

“THE PACIFIST”

or,

“THE PEACE-MONGER”

A New Play in One Act.

BY

JOHN G. BRANDON.



(LIGHTS ARE DOWN ON STAGE – THEN LIGHT APPEARS UNDER SLIT OF DOOR. KEY IS HEARD AND DOOR AT BACK L. OPENS TO ADMIT MRS. GARRITT. SHE LEAVES DOOR OPEN – PUTS ONE PARCEL ON BUREAU L. AND EXITS THROUGH DOOR DOWN L.)

(KEY AGAIN HEARD AND BRUNNER APPEARS AT DOOR AT BACK. STANDS LISTENING FOR A MOMENT – THE ADVANCES QUIETLY INTO ROOM TO C.)

BRUNNER. Nobody at home – good!

(GOES UP TO WINDOW – PUTS BAG ON TABLE – LOOKS AT TORN CURTAIN – LAUGHS QUIETLY – PULLS CURTAIN ASIDE – TURNS AND STARTS TO OPEN BAG WITH HIS BACK TO DOOR L. MRS. G. ENTERS AND SWITCHES UP LIGHTS.)

BRUNNER. (TURNING SUDDENLY) What the hell –

MRS. G. (STARTS BACK) Oh lor! – (THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT) Oh – it's you Mr. Brunner – frightened me out of my life you did. When did you come in?

BRUNNER. (RELIEVED) Just this moment. I thought nobody was at home.

MRS. G. Only jest got in myself from the 'orspital from seeing my son. Dr. Verrinder – I suppose I ought to say Miss Madge to you sir – ain't been back from St Mary's since she was called out in the Air Raid last night. That's the second time this week she's been out all night through these raids. Wonder to me 'ow she stands it with the work she does.

BRUNNER. Yes – she doesn't get much rest.

MRS. G. Rest!! Why she works twice as 'ard as any man doctor.

BRUNNER. (ANGRILY) There's no necessity for her to do it. Let the Authorities take the proper steps to prevent these raids.

MRS. G. 'Ow was the Authorities ter know that the Germans would be swines enough ter start this new game of killing women and kids at 'ome? If you'd seen the sights round these streets last night - you wouldn't 'ave blamed the Authorities. You'd 'a' done as Miss Madge done – took off yer coat and 'elped.

BRUNNER. I had no idea it was so close to you last night.

MRS. G. It was closer than I like. I was out at my daughters and couldn't get 'ome till it was all over. I suppose Miss Madge went out as soon as the first bang went. I waited up all night – then went out ter find 'er – but the awful sights was too much fer me.

BRUNNER. But why is your son in hospital? Was he hurt in the raid? He was here a couple of nights ago.

MRS. G. Yes – ‘e only went back to his ship yesterday, and this morning I got a telegram saying ‘e’s lying at death’s door in the ‘orspital. ‘Is ship was sunk at the mouth of the Thames last night.

BRUNNER. What was the name of his ship?

MRS. G. The “Vanroyal”.

BRUNNER. How did it happen?

MRS. G. Blown up – and over two hundred lives lost.

BRUNNER. (AGHAST) Good God – I (CLUTCHING AT HIS HEART) I – (SINKS INTO CHAIR) Sorry to scare you Mrs. Garritt – but my heart has been off colour all day. Get me a little brandy please.

(SHE GOES OFF L. TO GET IT)

BRUNNER. Two hundred lives – (HEAD SINKS INTO HANDS)

(ENTER MRS. G. WITH BRANDY)

MRS. G. Drink this Mr. Brunner. I don’t wonder yer ‘eart’s bad with all these areal torpeders abanging round us.

BRUNNER. Better to have torpedoes for a bit than that this cursed War should go on for ever.

MRS. G. Well I don’t see as ‘ow the killin’ of people at ‘ome – an’ mostly old ‘uns and kids at that – is goin’ ter stop it.

BRUNNER. It will stop it in time – I feel sure.

MRS. G. Well sir – I don’t agree with you – and those who ‘ave given their flesh and blood don’t either.

p.3

BRUNNER. I’ve given my share.

MRS. G. You sir – ‘ow?

BRUNNER. My brother – he was reported missing two days ago – and to-day – DEAD – so they told me at Whitehall – damn ‘em.

MRS. G. Eh?

BRUNNER. I mean it. DAMN them that make war for other men to bear the brunt. Emperors and Kaisers! Kings and Princes! Bah! It's we who pay the price in the end - not they - damn 'em. What are you staring at me for - it's true isn't it?

MRS. G. Not as I knows on sir. I agrees that War ain't right - that it's 'ard luck on you about yer brother. But it don't 'elp win the War goin' round and spouting like one of them Pacifists at the street corner.

BRUNNER. Who says I'm a pacifist?

MRS. G. Nobody - as I knows of - but you're talking like one.

BRUNNER. I - I didn't mean it that way.

MRS. G. Don't suppose you did sir - but you want to be careful who 'ears you round this district since last night.

BRUNNER. What do you mean?

MRS. G. I mean that they ain't in the mood ter listen to much in the way of "peace" with the Germans since last night, and they know that somebody in this district was the cause of them copping it so badly last night.

BRUNNER. (WITH A SNEER) What could they do?

MRS. G. Do? Look 'ere - 'ave you ever seen the women round 'ere deal with a man who has done anythink 'e shouldn't?

BRUNNER. No.

MRS. G. Well - take care that you ain't 'im. (GOING ABRUPTLY TO DOOR R. ) I'm jest downstairs making some coffee fer Miss Madge if you should want me.

(EXITS)

p.4

(BRUNNER STANDS STILL FOR A MOMENT WHEN SHE HAS GONE, THEN GOES CAUTIOUSLY FROM ONE DOOR TO THE OTHER AND LISTENS INTENTLY. BEING SATISFIED HE SWITCHES OUT THE MAIN LIGHTS IN THE ROOM, AND TURNS ON THE TABLE LAMP, SHADING ITS LIGHT FROM THE WINDOW.)

(HE DRAWS CURTAINS OF WINDOW SLOWLY AND STRONG BLUE LIGHT STREAMS IN. HE TAKES FROM HIS BAG A BLACK BOX, AND WITH IT TURNED TO HIS FACE HE TRIES THE SWITCH. AS HE TURNS THE BOX TO THE WINDOW HE KNOCKS A SMALL VASE OFF THE TABLE. HE STANDS FOR A MOMENT FROZEN WITH FEAR.)

BRUNNER. My nerves are all to pieces.

(SATISFIED - HE STARTS TO OPERATE HIS LIGHT. HE FLASHES THREE QUICK LIGHTS - THEN A LONG ONE - PAUSE - THEN REPEAT. THIS TIME HIS FACE LIGHTS UP WITH A

LIGHT COMING THROUGH THE WINDOW. IT REPEATS HIS SIGNAL. BRUNNER THEN SIGNALS "WAIT".)

BRUNNER. That will keep him waiting.

(THERE IS A BUMP OF A TRAY OUTSIDE DOOR L. HE QUICKLY DRAWS THE CURTAINS.)

MRS. G. (OUTSIDE) You might open the door Mr. Brunner – my hands is full.

BRUNNER. Certainly - Mrs. Garritt – certainly.

(PUTTING INSTRUMENT INTO BAG, AND QUICKLY SWITCHING UP LIGHTS WHILE SPEAKING.) (GOES AND OPENS DOOR.)

MRS. G. (AS SHE ENTERS WITH TRAY) Thank yer!

BRUNNER. (WITH AN EFFORT) Oh – don't mention it.

p.5

MRS. G. (AS SHE PUTS TRAY DOWN – LOOKING AT HIM) Good lor - sir – what's the matter with yer. You're as white as a sheet. Are you ill?

BRUNNER. No – I'm alright – the heat I suppose and this infernal heart of mine.

(TELEPHONE BELL RINGS)

BRUNNER. (STARTS VIOLENTLY AND ALMOST SHOUTS) What's that?

MRS. G. (PLACIDLY – POINTING TO IT) The telephone – it rings like that when they want somebody.

(SHE GOES DOWN AND ANSWERS IT. BRUNNER SITS R.)

MRS. G. (AT PHONE) Yes – eh – yes – what – wait a minute – it tickles my ear. Yes – that's better – what – yes – this is the doctor's - no – she's out – that's alright I can take the message. No – to nobody but her – yes – tell her the Red Cross Party leave Tilbury with the Transport at ----- yes – alright - good-bye.

BRUNNER. What's that?

MRS. G. Only a message for the mistress.

BRUNNER. But you mentioned something about a Transport – I haven't heard anything about that. When does it sail and from where – I should have had that information from headquarters by now.

MRS. G. Perhaps it's kept secret for some reason. The Mistress has expecting to hear when it sails, as two of her Nurses go with it.

BRUNNER. Does the Transport sail to-night?

Mrs. G. 'Eadquarters will let you know – when they want you ter know.

BRUNNER. I daresay.

MRS. G. (SMILING) I daresay.

(NOISE OF VOICES FROM STREET.)

p.6

MRS. G. (ALARMED) They're 'ere again!!!

(BRUNNER GOES QUICKLY UP TO WINDOW AND DRAWS CURTAINS)

(NOISE GROWS LOUDER)

(MRS. G GOES UP AND BOTH LOOK OFF R)

MRS. G. (TRYING TO LOOK OVER HIS SHOULDER) What is all the row?

BRUNNER. A lot of women seem to be rushing about for no reason.

(DOOR OPENS AND MADGE ENTERS – THEY DO NOT SEE HER)

MRS. G. They don't rush about for no reason. They've 'ad wind of a raid I bet.

BRUNNER. (TESTILY) I tell you there is no raid.

MADGE. You seem mighty certain about that. Who's your authority?

BRUNNER. (TURNING SHARPLY) Eh? By Jove Madge – you startled me.

MADGE. So it seems.

BRUNNER. (AS HE KISSES HER) How are you old girl?

MADGE. Oh tired – tired to death.

MRS. G. Poor dear – take yer things off Miss Madge, an' I'll get yer something to eat.

MADGE. No thanks, Mrs. G. – just a cup of coffee will do. (TO BRUNNER) Well Dick – you don't look up to much either.

BRUNNER. I feel rather seedy.

MADGE. You look it too (TAKES HIS WRIST) We must see to you.

BRUNNER. Oh – I'm alright – just a little excited perhaps.

p.7

MADGE. But you mustn't get excited with that heart of yours – You know what I'm always telling you – one sudden snap – and I shall have to look for somebody else to marry me.

(NOISE OF WOMEN HEARD)

BRUNNER. What are those women doing outside?

MADGE. Waiting and hoping for a raid.

BRUNNER. Hoping for a raid?

MADGE. Yes. (TAKING COFFEE) Thanks Mrs. G. I think you'd better have a drop of brandy Dick.

(MRS. G. EXITS TO GET IT)

BRUNNER. Thanks – I will. How do you mean – hoping for a raid?

(MRS. G RETURNS WITH BRANDY)

MADGE. So that they can get hold of the man who directs the enemy machines.

BRUNNER. And then?

MRS. G. (HANDING HIM BRANDY) Gawd 'elp 'im.

MADGE. I am afraid he will need his master the Devil's help as well. He'll undoubtedly deserve all he gets.

BRUNNER. But why should they constitute themselves his judge? They don't know what his idea is. He is probably working for what he hopes is the best.

MADGE. And they are doing what they know is best – for themselves and for their Country.

p.8

MADGE. Were you in this district last night?

BRUNNER. (NERVOUSLY) I – er – no – I was – er – Why do you ask?

MADGE. You didn't see the effects of the raid eh?

BRUNNER. Only as I came along here – was it bad?

MADGE. Bad – it was ghastly. I've seen some awful sights in my time – but this – (COVERING HER EYES) (WITH EXTRAORDINARY FERVOUR) God – that I were a man to kill the fiend who first thought of slaughtering innocents wholesale, and then call it – WAR. And to think they are helped by men and women here – who call themselves ENGLISH – God – it's maddening.



MRS. G. Don't upset yourself so, Miss Madge.

BRUNNER. Madge – you are unreasonable. These women have claimed too much of your sympathy.

MADGE. I haven't too much sympathy to give to these brave women. Have you heard that a battleship was sunk last night?

BRUNNER. Yes – I heard from Mrs. Garritt.

MADGE. Well these women – for whom you have no sympathy – gave their husbands and sons to their Country – to fight.

BRUNNER. Well?

MADGE. They didn't get a chance to fight. They were murdered – it is believed – by an Englishman. These women know that and believe that the man who placed the bomb aboard, and the man who directed the enemy machines – are the same.

BRUNNER. (NERVOUSLY) And you think that too?

MADGE. I'm practically sure of it,

BRUNNER. Why?

MADGE. Because the explosion of the ship occurred in a place where nobody but officials are allowed – and secondly the signals that guided the 'planes were given from these Docks. They were seen.

BRUNNER. What does that prove?

p.9

MADGE. Firstly, that the man – whoever he may be – is a trusted official. Secondly, that he first attempted the destruction of the ship through enemy airmen. They missed their mark. Then the man as a last resource – placed a timed infernal machine aboard. Can you wonder that these women wish to avenge their dead, and destroy the murderer.

BRUNNER. He may not have been a murderer – by intent I mean.

MADGE. As much as if he had done the killing with his own hands.

BRUNNER. (HALF JESTING, HALF NERVOUS) Come now – I can't altogether see that.

MADGE. I can - so can these women.

BRUNNER. But supposing – for argument – he were a man who had no belief in War at all – who thinks the wholesale slaughter of combatants should be stopped at any cost – in any way.

MADGE. Pacifist nonsense – but go on.

BRUNNER. Suppose that he did not sympathise with England's part of the War – plenty don't you know.

MRS. G. Then they ain't English.

BRUNNER. Would he not be justified in adopting any means in his power to stop the slaughtering of his Country's young men.

MADGE. By slaughtering the old people and children? No – the whole idea is infamous. What could he hope to gain?

BRUNNER. The Government and the People would soon sicken of War and come to terms with Germany.

MRS. G. Then you don't know the women round this way – that's a cert!!

MADGE. Mrs. G. is quite right. They are firmer than ever in their desire to see this war through to the finish.

MRS. G. (WHO HAS COLLECTED UP THE COFFEE THINGS – AS SHE GOES TO THE DOOR R.) So don't get larking about with any lights on the Docks sir – while the women are about.

BRUNNER. (IN A SUDDEN FURY) Damn you – what do you mean.

MADGE. Dick!!

p.10

MRS. G. I didn't mean nothing sir – only a joke.

BRUNNER. (PULLING HIMSELF TOGETHER) I'm sorry Mrs. Garritt – my heart you know,  
(DOOR BELL RINGS)

BRUNNER. What's that (STANDS INTENT)

MADGE. See who it is Mrs. G.  
(MRS. G. PUTS DOWN TRAY AND GOES TO OUTER DOOR.)  
(BRUNNER SINKS ON SOFA – MADGE WATCHING HIM)

MADGE. You certainly are nervy tonight Dick.

BRUNNER. Yes – the heat – and the raid –

MADGE. Um – perhaps!  
(MRS. G. RE-ENTERS)

MADGE. Who is it Mrs. G.?

MRS. G. (IN A WHISPER) The police!!

BRUNNER. (STARTING UP) My God – the Police.

MADGE. (IMPATIENTLY) Really Dick – you’re too absurd. Do sit down and calm yourself. Anyone would think they wanted you.

BRUNNER. (WITH A LAUGH) Sorry – old girl. (SITS WITH FEAR SHOWING IN EVERY FEATURE)

MADGE. What do they want?

MRS. G. It’s a Sergeant Mum – he wants ter see you.

MADGE. Very well – ask him in.

p.11

(MRS. G. GOES OUT FOR A MOMENT RETURNING WITH SERGEANT – BRUNNER SITS TRYING TO LOOK AT HIS EASE)

SERGEANT. Sorry to trouble you Doctor – but I found a poor woman downstairs with some of the women – trying hard to make them understand something. I took her round the corner, but she broke away and came back here. She can’t speak and I thought you might be able to make something of her. I think she’s ill.

MADGE. Bring her up Sergeant.

SERGEANT. Thank yer Doctor. I think that’s just what she wanted.

(EXIT SERGEANT)

MADGE. (TO BRUNNER) In case it’s anything private Dick – just go in there for a moment. (POINTS TO DOOR L.)

BRUNNER. Righto Madge (EXIT)

MRS. G. A telephone message come for you Miss Madge – about the Transport sailing.

MADGE. (SHARPLY) Then why didn’t you give it to me as soon as I came in?

MRS. G. They said I was to give the message to nobody but you, and Mr. Brunner seemed too anxious to know about it – so I thought I’d wait. Was to tell you it sailed tomorrow at eleven at night.

MADGE. Tomorrow night at eleven.

MRS. G. Yes Miss Madge.

MADGE. What did you mean – about Mr. Brunner.

p.12

MRS. G. Well Mum – I thought he was rather ‘nosey’ about it, and you ain’t married yet you know – time enough to tell ‘im everything when you are.

MADGE. (WITH A LAUGH) Quite right. It was none of his business anyway.

(ENTER THE SERGEANT WITH THE WOMAN – WHO IS PALPABLY VERY FRIGHTENED AT SOMETHING. SHE FIRST RUNS TO MRS. G. AND CLINGS TO HER LEGS LOOKING WILDLY ROUND THE ROOM. SHE GETS UP AND PEERS INTO HER FACE, AND THEN SHAKES HER HEAD – THEN COMES SLOWLY TO MADGE – BUT HESITATES)

MADGE. Come to me – I won’t hurt you.

(WOMAN SHAKES HER HEAD – RUNS FOR DOOR – SERGEANT BARS HER WAY)

SERGEANT. Let the Doctor have a look at you.

(WOMAN BACKS FROM SERGEANT – ENTER BRUNNER)

BRUNNER. I left my bag –

(WOMAN LOOKS ROUND ON HEARING HIS VOICE)

MADGE. Keep quiet for a moment Dick – we can’t make head or tail of her. Get some hot coffee for her Mrs. G.

(MRS. G. EXITS R. TAKING OTHER COFFEE THINGS WITH HER. THE WOMAN GOES TO FOLLOW HER.)

MADGE. Do you know who she is Sergeant?

p.13

SERGEANT. No Doctor. Never seen her round here before.

MADGE. (GOES C. TO WOMAN) come here.

(WOMAN COMES TO HER)

MADGE. Can you understand what I say?

(WOMAN NODS – ALWAYS LOOKING AT BRUNNER)

MADGE. Why don’t you speak to me?

(WOMAN POINTS TO TONGUE AND MAKES NEGATIVE SIGN)

MADGE. (TO SERGEANT) Do the women outside know her?

SERGEANT. No Doctor – but they tell me that she seemed very anxious to come up here.

MADGE. Strange – very strange.

(THE WOMAN THEN BECKONS TO BRUNNER – SHE IS BY THE WINDOW NOW – AND HE GOES SLOWLY TOWARDS HER – SHE PULLS THE CURTAINS WITH A SNAP, AND LEANS FORWARD TO LOOK OUT OF WINDOW. A STONE OR ROCK COMES THROUGH WINDOW, AND THE WOMAN IS SEEN TO CLASP HER HEAD AND FALL BACKWARDS TO THE GROUND AND LIE STILL. BRUNNER QUICKLY CLOSES CURTAINS AND POLICEMAN COMES FORWARDS AND PICKS UP THE STONE, AND MAKES QUICKLY FOR THE DOOR.)

MADGE. (ON HER KNEES BY THE WOMAN WHO IS BLEEDING FROM A WOUND IN HER FOREHEAD) See who threw that – quickly Sergeant.

SERGEANT. Yes Doctor (EXIT)

MADGE. (TO BRUNNER) Carry her to the sofa.

p.14

(BRUNNER DOES SO - PLACING HER HEAD L OF STAGE)

(MADGE BENDS OVER BACK OF SOFA AND EXAMINES WOUND – BRUNNER GOES R. PALPABLY SHAKEN – TAKES CIGARETTE FROM CASE.)

BRUNNER. Is she badly hurt?

MADGE. No – I don't think so, but I must bathe that cut. Keep your eye on her while I get some hot water.

BRUNNER. Alright!

(MADGE GOES OFF L. BRUNNER LIGHTS CIGARETTE.)

(THE WOMAN VERY CAUTIOUSLY RAISES HER HEAD AND LOOKS AT DOOR L. – THEN ROUND THE ROOM – GETS UP QUICKLY AND COMES TO BRUNNER WHO STARTS AT HER VOICE.)

WOMAN. (WITH A STRONG GERMAN ACCENT) Read dat – qvick.

(HANDS HIM NOTE.)

BRUNNER. (ASTOUNDED) But ---

WOMAN. Don't dalk – read – (PUSHES NOTE IN HIS HAND). Dey may be back at any moment.

BRUNNER. (READING NOTE ALOUD) "Must have news about Transport at once. Bearer may be trusted." Hahn. In God's name – who are you?

WOMAN. Dat does not madder much.

BRUNNER. But I thought you were dumb.

WOMAN. Ven your English is as bad as mine – it is vise to be dumb in dese barts.

BRUNNER. (CRAFTILY) But what does this note mean? Who is Hahn.

p.15

WOMAN. (TURNING FIERCELY) Don't blay dricks. You know who dat note comes vrom – andt vat it means. I have risked my life to deliver it. Dose Transports must not reach France. Hahn wants to know the hour they sail – our U. Boats vill do der rest.

BRUNNER. But I don't know when they sail.

WOMAN. Den find oudt from you lady here – she knows.

BRUNNER. Damn you – I'm not a spy.

WOMAN. No? Vell – I am. Only I work for my own Country – Germany – dat is der Country you work for too – mine friendt.

BRUNNER. I only did – what I did – to stop the War – not for Germany.

WOMAN. Der result is der same. Germany benefits.

BRUNNER. I can't do anything more – it's too risky.

WOMAN. Der risk vill be greater – my friendt –if you disobey our orders.

BRUNNER. If I got this information – I wouldn't dare send it – the women are watching.

WOMAN. You must risk dat. I will get them away if bossible.

BRUNNER. (PACING UP AND DOWN) Suppose I refuse – what then?

WOMAN. (NODDING HER HEAD TOWARDS WINDOW) I vill tell dem about last night – ah – you don't fancy trusting yourself to dem. Dey would trample you flat.

BRUNNER. (ADVANCING SLOWLY – FIERCELY) What if I kill you now.

(HE FINDS HIMSELF STARING INTO THE BARREL OF A VERY SERVICEABLE REVOLVER.)

WOMAN. You vill stay where you are – my friendt.

BRUNNER. (AGHAST) Put that thing away – for God's sake.

(NOISE OF PLATES OFF R.)

WOMAN. (FINGER TO LIPS – POINTING TO DOOR R.) See

p.16

(BRUNNER GOES QUICKLY TO DOOR R., OPENS IT SLOWLY)

(WHEN BRUNNER'S BACK IS TURNED – MADGE QUIETLY ENTERS AND STANDS FOR A MOMENT PUZZLED AT SEEING THE WOMAN SITTING UP COVERING BRUNNER WITH REVOLVER – THEN SHE QUIETLY BACKS OUT OF DOOR AS BRUNNER SPEAKS.)

BRUNNER. Mrs. Garritt coming back. (CLOSES THE DOOR.)

WOMAN. Vell?

BRUNNER. I will try to get the information Hahn wants and send it to him to-night.

WOMAN. Goot!! Go to him to-morrow and he can hide you aboard until he sails next week, andt you can go mit him.

BRUNNER. And you?

WOMAN. I can dake care of myself – I vill get away qvite alright.

(SHE LIES DOWN SUDDENLY IN THE SAME POSITION AS AT BEGINNING OF SCENE – AS MADGE ENTERS FROM DOOR L. WITH BOWL OF HOT WATER AND STANDS PERPLEXED - BRUNNER BY FIREPLACE LIGHTING CIGARETTE – VERY SHAKEN. MRS. G. ENTERS WITH COFFEE.)

MRS. G. Sorry to 'ave been such a long time Miss Madge, but I 'ad to make it fresh. (SEES WOMAN) What's 'appened to the poor creature?

MADGE. (AS SHE BATHES HER HEAD) Only a slight accident.  
(SERGEANT KNOCKS)

MADGE. Come in!  
(SERGEANT ENTERS)

p.17

MADGE. Well?

SERGEANT. Where was you Doctor in the raid last night?

MADGE. Out in it - trying to help. Why?

SERGEANT. Something funny about this business, Doctor. What I don't understand. Can't find out who threw the stone, but found out the reason why.

MADGE. Well?

SERGEANT. They swear that signals were given from this house last night – they don't know which floor – but they are sure of the house.

BRUNNER. (WITH AN HYSTERICAL LAUGH) Come now – that's utterly absurd.

SERGEANT. So I told 'em Sir. But they stuck to their story.

BRUNNER. Surely they don't suspect the Doctor or Mrs. Garritt.

SERGEANT. No Sir – they trust them orlight – but as they say – they ain't always at 'ome. They wasn't when the raid was on last night. Anyway there's something funny about it.

MADGE. (CLOSELY WATCHING BRUNNER) Suppose a man – or for that matter – a woman – were caught helping the enemy in a raid – what would happen?

SERGEANT. How do you mean Doctor? If the women outside did the catching --

MADGE. No – I don't mean that – I mean caught by the police.

SERGEANT. Well – he'd be charged with – er - with er---

MADGE. Do you think he would be hanged – or shot – or put to death in some way?

SERGEANT. Well – do you know Doctor – I'm afraid he wouldn't. It would probably be months while his case was heard and then ---

MADGE. He might get off you think?

SERGEANT. Not altogether Doctor – but I don't think they'd kill 'im. The Law 'as too many loopholes. The best way would be to let the women 'ave 'im I think. (REFERRING TO WOMAN) 'Ow is she Doctor – badly 'urt?

MADGE. No – I don't think so. I wonder if you would get me a taxi or something to take her away.

SERGEANT. Certainly Doctor. They're a bit difficult nowadays, but I think I know where I can snaffle one.

p.18

(SERGEANT EXITS)

MRS. G. (PICKING UP COFFEE THINGS) You won't want this now.

MADGE. No thanks Mrs. G.

(EXIT MRS. G. WITH COFFEE THINGS)

BRUNNER. What will you do with her?

MADGE. I don't know yet. Did she show any signs of coming to while I was away?

BRUNNER. No – none at all.

MADGE. Did you watch her closely?

BRUNNER. I never moved from my position here. What's wrong with her do you think?

MADGE. Her condition has something to do with the raid last night I expect.



(ENTER MRS. G.)

MADGE. Get me my hat and coat please Mrs. G. and put your own on as I shall want you to come with us. Excuse me while I write a note.

(SITS AT BUREAU AND QUICKLY SCRIBBLES NOTE DURING THE FOLLOWING SCENE.)

BRUNNER. Going out Madge? If so I'll wait here till you come back – if you don't mind.

MADGE. You still have a key to this floor – haven't you?

BRUNNER. Yes – do you want it?

MADGE. No. I shall have to go with the Policeman to the hospital with this woman – so make yourself comfy.

p.19

(HE STANDS AT THE BACK OF SOFA LOOKING DOWN AT WOMAN)

(MRS. G. ENTERS WITH THINGS)

(LIGHT STARTS HERE)

BRUNNER. Why bother to take her to the hospital.

(MADGE LOOKS UP AND SEES THE LIGHT – QUICKLY GOES TO SWITCH)

BRUNNER. I daresay they have their hands full with more serious cases – and the woman –

(MADGE SWITCHES OUT LIGHTS) (BLACKOUT)

BRUNNER. What's wrong with the lights?

MADGE. Nothing – I turned them out.

BRUNNER. Why?

MADGE. Look – on the wall there – that light.

BRUNNER. (UNDER HIS BREATH) The fool – the damned fool.

MADGE. What is it – where does it come from?

BRUNNER. Oh – some reflection from the Docks perhaps.

MADGE. Nonsense – the flashes are too regular to be a reflection. It's striking direct to this window and from what little I know – I can see it is spelling out the Common Morse Code.

MRS. G. Perhaps it's one of them Dock Spies the women are after. I'll call the Police.

BRUNNER. Don't do anything so stupid Mrs Garritt. I expect it's a crane light reflecting off the water.

p.20

MADGE. Two short flashes and one long – two short and one long. Your reflection is very persistently calling the letter B.

BRUNNER. My dear Madge – you surely can't expect me – knowing the Docks as I do and how closely they are watched – to accept such a silly idea. – (IRRITABLY) The whole thing's preposterous.

MADGE. Things always are with us in England – till something happens – and it's too late. There it is still – always the letter B. I agree with Mrs. Garritt – I shall warn the Police.

BRUNNER. (FRANTICALLY) No – no – wait – don't do that. If what you think is true – I'm the one to find out.

(MADGE SWITCHES UP LIGHTS.) (TAXI HORN HEARD)

MADGE. Here's the Sergeant. He will take the matter in hand and save you bother.

BRUNNER. Madge – for God's sake – don't mention it to him.

MADGE. But why? Surely to Police –

BRUNNER. The Police have nothing to do with the affairs of the Docks. If anything should be wrong there – I'm the Authority to take the matter in hand – not the Police.

MADGE. But Dick – you are hardly in a fit state tonight to –

BRUNNER. Oh – I'm alright – just a little anxious – as we all are.

MADGE. I still think –

BRUNNER. Set your mind at rest Madge. Before I go to bed tonight I will search every hole and corner a spy could hide in. Better to leave the Police out of it till we have something definite to go on.

MADGE. Perhaps you're right – still – I don't like it.

(POLICEMAN RINGS OUTER BELL)

(MADGE MOTIONS MRS. G. TO OPEN DOOR, AND GOES TO BUREAU)

p.21

BRUNNER. Before you open that door (MRS. G. STOPS) Not one word about that light to the Sergeant. It is important he should not know about it.

MADGE. Very well - if you particularly wish it. You understand Mrs. G.? (FINISHES NOTE)

MRS. G. Yes Miss Madge.

(EXIT TO OPEN DOOR)

BRUNNER. (WITH RELIEF) Thanks Madge.

(SERGEANT ENTERS)

SERGEANT. I managed to get a taxi Doctor.

MADGE. It's very good of you to take so much trouble , Sergeant.

SERGEANT. That's alright Doctor. We 'ave to do some funny things nowadays. I was sittin' on a doorstep at three o'clock this morning, nussing a kid to sleep – lorst its mother in the raid – blown clean out of a window it was and not 'urt.

(MADGE IS BENDING OVER THE WOMAN AND PINNING HER SHAWL, AS SHE DOES SO SHE SLIPS THE REVOLVER FROM THE WOMAN'S SACHEL AND HIDES IT UNDER THE CUSHION.)

SERGEANT. Shall I take her down now doctor – while it's quiet. The women have cleared off somewhere.

MADGE. Yes please.

SERGEANT. Did you see anything of that light flicking about your window just now?

BRUNNER. A light?

SERGEANT. Yes – I saw it as I got out of the taxi.

BRUNNER. We saw no light of any kind – did we Madge?

MADGE. (AFTER A PAUSE) No!

p.22

SERGEANT. Only my fancy I suppose.

BRUNNER. Must have been.

MADGE. She's ready now. (POLICEMAN PICKS UP WOMAN)

BRUNNER. I'd better come along with you Madge.

MADGE. No – stay here. (SHARPLY) I want you to.

BRUNNER. ALL RIGHT. (GOES DOWN R.)

(POLICEMAN GOING OUT DOOR – MRS. G. FOLLOWING)

MADGE. (ASIDE TO MRS. G., HANDING HER NOTE) Read that as soon as you get into the taxi, and tell the Sergeant.

MRS. G. Yes Mum.

(EXIT SERGEANT WITH WOMAN AND MRS. G.)

BRUNNER. (ALL NERVES NOW) Where will they take that woman?

MADGE. (PUTTING ON HAT AND COAT) To the hospital.

BRUNNER. If she's better – will they let her out tonight?

MADGE. (BUSY WITH HER GLOVES – BUT WATCHING HIM) Perhaps.

(AWKWARD PAUSE)

BRUNNER. I think I'd better be getting along.

MADGE. You were anxious to stay just now.

BRUNNER. I want to go to the office – but – by Jove yes – you can give me the information and save me the journey. About those Transports – (MADGE FLINCHES) When do they go?

MADGE. Is it important you should know?

p.23

BRUNNER. (EAGERLY) Yes – very.

MADGE. They sail to-night – at eleven o'clock.

(BRUNNER IS SO EXCITED THAT HE MAKES A HALF MOVE TOWARDS HIS BAG – THEN HE CLUTCHES AT HIS HEART AND GOES TOWARDS CHAIR R, AND SINKS INTO IT. MADGE DOES NOT MOVE FOR A MOMENT – SHE HAS SEEN EVERY MOVE. SHE LEANS FORWARD QUICKLY AND GETS REVOLVER, AND SLIPS IT UNDER HER COAT.)

MADGE. (GOING WEARILY TOWARDS DOOR AT BACK) Better rest till I come back – shall only be about 15 minutes.

(EXIT AND CLOSES DOOR. BANG OF OUTER DOOR HEARD.)

(BRUNNER SITS TENSELY FOR A MOMENT, BUT HIS HANDS BETRAY THE EXCITEMENT HE LABOURS UNDER. HE RISES AND GOES SWIFTLY DOWN TO SWITCH. AS HIS HAND TOUCHES IT THE HOOTER OF THE TAXI IS HEARD, AND THE TAXI HEARD GOING AWAY FROM THE HOUSE. HE SWITCHES ALL LIGHTS OUT EXCEPT THE TABLE LAMP. HE QUICKLY UNDOES HIS BAG.)

(TAKING HIS SIGNALLING APPARATUS OUT OF BAG HE SETS IT UP ON TABLE – CONNECTS IT UP – TURNS OUT TABLE LAMP – TESTS HIS LIGHT – DRAWS BLINDS, AND CAUTIOUSLY LOOKS OUT OF WINDOW.)

BRUNNER. All clear outside – nobody about.

(WHILE HE IS IN THE WINDOW – THE LIGHT IN PASSAGE GOES OUT AND THE DOOR OPENS SLIGHTLY TO ADMIT MADGE WHO SLIPS BEHIND SCREEN BY THE SIDE OF THE DOOR.)

(BRUNNER SIGNALS “ARE YOU THERE”.)

p.24

(THE ANSWERING LIGHT COMES WITHOUT A MOMENTS PAUSE.)

BRUNNER. Got him first time.

(MADGE SLIPS QUIETLY DOWN L WALL, MAKING SLIGHT NOISE.)

BRUNNER. (PEERING INTO DARKNESS) What’s that (PAUSE) I’m all nerves.

(SIGNALS AND SPELLS OUT MESSAGE.)

BRUNNER. TRANSPORTS – SAIL – AT – ELEVEN – TONIGHT. MEET – THEM – SHEERNESS – 12-30.  
BRUNNER.

(ANSWERING LIGHT – BRUNNER READS MESSAGE ALOUD.)

BRUNNER. RIGHT – HAHN.

(BRUNNER PULLS CURTAINS SLOWLY – WHEN THEY ARE CLOSED MADGE TURNS UP LIGHT.)

(BRUNNER STANDS PARALYZED FOR A MOMENT.)

BRUNNER. My God!!!

MADGE. So it was you – YOU – all the time.

BRUNNER. What do you – intend to do?

MADGE. That depends entirely on yourself. I suspected you Dick when you lied to me tonight, and I trust you have the courage to do the only possible thing to be done.

BRUNNER. (FEEBLY) What is that?

p.25

MADGE. (HANDING HIM REVOLVER) Kill yourself.

(HE TAKES IT A NERVELESS HAND BUT IT SLIPS ONTO THE SOFA AS HE WEAKLY LEANS ON THE BACK OF IT.)

BRUNNER. I can't – I can't.

MADGE. Do you still wish to live – knowing what a menace you are to our Country.

BRUNNER. I only know – I want to live. That is why I took the risk to-night to send information about the Transports.

MADGE. You would send ten thousands of brave men to eternity, to save the miserable thing you call your soul?

BRUNNER. I want to live – I can't die yet. Madge have pity.

MADGE. What do you expect me to do?

BRUNNER. Help me to get out of it all. You were fond of me once – help me – in God's name.

MADGE. I will help you to get out of it all – in Humanity's name.

BRUNNER. (GOING TOWARDS HER) God bless you Madge -

MADGE. Don't touch me.

(HE STAGGERS BACKWARD – CLUTCHING AT HIS HEART)

BRUNNER. (GASPING) My heart again.

MADGE. Wait a moment.

(SHE GOES OFF L. FOR A MOMENT RETURNING WITH A TUMBLER HALF FULL OF WATER AND A SMALL PHIAL. POURS SEVERAL DROPS INTO GLASS – PUTS PHIAL DOWN ON BUREAU – AND BRINGS IT TO HIM – HE DRINKS EAGERLY.)

BRUNNER. (AFTER A MOMENT) That's better – that has steadied me.

p.26

MADGE. Your head clearer now?

BRUNNER. Yes.

MADGE. Then listen. The information you sent about the Transports was wrong – they go tomorrow. That does not lessen your crime that you were prepared to sell the information to the enemy to save your own useless life. On the contrary – we may be able to destroy some of their submarines. I gave you one chance to-night to kill yourself and you hadn't the courage of a coward. Do you – knowing of what you are guilty – think you are fit to live – because I don't.

BRUNNER. What do you mean – what are you going to do?

MADGE. (PICKING UP PHIAL) Nothing further – what I had to do is already done.

BRUNNER. You don't mean – no – no – my God – not that –

MADGE. I have poisoned you. In two minutes you will be where you can do no further harm.

(TAXI HEARD.)

BRUNNER. But that is – MURDER. (CLUTCHES AT THROAT.)

MADGE. MURDER?? (LAUGHS HYSTERICALLY) Murder to avenge those poor innocent babies and old people who were ruthlessly slain and maimed last night? Does your sight grow dim now that the poison is working? Shut them and blot out the sight of your work last night. Can you hear the poor children crying for their parents who lie dead and mangled in the ruins of their pitiful little homes? Can you see the thousand horrible sights that my eyes witnessed last night? If so – then your soul must be already in a hell of torture at the thought that you were responsible for the carnage. Murder to kill you – you say – no – as God is in his Heaven – it's Justice – JUSTICE.

(DOOR HEARD OPENING – BRUNNER BY SOFA. GETS TO HIS FEET – STAGGERS TO BUREAU – GETS PHIAL. HE STARTS FOR THE DOOR BUT FALLS SLOWLY TO HIS KNEES.)

BRUNNER. (MUTTERS IN AWFUL AGONY) The Police – they - -

p.27

(HE RISES TO HIS FEET AS SERGEANT AND MRS. G. ENTER. BRUNNER C. WITH PHIAL IN HIS HAND – HE TRIES TO SPEAK AS HE POINTS AT MADGE – SLOWLY SINKS TO HIS KNEES AND FALLS DEAD.)

SERGEANT. (PLACING HIS HAND ON BRUNNER'S CHEST) He's dead Doctor. Was he – the man? (PICKS UP PHIAL)

MADGE. Yes.

SERGEANT. He poisoned himself?

MADGE. Yes.

SERGEANT. I understand. We took the woman to the Police Station and came straight back as you asked us to in your note. I'll see about getting that taken away. Anything else I can do?

MADGE. Yes – get on to the Admiralty and tell them to look out for submarines at Sheerness at 12-30 to-night, and be sure to catch a man named Hahn – who will signal them.

SERGEANT. I understand Doctor – good-night.

MADGE. Good-night.

(WHEN OUTER DOOR IS HEARD TO CLOSE, MADGE SLOWLY KNEELS BY THE SIDE OF  
BRUNNER – LOOKS INTO HIS FACE)

MADGE.

Dicky – poor Dick. I did love you dear – but your ideas were all wrong. I had to kill  
you Dick – I had to – England must come first – always – always.

(BREAKS DOWN COMPLETELY – SOBBING VIOLENTLY)

CURTAIN.