

THE HUN

A Belgian episode written by

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CHARACTERS

Louise	A Belgian girl
Sn. Carmoy	Grandparent of Louise
The Hun	A Prussian Officer

SCENE

Interior of Sn. Carmoy's cottage

(Old man discovered at table, he hears keys fall, gets up, picks them up, replaces them on nail, looks through hole)

GRANDPÈRE	Ah! it is Louise returning (Old man returns to seat at table – Louise enters) Back safe Louise! Any news from the village ma Cherie? (Louise places basket on table)
LOUISE	No grandpère there is no news not even of Yvonne – my poor little sister. I wonder where she can be?
GRANDPÈRE	There! There! My child do not fret yourself we must trust in the Bon Dieu – but listen I wish to talk to you –
LOUISE	Of what do you wish to speak grandpère?
GRANDPÈRE	I wish to speak of the Prussian who visits us – he says he is our friend but I do not like him. I trust him not!
LOUISE	I do not trust any Prussian – but he says grandpère that he is trying to find Yvonne for us.
GRANDPÈRE	Yes my child he says he is trying to find her for us but I am afraid he is lying – he has other motives. I believe he was the cause of her disappearance. He was seen speaking with her on the very day she disappeared – that is fifteen days ago. I

fear he knows more than he would like us to know. When he comes tonight I will try and make him talk – yes the Prussians like to boast when they are in their caps.

(Louise takes knife from table)

LOUISE If he has dared to harm her in any way. I will kill him the Prussian dog.

GRANDPÈRE Sh, child not so loud, you know it fares hard with us Belgians who speak our minds – and we must – we must wait! Ha! – that little knife in your hand reminds me of what I wanted to tell you – see that there is no one listening at the door my child! These Prussians have low underhanded methods, we must be careful – sit down Louise and listen. A few nights ago I went walking out beyond the village to the wood – you were asleep at the time. I entered the wood and just as I got to the ditch – you know a little beyond the stile – the moon came from behind the clouds and there, right before me on the bank of the ditch lay four men, three wore the Prussian grey – and one the khaki of the British. I paid no heed to the Prussians I have seen many of them lying so. I stooped and shook the British soldier thinking he might yet be living but no child he was dead – but he had died gallantly! Yes child, for afterwards I looked at all their wounds and the Prussians had died by his bayonet, but he alas, poor lad, on his body I counted more than twelve wounds – mais oui Cherie! He did indeed die gallantly – three to one is not bad for one so young.

LOUISE Mais les Anglais sont toujours brave!

GRANDPÈRE As I looked down on the face of the pauvre garçon – for he was little more than a lad – my thoughts were of the brave British mother, aye and mothers who have given their sons to fight for our country and our cause. She would be glad to know that her son had died fighting as all brave Britons do. In a pouch by his side I found this – and brought it away with me for you.

(Grandpère hands Louise the Pistol)

LOUISE For me Grandpère – I do not understand.

GRANDPÈRE In this pistol there are six bullets with it you can protect your honour or prevent your dishonour. Do you understand Louise?

LOUISE I understand

GRANDPÈRE There take it child and always have it by you – one never knows these treacherous Prussians – Ah! what is the hour –

LOUISE It wants twenty minutes to the hour of ten.

GRANDPÈRE He generally comes before this!

LOUISE He may not come to-night.

GRANDPÈRE Ah, he will come my child these tyrants give us no rest, in everyone who is not of their cursed race they see an enemy – they hunt and torture everyone – not so much from discipline but from fear – aye fear of spies!

LOUISE It is getting late and the keys have not fallen yet!

GRANDPÈRE Ha, ha! The keys that was a great idea to run a wire from the gate to this room and to hang the bunch of keys to that wire – so that when anyone opens the gate the keys fall to the floor and warn us that someone is approaching. I wonder what our friend the Prussian would say if he knew – ha, ha!

 (Keys fall)

LOUISE They have fallen Grandpère!

GRANDPÈRE Yes child – quick see who it is!

 (Louise runs and looks out of window)

LOUISE Yes! it is the Prussian

GRANDPÈRE Ah bon Louise after a while you go to your bed and leave the Prussian to me –

LOUISE Have a care Grandpère, humour him or he may do you an injury.

GRANDPÈRE Ha – I fear him not – but get your book and be reading to me when he comes in.

 (Louise gets books, begins to read)

 (Prussian enters door)

PRUSSIAN Gut evening, you think perhaps I don't come tonight eh!

GRANDPÈRE We were just wondering, just wondering.

 (Prussian takes glass from table and pours out wine from bottle but just before drinking thinks it might be poisoned so passes to old man to drink first)

PRUSSIAN Drink –

 (Old man takes a drink then Prussian laughs and drinks)

LOUISE Have you any news of my sister?

PRUSSIAN No news Fräulein – I have look and look everywhere but I can find her not but perhaps one day we shall see her again!

GRANDPÈRE Yes one day perhaps! But I fear it will not be in this world.

LOUISE Grandpère what do you mean?

GRANDPÈRE A fancy child, just a passing thought but Louise, you had better go to bed – the hour is getting so late.

LOUISE Bon soir Grandpère.

 (Louise kneels and old man kisses her head. She then rises and lights candle, goes towards curtains.)

GRANDPÈRE Bon soir ma petite.

PRUSSIAN Gute nacht Fräulein.

 (Louise bows stiffly to Prussian and exits)

PRUSSIAN What is this fancy of yours this passing thought – of what you speak?

GRANDPÈRE That was said for the benefit of Louise – for when I said we would not see Yvonne again in this world I spoke the truth.

PRUSSIAN She is dead?

GRANDPÈRE She is dead!

PRUSSIAN If the little fool had not run away from me she would have been living now and –

GRANDPÈRE Mon dieu. Do you speak the truth Prussian?

PRUSSIAN Ya! All Prussians speak der truth!

GRANDPÈRE All Prussians think they speak the truth.

PRUSSIAN Ha, he. Dats a good joke – but you say the girl she is dead.

GRANDPÈRE Do you know nothing of her death?

PRUSSIAN Gott in Himmel I know not of her death. I tell you she run away from me and I see her no more.

GRANDPÈRE So she was with you – you lured or carried her away to her ruin – she an innocent child. You Prussians - are you men or devils?

PRUSSIAN We are Prussians – she was with me eight or ten days. I forget which. I treat her well – but she one day jumps from the window and run away. I don't see her no more!

GRANDPÈRE So she ran away from one monster to fall into the hands of your brutal soldiers who caused her death!

PRUSSIAN Hold there! Are you sure it was my men who killed her?

GRANDPÈRE Am I sure – listen! I am sure of this that the soldiers of our allies do not! No – nor would not stoop so low – as to commit such an inhuman outrage!

PRUSSIAN Perhaps she was shot by accident!

GRANDPÈRE She was not shot – I found her body lying in the small wood three days ago. I dug her a grave and buried her there – my poor little Yvonne may her soul rest in peace.

PRUSSIAN Not shot – den how did she die?

GRANDPÈRE It is too painful for me to repeat the manner of her death – but this I will tell you Prussian, it would have been more merciful had she been shot!

PRUSSIAN Ha – and you say the Prussians did this. Well, what if they did!

GRANDPÈRE Do I say they did – I know they did! Have I not seen what the Prussians have done and what they are still doing.

PRUSSIAN Bah! This is war!

GRANDPÈRE War – you call it war! I all it murder. Have I not seen in this very village men, women and children done to death – aye from the ages of two to eighty – shot and slaughtered for no good reasons at all. You call it war – but the rest of the world call it murder – but listen Prussian, the day of reckoning is near at hand!

PRUSSIAN Bah! They were killed because they were spies and carried information of our plans to our enemies.

GRANDPÈRE Spies, you say eh! Are children in arms spies? Are the Prussians then afraid of babies!!

PRUSSIAN Have a care you old schweindhund how you speak or you may be taken out and shot.

GRANDPÈRE Sacré ... – old as I am, I am not afraid of death. Mon dieu if I had your health and strength I would be in the fighting line. I should not stay in a village outraging women and slaying innocent children.

PRUSSIAN You old dog – I would choke from you the life but I have use for you yet.

(Prussian goes as if to strike old man)

So curb your tongue or I may forget myself.

GRANDPÈRE I shall help you in none of your brutal work – and I shall speak as I wish though I die.

PRUSSIAN Bah, listen to me you are now all Prussian subjects – your country is crushed. Prussia has pasted over it and Belgium is no more.

GRANDPÈRE Yes it is easily seen that some plague has devastated our country Prussia, has passed over it yes – but not all over it!

PRUSSIAN What do you mean, not all over it?

GRANDPÈRE Has all Belgium then been taken. Yes Prussian, the time will come when Prussia will learn that Belgium is a country – not a road.

PRUSSIAN Gott in Himmell! Enough of this you old dog.

GRANDPÈRE Ha, you like not the truth – no Prussian likes to hear the truth. Prussians – bah! You are all a brutal cowardly nation, aye all! From the private in the line to that inhuman monster your emperor.

PRUSSIAN Mein Gott! You speak so of our emperor – you shall retract those words – you old schwind – retract those words.

GRANDPÈRE You ask me to retract my words – listen, were all the guns of the Prussian army at my breast, my answer would be the same! Never.

(The Prussian waits until old man turns then shoots him in back. Old man staggers – Louise rushes out and catches old man. Prussian going towards door turns at Louise's entrance.)

LOUISE You Prussian dog! Do you call this war!

PRUSSIAN That was an accident, I am –

LOUISE You coward!

(Louise fires and kills Prussian)

(CURTAIN)