

# **JUMPING BLIND**

By

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**THE CHARACTERS:**

*The central character, Edward Riviere, is played by two actors: one plays him in 1975, when he is sixty (and is referred to as Riviere); the other plays him in 1944, when he is thirty (and is referred to as Edward).*

RIVIERE, English, sixty

EDWARD, his younger self, thirty

GERHARD, a German soldier, early twenties

FRIEDA, English, mid-fifties, and mid-twenties

*(Frieda is played by the same actress at both ages)*

MADELEINE, a French prostitute, twenties

*The other characters can be played by as few as four actors (three men and one woman), who each perform multiple roles:*

JOE, an English barman, twenties

SELSON, an English intelligence officer

HANS, a German officer, late twenties

FRANCOIS, a French farmer, fifties

SIMONE, his wife

JEAN, a French butcher

ALAIN, a French aristocrat

THERESE, a French girl, late teens

and ENGLISH RECRUITS, THEIR INSTRUCTORS,  
FRENCH MEN AND WOMEN

**THE SETTINGS:**

The settings should be simple, and not realistic (a cafe can be two chairs; the interior of a plane, two benches; a barn can be indicated by a single bale of hay; a room in a brothel by a bed and nothing else). This will make it easier to move fluidly between the two time periods. The stage need not be big; all that matters is that the space have limited décor to leave air for Riviere's memories.

## ACT ONE

(Night sky, full moon. A parachute opens and a man floats down, like in a dream...)

(The dreamer is RIVIERE, tossing in bed; it's 1975:)

RIVIERE

No... not again...

(The dream becomes a nightmare: the jumper stops in mid-air, as if caught. Struggles to keep descending.)

RIVIERE

Caught! No trees, no wires -- not tangled, not hanging, not landing, just caught. Again! Still!

(A doorbell rings.)

VOICE OUTSIDE

Telegram...

(Riviere sits up suddenly in bed. The dream disappears.)

VOICE OUTSIDE

(knocking)  
Hello? Telegram?

(Riviere gets the telegram. Reads it. It's big news.)

(A PUB appears. Riviere, shaken but exhilarated, walks in, calling to the barman:)

RIVIERE

Frank, oh Frank, what would you prescribe for shattered nerves combined with a revulsion for everything you've ever done in your entire life?

(The Barman -- JOE, twenties -- turns to him.)

RIVIERE

(distressed by this new face)  
-- where's Frank?

JOE

Off. Name's Joe.

RIVIERE

"Off"? Off where?

JOE

(shrugs)  
What'll it be?

RIVIERE

You're awfully young...

JOE

What's wrong with the young then?

RIVIERE

They're stupid.

JOE

Least I buttoned my shirt right.

(Riviere sees he has indeed buttoned  
his shirt wrong; as he re-buttons it:)

JOE

What's your pleasure?

RIVIERE

(sly)  
My usual.

JOE

What's that, love? A Screaming Fit?

RIVIERE

Whisky soda. And none of your lip.

JOE

You should be so lucky.

(FRIEDA comes in, walking with a limp  
to which she is accustomed, talking  
back to her dog who she's leaving  
outside:)

FRIEDA

(baby-voiced)  
Stay there, piggy-wiggly.

RIVIERE

Oh dear god.

FRIEDA

Yes darling, Mummy will be right in here, right in  
here, you can look through the window and see me,  
right in here, right in here, that's a good doggy-  
woggy.

RIVIERE

And to think, you were once the most extraordinary woman I'd ever met.

FRIEDA

Lovely to see you too -- and thanks for coming round for us this morning.

RIVIERE

Oh Christ, was that today?

FRIEDA

With all I've been through in my life, I suppose I can manage the threats of a cabbie.

RIVIERE

Doggie-woggie pissy-wissy in the taxi-waxy?

FRIEDA

Why do you think I needed you to take us to the vet? Where were you? You didn't answer at home or work.

RIVIERE

Out.

FRIEDA

Dark and mysterious, never a good thing with you...  
(notices Joe)  
What's this? Where's Frank?

RIVIERE

Joe here's sworn to secrecy, no amount of torture --  
(pretending to be mortified by his "slip")  
-- oh sorry, didn't mean to bring that up. Dreadful of me.

FRIEDA

A joke. You must be nervous about something.

(Joe brings Riviere's drink.)

JOE

You with the old poof?

FRIEDA

Do you know who this is, you speck of lucky sperm? Edward Riviere, awarded the George Cross for distinguished service to the Crown --

RIVIERE

(genuinely pissed off)  
Shut up --

FRIEDA

The highest military honors --

RIVIERE

I said, shut up.

FRIEDA

He may be an old poof, but he's a decorated old poof.

JOE

What'd you do, Poppy? Slap some Nazis to death?

FRIEDA

Made the world safe for you and yours, that's all.

(She looks pointedly to Riviere,  
prompting him. He sighs and recites:)

RIVIERE

She got sent to Buchenwald.

(Joe shrugs -- that doesn't mean  
anything to him.)

FRIEDA

Why did we fight the war.

JOE

I give up, Auntie, why did you?

FRIEDA

Get me a pint of Guinness, and we'll have a couple of  
those sandwiches and the pleasure of your back.

JOE

I'm not giving my backside to the likes of him.

(Joe goes off to get their order.)

RIVIERE

You should be so lucky!

FRIEDA

I dislike this place intensely, why do we have to  
come here?

RIVIERE

You don't, it's my local.

FRIEDA

So. Why didn't you come around this morning? Not  
like you to break a promise.

RIVIERE

(that strikes an unexpected chord:)

Really.

(catching himself; doesn't want her to know  
what's up)

Sorry, my mistake.

(But Frieda sees that something's off.)

FRIEDA

You dumped the new what's-his-name.

RIVIERE

(pleased to misdirect her)

I confess.

FRIEDA

Well that's a relief, I thought when I couldn't get  
you at work you'd quit your job.

(Riviere shrugs -- he did.)

FRIEDA

Aren't you having a red-letter day.

RIVIERE

Not really, just bored. Here we go --

(Joe brings Frieda's drink and their  
sandwiches. Frieda takes a small bowl  
out of her purse and pours some of her  
beer into it.)

RIVIERE

This is stale.

FRIEDA

You are such a baby.

(to Joe, as she takes the bowl of beer to the  
door)

During the war he hid in the woods, never slept  
twice in the same place, even ate boiled nettles --

RIVIERE

Will you shut up!

FRIEDA

-- now he can't eat day-old cheese.

(placing the bowl outside for her dog)

Did you miss Mummy, monkey-face? There you are  
sweetie, some nice Guinny-winny for my brave girl.

RIVIERE

(to Joe)  
And that's why we fought the war.

(Joe laughs. Frieda returns to them:)

FRIEDA

He only makes jokes when he's nervous -- otherwise, he's a miserable old bitch. Now usually when you quit a job, you're off on holiday. And when you drop some poor unsuspecting Joe -- sorry Joe -- you dash off on the hunt... yet here you are with me.

JOE

Bit of a bastard, is he?

FRIEDA

Sod off.

JOE

'Scuse me?

FRIEDA

I'm allowed, not you, off you go.

(Joe takes off.)

FRIEDA

So what's going on, Teddy?

(Riviere, angry, doesn't respond.)

FRIEDA

Why'd you drop him? You liked this one.

(Riviere shrugs.)

FRIEDA

There's that Gallic shrug again, acquired as camouflage on the battlefields of France, anybody gets a little too close and...

(She imitates his shrug.)

(Riviere slaps coins on the bar, heads out -- )

FRIEDA

Oh come on, I only asked why you --

RIVIERE

(covering with a lie)  
I felt trapped, haven't you ever felt trapped?

FRIEDA

Yes, I have felt trapped, I have been trapped.

RIVIERE

Oh right, sorry, Buchenwald trumps everything.

FRIEDA

What on earth has happened -- ?

RIVIERE

At least you were captured and sent there, you didn't have a choice -- you can look back and say, I never made a mistake, can't you.

FRIEDA

(quietly)

I don't think this is about me, Teddy. What's happened?

RIVIERE

You know I despise this kind of nonsense, I come in here for a tip of the elbow, and suddenly you want to know everything --

FRIEDA

Finish your drink, I'll cut the bad part off your cheese --

(He watches her do so, appalled.)

RIVIERE

Is this what we've come to George? This... this? We had such... I can't do it any more, I won't -- not any more.

(He opens the door to leave -- )

(And EDWARD, in uniform, walks through the door into a HOTEL ROOM in 1944, where SELSON, in a dark suit, stands.)

SELSON

Private Riviere? My name's Selson.

(Edward salutes him.)

SELSON

Oh my goodness no, no need for that.

EDWARD

I'm sorry sir, I thought --

(Selson offers his hand instead. Edward shakes it.)

SELSON

Please.

(He indicates a chair. Edward sits, nervous. Selson remains standing.)

SELSON

Riviere -- yet you look quite regular. English, I mean.

EDWARD

It's the uniform, fools them every time.

SELSON

I'm sorry, you're not English? Your file...

EDWARD

Oh yes, sir, I am... That was a joke -- to break the ice.

SELSON

Humor?

EDWARD

Not very good, apparently.

SELSON

(taking him in)  
Can you seem French, do you think?

EDWARD

Sorry...?

SELSON

Could you pass for French?

EDWARD

I did, for years. I mean, I was.

SELSON

I see here your mother was French, your father English.

EDWARD

Yes.

SELSON

And yet your surname is French...?

EDWARD

They weren't married. Soldier, actress, the Great War, an old story.

(nerves chattering him on)  
I didn't know my father --

SELSON

Pity.

EDWARD

On the other hand, I knew my mother quite well,  
which was an even greater pity.

SELSON

... That would be more humor?

EDWARD

Forgive me, sir, I'm a bit nervous --

SELSON

What have you been told about this?

EDWARD

Just that you're looking for people who know France,  
who speak French well -- as though they're natives.

SELSON

You were raised in France?

EDWARD

Yes.

SELSON

And came to England --

EDWARD

When I was getting too old to be my mother's son.  
She was a vain woman.

SELSON

Your French would be rather good, then.

EDWARD

Better than my English, I'm told.

SELSON

Are your parents still living?

EDWARD

I don't know.

SELSON

Have you any other family?

EDWARD

No.

SELSON

A fiancee?

EDWARD  
No.

SELSON  
Girlfriend?

EDWARD  
No.

SELSON  
Good-looking chap like you? In uniform? You probably have to fight them off.

(Edward, embarrassed, shakes his head, no.)

SELSON  
Are you warm?

EDWARD  
No sir.

SELSON  
You're flushed.

EDWARD  
I... the lift was out of order, I took the stairs. Just as well. Can't get used to the fast lifts these days.

SELSON  
Do you have a problem going down?

EDWARD  
(shocked)  
Sorry?

SELSON  
If going down is a problem...

(Edward just gapes at him.)

(Riviere, who has been watching this in his memory, interjects impatiently:)

RIVIERE  
He didn't mean it that way. God, you were so randy. But then I suppose the hotel room, the secrecy, the talking in code...  
(with a smile, sympathetic to Edward)  
You actually had to adjust yourself.

EDWARD

(squirming to adjust his crotch)  
Sir?

SELSON

Do you think going down -- jumping by parachute --  
might put you off?

EDWARD

Oh. No sir --

RIVIERE

An actor at an audition always agrees to  
everything... Although it was as if you were  
auditioning without knowing what the role was.

SELSON

If you were being followed by a man, what would you  
do?

EDWARD

Followed... by a man?

RIVIERE

Oh don't.

EDWARD

I'm not sure I know what you mean, sir.

SELSON

If you didn't know this man and wanted to find out  
who he was, what he wanted with you...?

EDWARD

Oh. I suppose I might... stop and look in a  
window -- watch the reflection, see if he passed by.

RIVIERE

You'd had a lot of experience with that, hadn't you.  
And you thought it would make you a brilliant spy.

SELSON

You've worked in quite a lot of different jobs...

EDWARD

Yes, my mother's circumstances -- I was on my own a  
lot.

SELSON

How do you do on your own?

(That hits Edward. And Riviere:)

EDWARD

I suppose I've been alone most of my life.

SELSON

Would you describe yourself as a loner?

EDWARD

No, I like people, I like being around people.

SELSON

(disappointed)

I see.

EDWARD

(quickly, seeing his disappointment)

I've just never been very good at it.

SELSON

Why not?

EDWARD

... I -- can't say.

SELSON

Forgive me for asking such personal questions.  
We're looking for a very particular kind of person.

EDWARD

Perhaps if you told me more about what --

SELSON

You've worked as an actor?

EDWARD

Yes.

SELSON

So you're experienced at playing roles?

EDWARD

Oh yes.

SELSON

Would you call yourself secretive?

EDWARD

... I...

SELSON

These qualities won't do for a soldier of course.  
But we think our kind of man might not make the best  
soldier.

EDWARD

Then I'm your man, sir.

(Selson studies him. Then rises:)

SELSON

We'll be in touch.

RIVIERE

I knew what that meant: no call back.

EDWARD

(forcing himself to be forthcoming)

Sir, the reason I'm not very good at being close with people -- I mean, I like people, I wish I could be -- it's just that I'm... different. More secretive, yes. I've always wanted to fit in, to belong, to be taken seriously. I don't know what you have going on here, but with all this hush-hush, it must be important. And that's what I want -- to do something important. This war, I don't want to spend it counting supplies, I want to do something that will make a difference, I want to be something greater than myself. The military men, they don't think much of me -- I'm not much of a fighter, I admit that. Loud noises make me jumpy, so gunfire -- well it's not really me. But if you want somebody who can keep a secret, that is me. If you want somebody who knows how to live on his own, by his wits, who can play a role... believe me, that's me in spades.

RIVIERE

(admiring Edward)

Just to jump into things that way...

SELSON

Thank you, Private Riviere.

(Edward, disappointed, nods and leaves.)

RIVIERE

You thought you'd failed. No, failure was to come later.

(taking the telegram out of his pocket)

If they'd rejected you none of this would have happened. You would have gone along, comfortably orbiting life from the outside, never touching down, never feeling what you're missing. And now you wouldn't be trying to fix a mistake you made thirty years ago...

(Riviere opens the door to his flat, but finds himself back in 1944 again, watching A MESS HALL -- really the dining room of a stately home.)

(He sees Edward sitting next to Frieda, now twenty, among other recruits. An old-school COLONEL addresses them:)

COLONEL

All of you will undergo commando training, followed by more specialized work in field-craft, map work, elementary morse, intelligence and code work, clandestine techniques and security --

EDWARD

(whispering to Frieda)  
Not quite the holiday I signed on for.

FRIEDA

(overwhelmed herself)  
I answered an advert for a bilingual secretary, I told my Dad I'd be back in time for tea.

EDWARD

(laughing; appreciating her)  
What's your name?

FRIEDA

Apparently all us wireless ops are to be called George, after the first one, whose name was actually George.

EDWARD

Odd name, Actually George. Most people refer to me as "Honestly, Edward".

FRIEDA

(laughs)  
My name's Frieda, really. I mean it's really Frieda. I mean --

(She laughs. He grins.)

EDWARD

I believe I can crack that code and on my first day, too -- you're Frieda.

(They shake hands.)

EDWARD

Lovely.

FRIEDA

Lovely to meet you too.

EDWARD

No I meant you're lovely, we must make sure you don't get blown to bits.

(Frieda lights up at his compliment, but he doesn't notice:)

COLONEL

Wireless ops will train in advanced morse -- agents will learn industrial sabotage, demolition --

EDWARD

Not my cuppa -- I thought we were going to pop in, toss them some guns and hop off to the sea-side...

(Frieda laughs.)

RIVIERE

Listen to him, you smart-ass, he might say something you need to know...

COLONEL

You will learn to live off the country with very meager resources --

EDWARD

Story of my life.

COLONEL

Most important, you must learn to look natural and ordinary while doing unnatural and extraordinary things -- organizing local partisans, arming them, disrupting German operations. As the proverb says, "He that has a secret should not only hide it, but hide that he has to hide it."

RIVIERE

Talk about the story of your life...

(In RIVIERE'S FLAT, 1975, Riviere looks away from the mess hall, shutting out the memory; the mess hall disappears.)

(He peers at himself in a mirror:)

RIVIERE

Speaking of meager resources -- well it's not so bad -- oh fuck who am I fooling -- look at that, the grey matter's leaking out.

(He plucks out a grey hair, then through the mirror, he sees Edward, Frieda and other recruits doing jumping jacks.)

FRIEDA  
Did you crack?

EDWARD  
Beg pardon?

FRIEDA  
The mock interrogation -- they really lay it on thick, don't they? I nearly slipped into English once... Middle of the night, all I had on was my nightie --

EDWARD  
Very sexy.

FRIEDA  
(pleased)  
Stop. They wake you?

EDWARD  
I was up studying codes. And I thought Shakespeare was difficult --

FRIEDA  
How'd you hold up?

EDWARD  
Didn't get anything out of me, I dream in French anyway.

FRIEDA  
Thought you said you were still awake.

EDWARD  
See what a good liar I am?

(They switch to push-ups. Edward stops exercising.)

FRIEDA  
Come on -- they'll see.

EDWARD  
Don't care, I refuse to bulk up.

FRIEDA  
You are such a baby, it's only push-ups.

EDWARD

You tell me what calisthenics have to do with intelligence.

FRIEDA

You don't want them to eliminate you --

EDWARD

They won't, I'm too valuable now. I've learned demolitions better than anybody else --

FRIEDA

(affectionately)

Even if you do stuff tissue in your ear during practice --

EDWARD

But I can set a charge more efficiently and precisely than anybody here. I may not be as manly, I may not be as good at sport, I'm not all ("manly"-voiced)  
"come on lads, let's have a pint and scratch ourselves like real men..."

FRIEDA

You don't have to be like that...

EDWARD

Exactly. I'll learn to make bombs and tip my soup bowl toward me as the French do, I'll memorize code and cipher and even jump from a bloody plane though you'll probably have to push me out, but I like my figure the way it is, thank you very much.

(Frieda pulls him back to the calisthenics:)

FRIEDA

Come on. I don't want to go to France without you.

(The recruits stop exercising, as a PARACHUTE INSTRUCTOR addresses them:)

PARACHUTE INSTRUCTOR

You'll be jumping out a hole in the floor of a Halifax...

EDWARD

Oh yes, lovely --

FRIEDA

Shh!

## PARACHUTE INSTRUCTOR

It will be night and many of you will be jumping blind -- there'll be no reception committee to greet you, no lights, no fires, you'll be entirely on your own. It is vital for your own safety and the security of your circuit that you bury your parachute immediately.

(As the class disperses:)

## RIVIERE

They tried to cover every eventuality -- they even warned you not to engage in "liaisons". No, what happened was your fault, your own mess, nobody else's.

## EDWARD

Full moon, final preparations: make sure there's nothing that can identify you as English. Cover story: their first suggestion is farmer. I mean, really. Then gentleman farmer. Getting warmer. Finally, we settle on travelling salesman. I played one in a terrible musical once -- now I have the chance to get it right...

(Frieda joins Edward, bringing on their clothes for France. As they change:)

## RIVIERE

New old clothes were made for you -- French fabrics, French thread, French money, French tobacco, even French dirt in your cuffs...

(Selson shakes their hands.)

## RIVIERE

Farewell at the aerodrome. Try to forget that they place the odds of your return at two-to-one -- and if that's what they're saying, you can bet that's optimistic. No fear, though, none at all, just the thrill of it. Fool.

(Selson leaves.)

## RIVIERE

And then we were off. Climbing, climbing. Below, England got smaller and smaller. George sitting across from you. The hole in the floor, waiting for us. It felt safe, the way being in the womb must have felt -- if you had a mother who wanted you. Then it got bumpy over the coast of France, with the anti-aircraft flack coming up at us...

(more)

RIVIERE (cont'd)

Looking out, you could see it, like shooting stars, only a whole field of them and they were below you coming up, instead of above, it was an upside-down world. Never afraid, neither was George... She looked like an ordinary French girl. And me, with my French clothes and French dust. My new identity. And then, past the coastline, it gets silky. Gliding through the night, like dreams you had when you were a child and everything was possible. The full moon reflecting in the rivers below, the pilot following them as if they're roads lit bright to welcome us. And then the light above you flashes red -- Get ready. Check your parachute one last time, make sure the static line is secure, check the parachute with the canister, the canister with George's wireless transmitter -- would be worse to break that than to break yourself. Right, ready. George, her eyes shining as she looks down into the reflected moonlight, the river of light in her eyes. Green light and she jumps...

(Frieda jumps and then disappears.)

RIVIERE

Everything perfect. Shove out the canister, perfect. Red again. Red light, green light, that game children play. Wait for it. Then green for me --

EDWARD

-- For Thierry Alfont, travelling salesman and freedom fighter!

(Edward jumps.)

RIVIERE

And then down through the hole -- being born, born into a new life. A life where you can be the person you want to be. The script you've written. My new life rushing up to greet me...

(Edward lands, badly.)

RIVIERE

And then straight away -- improvisation!

(Edward gets up, limping, collects his parachute.)

RIVIERE

A twisted ankle --

Wonderful!

EDWARD

Pain --

RIVIERE

Life!

EDWARD

(Edward takes a spade out of his backpack and buries his parachute, as he peers around for Frieda:)

RIVIERE

Bury the parachute. Where's George? The canister with the wireless? Can't find them... the wind must have carried them in another direction. But this is what you've been chosen for and trained for: taking care of yourself.

(Dogs bark.)

EDWARD

(thrilled)

Danger!

RIVIERE

Hide until morning, then hobble into town. People on the street, your new "countrymen" --

EDWARD

My audience!

RIVIERE

It's a wonder you lived five minutes. Go to see your local contact -- Dr. Dupont at 8 rue Chabot.

(Edward knocks on a door. A FRENCH WOMAN opens it.)

FRENCH WOMAN

Yes?

EDWARD

May I see the doctor?

FRENCH WOMAN

You have an appointment?

EDWARD

Your roses are beautiful --

RIVIERE

The code -- as though you were in a spy movie, you were so excited --

FRENCH WOMAN

(quickly closing the door)  
It's the wrong time of the year for roses.

EDWARD

Wait -- he's expecting me!

FRENCH WOMAN

(hissing)  
Things have changed.

(And she slams the door shut.)

RIVIERE

No local contact, no ration card, no coupons, your wireless operator and the wireless are missing --

EDWARD

(exhilarated)  
I need a drink.

(A CAFE appears. Edward limps in, goes to the BARMAN:)

BARMAN

Yes?

EDWARD

Coffee with cognac, please.

(Patrons turn to look at him. The Barman gives him the once-over:)

BARMAN

It's our day without.

EDWARD

Pardon?

BARMAN

It's our day without.

EDWARD

Of course, stupid of me. Just cognac.

BARMAN

It's our day without cognac.

EDWARD

Yes, I meant, just without cognac.

(The Barman pours him a coffee. Edward grins sheepishly at the other patrons who are looking at him suspiciously:)

EDWARD

All these regulations -- disgusting, huh?

(The others regard him stonily.)

RIVIERE

You were a stranger, you could have been friend or foe.

(GERHARD and HANS, German soldiers in their twenties, come in. Their uniforms are dirty, they are exhausted. Hans, who is missing an arm, strides to the bar; Gerhard follows, limping badly.)

HANS

Two cognacs.

RIVIERE

A godsend -- two men even more conspicuous than you. Get the hell out!

(But Edward stays, unable to tear his eyes away from the Germans:)

EDWARD

Everything's been in black-and-white, my whole life, but now... The swastikas on their uniforms are blood red, the silent anger on the cheeks of the Frenchmen is hot pink, the mud caked to their boots, muck green -- the Germans' eyes, ice blue...

RIVIERE

(gazing at Gerhard)  
No -- Delft blue.

BARMAN

No cognac.

HANS

You really want to fuck with two soldiers on leave from the Russian front?

BARMAN

I'm sorry -- regulations --

HANS

We've been travelling for weeks, we're tired, my friend is hurt --

BARMAN

They're your regulations.

(Hans takes out his revolver.)

(The Barman pours two glasses. Hans holsters his revolver, hands one drink to Gerhard, toasts him:)

HANS

Welcome to France.

(Riviere turns away from the memory and the cafe disappears.)

(He spots his unmade bed in his flat.)

RIVIERE

Can't have this mess. Tonight of all nights.

(As he starts to make the bed, another bed appears in his memory...)

(It's the only piece of furniture in A ROOM IN A BROTHEL. We hear drunken laughter outside. MADELEINE, a prostitute, twenties, leads in Edward, who is exhausted and anxious.)

(Madeleine caresses his crotch. Edward pulls back.)

EDWARD

I was hoping -- I have something in the order of a special request.

MADELEINE

I don't kiss.

EDWARD

... Fine.

MADELEINE

Otherwise, everything is possible.

EDWARD

It's a little unusual --

MADELEINE

Now you're talking.

EDWARD

The thing is... I'm really tired.

MADELEINE

Oh you poor baby. Sit on the bed...

(She guides him back onto the rumpled bed, then kneels in front of him and starts to unbutton his trousers. He rises, pushing her away.)

MADELEINE

What would make you happy?

EDWARD

I think I can make us both happy...

MADELEINE

Tell Madeleine.

EDWARD

I'd like to sleep -- just sleep.

(Madeleine gets up, marches to the door and opens it for him to leave. He follows her, closes it.)

EDWARD

I'll pay for the whole night --

MADELEINE

What do you think I am, your wife? I don't sleep with customers.

EDWARD

Actually that's preferable.

MADELEINE

What...?

EDWARD

I have no place else to stay.

MADELEINE

(suspicious)

The hotel would be less expensive...

EDWARD

There's someone there I'd rather not see.

MADELEINE

(opening the door)

I can't afford to get in trouble.

EDWARD

(closing the door)  
You won't.

(She tries to open the door, but he holds it shut. She struggles to open it:)

MADELEINE

I'll scream --

EDWARD

(quickly, winging it:)  
Don't you wonder why I chose you? Of all the girls?

(She stops struggling, intrigued.)

EDWARD

You remind me --

MADELEINE

Here it comes -- your girlfriend?

EDWARD

(running with that; playing fey)  
Girlfriend -- me?

MADELEINE

(surprised)  
Huh. I -- don't take this wrong, but I'm not really your type, am I?

EDWARD

If you were, darling, you'd be paying me.

(She chuckles at that. Which is what he was hoping for. He lets her go.)

MADELEINE

So who is this I remind you of?

EDWARD

My mother.

MADELEINE

Your mother was a prostitute?

EDWARD

Actress, same thing.

(She laughs. Relieved, he laughs, too.)

RIVIERE

Just the way a travelling salesman would handle it.

EDWARD

I'll make it worth your while -- and you can go away and make more money with someone else. Just think -- one for the price of two.

MADELEINE

(ordering him)  
No trouble.

EDWARD

Promise.

MADELEINE

Because I can get you thrown out of here like that.

EDWARD

All I want to do is sleep.

MADELEINE

Two hundred francs.

EDWARD

What? That's --

MADELEINE

Two hundred.

(Edward sighs, hands her some bills.)

MADELEINE

And no stealing business from me!

(She goes out, closing the door behind her. Edward lets down the performance, wiped out, collapses on the bed. Men can be heard laughing and singing drunkenly in German.)

(Riviere watches Edward as he goes to sleep:)

RIVIERE

There must have been a moment when I could have done something different -- when I could have stopped it from happening, stopped myself...

(then, urgently, to Edward:)

Leave now, before --

(The door opens and a man in a German uniform stumbles in. Drunk. Edward, instantly awake, jumps up, pulling back into the shadows. The German doesn't see him, limps toward the bed -- it's Gerhard.)

EDWARD

Pardon me --

(Surprised, Gerhard turns sharply to him, falling to the ground with a grunt of pain. He scrambles up, fumbles out his revolver:)

EDWARD

(hands up)  
No! I'm not armed -- it's all right, it's all right --

GERHARD

What are you doing here?

EDWARD

The girl -- we finished and...

RIVIERE

It began with a lie -- how else could it have ended?

EDWARD

She said I could sleep here -- for the night...

GERHARD

She said the same thing to me.

EDWARD

(laughs nervously)  
She's very enterprising.

GERHARD

(laughs nervously)  
Yes.

EDWARD

Well...

(Edward limps toward the door. Gerhard pockets his revolver:)

GERHARD

(desperate to connect with someone, anyone)  
What happened to your leg?

EDWARD

Fell off a ladder picking fruit.

RIVIERE

Cover story now completely exploded: picking fruit off ladders is such a natural behavior for travelling salesmen.

GERHARD

Yours will heal, then.

EDWARD

Yes.

RIVIERE

Get out now before --

GERHARD

They say I'll probably limp the rest of my life.  
Something to remember our glorious victory -- if I  
live through it.

(quickly covering the nakedness of that:)  
I'm lucky, they almost had to cut it off.

EDWARD

(at the door; what to say?)  
... Really?

GERHARD

Russian bullet. They had to cut off Hans' arm --  
the Lieutenant. He says it still feels as if his  
hand is there -- he goes to scratch it and it's gone.

EDWARD

He's lucky it wasn't his cock.

(Gerhard, surprised, chuckles -- which  
is what Edward was hoping for.)

RIVIERE

You got a laugh, now leave! Go. Why don't you go?!

(They hear a man and a woman enter the  
room next door, laughing lewdly. It  
tortures Gerhard:)

GERHARD

And this is what they --  
(catching himself, forcing a manly laugh)  
The girls are happy for the new business.  
(trying to tamp down his desperation)  
You know, I don't understand you French...

RIVIERE

So he believed your performance, is that why you  
stayed? Vanity?

GERHARD

The Russians -- they fight for every inch of their  
country, but you French, you let us walk in and take  
it... Maybe you know something the Russians don't,  
get it over with quickly --

(The couple next door starts getting it on. It infuriates Gerhard; he explodes:)

GERHARD

Pigs! They're such pigs!  
 (taking a drink from a flask)  
 Women shouldn't be treated like that --  
 (sees Edward looking at him with surprise)  
 Yes, French women too, you think I'm a monster?  
 Honor! That's what -- there's no honor any more, no honor anywhere...

(He offers Edward a drink from his flask. Edward shakes his head, no.)

EDWARD

Thanks but I should get --

GERHARD

Too good for German schnapps?  
 (takes another slug)  
 You think I want to be here? I have a fiancee at home, my family -- and here I am in France, beautiful France for rest and recuperation. Everybody cursing you behind your back -- if they're pleasant to you, it's because they're afraid of you.

EDWARD

What did you expect?

GERHARD

Aren't you afraid of me?

EDWARD

... No.

GERHARD

(pleased)  
 Then have a drink! A drink between enemies, to pass the time. No? Don't know what you're drinking -- missing. Wish we'd had this at the front -- would've made it easier to sleep through all the lice and mud and...

(another drink, desperate to smother the loneliness that's welling up)  
 When men die, soldiers, they don't cry for their leader or their country, they cry for help -- their mother, someone they love... And then the ones who survive can't talk to each other about it.

(extends the flask to Edward once again:)  
 Come on, you won't catch being German from me.

(Edward, intrigued despite himself,  
takes the flask.)

RIVIERE

His pain was so beautiful...

GERHARD

Your farm, tell me about your farm.

EDWARD

(surprised)  
What...?

GERHARD

Go on, tell me -- you were picking fruit -- or do  
you work for somebody else?

EDWARD

No, it's my family's farm.

RIVIERE

-- the danger of improvisation was intoxicating --

GERHARD

What? Apples?

RIVIERE

-- and he was so grateful to you for distracting  
him --

EDWARD

Apples, figs, olives -- we also have cows and milk  
and things.

GERHARD

"We"? Married?

RIVIERE

At least stick to the tatters that are left of your  
cover story -- it's easier to remember the lies that  
way.

EDWARD

No.

GERHARD

Fiancee?

(Edward shrugs, no.)

GERHARD

Why not? You've been unhappy in love --?  
(recognizing something -- in himself, too:)  
You've never been in love.

EDWARD

(transfixed, the truth:)

No.

(Gerhard hands him the flask. Edward takes a drink, hands it back.)

GERHARD

What's it like? Your farm.

RIVIERE

The mistake earlier was giving too much detail: you should have simply said, "I fell" -- not, "I fell off a ladder picking fruit." Now you have to invent more fiction to sustain the lie.

EDWARD

Well, it's not much. But in the spring, when the trees are in bloom and the clouds roll across the fields and the bees are buzzing --

GERHARD

Bees in the spring? You mean summer.

EDWARD

Right.

(hurrying past that flub:)

Cherries, there's a cherry orchard, or we used to have one, we had to sell it --

RIVIERE

Oh god, now you're stealing from Chekhov!

GERHARD

My aunt and uncle had a farm in the country -- my father wouldn't let us go there, he said it had taken his whole life to get off the farm, we weren't peasants any more. The kids at school called my sister and me country bumpkins. I didn't even know what that was -- just knew it was an insult. It became forbidden fruit: The Farm. So one day we played hookey from school, my sister and I, we took the train out to my uncle's farm. The smells! The air, so soft, the quiet so quiet, just the bees... We milked a cow -- we didn't have a clue, our cousins made fun of us, but it was wonderful. Drank milk right from the pail... It tasted like something I remembered, but never had. Guess I was born a bumpkin, even though I'd never been to the country, even though I'd lived in the city my entire life. That's who I was -- despite all my father's efforts to cover it up, that's who I was.

(more)

GERHARD (cont'd)

The thing the other kids accused us of being, was something I liked.

(then:)

When we got home, my father -- well I had to tell him the truth. I expected to get beaten, and it would have been worth it -- except my sister got in trouble, too. That was awful.

EDWARD

Was going to the farm your idea or hers?

RIVIERE

Why do you care?! Leave!

GERHARD

It doesn't matter whose fault it was, I should have taken care of her, she was my responsibility.

(The moans from next door reach their climax. It pulls Gerhard back to the present, disgusting him:)

GERHARD

Rest and recuperation...!

(He downs another slug from the bottle, hands it to Edward:)

GERHARD

How was she?

EDWARD

Who...?

GERHARD

The girl.

EDWARD

Oh...

(taking a manly draw from the bottle)

Well, you know.

GERHARD

(takes the flask back, drinks again:)

No. I lied, I didn't make love to her. What's the point? With somebody who only does it because you pay them? Or because they're scared of you?

(More coming and going and sex is heard from other rooms...)

EDWARD

You haven't had a woman since you left home?

GERHARD  
 No. How was she?

EDWARD  
 Does it matter?

GERHARD  
 (realizing)  
 You didn't make love to her either --

EDWARD  
 Of course I did --

GERHARD  
 Then how was she?

EDWARD  
 Great!

GERHARD  
 (laughing; happy to find a kindred spirit)  
 You didn't do it.

EDWARD  
 Yes I did --

GERHARD  
 No you didn't --

EDWARD  
 Yes I did...

(They hear more fucking from other rooms, men orgasming in German:)

GERHARD  
 Pigs! And they take us here instead of home --!  
 (throws the flask against the wall the moans are coming from)  
 They don't want people to see how many of us have been maimed, killed, they don't want them to know what's happening to us!

(He slips and falls on the floor, moaning in pain. Without even thinking about it, Edward goes to help him. Gerhard tries to stand.)

EDWARD  
 You shouldn't stand -- your leg --

GERHARD  
 (in a panic)  
 I have to, I have to get up...

(Edward helps Gerhard stand.)

EDWARD

Don't put any weight on it --

(Limping on his own sprained ankle, Edward helps Gerhard limp to the bed. They both collapse onto it. Edward can't help but laugh nervously:)

EDWARD

It's like a three-legged race...

(Gerhard laughs, too. Then, as Edward starts to disengage himself, Gerhard -- shivering, shaking -- suddenly grabs Edward and kisses him on the lips.)

(Shocked, not knowing what to do, Edward starts to pull back, but Gerhard hangs on to him.)

(Edward -- torn, excited, drawn to Gerhard despite himself -- freezes. Then reciprocates...)

RIVIERE

Was it my fault? Was I so transparent?

(The lights start to brighten in the brothel. Dawn is approaching.)

(Edward gets up from the bed, where Gerhard lies still, and starts to pull on his clothes...)

GERHARD

When we were in Lodz --

(Edward turns sharply to Gerhard -- is he awake?)

GERHARD

-- we had already killed forty, fifty infantry-men, they just kept coming. That's how the Russians operate, they just keep coming at you, wave after wave of them, like ants, streaming over their dead brothers, marching on top of them, pushing them down into the mud. We broke through their line, plowing them down with machine guns... Then, up ahead, this armored tank was coming at us -- the only thing that could drive through that mud. I grabbed the anti-tank gun, fired fast. Hit it dead on.

(more)

GERHARD (cont'd)

Explosion, fire, smoke everywhere. Cheers from the men. We moved carefully, slowly toward the tank, our guns drawn... and through the smoke, you could see this Russian hanging out of the hatch, his feet caught, and he was hanging upside-down, and his legs were burning from his feet down to his knees. Down to his knees. He was upside-down -- and he was alive, screaming. No way to free him. Even if you could... a few hours of pain, torturous pain, then death anyway. So I shot him -- the others cheered me... I thought it was raining -- but the wet was only on my face. I couldn't let them see I was crying for a dead Russian. A dead Russian I murdered.

(The morning light finally reveals that tears are rolling down his face. Edward looks at him for a long moment. Then goes to him and wipes Gerhard's tears with his hand.)

GERHARD

I don't know your name.

(Edward hesitates. Then tells him:)

EDWARD

Thierry.

(The brothel and Gerhard disappear.)

(The CAFE appears; Edward goes in, heads for the Barman; it is morning.)

RIVIERE

What were you thinking...?

EDWARD

Coffee with cognac.

RIVIERE

You weren't thinking, that was the problem --

BARMAN

Your lucky day.

RIVIERE

What a moment in your life to start feeling.

(Edward downs the coffee and cognac, motions for another one:)

EDWARD

This time skip the coffee.

RIVIERE

But you shut it off. Told yourself you hadn't put the mission at risk -- no reason you ever had to see him again. Besides, he was just as scared as you -- more. You could put this behind you and still do the right thing. The right thing...

(Frieda comes in, carrying a suitcase. Edward sees her, is relieved, but acts casual for the Barman:)

EDWARD

One more, please.

(Frieda sits at a table. Edward brings the coffees to the table, kisses her casually on both cheeks. They speak quietly, hiding their anxiety:)

EDWARD

Morning.

FRIEDA

Good morning.

EDWARD

You all right?

FRIEDA

I couldn't find you...

EDWARD

Got everything?

(Frieda nods, glances at her suitcase.)

(He picks up the suitcase and they head out, bumping into Madeleine who's on her way in:)

MADELEINE

Well hello.

EDWARD

(covering his terror)  
Hello.

MADELEINE

(enjoying putting him on the spot)  
Sleep well?

EDWARD

Thank you, yes.

(Madeleine and Frieda exchange looks.  
Madeline smirks, heads to the bar.)

(Edward takes Frieda's arm and they  
leave. As they walk:)

FRIEDA

What was that?

EDWARD

They warned us about avoiding hotels until we know  
the lay of the land, brothels don't make you fill  
out identity cards -- it was the safest place I  
could think of.

(changing the subject)

Where'd you spend the night?

FRIEDA

In the next village -- I found Bernard.

EDWARD

You know we're not supposed to contact agents from  
other circuits --

FRIEDA

Nobody followed me back, I'm sure of it -- besides  
Bernard gave me new coupons and ration cards, ours  
aren't good any more.

EDWARD

All I'm saying is we have to be careful --

FRIEDA

Look who's talking.

EDWARD

I slept in a brothel, that's all --

(A couple of people pass by. Frieda  
slips her arm through Edward's as if  
they are a couple. After the others  
pass:)

FRIEDA

They didn't really prepare us for this, did they?  
How it would feel to make things up as you go along.  
Is it dreadful to be excited, do you think?

EDWARD

Probably.

(then)

It's good you found Bernard. Resourceful.

FRIEDA

Why are you limping?

EDWARD

Bad landing, twisted my ankle. How's Bernard doing?

FRIEDA

Incredible -- he's got a whole circuit put together.

EDWARD

Our contact wouldn't see me -- probably been burned. You should tell London straight away -- what's your transmission schedule?

FRIEDA

Tonight at seven-forty-five, I've got a place.

EDWARD

That was fast.

FRIEDA

A farm. Bernard vetted the farmer, says he and his wife are true patriots -- dying to do what they can.

EDWARD

But are they part of Bernard's circuit?

FRIEDA

No, Bernard's got all the people than he can safely use right now.

EDWARD

But the farmer's still connected to Bernard -- if something goes wrong it could infect two circuits --

FRIEDA

Our contact's out of the picture, how else are we going to start a circuit of our own?

EDWARD

Guess we'll have to take the risk for the time being -- it's not strictly up to form but...

(shrugs in a French way, what-can-you-do)

FRIEDA

You're shrugging like a Frenchman -- playing the role already.

RIVIERE

Playing the role... but which one? Do you even remember who you told which lies?

(A BARN appears; it is night. Frieda, carrying her suitcase, and Edward come in, followed by FRANCOIS and SIMONE.)

FRIEDA

This will do nicely.

SIMONE

I'll get you both some blankets...

EDWARD

I won't be staying.

SIMONE

But where will you sleep?

FRANCOIS

Security, Simone. Get the girl a blanket.

FRIEDA

Thank you so much for dinner -- that was a real farmer's meal --

EDWARD

We haven't seen two eggs together in a long time.

SIMONE

Deliver those arms and I'll stuff you like hogs.

(Simone leaves.)

FRANCOIS

When do you want to meet my brother?

EDWARD

The day after tomorrow, seven, at the cafe. Just him, Francois, you mustn't bring anybody else, we have to build this circuit slowly, with absolute security. And nobody must talk about this, no loose talk -- I mean it, I won't have it.

FRANCOIS

I never talk, monsieur. It's a constant complaint of my wife.

(Francois leaves.)

FRIEDA

Think they'll be all right?

EDWARD

That bad hand of his? Got it fighting the Germans in the Great War -- he's the real thing. I'm off.

FRIEDA

You're not going back to the brothel?  
(off his look)  
Patterns, we have to avoid patterns.

EDWARD

I'm not going back to the brothel.

FRIEDA

Where will you stay?

EDWARD

It's bad enough I know where you are. You should move as soon as you can -- from now on, don't tell me where you are. We'll establish a letter-drop next time I see you.

FRIEDA

Which will be...?

EDWARD

At the chemist's shop, noon Thursday.

(He leaves the barn; it disappears.)

RIVIERE

Lecturing her about security -- after what you'd done. And what you were about to do...

(A RESTAURANT appears; it is night.  
Edward sits at a table, eating dinner.  
JEAN sits at the next table. The OWNER  
brings Jean his dinner:)

OWNER

Your coupons, Jean?

JEAN

It's meat from my own shop.

OWNER

You still need coupons, you know that.

JEAN

(giving him the coupon book)  
Outrageous...  
(to Edward)  
Don't you think this is outrageous?

OWNER

What's outrageous is we have to go through this every single night.

JEAN

If you were a true patriot, you'd take a stand --

OWNER

And if you were a true patriot, you'd sell meat with more fat on it.

(Other customers chuckle -- but stop when Hans and Gerhard come in and sit.)

(Gerhard and Edward catch each other's eye, then look away nervously.)

OWNER

What can I get you?

HANS

(sniffing the air distastefully)  
Have anything without garlic?

JEAN

(under his breath, to Edward)  
Wine.

OWNER

I can make you whatever you want. I'll need coupons of course...

HANS

You hear that Gerhard? Whatever we want. How about some sauerbraten?

OWNER

Pardon me, I meant whatever you want that's on the menu -- without garlic.

HANS

You should say what you mean -- that's the problem with you French, you're always being devious.

GERHARD

We'll have the pork, and some wine, please.

OWNER

Yes of course...

JEAN

(imitating the Patron's obsequiousness)  
A very good choice.

(The Owner glares at Jean on his way to the kitchen. Jean calls to after him:)

JEAN

And more wine for me -- where are you going? I have the proper coupons, I have papers for everything! For eating and drinking, shitting, fucking --

OWNER

Even a coupon couldn't buy you that.

RIVIERE

You got through seeing him in public and you thought, I can handle this, I can handle anything...

(The setting changes to A STREET, some time later, as Edward and Jean are engaged in secret conversation.)

RIVIERE

You even thought you could take the biggest blowhard in town as your first recruit, that you could turn him into a first-class resistance fighter...

(They shake hands. Jean leaves.)

RIVIERE

Oddly enough, about that you were right.

(Edward continues walking, becomes aware of somebody following him. Edward stops, looks in a shop window --)

(Gerhard suddenly appears, surprising Edward, hustling him into a dark corner where he punches him a couple of times and then holds him in a body lock:)

GERHARD

You put him up to it, didn't you?

EDWARD

What -- ?

GERHARD

The man you were just with, you got him to make a scene in the restaurant --

EDWARD

No --

GERHARD

Don't lie! What're you up to?

EDWARD

Nothing, I swear -- !

GERHARD

That prostitute, you're in it together --

EDWARD

No -- !

GERHARD

Keep your voice down!

EDWARD

How could she have known you were coming to the brothel?

GERHARD

What're you trying to do to me?!

EDWARD

Nothing! Gerhard --

GERHARD

Don't say my name! You don't know my name!

EDWARD

(flashing back, angry)

You think it's better for me? I slept with a German -- I'm not going to shout that from the rooftops!

(Gerhard deflates, releases him.)

GERHARD

We shouldn't have, we shouldn't have, it's a sin --

EDWARD

(pulling himself together)

Is that all that's worrying you.

GERHARD

What--?! what is that, a joke?

EDWARD

If that's all that's bothering you, why'd you hunt me down?

GERHARD

To get you to stop --

EDWARD

Stop what? I haven't done anything, you're the one making the moves.

GERHARD  
Stop it!

RIVIERE  
Stop!

GERHARD  
I've never done anything like this in my life...  
what are we going to do, what're we going to do?

EDWARD  
Nothing, we never see each other again, we forget it.

GERHARD  
I can't! I can't forget it, I feel like they can  
see it all over me --

EDWARD  
(knows what that feels like)  
Don't worry, that makes it worse -- understand?

(Gerhard nods, broken.)

EDWARD  
All right, listen, I'm going out that way. After a  
minute, you come out and go the other --

GERHARD  
(blurting out)  
I don't want to forget it!

GERHARD	EDWARD
It's the only time since I	You must -- you have to
left home I felt --	forget it --

(They hear footsteps --)

EDWARD  
Shit...

(They draw into a corner in the shadows  
and freeze, huddled against each other,  
face to face, eye to eye. As the  
footsteps start to pass, Gerhard grabs  
Edward's head and kisses him...)

(Edward resists, and, after the  
footsteps pass, he pushes Gerhard back:)

EDWARD  
Stop!

GERHARD  
You don't want to stop.

(He kisses Edward again...)

RIVIERE

He saw right through you. You told yourself it was just sex...

(The setting changes: Edward and Gerhard lie in A FIELD, later that night:)

GERHARD

The lake is so still.

RIVIERE

...but afterwards, in the field you found together that night, you saw every blade of grass even though there was no moonlight, you heard the air even though there was no wind, the diesel fumes from the road smelled sweet, and the mud, the mud on your hands felt like cream...

GERHARD

I've never felt like this. So close, sharing a secret... I know nothing about you -- except what I feel...

EDWARD

But that's the real truth, the rest is just stories.

RIVIERE

A convenient interpretation of "the real truth"...

EDWARD

We should go...

GERHARD

"I say to this night: 'Pass more slowly', and dawn will soon dissolve the night."

(Edward looks at him, mystified.)

GERHARD

Lemartine.

(surprised Edward doesn't know it)

"The Lake" by Alphonse de Lemartine? He's my favorite poet -- French. You don't know him?

EDWARD

I'm tone-deaf when it comes to poetry.

GERHARD

And here we are by a lake -- his lake, perhaps.

RIVIERE

Lake or no lake, you had a mission...

GERHARD

"Mankind has no harbor, time has no shore; it flows and we pass on." If he was German, he'd have triumphed over time, no "passing on" for us.

(Edward collects himself to leave.  
Gerhard doesn't want him to go:)

GERHARD

Have we done terrible things to your family?

EDWARD

"We"?

GERHARD

My country.

EDWARD

Well. You weren't there, not you personally --

GERHARD

No, I am my country. I thought they did a great job, the Party. Before them, Germany was such a mess -- at school, I knew boys who wore rags, had nothing to eat because their fathers couldn't find work. The Party got people jobs, it was safe to walk the streets at night, I could go to concerts and theatre -- it made me proud to be German... Everyone wants to be proud of who they are.

(confused)

I was raised to believe in discipline, discipline works --

EDWARD

Oh yes, of course it works -- you're here with me after swearing you'd never --

GERHARD

(admiring as much as upset)  
How can you joke about this?

EDWARD

That's my way.

GERHARD

We never joked at home.

(Gerhard takes a couple of photos out,  
shows them to Edward:)

GERHARD

My parents --

EDWARD

They don't look like jokers.

My sister... GERHARD

She's sweet. EDWARD

Don't get any ideas. GERHARD

(surprised, laughs)  
See -- you can joke too. EDWARD

(Gerhard grins, also surprised by himself.)

If they could hear me now -- GERHARD

If they could see you now. EDWARD

(Gerhard laughs. Looks at the photos:)

They're so ragged. Every night at the front, I'd fall asleep holding them -- I'd wake up an hour later and they'd be clenched in my hands... GERHARD

(He puts the photos back in his pocket.)

What about you? Your family? GERHARD

(Edward takes out some photos:)

My parents -- EDWARD

Fakes. RIVIERE

Dead. EDWARD

A lie. RIVIERE

You must miss them. GERHARD

EDWARD  
Very much.

RIVIERE  
Gigantic lie.

GERHARD  
This is your girlfriend?

EDWARD  
Sister.

RIVIERE  
All lies, nothing but lies.

EDWARD  
I'm not the same as you, I'm not interested in women  
that way --

RIVIERE  
Finally the truth!

(A plane drones overhead. They tense.)

EDWARD  
We have to get out of here.

GERHARD  
When can I see you again?

EDWARD  
Gerhard. We can't...

GERHARD  
I've never done this before --

EDWARD  
You have to stop saying that --

GERHARD  
-- but I know this isn't only sex. I felt  
something... You felt it too, I saw you feel it.

EDWARD  
That's how really good sex feels.

GERHARD  
When we're -- you know -- you don't close your eyes.  
I see you seeing me and I know -- you feel it too.

EDWARD  
We don't know anything about each other --

GERHARD

I'm not stupid, I know it's dangerous... But last night, when we were together, for the first time since I left home, I slept through the whole night.

EDWARD

I have to go.

(Gerhard grabs his hand:)

GERHARD

I'll be here, in this field, by this lake, right here, tomorrow night. If you don't come, I won't bother you again.

(Edward leaves.)

(Gerhard waits as the light changes from night to day and back again.)

(Riviere watches anxiously, silent for once, waiting...)

(And then Edward returns to Gerhard.)

RIVIERE

Gerhard... You were the last person I should have loved. Inexcusable, indefensible. Maybe that's why I did -- because you were the most forbidden lover imaginable. Or maybe because you were proof that I was giving a great performance -- you were the good notice, the hit review. Maybe you just turned me on... Or maybe your incompleteness completed me -- maybe we found each other because we'd spent our lives hiding from ourselves.

(Edward and Frieda walk; it is day.)

FRIEDA

I have to wire London tomorrow the location for the drop.

EDWARD

How many canisters?

FRIEDA

Five.

EDWARD

Two people to carry each canister -- there's Francois, his brother, Jean the butcher, me -- that means two trips to wherever we hide them.

FRIEDA

The pasture up from Francois and Simone's farm? We can hide the canisters in their barn, it's an easy walk --

EDWARD

We may want to save it for bigger shipments -- we don't want to use it up if something goes wrong. There's an open field down by the lake, it's protected from the road by a grove of trees, nobody goes there --

FRIEDA

Storage nearby?

EDWARD

An empty shed on the other side of it.

FRIEDA

Sounds good.

EDWARD

I'll leave a note tomorrow morning in the letter-drop. A, we use Francois' barn, B the field by the lake.

FRIEDA

Right.

(then)

You have a safe place to stay?

EDWARD

It's best if you don't know. How're you holding up?

FRIEDA

All right. Good actually.

EDWARD

Any lovely Frenchmen sniffing around?

FRIEDA

That's strictly off-form, strictly, you know that --

EDWARD

Right.

FRIEDA

(getting suspicious and worried)

With good reason too --

EDWARD

Of course --

FRIEDA

Impairment of judgement --

RIVIERE

Impairment of judgement...

FRIEDA

They almost didn't choose me because of my family, you know -- I've been taking care of everyone since Mum died -- they thought that could influence me to make the wrong choice in a crisis.

EDWARD

I can't imagine you making the wrong choice ever.

FRIEDA

I do see their point. If you love somebody... you might want to protect them. The emotion, it makes you vulnerable -- and dangerous.

(She's talking about the way she feels about him; he doesn't get that.)

EDWARD

Well we don't have to worry about that, do we.

RIVIERE

But you knew she was right -- you had been living in a dream-world, thinking you could control it -- believing you could control your feelings. And so you decided to break it off before it got any worse...

(Gerhard leads Edward into a DESERTED FARMHOUSE; it is night.)

EDWARD

(very troubled)

This is your surprise? I can't stay here...

GERHARD

It's safe, it's deserted.

EDWARD

It's not "deserted" -- the Jews who lived here were were arrested and taken away.

GERHARD

That's what I said.

EDWARD

No, you said "deserted" as if they went on their own.

GERHARD

You knew them?

EDWARD

Do I have to know them?

GERHARD

(holding out a precious gift)

I brought some meat, I know you don't get much --  
And look...

(he pulls a sheet off a bed)

We can actually sleep in a bed together all night --  
like our first night --

EDWARD

In the brothel.

GERHARD

Like --

EDWARD

Like we're married?

(Gerhard goes silent. Slices the ham.)

EDWARD

Where'd you get that ham?

GERHARD

I bought it from a peasant who comes around the --

EDWARD

From a collaborator.

GERHARD

(flaring)

Like you, is that what you mean? You think you're  
the only person who feels anything? You're screwing  
a German, how horrible. What do you know of  
Germany? Have you read Thomas Mann? Have you  
listened to Mahler and Mendhelsson?

EDWARD

Both Jews.

GERHARD

German Jews!

EDWARD

You know Jews, too, naturally.

GERHARD

Of course --

EDWARD

How many?

GERHARD

I don't know, I don't count --

EDWARD

You don't count but you pause in your "friendships" long enough to notice that they're Jews?

GERHARD

I don't hate Jews --

EDWARD

Of course not, you love them -- not just their music, their culture, their merchandise, but them, as people?

GERHARD

I'm not fighting the Jews!

EDWARD

What? What're you -- are you living in a dream-world?

RIVIERE

What about you?

GERHARD

No, a nightmare! A nightmare... We knew Jews were being sent away but we never meant -- I know it was wrong now but --

EDWARD

How could it ever seem right?

RIVIERE

Accusing him of your own faults --

GERHARD

I don't know! I just want this to be over, I just want to go home and --

EDWARD

That's why you seduced me -- !

GERHARD

I seduced you? I've never done anything like this before in my --

EDWARD

You weren't that drunk, you managed to get it up --

EDWARD  
 You seduced me -- a  
 Frenchman, the enemy --

RIVIERE  
 Pretending it's all his  
 fault isn't going to --

EDWARD  
 -- to prove to yourself that you weren't a Nazi!

GERHARD  
 All I want to do is keep the world outside. Just us  
 here, somewhere safe --

EDWARD  
 You think you can stop it at the door?

RIVIERE  
This isn't his fault!

EDWARD  
 Gerhard -- I'm sorry -- I want to, but --

GERHARD  
 Close your eyes --

EDWARD  
 Gerhard --

GERHARD  
 Go on.

EDWARD  
 I can't, I can't do this.

GERHARD  
 Give me your hand.

(Edward does so.)

GERHARD  
 Close your eyes.

(Edward closes his eyes. Gerhard leads  
 him to the door, places his hand on the  
 door:)

GERHARD  
 Feel that? It's a meter thick, solid steel, locked  
 with iron bars. It can keep anything out. When we  
 close that door, we're not in France or Germany,  
 we're here, our place. The family who lived here  
 was taken away because they were people the Reich  
 hated -- like us, like me now. They'd want us to  
 have this.

(then, simply)

Thierry, do you want to be together?

EDWARD

(opening his eyes)  
... Yes, but --

GERHARD

Then this is the perfect place.

(Edward nods, agreeing. Gerhard relaxes:)

GERHARD

It's safe, nobody comes here -- besides, we can't use the field by the lake any more, they're keeping an eye on it.

EDWARD

(stopped by that)  
What?

GERHARD

The Gestapo's watching it.

EDWARD

("casually")  
Oh...

RIVIERE

Now you know you can't use that field for the drop. Valuable information... Is that why I didn't break it off? So I could use him for more "valuable information"?

(Edward, Frieda, Francois and Jean carry the last of several canisters into FRANCOIS' BARN; it is dawn.)

EDWARD

That's the last of them...

FRIEDA

Good thing, too, it's almost light.

JEAN

Look at all this, I never knew the English were so smart.

FRIEDA

Jean...

JEAN

I didn't say you two were English --

FRIEDA & EDWARD

Jean.

JEAN

Come on, we all know it --

EDWARD

Keep blabbing that way, I'll shoot you.

JEAN

(backing off, but saving face)

This play-acting, it's stupid, we all know what we're doing...

EDWARD

The only way you're going to stick to the story is to stick to the story, all the time, all the time.

RIVIERE

Are you even listening to yourself any more?

EDWARD

You have to be the role, live the cover, forty-eight hours a day -- think it, dream it, talk it, eat it. I am Thierry Alfont, from Bordeaux. Anybody says I'm not, I'll shoot him dead.

(The tension is broken by the entrance of Simone with a tray of food.)

EDWARD

Breakfast. Excellent. Thank you Simone.

(They break off to eat. Edward turns to Francois, addresses him urgently:)

EDWARD

Francois... We need to find out why your brother didn't show up --

FRANCOIS

Maybe he's sick.

EDWARD

We need to know right away. You understand.

(Francois nods gravely.)

(Edward and Frieda move aside, talk confidentially to each other:)

FRIEDA

If they caught his brother...

EDWARD

I'll take care of it.

FRIEDA

(reciting a lesson she doesn't like)  
Cut off the limb before it infects the body.

EDWARD

That's right.

FRIEDA

It's different to do it than to talk about it....

EDWARD

I said I'll take care of it.

(He sees Jean helping himself to a gun  
from one of the canisters, and  
addresses them:)

EDWARD

We don't kill the enemy unless we have to. We don't  
want reprisals -- they've killed twenty at random  
for every one of theirs. Besides, why kill a couple  
of Germans when we can do things that will make  
their entire occupation vulnerable?

(taking out different kinds of explosives:)  
Put these under rail lines, the weight of the train  
makes them explode. These are good for bridges.  
And the ones that are painted to look like rocks?  
Tire-busters.

JEAN

That's all we're going to do? Pinpricks?

EDWARD

Pinpricks avoid reprisals. Pinpricks keep the enemy  
off-balance, nervous, they divert attention while we  
plan our big missions... This is a limpet mine -- it  
works underwater.

JEAN

Why underwater?

EDWARD

You've seen the barges shipping submarine parts down  
the river -- with these, we can stop them from  
getting to the coast.

(The others are impressed.)

EDWARD

But. We've only got one shot -- if we fail, they'll  
guard the transports more carefully. If we do it  
right, if we choose the right barge at the right  
place, we'll make sure it takes them a long time to  
unplug the river --

JEAN

And stop all German supply traffic.

EDWARD

Exactly.

JEAN

You English are smart.

(Off Edward's exasperation -- )

(Riviere's phone rings in his FLAT, jarring him out of his memory. The barn and 1944 disappear as he picks up the phone:)

RIVIERE

Hello...

(Frieda, now again in her mid-fifties, is calling him from her flat:)

FRIEDA

Are you all right?

RIVIERE

For god's sake, George, I'm not a child, I can take care of myself --

FRIEDA

What did you mean, "I can't do this any more?"

RIVIERE

What are you babbling about?

FRIEDA

When you left the pub, you said, "I can't do this any more."

RIVIERE

Oh my god, of all the stupid -- Why would I do away with myself now? I've been dead for thirty years.

FRIEDA

You're not assuaging my anxiety.

RIVIERE

I'm ringing off, George --

FRIEDA

Teddy, please. I'm sorry if I miffed you with all that hero talk, I know you don't like it --

RIVIERE

That's because I wasn't a hero.

(He sees Madeleine lead Edward into her  
ROOM IN THE BROTHEL, is distracted by  
his memory:)

RIVIERE

Madeleine -- now she was a hero...

FRIEDA

Yes, she was, and so --

FRIEDA

-- were you.

RIVIERE

-- was Jean.

FRIEDA

Don't get me started on Jean, he was such a hero he  
lost me all my toenails.

RIVIERE

You're so far off it's ridiculous...

FRIEDA

What? Teddy?

(He hangs up, lost in his memory,  
watching Edward and Madeleine:)

MADELEINE

Didn't think I'd see you again.

EDWARD

And yet here I am, unable to resist your charms.

MADELEINE

(nervous)

So I converted you?

EDWARD

I've been watching you --

MADELEINE

That'll cost you two hundred francs.

EDWARD

You entertain quite a few German officers --

MADELEINE

All the girls do.

EDWARD

But you have certain high-ranking officers.

MADELEINE

Does that excite you?

EDWARD

Your parents -- they were sent away --

MADELEINE

No they weren't, they live in Lyon --

EDWARD

Were they taken by the Germans?

MADELEINE

No. Get out.

EDWARD

By the French?

MADELEINE

I'll scream.

EDWARD

I'm on your side --

MADELEINE

I'm warning you --

EDWARD

I don't know if they were sympathizers or resistance or what -- but I do know that you slipped opium into German pilots' cigarettes to throw off their eyesight: that's wonderful.

(Madeleine screams.)

EDWARD

(whispering quickly)

I won't tell you who I got that from, their secret's safe with me, same as yours --

WOMAN'S VOICE OUTSIDE

Madeleine? You all right?

(Madeleine doesn't say anything, evaluating him, trying not to panic.)

EDWARD

Itching powder in their underwear? We can do so much more.

WOMAN'S VOICE OUTSIDE

Madeleine?

MADELEINE

(calling through the door)  
Just a rat.

WOMAN'S VOICE OUTSIDE

What's his name?

(Her laughter can be heard disappearing  
down the hall.)

MADELEINE

(cautiously)  
What do you want?

EDWARD

I won't thank you, I won't give you money, you can  
name the time and place when we meet again.

MADELEINE

For what?

EDWARD

I need some information from General Macht.

MADELEINE

I can't get him to tell me any--

EDWARD

But you can get me the key to his office -- with  
this.

(He holds up a bar of soap. She looks  
at it, then back at him, mystified.)

EDWARD

I know, it's like something out of a bad play --  
actually, it is something out of a bad play, I  
should know, I did it eight times a week for two  
months. But it works.

MADELEINE

Who are you?

EDWARD

Get him drunk and satisfied -- whatever it takes to  
put him to sleep. Then soften the soap with water,  
and make an impression of the key. The key I want  
is short and thin.

MADELEINE

Like his cock.

(They both laugh, let down a bit.)

MADELEINE

What's in his office?

EDWARD

You don't want to know.

MADELEINE

That was me just asking.

EDWARD

It's safer for you this way.

MADELEINE

What will you do with this information?

(Edward doesn't say anything.)

MADELEINE

Who are you? Or is it also safer for me to not know who you are?

EDWARD

Actually, it's safer for me...

(They chuckle; gallows humor. Then, seriously:)

EDWARD

And for you.

(Madeleine nods -- yes, she'll do it. He starts to leave.)

MADELEINE

Sorry about sending in the German that night.

EDWARD

I should ask for a refund.

MADELEINE

How'd you handle it?

EDWARD

We talked about you.

MADELEINE

(remembering)

I don't think he fucked me either...

EDWARD

(quickly, leading her away from that)

He was too drunk -- but you made an impression. Speaking of impressions...

(He hands her the bar of soap.)

(Then, suddenly, there's a big explosion off --)

(It's night. Edward, Jean and Francois scramble on, dropping into hiding in a thicket of A MARSH.)

FRANCOIS

Shit!

JEAN

I thought those were half-hour delays!

EDWARD

That's what the labels said.

JEAN

English workmanship.

(Edward whips out his revolver, cocks it, pointing at Jean.)

EDWARD

You're valuable, you're brave, but if you do that one more time.

JEAN

All right all right. God knows French workmanship's just as bad.

FRANCOIS

(looking off)

That barge'll block up the river for weeks. How'd you find out they were bringing down a bigger barge?

EDWARD

Francois...

FRANCOIS

No more questions.

JEAN

I have some champagne I've been saving --

EDWARD

Save it a little while longer. We don't get near each other for a week. Live your normal lives, no pinpricks, nothing. Watch if anybody's following you, asking questions. At the end of the week, if you're absolutely certain you're clean, look in the letter-drop. If I'm clean, I'll leave you a message about when we'll meet.

For the next job?  
FRANCOIS

Right.  
EDWARD

And what's that?  
JEAN

Jean.  
EDWARD

Say no more.  
JEAN

(The sound of jeeps approaching.)

FRANCOIS  
What if one of us gets "infected"?

EDWARD  
Then the circuit's blown, we disperse -- and you  
save that champagne for the end of the war.

(then)  
If you do get arrested, try to hold out for forty-  
eight hours, give them something insignificant,  
anything to buy the rest of us time to get away.

(The sound of jeeps gets closer. They  
hunch down. The jeeps pass by -- )

(The doorbell in Riviere's FLAT rings  
over and over, snapping him out of his  
memory. He opens the door.)

FRIEDA  
You know.

RIVIERE  
Know what?

FRIEDA  
You've known all these years.

RIVIERE  
What are you going on --

FRIEDA  
Who betrayed us, who blew the circuit.

RIVIERE  
Go home.

(She sits down.)

FRIEDA

Can't. Have to rest my feet from that horrible climb up those stairs. Why you couldn't live somewhere lower I'll never know --

RIVIERE

Has it ever occurred to you that I might have let this flat specifically so you couldn't come up and bother me all the time?

FRIEDA

(simply)

No.

(then)

"You're so far off, it's ridiculous", that's what you said on the phone. You slipped up, Teddy, you finally cracked. All these years you've known and you've lied and said you didn't.

(Riviere realizes he slipped. He says nothing.)

FRIEDA

All right then, process of elimination. It wasn't me, that's for sure -- obviously not Francois or Simone from what happened to them. And not you with your George cross --

RIVIERE

Can't you go one single hour without talking about that fucking George cross?!

FRIEDA

It was scandalous that you didn't accept it --

RIVIERE

(imitating her)  
Simply scandalous to be such a spoil-sport --

(Riviere heads for the door:)

FRIEDA

Where are you going?

RIVIERE

To get some razor blades -- and not for that, you silly cow. I have a date tonight and I want you out when I get back.

(He's almost out the door when she comes to a sudden realization:)

FRIEDA

It was you, wasn't it?

(shocked, mortified:)

You betrayed us...

(Riviere opens the door to get away --)

(-- and finds himself back in the FARMHOUSE, 1944, where Edward is preparing a simple dinner. Gerhard comes in, distracted.)

EDWARD

You're late.

GERHARD

Sorry.

EDWARD

Don't worry, you can't actually burn cheese sandwiches. I know from personal experience. And I've got a special treat -- salad!

GERHARD

How'd you get that?

EDWARD

Madeleine.

(off his questioning look)

The prostitute, our benefactress.

GERHARD

You saw her?

(Edward realizes he's slipped:)

RIVIERE

A slip -- because you were happy... happy with your success, as was London, and happy with him, so you wanted him to be happy, too. Was that your mistake? Thinking you could have it all -- a man, a mission and a salad...

EDWARD

She's got good black-market connections.

GERHARD

Does she know?

EDWARD

Know what?

GERHARD

About...

EDWARD

About my "preferences"?

RIVIERE

Classic save -- misdirect with the truth.

EDWARD

She's a professional -- I imagine she knew about you before you even knew about you. We should actually be grateful to her.

(pouring wine)

To Madeleine.

(they drink; he serves the dinner)

I don't have much time.

GERHARD

Right.

EDWARD

Come on, let's not argue, we don't have the --

GERHARD

The time, of course not.

EDWARD

(seeing something's wrong)

What is it?

(Gerhard shakes his head, nothing.  
Drinks wine. Edward gets wary:)

EDWARD

No tell me.

GERHARD

It's got nothing to do with you.

EDWARD

What happened?

GERHARD

No, I shut the door, the world's outside now, that's our rule --

EDWARD

You may have shut the door, but you're still outside too.

(No response.)

EDWARD

Gerhard. If you don't tell me --

GERHARD

You'll what?

EDWARD

I won't know how to trust you.

RIVIERE

Blackmail, very nice.

GERHARD

Great, that's just -- great. I'll be the enemy in here, too, is that it?

EDWARD

That's not what --

GERHARD

I hate being the enemy. Out there they all think --

EDWARD

Out there, they only see the uniform. Gerhard, this is dangerous, you can't think that way, listen to me -- outside this house, you can't be who you are.

RIVIERE

To save himself, or to save your own skin?

GERHARD

We're not the only -- your side has its monsters too.

EDWARD

Right. Let me tell you a story: There's a jewelry store in the next town, Jewish owner. Last week, two of your lieutenants stole a dozen watches from him. He filed a complaint. The soldiers told their commanding officer they "requisitioned" the watches to give to their men -- after all, they'd suffered so greatly in combat. Their commanding officer arrested the lieutenants, collected the watches --

GERHARD

But that was very correct of him --

EDWARD

-- and turned the watches over to the Wehrmacht. Said they were property of the Reich. His lieutenants had stolen from the Reich, not the Jew. The lieutenants were scolded, had their leave taken away for a couple of days. The Jew was deported.

GERHARD

(so weary of all this)  
What does this prove.

EDWARD

Your monsters are worse.

GERHARD

(that really pisses him off, and what's bothering him pours out:)  
A week ago, some "resistance" terrorists bombed a barge in the river, you must have seen it --

(Edward tenses, covers.)

GERHARD

Two of the crew were hurt badly -- a cook and a mechanic. The mechanic, I knew him, he used to fix my father's car -- three children, wife with tuberculosis. Anyway, they died today, the mechanic and the cook -- they weren't even soldiers! "Resistance"? -- these bastards don't wear uniforms and they kill people, that's not warfare, that's murder.

(Gerhard gets a cloth and a bowl of water, then sits and lowers his pants to wash the wound on his thigh and change the dressing.)

(Edward goes to him, takes the cloth away from him, kneels in front of him and cleans his wound.)

EDWARD

It's almost healed.

(Gerhard nods.)

EDWARD

So you'll be going soon. Back home or...?

GERHARD

I don't know. We may stay here.

EDWARD

Here...?

GERHARD

In France. There's lots of rumors -- an invasion from the Americans and the British --

(Edward kisses Gerhard to stop him.)

GERHARD

Stay all night --

EDWARD

I can't --

GERHARD

Just once, just this once --

EDWARD

I can't, you know that --

GERHARD

You say you're not married, you don't have anybody else -- I don't even know where you live or --

EDWARD

I'll stay some time, I will, just not tonight --

GERHARD

Where do you go when you leave me?

(Edward takes his hand, leads him toward the bed. Gerhard holds his ground:)

GERHARD

I'm not German when we're making love, but as soon as it's over, I'm a --

EDWARD

No.

GERHARD

Please please stay the night. I try to leave it outside but I can't -- as soon as you go, it all comes flooding in --

EDWARD

I know...

GERHARD

I don't think I can go home now.

EDWARD

(stroking Gerhard's hair)  
Sssh...

GERHARD

The only thing I miss is what I always hated -- the routine. You know that every day, you'll get up at the same time and go to work. Saturday you'll hike in the woods or swim in the lake, maybe go to a concert or a film. Sunday you'll go to church, read a book. In the summer, a holiday in the mountains, autumn you'll burn the leaves, at Christmas you'll decorate a tree and sing carols and drink gluwine and... all these things that you know you'll do and you do them.

(more)

GERHARD (cont'd)

(taking Edward's hand:)

I want that with you. I want to know what we're going to do tomorrow, over the weekend, next week, next year. Don't you want that?

EDWARD

What I want isn't... The question is, what's possible.

GERHARD

What you want you make possible. Do you want that?

EDWARD

I want you.

GERHARD

Then stay.

EDWARD

... I will -- as long as I can.

(They kiss.)

GERHARD

That night at the lake, our first night there, I said: I am my country. I was wrong: You are my country.

(And, as Frieda continues to confront Riviere in his FLAT, Edward and Gerhard make love in the FARMHOUSE:)

FRIEDA

It was you.

RIVIERE

Please go.

FRIEDA

You were the only one of us who wasn't there, who wasn't arrested or killed. We'd waited a week, checked our tails, we were clean, no infections. We got your message from the letter-drop to meet at Francois and Simone's barn, we were waiting for you...

(Frieda joins Francois and Jean in THE BARN, becoming twenty again. Jean opens a bottle of champagne.)

FRIEDA

We were celebrating our success --

(Suddenly, violently, a Gestapo agent bursts in. Frieda runs but another Gestapo agent appears and catches her. Jean whips out his revolver, and they shoot him, killing him. The Gestapo drag Francois and Frieda out.)

(Frieda, becoming her 1975 self again, returns to Riviere in his FLAT --)

(While in the FARMHOUSE, Edward and Gerhard fall asleep in each other's arms:)

RIVIERE

(impatient for her to leave)  
It was Simone.

FRIEDA

Simone? But they killed her, why would they...  
(stops, realizing how stupid that thought was)

RIVIERE

They caught Robaire.

FRIEDA

Robaire...?

RIVIERE

Her husband's brother. Remember how he didn't show up for that first drop? Turns out they had caught him stealing ration cards -- he heard me say ours were no good, he wanted to prove himself.

FRIEDA

They questioned him...?

RIVIERE

He didn't give them anything. They tortured him, finished him off, then they showed him to Simone, said they'd do the same thing to her husband unless she told them who was involved.

FRIEDA

To save her husband --

RIVIERE

She cracked like an egg. Of course they assured her if she cooperated, they'd spare her and Francois.

FRIEDA

And she believed them.

RIVIERE

She judged people by her own character. A huge mistake. As we know.

FRIEDA

Why didn't you tell me? All these years...?

RIVIERE

You're even a stupider old bitch than I thought. Get out of here, I've got a date.

FRIEDA

(realizing)

Teddy it wasn't your fault --

RIVIERE

(lost in the past again)

"It doesn't matter whose fault it was, I should have taken care of her, she was my responsibility."

FRIEDA

Simone? How was she your responsibility?

RIVIERE

You know, you finally know ... Now will you please leave?

FRIEDA

You can't be serious. This... false blame you have the monumental ego to place on yourself -- it's just self-pity. All the things you did, the incredible brave selfless dangerous things you did after that... This is why you didn't accept your George cross? Insulting Queen and country, not to mention your friends and it's amazing you have any left at all -- come to think of it, you don't, except me. This is why you leave the room when people call you a hero? Absurd!

RIVIERE

Want to know where I was that night? The night I didn't get killed or captured with the rest of you? I was in bed with a man named Gerhard, a German soldier. Met him the first night we jumped in. I was in love with him.

(Frieda is shocked. Tries to say something. Can't.)

RIVIERE

Well it wasn't a total loss -- I've finally stunned you speechless.

FRIEDA

...Did he know about us, about the circuit?

RIVIERE

No.

FRIEDA

So he didn't know what you were doing?

RIVIERE

No, never.

FRIEDA

Who did he think you were?

RIVIERE

An honest Frenchman.

FRIEDA

(swallowing her horror)

It was a different time...

RIVIERE

Oh no you don't duckie, no excuses for me. I lied to everybody. To you, to him --

FRIEDA

It wasn't your fault, Edward, you didn't blow the circuit. You had a... lapse in judgement, you made a mistake, but --

RIVIERE

You're right, I did make a mistake, I made the biggest mistake of my life... I gave up Gerhard.

FRIEDA

(startled, confused)

... What?

RIVIERE

(placing each on an imaginary scale:)

My lover, my country -- after that night, I felt I had to make a choice. So I gave him up. I did the patriotic thing, the "right" thing...

FRIEDA

Exactly --

RIVIERE

What difference did it make? If I hadn't done all those "brave, selfless" things that won me that medal, what difference would it have made? The war would have ended twenty minutes later. Instead I lost the only man I ever loved for a piece of tin.

(Riviere looks over at:)

(THE FARMHOUSE, where Edward wakes up and realizes in a panic that it's morning. He shoots out of bed and shoves on his clothes without waking Gerhard. A button comes off in his hand, he looks down at it and sees with horror:)

EDWARD

Harrods? Fucking Harrods?

(He rips off the rest of the buttons, slips them in his pocket on his way out:)

EDWARD

They can get French dirt to put in our cuffs and they use buttons that say Harrods on the back?!

RIVIERE

I wasn't meant to survive, I shouldn't have survived...

FRIEDA

(her love for him is great enough to overcome even this)

What happened to him?

RIVIERE

Interesting you should ask. Didn't look for him for decades -- couldn't get out of my head how he must have hated me. Or maybe I had gotten him killed. But then a few years ago, I couldn't bear it any more, not knowing... But what to do? I didn't know where he lived. I didn't want to go to the English authorities -- "'Scuse me, luv, can you help me find me dead Nazi lover?" Besides what could they have done? I went to Germany, they weren't exactly motivated to help me, as you can imagine. So I started looking up his name in telephone directories -- not an uncommon name, as it turns out. I wrote letters and letters and letters. And then finally, got a reply. Telegram. This morning. He's coming here tonight... So now will you get the fuck out?

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

(Darkness. There's an explosion, then another, then another -- a crescendo of explosions. We discover Riviere in HIS FLAT, in 1975, waiting in his armchair, and Edward in THE WOODS, in 1944:)

RIVIERE

There was a time when explosions made me shake...

RIVIERE

A long time ago...

EDWARD

A month or two ago --

EDWARD

Now the louder the better.

(The flash from a nearby explosion illuminates Edward, who doesn't flinch.)

(He is thinner, gaunt, his clothes are ragtag. He has also deliberately altered his appearance: his hair is longer, and he's grown a beard.)

(He is joined by several MAQUISARD -- young male resistance fighters who live in the woods. They are returning to their camp, armed with rifles and sten guns.)

(They spot someone waiting for them, and raise their guns. Once they see that it's Madeleine, they relax.)

FIRST MAQUISARD

Thierry -- your "friend" is here.

(to Madeleine, suggestively)

Got some time for me?

MADELEINE

Got a fresh ham for me?

FIRST MAQUISARD

No, but I got a big hog.

(He laughs; she smiles. It's a running joke.)

(Edward takes Madeleine aside as the Maquisard build a fire:)

MADELEINE

You look like shit.

EDWARD

What's the message from London?

MADELEINE

Are you sleeping at all?

EDWARD

What's the message?

MADELEINE

Ever eat?

EDWARD

You're my courier, not my mother, when's our next drop?

MADELEINE

(has message memorized)

"No more deliveries scheduled -- "

EDWARD

What? How do they expect us to --

MADELEINE

Let me finish: "Save the rest of your supplies until further notice." The invasion must be close.

EDWARD

We need more munitions, give Jacques a message to send back --

MADELEINE

He said he can't send any more messages for you right now --

EDWARD

He's freezing me out?!

MADELEINE

No, he's very busy -- he's transmitting for several circuits at the same time. He said the security was appalling but...

(she shrugs)

EDWARD

They're still suspicious of me -- the only survivor of my circuit.

MADELEINE

If they thought that, they would've ordered you back. And they wouldn't have sent you all the supplies they already have --

EDWARD

They sent them to Alain, to the Maquis, not to me.

MADELEINE

To you, to arm and train the Maquis -- and you've done a good job, everybody knows that. If you hadn't, you think I'd risk my life taking your messages back and forth?

(taking him further aside, secretly gives him a small package)

Here.

(He unwraps it, sees what it is. Calls to the Maquisard:)

EDWARD

Hey.

(He tosses them the package; they see that it's food:)

FIRST MAQUISARD

(pointedly, to Madeleine)

Thanks.

(They go off with the food.)

MADELEINE

So you're also starving yourself.

EDWARD

They're hungry.

MADELEINE

What about you?

(Edward shrugs.)

(ALAIN approaches. His clothes are expensive but dirty; he has a gentrified manner. He listens, unseen:)

MADELEINE

The Germans from the Russian front -- the ones who arrived the same night as you?

(Edward doesn't say anything.)

MADELEINE

Their rest and recuperation is over -- they're leaving in the morning.

EDWARD

(pretending disinterest)

So?

MADELEINE

Including yours.

EDWARD

(stone-walling her)

Mine?

MADELEINE

The one with the wounded leg? The one you spent the night with when --

(Edward sees Alain, covers:)

EDWARD

Oh yes, he was useful -- I got some information out of him about where the Germans were looking for our supply drops.

ALAIN

Impressive -- how'd you accomplish that?

EDWARD

He was homesick, I got him drunk, made him think I was sympathetic -- he was a pushover.

ALAIN

(to Madeleine)

How do you know they're leaving?

MADELEINE

I've been even busier than usual.

ALAIN

The Germans are very lucky.

MADELEINE

Not really, I have gonorrhoea.

(Alain takes that in, leaves.)

EDWARD

You all right?

MADELEINE

Please, that's the least of our problems.

(whispering:)

He came to see me, desperate to find you. I said I didn't know anything -- he gave me this anyway.

(She slips him a letter as she leaves.  
Edward reads it:)

RIVIERE

From Gerhard. A time and a place. A last chance.

(Edward drops the letter in the fire.  
Riviere watches the letter burn, as the  
lights change -- )

(WOODS; later that night. Shouts in  
the darkness. Then a GERMAN SOLDIER  
and a FRENCH GIRL lurch toward the  
dying fire, terrified, pushed on by  
First Maquisard with his rifle:)

FIRST MAQUISARD

German whore!

(Alain has been sleeping by the fire.  
He is instantly awake and up:)

ALAIN

What happened?

FIRST MAQUISARD

Fucking her boyfriend!

FRENCH GIRL

Please monsieur, please --

ALAIN

I know you... what's your name?

(Edward, wakened by shouting, hurries  
on, stops behind them, unseen by the  
German Soldier:)

FRENCH GIRL

Therese Marchand.

ALAIN

Your father is the tailor Marchand?

FRENCH GIRL

He was killed, monsieur, my mother, too.

FIRST MAQUISARD

That's your excuse for selling your pussy to this  
Nazi pig?

FRENCH GIRL

(to Alain)

Please monsieur, my parents always said you were a  
good man -- you don't know what it's been like...

(The German Soldier pulls out a hidden  
gun, grabs the First Maquisard as a  
shield and aims the gun at Alain.)

(Edward, unarmed, jumps the German from  
behind. The German, surprised,  
releases the Maquisard, tries to throw  
Edward off. Edward punches and kicks  
the German to the ground, grabs his gun  
and aims it at the German. He  
hesitates...)

ALAIN

Shoot him!

(Edward shoots the German, killing him.)

(The Girl becomes hysterical.)

(Edward looks at the dead German.)

(For a moment they all stand there  
silently. The Girl sobs. Then:)

FIRST MAQUISARD

Crying for a dead Boche.

ALAIN

(sharply)

That's enough! Hasn't she been through enough?

(to the Girl)

It's all right, Therese. Were there any others?

(She shakes her head.)

ALAIN

I won't be angry, but we have to know -- for your  
sake, too. Were there any others?

FRENCH GIRL

No, I swear...

ALAIN

(to the Maquisard)

Take her to get some wine.

(The First Maquisard grabs her roughly:)

ALAIN

Gently -- don't do anything to her, understand?

(to the Girl)

I'm very sorry about your parents.

(The First Maquisard takes her off.)

ALAIN

We'll have to shoot her.

EDWARD

What -- ?

ALAIN

What choice do we have? She knows where we are, she's not stupid so she knows what we're doing, she's clearly subject to German influence...

EDWARD

You can't just execute her without --

ALAIN

I'll wait an hour, you come up with another solution, tell me. I'd like to find one, truly I would. Her father was a good man.

(He takes off, leaving Edward alone.)

RIVIERE

The gunfire was loud enough for a while. Then the explosions were loud enough for a while. But the sound of one's own heart -- eventually, there's nothing loud enough to drown that out.

(A GUNSHOT off in the woods. Edward flinches -- as does Riviere.)

(Dawn comes to the WOODS. The Maquisard warm themselves by the fire. Edward remains standing in that same spot, still shock-still, apart from the others. Alain enters, goes to him:)

ALAIN

We don't have much time, we must prevent those Germans from leaving.

EDWARD

Our orders are to avoid engaging in direct combat --

ALAIN

You're a guest here. We appreciate your help, your supplies, but England's orders are not my orders.

EDWARD

They need to coordinate arms and plans throughout the entire country for the invasion --

ALAIN

Ah yes, the invasion. Your country thinks so highly of us it doesn't tell us where or when it's going to be, even the Germans know more about it than we do --

EDWARD

That's ridiculous --

ALAIN

Why else order their men away from here so suddenly? They're reinforcing their troops, they're sending them where they believe the invasion will take place.

EDWARD

Or they're sending them home -- you just want to kill Germans.

ALAIN

Don't you?

(Edward doesn't respond.)

ALAIN

We camp here in the woods, waiting, waiting, cold, miserable, hungry, while they live in our homes, eat our food. What do we do? Cut trees across roads, bomb railway junctions, spy on petrol dumps --

EDWARD

All that work, all that information will be essential when --

ALAIN

My men are restless, they need to see results for their actions. We request better weapons, no reply, we ask for more ammunition --

EDWARD

Exactly, that's the point, we have to save our supplies, we don't have sufficient ammunition to take out a whole German unit --

ALAIN

We do if we know which route they're going to take. Surprise will weigh the ambush in our favor.

(more)

ALAIN (cont'd)

That shouldn't be difficult information for you to obtain --

(meaningfully)  
with your connections.

(Edward looks at him, astonished.  
Doesn't know what to say.)

ALAIN

Madeleine said, "your" German...?

EDWARD

I told you, I got information out of him --

ALAIN

Yes, "easy to crack," you said. So you can do it again, this will be your greatest triumph --

EDWARD

I'd be shot before I found him.

ALAIN

Your circuit was blown months ago, by now you've been forgotten by the Germans -- except for one perhaps...? Unless you have some reason you don't want to use him to get information again?

EDWARD

I'll try. He may not be as easy now... He was very vulnerable back then -- wounded, off a long march, after months at the Russian front --

ALAIN

I'm sure you'll find a way to persuade him. Your kind seem to be expert at that.

EDWARD

My kind...?

ALAIN

(lets him draw the worst conclusion; then,  
smoothly:)  
The English.

(Alain goes to the Maquisard. He says something and they leave together, murmuring, looking back at Edward:)

EDWARD

Talking about me -- whispering, snickering -- so familiar.

(more)

EDWARD (cont'd)

The same as at school, always the last chosen -- the ponce, the nancy boy, "not really one of us." I wanted so much, so very very much, to belong...

(Edward walks toward town...)

RIVIERE

You want the part, you want the job. They offer it to you, you take pride in doing it well -- and then one day, one grey morning, you wake up and find that you've played the role too well, you've become the job. You make your toast, amazed: I'm a waiter? I'm a shop clerk? I'm a freedom fighter? How the hell did that happen?

EDWARD

For once in my life...

RIVIERE

Once in my life, I had a choice. There was a fork in the road and I had a choice...

(Edward arrives at the brothel:)

EDWARD

My chance to be a hero, to be one of them...

RIVIERE

All you have to do is betray the only person you ever loved.

(Madeleine shows Edward into THE ROOM IN THE BROTHEL. Gerhard shoots up from the bed on which he's been sitting:)

GERHARD

Thank god --

(But Edward avoids his glance, looks over at Madeleine. She gets the message and starts to leave, then stops:)

MADELEINE

My father used to tell me the only thing that mattered was what people thought of you. Your position, your character, respect. He took me for walks on Sundays, always dressed in his good suit, his shoes freshly shined, nodding to people as we walked past, very dignified. He was wrong -- all the position and character and respect in the world couldn't save him.

(more)

MADELEINE (cont'd)

(then:)

He had a callus between his thumb and finger -- it was so rough when he held my hand -- I used to lock my hands behind my back when we'd go for a walk, it was so rough. And now, all I want to do is hold his hand.

(She looks at them, making sure they understand what she means. Then leaves.)

GERHARD

You look different.

EDWARD

It's the beard.

GERHARD

No, something else...

(He tries to look Edward in the eyes. Edward turns away.)

GERHARD

I didn't know if you'd come... I had to see you tonight, before -- I couldn't think of anybody else to ask. She said she didn't know where you were -- it was a risk but --

EDWARD

Your leg's better.

GERHARD

I can exercise now -- just in time for a long march.

EDWARD

They're sending you home then, that's good, that's what you wanted --

GERHARD

Oh no, they're not that nice --

EDWARD

But you're leaving in the morning...?

(Gerhard nods.)

EDWARD

(overly casual; feeling guilty for asking)  
For where?

GERHARD

Doesn't matter --

(breaking through impatiently:)

Thierry -- what happened, what -- happened? I woke up, and you were gone, you disappeared... Did I do something wrong?

EDWARD

We knew it was a bad idea, you said so yourself --

GERHARD

No -- us, together, that's the only thing that matters to me, Thierry, the only thing...

RIVIERE

Even the name you had him call you was a lie.

GERHARD

I don't want to lose you -- and you don't want that either, I know you don't --

EDWARD

Gerhard please --

GERHARD

No, listen to me -- there's something I want to ask you, something important --

(struggles, can't ask him yet; so instead:)

If you weren't here, where would you be?

EDWARD

(alarmed)

What do you mean -- ?

GERHARD

Pretend this isn't happening, no war -- what would you be doing right now?

EDWARD

(relieved that's what he meant)

Oh. Well, it's June...

RIVIERE

Trying to remember which lie you'd told him...

EDWARD

I'd be picking cherries...

GERHARD

Yes! Picking cherries, then lying on our backs in the hot sun, with the bees, watching the clouds...

(this is difficult for him:)

I lied to you. When I said I'd never... you know...

EDWARD

(surprised, not angry)  
Really?

GERHARD

I was sixteen. I wanted to go to the country for my summer vacation -- you can imagine what my father had to say about that. I begged my mother to convince him. God knows how she managed it, but they sent me to live with a family on a farm for a month. A boy my age, their son. He was so much fun -- and far more... adventurous than I was.

EDWARD

(softening, affectionately)  
What a nice way to put it -- "adventurous"...

GERHARD

(smiles, looks at Edward)  
And sweet. And funny. And full of life.

EDWARD

So that's your big lie?  
(then:)  
You asked what I'd be doing right now. Actually, I'd be looking for a job -- I'm not a farmer, I'm an actor --

GERHARD

An actor...?

EDWARD

When I can get work. When I can't, I work in shops, restaurants, whatever. And June, well June is never a great time unless you're lucky enough to be in a hit that will survive the summer. So. Now you know...

(he wants to tell him everything)  
I lied to you because...  
(but he can't)  
I've always lied to you, I'm sorry.

GERHARD

That's not what I asked -- I meant, what would you be doing right now? Ten on a Tuesday night?

(Riviere loves Gerhard for this. He moves to him, and kisses him on his head or his hand in his memory.)

EDWARD

I guess I'd be sitting in a bar or a cafe -- chatting, gossiping, flirting maybe.

GERHARD

Good, with friends, that's good.

EDWARD

Friends? They laugh at my jokes because I laugh at theirs. It's not something you want to do, it's something you find yourself doing to fill the time.

RIVIERE

Filling the time...

EDWARD

I think I'd better leave now...

GERHARD

No -- please -- want to know I'd be doing, ten on a Tuesday night? I've been to a concert or the theatre, I'm coming home on the streetcar... I see a girl across the aisle and I think, maybe that's the one, maybe she's the one I'm supposed to be with. Not Greta, my fiancee -- Greta's fine, a fine girl, but how do I know if she's the one?

EDWARD

I guess you just know.

GERHARD

(looking at him)  
That's right.

(Edward breaks off the look.)

RIVIERE

(to Edward)  
Look at him!

GERHARD

I get home, go to my room, do my evening exercises --

EDWARD

Your "evening" exercises?

GERHARD

Yes, morning and evening, to make myself strong. And then I study -- science, architecture, literature -- anything. I keep reading, by the bad light, getting a headache, trying to find something, anything that will make me feel, that's it, that's me. And I don't find it. Do you know what it's like to have never found yourself, never discovered who you are?

(more)

GERHARD (cont'd)

(then:)

Even this awful room that smells of stale sex, in a town where I'm the enemy, in a country where I'm hated, even this is better because this is where I met you -- and I finally knew: That's me, that's who I am, I'm Gerhard who loves Thierry.

EDWARD

Gerhard, I've been trying to tell you, I'm not who you think I --

GERHARD

Let's go, tonight --

EDWARD

What? Go where?

GERHARD

Run away! We can hike south across the Pyrenees, the army's going to --

EDWARD

No! Don't tell me --

GERHARD

(misunderstanding, hurt)

If you don't want to, if you don't want me --

EDWARD

No, that's not what I mean --

GERHARD

(lighting to the glimmer of hope)

Then let's go! We'll go to Spain and then... anywhere, everywhere! Together.

EDWARD

They'd catch us, they'd kill you --

GERHARD

Not if we're smart, not if we leave right now.

(Edward hesitates...)

GERHARD

Don't you want to?

EDWARD

... Yes but --

GERHARD

But what? What do you want? You've never told me.

RIVIERE

What did you want then?

EDWARD

(so tempted, but:)

I want to do what's right.

GERHARD

Right for who? For them? for the world who hates people like you and me? Or do you want to do what's right for us?

(He grabs him and kisses him. It's a long kiss, passionate for both of them.)

GERHARD

You saw me, you're the only person who's ever really seen me and you loved me anyway. Don't you understand? That's how I feel about you --

RIVIERE

Go! Go with him! Why didn't you go with him?!

GERHARD

If you don't come with me...

EDWARD

What?

GERHARD

I don't know. All I know is I want to be with you.

(That makes up Edward's mind:)

EDWARD

...Yes -- Yes.

(Thrilled, Gerhard grabs him in a tight embrace:)

GERHARD

Thank God...

(He releases Edward, quickly puts on his coat:)

GERHARD

We have to leave tonight and head south, we're supposed to march in the morning north on the road to Orleans.

RIVIERE

So there it was -- he volunteered it. The same as the first time you betrayed him...

EDWARD

I'll meet you at six at the farmhouse.

(As Riviere speaks, Edward leaves Gerhard, crosses to the WOODS, where he meets Alain and the Maquisard and gives them the information:)

RIVIERE

He gave it to you like a present. The information for your final betrayal --

(correcting himself)

No, not your final one...

(Riviere watches as Edward goes into A HUT; it is later that night. Gerhard and Edward sit on the ground, packing their knapsacks. Edward shivers.)

GERHARD

Cold?

EDWARD

Can't risk a fire, somebody could see the smoke. You have to be very careful about fires. We should get some sleep --

GERHARD

It's so early --

EDWARD

-- and then cover as much ground as possible after midnight. We're going to have to sleep during the day and walk at night. I brought enough sausage to get us to Spain if we ration it and make decent time. No stealing food along the way no matter how hungry you are -- it only increases the risks. Understand?

(Gerhard looks at him with a new understanding. Edward, occupied with packing, doesn't notice:)

EDWARD

We can eat nettles if we need to, but you have to boil them for at least a half-hour, understand?

(Edward looks up at Gerhard:)

EDWARD

Do you understand?

GERHARD

Yes, I understand.  
(that, and more)

EDWARD

Good. Let's get some sleep.

(Edward lies down; Gerhard lies behind him, hugging him, snuggling in.)

(Riviere turns away from the scene, trying to turn off the memory:)

RIVIERE

Won't do any good to remember that...

(But this time the memory doesn't disappear. And he eventually turns back to look at it.)

(Gerhard kisses the back of Edward's head:)

EDWARD

We need to sleep.

GERHARD

Not tired.

EDWARD

You have to. I could tell you a bed-time story...

GERHARD

Tell me what it's going to be like. Us, when the war is over.

EDWARD

All right. We'll live in a small flat --

GERHARD

Above a restaurant so we never have to go out.

EDWARD

And we'll have really dreadful furniture --

GERHARD

So nobody will ever want to come in.

EDWARD

You'll do all the cooking --

GERHARD

And you'll do the washing up.

EDWARD

Well, no actually, you'll do that too.

(Gerhard laughs, holds him tighter.)

EDWARD

At night, while I'm off working, you'll read your books. I'll come home late and you'll have fallen asleep in your chair --

GERHARD

Waiting for you.

EDWARD

No. No you mustn't wait for me -- no waiting, understand?

(It's more urgent to him than it should be. Gerhard takes that in.)

GERHARD

(after a moment; wants the dream to go on forever)

Where will we go? I want to go everywhere with you, see everything... Tell me.

EDWARD

We'll go to Greece and see the Acropolis and the open-air theatres where the ancients made plays about men who defied the gods. And we'll go to the islands where the gods lived, where men can swim naked in the moonlight without shame. And Italy, where women with babies on the street look like the frescoes in the churches. We'll eat baklava in Turkey and sip sherry in Portugal. And everywhere we go, people will remember us because we'll be so happy, we'll be the happiest couple they've ever seen. They'll have to shield their eyes with their hands when they look our way because the sheer bright shine of us will blind them. We'll never fight, and I'll never lie to you again.

(Edward turns to look at Gerhard, sees that his eyes are closed and he is on the edge of sleep.)

EDWARD

I love you.

(Gerhard smiles.)

RIVIERE

Happy. To know I loved him.

(Edward steals away, looking back at Gerhard, who is still smiling and full of love as he falls asleep.)

(Gunfire and shouts and screams are heard from off-stage.)

RIVIERE

Apparently the ambush the next morning was successful...

EDWARD

At least I saved him from it.

(Edward and Riviere take a final look back at Gerhard -- frozen in time, smiling and full of love as he falls asleep -- until Gerhard, too, disappears.)

RIVIERE

Now the match was lit and you were on fire: D-day, roads blocked, bridges blown up, petrol dumps destroyed, nine hundred fifty rail lines cut in one month, the country ablaze. One hundred thousand Germans in southwest France were stopped from reinforcing troops in the north. Now you belonged, finally you were one of them -- a hero...

(Edward disappears. Riviere looks in his wardrobe:)

RIVIERE

What does one wear to beg forgiveness?

(There is a knock on his door.)

FRIEDA (off-stage)

Don't get your knickers in a twist, it's only me.

RIVIERE

Go away.

FRIEDA (off-stage)

Don't want him finding me camped on the stairs, do you?

(Riviere opens the door, stands in the doorway, to prevent her from coming in:)

RIVIERE

Go away.

FRIEDA

(walking in around him)  
Did I ever tell you about the time --

RIVIERE

Undoubtedly.

FRIEDA

-- I was caught in a snap check while I was carrying the wireless set? I thought I was a goner, but I flirted with the Boche, batted my eyes a bit, and he let me go.

RIVIERE

It's not the same, you weren't in love.

FRIEDA

No. You're right. I don't really want to be here, you know, Teddy --

RIVIERE

Then get out -- !

FRIEDA

My early life was crammed with incident, now I much prefer routine, I don't like all this commotion --

RIVIERE

Why are you here?

FRIEDA

Can't bear you feeling sorry for yourself. Mind if I sit down? Those stairs, twice in one day. My toes, you know --

RIVIERE

Yes I know, they pulled the nails out by the roots but you didn't crack, didn't tell them anything, the nails never grew back, it's all my fault.

FRIEDA

(surprised)  
I never blamed you.

RIVIERE

Then why do I feel guilty every time you gimp around?

FRIEDA

That's your problem. I do know what it is to be troubled by memories. Remember how the Germans drove Citroens? Now when I hear a Citroen starting up... Not to mention the smell of meat on the griddle.

RIVIERE

How can I possibly answer that?

FRIEDA

Are you sure that you really felt the way you believe you did? Maybe you're making more of it than it was -- we do tend to juice things up in memory. How do you know you don't just enjoy torturing yourself?

RIVIERE

That's your job.

FRIEDA

You haven't stopped running since the war. No, not running -- even worse, drifting. Man after man, job after job. I thought it was because you felt guilty about me and the others. Now I find out...

RIVIERE

You know, the more miserable I am, the happier you are -- has that ever occurred to you?

FRIEDA

Parry, thrust, change the subject.

RIVIERE

I have to get ready --

FRIEDA

You wish you'd run off with him?

RIVIERE

Yes.

FRIEDA

Betrayed your country?

RIVIERE

Yes.

FRIEDA

And lived happily ever after? You really think you would've been able to live with yourself?

RIVIERE

You call this living?

FRIEDA

So you're going to run away with him now?

RIVIERE

I doubt he'd have me, he must hate me. What did he think when he woke up in that hut and I was gone? Was he caught? Was he sent to a prison camp? How could he love me if the whole thing was a lie? Thirty years, turning out the light every night, knowing I betrayed him, thirty years, waking up every morning hating myself for it --

FRIEDA

You didn't betray him, you saved him --

RIVIERE

I betrayed him and myself.

FRIEDA

You let him go, sometimes that's the best thing you can do --

RIVIERE

Well then, take a lesson.

(He opens the door. She slams it shut, turns on him, finally exploding:)

FRIEDA

How could you love a Nazi?

RIVIERE

He was a good man! He was doing what he thought best for his country, the same as us, he was doing what he was told! Usually we value that in a person --

FRIEDA

We value that in a dog, we expect people to be more discerning.

RIVIERE

Ah, that's about me, isn't it?

(then)

What can I say? We don't get to choose who we love.

FRIEDA

(looking at him)

No. We don't.

(then)

I won't have you putting it down, you see?

RIVIERE

What...?

FRIEDA

What we did. Who was I? The eldest daughter, plain as a post, the one who never got married and took care of the family. What we did, the work you and I did, it was the one time in my life, the only time in my entire life, that I did something important. I won't have you say it was a bad thing.

RIVIERE

It wasn't bad for you.

(She rises to leave.)

FRIEDA

What you're about to do -- it's a bit like jumping out of that Halifax, isn't it? I suppose it's actually quite brave.

(at the door)

That prostitute -- the one who became your courier after I was captured...?

RIVIERE

Madeleine. Brave, wonderful -- she was a hero.

FRIEDA

Why couldn't you have fallen in love with her?

RIVIERE

And caught gonorrhoea, thank you very much.

FRIEDA

Whatever happened to her?

RIVIERE

Last I heard, she owned a dress shop.

(admiringly)

All she ever asked for, when the war was over and they were giving out honors and reimbursing people and all that nonsense -- she said all she wanted was a decent pair of evening shoes.

FRIEDA

I hope she got them.

(it's not easy to say, but she means this:)

I hope you get what you want, too.

(Riviere is surprised and moved. For a moment he can't say anything. Then:)

RIVIERE

Then get the hell out.

(She smiles at him, and leaves.)

(Riviere collapses into his chair,  
exhausted.)

(The sky becomes night. A full moon  
appears. That parachute opens and the  
jumper floats down, silhouetted by the  
moon. But this time the parachute  
floats all the way down to the  
ground -- and we see that the jumper,  
of course, is Edward.)

(Edward gathers the parachute and  
watches Riviere as:)

(Inside RIVIERE'S FLAT, ten chimes on  
the clock. Riviere sits in his chair,  
in the nearly dark room, waiting.  
There's a knock on the door. He finds  
that he can't move. Another knock.)

RIVIERE

It's open.

(The door opens -- and Gerhard walks  
in, still twenty, looking just as he  
did, as if frozen in time, but in  
contemporary clothes and haircut.)

(Riviere stares in amazement. Is this  
a dream? Is it possible Gerhard hasn't  
changed in thirty years? Is it an  
apparition -- a trick of the dim light  
or his imagination?)

(Riviere fumbles his way up from the  
chair; for the first time he looks  
frail, vulnerable and old:)

RIVIERE

... Gerhard...?

CLAUS

I'm Claus, Gerhard's son.

RIVIERE

Gerhard... he's with you?

CLAUS

(closing the door)

Mr. Riviere?

(off Riviere's confused nod)

I'm afraid my father's dead.

(Riviere falters, stumbles. Claus rushes forward, catches him, helps him into the chair as Riviere gapes at him:)

RIVIERE

You look...

CLAUS

I know. I'm sorry I deceived you.

RIVIERE

Dead...

CLAUS

Your letter was forwarded to me, it took some time. It was me who wired you -- I'm sorry, I know it wasn't honest, but I had to meet you, I didn't know if you'd see me otherwise...

RIVIERE

When -- how long ago did he...?

CLAUS

Three years ago. Heart attack, sudden. Can I get you something? A glass of water...?

RIVIERE

What do you want?

CLAUS

To talk to you.

(Riviere, trying to collect himself, motions, go ahead.)

CLAUS

My father and I, we hadn't spoken in some time when he died. Stupid...

RIVIERE

Was he married still?

CLAUS

Yes -- well, not for the last few years, my mother died when I was sixteen.

RIVIERE

Did you scare her to death?

CLAUS

I'm sorry, I just had to see you. When did you meet my father?

RIVIERE

Do you have any brothers or sisters?

CLAUS

No. Are you sure I can't get you a glass of water?

(Riviere shakes his head no, as he continues to stare at Claus.)

RIVIERE

Your mother, was her name Greta?

CLAUS

... Yes, did you know her?

RIVIERE

He spoke of her.

CLAUS

You met my father during the war?

RIVIERE

What did he say about me?

CLAUS

About you...?

(shakes his head, nothing)

RIVIERE

He must have said something or you wouldn't be so interested. You wouldn't have lied and travelled all the way here.

CLAUS

It was your letter --

RIVIERE

"If you are the Gerhard Roder who served at the Russian front and then spent six months in France, I should very much appreciate hearing from you." That was my entire letter.

CLAUS

... May I have that glass of water?

(Riviere rises, gets him a glass of water:)

CLAUS

My father never spoke about the war. Never went to reunions, had no friends from that period. People would call, he'd cut them off, not interested. Once, he referred to it, only once.

(Riviere stops, anxious to know:)

CLAUS

It was right after my mother died. He never showed emotion -- always in control, "disciplined". I guess I was upset he wasn't more upset about her death. He got drunk -- it was the only time I ever saw him drunk, the only time I ever saw him not in complete control of everything. He said there was a friend he'd met in the war who saved his life.

(Riviere, disappointed, hands Claus the glass of water:)

RIVIERE

Oh.

CLAUS

Was that you? Did you save his life?

RIVIERE

I suppose I did, yes.

CLAUS

How?

RIVIERE

I helped him avoid an ambush.

CLAUS

Why would you do that? You were on the other side.

RIVIERE

I was returning a favor.

CLAUS

He helped you...?

RIVIERE

Oh yes -- but personally, not in a military way.

CLAUS

How?

RIVIERE

He helped me... know myself.

CLAUS

That's what he said about you.

RIVIERE

... What?

CLAUS

He said the man who saved his life helped him discover who he was, and he was grateful to him, and hoped some day I'd find as good a friend.

(Riviere can't speak. Nods.)

CLAUS

Who was he?

RIVIERE

A good man.

(turning to prevent Claus seeing his emotion)  
I'm sorry -- I was so hoping he was alive, you see... Did he re-marry? After your mother's death?

CLAUS

No.

RIVIERE

And -- forgive my asking -- did you ever have reason to believe that he was... unfaithful to her?

CLAUS

My father? He was as straight as they come.

RIVIERE

... Straight?

CLAUS

He got up and went to work every day, at the same time, came home to dinner and a book -- always reading, always hidden behind a book. On the weekends, a hike or a swim, maybe a movie. Church every Sunday. Summer, he'd take us for a holiday in the mountains -- same place every year. Last weekend of autumn, burn the leaves. Christmas, the same ornaments on the tree, the same carols, and that same damn sweet gluwine. Routine, that was him. It was like, if he'd altered it, he'd crack. I hated it.

RIVIERE

That's what you fought about?

CLAUS

I went with a fast crowd, I didn't want to continue with school...

(really:)

I never knew him. He never knew who I was. He never let himself be seen. Except that one time. I just wanted to know him, to have him know me, who I really was.

(more)

CLAUS (cont'd)

(then)  
Did he fall in love in France?

RIVIERE

... Yes.

CLAUS

What happened to her?

RIVIERE

She loved him, she was never the same.

CLAUS

He wouldn't have liked that. He always told me, You can survive anything, but you must be strong.

(then)  
You're English, aren't you?

RIVIERE

Yes.

CLAUS

Then maybe you'll understand the significance of this...

(taking something out of his pocket)  
I found it when I was cleaning out the house after he died, he'd hidden it under his socks --  
(handing a button to Riviere)  
It's a button, says Harrods on the back...

(Riviere takes it, overcome with emotion which he can't hide from Claus.)

CLAUS

What does it mean?

(Riviere turns to look at Edward, who is holding the parachute, who has been watching this all:)

RIVIERE

(to both Edward and Claus)  
It means he knew who you really were, and he loved you anyway.

(Riviere turns back to Claus, offers him back the button. Claus, also moved, motions for him to keep it. Riviere holds it, looking at it, turning it over and over in his hand, as -- )

(Edward takes a spade out of his backpack and starts to bury the parachute. The lights fade on the three of them...)

(THE END.)