

The Dog Man of Brignoles

a play in three acts by
George Gray

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Preface

On July 3, 1940, in a tragic but necessary move calculated to prevent the powerful naval resources of Britain's vanquished French allies from falling under Axis control, Prime Minister Churchill ordered an attack on resisting elements of the French fleet moored off the North African coast at Oran. Although successful in its strategic goal, the engagement represents one of the most unhappy ironies of the war, a poignant demonstration of the exorbitance and moral absurdity of political nationalism. In recalling the incident, however, Churchill, the determined optimist, characteristically and philosophically observed:

"The genius of France enabled her people to comprehend the whole significance of Oran, and in her agony to draw new hope and strength from this additional bitter pang ... In a village near Toulon dwelt two peasant families, each of whom had lost a sailor son by British fire at Oran. A funeral service was arranged to which all their neighbors sought to go. Both families requested that the Union Jack should lie upon their coffins side by side with the Tricolor, and their wishes were respectfully observed. In this we may see how the comprehending spirit of simple folk touches the sublime."

The Second World War
Volume II: Their Finest Hour

Brignoles is indeed a village in the south of France which, for historical accuracy, should lie further south, and which demographically has one tenth the portion now -- today -- of my Brignoles in 1939, lifted from the map of France primarily and essentially for its sonority in the title. Otherwise, excepting historic events and figures, The Dog Man of Brignoles is a fictitious work, and any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

This play is conferred upon my father
George Gray, Jr.
who brilliantly staged its only (but for one unmentionable)
production in 1978

CHARACTERS

JEAN-LOUIS PERRAULT, the Dog Man, 50
GRETHE, his wife, 39
WOLF ("Loup"), their son, 20
PIERRE BOUILLON, baker, town bureaucrat, 45
MADELAINE, nee PERRAULT, his wife, 46
PAUL, their son, 20
MARIE-LOUISE ("Mimi"), their adopted daughter, 17
ELAINE DUPUY. a young widow
CLAUDE, her son, 10
MARCEL BASSE, neighbor and friend
TWO OLD WOMEN
A GERMAN OFFICER
GERMAN SOLDIERS

SCENARIO

ACT ONE

Scene One. September 1, 1939

Scene Two. The next morning

ACT TWO

Scene One. November, 1939

Scene Two. Midwinter, 1940

Scene Three. May 10, 1940

Scene Four. June 16, 1940

Scene Five. July 3, 1940

ACT THREE

Scene One. Summer, 1940 to Autumn, 1942

Scene Two. Immediately following

SETTING

In the main playing area, the home/*boulangerie* of the Bouillon family. The many-windowed shop, with display cases and shelves for bread, occupies the moderately elevated up left quadrant of the stage and gives on the street. A curtained arch separates the shop from the kitchen/living area. Two large ovens, a cookstove, a dining table with chairs; a staircase leading to a landing and hall to upstairs rooms; a door giving onto a side alley; chairs, a sofa, dressing in a downstage sitting area. The atmosphere is one of simple comfort, a bit cramped, owing to its two-family occupation, and here and there a bit threadbare, but generally warm and pleasant.

In contrast, in the extreme and intimate (sunken) forestage, unseen (unobtrusive) unless lit, the weathered outbuilding where JEAN-LOUIS kennels his dogs. Dirt floor, rough wood, straw, some distance from the house. At left, a pen-like enclosure which

obscures the dogs; at center a wood stove, a rough bench; at right the only door.

At the extreme right, at considerable height and separated from the main action by time and space, an amorphous area representing the gun deck on the French battleship Bretagne. It is totally inconspicuous until lit, and the quality of both scenery and lights suggest distance and detachment.

Finally, suspended above the playing area and angled toward the audience, also invisible until lit, a large projection screen. *[NOTE: Although by far the most effective medium for conveying documentary material in the script, the motion picture device is not mandatory. Other forms of projection, radio news broadcasts (period or contrived), or even well-phrased program notes are sufficient substitutes.]*

The Dog Man of Brignoles

Act One

ON THE SCREEN:

The Curtain Warmer. The audience enters a semi-dark house to witness a montage of film clips assembled from pre-war movie-news reports. Early in the sequence, a frivolous nostalgia-sports highlights, fashion briefs, business news and beauty contests. A subtle transition shifts focus to growing tension in Europe (Czechoslovakia, Munich) which culminates on the eve of the Invasion of Poland.

Scene One. Early morning. September 1, 1939.

The kennel, JEAN-LOUIS emerges from the pen. Weary, cramped, a bloodsoaked rag tied around his left hand; he stretches, rubs his neck, moves to the door and exits into sunlight.

Beat. Lights fade in the kennel.

In the kitchen, GRETHE, still in nightclothes, kneads dough into small baguettes, places them in rows on large breadpans.

Beat.

JEAN-LOUIS enters by the upstage door, stands spent. She meets his eyes with patient question.

Shared Beat.

JEAN-LOUIS

(In response.)

Nothing. False alarm.

GRETHE

I pour you coffee. Sit down.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Moving to the table.)

I ache from sitting. All night. All for nothing.

GRETHE

(Pouring.)

You worry too much.

JEAN-LOUIS

All that agony. Wasted.

(Slumps into a chair.)

Now she's exhausted. When she starts again.

GRETHE

God will give her strength.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Sipping. Irony.)

God...!

GRETHE

(Sees his hand.)

You've hurt yourself!

JEAN-LOUIS

It's nothing. Hans, he snapped at me.

GRETHE

Maybe he knows he's going to be a papa.

JEAN-LOUIS

She's too young. I should have waited.

GRETHE

The young are strong, Jean-Louis.

JEAN-LOUIS

She's so small.

GRETHE

(Brief smile.)

Like me, ja?

When you stayed with me, it was the same, remember? You were so nervous Frau Schumann made you leave the room.

JEAN-LOUIS

I remember.

GRETHE

(Beat.)

How is she?

JEAN-LOUIS

Sleeping.

GRETHE

You should sleep too.

JEAN-LOUIS

I'll nap down there. She'll need me when she wakes up.

GRETHE

Will she?

JEAN-LOUIS

I have to be there.

GRETHE

What can you do for her, Jean-Louis?

JEAN-LOUIS

I stare into her eyes.

Her eyes never left mine. All night. Helpless, afraid. As though I were somehow both the pain and the release, responsible...

GRETHE

You cannot release her from this pain, Jean-Louis. Only with God a woman shares this pain. This is her miracle.

JEAN-LOUIS

What kind of miracle is pain?

GRETHE

You're tired.

JEAN-LOUIS

I have to be there.

There are so few miracles left in the world.

GRETHE

Will you be all day in the kennel, do you think?

JEAN-LOUIS

Until it's over. Why?

GRETHE

I just wonder. You know today is Mimi's birthday. JEAN-LOUIS

(Sardonic chuckle.)

Are you afraid I'll spoil the party?

GRETHE

(Slight flush.)

I only am afraid you don't remember her.

JEAN-LOUIS

Who am I to remember? A man who sleeps with his dogs.

GRETHE

Jean-Louis, she don't mean...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Refuting bark.)

"A crazy old Bosch who sleeps with his dogs!"

GRETHE

She's just a child, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

Then she should be beaten! A child doesn't talk that way about her betters!

GRETHE

(Quickly.)

Schweige! You'll wake the house!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Loudly.)

I don't care if I wake the whole town! Wake up! Wake up, you stupid Frogs! Let's get this over with once and for all!

GRETHE

Please, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

And you! Look at you! Always so meek, always on tiptoes, like some mincing...

GRETHE

(He sees her tears. Beat.)

I'm sorry, Jean-Louis. I don't mean to make you upset...

JEAN-LOUIS

(He can't meet her gaze.)

I'm worried about the bitch...

GRETHE

I know.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat. He rises.)

I'd better be getting back down there.

GRETHE

There's fresh bread in the oven...

JEAN-LOUIS

I'll have some later. Ask Paul to bring me some.

GRETHE

(Still distressed.)

Jean-Louis, please. Forgive me...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Wheels to face her.)

For what?

GRETHE

(Startled.)

I...

JEAN-LOUIS

Forgive you for what? What have you done?

GRETHE

(Beat. Pathos.)

Why must you always fight with me, Jean-Louis?

Suddenly, almost savagely, he embraces her; she responds with gratitude. Then, as though triggered by compassion, he lifts his head, listening, almost hearing, something far away.

JEAN-LOUIS

What...?

MADELEINE appears on the landing dressed for the day, sees him, stops to observe.

GRETHE

(Sensing his drift.)

Jean-Louis, was ist loss...?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Vaguely.)

No, wait—something...

GRETHE

What?

(He stares into space as the instant slips away.)

You need to sleep.

JEAN-LOUIS

(A sigh.)

Ja.

(Starts away.)

Send Paul down, don't forget. I want to talk to him.

GRETHE

Jean-Louis, I don't think maybe...

JEAN-LOUIS

Do as I ask, Grethe.

(Beat. He sees MADELEINE descending the staircase; bristles.)

So! Guten Morgen, meine Schwester!

GRETHE

Jean-Louis!

MADELEINE

(Retaliating in kind.)

Good morning, Monsieur le Dog Man!

JEAN-LOUIS lunges at her impulsively, snarling like a dog; she recoils with a reflexive shriek of horror. He laughs unpleasantly, exits upstage. She shouts after him.

Dog! Crazy dog!

(Crossing to the kitchen.)

I swear to God, I don't know how much more I can take...

GRETHE

He was up all night...

MADELEINE

For a minute, I thought—he's getting worse, Grethe.

GRETHE

It was false labor...

MADELEINE

One day he's going to hurt somebody.

(Kneading dough.)

I wish he wouldn't keep asking to see Paul.

GRETHE

It's good he talks to someone, I think...

MADELEINE

(Picks up breadpan, moves to oven.)

He ought to try talking to his own son.

GRETHE

His own son don't talk so much to him either.

MADELEINE starts to respond, stops herself, stares at GRETHE in bemused exasperation. Beat.

Bright light in the kennel as Jean-Louis opens the door, steps in, dazed and distant, almost listening; sinking to his knees. Near darkness as the door swings slowly shut. He remains without moving.

MADELEINE

(Almost without interruption, turning to open the oven.)

Oh, my! You've been busy this morning!

GRETHE

I don't sleep so good without Jean-Louis...

(Sees MARIE-LOUISE on the landing.)

Besides, a birthday girl should have hot bread for breakfast, ja?

MADELEINE

Ah, bonjour, petite. Happy birthday

MARIE-LOUISE

Bon jour, Mama. Bon jour, ma tante.

MADELEINE

So tell me, how does it feel to be seventeen? I've forgotten.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Adolescent nonchalance)

Oh, I don't know. No change.

(Kisses MADELEINE, who notices rouged lips.)

Where is everybody?

MADELEINE

Sleeping, like rich people.

MARIE-LOUISE

Papa too?

(Kisses GRETHE, who also notices, smiles at MADELEINE.)

GRETHE

Happy birthday, Liebchen.

MADELEINE

I don't know what his problem is today.

(She calls.)

Pierre!

(Taking tray from oven.)

How about a hot roll?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Carefully casual as she sits.)

Just coffee, if you don't mind.

GRETHE

(Amused.)

"No change," she says.

MADELEINE

After Aunt Grethe went to the trouble to make them just for you!

GRETHE

Is okay, she don't want to lose her figure, Madeleine.

MADELEINE

(Pouring coffee.)

She's just afraid she'll smear her lipstick.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Protesting whine.)

Mama...

MADELEINE

I know. I remember some things. Only I think I was older.

(To GRETHE.)

How old were you when you first wore lipstick.

GRETHE

Already I was married, I think...

MARIE-LOUISE

(Has taken a cigarette from her pocket, lighting up.)

So what was Jean-Louis yelling about this morning? I thought the roof was caving in.

MADELEINE

(A familiar reprimand.)

Don't talk that way about your uncle.

MARIE-LOUISE

(An unfamiliar retort.)

Why not? You do.

MADELEINE

(Turns to rebuke.)

What I do and what you do...

(Sees cigarette.)

What is that in your hand?

MARIE-LOUISE

Mama...

MADELEINE

Put it out.

MARIE-LOUISE

I'm seventeen, Mama!

MADELEINE

(Moving to take cigarette, putting it out.)

I don't care how old you are, as long as you live in this house...

MARIE-LOUISE

Corinne smokes!

MADELEINE

(Disapproving.)

Corinne!

MARIE-LOUISE

And what about Papa?

MADELEINE

You'd just better hope he doesn't notice the lipstick!

MARIE-LOUISE

He smokes!

GRETHE

(Affably, bringing her coffee and rolls.)

Cigarettes stump your growing, Liebchen!

MARIE-LOUISE

(A sigh.)

"Stunt," Aunt Grethe.

GRETHE

What?

MARIE-LOUISE

It's not "stump," it's...

(GRETHE raises an eyebrow.)

I'm sorry.

GRETHE

(A smug smile as she sets down the treat.)

Good, because somebody that mocks the faults of a poor foreign lady don't deserve no *brioche*.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Spontaneous delight.)

Brioches!

MADELEINE

(Calling off.)

Pierre! You're going to be late!

PIERRE

I'm coming!

MARIE-LOUISE

(Bringing up a closed subject.)

Mama, can't I please stay home?

(MADELEINE reproaches with a glance.)

But they're leaving Sunday!

MADELEINE

You have all day tomorrow.

MARIE-LOUISE

Can I ask Papa?

MADELEINE

No.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Her morning ruined.)

Some birthday!

GRETHE

(To MARIE-LOUISE.)

What is that word you said? Stunt?

MARIE-LOUISE

S-t-u-n-t.

GRETHE

Like a circus trick? Stunt?

MARIE-LOUISE

That's what they say.

GRETHE

I think it should be "stump," like a tree stump. Stump your growing.

PIERRE

(Hurries in, carrying shoes and socks; kisses MADELEINE.)

Good morning, *ma famille*.

GRETHE

Good morning, Pierre.

MARIE-LOUISE

Bonjour, Papa.

PIERRE

(Kisses her, then sits to don socks.)

Bonjour, petite.

MADELEINE

Do you have time to eat something?

PIERRE

Brioches!

MADELEINE

Grethe made them.

MARIE-LOUISE

Papa, how old were you when you started smoking?

PIERRE

What?

MADELEINE

I wouldn't bring this up right now if I were you.

PIERRE

(Catching the drift.)

I think it was when I could pay for them. Why?

MADELEINE

There, you see?

PIERRE

Is that lip rouge you're wearing?

MARIE-LOUISE

Yes, Papa.

PIERRE

You look like a shop girl. Have you taken a job in a shop?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Patiently.)

No, Papa.

PIERRE

So what's the occasion?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Sigh.)

No occasion, Papa...

GRETHE

(As if he didn't know.)

It's her birthday, Pierre!

PIERRE

No! Her birthday? Really?

(To MARIE-LOUISE.)

Well, no wonder she's acting like a shop girl. Here, have a cigarette!

MARIE-LOUISE

(He reaches for his pack.)

Papa...

PIERRE

How old are you? Twenty-five?

MARIE-LOUISE

I'm seventeen, Papa.

PIERRE

(Wrinkling his forehead, cigarette in hand.)

Only seventeen?

MADELEINE

Don't make fun of her, Pierre.

PIERRE

Of course it's her birthday. How could I forget? September first. Our little miracle.

MADELAINE

(To GRETHE.)

We didn't think she'd make it. Her mother was so sick...

PIERRE

She was an actress.

MARIE-LOUISE

We know, Papa.

PIERRE

It runs in the blood.

MARIE-LOUISE

So why don't you go on the stage?

PIERRE

Me?

MARIE-LOUISE

She was your sister.

MADELAINE

(Reproach.)

Mimi.

PIERRE

(Innocently takes small box from his pocket.)

I don't suppose there's anything else you'd rather have besides this cigarette...?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Quickly comprehending.)

I don't know. What did you have in mind?

PIERRE

In mind? Oh, nothing special...

MARIE-LOUISE

(Growing excitement.)

What is it, Mama?

MADELEINE

How would I know?

MARIE-LOUISE

Mama!

MADELEINE

I don't know, really. He wouldn't tell me.

MARIE-LOUISE

(To PIERRE.)

You have to give me a hint.

PIERRE

Close your eyes and hold out your hand.

(She does. He takes ring from box.)

Keep them closed, now...

MADELEINE

(Astonished.)

Pierre!

PIERRE

Shhh!

(He slips the ring on her finger.)

Now open.

MARIE-LOUISE

Oh, Papa!

GRETHE

What is it?

MARIE-LOUISE

A sapphire! Look, Mama!

(To PIERRE.)

Is it real?

PIERRE

(Gaily.)

Of course it's real!

MADELEINE

Pierre, for God's sake!

GRETHE

It's so beautiful!

MARIE-LOUISE

Corinne's going to hate me! May I wear it to school?

PIERRE

I take it we've made a trade?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Hugging him.)

Oh, yes, Papa! I love it!

PIERRE

And cigarettes can wait for a year or two?

MARIE-LOUISE

Cigarettes stump your growth.

(GRETHE and MADELEINE share the joke.)

Thank you, Papa!

PIERRE

You're welcome, petite. Happy birthday.

MADELEINE

Off you go now.

MARIE-LOUISE

Oh, can't I show it to Paul and Loup?

MADELEINE

After school.

MARIE-LOUISE

(A final appeal.)

Oh, Mama, do I have to?

(MADELEINE's glance.)

You're so mean.

(Kisses her, then PIERRE.)

Bye, Papa. Bye, Aunt Grethe...

GRETHE

(As she leaves.)

Happy day, Liebchen.

MADELEINE

Happy birthday!

PIERRE

(He sips MIMI's coffee.)

Mmm. Cold.

MADELEINE

You want a fresh cup?

PIERRE

No, I need to be going too.

(He starts to put on his shoes.)

MADELEINE

Pierre...

PIERRE

What?

MADELEINE

Pierre, that ring! It must have cost a fortune!

PIERRE

You saw her face, Madeleine. It was worth it, wasn't it?

MADELEINE

Worth what? What did you pay for it?

PIERRE

Less than you'd think, believe me. Bonnard bought it from a man in Marseilles that needed the money. It was a good bargain.

MADELEINE

How good?

PIERRE

(Beat. He is uncomfortable.)

The man was a Jew.

MADELEINE

A Jew?

PIERRE

From Germany. A refuge. There are thousands of them in Marseilles, they're selling everything they have.

MADELEINE

How much did you pay Bonnard?

PIERRE

Four hundred francs.

MADELEINE

Four hundred!

PIERRE

He wanted five, but I talked him down. He said I was a better Jew than the man he bought it from.

MADELEINE

But the ring must be worth four thousand at least!

PIERRE

Bonnard only paid two hundred.

MADELEINE

(Nonplused. Heavily.)

Sometimes I wonder if we're any better than the Nazis...

PIERRE

Madeleine!

MADELEINE

They chase people from their homes and then we pick their pockets.

PIERRE

The Jew was satisfied! Bonnard didn't make him sell it!

(Defensive rationale.)

They have to sell, Madeleine. Some of them still have families in Germany—forgive me, Grethe...

(GRETHE waves dismissal.)

Some are trying to get to England or America. They need the money.

MADELEINE

Maybe so, but still, such a sacrifice!

PIERRE

Was I wrong to buy it?

MADELEINE

(Uncomfortably resigned.)

If you hadn't, I suppose someone else would have.

PIERRE

And Mimi. Did you see her face?

GRETHE

She was so happy!

MADELAINE

She is so much like Roxanne.

PIERRE

Roxanne was twenty-two.

GRETHE

Children grow up faster now.

MADELEINE

(Dismissing the issue.)

Go on, get out of here. You're going to be late.

PIERRE

(Rising, slipping into his coat.)

That's what you always say.

MADELEINE

Here, take a roll. You can't go without food...

PIERRE

And never once...

MADELEINE

(She puts roll in his mouth.)

One day it's going to happen.

PIERRE

(Backing toward the door.)

One day the sky will fall!

MADELEINE

(As he turns to leave.)

Pierre...

(He turns back.)

I'm sorry about the fuss. The ring is beautiful.

PIERRE

(Grateful smile. Suddenly bells begin to peal.)

Oh my God!

GRETHE

(As he starts out.)

Pierre! Your shoes!

(She brings them to him; he starts to put them on.)

MADELEINE

Don't put them on! Run!

(He rushes out in sock feet; she laughs uproariously at the sight.)

GRETHE

(Joining her.)

I wonder if the sky falls now.

MADELEINE

(Moving back into the room. Righteous humor.)

It only serves him right. God's judgment for the Jew.

GRETHE

You must not blame Pierre, Madeleine. He only tries to please.

MADELEINE

Oh, I know. It's just...

(Ironical extenuation.)

And you can't really blame Bonnard, either. After all, the Jew had to sell—Bonnard was doing him a favor, it was an act of charity. Bonnard, the Good Samaritan.

GRETHE

Just because he makes a bargain, it don't mean he's a Nazi...

MADELEINE

(Firmly.)

It's just as much a crime to profit by sin as it is to sin yourself.
The butcher doesn't slaughter sheep if people don't eat mutton.

GRETHE

(Slight Beat.)

So God will judge Monsieur Bonnard too, *ja*?

MADELEINE

I suppose...

GRETHE

And if in the end it makes a young girl smile...

MADELEINE

(With a laugh.)

Can you believe that little...?

GRETHE

She's growing up.

MADELEINE

Oh, I know. Still...

I didn't mind so much with Paul.

(She sips her coffee.)

She's going to be impossible after they've gone.

GRETHE

She wants to go with them!

MADELEINE

Of course she does. The girls in Aix are notorious! I remember when Jean-Louis was there...

GRETHE

(An airy reproach.)

Wolf is a good boy, Madeleine.

MADELEINE

(Teasing.)

Good looking, too!

GRETHE

Like Jean-Louis, *ja*? When he was young.

MADELEINE

Like father, like son. Although I wouldn't let him hear you say it.
(GRETHE flinches; MADELEINE steps back in bounds.)
I'm sorry.

GRETHE

(Slightly petulant, remonstrative.)
Maybe if Wolf cannot have his papa's good looks even, maybe he is like him in other ways too.

MADELEINE

(Rising for more coffee; dismissing the argument.)
Maybe that's the trouble.

GRETHE

(Beat. Bridging.)
I was like Marie-Louise one time, I think.

MADELEINE

(Ironical reference to the cigarette scene.)
Oh, really?

GRETHE

When I was little girl. I used to walk with Papa by the river and make believe I was a countess, and Papa was my handsome French marquis!

MADELEINE

Oh, a Frenchman?

GRETHE

(A smile.)
I know. "Why always am I a Frenchman?" Papa says. He used to laugh...

MADELEINE

(The obvious.)
And then you met Jean-Louis.
(Beat. Suddenly self-mocking, unconscious revelation.)
When I got married, all the handsome Frenchmen were in the trenches! Except Pierre, of course...

GRETHE

Ja, the Germans, too.
(The thought of trenches.)
At least our sons go only to Aix.

MADELEINE

I guess.

GRETHE

(Beat. An undercurrent.)

Better than to war, Madeleine.

MADELEINE

(Rising to clear the table; GRETHE rises to help.)

I'll get these. Why don't you open the shop?

GRETHE

(Slight trepidation; reflexive hesitation.)

I'm not dressed...

MADELEINE

(Perfunctory.)

Just unlock the door, I'll be right there.

GRETHE

(Embarrassed.)

Jawohl.

She enters the shop, unlocks the door, opens shutters; MADELEINE begins to remove bread from the oven.

At the same time, in the kennel, JEAN-LOUIS starts from his trance in sudden recall, finds his bearings, pulls himself to his feet and lurches out the door. Bright light that dims to black as door swings shut.

MADELEINE

(Calling over her shoulder.)

Oh, don't let me forget, tomorrow I want to make something special for them to take on the train. You know how Loup likes sweets.

(GRETHE stands in arch.)

Did they check on the schedule?

GRETHE

Wolf is to go this morning. You think I should wake them?

MADELEINE

No, let them sleep. They'll be getting up early soon enough, and staying out half the night as well.

(Taking hot pans to GRETHE.)

Here, take these.

(GRETHE takes pans to shop, begins to shelve bread;

MADELEINE goes for more.)

You know, it's strange, Loup is exactly like Jean-Louis in so many ways. The way he was. The way he makes you laugh sometimes...

GRETHE

(Wistful.)

Ja.

MADELEINE

The way he has of drawing people to him, you know.

(Entering shop with more bread.)

I'll tell you the truth, sometimes I wish Paul had a little more Perrault blood.

GRETHE

Paul is a good son too, Madeleine.

MADELEINE

(Slight blush.)

I know. Paul's intellectual.

GRETHE

Paul is like my brother Wolf, I think.

MADELEINE

Except he studied chemistry, right?

GRETHE

Yes. Chemistry...

MADELEINE

(Shelving bread, her back to GRETHE.)

I wish Paul would study chemistry. I think this psychology business is a lot of nonsense...

(Turns to find GRETHE in tears.)

Grethe...!

GRETHE

It's all right, I...

(Stifling.)

Wolf is only a year at Heidelberg when...

MADELEINE

(Comforting.)

I know...

GRETHE

(Pulls away.)

I'll get the other...

MADELEINE

Grethe, what...?

GRETHE

Jean-Louis says Wolf should go to Weimar.

MADELEINE

(Wearily.)

Jean-Louis should go to the moon.

GRETHE

That way he says when war comes, Wolf is for Deutschland.

MADELEINE

Grethe...

GRETHE

"What difference does it make," he says, "in the trenches?"

MADELEINE

Jean-Louis is crazy. Besides, they don't have trenches on a battleship.

GRETHE

War is crazy too, *ja*?

MADELEINE

(They've had this conversation too many times.)

Yes, war is crazy. Hitler's crazy. Sometimes the world is crazy! But Loup's a Frenchman, and when it comes to war...

GRETHE

We must have hope, Madeleine!

MADELEINE

I just hope we're ready.

(GRETHE starts to protest.)

I'm sorry. Yes, you're right, let's hope. *Bonne a mere*, maybe I'm the crazy one.

Beat. GRETHE gives up, goes to check the ovens as MADELEINE continues to shelve bread.

JEAN-LOUIS enters upstage, watches GRETHE remove pans.

GRETHE

(Turns, starts.)

Jean-Louis! You startled me!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat. Their eyes meet. He is penitent.)

I do remember when I stayed with you.

GRETHE

I know.

JEAN-LOUIS

A room no bigger then the kennel where I spent last night...

GRETHE

(Grateful.)

Yes.

JEAN-LOUIS

I told you about the mistral wind. The raging mistral of Provence...

GRETHE

You always talk about the mistral...

JEAN-LOUIS

It comes from nowhere and lasts forever, howling like wolves...

MADELEINE

(Having shelved the bread, steps through the arch.)

Grethe, would you like to...

JEAN-LOUIS

(She stops at the sight of him, bristles. Calm.)

She'll be there in a minute.

(Beat. MADELEINE withdraws.)

I couldn't stay down there. The heat, already...

(Beat. He sits.)

I don't see how you bake...

GRETHE

It's not so bad early...

(Beat. A smile.)

"It keeps bread on the table," ja?

(JEAN-LOUIS glares; her eyes drop.)

It is our joke.

JEAN-LOUIS

I should kill the dogs for meat.

GRETHE

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

The best blood in the south of France...

(For MADELEINE's ears.)

As if I'd let a one go to a fool of a French...

GRETHE

Jean-Louis, please...!

The shop door opens, ringing a bell, as HELENE DUPUY enters with her young son CLAUDE. GRETHE starts toward the shop.

JEAN-LOUIS

Wait...

GRETHE

I must go in now...

(He holds her with his eyes.)

MADELEINE

Bonjour, Helene. Bonjour, Monsieur Claude.

CLAUDE

Bonjour, Madame Perrault.

MADELEINE

And what will you have this morning?

HELENE

Three little loaves, I think.

MADELEINE

(Calling.)

Grethe! She's bringing them now.

HELENE

So, tell me about Paul and Loup. Have they gone yet?

MADELEINE

Sunday.

JEAN-LOUIS

(To GRETHE, heavily.)

Go on.

GRETHE touches him, then moves with bread to the shop. JEAN-LOUIS rises, trails after.)

HELENE

We saw them last week at the pond, didn't we, Claude?

CLAUDE

Loup let me play with his ships!

MADELEINE

Oh, did he now!

CLAUDE

And he said he'd take me sailing!

MADELEINE

Well, you must be very special!

HELENE

He said he wished he was going to sea instead of school.

MADELEINE

Well, you know Loup, ever since he was little! But I guess he figures that will come...

GRETHE

(Entering, catching and changing drift.)

You know he goes to study boats, how to build them.

MADELEINE

Here we are!

HELENE

Bonjour, Madame.

GRETHE

Bonjour.

MADELEINE

(Taking three baguettes to wrap.)

Ouch! You'll have to be careful not to burn your hands.

HELENE

Doesn't it smell good, Claude?

Two OLD WOMEN enter, see that MADELEINE is occupied and remain at the door.

MADELEINE

Bonjour, Mesdames.

OLD WOMAN

(Both nod with reserve.)

Madeleine...

HELENE

Oh, have you heard the latest news?

MADELEINE

News?

HELENE

The Italians called a conference in Rome next week, and Hitler's going to go!

GRETHE

This is true?

HELENE

You know once all those educated men sit down and talk...

JEAN-LOUIS

(In the arch.)

Il Duce? Educated?

MADELEINE

Shut up, Jean-Louis.

HELENE

(Timid defiance.)

At least we have another week!

JEAN-LOUIS

Another straw to clutch.

GRETHE

(To the WOMEN, who ignore her.)

Mesdames?

MADELEINE

(Giving parcel to HELENE.)

Here you are, three little baguettes, and a little something sweet for Claude...

HELENE

Oh, no, please...

MADELEINE

For the news. Take it.

HELENE

You must say thank you, Claude.

CLAUDE

Merci, madame!

MADELEINE

(Taking money from HELENE.)

You're welcome, Monsieur Claude.

GRETHE

(To the WOMEN.)

May I help you?

JEAN-LOUIS

(The WOMEN are silent.)

Well? Speak up! Do you want something or don't you?

MADELEINE

Go on about your business, Jean-Louis. We can take care of ours.

JEAN-LOUIS

Stay out of this.

(To the WOMEN.)

Well?

OLD WOMAN

(Turning to leave.)

We'll come back some other time.

JEAN-LOUIS

What's wrong, old witch? Is she diseased? Is she a leper?

GRETHE

(Trying to restrain him.)

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

What are you afraid of?

OLD WOMAN

(Turning back to JEAN-LOUIS.)

Nazi pig!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Chasing them out the door.)

Mannerless hag! Was that an insult? Children of Robespierre!

MADELEINE

(Rushing to him.)

Jean-Louis!

JEAN-LOUIS

Unverschämte Baeurin! Bald kommt der Krieg! Das Brandopfer! Heil Hitler! Heil Hitler!

MADELEINE

(Grabs him.)

Jean-Louis!

She slaps him. He slaps her back with equal force. He breaks and stalks into the main room. She follows, stopping just inside the arch.

HELENE

(Softly, embarrassed.)

Come, Claude...

GRETHE

Please forgive him, Helene...

HELENE

I pity you, Madame.

(As they leave.)

Au revoir.

MADELEINE

(To JEAN-LOUIS.)

Why do you do things like that?

JEAN-LOUIS

What difference does it make any more?

MADELEINE

Damn you, Jean-Louis! I depend on these people to...

JEAN-LOUIS

To keep bread on the table. I heard that one already.

MADELEINE

It's the truth!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Pointing to GRETHE in the arch.)

I won't stand by and see her abused!.

GRETHE

Stop...

MADELEINE

She's got nothing to do with it. It's you they hate.

GRETHE

Stop it, both of you!

MADELEINE

(Beat. Calmer now, but deadly earnest.)

You mustn't come in the shop any more, Jean-Louis. Do you understand? Not even in the house when the shop is open. Just stay down with the dogs.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Humiliated.)

It's your house.

MADELEINE

It's better when you're not here, believe me. It's only when you're around...

(Beat. He starts out, shamed and defeated.)

One more thing, Jean-Louis. I want you to stop talking to Paul.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Turns in futile protest.)

Why?

MADELEINE

He's my son.

JEAN-LOUIS

A man talks to anyone who listens.

MADELEINE

It upsets him.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Suddenly alert, listening.)

There-what? Again. Like wolves-only the air, still...

(Beat. MADELEINE turns away.)

No promise...

(Beat. A sigh.)

Gone again.

(To MADELEINE.)

I'll go talk to my dogs...

GRETHE

(He exits; MADELEINE sinks into a chair. Beat.)

You mustn't blame him, Madeleine...

MADELEINE

Grethe, I love you like a sister, but if you defend him to me know, I

swear by all that's holy...!

GRETHE

He is not the one to blame...

MADELEINE

When he was Loup's age he'd have killed the man who talked like that!

GRETHE

(Uncharacteristic sarcasm.)

So Wolf must kill his papa now, *ja*? Maybe this stops the trouble.

MADELEINE

Just as long as he stays out of the shop, that's all I care about. Times are bad enough without him chasing customers away.

GRETHE

(Impressing her truth.)

It is for me he does these things, Madeleine. I am the *Auslander*.

MADELEINE

(Rising.)

I'm not even going to...

GRETHE

They do not hate Jean-Louis except for me: I am the cause! Maybe now, I don't know, all this Nazi business—only they call *him* German! Why? Except for me!

MADELEINE

(At stove.)

You want some more coffee?

GRETHE

(Defeat.)

Nein, bitte. I must get dressed, I think...

MADELEINE

(GRETHE starts out; MADELEINE stops her.)

Grethe, he knew when he brought you here it wasn't going to be easy. He knew there would be hard feelings...

GRETHE

(Beat. Stirring emotion rarely displayed.)

You think in Koln it was easy?

MADELEINE

He made the choice.

GRETHE

You think in Koln it is not the same? What choice does he have? No! Hopes he has, only hopes. To come home. "I am a teacher in Brignoles," he tells me. "I have good friends, respect..."

MADELEINE

(Some of these things have never been spoken.)

Some things take time! If he'd shown the slightest patience...

GRETHE

In Koln he is patient! Four years in Koln, he is patient. Even when they beat him in the streets, even when they do not pay him for his work because he is a Frenchman, he is patient! For me. Because Koln is my home. Only when there is no work at all, he ask me can we come to France. He has no patience left. Only hopes. And what does he find?

MADELEINE

You were a German. A lot of Frenchmen died because of Germans.

GRETHE

My brother is dead in the War too. By Frenchmen! Is this cause for me to hate the French? You? Pierre?

(MADELEINE sits at the table with a sigh.)

One time my papa says to me, "Before you hate, you must first be sure to have a good cause. With no good cause, you feel guilt, and you only will hate yourself..."

For Papa, when Wolf is killed, this is his cause...

They are much alike, I think, these people and my Papa. They blame me for their sons like Papa blames Jean-Louis...

MADELEINE

Do you think he felt guilt?

GRETHE

Papa?

(Sadly.)

Ja, Papa felt guilt. It is not the French who kill my brother, it is the War—it is the hating. It is all the people who allow such a thing even as war. Even Papa, he too is to blame. The Frenchman who shoots the gun, even he is not to blame any more than Papa. In his heart he knows this is true.

I think maybe there is not good cause for hating.

MADELEINE

(A subtle point.)

What about Jean-Louis?

GRETHE

(Beat. Still defending him.)

You were not there in Koln, Madeleine. You cannot know what hopes he had. Now his hopes are gone.

The things he listens, in the air? These are his hopes!

When Wolf is killed, my Papa is the same.

(She winds down.)

I must get dressed. There's work to do.

(Crosses to stairs, stops.)

I have hopes. I hope there is no war this time. I hope our sons don't go to war...

(Shrug.)

What good is hope? The war is coming, ja?

(Brief reminiscence.)

"Die Hofnung is das Vertrauen im Morgen haben..." Hope is to have faith in tomorrow.

(Sad smile.)

Jean-Louis says this to me the first time we make love together...

MADELEINE

Grethe...

Suddenly PIERRE bursts into the shop, stunned and bewildered.

PIERRE

Madeleine! Paul!

MADELEINE

(Moving toward the arch.)

Pierre...?

PIERRE

(Bursting through, almost knocking her down.)

Good, you're here. Where's Paul?

MADELEINE

Upstairs...

PIERRE

(Already crossing.)

Paul! Loup!

MADELEINE

Pierre, what is it?

PIERRE

Come down here, quickly! Both of you!

MADELEINE

Pierre, for the love of God...!

GRETHE

(Knowing.)

Wait.

MADELEINE

(Realizing.)

Dear God...

Beat. JEAN-LOUIS reappears in the kennel, seems suddenly aware of the suspense.

JEAN-LOUIS

Wait-what...?

PAUL

(Appearing on the landing in pajamas with WOLF.)

What's wrong, Papa?

PIERRE

The news has come. The Nazis have attacked Poland.

Blackout. End of Scene One.

ON THE SCREEN:

Blitzkrieg! The Invasion of Poland at full intensity.

Scene Two. Sunday morning (September 3), before dawn.

WOLF, MADELEINE, and PAUL. An air of forced, but not false, gaiety.

PAUL

The condemned man ate a hearty breakfast.

MADELEINE

Day-old bread and last night's coffee!

WOLF

Of all the things I'll pine for in the bleak months ahead, the staff of life from *Boulangerie Madeleine* is what I'll miss most sorely!

MADELEINE

Merci, Monsieur connoisseur!

WOLF

As for the coffee...

(He tastes it, shudders.)

Ecch!

PAUL

Wait until you taste what the Navy calls coffee, pal!

MADELEINE

Poor Loup. Maybe you'll be stationed at Toulon, or at least Marseilles. Then you could get home for a decent meal now and then.

PAUL

I doubt it, Mama. The south coast is safe as long as Italy stays out of it; the British can keep the Germans out at Gibraltar. Most likely we'll go to the Baltic.

MADELEINE

The Baltic?

WOLF

It's part of Paul's strategy for winning the war in two weeks. Having leveled his incomparable intellect against the facts of the matter, Monsieur Bouillon has devised an unassailable masterwork of military science!

PAUL

(Smiling.)

Of course, the War Ministry may have other ideas...

MADELEINE

(To WOLF, playfully.)

Maybe the University will loan him out, what do you think?

(WOLF and PAUL exchange a glance.)

No?

WOLF

(Smiles.)

Why not? And while he's in Paris, maybe he could also straighten out the economy!

PAUL

Confess it, Loup. It's the only plan that makes sense.

MADELEINE

So tell us, *monsieur le strategiste*, what should we do?

PAUL

It's simple, really. While the Germans are fighting in Poland—they have two thirds of their force there right now—we take over the Baltic, land troops at Kiel, and march on Berlin! If Hitler pulls out of Poland, the Poles attack his flank; if he abandons the Rhine, we cross over the Siegfried Line.

MADELEINE

Very simple.

WOLF

(Continuing a previous argument.)

Except for the German Navy, who just might not appreciate the way we just sail in and take over the Baltic...

PAUL

Oh, but with the invincible Loup Perrault on a French ship, how can we fail?

WOLF

Why don't I just parachute myself into the middle of Berlin and save the Allies all this trouble and expense? I'll challenge the Fuehrer to single combat, winner take all. Pistols at ten paces.

MADELEINE

(Gaily.)

Great! But not pistols—what?

WOLF

Wrestling!

PAUL

Chess!

WOLF

You want to lose the war? I can't even beat you at chess.

PAUL

Nobody can beat me!

WOLF

You challenge him, then.

MADELEINE

Paul will be much too busy learning about crazy people to worry with little things like wars!

PAUL

(Not intentionally.)

Leave the fighting to the men, right, Mama?

MADELEINE

(WOLF reacts. Off balance.)

What...?

PAUL

(GRETHE appears on the landing.)

Good morning, Aunt Grethe.

GRETHE

Good morning, Paul.

(Beat. All are uncomfortable.)

Is it time?

MADELEINE

Almost. Pierre's gone for the car.

WOLF

I was going to wake you, Mama.

GRETHE

(Sad joke.)

I know. I couldn't wait any longer...

WOLF

(Beat.)

I have to go, Mama.

GRETHE

I know this too.

WOLF

The train leaves at seven.

GRETHE

For the Navy, *ja*? All the toy boats, now you sail on a real one...

MADELEINE

I'll pour you some coffee.

GRETHE

Ja, danke.

WOLF

I was going to wake you, Mama. I wasn't just going to leave without saying goodbye...

GRETHE

Your papa too, *ja*?

(WOLF turns away.)

You must tell Papa, Wolf.

WOLF

You know what would happen...

GRETHE

He's your papa, Wolf. You owe him as a son. Go to him.

WOLF

I've gone to him before, Mama. I've gone to him a thousand times. This time he can come to me.

PAUL

Loup...

WOLF

He doesn't care, Mama! I'd go to him if I thought he cared! He cares more about his dogs than he's ever cared for me.

GRETHE

This is maybe because they do not sneak away from him in the night.

WOLF

That's not fair, Mama.

GRETHE

(To MADELEINE, for support.)

You tell him.

MADELEINE

Grethe...

GRETHE

(She senses defeat. To WOLF.)

I have things for you to take. Just little things. I'll get them...

WOLF

(As she turns.)

I'm sorry, Mama.

GRETHE

(Turns back.)

For me? Don't be sorry for me, my son. Be sorry for him. You know where he is now? With the dogs. All night, with the dogs, again. What do you think he does down there, Wolf? You think he don't know too, like me? You think he don't wait? For you to come, for blessing? You shame him, Wolf. You wait for him to come to you? He cannot. He's ashamed.

WOLF

(Firmly.)

I'm not waiting, Mama. I stopped waiting a long time ago. This isn't a game—not a contest of pride or will. I just don't want the last memories I have of home to be mutilated by the ugly scene I *know* will happen if I see him! I am sorry for him, Mama. Believe me I am. If I thought it would do any good at all...

GRETHE

(Beat.)

I get the things.

MADELEINE

(Beat. GRETHE leaves.)

Don't you know every time you strike at him you hit her...

WOLF

You know, the irony is she's right. He's down there right now, waiting for me, torturing himself, fighting his pride. Knowing I won't come. Even wishing he had the courage, or the strength, to come to me...

MADELEINE

God forbid.

WOLF

Only the second he saw me all his suffering would turn to bile and he'd snarl at me like a mad dog—"Heil Hitler!"

PAUL

Freud calls it schizophrenia.

MADELEINE

I call it crazy! I only wish your mother wasn't...

WOLF

What else can I do? I'm going to war for everything he hates! How can I ask his blessing?

PAUL

(Looking for his own opening.)

I think we ought to change the subject. Do we have any brandy in the house?

WOLF

Good idea.

MADELEINE

Brandy? For breakfast?

WOLF

Breakfast is no occasion, *ma tante*, but a sea cruise deserves a toast!

MADELEINE

(A smile.)

Get some glasses, Paul. The warrior seeks a taste of glory!

WOLF

Vive la France!

MARIE-LOUISE appears on the landing in her modest version of a sexy negligee as PAUL pours the cognac.

MARIE-LOUISE

I guess it's time to say goodbye.

MADELEINE

Mimi! Go right back to your room and put something on!

PAUL

(With a laugh.)

Ooo-la-la! She's Hedy Lamarr!

MADELEINE

Who?

MARIE-LOUISE

Paul...!

PAUL

"Loup, my darling!"

MADELEINE

Loup won't get away before you put on a robe, now go!

MARIE-LOUISE

Mama, how can you think of decency at a time like this?

MADELEINE

Go!

MARIE-LOUISE

(To PAUL as she makes her exit.)

I hate you!

MADELEINE

And you should be ashamed of yourself. She's embarrassed to tears!

PAUL

I bet she spent an hour on that entrance. She's wearing makeup, did you see?

MADELEINE

When she comes back, you should remember something you have to do in your room. I'm going in to straighten the shop.

PAUL

What...?

MADELEINE

Just do as you're told.

PAUL

(Stiffens comically.)

Never!

MADELEINE

And no funny business.

PAUL

Leave cousin in the company of cousin? Unchaperoned? Alone?

WOLF

(Mock pride.)

Monsieur, you assault my esteem!

PAUL

Confess it, sir, you're a cad.

WOLF

I insist on satisfaction! Choose your weapons!

PAUL

Pistols at ten paces!

(Slight pause, melodramatic shift.)

Dear cousin...

WOLF

Mon ami le plus cher...

(Beat. Aside, simply.)

Now would be a good time, I think...

PAUL

Now?

WOLF

No?

MADELEINE

(Catching their exchange.)

A good time for what?

PAUL

(Playing for time.)

One last cigarette, *mon capitaine*, before you sound the order...

WOLF

(Deliberately.)

Ready, aim, fire.

PAUL

(Beat. To MADELEINE.)

I'm going too, Mama.

WOLF

Not like that, you imbecile!

PAUL

(Sheepish grin.)

Sorry, pal. That's the way it came out.

MADELEINE

(Not fully comprehending.)

What...?

PAUL

To the Navy, Mama. I'm going too.

MADELEINE

You...?

PAUL

Now don't get upset...

MADELEINE

(Flustering.)

But you—I thought...

PAUL

I know.

MADELAINE

(Beat.)

When...?

PAUL

The same as Loup, I guess. As soon as Papa...

(Beat.)

I'm sorry, Mama.

MADELEINE

No. No, it's all right, it's just—I mean, we all...

PAUL

I know.

MADELEINE

(Recovering.)

Just thought you'd let Loup get all the attention...!

PAUL

Loup fares better in the limelight. Right, Loup?

LOUP

I lock myself in the closet every morning so the sun will come up!

MADELEINE

(Uncomfortably.)

I don't know what to say. I never...

PAUL

(As MARIE-LOUISE appears above, fully dressed, still

peev^{ed}.)

"Dulce and decorum est..."

MARIE-LOUISE

Are you reciting Latin again, *monsieur le professeur*? How boring.

MADELEINE

(To PAUL.)

Does she know?

PAUL

Not yet. Only Papa.

MARIE-LOUISE

Know what?

MADELEINE

(Stung.)

Your papa knows?

PAUL

(Self-conscious.)

He asked me.

MARIE-LOUISE

Will someone please tell me what's going on?

MADELEINE

Your brother's just informed me that he too is going off to war.

PAUL

Mama...

MARIE-LOUISE

(To PAUL.)

You?

PAUL

They'd have called me up sooner or later anyway. This way I'll have Loup to take care of me.

MADELEINE

(Sincerely.)

I'm very proud of you, Paul. Very proud.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Very close to tears.)

Mama...

PAUL

I think we need more brandy. Mama, give Mimi a glass.

MADELEINE

I propose a toast.

(She raises her glass.)

To Paul and Loup. Two loyal sons of France...

MARIE-LOUISE

(Pouring brandy.)

Wait!

PAUL

(Quipping.)

To us!

MARIE-LOUISE

(Raising her glass solemnly.)

To your return. May it be soon—and safe...

MADELEINE

And victorious!

PAUL

I'll drink to that!

WOLF

(He raises his glass.)

To France!

ALL

(Soberly.)

To France.

As they drink, JEAN-LOUIS enters through the back door with a newborn puppy in his hands, sorrow in his eyes. He watches them drink, comprehending. PAUL is the first to see him; the others follow his eyes.

PAUL

Bonjour, Jean-Louis.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Dangerously calm.)

Good morning, Paul.

(Beat.)

What's going on here? A celebration? Have the Poles surrendered?

WOLF

A farewell toast, Papa.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Deliberately naive.)

Who's going away?

WOLF

(Calmly.)

Paul and I. To the Navy.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Slow turn to PAUL.)

You too, Herr Philosophe?

PAUL

Are you surprised?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Recalling a former conversation.)

In the event, one has to take a side...

PAUL

I'm going to miss our conversations.

JEAN-LOUIS

I too...

(Beat. He displays the puppy.)

The only one to live. Even Mathilde's dead.

WOLF

I'm sorry, Papa...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Diminutive.)

Ach. There will be others.

(Beat. Almost tenderly.)

I will call him Adolf. Yes. Little Adolf.

WOLF

(Humoring him, but with an edge.)

Call him what you will, Papa.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Moving to rage.)

Maybe I should call him Wolf! To take the place of my son!

WOLF

Papa...

MADELEINE

Jean-Louis!

JEAN-LOUIS

(To MADELEINE.)

You stay out of this! You're the one who turned him against me!

WOLF

No, Papa! You're the one-only you. You and your stupid hate!

GRETHE

(Quickly at the landing.)

Jean-Louis...!

JEAN-LOUIS

(To her.)

You hear the way he speaks to me?

GRETHE

He was coming to tell you. He was- weren't you, Wolf? Tell him!

JEAN-LOUIS

No! What can he tell me? I'm the enemy! The Nazi *Sheiskopf*! Traitor!

WOLF

You chose the words, Papa. One day you'll have to eat them!

JEAN-LOUIS

Who is the man who talks to me like this? Not my son!

WOLF

Papa...

JEAN-LOUIS

No! Not my son any more!

(To all.)

You hear? He's not my son-I renounce him! I have no son!

GRETHE

(Still on the landing.)

No! No!

WOLF

Papa. please...!

JEAN-LOUIS

Not your papa! Find your papa in the French Army!

WOLF

(Painful outburst.)

My papa was in the French Army!

(This wounds JEAN-LOUIS. Beat.)

I'm sorry, Papa.

GRETHE

(Piteous.)

He was coming to tell you...

WOLF

This is right, Papa. I think you know it's right, but even if you think I'm wrong...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Trembling.)

A man does what he has to do.

WOLF

(A glance at GRETHE.)

Forgive me, Papa...

I ask for your blessing.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat. He waits himself to be forgiven, stares at WOLF.

Then rising rage.)

I give you my curse!

(Moves to stairway, turns back, his face a study in ugly anguish.)

Heil Hitler!

He exits up the stairs. As he passes GRETHE, she looks forlornly at WOLF, then follows. Beat.

WOLF

Would it have been any better if I'd gone to him?

MADELEINE

No.

PAUL

(Irony.)

It might have spared the rest of us...

MADELEINE

Just be glad it wasn't worse.

WOLF

I did what she wanted! I tried!

MARIE-LOUISE

I'm afraid when he's like this...

PAUL

Don't be. He's only trying to hurt himself.

(Beat. An automobile horn.)

There's Papa. We'd better get started.

WOLF

(Subtle hint.)

You go ahead, I'll be there in a minute...

PAUL starts to make a quip, decides against it, exits. MADELEINE embraces WOLF and follows. MARIE-LOUISE remains. Beat.

WOLF

I thought we'd have more time.

MARIE-LOUISE

All these years.

WOLF

I know. I'm going to miss you.

MARIE-LOUISE

Don't...

WOLF

I will. I'll miss you every minute.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Managing a smile.)

My hero.

I've never felt like this. I feel like I'm going to break open.

WOLF

Write to me.

MARIE-LOUISE

You too.

WOLF

I will.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Holding out her hand.)

I put my ring on my right hand. It means I'm engaged.
(He kisses it.)
Nobody noticed.

WOLF

Mimi...

MARIE-LOUISE

Kiss me.
(Their first kiss. Beat.)
I'd better say goodbye to Paul...
(Starts off, turns back. They embrace as lovers.)
I love you so much!
(Beat. GRETHE appears; she pulls away.)
Be careful. Come home.

WOLF

I promise.

MARIE-LOUISE

Write me.

GRETHE

(After she has left.)
He don't mean what he says, Wolf...

WOLF

I know.

GRETHE

He don't let me in the room. He is hurting very much, I think.
When my papa dies, they send this letter...
(She gives it to him; he reads.)
It is a letter he writes to me when I come to France, but he don't
mail it.
Look at the end, Wolf. Look what it says at the end. "Verzeihe
mir."
Forgive me.

WOLF

He never mailed it?

GRETHE

He was too ashamed.

WOLF

What can I do, Mama? What am I supposed to say, "I forgive you?" I
can't! A person has to ask forgiveness! You can't forgive someone
who doesn't care! Mama!

GRETHE

(Beat.)

This locket was my mama's. That's my mama, and that's my papa. Take it.

(He does. She holds a pocket watch.)

This was my papa's watch...

WOLF

Mama, please...

GRETHE

Take it. It's all I have to give you.

(He takes the watch.)

Be safe, my son. I will pray for you.

WOLF

You too, Mama...

PIERRE

(Enters through back door.)

Come on, Loup. It's time to go.

WOLF

(Embracing GRETHE.)

I've got to go now, Mama...

GRETHE

(Holding him close.)

Wait...!

(Beat; then release, sigh.)

Now.

WOLF

I'll write you, Mama. Every day...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Appearing on the landing with the puppy.)

Halt! Wartst du ein moment; ich habe etwas zu sprechen!

GRETHE

Jean-Louis!

PIERRE

We all speak French in this house, Jean-Louis.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Ugly and menacing.)

I'll speak whatever I choose to speak, *mein schwager!*

(As GRETHE starts to speak.)

Don't interrupt me! I have something to say to your son.

So. You've decided go fight for France. Very well. A man does what he has to do. Very well...

Then I too will go to war!

(Holding out the puppy.)

Little Adolf and I will go to war.

(Croons to the puppy.)

My little Fuehrer...

(Looks up at WOLF; cruelly.)

My son!

(Raving.)

No more sheep dogs! Today the Dog Man begins to train soldiers!

(Moving slowly down the stairs. To the puppy.)

Lunge for the throat, mein Fuehrer. Crouch low, lunge for the throat. From now on you only eat what you kill...

(Stops in front of WOLF.)

A soldier for the Reich, mein Sohn.

(Holds the puppy high.)

Ein Soldat fur den Reich! Ein Soldat! Aus den Hund-Mann von Brignoles!

PIERRE

(Incensed but ineffectual.)

You will speak French in my house!

JEAN-LOUIS

Wieder niemals spreche ich franzosisch!

(Moves to door, turns back, raises puppy.)

Soldaten! Soldaten fur mein Fuehrer sein! Heil Hitler!

He exits. Beat. GRETHE is crushed; she sinks heavily into a chair downstage.

PIERRE

Let's go, Loup.

(Beat. WOLF looks helplessly at GRETHE.)

There's nothing you can do.

They exit. GRETHE looks up, sees the letter on the table, forgotten by WOLF. She picks it up, looks toward the door. Beat.

GRETHE

(Softly.)

Verzeihe...

(She starts to cry.)

Verzeihe mir...

Lights fade to black. End of Scene Two.

End of Act One.

Act Two

ON THE SCREEN:

The Phony War. Tension and tedium as the world waits for Hitler's next move.

Scene One. November, 1939. Bright sunlight.

WOLF and PAUL on deck at leisure aboard the French battleship Bretagne. PAUL reads a book; WOLF prepares to write a letter.

Dimly lit in the main playing area, MADELEINE, PIERRE, GRETHE, MARIE-LOUISE in relaxed tableau; in the kennel, slightly more prominent, JEAN-LOUIS in repose.

WOLF

What's today, the twentieth?

PAUL

(Not looking up.)

Who knows? I think it's November, that's the best I can do.

(WOLF grunts. Fancifully.)

Unless, of course, time actually has stopped, finally and forever. That's a possibility I haven't considered...

WOLF

(Writing the word.)

E-ter-ni-ty...

PAUL

Otherwise, what in the hell are we doing here?

WOLF

(Trying to concentrate.)

Good question.

PAUL

(Beat.)

Who're you writing?

WOLF

Stupid question.

PAUL

Tell her I said hello.

WOLF

Why don't you tell her yourself?

PAUL

I'm reading.

Tell her I'd write, but my fingers got caught in the screw, she'll believe it.

WOLF

(Looking up.)

When was the last time you wrote home? Tell the truth.

PAUL

(A chuckle.)

You say that as though we'd been gone for years.

WOLF

(Back to the letter.)

Sometimes I think we have...

PAUL

You're just homesick.

Sometimes I feel like I've been on this damned *boat* for years.

(WOLF writes.)

You know, I never figured you to be the one to get homesick.

WOLF

(Slight irritation.)

Who's homesick? I write letters! Everybody writes letters—you're the oddball! I'll bet you haven't written since we sailed!

PAUL

What's there to say? "Dear Mama, the sea is calm, the sky is blue, we haven't weighed anchor in a month."

WOLF

That's a start.

PAUL

That's it! "You heroes are fine—Loup scrubs the deck and I polish brass." It's a bore!

What do you say to Mimi?

WOLF

Another stupid question.

PAUL

No, I mean it. What do you find to say?

WOLF

A lot of things I never thought to say before...

PAUL

(Beat. WOLF writes.)

You know the person I would like to write?

WOLF

Who?

PAUL

Jean-Louis.

WOLF

(Looks up.)

Papa?

PAUL

He is the one person in the world who might begin to understand how stupid I think all this is. When I think back on the things he said...

WOLF

Go on...

PAUL

I'm sorry, I know you don't like to talk about him...

WOLF

No, go ahead. I've always wondered what you two talked about, all huddled in the kennel like conspiring thieves...

PAUL

Not about you. That was one of the ground rules, I think. Unspoken.

WOLF

I'm glad to hear it.

PAUL

We mostly talked philosophy. History, politics, art—we were more scholars than conspirators. And he was interested in psychology... He did talk about you once. He called you a poet. He reduced the world to poets and philosophers: you were a poet, I was a philosopher.

WOLF

What was he?

PAUL

I don't know. Both, I think—himself and his Doppelganger. A classic

case...

He talked a lot about your mother.

WOLF

None of his crazy Nazi shit?

PAUL

Oh, that too, but—you have to understand, he *knew*—he never really...

WOLF

What?

PAUL

I don't know. It's hard.

(A futile shrug.)

I should have gone on to Aix. As well I might have, for all the good I'm doing here.

WOLF

What would you say if you wrote him?

PAUL

That he was right about the stupid Allies, for one thing. We could have won the war by now! Instead we shrink back in the ridiculous hope that the Beast is satisfied.

WOLF

Who knows? Maybe he is.

PAUL

That's what Chamberlain said in Munich.

WOLF

Look, if this is turning into another political harangue...

PAUL

That's what they said about Genghis Khan!

WOLF

You know, you should write to Papa. Then I wouldn't have to listen to you all the time.

PAUL

Maybe I will!

WOLF

Then do it!

PAUL

I can't.

WOLF

Then read! Do something, for God's sake, I want to get this finished before chow!

PAUL

(WOLF returns to writing.)

I knew I shouldn't have said anything.

WOLF

(Beat.)

What do you mean, you can't?

PAUL

He has to hear from you first.

WOLF

(Returning to the letter.)

You're going to have a long wait, cousin...

PAUL stares at him a moment.

*Lights fade out on the deck, up on the tableau.
Evening. MARIE-LOUISE reads the letter aloud.*

MARIE-LOUISE

"Dearest Mimi..." Oh—it's dated "Eternity."

GRETHE

Eternity!

MADELEINE

It seems that long sometimes.

MARIE-LOUISE

"Paul says time has stopped. I'd think so too if it weren't for your letters reminding me that somewhere life goes on. Out here one day is so much like the next you feel as though you're living the same one over and over again. Morale is low. It wouldn't be so bad, I guess, if every minute we weren't expecting the inevitable. I agree with Paul, it's a stupid way to run a war..."

MADELEINE

Oh, are we at war?

PIERRE

At least they're still alive. Go on, Mimi...

MARIE-LOUISE

"He says hello, by the way, and that he'd write except his fingers got caught in the propeller. Tell Madeleine yes, he got the package, and yes, we both enjoyed the pastries..."

GRETHE

What happens to his fingers?

MARIE-LOUISE

It's a joke, Aunt Grethe. Paul wouldn't write me if his life depended on it.

MADELEINE

Who does he write? I send him a package and Loup writes a letter.

GRETHE

Go on, what else does he say?

MARIE-LOUISE

"You wouldn't believe how Paul has changed. He's so intense! He talks about becoming a communist. Luckily I still have a sense of humor—when he says we should take over the ship, like *Potemkin*, and sail against the Nazis, I remind him Lenin was a pacifist..."
Whatever that means...

PIERRE

(*To MADELEINE.*)

That's your brother's influence...

MARIE-LOUISE

That's what Loup says: "Sometimes he reminds me a lot of Papa..."

MADELEINE

God knows I tried to stop it...

GRETHE

Go on, please...

MADELEINE

I'm sorry. I won't say another word.

MARIE-LOUISE

"I wouldn't worry, though. Next week we have shore leave at Gibraltar, and we'll all get back in touch with reality. I hear the barmaids are irresistible..."

(*Beat. She scans, blushes, looks up.*)

A lot of this is just for me...

GRETHE

(A chuckle as MIMI scans a whole page.)
All this about the barmaids?

MARIE-LOUISE

Here. "It's time for chow so I'd better close. Give the folks my love, and tell them they'd better be good to you while they can because...

(She skips.)

"And tell Mama to keep praying. I'm convinced she's all that's holding off the storm. I miss her more than I can say, as I do all of you, I'm every bit as homesick as Paul says. The only one I..."

She stops herself, looks at GRETHE. In the kennel, JEAN-LOUIS is suddenly alert, listening, almost hearing.

GRETHE

(Comprehending.)

Is this part for you too?

(MIMI looks helplessly to MADELEINE.)

Let me see...

(Takes the letter, reads.)

"The only one I don't miss is Papa..."

(Beat. JEAN-LOUIS reacts vaguely.)

MARIE-LOUISE

I'm sorry, Aunt Grethe.

Lights fade out on tableau, up on kennel. JEAN-LOUIS whispers to the emptiness.

JEAN-LOUIS

Grethe...?

(Beat.)

Grethe...?

Beat. The answering voice is that of GRETHE as a young girl, light and without accent (they are speaking German). The year is 1919. He is entranced throughout the scene.

GRETHE'S VOICE

Yes?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Uncertain in the transition.)

Grethe...?

GRETHE'S VOICE

Yes?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat. Affecting the transition.)

Are you asleep?

GRETHE'S VOICE

Yes...

JEAN-LOUIS

No, you're not.

GRETHE'S VOICE

I am. I'm fast asleep, and I'm having a wonderful dream!

JEAN-LOUIS

Tell me about it.

GRETHE'S VOICE

Oh no! If I tell it won't come true!

JEAN-LOUIS

Am I in it?

GRETHE'S VOICE

Naturally. It wouldn't be a dream without you.

JEAN-LOUIS

Then you can tell me.

GRETHE'S VOICE

I'm dreaming that you've come up to my room and made love to me, and it was so wonderful I don't ever want to wake up!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Tenderly.)

Mon jolie ecureuil...

GRETHE'S VOICE

What does that mean?

JEAN-LOUIS

It means I love you very much.

GRETHE'S VOICE

No, it doesn't, it means I'm a pretty something. What is it?

JEAN-LOUIS

A squirrel.

GRETHE'S VOICE

A squirrel?

JEAN-LOUIS

A pretty squirrel. And it also means I love you very much.

(Beat. A dog begins to whimper in present time.

Undertone.)

Stay, Adolf...

GRETHE'S VOICE

Jean-Louis?

JEAN-LOUIS

Yes.

GRETHE'S VOICE

It's not a dream, is it?

JEAN-LOUIS

No, *cherie*. It's not a dream.

(Whimpering again. Soft threat.)

Adolf...

GRETHE'S VOICE

(Beat.)

Are you waiting for me to fall asleep?

JEAN-LOUIS

I have to leave soon.

GRETHE'S VOICE

I know. Papa gets up with the sun.

JEAN-LOUIS

It would be easier if you were asleep.

GRETHE'S VOICE

Then I'd wake up without you, and I'd never be sure it wasn't a dream.

JEAN-LOUIS

We've got tomorrow...

GRETHE'S VOICE

Something will happen.

JEAN-LOUIS

What can happen? I'll talk to your father...

GRETHE'S VOICE

No!

JEAN-LOUIS

We'll live here, in Koln...

GRETHE'S VOICE

You don't understand. Oh God, how can I make you understand? Do you know what I want? I want you to bite me. Bite me hard. Somewhere—my breast—where no one will ever see. So that when you leave—when I wake up and you're gone—I'll have some way of knowing you were really here! I don't want promises! I don't want tomorrow! I want right now, forever and ever!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Gently.)

Tomorrow comes, *ma petite*. The earth turns, life goes on. Tonight is only the beginning.

GRETHE'S VOICE

Do you know what I was thinking? The whole time?

JEAN-LOUIS

What?

GRETHE'S VOICE

I thought, "This must be what it's like to die." I did! And you know the way your whole life passes in front of you? That's what it was like—only my whole life seemed to be right then, with you inside me. It was like being born! And I thought, "What a wonderful thing dying is!" And yet all the time I'd never felt so alive! Isn't that strange?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Gently, in both times.)

I love you, Grethe...

GRETHE'S VOICE

And then I thought, "Why do people wait until they're old and sick—or go to war—to die? People should die when they feel like this, before anything happens to ruin it..."

JEAN-LOUIS

There's an old woman in my town.

When she was young she was a dancer—a ballerina—her whole life was the ballet.

One night she danced before the Emperor, Napoleon III, and her performance was so flawless, so electrifying—the intensity of the

moment so strong and sure—that she too felt like dying.
What could tomorrow offer to compare with tonight?
She never danced again.

(Aware of the irony.)

To see her now, walking in the town, the same pitiful, long-ago smile
on her face—still living her one instant of glory.

(He cups his hands as though touching her face.)

You're the most wonderful thing my life has ever known. If I died
now, I'd be satisfied.

But I don't want to die! I want to live! Tonight has given me a
reason to live—a hope!

The time to die is when there is no hope...

GRETHE'S VOICE

(Beat.)

I wonder if we made a baby...

JEAN-LOUIS

I'll give you babies. We'll have a houseful of babies!

GRETHE'S VOICE

Hold me.

*(JEAN-LOUIS raises his hands in a vague gesture of
embrace.)*

You're strong. You're so strong—I feel like a squirrel with you...

JEAN-LOUIS

(The dogs whimper; he pulls back slightly. In both times.)
I've got to go...

GRETHE'S VOICE

Your hands—look. One of yours is like both of mine...

I was just fourteen when the war started, Jean-Louis. Still a child.
The only hope I've ever had was for the War to end.

JEAN-LOUIS

The War is over.

Tomorrow comes, Grethe. Look—it's here already. Last night's no
more than memory.

Hope is having faith in Tomorrow...

*Long pause. JEAN-LOUIS lets the moment flow
through him. Then from his soul erupts a brutal
scream.*

Blackout. End of Scene One

ON THE SCREEN:

The Russian Invasion of Finland, winter, 1939-40.
The only military action of the Phony War. Scant
text; soldiers in snow; desolation, wind.

Scene Two. Midwinter, 1940. Late afternoon.

The wild and bitter mistral of Provence howls outside the kennel. JEAN-LOUIS enters from the cold with a captured rabbit in a sack. There is a madness about his eyes. He drops the sack, flings off his coat, rubs his hands together, stokes the fire, warms himself for a moment. Then, with a glance toward the pen, he retrieves the bag and takes out the rabbit, which struggles to escape.

JEAN-LOUIS

(A sinister crooning.)

Easy, little rabbit. Easy. Don't be afraid. Death is such a blessing, God gives but one to every living thing. What does it matter when it comes? Just think how nice it feels to be here by the fire, away from the biting wind...

(Stroking the rabbit.)

That's better. That's better, now. Yes...

(Beat. He looks into the rabbit's eyes.)

You're still afraid, I see it in your eyes. Don't worry, I won't hurt you.

(The dogs begin to stir.)

Listen. Listen, little rabbit. That's what you have to be afraid of...

(Crosses to pen, stroking rabbit. Roughly.)

It's about time you worthless pigs caught the scent. Look what I've brought you!

(He throws the rabbit to the dogs, watches the slaughter.)

Get in there! Fight for it! There isn't much! Not enough for all of you!

(Sharply.)

Adolf! Get in there!

(Stunned anger.)

God damn it! You yellow bastard!

(Beat. The furor dies down. Occasional snarls.)

Stupid dog! Now you wonder where it went, don't you? Did you think they were going to save you some?

(Irrationally.)

I'm going to starve you to death! Don't you understand that? Just because you're the baby doesn't mean I'm going to spoonfeed you!

(Beat. The puppy whimpers a question.)

Stop that!

(Beat. Silence. Contempt.)

And you were going to be the great killer. Christ, you're big enough! You're turning into a monster!

(Beat. To himself.)

Ach! Crazy old man. He's only a puppy...

(Beat. He looks at the puppy, relenting; then shouts.)

No! You've got to learn!

(Beat. Softly.)

When you get hungry enough, you'll learn...

Beat. He sits heavily on a pile of straw, takes one of several books lying around, adjusts himself to the light, and begins to read. Beat. The puppy begins to whimper.

(A warning.)

Adolf...

(Beat. It continues.)

Damn it, I'm warning you...

(The puppy barks.)

All right, that's it!

(He takes a leather strap from the wall, enters pen, begins whipping the dog brutally.)

That's for being a coward! And that's for whining!

Get back, Hans!

That's for disobedience! Come back here!

And that's for barking at me!

Now stand up. Stand up! Up!

Now sit.

That's good. Now stay. Don't move.

(He walks from the pen, leaving the gate open; looks back.)

Stay.

(Beat. The puppy murmurs.)

No!

(To himself.)

Crazy old man. You know he's too young...

(Beat. Contrite.)

All right, come on.

(The puppy runs to him affectionately.)

Stupid animal. You're crazy, you know that? You're just as crazy as I am. You might as well be a stupid sheep dog.

You're not getting anything to eat. You know that.

(Beat. He rubs the dog's head.)

What the hell, I'll read to you. Stupid dog. You don't have the brains of an aardvark.

(He sits. The puppy nuzzles him.)

Adolf. Ha!

(Beat. He adjusts to the light, reads aloud to the puppy.)

"Lass, o Welt, o lass mich sein!

Locket nicht mit Liebesgaden.

Lass dies Herz alleine haben

Seine Wohne, seine Pein!

Moerike. Eduard Moerike. 1832. It's called "Seclusion."

"Verborgenheit."

(Translating the next verse.)

"Why I mourn I do not know.

It is an unknown pain.

Always through tears I see

The light of the sun..."

(Beat. Restating the last two lines in German.)

"Immerdar durch Traenen sehe ich der Sonne liebes Licht..."

(Beat. To the puppy.)

How old are you? Five months? Six? That's three years for a man...

When he was three I was already teaching him French...

"Always through tears I see the light of the sun..."

He was very quick to learn. Quicker than you, my little Fuehrer...

(He reads.)

"Lass, o Welt..."

(Translating.)

"Do not lure me with the gifts of love.

Let this heart have its bliss, its anguish alone..."

(To the puppy.)

Why do you love me when I beat you?

Pause. GRETHE's voice, when it comes, is no surprise; JEAN-LOUIS welcomes it with a familiar sigh. Subtle lighting shift.

GRETHE'S VOICE

Jean-Louis?

JEAN-LOUIS

What is it, little squirrel?

GRETHE'S VOICE

I have good news.

JEAN-LOUIS

(In both times.)

Good news would be a welcome change.

GRETHE'S VOICE

(Beat.)

We're going to have a child, Jean-Louis..

JEAN-LOUIS

(As lights fade.)

A child...?

Lights fade out. End of Scene Two.

ON THE SCREEN:

French soldiers pose for photographers on the
Maginot Line. The War seems far away.

Scene Three. May 10, 1940. Morning.

Dimly lit in the kennel, JEAN-LOUIS sleeps in starts. MARIE-LOUISE and GRETHE in the shop.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Glancing through a magazine.)

Aunt Grethe?

GRETHE

Ja, Liebchen?

MARIE-LOUISE

Are all German boys as beautiful as their pictures, or is it just the uniforms?

GRETHE

What pictures?

MARIE-LOUISE

In the magazines. Look.

GRETHE

(Looking.)

I think they look mean, the uniforms.

MARIE-LOUISE

But look at the faces! They almost look like girls' faces!

GRETHE

Ja, when I was a girl, they have these faces. Rosy cheeks, from eating apples!

MARIE-LOUISE

They do look mean, though. Not mean, but cold. But that's the uniforms.

GRETHE

I thought you like the uniforms!

MARIE-LOUISE

I do like the uniforms. Oh, I don't know what I like. I wonder what Loup would look like in one...

GRETHE

You better not let your mama hear you say that.

MARIE-LOUISE

I know...

GRETHE

(Leafing through the magazine.)

Oh, look, *Liebchen!* This place is near my home!

(Reads.)

Ja, Mulheim!

(Remembering.)

Sometimes. when I was a girl, we would go to Mulheim. Only for the day. My papa's cousin lives there, before the War... So long ago, those days...

MARIE-LOUISE

Tell me about them.

GRETHE

(A smile.)

What, you don't believe I ever was a young girl?

MARIE-LOUISE

I do! I just like to listen...

GRETHE

(Embarrassed.)

I talk too much sometimes.

(Gives her the magazine.)

Here, go look at your pictures.

MARIE-LOUISE

Were you ever in love? I mean, before Jean-Louis.

GRETHE

What a question!

MARIE-LOUISE

Tell me!

GRETHE

I have much better things to do, I think!

MARIE-LOUISE

(As MARCEL BASSE enters the shop.)

Like what?

GRETHE

Like selling *Monsieur Basse* some bread. *Bonjour, Marcel.*

BASSE

Bonjour, mesdemoiselles!

GRETHE

(Pleased.)

Monsieur!

BASSE

Un baguette, s'il vous plait. Have you been outside?

MARIE-LOUISE

Isn't it beautiful?

GRETHE

Spring is here for sure. What do you hear from Gavin?

BASSE

Oh, all he does is pour concrete, day and night. He says he wishes the attack would come just to relieve his blisters. What about Loup?

GRETHE

(An eye to MIMI.)

Oh, I get all my news from second hand!

MARIE-LOUISE

He's fine, *monsieur*. Paul, too.

GRETHE

Only they complain about scrubbing the docks.

MARIE-LOUISE

Decks, Aunt Grethe...

GRETHE

(Amiably.)

Decks, docks—he don't shoot the guns, he says. The closest he gets to the guns is to polish them.

(Gives him the bread, taking money.)

Here you are.

BASSE

Merci, madame. Give the boys our regards...

GRETHE

(As he starts out.)

Marcel?

BASSE

Yes?

GRETHE

I only wonder, do you think—I mean, it's eight months now—you think

maybe...?

BASSE

Who can say? Each day is God's blessing. In the last war...
(*He catches himself.*)

I mean...

GRETHE

Maybe God will make a miracle.

BASSE

That's what we're all praying for.
(*Turning to go.*)
Give my regards to Loup and Paul...

GRETHE

And to Gavin also.

MARIE-LOUISE

Au revoir, Monsieur Basse.

BASSE

Au revoir, Mimi.

MARIE-LOUISE

(*Beat. Sensing GRETHE's despair.*)
There's still hope, Aunt Grethe. There's always hope, every day that goes by...

GRETHE

It is like breaking down the middle when Wolf is fighting
Deutschland...

(*Beat. MIMI comforts her.*)
Wolf is my brother's name, you know...

MARIE-LOUISE

I know...

GRETHE

You know how Wolf comes to be called "Loup?"

MARIE-LOUISE

"Un loup" is French for "*wolf...*"

GRETHE

But you know who says it first? Jean-Louis.

MARIE-LOUISE

(*Seeming almost to recall.*)

Jean-Louis?

GRETHE

The first day we come to Brignoles. He puts him standing on the table, and says, "Today, my son, you are a Frenchman!"
I think it was the happiest day...

MARIE-LOUISE

What happened, Aunt Grethe?

GRETHE

Oh, many things too hard to understand for little ones...

MARIE-LOUISE

I'm not so little.

GRETHE

I don't even understand them all myself. Marcel Basse. For years he will not come into the shop even. You see now how he is?
It was not easy for Jean-Louis that I was German...

PIERRE rushes in, blanched, terrified.

MARIE-LOUISE

Papa...!

PIERRE

Where's your mother?

MARIE-LOUISE

Upstairs. What's the matter?

PIERRE

(Rushing through the shop and up the stairs.)

The Nazis are overrunning Belgium!

GRETHE

(Stunned silence.)

Mein Gott! O mein Gott!

MARIE-LOUISE

It's started...

(A prayer.)

Be safe, Loup! Be safe!

GRETHE

(Softly but urgently.)

Jean-Louis...!

GRETHE passes through the main room and exits through the back door. MARIE-LOUISE follows her slowly through the arch, then stops. PIERRE comes down the steps, followed by MADELEINE. PIERRE's terror is an almost ugly sight.

MADELEINE

Belgium, Pierre! Not France, Belgium! We don't even have troops in Belgium!

PIERRE

But they're halfway to Brussels! *Panzertanks!* Artillery! We'll never stop them. The world has never seen a war like this, the *Blitzkrieg!* Lightning war!

MADELEINE

(Sharply.)

Stop it!

PIERRE

Bonnard's leaving the country. He's going to Spain. He's been getting ready for months!

MADELEINE

Bonnard's a traitor.

PIERRE

(Crushed.)

Yes.

MADELEINE

Tell me what happened.

PIERRE

It was sometime during the night, communications—they don't know. It was a complete surprise!

MARIE-LOUISE

(Unable to hold back.)

Paul and Loup...?

PIERRE

No news yet on the Navy. For a while they thought Italy might...

MADELEINE

Tell us what happened...!

PIERRE

First there were air attacks, bombs. Then all along the Dutch and

Belgian borders, German soldiers, in a line—the news is they've already taken over a hundred miles...

MADELEINE

That's not halfway to Brussels...

PIERRE

The news is hours old! The could be in France by now!

(Stops himself.)

I've got to go, I just stopped by to tell you. I'm supposed to be collecting guns.

MADELEINE

Guns?

PIERRE

Firearms. The Mayor wants an arsenal at the Town Hall, just in case...

(Remembering; starts back up the stairs.)

Oh! I'd better get mine...

MADELEINE

You stay here and try to calm down. I'll get your gun.

PIERRE

God help us all, Mimi. Your papa's scared to death.

(Looks around.)

Where's Grethe?

MARIE-LOUISE

She went to tell Jean-Louis.

PIERRE

Oh no! No, she can't!

MARIE-LOUISE

What's wrong?

PIERRE

Christ! He'll have to be sent away. And all those shitting dogs...!

MARIE-LOUISE

I wonder if Loup's afraid.

MADELEINE

(Offstage.)

Pierre! Where is it?

PIERRE

Under the bed where it always is!

MADELEINE

No it's not. Where else could it be?

PIERRE

That's where I keep it!

MADELEINE

(Appearing.)

Well it's not there now. When was the last time you saw it?

PIERRE

I don't know, last month?

MADELEINE

It's gone.

PIERRE

(The natural assumption.)

Jean-Louis...

MADELEINE

You go do what you have to do. I'll get the gun.

PIERRE

(Rushing out through the shop.)

Grethe's down there, let her get it! I'll be back as soon as I can!

MARIE-LOUISE

(Beat. Shaken.)

I've never seen Papa like that...

MADELEINE

He's a good man, Mimi. He's just afraid. Everyone's afraid.

(Beat. An awful thought.)

Grethe!

MARIE-LOUISE

(As MADELEINE starts out.)

He wouldn't hurt her, Mama...!

MADELEINE

God knows what he'll do with a gun...!

She rushes out; MIMI follows. Lights dim in the main playing area.

ON THE SCREEN:

Tanks, planes, artillery, carnage.

GRETHE enters the kennel; JEAN-LOUIS is at once alert. Their eyes meet. He reads her face.

JEAN-LOUIS

It's come.

GRETHE

It has come.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Fighting to maintain control.)

How? Where?

GRETHE

Belgium, he says. Pierre...

JEAN-LOUIS

Belgium...

(Beat.)

I suppose it was a complete surprise?

GRETHE

Ja, I suppose.

(Beat. She senses his crisis, pleads.)

Jean-Louis, this thing in you—you must know is not right...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Postponing.)

Belgium isn't France...

GRETHE

It will be France...

(Beat.)

I do not ask so many things from you, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Still barely lucid.)

I never meant to go this far...

GRETHE

It was for me, I know, because you love me—but I don't never ask these things. Now I ask, Jean-Louis—if you love me...

(Beat.)

If you love Wolf...

Beat. An internal struggle is almost won.

MADELEINE

(Calling off as she approaches.)

Jean-Louis! Jean-Louis, are you down here? Jean-Louis, do you hear me?

The fine line breaks. JEAN-LOUIS darts a glance at GRETHE, bolts for the door, bars it, assumes a furtive pose. MADELEINE tries the door, beats on it, calling.

JEAN-LOUIS

What do you want?

MADELEINE

Is Grethe with you?

GRETHE

I'm here.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Roughly.)

What do you want?

MADELEINE

I want the gun.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Blankly.)

What gun?

As he speaks, he remembers, runs to pen for the gun, examines it.

GRETHE

Jean-Louis!

MADELEINE

I don't have time to argue with you, Jean-Louis. Give me the gun.

JEAN-LOUIS

You think one little gun will help you against Hitler? Don't be stupid.

MADELEINE

Jean-Louis, for the love of God...!

JEAN-LOUIS

I have to protect myself!

MADELEINE

Nobody's going to hurt you, just give me the gun...

GRETHE

Please, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

Keep out if it!

(Crosses to the door.)

Get away from here, you hear me? This is my place! Leave me alone!

(Points gun toward GRETHE.)

Tell her. Tell her to go!

GRETHE

It's all right, Madeleine...

MADELEINE

Grethe...?

JEAN-LOUIS

I'll let the dogs loose!

GRETHE

Please go, Madeleine. It's all right...

(Beat. Silence.)

Let me have the gun, Jean-Louis,,,

These are your people! Your family, friends...!

JEAN-LOUIS

No! I'm the Dog Man! I want no part of them! Let the Nazis mow them down!

GRETHE

(Moving toward the door.)

I can't reach you no more, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Waving the gun.)

Don't touch that door!

Beat. He is suddenly alert to the presence of the past. WOLF's voice is heard, a child of four. Cologne, 1923.

WOLF'S VOICE

Papa!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Disoriented.)

What?

WOLF'S VOICE

(Beat. He drifts. GRETHE remains at the door.)

Bonjour, Papa!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Pleased at the French.)

Bonjour, mon fils! Comment ca va?

WOLF'S VOICE

Bien, Papa. Et toi?

JEAN-LOUIS

I don't complain. Look, I brought you something.

WOLF'S VOICE

What, Papa?

JEAN-LOUIS

A book. With pictures, see? And underneath the pictures there are words that say what the pictures are. That's a cow, see? And the word underneath says "cow." What's "cow" in French?

WOLF'S VOICE

Une vache?

JEAN-LOUIS

Right. V-A-C-H-E. *Une vache*. But this book only shows the German words.

WOLF'S VOICE

Why?

JEAN-LOUIS

Because it's a German book. Do you like it?

WOLF'S VOICE

Is it mine to keep?

JEAN-LOUIS

All yours.

WOLF'S VOICE

Merci bien, Papa!

JEAN-LOUIS

De rien, mon fils...

GRETHE

(Beat. From the shadows. Tentative.)

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Momentarily confused; adjusting.)

Why don't you go show the book to Rudy so I can talk to Mama?

WOLF'S VOICE

D'accord, Papa. But I won't let him keep it!

The following dialogue conveys a surreal molding of times and people as the scene unfolds in JEAN-LOUIS's mind. GRETHE speaks but doesn't move.

GRETHE

(Uneasy, hesitant, expecting the worst.)

You're home early...

JEAN-LOUIS

I lost the job.

(Beat. Smile.)

What the hell, I never liked beer. Give me red French wine...

GRETHE

Was there trouble?

JEAN-LOUIS

You mean was there a fight? No. But according to Reichardt, one was brewing.

(The pun.)

Brewing. Ha! "Koln is no place for a Frenchman," he tells me. At least he apologized.

GRETHE

As long as there wasn't a fight...

JEAN-LOUIS

I promised, didn't I?

(Senses something wrong.)

What?

GRETHE

Do we have any money?

JEAN-LOUIS

What difference does it make when bread's a million marks a loaf? If

you ask me, Koln is no place for anybody. Germany's no place for anybody these days.
Will Herr Graeber give us credit?

GRETHE

He has before.

JEAN-LOUIS

(A grim smile.)

I wonder if he knows I'm French...

GRETHE

(Beat.)

Maybe we should go to France.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Compassionate.)

Would it be so very bad, mon ecureuil?

GRETHE

I wouldn't mind...

JEAN-LOUIS

I could find work in France. I could even teach. Did you know I was a teacher once?

GRETHE

I know.

JEAN-LOUIS

Sometimes I forget. It's been so long—ten years now, with the War. I wonder what they teach...

(Noting her distraction.)

What's wrong?

GRETHE

It's Papa, he...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Tensing.)

What?

GRETHE

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

What? Tell me!

GRETHE

He wants to take Wolf. To protect him.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Incredulous.)

He's crazy!

GRETHE

A lawyer came, with papers.

JEAN-LOUIS

He can't do it! Even German law can't...

GRETHE

There's been more trouble at Essen.

JEAN-LOUIS

Trouble?

GRETHE

At a factory. French soldiers shot at the workers, some were killed. Children, they say. Young boys.

JEAN-LOUIS

When?

GRETHE

Saturday. It was in the newspaper...

JEAN-LOUIS

Easter Saturday?

(Stunned.)

But why? For God's sake, why?

GRETHE

There was a protest, a demonstration, against the occupation. Soldiers shot into the crowd.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Coming to grips.)

No wonder Reichardt was so anxious to get rid of me...

GRETHE

It was terrible, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Angry and frustrated by the injustice.)

Oh, yes, it was, a terrible thing, a tragedy. German boys slaughtered by the French!

(The puppy begins to murmur, jarring the reality of the

scene.)

No! No, stop it!

GRETHE

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Waving the gun dangerously.)

Stay there!

GRETHE

(Repeating; retracing; the dream becomes a jumbled nightmare.)

Maybe we should go to France...

JEAN-LOUIS

We will!

GRETHE

(The dog barks.)

He wants to take Wolf...

JEAN-LOUIS

God damn it, dog! Shut up!

GRETHE

Trouble. There's been more...

JEAN-LOUIS

Trouble?

GRETHE

(Other dogs begin to bark.)

At Essen. Children, they say...!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Flinging himself toward the pens.)

Stop! No more!

GRETHE

Soldiers...

(Breaking into present time.)

Jean-Louis, no...!

All the dogs are barking. JEAN-LOUIS fires once, then again, point blank. He stares at what he's done. Beat. Brignoles, 1923.

WOLF'S VOICE

Papa?

GRETHE

(JEAN-LOUIS is again alert.)

Jean-Louis...

WOLF'S VOICE

Papa, what is a wolf called in French?

JEAN-LOUIS

Un loup, my son.

WOLF'S VOICE

Am I *un loup* now, since I'm a Frenchman?

GRETHE

(In both times.)

It's all right, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

You know why your name is Wolf, don't you?

WOLF'S VOICE

Oui, Papa. Wolf was Mama's brother.

JEAN-LOUIS

Right. But Mama's brother was a German, wasn't he? And you're a Frenchman! I'll bet if he'd been born a Frenchman, his papa would have named him Loup.

WOLF'S VOICE

So I can be Loup?

GRETHE

(As before.)

It's all right, Jean-Louis...

MADELEINE

(Calling from off stage.)

Jean-Louis! Jean-Louis, answer me! What's going on in there?
Grethe?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Stunned.)

Lieber Adolf...

MADELEINE

Grethe! Are you hurt?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Falls sobbing to his knees.)

Mein Sohn. Mein lieber Sohn...!

Lights fade out.

End of Scene Three.

ON THE SCREEN:

The fall of France; the occupation of Paris.

Scene Four. June 16, 1940. Late at night.

In the living area, MADELEINE paces nervously. JEAN-LOUIS is barely suggested in the kennel. PIERRE enters wearily, resigned.

MADELEINE

Any news?

PIERRE

There's still some fighting, not much. It won't be long now.

MADELEINE

What about Weygand?

PIERRE

Rumors. Some say he's defected.

MADELEINE

Defected?

PIERRE

(Taking off his coat, then sitting.)

Just rumors. It seems a lot of people are collaborating...

MADELEINE

Anything about the Navy?

PIERRE

Not yet. Grethe stayed to hear. I had to get away from it. Of course, once the government surrenders...

MADELEINE

(Ugly accusation.)

Will that please you?

PIERRE

What?

MADELEINE

Anything to stop the war, no matter what the price. Jean-Louis's right, the French are cowards.

PIERRE

(Sound reasoning.)

They're going to bomb Paris.

MADELEINE

What's Paris if it falls to Hitler?

PIERRE

You don't understand, Madeleine. It's over.

MADELEINE

This can't be happening. I can't believe this is happening...

PIERRE

We have to accept it.

MADELEINE

You accept it.

PIERRE

No! We have to learn to live with it, make the best of it. We have to survive...

(As she starts to protest.)

We have to think of Mimi, what they could do to her, if...

They will need people like me, Madeleine. Officials. People with experience, who can keep the systems working. The Mayor...

MADELEINE

(Irrationally logical, steadfast.)

No, we have to fight...!

PIERRE

The fighting's over. Now it's a matter of survival...!

MADELEINE

(Stares at him, then calls upstairs.)

Mimi!

PIERRE

Madeleine...

MADELEINE

No! I want her to hear! Mimi!

MARIE-LOUISE

(Appears on the landing, sees PIERRE; hopeful for news.)

Papa...?

MADELEINE

Your father thinks we should all be Germans. What about that? Would you like to be a German?

PIERRE

(To MADELEINE.)

Would you rather she were dead?

MADELEINE

Yes!

PIERRE

Can't you see, it's pointless to resist! The war is over, Madeleine. In a matter of days, German soldiers will be everywhere, anybody who resists will be shot!

MADELEINE

I can shoot, too!

MARIE-LOUISE

Mama, Paul and Loup can come home now...

MADELEINE

Not like this! Not without a fight!

MARIE-LOUISE

Mama...

MADELEINE

No! Stop it! I won't listen to this! You sound like the Dog Man! Both of you, just like Jean-Louis!

MARIE-LOUISE

It's no use, Papa...

MADELEINE

Was he right all along? Are there no Frenchmen left?

PIERRE

(Moves to comfort her.)

Madeleine...

MADELEINE

(Rage and frustration.)

Stay away! Don't touch me!

GRETHE enters, senses the tension. All look at her. Her report is anti-climactic.

GRETHE

The news has come, Pierre. There is to be a new government. Marshall Petain is the leader.

MADELEINE

(Shaken.)

Petai...?

PIERRE

He will surrender...

GRETHE

Yes.

MADELEINE

(Wounded sarcasm.)

You should go ring the bells, Pierre...

PIERRE

The bells?

MADELEINE

The bells! Bells of joy! Victory bells! The War is over!

PIERRE

Madeleine...

MADELEINE

Welcome the Conqueror! Heil Hitler!

PIERRE

You have to face facts...

MADELEINE

(Storming up the stairs.)

No! You face facts! You and Jean-Louis! I'll be the crazy one for a while!

MARIE-LOUISE

Mama, it's over! We lost!

MADELEINE

(Turns back.)

No! England is still fighting. As long as England fights, there's hope...!

PIERRE

England won't last a month!

MADELEINE

As long as England fights, I'll fight.

GRETHE

(As MADELEINE exits.)

I will go to her...

PIERRE

(Beat. He smiles uncomfortably.)

Sometimes I think insanity runs in the family.

MARIE-LOUISE

What's going to happen, Papa?

PIERRE

Not much. Politics. The Germans will come, and there will be some hardships, confusion, for a while, and a few things will change. We'll all learn to speak their language, our taxes will go up. Before long we'll be living just as though the war had ever happened...

MARIE-LOUISE

Except we won't be French...

PIERRE

By then that won't matter, *ma petite*...

MARIE-LOUISE

And Paul and Loup?

PIERRE

Oh, they'll keep them somewhere for a while, prisoners of war, not long.

MARIE-LOUISE

How long?

PIERRE

Until England falls. Not long.

MARIE-LOUISE

I hope it's soon. I want it to be soon...!

Lights fade in the main playing area. In the kennel, JEAN-LOUIS searches on inside himself, his eyes a probing mask.

End of Scene Four

ON THE SCREEN:

Reports from Vichy. Terms of the surrender. The question of the Navy...

Scene Five. July 3, 1940. Late afternoon.

*In the main playing area, MADELEINE kneads dough;
MIMI reads.*

MARIE-LOUISE

(Looking up from her book.)

Isn't today July the third?

MADELEINE

(Generally despondent.)

Who counts days any more?

MARIE-LOUISE

Tomorrow is Independence Day in America, did you know that?

MADELEINE

God bless America.

MARIE-LOUISE

Oh, Mama...

I wonder if the Germans will let us celebrate Bastille...

MADELEINE

What's to celebrate? *Liberte, egalite, fraternite?* Let America celebrate.

(Beat. An unlikely thought.)

Are you reading history?

MARIE-LOUISE

Mm-hmm...

MADELEINE

In the middle of summer?

MARIE-LOUISE

It's Loup's. I found it when I was cleaning their room. It's interesting.

MADELEINE

(Wry amusement.)

Mm-hmm...

MARIE-LOUISE

Well, I don't want him to think I'm ignorant!

(MADELEINE smiles. Matter-of-fact.)

Anyway, I'll be leaving school when he comes home, so I might as well learn something while I can...

MADELEINE

(A new wrinkle.)

Leaving school?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Adolescent disdain.)

Mama, they don't let married girls go to school...!

MADELEINE

Oh, I see...

(Tongue-in-cheek reproach.)

And what if somebody didn't let schoolgirls get married?

MARIE-LOUISE

Mama!

MADELEINE

It's your last year, after all...

MARIE-LOUISE

(Adolescent logic.)

Mama, we said all along, as soon as the war was over! We never said anything about...

(She bites her tongue. Beat.)

I mean as soon as...

MADELEINE

As soon as we won the war, I think we said.

(Beat.)

Wasn't that what we said?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Petulant. Kicking herself.)

Yes, Mama.

MADELEINE

(Pressing her point.)

So it's not really very likely that you'll be leaving school early, is it?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Taking her medicine, not listening.)

No, Mama...

MADELEINE

(Angrily.)

Look at me when I'm talking to you!

MARIE-LOUISE

I'm sorry, Mama. I didn't...

MADELEINE

Yes you did! For two weeks now, ever since the news came, all I've heard from you is "Loup this," and "Loup that," and "Won't everything be wonderful when Loup comes home?" As if any minute he and your brother were going to walk right through the door! It's driving me crazy!

MARIE-LOUISE

(Hurt; cool.)

I didn't know it was bothering you, Mama. I won't do it any more.

MADELEINE

(Contrite.)

Mimi-Louise...

MARIE-LOUISE

I thought you'd be glad! Why aren't you glad?

MADELEINE

(Hopeless.)

Glad for what? *Bonne a mere*, why is everyone around here so anxious to embrace defeat?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Confronting the issue.)

The war is over, Mama. I'm sorry, I know how much it hurts to lose, it hurts me too! But it's over! We have to take what comes.

(Beat.)

I'm sorry, Mama.

MADELEINE

Don't be sorry. You say what you believe.

(Beat.)

I wonder if you know what it means, to take what comes, to have to take what comes. What comes? Do you know? Look in your history book, what lot falls to the vanquished?

MARIE-LOUISE

(Pressing her naivete.)

They're coming home, Mama...

MADELEINE

Where does it say that? Show me where it says that!

MARIE-LOUISE

They're coming home! Papa says...!

MADELEINE

Don't tell me what Papa says. Not all Frenchmen are as gullible as your papa, thank God—anything that comes through channels, he'll swallow like the host! Poland fell to the Nazis! Ask the Poles who comes home! They're all in labor camps on the Rhine! They're slaves!

MARIE-LOUISE

(Beginning to understand.)

Mama...

MADELEINE

(Beat. Drop in tone.)

But that's not all. That's only part of what comes with the Nazis. It gets worse.

MARIE-LOUISE

(The full implication.)

But Mama, it is over. It is, it's fact! The government...

MADELEINE

(On will alone.)

It can't be over. It has to go on! Even if it takes years, even if Paul and Loup never come home—it has to go on!

JEAN-LOUIS enters upstage unobserved.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Devastated.)

But what can we do?

MADELEINE

Pray, baby. Pray for a chance. Pray for England to hang on until...

MARIE-LOUISE

Until when, Mama?

MADELEINE

It has to go on...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Abrasive.)

So now France prays for England to do her fighting.

MADELEINE

(Not ready to deal with him.)

Just get your coffee and crawl back in your hole, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Crossing to pour coffee; a condescending taunt.)

Give up, Madeleine. The British are as yellow as the French. They don't have the stomach for war—or the spine!

MADELEINE

At least they're still fighting!

JEAN-LOUIS

Hanging on! Hanging on by the skin of their teeth! As soon as Hitler offers terms they'll tumble like a house of straw!

MADELEINE

As long as they hang on, there's hope!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Contemptuous.)

Has it not occurred to you, dear sister, that the British might have enough trouble of their own just trying to stay afloat? Why should they worry about poor fallen France? Especially when Hitler puts planes on the French coast, ships in French ports, bringing the war to their doorstep!

MADELEINE

What?

JEAN-LOUIS

So. You didn't consider that.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Reacting to the ships. Fearful.)

Mama...?

MADELEINE

It's not true, baby. The French are our allies...

JEAN-LOUIS

France made a separate peace. We're Hitler's allies now.

GRETHE appears on the landing, drawn by the disturbance. At almost the same time, PIERRE enters the shop with a large radio.

GRETHE

What are you doing here, Jean-Louis? You know in the day you're not allowed...

PIERRE

Madeleine? Hello!

MADELEINE

Oh God, it's the other one.

PIERRE

(Passing through the shop, struggling with the radio.)

Grethe? Hello! Who's watching the shop?

(Steps through the arch; he doesn't see JEAN-LOUIS.)

Here you are! Mimi! Look what I've got! A radio!

MARIE-LOUISE

(Still stunned.)

That's nice, Papa...

PIERRE

Just the thing to cheer everybody up!

GRETHE

(Moving down the stairs.)

Here, Pierre. I make you a place...

MADELEINE

Put it down before you ruin your back!

PIERRE

(He does so; notices grave expressions.)

I'd say we could use some cheering up around here...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Behind him.)

Guten Morgen, mein Schwager.

PIERRE

(Turns quickly, drats a glance at MADELEINE, smiles at JEAN-LOUIS.)

G-Guten Morgen, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Patronizing.)

Not bad, Pierre. You're learning.

GRETHE

Over here, Pierre. There is a plug...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Stepping to lift the radio with ease.)

Bitteschoen...

MADELEINE

(To PIERRE, a hostile air.)

I suppose this is a symbol of our elevated status!

PIERRE

Madeleine, please...

MADELEINE

One of the spoils of war?

PIERRE

(It was to have been a peace offering.)

You always wanted a radio...

MADELEINE

And now, as the wife of an important government official, I have one!

GRETHE

What is this?

MADELEINE

He didn't tell you? He's been appointed to the Council!

PIERRE

(To JEAN-LOUIS, self-effacing, in defense.)

They needed someone who had some German, to help translate...

MADELEINE

All he had to do was swear an oath!

PIERRE

(To MADELEINE, in denial.)

An oath of office.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Alert.)

A loyalty oath?

MADELEINE

"To affirm and enforce the legitimacy of the New Order!"

JEAN-LOUIS

(To PIERRE, piecing things together in strange dismay.)

And you swore...?

PIERRE

Everybody swore! The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, almost the whole Council....!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Quick.)

Almost?

MADELEINE

(Wry.)

Those who didn't lost their posts.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat. A dangerous shift to manic good humor.)

And those who did were rewarded! Just as it should be! Right, Pierre? Who wouldn't swear in those circumstances, right? It's only practical!

(The tone is mocking, but underneath his mind races.)

Besides, in these times, it's always good to know who among us can be trusted...

(Pointing the German at PIERRE.)

Ja?

PIERRE

(Uncomprehending; thinking himself vindicated.)

Jawohl...

JEAN-LOUIS

And if the ones who swore are a mixed bag, at least we know our enemies!

MADELEINE

Honest Frenchmen!

JEAN-LOUIS

(A double edge.)

They should be identified! They should all have to wear badges, so people will know of their *disloyalty*!

GRETHE

(Apprehensive.)

The radio is ready to play now, ja?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Very hyper; as lucid as he has appeared thus far.)

Ja. Ja, how does it work? I suppose you just turn the knob, wait for it to warm up...

(He turns it on, drums his fingers. TO PIERRE.)

So, Pierre. How many people had to take this oath?

PIERRE

Anyone who works for the town. All the departments, not just the government. Police, the power plant, even teachers...

JEAN-LOUIS

Even teachers!

PIERRE

I know. What could a teacher do?

MADELEINE

(Ironic.)

Some of them didn't sign, Jean-Louis. In case you're interested...

JEAN-LOUIS

You mean they'd have me now?

MADELEINE

You'd pass the loyalty test.

JEAN-LOUIS

Touche.

The radio hums and crackles. A German announcer reports on the occupation of French airfields by the Luftwaffe. All listen, although neither MADELEINE nor MIMI speak the language, and PIERRE is hardly fluent. As soon as they catch the drift, GRETHE is grave, PIERRE shaken. JEAN-LOUIS smiles broadly.

GRETHE

Lieber Gott!

JEAN-LOUIS

There! What did I tell you?

MADELEINE

What's he saying? What?

PIERRE

Something about the *Luftwaffe*, what? French airfields?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Raw sarcasm.)

What about the British now, Madeleine? France is their target!

PIERRE

(Tuning to another wave length.)

Doesn't anybody speak French anymore?

JEAN-LOUIS

Ten centuries of language wiped away in less than a year.

PIERRE

(Finding music: a sentimental orchestration of "Lili Marlene.")

There. The universal language!

GRETHE

(Beat. The music softens the atmosphere.)

One forgets sometimes how music sounds...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat. Lucid reverie.)

We used to sing this song in the trenches, in the last war...

MARIE-LOUIS

You sang in the trenches?

JEAN-LOUIS

Every night. You could hear it all along the line. Sometimes the Germans would join in...

MARIE-LOUISE

The Germans?

GRETHE

Germans sing too, *Liebchen*. This is even a German song, I think.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Sings along, softly.)

"Lili of the moonlight, my own Lili Marlene..."

MARIE-LOUISE

(A long moment of grace; then her timid need.)

Jean-Louis, the Germans—they can't make Loup keep fighting, can they?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Slow beat back to earth and the Dog Man.)

What?

(Beat. He stares at her in confusion.)

Yes. Yes, keep fighting. Why not? There's still England. After England, who knows? Africa? No, Russia. Like Napoleon!

GRETHE

(Apprehensive.)

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(A determined gleam in his eye.)

The dogs are ready. A little rusty, maybe, but a day or two...
Not here, though. The war's over here, they never even came...

(Clutches at his clothes.)

I need—I need a uniform. Yes...

(To PIERRE, smiling, as he drifts to the stairs.)

We must identify ourselves...!

GRETHE

(As he starts up.)

Where are you going, Jean-Louis?

JEAN-LOUIS

It's time to fight back, I think...

(He exits up the stairs. The music continues to play.)

MARIE-LOUISE

Did I say something wrong?

GRETHE

No, *Liebchen*...

MADELEINE

I hope to God he's not really planning to take those dogs off to fight...!

PIERRE

Is that what he was talking about?

GRETHE

I'll go to him...

PIERRE

No, wait! I almost forgot. There was mail!

MARIE-LOUISE

From Loup!

PIERRE

(Passing them out.)

Three from Loup, for you, and one for Grethe—and one from Paul, for all of us!

MADELEINE

(Surprised.)

Paul?

PIERRE

Postmarked just three days after the Armistice...

(Slight self-justification.)

You have to give the New Order credit...!

MADELEINE

What does it say? Read it!

PIERRE

(Giving it to her with a smile.)

You read it.

MADELEINE

(Opening it.)

Wouldn't you know as soon as the war was over...

PIERRE

Last chance before he comes home, I guess!

MADELEINE

(Hands trembling, she reads.)

Dear Family. The world is changing even as I write, and what was tedium yesterday, today is confusion and doubt. The latest and prevailing rumor is that the Fleet is ordered to Toulon to wait out the war, in which case it's not unlikely we may see you soon..."

MARIE-LOUISE

(Rebutting their argument from her own letter.)

That's what Loup, says, Mama. You see...?

MADELEINE

(Unconvinced.)

He says it's a rumor. I wouldn't start getting my hopes up...

PIERRE

Go on.

MADELEINE

(Looking back.)

Here. He says, "On the other hand, there's a strong force in favor of going in with the British against Moussolini, and if we have a choice, I think we should. Why surrender without a fight?"

GRETHE

That doesn't sound like Paul...!

The music stops abruptly as an announcer reads a bulletin. PIERRE moves to lower the volume, but the words catch his attention. Action freezes as the lights dim.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Citizens of France. The government at this hour confirms reports of hostile activity between unsuspecting elements of the French Fleet

and superior British forces off the coast of North Africa in a treacherous violation of French neutrality. Among those vessels engaged in the conflict...

The voice fades out. Lights reveal WOLF and PAUL at battle stations on the Bretagne.

WOLF

I wish to God they'd open fire and get it over with!

PAUL

Thank God for every minute, Loup. Who knows what the next one's going to bring.

WOLF

Who knows? Sanity, maybe?

PAUL

Where there's life, there's hope.

WOLF

(GRETHE passes through his mind. Hopeless.)

Hope...

(Bravado.)

Hope's a futile science, cousin. Mathematically, it's a negative equation composed of imaginary numbers. Hope...

(Beat; he breaks.)

God damn it, the war's over!

(Rushes to rail, shouts across the water.)

Can you hear me over there? The war's over!

PAUL

(Sharply.)

Loup!

WOLF

Don't they know? It's over!

PAUL

They know, Loup. You know they know, that's why they're here...

WOLF

(Utter disbelief; an almost sobbing laugh.)

The British! Can you believe it? Won't Papa be proud to know I wound up fighting the British.

PAUL

They don't want it any more than we do.

WOLF

Then why is it happening? Why can't we surrender? We're on the same side, for Christ's sake! Germany's the enemy!

PAUL

I wonder how many Germans really want it.

WOLF

It's crazy!

PAUL

War's always crazy. Killing strangers on command—what could be crazier?

(Beat.)

And this is only the beginning...

WOLF

It's the end for us.

PAUL

Probably. And maybe just as well.

WOLF

Aren't you afraid?

PAUL

Don't even talk about it.

(Beat. WOLF takes an envelope from his pocket, tears it in two.)

What's that?

WOLF

(Quietly.)

I thought we'd be going home.

PAUL

You never mailed it.

WOLF

I was going to take it to him.

PAUL

(Pejorative.)

Poet!

WOLF

What's the difference? Who am I to forgive sins like his?

PAUL

(Sees the first puff of smoke.)

Look!

WOLF

(Moving to the rail.)

What the...

A blinding flash accompanied by an ear-shattering explosion. Blackout.

Light is slowly reintroduced into the living area. Tableau: shock and grief. Beat.

MADELEINE

(A stunned whisper.)

The British...!

PIERRE switches off the radio. MARIE-LOUISE realizes the letters she holds are all she has left of LOUP. PIERRE puts his arm around her, but is too confused himself to console, and GRETHE, keeping her grief characteristically inside but hard pressed, moves to help. MADELEINE remains defiant and aloof, taking out her pain in hate and anger, verging on hysteria.

JEAN-LOUIS

(His voice off stage, singing raucously.)

Die Fahne hoch! Die Reihen dicht geschlossen.

S.A. marchiert mit ruhig festem Schritt.

Kameraden! die Rotfront und Reaktion erschossen!

Marchiern im Geist, in unsern Reihen mit!

On the last line he appears on the landing in a World War I French military blouse, with a large swastika emblazoned on the front in black ink. MADELEINE screams at the grotesque. He reacts, looks from face to face, finally to GRETHE.

GRETHE

(Beat. Holding back.)

Unser Sohn...

JEAN-LOUIS

Dein Sohn! Ich habe kein Sohn!

GRETHE

Jean-Louis!

(Beat. Pleading simply.)

Unser Sohn ist tot.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat. His sand world collapses.)

Tot...?

*Lighting shifts dramatically to concentrate focus
on JEAN-LOUIS; all sight lines point to him.*

WOLF'S VOICE

Papa...?

JEAN-LOUIS

What...?

WOLF'S VOICE

Am I un loup, Papa?

GRETHE

(Moving to him.)

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Waving her away.)

Un loup, my son...

WOLF'S VOICE

Am I un loup, since I'm a Frenchman? Am I un loup?

GRETHE

(In both times.)

It's all right, Jean-Louis..

*Lights fade to a single spot on JEAN-LOUIS, his
eyes and being fixed in time as the question
echoes through his soul.*

WOLF'S VOICE

Am I, Papa? Am I un loup...?

Lights fade to black. End of Scene Five.

End of Act Two.

Act Three

ON THE SCREEN:

The Battle of Britain. The British hang on.

Scene One. Summer, 1940 - Autumn, 1942

This scene bridges the months between the fall of France and the Allied invasion of North Africa. The effect of the projections should almost resemble that of calendar leaves falling away in feature films of the period. (If projections are not used, radio accounts played over the stage set will serve to punctuate the progress of JEAN-LOUIS's reverie.)

In dim light, the family, in casual grouping, as though listening to the radio after the evening meal, GRETHE prominent and slightly isolated from the rest. During the scene they remain neutral unless JEAN-LOUIS demands their presence.

In an open pen in the kennel, JEAN-LOUIS, dazed and unkempt, still wearing the military blouse, his brain in utter limbo, slumps ungainly on his bed of straw. His face and eyes maintain a desperation and despair that show he still rejects all hope, as WOLF's voice echoes words from the end of Act Two.

WOLF'S VOICE

Papa...?

Am I un loup, Papa? Am I un loup now?

Papa?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Mechanically.)

Yes, my son?

WOLF'S VOICE

Am I un loup?

JEAN-LOUIS

(A sad, lost, once-proud smile.)

Un loup...

He jerks himself to his feet in the pen, hesitates. Light dims up on GRETHE, distant, passive, yet somehow connected.

JEAN-LOUIS (*Cont.*)

(He speaks to her in a later time.)

I went to see Jean Roedel.

I wanted to know when I could start teaching.

His brother was my...

We were together at Verdun. I was with him...

He stood away from my embrace. When I...

(He holds out his arms, lets them drop.)

He looked at his hands, knickknacks on the wall. He tried to smile.

I was embarrassed for him.

He talked about how things have changed, he said...

Next term, maybe.

At first I thought...

(Childlike.)

I thought he was my friend...

He drifts warily from the pen as the lights dim.

ON THE SCREEN:

Hitler betrays Stalin, invades Russia, June, 1941

A year has passed in his delusion. In the house, GRETHE is weeping softly. He registers.

JEAN-LOUIS

Was ist denn loss, mon ecureuil?

GRETHE

Jean-Louis!

(Wiping her eyes.)

I didn't hear you come...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat.)

What did they do this time?

GRETHE

Nothing, I just...

JEAN-LOUIS

Tell me.

Something happen in the shop?

Somebody else ask if you baked their bread?

GRETHE

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

Why do you hide things from me?

GRETHE

They don't mean it like...

JEAN-LOUIS

As if your hands weren't clean!

GRETHE

They don't mean this, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

What's the matter with these people? When will they learn?

GRETHE

Please don't fight with them, Jean-Louis. Fighting only makes it worse.

JEAN-LOUIS wrenches himself away, paces through time in pain and listless anger. WOLF's voice, when it comes, is registered with no surprise.

WOLF'S VOICE

Papa?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Stops pacing. Mechanically.)

Loup?

I'm here. What...?

WOLF'S VOICE

Simeon Cellier said you fought for the Germans in the War.

JEAN-LOUIS

You tell Simeon I fought for France, and I have a *Croix de Guerre* to prove it.

WOLF'S VOICE

That's what I said, Papa.

JEAN-LOUIS

And?

WOLF'S VOICE

He said that's why you keep the dogs. He said you were a German spy, and the dogs are spy dogs!

JEAN-LOUIS

(An edge creeping into his patient tone.)

Tell him the dogs are shepherds, for the herdsmen of Provence, and I keep them because no one seems to think I'm good for anything else!

WOLF'S VOICE

I told him they were shepherds...

JEAN-LOUIS

What did he say then?

WOLF'S VOICE

He said I was a liar.

JEAN-LOUIS

And you fought?

WOLF'S VOICE

Like you taught me, Papa...

JEAN-LOUIS

And did you win?

WOLF'S VOICE

(Joyless.)

Oui, Papa.

JEAN-LOUIS

You made him take back what he said?

WOLF'S VOICE

Oui.

(Hesitant.)

Papa?

JEAN-LOUIS

Yes, my son?

WOLF'S VOICE

You weren't a spy, were you?

The question sinks in; he digests it, mulls it over without apparent reaction. GRETHE in dim light, sharing his time, although she does not react when he addresses her.

JEAN-LOUIS

It was better in Cologne!

At least in Cologne they were strangers! I've known these people all my life!

Madame Cunard, who spits every time you walk by—I used to milk her goats! The boys Loup fights—I taught their fathers! Language! History! I taught them what it means to be French, and now... In Cologne I was a Frenchman! Here...

(Turning inward.)

Gut. Zehr gut. If that's what they want...

MADELEINE stands in light, takes focus. The year is 1933. Stychomythia.

MADELEINE

They're calling you the Dog Man...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Stiffening; civil.)

I keep dogs...

MADELEINE

Some of them have your eyes, they say...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Calm.)

They're mistaken...

MADELEINE

Not to mention your disposition...

JEAN-LOUIS

I weigh heavy on their souls...

MADELEINE

You're the laughing stock of the town!

JEAN-LOUIS

Laughter is the mask of shame...

MADELEINE

Because you choose to lie down with dogs? Whose shame is that? They just think you're crazy!

PIERRE

(Adjusting into the scene.)

He chased old man Delibes down the street this afternoon, swearing at him in German at the top of his lungs, and then some boys with rocks chased him back. Oh, it was some row!

MADELEINE

There's talk of putting you away somewhere.

PIERRE

He sounded for all the world like the new German chancellor...!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Pulling back to present time.)

You wait! You call me German now and laugh, but you just wait...!

(Beat. Family resumes neutral attitudes as lights begin to fade)

My turn will come to laugh.

ON THE SCREEN:

The attack on Pearl Harbor, December, 1941. The war is now global.

The mistral blows cold and bitter in winter, late 1938. In a far corner of the kennel, JEAN-LOUIS sits huddled over a cup of hot soup. In dim light, the family at supper; MADELEINE on the landing.

MADELEINE

Loup's in his room. He says he won't come down until the Nazi is through eating...

(Beat. JEAN-LOUIS does not respond.)

It seems he asked the priest if the commandment to "honor thy father" meant he had to be a Nazi sympathizer...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat. He looks up.)

What did the priest say?

MADELEINE

That sometimes God makes exceptions.

JEAN-LOUIS

So now they take my son...

GRETHE

(As MADELEINE moves to her place at the table.)

He don't mean to hurt you, Jean-Louis. He don't understand...

JEAN-LOUIS

No. No one understands, not yet—or if they do, they close their eyes. But they will. Soon...

(His turn.)

They don't laugh at the Dog Man any more, Madeleine. Germans aren't so funny these days...

MADELEINE

If you prefer hatred to ridicule...

JEAN-LOUIS

Not hatred, Madeleine. Fear.

GRETHE

Don't pick a fight, Jean-Louis...

MADELEINE

No one's afraid of you.

JEAN-LOUIS

The Nazis have a slogan: "*Heute Deutschland, Morgen Europa!*" First the Rhineland, now Austria, the Sudeten. Who's next? France?

PIERRE

I refuse to listen to this at my table!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Throwing his cup against the kennel wall as he stands.)

Why should I eat with pigs? Let Hitler come and teach you manners!

MADELEINE

Hitler is a mad dog! Just like you! Both of you ought to be destroyed!

JEAN-LOUIS

(With great emotion.)

Yes! Yes! But who? Who will dare? The world is petrified! And when, Madeleine? When a mad dog bites, there's nothing you can do!

(Beat. A snarl.)

Tell the patriot he can eat now...

ON THE SCREEN:

The siege of Stalingrad, fall and winter, 1942.
The critical engagement of the war in Europe.

In the kennel, JEAN-LOUIS alone, not long before the outbreak of the war; the living area is dark and bare.

JEAN-LOUIS

Voruber ist mein Kampf! Der Fuehrer kommt! Bald kommt der Deutsche Krieg! Niemals werde ich der Hund-Mann sein! Wieder Niemals! Mein

Fuehrer kommt—Heil Hitler! Gross ist die Welt, und dein! Dein...!

In the height of his harangue, PAUL opens the door to the kennel, interrupts.

PAUL

Jean-Louis?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Startled. Beat. Confused, disoriented.)

Paul...?

PAUL

They said you wanted to see me.

JEAN-LOUIS

(Still adjusting.)

Yes. Yes, come in, sit down...

PAUL

I've come by several times, but it never seemed...

JEAN-LOUIS

I know. The Dog Man...

PAUL

He seems to have a lot to say these days.

JEAN-LOUIS

He comes and goes, my doppelganger. What does he call it, your Doctor Freud?

PAUL

Schizophrenia.

JEAN-LOUIS

Yes. A schism in the mind.

There's going to be a war, you know. Before the year is out.

I have to pick a side.

PAUL

What if the Dog Man wins?

JEAN-LOUIS

Sometimes I think the Dog Man is my sanity.

Or maybe I'm as crazy as they say, who knows? When does the armor become the soul?

The Dog Man takes the pressure from my pain...

I'm not a madman, Paul. Not yet. Sometimes, maybe, when the wind is

right. Like Hamlet: "I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly..."

This howling mistral swirls so many ways, a man might lose his bearings.

(A smile.)

A Provencal is noted for his passion, *n'est-ce pas?*

(Changing tack.)

So, when are you leaving for Aix?

PAUL

Next week.

JEAN-LOUIS

I envy you. The girls are amazing.

PAUL

(A flush.)

So I've heard.

JEAN-LOUIS

They make it hard to concentrate.

(Beat.)

So talk! You're not saying anything.

PAUL

In psychology we learn to listen.

JEAN-LOUIS

And now you've listened, what do you think? You learn that too, I hope!

PAUL

(Beat.)

I'm wondering why it's me that's listening. Why you talk to me and not to Loup...

JEAN-LOUIS

(The unspoken rule.)

Loup...?

PAUL

(Deferring.)

You asked what I was thinking...

JEAN-LOUIS

True.

PAUL

If he came to you...

JEAN-LOUIS

Why should he?

PAUL

But if he did...?

JEAN-LOUIS

(But the mention of WOLF has brought the Dog Man.)

He won't!

PAUL

(Resigned.)

No...

WOLF appears in the living area, glass in hand, as in Act One, Scene Two. Others will take similar attitudes and positions as they enter, building to the tableau. PAUL remains in the kennel, in dimmed light.

WOLF

(Raising his glass.)

To France, Papa...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Unprepared.)

What...?

WOLF

A farewell toast...

PAUL

(In his time.)

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Rejecting PAUL.)

Who's going away?

WOLF

Paul and I. To the Navy...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Looks at PAUL.)

You too?

PAUL

(As before.)

Jean-Louis...

GRETHE

(Appears on the landing.)

He was coming to tell you...

JEAN-LOUIS

Tell me what...?

WOLF

I'm sorry, Papa...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Reliving.)

A man does what he has to do...

GRETHE

He was coming to tell you...

JEAN-LOUIS

Not my son!

GRETHE

He was. Tell him, Wolf...!

WOLF

Even if you think I'm wrong...

JEAN-LOUIS

(A bellow.)

I have no son!

MADELEINE

(Appears.)

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

Stay out of this!

MADELEINE

Jean-Louis, it was the British! the British!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Further disoriented.)

What...?

WOLF

Papa, please...

JEAN-LOUIS

Don't ask me this!

WOLF

Forgive me, Papa...

JEAN-LOUIS

No!

GRETHE

Jean-Louis...

WOLF

I ask your blessing...

JEAN-LOUIS

You ask a stone for water...

WOLF

Papa...

JEAN-LOUIS

Bastard! No! I give you...

(Catches himself, chokes back the words, then screams.)

No! No!

Blackout except for tight spot on JEAN-LOUIS, on his knees in anguish and rage.

WOLF'S VOICE

(The child.)

Am I un loup, Papa...?

(Beat.)

Am I, Papa? Am I un loup...?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Softly, from his soul.)

Verzeihe...

(Beat.)

Verzeihe mir, mein Sohn!

ON THE SCREEN:

Montage: The Allied invasion of North Africa in November; the scuttling of the French Fleet at Toulon; the German occupation of Vichy; then, without words, a convoy moving south through the following.

*In the distance, the sound of the approaching
convoy. JEAN-LOUIS is suddenly alert. For a
moment he wonders whether to trust his senses;
then he smiles, rises.*

JEAN-LOUIS

At last...

(He straightens himself, reaches for the gun.)

Now, meine Kameraden...

He exits. The lights fade out.

End of Scene One.

Scene Two. Immediately following

The sound of trucks and tanks is now loud and steady as the convoy passes in the next street. MADELEINE mixes dough in the kitchen area; MARIE-LOUISE sulks defiantly at the table. GRETHE tends the shop.

PIERRE enters through the shop door in a happy rush.

PIERRE

(To GRETHE, passing through.)

It's unbelievable! They're stretched out as far as the eye can see, there's no end to them! Madeleine...!

(Steps through arch.)

There you are! What are you doing?

MADELEINE

Baking bread.

PIERRE

Baking bread.

MADELEINE

Somebody has to do it.

PIERRE

The Mayor is watching from my window and my wife bakes bread.

MARIE-LOUISE

The Mayor?

PIERRE

(Beaming stupidity.)

It's the best view in town!

MARIE-LOUISE

(Adolescent plea.)

Oh, Mama, please! Everybody's there!

MADELEINE

No!

PIERRE

The Mayor's daughter's there. His wife, too!

MADELEINE

All crowded together in your little third-floor cubbyhole? That's cozy! You must feel highly honored!

PIERRE

Madeleine...

MADELEINE

The Mayor is a Vichy pig!

PIERRE

I wish to God you wouldn't say things like that...

MADELEINE

Collaborators! All of you!

PIERRE

What else can we do, and survive? Don't you know how pointless it would be to resist? Come with me. See for yourself.

MADELEINE

(Deeper meaning.)

I know how pointless resistance is, Pierre.

PIERRE

Not to mention the reprisals! In Nancy they say for every German soldier killed by the Maquis, they kill...

MADELEINE

I've heard the stories!

PIERRE

Well God save us from the Maquis, that's all I say!

MADELEINE

Save us for what?

PIERRE

(Impatient and annoyed.)

I'm not going to stand here and argue fate while the *Reichswehr* passes in review outside my window! I only came because I thought you'd like to see. Since you're obviously not interested...

MARIE-LOUISE

(As he starts out.)

Papa!

MADELEINE

No!

PIERRE

Why not?

MADELEINE

You go cheer the Master Race. You, I can't control. Mimi stays here.

PIERRE

It's something she'll remember as long as she lives! Guns on trucks, cannons—and *panzertanks*—and hundreds and hundreds of soldiers...!

MARIE-LOUISE

They're only passing through, Mama! I'll never have another chance!
(*Her last weapon.*)

Mama, the Germans didn't kill Paul and Loup! The British did!

PIERRE

She's right, Madeleine. The Germans are our friends—the general even speaks French!

MARIE-LOUISE

A general!

PIERRE

(*Vicarious pride.*)

He asked the mayor to come to lunch!

MADELEINE

Dear God...

MARIE-LOUISE

Did you talk to him?

MADELEINE

If they're our friends, why do they send armies to occupy our land? Ask him that!

PIERRE

(*Patient; patent.*)

The British are making alarming gains in North Africa, Madeleine. The Maquis scuttled the fleet—without the troops, the whole south coast of France is open to invasion!

MADELEINE

Invasion...?

PIERRE

They're here to defend us!

MADELEINE

(Sinking into chair.)

Invasion...

GRETHE

(In the archway; timidly.)

Madeleine...

(Speaking up for the first time.)

If God has thought to join our people, even in this cause, maybe...

Beat. Who is the enemy? MADELEINE knows the moral issues of the war; she even understands the necessity of Oran, although she rails at British murderers in maternal outrage. Yet her nation and her family, now even GRETHE, have aligned themselves with Hitler, while all the personal agony of the war is inflicted by the Allies.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Wheedling.)

Mama...?

MADELEINE

(Heavy capitulation.)

Go...

MARIE-LOUISE

(Kissing her before dashing out.)

Merci, Mama!

MADELEINE

(Calling after her.)

Not on the street! Stay inside!

(Urging PIERRE,)

Go with her!

PIERRE

(Beat.)

They're only passing through, Madeleine...

MADELEINE

Go on!

(He starts out, turns back, hoping for more.)

What?

PIERRE

It's a matter of survival.

MADELEINE

Is it, Pierre? Is that all it is? Survival? Then why do I feel ashamed? I don't know what to hope for any more...

Suddenly over the steady din, the sound of gunshots, three or four well-placed rounds, followed by panic and confusion, then an angry barrage of machine-gun fire as the convoy grinds to a halt.

PIERRE

What's that?

GRETHE

It sounds like guns...

MADELEINE

(Stunned beat. Rising in panic.)

Mimi...!

PIERRE

What?

MADELEINE

(Her voice rising to a scream as she races out.)

Mimi!

GRETHE

(Clutching at her.)

Madeleine...!

MADELEINE

(Breaking free and out.)

Let me go!

PIERRE

(Running after her.)

Madeleine! Come back!

GRETHE

Stop her, Pierre!

She stands at the door as people rush by; she tries to ask questions, but the answers are garbles and confused. Suddenly she sniffs the air.

O mein Gott!

She rushes into the kitchens, opens the oven doors; smoke billows out. For a moment she forgets the greater crisis to deal with the one at hand. The loaves are black.

As she finishes, JEAN-LOUIS lurches through the upstage door with the gun, mortally wounded but sane and strong. GRETHE stifles a shriek; for a moment she cannot move. Their eyes hold a beat.

JEAN-LOUIS

I meant for them to kill me...

GRETHE

Jean-Louis...!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Winces; she rushes to him, helps him to a chair.)

Don't touch me! The blood...!

GRETHE

I'll clean it...

JEAN-LOUIS

No! There's not much time. I only came back here...

GRETHE

(At his feet, she unties her apron, tries to stop the bleeding.)

So viel das Blut...!

JEAN-LOUIS

Grethe, stop. Stop!

(He takes her hands.)

There isn't time! They'll be here any minute!

GRETHE

I cannot watch you die, Jean-Louis!

JEAN-LOUIS

I want to die! Listen to me—Grethe...!

(She is verging on hysteria; he shakes her.)

Grethe, please! I have to die! Listen! When I saw them—proud and cruel, the conquerors! Something, I don't know—the dogs...

GRETHE

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

The dogs, I thought! I thought...

GRETHE

(As he winces in a sudden spasm.)

Jean-Louis!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Suppressing the pain.)

No! Something in their eyes, I thought—I've seen those eyes...

(Sudden rage.)

We are not dogs!

GRETHE

You make the bleeding! Please, Jean-Louis!

JEAN-LOUIS

They didn't even see me. As though I wasn't even there. I almost laughed!

(Beat.)

Even as I was firing...

GRETHE

Be still now...

JEAN-LOUIS

I think I killed their general...

GRETHE

Mein Gott!

JEAN-LOUIS

So you see, I have to die, there's no use...

GRETHE

No!

JEAN-LOUIS

I don't know why I even ran, except—it was so strange—they just looked at me...

Suddenly there was hope.

GRETHE

Hope?

JEAN-LOUIS

The time to die is when there is no hope. Remember?

GRETHE

I remember always.

JEAN-LOUIS

One faint last hope, just one. I never knew I had it. I never let myself-believe...

GRETHE

I always hope, Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

Mon petit ecureuil...

MADELEINE bursts into the shop, calling frantically.

MADELEINE

Mimi! Mimi, are you here?

GRETHE

(Rising, rushing to arch.)

Madeleine...!

JEAN-LOUIS

Grethe...!

MADELEINE

(Steps through arch, meets GRETHE.)

Has she come back...?

GRETHE

Jean-Louis...

MADELEINE

(Assuming no, starts back out.)

If anything happens to her, I'll...

GRETHE

Madeleine...!

MADELEINE

What...?

(Turns back, sees JEAN-LOUIS. Beat.)

Oh my God...

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat. Simply.)

I struck a blow for France, Madeleine.

GRETHE

(Helpless.)

Madeleine, the bleeding...

MADELEINE

I should have known. Dear God, I should have known!

JEAN-LOUIS

I couldn't help myself...

GRETHE

Madeleine...!

MADELEINE

(Beat. Implications. Pragmatic move.)

The kennel...

JEAN-LOUIS

No.

MADELEINE

You can't stay here, they'll find you! They're combing the town...!

GRETHE

(This thought has not occurred.)

Jean-Louis...!

JEAN-LOUIS

They'll find me anyway.

MADELEINE

But if they find you here...!

JEAN-LOUIS

(With finality.)

It doesn't matter where, Madeleine...

MADELEINE

(Beat. Nonplused.)

Why?

JEAN-LOUIS

Was I wrong?

MADELEINE

What's the point? It's over!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Gentle irony.)

The British are still fighting...

GRETHE

(On her knees tending his wounds. Remonstrance.)

Jean-Louis...

MADELEINE

The British killed my son!

JEAN-LOUIS

Dogs killed your son, Madeleine! And mine! What does it matter which kennel they came from?

MADELEINE

(His craziness.)

Dogs?

JEAN-LOUIS

Dogs, yes! The dogs of war! British, German, French! You want to see who killed your son? Look in the street! Look out there! Those soldiers' eyes—those other mothers' sons—those children! A pack of dogs!

GRETHE

(Trying to calm him.)

Jean-Louis...

JEAN-LOUIS

What changes children into dogs? Who teaches them to hate? Who trains them? Who puts the madness in their eyes?

(Beat. Difficult confession.)

I saw myself reflected in their eyes. My madness...

(Confession.)

I killed our sons, Madeleine. Forgive me.

MADELEINE

You...?

(Her own confession.)

What mother sends her son to war...?

JEAN-LOUIS

(To GRETHE.)

Und dich, mon ecureuil...

GRETHE

Liebster Mann...

JEAN-LOUIS

Verzeihe mir...

GRETHE

Ich liebe dich...

JEAN-LOUIS

That's more than I could hope...

MADELEINE

(Sensing their intimacy, starting into shop.)

I'll tell you when they come...

JEAN-LOUIS

Madeleine...

(She turns back.)

It isn't over yet.

*Their eyes meet in an understanding beat. Then
PIERRE bursts in through the shop, calling in
terror.*

PIERRE

Madeleine!

MADELEINE

(Startled.)

Pierre!

PIERRE

(As MADELEINE steps through the arch.)

They have Mimi!

MADELEINE

What?

PIERRE

They took her! I saw them! I wasn't ten feet away...!

JEAN-LOUIS

(As GRETHE starts to rise.)

Stay here.

GRETHE

Mimi-Louise...!

MADELEINE

(To PIERRE.)

You let them?

JEAN-LOUIS

(To GRETHE.)

There's nothing you can do.

PIERRE

What could I do? She ran right into their arms, everything was crazy!

(MADELEINE starts out; he grabs her.)

Where are you going?

MADELEINE

(Struggling.)

Let me go!

PIERRE

There's nothing we can do! What can we do?

MADELEINE

They can have me!

GRETHE

(Anguished.)

What have you done, Jean-Louis?

PIERRE

They won't hurt her! As soon as they find the killer...

MADELEINE

The killer is here!

PIERRE

What?

(Beat. He bolts through the arch, sees JEAN-LOUIS.)

You!

JEAN-LOUIS

Forgive me, Pierre.

PIERRE

(Beat. A whisper.)

Assassin!

JEAN-LOUIS

I've never brought you anything but pain.

PIERRE

(His voice rising.)

Assassin!

MADELEINE

Pierre...

PIERRE

(Blurting out.)

They have Mimi-Louise!

JEAN-LOUIS

He's right, Madeleine.

PIERRE

They'll kill us all!

JEAN-LOUIS

(Beat.)

What are you waiting for?

Beat. PIERRE accepts his role, turns to pass through the arch. GRETHE lunges to stop him; MADELEINE holds her.

GRETHE

No!

At this moment the door to the shop opens and a German OFFICER enters, escorting MIMI and accompanied by two enlisted men with submachine guns. PIERRE stops in his tracks, paralyzed with fright.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Beat. Pathos.)

Papa...?

MADELEINE

(Dashing for the arch.)

Mimi!

OFFICER

(Beat.)

The girl tells me the British killed your sons. My condolences.

MADELEINE

Merci.

MARIE-LOUISE

(Begging forgiveness.)

Mama...?

OFFICER

Also, she says her aunt is coming from Koln?

PIERRE

(Finding his voice, ingratiating.)

My sister-in-law...

OFFICER

Then you will be Papa, who takes the oath of office.

PIERRE

Pierre Bouillon.

OFFICER

(Beat. A smile.)

And the one who trains dogs for the Fuehrer...?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Rising in pain.)

Herein, mein Kamerade!

(GRETHE rushes to him; he flings her away.)

Get away from me!

OFFICER

(Bursts through the arch, sees JEAN-LOUIS, reaches for his pistol.)

Was...?

JEAN-LOUIS

(Raising his hands.)

Willkommen, Herr Kapitan. Ich heisse hier denn der Hund Mann...

OFFICER

(Nonplused.)

Dog man...

JEAN-LOUIS

Sometimes the dog bites the master, ja?

OFFICER

(Realization sinks in. A bark to his men.)

Kommen Sie hier! Schnell!

JEAN-LOUIS

(The MEN come in and take positions; he salutes triumphantly.)

Heil Hitler!

OFFICER

Erschiess ihn.

GRETHE

(Breaking to JEAN-LOUIS.)

Nooo!

The soldiers blast away, riddling both GRETHE and JEAN-LOUIS, as MIMI screams; PIERRE turns his head. MADELEINE stands proud as the lights fade.

End of Scene Two.

ON THE SCREEN:

The Allies in the streets of Paris, 1945.

End of Act Three.

Finis.