

CARSTAIRS. Thank heavens. I thought we'd be hiding in those cheeses forever.

RENÉ. What are you doing here Michelle? And why have you brought this foolish British agent who thinks he can speak French?

CRABTREE. (*To RENÉ.*) Are we a loon? We need to tick with you.

RENÉ. I am as a loon as I can be. What do you want? I have a business to run.

MICHELLE. Listen very carefully, I will say this only once... (*To the BRITISH AIRMEN, in British accent.*) Hello, chaps. Sorry about the delay, but good news! We've got a plan to get you back to Blighty!

RENÉ. Don't just stand there talking English in the middle of wartime France. Go out the back to do your plotting. It's not like I can understand a word you are saying.

(MICHELLE bundles the two BRITISH AIRMEN offstage through the back door, leaving RENÉ and CRABTREE alone.)

CRABTREE. We have a plan to send away the airmen.

RENÉ. Oh, well I understand that much better. (*To audience.*) He has a plan to send away the airmen.

CRABTREE. They will float back home in a hot air balloon.

RENÉ. A hot air balloon? Wherever did you get such a thing?

CRABTREE. We made it ourselves. We have the biscuit already.

RENÉ. You have the basket – but what about the balloon?

CRABTREE. We need some things first. We will be in torch shortly.

RENÉ. I see. Well, flying the airmen out in a giant balloon floating over Nouvien shouldn't attract much attention.

CRABTREE. I do not know what you moan.

(MICHELLE enters again from the back room.)

MICHELLE. *(To CRABTREE.)* Have you explained the plan to René?

RENÉ. In his own inimitable way. Look, Michelle, I will help the Resistance where I can, unless of course it puts me in physical danger or costs me anything, but why do you insist on using this incompetent British agent?

MICHELLE. In my fight for the freedom of France, I will use any weapons that I can. Officer Crabtree has been a great help ever since he first arrived here in Nouvien.

CRABTREE. *(Reminiscing about his arrival in France.)* Ah yes, I remember it well. It was a dick night, and there was no min.

RENÉ. *(To audience.)* Dark night, no moon.

CRABTREE. I jumped out of a British bummer, which was being chased by some German fartars. Now I am disgeezed as a poloceman so I am able to mauve about with complete frodom.

RENÉ. Good. Feel completely free to leave and take this fanatical female with you.

MICHELLE. René, listen very carefully, I shall say this only once.

RENÉ. What now?

MICHELLE. We will be back here shortly with a list of items we will need for our hot air balloon. You will find these items for us.

RENÉ. And if I don't?

MICHELLE. When the English pilots escape in the balloon, we will use your cowardly corpse for ballast. Come, Crabtree, we must escape like phantoms into the night.

CRABTREE. Forwool René. We will be bick looter.

(MICHELLE and CRABTREE exit through the main door.)

RENÉ. *(To audience.)* And there goes my quiet life again. All I want is a little peace.

(MIMI enters down the stairs. She poses flirtatiously on the bottom step.)

And here she is. Still, whilst no-one else is around... come to me, Mimi!

MIMI. Oh, René!

RENÉ. *(He embraces her.)* Oh, Mimi. *(Stops.)* I thought you had gone into town with Edith?

MIMI. She sent me back early to make the soup. She is still taking tea with Monsieur Alphonse.

RENÉ. Monsieur Alphonse? She sits drinking tea with another man whilst I toil to keep this cafe open. How unfaithful of her. Now, where were we? Ah, Mimi!

MIMI. *(Embracing him again.)* René, when will I ever get over you?

RENÉ. Well, Thursday's are good for me...

MIMI. I cannot hear your heart.

RENÉ. That is because you are listening to my appendix.

MIMI. Will you see me later?

RENÉ. How about you meet me in the coal cellar after dinner.

MIMI. The coal cellar? But I get so dirty in there!

