

Scene Two The Colonel's HQ

(The same day. The COLONEL is sitting at the desk in his office. GEERING stomps in and sits in a chair looking cross.)

COLONEL. A bad day at the office Captain?

GEERING. Yes Herr Colonel. We have a new intake of privates at the barracks. They are very badly trained and when they are given the order to stand to attention they stand at ease. When they are told to stand at ease, they fall out.

(GRUBER enters and notices the despondent air.)

GRUBER. Trouble?

COLONEL. It is the Captain. He is having trouble with his privates.

GRUBER. Oh?

GEERING. Yes, they keep falling out.

GRUBER. Have you tried a change of trousers?

COLONEL. This war is not turning out as I expected. I hear too that Hitler is acting strangely.

GEERING. Do you think he has a screw loose?

COLONEL. If you ask me, a whole meccano set has fallen apart in there! I always thought we'd have an easy life, line our pockets well and have a comfortable future after the war. Instead, we have no painting and the General has fifty thousand francs which he won't be sharing with us.

GEERING. It does not seem fair!

COLONEL. It is not. Gruber, you have been to Staff College, how do you sneak into in a General's dressing room?

GRUBER. Hmmm... I think I must have been away that day!

COLONEL. That is unfortunate because I am ordering you to visit Von Klinkerhoffen tonight, distract him and steal back the camembert cheese and the money!

GRUBER. But what if I am caught?

COLONEL. Then you will probably be shot.

GRUBER. Well, if I am, I should like to be buried with Hubert junior.

GEERING. Which regiment is he in?

GRUBER. He's my little tank! Even if I do get away with it, won't the General be very cross when he finds the money has been taken?

COLONEL. We can just blame it on the resistance and shoot a few peasants.

GRUBER. Very well. I shall wear my special cologne.

GEERING. Special cologne?

GRUBER. Lily of the valley with a splash of diesel oil.

COLONEL. Good luck Lieutenant.

GEERING. You'll need it...

(Blackout.)