

**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!

**RENÉ.** (*Suggestively.*) I know.

**MIMI.** Naughty boy. And now I will go and make the soup for the diners tonight. Have you a favourite?

**RENÉ.** Cockaleekie?

(**MIMI** titters and exits up the stairs.)

(*To audience.*) One dangerous job and two intimate meetings. Ah well, you have to take the rough with the smooth.

(**EDITH** enters through the front door with **MONSIEUR ALPHONSE**. **ALPHONSE** carries Edith's bag of grocery shopping.)

Ah, my wife Edith. Things just got a lot rougher!

**EDITH.** Monsieur Alphonse, you are so gallant. You really did not 'ave to walk me home.

**ALPHONSE.** Nonsense, Madame Edith. I would not rest until I was certain you had returned unharmed. The streets are not safe for a beautiful woman such as yourself to traverse unaccompanied.

**EDITH.** You flatter me, Monsieur Alphonse. (*To RENÉ.*) René! Why do you never lavish me with such honeyed words?

**RENÉ.** I have been stung too often. And who are you, Monsieur, to make such overtures to my wife?

**ALPHONSE.** I, sir, am Monsieur Alphonse the undertaker. Madame Edith and I were discussing local affairs, we were chatting about this and that, you know how it is.

**RENÉ.** This and that?

**ALPHONSE.** *Mostly* that. But it was getting late and I walked her home to ensure she arrived home un-ravaged... (*With pointed contempt*) as any dutiful husband would do.