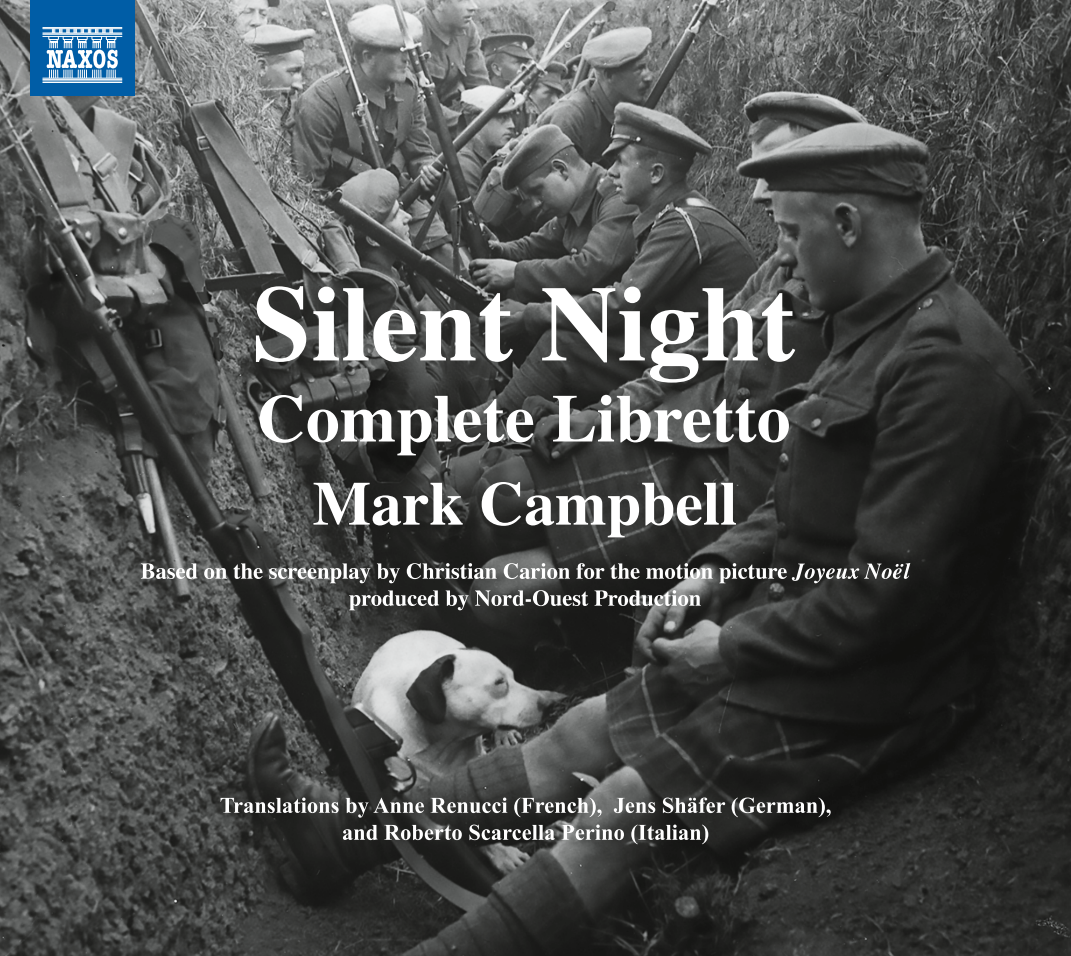

NAXOS

Silent Night

Complete Libretto

Mark Campbell

Based on the screenplay by Christian Carion for the motion picture *Joyeux Noël* produced by Nord-Ouest Production

Translations by Anne Renucci (French), Jens Shäfer (German), and Roberto Scarcella Perino (Italian)

ACT I
CD 1

PROLOGUE.

[Three separate scenes: the stage of a Berlin opera house in the middle of a performance; a small village church in Scotland; and a room in an apartment in Paris. Lights come up theatrically on the performance of an opera composed in the style of Mozart or Gluck. Anna holds up a candelabra and is in full costume as an 18th Century artistocrat.]

1

ANNA:

Ogni notte, ogni notte,	Every night,
Io accendo una candela	I light a candle
Nella camera del castello,	In the room of the castle,
E attendo il suo ritorno.	Awaiting his return.
Sempre prego, sempre prego,	Endlessly, I pray,
empre prego, tutto il giorno,	Endlessly, I pray,
E quel giorno, si' verra'	That—yes!—that day will come.
Sempre prego, sempre prego,	Endlessly, I pray,
Sempre prego, tutto il giorno,	Endlessly, I pray, all day long,
E quel giorno, si' verra'.	That—yes!—that day will come.

[Nikolaus has entered costumed (plumes and all) as the stalwart hero returned from battle.]

NIKOLAUS:

Eccomi alfin Amor mio!	Behold, my love!
Dalla Guerra, dalla guerra,	I have returned from war,
Son giunto 'sta ser,	To be with you!
Son giunto a te!	To be with you!

ANNA: *[With above.]*

Oh mio cuor! Oh mio cuor!	Oh, my heart! Oh, my heart!

[Anna and Nikolaus rush into each others' arms.]

ANNA/NIKOLAUS:

Per una notte sola,	For one night only,
Sarem di nuovo insieme,	We will be together
Per una notte sola.	And never again be apart.
Mai più!	Never again,
Mai più!	Never again,
Noi ci separerem!	Be apart.
Mai più!	Never again,
Mai—!	Never—

[A German General has trod on stage in uniform and signaled to the conductor to stop the orchestra. Anna and Nikolaus stop singing. The General unfolds a letter and reads it out loud.]

GERMAN GENERAL:

Ich wurde beauftragt, dieses Schreiben seiner Majestät, unseres geliebten Kaiser Wilhelm, zu verlesen. "Deutschland geht durch schwere Zeiten. Deutschland wurde angegriffen und wir haben keine andere Wahl, als den Aggressoren den Krieg zu erklären.Mit Gottes Hilfe und dem Schwert, das wir in unserer Hand tragen, werden wir unsere Ehre verteidigen. Der Sieg wird unser sein."	I have been ordered to read this letter from His Majesty, our beloved Kaiser Wilhelm. "Germany is going through difficult times. Germany has been attacked and we have no choice but to declare war on the aggressors. With God's help and the sword we brandish in our hands, we will defend our honor. Victory will be ours."

[From offstage, very quietly, German soldiers sing a war song. The General exits.]

MALE CHORUS: *[Offstage.]*

Der Sieg ist unser!	Victory is ours!
Dafür habt Kraft!	Stand firm!
Dafür habt Mut!	Take courage!
Möge Gott uns lenken,	May God guide us!
Den Sieg uns schenken,	Give us victory!
Mit des Tyrannen Blut	The tyrant's blood
Die Erde tränken!	Will soak the Earth!

[As the song offstage continues, Anna and Nikolaus, no longer in performance, hold each other tightly and freeze. Lights down. Lights up on a standing candelabra and a small statue of St. Michael in a village church in Scotland. Jonathan paints the statue while Palmer looks on paternally.]

2

PALMER: *[Sweetly.]*

Jonathan!
Why does Saint Michael have one green eye
And one blue?

JONATHAN: *[Sheepishly.]*

We're out of green paint.
And we've loads of blue.

PALMER:

Then shouldn't you have painted both blue?

JONATHAN:

But his eyes were green to start with.
I thought I should compromise.

[William runs on breathlessly, holding a flyer in his hand.]

WILLIAM:
That's it! That's it! It's happened!
War has been declared!
War has been declared!
[To Jonathan.]
We can leave town
For training in Glasgow!
In two days!
Think of it, little brother:
The glory of battle!
The glory of battle!
The glory—!
France!
The glory of battle!
Come on, little brother,
Come sign up with me.
Or you can stay here,
And paint statues your whole life!

[William runs off. Jonathan looks at Palmer for a brief second, then follows William. Palmer tries to say something to them, but it is too late. From offstage, British voices sing a war song, quietly. Palmer turns toward an altar and prays.]

MALE CHORUS: *[Offstage.]*
Never turn your back
On the Union Jack, boys!

MALE CHORUS: *[Offstage.]*

No, never turn your back
When your country calls!
Hie to her side!
Shield her with pride!
And see she never falls!
And see she never falls!

[Lights down, then up on a small table where Audebert and his pregnant wife Madeleine, sit in silence. Suddenly, Madeleine pounds her fist on the table.]

3

MADELEINE: *[Angrily.]*

Ne pars pas si tu	You don't have to go.
Ne veux pas.	You don't.
Ta femme attend un enfant!	Your wife is having a child!
Ne peuvent-ils pas	Can't they
Comprendre?	Understand that?
Comment peux-tu me quitter?	How can you leave me?
Pis, nous quitter, *nous?*	How can you leave *us?*
Je te déteste.	I hate you.
Je te déteste.	I hate you.

AUDEBERT: *[Consolingly.]*

Madeleine!	Madeleine!
Penses-tu que	Do you think
Jeveux partir?	I want to go?

AUDEBERT:

Penses-tu que	Do you think
Je veux vous abandonner ainsi?	I want to leave you
Cette guerre ne durera que	Lke this?
Quelques semaines.	This war will last
Un mois, au pire.	Only a few weeks.
Un mois!	A month at most.
Et je serai de retour	One month!
Pour t'embrasser—	And I'll be back
Vous embrasser—	To kiss you—
Tous les deux.	*Both* of you.

[From offstage, French soldiers sing a war song. Madeleine stands and embraces Audebert. They kiss passionately. Lights out.]

MALE CHORUS:

Pour nos pères, pour nos mères,	For our fathers, for our mothers,
Pour notre air, pour nos terres,	For our air, for our land,
Nous nous battons!	We fight!
Nous nous battons!	We fight!
Pour la justice, pour l'histoire,	For justice, for history,
Pour l'honneur, pour la gloire	For honor, for glory,
Nous nous battons!	We fight!
Nous nous battons!	We fight!

[Lights up. The five men stand apart in three groups: Nikolaus/Palmer, Jonathan, William/Audebert. They finish donning their uniforms. As the five sing, the chorus of war songs grows in intensity, drowning them out.]

4

WILLIAM:
One more week
Here in Glasgow,
Then I'm off.
Bound for glory.
To the front,
Into battle,
For the King,
For adventure.
And they say
It's a short war,
And will end
In a few weeks,
But I hope
I see action,
Say"hello"
To the Kaiser,
Let him know
How I love him,
And return
Here a hero.

JONATHAN:
Promised Mum
I would watch him
And make sure
Nothing happens.
And I swear
On my honor
Nothing will
Ever harm him.
And if God
Has to choose which
One of us
Has to die first,
Then I hope
I am chosen.
For I won't
Live without him.

PALMER:
God's better served
If I go there.
There'll be a need
For men like me.
And I can watch,
Over our lads.
Hope they won't need
A stretcher-bearer.
They always say.
THIS war is short.
But I have found
Wars never are.

NIKOLAUS: *[Over above.]*
Dieser Krieg ist sinnlos
Und verrückt.
Gehe ich nicht
Ist meine Karriere ruiniert.
Schon bald
Werde ich zurück—
kehren und
mit Anna singen.

This war is useless
And absurd.
But if I don't go
My career is ruined.
Soon
I will be back
Together with Anna
And singing.

AUDEBERT: *[Over above.]*
La seule raison
Pour laquelle je pars,
C'est mon père
La seule raison!

The only reason
I'm going
Is for my father!
The only reason.

.

BRITISH, GERMAN, FRENCH SOLDIERS *[Over above.]*

Never turn your back
On the Union Jack, boys!
Be ready to attack
When the time is nigh!
In England's name
Put tyrants to shame
And raise her scepter high!

Der Sieg ist unser!
Dafür habt Kraft!
Dafür habt Mut!
Möge Gott uns lenken
Unsren Sieg uns schenken!
Mit des Tyrannen Blut
Die Erde tränken!
Der Sieg ist unser!

Pour l'honneur, pour la gloire
Nous nous battons!
Nous nous battons!
Pour nos épouses, pour nos enfants
Mais surtout, mes amis, pour La France!
Nous nous battons! Nous nous battons!

[The ssound of a bomb in the air comes forward and explodes violently onstage. Blackout. End Prologue.]

SCENE 1.

[The battle. Bombs, blasts, and machine guns are deafening and relentless and mingle with the screams of men fallen and commands to fight. The French and Scottish soldiers attempt—and fail—at their attack on the German bunker. During the battle, Nikolaus is seen violently engaged in combat, stabbing a man to death and in despair at the violence. Not long after, William runs across no-man's land and is shot. Jonathan follows behind him and tries to carry him across the field to safety.]

5

JONATHAN:

Come on, brother.
Only a few yards away.

WILLIAM:

I can't, Jonathan. I can't. You go on ahead.
One of us has to get through this.
I said GO!

[William goes limp. Jonathan runs back to the Scottish bunker. The battle dies down. Smoke clears away to reveal bloodied corpses strewn across no-man's land. End Scene 1.]

SCENE 2.

[The Scottish bunker, later that evening, following the battle. Men sit and lie about, tending to wounds, broken, exhausted. Lieutenant Gordon surveys the damage to his platoon with another soldier.]

6

GORDON:

How many?

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:

Too soon to tell.
Probably ten.
Many more wounded.

GORDON:

Not too bad.
We'll request reinforcements after Christmas.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:

Yes sir, Lieutenant.

[They exit. Palmer leads on a limping soldier and sits him down. He sees Jonathan, alone, in tears.]

PALMER:

Jonathan!

JONATHAN:

I abandoned him.
Like a coward.
Like a coward!
Left him out there,

PALMER:

You had no choice.
You mustn't

JONATHAN:
To die in the mud.
My own kin!

I don't care about
The others!

PALMER:
Blame yourself.
We must pray
For him and the others…

PALMER:
"Teach us, good Lord,
To serve Thee as Thou deservest;
To give, and not to count the cost,
To fight, and not to heed the wounds…"

[Jonathan does not repeat the prayer.]

JONATHAN:
[Leaning into Palmer and and weeping.]
I will kill every last one of them!
Every last one of them!

[The French bunker. Men lie about traumatized, exhausted, tending to wounds. Audebert enters with a French Soldier.]
7
AUDEBERT:
Combien?
How many?

FRENCH SOLDIER:
Douze…quatorze.
Et douze blessés graves.
Twelve…Fourteen.
And a dozen wounded.

AUDEBERT:

Il nous faut demander	We must request
Plus de renforts.	More reinforcements.

FRENCH SOLDIER:

A vos ordres,	As you wish,
Mon lieutenant.	Lieutenant.

[Audebert retreats into an area in the bunker. He is surprised to see a General waiting for him.]

GENERAL:

Vous n'êtes pas blessé?	You're not wounded?
Que s'est-il passé?	What happened?
Vous vous êtes repliés	You retreated
En cinq minutes.	In five minutes.

AUDEBERT:

J'ai perdu un tiers	I lost a third
De mes hommes!	Of my men!
Les mitrailleurs—	The machine gunners—

GENERAL: *[Snidely.]*

Vous avez vu	You saw
les Ecossais reculer,	The Scottish retreat,
Et vous les avez imités.	So you did the same.

AUDEBERT: *[Abruptly changing the subject.]*

Alors, quelles nouvelles?	So, any news?

GENERAL:

Rien de la Croix-Rouge.	Nothing from the Red Cross.
Impossible d'avoir	It's impossible to get
Des informations par	Information through
Les zones occupées.	The occupied zones.
Votre femme doit être	Your wife must be
Chez ses parents.	At her parents.

AUDEBERT:
[As if to make him leave.]

Merci.	Thank you.

GENERAL:
[He stays.]

J'ai demandé votre transfert	I have asked that you be
Chez les artilleurs.	Transferred to Artillery.
Vous m'avez beaucoup éçu ici.	You've been a
Votre avancement	Disappointment here.
Sera rapide	And you can move up fast
Dans l'artil—	In Artil—

AUDEBERT:

Non.	No.
Je reste ici,	I'm staying here.
Avec mes hommes.	With my men.

GENERAL:

Je suis général de cette division.	I am the general of this division.
Vous devez suivre *mes* ordres.	You follow *my* orders.
Vous pouvez passer Noël avec vos	You may spend Christmas with your
Soldats, vous irez vous entraîner	Men, and then you will go to Poitiers
À Poitiers ensuite.	For training.

AUDEBERT:

Bonne nuit, mon général.	Good night, my General.

[The General leaves. Audebert searches in his pocket for something. He cannot find it. He looks elsewhere in his clothing. Ponchel enters with coffee and notices Audebert.]

PONCHEL:

Que cherchez-vous,	What are you looking for,
Mon lieutenant?	My lieutenant?

AUDEBERT:

Mon portefeuille, Ponchel.	My wallet, Ponchel.
Je l'ai perdu	I lost it
Dans la bataille.	In the battle.
Ce n'est pas important	It's not important
Mais il contient	Except that it contains
La photo de ma femme.	A photo of my wife.

PONCHEL:

Quel malheur!	What a pity!
Mais vous n'avez pas	But you don't need
Besoin d'une photo	A photo
Pour vous rappeler	To remember
Votre femme.	Your wife.

[He points to his head, "she lives in your imagination."]

Et puis regardez!	And look!
Moi aussi, j'ai failli	I almost lost
Perdre quelque chose!	Something, too!

[He removes a large alarm clock from his coat and winds it.]

A deux centimètres près…	Two more centimeters, and…

[He makes a gesture of dying. The clock sounds an alarm.]

Ah, voyez!	But you see—
Elle marche toujours!	It still works!
Comme moi.	Like me.

[Kindly.]

Reposez-vous, mon lieutenant.	Get some rest, Lieutenant.

AUDEBERT:

Vous aussi, Ponchel.	You, too, Ponchel.
Et faites-moi un bon café	And have a good coffee
Demain matin.	Ready for me in the morning.

PONCHEL: *[Huffily.]*

Je ne fais que du bon café,	I make *only* good coffee,
Mon lieutenant.	Lieutenant.

[Ponchel leaves. Audebert sits alone, exhausted. He takes out a logbook and begins writing in it.]

8

AUDEBERT: *[Stoically.]*

"Blessés:	"Wounded:
Grabert, Pierre.	Grabert, Pierre.
Vingt-six ans.	26 years old.
La Rochelle.	La Rochelle.
Fauchon, André.	Fauchon, Andrè.
Vingt ans.	20 years old.
Saint-Brieuc."	Saint-Brieuc."
[Audebert looks up and imagines his wife.]	
Madeleine.	Madeleine.
J'ai perdu ta photo.	I lost your photo.
Celle près des lilas…	The one by the lilacs.
[He writes.]	
"Boisvert, Charles.	Boisvert, Charles.
Trente ans.	30 years old.
Cancale."	Cancale.
[To "Madeleine."]	
Je l'ai bien embrassée	I must've kissed it
Plus de cent fois par jour.	A hundred times a day.
[He writes.]	
"Morts :	Dead:
Vernice, Henri-Paul.	Vernice, Henri-Paul.
Trente ans.	30 years old.
Amiens."	Amiens.
[To "Madeleine."]	
Mais Ponchel a raison.	But Ponchel is right.
Je n'ai pas besoin	I don't need
D'une photo	A photo
Pour te voir.	To see you.

Je ferme les yeux
Et tu es là.
Près du feu.
Et notre jeune enfant
Est tout contre toi.
Il se met à pleurer.
Tu lui souris
Et tu lui chantes
Une berceuse
Doucement.
Et il s'arrête de pleurer.
Ah, Madeleine,
Ma Madeleine,
J'espère que tu vas bien.
Que *vous* allez bien.
Et que notre petit
Te laisse dormir!
… Dormir.
J'en ai tellement besoin.
Dormir,
Dormir.
[He writes.]
"Disparus:
Clément, Paul.
Dix—"
Je finirai demain.
Dormir…
Dormir…

I close my eyes
And you are there.
By the hearth,
And our infant
Is at your breast.
He begins to cry.
You smile
And sing him
A lullaby,
Sweetly.
He stops crying.
Ah, Madeleine,
My Madeleine,
I hope that you are safe.
That you *both* are safe.
And our little one
Lets you sleep!
…Sleep.
That's what I need.
To sleep,
Sleep.

Missing:
Clèment, Paul.
18—
I'll finish this tomorrow.
Sleep…
Sleep.

[From all three bunkers, the men imagine their former lives. Snow starts to fall, slowly at first, then increasing, lightly erasing the bodies of the corpses in no-man's land.]

9

SCOTTISH SOLDIERS:

Sleep…
Sleep…
Let the world
Fall away.
Close your eyes
And forget.
For three hours…
I am safe…
Think of her…
She's at home…
At the door…
In her crib…
By the stove…
By the fire…
With her kiss…
Sleep…
Sleep…
Sleep…
Sleep…
Maybe when I wake
All will have changed.
All will be well.
This awful war
Will have ended
When I wake,

Maybe then.
But for now
Try to…
Sleep…
Sleep…
Through the night,
For once,
All through the night,
Not wake,
Not stir,
Until,
Morning
Comes.
Sleep.
Sleep.

FRENCH SOLDIERS: *[With above.]*

J'ai sommeil…
J'ai sommeil…
Jolis rêves…
Rêver d'elle…
Dans mes rêves…
Tout est calme…
Pieds au sec…
Pas de sang…
Il fait chaud…
Elle sourit…
A la porte…

I sleep…
I sleep…
Lovely dreams…
Dreams of her…
In my dreams…
All is calm
Dry feet…
No blood…
It is warm…
She smiles…
At the door…

Dans mon bain…	In the bath…
Pas de bruit…	No noise…
Elle attend…	She waits…
Pour une fois dormir,	Just for once sleep,
Jusqu'a l'aube,	Until dawn,
Dormir,	Sleep,
Avec des reves tranquilles,	With sweet dreams,
Toute la nuit,	All night,
Comme un bébé,	Like a baby.
Pour une fois,	Just for once,
Yeux fermés…	Eyes closed,
Yeux fermés…	Eyes closed,
Ce soir.	At home,
Je suis là.	I am there.
La, chez moi.	In my home.
Un bon feu.	A good fire,
Un bon repas.	A good meal.
Un doux lit.	A soft bed.
Un doux sourire.	A sweet smile.
Je suis là.	I am there.
Je suis là.	I am there.

GERMAN SOLDIERS: *[With above.]*

Keine Alpträume…	No nightmares…
Kein Lärm mehr …	No more noise…
Trockene Füße…	Dry feet…
Heisses Bad…	Hot bath…
Es wird warm…	It's getting warm……

Sie riecht gut…
Kein Krieg mehr…
An der Tür…
Alles ist ruhig…
Alles ist still…
Ich bin da,
in meinem Haus…
Eine gutes Mahl
Ein warmer Herd
Ich fühl mich froh.
In meinem Haus.
Alles ist stille,
Alles ist stille.
Alles ist stille.
Alles ist stille.
Endlich einmal,
Schlaf…
Wie ein baby
Durch die Nacht…
Endlich einmal
Durch die Nacht…
Wie ein Stein…
Alles ist stille.
Alles ist stille.

She smells good…
No more war…
At the door…
All is calm…
Everything is quiet ...
I'm here,
in my house…
A good meal
A warm stove
I feel happy.
In my house.
Everything is silent,
Everything is silent.
Everything is silent.
Everything is silent.
Finally,
Sleep…
Like a baby
Through the night…
Finally
Through the night…
Like a stone…
Everything is silent.
Everything is silent.

[Soldiers have fallen asleep or faded into despair, leaving Nikolaus alone on watch..]

10
NIKOLAUS:

Anna,	Anna,
Meine Anna.	My Anna.
Ich kann nicht in	I cannot return
Mein altes Leben zurück.	To my life before.
Ich kann nicht.	I cannot.
Ich sah zuviel.	I've seen too much.
Ich weiß zuviel.	I know too much.
Alles ist nutzlos.	Eveyrthing is useless.
Alles:	Everything.
Die Oper.	The opera.
Der Gesang.	Singing.
Nutzlos.	Useless.

11
[Lights dim. The snow stops. End Scene 2. Slowly, in an extended orchestral interlude, the light slowly brightens into a glaring dawn.]

SCENE 3.

[Early morning: in the German bunker, men unpack Christmas trees. Horstmayer strides on, accompanied by an officer, with a communiqué.]

12
HORSTMAYER:

Christbäume!	Christmas trees!
Vom Kronprinzen.	From the Kronprinz.
Keine neuen Waffen.	Not more guns,
Keine neuen Männer.	Not more men,
Sondern Christbäume!	But Christmas trees!
Zehn davon.	Ten of them.

HORSTMAYER:

Mit Lametta.	With tinsel.
Lächerlich.	Ridiculous.

[He sees Nikolaus and calls to him.]

Sprink!	Sprink!

NIKOLAUS:

Jawohl, Herr Leutnant?	Yes sir, Lieutenant?

HORSTMAYER:

Der Kronprinz wünscht	The Kronprinz wants
Sie zu sehen.	To see you.
Sie sollen heute	He would like you to
Abend auf seinem	Sing at his party
Fest singen.	This evening.

NIKOLAUS:

Was? Wo?	What? Where?

HORSTMAYER:

Auf einem Schloß, etwa	At a chalet about
Dreißig Kilometer von hier.	Thirty kilometers from here.
Mit einer gewissen…	With one…
Anna Sørensen.	Miss Anna Sørensen.

[A smile brightens Nikolaus's face, then concern.]

So steht es hier.	It says so here.
Dieser Mann wird	You must go with
Sie sofort hinbringen.	This man at once.

[Horstmayer starts to leave. Nikolaus stops him.]

NIKOLAUS:

Eine Frage.	A question.

HORSTMAYER:

Ja?	Yes?

NIKOLAUS:

Warum können Sie mich Nicht leiden?	Why do you Dislike me?

HORSTMAYER:

Ich kann Sie leiden.	I don't dislike you.
Ich kann Sie aber nicht brauchen.	I just have no need for you.
Für meine Einheit,	I prefer to have men
Ziehe ich Männer vor die etwas	In my unit who actually
Richtiges im Leben tun.	*Do* something with their lives.
So wie Steinmetze,	Masons, farmers,
Bauern und Bäcker.	Even bakers…
Künstler sind schlechte Soldaten.	Artists make bad soldiers.
Berühmte Künstler sind	Famous artists make even
Miserable Soldaten.	Worse soldiers.

[Dismissing him.]

Sie werden morgen in den Schützengraben zurückkehren.	You will return to The trenches tomorrow.

NIKOLAUS:

Jawohl, Herr Leutnant.	Yes sir, Lieutenant.

[Nikolaus leaves. From the French side, an alarm clock rings.]

HORSTMAYER: *[To a sentry.]*

Jeden Tag um zehn Uhr!	Every day at ten o'clock!
Dieser verdammte Alarm!	That goddam alarm!
Was bedeutet das?	What does it mean?
Seid heute noch mehr auf der Hut!	Be extra alert today.
Diese Scheisskerlen werden	Those bastards will
Alles versuchen.	Try anything.
Sogar am Heiligabend.	Even on Christmas Eve.

GERMAN SENTRY:

Jawohl, Herr Leutnant.	Yes sir, Lieutenant.

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Entschuldigen Sie, Herr Leutnant,	Excuse me, Lieutenant,
Wohin geht Sprink?	Where is Sprink going?

HORSTMAYER:

Sprink wird Heiligabend nicht	Sprink will be absent
Sa sein.	On Christmas Eve.

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Aber er hat versprochen,	But he promised to sing
Für uns zu singen!	For us!

HORSTMAYER:

Weihnachtslieder!	Christmas carols!
Christbäume!	Christmas trees!
Erscheint als nächstes	What's next? A guest appearance
Der Weihnachtsmann?	By Father Christmas?
Wir befinden uns im Krieg!	There is a war going on!

[He pushes the soldier aside brusquely and exits. In the French bunker, the soldiers joyfully break open the crates that have arrived.]

13

FRENCH SOLDIERS:

Regardez ça!	Look at this!
Bourgogne.	Burgundy.
Cognac.	Cognac
Boudin!	Boudin!
Champagne.	Champagne.
Chocolat!	Chocolates!
Grâce à l'intendant,	Thanks to the quartermaster,
Nous aurons un vrai réveillon.	We will have Christmas Eve after all.

[Ponchel enters officiously through the soldiers, carrying coffee, scissors, and a tablecloth. He nears Audebert, sitting in a chair.]

PONCHEL:

Et voilà, mon Lieutenant.	Here you are, Lieutenant.
Le meilleur café du monde.	The best coffee in the world.

AUDEBERT:

Merci, Ponchel.	Thank you, Ponchel.

[Ponchel makes a huge show of unfolding and flapping the tablecloth, wrapping it around Audebert's neck and snipping his scissors.]

PONCHEL:

Prêt?	Ready?

AUDEBERT: *[Nervously.]*

J'espère.

I hope so.

PONCHEL:

Ne vous inquiétez pas.
Vous êtes en très bonnes mains,
(Même si elles tremblent peut-être
Un peu plus qu'avant.)
Je suis le meilleur barbier de Lens.
Les gens veulent que je leur
Coupe les cheveux
Alors même quand ils n'en ont
Pas besoin.

Nothing to worry about.
You're in very good hands.
(Although they may be less steady
Than they once were.)
I am the best barber in Lens.
People ask me
For a haircut
Even when they don't need one.

AUDEBERT:

Lens?
Vous connaissez un homme appelé
Henri Hennebicque?

Lens?
Do you know a man named
Henri Hennebicque?

PONCHEL:

Hennebicque?
[Searching.]
Hennebique.
Ah oui.
[Audebert nods.]
Grand?
Rouquin?
[Audebert nods.]

Hennebicque?

Hennebique.
Ah, yes.

Tall?
Red hair?

PONCHEL:

Dégagé sur les côtés,	Short on the sides,
On touche pas au crâne.	Nothing off the top.
Et la nuque nette.	Straight in the back.

AUDEBERT:

C'est mon beau-père.	He's my father-in-law.

PONCHEL:

Le monde est petit!	Small world!

[After cutting the hair a bit, he takes Audebert into his confidence.]

Je peux vous le dire, maintenant.	I can tell you this now.
Parfois, la nuit	Sometimes at night,
Je monte le long du chemin.	I climb up to that path,
Et je m'assieds pour regarder	And sit there and gaze across
Le champ,	The field.
Au loin.	And I know my home is only an
Et je sais qu'à une heure, à pied,	hour away
Il y a ma maison.	On foot.
A une heure!	An hour away!
Ma mère est là-bas,	My mother would be there,
A la porte,	At the door,
Du café chaud sur le poêle,	Hot coffee on the stove,
Ce vieux poêle tout graisseux,	That old greasy stove,
Du café chaud,	Hot coffee,
Encore meilleur que le mien!	Even better than mine!
Hmmm. Ça sent tellement bon.	Mmmm. It smells so good.
Et on reste assis simplement,	And we simply sit there,
A parler.	Chatting together.

PONCHEL:

Elle me raconte	And she tells me
Les potins du village.	A little town gossip.
Et puis on se tait.	And then there is silence.
Et on est bien, là,	And we are content,
Assis comme ça.	To sit like this.
En silence.	In silence.
Un magnifique silence.	A magnificent silence.
[Suddenly.]	
Saloperies de poux!	Oh, these goddam lice!
[Scraping his comb with his scissors.]	
Allez, va-t-en, petit Wilhelm!	Off you go, little Wilhelm!
Et voilà, mon Lieutenant.	There you are, Lieutenant.
Propre et net pour la Noël!	All neat and proper for Christmas!

[Ponchel withdraws a little mirror from his pocket and holds it up behind Audebert's neck, as if they are in a barbershop and he is showing Audebert the back of his head in a mirror.]

AUDEBERT:

[Realizing Ponchel's mistake, kindly.]

Ponchel. Vous oubliez:	Ponchel. You forget:
Il n'y a pas de miroir	There's no mirror
En face de moi.	In front of me.

PONCHEL:

Mais bien sûr!	Yes, of course!
Ah, les vieilles habitudes.	Old habits die hard.

AUDEBERT:

Merci beaucoup.	Many thanks.

PONCHEL:

Mais de rien.	It's nothing.

[Audebert leaves. Ponchel looks out.]

PONCHEL:

Une heure, à pied.	An hour on foot.
Du café sur le poêle.	Coffee on the stove.
Le silence,	Silence,
Et ma mère…	And my mother…

[The Scottish bunker. Palmer helps unload crates of supplies, including whisky. Jonathan sits apart and rereads a letter he has written to his mother.]

14

JONATHAN:

"Mother:
William and I have received your package.
Thank you for the gloves.
They are very welcome here.
The thought of you at home,
All safe and warm,
Keeps us going.
Thank you also for your cake,
William and I will guard it with our lives!"

[Palmer yells to Jonathan, referring to the whisky.]

PALMER: *[To humor him.]*
Hey Jonathan.
That's quite a lot of ammunition.
Perhaps we should take up
An offering tonight.
This parish will be a captive audience!

[Jonathan doesn't react. Palmer walks away, but overhears Jonathan signing his letter.]

JONATHAN:
"William sends his love…
As do I.
Jonathan (and William)."

[End Scene 3.]

SCENE 4.

[From all sides, the representation of a chalet appears in no-man's land. There is a chandelier and a large, decorated Christmas tree, and a quartet of musicians. A party is in progress. Two waiters circulate among six or so German officers with champagne and cigars, while Anna and Nikolaus finish the last phrases of the duet from the opera heard in the prologue. Nikolaus is distraught.]

15

ANNA/NIKOLAUS:

Per una notte sola!
Sarem di nuovo insiem(e)
Per una notte sola.
Mai più!
Mai più!
Noi ci separerem!

For one night only!
We will be together
And never again be apart.
Never again!
Never again!
Be apart!

[There is a rousing ovation. The Kronprinz rises and moves to Anna and Nikolaus.]

KRONPRINZ:

Bravo, bravo.	Bravo, bravo.
Vielen Dank!	Sincere thanks!
Ihr Gesang brachte mich zurück	Your singing transported me back
Nach Berlin.	To Berlin.
Ich weiß, dort	Where I know,
Werden wir	We will all be
Im Frühling sein.	Come Spring.
Mit Gottes Hilfe.	With the help of God.

ANNA: *[Flattering.]*

Mit Gottes Hilfe.	With the help of God.

KRONPRINZ:

Besonders möchte ich	And I especially want
Ihnen danken, Herr Sprink.	To thank you, Herr Sprink.
Sehr beeindruckend	It is most impressive
Dass Sie sich freiwillig meldeten.	That you enlisted for our cause.

NIKOLAUS: *[A bit bitterly.]*

Ich habe mich nicht	I did not volunteer
Freiwillig gemeldet.	To enlist.
Ich wurde eingezogen	I was conscripted
Wie alle anderen auch.	Like everyone else.

ANNA: *[Swiftly changing the subject.]*

Vielleicht mögen Eure Hoheit noch	Perhaps his Excellency would like
Eine Zugabe hören?	An encore?

KRONPRINZ: *[Taking the bait.]*

Natürlich.	Of course.
Seien Sie so gut, verwöhnen	If you would be so kind as
Sie uns weiter.	To indulge us.

[Anna takes Nikolaus's hand. She whispers to him and directs the quartet to play.]

16

ANNA/NIKOLAUS:

Komm, Frühling! Komm, Frühling!	Come, Spring! Come, Spring!
Erfülle die Luft!	Fill the air!

[Nicholas is overcome with exhaustion and emotion; he cannot sing anymore. Anna takes his hand and smiles at him, then beckons to the quartet to start over.]

Komm, Frühling! Komm, Frühling!	Come, Spring! Come, Spring!
Erfülle die Luft!	Fill the air!
Mit fliedernem Duft.	Infuse it with the scent of lilacs.
Erfüll' sie mit dem Klang	Fill it with the sound of
Von schönem Vogelgesang.	A beautiful bird singing.
Komm, Frühling! Komm, Frühling!	Come, Spring! Come, Spring!
Des Winters Traurigkeit	Winter sadness
Ist nun Vergangenheit.	Is now past.

ANNA/NIKOLAUS:

Mach Felder und Wiesen grün.	Make the fields and meadows green.
Lass Blumen und Herzen aufblüh'n.	Make flowers and hearts bloom.
Komm, Frühling! Komm, Frühling!	Come, Spring! Come, Spring!
Komm her. Komm Heute!	Come hither! Come today!
Erfreue die Leute!	Give everyone joy!

[When they finish, the party applauds, then freezes in position. Anna takes Nikolaus's hand and escorts him to a terrace outside of the party.]

17

ANNA:

Sieht aus wie der Balkon, auf dem wir	Looks a little like the balcony
Uns begegnet sind.	Where we met.
In Oslo.	In Oslo.

NIKOLAUS:

Vor fünf Jahren.	Five years ago.
Beinah eine Ewigkeit.	Seems like forever now.

ANNA: *[Imitating him.]*

"Frau Sørensen:	"Miss Sørensen:
Ihre Stimme ist wunderschön,	You have a beautiful voice,
Aber Sie phrasieren,	But your phrasing—
Könnte ein wenig	It could stand
Verbesserung vertragen."	Some improvement."
Ungebetene Kritik.	Unsolicited criticism.
Immer eine gute Verführungstechnik.	Always a good seduction technique.
Ich habe mich trotzdem	But I fell in love with you
Ich dich verliebt.	Anyway.

NIKOLAUS:

Ich wartete die ganze Nacht.	I waited all night,
Die ganze Nacht	All night,
Auf einen Augenblick	To find a moment,
In dem du allein bist	When you would be alone.
Und dann fand ich dich	And then I found you.
Auf diesem Balkon.	On that balcony.

[Anna caresses his face, outlining the new scar on his forehead.]

ANNA:

Vielleicht ist diese Nacht	Perhaps tonight
Meine Nacht	It is *my* night
Um *dich* zu finden.	For finding *you*.

NIKOLAUS: *[Looking back at the party.]*

All die fetten, alten Männer!	All these fat old men!
Kippen ihren Champagner,	Swigging their champagne,
Erzählen schmutzige Witze!	Telling their stupid jokes!
Während die Menschen sterben...	While people are dying…

ANNA:

Ich ließ dir ein Zimmer	I've arranged for your room
Auf meinem Stockwerk geben.	To be on my floor.
Meine Tür wird offen sein.	My door will be open.
Komm zu mir, wenn wir oben sind…	Come to me after we go upstairs…

NIKOLAUS:

Ich will nichts lieber als das!	More than anything I want to.
Aber, Anna, ich kann nicht!	But, Anna, I can't.
Ich muß zurück zu meinen Kameraden.	I must return to my comrades.
Heut' Nacht.	Tonight.

ANNA:

Zurück? Heut' Nacht?	Return? Tonight?
Nach allem, was ich tat?	After everything I've done?
Dem Kronprinz einen Brief schrieb?	Writing a letter to the Kronprinz,
Ihm meine Liebe zum	Lying about my love for
"Vaterland" vorlog?	"The Fatherland,"
Ein Weihnachtskonzert anbot	Offering a Christmas concert!
Mich mit ihm treffen,	Meeting with him,
Ihn freundlich anlächeln musste.	Having to smile sweetly at him!
Wozu das alles?	All for what?
Damit du mich allein läßt?	So you could leave me alone?
Hier?	Here?

NIKOLAUS:

Es tut mir leid.	I am sorry.
Aber sie brauchen mich.	But they need me.
Das könnten ihre letzten	It could be
Weihnachten sein.	Their last Christmas.
Es tut mir leid, Anna.	I'm sorry, Anna,
Ich glaube, ich bin	I guess
Nicht mehr der Mann	I'm not the same man I was
Der ich noch vor sechs Monaten war.	Six months ago.

ANNA:

Nicht ein Augenblick verstrich	Not a minute has passed
Seit du weg gings't	Since you went away
An dem ich nicht	When I haven't lived
Für den Augenblick lebte.	For this moment,
An dem ich dich wiederseh'	Of seeing you again,
In deinen Armen bin,	Of being in your arms,
Neben dir liege,	Of lying beside you,
Nicht ein Augenblick,	Not a moment,
Nicht ein einziger Augenblick,	Not a single moment!
Seit du weg gingst.	Since you went away.
Nachdem ich so weit gegangen bin	And after coming this far,
Wagst du, mir zu sagen,	You dare to tell me
Dass du mich ablehnst.	That you would deny me
Alles wovon ich träumte,	All I dreamed about?
Wofür ich lebte?	Lived for?
Ich werd's nicht erlauben.	I will not allow it.
[Simply.]	
…Ich werde mit dir gehen!	…And I'm coming with you.

NIKOLAUS:

Nein.	No.

ANNA:

Ich werde mit dir gehen.	I'm coming with you.

NIKOLAUS:

Komm nicht in Frage!	Out of the question!
Es ist zu gefährlich!.	It's too dangerous!

ANNA:

Doch, das tu ich.	No, I am.
Genau das tu ich.	I simply am.
Außerdem wirst du hier nicht	And besides, you won't be able to leave
Ohne Passierschein wegkommen.	Here without my papers of passage.

NIKOLAUS:

Du hast einen Passierschein?	You have papers of passage?

ANNA:

Von Wilhelm persönlich!	From Wilhelm himself.
Du hast keine Wahl.	So you really don't have a choice—
Nicht wahr, Liebster?	Do you, my love?

[She takes several steps forward; Nikolaus remains behind. She reaches out to him, he comes forward, they embrace, then move on. End Scene 4.]

SCENE 5.

[Evening in all three bunkers. In the French bunker, the soldiers enjoy a feast and in the German bunker, they drink schnapps or beer and finish trimming the Christmas trees. In the Scottish bunker, a soldier enters, tooting on a bagpipe.]

18

PALMER:

And where did you find that?!

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:
The guys from the 67th passed it on.
Donated it when they found out where
We'd be for Christmas.

PALMER:
How 'bout a tune, then?

[The Soldier starts to play a ballad that the soldiers instantly recognize.]

PALMER: *[Directing the bagpipe player.]*
Start again.

[The bagpiper starts again. Palmer sings a sentimental ballad of the day.]

19

PALMER:
"Many the miles I have travel'd,
Many the seas I have cross'd,
Ofttimes my dreams have unravel'd
Ofttimes my soul has been lost.
But wherever I may be going,
However my heart's led astray,
There is ever some solace in knowing,
My home's never far away."

[From the other bunkers, the soldiers have stopped eating and drinking and listen; some are enchanted, some are sad, some are cautious. When the ballad ends, there is a slight pause to permit some melancholy—and then a rousing cheer.]

GORDON:
Hey, Father, let's hear it again.

[The bagpipes start again. Gordon sings. He is gradually joined by other soldiers and rejoined by Palmer by the end of the song.]

GORDON, PALMER AND SCOTTISH SOLDIERS:
"Many the miles I have travel'd,
Many the seas I have cross'd,
Ofttimes my dreams have unravel'd
Oftttimes my soul has been lost.
But wherever I may be going,
However my heart's led astray,
There is ever some solace in knowing,
My home's never far away."

PONCHEL: *[Over above.]*

Va-t-on devoir	Must we listen
Écouter *ça* toute la nuit!?	To *that* all night!?
Je préfère encore les bombes.	I prefer bombs.

HORSTMAYER: *[Over above, to the sentry.]*

Ist das ein Ablenkungsmanöver?	Is this a diversion?
Bleibt wachsam!	Remain vigilant.

[Nikolaus and Anna have entered the German bunker, unbeknownst to the soldiers.]

NIKOLAUS: *[Referring to the Scottish soldiers.]*

Jemand feiert ein Fest	Someone's having a party,
und wir sind nicht eingeladen?	And we're not invited?

[A small cheer rises from the German bunker, then gasps of awe as the soldiers see that there is now a woman in their presence.]

HORSTMAYER:

Sprink! Wie so sind *Sie* zurück?	Sprink! What are *you* doing back?
Und wer ist das?	And who is this?

[Nikolaus shows him a letter, quoting Horstmayer's response in Scene 2.]

NIKOLAUS:

Alles in Ordnung, Leutnant.	All in order, Lieutenant.
Hier steht es.	It says so here.
Vom Kronprinz.	From the Kronprinz.
Meine Herrn, darf ich Ihnen	Gentlemen, may I introduce
Frau Anna Sørensen vorstellen.	Miss Anna Sørenson.

[They applaud. The song has ended in the Scottish bunker.]

NIKOLAUS:

Wer hat Lust auf	Now, who would like some
Echten Gesang?	*Real* singing?

[They cheer. Nikolaus sings a German Christmas carol, accompanied by a soldier on harmonica.]

20

NIKOLAUS:

"Hab Freude im Herzen,
O Christenheit!
Freu' dich für diese glorreiche Zeit!
Da liegt das Jesuskind,
Auf Heu und auf Stroh,
Maria und Josef
Betrachten es froh.
Überall herrscht Friedlichkeit!
Hab Freude im Herzen,
O Christenheit!"

"Have joy in your hearts,
O Christiandom!
Joy for this glorious time!
Behold the baby Jesus,
Lying in hay and straw,
While Mary and Joseph
Look on contentedly.
And all is now peaceful.
Have joy in your hearts,
O Christiandom!"

PONCHEL: *[With above.]*

Oh, et puis *eux* maintenant.
Je ne sais pas ce qui est pire
Le bruit du chat qu'on égorge
Dans Rosbifland,
Ou le KH-KH-KH-KH-KH
De cette langue ignoble.

Oh, not *them* too.
I don't know which is worse.
The sound of the dying cat
Over in Roast Beef Land,
Or the KH-KH-KH-KH-KH
Of that detestable language.

[The bagpiper has joined in.]

GORDON:

McDonnaugh, put that down.

PALMER:

Oh, come on. Let him play.

[Other soldiers repeat this sentiment. Nikolaus, emboldened by the bagpiper joining in, sings again.]

NIKOLAUS:

"Hab Freude im Herzen,	"Have joy in your hearts,
O Christenheit!	O Christiandom!
Freu' dich für diese glorreiche Zeit!	Joy for this glorious time!
Da liegt das Jesuskind,	Behold the baby Jesus,
Auf Heu und auf Stroh,	Lying in hay and straw,
Maria und Josef	While Mary and Joseph
Betrachten es froh.	Look on contentedly.
Überall herrscht Friedlichkeit!	And all is now peaceful.
Hab Freude im Herzen,	Have joy in your hearts,
O Christenheit!"	O Christiandom!"

[Toward the end of the song, Nikolaus stands on top of the bunker.]

HORSTMAYER: *[Over above.]*

Sprink! Was machen Sie da?	Sprink! What are you doing?
Sind Sie verrückt geworden?	Are you crazy?
Kommen Sie darunter!	Get down from there!
Sprink! Das ist genug!	Sprink! That is enough!

PONCHEL: *[Over above.]*

Oh mon Dieu.	Oh my God.
Mais que fait-il?	What is he doing?

FRENCH SOLDIER:*[With above, raising his gun.]*

On n'a pas le temps	We won't have time
De le découvrir.	To find out.

AUDEBERT: *[With above.]*

Mandeville!
Baissez ça.

Mandeville!
Put that down.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER: *[With above.]*

Will you look at that?

SCOTTISH SOLDIER: *[With above.]*

It's a trick.

[The French sentry obeys. The German soldiers position Christmas trees one by one atop their bunker, as Nikolaus finishes the song. There is a cheer from the Germans, echoed by the Scots, then followed by the French. Silence.Tension. The bagpiper starts playing a Latin Christmas song. Nikolaus sings along, and even more emboldened, picks up a Christmas tree and steps forward.]

21

NIKOLAUS:

"Dormi, Jesu.
Mater ridet,
Quae tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi, Jesu blandule!"

"Sleep, Jesus.
Your Mother smiles,
Seeing you sleep so sweetly.
Sleep, gentle Jesus."

HORSTMAYER: *[Over above.]*

Sprink!
Ich befehle Ihnen,
Da runter zu kommen!

Sprink!
I order you to get down
From there!

[The bagpiper moves to the top of the bunker. Slowly and cautiously, another Scottish soldier does the same. Two other Scottish soldiers rise to the top of the bunker. And now one or two Frenchmen rise.]

FRENCH SOLDIER: *[Over above.]*

C'est un piège. This is a trick.

FRENCH SOLDIER: *[Over above.]*

Fais attention. Look out.

[Nikolaus sings again, and slowly moves toward the center of no-man's land; as he does, more Scottish and French soldiers stand at the top of their bunkers.]

NIKOLAUS:

"Dormi, Jesu. "Sleep, Jesus.
Mater ridet, Your Mother smiles,
Quae tam dulcem somnum videt, Seeing you sleep so sweetly.
Dormi, Jesu blandule!" Sleep, gentle Jesus."

GORDON: *[Over above.]*

What are you doing?
This is a trick.
Get down from there.

FRENCH SOLDIER: *[Over above.]*

Il y a une grenade dans cet arbre. There's a grenade in that tree.

[Palmer has lit a candle and held it up. Another soldier, then another, lights a candle and holds it up. Nikolaus ends the song and hoists a Christmas tree in the air as a gesture of peace. The gesture is echoed by the Scottish soldiers raising their candles. There is cheering and applause from all sides.]

NIKOLAUS:
[Shouting spiritedly to the Scottish soldiers.]
Good evening to the English!

HORSTMAYER: *[From atop the bunker.]*
Sprich nicht mit ihnen! Don't talk to them!

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:
Good evening to the German.
But we are not English, sir,
We are Scottish!

[The Scottish soldiers cheer.]

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:
And we would rather die
Than sing in German!

NIKOLAUS:
No, it would probably kill me first
If you sang in German!

[The Scottish soldiers laugh.]

FRENCH SOLDIER:
Qu'est-ce qu'il dit? What did he say?

FRENCH SOLDIER:
Que ça le tuerait That it would kill him first
De les entendre chanter en allemand. If they sang in German.

GERMAN SOLDIER: *[With above.]*

Was sagt er?	What did he say?

GERMAN SOLDIER: *[With above.]*

Daß er gestorben wäre	That it would kill him first
Wenn sie Deutsch gesungen hätten.	If they sang in German.

[The French and Germans soldiers laugh.]

HORSTMAYER:
[Over above, stepping down from the bunker.]

Sprink! Sprink!	Sprink! Sprink!
Zurück zum Bunker.	Get back to the bunker!
Das ist ein Befehl!	That is an order.

[Slowly, the German soldiers stand and rise to the top of the bunker.]

HORSTMAYER:

Jetzt!	Now!

FRENCH SOLDIER: *[In German.]*

Wie, keine Zugabe?	What, no encore?

GERMAN SOLDIER: *[In French.]*

Je parie que ta fiancée dit	I'll be your girlfriend says
La même chose!	The same thing!

[The men laugh. Horstmayer looks behind him and sees that his soldiers are at the top of the bunker. He has no choice: he withdraws a white flag and waves it and rushes to grab Nikolaus.]

HORSTMAYER:

Sprink! Das ist hier nicht Berlin!	Sprink! This is not Berlin!

NIKOLAUS:

No, it's better.

PONCHEL: *[Over above.]*

Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça?	What's going on?
Les Boches se rendent enfin?	Has Fritzie finally surrendered?
Bien!	Good!
On va enfin rentrer chez nous!	We can all finally go home!

[Gordon approaches the two men, a white flag in his hand.]

AUDEBERT:

Une réunion au sommet et	A summit and
Je ne suis pas convié?	I'm not invited?
Voyons voir.	We'll see about that.

[Audebert walks toward the gentlemen, a white flag in his hand.]

GORDON:

Good evening, Lieutenant.
Do you speak English?

NIKOLAUS:

I do.

HORSTMAYER:
Halt's Maul, Sprink! Shut up, Sprink!
[To Gordon.]
A little.

[Audebert has joined them.]

AUDEBERT:
Bonsoir. Good evening.

GORDON:
Do you speak English?

AUDEBERT:
Non. No.

NIKOLAUS:
I can translate.
22
GORDON: :
Gentlemen….

NIKOLAUS: *[Translating for Audebert.]*
Messieurs… Gentlemen…

GORDON:
I think you believe…

NIKOLAUS:
Je suis sûr que vous pensez… I think you believe…

GORDON:
As I do,

NIKOLAUS:
Comme moi…

As I do…

GORDON:
That this war will not be
Settled tonight.

NIKOLAUS:
Que cette guerre ne sera pas
Réglée ce soir.

That this war will not be
Settled tonight.

GORDON:
We are all clearly exhausted,

NIKOLAUS:
Nous sommes
Tous clairement épuisés

We are all
Clearly exhausted…

GORDON:
And I propose a ceasefire.

NIKOLAUS:
Je propose un cessez-le-feu.

And I propose a ceasefire.

GORDON:
For tonight only.

NIKOLAUS:
Et pour ce soir seulement — For tonight only.

GORDON:
On Christmas Eve.

NIKOLAUS:
Pour la veille de Noël. — On Christmas Eve.

GORDON:
Agreed?

NIKOLAUS:
D'accord? — Agreed?

AUDEBERT:
D'accord. — Agreed.

HORSTMAYER: *[Warily, after a long pause.]*
Agreed.
But only for tonight.

[Gordon shakes Audebert's hand, then Horstmayer's.]

GORDON:
Merry Christmas!

[Audebert shakes Horstmayer's hand.]

AUDEBERT:

Joyeux Noël! Merry Christmas!

HORSTMAYER: *[Less celebratory.]*

Fröhliche Weihnnachten. Merry Christmas.

[The soldiers slowly move from the top of the bunkers toward each other, not smiling. When they converge in no-man's land, there is a long, tense pause—this could go either way. Suddenly, Ponchel reaches in his pocket, scaring the nervous Germans standing in front of him; one or two men reach for their guns.]

PONCHEL: *[Offering a bar of chocolate.]*

Chocolat? Chocolate?

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Sie zuerst. You first.

PONCHEL: *[Rolling his eyes.]*

Bien sûr. Of course.

[Ponchel unwraps it, takes a bite and then offers it to the German soldier, who fearfully takes a bite, and then beams.]

GERMAN SOLDIER: *[To his fellow soldiers.]*

Schmeckt gut! So good!

[The men start to mix, tentatively at first, then growing in celebration. A German Soldier pushes a French soldier and storms off.]

SOLDIERS:

This is my girlfriend…	
Sie est sehr schön…	She's very beautiful…
Voilà ma fiancée…	Here's my fiancèe…
Meine Frau…	My wife…
My two children…	
Have some …	
Champagne?…	
Comment on en joue?	How do you play this?
It's simple…	
Quel bruit atroce…	What an awful noise!
You are from Metz—	
My wife has a sister there…	
Comment on dit?…	How do you say…?
Joyeux Noel…	
Merry Christmas…	
Frohliche Weihnnachten…	
Eine Zigarette?	Cigarette?
Very smooth…	
One of mine?	
Where are you from?	
Near Edinburgh…	
From Freiburg…	
Marseilles…	
More …	
Mein Zwillingsbruder…	My twin brother…
Ich verstehe…	I understand…
Ich bin Heinrich…	I'm Heinrich…

SOLDIERS:
I'm Thomas…
Didier…
My pleasure…

[During the above, Nikolaus retrieves Anna from the trenches and brings her forward. The soldiers suddenly become silent at the sight of a woman and stare at her in awe. Anna is a little frightened, but Nikolaus reassures her.]

PONCHEL: *[Agog.]*
Mon Dieu. Une femme!
S'ils gagnent la guerre,
On saura pourquoi.

My God.
A woman!
If they win the war, we know why.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER: *[Staring at Anna.]*
I think I hear bells.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER: *[He points to Palmer.]*
You *do* hear bells.

[Everyone turns. Palmer has found the broken bell in the church and strikes it. He has created a small altar with war debris and bayonets and beckons the soldiers.]

PALMER:
In nomine Patris
Et fillii et Spiritus Sancti.
Amen.

In the name of the Father,
The Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

[The men move silently and slowly to Palmer.]

SOLDIERS:

Amen.

[Palmer continues to intone the service in the background.]

PALMER:

Deus, qui hanc	O God, who hast made
Sacratíssimam noctem	This most holy night
veri lúminis fecísti illustratióne	to shine forth with the brightness
claréscere; da quæsumus;	of the true light, thou hast made;
ut cujus lucis mystéria in…	grant; to whom the new light on…

[Nikolaus and Anna have lagged behind, and behind them Audebert, Gordon and Horstmayer.]

NIKOLAUS:

Ich bin froh,	I'm glad you
Dass ich sie herbringen musste.	Made me bring you.
Ich hätte das nicht geglaubt,	I would not have believed all this,
Hätte ich es ganz allein erlebt!	If I'd witnessed it alone.

[Audebert has approached.]

Bonjour Lieutenant.	Hello, Lieutenant.
Je vous présente, Anna Sørensen.	May I present…Anna Sørensen.

AUDEBERT:

Enchanté, Madam.	My pleasure, Madam.
Ma femme et moi vous avions vus,	My wife and I saw the both of you
Il y a deux ans à l'Opéra.	At the opera house two years ago.
Elle en parle encore.	She still talks about it.
Enfin, elle en parlait encore.	Or, at least, *did* talk about it.

ANNA:

Merci, Lieutenant.
En parlait encore?

Thank you, Lieutenant.
"Did" talk about it?

AUDEBERT:

Nous n'avons pas
Pu communiquer
Depuis six mois.
Elle devait accoucher
De notre enfant.

We haven't been able
To communicate
For six months.
She was due to have
Our child.

GORDON: *[To Horstmayer.]*

Well, this may turn out to be
The most memorable Christmas
In your life.

HORSTMAYER: *[To Gordon.]*

In my life?
It's the *only* Christmas in my life.
I'm Jewish.
And don't forget, tomorrow at dawn,
The ceasefire is over.

[They join with Palmer, continuing the service. Jonathan appears from the bunker with his gun and a blanket. He searches among the corpses for his brother and finds him.]

PALMER:

…ejus quoque gáudiis
In cælo perfruámur.
Qui tecum vivit et regnat
In unitáte Spíritus Sancti,
Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.
Amen.

…His happiness
In heaven.
Who lives and reigns with
the Holy Spirit, one God,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

23

JONATHAN: *[With a quiet rage.]*

I can still hear you:
"The glory of battle!
France!
Heroes!"
I wish I was there
And you were here, William.

[A German soldier has wandered on drunkenly from his bunker to take a piss—then sees Jonathan.]

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Na, Du Schottenrock!
Du glaubst diesen Mist
Wohl auch nicht?
Ich hab' den General schon
Darüber informiert.
Man sollte mich dafür befördern.
Keine Sorge:
Wir kehr'n zurück zum
Bumm, Bumm, Bumm,
Morgen früh.

Hey, Kilt Boy!
So, you don't buy
This shit either?
I just had word sent
To the General.
Ought to get me a promotion.
Don't worry:
We'll return to the
Boom, boom, boom,
Tomorrow.

GERMAN SOLDIER: *[Offering schnapps.]*

Auch einen? Want some?

[Jonathan glares at the soldier; he backs off.]

Ach, mach doch, was du willst! All right, Suit yourself!

[The German soldier wanders drunkenly back to the bunker.]

JONATHAN:

You needn't worry, William.
You needn't worry, brother.
They will pay for this.
They will pay.
Dearly.
If I have to murder every last one of them
With my own hands.
Every last one of them.
Every last one of them.
Every last one.

[Jonathan takes a blanket and covers William. He lies down next to him, where he remains until the end of the act. Palmer finishes the service.]

SOLDIERS:

Amen.

[Palmer signals for Nikolaus to sing. Nikolaus stands and beaming, beckons Anna to sing.]

24

ANNA: *[Purely and simply.]*

Dona nobis pacem,
Dona nobis pacem, etc.

[The men all stand in silence, awestruck. Palmer rises and addresses the soldiers.]

PALMER:

Ite in pace. Go in peace.

[The men turn to leave. Suddenly, in the distance, there are explosions and a flicker in the nighttime sky. They freeze.]

PALMER: *[More insistently.]*

Ite in pace. Go in peace.

[Light slowly fades on the soldiers' faces. End Act I.]

ACT II
CD 2

SCENE 1.

[Early morning fog the next day. Jonathan strides toward no-man's land with a shovel to bury his brother. Lights come up dimly on the German bunker where two sentries are watching his actions.]

1

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Was soll das?	What's this? Not even dawn
Es dämmert noch nicht mal	And the Scottish bastards
Und die schottischen Schweinhunden	Are already
Pflanzen schon wieder Minen.	Planting mines.

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Vielleicht waren wir letzte Nacht	Maybe we were too friendly
Zu freundlich zu ihnen.	With them last night.

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Wir? Noch einen whisky	"We?" One more whisky
Und du hättest ihnen	And you'd have
Walzerstunden gegeben.	Given them waltzing lessons.
Nun, der Waffenstillstand ist vorbei.	Well, the truce is over.
Es wird Zeit, dass sie ihr erstes	And it's time to give them
Weihnachtsgeschenk bekommen.	Their first Christmas gift.

[He lifts his gun.]

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Nein. Du kannst ihn nicht	No! You can't just shoot him
Einfach kaltblütig erschiessen.	In cold blood.
Nicht jetzt...	Not now…

[From the Scottish bunker, Gordon appears with Palmer and one or two men, waving a white flag.]

GERMAN SOLDIER:
[Clicking the trigger and singing mockingly.]
O Tannenbaum! O Tannen… O Christmas Tree! O Christ—

GORDON:
Hold on. Hold your fire.

[The German Soldier keeps his gun raised.]

GORDON: *[To Jonathan.]*
What are you doing?
The truce is over!

PALMER:
[With above, to Jonathan.]
Jonathan, they'll shoot you.
Come on.
[Quietly.]
Come back to the bunker.

[In the German bunker, Horstmayer has entered and sees Gordon.]

HORSTMAYER: *[To German Soldier.]*
Rauhut! Rauhut!
[German Soldier does not shoot; yelling to Gordon from his bunker.]
The truce has ended.
Your white flags mean nothing anymore.

[From the Scottish bunker, two or three soldiers stand and point their guns at Horstmayer.]

GORDON:
He was only trying to bury his brother.

[They turn to take Jonathan back to the bunker.]

HORSTMAYER:
[To the sentry.]
Waffe runter. Put down your gun.
[The sentry haltingly puts down his gun. To Gordon.]
Tell your men not to shoot.

[Gordon turns back and signals for the men to put down their guns. Horstmayer leaves the bunker and crosses to Gordon. Palmer and Jonathan continue to the bunker.]

HORSTMAYER:
Maybe….maybe it is time…
To bury all of them.
The dead.
Maybe it is time…
To give them all…
A proper burial.

[Audebert runs onto no-man's land, waving a white flag. The soldiers are slowly waking and gathering.]

AUDEBERT:
Que se passe-t-il? What has happened?

HORSTMAYER: *[To Audebert.]*

Je proposais simplement	I simply suggested that
Que l'on prenne le temps,	We take some time,
Le temps d'enterrer nos morts.	Some time to bury the dead.

[After a long pause, looking both at Gordon and Horstmayer, then back again, Audebert calls to Ponchel in the French bunker.]

AUDEBERT:

Ponchel…café!	Ponchel…coffee!

[Horstmayer, Gordon and Audebert sit. There is an uncomfortable pause.]

2

GORDON:

Well, here we are.

HORSTMAYER:

Yes, here we are.

[To Audebert.]

Ah…nous voilà.	Ah…here we are.

AUDEBERT:

Oui, nous voilà.	Yes, here we are.
Le jour de Noël…	Christmas Day…

HORSTMAYER: *[Translating, to Gordon:]*
On Christmas Day…

GORDON: *[To Horstmayer, then out.]*
I understood…
Seems apropos.

GORDON: *[A little excitedly.]*
I must say
Last night
I slept better than
I have in months.

HORSTMAYER: *[To Audebert, also a bit excitedly:]*
La nuit dernière Il a dormi— Last night, he slept—

AUDEBERT: *[Interrupting, with some exhilaration.]*
Comme un bébé … Like a baby…

GORDON: *[Overlapping.]*
Like a baby…

HORSTMAYER:
Wie eine Ba… Like a ba—

[This is too close. They resume "business."]

GORDON:
Look, I propose
We have a truce.
For sev'ral hours.

HORSTMAYER:
Il propose une trêve.
De quelques heures…

I propose a truce.
For several hours….

GORDON:
To bury the dead…

HORSTMAYER:
Pour enterrer nos morts…

To bury the dead…

GORDON:
Till fifteen hundred…

HORSTMAYER:
Jusqu'à quinze heures…

Till fifteen hundred…

AUDEBERT: *[After a short pause.]*
D'accord.

Agreed.

HORSTMAYER:
D'accord.
Agreed.

Agreed.

[Ponchel enters with coffee. He looks longingly in the direction of his hometown.]

AUDEBERT:
[Noticing Ponchel's distractedness.]

Le café, Ponchel.	The coffee, Ponchel.

PONCHEL:
[Snapping out of his reveille.]

Ah, oui, mon Lieutenant.	Ah, yes, Lieutenant.

[Ponchel pours the coffee and exits. The men drink their coffee.]

AUDEBERT: *[To Horstmayer.]*

Vous pouvez récupérer	You can retrieve
Les corps de	The bodies
Vos soldats qui sont	Of your men
Dans nos tranchées	In our trenches
Depuis votre attaque ratée	From your failed attack
La semaine dernière.	Last week.

HORSTMAYER: *[To Audebert.]*

Et en échange	And in exchange,
Vous pouvez récupérer	You can retrieve
Les corps de vos hommes	The bodies of your men
Qui sont dans nos tranchées	In our trenches from
Depuis votre stupide assaut hier.	Your stupid attack yesterday

AUDEBERT: *[Heatedly.]*
Stupide? "Stupid—?"

HORSTMAYER: *[Temper rising.]*
Pardon…*très* stupide. Sorry…*very* stupid.

AUDEBERT: *[Angrily.]*
Très stupide!? "*Very* stupid!?"

GORDON: *[Mitigating the situation.]*
Gentlemen!
This is supposed to be a truce!

AUDEBERT: *[Defensively.]*
Bon... Well…
Les ordres sont les orders. Orders are orders.

HORSTMAYER: *[Conciliatory]*
Befehl ist Befehl. Orders are orders.

GORDON: *[Resignedly.]*
Orders are orders.
[Changing the subject, trying to speak French to Audebert.]
Hey, la café est excellent.

AUDEBERT: *[To Gordon, correcting him.]*

Le café.	
Ponchel ne sait pas faire	Ponchel is incapable of making
Du mauvais café.	bad coffee.

HORSTMAYER: *[To Audebert.]*

La nuit dernière, vous avez dit	Last night, did I hear you say
Que vous vivez à Paris, n'est-ce pas?	You live in Paris?

AUDEBERT: *[Suspiciously.]*

Oui.	Yes.

HORSTMAYER:

Est-ce rue Vavin, par hasard?	Rue Vavin, by any chance?

[Audebert nods. Horstmayer withdraws a wallet from his pocket.]

Alors, j'ai trouvé ceci…	Ah, I found this…

AUDEBERT: *[Excitedly.]*

Mon portefeuille!	My wallet!

HORSTMAYER:

Vous avez du le laisser tomber	You must have dropped it
Dans notre bunker hier.	In our bunker yesterday.

[Audebert searches through his wallet and withdraws the photo of Madeleine, which he beams at.]

Vous habitez dans	You live in my favorite part
Mon quartier préféré.	Of the city.
Ma femme et moi	My wife and I
N'étions pas très loin,	Stayed near there,
Pendant notre lune de miel.	On our honeymoon.

[From the French bunker, the alarm clock sounds.]

GORDON: *[To Audebert.]*
I have a question.

HORSTMAYER: *[To Gordon.]*
I think I know:
[To Audebert.]
Pourquoi est-ce que
L'alarme sonne
Tous les jours à dix heures?

Why does that
Alarm sound
Every day at ten o'clock?

AUDEBERT:
Ah…
Avant la guerre …

Ah…
Before the war…

HORSTMAYER: *[To Gordon, translating.]*
Before the war…

AUDEBERT:
Ponchel prenait
Le café avec sa mère
Tous les matins à dix heures.

Ponchel had
Coffee with his mother
Every morning at ten o'clock.

HORSTMAYER: *[To Gordon, translating.]*
Ponchel had
Coffee with his mother
Every morning at ten o'clock.

AUDEBERT:

C'est juste un petit rappel
Parce qu'il a peur d'oublier.

It's just a reminder.
He's afraid he'll forget.

HORSTMAYER: *[To Gordon, translating.]*

It's just a reminder.
He's afraid he'll forget.

GORDON:

I understand.
I think we're all afraid we'll forget.
Come on…
Let's get this nasty business done with.

[End Scene 1.]

3

SCENE 2.

The soldiers move out of their bunkers toward no-man's land. Some make makeshift crosses while others silently remove weapons, identification, letters, photographs, etc., from the corpses as Palmer performs last rites. As the bagpipe plays, the corpses are lifted onto a wagon, which is then pulled toward the church, followed by the soldiers. Anna and Nikolaus remain.]

4

ANNA:

Irgendwo, irgendwann,
In dieser Welt
Hört eine Frau ein Klopfen

Anywhere, anytime,
In this world,
A woman hears a knock

ANNA:

An der Tür.
Sie öffnet und sieht
Einen Mann
Mit der Nachricht,
Die sie so fürchtet.
Über den Jungen,
Den sie gebar...
Über den Mann,
Mit dem sie das
Leben teilte...
Über den Mann,
Zu dem sie aufsah...
Irgendwo, irgendwann,
In dieser Welt.
Und ich werde bald
Eine solche Frau sein
Die die Nachricht erhält.
Dass Du, auch Du,
In diesen Wagen
geworfen wurdest
Und dann in dein Grab.
Unsere Geschichte wird enden
Wie all die anderen.
Wenn wir nichts dagegen tun.
Wir müssen etwas dagegen tun.
... Ich werde einen Weg finden.

At the door.
She opens it and sees
A man,
Bearing the news
She dreads.
About the boy
She gave birth to…
About the man
She shared
Her life with…
About the man
She looked up to…
Anytime, anywhere,
In this world.
And soon, I will be
One of those women.
Hearing that news.
For you, you too,
Will be tossed
Into that wagon
And then into your grave.
Our story will end
Like all the others.
Unless we do something about it.
We *must* do something about it.
…I will find a way.

[Nikolaus holds Anna and kisses her, then wraps his arm around her as they trudge toward the gravesite. End Scene 2.]

SCENE 3.

[On three different platforms rolled suddenly and jarringly into no-man's land, three men appear with communiqués: the Kronprinz, the French General, and a British Major. They are clearly angry.]

5

BRITISH MAJOR:
Despicable!

KRONPRINZ:
Undenkbar! Unthinkable!

FRENCH GENERAL:
Honte! Shameful!

BRITISH MAJOR:
Immoral!

KRONPRINZ:
Verräterisch! Treacherous!

FRENCH GENERAL:
Trahison! Treason!

BRITISH MAJOR:
When our spy first told me,
I dismissed it as mere rumor.
This could not have happened,
Surely not with our men!

BRITISH MAJOR:

Not they who serve the Crown!
Now they have confirmed it,
Disbelief has been replaced by
Rage and indignation.
They're no less than traitors!
Who have betrayed our cause.
This is not how war is fought.
This is not how war is run.
It's absurd.
Christmas carols,
Sharing schnapps,
And God know what else occurred
Despicable! A disgrace! Preposterous!
My God!
This is not how war is waged.
This is not how it is won.
It's perverse,
Saying prayers, shaking hands,
And must be stanched before it's worse!

KRONPRINZ: *[With above.]*

Wie können gute Deutsche
So etwas tun?
Das muss aufhören.
Das muss aufhören.
Unser Land
tut das Beste und schickt
seinen Soldaten die besten Würst

How could good Germans
Do something like this?
It must be stopped.
It must be stopped.
Our country
Does its best and
Sends our soldiers the best sausages

KRONPRINZ:

Und diese Männer teilen sie mit	And these men share them
die uns verhungern lassen würden	With those who would starve us!
Undenkbar! Verraterich! Unsittlich!	Unthinkable! Treason! Immoral!
Mein Gott!	My God!
Weihnachtslieder!	Christmas carols!
Und Champagner!	And champagne!
Sie spuckten	They have spat
auf die Krone!	Upon the crown!
Und dafür	And for that
Müssen sie bezahlen.	They must pay.

FRENCH GENERAL: *[With above.]*

Notre pays	Our country
Est envahi	Is invaded
Par des barbares	By evil men
Et on leur donne	And they give them
Du champagne!	Champagne!
Une erreur!	A mistake!
Très scandeleuse	A scandal,
Mon Dieu!	My God!
On chante avec eux!	Sing with them!
On plaisante avec eux!	Joke with them!
On prie avec eux!	Pray with them!
L'ennemi!	The enemy!
Pour ça	For that
Ils devront payer.	They must pay.

[From the back of the stage, the soldiers have rushed on playing soccer, sitting and playing games of poker, telling jokes, playing the bagpipe and harmonicas, enjoying a joyous release after the funeral.]

BRITISH MAJOR:
Despicable!

KRONPRINZ:
Undenkbar! Unthinkable!

FRENCH GENERAL:
Honte! Shameful!

BRITISH MAJOR:
Immoral!

KRONPRINZ:
Verräterisch! Treacherous!

FRENCH GENERAL:
Trahison! Treason!

BRITISH MAJOR:
Measures must be taken,
To rebuke them for their actions.
Swift and potent measures,
That ensure this evil
Will not occur again.

KRONPRINZ: *[With above.]*

Das ist Anarchie!	This is anarchy!
Das ist gefährlich!	This is dangerous!
Niemand darf davon erfahren!	Nobody can know about it!
Wir müssen es beenden.	We have to end it.
Das darf nicht wieder vorkommen.	It must not happen again.

FRENCH GENERAL: *[With above.]*

Discrètement,	With discretion,
Discrètement,	With discretion,
Voilà comment procéder.	We must proceed.
Nous devons veiller	And make sure
À ce que cela ne se reproduise jamais.	It never happens again.

[The three platforms roll off as the soccer game ends. The celebration is at its peak. Then Gordon signals to Audebert and Horstmayer that it's three o'clock. The men suddenly quiet down. They silently shake hands and return to their bunkers. The three officers remain in the center of no-man's land.]

6

GORDON:

Well, I'm afraid that's it.
I just received a communiqué.
We're to be shipped out tomorrow.
We're also getting a visit
From the Major.
I want to wish you both well
Whatever happens.

HORSTMAYER:

It has been an honor to meet you.
Maybe in different circumstances…

AUDEBERT: *[To Horstmayer.]*

Peut-être viendrez-vous
Boire un verre
Rue Vavin—en touriste!

Maybe you'll drop by Rue Vavin
For a drink—
As a tourist!

HORSTMAYER:

Oui, ou lorsque nous aurons
Pris Paris …

Yes, or after
We've taken Paris…

AUDEBERT: *[Sweetly acerbic.]*

Oh, ne vous sentez pas
Obligé d'envahir
Ma ville pour boire
Un verre avec moi!

Oh, don't feel
You have to Invade my city
To enjoy a drink
With me!

GORDON:

Gentlemen.
Bonne chance.
Viel Glück.

Good luck.
Good luck.

AUDEBERT/HORSTMAYER:

Good luck.

[Gordon walks toward his bunker. Audebert shakes Horstmayer's hand.]

AUDEBERT:

Au fait, vous parlez
Un excellent français.

By the way, you speak French
Quite well.

HORSTMAYER:

Je n'ai aucun mérite:	I can't take all the credit.
Ma femme vient de Marseilles.	My wife is from Marseilles.

[They return to their bunkers. End Scene 3.]

SCENE 4.

[Soon after, in the German bunker. Horstmayer confronts Anna and Nikolaus.]

7

HORSTMAYER:

Ich erhielt gerade Nachricht.	I just received word.
In einer halben Stunde wird	A car will arrive in a half hour
Ein Auto hier sein	To take you away
Um Sie von hier fort zubringen.	From here.

ANNA:

Eine halbe Stunde?	A half hour?

NIKOLAUS:

Darf ich Sie etwas fragen,	May I ask you something,
Herr Leutnant?	Lieutenant?
Was ist ihr Plan?	What is your plan now?
Einen Aperitif mit dem Feind trinken?	Share an aperitif with the enemy?
Ihm Gedichte vorlesen?	Read poetry to them,
Bevor Sie ihn wie	Before gunning them down
Die Hasen abknallen?	Like rabbits?

HORSTMAYER:

Wie Sie, werde ich weiter	Like you, I will continue to serve
Dem Vaterland dienen.	The Fatherland.

NIKOLAUS:

"Dem Vaterland?"	"The Fatherland?"
In den Augen des Vaterlands sind	In the eyes of the Fatherland
Sie nicht mal Deutscher.	You're not even German.
Sie sind ein kompletter Idiot,	You're an utter idiot
Wenn Sie glauben	If you think
Sie dienen Ihrem geliebten	You're serving your dear
"Vaterland."	"Fatherland."
Sie dienen den Junkern.	You're serving the Junkers.
Sie dienen diesem Trottel	You're serving that idiot
Von Kaiser.	Of a Kaiser.
Sie dienen Macht und Geld.	You're serving power and money.
Die Hindenburgs	The Hindenburgs
Und Krupps	And the Krupps
Dieser Welt	Of the world—
Das sind die, denen Sie dienen!	That's who you're serving!

HORSTMAYER:

Das reicht, Sprink.	That's enough, Sprink!
Sie Sind verhaftet!	You are hereby under arrest
Wegen Aufsässigkeit.	For insubordination.
Vielleicht bringt Sie das Gefängnis	Maybe prison
Auf andere Gedanken.	Will change your mind.

ANNA: *[With a quiet defiance.]*

Ja, er wird ins Gefängnis gehen.	Yes, he will go to prison.
Und ich werde ihn begleiten.	And I will go with him
Aber nicht in Ihr Gefängnis!	But not *your* prison.

[Softly, to Nikolaus.]

Nimm meine Hand.	Take my hand.

NIKOLAUS:

Anna, nein…	Anna, no…

ANNA:

Nimm meine Hand.	Take my hand.
Und laß sie nicht los.	And don't let go.
Vertrau mir…	Give me your trust.

[He does. She leads him from the bunker.]

HORSTMAYER:

Was tun Sie da?	What are you doing?

[To his soldiers.]

Haltet sie auf!	Seize them.

[The soldiers put down their guns.]

Ich sagte, haltet sie auf!	I said seize them.

[Anna firmly guides Nikolaus across no-man's land toward the French bunker.]

HORSTMAYER:

Sehr gut.	Very well…

[To Anna and Nikolaus outside of the bunker.]

Ich befehle Ihnen,	I order you

Stehen zu bleiben!	To halt.
Sonst werde ich Sie	Otherwise,
Persönlich erschiessen.	I will shoot you myself.

[Horstmayer tries to grab the sentry's gun; he will not cede it. He finds another soldier, pushes him to the ground and takes his gun.]

Ich sagte, Halt!	I said: Halt!

[He raises the gun. Puts it down. Then raises it again. He finally shoots it into the air. Anna and Nikolaus freeze for a second, then continue. Horstmayer snaps at his men.].

Was guckt Ihr so dumm?	What are *you* looking at?
Macht euren eigenen Kram,	Mind your own business,
Verdammt!	Damn it!

[He storms off angrily. Anna and Nicholas have reached the French bunker.]

8

ANNA: *[To Audebert.]*

Nous demandons—	We ask…

NIKOLAUS: *[Interrupting, to Audebert.]*

Nous *insistons*	We *insist*
*P*our que vous nous arrêtiez	That you place us
En tant que	Under arrest
Prisonniers de guerre.	As war prisoners.

AUDEBERT: *[To Anna and Nikolaus.]*

Êtes-vous conscients de ce que	Are you aware of
Vous demandez?	What you're doing?
Du sérieux de la situation?	How serious this is?

NIKOLAUS: *[To Audebert.]*

Tout à fait conscients.	Well-aware.
C'est notre seule alternative.	This is our only choice.
Le seul choix possible.	Our only choice.
Je préfère être emprisonné,	I would rather be imprisoned,
Trahir mon pays, même,	Betray my own country,
Plutôt qu'être séparé d'elle.	Then be apart from her.
Maintenant que	For we have found
Nous nous sommes retrouvés,	Each other again.
Rien ne pourra nous séparer.	And nothing will separate us—
Surtout pas cette guerre futile.	Least of all this futile war.

ANNA: *[Sweetly to Audebert.]*

Et je suis sûre que vous	And I would think you of all people
Me comprenez.	Would understand.

AUDEBERT:
[After a short beat.]

Très bien.	Very well.

[The French soldiers cheer.]

Enfermez-les.	Lock them up.

PONCHEL: *[To Anna and Nikolaus.]*

Evidemment, s'il s'agit d'amour,	Well, if it has to do with love…
Au moins, maintenant vous êtes du	At least now you're on the
Bon côté des tranchées.	Right side of the trenches.

[A slight dim in the lights to indicate a short passage of time. In all three bunkers, soldiers write letters.]

9

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:

It was the most amazing thing.
I shall never forget it.

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Hast Du schon mal probiert?
Nicht schlecht.

Have you ever had whisky?
Not bad.

FRENCH SOLDIER:

Et quand elle a chanté
On aurait dit un ange.

And when she sang
She sounded like an angel.

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Heute haben wir den
Bandmann-Jungen begraben.
Neben einer Kirche.
Das hätte ihm gefallen.

Today we buried the
Bandmann boy.
Next to a church
He would've liked that.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:

Finally had a good night's sleep.

GERMAN SOLDIER:

All die Männer
Zog es zum Kreuz
Als wär's ein Feuer.

All of the men gathered
Around the cross
As if were a fire.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:

One Kraut owns a small hotel
In the Alps.
He invited us to visit
When the war is over.

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Es heisst Dudelsack.
Es ist aus Schafsdarm gemacht.

It's called a bagpipe.
It's made from a sheep's stomach.

FRENCH SOLDIER:

La plupart d'entre nous ne
Comprenaient pas
Un mot de ce qu'ils disaient.
Mais ça ne faisait rien.

Few of us understood
A word they said.
But we didn't
Need to.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:

Beat us badly at football.

FRENCH SOLDIER:

On est tous tellement
Malades de cette guerre.

As sick of the war
As we are…

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:

Who knew Germans had
A sense of humor!

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Seine Frau sieht ein wenig	His wife looks a little
Aus wie du.	Like you,
Aber lang nicht so hübsch.	But a lot less pretty.

FRENCH SOLDIER:

Huit enfants…huit!	Eight children…eight!
Tu te rends compte?	Can you imagine?

GERMAN SOLDIER:

Erzähl niemandem davon.	Don't tell anyone about this.

FRENCH SOLDIER:

N'en parle à personne.	Not a word about this to anyone.

JONATHAN:

Yesterday, William took two Jerrys.
If he keeps this up
He'll have the best record
In the whole platoon.
Your gloves continue
To keep our hands warm.
Much love
From both of us…

AUDEBERT:

Fais de beaux rêves, Madeleine.	Sweet dreams, Madeleine.
Et bonne nuit à notre enfant aussi.	To you and to our child.

JONATHAN:
Jonathan and William.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:
Your devoted husband.

FRENCH SOLDIER:
Je vous embrasse — A kiss to you
Toi et mon petit Alain. — And little Alain.

GERMAN SOLDIER:
Für immer, Dein Sohn. — Your son, always.

[Lights dim into darkness. End Scene 4.]

SCENE 5.

[Lights up suddenly and sharply. It's the next morning, The British Major stands in the Scottish bunker before the soldiers.]

10

BRITISH MAJOR:
I don't have to tell you
Why you're being moved from this sector.
Fraternizing with the enemy
Is a very serious offence!
In lieu of punishment…

PALMER:
Punishment! For what?

BRITISH MAJOR:

And you, the bloody Saint Bernard!
You call yourself a man of the cloth!
No less a person than the Bishop
Has ordered you to return
To Scotland.
You'll be lucky
If you're not excommunicated.
The rest of you are being moved
To the front lines in Neuve Chapelle.

[The British Major sees a man in a German uniform walking across no-man's land.]

There's one of those bastards now.
Coming this way.

[To the soldiers.]

Everyone to his post!

[The soldiers ignore him.]

Everyone to his post!

[Again, the soldiers ignore him.]

Gordon!

[Gordon turns away from the Major.]

What are you waiting for?
Shoot the bloody Kraut!
What are you playing at? Shoot him!

[A shot rings out; the soldier is struck and falls. An alarm clock rings from inside the soldier's coat. It is Ponchel. Jonathan stands up with his rifle still smoking, a cold smirk on his face. The British Major smiles at Jonathan.]

Well, I'm glad one of you
Hasn't lost his senses.
Finish packing your things.
And go.

[He leaves. The Scottish soldiers slowly exit. Palmer looks sadly at Jonathan who looks away and leaves. Palmer remains. In the meantime, three men have rushed from the French bunker waving white flags to carry Ponchel back to the French bunker.]

11

AUDEBERT:

Ponchel.	Ponchel.
Que s'est-il passé?	What happened?

PONCHEL: *[Gasping for breath.]*

C'est absurde de mourir comme ça,	Well, this is an absurd way to die,
N'est-ce pas?	Isn't it?
Dans un uniforme allemand!	In a German uniform!

AUDEBERT:

Comment avez-vous—?	How did—?

PONCHEL:

L'un des soldats allemands	One of the German lads
Me l'a prêté.	Lent it to me.
J'ai vu ma mère.	I saw my mother.
On a bu le café.	We had coffee.
Comme avant.	Like before.
Et…	And…
Elle m'a dit…	She told me…
Que vous avez un fils.	You have a son.
Il s'appelle Henri.	Hi name is Henri.

AUDEBERT:

Cher ami. Merci.
Thank you, dear friend.

[Ponchel's eyes roll back; he is dead. Audebert quickly and sharply turns to the soldiers:]

Enlevez-le.
Take him away.

[A group of French soldiers removes Ponchel's corpse. In the Scottish bunker, Palmer sings an old hymn.]

12

PALMER:

Make me a channel of Your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring Your love.
Where there is injury, Your pardon, Lord.
And where there's doubt, true faith in You.
True faith in…True faith in…

[Palmer removes his cross and throws it into no-man's land and leaves. In the French bunker, Audebert has returned to his small office. The General is there.]

13

AUDEBERT: *[Tearfully, but with rage.]*

Si vous êtes venu me
Faire la morale,
Ce n'est pas le moment.

If you're here
To lecture me,
This is not the time.

GENERAL:

Pour l'amour du ciel!
Ne sais-tu donc pas que ce
Que tu as fait
Est considéré comme un acte
De trahison?
Imagine que le public l'apprenne.

For the love of God,
Don't you realize
What you did
Is considered treason?
Just imagine if
The public found out.

AUDEBERT:

Oh, ne vous inquiétez pas.	Oh don't worry.
Personne ne dira quoi que ce soit.	No one's going to say anything.
Et même s'ils en parlaient,	And even if they did,
Qui les croirait?	Who would believe them?
Et comment	And how did
L'avez-vous découvert, *vous?*	*You* find out?

GENERAL:

J'ai mes sources.	I have my sources.
Tes hommes ne sont pas tous	Not all of your men
Aussi loyaux que tu ne le penses.	Are as loyal as you think they are.
Tu aurais pu être jeté en prison.	You could've been thrown in prison
Pour un mois! Au minimum!	For a month! Minimum!
Heureusement pour toi,	Luckily for you I arranged
J'ai organisé ton transfert	To have you transferred away
Loin du front.	From the front lines,
Là où tu ne pourras plus	Where you can't do
Causer d'ennui!	Any more harm!
Demain tu pars pour Verdun.	Tomorrow you leave for Verdun.

AUDEBERT:

Verdun?	Verdun?

GENERAL:

Un village dont tes amis allemands	A village your
Ne soupçonnent probablement	German chums
Pas l'existence!	Are probably not even aware of!

[He turns to leave.]

AUDEBERT:

Père…	Father…
J'ai quelque chose à vous dire :	I want to tell you something.
Vous êtes grand-père.	You're a grandfather.
Il s'appelle Henri.	His name is Henri.

GENERAL:

Comment ça?	What do you mean?
Comment le sais-tu?	How did you find that out?

AUDEBERT: *[Ironically.]*

J'ai mes sources.	I have my sources.

GENERAL:

"Henri?"	"Henri?"
Pas mal.	Not bad.
Henri Audebert.	Henri Audebert.
Alors, essayons de voir	Then let's try to live
Le bout de cette guerre.	Through this war.
Pour lui.	For his sake.

[The General moves to shake his son's hand. Audebert turns away. The General leaves.]

AUDEBERT: *[Looking out, repeating, simply.]*
Verdun.

[From the side of the stage, a boxcar is rolled on with Horstmayer and many of the German soldiers. Someone plays a tune on the harmonica, but stops when the Kronprinz marches on.]

14

KRONPRINZ:

In zwei Tagen	In two days,
Werden Sie in eine	You'll be engaged
Offensive eingesetzt,	In an offensive
In Pommern, geg	In Pomerania,
Die Russische Armee.	Against the Russian army.
Man hofft, Sie werden	It is hoped that you will
Ihren Kampfgeist wiedergewinnen.	Regain your fighting spirit,
Und die Feinde	And crush these
Des Reichs vernichten.	Enemies of the empire.

[He shoots a look to Horstmayer.]

Was für ein Deutscher sind Sie denn?	What *kind* of German *are* you?

HORSTMAYER: *[Exhausted, resigned, by rote:]*

Ein guter Deutscher…	A good German…

KRONPRINZ: *[Cutting him off:]*

Das ist alles.	That is all.

[The Kronprinz storms off. The German soldiers look at each other in despair. One picks up a harmonica and gently, awkwardly, starts to play the melody of "My Home's Never Far Away." Another soldier begins to hum along, then two, then more (but not all), as the boxcar solemnly rolls off. The stage is empty. No soldiers. No corpses. It slowly begins to snow. From offstage there are voices.]

FRENCH SOLDIER:

Et quand elle a chanté
On aurait dit un ange.

And when she sang
She sounded like an angel.

GERMAN SOLDIER:

All die Männer
Zog es zum Kreuz
Als wär's ein Feuer.

All of the men gathered
Around the cross
As if were a fire.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER:

It was the most amazing thing.
I shall never forget it.

[A long moment of silence as the snow falls. Lights fade. The End.]