

Round One instructions:

Before Round One begins, all the cast, except Schnell, should have been circulating (in character) with the guests, whilst the sound of French organ music is heard in the background.

All the cast should act in character. Von Pinscher is in full military uniform but is clearly off-duty, as he orders another beer. Claudette, whilst on the phone, calls Amélie to come and serve him. François could polish the tables and remove empty glasses whilst talking to guests. Von Pinscher could try to point out that occupation is not so bad as everyone is still free to enjoy themselves. Claudette could argue with François about what order all the various tasks should be done in. François could kiss and embrace Amélie every time his wife gets distracted either by the phone or Von Pinscher. Von Pinscher could live up to his name by pinching the bottom of Amélie whenever he gets the chance. She should, of course, try to ignore him.

ROUND ONE SCRIPT

MAKE SURE ALL THE GUESTS ARE SETTLED BEFORE YOU BEGIN – AS “CAFE STAFF”, THE CAST SHOULD HELP EVERYONE TO FIND THEIR PLACES AND CONTINUE TO INTERACT WITH THEM IN CHARACTER, EXCEPT FOR FRANÇOIS AND AMÉLIE WHO HAVE LEFT.

VON PINSCHER SITS DOWN AND NOTICES HIS GLASS IS EMPTY. AS CLAUDETTE WALKS PAST HIM, VON PINSCHER TRIES TO GRAB HER AS HE HOLDS UP HIS GLASS.

Von Pinscher: Mein liebchen, mein liebchen!

Claudette: I think you’ve had quite enough, Monsieur Von Pinscher!

Von Pinscher: How could any man have had enough of you, mein liebchen? You and your lovely café!

Claudette: Bah! You just love beer, Monsieur Von Pinscher!

Von Pinscher: Nein, nein, Fraulein. I love women too and I love you! But look! Look! My glass is empty.

Claudette: Ahhh! For the last time, I am not a frauline. I am married to the owner of this cafe! (CALLS OUT) Amélie! Amélie. Where is that girl? AMÉLIE! I don’t know why we pay her! (TO VON PINSCHER) If I let you have another beer, do you promise to drink it slowly and not ask for any more tonight?

Von Pinscher: Of course, of course! Whatever you say mein leibchen!

Claudette: Amélie? Ah, what's the use?

CLAUDETTE GRABS VON PINSCHER'S GLASS. HE STARTS TO SING A DRUNKEN SONG. JUST AS CLAUDETTE REFILLS HIS GLASS, AMÉLIE RUNS IN, DOING UP HER BLOUSE.

Claudette: Oh, so the wanderer returns! And where were you this time? Sailing along the Seine? Just stoking the fire upstairs, perhaps?

Amélie: No, no. I was in the bed with François.

Claudette: What?

Amélie: The flowerbed outside! François wanted me to choose something for the hanging basket.

Claudette: That basket-case could do with a good hanging! Now, take this over to the Colonel.

AMÉLIE TAKES THE BEER TO VON PINSCHER. FRANÇOIS WALKS IN, DOING HIS SHIRT UP.

François: Is there a problem, ma chère? I heard you calling for Amélie.

Claudette: Yes, the problem is that lazy girl is never around when you need her. But why is your shirt undone, when you were just outside with Amélie? And I can see lipstick on your cheek as well!

François: Oh Claudette! This is not lipstick but juice from the red berry bush. We were trying to move it upwards, in the bed, and with one thrust, a thorn took off all the buttons from my shirt.

Claudette: Hmmm. We are meant to be running a café here, not a flower shop!

VON PINSCHER PINCHES AMÉLIE'S BOTTOM AS SHE PUTS DOWN THE BEER. SHE QUICKLY MOVES OVER TO THE BAR AREA.

Von Pinscher: Ah, mein host! François! How happy I am to see my good friend again.

François: 'Allo, Colonel. I am happy that you are enjoying yourself.

VON PINSCHER STARTS SINGING AGAIN WHILST DRINKING HIS BEER.

François: Can you believe this is a Colonel in the German army?

Claudette: No, but I've a mind to give you a good beating! Leaving me to work here on my own! Where is that girl now?

François: Oh, she's probably just gone to bring some wine up from the cellar. I noticed that the stocks were getting low.

Von Pinscher: Come and have a beer with me, François. I'm buying, today!

Claudette: Oh go and keep him occupied François but remember to serve anyone else who comes in.

François: Will you not be here in the bar?

Claudette: I've just remembered that we need some things from the boulangerie. I expect that Von Pinscher will want to eat here later and some of his delightful army will probably be coming to join him.

François: I will do what I can to keep him entertained.

CLAUDETTE LEAVES AND FRANÇOIS JOINS VON PINSCHER.

François: So, what is new, Colonel?

Von Pinscher: Ooh, I am so happy, François.

François: Why is that? Are you going back to Germany?

Von Pinscher: Noooo! I do not want to go back to Germany. I like it here, where I can drink with the friendly people of France. You and the lovely lady!

François: The lovely who? Oh, my wife. Yes, yes, of course.

Von Pinscher: But you still do not know why I am so happy?

François: No, Colonel, I do not. Why is it you are so happy?

Von Pinscher: Because I have been clearing an office in the chateau earlier today and in an old brandy box, in a cupboard, I have found a beautiful painting. It was wrapped up in brown paper and when I opened it I found it was the famous painting by Rubenstein that went missing soon after the war started! 'The Straddling Venus'!

François: 'The Straddling Venus in the Garden Ecstasy'!!

Von Pinscher: Ah, so you know it?

François: But of course Colonel! But what can you do with a painting like that? It would not look good in a soldier's office?

Von Pinscher: Ah, I'll tell you, my friend but you must keep this a secret! (LOOKS AROUND CAREFULLY). Hermann Goering will be coming here next week on his way to the Luftwaffe base at Abbeville. You probably know that he is a great lover of fine art. I am sure he will give me a lot of money for it!

VON PINSCHER STARTS SINGING DRUNKENLY AND THEN FALLS ASLEEP ON THE TABLE. AMÉLIE CALLS OVER FROM THE SIDE.

Amélie: François, I need to talk to you.

François: And I need to talk to you. (GOES TO AMÉLIE AND WHISPERS) The Colonel has found the painting of 'the Straddling Venus'.

Amélie: 'The Straddling Venus in the Garden of Ecstasy'? But you said it was so well hidden in the chateau that no one would find it until after the war!

François: I know, I know! But somehow the Colonel now has the painting.

Amélie: We'll have to see to that later. In the meantime, we have a problem. Listen very carefully. There is a man in the kitchen wearing a balaclava.

François: Oh, that is all we need. Do you think he might be a member of La Resistance?

Amélie: He might be a British spy but he could be a German spy pretending to be an escaping British airman, who looks like a member of La Resistance!

François: What? Oh! Mon Dieu! What was he doing?

Amélie: He was acting very suspiciously, making himself a honey sandwich.

François: A honey sandwich? (LOOKS AT AUDIENCE INCREDULOUSLY) Yes, that is very suspicious! (BACK INTO CHARACTER. LOOKS AT AMÉLIE) Well, if the Germans find him here we will all be shot!! Let me think in a minute. We'll have to confront him.

FRANÇOIS IS ABOUT TO MOVE WHEN SCHNELL BURSTS IN AND POINTS A LUGAR AT FRANÇOIS AND AMÉLIE.

Schnell: Halt! Everybody stay exactly as you are.

François: I don't think he's moved for the last five minutes (POINTS TO VON PINSCHER).

Schnell: I will deal with him later. Right now, I would like to find out why you are giving refuge to an enemy of the Reich.

François: I don't know what you mean!

Schnell: Do not treat me as an idiot! What is your name?

François: François Derrière, the owner of this café. And this is Amélie who works here.

Schnell: (AMÉLIE TRIES TO WALK TOWARDS THE KITCHEN). Stay exactly where you are fraulein unless you want a bullet to enter your brain! Not that it would help you to try to escape. I have men covering every exit with orders to shoot on sight!

Amélie: Who are you?

Schnell: I, fraulein, am Gunter Schnell, Kriminal Kommisar of the Gestapo. I am happy to inform you both that accommodation is available for both of you at our comfortable interrogation centre in Amiens. With full board but I am afraid, no wine or beer! (LAUGHS AT HIS OWN JOKE). A man was seen acting suspiciously and then entering this house from the back. Now, tell me please, where is he?

François: If you are talking about this man you say entered this building, I have no idea. I have not seen anyone.

ENTER CLAUDETTE CARRYING SOME BREAD. SHE DOES NOT SEE SCHNELL.

Claudette: Oh, so you found Amélie, did you? And that fat oaf has fallen asleep. There will be more drunken German soldiers coming soon. Amélie, is the beer barrel full?

François: I don't think there will be any German soldiers coming here to drink tonight my love.

Claudette: Why not? It's all they seem good for, when they aren't dropping bombs or goose-stepping around the place!

François: Or standing behind you with a Luger pointed directly at your head?

Claudette: Yes, or standing behind you with a Luger pointed directly at your head. What? (CLAUDETTE TURNS ROUND TO SEE SCHNELL POINTING HIS PISTOL AT HER).

Schnell: Good Evening, Madame. Now, you were saying?

Claudette: Oh, oh, oh. I, er. I was just saying what a pleasant change to the local drunken peasants it is having our cultured friends from Germany frequenting the café.

Schnell: You are very kind, Madame. Now, would you be kinder still and tell me where you have hidden the British officer who has entered this house?

Claudette: What is he talking about, François?

François: I don't know! What is he talking about, Amélie?

Amélie: I don't know! Can I offer you a taste of our best wine from the cellar?

Schnell: Why not? I will try your wine and then we will search this house and if we find any enemies of the Reich being hidden here, you will all be shot. That is fair, no? Now, get the wine, quickly!

AMÉLIE RUNS OUT. AS SHE DOES, VON PINSCHER WAKES UP.

Von Pinscher: Ah. I must have dozed off. Herr Schnell!

Schnell: Ah, Von Pinscher! I see you had all these members of the resistance safely rounded up and under guard, prior to my arrival. Where would we be without the efficiency and professionalism of the Wehrmacht?

Von Pinscher: What? What are you saying? This is just a café. Sit down and have a beer!

Schnell: Obersturmbannfuerher Von Pinscher! You are a disgrace to the German army and the Reich. I will be mentioning your incompetence in my report to Berlin, you may be sure of that! Perhaps it is a little too warm for you here in France and your mind is muddled. A spell of coolness at the Russian front will help you to think more clearly, I am sure!

Von Pinscher: You have no jurisdiction here, Herr Schnell. (HIC) The government of this town is not (HIC) a matter for the Gestapo!

Schnell: This is a matter of Reich security Herr Oberst! And if that girl is not here within one minute, I will assume that she has tried to escape

and give orders for her to be shot on sight. And as for you, Herr Derrière.....

AMÉLIE BURSTS IN.

Schnell: Well?

Amélie: That man who you say entered this building. I think I have found him but I do not think you will get him to talk!

Schnell: We have ways of making them talk!

Amélie: Well, you can try Herr Kommisar but he's dead. I just found him lying on the floor in the kitchen.

Schnell: What are you saying? Have one of you killed him to stop him giving us information?

François: Maybe he tried to hide here and heard you say that the house is surrounded and so he killed himself?

Schnell: We shall see. All of you, into the kitchen, now! I want to know if any of you recognise the man who is on the kitchen floor. The rest of you can have some food and drink but if any of you try to leave the building, you will be shot!!

END OF ROUND ONE.

The guests and cast should all now be served with their first course. The cast will come in while the guests are being served and perform script two.