

RED VIRGIN

(Louise Michel and the Paris Commune of 1871)

written by

Gary Graves

in collaboration with Anna Ishida, Allison Lovejoy, Juliana
Lustenader, John Patrick Moore, Galen Murphy-Hoffman, Josh
Pollock, Diana Strong, Kenny Toll, Gregory Scharpen,
and Jan Zvaifler

DRAFT 4

November 5, 2013

Premiere Draft

© CENTRAL WORKS
P.O. Box 9771
Berkeley CA 94706
510-558-1381
gary@centralworks.org

CAST

LOUISE MICHEL: unconventional schoolteacher and irrepressible revolutionary.

CLEMENCE ENJOLRAS: orphan and student at Louise's school.

THEO FERRÉ: socialist revolutionary with a long arrest record.

RAOUL RIGAULT: devoted Blanquist (follower of the socialist August Blanqui) and head of the Commune's secret police.

THE MARQUIS DE GALLIFET: aristocratic cavalry officer who leads the government forces against the Commune.

THE ACCORDIONIST: provides much of the musical accompaniment in the play, augmented by the other performers.

SETTING

The action takes place in various locations in and around Paris and Montmartre in 1870-1871.

BACKGROUND

In the spring of 1871, the government of France surrendered to Germany at the end of the Franco-Prussian War. But the working people of Paris refused to accept their government's surrender, and instead ignited an insurrection that sent the French government fleeing from the city, and led to the establishment of a new socialist, revolutionary government. They called it the Paris Commune. The rebels held the city for two months, and instituted a wave of socialist changes, before the government forces recaptured Paris and crushed the rebellion in a horrific act of carnage known as the "Bloody Week," when some 20,000 *communards* were put to death. Public trials, further executions, and a wave of deportations to far off penal colonies followed. One of the most remarkable figures to emerge from these tumultuous events was Louise Michel, whom history remembers as "the Red Virgin."

"Yes, barbarian that I was, I loved the cannon,
the smell of gunpowder and grapeshot in the air,
but above all, I was in love with the revolution!"

--Louise Michel, *Memoirs*

SCENE AND MUSIC BREAKDOWN

SCENE		PAGE	LENGTH
1	ACT ONE: THE OLD MELODY <i>LOUISE (8), CLEMENCE (8)</i>	1	1 5/8
	<i>"The Old Melody"</i> (1st instance) Louise	2-3	
2	THE OATH LOUISE (2)	3	7/8
3	THE MARSEILLAISE CLEMENCE (12), LOUISE (20)	4	4 4/8
	<i>"La Marseillaise"</i> Clemence/Louise	5-8	
4	THE REQUIEM CLEMENCE (1), LOUISE (20), THEO (18)	9	3 3/8
	<i>"Requiem Dies Irae"</i> Ensemble	9	
5	IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT GALLIFET (2) , LOUISE (18), THEO (14), RAOUL (11) , CLEMENCE (3)	13	4 5/8
	<i>"Le Chant de l'oignon"</i> Gallifet	13	
	<i>"It'll Be All Right"</i> Ensemble	13-16	
	<i>"The Old Melody"</i> Instrumental (2nd inst.)	17-18	
6	THE TIME OF CHERRIES CLEMENCE (4), LOUISE (41), THEO (41), RAOUL (14)	18	9 5/8

"The Time of Cherries" Clemence/Louise/Theo 19-20

7	SURRENDER	28	6 2/8
	LOUISE (27), THEO (27), RAOUL (14), CLEMENCE(10)		
	<i>"Drum & Accordion"</i> Ensemble	28-33	
8	A WARNING	35	6/8
	GALLIFET (1)		
9	THE PARIS MOB	36	11 4/8
	CLEMENCE (34), LOUISE (51), GALLIFET (19), THEO (18), RAOUL (10)		
	<i>"Vive La Liberte"</i> Louise/Clemence	36	
	<i>"Time of the Cherries"</i> (reprise) Clemence	41	
	<i>"The Paris Mob (La Canaille)"</i> Ensemble	42-47	
10	ACT TWO: INTERNATIONALE	48	5 6/8
	CLEMENCE (11), RAOUL (17), THEO (19), LOUISE (25)		
	<i>"Internationale"</i> Raoul	48	
11	THE DIVA OF THE EMPIRE	54	6 3/8
	CLEMENCE (22), LOUISE (30), THEO (8), RAOUL (3)		
	<i>"The Diva of the Empire"</i> Clemence/Louise	54-58	
12	THE CALF OF GOLD	61	3 2/8
	GALLIFET(4),LOUISE(4),THEO(3),RAOUL(4),CLEMENCE 1)		
	<i>"The Calf of Gold"</i> Gallifet	61-64	

13	MARCH TO THE SCAFFOLD CLEMENCE (19), LOUISE (17) <i>"March to the Scaffold"</i> (instrumental) Louise 65-66	65	2 4/8
14	PRINCIPLES THEO (23), RAOUL (22), LOUISE (6)	68	4 5/8
15	BLOODY WEEK CLEMENCE (49), RAOUL (23), THEO (14), LOUISE (37), GALLIFET (31) <i>"The Old Melody"</i> (3rd inst.) Clemence <i>"Calf of Gold" (reprise)</i> Gallifet/Ensemble	73 73 83	13
16	GNOSSIENNE CLEMENCE (13), LOUISE (16), RAOUL (3), GALLIFET (6) <i>"Gnossienne No. 1"</i> (instrumental) Ensemble 86-87 <i>"Internationale"</i> (reprise, a capella) Raoul 87 <i>"Gnossienne No. 1"</i> (resumes) Ensemble 87-88 <i>"The Old Melody"</i> (4th inst.) Louise 89	86 87-88 89	3 7/8
17	QUESTIONS GALLIFET (47), LOUISE (46)	90	5 7/8
18	THE KISS LOUISE (20), THEO (10), GALLIFET (11) <i>"The Old Melody"</i> (5th inst.) Louise/Theo	96 97	3 5/8
19	INTERNATIONALE (REPRISE) LOUISE (5), CLEMENCE (5), CHORUS (1) <i>"Internationale"</i> (reprise/finale) Ensemble 101-102	100	2 2/8

(August, 1873.

We hear sounds of the sea.

Reveal LOUISE and CLEMENCE.

They are prisoners in the hold of a ship, deportees, bound for the South Seas.)

LOUISE

I have seen criminals, and I have seen whores.
Been on intimate terms with them both. Now I ask,
If you believe them made as they are
To live in rags, in blood and mire
Preordained for evil and disgrace?
You to whom all men are prey
Have made them what they are today.

(looks about, then to
Clemence)

She's a good ship. Seaworthy. We undertake a great voyage.
Half way round the world. What adventures lie ahead? We're
alive. We survived. We have to carry on.

(CLEMENCE doesn't look at her.
LOUISE reveals a little cloth
flower, a red carnation, and
offers it to the girl.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

I made this for you. It's a red carnation. Long live the
revolution, eh? I made it from my sash. It's all I had
left. It's for you.

(CLEMENCE looks at the flower,
and looks away.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Clemence. We'll be all right.

(singing faintly)

"Oh, it'll be, it'll be all right..."

(beat)

At least we have each other.

(CLEMENCE moves away.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Don't give up. Don't give in to them. We must be strong.
We have to carry on. It is our duty.

(beat)

Sing with me. Come, let's have a song.

CLEMENCE

I don't feel like singing.

LOUISE

Come. It'll pass the time. We've got four months at sea ahead of us.

CLEMENCE

Four months?

LOUISE

That's what I heard.

(CLEMENCE looks at LOUISE.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

(*The Old Melody*, by Allison Lovejoy, plays on the accordion. LOUISE sings.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

(singing)

Sing for me the Old Melody.
The one we all have heard,
Though the refrain may stay the same
We forgot the words...

(Lights change as the melody plays.)

2

THE OATH

2

(*The Old Melody* plays. Sunlight beams down through trees. LOUISE runs through the woods.)

LOUISE

(speaking)

When I was little, I used to run through the woods of the High Marne. On and on I'd run. I never got tired. I remember the sun streaming down like shafts of gold through the trees. And the birds, I would talk to the birds, and all the other animals of the forest.

(*The Melody* ends.)

LOUISE senses something.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Who's there? Vercingetorix, spirit of ancient Gaul--arch enemy of Roman Caesar. And this tree--this is the Sacred Oak of the Oaths, oldest tree in the woods, sacred to the Druid priests. Here they will sacrifice a great, white bull. But it's not enough. The gods demand a human sacrifice. A willing sacrifice. A martyr to pagan Gaul. The priestess taps me with a golden rod. I offer myself to the slaughter. She plunges a dagger into my heart. And then into her own. And with a kiss...we die.

(A wolf howls in the distance.)

The wolf. I hear you. Always out there, aren't you? Always following. Always in the shadows, lurking. You do not frighten me. Here I take the oath. By the spirit of Vercingetorix... always will I side with the weak in a battle against the strong, always with the poor in their eternal struggle against the rich, always with the slaves in a war against tyrants, forever. Now, into the Cave of Souls.

(She walks forward as the lights change.)

3

THE MARSEILLAISE

3

(CLEMENCE steps into a spotlight
and speaks to the audience.)

CLEMENCE

I first met Mademoiselle Michel at her school for girls, on
the Rue Oudot, in Montmartre.

(Lights change.)

LOUISE

What is your name, child?

CLEMENCE

Clemence Enjolras.

LOUISE

Enjolras? Like the character in Monsieur Hugo's novel?

(CLEMENCE shrugs, not knowing.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

"Have faith, my friends, the human race shall be delivered!"

(LOUISE laughs. CLEMENCE doesn't
recognize the quote.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Victor Hugo. The greatest living author in the world?

CLEMENCE

Yes, Mademoiselle.

LOUISE

I see you have some reading to do.

(beat)

Have you learned how to read yet?

(CLEMENCE looks down, ashamed.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

I see. Well, we shall correct that in short order. And
where are your parents?

CLEMENCE

Mother's dead.

LOUISE

How?

CLEMENCE

She worked in the cotton mill in Passy. But she got sick.

LOUISE

And your father?

(CLEMENCE just shakes her head,
no.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Nothing to be ashamed of, child. You're not alone here. There are more important things in life. Believe me. As one bastard to another. Now, come. I'll introduce you to your school mates.

(Lights change.)

LOUISE addresses the audience as
her students.

CLEMENCE stands alone in front of
the class.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Good morning, girls. We have a new student. This is Citizen Clemence Enjolras. Welcome to the Montmartre School for Girls, Clemence.

CLEMENCE

Thank you, Mademoiselle Michel.

LOUISE

Here you will learn. Here I will open the doors of knowledge to you. And you will open your mind. We begin each day with the anthem of the Republic. Do you know the *Marseillaise*?

(CLEMENCE nods, nervously.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Good. Sing it for us.

(LOUISE cues the intro to *La Marseillaise*.)

CLEMENCE hesitates.

The music stops.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Well? What's the matter? Are you afraid to sing? No true Frenchman is afraid to sing. What's wrong, Clemence?

CLEMENCE

It is forbidden.

LOUISE

Forbidden to sing the *Marseillaise*? Who forbids such a thing?

CLEMENCE

His Majesty, Napoleon the Third.

LOUISE

Ah. The emperor. Of course, he forbids such a thing. Our anthem stands for everything which he is not. Yes, Clemence, it is forbidden to sing the *Marseillaise* out there. But in here, in these halls, humble as they may be, here, it is not forbidden. Here we live by the principles of the Social Revolution. And what are they--can you tell me?

CLEMENCE

Um...Liberty. Equality. Fraternity?

LOUISE

Yes. Very good. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. And what else?

(CLEMENCE shakes her head, no, uncertain.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Charity. Respect for all. Help for the poor. Care for the sick. It is our duty to care for the weakest among us, the orphans, the infirm, the aged. To read to the blind. I awaken souls. How? Through education. Education is a right. A right possessed by all citizens--yes, even girls--a right to the means for the full development of your physical, moral, and intellectual faculties. Labor is a right. Every citizen has the right to work for a living. Bread first, but then work. Alms degrade, work ennobles. The mayor of Montmartre--and what is his name?

CLEMENCE

Monsieur Clemenceau?

LOUISE

Yes, very good, Monsieur Clemenceau claims that my school is a madhouse, that my methods are "highly unusual"--yes, we have our white mice, our tortoise, Pierre, our snakes, our beautiful beds of moss, and mushrooms, our nature dances, my plays. I admit, there is nothing ordinary about this school, but even Clemenceau admits, there is learning going on here! "No More Idiots, No More Madmen"--that's what I say. It's the title of my book. There's a copy here somewhere. One must try every approach, every means possible: science, research, devotion and, above all, faith in mankind. I will teach you to see, to feel, to desire. Look around you. All across the world. A war over slavery in America. Italy in turmoil. Poland has been crushed. Misery everywhere.

(MORE)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Our cousins up north, in the coal mining strikes of the Pas-de-Calais, dying of cold and hunger, with the boot of rich industrialists on their throats. Will you stand silent in the face of such misery and injustice? Listen:

(quoting one of her poems)

"Do you hear it? The distant thunder of horse hooves in the brooding night. Do you see the banners unfurl? Is it a winding road, or the sails of a great ship, gleaming white on the far horizon? A revolution brews in the unfathomable crucible of the infinite." Do you remember the story of the Roman, Marcus Curtius, who gave his life to save his people? Fully armed, astride his magnificent warhorse, he drew his sword, and galloped into the yawning, bottomless chasm. And what was his cry?

CLEMENCE

Long live the Republic!

LOUISE

Yes, child. Long live the Republic. Now sing!

(Again, LOUISE cues the intro to *La Marseillaise*.)

This time, CLEMENCE belts out the anthem, in French.

LOUISE speaks the words in English.)

CLEMENCE	LOUISE	*
(singing)	(speaking)	*
Allons enfants de la Patrie	Let us go, children of the	*
Le jour de gloire est arrivé.	fatherland	*
Contre nous, de la tyrannie,	Our day of Glory has arrived.	*
L'étandard sanglant est levé,	Against us stands tyranny,	*
l'étandard sanglant est levé,	The bloody flag is raised,	*
Entendez-vous, dans la	The bloody flag is raised.	*
compagnes.	Do you hear in the country-	*
Mugir ces farouches soldats	side	*
Ils viennent jusque dans nos	The roar of these savage	*
bras	soldiers	*
Egorger vos fils,	They come right into our arms	*
vos compagnes.	To cut the throats of your	*
	sons,	*
	your country.	*
Aux armes citoyens!	To arms, citizens!	*
Formez vos bataillons,	Form up your battalions	*
Marchons, marchons!	Let's march, Let's march!	*
Qu'un sang impur	That their impure blood	*
Abreuve nos sillons.	Should water our fields!	*

CLEMENCE AND LOUISE
(singing together)

Aux armes citoyens!
Formez vos bataillons,
Marchons, marchons!
Qu'un sang impur
Abreuve nos sillons.

(The song ends and the lights
change.)

4

THE REQUIEM

4

(CLEMENCE speaks to the audience.)

CLEMENCE

I think they met at the funeral for Victor Noir. In Montmartre. During the last days of the Empire.

(Thunder. The sound of rain. MOURNERS, dressed in black, enter with umbrellas, and sing a funeral hymn from Berlioz' *Requiem Dies Irae*.)

LOUISE enters, wearing an overcoat. As the hymn continues, she recites a poem at the grave of Victor Noir.)

LOUISE

(speaking)

Criminals, creatures of the night,
Spies, traitors, assassins,
Go, wash the blood from your hands,
Barricade well all your hiding places.

You heap up your crimes, one upon the next,
But we are here now, we, the avengers,
Are coming for you, we curse everyone of you,
On the grave of Victor Noir.

(As the hymn concludes, the crowd departs, leaving only LOUISE and a young man, THEO FERRÉ. He stares at the grave, lost in thought. LOUISE recognizes THEO, and approaches him. They each wear a red carnation.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Monsieur Ferré?
(indicating her carnation,
confidentially)

Long live the revolution.

(he looks around)

It's all right, I know your sister. Marie.

THEO

Who are you?

LOUISE

I'm Louise. Michel?

(beat)

(MORE)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I can be trusted.

(She opens her coat to reveal
a sabre hidden underneath.)

THEO

What's that for?

LOUISE

Dreaming of Harmodius.

THEO

What?

LOUISE

Harmodius. The Athenian? You know, "Death to the tyrant!"

THEO

Look, I don't know who you are, or what you want, but--

LOUISE

I saw you speak at the memorial for Baudin. Unforgettable.
"Long live the republic in France, the voice of the people in
the King's Palace, and reason in Notre Dame!"

(she laughs)

You're...you're just...you're...

THEO

Well...thank you. But you'll have to excuse me--

(starts to go)

LOUISE

Wait, please, Monsieur Ferré--Citizen Ferré. I want to join
the Vigilance Committee of the Eighteenth.

THEO

Oh. Well, then, you should speak with Beatrix Excoffon. I'm
sure she can--

LOUISE

I'm already in the Women's Committee.

THEO

I don't understand.

LOUISE

I'm not afraid to die. I thought there would be a fight here
today. That's why I came armed. It's my uncle's sabre. He
fought in forty-eight. A good Republican. I'm willing to
give my life for the Revolution. Ask your sister about me.

THEO

You're the one with the school.

LOUISE
Ah-ha, so you have heard of me.

THEO
Give your uncle back his sabre. You'll bring the Prefect down on us.

LOUISE
Let him come. I'm ready.

THEO
You alone, eh? One woman with her grandfather's cutlass?

LOUISE
They say there was a hundred thousand here today. We should have marched on City Hall.

THEO
We'd have been slaughtered.

LOUISE
Our little emperor is teetering on the brink. Everyone knows it. The time is now.

THEO
No. Things must get worse, before they will get better.

LOUISE
Worse--than this?

THEO
Much worse. Listen to Blanqui.

LOUISE
The anarchist?

THEO
War is coming.

LOUISE
War--with who--the Germans?

THEO
The emperor will turn "to glory"--

LOUISE
No.

THEO
To distract us from our present state of degradation.

LOUISE
War?

THEO

That will be the Revolution's opportunity.

(beat)

Put up your sabre for the moment...

LOUISE

Louise.

THEO

Louise. Go back to teaching school.

LOUISE

Let me join your Vigilance Committee. I can fight as well as any man.

(He smiles, and exits.)

Alone, she looks at her sabre.)

5

IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT

5

(The MARQUIS DE GALLIFET enters with a flourish of martial music. He is an aristocrat, a cavalry officer in the French Regular Army. He steps into a spotlight and sings the chorus from the old French army marching song, *Le Chant de l'oignon* [The Song of the Onions].)

GALLIFET

(singing)

Let's charge, my boys,
Let's charge, my boys,
Let's charge, let's charge, let's charge.

Let's charge, my boys,
Let's charge, my boys,
Let's charge, let's charge, let's charge!

(speaking)

Vive la guerre. Long live war. To Berlin, you sons of France. Onward, to Berlin!

(He exits.)

LOUISE enters, with CLEMENCE at her side.)

LOUISE

In the night, we march together. Along the darkened boulevards.

(A drum beats out the rhythm of a march, *Oh, It'll Be All Right*, as LOUISE and CLEMENCE march through the streets of Paris, recruiting rebels.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Do you believe in the Republic? Then come with us. We oppose this war. We oppose this tyrant. Come. March with us.

(The music builds as the others join in.)

THEO enters.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Our numbers grow.

THEO

No Gods, no masters!

LOUISE

Are you an anarchist? Fine, whatever that means, so long as you oppose Bonaparte--come with us. March with us!

(RAOUL RIGAULT enters.)

RAOUL

When the people shall have nothing more to eat, let them eat the rich!

LOUISE

Internationalist? Welcome to our ranks. March on, legions of Paris.

THEO

March on!

RAOUL

March on!

LOUISE

We are coming for you, Your Majesty.

THEO

You have declared this war against Germany in a desperate attempt to preserve your own survival--

RAOUL

--and that of your corrupt dynasty--

THEO

--while the people--

LOUISE

--our brothers--

RAOUL

--die by the thousands on the battlefield.

(The music continues to build--a distant bugle calls, battle sounds.)

LOUISE

In Alsace--

THEO

--eight thousand die.

(a distant explosion)

LOUISE

In Lorraine--

RAOUL
--another twelve thousand dead.
(a louder explosion)

LOUISE
At Sedan--

THEO
--seventeen thousand go to their graves.
(a louder explosion)

LOUISE
Their ghosts all rise from the soil of France, and march
beside us.

THEO
(building)
March on.

RAOUL
(building)
March on.

(All stop.)

GALLIFET re-enters, sooty,
ragged, and dishevelled.)

GALLIFET
I regret to inform you...that the Emperor, His Majesty
Napoleon the Third, has been captured, and is now a prisoner
of the German High Command.

(A great creaking sound begins to
build, then a terrible,
thunderous crash explodes, and
fades away.)

CLEMENCE
What was that?

RAOUL
That was the sound of the Empire falling.

LOUISE
Long live the Republic.

THEO
Long live the Republic.

CLEMENCE
Long live the Republic. Weeeeeeeeeee!

(The rebels break into *Oh, It'll Be All Right* [traditional, adapted by GG], clapping time, loudly, laughing and dancing, joyously, in the streets.)

REBELS

(singing)

Oh, it'll be, it'll be all right,
Hang the aristocrats tonight!
Oh, it'll be, it'll be all right,
Up the revolution and the grand old fight!
Despotism's dead, liberty's alive,
We will take the day, France has been revived!
Oh, it'll be, it'll be all right,
No more priests, no royalty,
Oh, it'll be, it'll be all right,
Liberty, equality, fraternity!
It'll be all right if you will fight,
It'll be all right tomorrow night,
If you will fight against the emperor Napoleon!

(As the others sing and dance, loudly, LOUISE and THEO run into each other on the street. They have to shout over the din of the singing, dancing, crowd, celebrating the fall of the Empire.)

Hello, again.

THEO

What?

LOUISE

I said, hello!

THEO

What?

LOUISE

(He shakes his head, no, giving up.)

We've won!

LOUISE (CONT'D)

(She hugs him.)

RAOUL, with a list in hand, urgently approaches THEO.)

RAOUL
(shouting over the noise)
They've formed a government!

THEO
What--already--who is it?
(reading the list)

RAOUL
They want Trochu!

THEO
Trochu? No!

RAOUL
It's done! They're calling it the "Government of National
Defense." Get used to it: the army's in charge!

(Silence.)

LOUISE
The army?

CLEMENCE
What kind of republic is that?

RAOUL
The Germans are surrounding Paris.

(RAOUL exits.)

LOUISE
Who's that?

THEO
My friend, Raoul Rigault. He knows what he's talking about.

LOUISE
No surrender?

THEO
No surrender.

(The Old Melody plays.)

THEO and LOUISE dance a waltz
step together. The lights
change, we move forward in time a
few months, and a cold, cold
winter sets in.)

6

THE TIME OF CHERRIES

6

(CLEMENCE speaks to the audience.)

CLEMENCE

The headquarters of the Men's Vigilance Committee was a room in the town hall of Montmartre. During the siege, we spent a lot of time there, when we weren't out looking for food to feed the hungry. Lots of people were starving. Lots froze to death in December. January was even worse. And even colder. But we found ways to warm our hearts.

(As *The Old Melody* fades out, LOUISE and THEO huddle by a fireplace.)

CLEMENCE looks out a window.

An artillery shell explodes in the distance.)

LOUISE

Where was that?

CLEMENCE

Saint-Denis, I think.

THEO

Nothing new.

(More shells fall in the distance.)

THEO (CONT'D)

(to Louise)

No, you have to understand, this government and the army, together, have no intention of resisting the Germans with any determination at all. They have already embraced defeat. Defeat is in the interests of Trochu and his generals--in spite of what they say publicly. Privately, they think it's a lost cause. Paris is a lost cause. The Republic is a lost cause. But that's because they don't know how to use the resources they have at hand. It won't be rifles, or machine guns, or secret weapons that will win this war. It will be an idea. Just as it was in ninety-three. The idea...of the Commune. We have to give the people of Paris, the masses, the working class of Paris, a reason to fight. The Commune is that reason. The Commune is the promise of a better life. Social justice. The right wing offers nothing to the working class, for fear it will cut into their profits, threaten their private property. But we can mobilize the might of France, with the promise of the Commune.

(MORE)

THEO (CONT'D)

This government of National Defense is really a government of National Defeat, but Trochu doesn't want to admit it too soon, because he knows the people--and the National Guard--will turn against him, and destroy him. The flag of the Commune, is the flag of the World Republic. Long live the Commune.

(beat)

What's that?

LOUISE

(entranced)

Oh. Here. Dinner.

(They share a plate with one little fish on it.)

THEO

Ha! It looks delicious.

(tastes it)

Mmmm. It's magnificent.

(Clemence strums on a guitar, *The Time of Cherries*, by Clement and Renard, 1866.)

LOUISE

Savor it, my friend. There's only the one between us.

THEO

One little herring? More than enough. Here.

(she takes a bite)

Where's your coat?

LOUISE

I gave it away.

THEO

You gave it away?

LOUISE

I have this.

THEO

It's snowing. That old thing won't keep you warm.

LOUISE

Certainly it will.

THEO

You're shivering. Here.

(They share his coat.)

Who did you give your coat to?

LOUISE

I didn't ask his name. He was cold.

THEO

You give away everything you have, Louise. Why do you do that?

LOUISE

We do what we must do.

THEO

But now you're cold.

LOUISE

Now I have you.

(The three sing *The Time of Cherries*, lyrics adapted by GG.)

CLEMENCE

(singing)

When we will sing of the time of cherries,
Then sweet nightingales, and mocking blackbirds,
will all be happy to find
That pretty young girls have folly in mind,
And lovers have sunshine warming their hearts.
When we will sing of the time of cherries,
The mocking blackbird will sing better by far.

LOUISE

(singing)

But all is so brief, the time of cherries,
When we go as two, to pick as we dream,
those little cherry earrings.
Cherries of love with matching red trimmings,
Dangling from branches like sweet drops of blood.
But all is so brief, the time of cherries,
We dream as we pluck them from limbs above.

THEO

(singing)

I will always love the time of cherries,
It's from those days I hold in my heart
an open wound.
The best of luck I seem to have found
Can never relieve my suff'ring and pain.
I will always love the time of cherries,
And the memory that calls me again.

(The sound of more artillery shells falling in the distance ends the song.)

CLEMENCE
(looking out the window)

La Rochelle.

THEO

Bastards.

LOUISE

I'm going to the front.

THEO

What?

LOUISE

We're going to relieve Strasbourg.

THEO

Who is--how?

LOUISE

We're going to march on the Villetta Barracks, demand weapons, and get them to Strasbourg.

THEO

That's ridiculous.

LOUISE

Ridiculous, is it? I know people in Strasbourg.

THEO

We're surrounded by the German army, Louise; you'll never make it out of Paris.

LOUISE

We'll break out.

THEO

You're serious.

LOUISE

Of course, I'm serious. We have over a hundred signed up.

THEO

A hundred--who?

LOUISE

Some are teachers.

(looks at Clemence)

Some are students. Some from the Red Clubs, some from the Women's Rights group--

THEO

What--women?

THEO (CONT'D)

We have to get control of the government. We have to have an army. Then we can deal with the Germans.

(beat)

LOUISE

I have to check in on my mother.

(She starts out, but RAOUL enters.)

RAOUL

Where is everyone?

THEO

Is there a decision?

RAOUL

Yes. There is.

(RAOUL sits, and calmly pours himself a drink of wine.)

THEO

Well?

RAOUL

We're going to storm Mazas.

THEO

What?

CLEMENCE

The prison?

LOUISE

Excellent.

THEO

Why?

RAOUL

To get Florenz out.

LOUISE

Ha!

CLEMENCE

Who?

LOUISE

General Florenz.

When? THEO

Tonight. RAOUL

Fantastic! LOUISE

Tonight--how? Mazas? It's impregnable. THEO

Prison's are built to keep people in, not out. It can be done. RAOUL

But why--why now? THEO

It's General Flourenz--why not? LOUISE

We have to get Flourenz out, in order to seize the Prefecture. RAOUL

The Prefec--what good is Police Headquarters without City Hall? THEO

The Secret Police files are in the Prefecture. RAOUL

The files can wait. We need to win the support of the people, and the Guard. We need City Hall-- THEO

The Committee has decided, Ferré. RAOUL
(beat)

Now listen: at ten o'clock tonight, you arrive at Mazas with the Sixty-first. How many can you get? Can you get three hundred Guardsman to storm the prison at ten tonight? You're to force the release of Flourenz, and get him to draft an order naming me the new Chief of Police.

What about Pouchet--you think he's going to step aside with a polite "yes, sir, as you please, sir?" THEO

I've made arrangements to draw Pouchet away at eight o'clock. He's meeting a...well, a friend of mine at the Cafe Madrid. RAOUL
(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

I happen to know that Prefect Pouchet cannot resist a pretty face--we'll arrest him there. Then I show up at the Prefecture with the signed order from Flourenz--and the place is ours.

LOUISE

It's brilliant.

(LOUISE starts loading her rifle.)

THEO

And if we can't get into the prison, if they refuse to surrender Flourenz--who knows how many troops they have at Mazas?

RAOUL

I've been there myself, there's a handful of Guardsmen, nothing more--

(notices Louise loading her rifle)

What the devil is that?

LOUISE

Sixty-eight Chassepot. A beauty, isn't she?

RAOUL

(to Theo)

Yours?

LOUISE

No, mine. Well, on loan from a friend. A Guardsman in the Sixty-first.

RAOUL

What are you planning to do with it?

LOUISE

We're storming Mazas, aren't we?

(RAOUL looks at THEO.)

THEO

Louise...

LOUISE

What?

THEO

Put the rifle down.

LOUISE

What--you think I can't shoot? I can hit a Bordeaux bottle at four hundred meters. Can you?

THEO

It's out of the question.

LOUISE

What's out of the question? You think I can't fight? I'll show you who can fight--

RAOUL

We need a diversion.

(beat)

THEO

What do you mean?

RAOUL

We need a diversion from the assault on the prison. Something to draw away any auxiliary troops that might be stationed there.

THEO

You didn't say anything about auxiliaries--is it a handful of guardsmen or not?

LOUISE

We'll march on City Hall.

(beat)

I'll lead the Women's Committee in a march on City Hall. Thousands will join us. Trochu and his lackeys will fear another coup. They'll think it's October thirty-first all over again. So what will they do? They'll call in troops from all across the city to face us down, contain us--they may even fire on us, just to play it safe. Ha! You know they will. That'll leave the prison open to you and the Sixty-first. It's perfect. Admit it. I'll have an army at City Hall by nine o'clock tonight, an army of ordinary citizens, the working class of all Paris, led by the Women's Vigilance Committee of the eighteenth. How's that for a diversion?

(beat)

THEO

(to Raoul)

Take it to the Committee.

RAOUL

I like it.

LOUISE

Consider it done.

(to Clemence)

Come on.

(starts out)

THEO

Louise--wait.

(she stops)

We have to go through the Committee.

LOUISE

Go ahead. You know where to find me. I'll be out there. On the streets. With an army. Ready and willing to march on City Hall. Just say the word.

(to the girl)

Now let's go.

(CLEMENCE hesitates.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Are you coming, or not?

(CLEMENCE slings a drum over her shoulder, strikes up a beat, and exits with LOUISE.)

RAOUL pours himself another glass of wine.)

THEO

You think they'll approve it?

RAOUL

Why wouldn't they? It's a perfect diversion.

THEO

I'm not sure which is the diversion, Rigault--her part, or yours.

RAOUL

Drink up, Citizen. Long live the Commune.

(Lights change.)

7

SURRENDER

7

(LOUISE steps into a spotlight,
rifle in hand.

CLEMENCE plays a beat on the
snare.)

LOUISE

We are coming, you bastards. The women of Montmartre are on
the march.

(Elsewhere in the city, THEO
addresses the men of the Sixty-
first. A bass drum beats.
Building.)

THEO

Business is booming, they tell us. In spite of the war, in
the armament factories, and the coal mines, and the steel
mills, business is booming.

LOUISE

Up the Rue de Rivoli we come.

THEO

The railways are making a killing--while they outlaw your
unions, and put your children to work sorting coal.

LOUISE

A hundred at first, now three hundred, now a thousand, and
thousands more are coming, each one a spirit of the
Revolution.

THEO

The industrialists laugh all the way to the bank, while you
lose your home, or you lose the small business you once had.

LOUISE

We flow through the city like a great river, swelling over
its banks, sweeping up all in its path.

THEO

You, you were in the middle class once--now look at you.

LOUISE

Behold our ranks, you bastards.

THEO

Now you're one of us.

LOUISE

There will be no surrender.

LOUISE AND THEO
(in different locations)

Long live the Commune!

(In a cafe on the Seine, RAOUL
relaxes with friends. Accordion
music plays.)

RAOUL

Long live the Guillotine!

(he laughs)

I'm only joking. Shoot all priests, I say, and let sexual
promiscuity reign.

(laughs again)

All in good time. All in good time. We've work to do first.
I've been waiting for this for...oh, for quiet some time.
Served three sentences "in the manor," as they say. Bit of a
jailbird myself, just like the Old Man, eh? That's how I've
done it. Been studying them from the inside, you see. I
know exactly how the whole system works.

(looks through a spyglass)

The coordinated accumulation and systemization of
information.

(LOUISE continues her march with
the women as THEO addresses his
men as the drums build.)

LOUISE

Keep marching. Don't be afraid.

THEO

You live in filth.

LOUISE

They are soldiers in the French army.

THEO

And when death finally comes, most of you can't even afford a
funeral.

LOUISE

Gentleman, every one of them.

THEO

It's the common pit at Saint Innocents for you, and your
loved ones.

LOUISE

They will not fire on women--will you?

THEO

Come with me.

LOUISE
(shouts)

Will you?!

(Back at the cafe--accordion
music.)

RAOUL
It's a filing system. You see, if you can build a file on a man, you have a power over him. They've been watching me for years. Now I've turned the tables on them. Now I'm watching them.

(A hail of gunfire. All builds.)

LOUISE
(crouching)
God, listen to it. Like hail in a sudden summer storm. It's beautiful.

(she fires off a round)

THEO
More than a hundred thousand out there are registered paupers --nearly one in ten Parisians.

RAOUL
I've a clear view of the Prefecture from here.

THEO
A million in need of daily bread rations.

RAOUL
I've been here everyday for the last nine months.

LOUISE
I am not myself, no longer me.

THEO
These traitors are Republicans in name only.

RAOUL
They think they've got an eye on me.

LOUISE
I am a bullet, from the barrel of a gun.

THEO
They cannot govern, and they will not fight.

LOUISE
Through the air.

RAOUL

But the fact is, I've got my eye on them.
(looks through spyglass)

THEO

They mean to surrender France to Germany.

LOUISE

Into the fray.

RAOUL

Got a team of agents posted all about.

THEO

Will you await their surrender in passive despair?

LOUISE

Into the fight.

(fires another round)

RAOUL

Keeping track of everyone who goes in, and everyone who comes out.

THEO

What you do...makes a difference.

(LOUISE fires again.)

RAOUL

Every informer.

THEO

Each and every one of you.

(LOUISE fires again.)

RAOUL

Every plain-clothes cop.

THEO

We can change the world.

(LOUISE fires again.)

RAOUL

Now it's time to strike.

THEO

Make way for the people.

LOUISE

God, I love this!

THEO

Make way for the Commune!

(The sound of marching soldiers approaches--the drumming and the accordion stop.)

RAOUL sees something and stands, alarmed.)

CLEMENCE

What's that sound?

RAOUL

Germans.

THEO

Germans.

LOUISE

Germans.

(Lights change as the rebels come together--watching the German army march through Paris.)

CLEMENCE

The German army?

LOUISE

They're marching through the city.

RAOUL

They've done it.

CLEMENCE

Done what?

LOUISE

They've surrendered.

CLEMENCE

Who has?

THEO

Our Government of National Defeat.

LOUISE

Cowards.

THEO

Traitors.

Fools.

RAOUL

Now what?

(LOUISE and THEO look at each other.

The marching fades as the German army leaves the city.

Silence.)

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

What do we do now?

(RAOUL dashes off.)

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Where's he going?

THEO

He doesn't want to be arrested. It's time to lay low. They'll come for all of us. They'll arrest everyone they can, shut down our papers, close all the Red Clubs, take all our guns, and get on with business as usual.

LOUISE

They won't take my Chassepot.

THEO

Find a place to hide, Louise. Till the storm blows over.
(regarding Clemence)

And look after her.

LOUISE

How will I find you?

THEO

It's best you don't know where I am. If you're arrested...

LOUISE

If I need you, how will I find you?

(beat)

THEO

The alleyway off Clignancourt. Third door on the left. Now go.

(THEO exits.)

CLEMENCE

Where will we hide?

LOUISE

We don't hide. We report for duty.

CLEMENCE

What? Where?

LOUISE

Wherever they need us. Come on.

(LOUISE exits.)

CLEMENCE

But...

(alone)

I don't understand. Who's in charge now?

(GALLIFET enters his private quarters--dressed in his underwear.)

CLEMENCE exits, following after LOUISE.)

(GALLIFET dresses himself in a fine new uniform as he dictates an official proclamation.)

GALLIFET

Take this down, Lieutenant To the good people of Paris: For some time now, certain ill-intentioned rabble-rousers have used the pretext of resisting the Germans in order to justify their dominion over certain sectors of the city--the neighborhood of Montmartre, in particular--a well-known haven for dissolute artists and subversive revolutionaries. Furthermore, certain insurrectionist elements within these sectors have established a secret committee claiming to have supreme control over the National Guard. This so-called "Central Committee" is defying the authority of the new, duly elected government of France, headed by President Thiers. These committee members are, in fact, rebel scum, and nothing more. They tack up posters about the city claiming they defended you from the Germans, but this is a lie. They have done nothing for anyone but themselves. They are mere opportunists. They are criminals. France has concluded a treaty with Germany. The war is over. Now it is time to restore order.

(he straps on his sabre)

Now it is time to surrender the gun batteries all about Paris, in particular the nearly one hundred cannons on the hill of Montmartre. This must be done immediately, or there will be grave consequences to those who resist. Good, true-hearted Frenchmen, dissociate yourselves from these misguided insurrectionists, and assist the army in repossessing those guns. Order will be restored in Paris.

(checks the cylinder of his revolver--it's loaded--he holsters the gun)

You have been warned.

(He exits.)

9

THE 18TH OF MARCH

9

(CLEMENCE speaks to the audience.)

CLEMENCE

On the night before the eighteenth of March, I was at number six, Rue des Rosiers, in Montmartre. That was our guard post. I was on guard duty, with Mademoiselle Michel.

(In the guard post, LOUISE sits at the piano.)

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

President Theirs, and his bourgeois apple-polishing toadies, can kiss my--

(she sings to the tune of
Vive La Liberte)

Aaaas I said to *mon president*
When he surrendered to the Boshe
If it's Paris that you want
Then it's Paris you much squash.
He cried Long live Bismarck!
And Long live the Kaiser!
But he didn't ask me
Long live our Liberty!

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Now President Adolphe Thiers
The rich little gnome of Versailles
Paid billions in gold to be there
And then he was heard to cry
Long live aristocrats!
And down with the Republic!
But Adolphe doesn't scare me
(with Louise)
Long live our Liberty!

LOUISE

While lining his pockets in style
He gave away Alsace Lorraine,

CLEMENCE

Then he boldly said with a smile
His very familiar refrain,

LOUISE

Long live the money men!
And down with the Republic!
But Adolphe cannot buy me
(with Clemence)
Long live our Liberty!

(They laugh together, playfully,
till LOUISE hears something
outside.)

Shh!
LOUISE (CONT'D)

What is it?
CLEMENCE

(LOUISE grabs a pistol, and looks
out a window.)

I heard something.
LOUISE

What--is there somebody out there?
CLEMENCE

Not sure.
LOUISE

It's dark.
CLEMENCE

No moon.
LOUISE

(Sound of cats, fighting.)

Cats.
LOUISE (CONT'D)

Go on, get out--shoo!
(exiting)
(re-enters)

Cats.
CLEMENCE

They're hungry.
LOUISE

(The two wait, and watch.)

How much longer?
CLEMENCE

Till we're relieved.
LOUISE

When will that be?
CLEMENCE

LOUISE

The sun'll be up soon enough.

(beat)

CLEMENCE

I don't think I like guard duty very much.

LOUISE

You're not supposed to like it.

CLEMENCE

I'm sleepy.

LOUISE

Sleep. It's all right. I'll keep an eye out.

(beat)

CLEMENCE

Why do they call it Montmartre?

LOUISE

The mountain of the martyr. Saint Denis. Sent by the pope to convert the Gauls.

CLEMENCE

Did it not go well for him?

LOUISE

The Gauls cut off his head--him being a Christian, and them being pagans, eh? But after they lopped off the old fellow's noggin--so they say--he bent down and picked it up, picked up his own head, and walked six miles with it, preaching a sermon all along the way as he went, till finally, he laid down and he died--right where his cathedral stands today. Where all the kings of France are buried there beside him.

CLEMENCE

Picked up his own head?

LOUISE

So the priests will tell you in church.

CLEMENCE

I don't believe it.

LOUISE

He died for what he believed in. I don't fault him for that.

CLEMENCE

You really think we can win?

LOUISE

So long as we have those guns out there, we can.

CLEMENCE

But how can we hold off the whole German army, and a French one, too?

LOUISE

No more questions. Sleep.

(GALLIFET reports to the French High Command.)

GALLIFET

At three A.M. on the morning of the eighteenth, General Lecomte--in command of the eighty-eighth Regulars--ordered his riflemen to open fire.

(Shots ring out.)

CLEMENCE

What was that?

LOUISE

Come on.

CLEMENCE

Where?

(LOUISE and CLEMENCE step into a spotlight.)

LOUISE

Follow me. Keep your eyes open, and your wits about you.

CLEMENCE

Look. There.

LOUISE

Christ, a whole column of them.

CLEMENCE

Who's that?

LOUISE

Turpin.

CLEMENCE

Jean Turpin?

LOUISE

He's been shot.

Shot?
CLEMENCE

Help him.
LOUISE

He's bleeding. His head.
CLEMENCE

Brave soldier.
LOUISE

He's dying.
CLEMENCE

They've come for the guns. Stay with him.
LOUISE

What?
CLEMENCE

I'll send a doctor.
LOUISE

Where are you going?
CLEMENCE

To sound the alarm.
LOUISE

He's dying!
CLEMENCE

Be brave, Clemence. Now we fight!
LOUISE

Wait! Don't leave me here...
CLEMENCE

LOUISE
(in another spotlight)
Treason! To arms, citizens of Paris! Guardsmen, report to your battalion commanders! The traitors have come for the guns of Montmartre!

CLEMENCE
Louise! Help me! Somebody, help me. He's dying!

GALLIFET
General Lecomte ordered his men to seize the guns.

(THEO enters, dressing quickly, and meets LOUISE.)

THEO

What is it?

LOUISE

The army's come for the batteries up on the hill.

THEO

(checking his revolver)

I'll bring the sixty-first.

LOUISE

I'll bring the women.

(They separate.)

CLEMENCE

He's dead.

GALLIFET

Unfortunately, General Lecomte realized only then that he could not remove the cannons without horse teams. But he had no horse teams. He had made no arrangements for horses. Idiot. So...he sent for horses. Urgently. And he waited. And he waited. The sun began to rise. And a great rabble converged on Montmartre. All the rebel scum from the entire city.

LOUISE

The sun rises. We assault the hill. All about me, the women of Paris, fearless, determined women. Up the slope we come. An army in full battle formation awaits us at the summit. We will die. But we will die...for liberty. I am transported. The hilltop is enveloped in a white glow, a splendid dawn of deliverance.

(CLEMENCE sings the melody of *The Time of Cherries*.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Mother? Is that you? What are you doing here? Go back, this is no place for you. Mother!

THEO

Hold your positions. They won't fire on the women.

LOUISE

We throw ourselves on the cannons. Shoot us! Shoot us, if you dare, you will not take these guns. They belong to the people of Paris. We raised the money to forge them, bought and paid for by the citizens of Paris. You will not take these guns, unless you shoot us first.

THEO

My God.

GALLIFET

Taken by surprise, the general's men made no move.

LOUISE

Join us. If you are Frenchmen, if you love your country,
join us.

GALLIFET

Finally, General Lecomte ordered his regiment to open fire on
the mob.

LOUISE

Will you shoot us--women and children? Join us!

GALLIFET

But it was too late.

THEO

They're turning.

LOUISE

Turn up your rifles, and join us!

THEO

Brothers!

GALLIFET

The entire regiment turned up their rifles, butt-end in the
air, and went over to the rabble.

THEO

They are with us.

LOUISE

Down with the general, up with the revolution!

CLEMENCE

Victory.

LOUISE

Long live the Paris mob!

(Ad lib: "Come on, Louise. Sing
The Mob. Sing it!")

Music plays, *La Canaille* [*The
Paris Mob*, lyrics adapted by GG].
LOUISE sings.)

(LOUISE steps forward.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

(sings)

In the oldest city in France

(MORE)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Are men with hearts of steel
They may be dressed in ragged pants
But pain they do not feel
They are called *les misérables*
By the powers that may be

CHORUS

It's the Paris mob!

LOUISE

Oh, yeah?--that's me!

GALLIFET

All across Paris the same scene played out again and again,
as these criminals swept through the entire city.

LOUISE

(singing)

Though they call them thieves,
and call them whores
They are honest, true and brave,
Down on their knees scrubbing your floors
From the cradle to the grave.
She's a mother with a day job,
Maybe two jobs, maybe three.

CHORUS

It's the Paris mob!

LOUISE

Oh, yeah?--That's me!

(The music stops--back to
GALLIFET.)

GALLIFET

At about noon, General Lecomte was pulled down off his horse
in the Place Pigalle, and taken prisoner. A mob of savage
harpies descended on the general's horse and butchered it
right there in the square.

LOUISE

(resuming)

She's a girl who won't be trifled with--
Shook off her wretched state.
Now she's up and joined the Sixty-fifth
To temp the hand of Fate.
She leads the charge cause that's her job
And dies with a smile if need be.

CHORUS

It's the Paris mob.

CLEMENCE

Oh, yeah?--That's me!

(Music stops--back to GALLIFET.)

GALLIFET

At one o'clock in the afternoon, General Clement-Thomas had the bad fortune to wander onto the scene, and he, too, was taken prisoner by the rabble. Now they had two of our generals, as prisoners, in the Rue des Rossiers.

(Elsewhere, RAOUL meets up with THEO.)

RAOUL

The army's leaving Paris. They're in full flight. The whole government's on the run.

THEO

To where?

RAOUL

To the Palace of Versailles--where else? Always the last holdout of the aristocracy when it's on the run.

GALLIFET

I departed for Versailles.

THEO

We've done it.

RAOUL

Long live the Commune!

LOUISE

(sings another verse)

They sang patriotic songs
They tore down the old Bastille
In ninety-three they righted wrongs
With guns to fit the bill.
They brought down the fat old slob
And we'll do it again--

(all)

Oui, Oui!

CHORUS

It's the Paris mob.

RAOUL

Oh, yeah?--That's me!

(a drum beats)

LOUISE

(speaking)

A human sea, all bearing arms, their bayonets pressed together as flowers in a field, with the sound of the brass splitting the air, the heavy beat of the drums, the great drums of Montmartre, the drums that woke all Paris on the night of the eighteenth.

GALLIFET

They began to demand blood.

RAOUL

(approaching Theo)

Where are the prisoners?

THEO

What prisoners?

RAOUL

The two generals, Lecomte and Clement-Thomas.

THEO

Chateau Rouge--under guard, for safe keeping.

RAOUL

The soldiers want the generals handed over.

THEO

No.

LOUISE

(resuming)

Some work with a pen in hand;
It's mightier than the sword.
Others swing a hammer and
Get drunk for their reward.
They work, they sweat, they do the job
With misery for company.

CHORUS

It's the Paris mob.

(THEO hesitates.)

The music stops.)

THEO

(spoken)

That's me.

(RAOUL heads off, leaving THEO alone--back to GALLIFET.)

GALLIFET

They dragged General Clement-Thomas into a little garden courtyard, and there, amid the gooseberries and the trellises, his own troops faced him, grimly. "Kill me," I'm told he said, "You cowards--assassins!"

(A fusillade of gunfire.)

A bullet through the eye finally took him. General Lecomte begged for his life.

RAOUL

(on his own)

Shoot him.

(another fusillade)

GALLIFET

Their corpses were mutilated. A hideous old hag squatted and urinated on them.

(THEO catches up with RAOUL.)

THEO

Rigault.

RAOUL

Where've you been?

THEO

There must be no executions.

RAOUL

I'm afraid it's a bit too late for that...Citizen.

GALLIFET

All across the city, they sang, and they danced, and they celebrated. The whole stinking tribe of them.

(LOUISE wraps a red sash around her waist.)

LOUISE

(resuming)

And last of all it's a fighting force
Dressed in rags and worn out shoes.
But today in France it's a matter of course
That everyone must choose:
Are you a citizen, or a snob?
Patriot or enemy?

CHORUS

Choose the Paris mob.

(all the rebels)

Oh, yeah--That's me!

(The song ends.)

They must pay for this.

GALLIFET

(Blackout.)

END OF ACT ONE

10

ACT TWO: INTERNATIONALE

10

(RAOUL sits at a table in the Headquarters of the Vigilance Committee. He drinks wine, and plays a guitar, languidly strumming the chords of *The Internationale* by Pottier and de Geyter.)

CLEMENCE speaks to the audience.)

CLEMENCE

One, maybe two weeks passed. I think. There was an election, and the Commune won. Everybody voted for us. Except the women. Of course. We can't vote. For some reason. But we were all for it. Everyone I knew anyway.

(Lights change.)

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

(to Raoul)

What's that tune?

RAOUL

A little ditty a friend of mine cobbled together.

(RAOUL sings a verse of *The Internationale*, lyrics by Billy Bragg.)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

(singing)

Stand up, all victims of oppression
For the tyrants fear your might
Don't cling so hard to your possessions
For you have nothing, if you have no rights
Let racist ignorance be ended
For respect makes the empires fall
Freedom is merely privilege extended
Unless enjoyed by one and all

So come brothers and sisters
For the struggle carries on
The internationale
Unites the world in song
So comrades come rally
For this is the time and place
The international ideal
Unites the human race

CLEMENCE

It's pretty good.

RAOUL
(moving in for a kiss)

You like it?

(THEO enters, on his way out.)

THEO
Rigault. Quickly. They've called an emergency meeting of
the Central Committee.

RAOUL
Of course they have.

THEO
What's the matter?

RAOUL
You haven't heard.

THEO
Heard what?

RAOUL
They've arrested the Old Man.

THEO
What--how--where?

RAOUL
He was recuperating down south. A house in the country.
Someone betrayed him, and Thiers had him arrested.

THEO
Where have they got him?

RAOUL
We don't know.

CLEMENCE
The Old Man who?

(The men ignore her.)

RAOUL
He's been condemned to death.

CLEMENCE
What did he do?

RAOUL
We have to get him out.

(LOUISE enters, and salutes.)

LOUISE

Citizen Ferré, Delegate to the Commune--

THEO

What is it, Louise?

LOUISE

I'm glad I found you--

THEO

I was just on my way out. It's urgent--

LOUISE

When are we going to march on Versailles?

THEO

March on--I don't know.

LOUISE

What's the delay? What are they waiting for?

THEO

We've our hands full just trying to run the city--

LOUISE

Time is wasting. We've got them on the run. What is the Central Committee waiting for?

THEO

We're not waiting for anything, we're working round the clock!

LOUISE

Doing what?

THEO

Doing what? Lifting martial law, restoring freedom of the press, abolishing military tribunals, granting amnesty to political prisoners, taking over every ministry in the city, issuing food rations for the wounded, / passing pension rights for common-law wives and children, eliminating unfair grants to the churches, prohibiting night work in the bakeries--

LOUISE

Yes, yes, yes, all right, I understand! And every day we delay, Versailles grows stronger. We have to attack, before it's too late!

THEO

We aren't ready yet. We're building a whole new society here, Louise. It takes time.

LOUISE

We haven't got time!

(to Raoul)

Admit it, I'm right, we should march on Versailles, and finish them off.

RAOUL

(strumming his guitar again)

Not without the Old Man.

LOUISE

What?

THEO

Blanqui's been arrested.

(beat)

CLEMENCE

Who's Blanqui?

LOUISE

(ignoring Clemence)

How did they find him?

RAOUL

We were betrayed--again. You people don't understand: Theirs has spies everywhere. Why don't you understand that?

(to Theo)

It's time to take the gloves off. Unless you want us all to end up staring at a firing squad.

(beat)

THEO

(to Raoul)

All right. Come on.

LOUISE

Why don't we shoot the president?

(beat)

THEO

What did you say?

LOUISE

We should shoot Thiers. Why not?

RAOUL

How?

LOUISE

I put a gun under my skirt. Walk up to him in the General Assembly at Versailles, and...bang.

THEO

Impossible.

LOUISE

Why?

RAOUL

How would you get there?

LOUISE

I heard you can walk there from the South Gate, if you go through Sceaux, on the road to Orleans.

RAOUL

You'd never make it.

LOUISE

Why not?

THEO

What good would it do?

LOUISE

An act like that, right there in front of the entire National Assembly--it would strike terror into the whole reactionary cause. They'd be stopped dead in their tracks.

THEO

Are you out of your mind?

LOUISE

We have to take action.

THEO

Assassinating Thiers would turn the whole world against us. You would crush the revolution, not the reaction!

RAOUL

I rather like the idea. But, frankly, I don't think you could pull it off.

LOUISE

Why not?

RAOUL

First: you'd never make it to Versailles. And second, well...

LOUISE

What? Second what?

RAOUL

A woman?

(to Theo)

Are we going to speak to the Central Committee, or not?

(THEO exits.)

RAOUL follows him out.)

CLEMENCE

Maybe we should get back to the school. All the girls.

LOUISE

My mother can take care of the school.

CLEMENCE

I miss it.

LOUISE

I'm going to Versailles. What about you?

CLEMENCE

But...how will you get there? The army. They'll arrest you. Won't they?

LOUISE

Do you know "The Diva of the Empire?"

CLEMENCE

You mean...the song?

LOUISE

(sings a line)

"Underneath a gay stylish hat..." Do you know it?

CLEMENCE

Well, yes. Everybody knows "The Diva of the Empire."

LOUISE

Good. Sing it.

(LOUISE exits, leaving CLEMENCE alone, perplexed.)

11

THE DIVA OF THE EMPIRE

11

(The intro to *The Diva of the Empire* plays, music by Erik Satie, lyrics by Dominique Bonnaud and Numa Blès, adapted by GG.)

CLEMENCE

(singing, uncertainly at first)

Underneath a gay stylish hat,
Flashing the burst of a smile,
Like a purring pussycat
Or a child with a look that beguiles,
She's a girl with deep velvet eyes
It's her: *Diva de l'Empire*.
She's the queen all adore
All Monsieurs et Madams
As they stroll
Down the Champs-'Lysées.

(LOUISE re-enters, dressed up as a very stylish lady. The music stops.)

LOUISE

How do I look?

CLEMENCE

(shocked at the transformation)

Mademoiselle Michel? Is that you?

LOUISE

How do they wear these things?

CLEMENCE

I hardly recognize you.

LOUISE

That's the idea.

(She tucks a small pistol into a holster under her skirt.)

It's not me. It's the "Diva of the Empire" they all love so well.

(The music resumes, and she sings)

When she says "yes" she's just as sweet as can be.
All the snobs in all their finery,
Welcome her, flatter her, greet her kindly.
When she's on stage they toss her flowers with glee
They never notice her flash a smile

(MORE)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Mocking them all the while.

(as the music continues)

Now come on!

(CLEMENCE speaks to the audience.)

CLEMENCE

We took an omnibus to the Botanical Gardens, and from there we walked. Sixteen miles we walked. Talking our way past several army guard posts along the way.

(LOUISE speaks to an army guard.)

LOUISE

(innocently)

We are on our way to see my uncle, Monsieur LeBou, in Orleans. Is it this way?

CLEMENCE

Well, Mademoiselle Michel did all the talking, actually.

LOUISE

Oh, thank you, Sergeant. You are so very kind.

CLEMENCE

Till finally we made it to the great park of Versailles, where the army was camped.

(The music stops.)

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

(joining Louise)

There are soldiers everywhere.

LOUISE

Don't look scared. Do as I do.

(to some soldiers)

Hello, boys. What are you doing fighting for the likes of this lot? Are you the servants of the rich? Do you really believe Thiers and his bourgeois lackeys give a damn about you and your families?

CLEMENCE

Mademoiselle Michel, shouldn't we be on our way?

LOUISE

(to the soldiers)

First he surrenders to the Germans, now he wants you to do their bidding, and oppose the good working people of Paris. Come on. Are you men--or sheep?

CLEMENCE

(trying to draw her away)

Mademoiselle Michel--

LOUISE

(to the soldiers)

Fight for your dignity. Fight for the Commune. Your brothers will welcome you with open arms.

CLEMENCE

(confidentially)

Are you trying to get us arrested?

LOUISE

You there. You're interested, aren't you? I can see it in your eyes. The spark of the Revolution. What's your name, Captain?

(The music resumes as they move on in their journey.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

(singing)

Underneath a gay stylish hat,
Flashing the burst of a smile,
Like a purring pussycat
Or a child with a look that beguiles,
She's a girl with deep velvet eyes
It's her: *Diva de l'Empire*.
She's the queen all adore
All Monsieurs et Madams
As they stroll
Down the Champs-'Lysées.

(The music stops as they enter a bookstore.)

CLEMENCE

What are we doing in here?

LOUISE

I need to get something.

CLEMENCE

This is a bookstore.

LOUISE

Yes, the best one in Versailles.

CLEMENCE

Are we shopping now?

LOUISE

You there, Monsieur le clerk. Have you heard about that scandalous woman in the Commune? Her name is Louise Michel.

CLEMENCE

Mademoiselle!

LOUISE

She dresses up as a man, shoulders a rifle, calls for the overthrow of the Versailles government--what next from these dreadful socialists? Sell me one of those newspapers, will you, my good man?

CLEMENCE

Come along, Mademoiselle!

(The music resumes as they move on to the next stop on their journey.)

LOUISE

There it is. The palace of Versailles.

CLEMENCE

No.

LOUISE

Through the gates, and in the main entrance we go. This way to the great hall where the National Assembly meets.

CLEMENCE

No.

LOUISE

All the deputies of the provinces convene. There must be a thousand people in here. We pass along the galleries with all the other spectators. It's all so easy. And there he is. The villain himself.

CLEMENCE

Please.

LOUISE

(she sings)

When she's on stage she dances so naturally
Lifts her skirt, oh, very modestly
To reveal under-things most surprising,
Lace, stockings, frills, and something else you will see.
While you may think she is pure and sweet
She can be indiscreet.

(She reaches under her skirt, withdraws the pistol, and aims it.)

The music stops.

CLEMENCE gasps.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Bang.

(The music resumes and the two women sing together as they gayly return to the Headquarters of the Vigilance Committee in Montmartre.)

LOUISE AND CLEMENCE

(singing together)

Underneath a gay stylish hat,
Flashing the burst of a smile,
Like a purring pussycat
Or a child with a look that beguiles,
She's a girl with deep velvet eyes
It's her: *Diva de l'Empire*.
She's the queen all adore
All Monsieurs et Madams
As they stroll
Down the Champs-'Lysées.

(The song ends.)

LOUISE stands before THEO and
RAOUL--astonished.)

THEO

Louise?

RAOUL

No. It can't be.

LOUISE

Oh, it's me all right. I could have shot him, if I'd wanted to. It would have been easy. I was as close to him as I am to you right now. But I didn't. I just wanted to show you I could have, if I'd wanted to.

RAOUL

I don't believe it.

LOUISE

That doesn't surprise me. Here, have a look at this.
(hands him a newspaper)

THEO

The *Versailles Gazette*?

CLEMENCE

Oh, we were there, all right. It's true. Everything she said.

THEO

You went along with her?

(CLEMENCE nods, yes.)

LOUISE

She was very brave.

THEO

But how did you get into the Assembly?

LOUISE

We walked right in. They're in a state of complete disorder. Their lines are full of holes. Their morale is as low as it gets.

CLEMENCE

We walked sixteen miles. Each way.

LOUISE

Oh, and this.

(hands him a letter)

THEO

What's this?

LOUISE

A letter from a new recruit. An officer. Captain Jules Dupont. He wants to join the Commune. He's applying to General Eudes.

THEO

(reading)

"I place myself entirely at your disposal for any task useful to the cause--Salutations and Equality."

LOUISE

He's a good man. I could see it in his eyes.

RAOUL

You went to Versailles and recruited for the Commune?

LOUISE

Why not? That's where the soldiers are.

CLEMENCE

I thought surely they'd arrest us. But no one even tried to stop us. It was as if...Madmoiselle was charmed.

LOUISE

I could have shot him, if I wanted to.

(looking at Theo)

But Citizen the Delegate...said no. And I dutifully obeyed. This is no time for moderation, brothers. It's time to strike, I tell you. On, to Versailles!

(beat)

THEO

All right, I'll take it to the Committee. We attack. But first, a drink.

(grabs a bottle and offers it to Louise)

Citizen Michel?

LOUISE

(takes the bottle)

To the Commune.

(drinks)

THEO

To the Commune.

(drinks)

RAOUL

(grabs the bottle)

To the Revolution.

(drinks)

CLEMENCE

(grabs the bottle)

To France.

(drinks)

ALL

To France!

(Blackout.)

(GALLIFET enters and sings *The Calf of Gold* from *Faust* by Charles Gounod, libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, English adaptation by GG.)

GALLIFET

(singing)

Calf of Gold stand forever more!
At his feet bow down and worship,
At his feet bow down and worship,
Over the world and ever more.
To extol the famous idol,
Kings and paupers come together,
Golden coins bring all together,
Dancing ever, ever wilder,
Round and round his pedestal,
Round and round his pedestal!

While the devil leads the dance,
Come to the dance,
While the devil leads the dance
Come to the dance!

While the devil leads the dance
Come to the dance,
Come to the dance!

While the devil leads the dance
Come to the dance,
Come to the dance!

GALLIFET (CONT'D)

(bows and speaks to the audience)

Thank you, thank you. Good evening, ladies. What a pleasure it is to be here tonight.

(he raises a glass)

A toast. We have much to celebrate today. Today we begin to wipe away the disgrace that has so humiliated France during these difficult times. Today, the tide turns. Today, the retreat is ended. To France!

(GALLIFET drinks and resumes playing the melody to *The Calf of Gold*.)

In Montmartre, artillery shells explode in the distance.

The rebels look out across Paris.)

Do you hear that?

LOUISE

Artillery.

THEO

They're shelling us.

RAOUL

Who--the Germans?

CLEMENCE

Versailles.

RAOUL

Thiers.

LOUISE

A Frenchman shelling Paris.

THEO

The pig.

RAOUL

I should have shot him when I had the chance.

LOUISE

(More explosions.)

RAOUL and THEO share a last drink.

LOUISE ties a red sash around Clemence's waist.

GALLIFET sings.)

GALLIFET

(singing the chorus)

While the devil leads the dance,
Come to the dance,
While the devil leads the dance
Come to the dance!

While the devil leads the dance
Come to the dance,
Come to the dance!

While the devil leads the dance
Come to the dance,
Come to the dance!

(The music rests.)

(MORE)

GALLIFET (CONT'D)

I assure you, ladies, this so-called "Commune of Paris" is nothing more than a brothel-house, built of cards. One that we shall soon utterly blow over.

(LOUISE changes out of her dress into her uniform as she speaks a letter to her mother.)

LOUISE

Mamma, I'll be away for a few days. It may be a while before we see one another again. Please convey the one hundred fifty eight francs enclosed here to Madame Poulain as partial payment for her salary at the school. It's all I have, at the moment. But I promised to get her what I could. I know she needs it. She's been devoted to us. And the girls. Tell them all I love them. And you, too, Mamma. You know I love you.

(THEO speaks a note to his sister.)

THEO

Marie, tell mother and father, I love them dearly.

(RAOUL issues an order.)

RAOUL

I hereby order the immediate arrest and incarceration of George Darboy, commonly called the Archbishop of Paris.

GALLIFET

I'll let you in on a little secret, ladies: just today--at my urging, mind you--President Thiers has made a deal with the Kaiser of Germany. Mm-hm. The Kaiser has agreed to release the two French armies he's holding captive in Alsace-Lorraine, if our president will use them to pry Paris loose from these Red scoundrels, and restore order in the city. And, believe me, ladies, that's precisely what we intend to do.

(he sings, resuming *The Calf of Gold*)

Calf of Gold you reign most supreme!
In your glory you command all,
In your glory you command all,
You insult God and you blaspheme.
What's he thinking, what desire?
All mankind in his command,
In the blood and in the mire,
Dancing wild, with sword in hand,
Look at how the metal shines,
Look at how the metal shines!

While the devil leads the dance,
Come to the dance,

(MORE)

GALLIFET (CONT'D)

While the devil leads the dance
Come to the dance!

While the devil leads the dance
Come to the dance,
Come to the dance!

While the devil leads the dance
Come to the dance,
Come to the dance!

(Lights change.)

13

MARCH TO THE SCAFFOLD

13

(CLEMENCE speaks to the audience.)

CLEMENCE

I remember, one night, on a hillside in Les Moulineaux. There was a full moon that night.

(LOUISE crouches, rifle at her side.)

LOUISE

Now we fall silent. Now it is time to fight. There before us, the hillside rises up.

(Cannon and rifle fire sound.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

I charge. Up we go. To Versailles! On to Versailles! Razoua throws me his saber. We clasp hands. Above us, a shower of fire. We form up in ranks. We will skirmish with these lads. Ha. You'd think we were old hands at this.

(fires off a round, and advances)

CLEMENCE

She seemed to live in a different world.

LOUISE

I throw myself into the abyss, the great abyss of the Revolution, calling to me, evermore.

CLEMENCE

There was an old, deserted church in Neuilly.

(Lights change. LOUISE and CLEMENCE look around in the dark, ruined church at night.)

LOUISE

A piano.

(she sits at the piano)

Look at it. What a beauty. Untouched. How?

(she plays a note)

CLEMENCE

Shhh.

LOUISE

It's a miracle.

(LOUISE begins to play the piano, loudly, Berlioz' *March to the Scaffold*.)

CLEMENCE

Don't! What are you doing? The sound! You'll draw their fire! Please, Mademoiselle! Please!

(No use--LOUISE keeps banging away at the piano, lost in the music. Frantically, CLEMENCE looks for somewhere to hide and take cover, fearing they will be fired on.)

LOUISE stops, overcome.)

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Are you...crying?

(beat)

Why are you doing that?

LOUISE

What?

CLEMENCE

Why are you playing the piano?

LOUISE

Because I love it.

CLEMENCE

There are Versailles snipers everywhere!

LOUISE

It's music.

(she resumes playing the piece, quietly now)

CLEMENCE

(to the audience)

I watched her drag a wounded Versailles soldier to safety once. She saved his life, at the risk of her own.

(to Louise)

Why? He is an enemy.

LOUISE

(as she plays)

I am, after all, an ambulance nurse. And a human being. As is he. Perhaps he will join up with us, once he recovers.

(LOUISE stops playing, and stands, sensing something.)

CLEMENCE
What is it? What's wrong?

LOUISE
Do you feel that?

CLEMENCE
What?

LOUISE
The gentle softness of the night. A warm spring night.
(looking into the night)
I see flames.

CLEMENCE
Where?

LOUISE
A great seething conflagration.

CLEMENCE
Where?

LOUISE
All Paris is afire.

CLEMENCE
What fire? I see no flames.

LOUISE
It's yet to come.

CLEMENCE
No.

LOUISE
Perhaps it is the dawn.

(Lights change.)

14

PRINCIPLES

14

(Lights up on THEO and RAOUL,
back at headquarters in
Montmartre.)

CLEMENCE looks on silently as the
two men argue.)

THEO

No, absolutely not.

RAOUL

We have to get the Old Man out.

THEO

I will not have more blood on the hands of the Commune.

RAOUL

They're shooting all prisoners summarily. Five more, just
today. On Gallifet's orders.

THEO

No!

(beat)

Is this what it's come to? Killings, and counter killings?

RAOUL

It always comes to this. What do you expect from a
revolution?

THEO

More than that. Don't you?

RAOUL

This is no time for sentimentality. We have to act.
Gallifet intends to kill us all. He's put it in writing.
It's pasted up all over the walls in Courbevoie and Neuilly:
"War without truce or mercy." Those are his words. What
does that tell you, Theo?

THEO

I will not be a party to cold-blooded murder.

RAOUL

Not murder--execution, sanctioned by the Revolution.

THEO

No. Not by me.

RAOUL

An eye for an eye--a tooth for a tooth. They mean to kill us
all. It's time we took sterner action.

(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

If they won't exchange Blanqui for the Archbishop, then we have to show them we mean business. One priest every six hours. Till they give us the Old Man.

THEO

Forget about Blanqui.

RAOUL

Forget about him?

THEO

Why this obsession with Blanqui?

RAOUL

Where would your Commune be without the Old Man?

THEO

My Commune?

RAOUL

Without Blanqui, we are lost.

THEO

What are you really fighting for, Raoul?

RAOUL

Don't ask me that.

THEO

Why not?

RAOUL

Without Blanqui, nothing can be done. With him, everything.

THEO

He's one man. We are a Commune. I thought.

RAOUL

Please. Leave your rousing speeches for the Central Committee, and all those poor fools out there waiting for us to take charge of this situation.

THEO

This is how you would take charge of the revolution?

RAOUL

The Old Man is the only one who can end all this perpetual talk. This interminable squabbling in all these infernal committees. It's a government of a thousand committees, where everyone talks and talks, and nothing ever gets done. Meanwhile, Versailles gets closer and closer to breaking through our lines every minute. They get stronger every day, and all you and your committee-members do is talk. You have to take charge of a revolution.

(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

Those with the know-how, / the determination, those with the vision, only they can lead, only they can direct--we have to have Blanqui in charge!

THEO

Oh, God. More of this. This is the Old Man talking. Forget about Blanqui. Blanqui is the past!

(beat)

He's an old, old man. He never understood the idea of the Commune. He didn't pave the way, he never even saw it coming. And neither did you. You're just like him.

RAOUL

Don't.

THEO

Just bring down the government, and who cares what comes next? We'll figure it out then. That's Blanqui. And that's you. Well, we did that. And now the Commune stands. A government of the people, elected by the people. Ready to fight and die for what they believe in. Now's the time. Now's our test. We have to be true to our principals, Raoul.

RAOUL

Which principals, Theo?

(LOUISE hurries in, breathless.)

THEO

What is it?

LOUISE

Dombrowski sent me. We have to call up the battalion.

RAOUL

What's happened?

LOUISE

They've broken through. Into the city.

THEO

Where?

LOUISE

Saint Cloud gate.

THEO

How many?

(LOUISE hands THEO a hand-written message.)

RAOUL

How'd they get in?

(LOUISE shakes her head; she doesn't know.)

RAOUL (CONT'D)
(to Theo)

What's that?

THEO
It's from Delescluze.

RAOUL
Well?

THEO
(reading)
"The hour of the revolution strikes. To the barricades.
All."

(beat)

LOUISE
No defeat. Even in death. That's all that matters now.
Long live the revolution.
(to Clemence)
Come on.

THEO
Where are you going?

LOUISE
Top of the hill. They won't get those guns. Not so long as
I'm alive.

THEO
Go home, Louise. Go to your mother. She needs you. Put
your rifle away, and go home.

LOUISE
I was with you at the beginning. I'll be with you at the
end. So help me God.
(to Clemence)
Come on.

(LOUISE exits.)

The two men look at CLEMENCE.

THEO shakes his head, no--don't
follow her.

CLEMENCE exits, following after
Louise.)

RAOUL

(after a beat)

Withdraw into the old city. Blow up all the bridges across the river. We make a last ditch defense there. And we burn everything else.

(THEO starts out.)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

Theo.

(Theo stops.)

Are you with me?

(beat)

Listen to me. Go to Mazas. Tell de Costa and the others to bring the hostages to La Roquette. All of them. I'll meet you there, after I put everything else in order. Will you do that?

THEO

I should report to Eudes.

RAOUL

I need you. He's the Archbishop of Paris. We mustn't squander that. Not now. We don't know where this is headed exactly. Who knows really? Meet me at La Roquette with the archbishop. And all the others. Quickly. Before it's too late.

THEO

I...

(THEO exits.)

RAOUL exits, opposite.

Lights change.)

15

BLOODY WEEK

15

(CLEMENCE speaks to the audience.)

CLEMENCE

It was a very bloody week.

RAOUL

SUNDAY. Twenty-first, May. Two P.M. Versailles troops enter Paris.

(*The Old Melody* plays.)

CLEMENCE

I follow Mademoiselle Michel through the city. I sense a gathering gloom. Not a vehicle of any kind on the streets. National Guards hurry this way and that as we go. Some lounge about. Talking low. Drinking. Some with a smile on their lips. One asleep, snoring. It's as if I have entered a great void. A multitude in solitude, somehow. Like a vast desert with a crowd in it. Shops close up. Lights turn low. People hurry into their homes. A barefoot girl on a street corner sings a song.

(CLEMENCE sings the melody line of *The Old Melody* as the action continues.)

Sound of cannon fire, close, shells whizz past, volleys of gunfire.)

THEO

(alone)

I'm awake. Was I asleep? I must have dozed. Where am I? The Versaillais are in the city. How did it happen? Where are they now? When did they break through?

RAOUL

(alone)

We were betrayed.

THEO

No one knows anything. They're already at the Trocadero. There in the distance. They're coming.

RAOUL

They've got Auteuil. They're moving up the Champ de Mars.

GALLIFET

(reporting to the president)

By Sunday morning, we were well aware of the desperate condition they were in. We were receiving information from a number of sources.

RAOUL

Spies.

GALLIFET

Those with an interest in the restoration of order.

RAOUL

Traitors.

GALLIFET

Our artillery did the job. The cowards ran for cover. At noon, my point officer at the West Gate spotted a man waving a white handkerchief.

RAOUL

His name is Ducatel.

GALLIFET

An engineer in the Roads and Bridges department, I'm told. An ex-army man.

RAOUL

He betrayed us.

GALLIFET

"The way is open," he called out to my officer. "There's no one here, I swear it." Ha!

THEO

(to Raoul)

Who was in command at the West Gate?

RAOUL

(to Theo)

What does it matter now?

GALLIFET

That's how we did it. That's how we got in. And the floodgates opened.

(gun shots)

It was half-past three in the afternoon. First corps made its way in through Auteuil and retook the streets of Passy.

(more gun shots)

By midnight, I gave the order to move in, all along the line.

(cannon fire)

LOUISE

MONDAY.

THEO

(to the Commune's generals)

We will arrange an interlocking system of barricades all through the city. General Eudes will take districts one and two. General Dombrowski, the ninth, tenth, and twentieth. General Rossel, the boulevards of the Madeleine, and the Bastille are yours.

LOUISE

(reporting for duty)

Citizen Delegate of the Commune.

(She salutes Theo. He salutes her in return.)

THEO

Bear your arms, Citizens. Make way for the people. The real soldiers. The hour of the Revolution strikes. If you would spare your children the suffering and misery you have endured, then rise, now, as one, and let these cowards reap nothing but the harvest of their own disgrace. They may have sold Paris, but Paris will never be delivered!

CLEMENCE

The night is calm. Peaceful even. But Tuesday morning is hideous.

GALLIFET

TUESDAY.

(A roar of gunfire.)

CLEMENCE

I was sent for ammunition, up the Cour Trevisé.

(a shell whistles past)

A company of soldiers comes up the street. They drag a man from his apartment, his hands bound. They shove him against a wall, he cries out--

RAOUL

"I only wish I had blown up the whole neighborhood."

CLEMENCE

Up above, a window opens, and his wife leans out--

LOUISE

"Die bravely. I will avenge you."

CLEMENCE

They go back in for the wife.

(she covers her eyes--sound of gunfire--she covers her ears--more gunfire)

THEO

I transfer the hostages from Mazas to La Roquette.

CLEMENCE

I see dead bodies in the streets. Houses crumble down upon the inhabitants. A man falls to his knees and cries out.

THEO

Have mercy on us.

CLEMENCE

It feels strange to be alive amid such death and dying.
(a bullet whistles by--glass shatters)

RAOUL

They've taken the Arc de Triomphe.

GALLIFET

Give yourselves up, and your lives will be spared.

CLEMENCE

Seven surrender.

GALLIFET

Shoot them.

CLEMENCE

The cops shove them into a big hole, and shoot them from above like rabbits.

LOUISE

A child lies dead on the corner of the Rue de Rome. A pretty little boy. His brains splattered on the pavement beside him.

CLEMENCE

More arrests. A man runs into a house. Soldiers follow in after him. I see a man walk up to an Army major, and strike him across the face. The major stands him up in front of a wall, and blows his brains out with a revolver.

(sound of a pistol shot)

Another man scowls and spits at them.

LOUISE

Pigs.

CLEMENCE

They shoot him, too.

(another shot)

THEO

WEDNESDAY.

CLEMENCE

The sun is up. It will be hot today. Thirty men come running up the street.

THEO

Raise a barricade across the rue la Fayette.

LOUISE

(to Clemence)

Give a hand.

CLEMENCE

Everyone hurries back and forth, like busy ants, men, women, and children, all carrying paving-stones. They're digging up the stones from the streets, and stacking them like bricks. Like fine castle walls. We are building a barricade. Already, the handsome structure is three feet in height, more in some places. A team of women hauls a cannon into place, their clothes are nearly rags, ragged skirts tied up about their waists, faces furious, determined, valiant, each with a red cap of the revolution on her head. Long live the Commune.

LOUISE

More paving-stones--quickly, quickly!

GALLIFET

Anyone participating in the construction of the rebel barricades is guilty of treason, and thereby subject to the laws of war.

CLEMENCE

We convey the stones from hand to hand, in long human chains. Higher and higher our castle wall rises, ten, even twelve feet now.

GALLIFET

The gate at la Muette is now ours.

CLEMENCE

More stones. Higher still.

GALLIFET

The Champs de Mars is secure.

RAOUL

Twelve surrendered.

GALLIFET

Shoot them.

(a hail of bullets)

RAOUL

Their bodies are still in the street.

LOUISE

In the Rue de Sevres we put to flight a whole regiment of the line. Ha! Take that, you dogs!

THEO

We have been sold out, betrayed, and surprised. But I don't care. We can beat them, I tell you. Fight on!

CLEMENCE

The children are making sacks that we fill with dirt. The older kids reload rifles.

THEO

Any mother who loses a child in the defense of the Commune receives a pension.

LOUISE

They love it.

CLEMENCE

Do they think it's all a game, I wonder?

LOUISE

They think they're on holiday.
(a bugle sounds)

Form up!

GALLIFET

I have taken the Place de la Concorde.

CLEMENCE

I'm running along the quay, taking a message to Delegate Ferré. It's like I'm in a dream. I'm so tired. But so awake. I see a pack of children cutting the flesh off a dead horse. Down by the water, a man fishes, as shells explode in the river. Corpses all about on the ground. I come upon a soldier, sitting under a tree, his face covered in blood. He opens his mouth to speak, as I approach. Then his eyelids quiver. His head tilts back. And it's over. For him. On I run. Trees down, lamp-posts broken over, glass crackling under my feet, rubble everywhere. On. On. On.

LOUISE

The barricade on the Rue de Clichy is holding.

GALLIFET

Hit them harder at Clichy.

CLEMENCE

At City Hall, I wait. It's chaos. The streets are thick with gunfire. One old fellow, a Corporal, in his Communard blues, stands alone in the middle of the street. Nothing at all to protect him, save his courage. He loads his rifle and fires.

(MORE)

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

(a shot)

Loads and fires again.

(another shot)

And again.

(more shots, fading)

Thirty-three times he fires.

(silence)

Till his rifle falls to the pavement.

(a fusillade)

He staggers, and goes down.

LOUISE

It's possible to get drunk on the smell of gunpowder alone.

CLEMENCE

The cries of the wounded.

LOUISE

Still, Clichy holds out.

GALLIFET

Move General Vinoy's machine guns to Clichy. That should do the trick.

(the sound of proto-machine
gunfire echoes in the night)

CLEMENCE

THURSDAY. Another hot one. In the Place Blanche, we pour buckets of water on the cannon barrels to cool them off.

(shots ring out)

We hear of more executions.

(more shots)

Lots more. They say everywhere the army moves through in the west, anyone suspected of sympathy with the Commune is being dragged out into the street and shot.

(more shots)

That's what we hear, anyway.

GALLIFET

Any young man of fighting age found on the streets is to be arrested, provisionally. Anyone at all. Children, as well.

RAOUL

Revenge.

GALLIFET

Revenge.

CLEMENCE

Everywhere, people are hiding.

LOUISE

Where's he going?

GALLIFET

Find them. Root them out.

CLEMENCE

A window opens, a woman signals. Soldiers enter the house.

GALLIFET

Shoot them.

CLEMENCE

You hear the shots.

(shot in the distance)

GALLIFET

Do it in the street. Where everyone can see.
(more shots)

CLEMENCE

You see them everywhere. The dead.

LOUISE

Murderers.

GALLIFET

Traitors.

RAOUL

Light the fires.

LOUISE

It's the only way to slow them.

CLEMENCE

I am on the roof of a house near the Opera. I see the fires
for the first time.

RAOUL

Just do it.

CLEMENCE

I can't speak. Can't say a word. City Hall is in flames.
The smoke billows up, a deep red glow within, churning,
roaring, spreading its tentacles through the city like a
great, fiery monster. The smell is horrible. It comes in
waves, with the wind.

THEO

The smell of death.

RAOUL

Burning flesh?

LOUISE

More petrol!

RAOUL

The palace of the Tuileries...

THEO

The Legion of Honor...

LOUISE

The Ministry of War...

GALLIFET

The ministry of Finance...

CLEMENCE

All catch fire, all burn. It's as if all Paris is in flames.
Is this the end of the world? The end of France?

LOUISE

They're executing hundreds.

RAOUL

Thousands.

GALLIFET

All incendiaries are to be shot on sight.

CLEMENCE

Anyone accused of setting fires is called an "incendiary."

GALLIFET

It's the women. They're the ones lighting the fires. Anyone
caught carrying petrol is to be shot, immediately.

CLEMENCE

They're shooting women everywhere.

GALLIFET

Shoot them.

(several shots)

CLEMENCE

They leave their bodies on the boulevard.

RAOUL

He's set up a court martial on the stage of the Theater du
Chatelet. Twenty at a time. He judges them...

GALLIFET

Execution../. Execution... Execution...

RAOUL

Condemns them, marches them out onto the square, and mows
them down like grass with one of these new machine guns of
theirs.

(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)
(Sound of proto-machine
gunfire)

Very efficient.

CLEMENCE
We're helping wounded in the Rue Saint-Denis. I wander into
a yard. There's a stable filled with corpses. Hundreds of
them. Stacked up like sacks of potatoes.
(the sound of buzzing flies)

FRIDAY. Where am I now?

LOUISE
Place Blanche.

CLEMENCE
The Place Blanche?

LOUISE
The women's barricade.

CLEMENCE
We are shooting at the Versaillais. A hundred and twenty of
us. All women. But they have cannons, and these machine
guns. And so many soldiers.

LOUISE
Pauline!

CLEMENCE
I know her. Pauline Lefebvre. Once I heard her say, she
loves the Revolution, like a man loves a woman.

LOUISE
She's dead. They're all dead.

CLEMENCE
A gallant man on horseback rides up.
(sound of a horse
approaching)

LOUISE
General Dombrowski.

CLEMENCE
He looks down at Louise. They're eyes meet for a moment.
"We've lost," he says, with a look of despair, "Save
yourself."

LOUISE
No.

CLEMENCE

And off he goes.

(sound of a horse riding
away)

But a shot cracks through the air...

(a gunshot in the distance)

And the general falls from his horse.

LOUISE

Fall back to Montmartre.

GALLIFET

Close in on Montmartre.

RAOUL

La Villette is on fire, Belleville and Montmartre are
burning.

LOUISE

Fall back to the cemetery.

THEO

SATURDAY.

(GALLIFET sings, reprising *The
Calf of Gold*. THEO holds a
pistol in hand. RAOUL speaks.)

GALLIFET	RAOUL	*
(singing)	(speaking to Theo)	*
While the devil leads the	It's time. Do it.	*
dance,		*
Come to the dance,	They're slaughtering us. Do	*
While the devil leads the	it.	*
dance		*
Come to the dance!	Within sight of their forward	*
	posts.	*
While the devil leads the	It's all that's left.	*
dance		*
Come to the dance,	Shoot the Archbishop first.	*
Come to the dance!		*
While the devil leads the	And then all the others. Do	*
dance	it!	*
Come to the dance,		*
Come to the dance!		*

(The music stops.)

RAOUL

Do it!

(THEO fires his pistol. A hail of chaotic, frenzied gunfire follows, and fades away, echoing in the night.

Faraway, LOUISE, with her rifle, and CLEMENCE, with a pistol, crouch behind tombstones in a cemetery.)

CLEMENCE

Tombstones in the night. Crouching beneath a marble cross. We set up a battery on the sepulchre of Victor Noir.

(artillery explodes)

The shells of the Versaillais fall all about us.

LOUISE

The sacred enclosure. Look, their artillery plows up the earth, unburies the dead.

(another explosion)

CLEMENCE

What's that?

LOUISE

What?

CLEMENCE

It rolled down the pathway there. Is it a shell?

LOUISE

No. That's a skull. Don't worry, he died long ago.

(beat)

CLEMENCE

I don't want to die.

LOUISE

Don't be so gloomy. We're not done yet.

(an explosion)

This...this is living. Don't be afraid.

Let's drink, Clemence. You and I.

(She drinks from a flask, and passes it to Clemence.

Clemence gasps when she tastes the brandy)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

They'll charge us before long.

(fixes her bayonet)

Man against man, among the tombs.

CLEMENCE

Seems a desecration of the place.

LOUISE

No. Where better to fight and die? The moonlight. The calm. I love it. Here I am one with all eternity. You're a brave girl. The spirit of France, eh? We go together. Into the night. Come and have at us, Caesar. For liberty...

(aims and fires her rifle,
reloads)

Equality.

(fires, reloads again)

Fraternity.

(fires again)

CLEMENCE

(aiming her pistol)

And charity.

(She fires. A hail of gunfire erupts, and a swirl of battle sounds engulfs the two, mysteriously.)

LOUISE

(as if in a dream)

I am lifted...I don't know where...

CLEMENCE

Where am I? Have I been shot? Am I dead?

(GALLIFET enters.)

GALLIFET

I am Gallifet. You people of Montmartre think me a cruel man. You shall come to know I am more cruel than ever you imagined.

(Lights change.)

16

GNOSSIENNE

16

(Erik Satie's *Gnossienne No.1*
plays on the piano. Each alone
in the aftermath of the
slaughter.)

CLEMENCE

I heard they killed ten thousand of us.

LOUISE

Twenty thousand.

RAOUL

Thirty thousand.

GALLIFET

A gross exaggeration, I assure you.

LOUISE

Mamma? Mamma, where are you? The dead are everywhere, amid smoldering ruins. A stench hangs over the entire city. Frightful clouds of flies swarm about the corpses. So many, slaughtered in the streets. I check at the school. The concierge, Henriette, tells me my mother has been arrested. Arrested? They came looking for me, and arrested my mother, instead. The police say they will shoot her, in my place, unless I surrender. At Bastion forty-three, the commander tells me, "They are probably shooting her right now." My mother.

GALLIFET

You associated with the insurrectionists, did you not?

LOUISE

Are they simply shooting everyone?

CLEMENCE

I don't remember what happened after that.

LOUISE

Please, take me. Let my mother go.

CLEMENCE

They made us walk to the prison.

LOUISE

The long march to Satory.

RAOUL

(lantern in hand)

Where to run? They're everywhere. Down. Into the sewers, further still, into the catacombs, down beneath the somber vaults of Paris.

(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

What stories these old passageways could tell, of desperate fugitives dragging their weary limbs into the darkness of these gloomy caverns, if only to die in peace, here in the company of so many bones, neatly stacked, by the millions. What a glorious Golgotha is this. A place of skulls.

(sound of dogs barking, in pursuit)

They're coming for me. Approaching through the misty darkness. I despise you.

(shots ring out)

I'm bleeding. Can't move. Dying.

(The piano stops.)

Quietly, RAOUL sings a few bars of *The Internationale*.)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

(a cappella)

Stand up, all victims of oppression
For the tyrants fear your might
Don't cling so hard to your possessions
For you have nothing, if you have no rights

(A shot rings out.)

He blows out the candle in his lantern--blackout.

Satie's *Gnossienne* resumes on the piano.)

CLEMENCE

(stepping into a spotlight)

The fires are out. We see the ruins. Paris, sad, still, devastated. All the blood. This dreadful blood. Corpses everywhere. In the streets. In the homes. So many executions. But it's quiet now. Only the sound of our footsteps, as they march us all to prison. Tens of thousands of us. Quiet as the dead.

LOUISE

We walk, and we walk, and we walk, to the constant beat of horse hooves, an endless column of prisoners, their cavalry at our sides, through a night lit by red flashes of light, a misty dream, down La Murette ravine.

GALLIFET

You will die here.

CLEMENCE

But we keep marching.

LOUISE

On through the night.

CLEMENCE

On through Versailles. Angry people jeer and scowl at us.

LOUISE

Like hungry wolves, eager for the kill.

CLEMENCE

We were here just a few weeks ago.

LOUISE

Remember that sunny jaunt in better times?

CLEMENCE

It all looks different now.

LOUISE

Must it rain now?

(sound of rain)

GALLIFET

(looks at Louise)

Don't bother searching that one. She'll be shot in the morning.

(GALLIFET and LOUISE lock eyes.)

Thunder.

The *Gnossienne* concludes.

CLEMENCE arrives in a prison cell and discovers LOUISE there.)

CLEMENCE

Mademoiselle?

LOUISE

Clemence? You're alive.

CLEMENCE

And you.

(they embrace)

Where are we?

LOUISE

Satory. It's a military prison.

CLEMENCE

What will they do with us?

LOUISE

There's a window there. You can see out. There are thousands huddled in the yard out there. In the rain.

GALLIFET

(calling a name)

Eugene Riviere.

CLEMENCE

Riviere--Do you know him?

(Louise nods, yes)

What will they do to him?

LOUISE

They give you a shovel. March you out to the parade grounds. And you dig yourself a grave.

CLEMENCE

Dig your own grave?

LOUISE

Of course. And then...

(a shot rings out)

That's it. Simple as that.

(beat)

Don't cry. That'll do you no good in here.

GALLIFET

Louise Michel.

CLEMENCE

No.

(Tearfully, CLEMENCE hugs LOUISE.)

LOUISE departs.)

LOUISE

I walk through the halls and corridors of this ancient castle, and it reminds me of the old house I grew up in, in the woods of the High Marne. My beautiful woods. They're going to shoot me. So be it.

(LOUISE sings a verse of *The Old Melody*.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

(singing)

Sing for me the Old Melody.
The one we all have heard,
Though the refrain may stay the same
We forgot the words...

(Lights change.)

17

QUESTIONS

17

(As the music fades, LOUISE sits on a stool.

GALLIFET holds a dossier.)

GALLIFET

You are an insurrectionist.

LOUISE

Yes?

GALLIFET

You were seen at Les Moulineaux during the fighting there. At Clamert, during the fighting there. At Montrouge, Neuilly, Montmartre cemetery--

LOUISE

I was in charge of a mobile ambulance.

GALLIFET

You wore the uniform of a man.

LOUISE

I wore the red sash of the Commune.

GALLIFET

There are numerous accounts of your dressing as a man.

LOUISE

All right, yes, once or twice I put on a pair of trousers. Will you shoot me for that?

GALLIFET

You were a member of the Labor Commission.

LOUISE

Yes.

GALLIFET

A member of the Aid Society for the Victims of War.

LOUISE

What of it?

GALLIFET

The Society of Free Thinkers.

LOUISE

Yes.

GALLIFET

The Women's Rights Committee.

LOUISE

Yes.

GALLIFET

The Garibaldi Legion, the Women's Vigilance Committee of Montmartre.

LOUISE

Is this leading to some point you're trying to make?

GALLIFET

And the Men's Vigilance Committee of Montmartre.

LOUISE

Not officially.

GALLIFET

You were frequently seen attending various Red Clubs.

LOUISE

(feigned innocence)

Me?

GALLIFET

And you regularly chaired the meetings.

LOUISE

First among equals.

GALLIFET

You've been a very busy women.

LOUISE

Well, there's a lot that needs doing.

GALLIFET

You're a "socialist."

LOUISE

That what your papers say?

GALLIFET

No. That's what you smell like to me. Are you pleased with what you've done?

LOUISE

Are you?

GALLIFET

You want to destroy France.

LOUISE

That's your intention, not mine. I love France. I simply want to rid her of all religious cults.

GALLIFET
You're a savage.

LOUISE
I believe in morality above all else.

GALLIFET
Without God?

LOUISE
Without the church.

GALLIFET
Guided by your animal instincts?

LOUISE
Guided by conscience.

GALLIFET
Conscience?

LOUISE
Conscience is the natural rule of conduct for one and all.

GALLIFET
Odd a criminal should sight conscience as a guide, but then I suppose that shouldn't surprise me. You criminals are forever justifying your crimes.

LOUISE
Morality amounts to acting in accordance with one's own convictions, and treating others justly.

GALLIFET
Justly?

LOUISE
Yes, with justice.

GALLIFET
Paris is in ruins.

LOUISE
Whose fault is that?

GALLIFET
You insurrectionists.

LOUISE
You traitors.

GALLIFET
You disgust me. What in God's name did you think you could possibly achieve with this...this...madness?

LOUISE
Politically, our goal is the universal Republic--

GALLIFET
Ha!

LOUISE
Which we will achieve through the development of the most precious faculties of each and every individual--

GALLIFET
Will you now.

LOUISE
We will eradicate all evil instincts through proper education--

GALLIFET
This is pathetic.

LOUISE
We acknowledge the profound nature of human dignity, and the right of everyone--

GALLIFET
Dignity?

LOUISE
--women and men alike--to a comprehensive educational system.

GALLIFET
You are an anarchist.

LOUISE
I call for the government of all by all. If that means I am an anarchist, then that's what I am.

GALLIFET
You are a fool.

LOUISE
Until we can achieve the ultimate form of such a state, the Commune represents it best.

GALLIFET
And what of your Commune's illegal arrests?

LOUISE
There were none.

GALLIFET
There were none? Ha! What of the theft, the outright theft of so many businesses, and households?

LOUISE

These are lies. There was no theft. No illegal confiscations. Everything the Commune did, it did so legally. By law.

GALLIFET

You're deluded.

LOUISE

Am I?

GALLIFET

How did you become such a violent woman?

LOUISE

I'm not violent. When I'm attacked, I fight back. Don't you?

GALLIFET

Do you know what happened at La Roquette on the night of May twenty-fourth?

LOUISE

At the prison?

GALLIFET

Your colleague, Theo Ferré, with a company of criminals and deserters, executed the Archbishop of Paris and fifty others. Mostly priests. Policemen. Some purely innocent bystanders-- taken prisoner most inopportunistly. They were all shot at close range, murdered, all of them. Shot down in cold blood.

LOUISE

I don't believe you.

GALLIFET

The Archbishop was old and infirm. Sick with pleurisy. Shot him like a dog, stabbed him with their bayonets, and threw his body into an open ditch in Pere la Chaise.

LOUISE

No.

GALLIFET

That is your Commune.

LOUISE

And how many did you kill? You've been at it night and day for--how long? In the streets, in the fields, any empty lot, any basement, any gutter, any hole in the ground. How many now?

GALLIFET

That is war, my dear.

LOUISE

Ten, twenty, thirty thousand?

GALLIFET

Not half enough!

(beat)

You're not married. Are you?

(beat)

Are you Ferré's mistress? They say you are.

LOUISE

Do they.

GALLIFET

Well?

LOUISE

No. Why?

GALLIFET

You're not much to look at.

LOUISE

Is he alive?

GALLIFET

Who--Ferré? Yes, actually. As a matter of fact, he's here, in the prison. Is he your lover?

LOUISE

No. He's not. Why do you want to know?

GALLIFET

You're lying.

LOUISE

I have only one passion: the Revolution.

GALLIFET

Is that so. You're filthy. I will allow you to wash.

(GALLIFET exits.)

18

THE KISS

18

(THEO enters, in his cell. He opens a letter, and reads it.

LOUISE speaks the words in the letter.)

LOUISE

My dear delegate, if you are reading this, then all my efforts with the prison chaplain have not been in vain. You're alive. That is surely the only bit of good news I've had since...since...since all this began. So many dead. Still the executions continue. Will they really kill us all? Time is short. Is it possible...somehow...that we could...meet? Just to...one last glimpse. Somehow. I so want to tell you...

THEO

Louise.

LOUISE

Theo.

(They meet, in a dream.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Is it really you?

THEO

You look well.

LOUISE

And you...

THEO

You fought bravely.

LOUISE

We do what we must do.

THEO

I was wrong about you. Citizen Michel.

(beat)

They're going to execute me.

LOUISE

No.

THEO

I won't defend myself.

LOUISE

You must. We have to fight them.

THEO

No.

LOUISE

Is it true? About the hostages at La Roquette?
(beat)

Raoul...

THEO

No. The Commune must stand upon its actions.

LOUISE

What have we done? What should we do?

THEO

See that the Revolution survives. The sheer intensity of their vindictiveness is a clear sign of their moral bankruptcy. They are terrified of us. They are terrified of the Commune. They can't kill us all. We have to survive. Someone has to... The idea must survive. You. Citizen.

LOUISE

No surrender?

THEO

No surrender.

(They kiss.)

The Old Melody plays, and the two waltz together about the stage.

Finally, they separate.

THEO faces GALLIFET.)

THEO (CONT'D)

I am a citizen of the Paris Commune. And I am now in the hands of the victors. You want my head. Take it. I will not beg for mercy, nor forgiveness. I die a free man. As I have lived. I entrust my memory, and my vengeance, to the future.

GALLIFET

Shoot him.

(A distant hail of bullets.)

GALLIFET (CONT'D)

(to Louise)

I delivered the coup de grace myself. *Finis*. Odd. Just then...a dog appeared out of nowhere. Wandered up, and licked the face of his corpse. The blood, you know.

(MORE)

GALLIFET (CONT'D)

That was the end of Theo Ferré. Hero of the Commune.
Murderer. Coward. Degenerate.

THEO
(to Louise)

Au revoir.

(THEO exits.)

Lights change. GALLIFET passes
final judgement on LOUISE.)

GALLIFET

Were you present when your accomplices executed General
Lecomte and General Clement-Thomas on the eighteenth of March
in Montmartre?

LOUISE

No. But I hear they died well.

GALLIFET

Did you undertake a plan to assassinate President Thiers?

LOUISE

Yes. But unfortunately Citizen Ferré persuaded me not to go
through with it.

GALLIFET

Were you the chair of the Revolutionary Club at La Chapelle?

LOUISE

Yes. Except when I was away fighting at the front.

GALLIFET

Do you condemn the Catholic Church?

LOUISE

It is strangling the people.

GALLIFET

Did you advocate the burning of Paris?

LOUISE

I refused to surrender.

GALLIFET

Did you participate in the burning of Paris?

LOUISE

Yes. As a defensive tactic.

GALLIFET

Were you Ferré's mistress?

(beat)

Were you Ferré's mistress?

LOUISE

I am no one's mistress.

GALLIFET

You are an illegitimate child raised on the charity of others, yet, instead of thanking providence, you gave free reign to your exalted imagination, and your difficult character. You relocated to Paris in search of adventure. Once there, you were corrupted by nefarious influences.

LOUISE

I am a soldier.

GALLIFET

You are charged with treason, incitement, bearing arms in an insurrection, murder and arson. How do you plead?

LOUISE

Who is guilty here? Versailles is guilty! I swear upon the Sacred Oak of the Oaths, if you let me live, I will never stop crying for vengeance against you and your brethren. Go on, do it. If you are not a coward, kill me!

GALLIFET

It is the decision of this council that you are hereby sentenced to deportation, for life. You shall be transported to the penal colony on the island of New Caledonia, and there you will live out your life in contemplation of your crimes--in servitude.

(A gavel sounds--echoing--and fades away.)

Blackout.)

19

INTERNATIONALE (REPRISE)

19

(Lights up, back in the ship's hold where the story began-- LOUISE and CLEMENCE.)

LOUISE

I remember the old house where I grew up, and the woods in the High Marne, the wolves in winter, and the nightingales in summer. I remember a storm one night, when an evil wind blew in through the window. I hear the voices of the dead. Or is it the future? Oh, God, I love.

CLEMENCE

Where is New Caledonia?

LOUISE

Half way round the world. A wondrous island in the South Pacific.

CLEMENCE

It's a penal colony, Louise. They're sending us there...to die.

LOUISE

No.

CLEMENCE

What's wrong with you?

LOUISE

Don't. Please.

CLEMENCE

You just want to fight. You don't care who you fight against. / You just want to fight. Why?

LOUISE

No, no, I oppose all tyrants. I oppose the cruel, the unfeeling, those with so much, who are willing to give so little. The cheats and the thieves, in all their finery. The hypocrites, the liars, the frauds--

CLEMENCE

Stop it!

(beat)

What good has it done? Look at us. Filthy prisoners, in the hold of an old scow, bound for the end of the world. Doomed to live out our lives in a penal colony. Why? What for? Paris nearly burned to the ground--how many dead? And what's changed? What good has it done?

(beat)

LOUISE

One day...we will triumph. You'll see. You'll see.

(LOUISE sobs.)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry...I'm sorry...I'm so sorry...

(A long, painful moment.)

CLEMENCE discovers the little cloth red carnation on the floor. She picks it up, and looks at it.

She approaches LOUISE, and touches her gently.

LOUISE wipes her eyes, and recovers.

CLEMENCE shows her the flower in the palm of her hand.)

CLEMENCE

You made this for me?

(beat)

Thank you, Louise.

(CLEMENCE begins to sing, reprising *The Internationale*.)

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Stand up, all victims of oppression
For the tyrants fear your might
Don't cling so hard to your possessions
For you have nothing, if you have no rights

LOUISE

(joining in)

Let racist ignorance be ended
For respect makes the empires fall
Freedom is merely privilege extended
Unless enjoyed by one and all

(All the others in the cast join in, and look into the distance, as the ship sails on.)

CHORUS

So come brothers and sisters
For the struggle carries on
The internationale
Unites the world in song
So comrades come rally

(MORE)

CHORUS (CONT'D)

For this is the time and place
The international ideal
Unites the human race

(Blackout.)

THE END