GARBO

The true story of the artist who saved the world

by

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"In wartime, truth is so precious
that she should always be attended
by a bodyguard of lies"
Churchill

"The greatest deception
of the war was not a lie.
It was an entire society
that existed only
in one man's imagination"
Cyrill Harris

"This was not method acting.
It was something closer to possession
—the voluntary surrender of the self
to the invented self,
the temporary occupation
of a life that had never been lived."
Thomas Harris

Characters:

JUAN (GARBO)

ARACELI: Ale/Vendor 1 /Sarah Bishop

THOMAS HARRIS: Father/Vendor 2/Count.

ACTOR 1: Luis /Gustav Knittel/ Eisenhower/ Krummacher.

ACTOR 2:Tomás/Cyrill/ Officer 1/Hitler

ACTOR 3: César/Officer 2/Attaché/Kapitán/Countess.

Setting:

The García Herrera house in Caracas, 1984. Also other areas: British Embassies in Spain and Lisbon, Cafes and MI5 and ABWEHR offices.

ACT I

1

Caracas, 1984. Living room in Juan's home in Caracas, 1984. Onstage, Juan and his granddaughter, Alexandra. We hear birds.

ALEX: Grandpa, can we play the train game?

JUAN: I'm busy, Alex.

ALEX: I want to play the train game, like you did with your dad!

JUAN: My dad played the train game with me when he wasn't doing anything and I'm very busy, I told you.

ALEX: But Grandpa, you're not doing anything!

JUAN: What do you mean I'm not doing anything? I'm waiting for the lion at the Pinar Zoo to roar, that's what I'm doing.

ALEX: What for?

JUAN: Because then it'll be precisely 1:47 p.m.

ALEX: And what exactly is my fun grandpa going to do at 1:47 p.m.?

JUAN: Birdwatch, of course.

ALEX; But you can do that any old time, Grandpa!

JUAN: No, young lady, because 1:47 is when the Yellow Orioles and Bay-headed Tanagers land here.

ALEX: Very interesting. Super interesting. And after the "Bay-headed Orioles" you'll start reorganizing your fascinating stamp album and then at night most exciting of all: you'll read a play from one of those big black books.

JUAN: Orioles and Bay-headed Tanagers are two very different birds. They don't look alike, they don't talk to each other. My stamp collection is very valuable, so you better take care of it because one day it'll be yours. And the plays in the black books are nothing less than the Monte Ávila Collection!

ALEX: Whatever: everything you do is so interesting!

JUAN: That's me. I'm almost seventy. It's what old people do.

ALEX: Grandpa! You're the most boring man on Earth!

JUAN: I think you've made that abundantly clear during the last seventeen years.

ALEX: Since I was born!

JUAN: Exactly. When you were born, instead of crying, you looked at me and said: "Grandpa Juan, you're the most boring man on planet Earth. I can tell even though I just got here." Come to think of it, you did look like a Martian…

ALEX: Because you are!

JUAN: A Martian?

ALEX: Boring! When I ask you about your life you say nothing ever happened to you. You just talk about your dad. How could you live your whole life without anything happening to you?

JUAN: I've been lucky: I've led a quiet life of peace and contemplation.

ALEX: Yeah, contemplation of birds, stamps and weird theater!

JUAN: By the way, the Caracas International Theater Festival starts this week. I picked 22 plays. Will you go with me?

ALEX: You're asking? You always make me go to every single play all year long anywhere in the whole city!

JUAN: Because it's the most important thing you can do right now in this country: go to the theater. Be many and one, watching the few! Don't you see how lucky you are to live here, in a place where you can be an audience for art? (ALEX SHAKES HER HEAD AND SULKS) Come with me to buy our Festival tickets. You know, a "Hamlet," a Goldoni and a Pirandello are coming.

(LUIS ENTERS, NERVOUS)

LUIS: Dad, someone's at the door.

JUAN: What do they want?

LUIS: They asked to speak to the man of the house.

JUAN: That's you.

LUIS: They want you, Dad.

JUAN: Who are they?

(ALEX CLAPS, BUT SEES LUIS IS SERIOUS)

LUIS: They say they're from the British Embassy.

JUAN: What?

ALEX: What do English guys have to do with you, Grandpa?

JUAN: (A BIT NERVOUS) So what do these men from the British Embassy want? Money? Aren't those pirates satisfied with everything they've taken?

LUIS: They want to talk to you.

JUAN: And don't these "gentlemen" know it's 1984 and there's a little thing with a dial on the front called a TELEPHONE they can use before showing up on someone's doorstep! (LOUD ENOUGH FOR THEM TO HEAR) And for their information, we sided with Argentina on the Malvinas Islands. That's right, the Malvinas Islands!

ALEX: Grandpa, be quiet!

LUIS: They said they're on official business for the British government.

JUAN: Tell them to leave!

LUIS: But, Dad, they look very serious.

JUAN: As far as I know, the British Embassy has no authority in Venezuela!

LUIS: Dad, they're not here to cause trouble. They were very polite.

JUAN: Tell them to leave! I'm a Venezuelan citizen. The English can't touch me!

LUIS: A naturalized citizen.

JUAN: I've lived in this country for 36 years! A lot longer than I lived in Spain! Or Lisbon! I'm from here; I have papers. And when I die, here's where I'll be buried… Alex!

ALEX: (COACHED) Because Grampa bought a plot in Choroní…

JUAN: In a very pretty spot with a view of the ocean.

ALEX: Aren't you curious? Have you ever even been to England?

JUAN: Never! And anyways, the English are like tea without sugar. Like tea without lemon. Like tea without tea, or water. That's what the English are: an empty cup.

LUIS: Dad…it's just…they gave me this.

JUAN: Well what is it?

LUIS: An invitation from Queen Elizabeth II, of England.

JUAN: From who?

(ALEX TAKES THE ENVELOPE)

LUIS: They said they've awarded you Member of the Order of the British Empire and…

ALEX: (READING) For your service to the Allies during the Second World War! Grandpa!

JUAN: (VERY NERVOUS) Me? In the war? What are they talking about?

LUIS: They say you saved the world.

JUAN: Me?

ALEX: Grandpa?

LUIS: And there's more. Your name isn't Juan García Herrera.

JUAN: No? What is it? Hamlet? Leave me the hell alone!

LUIS: Your name is Juan Pujol.

JUAN: (MORE NERVOUS) Yo...ah…haha. Pujol! That's ridiculous! My…name… I!

LUIS: And that in international spy rings you were known as "Garbo."

(THEME MUSIC PLAYS, VERY NOBLE)

JUAN: Me? Ah it… What? Garbo? Where's it say?... What…? But I've never had any name in my life. But I'm me, Alex, tell him...tell him that I'm…

ALEX: (CONFUSED) The Most Boring Man in the World.

JUAN: Yes…boring…I've never been…I…Never…

LUIS: And on June 6th, a queen, five presidents and two prime ministers will be waiting for you on the beaches of Normandy to personally thank you for destroying fascism.

ALEX: Grandpa!!

JUAN: I….Never…No…

(JUAN TAKES THE LETTER. HEARS THE LION ROAR)

JUAN: The lion at the zoo is hungry. I better go see the Grassquit and the Night-Heron; they must be around here…

ALEX & LUIS: GRANDPA! Tell us!

(JUAN, DEFEATED, WAITS A BEAT)

JUAN: All right. (TO LUIS) Call everyone. We'll have a family meeting tonight.

LUIS: Tonight!

JUAN: Yes, we have something very important to discuss.

LUIS: What about the men at the door?

JUAN: They can wait. After all, they've waited 36 years. And tell them I'll give them a definite answer in 7 days.

(THE MUSIC CONTINUES)

2

Onstage, Alex, Luis, Tomás and César. Juan, with the letter from the Embassy in his hands.

JUAN: The first thing you need to know is that I love you very much. All of you. You're my family. Especially you, Alexandra, my dearest one.

TOMÁS: But Grandpa… What is all this?

JUAN: The thing is, just like those English bureaucrats said, my real name isn't Garcia. It's Pujol.

CÉSAR: But how's that possible?!

TOMÁS: Pujol isn't a Galician name, Grandpa!

JUAN: No, of course not.

LUIS: Then your first wife, Araceli, wasn't Galician either?

JUAN: Don't even think it. If Araceli heard you saying she's not Galician, she'd rise up from the grave and crack your skull with a stick. She took these things very seriously and she could hit plenty hard too, I can tell you. Now she was Galician, of course she was. But I…My real name is Juan Pujol and I'm from Catalonia.

ALEX: Are you saying we have to change our name?

TOMÁS: You know what a headache that can be!

ALEX: With such a big family…!

LUIS: The children, the grandchildren… we're all García Herreras!

JUAN: Don't change anything! Our papers are in order. In fact, I plan to do nothing. What the English are asking is impossible and I plan to say no. I won't go anywhere and I'll ask them to leave us alone. That's all.

TOMÁS: But…What about the rest?

ALEX: Grandpa…Is it true you were a spy?

JUAN: Me, a spy? Of course I wasn't a spy!

ALL: Thank goodness! I told you so! Grandpa doesn't have the guts for that!

JUAN: I was was a Double Agent for Allied Counterespionage.

ALL: Grandpa! How's that possible?! You never said a word! You spent the war in hiding in Portugal. You don't like politics! You've led the most boring life on the planet!

JUAN: Ok, now, now. That's why I asked you to come today, to tell you everything. (MOVES TO ONE SIDE) When I was young, of course, what I wanted to do was theater. I studied everything I could and set out to find the master García Lorca...

LUIS: Grandpa, we want to hear the story about the spy, not the one about the theater!

(MUSIC. LIGHTS. THEY ALL DISAPPEAR)

JUAN: The truth is it wasn't my idea to be a spy, it was Araceli's. She dreamt up all kinds of crazy ideas. Honestly I always thought she was the theatrical one and I was just her audience…!

(WE SEE A SIGN: "1940 -MADRID /British Embassy" A VERY YOUNG AND VERY NERVOUS JUAN STANDS FACING A DESK WITH THE BRITISH FLAG AND A PORTRAIT OF KING GEORGE VI BEHIND IT. WITH HIM, ARACELI)

ARACELI: Ok, Juan. We're here. Will you go through with it?

JUAN: Araceli, the things you come up with!

ARACELI: What about hating fascism and Hitler and how we'll lose the world just like we lost Spain in the Civil War? That they killed Lorca—and your hope of being a man of the theater? Because that's all I've heard since we met and got married and I'm up to here with this George VI!

JUAN: Don't exaggerate…

ARACELI: And how it's your fault we lost everything. How the world isn't responsible for anything, it's you? How Mr. Juan Pujol, of Barcelona, is responsible for all of mankind's woes.

JUAN: It's not that I'm responsible, just that I could've done something other than study art and dream of theater.

ARACELI: Fine. Then. Do it! Here we are. There's tea. It says: British Embassy. There's even a painting of an ugly king. This place couldn't be more English! So when the man comes back with your request you say: sir, as you can see, I've decided…

JUAN: My wife has forced me…

ARACELI: To come here to offer myself…

JUAN: She nagged me to offer myself…

ARACELI: To spy for her majesty or whatever you say.

JUAN: Because something must be done! The abyss is crashing down on us!

ARACELI: Because I happen to know a lot about fascism…

JUAN: Those bastards!...I could add.

ARACELI: And that should do it.

JUAN: Just in case, I wrote them a letter about the Nazis I've been monitoring in the neighborhood, and I gave them the notes I took on people who seem anti-British.

ARACELI: You told them that?

JUAN: And that I was able to penetrate the Falange. And convinced them that I'm one of them. That I'm chummy with Secretary Morón, and Chief Ramírez, and Officers López and Ángel…

ARACELI: But Juan. Who are all these people? I haven't seen you at any Falange meetings!

JUAN: None of them exist, Araceli, of course not! They're characters. I make them up as I go and go as I make them up.

ARACELI: But, for God's sake, Juan…Why make up so much?

JUAN: If I don't make something up, they won't believe me and they won't take me on as a spy.

ARACELI: So these men: López, Ramírez, Morón and Ángel?

JUAN: Figments of my imagination.

(ENTER OFFICER 1)

OFFICER 1: Are you Juan Pujol?

JUAN: Yes. Did you read my letter?

OFFICER 1: Yes. And I'm very impressed.

JUAN: This is my wife, Araceli. She knows everything. (SHE HOLDS OUT HER HAND, BUT THE OFFICER DOESN'T EVEN NOTICE) Should we talk here? Do we do this today or wait for for another time? Is the embassy a good place to do this or maybe we should meet at a café?

OFFICER 1: I have a better idea, Mr. Pujol: Instead why don't you leave and never come back?

JUAN: What?

OFFICER 1: We're too busy here to be dealing with crackpots.

(OFFICER 1 TOSSES THE FILE AND DISAPPEARS)

ARACELI: And these are the English we're supposed to be helping to defeat Hitler?

(JUAN RETURNS TO THE CARACAS HOUSE AREA,1984)

JUAN: It wasn't that I wanted to be a spy, but I wanted to help somehow. You should know that urge came from my father. My father and my childhood home in Barcelona, and the train tracks that ran by our back yard.

ALEX: Your father? He made you want to be a spy?

JUAN: I was born February 14, 1912, between "Tragic Week" in Barcelona and the start of World War I. (IMAGES OF CONFLICT AND WAR) The first I saw of the world was a general strike, fires, political assassinations, and then fighting, coup attempts… And the war of the trenches. My brother and sisters, my mother and I lived in terror. And admist all that chaos, the only spot of calm in those days was my father, with his trim beard, his upright walk, his soft hand and his cigars. In the face of so much destruction, my father would say…

(WE SEE HIS FATHER, SMOKING A LONG CIGAR. JUAN ENTERS FROM ANOTHER AREA OF THE STAGE)

FATHER: The ones who shout the loudest, the ones who kill the most, who talk about war, they're the ones who are the most afraid. Do you know why, son? Because they're drawn to the abyss. They picture it, they see it and they pursue it! And if they can't see it, then they fabricate it themselves!

JUAN: The abyss? They fabricate it? Why?

FATHER: Because they're afraid and they're cowards. You can be afraid and still be brave. But the ones who kill, who enjoy terror, they're afraid and they're cowards. That's why they love the abyss and lurk at its threshold, contemplating the void. You must always stand up to oppression and tyranny, Juan. Ideas serve only one purpose: To defeat the abyss! To defy power!

JUAN: (TOWARD THE "CARACAS" AREA) My father died in 1931. And his absence was catastrophic for me. The man, whose words, whose cadences, had delivered me from evil, had died. (HIS FATHER GIVES HIM A KISS) And then, I made a resolution: I gave up thinking about theater, art, sensitivity, and decided to find who was responsible for my pain, for the emptiness of my abyss. But all I found was Spain, division and civil war. (IMAGES OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR) They shot Lorca, machinegunned imagination, destroyed joy and we all tumbled into the abyss. (TO ONE SIDE, ENTER TWO NEWSPAPER VENDORS. SOUNDS OF MACHINEGUN FIRE, AIRPLANES AND CANNONS OVER IMAGES OF WORLD WAR II) When news about Germany started arriving in April 1940…

FATHER: Germany invades Norway and Denmark! Germany unleashes blitzkrieg on Netherlands and Belium! Nazis breach Maginot Line! France under siege! 250,000 English soldiers surrounded at Dunkirk!

JUAN: The abyss was back, bigger and more absolute than ever, bringing back Tragic Week, the Great War, and my father shouting…

FATHER: Do something!

JUAN: (TERRIFIED) What do I do?

FATHER: Something!!!!

JUAN: Impotence is like death: it paralyzes and seduces you. It absolves you but freezes your blood, traps your mind, stops your heart and you see yourself looking down on yourself from the heavens (FATHER SAYS THIS PHRASE WITH HIM) as if you were lying awake in a coffin. Then, since I didn't know what to do, I told Araceli…"I want to be a spy!"

(NOISE STOPS. SPAIN AREA, 1940)

ARACELI: Then you'll be a spy! Plus, I think they make good money. But the English already turned you down! Who will you spy for now? The Americans? They're not in the war.

JUAN: Then I'll spy for Germany!

ARACELI: (HITS HIM) The Nazis? Have you gone crazy? They're the enemy!

JUAN: That's why! To fool them! You think I can trick them?

ARACELI: You? You could finesse God himself!

(THEY GO TO A DESK WITH A NAZI FLAG AND PORTRAIT OF HITLER. WE SEE A SIGN: German Embassy in Madrid. TO ONE SIDE, THE ATTACHÉ. JUAN AND ARACELI STEP FORWARD, ARM IN THE AIR)

JUAN: I want to serve the Axis. I want to help build the new Europe, with the Führer and the Nazi party. With Il Duce, we'll form a new world free from the tyranny and oppression of capitalist Jews!

ATTACHÉ: All right. Leave your number and we'll call you.

JUAN: (TO ARACELI) At least they didn't reject me right away.

(TO ONE SIDE, THE PHONE RINGS. ARACELI ANSWERS)

ARACELI: (TERRIFIED) It's the Nazis and it's for you, Juan!

JUAN: Hello…

ATTACHÉ: Mr. Juan…Come to Café Lyon on Alcalá Street tomorrow at 4:30 p.m. A man will be there, with blue eyes, a beige suit and a raincoat over his arm. His code name is "Federico." Go to him and say "I'm Juan, I came about the phone call." He'll give you more instructions.

(THEY HANG UP)

JUAN: THEY CALLED ME! To a meeting! With a man whose "code name" is "Federico!"

ARACELI: Oh God! The devil always says yes!

JUAN: "Code name," Araceli! "Code name!"

(JUAN STRAIGHTENS HIS TIE, REPEATING THE PHRASE; *I'm Juan, I came about the phone call.* HE APPROACHES THE CAFÉ, VERY CLOAK AND DAGGER, REPEATING THE PHRASE. HE MEETS "FEDERICO," GUSTAV KNITTEL)

JUAN: (SAD ATTEMPT AT PLAYING THE SPY) I'm the phone call, I came about Juan! I mean…I'm Juan, I came about the phone call!

GUSTAV:Pleased to meet you, Juan. Sit… I'm "Federico."

JUAN: (SPY MODE) "Code name."

GUSTAV: So tell me, "Real name" Juan… How can I help you?

JUAN: (LOOKING ALL AROUND) Should we use code? Do you speak French? English?

GUSTAV: Juan, please, let's speak Spanish. And act natural. There's no drama here, we're just meeting to talk. That's all.

JUAN: "That's all." I get it. "That's all."

GUSTAV: Yes. That's all. So then, tell me… What can I do? But talk normally, for God's sake!

JUAN: (SEEING THE ACT IS GETTING HIM NOWHERE) Well, the truth is I contacted you because I think I can help Germany win the war. I know we've already won some amazing victories and it'll all be over soon…

GUSTAV: Don't be so sure. It will be a long struggle, but one we're sure to win in the end. How exactly do you think you can help, Mr. Juan?

JUAN: However you say!

GUSTAV: Well we're looking for Spaniards with passports…

JUAN: I have a passport!

ARACELI: (FROM HER AREA) You don't have any passport, Juan!

JUAN: (TO ARACELI) Making it up as you go along, Araceli. Making it up as you go along.

GUSTAV: All right. We need agents who can travel abroad, who are willing to pass information on enemy movements. Do you also have an exit visa?

JUAN: No…I don't…have…a visa.

GUSTAV: (DISAPPOINTED) Oh, that could be a problem…

ARACELI: What happened to making it up as you go along?

JUAN: (TO ARACELI) It's just, I didn't know what an exit visa was and I got nervous! (TO GUSTAV) But I can get one…

GUSTAV: How do you plan to do that?

ARACELI: Making it up as you go along!

JUAN: I have a trip to Lisbon coming up…

GUSTAV: All right, Juan. (LOOKING SIDE TO SIDE) Do you know what ABWEHR is?

JUAN: ABWEHR…Not much. Maybe a little. Very little. I don't know.

GUSTAV: It's Germany's Intelligence and Counterintelligence Service. And we'd like to start an association with you, since you have a passport, a diplomatic visa and offered. Are you interested?

JUAN: (SURPRISED) Of course I am, whatever you say!

GUSTAV: It would be very useful if you could set up in London. From there you could send us information on troop movements. To win the war we need the most important weapon ever invented: Intelligence, Juan. So? The offer stands for today only. What do I mean today? For a few minutes. Is it yes or no?

JUAN: Yes, of course!

GUSTAV: That's what I like to hear. And your wife?

JUAN: She does whatever I say!

(ARACELI HITS HIM VERY HARD)

ARACELI: I do whatever you say?

JUAN: It's for show!

ARACELI: Better show the truth!

JUAN: My job is to lie, Araceli! Remember! Theater!

ARACELI: Yes, I know— "it's all theater."

(GUSTAV GOES TO JUAN)

GUSTAV: All right. (OPENS A BRIEFCASE) We'll start with this. (HANDS HIM A BOTTLE, A WALLET, PAPERS) Here's some money to get you set up in London. This is invisible ink and Enigma codes for you to send your reports. Don't try to enter England from Spain. Go through Lisbon. Is that clear?

JUAN: Yes, crystal clear!

GUSTAV: All right, Juan. Welcome to the Third Reich!!!

(WE HEAR THE LION ROAR. LIGHTS. MUSIC)

ARACELI: The Third Reich! Oh, God, my nerves!

(SOUND OF THE TRAIN ON THE TRACKS)

3

We see a train heading for the audience, with deafening noise. It's the train, but also the animals screeching in the zoo. In the twilight, the shadow of Juan's father. The sound of the train on the tracks accompanies his words.

FATHER: Goethe said: talent is forged in solitude, but character is built in the world's torrents.

(THE LIGHTS TAKE US BACK TO CARACAS, 1984. THE TRAIN STOPS, THE ANIMALS CONTINUE)

JUAN: The train ride to Lisbon reminded me of my nights in Barcelona when I'd hear the trains passing by the house, like wild beasts, the way I hear the animals in the Pinar Zoo here in Caracas; the trains and the animals sound so close, I think they're free. Those childhood trains of mine were iron beasts that, in my mind, carried not people, but characters. People I imagined sitting in the cars, with all their qualities on display, all the facets of their humanity. Their gestures, ways of speaking, status, worries. (THE OTHER ACTORS RECREATE THE TRAIN PASSENGERS) And before I fell asleep, I'd see them like in a dream; characters making decisions under pressure, and the deeper their revelation was, the more authentic the character felt. Luis, who's decided to disappear; Francesca, heading for Rome with her lover who was always her true love; Helena's family, looking for a place to settle down because they've gone so long pretending they aren't Jews. And counting made-up people, I'd fall asleep. (NOW ALONE ONSTAGE) I think that's why I got started in theater: to imagine people I could see, or even better, to live the life that others live, like one poet said. But not one life repeated every night, but the life of characters in a theater of continual creation, where each performance isn't simply different, but new, just created. (THE TRAIN SOUNDS STOP) I've always been happy daydreaming about people. Or at least I used to be. Before the abyss.

(WE SEE A SIGN: "LISBON." DESK AND ELEMENTS OF HOME. ONSTAGE, ARACELI)

ARACELI: In Lisbon and almost broke. When are you going to send your first message as a German spy, Juan? Because if you don't send them something, they won't give us any more escudos, pesetas, marks, or whatever.

JUAN: I'll make my first report today!

ARACELI: And what will you report, my raving madman?

JUAN: Something made up, Araceli. What do you think? (GOES BEHIND HIS LISBON DESK) “Arriving in England...(ARACELI LOOKS AT HIM IN DISAPPROVAL) I’ve gotten a KLM pilot to take my mail to Lisbon. I think it will look less suspicious if I send my reports without using the British post...”

ARACELI: Which is also very convenient since (LOUD) we’re not in London! We’re in Portugal!

(GUSTAV KNITTEL APPEARS ON THE OTHER SIDE)

JUAN: (CONTINUES HIS TRANSMISSION) I’ve also recruited three people with ties to official English sites, making them subagents. They’ve agreed to pass along any information that could be relevant.

GUSTAV: And where are these subagents? Who are they?

(ARACELI GROWS SCARED. WE HEAR SPECIAL MUSIC THAT SIGNALS JUAN’S IMAGINATION AT WORK. JUAN TRANSFORMS INTO SEVERAL OF THE CHARACTERS, WITH WARDROBE OR OBJECTS, ACCENTS. HE LOOKS AT THE MAP, MAKING IT UP)

JUAN: One in the West. That’s Agent 2, Mr. Gerbers. Married to Mrs. Gerbers, Sonia, from Liverpool. Agent 3, code name “Benedict,” a Venezuelan student from a wealthy family, living in Glasgow. He hates the English and supports Scottish independence. That’s why he’s helping us. The other one’s a subagent working in the KLM Pilot’s network, Agent 1. He’s a censor, a party sympathizer. We’ll call him J4. All of them live near military bases and have committed to visit them, take notes and pass them on every Wednesday, which means from now on every Thursday you’ll receive a detailed summary. (PAUSE. THE SPECIAL MUSIC STOPS) Yes?

(EVERYONE LOOKS AT HIM. SHORT PAUSE)

ARACELI: (IMPRESSED) Good heavens, Juan… You just came up with that off the top of your head?

GUSTAV: That sounds like a very good idea.

ARACELI: That’s quite a talent for lying you have. Now tell him the rest…

JUAN: (TO GUSTAV) If you think it’s possible, it would be a good idea to give them some small compensation for their efforts…

GUSTAV: Of course. We’ll send the money.

ARACELI: They're going to pay you!

JUAN: Not me, Araceli. It's for agent Gerber and his wife Sonia, who's pregnant with their second child, who'll they'll name Roger. And for Benedict and the KLM pilot and Agent J4, the censor, who in spite of it all, is a very good person. He really likes mangoes.

ARACELI: Enough Juan! You're driving me crazy! Those people don't exist!

JUAN: Of course they do.

ARACELI: In your imagination! Well if they're so easy to make up, then you better start making up more people to pay our bills and move someplace nicer.

(AGAIN WE HEAR THE SPECIAL MUSIC)

JUAN: I just recruited another one, Eugene, a friend of KLM's from the post. He'll work with him as J2. Also, a Spaniard with a beard will work with him, not too young, but with an English name, Barney, a real fascist and racist, code name J3, from the KLM ring. And Joe, another pilot with Scottish roots, very young, very Nazi, recommended by Benedict. He'll work with code 3.1. And with them, Doug, an officer in the 49th Infantry Division, who used to be a butcher, or better yet, a telegraph worker, a close friend of Benedict's, identified as 3.3. He's promised to help tap into telephone lines.

(MUSIC ENDS. GUSTAV IS SURPRISED)

GUSTAV: All hired!

ARACELI: You should've written for the theater! Although Theater's a lot of work and the pay's lousy. I'm warning you, I'll be managing the money and I'll be using it to buy things in my imagination too, things like bread and vegetables…

JUAN: The newspaper, an English rail guide and a map of England.

ARACELI: What for? We live in Lisbon!

JUAN: But the Germans don't know that! And if I don't study up on what I'm talking about, sooner or later I'll put my foot in it and my teeth too. "Writing is researching," Araceli. Pirandello says so!

ARACELI: Well, then let this Pirandello fellow come and fetch our bread and cook, and wash your clothes and sleep with you too!

JUAN: Stubborn woman.

ARACELI: And not at all imaginary, my dear.

GUSTAV: (FROM HIS SIDE) Don't forget to find a strategic position in London. If not, the mission could be canceled…

JUAN: (NERVOUS, RUNS TO HIS DESK) "Message No. 3. I've gotten a job at BBC London…!"

GUSTAV: Wunderbar!

ARACELI: Don't tell them that. They'll think you're rich and stop sending money!

JUAN: Hush. (AGAIN, TO GUSTAV) I'll be a reporter at the BBC. I'm ready to add a fourth subagent. His name is Daniel, code name "The Greek," he's an actor in the theater. But he goes to all the ritzy parties, though he doesn't have a pot to piss in.

GUSTAV: Typical actor. That's why I quit theater and show business.

JUAN: "The Greek" eavesdrops on all kinds of conversations. Should we hire him?

GUSTAV: If you think it's necessary, but don't trust actors, they're double agents by nature.

JUAN: But this one's very motivated by money.

GUSTAV: Then add him to the payroll. Any other important information?

JUAN: Nothing solid.

GUSTAV: Juan: it's not all about payroll. You need to give us some useful information. Where troops are setting up, movements…If not, Berlin could shut down the Network.

JUAN: (TRIES TO SPEAK, BUT NERVES GET TO HIM. ARACELI HITS HIM THROUGHOUT THE SPEECH SO HE'LL MAKE UP SOMETHING WORTHWHILE) Actually, I was just getting to that. I have fresh information from "The Greek." He found out, from some sailors involved in a fight, a brutal business, a real beating, one of them nearly got his arm broken. But through the pain he said… (RUNNING FROM ARACELI, SPITS OUT THE FIRST THING THAT POPS INTO HIS HEAD, LOOKING AT THE MAP OF ENGLAND AND A TOURISM POSTER FROM MALTA) There's a fleet sailing from Liverpool toward Malta!

GUSTAV: We'll confirm!

(LIGHTS DOWN ON ABWEHR AREA)

JUAN: Listen you she-devil! How long do you think we can go on making things up, off the cuff, beaten out of us? Literally beaten out!

ARACELI: I was just so nervous!

JUAN: Of course you were nervous! And meanwhile you thrashed my arm to a bloody pulp!

ARACELI: What do we do, Juan? You got me into this spy business, now get me out!

JUAN: Maybe I can ask dear old Benedict for advice. Since he lives in Scotland and has money. His family's from Venezuela. We could…

ARACELI: Juan! Wake up! Those people don't exist! And when the Germans find out there's no boat from Liverpool heading for Malta, they won't be the only ones who don't exist!

(AGAIN, LIGHTS UP ON GUSTAV'S AREA)

GUSTAV: Juan! (JUAN AND ARACELI ARE STARTLED) I've been looking for you. About your last report…

JUAN: I, I'm sorry, it's just…

GUSTAV: It was magnificent! Berlin is very impressed. The Luftwasse just confirmed they've spotted a fleet of ships leaving Liverpool for Malta. This is top-notch information!

ARACELI: (HITTING JUAN) You're aiding the enemy, you idiot!

JUAN: How's that possible?! But I just…made it up.

GUSTAV: I have good news for you, agent ARABEL!

JUAN: Arabel?

GUSTAV: From now on, that's your code name: Arabel. And you've been promoted to Agent 1. That means better pay and authorization to grow your network of London agents. Keep sending information like that. Your work's getting noticed in ABWEHR, the SS and even the party!

ARACELI: Well fine, if there's more money, now what we have to do is be more careful with the lies, Juan. The tricks need to be more tricky and a little less true, without looking fake, nothing too deceitful, nothing too real. Wouldn't you say?

JUAN: And recruit more agents so we can get enough money together to escape. Arabel might be able to lie for now, but sooner or later, he'll have to grab his wife and fly away, get lost.

ARACELI: What about London?

JUAN: We'll never make it to London, my love.

ARACELI: I really don't like you, Arabel! Besides, what kind of ugly name is that? Makes you sound like a tart!

(WE HEAR LONDON'S BIG BEN CHIME, OVERLAPPED BY THE THUNDER OF TYPEWRITERS. LIGHTS. WE ENTER THE AREA OF THE MI5)

4

Sign: London, 1941. Mi5 offices. Onstage, Thomas Harris and Cyril Mills. A very nervous Cyril is holding a file.

CYRILL: We've decoded wires from the German Embassy in Madrid to Berlin. This is a disaster!

THOMAS: (READING THE REPORT) There's a spy in London!

CYRILL: I thought we had them all under control.

THOMAS: Arabel?

CYRILL: He informed them about the Malta operation.

THOMAS: We cancelled the operation because of our slip up?

CYRILL: That's what they're saying in V5. We made a hash of it…again.

THOMAS: Those bastards will drag us through the mud over anything.

CYRILL: MI5 has enough enemies already, Thomas, without us chasing after some German spy who's got the whole empire in check. We're in a jam. Or at least in doubt. They think we're "ineffectual."

THOMAS: And all because of this…

CYRILL: "Arabel"

THOMAS: Who is this spy anyway? When'd he get to England? How'd he get in?

CYRILL: I have our best agents searching for him. We need to silence him and fast.

THOMAS: What leads do we have?

CYRILL: (HANDING HIM MORE PAPERS) We think he's in London or the suburbs. Maybe north of the city. He's very professional, probably been spying for years. The profile is a man in his sixties, single, alone, someone who doesn't talk much. He's so good he's able to send information out through Lisbon.

THOMAS: Lisbon

CYRILL: He's an old fox.That's the M.O. of the old guard. Lisbon's always been a hideout for secret agents. I bet this Arabel comes from the Great War.

THOMAS:Just what we needed: A veteran spy activated by Hitler!

CYRILL: Enigma's given us more information. It's clear he's reporting to Madrid every Thursday like clockwork. He's considered a reliable source. Also, he has 3 other agents: Gerbers, Benedict and "The Greek," who's very dangerous.

THOMAS: (READING THE REPORT) I think I know this Gerbers. He's Irish, surname Waxman. I thought he died in an accident!

CYRILL: We'll he's alive and passing information. I'm worried about this Benedict too. I've heard of him. And "The Greek"… An actor? Just what we needed! Artists in this business!

THOMAS: A whole network right under our noses! We need to find Arabel and his agents and take them out now.

(ON THE OTHER SIDE, JUAN AND ARACELI AT A DESK WITH AN AMERICAN FLAG AND A PORTRAIT OF FDR BEHIND IT)

ARACELI: Yankees, Juan? Yankees? No less! Are you sure?

JUAN: The English didn't take me seriously. The only ones who'll give me the time of day are the Germans, the enemy, and now it turns out I'm helping them. We have no one else to go to. If the Yankees don't help us out of this, we'll be dead in weeks.

ARACELI: But…Why the Yankees?

JUAN: Because they're far away. And close to South America. Because, maybe if I confess and turn over all the material, they'll help us escape.

ARACELI: To Venezuela, I have family there.

JUAN: All Galicia has family there.

ARACELI: Leave my Galicia alone. We might not be as sharp as you Catalonians, but at least we're not up to our necks in hot water.

JUAN: You are up to your neck!

ARACELI: Because of you!

JUAN: All right, we'll go to Venezuela. Because when the Nazis figure out I've been taking their money and making up stories, they won't get mad, oh no. They'll send one of their SS men to put a bullet through each of our foreheads.

ARACELI: Keep it up, wise guy, for a lot less than that the Nazis are going to hang you up by…

JUAN: Araceli, we're in the American Embassy!

ARACELI: By those. Your two jingle bells!

(ENTER DEMOREST, A U.S. OFFICER)

DEMOREST: Mr. Pujol, thank you for coming. I've been looking over your dossier. Very impressive!

ARACELI: You don't have to tell him twice. This Catalonian is full of himself.

DEMOREST: First of all, let me just say you've done the right thing in coming here. Your life could be in danger if the Germans find out what you've been up to… Three secret agents and six subagents in England? Really?

JUAN: It just came to me.

DEMOREST: It says here you invented a theater troupe that traveled to Sussex and that they talked about an American convoy that would be bringing a special weapon…

JUAN: The theater's my passion and…

ARACELI: Making it up as you go along, he says.

DEMOREST: But it was true!

JUAN: No, I made up the theater troupe.

DEMOREST: It's true, we sent a boat to Sussex with a new tank! All this make believe of yours is going to win the war! And not for us, Juan!

ARACELI: I told him not to do it! He made it up all on his own!

DEMOREST: (LOOKING AT THE FILE) Here you say you gave a sailor a few cases of whiskey for information on…! The Scottish fleet moving to Ireland!

JUAN: It's just… Scots are heavy drinkers.

DEMOREST: Well that's what we were going to do and we had to switch plans when we discovered that you, ARABEL, had already informed the Germans!

JUAN: Coincidence, a hunch… I've always believed that what we imagine, once it takes shape, tries to make itself felt in reality. Reality is faint, but fiction shines. To create is to choose something known and reinvent it well.

DEMOREST: But your imagination is aiding the enemy, Juan.

ARACELI: And here he hates the Nazis worse than the dirt between his toes!

JUAN: You know? I think it has to do with the characters. You see, inventing—creating people—is a very strange thing, and you never know what forces you're messing with when you do it.

DEMOREST: The ABWEHR German intelligence services in Berlin say you're a "reliable source," "high level," "our greatest success in England."

JUAN: *(Proud)* They said that?

ARACELI: It's nothing to be proud of, Juan! You should be ashamed!

DEMOREST: And you're not even there! But what's most amazing is that the Germans have swallowed all your lies. And they've even approved a budget for your spy network that… Doesn't even exist!

ARACELI: But the money does exist and it's really helped, sir.

JUAN: Araceli, please, our lives are at stake here.

DEMOREST: I've spoken with my colleagues at MI5, the British intelligence service. Agent Thomas Harris has opened a terrorism file. Turns out, they've been searching for you to silence you. After the Malta affair, the usual thing in these cases is a fifteen-minute trial and a speedy execution, Juan. For both of you.

JUAN: Please, I'm so ashamed. Forgive me, sir… And if you have to kill someone, then I'm willing to make the sacrifice. I suggest you shoot her and let me live out my life in the Caribbean as a bachelor.

ARACELI: JUAN!

(JUAN AND DEMOREST LAUGH AT ARACELI)

DEMOREST: I've been authorized to make you a proposal. The idea is for you to go to London. And from there Arabel will keep sending information to Berlin just like he's been doing so far.

JUAN: (NOW GETTING SERIOUS) But I thought if I came here and confessed, my activities would come to an end and with your help I could go to South America and…

DEMOREST: Of course we can do that too. But really it would be a great help if you were willing to travel to London and work with MI5 feeding the Germans the information the Allies want them to have.

JUAN: You mean, become a double agent.

DEMOREST: Counterespionage.

ARACELI: Or in your case, with all those people you have in your head, "ultra, super-double-counterespionage."

DEMOREST: Understand, Juan, this is extremely important work. It could be key to the survival of democracy in Europe. It could pull us back from the abyss we're approaching. What do you say?

JUAN: Did you say the abyss?

DEMOREST: Don't you think we're on the verge of an abyss?

JUAN: Of course I do. We're already at its gate. You can feel the void from here.

DEMOREST: So? Will you help us? What'll it be: London or South America?

(WE HEAR AND SEE THE TRAIN AGAIN, BUT THIS TIME IT'S OUT OF CONTROL. PHOTOS OF PEOPLE FLASH BY. ONSTAGE DEMOREST AND ARACELI DISAPPEAR. JUAN IS LEFT ALONE, LIT BY A SHAFT OF LIGHT)

JUAN: What am I now, Juan? Where do I go? The depths of a character are revealed when he must make decisions under pressure, when his hidden nature comes up against his façade. So? Theater or the abyss? Trains and a passion for creating people or the quiet, healthy repose of the coffin? Who am I and what's my purpose?

(THE PHOTOS STOP. SUDDENLY, HIS FATHER APPEARS)

FATHER: Do something!

JUAN: A character is a passionate statement. The face in words behind the face in lights. (SUDDENLY SHOUTS) Dad! I'm off to London! To my first job as a Double Agent for the British Counterespionage service, MI5! I'm doing something!

(HIS FATHER DISAPPEARS. SO DOES THE NOISE OF THE TRAIN. BLACKOUT. IN THE DISTANCE WE HEAR THE LION ROAR AGAIN. SOUND OF A PLANE)

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT II

1

Sign: April 1942 . London. Onstage, Cyril and Harris waiting like for Godot. Finally Juan and Araceli arrive and they greet each other.

THOMAS: Welcome to London. I'm Thomas Harris, with MI5 and this is my partner, Cyril Mills, Assistant Director. (LOOKING AT JUAN) Well! So you're the famous ARABEL! Did you know the Germans call you "Vertrauensmann," which means "Trusted Agent?" They save that for their most valued spies.

ARACELI: Clearly they don't know him very well.

JUAN: My wife, Araceli. (THEY SHAKE HANDS) Harris? Are you the man who prepared my file for the Americans?

THOMAS: It was an honor, really.

JUAN: Please, I hope you'll forgive me for causing so much trouble.

THOMAS: Don't worry. With your imagination on our side and coordinating with us, I get the feeling that now we might just win this war.

JUAN: You're exagerrating, of course.

THOMAS: (SERIOUS) Not at all.

JUAN: Then, tell me something. I've been a spy for a year and I know more or less what to do. But this double spy thing is new. Can I be a triple spy?

THOMAS: I hope not, or we'll have to shoot you.

JUAN: I see. Well that's rather inconvenient, I'm afraid.

THOMAS: Especially for the one getting shot. For us, it's procedure.

CYRIL: Actually it's quick and doesn't cost much.

THOMAS: You'd be surprised how cheap a bullet is in wartime.

CYRIL: (POINTING OUT THE WINDOW) This area is called Hendon and we're at 35 Crespigny Road. Don't forget it.

THOMAS: This will be your office. Behind us is the Special Forces Club. They serve a good Greek salad there.

CYRIL: And since you told the Germans you're working for the BBC, we'll get you an ID that checks out. We're going to make all your lies come true.

ARACELI: Do we have to return all the money the Nazis gave us?

CYRILL: No, of course not.

ARACELI: That's good, because returning what no longer exists would take double Arabel's imagination.

CYRILL: But from now on, any money you receive from them will go directly to MI5. We'll take care of your expenses. Don't worry, you'll be better off with us than with the Nazis.

ARACELI: I don't know, they did pay very well.

THOMAS: What we need to do now is strengthen the network of agents you created. Expand it. Do all your agents have numbers and code names?

JUAN: All except the KLM pilot. He's a very upstanding fellow and he's done a marvelous job and I always think it's rude to call them by a number. He's very sensitive, you know?

THOMAS: (ALARMED) You mean the pilot really exists? (JUAN LOOKS AT HIM WITHOUT SPEAKING. THOMAS IS ASHAMED) Excuse me, Mr. Pujol, I just can't tell yet if you're lying or telling the truth.

ARACELI: I'll pass the first bit of information: This lunatic is always lying.

THOMAS Well let me just say, that's an inspired lie. In the Allied intelligence community, it's considered one of your greatest achievements.

CYRILL: I've heard the Director General say, "we've got to create more agents like the KLM pilot."

JUAN: Just be careful. He's got very firm principles you see and he doesn't like being manipulated.

THOMAS: Of course not! By the way, we're going to need to create a fourth agent in your network, along the lines of the "KLM pilot," a very important one. He'll be an agent you trust implicitly, like your second in command. That agent will have other subagents working for him. What do you think? How soon can you have his profile ready?

JUAN: But, well he already exists.

THOMAS: What? (CHECKING PAPERS) We haven't detected him in your…

(WE HEAR JUAN'S SPECIAL THEME SONG AGAIN)

JUAN: (INSPIRED) His name is Carlos. (THOMAS TAKES NOTES) He's agent Five, code name MOONBEAM. Very restless, but very smart. He's from Venezuela, brother of Agent 3, Benedict. He studied music and he's got a head for abstract thinking. He's already got a subagent working for him, Agent 5.1, a cousin living in Buffalo, in the U.S. He's promised to start a ring in the Arabel network, initiating our penetration of America. (CYRIL AND THOMAS TRY TO INTERRUPT) He sent his first message October 7, 1941. I had to train him not to write so much or his invisible ink would run out too fast. But the real number 2 in my network is Agent 4, (THOMAS FLIPS THE PAGE) CAMILLUS, who I've sent to Aberdeen. CAMILLUS has turned out to be very efficient. He's already got his own ring made up of agent 4.1, code name ALMURA, a radio operator, that's how he sends his reports; agent 4.2, a guard, code name CHRIS, because he's in Chrislehurst and Agent 4.3, an American living in London.

THOMAS: MOONBEAM? CAMILLUS? Who's your right hand?

JUAN: CAMILLUS is left handed, but he's my right hand. He's been a model student; brown eyes, shirt always wrinkled, and I think he's allergic to pollen and spiders.

(THE MUSIC STOPS. THOMAS AND CYRIL SPRING INTO ACTION, GOING OVER REPORTS, CHECKING PAPERS, VERY NERVOUS)

THOMAS: We didn't know anything about Moonbeam!

CYRIL: Or Almura!

THOMAS: A spy network in the U.S.!

CYRIL: It's the largest network the Germans have created!

THOMAS: Why isn't any of this in the reports? When did you do all this?

ARACELI: What do you mean when? He just did it! Right now! He made it all up just now!

(CYRIL AND THOMAS LOOK AT HIM IN DISBELIEF)

THOMAS: Really?

CYRIL: All that in one minute?

JUAN: And ten seconds.

THOMAS: So, the Germans don't know about it yet.

JUAN: But they'll find out in the next 15 minutes.

(THOMAS AND CYRIL RUN BACK AND FORTH)

THOMAS: Wait a minute!

CYRIL: Don't do anything!

THOMAS: We have to prepare the reports!

ARACELI: Don't be bad, Juan. Let them breathe. We only just got here and these Englishmen have been very kind.

JUAN: A character is in constant battle with his surroundings and himself. Besides, the cold makes me cranky. (GETTING READY) All right, we'll take it from the top. But first of all, I think you should change my code name.

THOMAS: Juan, you already know Arabel has to keep working with the Germans…

JUAN: Yes, but I want a different one for my new role here.

CYRIL: But of course!

THOMAS: Whatever you want. What comes to mind?

JUAN: I don't know. I'm blank. (THEY ALL LOOK AT HIM IN AMAZEMENT) The thing is I don't have a flair for the truth. I can only see reality when I'm lying. So, tell me…

CYRIL: Tell me: What's your favorite thing?

JUAN: Theater.

THOMAS: What a surprise!

CYRIL: Would you like the name of some actor?

ARACELI: Grant, Bogart…Stewart!

THOMAS: How about an actress?

ARACELI: He likes the theater, but let's not go overboard!

THOMAS: An actress who takes on Arabel.

CYRIL: Who fights her.

THOMAS: And destroys her.

CYRIL: Let's see: what actresses do you like?

ARACELI: There's Jean Arthur, Irene Dunne...

JUAN: Ingrid Bergman!

CYRILL: That's it: you'll be BERGMAN!

THOMAS: Or maybe, the best of them all. Greta Garbo.

JUAN: I'll be GRETA!

THOMAS: Or even better, GARBO.

JUAN: That's it!

THOMAS: All right, Juan. From now on in the Allied Secret Service you'll be known as "GARBO."

(A PHOTO OF "GARBO" APPEARS WITH HIS PENETRATING GAZE, HIS BEARD AND GLASSES. MUSIC. JUAN ENTERS THE "CARACAS" AREA, 1984, HOLDING THE INVITATION FROM THE EMBASSY)

JUAN: And as "Garbo" now they want me to go back to London. "Garbo" is the one who got this invitation five days ago; "Garbo," the mystery, "Garbo," the character, "Garbo," that passionate statement that isn't me anymore. What does a character do when his author stops thinking about him? Where have you gone, Garbo? What does a character, a passionate statement, do when his author stops thinking about him? (MUSIC. LIGHTING CHANGE, MORE INTIMATE) Last night I dreamt about Pirandello. In my dream, my father was playing the train game and the characters leapt from his lips. They flew so fast it was like gunfire, like cannonballs flying out of my father. And I was laughing, because the theater looked like a weapon defending our position against the onslaught of beasts; the theater was a trench protecting us from the abyss. And then, in my dream, my father shouted again:

FATHER: Do something!

JUAN: That voice, like a lion's roar, woke me this morning and that's when I realized. The theater is ageless, timeless. It's like space. Everything is happening at the same time. That's how it is with an author and his characters. We're not authors of a single piece, but a

whole body of work, that isn't finished until we are. (THE "GARBO" PHOTO DISAPPEARS. JUAN IS ALONE, IN A BEAM OF LIGHT) Life is a Theme. And maybe my work isn't finished yet!

(MUSIC FROM 1944 FILTERS THROUGH)

2

MI5 offices, very messy. Bottles and glasses scattered around. A radio plays music from 1944. On the floor are several paintings and items of wardrobe related to the characters in the network: sailors, officers, women, etc. Onstage, Thomas and Juan, in the middle of a party. Juan has just finished singing a "fado."

JUAN: I learned that one in Lisbon!

THOMAS: What's learned as a drunk is worth nothing!

JUAN: That's what we artists do when we can't be: we drink to forget ourselves. Did I tell you I got a call from the wife of Agent 2 today?

THOMAS: The one in Liverpool?

JUAN: Bootle! You don't pay attention to anything! No wonder V5 has its eye on us.

THOMAS: They talk a lot, but we're still the best division in MI5.

JUAN: We're nothing, Thomas. They won't let us create! That's why GARBO's worn out. There's no truth in his lies… By the way: Agent 2 died.

THOMAS: (WORRIED) Who? What's this?

JUAN: You remember how sick he was? That's why he moved to Bootle with his wife.

THOMAS: I remember now!

JUAN: He died.

THOMAS: You should stop drinking, Juan.

JUAN: Arabel held him in very high esteem.

THOMAS: You are Arabel!

JUAN: Last night Arabel spoke to his wife, Mrs. Gerbers. And that's when she told him: "William Maximiliano…

THOMAS: (DYING WITH LAUGHTER) His name was William Maximiliano!

JUAN: Is dead!

THOMAS: Juan! You have to stop making things up, you're killing me!

JUAN: Yesterday, January 2nd, 1944, we found out.

THOMAS: What a shame. Should we send flowers?

JUAN: Today Mrs. Gerbers published an obituary.

THOMAS: (NO LONGER LAUGHING) Careful, Juan. Don't talk nonsense. If you tell them that we'll have to publish something in…

JUAN: (SHOWS HIM A NEWSPAPER) Here it is.

THOMAS: (READING) You published this? When? Today? Juan, are you creating your own intelligence?

JUAN: It was a terrible blow.

THOMAS: Of course it's terrible! You can't go creating your own intelligence without telling me! You know they're watching us, that they've warned me you're becoming dangerous. They admire you, but they think you're crazy. They're even afraid of you! You drink all day and all you eat is Greek salad. If it's not booze on your breath, it's feta cheese! I'm supposed to be the only one who can control you when really it's you who's controlling me. And your nocturnal wanderings around Soho and your entanglements with actresses aren't helping any and neither is the fact that you're up all night, much less these stories you're making up like the torpedo corpse. And now the widow Gerbers! Remember we're in the army and we're at war!

JUAN: Against a sniper, a cripple's got a better chance of getting away than someone who walks a straight line (THOMAS DOESN'T GET IT) Since he's unpredictable, the cripple's got a better chance of dodging the bullet.

THOMAS: I don't get it, Juan. I don't have your…

JUAN: A character is believable when he isn't predictable.

THOMAS: (LOOKING AT THE NEWSPAPER) So when will you notify ABWEHR that the cripple wasn't hit by the sniper?

JUAN: I already did and they're heartbroken. They sent a pension for his widow.

THOMAS: A pension you'll be turning over to me, don't forget!

JUAN: I don't know if I can, Thomas.

THOMAS: Juan! Don't play with fire!

JUAN: The thing is I think his widow spent it all on the funeral and to pay off his gambling debts. Besides, the very generous Mrs. Gerbers gave money to several of the Soho actresses her husband is seeing…was seeing.

THOMAS: A saint. So he spent it all?

JUAN: Yes, all of it. You see Maximiliano drank and drinks a lot.

THOMAS: He's still drinking? After his death?

(JUAN PULLS OUT TWO BOTTLES OF WHISKEY. THOMAS IS ON THE VERGE OF GETTING ANGRY, BUT CAVES IN THE END)

THOMAS: I give up! They say there's no arguing with genius, and I won't be the one to come down on you about the money. Anyway, V5 doesn't listen to us. (LOOKING AT THE BOTTLE) This Maximilian Gerbers drank the good stuff.

JUAN: Agent Benedict sent it to him from Scotland...

THOMAS: Tell him thanks.

JUAN: Thanks a lot. He says you're welcome.

THOMAS: All right.

(THEY TOAST. THOMAS PICKS UP A PAINTING FROM THE FLOOR. SHOWS IT TO JUAN)

THOMAS: I want you to have this one. I know it's not very good, but it's a Thomas Harris original and I painted it with a lot of passion when I was a teenager. I want you to have it.

JUAN: But don't go kissing me. There are enough rumors floating around already.

THOMAS: Cheers!

(THEY LAUGH AND TOAST. JUAN LOOKING AT THE PAINTING)

JUAN: It's not half bad. You're very talented.

THOMAS: We're all talented when we're teenagers, Juan. But I stopped believing in art when I realized the world was slipping from our hands. What does art matter when peoples' lives are going up in flames? Can you imagine, Juan? When so many young people with talent and desire, vocation and imagination for theater, painting or music are slaughtering each other on the fields of Europe? How many

of them could have fulfilled the promise of their calling, but instead today they're dressed up as soldiers, forced to shed their blood, dead or shut up in concentration camps?

JUAN: None of us can ever be what we always wanted to be.

THOMAS: (TAKES THE BOTTLE) And that, my dear Juan, is the real war they're waging against us with all these armies and all these sides. Even ours!

JUAN: And that, my dear disillusioned Thomas, is The Abyss.

(THEY DRINK. JUAN TURNS THE PAINTING AROUND AND THERE IT IS: A GREAT ABYSS, BLACK AND TERRIBLE. JUAN DROPS IT AND STARTS TO SING AGAIN, BUT THIS TIME A "CANTE JONDO." THOMAS CHIMES IN, TRANSLATING WHAT HE SAYS INTO ENGLISH, BUT VERY OFF KEY AND FUNNY. NOW JUAN SINGS FLAMENCO AND STOMPS HIS FEET. THEY DRINK AND LAUGH. CYRIL, EISENHOWER AND SARAH BISHOP APPEAR. THOMAS REALIZES THEY ARE WATCHING AND STRAIGHTENS UP THE BEST HE CAN. BUT JUAN GOES ON WITH HIS SHOW UNTIL THOMAS WARNS HIM)

THOMAS: Juan…Juan…

JUAN: (SEEING THE VISITORS) How are you my compatriots?! Welcome, gentlemen and Miss, to our humble Soho bar where today's performance includes lively ladies who are pleased to show their legs and frightened artists who displease by showing their work. (LAUGHS BUT NOTICES NO ONE JOINS IN. BEAT) Cyril, who are these two scarecrows anyway?

CYRIL: (TO EISENHOWER, POINTING TO JUAN) General Eisenhower: this is him.

EISENHOWER: The one holding a bottle and dancing like showgirl or the one with the sailor's cap and a whiskey bottle behind his back pointing to his ass?

CYRIL: (MORTIFIED) The…one…holding… the bottle… Dan..cing...

(EISENHOWER GOES TO JUAN, WHO SLIPS AND FALLS AT HIS FEET. THE GENERAL LOOKS HIM OVER WITH A CERTAIN DISGUST)

EISENHOWER: So you're the famous "Garbo."

JUAN: (FIXING HIMSELF UP) General. Just a… I… ah… really… I'm pleased. A pleasure. I've admired you ever since…

EISENHOWER: You can shut up. This young woman is Sarah Bishop, an officer in the United States Marines and from now on she'll be the liason between this dump you call MI5 and Supreme Headquarters. Today we initiate SHAEF.

THOMAS: Shaef?

CYRIL: (TO THOMAS, UNDER HIS BREATH) I've been calling you all afternoon!

(THOMAS SEES THE PHONE ON THE FLOOR, NEXT TO A BOTTLE. PUTS IT WHERE IT BELONGS)

EISENHOWER: (TO CYRIL) Is this unit really the envy of Britain's secret service?

CYRIL: It's not how it looks, sir.

EISENHOWER: I hope not. How many active agents report to this office?

THOMAS: We have 21 agents.

JUAN: Though one recently died. (HICCOUGHS) Sorry.

(EISENHOWER SIGHS, DISBELIEVING)

CYRIL: There are 20 Agents, but really they're all in Garbo's head. He's…

EISENHOWER: Don't explain it to me, Mills. The whole story puts me on edge. (SIGNALS TO SARAH) Miss Bishop…

SARAH: Gentlemen. Regarding Thomas Harris's report on counterintelligence activities and our ability to maintain the credibility of the information we pass to the enemy…

EISENHOWER: (TO JUAN) Garbo, tell me something, when one is sick in the head…Does he know?

SARAH: (CONTINUING HER SPEECH) Supreme Headquarters and General Eisenhower have proposed that going forward we begin a new stage that we'll call SHAEF: Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.

EISENHOWER: Starting today, we'll create coordinated information and actions. Whatever you tell the Germans, we're going to make it 100% true on the ground. If there's a mission to Rumania,

well then there's a mission to Rumania! At all costs! Isn't that what you wanted?

THOMAS: Yes, of course, absolutely! Those operations will cement Garbo's network.

EISENHOWER: Good. Our priority is for the Germans to swallow all our stories because we need Garbo's full participation in the most important battle. (SUDDENLY, A PAUSE. ALL LOOK AT THE GENERAL) Our ultimate strike against Hitler. The invasion of Europe! To succeed in this monumental task, we'll need a powerful weapon. And that weapon is…deception. I've been assured that a mission of this magnitude can only be carried out by this unit. It doesn't look like it, but that's what everyone says. Now myself, I'd take bombs over lies. But for what we have planned we need a team of madmen. Starting with myself. (POINTS TO JUAN) And ending with you, the most stark-raving lunatic in all the Allied Forces. Are we ready?

(EISENHOWER GRABS JUAN'S BOTTLE. JUAN LOOKS AT HIM, INTIMIDATED, BUT DOESN'T LET GO. BOTH HANG ON. EISENHOWER STUDIES HIM A GOOD WHILE, SCRUTINIZING. THEY EXPECT HIM TO SAY SOMETHING IMPORTANT)

EISENHOWER: Greta: you're too ugly to be called Garbo.

(EISENHOWER FINALLY WRESTS THE BOTTLE AWAY AND FINISHES IT OFF. A DEAFENING ROAR OF TYPEWRITERS MIXES WITH THE NOISE OF A TRAIN. LIGHTS)

3

To the right, Gustav and Kapitän in the offices of ABWEHR, dominated now by a map of Europe where the Kapitän displays information as it arrives from Arabel. To the left, MI5 office with Juan, Sarah and Thomas. The pace is dizzying.

SARAH: February 22, 1944.

JUAN: We'll call the new agent J5

GUSTAV: Tell me about her.

JUAN: (DESCRIBES SARA) She's 30ish and wonderfully indiscreet.

GUSTAV: You think she's a good option? Is she very pretty?

JUAN: Not really; she's always a bit frumpy actually.

GUSTAV: I hope you don't start falling in love with your agents, Arabel.

JUAN: I don't love them, but there is a certain intimacy.

SARAH: You wish. (TO THOMAS) Does his wife know?

GUSTAV: And that doesn't compromise their reliability?

JUAN: She works inside the War Cabinet itself.

SARAH: Add…And she's our agent closest to the center of information." (JUAN REPEATS)

GUSTAV: Fine, we'll keep her on then, but be careful.

SARAH: (SIGNALS) Now….

THOMAS: We begin…

JUAN: Ok…(PREPARES HIMSELF, AS FOR A CRITICAL JUNCTURE) For the first time J5 has spoken to me about the possibility of a large-scale amphibious invasion.

(BEAT. THEY GLANCE AT EACH OTHER, WAITING FOR GUSTAV'S REACTION)

GUSTAV: This is very significant, Arabel. Keep pressing on this matter. It's vital that the Reich know all the details of the enemy's plans to invade Europe. Our undertaking depends on it!

SARAH: He swallowed it!

THOMAS: I told you. Garbo could tell the Germans Martians have landed in London and they'd send an ambassador tomorrow to sign a treaty. Now with SHAEF, the network's got more credibility than ever!

SARAH: Then it's time to set Garbo's most important phase in motion: the three operations ordered by General Eisenhower.

JUAN: You plan to tell me what they are someday?

THOMAS: Deceive them, confuse them, convince them.

SARAH: Their code name is FORTITUDE. First: make them believe our forces are concentrated in the north and southeast and that the invasion of Europe will take place on two fronts: one, an attack on Norway, from our bases in Scotland.

THOMAS: Which don't exist.

SARAH: Which don't exist. And two: the second attack, the most important attack, on Calais.

JUAN: So what's the second mission?

SARAH: Confuse them about the date of the planned attack. First, that it's imminent, so they mobilize their forces to the East and then make them believe it will be later, so they leave their troops in place.

JUAN: And third…

SARAH: Convince them, when the real invasion comes, that it's no more than a diversion and that they have to wait for a second wave at Calais. Always at Calais.

THOMAS: But it won't be there.

SARAH: It won't be there. (SHORT PAUSE) It will be at Normandy, code name "Overlord." This is the reason for everything we've created, Juan. This is the biggest, most elaborate, most well-planned and vital misinformation campaign ever carried out.

THOMAS: Since Troy!

SARAH: And it's all happening in three months!

JUAN: Three months!

THOMAS: What do you say, Achilles? Can we do it?

JUAN: Can we do it? Give SHAEF these orders: (SARAH TAKES NOTES) We need them to raise a bogus army with fake barracks that

look real from overhead. With vehicles, trucks and twenty thousand dummy tanks. They need to name a real general for the phantom army, maybe Patton, since he's the biggest talker and the clumsiest. We'll turn every fishing boat, every pleasure craft and anything that floats in England, Ireland and Scotland into warships in disguise!

THOMAS: How?

JUAN: What do you mean how? With paint, cloth and wood. The stuff of Theater! In the East of England we're going to build a colossal fictitious army with hundreds of thousands of actors, more than thirty thousand rubber tanks and sixty thousand phony field tents for the liveliest, grandest, and fakest show every produced by mankind. An army that will invade with brilliant and fatal force at the only possible port! Calais!!!

SARAH: (TO THOMAS) I don't think Garbo's crazy, no he's downright delirious.

THOMAS: Yes! Isn't he wonderful?

(SARAH PICKS UP THE PHONE, SPEAKS)

THOMAS: Twenty thousand rubber tanks…Who can do that?

JUAN: Goodyear.

THOMAS:Damn, you're right.

JUAN: And last of all, we need a creative narrator, a master architect, like in Shakespeare. So let's give a warm welcome to Agent 7: "Dagobert," a retired sailor from Swansea. With a sub-network of up to seven agents!

THOMAS: Juan: you scare me.

SARAH: (PUTS DOWN PHONE) I just spoke to General Eisenhower: it's all been approved. SHAEF is underway. Full speed ahead!

(TENSE MUSIC. WE SEE PICTURES OF RUBBER TANKS, THE PHONY PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT ARMY IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND. NOW THE ABWEHR SIDE IS LIT UP, HIGHLIGHTING THE MAP OF EUROPE AND THE KAPITÄN)

JUAN: March 1st: We've sighted American soldiers in the east!

GUSTAV: The east?

JUAN: Troops are being trained to occupy Europe!

SARAH: Agent J5 has seen leaflets in Dutch that will be airdropped…

KAPITÄN: In Dutch…! Excellent! Congratulate the lovely J5, Arabel!

JUAN: She's my one and only. And she's brought me more: she says the Americans are growing impatient and want to invade Calais and head straight for Berlin.

SARAH: On March 7th!

JUAN: Agent Dagobert and his informants are reporting that units in the West are mobilizing to the East.

THOMAS: Dagobert thinks the invasion of Europe will have to come from Calais.

GUSTAV: Good work, Dagobert! We'll be waiting for them! By the way, Arabel, this Dagobert seems like one of the most reliable agents in your network.

JUAN: I think so too, though he's a very delicate, a bit sickly.

GUSTAV: Tell him to take care.

JUAN: He's eating a lot of chocolate. His aunt Helena, who lives on Grafton St., brings it to him.

THOMAS: Who the hell is Helena?

JUAN. Dagobert's aunt!

THOMAS: You're mad as a hatter!

SARAH: March 28th:

JUAN: Agent BENEDICT confirms naval exercises near Glasgow.

THOMAS: They're training for a possible invasion of Norway.

GUSTAV: Let's reinforce Norway!

SARAH: May 2nd:

JUAN: Agent J5, maybe to get my attention on the personal front, has suggested invasion is NOT imminent. NO INVASION.

SARAH: What?

THOMAS: This wasn't in our plan, Juan!

JUAN: A sniper always wants you to walk a straight line.

SARAH: What's he saying?

GUSTAV: Arabel: Don't trust her! Agent J5 is lying!

JUAN: I think I love her!

SARAH: Juan!

GUSTAV: No, this is not the time for distractions, Arabel!

THOMAS: This is not the time for improvisations, Garbo!

JUAN: She's sworn she loves me! "Federico" my friend, could you, as a personal favor, see in Berlin if there's any way the two of us could live out the rest of our days under the blue skies of the Reich and the fatherly hand of the Führer?

GUSTAV: Of course I will! We'll reward your efforts! And if she's who you want, even though we don't trust her the way you do, then we want her too!

JUAN: How sweet.

SARAH: Men are all such idiots. How is it you run the world? Let's get back to work…May 4th!

JUAN: Agent CAMILLUS has seen the 3rd Canadian Division set sail for Southampton.

GUSTAV: Canadians?

KAPITÄN: They're all meeting in the same place, sir!

SARAH: May 5th:

JUAN: Agent DORICK, 7.7 confirms the 6th American Tank Division is headed for Ipswich!

GUSTAV: They're coming, they're coming!! Inform high command, Kapitän. (TO GARBO) You see, Agent J5 was deceiving you. Do you still love her now that she's lied?

JUAN: (VERY SAD) You're right, my friend. She was telling me what I wanted to hear. And that's not all she lied about…She said she loved me, that she wanted to have my child…

SARAH: Patience!

JUAN: I think I'm going to leave her. But it hurts, Federico. Her betrayal hurts so much.

GUSTAV: Of course it does, but you'll get over it!

JUAN: We'll never live in Berlin with the fatherly hand of the Führer!

GUSTAV: Arabel, please!

JUAN: Or see the blue skies of the Reich!

SARAH: Garbo!

JUAN: Maybe I'll meet a German woman from the party. Do you think I can find a pretty Nazi who won't lie to me and who'll love me as I am?

SARAH: Idiot! Get on with the mission!

GUSTAV: The invasion is imminent Arabel!!!!

JUAN: That woman lies so well she scares me. Anyone who tells that many lies is dangerous. I think I need a…

ALL: ENOUGH!

(JUAN DROPS THE SUBJECT FINALLY)

SARAH: May 14th:

JUAN: Benedict reports that all is ready in Scotland and that the invasion of Norway will be launched soon.

GUSTAV: We'll send our U-boat fleet loaded with torpedoes! We'll put more submarines than the world has ever seen in the path of that Scottish armada!

SARAH: May 15th.

JUAN: Our best agent, Dagobert, reported something huge is happening tomorrow.

GUSTAV: Dagobert!

(JUAN DRESSES AS DAGOBERT. SARAH IS ABOUT TO ANNOUNCE THE DATE BUT JUAN STOPS HER)

JUAN: By the way, Agent Dagobert got lost for two days. Apparently he was with women of ill repute.

(AGAIN, DESPERATION FROM SARAH AND THOMAS)

GUSTAV: These English will be the end of Hitler!

JUAN: Don't worry. I reprimanded him. He assured me it was just a distraction but I think it shows a lack of character, don't you think?

GUSTAV: Forget about that! (PICKS UP PHONE) It's confirmed. The invasion is coming at Calais, in under a week!

OFFICER 2: Are you sure?

GUSTAV: It's coming from Arabel, confirmed by Dagobert, no less.

OFFICER 2: Dagobert! He's the best of them all!

GUSTAV: He even spent two days partying with women to celebrate his information. He wishes us luck.

OFFICER 2: That Dagobert! I like him better than Arabel, always whining and complaining. I'll report this right away to Colonel Friedrich Adolf Krummacher, at Wehrmact High Command.

KRUMMACHER: (SEES THE REPORT) Excellent! I'll take this to the Führer in Berchtesgaden. (MEETS WITH HITLER, WHO WE SEE IN THE SHADOWS) Mein Führer: our intelligence services have uncovered an imminent invasion.

HITLER: Move all heavy artillery from the West to the East! Reinforce our positions in Calais, Norway and even the Netherlands! I don't want a bug to fly through there without getting buzzed by our bullets!

KRUMMACHER: Right away. Heil Hitler!

HITLER: Heil Me!

(ON THE MI5 SIDE, AMUSED. JUAN HAS TAKEN OUT ANOTHER BOTTLE OF WHISKEY)

SARAH: This is no time for drinking, Juan.

JUAN: It's not for me, it's for Garbo.

SARAH: Very funny.

JUAN: Without technique, Garbo's not funny.

SARAH: And that's technique?

JUAN: In the network we call it Stanislavsky; it's what keeps an actor real. They call it the magic if.

SARAH: Drop the theatrics!

JUAN: Theatrics? Apparently she has no idea where she is.

(THOMAS AND JUAN DRINK. THEY OFFER THE BOTTLE TO SARAH, WHO REJECTS IT IN ANNOYANCE)

SARAH: This is not for me, but for J5 (TAKES A DRINK. THEY APPLAUD HER) Like Eisenhower said: artists, the dregs of the world!

THOMAS: And now, Garbo, we make our final thrust…

JUAN: June 3: Important information from agent DORICK, 7.7. Boats carrying American troops land at Norwich and the Scottish contingent is dispatching units to Ireland.

GUSTAV: Then the Norway expedition will be later.

JUAN. Maybe in July, says our Welsh fascist, 7.6. Agent J5 was right. By the way, we're back together.

GUSTAV: I'm sorry I doubted her. My apologies.

JUAN: Don't worry. J5 understands, but she asked me to remind you about our retirement under the blue skies of the Reich and the fatherly hand of the Führer.

GUSTAV: Consider it done!

(NOW JUAN AND THOMAS DRINK ALL THEY CAN. THEY PREPARE, AS IF TO SAY SOMETHING OF REAL MOMENT, LIKE TWO ACTORS ABOUT TO GIVE THE MONOLOGUE OF THEIR LIVES)

THOMAS: All right, the time has come. Places!

JUAN: The show must go on!

THOMAS: To be or not to be!

JUAN: The answer is "to be"

THOMAS: To be! And right now!

(PAUSE. ABSOLUTE SILENCE BROKEN BY JUAN)

JUAN: Monday, June 5th: report from agent ALMURA, 4.1

GUSTAV: From Benedict's ring!

JUAN: He says…

THOMAS: That ten American boats have landed at Liverpool.

(PAUSE)

GUSTAV: And?

JUAN: (AS IF HE WERE ABOUT TO RECITE A VERSE) And nothing more.

THOMAS: The rest is silence.

(PAUSE. SILENCE)

GUSTAV: Nothing more? (CALMS DOWN) All right. Good night, Arabel.

JUAN: Good night, Federico.

(LONG PAUSE. BOTH SIDES ARE PARALYZED. SARAH PICKS UP THE PHONE, NO HURRY. GUSTAV YAWNS. KAPITÄN WALKS HEAVILY)

KAPITÄN: Field Marshall Rommel has requested leave for tomorrow, June 6th, to attend his wife's birthday party.

GUSTAV: That's fine. Everything looks quiet.

KAPITÄN: General Spiedel from the Fifth Panzer Division has read the weather dispatch and requests a furlough for his troops today, June 6th.

GUSTAV: No problem, I'll notify Command.

KAPITÄN: General Friedrich Dollman has requested that the Seventh Army stationed in Le Mans take today, June 6th, for exercises and games with the soldiers who were on alert all last week.

GUSTAV: That sounds reasonable.

(SARAH HANGS UP THE PHONE. JUAN AND THOMAS LOOK AT HER, EXPECTANTLY)

SARAH: Our reconnaissance planes have reported that the German troops are waiting in Calais and Norway. And the rest are inactive. Now they won't have time to counterattack us in Normandy! (JUAN AND THOMAS EMBRACE HEARTILY. THEY DRINK AGAIN) Today, June 6th, 1944, at 0600 hours, we begin the invasion of Europe.

(NOW SARAH DRINKS TOO. WE SEE PICTURES OF THE INVASION OF NORMANDY. THOMAS AND SARAH, TO THE AUDIENCE)

THOMAS: 1,213 warships off the coasts of Normandy set ashore a first wave of 120,000 soldiers.

SARAH: 13,000 planes dump 5,200 tons of explosives in 13,600 flights.

THOMAS: 5,333 boats will arrive at the beaches of western France.

SARAH: Nearly 3 million people will take part in this operation.

THOMAS: And counting the two of us.

JUAN: Three million and two.

SARAH: Plus me, three million and three.

THOMAS: An invasion on this scale has never been attempted, Juan!

SARAH: And the enemy has no idea!

THOMAS: Never have so many lives been saved by a lie; a magnificent, epic, wonderful farse, like the one we created here!

(THEY EMBRACE. JUAN SITS. HE COMMUNICATES URGENTLY WITH GUSTAV WHO IS STARTLED AWAKE)

JUAN: URGENT: The Invasion of Europe is happening today, June 6th. And it's starting in three hours. It's confirmed!

GUSTAV: TODAY!!!

JUAN: Yes today…! (TO A NERVOUS THOMAS AND SARAH)…The third mission.

THOMAS: Right!

SARAH: Go ahead!

GUSTAV: Arabel!!! What's going on??

THOMAS: Be careful Juan, this will be the most important message you send during the entire war.

GUSTAV: Arabel!!! Are you there? Arabel, we need more information!!!

SARAH: (SEEING THAT JUAN IS DOING NOTHING) Do it now!

JUAN: Let them wait. Credibility requires a delay.

GUSTAV: Arabel!!! Talk to me!!!

JUAN: (TAKES A BREATH. BEGINS) …This invasion, on June 6th, is a diversion. CAMILLUS reports that only 20 of the 77 divisions at the ready will be used. The rest will be mobilized once

Germany moves its troops. The KLM pilot and Dagobert also confirm the invasion is a diversion. Agent J5 just came to me personally to attest to it: the move on Normandy today is a ploy by the Americans.

GUSTAV: Kapitän! Report this immediately!

KAPITÄN: Attention: hold your positions. Cancel all counterattacks on Normandy. Entrench your positions. The real assault is about to come, at…Belgium? Calais?

GUSTAV: Definitely!

KAPITÄN: (INTENSE) Kapitän Knittel: What Arabel has done for us is invaluable.

GUSTAV: Arabel has practically saved the entire Reich. (STANDS. THE NAZI ANTHEM PLAYS) Dear Arabel: it is with real pleasure that I write to inform you that the Führer himself, our beloved Adolf Hitler, has awarded you the "Iron Cross of the Third Reich" for your extraordinary services. A medal, which, as you know, is Germany's highest honor given only to soldiers in battle. Accept our warmest congratulations."

(THOMAS AND SARAH ARE SURPRISED)

SARAH: They gave you the Iron Cross?!

THOMAS: What's so special about this Arabel?!

JUAN: (TO GUSTAV, MELODRAMATIC) I don't know what to say. I'm overcome by emotion. Words cannot express my gratitude for the honor bestowed on me by my Führer, who I have always loved, respected and admired. Thank you!

(GUSTAV SHOWS HIM THE "IRON CROSS" MEDAL. JUAN SALUTES HIM)

JUAN: (SUDDENLY, TO SARAH) Do you think they can send it to me?

THOMAS: Do you really want to have the medal?

JUAN: It's an important recognition.

THOMAS: That you did them over!

SARAH: Juan… Just tell me one thing…

(JUAN EXPECTS A SCOLDING)

SARAH: What's it feel like to save the world?

(PAUSE. JUAN IS MOVED BUT CONTROLS HIMSELF)

JUAN: I don't know. Ask Thomas. Because Garbo without Thomas and Thomas without Garbo, would've been impossible.

(THOMAS GOES TO HIM AND THEY EMBRACE. THEN THOMAS PINS AN IMAGINARY AWARD TO JUAN'S LAPEL)

THOMAS: Here, before they can give you the Nazi Iron Cross or the MBE, first I'm going to give you this imaginary Medal of William Shakespeare Award for Best Actor to our theatrical genius: GARBO!!!!

(GARBO ACCEPTS IT AND IS TRULY MOVED. THEY EMBRACE AGAIN)

JUAN: The nicest…the best…the most thrilling part of the whole day.

(KISSES THE IMAGINARY STAMP AND SHOWS IT TO THEM ALL. ON SCREEN, WE SEE IT IN DETAIL. IT IS A PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, KNOWN AS THE "DROESHOUT PORTRAIT," THE SAME ONE THAT APPEARED IN THE FRONTISPIECE OF THE FIRST FOLIO IN 1623. MUSIC)

4

Loud music. The whole stage breaks into celebration. Images of the end of the war. Onstage, Juan.

JUAN: On May 7th, 1945, Picadilly was the center of the end-of-war festivities and neither Garbo nor Arabel ever sent another message.

(WE ENTER THE AREA OF JUAN'S HOUSE, JUAN AT THE CENTER, BESIDE HIM ALEX AND TOMÁS)

ALEX: Why didn't you stay there, Grandpa?

JUAN: I thought the war would continue against the Russians and they'd take reprisals against me. That the Nazis, once they found out what I'd done, would hunt me down and liquidate me. In any case, to be sure, I took the risk and went to see "Federico" in Madrid.

ALEX: You went to see the Nazis!

TOMAS: You were nuts!

JUAN: I wanted to see if they still believed in Arabel.

(MUSIC. LIGHTS. GUSTAV APPEARS)

GUSTAV: Arabel! How have you been? You look marvelous. Do you have a place to hide out?

JUAN: I plan to go to Africa.

GUSTAV: We're all fleeing like rats. The death of our dear leader has scattered us all. Nothing like losing! Huh? How are the others?

JUAN: The others?

GUSTAV: The KLM pilot, Mrs. Gerbers, Benedict, good old Camillus and Dagobert, especially him. What's become of them?

JUAN: Dagobert fled. The pilot crashed. Widow Gerbers remarried. Benedict disappeared. And the rest of the subagents are getting by the best they can.

GUSTAV: And Agent J5?

JUAN: When the promise of the blue skies of the Reich and the Führer's fatherly hand didn't pan out she left me for an American.

GUSTAV: (LOOKS FOR A FILE) Look, Arabel! I've got copies of some of your messages here. Sometimes late at night I reread them and remember it all. We sent each other 315 letters and over 500

coded messages! What a great job we did, Arabel! Our great work alone would have won the war! If we lost it was because of those lousy generals. All they did was fawn over the Führer. Arabel, do you think you can help me escape to South America?

JUAN: I'll ask Camillus; maybe he can help you.

GUSTAV: Yes, and Dagobert. He was always so loyal to us. (JUAN SHAKES HIS HAND, LEAVING) By the way, before you go, Arabel, I have something important for you…A message from the Reich…(JUAN THINKS HE'LL PULL A GUN FROM THE BOX AND SHOOT HIM, BUT HE HANDS HIM A WAD OF BILLS) It's money the Party sent for you before the war ended, as symbolic payment for your considerable efforts and for you to count on the rise of the IV Reich.

(JUAN TAKES THE MONEY AND THEY SAY GOODBYE. MUSIC. LIGHTS. JUAN RETURNS TO THE CARACAS-1984 AREA)

JUAN: So my double identity was safe.

ALEX: Didn't it make you sad to see "Federico" acting so pathetic?

JUAN: Not at all. That my victims praised me for my duplicity was my reward. It's like going to the theater: the artists make us cry and the more they move us, the more we applaud them.

ALEX: And they never found out about you, Grandpa?

JUAN: All those agents died without ever knowing I'd double crossed them. Still, MI5 decided to send me on a secret mission to Angola where I got malaria and died. But it didn't hurt, though I did feel a little sad. Especially because that was when Araceli decided to leave me too. I think, like almost all of us, she couldn't take the stress of what we did, the pressure of freedom, the dizzy speed of peace. In one penstroke, Arabel and Garbo had died and I was all alone. In the summer of 1946, I came to Caracas.

ALEX: Why, Grandpa?

JUAN: The weather, the way the landscape's always green, the birds and their habits, Paez Avenue with its trees and grand old houses. The mountain facing the house that eventually became the site of the Pinar zoo. I met your grandmother, who by the way was like a lion's roar in the mornings: a real spitfire with a passion for life. I learned to shower each day to the trumpeting of elephants; and drink my tea in the afternoon just before the hippo left his pond. In Venezuela, I left the action behind; on the beaches of the Caribbean I stopped

fighting for freedom; the sun and music of Caracas soothed my ideals; with these people I stopped looking at the abyss.

ALEX: So what are you going to do, Grandpa? You said you'd take a week to think about going back to London. And it's been seven days now.

TOMÁS: Will you go back? Because they all want to thank you for what you did.

JUAN: (NERVOUS) What do you want me to do?

ALEX: We want you back! And I want everyone to know how the most boring man in the world changed history.

TOMÁS: Caracas doesn't know anyone like you.

ALEX: This country has no idea what it's been holding in its heart for 36 years.

JUAN: (EXCITED) So, that's what you want? For me to come out, be revealed?

ALEX: Yes, for you to be recognized!

JUAN: Aren't I too old for that?

TOMÁS: The world is old, Grandpa. You're just being born!

(ENTER ALL THE ACTORS. JUAN STEPS ONTO A STAGE. BEHIND HIM WE SEE PICTURES OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE)

ALEX: The most boring grandfather in the world went to London.

TOMÁS: He became the only human being to ever receive the two highest honors from two enemy armies.

LUIS: The Nazi Iron Cross

ALEX: And Member of the Order of the British Empire.

LUIS: One for Arabel

TOMÁS: And the other for Garbo.

LUIS: The head of MI5 quoted General Eisenhower…

EISENHOWER: "The course of our victory in Normandy hinged on one single fact: that the Fifteenth German Army was never mobilized. The real Nazi power remained waiting for a fictitious invasion against the Pas-de-Calais. And while they were waiting for

our lies, we made it all the way to Paris! Those responsible for this strategy, the Counterespionage Secret Service, acted as if they were a real armored division of fifty thousand soldiers, but actually they were only a few agents. They deserve enormous credit, credit that some day they should receive…"

(WE HEAR THE LION)

CYRIL HARRIS: "The greatest deception of the war wasn't a lie. Rather, it was an entire society that existed only in one man's imagination"

(LUIS LEAVES. THEME MUSIC. ALEX & THOMAS, TO THE AUDIENCE)

ALEX: Grandpa Juan Pujol García died in Caracas three years after accepting the thanks of the world.

TOMÁS: And just like he always wanted we laid him to rest in his favorite place.

ALEX: The beaches at Choroní.

TOMÁS: In Aragua State, in Venezuela.

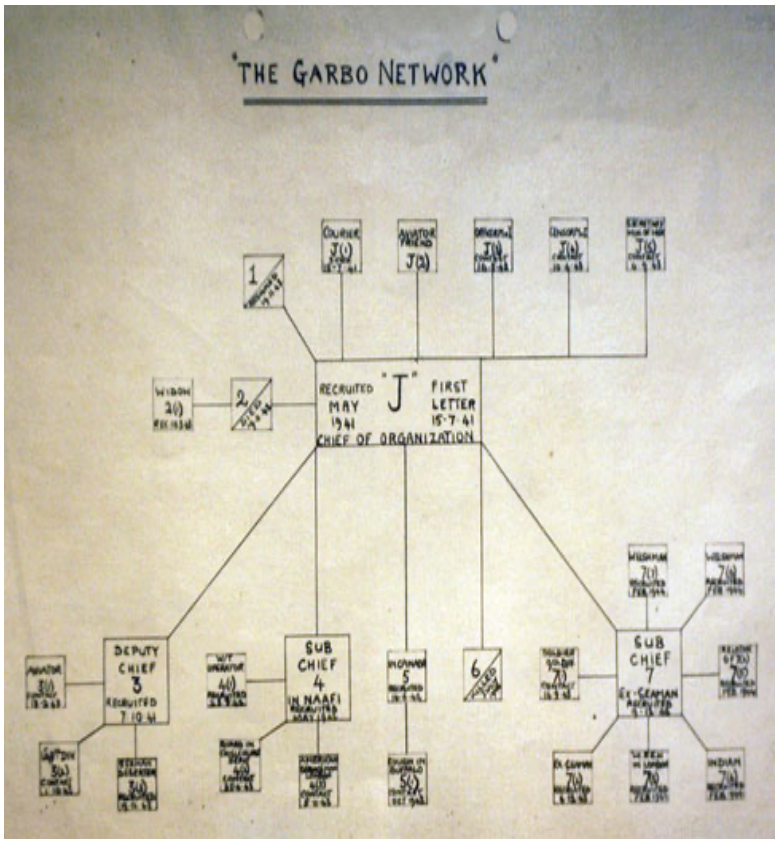
ALEX: He's still there. Telling stories. Making up people. Mixing things up. Fooling the best minds.

(ALEX AND TOMÁS EXIT. JUAN REMAINS LIT)

JUAN: Honestly, I just wanted to do theater…

(THEME MUSIC)

Blackout.


'THE GARBO NETWORK'
RECRUITED MAY 1941
"J"
FIRST LETTER 15-7-41
CHIEF OF ORGANIZATION
DEPUTY CHIEF 3 RECRUITED 7.10.41
SUB CHIEF 4 IN NAAFI
SUB CHIEF 7 EX-GERMAN