

Le Jeu Espion

(The Spy Game)

by

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Le Jeu Espion

The Spy Game

CAST

Obersturmbannführer SCHWICK - A German SS Officer.

Oberfähnrich BÖHM – Schwick’s Aide de camp.

MADAM M – a French Resistance worker.

ETIENNE– a street artist. Also working for the Resistance, and is a girl dressed as a man.

Her Moustache keeps falling off.

DICKIE – A British spy under cover as a Paris Policeman. His French is badly pronounced.

HENRI – A Café owner. Working for the Resistance.

ROCHELLE – A waitress in the café. Also involved in the Resistance.

ALEXEI– A Russian spy

LORENZO – An Italian spy

SCENE: A street scene in Paris along the Seine, with the Eiffel Tower in the background, and a café stage right.

Schwick is sitting at a table in the café reading a newspaper.

Madam M is trying to look inconspicuous upstage center.

Ettienne is upstage left with his painting easel, paints, some finished works surrounding, and a couple of rolled up paintings in cylindrical canisters.

Alexei is sitting at another table.

Lorenzo is looking at Etienne’s paintings

SOUND FX: In the dark, sounds from WWII – an air raid siren, a few bomb blasts in the distance, fades to French music and birds singing as lights come up.

ENTER Böhm. *She walks quickly up to Schwick’s table and salutes.*

BÖHM

Obersturmbannführer Schwick.

SCHWICK

[puts newspaper down and looks up]

Ah... Oberfähnrich Böhm...

[all on stage yell “Bomb?” and start to take cover]

BÖHM

Apologies, Obersturmbannführer Schwick...

It happens all the time.

SCHWICK

Hmph....well, have a seat, Oberfähnrich Böhm...

[all on stage yell "Bomb?" and start to take cover]

SCHWICK

[to all around]

Verdammt! It is her NAME!!

[While this is going on Madam M has been looking decidedly suspicious, sidles up to Rochelle and they talk while trying to eavesdrop on the German's conversation]

[Schwick and Böhm sit]

SCHWICK

What can you tell me, Oberfähnrich B.....

[stops himself before saying her name]

[Rochelle sidles up with coffee – comic sequence as Böhm wants to start talking but Rochelle is obviously trying to listen in. Rochelle moves away then closer, Böhm gives her a look, then Rochelle ducks away, only to sidle up again etc

Eventually Böhm gives her a solid warning look and Rochelle moves away]

BÖHM

[Conspirational]

The British attack plans are coded into a work of art.....

A lesser known work by the lesser known half-Italian half-English artist - Portocello-Smyth,
Called the "Singing Bovines".

SCHWICK

[loudly]

The Singing Bovines?

[Böhm shushes him]

BÖHM

Italian and British....what can you expect, Herr Obersturmbannführer.

SCHWICK

Where IS this, painting?

BÖHM

It is at present, in the possession of yonder Artist. His name is Etienne, and he has orders to pass the painting on to the French Resistance.

SCHWICK

When is this transfer to happen?

BÖHM

According to our intelligence, it should happen today.

SCHWICK

[standing]

Then we shall be ready to steal it, Oberfähnrich Böhm!

[all on stage yell "Bomb?" and start to take cover]

[DICKIE enters stage left and saunters along to CS]

SCHWICK

You must keep a close watch. It is time for my visit wither....for my daily communication from the Führer.

(They both stand and Schwick exits, Böhm sits and reads the paper)

[MADAM M sidles up to DICKIE CS].

MADAM M

Good evening Dickie.

DICKIE

[looks around concerned]

Doh nert cawl me by that nerm here! I am nert a Brightish spy! I am a Paris Policemern, by the nerm of Deeekeee.

Gode ervening to you.

MADAM M

Well, Deeekeee, I have some important information

[HENRI joins them quickly, wiping hands on a dish towel].

HENRI

My goodness, the Jerries are out in full force this evening! My café is full of them. I have had to open the last cask of '38 just to keep them inebriated! Something must be afoot!

MADAM M

Indeed you are right, Henri. Much is afoot.

Now listen carefully! I shall say this, and once only...

[all three lean in closer, they see ALEXEI approaching, so they turn and walk USC. Henri back to cafe]

ALEXEI has risen and has been trying to overhear the conversation, but as they turn he quickly looks disinterested – backs up towards stage left and bumps into LORENZO coming from the other direction.

ALEXEI

Lorenzo! What are you doing here?

LORENZO

Not that it is any business of the Kremlin, but I am on vacation!

ALEXEI

A 'vacation' I am sure, paid for by "Il Duce" Mussolini, no doubt!

LORENZO

Not that it is any business of the Kremiln, but because of our long 'association', I shall tell you.

[they move closer]

There is activity afoot!

ALEXEI

We hear so too. But what exactly IS it that is afoot?

LORENZO

Our intelligence reports are unsure. But the 'Resistance' is here *[indicates Madam M]* so it should soon be revealed.

ALEXEI

Come, Comrade, you will buy me a drink while we wait.

LORENZO

Que sera sera.

[both walk to the café. Lorenzo sees Böhm and it is obvious he is besotted with her.]

ALEXEI

You are not still swooning over that German Frauline, are you?

LORENZO

She is....Bellisimo!

ALEXEI

You fool, she is dangerous! She knows ten different ways to cut your throat!

LORENZO

Magnifico!!

[Alexei shakes his head and steers Lorenzo to a table, where Lorenzo sits making sure he can still see Böhm]

[Henri takes a cup of coffee to Etienne]

HENRI

Caroline! Here is some coffee for you, you must be thirsty.

ETIENNE

Henri! Sshhhh! I am NOT 'Caroline'! I am undercover as the street artist, Etienne!

[adjusts false moustache]

HENRI *[rolling eyes]*

Very well, very well. I'm sure 'Etienne' will enjoy a cup of coffee as much as 'Caroline'.

[he steps back and knocks the art canisters over]

Mon Dieu! I nearly broke my neck! What ARE these?

ETIENNE

[trying to gather up the cylinders]

Just paintings that have been bought, ready for postage.

[Etienne is trying to identify a specific cylinder]

HENRI

But you are not even a real artist! What paintings could you possibly....

[Etienne gives Henri a warning look]

Oh....OH....

ETIENNE

Now Henri! Look what you have done!

[Böhm sees this and quickly exits]

HENRI

What have I done?

ETIENNE

The Portocello-Smyth painting of the Singing Bovines....I don't know which one it IS!

HENRI

The what of the what?

ETIENNE

The...oh, never mind!

We are in BIG trouble!

HENRI

So, you have lost a little painting.

ETIENNE

Not just ANY painting!

[MADAM M saunters over followed by Dickie]

Good evening, artist painting next to the Seine whom I do not know at all.

ETTIENNE

Bonsoir Madam, could I interest you in a painting?

MADAM M

(In exaggerated whisper)

The frog croaks loudly....

ETIENNE

...But only in the spring.

[all gather closer]

MADAM M

Do you have ze painting?

ETIENNE

Not exactly....

DICKIE

Whote do you mean, Note exectly?

HENRI

A small 'retard'....

DICKIE

How der you cowl me small....and a retard!!

MADAM M

No, Dickie, 'Retard' is French for 'delay'!

HENRI *[deciding to get Dickie out of the way]*

Might I interest you in some coffee in my café....on the house?

DICKIE

Note that owfell ground acorn pooder that passes as cowffee in wer tern Paris?

HENRI

No, no *[whispers]* I have saved a special South American brew, for a special occasion.

[D & M head towards the café while Henri has a word with Etienne. Dickie enters the café (exiting SR)]

HENRI

I have bought you some time! You had better find the painting! *(runs after Dickie and exits into café)*

[Etienne starts trying to sort out the paintings in the cylinders while Alexei and Lorenzo saunter over]

ETIENNE

Can I interest you in....

ALEXEI

The frog croaks loudly.....

ETTIENNE

[suspiciously]

...But only in the spring

LORENZO

Hand it over!

ETIENNE

Look, I don't know what is going on, but I can't find it!

LORENZO

Can't find what?

ALEXEI

Typical French incompetence!

ETIENNE

Wait a minute, what do you, an Italian, and a Russian want with the painting?

LORENZO ANDE ALEXEI

A painting?

ETIENNE

Yes, the lesser known work by the lesser known half-Italian half-English artist - Portocello-Smyth,
Called the "Singing Bovines".
What would you want with it?

LORENZO

I could not say.

ALEXEI

Neither could I.

ETIENNE

Then I cannot help you!

LORENZO

We should think about this!

ALEXEI

Agreed. You shall buy me a drink

LORENZO

But no more acorn coffee

ALEXEI

We need something stronger!

[they walk back to the cafe where Alexei produces a bottle]