

# DAUGHTERS OF WATERLOO

*by R.W. Schneider*



## *Dramatis Personae*

EDITH	44
HALEY	19
NAPOLEON	45
CHARLOTTE	21
WELLINGTON	46

*A pronunciation guide will be found at the end.*

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## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

*FEBRUARY 2: A DRAWING ROOM ON FIFTH AVENUE*

*FEBRUARY 19: PALACIO I MULINI, ELBA (AN ISLAND OFF THE COAST OF ITALY).*

*MARCH 8: THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA*

*MARCH 7: A MOUNTAIN PASS IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE*

*AT THE SAME MOMENT: IN NEW YORK*

*MARCH 20: THE TUILLERIES PALACE, PARIS*

*MAY 25: ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, BRUSSELS*

*MAY 27: THE CHAMP DE MARS, PARIS*

*ABOUT THE SAME TIME: THREE UNDEFINED SPACES*

*JUNE 15: NAPOLEON'S FIELD HEADQUARTERS ON THE ROAD TO BRUSSELS*

*A FEW HOURS LATER: WELLINGTON'S BASEMENT KITCHEN IN BRUSSELS,*

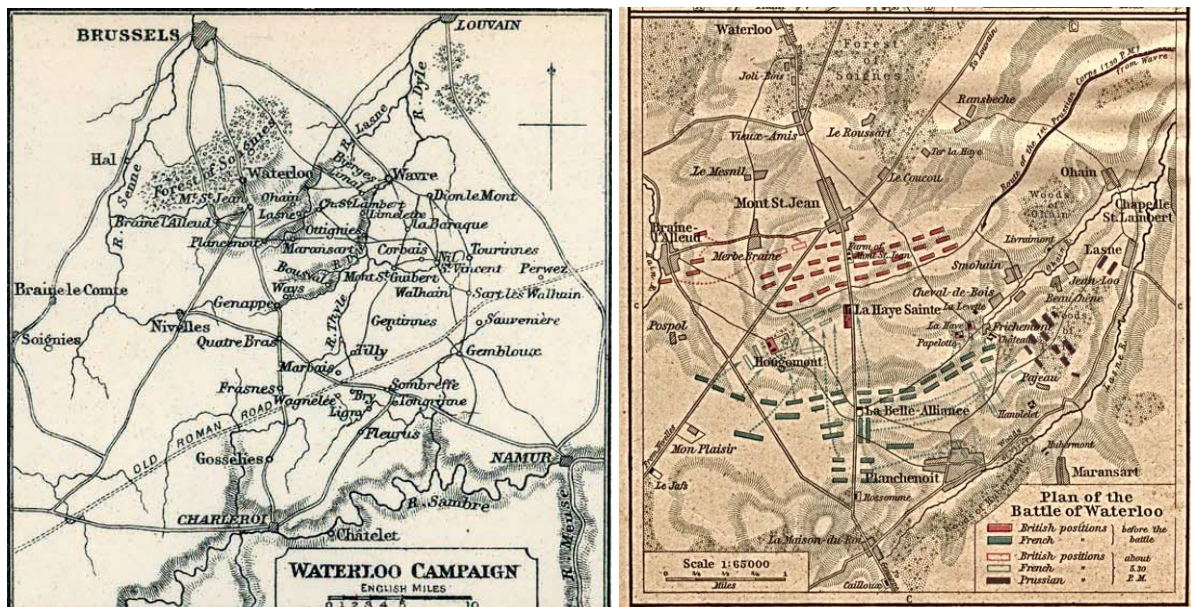
*JUNE 17: PARIS / BRUSSELS / LIGNEY (SIMULTANEOUS SCENES)*

*NAPOLEON'S TENT JUST SOUTH OF WATERLOO*

*JUNE 18: HOURS BEFORE DAWN – WELLINGTON'S DREAM*

*JUNE 18: A ROOM AT THE INN IN GENAPPES*

*THE BATTLEFIELD OF WATERLOO, FOUR DAYS LATER*



ONE

PROJECTION: *THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO WAS FOUGHT ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 18, 1815.*

PROJECTION: *FEBRUARY 2: A DRAWING ROOM ON FIFTH AVENUE*

*Edith, 44, is dressed as a fashionable lady of society would be in 1905. Haley, 19, wears a traditional riding suit -- jodhpurs and boots -- set off with a few anachronistic touches, perhaps a sweatband and headphones. A half-packed steamer trunk stands on the floor between them.*

EDITH

Balls are quite the thing, I'm told. You'll need dancing shoes.

HALEY

Like I really want to go dancing with a bunch of creepers.

EDITH

You needn't dance, but you should have the right shoes.

HALEY

Who is this guy really?

EDITH

A very old friend whose position requires him to travel. We've corresponded for many years. He's often expressed an interest in your welfare.

HALEY

You never talk about him.

EDITH

Haven't I? I'm sure I have.

HALEY

And he wants me to do what, exactly?

EDITH

He has many social engagements as part of his work. He needs someone to accompany him, someone who knows how to behave and who won't cause gossip.

HALEY

And that's *me*? You're kidding, right?

EDITH

The difference in your ages will obviate commentary, I should think.

How old is he?  
HALEY

Forty-six.  
EDITH

That's not *old*.  
HALEY

Thank you for that.  
EDITH

Mom, you know what I mean.  
HALEY

Precisely. You'll need at least a dozen gowns.  
EDITH

Is this guy a perv?  
HALEY

An Etonian, I believe.  
EDITH

Doesn't he have a wife?  
HALEY

His duchess is not active in society.  
EDITH

Whoa! The guy's a *duke*?  
HALEY

First duke of Wellington.  
EDITH

(Pause.)

HALEY  
I don't know if this gig is for me. It could be cool to be in a new city -- but on the other hand, I don't know anybody there. I don't speak the language. I won't know where to hang out.

EDITH  
You'll have a great success. Everybody speaks French – or almost everybody.

HALEY  
I wish you hadn't just gone and said I'd go...

EDITH

Well staying holed up here with your sketch pad and Mr. Archer won't do at all, will it? You'll never get a husband that way, however much you protest that a husband is not what you want.

HALEY

I don't. I mean really *not*. If I went, it wouldn't be for that.

EDITH

Surely you wouldn't do it just to please me? Gestures made from a sense of obligation rarely lead to anything of value. Look at Teddy!

HALEY

I feel bad. You've paid for everything...

EDITH

It's my pleasure. It's perfectly normal.

HALEY

So I don't *have* to go? You won't make me?

EDITH

Certainly not! I don't have any authority over you. A young woman should be free to lead her own life and find her own place in society.

HALEY

So...

EDITH

The only influence I might have is what I *continue* to pay for. I paid for Vassar. I paid for Paris. I paid for that gentleman's services, what is it you call him, "the shrink"? I paid for your internship...

HALEY

Hey, *they* paid *me*!

EDITH

They paid you with *my* money -- not that I'm complaining. There are very few ways a girl can make money of her own.

HALEY

But waltzing with creepers is one of them?

EDITH

Well the gentleman can't go unaccompanied. Wouldn't you like to change out of your riding costume?

HALEY

What about Mr. Archer?

EDITH

Mr. Archer will understand. Have you broken the news to him?

HALEY

I'm still not sure I'm going.

EDITH

What would you *prefer* to do, Haley? You have no prospects in New York that I'm aware of. Nobody seems much interested in you. I'm sorry to put it so bluntly, but that is the case, isn't it?

HALEY

I guess.

EDITH

When one suffers a social reversal, one seeks a place to regroup. Vienna seems like just such a place.

HALEY

When I graduated I thought there'd be offers, you know?

EDITH

One never knows in advance. The best "offers" I had came when I least expected them.

HALEY

Like when?

EDITH

When I was your age, perhaps a little older, travelling through Burgundy – that's a region in France...

HALEY

I know!

EDITH

Whilst staying at an inn in Auxonne, I met a young lieutenant of artillery at dinner. I blush to think of it now, but he was... iridescent!

HALEY

So... good artillery.

EDITH

The memory glows in my mind like a sunset prolonged and repeated -- as it might be for one moving westward down a series of foothills and across a series of dales.

HALEY

You should write that down.

EDITH

He had a temperament to conquer continents: energetic, inventive... passionate! He wore me as he did the tricolor cockade on his hat -- proud, yet tender!

HALEY

Gonna be in Scribner's Magazine for sure... with all the names and places changed.

EDITH

When you have memories worth recording, *then* you can mock mine.

HALEY

I've got some. Some memories.

EDITH

You should write them; they'll be precious to you one day. I regret that my early attempts at a diary were so fitful and scant.

HALEY

Doesn't anything count *before* you write it?

EDITH

No. Not for me.

HALEY

I wish I had what you have: a way of making *you* out of everything. (*Edith smiles.*) Does Teddy know about the lieutenant?

EDITH

I've been married to Mr. Wharton for many years, but that's the extent of our intimacy. I don't confide in him where matters of the heart are concerned. You'd better take the riding costume; you may need it.

HALEY

But Mr. Archer is staying here!

EDITH

There are horses in Europe! After a debutant season such as yours it will be an agreeable change to be introduced to whole horses.

HALEY

Were you in love with the lieutenant?

EDITH

I was passionately in love for a month... all the way down the Rhone and over to Toulon: my first view of the Mediterranean! We went punting in the Calanques! Then orders came and we were separated. Ours was a *coup de foudre* – we never allowed the vines of domesticity to curl about our feet.

HALEY

What did you do afterwards?

EDITH

We went on living, of course. He went to war and I went to Wimbledon.

HALEY

And you never saw him again?

EDITH

We've corresponded. His career has been quite brilliant. Indeed, several of the friends I met on that trip have distinguished themselves in the military -- including the gentleman in Vienna.

HALEY

He's a soldier? I thought he was, like, a diplomat.

EDITH

Arthur Wellesley *was* a soldier. Now he's a diplomat -- quite well-placed in both domains.

HALEY

I get it! You're sending me off to find a lieutenant of my own! I struck out as a deb, so you're sending me to Europe to have a love affair and come back all *foreignized* -- with an air of mystery and rumors of "a past" -- a princess in flight! Is that what you're up to?

EDITH

Don't be theatrical, Haley. A theatrical delivery usually conceals a weak text.

HALEY

But the nitty-gritty is you want me to have a love affair, but not in New York.

EDITH

I want you to have a life of scintillating experiences.

HALEY

Sure.

EDITH

Only take care of your reputation. Gossip can be fatal. The most innocent attentions can be misconstrued.



HALEY

Wait a minute: you say to follow my heart and find my lieutenant...

EDITH

I want you to have that happiness -- even if it's not, actually, with a lieutenant.

HALEY

But you're also saying to follow the rules and worry what people will say.

EDITH

Yes.

HALEY

Isn't that, like, a total contradiction?

EDITH

Yes.

HALEY

"Go for it, but don't let people talk."

EDITH

A lively exchange between relative strangers can easily devolve to flirting.

HALEY

You think that's gonna be a problem?

EDITH

It might be.

HALEY

Look, Mom... Seriously, who's gonna flirt with me? I got the degree and I failed to launch. No special skills. I mean -- I'm *nothing*.

*(Edith takes her hands, one after another, and holds them.)*

EDITH

Dear girl... Perhaps there's a chance for you in this?

HALEY

I guess.

EDITH

You should finish packing. Mr. Frome will take you to the steamer in the motor car. I would accompany you, of course, but Mr. James is coming to discuss my new chapter.

HALEY

Oh.

EDITH

So you'll give it a try?

HALEY

I don't have a choice, do I?

EDITH

Not really. (*Pause.*) You will write, won't you? I do look forward to your letters.

TWO

PROJECTION: *FEBRUARY 19. PALACIO I MULINI, ELBA (AN ISLAND OFF THE COAST OF ITALY).*

*Napoleon, 46, is not on horseback but moves as if carried by a restless beast. He wears a Guards uniform and a grey riding coat. Charlotte, 21, faces him at dueling distance. The effect of her military uniform is softened by a nylon book bag on her back and a pair of Converse All-stars on her feet.*

Well? CHARLOTTE

Well what? NAPOLEON

Did you get it? CHARLOTTE

Yes, I received it. Of course I received it. NAPOLEON

Well? CHARLOTTE

This is not the good moment. NAPOLEON

I knew you'd say that! I *knew* it! CHARLOTTE

The English Commissioner is visiting an ear doctor on the mainland. He will not return before the 28th. NAPOLEON

Do I need the English Commissioner's permission? He's your jailer, not mine. CHARLOTTE

He is *not* my jailer. My sovereignty on Elba is absolute, but the English Commissioner's eyes – and his defective ear -- are the eyes and ears of the reactionary powers whose leaders are meeting in Vienna at this very moment to destroy all that we have achieved. NAPOLEON

What's that got to do with me and Michael? CHARLOTTE

Look out the window – there, in the port. What do you see? NAPOLEON

CHARLOTTE

Duh, ships? I could be wrong.

NAPOLEON

Count them.

CHARLOTTE

Wow, I've never seen six at the same time.

NAPOLEON

We're borrowing them. When another arrives, you and your regiment will accompany me to France. We will chase away the Bourbon king and his pack of fawning *émigrés*. With your help, I shall regain my throne.

CHARLOTTE

That's why you doubled our rations! You needed cover for the extra supplies coming in!

NAPOLEON

My Charlotte is more perceptive than my quartermaster.

CHARLOTTE

So when the Commissioner comes back from the ear doctor...

NAPOLEON

...the Eagle will have flown.

CHARLOTTE

How do you know he won't come back early?

NAPOLEON

I invited him to a ball on the 28th. He changed his plans to please me.

CHARLOTTE

That's really smart!

NAPOLEON

Merci, ma petite.

CHARLOTTE

You're going to take back France with just my regiment?

NAPOLEON

And Cambronne's – and the Polish Lancers.

CHARLOTTE

A thousand men?

NAPOLEON

And two cannon! Against Louis and his army of turncoat whelps, that will suffice.

CHARLOTTE

Howya gonna do it?

NAPOLEON

Cambronne has the maps; he can brief you. We avoid the garrison in Marseilles which is infested with royalist lice. Otherwise we improvise. The people and the army love me. They have no trust for the Bourbons. So this is not the good moment for you to go gallivanting to Rhode Island.

CHARLOTTE

It's not gallivanting! He wants me to come.

NAPOLEON

Exactly! It's a *voyage d'agrément*, a lark. It amazes me that you can't see that! To me it's utterly transparent.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, well you're you.

NAPOLEON

It's a feint, a diversion! If you wish to command, you must make distinction between the feints and the main chance.

CHARLOTTE

It's a chance for me.

NAPOLEON

It's a diversion at a crucial moment when I need you with me.

CHARLOTTE

I love him.

NAPOLEON

You mentioned that in your letter.

CHARLOTTE

Well? Isn't that important?

NAPOLEON

No, it changes nothing. You have no notion of what the moment requires. You discover this thing, this love -- this splendid madness! You think you are the first to know it?

CHARLOTTE

I never said I was the first.

NAPOLEON

You think I've never suffered from such derangements? That my vision has never been clouded by love?

CHARLOTTE

You're gonna tell me about Josephine -- or maybe about mom.

NAPOLEON

Don't tell me what I will say! But yes, I have loved. Not once, but many times.

CHARLOTTE

Were you happier?

NAPOLEON

That's not the point. Listen to me, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

I'm listening.

NAPOLEON

Granted, you love this Michael. *Alors?* Does that mean you desert me?

CHARLOTTE

We want to be together.

NAPOLEON

You are such a child!

CHARLOTTE

I'm a child. He's a child. We want to grow up together.

*(Pause)*

NAPOLEON

You can have gold. And a step: you'll be *capitaine*. *Eh, ma petite capitaine?*

CHARLOTTE

I don't think rank matters in America.

NAPOLEON

Rank matters everywhere. So does gold.

CHARLOTTE

So does love.

NAPOLEON

I don't need you in Rhode Island. I need you in the advance guard, scouting the route, securing the bridges. I need intelligence.

CHARLOTTE

You expect intelligence from me? I'm a child! I have *no notion* -- and you want to promote me?

NAPOLEON

Perhaps I am insane. You are not the first to think it. I have promoted men who were almost illiterate. Masséna was the son of a shopkeeper. He rose through the ranks to become a Marshall of France!

CHARLOTTE

I'm no good in the advance guard. I'm only good to go to Michael. It's like I received a sign. It's like I'm guided from above!

NAPOLEON

Only a fool trusts to providence.

CHARLOTTE

It's the state capital!

NAPOLEON

You are not a fool.

CHARLOTTE

Yes I am! I'm a fool and I'm going!

NAPOLEON

First help me get to Paris. When that's done, the kings and princes will let us breathe!

CHARLOTTE

Aren't they letting us breathe here? Didn't they send us to Elba so everybody could breathe?

NAPOLEON

*I chose Elba. I chose to abdicate!*

CHARLOTTE

Whatever.

NAPOLEON

If we let them, Louis and the Bourbons will take France back to the middle ages.

CHARLOTTE

Mom would let me go. Why don't you ask her?

*(Pause)*

NAPOLEON

You have not mentioned your mother since the invasion of Russia – not once.

CHARLOTTE

Why don't you ask her?

*(There's a ringtone: "La Marseillaise." Charlotte fishes out her phone and looks at it.)*

CHARLOTTE

It's Cambronne.

*(She hands it to her father and reminds him how to take the call.)*

NAPOLEON

Yes, Cambronne? ..... A frigate, you say? ..... Excellent! The new ship is to take water and stores immediately. The crew is not to disperse about the island. The crews of the other ships are to be rounded up. Another thing, Cambronne, you will brief *la petite* on the invasion and show her the political intelligence from Paris. She's to have 5000 francs and a step to *capitaine*, but no leave! *Compris?* ..... *Ciao*, Cambronne. *(He returns the telephone.)* Thank you.

CHARLOTTE

Providence, dad? Providence! Don't be such an egotist!

NAPOLEON

You call me "egotist" because I put my face on coins, but *you* are the egotist: you behave as if this wondrous phenomenon of life on earth were just for you. Yes, you tolerate the presence of other people and even move aside to let them pass; but that is mere politeness, an acknowledgement that the private party of your activities is taking place on a regrettably public planet. You are quite content to stuff yourself at the world's banquet and leave the dishes for someone else. You should learn, my little egoist, that thinking well means thinking for everybody. If there's going to be a party, all the world should be invited, not you and Michael only.

CHARLOTTE

Please let me go. Please?

NAPOLEON

We shall leave Elba together, *ma petite*. After that, we shall see.



THREE

PROJECTION: *MARCH 8: THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA.*

*Wellington is in uniform. Haley wears her riding suit with a kitchen apron thrown over one shoulder. They are waltzing.*

WELLINGTON

ONE, two, three... ONE, two, three... ONE, two, three... COUNT, with, me... COUNT, with, me...

HALEY

It's no use!

WELLINGTON

IT'S, no, use... IT'S, no, use... STAY, with, me... STAY, with, me...

HALEY

You keep going one way when I want to go another!

WELLINGTON

That's because I'm leading.

HALEY

Mr. Metternich did the same thing! He had a mind of his own that guy! Made this crack about young America breaking away...

WELLINGTON

You didn't allow him to lead?

HALEY

No. Why should I?

WELLINGTON

*Prince Metternich is the Foreign Minister of Austria and the host of the Congress; you expect him to take direction?*

HALEY

He could take a bath.

WELLINGTON

Oh my goodness... I'm at fault, my dear. I should have explained all this.

HALEY

So explain already.

WELLINGTON

Austria's position in the Alliance is central both geographically and diplomatically. The Tsar wants a corridor across Saxony which only Austria is in a position to deny. If Alexander isn't held behind a Saxon barrier, Prussia will quit the Alliance and annex Saxony herself.

HALEY

So?

WELLINGTON

You shouldn't have been dancing with Metternich at all, but with Count Razmovsky.

HALEY

Why?

WELLINGTON

Razmovsky is having an affair with the Tsarina's principal lady-in-waiting.

HALEY

And the Tsarina isn't cool with that?

WELLINGTON

No, it's the Tsar who objects; she's his mistress, too. Your failure to keep Razmovsky occupied added to Alexander's discomfort, a discomfort which our government would prefer to see provoked entirely -- or almost entirely -- by the Austrian refusal of a Saxon corridor.

HALEY

So if the Tsar doesn't hook up with the Slutty-in-Waiting, what happens?

WELLINGTON

He threatens to absorb Poland entirely. It doesn't help that Razmovsky is Polish.

HALEY

But Alexander wasn't even at the ball!

WELLINGTON

There are Russian spies in every piss pot. Of course, nothing persuades me that you'd have danced better with Count Razmovsky than you did with Metternich -- or with me just now -- so perhaps the kitchen awaits you after all.

HALEY

So I'm no good at dancing. I can do other stuff.

WELLINGTON

The concert in the Redoutensaal was another disaster: you guffawed when the conductor mistook a *pianissimo* passage in the score.

HALEY

He jumped in the air all excited during a really quiet part. He looked like a dork!

WELLINGTON

Herr Beethoven is deaf; he can no longer hear his own musicians. It's most unfortunate.

HALEY

He dresses nice.

WELLINGTON

Can we return to your new post in the military commissary?

HALEY

I won't do it. I'll desert!

WELLINGTON

Dessert is a separate topic. For the moment we will confine ourselves to beef and truffles in a pastry shell. You would requite me by taking notes.

*(Haley moves to the desk and dips the quill disgustedly.)*

HALEY

I could still go to dinners. Mom said you needed me for that.

WELLINGTON

You used the last such occasion to criticize Princess Bagration's gown.

HALEY

It made her look like a giant schnauzer.

WELLINGTON

Granted, but it was impolitic to say so, especially to General Von Windischgrätz.

HALEY

Is Windischgrätz her lover?

WELLINGTON

No, Windischgrätz is the *former* lover of Grand Duchess Von Sagan, a woman of immense influence in the Alliance: Metternich is besotted by her – goes to see her every evening.

HALEY

So?

WELLINGTON

If Von Windischgrätz conveys your remark to Von Sagan, Von Sagan will tell Metternich.

HALEY

So?

WELLINGTON

Metternich will tell the Tsar.

HALEY

Oh.

WELLINGTON

Indeed. "Oh."

HALEY

But why would Von Sagony even mention it?

WELLINGTON

Spite, of course! You think Princess Bragation called her daughter "Clementine" for no reason? Metternich's Christian name is *Clemenz* !

HALEY

Oh my God! Oh my God! The giant schnauzer is Metternich's fuck-buddy?

WELLINGTON

Precisely.

HALEY

But I still don't get it. His new girlfriend should be *happy* I dissed his ex's gown – and she's more important, so why does it matter?

WELLINGTON

The Princess and the Grand Duchess use the same dress maker.

HALEY

This is too much!

WELLINGTON

But there's more: Prince Bragation was killed at Borodino; he's a Russian National hero. Von Sagan is putting it out that your criticism of his widow's gown *proves* that Great Britain is seeking to undercut Russia's position in the Holy Alliance.

HALEY

So she's already told Metternich?

WELLINGTON

No, she told a Hungarian agent headed downriver. He spread it all over Buda.

HALEY

Buda, but not Pest?

WELLINGTON

Buda is worse than Pest! Our counsel in Pest was in Buda; he got wind of it and alerted me. Metternich will find out eventually and will lose no time getting it to Alexander's ear.

HALEY

We're up shit creek. We're *totally* up shit creek!

WELLINGTON

As you say. I've thought it wise to represent – or cause to be represented – (*primo*) that you are an eccentric American much deranged by the recent burning of Washington City, (*secundo*) that in consequence, you give voice to every thought that comes into your head, (*terzo*) that our Prince Regent dissociates himself from your sartorial pronouncements and in no way seeks to stultify the diplomatic posture of Holy Mother Russia. Nor (*quarto*) does Britain seek to insult the dress makers of the German Principalities, not excluding Saxony.

HALEY

Well. You seem to have a handle on it.

WELLINGTON

A handle?

HALEY

You always seem to know what to do, but you don't know what to do about me. Have you ever asked yourself what *I* seek?

WELLINGTON

No.

HALEY

Maybe you should.

WELLINGTON

I don't see why.

HALEY

Do you know how many of those little, folded messages I've gotten from different officers since we've been here?

WELLINGTON

Probably more than the Signal Corps sends in a fortnight.

HALEY

They all want to take me away from you.

WELLINGTON

There's nothing I can do to dissuade them, Haley: young men go stark mad at the first sign of peace.

HALEY

One of them says he loves me.

WELLINGTON

Of course he loves you; he's never danced with you.

HALEY

You shouldn't wear epaulettes with that tunic. They make your neck look stubby.

WELLINGTON

We'll leave my neck out of this, if you please! Now – take notes! You'll require four pounds of fillet. The importance of good beef can scarcely be exaggerated. It must *not* be over-cooked. The pastry shell is a separate undertaking, entirely unconnected with the cooking of the meat. You'll need butter, eggs and flour. Brewer's yeast is not to be used. The beef and the pastry can be successfully united only if discipline is maintained at every stage.

HALEY

I don't know why you're telling me this; I'm not going to cook for you.

*(A ringtone: "Rule, Britannia." Haley pulls out her phone and hands it to him.)*

WELLINGTON *(with exaggerated volume and diction)*

Oh. Thank you. Yes, Minister? I can hear you perfectly! Good God, when? How many with him? No reaction from King Louis? He must have gout in his brain as well as his leg! Screw Louis to his throne and all you get is a larger piece of furniture! I shall consult the allies on the military options, of course, but I should think our best chance is Flanders. That's right, Flanders. There's a large army corps there already and the Prussians can join by forced marches. I am much obliged.... Yes, of course. I shall hold myself alert for further communications... Goodbye, Minister.

HALEY *(taking back the phone)*

What's up?

WELLINGTON

Bonaparte has escaped from Elba. He's landed with two regiments in the South of France. They think he's headed for Paris.

HALEY

That's so uncool.

WELLINGTON

Indeed it is. I expect you and I will be leaving Vienna shortly.

HALEY

Where to?

WELLINGTON

Brussels.

HALEY

That's in Belgium... uh -- *Flanders*, right?

WELLINGTON

Quite right. I hope the gentlemen of the folded messages won't object?

HALEY

They won't.

WELLINGTON

Not even the one who says he loves you?

HALEY

Especially not him.

WELLINGTON

Haley... I'm sorry that your stay in Vienna hasn't been as successful as your mother hoped.

HALEY

Yeah, well... I tried.

WELLINGTON

You did try. This is manifest. (*Pause.*) My dear, the allies will be coming soon to discuss strategy. They'll probably stay all day and I haven't had anything since breakfast. Could you possibly make me a sandwich?

(*Haley smiles.*)

HALEY

What do you want on it?

FOUR

PROJECTION: *MARCH 7: A MOUNTAIN PASS IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE.*

NAPOLEON (*out front*)

Soldiers of the Fifth Regiment, the lame King Louis sends you to arrest me: I, who led you to victory at Austerlitz! If there is one among you who wishes to harm his Emperor, here I am! Let him shoot now! (*Pause*) But there is no such person! No such person can be a soldier of France. Louis calls me a traitor and a rebel, but you know who the traitors are: you know who has bartered the bread of the people to foreign princes! You know who has trampled the rights of citizens under his royal slippers! Follow me to Paris! Follow me and follow your destiny! The eagle will carry our colors from steeple to steeple -- unto to the towers of Notre Dame! Unfurl the Eagles! I give the order! Unfurl the Eagles! Unfurl the Eagles!

*(Hundreds of soldiers cheer. Napoleon is carried offstage on a wave of sound.)*

PROJECTION: *MARCH 10: A CARRIAGE STOP NEAR MANNHEIM, KINGDOM OF WURTEMBERG, CONFEDERATION OF THE RHINE.*

*(Haley runs on with a basket of hastily-purchased provisions. She hoists herself into a bouncing carriage. Spreading a napkin on the seat beside her, she shows what she's bought.)*

HALEY

They had horseradish! I didn't know how to say it in German, so I just pointed. And when we stopped in Basel I got some tomatoes. That's funny isn't it? I wonder if there's a town called tomato where you can buy basil? (*Pause.*) You know, you shouldn't be eating just sandwiches. Why can't we stop so I can fix a hot meal? Like, we could keep the same horses and just let them rest overnight? No? Why not? Okay, okay! I got the kind of beer you like. Oh, and I got one of those telegram-thingies from my mom: she's coming to visit!

*(The carriage lurches off.)*

PROJECTION: *MEANWHILE, IN NEW YORK...*

*(Edith enters. She's speaking on a 1905, pedestal-style telephone.)*



EDITH

Mr. James... Mr. James, you can well imagine how much I regret forgoing your conversation which I always enjoy immensely, the fact is I'm going to Belgium. An old friend... Yes, that one. I've entrusted Haley to him and I'm afraid she hasn't been behaving well. Nothing scandalous, just *quelques bêtises*.... Well, yes, I shall look in on the other gentleman, too. I had forgotten that you knew about him.... It's most regrettable. Quite horrible, in fact. At this point the only thing they have in common is their *métier*. And me, of course. So, much to my regret, I shall miss the remainder of the season here -- and the new number of Scribner's Magazine with your story in it...

*(Edith walks off, trailing the phone cord behind her.)*

PROJECTION: MARCH 20. THE TUILLERIES PALACE, PARIS.

*(Charlotte enters carrying a tablet computer. She's on Skype.)*

CHARLOTTE

We're back in Paris! Louis and the Bourbons have fled! It sounds like a band, doesn't it: "Louis and the Bourbons won't be playing at the Palace!" Michael, I want to come. I really, really want to, but things are happening here. Like, yesterday Dad abolished the slave trade! Well, it's a big deal here! If you stopped jerking off and thinking about me all the time, you'd learn stuff. Okay, current events 101: the English, the Dutch and the Prussians all say they're gonna invade France because of Dad. The Austrians and the Russians are in on it, too. If they win, Europe'll go back to kings and princes: milord *this* and milady that, and this bunch of hereditary assholes will run everything, like, forever. Michael! That would really suck! The revolution was supposed to end all of that shit, but it's all coming back. He needs me, Michael... Yeah, but you're not an Emperor; I don't know if you've noticed.

*(The lights fade.)*

FIVE

PROJECTION: MAY 25: ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, BRUSSELS.

*Wellington is seated at a table covered with maps. He speaks to an invisible adjutant. A number of partially eaten beef dishes are aligned on a sideboard.*

WELLINGTON

Bring her to the door. Knock twice. Then leave. Her coachman is to stay by the coach... Well how did she *get* here? ... Oh. One more thing: have Uxbridge move his heavy cavalry to Nevilles. We don't know which way Boney's coming – we can't afford to concentrate too soon.... I know there'll be no forage, but that's where I must have them.... I'll also need a dozen black truffles. See that they're fresh. ... Go.

*(The adjutant exits. Wellington moves to the sideboard to inspect the beef dishes. He crushes a bit of crust idly with a fork. Two knocks come at the door.)*

WELLINGTON

*Entrez!*

*(Edith enters with a coquettish swirl of her cloak.)*

EDITH

Your Grace!

WELLINGTON

Mrs. Wharton! Welcome to Brussels! Do let me look at you!

*(He takes her gloves and cloak.)*

EDITH

I hope you ordered tea.

WELLINGTON

Kettle's on the nob. You look very fit, my dear.

EDITH

I've been walking a great deal. It seems you've sucked up all the horses from miles around. Are you eating them?

WELLINGTON

No. I need them for other things. What I'm eating isn't worth talking about.

EDITH

Tut-tut.

WELLINGTON

If you'd contacted me, I'd have sent a carriage.

EDITH

And how would the carriage reach me? The road from the coast is crammed with troops coming here. I rode on a caisson part of the way.

WELLINGTON

It's so like you to use the right word for everything. Most women would call it a "cannon cart."

EDITH

Have you heard from Kitty recently?

WELLINGTON

She writes every week, nearly always to the same effect. Does your husband?

EDITH

An occasional scribble.

WELLINGTON

I see.

EDITH

But I haven't come all this way so we could discuss the correspondence of our respective spouses.

WELLINGTON

You want to talk about Haley, I suppose?

EDITH

Well of course. All these preparations for war... is she safe?

WELLINGTON

She's my personal cook: whatever danger inheres to that position falls on the people she feeds.

EDITH

I see.

WELLINGTON

Safety's a humbug, by the way – in war, at least. Safety can kill one if one thinks too much about it. She's been too safe with you.

EDITH

Before hostilities commence, I want things to be regular between the two of you.

WELLINGTON

Regular as clockwork, I assure you.

EDITH

You know what I mean.

WELLINGTON

She says she wants to work for *Vogue* -- I gather that's a paper of some sort.

EDITH

Don't evade me, your Grace.

WELLINGTON

Things will be regular, Madame, when I decide they shall be so.

EDITH

I see. And when will that be?

WELLINGTON

When I am satisfied. There are things about this girl that escape my comprehension entirely.

EDITH

You are not alone. Young people don't live in the same century as their parents any more -- perhaps they never did. I don't share in her games or her enthusiasms. I don't understand the conversations she has with people her own age -- neither the matter of her conversation nor the technical means by which it's carried out. There are these *devices*... It's all a mystery to me. Why should it be different for you?

WELLINGTON

Because I am in command.

EDITH

You can command soldiers, Arthur, but not children. Children you can bribe or spoil or cow, but they cannot be commanded. Where is she now?

WELLINGTON

Gone to market. Won't be back for a while.

EDITH

"Back for a while"? Where did you pick up *that* locution?

WELLINGTON

Perhaps in camp during the Peninsular Campaign? Perhaps you didn't hear about it in the colonies: sent Boney packing from Portugal and Spain with 200,000 dead, we did. Not too careful with *locutions* under those conditions. Not so careful with language except when writing orders -- up to the mark then, by God!

EDITH

Why do you English think you're so damn clever?

WELLINGTON

Do you expect me to answer that?

EDITH

Yes, I do! I've noticed that Englishmen of your class invariably imagine they've got an education, but all they really have is an unshakable conviction of their own superiority.

WELLINGTON

Really?

EDITH

You have culture but not *mind*. As far as I can see, an English public school is a matchless invention for preserving ignorance at all costs: your graduates travel to distant lands without acquiring the least perspective on their own limitations. The playing fields of Eton that you go on and on about are proof against anything: sensation; reflection -- even simple observation. They teach no lesson at all but the vital importance of not letting down the side!

WELLINGTON

Well that's the main thing, isn't it? Be fair!

EDITH

When I first came here twenty years ago I thought I would walk among giants, and perhaps I did. But to walk in such small circles -- and in such stale air! Europeans despise America for a hundred reasons, but never *the right ones*! You think we're backward and puritanical and lacking in social thought. You think our art is rustic and our literature is primitive because you can't get it into your heads that we're not trying to imitate yours!

WELLINGTON

I don't pretend to understand literature. Any scrivener can beat me at that game just as I can beat him at mine.

EDITH

Your writers stand on the pinnacle of empire but lose all sense of the lives beneath them. They expatiate on the glories of the crust but never ask the cost of the loaf. Mr. Henry James finds it all so fascinating: he writes about English dinner parties as if they were military engagements!

WELLINGTON

And I write about military engagements as if they were dinner parties. It's all one in the end, isn't it?

EDITH

No, it isn't.

WELLINGTON

Won't you sit down?

EDITH

No, I won't. There isn't a proper chair in this room.

WELLINGTON

You're damn lucky to have a roof and a floor tonight: the town is full of soldiers on their way in and frightened townspeople on their way out. There's *a battle* in the air: a single whiff of it intoxicates some and terrifies others. The only one who doesn't smell it at all is you. No, you're preoccupied with questions of art and literature! For you, civilization is an accumulation of furniture, a bowl of ripe fruit.

EDITH

Please...

WELLINGTON

But those of us who actually *live* in the furniture shop know how the fruit comes about – I'm sorry; I'm mixing metaphors --

EDITH

No, pray continue.

WELLINGTON

You think a chair exists only to please you or to evoke the period and style of its manufacture. But even a simple chair is the expression of *an idea*. When people have strong ideas, they eventually come to blows about them. When that happens, you don't pick the chair -- you pick the idea. That's what civilization is; it's a collection of ideas! Civilization is the side you mustn't let down – and when you finally chose it you don't give a two-penny damn about the chair! There, I've said it!

EDITH

Perhaps I will sit down.

*(She sits. He serves tea.)*

WELLINGTON

Better, don't you think?

EDITH

It's *you* I'm angry with, Arthur, not your supercilious continent. This whole business with Haley...

WELLINGTON

I'm quite fond of the girl, actually. She tries to be useful and occasionally succeeds.

EDITH

Do you imagine it's some kind of New York *pruderie* that keeps me from telling her? I don't care a fig what New York thinks. I haven't told her because her father should tell her, and for that to happen he'll have to summon his celebrated courage and speak!

WELLINGTON

It's not as easy as you think.

EDITH

Surely you're not shy about your duchess? She must know you've had adventures of a non-military kind.

WELLINGTON

Yes, but you see, I don't know what you've told Haley. I don't wish to contradict any representation you may have made *vis-à-vis* Mr. Wharton, whom she must naturally suppose is her natural father – I mean... naturally... *n'est-ce pas?*

EDITH

What *are* you talking about?

WELLINGTON

Not knowing what she knows – or *thinks* she knows -- I can't tell her. If I tender assurances of paternity and I am subsequently repulsed, I shall appear in her eyes to be little better than a creeper.

EDITH

Indeed. A creeper.

WELLINGTON

There'd be no going back: I'd be trapped like a rat in a bottle.

EDITH

A what?

WELLINGTON

A rat in a bottle. I saw it when I was in India: the fakirs would evacuate a bottle, then present a rat to the neck of the bottle whilst breaking the vacuum. The animal would be sucked inside.

EDITH

They must have been either very large bottles or very small rats.

WELLINGTON

No ma'am! Very small bottles. Very large rats. The rodent is rendered quite helpless in consequence -- as portable as anything! So tell me, please, what exactly is your posture with Teddy?

EDITH

I have no posture with Teddy, nor have I had posture with Teddy since shortly after our honeymoon.

WELLINGTON

Didn't we *meet* shortly after your honeymoon?

EDITH

Indeed we did -- after your return from India. We were trapped in each other's bottle.

WELLINGTON

Remember Wimbledon?

EDITH

What an idea! Tennis outdoors!

WELLINGTON

On the grass!

EDITH

Everybody wearing white!

WELLINGTON

I returned your serve.

EDITH

Indeed you did! It was love-all!

WELLINGTON

I have no regrets.

EDITH

Nor do I. Can you doubt that she's your child?

WELLINGTON

Save for the curl of her upper lip and something about her eyebrow, she's utterly unlike me. I wouldn't give her command of a squadron for anything you could wager.

EDITH

She's your daughter for all that.

WELLINGTON

But does she think Mr. Wharton is her father?

EDITH

Teddy couldn't father anything more complicated than a card table. I don't know what Haley thinks; the subject has never come up.

WELLINGTON

You see! You see! It's no easier for you than it is for me!

EDITH

People's parentage isn't a normal topic of conversation. Not in the family, at least.



WELLINGTON

Good God, woman! It's very simple: what does she *call* him? "Father"? "Pater meus"? "Da"?

EDITH

I don't think she calls him anything. She might say "Hey...", but not often.

WELLINGTON

She never mentions him to me.

EDITH

That's it -- she avoids referring to him or addressing him by name.

WELLINGTON

For that matter, what's *her* name? Surely she was christened? Does she bear my name or Teddy's?

EDITH

Oh, dear! We've always just called her "Haley." It seemed to suit her.

WELLINGTON

Good God, Edith! What kind of childhood did you give her?

EDITH

Rather more of one than you did!

WELLINGTON

I'm very sorry, but I've been fighting the French since 1794!

EDITH

That's no excuse at all! You think your battles are important because they end in death. Well I've got news for you: *everything* ends in death. When I hear someone say "it's a matter of life and death" I know they're making a fuss over nothing.

WELLINGTON

As long as it's Boney's death we're talking about and not yours or mine -- or the girl's -- that's fine with me!

EDITH

I'm certain General Bonaparte found time to be a father to *his* daughter; you might have done the same for yours!

WELLINGTON

Bonaparte *doesn't have* a daughter.

EDITH

What do you know? What do you know about anything?

HALEY (*off*)

Mom! MOM!

EDITH

Haley?

*(Haley runs on and embraces her mother.)*

HALEY

Oh, mom, I missed you so much!

*(Edith returns her embrace.)*

EDITH

As I did you, my dear. I'm happy to see you again.

HALEY

Me too! I'm glad you're here!

WELLINGTON

A touching reunion!

HALEY

In Vienna I got to dance with a Prince! And Mom, if there's no country called Saxony next year, it's because of me!

EDITH

Indeed!

WELLINGTON

Poland is also much reduced. Your daughter, Madam, has danced out a new map of Europe.

EDITH

I'm very proud of her, as I'm sure you must be, too.

WELLINGTON

Words cannot express it.

HALEY

You guys! Come off it!

EDITH

Haley, his Grace has some very important words to say to you: an announcement. Isn't that right, Arthur?

WELLINGTON

Thank you, Edith, but I don't consider the moment opportune for an announcement of the kind you mean.

EDITH

If you can't be forthright whatever the moment, you're not the man I take you for.

HALEY

Mom, he's been working, like, day and night for *weeks*...

EDITH

I'm certain he has the strength for one more initiative. Arthur?

WELLINGTON

Indeed, it would be most unfortunate if I failed to make an announcement at this time...

EDITH

At last!

WELLINGTON

It concerns your future, Haley, and mine too, in a way. I've decided, in light of the considerable progress you've made in preparing and serving food... to promote you to the intelligence service.

EDITH

Arthur!

WELLINGTON

I've seen your drawings: if you can sketch defenses as well as clothes, you'll be a credit to my staff.

HALEY

Intelligence! I bet I can kill that!

EDITH

You're making a grave mistake.

WELLINGTON

Never fear, Mrs. Wharton. "Intelligence" as a branch of the service has only a homonymic relation to "intelligence" as a quality of mind.

HALEY

At least let me try! "My name is Bond, *Haley* Bond."

WELLINGTON

I beg your pardon?

HALEY

But I still want to make that beef dish for you. Can I do that in my spare time?

WELLINGTON

If you wish.

EDITH

His Grace has confidence in you, Haley. Perhaps more confidence than he has in himself. Try not to disappoint him.

HALEY

Oh I will! I mean, no, I won't. *Disappoint* him, I mean!

EDITH

We wouldn't want to see him trapped like a rat in a bottle, would we?

HALEY

Ah... no.

EDITH

There's disappointment in the air this morning -- and a battle, it seems, but I wouldn't know about that.



SIX

PROJECTION: *MAY 27TH. THE CHAMP DE MARS, PARIS*

*Napoleon (out front)*

Soldiers of France, I trust in your bravery. To you I confide the Imperial Eagles and the blue-white-and-red flag of our nation. Do you swear to preserve them from the enemies of my throne -- even at the cost of your blood!

*(Thousands of soldiers cheer.)*

NAPOLEON

Do you swear to rally to these colors and no other?

*(Another cheer)*

NAPOLEON

Do you swear to keep foreign princes from poisoning the soil of France?

*(Another cheer, louder.)*

NAPOLEON

Do you swear to surpass yourselves in this new and final campaign! To die to the last man rather than let foreigners dictate our laws?

*(A paroxysm of wild cheers: vive l'empereur!)*

*Napoleon (over it all)*

You swear it! You swear it! You swear it!

*(Napoleon is carried backwards on waves of sound. The cheering stops abruptly.  
Charlotte is there.)*

CHARLOTTE

You promised! You said when we get to Paris I can go!

NAPOLEON

Charlotte... *ma petite*...

CHARLOTTE

You swore! You gave your word!

NAPOLEON

The hereditary rulers of Europe are plotting against our liberties. I've decreed a new round of conscription.

CHARLOTTE

You've got 100,000 soldiers; you don't need me.

NAPOLEON

Yes, I need you! You are the sword on my thigh, the sword I'll use to slay the coalition that marches against us.

CHARLOTTE

Oh please!

NAPOLEON

The slave trade is gone. With you beside me what other injustices might not be vanquished?

CHARLOTTE

It's an injustice to keep me here when *you promised*.

NAPOLEON

How can I keep my word to you if I break it with France?

CHARLOTTE

How can you keep it to France if you break it with me?

NAPOLEON

Look around you: do you want corrupt kings to wipe out the gains of the revolution?

CHARLOTTE

You put an end to the revolution.

NAPOLEON

I put an end to its excesses, to its anarchy and disorder. But promotion on merit, the rights of the citizen, the end of inherited privilege – these things I preserve. These things I incarnate!

CHARLOTTE

You're talking to one person, not thousands. This one person wants to go to America.

NAPOLEON

You think only of yourself, not the role destiny has prepared for you. You are unworthy to be called my daughter!

CHARLOTTE

But you never call me that! Everyone calls me "*la petite*." You know how much it sucks to be called "*la petite*" when you're five-foot- ten?

NAPOLEON

Use the metric system! I will have no royalist feet, hands, or fingers!

CHARLOTTE

Sorry.

NAPOLEON

I think the speech went well, no?

CHARLOTTE

They worship you because you show them the way to death. It's the only thing they're still curious about. Army routine has beaten every kind of thought from their heads, but they're still fascinated by death. You tell them it's waiting for them, maybe in Belgium, maybe next week.

NAPOLEON

You reason like your mother. But you are right to say that only a poor commander worries about getting his men killed. Refuse to take casualties and you refuse to take victory -- war becomes an endless hacking away of stationary armies in stinking mud.

CHARLOTTE

You call it a campaign, but it's really a roadshow. It's like you're touring with a group.

NAPOLEON

A group?

CHARLOTTE

You give a concert everywhere you go and people die.

NAPOLEON

It's horrible, yet the concert would be viler still with no conductor or a bad one. Yes, some will die in this campaign, but not in vain. I see to it that they die properly: eagles held high and regimental colors flying; there'll be bugles and drums and the shouts of thousands. A soldier would rather have such a death than three more decades digging up turnips to finally die of boredom or a slow disease. You are a soldier; you must know this.

CHARLOTTE

Michael and I will die without each other because you broke your word, because you kept us apart. I hate you!

NAPOLEON

*Ma petite...*

CHARLOTTE

I hate you! I *hate* you!

*(She exits.)*

SEVEN

PROJECTION: *DEFENSIVE POSITIONS*

*An undefined space. Edith enters with her telephone.*

EDITH

But I *am*, Mr. James; I'm *very* apprehensive. I always imagined I'd be able to take up where I left off, but it's been years now. I was busy with my writing. .... But the years will have made a difference *for her*. She'll be a young woman now, quite past the age of innocence. .... Well, if you have a maxim that applies to my situation, I'd be happy to hear it. .... That's a lovely phrase, Mr. James, but what does it mean? How exactly am I to "feel in italics but think in capital letters"? Tell me, will you? Because at this juncture I'm feeling a great deal in capital letters. I'm feeling in **boldface**, underscored, BLOCK CAPITALS and I'm scarcely thinking at all! ..... Honestly, Mr. James, when you start talking in long, broken-up sentences stuffed with subordinate clauses and the syntax all haywire it's only with the greatest difficulty that I can follow you... ..... *Au contraire*, it's good of you to advise me... ..... No, pardon *me*.... There's one other thing on my mind: I've accepted a speaking engagement with The American Women's Club of Paris and I don't know what to say to them, certainly nothing about daughters. I know nothing at all about daughters!

*(Edith exits, still talking. Wellington enters. He speaks to his mirror while shaving.)*

WELLINGTON

Something about the eyebrow. Her upper lip. A ridge there. A ridge and a reverse slope... Cover behind the reverse slope -- cover for whole corps. Have them lie down, Maitland! Have them lie down behind the ridge! Heads down, lads -- get them down! He's got 12-pounders, that's why! I've seen the ball kill on the sixth bounce. *(He cuts himself.)* Bleeding there. Bleeding on the upper lip. A phenomenon, that upper lip. And the eyebrow.

*(Wellington exits to find a towel. Haley enters with a cellphone.)*



HALEY

Of course you can ride him, Lilly. He totally likes to be ridden. Brush him down good afterward. He likes it when you tickle his nose with the brush. .... What? ..... I can't hear you... No, "the *intelligence* service." I'm supposed to gather, like, information on Boney. On Napoleon! He's left Paris and he's moving into Belgium. Well, we say it's Belgium, but he says it's part of France.... No, he's got this giant army with him... .... I don't know, thousands... tens of thousands! He's got, like, a gazillion troops! ..... No, really not -- and I don't know why! I guess I trust him.... I say I trust Arthur, so I'm not scared.... I know! Isn't that freaky? He wants me to call him "Arthur" now!

*(She exits, the phone still pressed to her cheek.)*



EIGHT

PROJECTION: JUNE 15TH: NAPOLEON'S FIELD HEADQUARTERS ON THE ROAD TO BRUSSELS

*A large tent with a map table and an iron camp bed. Souvenirs of past campaigns abound, including a large, Egyptian mummy case. Edith, Napoleon and Charlotte have finished their tea.*

EDITH

The road was choked with troops, I don't know if they were yours or those of the other side: a river of war winding through the barely-breathing wheat: lancers and dragoons; Foot Guards in red tunics and Highlanders in kilts...

NAPOLEON

These must be of the other side. My army does not wear skirts.

EDITH

Oh. But there were also hussars and grenadiers and men of the line: flushed rows of determined, young faces marching under a long hedge of bayonets. They raised a great cloud of dust, of course, but through the dust the sun picked out helmets and the tips of lances, the gloss of chargers' flanks. It found gold on faded uniforms. It silvered the black of bearskin caps...

CHARLOTTE

That sounds like our guys... the bearskin caps.

EDITH

Close as the men were to me, they seemed *allegorically* splendid, as if – as if under the arch of sunset the whole of Europe were marching straight to glory. . . But listen to me prattling on and on! You two see sights like that every day.

CHARLOTTE

Dad, I should go.

NAPOLEON

Yes, it is time for your patrol.

*(They rise.)*

EDITH *(taking Charlotte's hand)*

What a pleasure it's been for me to make your acquaintance -- to *re-make* your acquaintance after all these years!

CHARLOTTE

Me too.

EDITH

I look forward to meeting your Michael.

CHARLOTTE

I don't know if that's gonna happen any time soon.

EDITH

You've grown into a superb young woman.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, little girls do that.

EDITH

I'm terribly sorry I missed those years. It's the great regret of my life.

CHARLOTTE

I'm sorry I don't remember you more from before. I should go. Duty calls, you know.

EDITH

Do be careful.

NAPOLEON

I prepared your maps myself.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks.

NAPOLEON

There will be mud, why don't you wear proper boots?

CHARLOTTE

Don't start, Dad! Goodbye, Mrs. Wharton.

EDITH

Goodbye, dear!

*(Charlotte leaves.)*

EDITH (CONT)

Oh God, I was horrible! Horrible! Nattering on and on... Everything came out wrong!

NAPOLEON

All things considered, you did well.

EDITH

It was a disaster! I *bored* her. I bored my own daughter!

NAPOLEON

You didn't bore me. It gave me great joy to see my first little family re-united. What do you think of her?

EDITH

You've done a fine job.

NAPOLEON

She's not perfect. These sentimental imperatives, these ultimata of the heart – I don't think she gets them from me.

EDITH

Certainly not.

NAPOLEON

From me she gets discipline and method. She's mastered trigonometry. She can aim a gun quickly and well, but I'm afraid it's only an *amusement* for her. A Prussian battery or a haystack; it's all the same as long as the ball goes where she aims it. She doesn't appreciate the practical aspect.

EDITH

Killing people?

NAPOLEON

*Victory*. She has no thirst for victory.

EDITH

That must indeed be my fault.

NAPOLEON

You once showed a taste for winning at cards...

EDITH

You know what they say, "lucky at cards, unlucky at love."

NAPOLEON

You were not unlucky; you shared the bed of an Emperor. This you have not forgotten, I hope.

EDITH

At the time he was a second lieutenant. I claim no credit for his future promotions -- especially as I wasn't there to share them. In fact, I didn't share your bed much either: you were hardly ever in it.

NAPOLEON

A wise man can function admirably on three hours' sleep.

EDITH

You call it wisdom, but it's insomnia. Sleeping is something she and I do better than you.

NAPOLEON

"More," not "better."

EDITH

You never learned to sleep. That explains everything: you were awake anyway, so you conquered Europe. It shows a lack of imagination on your part – an absence of whimsy.

NAPOLEON

How do you mean?

EDITH

A more inventive man would have stayed in bed and written a novel. It's warm in bed. The night is quiet and perfect for dreaming. Paper and ink are on the night stand. But you could never *imagine* the life of a romantic hero -- you had to act it out. Your insistence on constant activity is the most vulgar thing about you.

NAPOLEON

More vulgar than my Corsican vowels?

EDITH

Vastly.

NAPOLEON

I tried once to write a novel. During the Revolution I was cashiered from the army when I refused to suppress the loyalists in the west of France. With no duties to attend to I began an immense novel of love and heroism!

EDITH

How far did you get?

NAPOLEON

Thirty two pages. That was the end of my epic.

EDITH

With a greater effort of will, you might have conquered in art instead of life.

NAPOLEON

Had I your talent with words, I should have awed the world with paragraphs and chapters instead of forced marches and lightning deployments! Alas, I am incapable. Whereas you, *ma Cherie*, suffer from the opposite failing: you make whole cities out of language but wouldn't undertake to build a single breastwork out of earth and palings.

EDITH

From Washington Square to the Central Park I built everything in words; you burned Moscow with real flames.

NAPOLEON

It was not I that burnt it! But forgive me; I have little appetite for *badinage*. We were discussing your daughter.

EDITH

*Your* daughter.

NAPOLEON

Very well, *our* daughter.

EDITH

I think she might as well go to Rhode Island. Louisa and Henry van der Luyden are in Newport; they can get her started in society.

NAPOLEON

I don't think she's much interested in high society. She speaks of something called "grad school."

EDITH

How odd.

NAPOLEON

It seems these things are regimented by color. Hers is Brown.

EDITH

She's pretty in blue.

NAPOLEON

Rhode Island is... an island, *n'est-ce pas?*

EDITH

You could say that. It's entirely surrounded by water. And Connecticut. And Massachusetts.

NAPOLEON

I've just spent ten months on an island. It's not a destiny I would wish for Charlotte.

EDITH

"Able was I ere I saw Elba"?

NAPOLEON

Please! I prefer palindromes to platitudes, but still... you see the point I am making? Talented people, to exercise their gifts, require at least a kingdom -- at best a continent.

EDITH

Let her go. You said yourself she's hopeless as an *aide de camp*.

NAPOLEON (*yawning*)

I need her hopelessness.

EDITH

You need a nap.

NAPOLEON

And who is this “Michael”? Do you know him? Does he have a dossier?

EDITH

If he does, I’ve contributed nothing to it. She met him at school.

NAPOLEON

Ah yes, “study abroad.” What a curious institution! I urged her to profit of the occasion to visit you.

EDITH

She didn’t.

NAPOLEON

I don’t know why not.

EDITH

You’re trying to put a good face on it, *mon cher*, but she always preferred you.

NAPOLEON

I’ve never spoken ill of you. It’s always been my fervent wish to see a *rapprochement* between you.

EDITH

Your life was more interesting than mine. Whenever she might have come back to me you were at a crisis; at every crisis she stayed to help you through.

NAPOLEON (*not listening*)

I shall appoint Michael to an office of state in Nice. That way he’ll come to Europe and Charlotte will be spared constriction on the Island of Rhode!

EDITH

How clever, my dear!

NAPOLEON

No, not Nice; it’s too far south. Bruges! We’ll be in Bruges in a week. Wellington will evacuate via Dunkirk or Oostende.

EDITH

Such a lovely, romantic place, Bruges. Wonderful architecture!

NAPOLEON

A jewel among cities.

EDITH

Try not to burn it, will you?



NINE

PROJECTION: *A FEW HOURS LATER*

*Wellington's basement kitchen in Brussels. Charlotte's wrists are tied to a hook in the wall above her head. Haley interrogates her, but peers offstage from time to time at something we can't see.*

HALEY

We're not getting anywhere. I don't have a whole lot of time.

CHARLOTTE

I told you everything you want to know. Maybe you're asking the wrong questions.

HALEY

So you just happened to be exercising your mount where the 49th Highlanders just happened to be?

CHARLOTTE

Were those the 49th? I wasn't sure.

HALEY

I'll ask the questions.

CHARLOTTE

Why would I exercise my mount right next to your stupid pickets an hour before dawn?

HALEY

Exactly! And you had 100 gold pieces in your saddle bag. Were you were exercising your money as well?

CHARLOTTE

Don't be stupid. The money was to buy information.

HALEY

That's very interesting.

CHARLOTTE

"Interesting," maybe, but not "*very* interesting."

HALEY

You say you were in uniform when we captured you. Tell me, *mon capitaine*, has the whole French Army switched to Converse All Stars?

CHARLOTTE

I don't like boots. Yours are nice, though. Where'd you get them?

HALEY

I'll ask the questions.

CHARLOTTE

So ask already.

HALEY

You were exercising your horse an hour before dawn near a regiment of Highlanders. Tell me, are you fond of bagpipes?

CHARLOTTE

You're kidding, right?

HALEY

Do I look like I'm kidding?

CHARLOTTE

Bagpipes are a disease. Bagpipes are an acoustic form of leprosy.

HALEY

I suppose you have such advanced taste in music...

CHARLOTTE

Stop! Just stop! I can't take it! I can't take it any more...

HALEY

What's wrong?

CHARLOTTE

You call this an interrogation?

HALEY

Well, duh.

CHARLOTTE

Where did they find you? How did you even get to Europe?

HALEY

I was in the Vassar Summer Program.

CHARLOTTE

You don't know jack shit about the job you're doing, but you're doing it anyway.

HALEY

I didn't want to spend summer in Poughkeepsie.

CHARLOTTE

Has it occurred to you that interrogating prisoners is *a skill*?

HALEY

Hey, I arrested *you*...

CHARLOTTE

My dad says the Duke of Wellington needs military intelligence but discourages the other kind. I thought he was joking.

HALEY (*à la "Q"*)

I never joke about my work.

CHARLOTTE

You want to know the truth? When those kilted apes grabbed me I'd just come from meeting my mother – and I hadn't seen her since I was nine years old!

HALEY

You expect me to believe that?

CHARLOTTE

I don't care either way.

HALEY

What's your sign?

CHARLOTTE

What's your counter-sign?

HALEY

Virgo?

CHARLOTTE

Intacta?

HALEY

What does that mean?

CHARLOTTE

Still got your V card? Wondering who to give it to?

HALEY

Shut up!

CHARLOTTE

Maybe nobody wants it?

HALEY

SHUT UP!

CHARLOTTE

Would you believe this: the Emperor is worried about his right flank.

HALEY

His right is our left, right?

CHARLOTTE

Right.

HALEY

What's wrong with his right flank?

CHARLOTTE

There's a lot at stake...

HALEY

You're making a joke, right?

CHARLOTTE (*thinking*)

"Flank steak"?

HALEY (*ironic*)

Ha, ha.

CHARLOTTE

The Emperor's right flank is opposite the point where the Anglo-Dutch and Prussian forces are most likely to join up. He's sent Marshal Grouchy with a whole Corps and a hundred guns to hold off the Prussians while he takes the main body up the Brussels Road. To succeed, he has to find Wellington's force and defeat it before the Prussians join with reinforcements.

HALEY

No shit?

CHARLOTTE

You should take notes.

HALEY

I'll remember.

CHARLOTTE

I shouldn't be telling you this; it's secret.

HALEY

Go on.

CHARLOTTE

Because the Mons Road is paved, Wellington will have to reinforce his right side to guard against envelopment, but the main attack will come to his center, through Charleroi. Ney's move toward Mons is only a feint. The danger to the Emperor is that his right flank is open to Prussian attack if Grouchy fails.

*(Pause.)*

HALEY

TALK!

CHARLOTTE

I AM TALKING!

HALEY

Well say something relevant!

CHARLOTTE

Who does your hair?

HALEY

May I remind you that you're tied to a hook in my kitchen and not the other way around?

CHARLOTTE

I don't need reminding; the cords are chafing my wrists.

HALEY

If I believed your absurd story about being a spy, you'd be in worse trouble. You know what we do with spies?

CHARLOTTE

Bake them into pies?

HALEY

No.

CHARLOTTE

Make them eat haggis?

HALEY

You must think I'm dumb. I'm not dumb. I'm making Beef Wellington.

CHARLOTTE

Oh.

HALEY

Yeah, "oh"!

CHARLOTTE

Are you expecting your puff paste to rise? Is that why you put a cloth over it?

*(Haley walks off to inspect her puff paste and returns.)*

HALEY

Isn't that how you do it?

CHARLOTTE

Puff paste doesn't rise. There's no yeast in it.

HALEY

I know that...

CHARLOTTE

So it doesn't rise by itself. You roll it and fold it. Don't let it sit.

HALEY

Why not?

CHARLOTTE

You don't want the butter to melt.

HALEY

What happens if the butter melts?

CHARLOTTE

The whole thing turns to greasy mud.

HALEY

Oh shit. SHIT! SHIIIT! I wanted this one to be good!

CHARLOTTE

It helps to have a chilled pastry stone. You should chill the roller, too.

HALEY

Wait a sec! How do I know this is even true? Like how do I know this isn't totally bogus? Like you're intentionally giving me bad information just to mess with me?

CHARLOTTE

Would I do that to you?

HALEY

You might. How do I know you're telling the truth?

CHARLOTTE

'Cause it's pastry, dumbass, and I'm French!

HALEY

You don't sound French.

CHARLOTTE

My mother's American.

HALEY

Hey, so's mine!

CHARLOTTE

I guess that's why you don't sound British.

HALEY

If I untie you, will you promise not to run away?

CHARLOTTE

I promise.

HALEY

Really?

CHARLOTTE

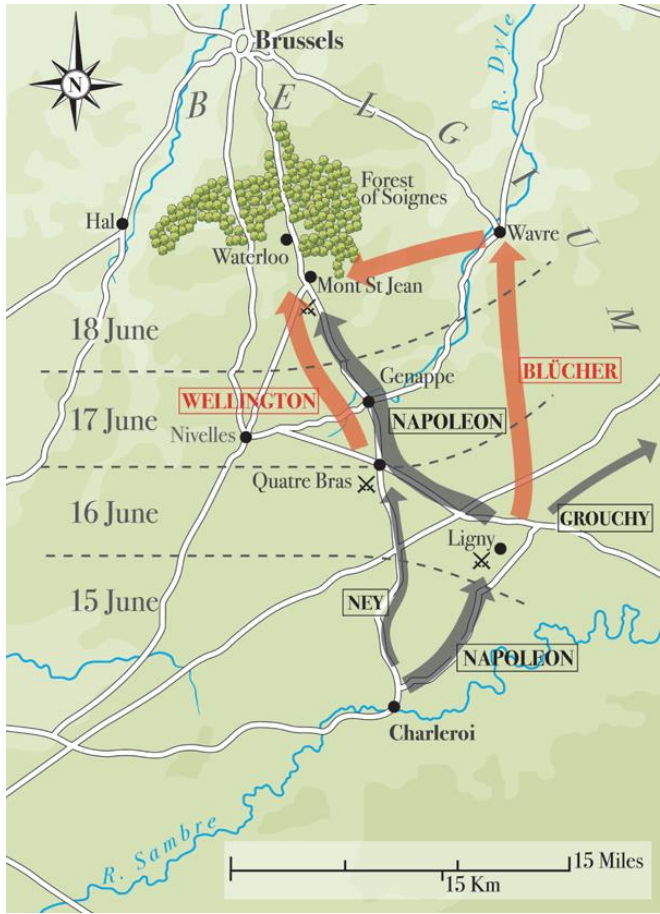
Really.

HALEY

You promise?

CHARLOTTE

I promise.





TEN

PROJECTION: *WHILE THIS IS GOING ON...*

*Edith addresses the  
American Women's  
Club*

EDITH

Ladies!

Proper English is the  
pavement on which  
literature must either  
stumble or ride to glory.

We must defend it at all  
costs.

By "proper," I mean an  
easy, idiomatic English  
usage with a natural turn  
of phrase –

An English that's never  
pedantic nor too  
"soigné."

Would anyone who  
cared about language  
say "dirt" for "earth" as  
when one speaks of "a  
dirt road"?

Would anyone say  
"back of" for "behind"?  
Or "any place" for  
"anywhere"?

If we can't make a stand  
for proper elocution, the  
English language has  
met its Waterloo!

*Wellington addresses his  
assembled officers.*

WELLINGTON

Gentlemen!

Because the Mons Road  
is paved Boney can  
deploy westward in a  
flash,

We must stop him at all  
costs.

He can turn our flank  
and cut our supply lines  
to the coast.

Here, at the Soignes  
Woods.

There's a dirt road. It's  
got a ridge to the south  
and a reverse slope to  
the north.

We can stand back of  
that road.....anyplace  
back of that road...

So we block his passage  
to Brussels at... (*He  
squints at the map.*)

Waterloo.

*Napoleon addresses his  
staff.*

NAPOLEON

Marshalls of France!

Because the Mons Road  
is paved Wellington can  
send his cavalry  
eastward at a trot.

This we must prevent  
*coûte que coûte.*

He can intervene  
between ourself and  
Grouchy on our right.

The Soignes Woods are  
the key.

The English and the  
Dutch retreat from  
Quatre Bras; the  
Prussians retreat from  
Ligny.

So long as Grouchy  
covers our right flank,  
the road to Brussels is  
open...here... at... (*He  
checks the map.*)

Waterloo.

ELEVEN

PROJECTION: *THE VERY NEXT NIGHT*

*Napoleon's tent as in scene eight, now pitched at Le Caillou, just south of Waterloo. Napoleon is in shirt sleeves. Haley's wrists are tied to a tent pole, her hands above her head. She's frightened, but determined not to show it.*

NAPOLEON

America honors me with a charming spy! What is your name?

HALEY

My name is Haley.

NAPOLEON

Like the comet? Your visit dazzles me. Please convey my thanks to your President...eh, Madison.

HALEY

The cords are chafing my wrists.

NAPOLEON

Such elegant wrists should be bound with nothing rougher than silk. I am the Emperor Napoleon.

HALEY

I've seen your bust.

NAPOLEON

I wish I could say the same.

HALEY

You're a creeper, you know that?

NAPOLEON

What does a creeper require if not a trunk? May I use yours?

HALEY

And another thing: you're short.

NAPOLEON

Ah, you cut me to the quick! I knew an American woman, many years ago. She, too, had a way with words. It must be an appurtenance of your race.

HALEY

Appurtenance is a two-way street.

NAPOLEON

If I released you, would you favor me with... what is it you call it -- a hug?

HALEY

I hear you're worried about your right flank. A hug won't help you there.

NAPOLEON

So young -- yet so ironic!

HALEY

Irony rusts if you don't use it.

NAPOLEON

Your repartee is as charming as your figure. You remind me of the Venus de Milo -- except your arms are still attached.

HALEY

You remind me of a Brussel sprout.

NAPOLEON

Speaking of Brussels, I'm sure you have news from Wellington's headquarters.

HALEY

His headquarters are your hindquarters, right?

NAPOLEON (*pouring two glasses*)

Let us not be scatological. Are you fond of champagne?

HALEY

Are you fond of bagpipes?

NAPOLEON

The bagpipe is a pustule on the rump of music. The bagpipe is to melody what lobotomies are to mathematics. (*Setting the glasses down.*) These are for later. How does it go with my esteemed enemy, le Duc?

HALEY

Everything's cool and ready to roll.

NAPOLEON

His center will fold?

HALEY

It won't rise by itself.

NAPOLEON

Ha, ha -- you are mistaken, mademoiselle, *it's risen* already.

HALEY

Creeper!

NAPOLEON

I am not ignorant of the arts of war – or the arts of love...

HALEY

*Mega-creeper!*

NAPOLEON

The terrain invites me! I shall attack the high ground!

*(He starts to unbutton her riding coat.)*

HALEY

In your dreams, frog face!

NAPOLEON

When a breach is opened, my column will penetrate!

EDITH *(off)*

*Est-ce que l'empereur reçoit?*

NAPOLEON

*Merde!* An ambushade!

EDITH *(off)*

Are you there, *mon cher*?

NAPOLEON

I'm undressing! Give me but a moment.

*(He gags Haley and drags her to the mummy case.)*

EDITH *(off)*

You needn't stand on ceremony with me!

NAPOLEON

Of course not. Just let me tidy up. *(To Haley)* A squeak from you and you die!

EDITH *(off)*

I've watched you undress, you know!

NAPOLEON *(shutting the case)*

But a small moment. *Entre, chère amie!*

EDITH *(entering)*

Thank you. Are you well? You seem flustered?

NAPOLEON

Flustered? *Moi*? It's uh... the invasion... you understand.

EDITH

Of course.

NAPOLEON

You came back so quickly!

EDITH

I took the train.

NAPOLEON

Train?

EDITH

*J'ai pris le train à vapeur !*

NAPOLEON (*not understanding*)

Let me take your coat.

EDITH

Thank you. Two glasses?

NAPOLEON

I was expecting you.

EDITH

How lovely. I adore champagne.

NAPOLEON

And I adore my Edith. Tchín-tchín!

EDITH

Cheers! You haven't lost the knack of pleasing women, have you?

NAPOLEON

I should hope not. How did it go, your speech to the American ladies?

EDITH

Oh, my speech! Proper English will triumph! My campaign advances all standards flying! How about yours?

NAPOLEON

My campaign? It flies! All advances up to standard!

EDITH

Has Charlotte returned?

NAPOLEON

She brought in a prisoner an hour ago. Let us go in search of her. Ah, but we are prevented!

*(Charlotte enters on a skateboard.)*

CHARLOTTE

Hi, dad. Hi, Mrs. Wharton.

EDITH

My dear girl!

NAPOLEON

Embrace your mother, *ma petite!*

*(They embrace in the French manner, kisses on both cheeks.)*

CHARLOTTE

I would have been back sooner, but I was tied up.

NAPOLEON *(examining the skateboard)*

No harm done, your mother has only just returned.

CHARLOTTE

Oh? Where were you?

EDITH

I was speaking to the American Woman's Club of Paris on the importance of proper English usage.

CHARLOTTE

Sweet. How did it go?

EDITH

It went, as you say, sweetly. An idea came to me on the train...

NAPOLEON *(“what’s she talking about?”)*

*Ma petite...*

CHARLOTTE

Never mind, dad.

EDITH

Your father's distinguished adversary, the Duke of Wellington, has a daughter only two years younger than you. She lives close to me. I know she'd be delighted to make your acquaintance. What do you think, dear? Would you like to visit her?

NAPOLEON *(to Charlotte)*

One might learn much from such a person...

CHARLOTTE

In New York?

EDITH

On Fifth Avenue.

CHARLOTTE

How far is that from Providence?

NAPOLEON

Why don't we discuss geography in another tent?

*(There's a ring tone: "On Fifth Avenue.")*

EDITH

What's that?

*(Embarrassed, Napoleon fetches Haley's telephone and hands it to Charlotte.)*

NAPOLEON

An anachronism. Can you silence it, *Petite?* *(to Edith)* Detestable devices, but sometimes they serve.

CHARLOTTE

She's got a text message: "Mr. Archer wants you to ride him."

NAPOLEON

A text in questionable taste.

CHARLOTTE

It sounds kinda slutty.

EDITH *(who didn't hear the above)*

Where did you get that apparatus?

NAPOLEON

Charlotte's prisoner. Someone of no importance. I don't even know where she is.

CHARLOTTE

You're not going to have her shot, are you? She's more useless alive.

EDITH

What does she look like?

NAPOLEON

I took no notice of her appearance.

EDITH

Ah?

NAPOLEON

A spy of the lowest order, quite unworthy of our attention. *Tiens...*

*(He hands the phone to Edith who reads the message.)*

EDITH

I must see her at once! Mr. Archer and I are well acquainted!

NAPOLEON

If Mr. Archer sent *you* such a message, he would answer to me!

*(The mummy case totters forward.)*

CHARLOTTE

Dad, why is that thing moving?

NAPOLEON

The humidity, I think. It's used to a dry climate.

EDITH

As furniture it was already grotesque.

CHARLOTTE

Maybe it wants its mummy.

HALEY *(inside the case and gagged)*

Mommmiee...

CHARLOTTE

Geez, I was making a joke!

*(Edith goes to the mummy case and unlatches it.)*

EDITH

Haley!

HALEY

Mommehh!

EDITH *(as she undoes the gag.)*

What are you doing in an *objet d'art*? His Grace won't approve of you neglecting your duties this way.

NAPOLEON

You know her?

HALEY

Thanks, mom! You're just in time.

CHARLOTTE

"Mom"? Did she say "mom"?



NAPOLEON

She's my *daughter*?

EDITH

She's *my* daughter.

CHARLOTTE

She's my *sister*?

HALEY

Arthur's my *father*?

EDITH

Yes, dear, Arthur's your father. I wanted you to hear it from his lips. That's why I enrolled you in the Vassar Summer Program.

HALEY

Oh gee -- he was trying to tell me all along -- but in his own way!

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, with recipes that leave out basic information.

HALEY

Is that thing really my sister?

EDITH

You remember my story about the Lieutenant? This splendid young woman is the child of that *amour*.

HALEY

I can't! I can't even...

CHARLOTTE (*to Edith*)

So you... with my dad *and* Wellington?

EDITH

Yes, I did. The two of you are half-sisters!

HALEY

Some sister! Don't ever turn your back on her.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, well...

HALEY

Can someone untie me?

EDITH

Requests take the conditional!

HALEY

*Could* someone untie me, please?

NAPOLEON

*Permettez-moi.*

HALEY

Not you, creeper! Geez! Stay away from me!

CHARLOTTE

Let me... Sis.

HALEY

Thank you. What's it like to have a perv for a father?

CHARLOTTE

He's alright. Just a bit... invasive.

HALEY

I'll say! At least Metternich had moves!

NAPOLEON

Why didn't you tell me *tout de suite* that you were Edith Wharton's daughter? I would have understood immediately!

HALEY

Creeper! (*To Edith*) I can't believe this guy was ever your lieutenant!

EDITH

You met under unfortunate circumstances.

CHARLOTTE

I'm sorry I hit you with the rolling pin. It wasn't very sisterly of me.

HALEY

And another thing: Mr. Archer's my HORSE.

CHARLOTTE

Oooo, you've got a horse? What kind?

HALEY

An Appaloosa.

CHARLOTTE

With spots? I love Appaloosas!

HALEY

Absolutely! You can ride him if you come to New York. There's this terrific place out by Jones Beach that's, like, completely unspoiled.

CHARLOTTE

That's so cool! Is Jones Beach near Providence?

HALEY

It's closer to Islip.

NAPOLEON (*to Edith*)

After we parted, you formed other attachments. It was only to be expected.

EDITH

You were in Egypt collecting mummy cases, *mon cher* -- and perhaps stuffing young women into them. The Duke understood my pain.

NAPOLEON

Did he maneuver or content himself with a frontal assault?

EDITH

It's odd, but the first things I noticed about him were his boots...

HALEY

I still think they're too tight around the calf.

NAPOLEON

Wellington is a soldier and a man of substance, but he's an Englishman -- the great enemy of France and the United States of America! And that's to say nothing of their cooking.

CHARLOTTE

You know, dad, she tried to make puff paste *rise*.

HALEY (*to Charlotte*)

Yeah, well when my dad finishes with creeper-face, there'll be nothing left but a smear of *foie gras*.

CHARLOTTE

Right! 'Cause his *intelligence* service knows all about cooking.

NAPOLEON

The English know nothing about *foie gras*, nothing at all!

EDITH

Please! This is neither the time nor the place for quarreling: we're on a battlefield.

NAPOLEON

You are right, *ma chérie*, the girls should be agreeable to each other! Children, your mother is a wonderful woman. She's conquered the conquerors of Europe!

HALEY (*to Charlotte*)

And she writes books and stuff!

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, she told me.

HALEY

So what do we do now? Call off the battle?

*(She does kick turns on Charlotte's skateboard.)*

EDITH

As things stand, a battle would be terribly *gauche*.

NAPOLEON

We cannot call off a battle simply because my daughter is Wellington's stepdaughter and *vice versa*. I have fifty regiments in the field!

CHARLOTTE

They'll get over it, Dad.

NAPOLEON

No, the battle must take place.

HALEY

Why?

EDITH

If it's a family affair, the violence will be intensified.

HALEY

Well I'm not gonna fight my sister!

CHARLOTTE

Me neither! We didn't get to fight the whole time we were growing up; we're not gonna start now!

NAPOLEON

Is this the obedience you owe your fathers? Have we taught you nothing?

HALEY

Fighting never settled anything anyway!

CHARLOTTE *(to Haley)*

Oh-oh, now you're gonna get it!

HALEY

Get what?

CHARLOTTE

The Carthage bit.

NAPOLEON

I regret, Haley, that the Creeper must instruct. Leave off that infernal appliance and pay attention!

*(Haley abandons the skateboard and sits, sulking. Napoleon adjusts the light in the tent. The new light is less comedic and more philosophic.)*

NAPOLEON (CONT)

You say fighting never settled anything – this you must tell to the Carthaginians!

HALEY

Carcinogins?

EDITH

*Carthaginians.* You know, like in *Salambo* -- the novel by Flaubert?

HALEY  
Who?

AND

NAPOLEON  
*Comment?*

EDITH

Never mind. Continue, *mon cher*.

NAPOLEON

For three thousand years the city of Carthage lorded over the Mediterranean until Roman soldiers pulled down its stones and burned its timbers in the second century before Christ. Today scholars debate to know just where it stood. Carthaginian letters carved in stone are as meaningless as hen scratches in the dirt: all who knew the language were killed or scattered at sword's point centuries ago.

CHARLOTTE

Are we gonna follow the Roman example, Dad? Use our swords to make sure our grandchildren can't read? Does tomorrow's battle decide whether it's French or English that becomes a dead language?

EDITH

I'm devoted to both languages -- you must stop this outrage *tout de suite!*

HALEY

Yeah, your Creepership, the women in your life are all saying "no," maybe you should listen.

NAPOLEON

You women! You all think you're more advanced than me -- especially you girls because your lives come mostly after mine. Let me inform you: the future doesn't dictate to the past; the past is sovereign!

CHARLOTTE

I'm sorry, he has this thing for aphorisms.

NAPOLEON

You don't decide the world you inherit: *M. le duc* and I create that world and we do it by fighting.

EDITH

Oh you *will* have your battle, won't you? But please don't say you're creating anything. I know what it is to create life; men only know how to take it away.

NAPOLEON

The Duke and I played a role in what you created -- our cooperation was brief but indispensable.

HALEY

So let's fight and undo it all! You guys make me puke.

NAPOLEON

It cannot be stopped. Rome had to conquer simply to be Rome. Take away Roman wars and you take away Roman law, Roman roads and Roman literature...

EDITH

That last would be a small loss.

NAPOLEON

Ovid? Horace?

EDITH

Wars create nothing!

NAPOLEON

They create a vacuum.

EDITH

A vacuum *is* nothing!

NAPOLEON

In a world crammed with outworn ideas, a vacuum is precious. A vacuum is pure potential! Great marvels grow from a vacuum.

EDITH

I take your meaning, but in that case you've organized your battle all wrong.

NAPOLEON (*moving to his maps*)

I have, Madame?

EDITH

You and the Duke. You've got the English, Dutch and Prussians on one side while the French are all on the other. You won't settle anything that way.

CHARLOTTE

What's the right way?

EDITH

On one side you must put all those who can't appreciate beauty: people for whom a chair is just for sitting and language is just for ordering drink in the tavern; people who eat without tasting their food and decorate their houses with expensive blobs of trash; people who've never learned to use their eyes to see the wonder of life nor their tongues to proclaim it and who won't teach their children any better. Put all those people on one side.

NAPOLEON

And on the other?

EDITH

Cannons! A great many cannons with grapeshot! *La mitraille*, isn't that right?

NAPOLEON

An excellent plan!

EDITH

But that's not the battle you're offering us. You've merely arranged a squabble of nationalities. It's vulgar and wrong and I won't have any part of it! Tomorrow I shall take the girls to a place of safety.

NAPOLEON

Edith, it is with regret that I inform you: there exists no place of safety.

EDITH

Piffle.

NAPOLEON

A quarter million soldiers are converging on this field. The war could break like a wave and sweep to any city in Europe. Rotterdam is not safe in the north nor Cologne to the east. There are corn riots in London and even in Louisiana a battle is prepared.

HALEY

That's kinda what Arthur says, too.

EDITH

Is our family to be slaughtered now that we're together at last?

NAPOLEON

Only one thing is more dangerous than a fight and that is to run from one.

CHARLOTTE

Aphorisms, dad!

EDITH

If I'd known we were going to die in Belgium, I would have insisted on a first class hotel.

NAPOLEON

More Champaign?

EDITH

Yes, please. Serve the girls first; they're old enough.

CHARLOTTE

Maybe *I* am.

*(He fetches two more glasses.)*

NAPOLEON

I am quite prepared to be reasonable. Indeed, I am always reasonable. Reason is the cornerstone of my nature. Haley is a prisoner. If she gives her word not to participate in the coming hostilities, she can be paroled like any other prisoner.

HALEY

Is cooking, like, *hostility*?

CHARLOTTE

Yours is.

HALEY

Shut up! *(to Napoleon)* I don't see why she gets to help her father and I don't get to help mine, especially if her father's a creeper.

EDITH

I'm sure Arthur can do without you this time, Haley.

HALEY

No he can't! When I'm not there he forgets to eat. Or he eats those hardtack thingies – like crackers made of concrete. *Yuk!*

EDITH

He has other people to help him. You must return to Brussels.

NAPOLEON

It's pointless. My troops will sweep north like the tide coming in. Brussels is not safe.

CHARLOTTE

She'll be safe if she stays with me.

HALEY

But you're on the wrong side!

EDITH

Both sides are wrong as I've already explained...

HALEY

And what about mom? If it's not safe for me, it's not safe for her.



EDITH

How considerate! I'm touched.

NAPOLEON

Very well! I shall make provision for you all. *Capitaine Bonaparte!*

CHARLOTTE (*coming to attention*)

Sire!

NAPOLEON (*at the map table*)

You will take these civilians south to... *Genappe* and wait there till I send for you.

CHARLOTTE

Genappe, sir...

HALEY

Is it far?

CHARLOTTE

Three miles...

NAPOLEON

Five *kilometers!* What must I do to bring you into the nineteenth century?

CHARLOTTE

That's not the problem...

NAPOLEON

That's *exactly* the problem: old concepts are prisons for new minds! Take the king's anatomy as a ruler and the king rules you by inches and feet – not to mention that they're impractical.

CHARLOTTE

Dad...

NAPOLEON (*over her*)

Is there anything stupider than non-decimal units of measure?

EDITH

War between nations?

HALEY

I don't get it...

CHARLOTTE

Can I say something...

EDITH

Dare I hope for a proper inn at Genappe?

NAPOLEON

An inn with linen sheets and polished furniture, tastefully arranged, I assure you. Tea and toast in the morning. Felt in the door jams. Even the candlesticks know their place.

CHARLOTTE

SIRE! I must speak!

NAPOLEON

Very well, *Capitaine*, speak!

CHARLOTTE

Genappe lies directly on your line of retreat. The town is built like a funnel with only a narrow bridge across the river. If you are forced to withdraw...

NAPOLEON

I know this. I crossed the bridge last night.

CHARLOTTE

If you are forced to withdraw, the town is a deathtrap.

NAPOLEON

Thank you, *ma petite*. You should know something also.

CHARLOTTE

What?

NAPOLEON

The eagle does not withdraw -- the eagle strikes!

TWELVE

PROJECTION: *JUNE 18TH: HOURS BEFORE DAWN*

*An indeterminate place with a ground fog. Bleak light. Wellington enters as if in a trance.*

WELLINGTON

Edith? Edith! It's an infamous army they've given me. People on my staff I hardly know; ranks of raw recruits with untried officers. All the crack companies are still in America -- and the Prussians -- where are they? It's even money whether they come in time. I've spread out the seasoned troops to stiffen the others. I've taken pains, but Edith, it may not do. It'll be a near-run thing at best, the nearest-run thing you ever saw. *(Pause.)* Before I went to India... before I became a soldier -- before I became a *fighting* soldier -- I burned my violin -- tossed it onto the grate. I could have sold it or put it in the closet, but I needed to renounce... to renounce that particular pastime. *(Pause.)* I've never wanted it back -- still don't. But tonight I'd like to play again... just for a while. I'd like to play "British Grenadiers." *(He sings softly.)*

Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules  
Of Hector and Lysander, and such great names as these...

*(Napoleon enters, preceded by a curl of fog.)*

NAPOLEON

Yoo-hoo, Milord! I interrupt your music. I regret it, truly.

WELLINGTON

Oh... you're here.

NAPOLEON

And I've come quicker than you thought! Much quicker, Milord!

WELLINGTON

You humbugged me -- stole a march. Stole *two* marches. Your men moved across the border like peas rolling in a pail.

NAPOLEON

An army that marches is more terrifying than one that fights.

WELLINGTON

So whose dream is this, Boney? Yours or mine?

NAPOLEON

I will not be addressed as "Boney"! I am the Emperor of the French! By the Treaty of Amiens signed and ratified by the Allied Powers in eighteen hundred and two, I am recognized as First Consul -- as head of state!

WELLINGTON

It must be my dream. You have to be awake to insist on protocol.

NAPOLEON

To be awake is an art, not a state of being.

WELLINGTON

Leave off your accursed aphorism.

NAPOLEON

I am the most awake of my generation. I was awake, so I conquered Europe.

WELLINGTON

I've heard that before. Who was it said that to me?

NAPOLEON

It can't have been Edith Wharton. I don't know her.

WELLINGTON

That's right, you don't. (*Pause.*) Are you sure?

NAPOLEON

Are you?

WELLINGTON

No, the thing can't be...

NAPOLEON

Of course I know her – and *knew* her. Fertile of pen and fertile of womb, she gave me a daughter. A son would have secured my dynasty sooner.

WELLINGTON

My mistress cannot possibly be the mother of your child.

NAPOLEON

The mother of your child cannot possibly be my mistress.

WELLINGTON

What are you saying? That a thing can't be less true than its converse?

NAPOLEON

WAIT! SILENCE! "*Converse...*"

WELLINGTON

I *was* conversing.

NAPOLEON

NO! The word means something else. "*Converse...*" Why can't I think!

WELLINGTON

Take a deep breath. It will come.

NAPOLEON

It doesn't come quick as it did before. You know the feeling?

WELLINGTON

I know the feeling. We are of an age, you and I. There's a trick for that: pretend there's music. Pretend there's music and the thing you can't remember is waiting to dance with you. Hold out your arms...

NAPOLEON

I hold them out...

*(Wellington embraces his opponent.)*

WELLINGTON

Now, Waltz with it. Waltz with it. Waltz with it. THAT's the way. THAT's the way.

*(The two commanders perform a slow waltz.)*

NAPOLEON

DANCE the thing. DANCE the thing. Interesting dream, this is.

WELLINGTON

Hush! You HAVE the thing. HAVE the thing. HOLD the thing. KEEP the thing.

NAPOLEON

LA-dee, da. LA-dee, da. ConVERSE with me. The shoes! *(He stops dancing.)* She wears the shoes of Converse, my daughter does. Shoes made of canvas and India rubber. I don't know where she gets them. I don't know why she likes them. There are so many things I don't know about my daughter!

WELLINGTON

So you *do* have a daughter. Have I met her?

NAPOLEON

Have I met yours?

WELLINGTON

I don't have a daughter.

NAPOLEON

That's what you think.

WELLINGTON

That's what I put out.

NAPOLEON

I know better. Your daughter works as a cook, a timer of eggs, a pricker of capons. You haven't told her she's your daughter. You haven't told her how to cook. She thinks that sauce Béarnaise comes out of a bottle. She thinks that everything comes out of bottles.

WELLINGTON

Rats don't.

NAPOLEON

Your daughter loves you. It amazes me that you can't see this! To me it's utterly transparent.

WELLINGTON

Do you know where she is? They haven't seen her in the kitchen.

NAPOLEON

I am not your daughter's keeper.

WELLINGTON

And what of yours?

NAPOLEON

My daughter obeys me.

WELLINGTON

Top drawer, that.

NAPOLEON

I am accustomed to being obeyed, but not in her manner. She follows me differently than do... my other followers.

WELLINGTON

And you don't know why? Has inspiration failed you?

NAPOLEON

What men call inspiration is merely rapid calculation. But yes, calculation fails me. I, who can discover the intention of an opposing army in the flash of an eyelash, I can't decipher what's in her heart.

WELLINGTON

I can tell you...

NAPOLEON

That would astonish me.

WELLINGTON

I can tell you because this is my dream. What's in your daughter's heart... is...

*(Pause.)*

NAPOLEON

A long silence?

WELLINGTON

Hope. Mostly hope. Hope is in her heart.

NAPOLEON

Why can't I see that?

WELLINGTON

Because you have none. The whole of Europe is marching against you, trying to end your bloody nightmare. If we don't stop you today, we'll stop you when the Prussians come. And the Austrians. And the Russians.

NAPOLEON

Are we back to that? May I give you a word of military advice? You shouldn't stand south of the Soignes Woods. With your backs to the forest my Imperial Guard will cut you up like pumpkins. Go to Brussels and declare it an open city. Then evacuate to Ostend or Antwerp.

WELLINGTON (*glumly*)

Got to stand someplace. Got to give the Prussians time to catch up.

NAPOLEON

No enthusiasm, Milord?

WELLINGTON

Not much.

NAPOLEON

Grouchy will keep the Prussians occupied. You don't have enough guns. Your guns are ill-served. Your army is a mish-mash of people from all over. Besides, you're an idiot.

WELLINGTON

Charming!

NAPOLEON

Your Grace is a bad general and you have stupid dreams.

WELLINGTON

Maybe that's because I'm dreaming of you, Boney, a man of destiny who has no destination; a man with a coach full of diamonds and an army full of dreamers: tens of thousands, sleep-marching behind you. The old ones follow their moustaches because it's all they know. When the young ones fall into line you can hear the click of freshly-closed minds.

NAPOLEON

You have a kitchen full of mushrooms and dull knives. You have an army of shop assistants and second sons, farm boys and stutterers. Everything in your army is slipshod except the horses. You will lose. It astonishes me that you can't see this.

WELLINGTON

There's something you should know.

(*Thunder.*)

NAPOLEON

Tell me. Tell me without dancing.

WELLINGTON

Are you listening?

NAPOLEON

Tell me the thing I should know.

WELLINGTON

There's a sunken lane behind the ridge at Waterloo. You can't see it from the south. A millennium of trudging peasants have worn it deep into the earth. If they come on it suddenly, galloping men will find nothing beneath their horses' hooves -- only air. You needn't tell your cavalry; they'll find out soon enough.

NAPOLEON

I did not know this.

*(Thunder, again.)*

WELLINGTON

On the far side of the sunken lane there's a thorny hedge. Behind the thorny hedge are Maitland's Foot Guards. They're lying down in the wheat. Also the 95<sup>th</sup>. The 95<sup>th</sup> has Baker rifles. This, too, your men and horses will discover.

NAPOLEON

Why are you telling me this, *Monsieur le Duc*?

WELLINGTON

I never remember my dreams -- why should you? But that's not the thing you need to know.

NAPOLEON

No?

*(Lightning.)*

WELLINGTON

No. You need to know something else, something important. Something that might make the difference...

NAPOLEON

Which is?

*(Thunder, much closer. A cloudburst.)*

WELLINGTON

It's raining. It's raining hard. While you sleep, it's raining.

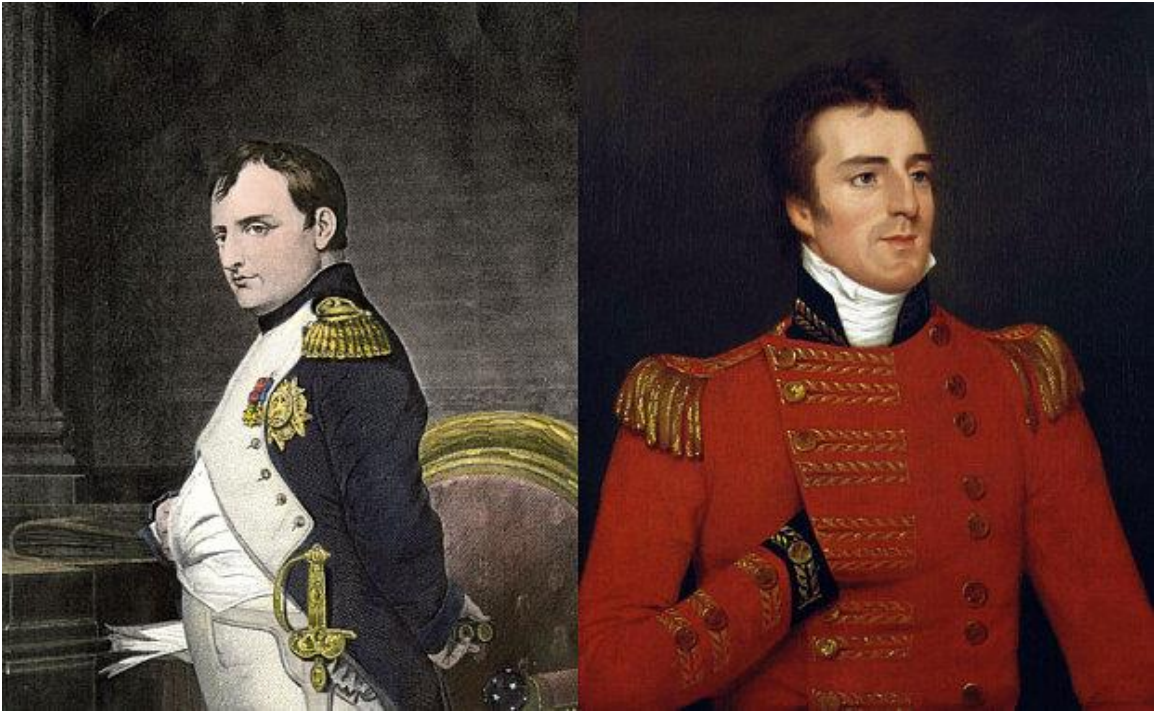
*(The lights change to dawn.)*



HALEY (*off*)

Arthur? Arthur. Daddy? Dad!

*(The dream dissolves.)*



THIRTEEN

PROJECTION: *THAT NIGHT IN GENAPPE*

*June 18: a room on the top floor of the Auberge du Roi d'Espagne. Edith and Haley share the bed. Charlotte is curled up in an armchair, her legs across Haley's steamer trunk. All three are asleep. Moonlight enters through an open dormer window. A candle burns in a glass chimney.*

*A horse gallops by in the street below, then another. We hear a carriage being driven fast, then silence. Under the women's breathing the sound of running men can gradually be heard. There's no shouting and no clink of weapons or armor; the men are running for their lives. One or two are now banging on the door of the inn. There are shouts of "Ouvrez! Ouvrez!" The banging goes on for some time. Edith stirs. She gets out of bed and moves to the window. There's the sound of a distant bugle. In response, the banging stops and the running intensifies. Edith gets a chair to stand on so as to have a better view.*

EDITH

Charlotte! Charlotte, wake up! You should see this!

*(Charlotte stirs.)*

CHARLOTTE

Hmmm? What is it?

EDITH

Your father's reinforcements, coming on the run.

*(Charlotte rises stiffly and moves to the window.)*

CHARLOTTE

Let me see.

EDITH

Such splendid, masculine vigor! Haley, wake up, dear!

*(Edith goes to light another candle from the one left burning. Charlotte climbs onto the chair and looks out.)*

CHARLOTTE

They're not reinforcements.

EDITH

How can you tell?

CHARLOTTE

They're going the wrong way. And they've ditched their weapons.

*(The running feet move slower as the street fills up. Now there are shouts of “Avancez! Avancez, nom de dieu!” as soldiers call to those in front to keep moving.)*

EDITH

So they’re retreating?

CHARLOTTE

They’re not retreating; they’re running.

EDITH

Oh. Is that normal?

CHARLOTTE

It sucks. The Guard sappers should have stopped them; it’s their job.

*(A drum can now be heard under the bugle calls. It continues throughout the scene, growing louder and more distinct.)*

EDITH

Haley. I’m sorry, but you really must wake up now.

*(We hear the sound of horses advancing deliberately. The sound intensifies throughout the scene.)*

CHARLOTTE

Oh my God!

HALEY *(still half asleep)*

What is it?

CHARLOTTE

I saw a Guardsman, a grenadier.

HALEY

So?

*(The pounding on the inn door resumes.)*

EDITH

You’re good with uniforms! I can’t tell one army from another!

*(Charlotte grabs the bolster from behind Haley’s head and puts it under the door.)*

HALEY

What’s up?

*(Charlotte pushes the steamer trunk against the door.)*

CHARLOTTE

Line troops will run, but never a Guardsman.

*(The shouting and knocking in the street become frantic. Something heavy hits the roof.  
We hear bare feet going down the stairs to the front door.)*

A VOICE FROM THE GROUND FLOOR

*N'ouvrez pas! Surtout, n'ouvrez pas!* (Don't open it. Whatever you do, don't open it.)

*(A bugle sounds again – much nearer.)*

CHARLOTTE

Prussian! The Prussians broke through!

HALEY

Yea, Prussians!

CHARLOTTE

Shut up, Haley. Help me move the bed behind the trunk.

*(The three women try to move the bed. It's too heavy.)*

EDITH

Take the mattress off.

*(They remove the mattress. There's no place to put it. Haley takes the chair away from  
the window so they can slide the mattress into the dormer. They slide the bed behind the  
steamer trunk. Booted feet are heard on the tiled roof.)*

CHARLOTTE

Move the mattress!

*(Haley and Edith move the mattress on top of the armchair so that Charlotte can go into  
the dormer. She closes the outside shutters, then the window and the curtains. Only the  
two candles light the room.)*

HALEY

What are they up to?

*(Something hits the shutter hard enough to break the window. Glass falls to the floor.)*

CHARLOTTE

Shit! Move it back.

*(They haul the mattress back into the dormer and lean it over the shattered window.  
Booted feet run up the stairs; they reach the floor below and stop. Someone knocks  
loudly on an interior door below. Someone else pries at the dormer shutters from  
outside. The mattress curls away from the window and flops down. . The sound of  
horsemen is much nearer. Edith tries to move the armoire, but can't.)*

EDITH *(a whisper)*

Help me.

*(They move the armoire a few feet. It topples over with a crash.)*

A VOICE ON THE ROOF

*Il y a quelqu'un? Ouvrez! Ouvrez, vite!* (Somebody inside? Open up. Open quickly.)

*(The women blow out both candles.)*

HALEY

Maybe we should let him in?

CHARLOTTE

He's a deserter!

HALEY

He's a human being!

CHARLOTTE

No, he's a deserter!

EDITH

Good heavens, are they all deserters?

A VOICE FROM THE ROOF

*Ouvrez maintenant, ou je tire.* (Open now or I'll shoot.)

CHARLOTTE *(to Haley)*

Got your phone?

HALEY

You gonna call 911?

CHARLOTTE

No, I need the light.

*(Charlotte finds her saddle bags and extracts two pistols and a handful of paper cartridges. By the light of Haley's cell phone she half-cocks the first pistol, opens the frizzen and checks the pan and touchhole. Edith removes a slat from the bed to use as a club. Haley's cellphone goes dark. She renews the light.)*

CHARLOTTE

Hold it closer.

*(Charlotte tears open a cartridge with her teeth, pours powder into the pan, then closes the frizzen. She pours the rest of the powder down the barrel, drops in the ball, still wrapped in paper, and rams it down gingerly. Haley's phone goes dark again.)*

A VOICE FROM THE ROOF

*Je sais que vous êtes là! Ouvrez!* (I know you're there. Open up!)

*(Bare feet are running up the stairs inside the inn. Charlotte finishes the first pistol and*

*starts on the second. A loud knocking comes at the door.)*

EDITH

*Qui est? (Who is it?)*

THE INNKEEPER ON THE LANDING

*N'ouvrez pas, Madame, surtout n'ouvrez pas!*

*(There's a gunshot from the street and a loud crash from the front door. The feet run back down.)*

HALEY

Hurry, Sis!

*(We hear a scream from inside the inn, the sound of a man whose throat has been slit. Booted feet run up to the floor below.)*

HALEY (CONT.)

Oh Jesus!

*(A bugle sounds, very close. The horses are trotting now. There are screams as the Prussian cavalry ride down fleeing soldiers further up the street.)*

CHARLOTTE

Hold it still!

*(The horsemen arrive at the inn. Pandemonium in the street: cries of "Pardon!" as fleeing soldiers beg for mercy, followed by screams as sabers meet flesh.)*

CHARLOTTE

Take this. Don't touch the trigger!

*(Haley takes the first pistol as she might a museum piece. As Charlotte finishes the second pistol the shutters are torn open from the outside. Charlotte braces herself and points her pistol at the window.)*

HALEY (CONT.)

Oh God!

A CALVALRYMAN IN THE STREET

*Da drüben, rechts -- auf dem Dach! (There, to your right -- on the roof!)*

*(A carbine is fired in the street.)*

A SCREAM FROM THE ROOF

*Merde!*

*(Wounded, or perhaps just losing his footing, the man at the window slides down the roof and into the street. Another set of footsteps is heard running along the roof ridge directly overhead. A third set of booted feet run up the stairs to the landing.)*

A VOICE FROM THE LANDING

*Auf machen. Auf machen sofort!* (Open immediately!)

*(After the briefest pause, the soldier on the landing starts beating on the door with the butt of his musket. Edith and Haley move the mattress in front of the armchair and take positions behind it. Charlotte joins them. The girls level their pistols at the door.)*

CHARLOTTE *(in a whisper)*

Use two hands. Aim for the thick part of his body.

*(The hammering continues.)*

HALEY *(in a whisper)*

Oh mom, I'm scared! I'm so scared.

*(The door begins to splinter.)*

EDITH *(loud)*

Now this is really too much!

HALEY

Mom!

EDITH

DON'T YOU AGREE? DOESN'T THIS EXCEED THE BOUNDS OF PROPRIETY?

HALEY

Mom, be quiet!

A VOICE FROM THE LANDING

*Wer ist da?* (Who's in there?)

*(Edith pushes the bed aside and drags the steamer trunk away from the door.)*

HALEY

What are you doing, Mom? Put those back!

EDITH

THIS MAN IS FRIGHTENING MY DAUGHTERS!

A VOICE FROM THE LANDING

*WER IST DA?*

*(She opens the door with the aplomb of a society hostess.)*

EDITH

*Wir sind Engländerinnen! Nur drei englische Frauen! Das ist unserer Zimmer. Bitte seien Sie ruhig! (We're English women! Only three English women. This is our room. Please be quiet.)*

*(Pause. The sound of trotting horses from the street.)*

A VOICE FROM THE LANDING

*Ich bitte Sie um Entschuldigung, meine Damen. Schönen guten Abend, meine Damen.*

EDITH

*Danke schön. Guten Abend.*

*(The booted feet thump down the stairs. The girls lower their pistols. Haley hugs her mother.)*

HALEY

Did you see the way he just clicked his heels and went? He just turned around and left!

*(Pause.)*

CHARLOTTE

That was amazing! But what happened to my Dad?

EDITH

You mean...

CHARLOTTE

Oh my God! What happened at Waterloo?



FOURTEEN

PROJECTION: *FOUR DAYS LATER*

*June 22: a tent pitched upwind of the battlefield. Edith tends a fire made of broken lances and musket stocks. A kettle is heating above it. Charlotte uses a hussar's saddle as a stool and Haley's steamer trunk as a table to support her computer. She's working on a spreadsheet. There are distant pistol shots. Charlotte ignores them. A horse whinnies. Haley enters angrily from an early morning ride. She carries a pair of saddlebags.*

HALEY

It sucks! It SUCKS, It SUCKS, SUCKS, SUCKS!

CHARLOTTE

You're out early.

HALEY

The peasants are burning your dad's soldiers again! I told them not to, but they won't listen!

CHARLOTTE

They won't listen to me, either.

HALEY

Aren't we gonna do something?

CHARLOTTE

Like what?

HALEY

We're paying them, aren't we?

CHARLOTTE

We only paid for their crop. We're not paying them to undertake... what they're undertaking. Pardon the pun.

HALEY

I told them to burn the horses and bury the men, *all* the men, even the French. They're tossing them on fires like hot dogs. It makes me sick.

CHARLOTTE

Sis, it's sweet of you to want them all buried...

HALEY

But?

CHARLOTTE

There are just too many. Even to burn, there are too many; the peasants are using wood they saved for winter. I'm sorry, but that's the truth. Remember the wall of bodies behind the farmhouse?

HALEY

Your dad's first corps?

CHARLOTTE

They marched into grapeshot like a spring shower.

HALEY

It didn't help that they were marching in mud.

CHARLOTTE

Still, what were they thinking? How could they will themselves to do that?

HALEY

I don't know.

CHARLOTTE

And the horsemen in the sunken lane! The riders behind pushed the riders in front until they could ride over the bodies.

HALEY

So gross. A giant trench of squashed meat.

CHARLOTTE

And it's not just our guys. I keep seeing your dad's 27<sup>th</sup> rifles.

HALEY

Lying dead, still in formation.

CHARLOTTE

How could they do that?

HALEY

He told them to stay right there. He musta had a reason.

CHARLOTTE

What happened here is beyond reason. If the peasants have to burn bodies, I don't think we it's for us to say they're wrong.

*(Edith straightens and totters forward with the kettle. She serves Haley coffee as if in a daze, refills Charlotte's cup, then goes back to the fire.)*

HALEY

Thanks, mom. *(to Charlotte, low)* Is she any better?

CHARLOTTE

I can't tell. She hasn't said anything this morning. I think she tended the fire all night.

HALEY

Mom? Howya doin'? You get any sleep?

*(Edith straightens and approaches.)*

EDITH

A road choked by bodies, all in red tunics. A river of blood streaming through the flattened wheat. Lancers and dragoons. The gloss of bloody flanks. Bodies all mixed up...

HALEY

Mom...

EDITH

Artillery broken: caissons and carriages, axles and wheels, spokes and strakes... splintered, smashed, dismembered...

HALEY

Mom...

EDITH

Rows and rows of deceased, young faces... Hussars eviscerated, trampled to a mat. Viscera purple, drawing flies. The wounded cry in pain. Cry in grief. Cry for water. Especially cry for water. All gory... under the arch of sunset. The whole of Europe gone straight to hell...

CHARLOTTE

We know. We saw.

HALEY

It's okay, Mom.

EDITH

Nothing to write about, really. Nothing.

*(She goes back to the fire. A gunshot in the distance.)*

CHARLOTTE

That's the most she's said since Genappe. I think she's getting a grip.

HALEY

I hope so. How did *you* sleep?

CHARLOTTE

Really well for a change. The smell is a lot better.

HALEY

Smokier.

CHARLOTTE

It's the only way, Sis.

HALEY

I guess. But it still sucks.

CHARLOTTE

The peasants brought bread. You want some?

HALEY

Yeah. (*She chews a piece.*) I hear they're sending your dad to another island, a tiny one in the South Atlantic.

CHARLOTTE

He'll hate it, but it'll keep him out of trouble. And your dad's a national hero!

HALEY

Which definitely *won't* keep him out of trouble. I got a letter from him -- a recipe. Oh, and a clipping from the Kentish Gazette: "A heavy and incessant firing was heard from this coast on Sunday evening from the direction of Dunkirk." Isn't that amazing? They heard the guns in England!

CHARLOTTE

Jeez.

HALEY (*looking over the letter*)

I think he's already forgotten how near he came to losing.

CHARLOTTE

He lost a lot of friends, didn't he?

HALEY

Yeah, just about his whole staff. Maybe he needs to forget.

CHARLOTTE

You think everybody will forget some day? Like, they'll just use this land to grow wheat and not even think there was a battle here?

HALEY

I wouldn't forget. I'd look at the wheat and see the bones underneath... you should be able to do that: maybe not every day, but let's say one day a year people should see the bones. So in two hundred years people can come here on bone day and the earth becomes transparent and they see bones everywhere... and they're, like, "wow, all those men! All those horses. They all died in one afternoon."

CHARLOTTE

I'd be cool with that.

*(Pause.)*

HALEY

Any word from Michael?

CHARLOTTE

Let me check. *(She clicks on her Email and reacts to what she reads.)* Oh, give me a break! Give me a friggin' break!

HALEY

What?

CHARLOTTE

He wants to buy a motorcycle and take me to someplace in South Dakota.

HALEY

That's nice, I guess.

CHARLOTTE

No it isn't! All this shit happening and the only thing on his marble mind is me on the back of a Harley!

HALEY

At least he's devoted.

CHARLOTTE

Devotion isn't everything.

HALEY

You gonna go?

CHARLOTTE

No. He can come here if he wants. It's not like we couldn't use help.

HALEY

Look what I've got.

*(She empties a saddlebag full of brass buttons and badges.)*

CHARLOTTE

You've been shopping.

HALEY

I'm gonna make a bag covered with buttons. It's gonna look like it's made of buttons.

CHARLOTTE

Thousands to choose from.

HALEY

I like the big ones from the busbies. The peasants are selling them for centimes.

CHARLOTTE

You don't want the bearskin that goes with it?

HALEY

Too heavy. Look at this: Prussian double eagle from down at Placenoit.

CHARLOTTE

Beautiful! I talked to the guy from Rotterdam.

HALEY

The metals guy?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah. He says we should recycle the bronze and let the peasants take the other metals. He'll warehouse the scrap for us and release it slowly to avoid a glut. Says he works with foundries all over Europe.

HALEY

Can he handle it all? There must be two hundred cannons out there.

CHARLOTTE

I get the feeling he's got people working with him, like a bronze cartel.

HALEY

How much is it worth?

CHARLOTTE

A fortune! The demand is constant: people melt down the guns to make plaques and statues to honor the dead; then their children or grandchildren melt down the statues and plaques to make cannons again.

HALEY

What's our cut?

CHARLOTTE

Sixty percent -- but we handle transport to Rotterdam.

HALEY

Can we do that?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, but slowly. I talked to the guy from the peasant union: you can't get draft horses anywhere, horses of any kind, in fact. And he's talking all of northern Europe...

HALEY

There are thousands of dead horses out there.

CHARLOTTE

Your dad told his men to aim low.

HALEY

I saw a horse with her forelegs shot off eating grass. When she had eaten all the grass she could reach she rolled to a new patch to keep eating. *(Pause. Gunshots in the distance.)* They're still finishing them off.

*(Pause. Distant music.)*

CHARLOTTE

What's that?

HALEY

A bagpipe!

CHARLOTTE

I thought the Highlanders had gone.

HALEY

I guess not. *(They listen.)* I know you don't like bagpipes, but it's kinda comforting.

CHARLOTTE

I don't mind them anymore. To a sound you gotta blow and to blow...

HALEY AND CHARLOTTE

... you gotta be alive!

*(They listen as the piping fades in the distance.)*

CHARLOTTE

I'm glad this is over.

HALEY

Me too. I'm not gonna melt down anything. I'm gonna make clothes.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah. Widows' weeds!

HALEY

Suits for amputees!

CHARLOTTE

Shrouds!

*(Their brief laughter dies.)*

HALEY

Our dads made a mess of things, didn't they?

CHARLOTTE

Totally.

HALEY

Let's try and do better. Okay, sis?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, let's try and do better.

*(End of play)*



## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Auxonne = OX – suun  
Calanques = cal – ANKS  
Coup de foudre = koo dih FOO - dreh  
Merci, ma petite = mehr-SI, mah pe-teet  
Cambrone = kam – BROne  
Marseilles = mar-SAY  
voyage d'agrément = voy-AHGE dah gray mehn  
capitaine = KAP PEA TEN  
Compris = kom PREE  
Mitternich = MET- ter –niche  
Razmovsky = raz-MOF-ski  
Redoutensaal = ray- DOO-ten-sal  
Bagration = bah- GRA- si- un  
Von Windischgrätz = fon-WIN-dish-grates  
Grouchy = GREW-she  
Charleroi = SHARL-le-wah  
Mons = monz  
Ligny = LIN-knee  
Objet d'art = OOb-ghet DHAR  
Toute de suite = toot sweet  
Genappes = gjen-APPE  
Placenoit = PLAA-se-nwa