

IS STILL AT LARGE. IN OTHER NEWS, THE BRITISH 8TH ARMY ANNOUNCED SUCCESS TODAY IN NORTH AFRICA NEAR SIDI BARRANI . . . (*Figure turns radio off . . . crosses to desk. Takes out make-up kit and removes notebook. Figure leafs through it quickly . . . then throws it back in kit, and removes lipstick and compact from kit then puts kit back in desk drawer. Figure stands tapping knife as he thinks. An owl is heard outside. Lights fade to black. A car gunning its motor, obviously stuck in the snow, is heard as the lights come up. Helsa enters, looks around the room, and starts to cross to the French doors. Elsa, bundled in furs, enters.*)

ELSA. Helsa, there seems to be a taxi stuck in the drive. I'm going down with a shovel. And the bar needs condiments. Will you see to it?

HELSA. Ja, gnadige Frau.

ELSA. Gnadige Frau? A bit formal this morning, aren't we? Oh, I think I know. Little Helsa is curious about my overnight guest, isn't she?

HELSA. Nein.

ELSA. Not even curious which bedroom he slept in? (*Laughs and attempts to kiss her. Helsa turns her head.*) Oh, don't worry, you're still the princess here. Now . . . to the day. There will be seven for lunch, four for dinner. I want you at your most efficient today, Helsa. I'm not at liberty to tell you why, but this day will add a bonechilling chapter to the Von Grossenknueten annals. (*As she goes, points to Ovaltine tray.*) Clear that also, will you? (*She exits c. Helsa turns to the French doors. O'Reilly stands outside. She starts . . . then opens doors.*)

O'REILLY. Thank you, thank you. Sure and we're after bein' stuck down on the road at the bottom of your driveway, wouldn't you know.

HELSA. Ja, I hear the car.

O'REILLY. No, that's another car. We can't even get up the hill. I'm Patrick O'Reilly. (*He takes off his hat to reveal a close-cropped blonde head. He is a large, rather sinister man with a sabre scar across his left cheek.*) I'm one of the actors. I thought I'd be after comin' up to see if I could borrow a shovel. (*He pronounces it "shivel."*)

HELSA. Shivel? Oh . . . Fraulein Von Grossenknueten is using it right now. May I take your coat?

O'REILLY. I may as well go back down, then, and see what I can do. (*He crosses to French doors.*)

HELSA. You are Irish, Mr. O'Reilly?

O'REILLY. As Paddy's cow. And you . . . are Scandinavian?

HELSA. I am German.

O'REILLY. Are you now?

HELSA. A refugee. Fraulein Von Grossenknueten gave me refuge here four years ago.

O'REILLY. Did she now?

HELSA. From the Nazis.

O'REILLY. The Nazis was it?

HELSA. Swine that they are!

O'REILLY. (*After a beat.*) I see. (*Beat.*) Well . . . it's been most interestin' meetin' you, Miss . . . ?

HELSA. Wenzel. Helsa Wenzel.

O'REILLY. Wenzel, yes. (*Turns to go. Stops.*) Faith and be-gorrah, but isn't there a very famous German cabaret entertainer named Wenzel? At the Tivoli, I believe.

HELSA. You are familiar with German cabaret entertainers?

O'REILLY. Well, it's after bein' my business now, isn't it? Dieter Wenzel, isn't that his name?

HELSA. I never paid much attention to the cabarets. (*From the hallway, c., we hear voices. Elsa enters followed by Ken De La Maize and Nikki Crandall. Ken is a handsome man in his mid-forties. His clothes and tan are Hollywood. Nikki is a beautiful young woman in her twenties. She occasionally wears glasses, but it makes not a whit of difference to her beauty. She is carrying a shoulder bag, and an envelope with lead sheets.*)

ELSA. This is the library. We'll hold the audition here, Ken. (*Ken looks around the room, crosses to wing chair, and moves it a few inches.*) Director at work. (*Ken moves the chair back a few inches.*) You can move it around anyway you like.

KEN. It's perfect.

ELSA. (*Turning to O'Reilly.*) Hello. I'm Elsa Von Grossenknueten.

O'REILLY. (*Clicking his heels.*) I'm Patrick O'Reilly. Our group is stuck down below. I came up for a shivel.

ELSA. A shivel?