

VIOLETTE

Based on the remarkable life and times
of Violette Morris (1893-1944).

By

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SCREEN DARK:

SUPERIMPOSE:

"I never saw a wild thing
sorry for itself.
A small bird will drop frozen dead,
from a bough
without ever feeling sorry for itself."

--D.H. Lawrence

EXT. BELGIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

SUPERIMPOSE:

Wallonia, Belgium 1904

The air is thick with MIST. An open, horse-drawn carriage into view with TWO OCCUPANTS:

BARON JACQUES MORRIS, a retired FRENCH CAVALRY CAPTAIN, and his daughter, VIOLETTE (11) of French and Palestinian-Arab descent.

An unsmiling little girl, Violette has long hair and dark, impenetrable eyes. The Baron has an ugly saber scar down one side of his face.

VIOLETTE

Why Belgium, Papa? Why can't I stay
in Verdun?

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Listen, Violette-- the Convent
provides an education superior to
those imbeciles in Verdun.

VIOLETTE

Mama told me she hated the Covent.
She said the nuns were mean. All,
but one.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

She never said a word about that.
Not to me. Here, girl. Take the
reins.

The Baron hands Violette the reins. From his Great Coat, he takes out a BRIAR PIPE and tobacco. He lights the pipe and nods; Violette returns the reins to his hands.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (CONT'D)

Do you know why I smoke this pipe?

VIOLETTE

Yes, Papa. Because it is durable and strong and can stand intense heat.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Very good, girl; you remembered.

(beat)

Listen closely, Violette. You are different than most girls.

VIOLETTE

How, Papa?

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Instead of a beautiful face, God gave you your mother's brains and my brawn. How your body will serve you, I cannot say. But with your mother's smarts, I believe you'll accomplish anything in life you set out to achieve.

(beat)

That is the only reason we are sending you to the Convent, V. They will train your mind in the Socratic Method, with deliberation, just as I have disciplined your body to be like this pipe: strong, durable, able to withstand whatever heat you encounter. Do you understand?

Violette nods. The Captain puts a comforting arm around her; she leans into him. He kisses the top of her head.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE: CONVENT OF THE ASSUMPTION - DAY

The Convent is located in bucolic surroundings.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Convent of the Assumption
Four years later...

INT. THE MOTHER SUPERIOR'S OFFICE - DAY

VIOLETTE (15) sits on a bench, eyeing her scraped KNUCKLES.

Each bruised and disheveled, MOTHER SUPERIOR (60) scrutinizes THREE older GIRLS (17), then SLAMS her hands on her desk, and lurches upright.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
 Rubbish! I do not believe Violette started such a silly argument. Racial purity? Bah!

Mother Superior gets close to the Three, nose to nose.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (CONT'D)
 Do you think me an idiot?

GIRLS (IN UNISON)
 No, Mother Superior.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
 The only reason I'm not going to punish you is because Violette has done it for me. Now get out of my sight. Go!

The Girls stumble over themselves leaving.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (CONT'D)
 Come, Violette. Walk with me.

EXT. CONVENT GROUNDS - DAY

NUNS and STUDENTS curtsy as Mother Superior passes.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
 They provoke you, Violette, because you are different.

VIOLETTE
 I know. I'm not pretty like them.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
 No, Violette. You are as God made you. In that, you are perfect and beautiful. They resent you because you are smarter than they are, and they know it.
 (Stops)
 I was a young nun, new to my vows when your mother came to us. She had one of the finest minds we had ever seen. She devoured knowledge-- the way you do, Violette.
 (They resume walking)

VIOLETTE

Mama said you befriended her.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Your mother had a difficult time. Being Palestinian made her very easy to pick-on.

(beat)

She had her own cross to bear, Violette. But she persevered. It was her mind that succored her. I want you to emulate your mother. Use your mind as a shield. Use it to repel the words of those who attack you.

(beat)

But there is something else. We are a small family here, and secrets are hard to keep secret. Do you know what I'm talking about?

VIOLETTE

No, Mother Superior.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

(Clears her throat)

Your relationship with Nanette Aguilar. I cannot condone it, Violette. But I understand it.

(beat)

The urges you feel are natural and part of God's plan. But they are meant to be shared between a man and a woman, united by bonds of love and commitment. Not by two men, nor by two women, for that goes against God's plan.

VIOLETTE

Nanette and I love each other.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

She is your best friend, I know. Perhaps your only friend. I will not tell you to end your friendship, but you must be discrete, Violette. Truly, discrete.

Mother Superior takes Violette's hands into her own and looks at Violette's scraped knuckles:

VIOLETTE

I know it hasn't been easy these last four years, V, but settling disputes with your fists has to stop. Do I make myself clear?

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

Yes, Mother Superior.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Good! Now join the others for lunch. After you've eaten, report to Monsieur Chastanet at his farm.

VIOLETTE

The goatherd?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

The very same.

VIOLETTE

But, why, Mother Superior?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

It wouldn't sit well with the other girls if I didn't punish you. I've spoken to Monsieur Chastanet. He's expecting you.

Mother Superior hands Violette a sealed envelope.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (CONT'D)

Give Monsieur Chastanet this. Now, go! And do wash your hands.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Supervised by NUNS, seated at three long tables are SIXTY GIRLS (Ages 11 to 17). They stop eating and stare at Violette as she ENTERS.

On Violette's tray is a large hunk of black bread, a fat wedge of cheese, sausage, a cluster of red grapes, and a glass of milk.

Violette sees the Three Girls she beat-up sitting together at the table reserved for the "seniors" (older students).

Violette stops and gives the Three a hard look. They avert their eyes. Violette proceeds to the second table where Girls (11-15) sit at mealtime.

NANETTE AGUILAR (15) is a Plain Jane, a wallflower with a beautiful smile who wears thick glasses and frequently nibbles on her bottom lip. Violette puts her tray down.

Violette scans the faces of SEVERAL GIRLS at their table. Some feign smiles; others quickly DEPART.

While Violette eats with gusto, Nanette notices Violette's knuckles and GASPS.

NANETTE

You're hurt, V!

VIOLETTE

No, Nanette. The ones hurting are sitting behind me.

NANETTE

I saw them. They look terrible. What did Mother Superior do? Did she use the paddle on you?

VIOLETTE

No.

NANETTE

Oh, my God, V! The leather strap?

VIOLETTE

No.

NANETTE

She must have done something!

VIOLETTE

I have to report to Monsieur Chastanet at his farm.

NANETTE

What--? The goatherd? Whatever for?

VIOLETTE

I don't know.

Violette takes a long drink of milk and BELCHES; she wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

Mother Superior knows about us, Nanette. In fact, she says the whole school knows.

NANETTE

(Gasps)
Oh, God!

VIOLETTE

Shhh! Keep your voice down!

Several girls risk looking in Violette's direction.

NANETTE

Are we going to be expelled?

VIOLETTE

No. But Mother Superior wants us to be discrete.

NANETTE

What does that mean?

VIOLETTE

It means you can't make so much noise when we're fucking.

NANETTE

I wish you wouldn't use that word.

VIOLETTE

What word should I use?

NANETTE

You could say: when we make love.

VIOLETTE

Tell me, Nanette: How does one, make love? I mean, what, exactly, are we making when my tongue is wiggling around inside you? Oh! I know! Pudding!

Nanette buries her face in her hands.

NANETTE

(Peeking through her fingers)
How long will you be gone?

VIOLETTE

I don't know. Listen, Nanette. I'll wait for you at the Old Mill. Meet me there after prayers.

NANETTE

Today? They'll know I'm gone. I'll be punished.

VIOLETTE

So! They make you go without
dinner, or scrub pots for an hour.
What of it?
(beat)
Don't you love me?

EXT. OLD MILL - LATER, THAT SAME DAY

On the bank of a stream, Violette cools her feet in the water. Eyes closed, her face tilts toward the sun.

An UNSEEN PRESENCE advances toward Violette; closer and closer until--

Violette spins around; pulls Nanette to the ground. They kiss.

As their breathing accelerates, their hands explore each other's body:

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Hello, girls!

Nanette SHRIEKS. The Girls untangle themselves.

On the crest of the bank with the SUN behind him, the man behind the voice wears a wide-brimmed hat. In one hand he holds a fishing pole, in the other hand, fish. GLARE from the sun makes it impossible to see his face.

FISHERMAN

Take care, ladies. The sun will
wrinkle your skin like an old
leather shoe. It will, you know.
(LAUGHS, and DEPARTS)

WIND causes tree limbs to gently bend and sway through the branches shading the streambank.

Joining in this wind-dance, Violette uses her entire body to imitate the graceful, sensuous movement of the branches.

VIOLETTE

Feel it, Nanette?

NANETTE

What?

VIOLETTE

The wind! I love it. It comes and goes where it pleases and asks no one's permission.

(MORE)

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

(beat)

It's free, Nanette. Like me.
Inside, I mean: really, really
free!

NANETTE

I'm getting cold. And it's late. I
should be going.

Violette sits on the grass and watches Nanette dress.

NANETTE (CONT'D)

Write me, okay?

Ascending the streambank, Nanette goes OFF.

THE SUN

An angry BLOOD-RED ORB low on the horizon. Sound of the
village bell in San Michel TOLLING the hour.

BACK TO SCENE:

Violette's eyes OPEN WIDE.

VIOLETTE

Merde!

CLAUDE CHASTANET'S FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Running, Violette STOPS a short distance from the front door.
Inside the farmhouse, sound of a woman SHOUTING:

ANGRY WOMAN (O.C.)

You pig! You lied! I hate you!

FRONT DOOR OPENS. A naked YOUNG WOMAN (20s) hastens outside
clutching clothes to her chest.

Former French Foreign Legionnaire, CLAUDE CHASTANET (40)
steps OUTSIDE, barefoot with trousers unbuckled and peasant
blouse undone.

ANGRY WOMAN (CONT'D)

You bastard! I said I would let you
paint me for twenty francs! Not bed
me for ten!

CLAUDE

(Inebriated)

Hah! So what? I lied! Away with you
now, you vixen temptress!

The Young Woman passes close to Violette:

ANGRY WOMAN

Watch yourself, girl! This one has
the devil inside him.

The Young Woman DEPARTS MUTTERING indistinguishable epithets
in Belgian over her shoulder.

Claude looks Violette up-and-down.

CLAUDE

Hah! You're one of the River
Fairies I saw today.

VIOLETTE

Oh, my God! That was you?

CLAUDE

What do you want, girl?

Violette reaches into her blouse; removes the envelope Mother
Superior gave her.

VIOLETTE

I am Violette Morris, Monsieur.
(Holds out the envelope)
Mother Superior instructed me to
give this to you.

CLAUDE

Bring the damn thing inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DUSK

CANDLES, LANTERNS, and a cooking FIRE in the fireplace
illuminate the interior.

Chastanet removes his shirt; pours water from a pitcher into
a porcelain basin. Soaking a cloth, he scrubs under his arms
and over his chest.

Chastanet has a muscular physique. On his torso are
presumptive battle SCARS.

Violette CLOSES the door. PAINTINGS of women (Arab &
Occidental) brighten several walls.

On one wall are framed PHOTOGRAPHS (Daguerreotypes): One
photograph is of a French Foreign Legion POST.

Another photo features CHASTANET and several BROTHERS-IN-ARMS
clasping rifles in front of a disinterested camel.

A third photograph shows CHASTANET (25) in his "Parade Dress Uniform" embracing a WOMAN (20) wearing a Wedding Gown.

Pausing from his ablutions, Claude squints at Violette:

CLAUDE
Are you Arab?

VIOLETTE
I am Palestinian, Monsieur. On my mother's side. May I have some water. I ran all the way.

CLAUDE
(Points)
Over there.

Claude continues washing. Violette fills a cup and drinks.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
I fought Arabs, you know.

VIOLETTE
No, Monsieur. I didn't know.

Chastanet stuffs the cloth down his pants; scrubs his crotch. Violette appears unphased.

CLAUDE
They damn near killed me! First in Algeria. Then Morocco. Formidable bastards. Maybe the best light cavalry the world's ever seen.

VIOLETTE
My father said the Comanche Indians in Texas were the best.

CLAUDE
Hah! Did he now?
(Towels his face dry)

VIOLETTE
Yes, Monsieur. He did. My father was a captain. In the cavalry.

CLAUDE
Really? Did he see any action?

VIOLETTE
Yes. The War of Eighteen-Seventy.

CLAUDE
Did he tell you where he fought?

Chastanet grabs a Brandy bottle and sits at the dining table.

VIOLETTE

Yes.

CLAUDE

Well? What did he say?

VIOLETTE

He often recounted the battle of Mars La Tour. He served in the Third Brigade, Eighth Regiment, under General Michel.

CLAUDE

Hah! I never met a Cuirassier I didn't like. Bloody good bunch of killers. But hard to get to know.

VIOLETTE

Yes, Monsieur. I know.

CLAUDE

Stop calling me Monsieur. Claude will do.

(SNAPS his fingers)

The envelope, girl! Let's see what the old dragon has to say.

VIOLETTE

Violette.

CLAUDE

What?

VIOLETTE

My name is Violette. Not, girl.

CLAUDE

Hah! Is it now?

Claude finishes his Brandy; he pours another.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Very well, Vi-o-lette! The en-vel-ope, pleee-zzzz.

VIOLETTE

Sarcasm is a subtle form of cruelty, Monsieur Chastanet.

CLAUDE

Hah! Is it, now?

LONG PAUSE. He eyes Violette as a botanist might a rare flower.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Very well. May I please have the damn envelope?

She gives him the envelope.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
(Glances at a chair)
No need to stand.

Violette sits. Claude opens the envelope; removes a multi-page letter and begins reading. His brow furls:

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Your mother passed last year?

Violette nods. Claude continues reading:

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
(Holds out a page)
This page is for you.

Violette takes the page and reads; Claude pours himself another Brandy.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (V.O.)
Violette, you are to remain with Monsieur Chastanet the remainder of the year, perhaps longer. It is for your own good and you should not think of it as punishment. Rather, consider it a golden opportunity to grow closer to the woman you are meant to be.

(beat)
Do as Monsieur Chastanet says, Violette. Learn from him. He will help you achieve your potential. Be of strong mind. In time you will feel the benefits of being away from the convent. Remember, God is everywhere. I pray He blesses and keeps you both safe.

VIOLETTE
Merde! Mother Superior says I am to stay here for the remainder of the school year. Perhaps longer. That I am to do as you say.

(beat)
Tell me, Monsieur.

CLAUDE

Claude.

VIOLETTE

(Hesitates)

And I ask this with all due respect.

CLAUDE

Just spit it out!

VIOLETTE

Very well: what is it, exactly, a goatherd can teach me? All I've seen you do so far is manhandle a young woman and drink Brandy.

Chastanet's gruff facial expression softens. He LAUGHS.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

Why are you laughing?

CLAUDE

A goatherd, you say?

VIOLETTE

Are those not your goats outside?

CLAUDE

No. They are not.

VIOLETTE

But, you're a goatherd, yes?

CLAUDE

No. I am not. I'll share a secret with you: being a goatherd is something Mother Superior has been telling you girls for a decade. Ever since I returned to Wallonia.

VIOLETTE

Why would she lie about such a thing-- when lying is a sin?

CLAUDE

It was a white lie, a lie with a good intention in the telling.

VIOLETTE

I don't understand. What good intention can she possibly have, telling us you're a goatherd?

CLAUDE

Muriel thinks if you girls believe I'm a goatherd, and not the brutally handsome artist they glimpse in the village, none of you will sneak off at night.

VIOLETTE

Sneak off? Why?

CLAUDE

To whet the appetites girls in the full bloom of youth struggle with.

VIOLETTE

Who is Muriel?

CLAUDE

My sister: Mother Superior.

VIOLETTE

Mother Superior is your sister!?

CLAUDE

Older sister, yes.

Violette's jaw drops.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Life is full of surprises, is it not?

VIOLETTE

This is insanity!

(Looks around)

If I am to live here, where will I stay? And what am I to wear, Monsieur?

CLAUDE

Claude.

VIOLETTE

(Exasperated)

Claude? Monsieur? What difference can it make? All I have is what I'm wearing! A stupid ugly uniform from that stupid ugly convent. Are you listening, Claude?

CLAUDE

I heard every word. And your concerns are duly noted. You said you ran all the way here.

VIOLETTE
From the Old Mill. Yes.

CLAUDE
Hah! You must have big lungs.

VIOLETTE
I have big everything. Hands! Feet!
Ears! Nose! Everything!

CLAUDE
Okay. Now listen, young lady--

VIOLETTE
(Interrupting)
I'm not a lady! Sometimes I don't
even feel like a girl!

CLAUDE
Yes, well, whatever you are, when
my sister spoke to me about you I
had serious misgivings as to what
she proposed.
(beat)
I told Muriel you may as well tell
Violette you're sending her to
Devil's Island, for all the
difference it will make to a hot-
headed, fifteen-year-old, who
lashes-out with her fists before
using her head.

VIOLETTE
And yet Mother Superior convinced
you it was a good idea.

CLAUDE
My sister is seldom wrong about
people, Violette. And she can be
very persuasive.

LONG PAUSE: Violette and Claude eye each other:

VIOLETTE
Where am I supposed to stay?

CLAUDE
I made a wonderful stew with the
trout I caught. Are you hungry?

VIOLETTE
Not in the least. I just want to
sleep.

CLAUDE

There is a cot in the barn you can
sleep on.

VIOLETTE

Cot? Barn?

EXT./INT. BARN - NIGHT

Claude OPENS the door. Holding a LANTERN, he leads the way
INSIDE. Violette follows carrying bedding.

Apart from a military-style cot, LANTERN-LIGHT reveals
NOTHING of what lay in the DARKNESS beyond.

Claude places the lantern on an upended wooden crate beside
the cot, then turns to leave.

VIOLETTE

Claude, wait! Where do I--
(Hesitates)
You know. When I need to--
(Unable to finish)

CLAUDE

Outside. Anywhere you want. For a
sit-down, use the latrine behind
the house.

Claude pauses at the barn-door.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

You may hear things.

VIOLETTE

What things?

CLAUDE

An owl.

VIOLETTE

An owl?

CLAUDE

He keeps mice at bay.

VIOLETTE

Mice?

CLAUDE

And rats.

VIOLETTE
You have rats?

CLAUDE
Not with Monsieur Owl living here.

VIOLETTE
Anything else I should know?

CLAUDE
I'm not sure.
(EXITS)

With the one lantern to see by, Violette places the bedding on the cot and looks toward the loft.

VIOLETTE
Monsieur Owl, my name is Violette
Morris. I am a prisoner here, and I
want us to get along.
(beat)
Please?

Sound of an owl HOOTING from the loft.

SUNRISE

The following DAY.

INT. BARN - DAY

Violette wakens to SUNBEAMS and LAUGHING. She rubs her eyes.

The LAUGHTER comes from FIVE BOYS (Ages 16-18). All Five wear athletic apparel (circa 1908).

The Oldest Boy, HENRI GASPARD (18) stands with his arms folded across his chest.

A Sixth BOY, slight of build and not laughing, is a bookish introvert named CYPRIEN GOURAUD (16). Embarrassed by the behavior of the Others, Cyprien nods pleasantly to Violette.

HENRI
Sleeping beauty has awakened.

LAUGHTER.

CLAUDE (O.C.)
(Shouts)
What the hell's going on?

Claude ENTERS wearing well-worn athletic apparel.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
 Outside, you Ground Hogs of spring!
 Get them warmed up, Henri.

The Six hurry OFF.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
 There's food in the house when your
 appetite returns.

VIOLETTE
 Who are those boys, Claude?

CLAUDE
 My students.

Claude starts to leave.

VIOLETTE
 Where are you going?

CLAUDE
 It's Sunday. On Sundays we run to
 the Village Square. Then we run
 back and train for several hours
 before I send them home to their
 nannies.

(Claude EXITS)

Violette scans her surroundings: The barn is equipped with weightlifting equipment: a knotted rope that reaches to the rafters, and other, miscellaneous training gear, circa 1908.

The barn's orderly albeit Spartan interior provides a stark contrast to the clutter inside Claude's farmhouse.

The remainder of the barn is devoted to an elevated, full-size boxing ring; plus "speed" bags, a "heavy" bag, and a dozen pairs of boxing gloves hanging from pegs.

A SMILE forms on Violette's lips (the FIRST we have seen)!

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Leading The Boys on their "Sunday" run, Claude sets the pace.

CLAUDE
 Keep up, you droolers, drippers,
 and dung beetles!

INTO VIEW wearing her rumpled school uniform, Violette runs barefoot past Claude and the Boys.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
 Are you going to let a girl beat you? Run, damn you! Run, you sluggards! Or by all the gods of war, I'll cane you black and blue!

VILLAGE OF SAN MICHEL

When Claude and the Boys arrive at the MAIN SQUARE they find Violette waiting, hands on her knees, catching her breath.

Violette stands on top of a stone pedestal that supports a STATUE of SAINT MICHAEL slaying the Devil:

CLAUDE
 Very impressive.

VIOLETTE
 Anything they can do, so can I.

WOMAN (O.C.)
 Claude, darling.

Claude sees an attractive female VILLAGER (20) named BRIDGETTE, beckoning to him from across the Square.

CLAUDE
 (Crosses the Square)
 Bridgette, my dove!

When Claude attempts to embrace Bridgette she SLAPS him:

BRIDGETTE
 That's for not coming to see me.

Claude and Bridgette are distracted by SHOUTING:

HENRI
 Really--? Anything I can do, you can do better?

VIOLETTE
 Yes.

HENRI
 (Looks at his pals)
 The balls on this silly cow. If you truly had balls, and not that pendulous udder, you would face me in the ring.

VIOLETTE

Ring or no ring, Henri, I'm not afraid of you. I think girls like me scare you. You see a girl like me and your pee-pee shrivels.

Cyprien LAUGHS. Henri silences him with a look. Claude arrives; he gets between Violette and Henri.

CLAUDE

Stop! Enough! Violette beat us to the village, fair and square. Now go, you savages! You hounds, from hell. Return to the gym. All of you! Go!

Violette jumps down from the pedestal.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

(To Violette)

Not you.

HENRI

Monsieur l'Coach? Aren't you coming?

CLAUDE

We'll be along. Get them started on their workouts, Henri! You're in charge until I return.

(Shouts)

Now off, you smelly sloths! Go! Go!

The Boys run OFF.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Come, Violette. I need to speak, and you need to eat.

INT. CAFÉ - DAY

Violette devours a hearty breakfast while Claude looks on. MADAME LECLERC, the PROPRIETRESS (70) comes to the table.

MADAME LECLERC

Would you like anything else, my dear?

VIOLETTE

No, thank you, Madame LeClerc. It was delicious, as always.

MADAME LECLERC

It's good to see a girl eat without worrying she'll get fat. More coffee, Claude?

CLAUDE

Please, Madame.

Madame LeClerc fills Claude's mug and moves OFF. From a flask, Claude adds Brandy to his coffee.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

What am I going to do with you, Violette Morris? I ask, because I haven't a clue.

Claude raises his mug, sips.

VIOLETTE

Train me, Claude!

Claude spits a mouthful of coffee onto the floor. Across the room, Madame LeClerc gives Claude the skunk-eye.

CLAUDE

Forgive me, Madame. I forgot to let it cool.

MADAME LECLERC

Perhaps, Monsieur Chastanet, you should have added more brandy.

CLAUDE

Violette will tell you: Sarcasm is a subtle form of cruelty, Madame.

MADAME LECLERC

And she's right!

VIOLETTE

Train me, Claude! I can do anything those pampered blue-bloods can.

CLAUDE

Really? Can you pee standing up?

VIOLETTE

I suppose I could. My father told me what I lacked in beauty I made up for with his strength and my mother's intellect.

CLAUDE
(Incredulous)
Your father told you *that*?

VIOLETTE
Many times. Yes.

CLAUDE
You don't know what you're asking,
Violette. You're only fifteen years
old, for pity's sake.

VIOLETTE
The world is changing, Claude. It
is Nineteen-Hundred-and-Eight! A
new century! Are you not paying
attention?

CLAUDE
No. Enlighten me.

VIOLETTE
Eight years ago? The Nineteen-
Hundred Paris Exposition! The
International Physical Sports and
Athletic Competition?

CLAUDE
What about it?

VIOLETTE
For the first time since the Greek
Olympiads began two-thousand years
ago, women were allowed to compete
in sports. How can you not know?

CLAUDE
I know what I know, Violette, and
it has kept me alive many years.
(beat)
Look! Much goes into the discipline
I provide: physically and mentally.
I have rules and I demand complete
adherence to them from my students.

VIOLETTE
So, test me, Claude! Test me!
(beat)
Test me! Find out if I would make a
worthwhile student!

INT. CLAUDE'S BARN/GYM - DAY

Henri stands inside the BOXING RING surrounded by his Four Pals. They WHISPER and cast disparaging looks at Violette.

Henri wears large, 16-ounce boxing gloves. He hits the gloves together and does several deep squats.

HENRI

After I flatten your udder, I'm
going to rearrange your face.

Except for Cyprien, the Boys LAUGH.

Violette is barefoot, long hair tied back. She wears her school tights underneath a pair of Claude's athletic trunks and has on one of Claude's baggy Tank-Tops.

Claude finishes lacing-up the strings of a worn pair of 16-ounce boxing gloves that engulf Violette's hands.

CLAUDE

Boxing is called the Sweet Science.
Do you know why?

VIOLETTE

No.

CLAUDE

Because to prevail, a boxer must
use what's here--

(Taps her forehead)

And in here.

(Taps over her heart.)

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

A boxer needs both. Inside the ring
he must be smart, and he must be
courageous. Above all, Violette, he
must have the common sense to quit
when he knows he's beaten. Do you
understand what I'm saying?

VIOLETTE

I think so.

CLAUDE

Good! Did your father teach you how
to defend yourself, if attacked?

Violette nods.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
 Good. Now listen, Violette: you
 have nothing to prove.

VIOLETTE
 But I do, Monsieur l'Coach. I have
 much to prove.

BOXING RING

Claude parts the ropes for Violette to slip between. He
 gestures toward the nearest corner.

CLAUDE
 Wait there.

Claude goes across the ring to where Henri waits:

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
 If you're not Henri, get out!

Henri's Pals leave the ring.

HENRI
 Instructions, Monsieur l'Coach?

CLAUDE.
 Violette believes this isn't a
 man's world Henri. She believes she
 can compete against men and win. I
 want you to convince her otherwise.
 You'll be doing her and me a very
 great favor.

HENRI
 She's a stupid girl, Monsieur
 l'Coach. How am I to convince her?

Claude looks at Violette and smiles; he pretends to adjust
 Henri's gloves.

CLAUDE
 Hurt her! Hurt her so putain bad
 she'll stop this nonsense and beg
 to go back to the Covent.
 (Smiles)
 Okay, Violette! Let's go.

Violette goes to the center of the ring.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
 Use your skills. Whatever skills
 you possess, and protect yourself!
 No gouging the eyes. No holding.

(MORE)

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

No biting. No kicking. No punching
beneath the beltline. Are we clear?

Violette nods. Henri nods.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Very well. Go to your corners and
wait for m+968.....+y
command to touch gloves. Good luck,
and may Saint Michael watch over
you.

Claude remains in the ring.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Box!

Violette advances toward Henri. They meet center-ring.
Violette extends her hands. Ignoring the gesture, Henri
delivers a punishing right to Violette's face that sends
Violette to the mat.

Blood flows from Violette's nose. Henri's pals CHEER. Cyprien
winces. Knowing what a punch in the face feels like, Claude
remains stone-faced.

Violette struggles to her feet. Henri charges; lands two
fierce jabs to Violette's face; then, a punishing left hook
to her liver that drops Violette to one knee.

Reeling with pain, Violette looks at Claude. He looks down at
his feet.

Violette stands; staggers forward. Henri hits her with a
series of jabs followed by a right hook to her spleen.

Henri connects again with a vicious uppercut that knocks
Violette flat on her back. Bleeding from nose, mouth, and a
cut over one eye, Violette stares at the ceiling.

She sees the Owl in the rafters, watching. Violette nods to
the owl; rolls to her knees.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Enough, Violette! Give it up.

Claude reaches toward Violette; she bats his hand away.
Violette spits blood; stands and motions to resume the bout.
Claude passes close to Henri:

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

(Hisses)

Finish this!

Henri's heart isn't in it. He moves toward Violette, hands poised to box, but with heavy feet.

They are two yards apart when Violette lifts her Tank-Top, exposing her BREASTS!

Henri drops his hands and looks to Claude for "instructions." Henri's pals are transfixed by Violette's breasts.

Violette lunges forward; executes a solid front-kick to Henri's groin. Cupping his testicles, Henri's eyes roll back; he sinks to his knees.

Holding Henri's head with her left hand, Violette delivers a solid right hook to Henri's face; then another, and another.

Violette finishes Henri off with a spinning back-kick that sends Henri to the mat-- UNCONSCIOUS.

CYPRIEN

Bravo, Violette! Bravo!

CLAUDE

Enough, Violette! Stop!

Violette thrusts her arms into the air:

VIOLETTE

Anything a boy can do, Violette can do!

INT. FARMHOUSE - LATER, THAT SAME DAY

Violette sits at the dining table holding a chunk of RAW MEAT against her battered face. Claude ENTERS.

VIOLETTE

How is he?

CLAUDE

He'll survive. His pride won't, but he will.

Claude finds a glass; fills it with milk; tops it off with Brandy and sits opposite Violette. He takes a long drink.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Who taught you the Art of Savat?

VIOLETTE

My father. His motto is "Sana mens. Sana corpore."

CLAUDE
Hah! "Strong mind. Strong body."

LONG PAUSE.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Okay.

VIOLETTE
Okay, what?

CLAUDE
I'll train you. To what end I cannot say, Violette. But I'll train you. Perhaps you will find your niche in sports. Who knows; we'll have to wait and see.

VIOLETTE
Thank you.

CLAUDE
No! No! No! Don't thank me. You showed me something I've never seen. And God knows, I've seen plenty. You have an indomitable spirit, Violette Morris, and you're fearless. A lethal combination, for sure.

(beat)
I don't know why, but that also worries me. After I stitch the cut shut over your eye, I'll start supper.

EXT. GARDEN [CONVENT OF THE ASSUMPTION] - DAY

Nanette sits alone. In her hands is a letter.

VIOLETTE (V.O.)
Darling Nanette, I miss you terribly. I beat up a boy older than me last week to prove my worth to Monsieur Chastanet who is no goatherd by the way, but that must stay a secret.

(beat)
The Coach has agreed to train me in sports. How wonderful is that? And in an improvised gymnasium with all the right equipment, even a boxing ring! I couldn't be happier, other than us being together.

(MORE)

VIOLETTE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Perhaps now my life might count for
 something.
 Tonight in my dreams I will kiss
 you everywhere. --V.

Nanette lowers Violette's letter, begins to CRY. A SHADOW
 falls over her.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
 What is the matter, Child?

NANETTE
 A letter from Violette. I feel like
 I'm dying without her.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
 For those who love deeply, that is
 how it always is, my child. But
 know this: what will be will be,
 even if it never happens.
 (beat)
 Now go wash that beautiful face.
 The other girls don't need to know
 you've been crying.

EXT. ROAD TO THE VILLAGE - DAY

Now "best friends," Violette and Cyprien run side-by-side.
 Running behind them come "The Boys."

VIOLETTE (V.O.)
 My dearest Nanette, if only you
 could see me train! Mother Superior
 wouldn't condone it, but on Sundays
 I run with Monsieur l'Coach and his
 boys. That's what he likes to call
 them: "his boys."
 (beat)
 I do not think he has any children
 of his own, so maybe we are his
 family-- Hahaha! His family of
 misfits! I love you! --V
 P-S: Do you ache for me down there,
 the way I ache for you?

INT. CLAUDE'S BARN/GYM -DAY

Under Claude's watchful eye, Violette trains on the "heavy
 bag" practicing jabs, uppercuts, and right-and-left-hand
 hooks.

The Boys cease training to watch. A look from Claude prompts them to resume their workouts.

EXT. CLAUDE'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Claude shows Violette and the Boys how to hold and heave iron cannon balls--substitutes for "shotputs."

He shows Violette how to plant her feet; grip the javelin, extend her arm back, and hurl the javelin forward.

Violette's strength of arm propels the javelin a considerable distance. Cyprien and the Other Boys APPLAUD.

VIOLETTE (V.O.)

Dear Nanette, every day I feel my body getting stronger. The learning never stops. It is my dream now to one day compete in Women's Sports and Athletic competitions-- if and when they ever happen. I get wet when I think about it, hahaha! --V

INT. CLAUDE'S GYM/BARN - DAY

Alone, Violette is doing sit-ups when Claude ENTERS. Violette stops; she gets to her feet; dusts herself off.

CLAUDE

(Extends an envelope)
My sister had this delivered. It's for you.

VIOLETTE

(Takes the envelope)
A letter from Mother Superior?

CLAUDE

Hah! I don't think so. It smells of lilacs. Muriel's letters smell of soggy geraniums.
(Goes OFF.)

Violette sits, holds the envelope to her nose and SNIFFS.

VIOLETTE

Nanette!

Violette grins, removes Nanette's LETTER, begins reading:

NANETTE (V.O.)

Dear Violette, I don't know how to tell you this so I'll just say it. I'm leaving the Convent today. I don't want to, but Papa was appointed to the Belgian Embassy in Washington D-C in the United States. I'm sorry, Violette. I will never stop loving you. --N

(beat)

PS. I will send my new address when I know it. PS.S. Monsieur Pecard's son Julian is quite the artist with a camera--yes? He has a fabulous eye for beauty and he also paints.

Violette removes a PHOTOGRAPH of Nanette in a sexually provocative pose wearing a transparent chemise revealing her breasts.

Her hands already wrapped with tape, Violette goes to the "Heavy Bag" and strikes it: Slowly. Methodically. Viciously:

VIOLETTE

(Between punches)

You can't leave me, Nanette!

(beat)

I won't let you!

(beat)

I need you, Cheri!

(beat)

Don't leave me, damn you!

Violette stops hitting the Bag and throws her arms around it. She SOBS, long and loudly.

EXT. CHASTANET FARM -DAY

In his vegetable garden, Claude hears Violette SOBBING.

CLAUDE

Love hurts. That is the first lesson of the game, V.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLAUDE'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

A new group of Claude's STUDENTS (BOYS 15-17) cavort with GIRLS the same age.

FIREWORKS over the village of San Michel are visible in the distance. Sound of RAGTIME MUSIC inside Claude's dwelling.

SUPERIMPOSE:

14 July, 1914
Bastille Day Celebration

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Partygoers dance to RAGTIME MUSIC from a GRAMOPHONE. Henri GASPAR (23) and VIOLETTE (21) sit arm-wrestling. Given the height disparity, Violette grips Henri's forearm instead of his hand.

The Women SHOUT encouragement to Violette. Among them is an attractive Bohemian lesbian named GINGER (20s).

The appreciative looks Ginger casts toward Violette garner Violette's attention.

Sitting on Claude's lap is with Bridgette (whom we first saw six years earlier in the Village Square).

VIOLETTE
(Shouts at Claude)
What do you think will happen?

CLAUDE
(Shouts)
Hah! War! War will happen! Unless
by some miracle the generals and
politicians pull their heads from
their arses!

Violette counters Henri's efforts to pin her arm.

VIOLETTE
(Grunting)
Should it come to that, what will
you do?

CLAUDE
I will have to close the gym. It
wouldn't make sense to stay open,
not with the young men gone to war.

Perspiring from their exertions, Violette and Henri struggle, each trying to gain the 'upper hand'.

VIOLETTE
(Shouts)
You could train girls?

BRIDGETTE

Oh, no, you won't, you old rooster.

Violette pins Henri's arm flush with the table. Henri's pals LAUGH. Violette stands; kisses Henri's head:

VIOLETTE

You owe me five Francs, Henri
Gaspar.

HENRI

Only because I let you win,
Violette Morris!
(Winks at his Pals)

VIOLETTE

Very well, let's go again.

HENRI

Oh, god, no! For pity's sake,
Violette!

Henri puts FIVE FRANCS into Violette's outstretched hand.
LAUGHTER from those watching.

Violette looks at Ginger and winks. She sees CYPRIEN (21)
standing alone near the fireplace, dejected. She goes to him.

VIOLETTE

Why so glum, my friend?

CYPRIEN

You don't want to know, V.

VIOLETTE

If that was true, I wouldn't have
asked. Tell me or I'll tickle you
until you piss yourself.

CYPRIEN.

It's my father. If I'm not married
by the First of September he'll
disinherit me.

VIOLETTE

Why does he insist you marry?

CYPRIEN

He wants the name, Gouraud, to live
on, after he's gone.

(beat)

He wants grandchildren, Violette,
to secure his lineage throughout
eternity.

VIOLETTE

Men! You're pigs! You know that, don't you? All of you! You sacrifice your todays for tomorrows you hope will one day arrive. But tomorrow never comes, Cyprien. It's always-- today!

CYPRIEN

Thank you, Violette. Now I am more depressed than before. What to do?

VIOLETTE

Find a woman to marry you. Then, when your father is in the ground, divorce her. Simple as that.

CYPRIEN

I wish to God it was that simple, Violette, but it's not. Believe me.

VIOLETTE

Why? Because you're queer?

Thunderstruck, Cyprien's eyes widen, his face turns ashen.

CYPRIEN

What? How? How did you find out? Did one of the others tell you?

VIOLETTE

Calm yourself, Cyprien. No one told me.

(Winks)

It takes one to know one. Your secret is safe.

Cyprien grasps Violette's hands and hugs her.

CYPRIEN

My dear, dear friend!

EXT. VERDUN - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

City of Verdun, Northern France

An ancient fortress-city, Verdun is situated on both banks of the River Meuse in Northeastern France.

TRAIN STATION

Her hair cut short for military service, Violette steps OFF the train without baggage.

WOODED SUBURB

Violette INTO VIEW in a horse-drawn TAXI; it STOPS in front of a SANITARIUM.

VIOLETTE
(To the DRIVER)
I won't be long.

INT. SANITARIUM - DAY

A clean, well-lighted place.

HALLWAY

Violette is accompanied by a MALE NURSE.

MALE NURSE
The Baron's memory is much worse than the last time you visited, Mademoiselle. It comes and goes. He may not recognize you.

DAY ROOM

Violette ENTERS. The Male Nurse points to a frail OLD MAN seated in a wheel-chair, staring out an open window.

MALE NURSE
Good luck.
(Goes OFF)

Violette picks up a folding-chair, goes to the window and sits alongside her FATHER (80s).

VIOLETTE
Hello, Papa.
(Kisses his scarred cheek)

The Captain's face remains impassive, his eyes vacant.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
I'm getting married, Papa. I wanted you to know, so you won't worry what's to become of me. Okay?
(beat)
(MORE)

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

His name is Cyprien. He is one year older than me. We trained together with Monsieur l'Coach, and he comes from a very good family. They're rich, Papa.

Violette places a hand on the Baron's shoulder.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

We're going to war against the Bosch again. I've joined the army, it's why I cut my hair. I want your blessing before I deploy.

The Baron stares at Violette:

CAPTAIN MORRIS

(Tortured)

What are you? Are you a man or a woman?

Violette looks like her heart was ripped from her breast:

VIOLETTE

(Tearing up)

I don't know, Papa. I guess I'm just me.

(beat)

Violette.

EXT. PARIS [8TH ARRONDISSEMENT] - DAY

Establishing shot(s): The Eiffel Tower, and the Arc di'Triomphe.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Paris, France, 1 August 1914

EXT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. MAGISTRATE'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - DAY

A MAGISTRATE performs the "marriage rites." Violette wears a traditional Wedding Gown. Cyprien wears a Tuxedo with tails.

Cyprien's love interest, a YOUNG MAN named PAUL (White, gay, 20s) serves as Cyprien's "Best Man."

The lesbian, Ginger, is Violette's "Maid of Honor."

Witnessing the charade, and suitably dressed for the occasion are Claude and Bridgette.

EXT. INTERCONTINENTAL PARIS LE GRAND HOTEL - NIGHT

Establishing shot.

INT. LOBBY: INTERCONTINENTAL PARIS LE GRAND HOTEL - NIGHT

The Hotel's ornate interior suggests a wealthy clientele.

BRIDAL SUITE

While SERVANTS set out food and Champagne, the Wedding Party stands together looking on. A Servant throws OPEN doors leading onto a wide Balcony. Done prepping the Suite, the Servants EXIT.

Thrilled by their luxurious surroundings, Ginger and Bridgette LAUGH while jumping on-and-off the plush furniture.

CLAUDE
A toast, dammit!

Claude opens a Magnum of Champagne; begins filling glasses.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
To the Bride and Groom. To Violette
and Cyprien!

They all touch glasses and drink.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
By the way, who's paying for all
this grandiosity?

CYPRIEN
He doesn't know it yet, but father
is. It's the least he can do for
his only son. Yes?
(Cyprien and Paul kiss.)

LATER

Smoking a cigar and drinking Champagne, Violette sits in her Wedding Gown with her bare feet on a table.

Ginger sits on the floor with one arm draped over Violette's legs and a drink in her other hand.

Claude and Bridgette LAUGH at whatever Claude is whispering into Bridgette's ear. Inebriated, Cyprien and Paul get to their feet.

CYPRIEN (CONT'D)
 Violette, my wife and amazing friend; Monsieur l'Coach, Mademoiselles Bridgette and Ginger: I adore you all. But, now, if you will excuse us, Paul and I will retire.

CLAUDE
 Hah! I've seen the Nuptial Bed, Cyprien. It could easily fit the lot of us.

LAUGHTER.

CYPRIEN
 Yes, Monsieur l'Coach. But not tonight. Not this night.

CLAUDE
 Hold on! Violette's the damn bride! To consummate the marriage you must deflower her. Is that not so, V?

VIOLETTE
 (Disinterested)
 It stands to reason.

Cyprien's jaw drops. Paul SHRIEKS.

CLAUDE
 Pick your cocks up off the floor, boys! We're joking!

Cyprien and Paul sneak OFF.

The sound of FIREWORKS draw Ginger, Claude, and Bridgette to the BALCONY and the dazzling view of FIREWORKS illuminating the Champs Elysée.

Violette remains seated in the main Salon, her father's words fresh in her mind:

CAPTAIN MORRIS (V.O.)
 (Reverberating)
 What are you? Are you a man or a woman?

EXT. INTERCONTINENTAL PARIS LE GRAND HOTEL - DAY

Except for Cyprien and Paul, the "Wedding Party" EXITS from the Hotel visibly hung-over. A HORSE-DRAWN TAXI is waiting.

The HOTEL MANAGER (50) runs out of the Hotel clutching Violette's Wedding Gown.

HOTEL MANAGER
Madame, wait! Madame!

He goes to Violette:

HOTEL MANAGER (CONT'D)
You forgot to pack your wedding gown, Madame.

VIOLETTE
Burn it!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WWI FRENCH FIELD HOSPITAL - DAY

The Field Hospital is overrun with Ambulances (Converted vans & trucks) conveying WOUNDED SOLDIERS from the battlefield.

SUPERIMPOSE:

First Battle of the Somme.
France, 1916

Sound(s) of distant shells EXPLODING blend with the CRIES and SCREAMING of the wounded soldiers arriving by ambulance.

NURSES and ORDERLIES struggle to offload grotesquely WOUNDED MEN and hurry them inside.

A Mud-covered ambulance arrives and STOPS. On the Driver's-side door is a racy PAINTING of Violette's first love, Nanette Aguilar (Older, gloved to her elbows, bare-breasted, smoking through a chic cigarette-holder).

Hair cut short, and wearing a French soldier's uniform, Violette jumps out of her ambulance and goes to the passenger-side door and OPENS it.

Inside is WOUNDED SOLDIER. The Soldier's left hand has been blown off. Fractured bone protrudes from the stump. A makeshift tourniquet on his arm stems the flow of blood.

The Soldier is close to passing-out. Violette steadies him. TWO NURSES appear.

NURSE

We'll take him from here, Private.

The Soldier gives Violette a grateful look. Violette nods; proceeds to the rear of her ambulance.

She OPENS the TAILGATE. BLOOD that has pooled there rushes-out; it splashes over Violette's boots.

NURSES and ORDERLIES run to Violette's ambulance where the WOUNDED are racked and stacked, two-deep-and-four-across.

NURSE NO. 2

Will it never stop?

VIOLETTE

Not until the monsters who wanted
this, grow weary of it.

INT. VIOLETTE'S AMBULANCE [TRAVELLING] THROUGH VILLAGE - DAY

Violette passes a column of soldiers on their way to "the front."

Coming from the opposite direction and led by an able-bodied Soldier, a long line of men blinded by mustard-gas walk with their hands on the shoulders of the man in front of them.

Violette sees raggedly-dressed CIVILIANS picking through the ruins of what were once homes, searching for anything edible, or salvageable.

Violette passes a shell-shocked LITTLE GIRL, face smeared with dirt, wearing a torn dress, standing by the side of the road. Eyes vacant, the Little Girl stares into space while clutching a rag doll.

Violette watches the LITTLE GIRL in the SIDE MIRROR of her ambulance.

Exhausted, pushed to despair, Violette pulls over and STOPS. Violette POUNDS the steering wheel.

VIOLETTE

(Screams)

Merde! Merde! Merde! Merde!

Sound of a German artillery BARRAGE. Shells EXPLODE in the vicinity where Violette is parked.

One of SEVERAL FRENCH SOLDIERS hiding behind cover stands and waves to Violette.

FRENCH SOLDIER
(Shouting)
Get out of there, man! Take cover!

A shell EXPLODES where the Soldiers are grouped, obliterating them.

Violette leaps out of her ambulance while bombs EXPLODE. She dashes around like a crazed animal.

Violette leaps into a bomb crater. Bombs SHAKE the ground beneath her.

An artillery round scores a direct hit on Violette's ambulance.

SILENCE

Violette crawls up the side of the crater and peers over the top. She sees blackened, twisted metal and burning tires that once composed her ambulance.

Stepping over the wreckage of the ambulance, Violette sees the dented, driver's-side door. Nanette's smoke-smudged face stares provocatively at her:

VIOLETTE
(Stops)
I guess this is 'goodbye', Cheri.

EXT. FRENCH TRENCH-LINE - DAY

Violette doggedly makes her way along a fortified trench, past soldiers huddled against the dug-out's earthen walls.

EXT./INT. "AMBULANCE CORPS" HEADQUARTERS (HQ) - DAY

Uniform muddied, face lined with grime, Violette ENTERS. In the HQ's confined space, TWO SOLDIERS jostle Violette as they squeeze past:

VIOLETTE
Watch where you're going!

They give Violette a puzzled look and continue on their way. A SERGEANT behind a makeshift table looks up:

SERGEANT
What is it, Private?

VIOLETTE
I come with an urgent message for
Lieutenant Henri Gaspar.

SERGEANT
Whose message?

VIOLETTE
From High Command, Sergeant.

SERGEANT
Bloody hell! Why didn't you say so?

The Sergeant lurches to his feet:

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Wait here!
(Hurries OFF)

The Sergeant returns with [now] LIEUTENANT Henri Gaspar. When
Henri sees it is Violette, the look on his face relaxes.

HENRI
Come with me, Private.

SUPPLY ROOM

Illuminated by LANTERN LIGHT.

HENRI (CONT'D)
(Whispering)
What is it, Violette? You look a
affright.

VIOLETTE
I feel a affright, Henri. My
ambulance took a direct hit less
than thirty minutes ago.
(beat)
I can't do this any more. Ferrying
our wounded to whatever fate awaits
them. I can't do it anymore, Henri.

HENRI
For god's sake, Violette, tell me
you're not thinking of deserting.

VIOLETTE
No! God, no, Henri! I want to
fight. I want to kill the Bosch.

Henri reaches out, grasps Violette's shoulders.

HENRI

There's no denying your courage,
Violette. In fact, it's something
that has always inspired me.

VIOLETTE

But?

HENRI

But I won't risk losing you forever
because you're in the mood to kill
Germans. Besides, I promised
Monsieur l'Coach I'd do my best to
keep you safe.

VIOLETTE

Where is safe, Lieutenant Gaspar?

HENRI

Hold on. I have an idea. Something
you are superbly suited for.

EXT. FRENCH POSITION - DUSK

THUNDEROUS sound of an artillery BARRAGE. The sky is AFIRE
with FLAMES from anti-personnel BURSTS.

Trying to avoid being hit by shrapnel, French Soldiers
flatten themselves against the sides of their trench.

SUPERIMPOSE:

7 October, 1916.

After four months of fighting
to a standstill, the number of dead
and wounded on both sides
exceeds one million combatants.

INT. BATTALION HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Battalion HQ bustles with activity: French Officers ENTER;
Others EXIT. A COLONEL confers over a MAP with a MAJOR. A
RADIO OPERATOR tries making contact on his radio to no avail.

Now a COURIER, Violette looks on from the shadows. On her
uniform she wears a leather harness with a trench-knife, and
pistol attached. A leather pouch hangs over one shoulder.

FRENCH COLONEL

Get word to Colonel Rocco, Major.
Tell him to hold his Moroccans back
until reinforcements arrive.
Otherwise, they'll be slaughtered.

Radio Operator looks at the Major and moves his head "No!"

FRENCH MAJOR

Monsieur Coronel. The communication lines are still down. There are numerous breaks in the cables. No telling when they'll be working.

Violette steps from the shadows.

VIOLETTE

I can do it, Monsieur Coronel. I can get your message through.

FRENCH MAJOR

To be sure, Monsieur Coronel, Private Morris is our best courier, but not even an ant could survive out there-- not right now.

LONG PAUSE.

FRENCH COLONEL

You say can do this, Private?

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

Violette runs past Soldiers in a TRENCH trying to make themselves small while the artillery BARRAGE lights-up the sky with FLARES and bursts of FLAME.

The ground CONVULSES with each EXPLOSION. Violette comes to where a section of the trench has been obliterated.

Forced to climb a ladder, Violette continues over the top into--

NO MAN'S LAND

Bombs BURST around Violette as she zig-zags past craters. Mangled CORPSES are draped in grotesque repose on the barbed wire.

VIOLETTE

Hold your fire! Hold your fire!
Courier coming in!

FRENCH TRENCH

Violette is helped into the trench by MOROCCAN SOLDIERS.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
Take me to your Headquarters!

EXT. MOROCCAN TROOPS' BATTALION HQ - NIGHT

Violette EXITS.

A handsome young MOROCCAN CAPTAIN with a dirt-stained face and dilated eyes grabs Violette's arm. Clearly traumatized, he is high on narcotics.

MOROCCAN CAPTAIN
Must you leave, Mademoiselle? Stay!
Join me for a cup of mint tea. We
can chat, and--

VIOLETTE
(Interrupting)
Mint tea? How sweet of you, Cheri.
Another time, perhaps. I would like
that very much.

The Captain grabs Violette's hand and kisses it as a gentleman would the hand of a well-born lady.

MOROCCAN CAPTAIN
You are the bravest woman I have
ever seen. You saved many lives
tonight, Mademoiselle. I will never
forget you.

Violette pulls her hand away and hastens up the side of the trench, into--

NO MAN'S LAND

Artillery BARRAGE lights-up the night sky with FLARES and bursts of FLAME.

Violette zig-zags on the gallop while bombs EXPLODE around her. She leaps into a crater; tumbles down its sloping side to a muddy stop.

When Violette looks around she sees several CORPSES--one without eyes, staring at her.

GERMAN SOLDIER (O.C.)
(Bavarian accent)
Are you French? Canadian? British,
perhaps?

Violette clutches her knife and pistol. She sees a SILHOUETTE sitting on the other side of the crater.

GERMAN SOLDIER (CONT'D)
No need to kill me. I'm already dead.

VIOLETTE
While you breathe, German, you're still my enemy!

GERMAN SOLDIER
I suppose you're right.
(beat)
By the sound of your voice, might you be a woman?

VIOLETTE
Depends on who you ask.

GERMAN SOLDIER
Hah! You have a wonderful sense of humor. I understand if you don't want to answer. But intriguing, yes? A woman in No Man's land during an artillery duel. Are you a courier?

VIOLETTE
(Lights a cigarette)
Yes. What about you?

GERMAN SOLDIER
I, too, am a courier. Our lines are a scant forty yards away. But a piece of shrapnel found its way into my thigh, so here I sit. A bloody mess bleeding-out.
(beat)
Can you spare a dying man a cigarette?

An ominous QUIET descends over No Man's Land.

VIOLETTE
Do you swear on the soul of your mother you won't kill me if I bring you one?

GERMAN SOLDIER
I'll not betray your trust, Mademoiselle.

VIOLETTE

Violette. My name is Violette.

GERMAN SOLDIER

A great pleasure, Violette. I regret we didn't meet during a happier time.

VIOLETTE

When was there ever a happier time, German?

GERMAN SOLDIER

When the world remembered how to laugh from the gut, not the head. When art flourished, and the old gods passed away, heralding a new age. An age of unimaginable possibilities.

Violette LIGHTS a cigarette; gives it to the German. He takes a long drag, savors the smoke; then EXHALES:

GERMAN SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Why is it the simple things give us the greatest pleasure?

Violette STRIKES a match; holds it over the German's WOUND. She removes a battlefield dressing and Sulfa powder from her pouch and applies both to the German's wound.

VIOLETTE

The Sulfa Powder will sterilize the wound. The tourniquet will slow the bleeding.

GERMAN SOLDIER

Thank you, but at this point I can do little more than crawl.

(Looks around)

You should be off, Mademoiselle, while the shelling has stopped.

VIOLETTE

You're right about that, German. But the shortest path back isn't always a straight line.

APPROACHING THE GERMAN TRENCH

The German hops with one arm around Violette's neck. Violette holds him upright with her arms around his waist.

A flare EXPLODES, ILLUMINATING Violette and the German.

GERMAN SOLDIER

(Shouts)

Nicht schieben, Kameraden! Ich bin verwundet.

(English subtitles)

Don't shoot, Comrades! It's me! I'm wounded.

German Soldiers hasten from their trench with a stretcher.

GERMAN SOLDIER (CONT'D)

You should go now. My comrades will take me the rest of the way. I will never forget what you did for me, Violette--?

VIOLETTE

Morris. Perhaps you would've done the same for me, Herr--?

GERMAN SOLDIER

Hitler. Adolph Hitler.

FLARES EXPLODE overhead.

FRENCH SOLDIERS

(Shouting)

Run, Violette! Run!

ADOLPH HITLER

(Shouts to his own men)

Don't shoot, Kameraden. She saved my life!

Violette runs toward the French position while both FRENCH and GERMAN soldiers CHEER her on.

FADE IN MUSIC: French National Anthem: La Marseillaise

SUPERIMPOSE:

11 November, 1919

FRONT PAGE NEWSPAPER HEADLINES:

"Armistice Signed!"; "Great War Ends!"; "German Kaiser Capitulates! Huns Defeated!"

VINTAGE FOOTAGE OF ARMISTICE DAY IN PARIS

Throngs of Parisians celebrate on the Champs Elysée.

FADE OUT MUSIC:

EXT. TROOP TRAIN (MOVING) - DUSK

French Soldiers return home after five terrible years of fighting.

Soldiers SING, drink, smoke, or play cards; some sit alone, MUTTERING to themselves. Many have bandaged faces, some are without limbs, some without eyes, others with half their face missing.

Wearing her uniform, Violette sits by herself, a beret low on her brow. Around Violette's neck hangs France's highest honor, the Croix de Guerre (War Cross).

Violette stares out the window at the passing COUNTRYSIDE.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR

(Shouting)

Those going to Verdun must
disembark and reboard in Charville.

(Repeats)

EXT. TRAIN STATION IN CHARVILLE - NIGHT

The TRAIN moves OFF leaving a solitary SILHOUETTE immersed in FOG. Violette shoulders her duffel bag and walks toward the Train Station.

INT. TRAIN STATION LOBBY - NIGHT

Violette lies on a bench, asleep; her duffel bag a pillow. The Lobby is otherwise deserted.

FIVE SOLDIERS (20s) ENTER. They see Violette asleep, and stagger drunkenly toward her. The Five form a semi-circle in front of Violette.

They pass a BOTTLE of Brandy around. The expressions on their faces suggest "crime in the making."

The LEADER of the Five, wearing "Sergeant's Stripes," rubs his crotch. When the bottle of Brandy returns to him, he finishes-off what remains and SMASHES the bottle on the floor.

Violette awakens with a start; sees the Five ogling her and apprehends what is about to happen.

VIOLETTE
 (Shakes her head)
 No.
 (Shouts)
 No!

The Sergeant unbuttons his trousers:

SERGEANT
 Hold her down.

VIOLETTE
 (Screams)
 No!

The Five move in. Violette kicks the closest in his testicles then scrambles to her feet. She strikes her next assailant squarely on the jaw.

Tackling, then hitting Violette repeatedly, the Five drag her to the floor and rip off her uniform.

Naked, Violette continues to struggle even as her arms are stretched behind her head and her legs forced apart.

Violette is summarily gang-raped and sodomized.

LATER

Their lust satiated, the Five start AWAY. The Sergeant sees Violette's Croix de Guerre on the floor. He picks-up the medal and pockets it.

The Five stagger past the entrance and VANISH in the FOG.

Violette lies motionless, eyes swollen shut. Her face is a mass of bruises and lacerations. Violette's inner-thighs are smeared with dried blood.

LATER

Gathering pieces of her uniform and underclothes, Violette discovers a WALLET. She opens it and finds a French Military I-D belonging to "Sergeant" MAX CAMEMBERT.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHASTANET FARM - DUSK

Sounds of DISTANT THUNDER. FLASHES of lightning. STORM CLOUDS are gathered overhead.

Claude is hoeing in his vegetable garden. He sees Violette coming down the road with her duffel bag. She runs to Claude.

VIOLETTE
Monsieur l'Coach!

Claude tosses the hoe aside and runs to her. They embrace. When Claude sees the cuts and bruising on Violette's face, his joy evaporates.

CLAUDE
My god, V!

VIOLETTE
I need you to make love to me,
Claude.

Claude starts to speak. Violette places fingers over his lips, silencing him:

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
Don't talk. Don't ask me why.
(Pleading)
Just do this. Please. For me.

INT. CLAUDE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sound of rain STRIKING the roof. A single LANTERN ILLUMINATES their congress. Claude defers to Violette's need to purge her brutalized psyche by dominating him.

INT. CLAUDE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Alone in bed, Claude wakens to the sound of a shovel digging at the ground. Claude goes to a window and looks out.

Dressed in a pair of Claude's trousers and wearing one of his peasant blouses, Violette digs a hole beneath a leafless fruit tree.

EXT. CLAUDE'S ORCHARD - MORNING

Violette gathers her bundled uniform off the ground and drops it into the hole.

Claude arrives. In his hand is a bottle of Brandy. He glances at the shovel in Violette's hands:

CLAUDE
Here. I'll trade you.

Violette scrutinizes the benign expression on Claude's face. She hands him the shovel; then takes the bottle from his outstretched hand and drinks.

Claude shovels dirt into the hole. Pausing, he looks Violette up-and-down.

 CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Are those my pants?

Violette nods.

 CLAUDE (CONT'D)
And shirt?

Violette nods. She hands the bottle back to him. Violette and Claude eye one-another:

 CLAUDE (CONT'D)
You wear them well.
 (Finishes filling-in the
 hole)
I know a tailor in Verdun. I will
introduce you.

EXT. VILLAGE CHURCH IN SAN MICHEL - DUSK

Wearing a man's tailored suit beneath a man's winter coat, Violette ENTERS the Church.

INT. VILLAGE CHURCH IN SAN MICHEL - DUSK

But for TWO elderly WOMEN in the front pew, the church appears deserted.

Violette proceeds up the center aisle and finds a place to sit-- off, by herself.

She stares at Jesus-on-the-Cross (above and behind the altar).

 VIOLETTE
 (To Jesus on the Cross)
Don't think I don't feel stupid.
Sitting here, talking at you.
I used to believe. Not any more.
Not after what I've seen and what
we do in your Father's Name.
 (beat)
It would break Mother Superior's
heart to hear me say these things.
I know it would.

 (MORE)

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

But better I say them, rather than carry them around in my head for the rest of my life. Tell her I'm sorry if you see her. But I just don't believe. Not any more. Not in any of it.

Tears stream down Violette's cheeks.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

Just so you know, I won't be talking at you again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

Violette sits asleep. Claude taps her gently on the shoulder.

CLAUDE

We're here, Violette.

Violette opens her eyes, YAWNS.

VIOLETTE

Nice? Finally?

CLAUDE

Yes. Finally.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

Gare de Nice-Ville, France, 1921

Violette is met by ALICE MILLIAT, organizer of the First Women's Olympiad, and by two of the five women composing Team Femina Sport: VIVIENNE BRÉARD and GERMAINE DE LAPIERRE (20s).

ALICE MILLIAT

You must be Violette. I am Alice Milliat. I have arranged your transportation to Monaco.

Violette and Alice Milliat shake hands.

VIOLETTE

Thank you, Madame Director. I am honored to be here. With me is my trainer, Monsieur Claude Chastanet.

Claude and Alice Milliat shake hands.

ALICE MILLIAT
Violette, these lovely ladies are--

VIOLETTE
(Interjecting)
Two of the fastest runners in
Europa: Vivienne Bréard, and
Germaine De Lapiere.

VIVIENNE BRÉARD
The rest of us are checking in at
the Hotel Metropole, Violette.
Thérèse and Suzanne look forward to
meeting you there.

GERMAINE DE LAPIERRE
We have heard wonderful things
about you, Violette. We're honored
to have you on the team.

EXT. TRACK & FIELD - LATER, THAT SAME DAY, AT DUSK

Violette and Claude walk onto an oval TRACK past SEVERAL
GROUNDSKEEPERS. Working late, the Groundskeepers use white
chalk to create "lanes" for the next day's Olympiad runners.

Claude and Violette proceed onto the grass FIELD.

CLAUDE
You said you wanted to see it, dear
friend. Well, here it is.

VIOLETTE
Yes. Here it is.

CLAUDE
You pursued your dream and now that
dream is real, V.

VIOLETTE
I couldn't have gotten here,
without you.

CLAUDE
Nonsense. You were born for this.

VIOLETTE
Even so, Monsieur l'Coach. I will
never forget you.

CLAUDE
Claude. Remember?

EXT. THE MONTE CARLO CASINO - DAY

The "First Women's Olympiad" takes place in the garden expanse of the Monte Carlo Casino.

Past the FLUTTERING colorful FLAGS of France, Great Britain, Norway, Italy, and Switzerland, the MEDITERRANEAN SEA shimmers in the background.

SUPERIMPOSE:

March, 1921. First Women's Olympiad
Monte Carlo, Monaco

ON THE TRACK: 200 METER RELAY RACE

Spectators CHEER and APPLAUD the WOMEN ATHLETES representing the Five Nations in [The] 200 Meter Relay Race.

Great Britain's TEAM wins First Place, the Two Teams from France come in Second and Third.

TWO-HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY METERS RACE.

Vivienne Bréard comes in second place and Suzanne Liébrard is third across the Finish Line.

FIFTY-YARD HURDLES RACE

Germaine De Lapierre, Suzanne Liébrard, and Therese Brulé win First, Second, and Third Place, respectively.

THE JAVELIN COMPETITION

In her hand Violette holds a javelin, testing its balance.

IN THE STANDS

Claude watches as the Athletes cast their javelins. With each javelin cast the CROWD SHOUTS!

Violette takes her position, launches her javelin. It soars through the air eclipsing the distances of the Javelins preceding hers.

Momentarily stunned, the CROWD erupts with CHEERING! Claude thrusts his arms into the air.

EXT. ATHLETES' DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Claude is waiting for her when Violette emerges from the Dressing Room with her team: Vivienne Bréard, Germaine De Lapierre, THERESE BRULE (20s), SUZANNE LIÉBRARD (20s).

Violette beams with joy. She LAUGHS and lifts Claude off the ground before returning his feet to earth:

VIOLETTE

We're going out to celebrate. Come with us Claude!

CLAUDE

No. No. No. This is a moment for you to savor with your teammates.

VIOLETTE

What will you do?

CLAUDE

I'm off to visit an old friend.

VIOLETTE

And might this old friend be a woman of tender years?

CLAUDE

Hah! You know me too well, V.

INT. UPSCALE BAR IN MONTE CARLO - DAY

The mood is festive. The PATRONS are well-dressed and thrilled to have the Women Athletes among them.

Her spirits soaring, Violette sits with her Teammates.

Alice Milliat ENTERS, seeks-out Team Femina Sports at their table. She greets them with kisses on the cheek.

ALICE MILLIAT

Not a bad day, ladies, for women and women's sports.

TEAM FEMINA SPORT

Here! Here!

Violette pours Alice Milliat a glass of Champagne.

ALICE MILLIAT

Silver and Bronze in the Two-hundred-and-fifty meters race.

Vivienne Bréard (Silver) and Suzanne Liébrard (Bronze) jostle each other playfully, the others POUND fists on the table.

ALICE MILLIAT (CONT'D)
Gold in the Eight-hundred meters
race.

Vivienne Bréard stands and bows. Teammates POUND the table.

ALICE MILLIAT (CONT'D)
Silver for Team Femina Sport in the
seventy-five meter relay, and
again, silver in the two-hundred
meter relay.

The Women POUND on the table.

ALICE MILLIAT (CONT'D)
Gold, Silver, and Bronze in the
hurdles.

Germaine De Lapierre, Suzanne Liébrard, and Therese Brulé stand and bow. Patrons now CLAP, WHISTLE, and CHEER.

ALICE MILLIAT (CONT'D)
Bronze in the Long Jump!

Vivienne Bréard stands and holds her arms overhead.

ALICE MILLIAT (CONT'D)
And last, but not least: Gold in
both the Javelin Throw and Shotput.
Stand up, Violette, take a bow.

A fashionably-dressed WOMAN (30s) appears at Violette's side. She leans close to Violette's ear.

WOMAN OF MEANS
I'm at the Metropole-- room Eight-
Twenty-Eight. I'll leave the door
ajar should you feel inclined.

The Woman DEPARTS. Violette turns to her teammates; they are on the verge of laughing. Violette grins and shrugs.

LATER, THAT NIGHT

The dinner crowd is gone. Alice Milliat and Team Femina Sport drink coffee and nibble on the remains of their desserts.

ALICE MILLIAT

This was an historic day, ladies,
an important step for women's
sports. Men dare not turn their
backs to us. There will be more
women's Olympiads, I swear it!

Vivienne Bréard turns to Violette and kisses her on the lips.

VIVIENNE BRÉARD

After the games are over, come to
Paris. Train with us, Violette.
Oh, do say you will. You'll love
Paris, and you so belong there.

INT. HOTEL METROPOLE LOBBY - DAY

Violette is standing among the ladies of Team Femina Sport
when a BELLBOY approaches holding an envelope.

BELLBOY

Mademoiselle Morris. A gentleman
requested I present this to you.

Violette accepts the envelope. The Bellboy goes OFF. Violette
opens the envelope, removes an enclosed card:

CLAUDE (V.O.)

My dearest Violette. The time has
come for you to be rid of me. I
taught you all I know, and now--
I must set you free. You have made
me proud beyond measure. Go! Seek
your fortune, wherever your dreams
lead you. If you need me you know
where to find me. Faithfully,
Claude.

Tears fall down Violette's cheeks. Vivienne Bréard places a
comforting hand on Violette's shoulder.

VIVIENNE BRÉARD

Are you all right, Cheri?

VIOLETTE

(Wipes tears away)
I'm more than all right, Vivienne.
Now I know where I'm meant to be.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Paris, France,
1928

EXT. FRENCH WOMEN'S SPORTS FEDERATION H.Q.(F.F.S.F) - DAY

A BANNER reads: FRENCH WOMEN'S SPORTS FEDERATION

INT. FRENCH WOMEN'S SPORTS FEDERATION H.Q. - DAY

Dour CHAIRMAN of the Board, and closet-homosexual, ANTON PRUDHOMME (Male, 70), paces back-and-forth in front of TEN BOARD MEMBERS (White males, 70s).

ANTON PRUDHOMME

The Summer Olympics, Monsieurs, are a scant three weeks away. If we are to act, we must do so now.

FIRST BOARD MEMBER

I agree with Monsieur le president Prudhomme. But we must appear resolute, and of one voice.

SECOND BOARD MEMBER

From what I can judge, this--
(Hesitates)
I feel stupid, referring to her as a woman.

ANTON PRUDHOMME

Then, don't, Francois. Amazon, will suffice.

CHUCKLES from the Board Members.

SECOND BOARD MEMBER

Yes, well, from what I gather, she will not go away without a fight.

FIRST BOARD MEMBER

Which is why grounds for revoking her license to compete must be ironclad. Uncontestable.

ANTON PRUDHOMME

And so they shall be.

SECOND BOARD MEMBER

Do we have sufficient proof to accomplish this, Anton?

ANTON PRUDHOMME

Yes.

(beat)

(MORE)

ANTON PRUDHOMME (CONT'D)
 Additionally, we now have signed
 statements from witnesses attesting
 to her behavior on the soccer
 field. To Wit, punching a referee
 in the nose, and furnishing players
 with amphetamines.

THIRD BOARD MEMBER
 My God! Really? Is that true?

ANTON PRUDHOMME
 More, or less.

Prudhomme looks across the room at a nattily-dressed,
 effeminate MALE taking notes of "the meeting."

ANTON PRUDHOMME (CONT'D)
 Phillipe, be a darling and ask
 Madame Netter to join us.

Phillipe puts his pen down and sashays from the Board Room.

ANTON PRUDHOMME (CONT'D)
 If you don't know already,
 Monsieurs, Yvonne Netter is a well
 known champion for Women's Rights
 who now works for us by way of an
 exceedingly generous retainer.

FIRST BOARD MEMBER
 This should be interesting: an
 avowed Zionist locking horns with a
 Palestinian Arab whom no one seems
 to know is of which sex.

LAUGHTER.

Philippe returns to the Board Room with a LAWYER (Avocat)
 named YVONNE NETTER (40). Netter's conservative manner of
 dress and unsmiling demeanor suggests she is all-business.

ANTON PRUDHOMME
 I will not waste your time, Madame
 Netter by going around the table
 making introductions. These fine
 gentlemen know your legal
 credentials are impeccable.
 (beat)
 What they would like at this
 juncture is a succinct summation of
 the instant matter.

MADAME NETTER

Very well, Monsieurs. The long and short of it is this: women do not have the right to wear men's trousers in the streets of Paris or anywhere else in France.

MURMURING from "the Board."

MADAME NETTER (CONT'D)

The Revolutionary Council that governed France following the Revolution in 1789, authored many decrees. One decree was that women are forbidden to wear men's trousers, culottes, or underwear in public.

SECOND BOARD MEMBER

Good lord! Imagine that!

MADAME NETTER

Yes, well, in Eighteen-Hundred it was widely believed anarchistic forces were encouraging degenerate, unwholesome elements of French society to undermine the foundation of our most cherished values. First by turning established norms on their head. Thus promoting moral decay.

THIRD BOARD MEMBER

But that's absurd.

MADAME NETTER

Perhaps, Monsieur; however, when Napoleon Bonaparte came to power the Ordinance of Eighteen-Hundred was never repealed.

(beat)

Monsieurs du conseil: you hired me to find a way to legally suspend Violette Morris's license to compete in women's sports. I have just given it to you.

Madame Netter opens her attaché case on the table and removes a stack of 8 1/2" X 11", black & white PHOTOGRAPHS.

Netter divides the photographs and circulates two stacks: one stack clockwise, one counter-clockwise, around the table.

The PHOTOS are of Violette Morris, taken in a notorious Lesbian Bar owned by Lulu Montparnasse, called Le Monocle, in a section of Paris also known as Montparnasse.

In every photo, Violette wears custom-tailored men's clothing and is smoking cigarettes, cigars; drinking Brandy, and being flirtatious with other women, in public.

MADAME NETTER (CONT'D)

I have a hundred more outrageous photographs of Mademoiselle Morris publicly flaunting her homosexual proclivities. And, in so doing, trashing the most basic precepts of a sound, otherwise well-ordered society: French society, Messieurs.

(beat)

Messieurs du conseil: for the good of France, and in defense of our daughters, and future generations of Frenchwomen, we must speak out against the moral anarchy that Violette Morris glorifies.

One Board Member begins to CLAP; then another, and another, until all are CLAPPING and-or POUNDING on the table.

Appearing satisfied, the Chairman, Anton Prudhomme, and the lawyer, Yvonne Netter, give each other a congratulatory nod.

INT. COURT OF COMMERCE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

Two Years Later
Tribunaux de Commerce
(Court of Commerce)

A Judge sits upon a dais. In men's clothing, Violette sits alone at the "Plaintiff's" table. Yvonne Netter and Anton Prudhomme sit at the "Defendant(s)" table.

In the gallery sit the Ten Members of the F.F.S.F Board of Directors.

CONSULAR JUDGE

Before I render my decision, Mademoiselle Morris, you are entitled to a closing statement.

VIOLETTE

Monsieur le Juge: this proceeding provides the court a façade of respectability, but in no way does it justify the despicable treatment I have received from the Defendants these past two years.

CONSULAR JUDGE

Mademoiselle Morris, do you or do you not want to make a statement? Or is it simply your intention to test the patience of this court?

VIOLETTE

For whatever good it will do me, Monsieur le Juge, here is what I'm willing to say:

Violette turns toward the Defendant's table.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

First, I want to address Madame Netter, Avocat for the all-male Board of Directors of the French Women's Sports Federation.

(beat)

An organization that, from the first days I began competing in women's sports, have sought my ruin. A cabal of lackluster men with as reprehensible a goal as has ever come before this court.

(beat)

And I have to ask myself: did Madame Netter do this for the publicity that a second trial would bring? Or was it for the monetary remuneration it would net her, no pun intended, Monsieur le Juge.

CONSULAR JUDGE

Noted. Now, please, do get on with it.

VIOLETTE

Forgive me, Monsieur Le Juge. Am I encroaching on your Lunch Hour?

CONSULAR JUDGE

I encourage you to keep a civil tongue, Mademoiselle.

VIOLETTE

Of course, Monsieur le Juge.
Forgive me.

(beat)

Madame Netter's plan was a tactical master-stroke, I give her that: producing an absurd statute from the distant past to prevent me from competing in women's sports. And now, seeking to revoke my license to race cars: cars I design and race and thereby earn a living by, and pay taxes on, like other citizens of this once great nation.

CONSULAR JUDGE

You are on thin ice, Mademoiselle Morris. Tread carefully.

VIOLETTE

I say: shame on you, Madame Netter! Shame on you for advertising yourself as a champion of women's rights. Am I not a woman?

(beat)

True. I had my breasts removed. I did it to better fit the cars I race. But last time I looked, my vagina was right where it's always been! So tell me, am I not a woman? Have I no rights? Why have you focused such vitriol, such contempt, such venom and scorn at me?

(beat)

Over and over again, Madame Netter, you reminded this court that I'm a lesbian.

(beat)

And I am! I *am* a lesbian! And proudly so!

(beat)

Over and over you told this court my sexual preferences and lesbianism were not on trial. Then why? Why bring up the matter no fewer than one-hundred and seventy-seven times during the course of this tawdry, three-day proceeding?

(beat)

Fate ordained me to be a woman at birth, Madame. I had no say in the matter. And, you!

(MORE)

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

You, too, have a womb, although yours is best suited for nesting only scorpions.

The Judge CHUCKLES; then quickly covers his mouth.

CONSULAR JUDGE

No more ad hominem attacks on Madame Netter, Mademoiselle Morris. Now-- are you finished?

VIOLETTE

No, Monsieur Le Juge.

(Turns toward Prudhomme)

And you, Monsieur Prudhomme: who are you to judge me? You and your cronies. All so high on your own petard; you have railed against me for years, despite my accomplishments in women's sports.

(beat)

I fought for France in the Great War. Did you? How many of the men composing the Women's Sports Federation's Board of Directors fought at the Somme, or at Verdun, or any other piece of ground bought and paid for by the blood of those who died there? And by those whom no one mentions, who carry the scars of battle in their mind and body today?

(beat)

I don't require your answer Monsieur Prudhomme. I know the answer. None of you! Not you, or even one man on the Board served in the military, but somehow you all managed to profit from the war. It is all on record, Monsieur Le Juge and easy to verify, for those who know where to look.

(beat)

Monsieur Le Juge, the so-called Women's Sports Federation call me immoral because I love women and smoke cigarettes and drink Brandy. And because I prefer men's suits to dresses. And because I won't paint-on a face every morning like a clown for whatever questionable benefit it brings women.

(beat)

(MORE)

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

I cannot help but think men believe women are clowns: deaf and dumb providers, placed on earth for their carnal amusements, and never to be taken seriously; certainly not in the bedroom.

CONSULAR JUDGE

Enough, Mademoiselle. You carry your complaint too far.

VIOLETTE

So be it! I have said all I have to say. Except, to hell with you hypocrites! To hell with your small minds and petty complaints!

The Judge POUNDS his gavel upon a block.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

To all such cowardly trash as you, I happily say, good riddance!

FADE OUT the sound of the Judge's gavel POUNDING.

EXT. COURT OF COMMERCE - DAY

Violette emerges from the building.

Waiting for Violette is a GROUP comprising Violette's LGBTQ+ SUPPORTERS.

Among these individuals is Violette's former teammate and occasional lover, VIVIENNE BRÉARD, and an enormous long-legged TRANS-FEMALE over 6' tall (30, muscular) with a long mane of infrared hair.

A SCORE of Protesters hold SIGNS that read: "Justice for Violette" and "Equality is Our Birthright" and "Solidarity with All! Not Just Some!"

POLICE VANS arrive. GENDARMES get out, and with batons at-the-ready they force Violette's Supporters into the STREET(S), away from the Courthouse steps.

Cars and busses come to a SCREECHING HALT in all directions. Car horns BLOW. Drivers get out and SCREAM at the Protesters. Protesters SCREAM back.

VIOLETTE

(To the Gendarme in charge)

(MORE)

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
This was a peaceful protest,
Monsieur Le Capitaine.

GENDARME CAPTAIN
We are here to make certain it
stays that way, Mademoiselle.

VIOLETTE
By threatening to club every queer
on sight?

GENDARME CAPTAIN
Mademoiselle Morris, we met many
years ago. The day I lost my hand.

He raises a left hand fashioned from wood.

GENDARME CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
It was at the Somme. I rode in the
front of your ambulance beside you.
You held a leather strap around my
arm to keep me from bleeding out.
(beat)
You saved my life, Mademoiselle.

Netter and Prudhomme EXIT from the Courthouse. They pause on
the steps to address SEVERAL REPORTERS. Occasionally, they
glance in Violette's direction.

Vivienne Bréard and the large red-headed Trans-woman appear
at Violette's side.

GENDARME CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
(To Violette)
Please. Go now! You and your
friends. Good luck to you all.

Violette, Vivienne, and the Trans-Woman make their way
forcefully through the SCRIMMAGE taking place between
Gendarmes, Protesters, and Motorists.

When the Three Women are in the clear, they pause to rest:

VIOLETTE
Well, sisters, so much for Liberty,
Equality, and Fraternity in
Twentieth Century France.

VIVIENNE BRÉARD
Let's go to Le Monocle. I'm buying.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFÉ - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

Two Years Later... 18 April, 1930

Violette sits across from a French News REPORTER (30s).

VIOLETTE

Today is my thirty-seventh birthday
and I want to do something silly.
So! Ask away, Monsieur Newspaper
Man.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

Thank you, Mademoiselle Morris. Our
readers want to know, now that the
Women's Sports Federation has
revoked your license to compete in,
well, not just some, but in all
women's sports and competitions,
what is your reaction?

VIOLETTE

It sickens me. When they revoked my
license to compete they denied me
the ability to earn a living. Is
that not the absolute right of
every human being? To work in order
to support oneself? I had to sue in
court to secure that right. But, as
you already know, I lost.

(beat)

And what did Yvonne Netter, a
hypocrite and self-proclaimed
champion of women's rights use to
accomplish this travesty? An
obscure ordinance from the year
Eighteen-Hundred, that forbids
women from wearing men's trousers!

(beat)

Idiocy, yes? Complete idiocy! I ask
your readers: where is the justice
in that! There is none! This
country of little people,
hypocrites, like Anton Prudhomme
and Yvonne Netter, is not worthy of
its elders, not worthy of survival.

(beat)

We live in a country made rotten by
money and scandals and ruled by
speechifiers, schemers and cowards.

(beat)

(MORE)

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

Someday its decay will bring it to the level of a slave, but if I'm still here, I won't be one of the slaves. It's not in my temperament.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

Are you, then, a latter day Joan of Arc, fighting against the patriarchal powers of the day?

VIOLETTE

No! I see myself as me! Violette Morris! But I tell you this much: anything a man can do, Violette can do.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

Our women readers will love that!

VIOLETTE

And well they should. Our time has come. Women must no longer tolerate living under the thumb of men who would rather wax and polish their automobiles, than caress their wife's nether-parts.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

We can't publish that.

VIOLETTE

Then, don't. But change is coming. It is undeniable, and unstoppable.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

With your permission, I would like to recap your career in sports, Mademoiselle.

VIOLETTE

Call me Mademoiselle once more, Monsieur Newspaper Man, and I'll punch you in the face. Call me, Violette. Okay?

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

Okay. Violette, it is. You were trained by a former Foreign Legionnaire, were you not?

VIOLETTE

Yes. Monsieur Claude Chastanet.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

For how long?

VIOLETTE

I was fifteen when I left the Convent of the Assumption in Wallonia to train with Claude.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

And you lived with him, yes?

VIOLETTE

Yes. Except for the time I served in the army.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

During which time you won the Croix de Guerre-- for gallantry at the Somme.

Violette nods.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER (CONT'D)

And after, when you won Gold medals in the First Women's Olympiad, in 1921, you moved to Paris where, in 1922, you again won Gold in the Second Women's Olympiad.

VIOLETTE

Correct. Gold in the Shotput, and Silver in the javelin throw.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

In 1924 you participated at the Women's Olympiad, again winning a Gold medal in both discus and shotput.

VIOLETTE

Yes.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

You have been labeled by your detractors as an Amazon, a freak of nature, abnormally strong for a woman. Your reaction?

VIOLETTE

Actually, I like that description. Listen. My strength is hereditary, from my father. The rest is due to my training, years of it. From the time I was a little girl.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

And yet you openly smoke cigarettes and cigars and drink alcohol. Some even say you have a fondness for Absinthe.

VIOLETTE

Hah! I'm French. Of course I smoke. Of course I drink. But, Absinthe? No. I leave that beverage to poets and poseurs. I am neither.

The Newspaper Man scribbles in his notebook.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

You were selected to play with the French National Water Polo Team, even though there was no women's team at the time.

VIOLETTE

True.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

Your desire to compete has also led you to compete in motor racing.

VIOLETTE

Yes, I won the Bol d'Or, a 24-hour endurance race in Nineteen Twenty-Seven.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

You also competed in the Tour de France Automobile Race, in Nineteen Twenty-Three; the Bol d'Or again in Nineteen Twenty-Two, and again in 'Twenty-Three, and thereafter, through Nineteen Twenty-Eight. You also came in Second place, in the Paris-Pyrenees Endurance Race in Nineteen Twenty-Two.

VIOLETTE

A race I should've and would've won had I not crashed to avoid a deer.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

You have even been an avid boxer, often fighting, and defeating, men.

VIOLETTE

Yes. But now I only fight privately and only when I need the money.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

I see. Among the other sports you've participated in are cross-country bicycle racing, motorcycle racing, airplane racing, horseback riding, tennis, archery, diving, swimming, weightlifting, and Greco-Roman wrestling.

VIOLETTE

Guilty, as charged.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

What was it like racing airplanes?

VIOLETTE

Exhilarating! And Terrifying. Once was enough.

(Laughs)

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

A personal question if you do not mind, Violette. Our readers would be interested knowing why you elected to have your breasts surgically removed.

VIOLETTE

Hah! They are very nosey, your readers.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

Yes, well. What can I say?

VIOLETTE

I had a double mastectomy in order to better fit the cars I designed and raced. But the business I started depended on selling car parts. Now, after this second suspension--yanking my license to compete in motor racing, my business, too, is gone.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

You're accomplishments are amazing, Violette. Is there anything you won't do?

VIOLETTE

I won't be wronged. I won't be insulted. And I won't turn the other cheek. The list could go on, but-- why bother?

VIVIENNE BRÉARD (O.C.)
Violette, dear!

Violette sees Vivienne Bréard waving from inside a TAXI.

VIOLETTE
I'm afraid we must end the
interview here.

Violette dashes across the STREET through TRAFFIC to where
Vivienne Bréard is waiting.

VIVIENNE BRÉARD
Get in, darling.

Vivienne opens the rear door. Violet gets inside. They kiss.

VIVIENNE BRÉARD (CONT'D)
Who is that strange little man you
were talking to?

VIOLETTE
A reporter for Le Figaro.

VIVIENNE BRÉARD
Oh, my god, V! You finally agreed
to an interview. Good for you. I'm
taking you to lunch.

VIOLETTE
Thank you, but no, Vivienne. Can
you give me a ride to my shop?

EXT. VIOLETTE'S 'AUTOMOTIVE PARTS' STORE - DUSK

The taxi STOPS in front of Violette's moribund auto parts
store. Violette gets OUT. She and Vivienne kiss.

VIOLETTE
Thank you, my friend.

VIVIENNE BRÉARD
Don't be a stranger, V. I'm here
for you.

INT. VIOLETTE'S 'AUTOMOTIVE PARTS' STORE - DUSK

Violette ENTERS. She locks the door behind. Very little light
enters through the plate-glass window fronting the street.

Inside there is a pervasive feeling of gloom. Violette looks around: at tools on benches, an unfinished race car, up on blocks, and other evidence suggesting work unfinished due to financial hardship.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BERLIN, GERMANY - DAY

Establishing shot: the iconic PARISIAN PLACE with views of TIERGARTEN, the VICTORY COLUMN, and the REICHSTAG, circa 1930.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Berlin, Germany: 1930

EXT. NAZI PARTY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A multi-story building with blood-red FLAGS bearing the black Swastika. In front, THUGS wearing brown uniforms stand guard.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Nazi Party Headquarters
Potsdamer Strasse 109
Berlin

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Hurrying along a marble hallway inlaid with large Swastikas is HEINZ LINGE (40). Physically imposing, Linge is Hitler's longest serving VALET and personal BODYGUARD.

Linge holds an armful of NEWSPAPERS. He approaches TWO GUARDS in brown uniforms outside Hitler's office.

HITLER'S OFFICE

ADOLF HITLER (Now 41) sits writing at his desk. He wears a starched, Khaki uniform and wide, black tie. Sound of KNOCKING.

HITLER

Come!

Heinz Linge ENTERS, excitement on his face. Hitler looks up.

HITLER (CONT'D)

What is it, Heinz? You look like the cat that just ate the canary.

HEINZ LINGE

You will want to read the French newspaper, Le Figaro first, mien Gruppenführer.

HITLER

Because?

HEINZ LINGE

Violette Morris, Gruppenführer.

Hitler snatches the newspaper from Heinz Linge's hand.

INT. VIOLETTE'S 'AUTOMOTIVE PARTS' STORE - DAWN

Asleep on a cot, Violette wears what she wore the night before and clutches an empty bottle of Cognac.

Persistent LOUD KNOCKING.

Hung-over, Violette staggers toward the door with one shoe and sock missing. She sees the dark figure of a MAN peering through the plate glass window.

VIOLETTE

(Mutters)

I'm coming for chris's sake.

Violette OPENS the door. Waiting is a THIN MAN with lifeless eyes, wearing a nondescript suit and tie. He looks Violette up-and-down.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS

(German accent)

Violette Morris?

VIOLETTE

Yes.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS

My name is Joseph Goebbels. I have come from Berlin at the behest of a friend of yours.

Goebbels opens a leather attaché case; removes a manilla envelope and holds it out to her.

VIOLETTE

I have no German friends, Herr
Goebbels.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS

Oh, but you do, Mademoiselle.
Please.

Skeptical, Violette takes the envelope.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS (CONT'D)

Now, if you will excuse me, I have
a plane to catch.

Goebbels starts toward a waiting LIMOUSINE. Violette closes
and locks the door.

VIOLETTE

Strange fellow.

On her way back inside the store, Violette tosses the
ENVELOPE onto a work bench. She returns to the cot,
collapses, and falls asleep.

LATER, THAT AFTERNOON

SUNLIGHT streams through the window. Sounds of STREET
TRAFFIC.

Violette GROANS, moves her legs off the cot. In a sitting
position she cradles her head in her hands. Getting to her
feet, she grasps a CIGARETTE BOX and finds it empty.

Violette goes to the table where she left the manilla
envelope; she plucks a cigarette BUTT from an ashtray and
lights it.

Inhaling what remains of the butt, Violette SIGHS and looks
around, at "the business" that didn't materialize.

VIOLETTE

Even if it never happens. Right,
Mother Superior?

Taking notice of the ENVELOPE, Violette picks it up, sees her
NAME written on the front and opens it.

Violette removes a single piece of paper: a LETTER emblazoned
with a Swastika (Nazi Party letterhead).

She rubs her eyes free of drowsiness and begins to read:

ADOLPH HITLER (V.O.)

Dear Violette Morris, many years ago you saved my life at the Somme. Please consider the enclosed a down-payment on the debt I owe you. Faithfully, Adolph Hitler.

VIOLETTE

What the--?

Placing the letter aside, Violette removes a PROMISSORY NOTE. The NOTE is endorsed by the NAZI PARTY and payable by the BANK OF FRANCE.

The Note states: "Pay the Bearer fifty-thousand Swiss Francs or an equivalent sum in British Pounds Sterling."

Violette swoons; almost collapses to the floor. Steadying herself, Violette removes a STRONG BOX from under a counter and places it on the table.

She OPENS the Box, puts the "note" inside. Violette starts to close the box, but hesitates.

She removes the ARMY PHOTO ID belonging to the Sergeant who initiated the gang-rape at the Train Station in Charleroi.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

Somehow. One day, I'm going to find you! I swear it. And if there's such a thing as justice, I'll have that, too.

EXT. VIOLETTE'S 'AUTOMOTIVE PARTS' STORE - DAY

Violette OPENS the door and steps OUT onto the sidewalk, still minus one shoe and sock:

VIOLETTE

(Shouts at the sky)

I'm back, you sons of bitches! Do you hear me, Paris? Do you hear me, France? Violette Morris is back!

Startled by the intensity in Violette's voice, PEDESTRIANS on the sidewalk hurry past her.

EXT. NAZI PARTY HEADQUARTERS, BERLIN - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. HITLER'S OFFICE - DAY

Hitler stands before a large aquarium containing TROPICAL FISH. The door OPENS. Joseph Goebbels ENTERS.

HITLER

(Without turning around)
Tell me everything, Joseph.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS

Of course, Gruppenführer. I arrived at dawn at Mademoiselle Morris's now defunct auto parts store. I knocked. She answered the door in the same clothes she apparently had on the night before. She reeked of cigarettes and stale Brandy.

HITLER

(Taps the side of the aquarium)
What else?

Hitler stares at TWO "fighting Beta" FISH struggling for dominance in a fight to the death.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS

Mein Gruppenführer. Head to toe, Violette Morris is an unapologetic lesbian.

HITLER

The French are a decadent people, Joseph. We have always known this. They have become weak, effeminate lovers of trifle pleasures. But that isn't who Violette Morris is.
(Turns, faces Goebbels)

JOSEPH GOEBBELS

Gruppenführer?

HITLER

Violette Morris is a warrior with fierce instincts. She saved my life at the Somme. So, ask yourself, Joseph, as I had to: what would Germany's future be like had she not interceded to save my life?
(beat)
We have operatives in Paris, yes?

JOSEPH GOEBBELS

Of course, mien Gruppenführer.

HITLER

Good. I want Violette Morris
surveilled. Discretely.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS

Of course.

EXT. LE MONOCLE BAR - NIGHT

Le Monocle, a club catering to Lesbians in the Montmartre section of Paris.

Women of all stripes: bohemians, artists, writers, and queer-curious housewives wait in a LINE outside the entrance.

Taxi INTO VIEW. It STOPS. Dressed in a custom tailored suit, Violette gets OUT, lights a cigar.

The enormous red-haired Trans-woman we saw with Violette outside the Court of Commerce is also a Bouncer at Le Monocle and controls the flow of patrons in and out.

The Bouncer smiles, waves Violette inside. Violette stuffs CASH into the Bouncer's coat pocket:

VIOLETTE

Germaine.

BOUNCER

Violette.

On her way inside, Violette SWATS Germaine on the buttocks.

INT. LE MONOCLE - NIGHT

The ambience is a mix of carnality, urgency and anticipation, coupled with the Parisian's love of theatre. There are stairs to the Second Floor and to the Wine Cellar.

Many Women are dressed in tuxedos or in suits. Some sport monocles advertising their dual identity as lesbians and cross-dressers. Some women wear whimsical, operatic costumes.

An ALL-FEMALE BAND wearing tuxedos are playing "Happy Days Are Here Again."

Violette passes COUPLES kissing in the shadows.

AT THE BAR

Violette takes a seat. A FEMALE BARTENDER comes over.

BARTENDER

The usual, V?

VIOLETTE

Thank you, Frankie.

The owner of Le Monocle, LULU DE MONTPARNASSE (40) appears wearing a tuxedo.

With Lulu is a French actress, YVONNE DE BRAY (41) wearing a Chinese silk brocade dress with lengthy slits on both sides.

Violette's eyes light up. She looks Yvonne up and down. Yvonne's expression suggests the attraction is mutual.

LULU MONTPARNASSE

Violette. May I introduce you?

VIOLETTE

God, yes. Please do.

LULU DE MONTPARNASSE

Violette, Yvonne De Bray. Yvonne,
Violette Morris.

Violette and Yvonne shake hands. When neither lets go--

LULU DE MONTPARNASSE (CONT'D)

I'll leave you two to get better acquainted.

(To the Bartender)

Frankie, bring my friends a bottle of our best Champagne on ice.

BARTENDER

I'm on it, Boss.

LULU DE MONTPARNASSE

Enjoy yourselves, my darlings. However, you may want to let go of each other long enough to lift your Champagne glasses.

(Goes OFF)

Embarrassed, Violette and Yvonne release each other's hand.

VIOLETTE

Is this your first time coming to Le Monocle, Mademoiselle de Bray?

YVONNE DE BRAY

Please. Call me Yvonne. And may I call you, Violette?

VIOLETTE

Of course.

YVONNE DE BRAY

(Looking around)

Everyone looks so natural, so comfortable and at ease with themselves.

VIOLETTE

It's because of Lulu. Women know once they're here they're safe to be themselves without being judged, or persecuted.

YVONNE DE BRAY

May I confess something, Violette?

VIOLETTE

If you wish. Of course.

YVONNE DE BRAY

I have a scrapbook filled with newspaper clippings about you. They go all the way back to the first Women's Olympiad in Monte Carlo in Nineteen Twenty-One. I was there, in the stands. And it was there I fell in love with you.

WINE CELLAR OF LE MONOCLE

Standing against a brick wall in a darkened corner of the cellar, Yvonne MOANS with her head tilted back. Violette kisses Yvonne's neck while one hand explores Yvonne's vagina.

EXT. LA MOULIN ROUGE, PARIS - NIGHT

Establishing shot. Sound of rowdy "CAN-CAN" MUSIC.

INT. LA MOULIN ROUGE, PARIS - NIGHT

Dressed in a tuxedo, Violette sits with Yvonne de Bray at a table, front-and-center.

The "Can-Can" performance ENDS. The DANCERS EXIT from the stage.

Appearing on stage is the Club's GUEST IMPRESARIO, French singer and actor, MAURICE CHEVALIER (40s):

MAURICE CHEVALIER

No. No. No. No more silly love
songs from me. But now, Madams and
Monsieurs, let us once again
welcome to La Moulin Rouge,
Mademoiselle Josephine Baker.

LOUD APPLAUSE. SPOTLIGHT ILLUMINATES American-born French
actress JOSEPHINE BAKER (Black, 24). Her iconic costume
consists of artificial bananas and a beaded necklace.

Josephine delights the AUDIENCE with her "Banana Dance"; then
SINGS a sultry, slow tempo love song, "J'ai deux amours". The
song ENDS. Miss Baker bows to the Crowd.

Violette and Yvonne stand and APPLAUD. As she leaves the
stage, Josephine Baker blows a kiss to Violette.

YVONNE DE BRAY

Should I be jealous?

VIOLETTE

No, my love. I briefly met her
before you and I were introduced.

YVONNE DE BRAY

I love you, V.

They kiss while the Crowd continues to APPLAUD after each of
two "CURTAIN CALLS."

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFÉ IN MONTPARNASSE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

Three years later...

Violette and Yvonne de Bray are enjoying aperitifs when a
well-groomed AVOCAT (Lawyer, 70s) named JEAN ROCHAMBEAU
approaches. He wears a white linen suit.

Over one shoulder Rochambeau carries a large, Italian-made
man-purse. Seeing him, Yvonne looks down:

YVONNE DE BRAY

Oh, God, Violette. Prepare
yourself. I know this avocat. A
shark, this one.

ROCHAMBEAU

Mademoiselles.

(Tips his hat)

A pleasure to see you again,
Yvonne.

YVONNE DE BRAY
Thank you, Jean. May I introduce my
dear friend--

ROCHAMBEAU
(Interjecting)
Actually, it is Mademoiselle Morris
I'm here to see.

YVONNE DE BRAY
Oh!

ROCHAMBEAU
Mademoiselle Morris. My name is
Jean Marie Rochambeau, Avocat
Extraordinaire, at your service.

VIOLETTE
What is this about, Monsieur?

Rochambeau produces a DOCUMENT:

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
(Puzzled, she takes the
document)
And this would be?

ROCHAMBEAU
Title of ownership to La Mouette.
You will find her moored on the
Seine at Pont de Neuilly near the
Bois de Boulogne.

YVONNE DE BRAY
My god! A houseboat?

VIOLETTE
And whom should I thank for this,
Monsieur?

ROCHAMBEAU
Forgive me, Mademoiselle. I am not
at liberty to say. Now, as much as
I would like to join you ladies, I
must be off. Ciao!

Rochambeau goes OFF.

VIOLETTE
Shall we have a look?

THE RIVER SEINE

Violette and Yvonne INTO VIEW. They see La Mouette (The Seagull) shimmering in the sunlight reflecting off the river.

YVONNE DE BRAY
My god, V! Look at that.

VIOLETTE
She's beautiful! Come on. Let's go
aboard.

Like forty-year-old schoolgirls, they run hand-in-hand.

From a place of concealment, Rochambeau removes a CAMERA from his man-purse and SNAPS photographs of the Two Women.

INT. LA MOUETTE - DAY

Everything about the interior is "rich": the walnut side-paneling, the Persian rugs that line the floor, chandeliers that hang in the Salon, the bedrooms, bath, and dining area.

DINING ROOM

On a table is an array of fruits, and cheeses. Yvonne takes a CARD off the table, hands it to Violette.

YVONNE DE BRAY
Hurry, V! Find out who it's from.

Violette opens the card, reads ALOUD:

VIOLETTE
My dear Violette, it is shameful
how France has treated you...

ADOLPH HITLER (V.O.)
A woman of your character and
accomplishments deserves the best
life has to offer. Let this
additional token of my gratitude
further consolidate a new beginning
for you. Faithfully, Adolph Hitler.

Yvonne's jaw drops. She fans her face. Tears flood Violette's eyes; she collapses into a hand-carved, Oriental chair.

YVONNE DE BRAY
What do you want to do, my love?

VIOLETTE
 (Laughing through tears)
 Get drunk.

EXT. LA MOUETTE - DAY

Excited, Yvonne boards La Mouette with a NEWSPAPER in-hand.

INT. KITCHENETTE - DAY

Violette smears jam over a croissant.

YVONNE DE BRAY (O.C.)
 (Shouting)
 V! V!

VIOLETTE
 My god, Yvonne, what is it?

Yvonne ENTERS.

YVONNE DE BRAY
 Wait until you see this.

She takes the croissant from Violette's hand and in its place thrusts the daily newspaper, Le Figaro.

HEADLINE: "HINDENBURG APPOINTS HITLER CHANCELLOR!"

The Headline is accompanied by a PHOTOGRAPH of Paul Von Hindenburg and Hitler standing together. Neither man is smiling. Yvonne nibbles the croissant; Violette reads ALOUD:

VIOLETTE
 President Paul von Hindenburg of
 Germany named Adolf Hitler
 Chancellor, making Hitler leader or
 führer of the National
 Socialist German Workers Party,
 also known as the Nazi Party.

YVONNE DE BRAY
 (Hugs Violette from
 behind)
 Your not so secret admirer is now
 the most powerful man in Germany.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

Violette and Yvonne are almost alone in the theatre.
 NEWSREELS play:

Hitler at a Nuremberg rally addressing tens of thousands of uniformed NAZIS.

Hitler delivering an impassioned SPEECH in Munich to his Nazi supporters.

Columns of German Tanks leading Thousands of Soldiers "on parade" past Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.

VIOLETTE

The world is going to change,
Yvonne. Forever.

YVONNE DE BRAY

What do you see ahead, V?

VIOLETTE

Pain and suffering.

EXT. LA MOUETTE - DAY

While Violette takes the sun, a uniformed DELIVERY BOY rides up on a bicycle.

INT. SALON - DAY

Violette ENTERS, TELEGRAM in hand. She sits; begins to read:

JOSEPH GOEBBELS (V.O.)

Mademoiselle Morris. You are invited by the Fuhrer to watch the Olympics. Travel tickets and hotel accommodations to follow. Signed: Joseph Goebbels, Reich Minister of Propaganda.

BEDROOM

Violette packs a suitcase. Yvonne stands behind, arms folded across her chest:

VIOLETTE

(Pauses from packing)

This is nothing to be fighting about, Yvonne. Hitler invited me. Not us. I expect to be meeting with him at some point and can't very well introduce you as my wife. Now, can I?

(Resumes packing)

The Nazis hate our kind.

(MORE)

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

And it would cause him difficulty
to be seen with us.

YVONNE DE BRAY

Then why go, for god's sake?

VIOLETTE

Adolph Hitler and I shared
something unique at the Somme. The
bond we forged cannot be undone. He
knows that, as do I. I saved the
man's life, Yvonne. Who knows?
After this, he may feel his debt is
paid in full.

YVONNE DE BRAY

If you love me, V, you won't go.

Violette SLAMS the suitcase shut and spins around.

VIOLETTE

Don't blackmail me that way,
Yvonne. You know I love you. But I
won't be possessed: not by you! Not
anyone! Not even by God, Himself.

YVONNE DE BRAY

And if I'm gone when you return?

VIOLETTE

Mother Superior often said: what
will be will be, even if it never
happens.

Yvonne SCREAMS, grabs a vase and hurls it, narrowly missing
Violette's head.

YVONNE DE BRAY

I hate you!

SOBBING, Yvonne hastens from the room.

VIOLETTE

(Shouts after her)
I never liked that vase.

EXT. AIRPORT OUTSIDE BERLIN, GERMANY - DAY

PLANE with German markings LANDS and taxis to a STOP. Wearing
one of Yvonne's dresses, Violette is met by Heinz Linge.

HEINZ LINGE

Welcome to Germany, Mademoiselle Morris. I am Heinz Linge. The Reich Chancellor's Personal Secretary. It is a pleasure to finally meet you.

VIOLETTE

Thank you, Herr Linge. I feel honored to be here.

HEINZ LINGE

The Reich Chancellor is ecstatic that you accepted his invitation. We have arranged for you to meet with him privately, at Party Headquarters, before checking into your hotel.

EXT. NAZI PARTY HEADQUARTERS, BERLIN

On the street is a conspicuous show-of-force by Hitler's new, black-shirted SS bodyguards. Armored vehicles reroute traffic away from the building.

INT. HALLWAY [NAZI PARTY HEADQUARTERS] BERLIN - DAY

Looking uneasy, Violette follows Heinz Linge down the Swastika-bedecked hallway toward Hitler's office. Sensing her anxiety, Linge pauses:

HEINZ LINGE

You'll be fine, Mademoiselle. I promise you. The Reich Fuhrer thinks of you as--

(beat)

Well, in a profound way, as a kindred spirit.

HITLER'S OFFICE

Joseph Goebbels, HERMANN GÖRING, and ALBERT SPEER are conferring with Hitler when Heinz Linge escorts Violette inside the office. The Men cease talking.

HEINZ LINGE

Mien Fuhrer, may I present Mademoiselle Violette Morris.

HITLER

Yes. Yes. Thank you, Heinz.

Heinz DEPARTS. Hitler goes to Violette, takes her hand.

HITLER (CONT'D)
 Twenty years, Violette! Twenty
 years since that night of nights,
 at the Somme.

Hitler turns to Goebbels, Göring, and Speer:

HITLER (CONT'D)
 Gentlemen, the uncommonly brave
 soldier who saved my life. Had it
 not been for Violette Morris, I
 would not be leading Germany to the
 bright future we have long labored
 to achieve.
 (beat)
 Violette Morris, may I reacquaint
 you with my Minister of Propaganda,
 Joseph Goebbels.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS
 We meet again, Mademoiselle Morris.

VIOLETTE
 A pleasure, Herr Goebbels.

HITLER
 My Chief Architect and Minister of
 War Production, Albert Speer.

ALBERT SPEER
 Charmed, Mademoiselle Morris.

A "ladies' man," Speer kisses the back of Violette's hand.

HERMANN GÖRING
 But, and alas, Albert has no war to
 prepare for.

Joseph Goebbels CHUCKLES. Speer rolls his eyes.

HITLER
 Last, but certainly not least, may
 I present Hermann Göring, Commander
 of the Luftwaffe and founder of our
 new Secret State Police, the
 Gestapo.

In lieu of shaking hands, Göring CLICKS his heels and bows.

HITLER (CONT'D)

Gentlemen. I have little time, and Mademoiselle Morris and I have much to discuss.

Goebbels, Göring, and Speer make the "Nazi Salute" and EXIT.

HITLER (CONT'D)

Come, come, Violette. Sit. We have Ceylonese tea, cucumber sandwiches, and scrumptious Austrian pastries.

VIOLETTE

Sounds wonderful, Reich Chancellor.

HITLER

No, no, no. Adolph. Please.

VIOLETTE

Thank you, Adolph, I--

HITLER

(Interrupting)

You are a national treasure, a war hero, the greatest female athlete who ever competed in women's sports and France betrayed you.

(beat)

You have not failed in life, Violette. You were betrayed by the Lilliputians who rule France. You live life on your own terms, as do I, my dear, and you ask permission from no one. And for that, these same small minds punish you.

(Irate)

Bah! It is enough to make me want to go to war with those fools! The Treaty of Versailles quite nearly destroyed Germany! But, no more! No more, I say!

(beat)

Forgive me, Violette. I am a poor host to bring up such unpleasantness on the occasion of our reunion.

(beat)

Let's enjoy our tea, chat about the Games tomorrow, and discuss the future. Your future, Violette.

EXT. LA MOUETTE - DAY

TAXI INTO VIEW. Violette gets out. Suitcase in hand, cigarette dangling from her lips, she walks toward the gangplank leading onto La Mouette.

Violette's neighbors, ROBERT & SIMONE TROBRIAND (Academics, 40s) are watering plants on the deck of their houseboat.

SIMONE DE TROBRIAND

(Waves)

Welcome home, Violette. We've missed you.

Violette waves.

VIOLETTE

It's good to be home, Simone.

ROBERT DE TROBRIAND

Apart from the excitement of the games, Violette, how did you find Berlin?

VIOLETTE

Actually, Robert. I found it strangely fascinating.

INT. LA MOUETTE - DAY

Naked, but for black Stiletto heels and a colorful silk kimono, Yvonne stares at a copy of Le Figaro newspaper.

There is a PHOTOGRAPH of HITLER watching "the Games." He is seated among Goebbels, Göring, Bormann, Speer, and OTHERS.

VIOLETTE is recognizable sitting several seats behind Hitler, and is accompanied by Heinz Linge.

Violette ENTERS, places her suitcase on the floor. Yvonne stands. Like a chastened puppy, she goes to Violette.

YVONNE DE BRAY

Do you want me to leave, V?

Violette parts the Kimono and caresses Yvonne's breasts:

VIOLETTE

(Matter-of-factly)

No.

EXT. LONDON, ENGLAND - DAY

Establishing shot(s): Big Ben. Parliament. Buckingham Palace.

EXT. SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIS) H.Q. - DAY

The heart of the British military's foreign espionage Branch, later to become the Special Operations Executive (Aka S.O.E).

SUPERIMPOSE:

Secret Intelligence Service
(SIS) H.Q.
54 Baker Street, London, England

INT. SIS EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

FRANK FOLEY (50), head of Britain's Berlin station, slides PHOTOGRAPHS of Violette across his desk to Josephine Baker.

FRANK FOLEY
Do you know this person,
Mademoiselle Baker?

Josephine looks at the photographs of Violette Morris in Berlin at "the Games," along with photos of Violette going in and out of Nazi Party Headquarters.

JOSEPHINE BAKER
Her name is Violette Morris.

EXECUTIVE
We know her name, Miss Baker. But
do you know her-- personally?

JOSEPHINE BAKER
Not well, but yes. She came
frequently to Le Moulin Rouge when
I was there. Often with another
woman, Yvonne de Bray, an actress,
and friend of the filmmaker, Jean
Cocteau.

(beat)
Unless I'm mistaken, Monsieur
Cocteau now lives with Violette and
Yvonne on Violette's houseboat.

EXECUTIVE
That is all very interesting,
Mademoiselle. What we want,
however, is for you to befriend
Violette Morris, if practicable.

JOSEPHINE BAKER
To what end, Monsieur?

EXECUTIVE
For starters, we want to know more about her relationship with Adolph Hitler. Simply put, is she spying for the Germans? Can you do that?

EXT. RESTAURANT IN NEUILLY, PARIS - NIGHT

A light SNOW is falling.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Christmas Eve, Paris, 1937

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Violette sits at a table with Robert & Simone de Trobriand.

At the bar, a drunk, ex-Legionnaire named JOSEPH LE CAM (30s) eyes Violette and her friends.

SIMONE DE TROBRIAND
Pity Yvonne couldn't be with us.

VIOLETTE
She has family in Clichy, Simone. It's good for her to be with them during the Holidays.

ROBERT DE TROBRIAND
(Lifts his glass)
Well, here's to good times with good friends.

They drink.

SIMONE DE TROBRIAND
Do tell us, Violette: are you still in contact with Herr Hitler?

VIOLETTE
No. Not since Berlin.

ROBERT DE TROBRIAND
Amazing what's taken place there.

SIMONE DE TROBRIAND
Oh, my god! Robert and I were discussing it this morning. The bread lines are gone.

(MORE)

SIMONE DE TROBRIAND (CONT'D)

The soup kitchens have disappeared.
Everyone is working. The currency
crisis has been stabilized. Its'
been an absolutely incredible
transformation, Violette. Like a
Phoenix, rising anew from its
ashes.

The drunk Legionnaire slides off his bar stool; he raises his
glass, spilling Cognac:

JOSEPH LE CAM

Well, isn't that putain great for
Adolph Hitler and the Bosch! While
you sit there blabbing about the
putain Nazis, their Condor Legion
in Spain is killing anyone who
opposes Franco and his fascists.

(beat)

Then, watch! Jews like me will be
next. So I say, putain Adolph
Hitler and putain the Third Reich.

The restaurant falls SILENT. The RESTAURANT HOST, ELLIOT (75)
approaches Le Cam.

RESTAURANT HOST

Please, Monsieur. Your language! I
cannot allow you to upset the other
patrons this way.

JOSEPH LE CAM

I am Joseph Le Cam. I served with
the Legion in Algeria. You will not
silence me, you little twirp!

Appearing out of nowhere--

VIOLETTE

Then I will.

Violette hits Le Cam with a solid right punch on his jaw. Le
Cam drops to his knees.

Waiters grab hold of Le Cam and drag him from the restaurant.
They leave him OUTSIDE face down in the gutter.

Violette reclaims her seat. Patrons and Staff APPLAUD.

RESTAURANT HOST

Mademoiselle, I--

VIOLETTE
 Hush, Elliot!
 (beat)
 What's for dessert?

EXT. RESTAURANT IN NEUILLY, PARIS - NIGHT

Violette, Robert, and Simone EXIT from the restaurant LAUGHING. They walk arm-in-arm down the sidewalk. SNOW continues to fall.

ALLEY

Collar turned up, Le Cam watches the Three from the shadows.

THE SEINE: BOIS DE BOULOGNE

The Three approach Robert & Simone's houseboat

ROBERT DE TROBRIAND
 What a night, ay?

SIMONE DE TROBRIAND
 Darling, I'm going to see Violette
 Home. Don't wait up.

ROBERT DE TROBRIAND
 Very well, my love. Merry
 Christmas, Violette.

Violette and Robert touch cheeks. Robert goes OFF. Violette hesitates, sensing something amiss, and looks around.

SIMONE DE TROBRIAND
 What is it, Violette?

VIOLETTE
 I'm not sure. Come on.

INT. KITCHENETTE - NIGHT

Violette and Simone are eating grapes and drinking wine.

SIMONE DE TROBRIAND
 You were wonderful tonight,
 Violette.

Violette pins Simone against a bulkhead, reaches her hand underneath Simone's dress. Simone MOANS.

Sound of FOOTSTEPS on the gangplank outside. Violette presses a finger over Simone's lips and moves her head, side-to-side.

VIOLETTE
Do you trust me?

Simone nods. Violette turns the light OFF.

SALON

The Salon is DARK. Joseph Le Cam ENTERS. A sharp CLICK as Le Cam frees the blade of a Switchblade KNIFE.

Salon LIGHT comes ON. Le Cam sees Violette standing in front of him, a 7.65 mm pistol in her hand.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
Leave now, Monsieur, and you take
your life with you. Stay, and you
die.

Le Cam doesn't move. Violette FIRES TWICE at the ceiling. Undeterred, Le Cam lunges at Violette.

She FIRES TWICE more, hitting Le Cam squarely in the chest.

LATER, ABOARD LA MOUETTE

TWO AMBULANCE DRIVERS take Le Cam AWAY on a stretcher. A POLICE DETECTIVE interviews Violette. A SECOND DETECTIVE interviews Simone de Trobriand.

In a daze, Robert de Trobriand sits by himself with a cup of tea and a blanket draped over his shoulders.

Finished taking statements from Violette and Yvonne, the Detectives DEPART. Violette looks at Simone and Robert:

VIOLETTE
Anyone besides me need a Brandy?

DAWN

The SUN rises over Paris and the Seine.

INT. LA MOUETTE [SALON] - DAWN

In varying states of undress, Violette, Simone, and Robert are draped over one another, asleep. Empty liquor bottles litter the floor.

Making a LOUD commotion, POLICE ENTER. Violette, Simone, and Robert are yanked to their feet.

DETECTIVE

Violette Morris. We are arresting you for murder. Joseph le Cam died an hour ago.

VIOLETTE

Merde!

(beat)

Merde! Merde! Merde!

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Snow blankets the ground in front of a prison built in 1830.

SUPERIMPOSE:

La Petite Roquette Prison for Women

INT. PRISON [HALLWAY] - DAY

Rochambeau is escorted by a FEMALE GUARD to Violette's cell.

PRISON CELL

Wearing a faded blue smock, Violette sits on a metal bed, smoking. The CELL DOOR OPENS. Rochambeau steps inside.

VIOLETTE

Four days, Monsieur Rochambeau.
Four putain days!

ROCHAMBEAU

Are you finished?

VIOLETTE

Yes.

ROCHAMBEAU

Then rejoice, Violette! The Court of Assizes accepted our plea of Self Defense. You're free to go. Come. I had your suit cleaned and pressed while you languished in this palace of grotesquerie.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POLAND'S FRONTIER - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

Border between Poland & Germany
1 September, 1939

VINTAGE FOOTAGE W/AUDIO [GERMANY INVADES EUROPE]

German BLITZKRIEG (Lightning War) by land and air against the ill-prepared Polish army.

Germany attacks Belgium, the Netherlands, and France.

VINTAGE FOOTAGE W/AUDIO [EVACUATION FROM DUNKIRK]

Pursued by the German army, British and French soldiers numbering tens-of-thousands retreat to a beach in the Netherlands known as Dunkirk.

Many French and British are saved by a courageous armada of small boats come to Dunkirk from England.

AMERICAN NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: "FRANCE CAPITULATES TO NAZIS!"

SUPERIMPOSE:

14 June, 1940

VINTAGE FOOTAGE W/AUDIO [GERMAN ARMY ENTERS PARIS]

The victorious German army parades past the Arc de Triumph in Paris. Sobbing, stunned Parisians line the avenue and watch the procession of German military might on their sacred soil.

The scene is a complete antithesis to France's victory celebration following the Armistice in 1919 ending the First World War.

EXT. GESTAPO HEADQUARTERS IN PARIS - DAY

A TAXI drives up and STOPS. Violette gets out. She wears one of Yvonne's dresses and a leopard-skin pillbox hat.

Across the street, a NANNY sits on a bench with a baby-stroller. Using a concealed CAMERA, she photographs Violette.

INT. GESTAPO HEADQUARTERS IN PARIS - DAY

A SECRETARY (French woman, 30s) greets Violette.

SECRETARY

A pleasure, Mademoiselle Morris.
We've been expecting you.

OFFICE

Sound of a toilet FLUSHING. SS CAPTAIN KELLER (35, tall blond, blue-eyed) steps out of a LAVATORY zipping-up his fly:

KELLER

My orders come from the Fuhrer himself, Mademoiselle Morris. I am to assist you at any time, day or night, in any way I can.

From a purse, Violette removes the PHOTO of Max Camembert.

VIOLETTE

Can you find this man, Herr Hauptman? He stole the Croix de guerre I received during the last war.

Keller winces. Violette gives him the PHOTO of Max Camembert.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

He stole something else from me, Herr Hauptmann. Something no woman should be forced to surrender.

KELLER

Mademoiselle Morris, I promise you I will turn Paris upside-down to find him.

INT. TAXI [MOVING] - DAY

Violette's Taxi drives through Montparnasse. Passing Lulu's club, Le Monocle, Violette notices the entrance boarded-up.

VIOLETTE

Putain Nazis!

TAXI DRIVER

Mademoiselle?

VIOLETTE

Nothing, Monsieur. Stop. I'll walk from here.

MONTPARNASSE

The SKY is dark with STORM CLOUDS. Passing an alley, Violette sees a STUDENT (Gay male) assailed by THREE BULLIES (White, 18).

BULLY NO. 1
You like it up the ass, don't you?
You're going to suck us! All of us!

VIOLETTE (O.C.)
No he's not!

The Three turn to see Violette behind them. They LAUGH!

BULLY NO. 1
Or what, bitch?

Violette drops the purse; removes her hat and shoes.

BULLY NO. 2
Hey! She's going to strip for us.

Using a flurry of kicks and punches, Violette sends the Bullies onto the ground, beaten, bruised and MOANING.

VIOLETTE
(To the Student)
For putain-sake! Learn how to
defend yourself!

The Boy hastens OFF. Anguished, Violette raises her arms and looks upward:

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
(Screams)
Merde!

INT. LA MOUETTE [SALON] - DAY

Violette ENTERS holding her shoes, purse, and pillbox hat. Yvonne looks up from her toast and coffee.

Intellectual/film maker, JEAN COCTEAU (Gay, 40s) looks up from where he sits writing.

JEAN COCTEAU
Good morning, Violette.

Violette takes a seat across from Cocteau.

VIOLETTE

You're an intellectual, Jean. So! Tell me something: there is an obvious difference between men and women, yes?

JEAN COCTEAU

Biologically, most certainly. But we express the same emotions and are more similar than not. Or so I choose to believe.

VIOLETTE

Me, too. But tell me: what makes some of us queer and others not?

JEAN COCTEAU

I can't say, Violette, because I don't know. I suspect we may be hard-wired at birth with such preferences and predilections as remain latent or dormant until, with puberty, they blossom.

VIOLETTE

But why are queers hated and made the butt-end of vulgar ridicule?

JEAN COCTEAU

Polite society despise us because they are ignorant, Violette. Their greatest fear is that they will become like us. For centuries, the great religions have indoctrinated humankind with the universal belief that queer folk are sexual lepers, an abomination in the eyes of the Creator, who somehow threaten civilized society merely because we exist.

Violette nods; gets up and continues to her--

BEDROOM

Violette starts to undress. Yvonne STOMPS inside.

YVONNE DE BRAY

Where have you been? I woke up and you were gone. And why are you wearing one of my dresses? And my pillbox hat, and my shoes?

VIOLETTE

I had something urgent to attend to. Nothing that concerns you.

Yvonne turns on her heel and leaves. Violette SIGHS; tosses the hat across the room and sits on the bed.

She unfastens clips from a garter belt; peels off a pair of silk stockings and hurls them aside.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

Damn these stupid things! Why do women put up with this nonsense?

EXT. SEEDY APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The building is in a section of Paris known to be inhabited by criminals, prostitutes, and other working-class Parisians.

A TRUCK carrying GERMAN SOLDIERS appears in front of the building. It SCREECHES to a STOP. Soldiers leap from the truck holding submachine guns-- some assume defensive positions on the sidewalk.

Behind the Truck, a black Mercedes STOPS. SS Captain Keller gets out accompanied by his aide, LIEUTENANT MULLER (25). Soldiers leading, Keller and Muller converge on the Building.

INT. 2ND FLOOR APARTMENT - DAY

MAX CAMEMBERT (40s) plays cards at a table with the same FOUR MEN (40s) who participated in the attack on Violette in 1919. Max's wears Violette's CROIX DE GUERRE around his grimy neck.

All Five are unkempt and unshaven and wear rumpled clothing. On the card table are several pistols. A CAT rests on Max Camembert's lap.

A veritable "den of thieves," the apartment is awash with BOXES and CRATES of what can only be STOLEN MERCHANDISE. Stacked in one corner are rifles and BOXES marked EXPLOSIVES.

The DOOR to the apartment is KICKED-IN. Max SCREAMS when the cat digs its claws into his groin and flees.

A German SS SERGEANT (20s) FIRES a burst from his machinegun at the ceiling.

BURLY SERGEANT

On your feet!

Max and the Others stand. Keller and his Lieutenant ENTER. Keller sees Violette's MEDAL; he yanks it free of Max's neck.

KELLER

This doesn't belong to you.

Keller sees stolen goods and weapons stacked to the ceiling.

KELLER (CONT'D)

My, my! What is this?

Keller nods to the SS Sergeant. The Sergeant SLAMS his fist into Max's diaphragm, collapsing Max to his knees.

KELLER (CONT'D)

You are not French soldiers. You are not Robin Hood and his merry band of men. You are terrorists. Pond scum.

INT. KELLER'S BLACK MERCEDES - DAY

Violette sees Max and the Others led from the building in single file with their hands on their heads.

Keller gets into the Front seat of the Mercedes. He turns around and holds Violette's medal out for her to take.

KELLER

I believe this belongs to you.

SUPERIMPOSE:

48 hours later...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Max is naked. A chain holds his arms above his head, his toes are several inches off the floor.

There is a long rectangular table with TOOLS for inflicting maximum pain on the human body.

Dressed in men's clothing, Violette ENTERS but leaves the door OPEN.

MAX CAMEMBERT

Who the hell are you?

Violette removes her suit coat, drapes it over the chair. She loosens a colorful silk tie and lights a cigarette.

From the table, Violette selects two pairs of brass knuckles, one for each hand, and puts them on.

Violette stands in front of Max. With her right hand she delivers a powerful uppercut to his testicles.

Max SCREAMS. The next moment he VOMITS. Some of the vomit lands on Violette's shoes.

VIOLETTE

Now look what you've done?

Violette delivers a left hook to Max's liver. He HOWLS.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

Let me refresh your memory. The year is 1919. A young woman is mustered out of the army after France's glorious victory over the Bosch.

(beat)

At the train station in Charleroi, she waits for the next train to Verdun. She waits to go home. But something unexpected happens.

(beat)

Five foul smelling pigs find her asleep. They do not ask permission. They beat her almost senseless. Then they take her. All of them. Front and back. Over and over. All five take her until she is bleeding from every orifice she possesses.

(beat)

When they're done, they leave her naked on the floor. But before they depart, the leader of this pack of filth takes something more than her innocence with him. He takes the one thing she could be proud of. Her War Cross, won at the Somme, her Croix de Guerre.

Max's eyes OPEN WIDE.

MAX CAMEMBERT

It can't be!

VIOLETTE

Life is full of surprises, is it not?

Violette goes to the table. She takes a wooden staff and SNAPS it in-two over her thigh. She weighs both pieces in her hands. She tosses one piece aside.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
 (To the piece in her hand)
 You'll do.

With a mixture of curiosity and horror, etched on his face, Max watches Violette's every move.

Violette's eyes catch sight of a leather TRUNCHEON.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
 Hello!

She returns the piece of broomstick onto the table.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
 (To the stick)
 Stay right there. I'll be back for you.
 (beat)
 Have you ever wondered, Max, what she felt when you sodomized her?
 (beat)
 When the others sodomized her?

Shaking his head with disbelief, Max looks down at the floor.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)
 No? Very well. I'll show you.

MAX CAMEMBERT
 That was long ago. Forgive me!

VIOLETTE
 Forgiveness is for God to dispense, Max. I didn't see Him doing much of that at the Somme, or at Verdun, or any other battle I experienced. No. I can't help you with that.

Violette places her left arm around Max's lower torso to hold him steady. Ignoring his SCREAMS, Violette jams the truncheon several inches up his rectum.

KELLER'S OFFICE

Conversing and drinking coffee, Keller and Lieutenant Muller hear PROLONGED SCREAMING coming from down the hall.

KELLER
She could be useful to us, Ernst.

LIEUTENANT
I was thinking the same thing, Herr
Hauptman.

The Lieutenant CLOSES the door to the office. It does little
to muffle Max's SCREAMING.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
What do you want done with the
other four? Hang them?

KELLER
No, no, no. Hanging is for petty
thieves, cowards, and perverts.

LIEUTENANT
A firing squad then?

KELLER
Certainly not, Lieutenant. A waste
of bullets.

LIEUTENANT
Surely, Herr Hauptman, you're not
thinking of turning them over to
that creature down the hall?

KELLER
Oh god, no, Ernst! I would have to
be a monster to do such a thing.
(Sips his coffee)
No. In this instance we must be
merciful.
(Lights a cigarette)
Cut off their cocks. Let them bleed
out.

EXT. LONDON: SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIS) H.Q. - DAY
MEN & WOMEN in uniform ENTER and DEPART from the building.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

Frank Foley is at his desk. His ADJUTANT, MAJOR VIVIAN (40)
ENTERS. The Major has a FILE FOLDER in his hand.

BLOCK LETTERS on the front of the folder identify it by a
Code Name: IRON MAIDEN.

FRANK FOLEY

Yes, Major?

From the folder, the Major removes several PHOTOGRAPHS and places them in front of Foley.

With a magnifying glass, Foley assesses photographs of Violette going in and out of Gestapo H.Q in Paris.

FRANK FOLEY (CONT'D)

From the Olympic Games in Berlin,
to Gestapo Headquarters in Paris.
Mademoiselle Morris is making quite
an inroad with the Third Reich.

Foley places the photos back into the folder.

MAJOR VIVIAN

It would seem so, Sir.

FRANK FOLEY

Fine work, Harry. And pass that
along to our operative in Paris.

MAJOR VIVIAN

That would be Shutter-Bug, sir.

FRANK FOLEY

Who?

MAJOR VIVIAN

The asset who took the photos, Sir.

Foley gives Vivien the skunk-eye:

FRANK FOLEY

Shutter Bug, indeed.

EXT. LA MOUETTE - DAY

Violette tends to her potted plants. A Mercedes ARRIVES and PARKS. Keller gets out and boards La Mouette.

VIOLETTE

Herr Hauptman.

KELLER

The Fuhrer is coming to Paris in--
(Looks at his watch)
Geschissen! Soon! He wants you to
drive for Goebbels and Speer in the
motorcade.

(beat)

(MORE)

KELLER (CONT'D)
Be at the Gare du Nord, train
station in an hour. No later!

Keller hastens OFF.

INT. [NAPOLEON BONAPARTE'S TOMB] - DAY

Hitler stands with Hermann Göring, Albert Speer, Joseph Goebbels and OTHER, high-ranking German OFFICERS.

Filled with emotion, Hitler gazes at Napoleon Bonaparte's sarcophagus.

EXT. LES INVALIDES - DAY

Leaving Les Invalides, Hitler addresses Göring:

HITLER
Seeing his tomb has been the finest
moment of my life, Hermann. Who can
equal him? Certainly, no Frenchman.

GÖRING
I believe only you have surpassed
Napoleon's greatness, Mein Fuhrer.

HITLER
I believe you're correct, Hermann.
I believe so, too.

EXT. EIFFEL TOWER - DAY

Hitler stands with his GENERALS before the EIFFEL TOWER. A fleet of black Mercedes convertibles are parked and waiting.

A SCORE of MOTORCYCLES with sidecars accommodating MACHINE GUNNERS wait to escort Hitler and his Entourage.

Hitler and Göring get into the back-seat of the first Mercedes.

Second in line is a Mercedes driven by Violette. Violette is accompanied by Heinz Linge.

Joseph Goebbels and Hitler's Architect, Albert Speer, get into the backseat.

Sound of a POLICE SIREN. A Mercedes with SS Captain Keller pulls up and STOPS. Keller hurries to Hitler's side.

Violette watches Keller tell Hitler something of obvious importance. Keller looks in Violette's direction.

VIOLETTE

What do you suppose this is about, Heinz?

HEINZ LINGE

I don't know. Something of obvious concern to the Gestapo.

Keller hurries over to Violette.

KELLER

Do you know an alternate route to the station at Gare de Nord?

VIOLETTE

Yes, Herr Hauptman.

KELLER

There's a plot afoot to assassinate the Fuhrer. Time is of the essence, Mademoiselle Morris. Come. You, too, Linge.

Violette and Heinz Linge leave their vehicle and follow Keller to Hitler's Mercedes. Hitler's SS Driver and Bodyguard remove themselves.

Violette gets into the Driver's seat. Heinz Linge gets into the Passenger seat.

KELLER (CONT'D)

Stop for no one, Mademoiselle. No matter what uniform they have on. Understood? No one!

VIOLETTE

Understood.

HITLER

Here we are again, Violette. The two of us together in harm's way.

VIOLETTE

Hold on, gentlemen.

[Violette's considerable driving skills are on full display as she navigates an alternate route to the train station.]

From the Eiffel Tower, Violette drives at breakneck speed, skidding around corners and dodging CARS and PEDESTRIANS at every intersection, creating chaos in the process.

Violette crosses the River Seine, passes under the Arc de Triumph.

Taking side streets, Violette narrowly avoids colliding with Street VENDORS and hapless SHOPPERS.

Passing a public library, Violette barely avoids running-down a GROUP of SCHOOL CHILDREN crossing the street.

TWO French PARTISANS dressed like German Soldiers step out of an alley waving their arms, signaling Violette to stop.

When Violette doesn't stop, the would-be assassins raise their weapons. Violette runs them over.

Hitler is LAUGHING. Göring looks ill, about to throw-up.

GARE DE NORD [TRAIN STATION]

Expecting the Fuhrer, the Station is awash with German Soldiers and leather-clad Gestapo Agents.

The LOCOMOTIVE taking Hitler and his Reich Ministers back to Germany is a heavily fortified colossus with anti-aircraft cannon and machineguns on top of the attached passenger cars.

Violette drives up and STOPS. Soldiers immediately surround the Mercedes. Hitler and Göring get out. Göring VOMITS and wobbles OFF, steadied by TWO SS OFFICERS.

HITLER

(Laughing)

I feel positively young again.
Come with us back to Germany,
Violette.

VIOLETTE

Thank you, Reich Fuhrer. But Paris
is my home. It's where I belong.

Hitler nods thoughtfully, then touches Violette's cheek:

HITLER

So be it, dear friend. But if you
change your mind. Come.

EXT. LA MOUETTE - DAY

Violette is sunning when her neighbors, Robert and Simone Trobriand depart for a waiting TAXI.

Robert is first to get in. Simone turns, bids Violette a sad farewell.

The Taxi DRIVES OFF.

Yvonne De Bray and the filmmaker, Jean Cocteau emerge from below deck. They, too, have suitcases in-hand.

YVONNE DE BRAY

We're going to Vichy to film Jean's newest work: The Eternal Return. Jean wrote a wonderful part for me, V. I can't pass this up.

JEAN COCTEAU

It's time to get out of Paris, for somewhere more tranquil.

Sound of GUNSHOTS, fired in a volley, in the distance.

JEAN COCTEAU (CONT'D)

Hear that? Another Firing Squad! The Nazis are killing innocent Parisians in retribution for the attempt on Hitler's life.

(beat)

Frenchmen and women have formed a nationwide resistance. They intend to retaliate against anyone collaborating with the Nazis.

(beat)

Have you not noticed, V? Jews, Gypsies, queers and Bolsheviks being rounded up and sent to Germany as forced labor. Or, worse, I fear. Le Monocle has been closed. La Moulin Rouge, as well. France is no more!

VIOLETTE

I know, Jean. It's terrible.

JEAN COCTEAU

You've made enemies, V. It's not safe to be around you any longer.

VIOLETTE

Are you saying I'm a collaborator, because the only work I get is what the Bosch provide?

JEAN COCTEAU

I'm afraid so.

Sound of a second TAXI stopping and SOUNDING its horn.

VIOLETTE

When your pretty boys drop by to
see you, Jean, I'll be sure to tell
them you're sucking cock in the
placid environs of Vichy.

Cocteau SIGHS, shakes his head; Yvonne follows him to their
Taxi.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

What is wrong with these people,
Mouette?

INT. LA MOUETTE [BEDROOM] - NIGHT

In bed, Violette tosses and turns. GUNFIRE shatters the calm.

Violette rolls onto the floor; grasps a Mauser automatic
pistol from a shoulder-holster. Bullets THUD against La
Mouette's exterior.

Violette runs to the deck above. Seeing the MUZZLE FLASH from
a sniper's automatic weapon, she returns FIRE.

ON SHORE

Josephine Baker's Driver/Bodyguard, RENE (Tall, black, 30s),
tosses a machinegun into the backseat of a nondescript car
and DEPARTS from the Bois de Boulogne.

EXT. LA MOUETTE - THE FOLLOWING DAY

Captain Keller looks at the numerous bullet holes along the
side of La Mouette, holes Violette painstakingly patches with
putty and trowel.

KELLER

You may want to consider a hotel
where we can better protect you.

VIOLETTE

I intend to stay here. Right here.

KELLER

Very well. I will provide you with
twenty-four hour protection. Not
forever, mind you, but temporarily,
until we find out who's behind
this.

VIOLETTE
 Every freedom loving Frenchman in
 Paris is behind this!

EXT. PEARL HARBOR, ISLAND OF OAHU - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

United States Naval Base
 Pearl Harbor, Oahu
 Sunday, 0750 Hours
 7 December, 1941

BEST VINTAGE FOOTAGE W/AUDIO JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

The Japanese Navy's Sunday morning SURPRISE ATTACK reduces
 "BATTLESHIP ROW" and the once beautiful harbor to a
 conflagration of burning iron and oil slick.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Establishing shots: Washington Monument. Lincoln Memorial.
 Jefferson Memorial. Potomac River. Capitol Building.

FADE IN: F.D.R.'s "Infamy" Speech.

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT (V.O.)
 Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date
 which will live in infamy, the
 United States of America was
 suddenly and deliberately attacked
 by naval and air forces of the
 Empire of Japan.

(beat)

The United States was at peace with
 that Nation and, at the
 solicitation of Japan, was still in
 conversation with its Government
 and its Emperor looking toward the
 maintenance of peace in the
 Pacific.

(beat)

Indeed, one hour after Japanese air
 squadrons had commenced bombing in
 the American Island of Oahu, the
 Japanese Ambassador to the United
 States and his colleague delivered
 to our Secretary of State a formal
 reply to a recent American message.

(MORE)

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT (V.O.)
 And while this reply stated that it
 seemed useless to continue the
 existing diplomatic negotiations,
 it contained no threat or hint of
 war or of armed attack.

VINTAGE FILM W/AUDIO INT. UNITED STATES CAPITOL - DAY

[FDR's Day of Infamy Speech before CONGRESS, continued]:

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT
 No matter how long it may take us
 to overcome this premeditated
 invasion, the American people in
 their righteous might will win
 through to absolute victory.
 (beat)
 I ask that the Congress declare
 that since the unprovoked and
 dastardly attack by Japan on
 Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state
 of war has existed between the
 United States and the Japanese
 Empire.

INT. S.O.E. HQ. LONDON - DAY

The Office of the Special Operations Executive, Frank Foley,
 is filled with MEN and WOMEN. All are CHEERING. Sound of
 Champagne corks POPPING.

FRANK FOLEY
 Thank God! The yanks are finally in
 this mess!

INT. LA MOUETTE [SALON] - DAY

Wearing an Arab Kaftan, Violette sips coffee/reads Le Figaro:

JOSEPHINE BAKER (O.C.)
 Hello--?
 (beat)
 Violette?

EXT. LA MOUETTE - DAY

Violette emerges from below deck.

VIOLETTE
 Mademoiselle Baker?

JOSEPHINE BAKER
 Permission to come aboard,
 Mademoiselle la Capitaine?

Three French Police (Gendarmes) guard the approach to La Mouette. When they see Violette, one of them spits tobacco.

Restraining her anger, Violette follows Josephine below deck.

INT. SALON - DAY

VIOLETTE
 Tea? Coffee?

JOSEPHINE BAKER
 Nothing, thank you, except that you
 call me Josephine. Or simply, Jo.

VIOLETTE
 Of course.

JOSEPHINE BAKER
 I feel fortunate to find you at
 home. I must say, I was appalled
 when I heard about the attempt on
 your life, Violette.
 (Looking around)
 Is it true Herr Hitler gave La
 Mouette to you?

VIOLETTE
 Yes.

JOSEPHINE BAKER
 You must be wondering why I'm here?

VIOLETTE
 A little. Yes.

JOSEPHINE BAKER
 I want you to accompany me to a New
 Year's Eve party. Please, Violette,
 say you will.

VIOLETTE
 As your bodyguard?

JOSEPHINE BAKER
 (Laughs)
 Oh, god, no!
 (Takes Violette's hand)
 As my escort!

VIOLETTE

Your escort?

JOSEPHINE BAKER

Very well, as my date! I'm sorry to be so forward, but I'm attracted to you and was, the first time I saw you in the front row at the Moulin Rouge.

(beat)

Don't think me a shameless whore, Violette, but the more I learned about you, the more attracted I became. So! Here I am. In the flesh.

BEDROOM

Violette and Josephine Baker lie naked in bed, smoking.

JOSEPHINE BAKER

You're amazing, Violette. I had no idea I could have so many orgasms.

(Puts out her cigarette)

But, now, I really must go. I am doing two private parties tonight.

Josephine leaves the bed.

EXT. LA MOUETTE - DUSK

Escorting Josephine, Violette feels the wind on her face.

VIOLETTE

Feel that, Jo?

JOSEPHINE BAKER

Feel, what?

VIOLETTE

The wind.

JOSEPHINE BAKER

It's brisk. I'll give it that.

VIOLETTE

It comes and goes as it chooses. It's free. Truly free. Like me.

Josephine nods thoughtfully. Violette watches her DEPART for her limousine.

EXT. BAILLIEU'S RESIDENCE OUTSIDE PARIS - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE:

Henri Baillieu's Residence Outside Paris
News Year's Eve. 31 December, 1941

The residence is a multistory MANSION belonging to Henri & Claudette Bailleul, an affluent couple highly placed in the hierarchy of French society and valuable assets to the Nazis.

Josephine Baker's LIMOUSINE INTO VIEW. It STOPS.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Wearing a tuxedo, Violette sits in back with Josephine Baker. Josephine wears a revealing Designer Dress. Both are smoking.

VIOLETTE

Who is Henri Bailleul?

JOSEPHINE BAKER

Henri is descended from a noble family originating from the village of Bailleul. They even own land in England and Scotland, or at least they did.

(Kisses Violette)

Let's join the party.

EXT. LA MOUETTE - NIGHT

Under cover of DARKNESS, a rowboat with TWO MEN and a YOUNG WOMAN (25) pull up alongside La Mouette.

Dressed in black, they board with guns drawn. The men proceed below, while the Woman stands guard. The Two Men soon return:

FIRST PARTISAN

(To the Young Woman)

She's not here, Comrade. What do you want to do?

INT. BAILLIEU'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

SERVANTS wearing Period livery, the same as in the court of King Louis 16th, serve drinks and appetizers. A STRING QUARTET plays Chamber MUSIC.

Violette and Josephine ENTER.

Henri Baillieu's high-strung, excitable WIFE, CLAUDETTE (40), excuses herself from several GUESTS (Nazi Officers).

MRS. BAILLEUL

Oh, my god. Thank you, Jo. You actually did it!

Claudette kisses Violette and Josephine each on both cheeks.

MRS. BAILLEUL (CONT'D)

I've so long wanted to meet you, Violette. May I call you, Violette?

VIOLETTE

Of course, Madame. Thank you for inviting me into your home.

MRS. BAILLEUL

Oh, my god, yes, but you must call me Claudette.

Claudette's husband Henri comes over:

MR. BAILLEUL

Welcome back, Jo. And is this who I think it is?

JOSEPHINE BAKER

Henri, may I present, Violette Morris.

VIOLETTE

I am honored to be a guest here, Monsieur Bailleul. Thank you.

MR. BAILLEUL

No, no, no, the honor is ours, Mademoiselle Morris.

VIOLETTE

Please. Call me, Violette.

MR. BAILLEUL

(To his wife)

Already I want her, my dear.

VIOLETTE

Am I missing something?

JOSEPHINE BAKER

When Henri and Claudette told me they were looking for someone special, someone with impeccable qualifications, I immediately thought of you, V.

VIOLETTE

I'm confused.

MR. BAILLEUL

It would be a full-time position, with excellent pay and benefits.

VIOLETTE

Doing what?

MRS. BAILLEUL

Tell her, Henri.

MR. BAILLEUL

Yes, of course. We want you as our driver, for ourselves and our children. And, most importantly, as a presence tasked with my family's physical security.

VIOLETTE

Forgive me, but there are hundreds of unemployed police in Paris, imminently qualified for such work.

HENRI BAILLEUL

Yes, perhaps, Violette, but they're not you, and I cannot say I trust them. You were a soldier. You earned the Croix de Guerre in the last war. You're the greatest female athlete of our day, and a champion race car driver, as well. Who, better than you?

Violette looks at Josephine. Josephine smiles and shrugs.

VIOLETTE

May I take time to consider your offer, Monsieur Bailleul?

MR. BAILLEUL

Of Course! Please do. When you've made up your mind, let Jo know. She'll get word to us.

EXT. LA MOUETTE - NIGHT

When Josephine Baker's limousine returns to Pont Neuilly and the Bois de Boulogne, La Mouette is ABLAZE! The FLAMES light-up the River Seine with their REFLECTION.

FIREMEN struggle to put the fire out, but La Mouette is too far gone.

Violette gets out, runs toward the dock.

TWO FIREMEN restrain her from going closer to the fire. Josephine and her Driver Rene hurry after Violette.

FIREMAN

Mademoiselle, I'm sorry. But there is nothing to be done.

Watching La Mouette BURN, Violette hears LAUGHTER from the sole French Gendarme on-duty.

Violette pulls her Mauser and advances toward him. She FIRES three times, killing the Gendarme where he stands.

SS Captain Keller's Mercedes pulls up and STOPS. Keller and his Lieutenant get out. Keller nods to Josephine Baker.

Trembling, Violette watches La Mouette BURN. Keller INTO FRAME beside her.

VIOLETTE

She was more than a boat, Herr Hauptman. She is all the family I had.

KELLER

Yes, well, fortunately for you, we believe the man you just killed had ties to the French Resistance. Have you any place to go? Anywhere I can take you?

Josephine Baker approaches with Rene just as Violette loses consciousness. Rene catches Violette in his arms.

JOSEPHINE BAKER (O.C.)

I'll take Violette with me to my place in Clichy, Herr Hauptman.

INT. JOSEPHINE BAKER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Josephine stands at the door of her "Guest" bedroom where Violette is asleep. A DOCTOR closes his black bag and exits.

Outside the door of the bedroom, the Doctor pauses to speak with Josephine.

JOSEPHINE BAKER
Will she be all right, Doctor?

DOCTOR
I administered a shot to help her rest.

JOSEPHINE BAKER
And--?

DOCTOR
There is nothing physically wrong. The damage is to her mind. Who is, Mouette? A family member, perhaps?

JOSEPHINE BAKER
No. A damn boat.

EXT. BAILLIEU'S RESIDENCE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

One month later...

SNOW glistens on the grounds of the Bailleul estate. Henri and Claudette Bailleul stand outside with their TWO CHILDREN: a daughter, CHLOE (5) and a son, LUCIEN (7).

Josephine Baker's limousine INTO VIEW. It STOPS. Josephine and Violette get out. Rene unloads a suitcase.

JOSEPHINE BAKER
Hello, Claudette. Hello, Henri.

MRS. BAILLEUL
Welcome, everyone, welcome!

VIOLETTE
(Looks at the Children)
And who are you?

LUCIEN
I'm Lucien. I'm seven. One day I will be a soldier.

VIOLETTE
A very fine one, I should think.

LUCIEN
I know who you are.

VIOLETTE

You do?

LUCIEN

You are a famous athlete who used to live on the Seine in a boat.

VIOLETTE

Yes. That would be me.

Violette kneels in front of Chloe:

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

You must be a Fairy Princess?

Chloe nods and holds up five fingers.

VIOLETTE (CONT'D)

And so old!

MRS. BAILLEUL

Come, Violette. I'll show you to the Guest Cottage. Then we'll all have a wonderful lunch.

JOSEPHINE BAKER

Forgive me, Claudette, but I must return to Paris and pack.

MR. BAILLEUL

Where to this time, Jo?

JOSEPHINE BAKER

Nice, first. Then Monaco for a month's worth of shows at the Metropole in Monte Carlo.

MR. BAILLEUL

Well, my dear, break a leg.

Claudette SWATS Henri on the arm.

MR. BAILLEUL (CONT'D)

What!? That's what you're supposed to say in Josephine's business.

JOSEPHINE BAKER

Odd, but true, Claudette.

Josephine embraces the Bailleuls.

JOSEPHINE BAKER (CONT'D)

(To Violette)

See me off?

Violette nods. She and Josephine walk arm-in-arm toward the Limousine.

Henri scoops Chloe and Lucien into his arms.

MR. BAILLEUL

Well, my beauties. We're going to have fun now.

MRS. BAILLEUL

What is that supposed to mean?

VIOLETTE

Thank you for everything, Jo.

The Women embrace.

JOSEPHINE BAKER

You would've done the same for me. I'll be in touch.

Josephine gets into the Limousine. Rene CLOSES the door; tips his hat to Violette.

The limousine proceeds OUT OF VIEW.

INT. BAILLIEU'S DINING ROOM - NOON

Henri PATS his belly and smiles at Claudette.

MR. BAILLEUL

That was wonderful, my dear.

MRS. BAILLEUL

Yes, well, tell that to Missus Exelmann.

MR. BAILLEUL

I'm sure you had a finger or two in the planning, my dear. Come, Violette. I have something to show you.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

Large enough to accommodate Henri's four cars, one vehicle is covered with a tarp.

Lucien and Chloe each hold one of Violette's hands.

MR. BAILLEUL

All right, my son. Now's the time.

Lucien helps Henri peel back the tarp, revealing a sleek black 1936 Citroën Traction Avant: the world's first unibody front-wheel-drive car.

VIOLETTE

She's beautiful, Henri.

MR. BAILLEUL

You like her?

VIOLETTE

Hah! What's not to like?

MR. BAILLEUL

That's good to hear, Violette.
Because she's yours!

(beat)

Get in! Get in! We'll take her for
a spin.

LUCIEN

Papa! You made a rhyme.

MR. BAILLEUL

Yes, my love. I suppose I did. But
right now I want you to take your
sister back to the house.

(beat)

Tell your mother Violette and I are
taking the Citroën out for a test
drive. Go on, now.

Lucien takes Chloe by the hand and DEPARTS.

VIOLETTE

You said a "test drive"?

MR. BAILLEUL

I did, didn't I. Because I had the
engine rebuilt. She now has more
horsepower and enhanced
carburation. She's fast as the
wind, Violette. Maybe faster.
And with you at the wheel, there's
no place she can't go.

(beat)

By the way, the front and rear
windshields are bulletproof.

(beat)

Come on! Get in!

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The Citroën Traction Avant speeds down a tree-lined road in excess of 140-kilometers per hour.

INT. CITROËN TRACTION AVANT (MOVING) - DAY

VIOLETTE

Are we going anywhere in particular?

MR. BAILLEUL

Yes. To one of my warehouses at the abandoned airfield a few kilometers up the road. I have a meeting scheduled with a rather important fellow. Someone I believe you've met. Although, I must say, I find him a boorish pain in the arse.

VIOLETTE

And that would be?

MR. BAILLEUL

An arrogant, bloated buffoon of a Nazi.

VIOLETTE

Hermann Göring?

MR. BAILLEUL

The very same.

EXT. DESERTED AIRFIELD OUTSIDE PARIS - LATE AFTERNOON

WRECKAGE of French fighter planes litter the environs of the airfield along with two demolished French anti-aircraft guns.

INT. CITROËN TRACTION AVANT [MOVING]

Henri points to what appears to be an EMPTY HANGER, outside of which several Mercedes are parked, guarded by SS.

MR. BAILLEUL

We should probably slow down before the S-S think we're here to kill Hitler's Air Marshall.

Violette eases off the gas pedal, downshifts.

EXT. AIRPLANE HANGER

Escorted by machinegun-wielding SS, Violette and Henri proceed on foot toward the all but empty Hanger.

SS Captain Keller greets them.

KELLER
Mademoiselle Morris. Monsieur
Bailleul.

MR. BAILLEUL
Herr Hauptman.

KELLER
Indulge me, but I must search you
before you see Reichsmarschall
Göring.

VIOLETTE
I have a pop-gun in my back pocket,
Herr Hauptmann.

Keller pats-down Violette and Henri for weapons. He finds Violette's 7.65 mm pistol where she said it would be.

KELLER
(Chuckles)
So you do. Thank you. Follow me
please.
(beat)
Only you, Monsieur Bailleul.

Henri and Keller go to where Göring and his ENTOURAGE wait.

Violette watches as the Men converse. Goring waves his hands; he appears frustrated:

GÖRING
(Shouts)
Where am I to find that many
qualified mechanics, Henri?

Henri raises his hands helplessly to his sides.

Violette steps forward.

SS Guards aim their machineguns at her. Keller gestures to the Guards to lower their weapons.

VIOLETTE
Forgive me, Reichsmarschall. But I
heard you say you need qualified
mechanics.

GÖRING
 For my Luftwaffe stationed in
 Paris.

VIOLETTE
 I can get you the best in Paris.

GÖRING
 How many?

VIOLETTE
 Sixty or so to start with. All well
 qualified and in desperate need of
 work to support their families.

GÖRING
 Tell me more.

LATER

Violette and Henri walk to the Citroen; Keller catches-up.

KELLER
 Petrol, Mademoiselle Morris! Can
 you get it? On the Black Market,
 perhaps?

VIOLETTE
 As much as you want, Herr Hauptman.

KELLER
 Then we must talk.

VIOLETTE
 Of course.

INT. CITROËN TRACTION AVANT [MOVING SHOT] - DAY

MR. BAILLEUL
 My god, Violette. You were
 marvelous back there.

VIOLETTE
 I simply made myself useful to
 them, Henri.

MR. BAILLEUL
 May I be honest with you?

VIOLETTE
 Always.

MR. BAILLEUL

I hate the Nazis, but without them
I couldn't pay my employees who
serve me faithfully. Nor could I
feed my own family.

(beat)

I'm ashamed to admit it, Violette.
I need the Bosch. I need them to
survive. What about you? You fought
Germans for five long years.

VIOLETTE

When France turned its back on me,
Germany made me feel welcome.

MR. BAILLEUL

You mean Adolph Hitler did.

VIOLETTE

Yes. For good or ill, Adolph Hitler
is Germany. Without him, the German
people would still be living in
squalor, their children uneducated,
made to feel ashamed they were born
German.

MR. BAILLEUL

Hitler cannot win, Violette. The
unlimited manpower of the Russians,
plus the industrial might of the
United States, will crush Germany.

VIOLETTE

Then, so be it, Henri. So be it.

(beat)

I don't live for France. I don't
live for Adolph Hitler.

(beat)

I am like the wind. Free! I live
for me.

(beat)

I live for Violette!

EXT. DESERTED ORCHARD - DAY

Parked in the shade a half-mile from the Airfield is the
limousine belonging to Josephine Baker.

Josephine stands with a pair of binoculars. Nearby, Rene
SNAPS PHOTOS using a camera with a telephoto lens.

JOSEPHINE BAKER

Make sure you get them all, Rene.

INT. SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE OFFICE - NIGHT

All Windows are heavily draped. Sound of Air Raid SIRENS and muffled EXPLOSIONS.

Major Vivien rushes inside.

MAJOR VIVIAN
These just came in, Sir. They're
ten days old, I'm afraid.

FRANK FOLEY
From whom?

MAJOR VIVIAN
Banana Split, Sir.

FRANK FOLEY
Banana Split?

MAJOR VIVIAN
Mademoiselle Baker's Code Name,
Sir.

FRANK FOLEY
(Scowling)
Who makes up these bloody names?
Iron Maiden! Shutter-Bug! Banana
Split! If there was a front to send
him to, I'd send him there.

MAJOR VIVIAN
Could be a woman, Sir.

FRANK FOLEY
Point taken. Let's have a look at
what you've got.

Foley scans photos of Violette with Henri Bailleul, Göring,
and SS Captain Keller outside the airport hanger.

MAJOR VIVIAN
What do you think, Sir?

FRANK FOLEY
What exactly do we know about Henri
Bailleul?

MAJOR VIVIAN
The scion of a noble family with
holdings all over Europe, including
here in England and Scotland.

FRANK FOLEY

England and Scotland, you say.
Rather cheeky for a Nazi
collaborator.

MAJOR VIVIAN

I agree, Sir. He has two Doctorate
degrees, both from Oxford. One in
Chemistry and the other in physics.

(beat)

He engages in various business
pursuits. By far, the most
important is a Weapons research and
development laboratory outside
Paris.

FRANK FOLEY

Good lord!

MAJOR VIVIAN

Another thing, Sir. Henri Bailleul
has a photographic memory. He
eschews blueprints for his most
sensitive projects. Thinks it too
risky to leave them about. He keeps
it all in his head. Strange as that
may seem.

(beat)

What do you want to do, Sir?

FRANK FOLEY

Haven't the foggiest idea. Go home,
Major. Get some rest. But first,
send Banana woman a 'Well
Done'. She did a bloody good job
connecting Violette Morris with
Henri Bailleul. And, Major--

MAJOR VIVIAN

Sir?

FRANK FOLEY

We need to plant someone close to
Bailleul. Someone who's apt to hear
things through the course of a day.

MAJOR VIVIAN

I'll get right on it, Sir.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BAILLEUL ESTATE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

Two Years Later
2 February, 1943

INT. BAILLIEU'S RESIDENCE [LIVING ROOM] - DUSK

Henri and Violette listen to the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C).

B.B.C ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, it has just been confirmed that the German Sixth Army, commanded by Field Marshall Von Paulus, has surrendered unconditionally to the Russian Army outside Stalingrad.

(beat)

As many as one-hundred thousand German soldiers are believed to have been taken prisoner.

Henri gets up, turns a large, free-standing radio OFF.

MR. BAILLEUL

The German defeat at Stalingrad will prove the end of the Third Reich.

VIOLETTE

What about the super weapons the Nazis are developing?

MR. BAILLEUL

Bah! Too little, too late. The allies will invade Europe with little to stop them, unless--
(Hesitates)

Unless I can convince Field Marshall Rommel that what I've been working on may be the solution they need. Without it, I'm afraid Germany is doomed.

Violette raises her hand, motions for Henri to stop talking.

Violette gets up and walks through an arched passageway that separates the Living Room from the Dining Room.

DINING ROOM

Violette sees Claudette Baillieu's new COOK (Female, 50), placing dishes on the dining table.

VIOLETTE

We haven't been introduced. My name is Violette. You are Mademoiselle Exelmann's replacement, Marie, yes?

COOK

Yes, Mademoiselle.

VIOLETTE

Terrible news, don't you think? Mademoiselle Exelmann drowning like that at Versailles.

COOK

You are mistaken, Mademoiselle. I was told Madame Exelmann slipped and broke her neck at the Fish Market in Clichy.

VIOLETTE

How could I get that so wrong?

COOK

Excuse me, Mademoiselle, I have more to do before dinner is served.

The Cook goes OFF. Violette returns to the--

LIVING ROOM

VIOLETTE

What do you know about your new cook?

MR. BAILLEUL

Marie? She came to us with several strong letters of recommendation.

(beat)

Why? Is something wrong?

VIOLETTE

No, Henri. Nothing's wrong. I'll make inquiries just the same.

MR. BAILLEUL

Whatever you think necessary, V.

EXT. LONDON, ENGLAND - DAY

Air Raid SIREN.

The engine of a German V-2 ROCKET goes SILENT. The rocket plummets to the ground and EXPLODES.

INT. SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

Foley is writing a letter when Major Vivien ENTERS.

MAJOR VIVIAN

Sorry to interrupt, Sir, but this simply can't wait.

FRANK FOLEY

What is it, Major? You look absolutely giddy.

MAJOR VIVIAN

The Operative we were able to insert into Henri Baillieu's employ.

FRANK FOLEY

Hurry-up, man! Give it up!

MAJOR VIVIAN

Henri Bailleul intends to drive to Calais on April Twenty-Sixth to confer with Field Marshall Rommel.

(beat)

Meanwhile, the mole we have in Baillieu's lab says Baillieu's engineers have developed a waterborne rocket with immense destructive capacity.

(beat)

Such a weapon, if indeed it works, could possibly thwart the invasion, Sir.

FRANK FOLEY

My god! Get word to L'alliance Occidentale, or whatever those horrid people call themselves.

MAJOR VIVIAN

The Bolshevik maqui in Normandy?

FRANK FOLEY

Yes. Tell those bloody brigands we have work for them.

(MORE)

FRANK FOLEY (CONT'D)
 Do it now, Harry!
 (Stands, grabs his coat)
 I need to see the Prime Minister
 about this.

EXT. NO. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

Frank Foley is greeted by Special Branch plain-clothes GUARDS outside the Prime Minister's official residence.

INT. CHURCHILL'S STUDY - DAY

The only illumination comes from a DESK LAMP. Cigar in mouth, Winston Churchill sits writing at his desk.

Churchill is interrupted by SOFT KNOCKING.

WINSTON CHURCHILL
 Come!

Foley ENTERS.

WINSTON CHURCHILL (CONT'D)
 Just the man I don't enjoy seeing.
 (beat)
 In any event, Foley, seeing as
 you're here, answer me this:

FRANK FOLEY
 Sir?

WINSTON CHURCHILL
 The difference between comprise and
 compose. I'm preparing an edict for
 the War Department and the wording
 has to be spot-on.

FRANK FOLEY
 That's easy enough sir.

WINSTON CHURCHILL
 Are you suggesting I'm some kind of
 dunderhead, Foley?

FRANK FOLEY
 No, sir. The rule is: the whole
 comprises the parts, and the parts
 compose the whole.

Churchill scribbles something on the document. He puts the pen aside; looks at Foley.

WINSTON CHURCHILL
What dastardly bit of business
brings you here, Mister Foley? Wet
work again?

FRANK FOLEY
Yes, sir.

WINSTON CHURCHILL
Who, this time?

FRANK FOLEY
An acquaintance of yours, sir:
Henri Bailleul.
(beat)
He's set to meet with Rommel in
Calais to discuss the use of a
waterborne rocket; something he
claims can thwart the invasion.

WINSTON CHURCHILL
Bloody hell, Foley! I had dinner
with Henri Bailleul and that
insufferable wife of his in
Scotland. Years ago, at Balmoral
Castle before the war. Brilliant
man. Wonderful sense of humor.
Couldn't stand the wife.
(beat)
Any collateral damage expected?

FRANK FOLEY
Apart from his driver, we don't
know who else might be with him. By
the way, sir, his driver is
Violette Morris. The Frenchwoman
Hitler's so fond of.

WINSTON CHURCHILL
Her, again. What did your people
conclude as to Mademoiselle Morris?

FRANK FOLEY
Not the spy we thought she might
be. She drives for the Nazis in
Paris and that makes her a
collaborator. But that's about all.

WINSTON CHURCHILL
What about Bailleul's family?

FRANK FOLEY

There's the wife, Claudette, and two children. A boy, nine, and a girl, seven.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

We're damned for all eternity if they're with him, Foley. You realize that, don't you?

FRANK FOLEY

Yes, Prime Minister. As a Christian, I'm painfully aware of that.

LONG PAUSE.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Cheer up, man! I was joking: war is a game to be played with a smile.

(beat)

If you can't smile, grin. If you can't grin, keep out of the way until you can.

Churchill scribbles a memorandum; he holds it out to Foley:

WINSTON CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

(Growls)

Get it done, Mister Foley!

EXT. BAILLEULS' RESIDENCE - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE:

26 April, 1944

Violette places the last of the luggage on top of the Citroën's luggage rack.

Chloe and Lucien are in the back with Claudette Bailleul.

The "Cook" approaches Violette; she holds out a wicker basket.

COOK

I made sandwiches for your trip, Mademoiselle. There are also croissants, jam, and fruit.

(beat)

And some candy for the children.

VIOLETTE
Thank you, Marie. That was most
kind of you.

Violette places the basket in the backseat with Claudette.
Unsmiling, Marie watches Violette and the Baillieus DEPART.

INT. CITROËN TRACTION AVANT (MOVING) - MORNING

Violette stares at Marie's REFLECTION in the REARVIEW MIRROR
until Marie walks back toward the house.

VIOLETTE
Claudette.

MRS. BAILLEUL
Yes, Violette?

VIOLETTE
What's in the basket please.

Claudette searches through the contents of the wicker basket.

MRS. BAILLEUL
Sandwiches, croissants, jam, fruit.

VIOLETTE
Nothing else?

MRS. BAILLEUL
Yes. Some hard candy.

VIOLETTE
Nothing else?

MRS. BAILLEUL
Such as?

VIOLETTE
A bomb.

Henri erupts with LAUGHTER. Mystified, Claudette and the
children exchange looks.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD IN NORMANDY - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

Coast of Normandy, France

Looking south, the road is bordered by dense woods to the
east and the English Channel to the west.

The Citroen INTO VIEW driving south at HIGH SPEED. It passes a SIGN that reads:

Calais: 170 Kilometers

INT. CITROËN TRACTION AVANT (MOVING) - DAY

LUCIEN

(Laughing)

Faster, Violette! Faster!

CHLOE

(Laughing)

Yes, Violette. Faster!

MRS. BAILLEUL

Shush, children! For God's sake, Violette, don't listen to them!

MR. BAILLEUL

Relax, Claudette. We are in the best of hands.

MRS. BAILLEUL

Dammit, Henri! This is not one of Violette's motorcar races.

Chloe leans over Violette's shoulder and points.

CHLOE

Violette, look!

VIOLETTE

I see them, little mouse.

Violette STOPS on the side of the road.

Hauling GERMAN SOLDIERS and field ARTILLERY, a CONVOY of military trucks approaches from the opposite direction.

The trucks are open to the elements and are filled with Young Boys and Old Men. The expressions on their faces are grim.

CHLOE

They look so sad, Mama.

MRS. BAILLEUL

They are soldiers, sweetheart. That is how soldiers are supposed to look.

MR. BAILLEUL

The only time soldiers are happy,
Chloe, is when they are being fed.

Violette casts Henri a hard look.

VIOLETTE

They are sad, little mouse, because
they know the invasion will come
soon.

(beat)

Many of those soldiers will die
without seeing their homes or loved
ones again.

MRS. BAILLEUL

Good Lord, Violette. Such talk will
only give her bad dreams.

VIOLETTE

Children need to hear the truth,
Claudette. Especially these days.

LUCIEN

Violette is right, Mama. The
invasion is the only thing we talk
about at school.

MRS. BAILLEUL

But let's not talk about it now.
Alright, Lucien?

(beat)

Not! Right! Now!

The last of the German convoy PASSES. Violette drives the
Citroën onto the road.

MRS. BAILLEUL (CONT'D)

At last!

MR. BAILLEUL

Listen, children, soon we will
enjoy a wonderful meal at the
Port of Calais. All your favorite
food from the sea. Sound good?

CHLOE

Yes, Papa.

MR. BAILLEUL

Lucien?

LUCIEN

I guess so.

Violette adjusts the rearview mirror to look at Lucien.

VIOLETTE

It will come any day now, my love.

EXT. HEIGHTS OVERLOOKING NORMANDY BEACH - DAY

The heights are fortified with massive concrete artillery emplacements, and bunkers to house infantry.

From a speaker comes the sound of a popular German love SONG, "Lili Marleen."

Along the heights are numerous pill-boxes connected by defensive trenches.

German SOLDIERS while-away-time smoking cigarettes, cleaning their weapons, and playing cards.

Atop the ridge a SENTRY stands guard, his eyes fixed on the sea, past numerous IRON OBSTACLES meant to obstruct tanks, landing craft, and men.

INT. CITROËN (MOVING) - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Sitting between the Children, Claudette naps. Chloe is curled-up on the seat asleep, her head on her mother's lap.

Lucien stares pensively out the window at the ocean.

Henri Bailleul takes a flask from his coat, offers it to Violette.

Violette takes the flask, drinks, and hands it back. Henri takes a long sip.

MR. BAILLEUL

If Germany loses the war, V, no
part of France will be safe for us.
Come to Switzerland with us.

Violette steers the Citroen around a curve.

Ahead is a wagon piled high with hay. It appears broken-down, and blocks the road.

The wagon-driver is a BOY (16). Violette down-shifts and brings the Citroen to a full STOP.

VIOLETTE

Wait here. I'll see what's-what.

MRS.BAILLEUL
Oh, God, now what?

VIOLETTE
I'll be right back.

CHLOE
I have to pee, Mama.

MRS.BAILLEUL
You'll have to hold it, darling.

CHLOE
I can't!

LUCIEN
I'll take her behind the car, Mama.

MRS.BAILLEUL
Very well. But don't wander off.

EXT. CITROEN - DAY

Violette looks around. Other than the hay wagon, she sees only trees. She approaches the Boy and his wagon.

VIOLETTE
Bad luck?

BOY
Truly, Monsieur.

VIOLETTE
When I lift, you put the wheel on.

BOY
Seriously?

Violette removes her coat, revealing a shoulder holster and her Mauser pistol.

VIOLETTE
Well? Go on.

The Boy lifts the wheel; steadies it for mounting. Violette backs under the wagon, her feet shoulder-width apart.

Using the strength of her legs, she EXHALES and RAISES the wagon.

The Boy places the wheel on the axle and secures it in-place with a cotter pin. Done, he steps back.

Violette disengages from the wagon, and reclaims her coat.

BOY

That was amazing, Monsieur.

The Boy climbs up, onto the seat of the wagon. With a SNAP of the reins he urges the mule on.

Sound of wings FLAPPING get Violette's attention. A murder of CROWS takes flight from the TREE LINE:

The wagon moves OUT OF FRAME, revealing six French partisans: FIVE MEN and a WOMAN (the same woman who torched Violette's houseboat in Paris).

VIOLETTE

(Drops her coat)

Merde!

Violette yanks the Mauser from its holster and FIRES. Two male Partisans fall dead.

The Partisans return FIRE. Bullets THUD into Violette's body.

ELSEWHERE

With a machinegun, the Boy leaps from the wagon and advances to the front of the Citroën.

He FIRES at the windshield--the glass holds!

INSIDE THE CAR

When the Boy moves to the side, Henri tries to shield Claudette.

Bullets pierce the driver's SIDE of the Citroen. Henri and Claudette are killed holding each other in a terrified embrace.

Lucien runs down the road. Chloe is BAWLING, petrified in place.

The Boy FIRES a long burst at Lucien, killing him; then walks to within a few feet of Chloe.

The Boy looks back at the Young Woman leading the Partisans.

WOMAN

Why do you hesitate?

The Boy wipes tears away with the back of his sleeve.

BOY
 (To Chloe)
 Forgive me.

The Boy FIRES his machinegun. The impact lifts Chloe off her feet-- hurls her backward like a rag doll.

Torn and bleeding, Violette teeters on her knees.

The CRY of a Seagull catches Violette's attention; her eyes follow the gull's trajectory skyward.

The Partisan Leader squats; she and Violette are eye-to-eye.

PARTISAN LEADER
 Do you know who I am?

Blood trickles from Violette's mouth and nostrils.

PARTISAN LEADER (CONT'D)
 My father was Max Camembert, the
 founder of our maquis, L'alliance
 Occidentale. Here. In Normandy.

From her shirt the Woman takes out a PHOTOGRAPH; holds it up.

PARTISAN LEADER (CONT'D)
 You betrayed him and his friends to
 the Gestapo four years ago.
 (beat)
 My father won the Croix de Guerre
 in the Great War. Did you know
 that?

Life creeps back into Violette's eyes; a smile forms:

VIOLETTE
 Life is full of surprises, is it
 not?
 (beat)
 Yes. I killed him.

A fierce wind RUSTLES through the branches of the trees. Feeling the wind on her face, Violette closes her eyes.

The Partisan Leader stands and motions for the others to join her.

PARTISAN LEADER
 Violette Morris: for murdering my
 father.
 (beat)
 And for collaborating with the
 Nazis.

(MORE)

PARTISAN LEADER (CONT'D)

(beat)

In the name of France.

(beat)

And in the name of those whose
lives you've destroyed--

VIOLETTE

Fuck you!

PARTISAN LEADER

I sentence you--

VIOLETTE

Finish it!

SFX/ SLOW MOTION SHOT

Partisan bullets shred Violette's body.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARDENNES FOREST, BELGIUM - LATE AFTERNOON

SUPERIMPOSE:

Ardennes Forest. Belgium
July, 1944

A camp used by Belgian Resistance FIGHTERS (Men and Women).

CLAUDE (70s) confers with several MEN and WOMEN around a MAP
spread over a makeshift table .

CLAUDE

If we come in from the west, right
here--

(TAPS the map)

We stand our best chance of getting
it done before the Bosch can react.

BRIDGETTE (O.C.)

Claude!

BRIDGETTE (50) INTO VIEW. Claude goes to her.

CLAUDE

I'm glad you're back, my dove. I
was beginning to worry. What news?

BRIDGETTE

Violette is dead, Claude.

Claude's face constricts with pain:

BRIDGETTE (CONT'D)
I have details if you--

Claude waves his hand and walks OFF. Several Partisans start to follow:

BRIDGETTE (CONT'D)
No! Let him go!

SECLUDED SPOT IN THE FOREST - SUNSET

Claude sits in a clearing with his head in his hands.

Bridgette arrives, kneels behind Claude. He rests his head against her.

Together, they watch the SUN as it sets.

SCREEN DARK.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Violette Morris's violent end occurred ten days before the greatest sea invasion in the history of modern warfare: the Normandy Landing, 6 June, 1944.

Arguably the greatest woman sports competitor in the last one-hundred years, Violette Morris lived a life authentic in a world rife with global conflict, greed, and corruption.

A passionate devotee of women's rights, Violette's mannerisms were unflinchingly masculine.

Yet, her courage inspired countless women to stand up for what they passionately believed.

Violette refused to compromise what she demanded women demand for themselves: freedom to determine their own path in life.

Violette's bullet-riddled corpse was transported by a coroner to the local morgue where it went unclaimed for several months.

She was later buried in Potter's Field, in Normandy, in a common unmarked grave.

Violette's Olympic medals were never found.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END