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# One of Our Aircraft Is Missing

By Emeric Pressburger

(Shouting in German)  
(Machine-gun fire)  
Fairpath. Calling Operations Room.  
M for Mother landed 04:26.  
No sign of any other aircraft about.  
Still no sign of B for Bertie. Over.  
Hello, Group.  
Yes, they're all back now,  
except B for Bertie.  
From this and other operations,  
one of our aircraft is missing.  
Pilot speaking, pilot speaking.  
Testing intercoms.  
Tom Earnshaw, second pilot.  
Frank Shelley, observer.  
Bob Ashley, wireless op.  
Geoff Hickman, front gunner, all correct.  
George Corbett, rear gunner.  
- That's all, Corbett.  
- Thank you, sir.  
Group, sir, about tonight's operations.  
Reynolds speaking. Yes. Right.  
The target is Stuttgart,  
the Mercedes-Benz works.  
Will all operational crews  
report to briefing at 1 4:30. 1 4:30.  
- Mail. One for you, Skipper.  
- Thank you.  
- One for you, Tom. Nice Halifax postmark.  
- Some letter.  
Halifax again.  
- Oh, it's from my fiance.  
- Both of them? Have you got two?  
The other's from Dad.  
- Surely not the future Mrs Earnshaw?  
- Whittaker & Whittaker, her dad's firm.  
- Second best in Yorkshire.  
- We know whose the best are.  
- My dad's.  
- Earnshaw & Son.  
Mm. I'm dying to see those two  
noble animals in the same meadow.  
You won't have to wait long.  
Here comes Corbett,

singing and dancing as usual.

(Airman) Billiards after lunch?

- You coming on this party tonight?

- I'm on ops.

Hazel says don't forget tomorrow night.

(Both) Hazel Mason,

home and forces programme.

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doing tomorrow night?

- Tomorrow? Packing.

- No, you're listening to my wife.

Home and Forces Programme.

Pack tonight.

I'm flying tonight.

- We didn't know you were on ops.

- I saw the group captain.

As it's my last night, he agreed to let me go.

Sorry to have gone over your head.

That's all right. Glad to have you with us.

Eh, fellas?

We're honoured, Sir George.

I suppose Hopkins has been  
told about this switch.

- I suppose so.

- I'd like to see Hopkins' face, Frank.

Poor old Hopkins.

(American accent) Well, the son of a gun.

- Hopkins.

- Yes, sir.

Sorry, but you won't be wanted tonight.

- I see, sir.

- Bad luck, old man.

The son of a gun.

I don't believe it. Hey, he's pulling my leg.

If you're not going,

can I have your silk stockings?

Oh, I suppose so.

What's this, camouflage net?

That's quality if it's a pair.

They keep you warm as toast.

If my girl ever finds out I lent...

Tell her Bob Ashley wore them.

She'll be pleased as punch.

Boy, I wish you could have  
seen that run of Welsh's,  
a run worthy of  
the great Bob Ashley himself.  
It had all the earmarks of an Ashley special.  
So it's a free kick against the Allied Forces.  
Free kick. Now, look out for Welsh.  
Not Welsh.  
Not Welsh? Hear that, Len?  
I'd like to see anybody else take it.  
Course it'll be Welsh.  
Compton will take the kick.  
This is a tense moment. The ball is  
on the spot. Welsh is going to kick.  
What did I say?  
Welsh is going to take the kick.  
Come on, Welsh!  
Welsh has kicked. No, he hasn't.  
He's jumped over the ball.  
Compton's taking the kick.  
Compton's the man.  
Goal! Well shot, Compton!  
Well, that was a surprise.  
Not to me.  
Cope with this indicator. It's stuck again.  
- I'll fix it.  
- How's Bertie?  
Perfect, sir. New coat, full stomach, a gent.  
Fine. Bring the car back about four.  
Did they fix that oil pressure, Jimmy?  
Yes, it's OK now.  
- Who's this bloke?  
- Fan of yours, wants your autograph.  
- Saw you in some play.  
- That's right.  
I saw you in the School For Scandal.  
You played Joseph Surface.  
Got a pencil?  
- Afraid not.  
- I'll do it for you tomorrow.  
- Thanks.  
- It was Charles Surface.  
Fairpath calling T for Tommy, T for Tommy.

**It's now 21 :**

Checking intercoms. Bob, are you there?  
Sergeant Ashley, sir, receiving you all right.  
Blasted beehive gets smaller every trip.  
What are you grumbling about, Sir George?  
You've got a carriage to yourself.  
Fairpath calling.  
Q for Queenie, Q for Queenie.

**21 :**

Check your watches, chaps.  
In 50 seconds, it'll be 21 :40.  
In...45 seconds.  
In...40 seconds.  
Fairpath calling B for Bertie, B for Bertie.

**It is now 21 :**

Off you go.  
Geoff, OK to go forward.  
OK, Skipper.  
Stuttgart, here we come.  
You know, I played in Stuttgart  
with my club in er...1938.  
1938...I was playing in New York.  
- What's Stuttgart like?  
- Oh, like all those continental towns.  
Played Saturday, Sunday,  
Monday on the train.  
That was Stuttgart. Well, well.  
- Nice girls in Stuttgart, Skipper.  
- Well, one anyway.  
What do you know about  
the girls in Stuttgart?  
I know a nurse from Stuttgart.  
That's funny. Mine was a nurse.  
Was her name Liesel?  
No, Else. What was your nurse like?  
Oh, she was a big blonde job.  
Couldn't half cook too.  
She worked for a doctor in Gerrards Cross.  
Used to sing that song,  
er...I Kiss Your Little Hand Madame.  
That's right and, of course,  
she used to sing it in German, you know?

She was always singing it, I suppose, cos she wasn't allowed to sing it in Germany.

The composer was a Jew, I believe.

What was your nurse like, Skipper?

Else? She was blonde too.

- Was she a good cook?

- She was good at everything.

My next nurse wasn't so good.

You seem to specialise in nurses, Skipper.

Well, I did then. I was only two, you see.

- Had you there.

- I'd seen snaps of her in my father's album.

He was on the reparations commission.

Stuttgart was capital of Wrttemberg,

once a kingdom on its own.

That's right. The biggest paper there

is called the Wrttemberger Zeitung.

Liesel used to read it to me out loud.

Over Dutch coast.

Geoff, George, look out for fighters.

If my course is right,

we'll be getting some flak soon.

(Anti-aircraft fire)

Your course seems all right, Frank.

- Cologne's just come off the air.

- I don't blame her.

Railroad ahead.

Got it. Main line to Cologne.

I've travelled on that line

and I was going to Stuttgart.

Mannheim on our right.

Tom, give them some leaflets.

Okey-doke.

Give them the Ashley special.

(Booming)

It's good for you.

Hold the course, John, over River Neckar.

John, do you see what I see?

Big fire, dead ahead.

We're in the wrong end, John.

(Anti-aircraft fire)

- Can I have a smack at the searchlight?

- OK, give it a squirt or two.

(Machine-gun fire)

Can I have a go too, Skipper?  
No favouritism.  
OK.  
(Machine-gun fire)  
Now who's in the wrong end?  
What's that fire?  
Bet that's Queenie on the job.  
And that'll be Tommy.  
All right, do another circuit.  
Bomb doors.  
Bomb doors open.  
- OK, let's go down.  
- Going down.  
4,000.  
3,600.  
Level out.  
Steady.  
Left, left.  
Steady.  
All bombs gone.  
Shall I transmit, sir, mission completed?  
Crikey!  
How about it, Tom?  
Starboard engine's packed up.  
Port's all right.  
Hello, Bob. Intercoms working?  
Yes, sir, radio's dead though.  
George, everything organised?  
- You may get your hands full.  
- All right, Skipper.  
We'll sort 'em out, won't we, George?  
How about it, Bob?  
Completely cheese, sir, all tubes blown.  
- How about cut out the corners, Frank?  
- All set. Shortest route over Mainz.  
Alter course to 301, Johnny.  
Bob, destroy your code signals.  
I have, sir. They taste filthy.  
Speed still dropping, only 90 now.  
I'll try a steep dive. Hang on, everybody.  
It's no use, chaps.  
We'll have to stooge home on one engine.  
At this rate, she may stall any minute.  
- Shall I get out and push?

- Where are we, Frank?  
Over Holland. Amersfoot.  
Can you see a railroad?  
I'm not sure. How about you, Tom?  
Yes, I think so.  
That's the main line  
from Amersfoot to Hilversum.  
Blast! That's both engines packed up now.  
(Engine splutters)  
We'll have to jump for it, boys.  
- Geoff. George.  
- (Both) Sir.  
- Frank. Bob. Tom.  
- OK.  
- I'm here.  
- Stand by to abandon aircraft.  
Shall we chance it together or go solo?  
- Together.  
- How?  
Bail out along the railroad,  
Skipper's last to leave.  
If we all follow the railroad northwest,  
we're bound to find each other.  
Tom, jump.  
Frank, jump.  
Geoff, jump.  
George, jump.  
Bob, jump.  
(Engine splutters)  
(Engine picks up)  
(Birdsong)  
- (George) What can you see?  
- The Zuider Zee.  
Anything else?  
Windmills.  
Any soldiers?  
- No.  
- What's the country like? Can you see far?  
Yes, miles. Very flat.  
What did you expect,  
the mountains of Mourne?  
No sign of him, then?  
The Zuider Zee's no good to us.  
How far is it to the North Sea?



- About 38 miles.  
- That's not so bad.  
- It's 38 miles too far in this make-up.  
- Clothes are the first thing to organise.  
- Then there's Bob.  
- It's too bad about Bob.  
- I'd rather it'd been John or Frank.  
- Oh, would you?  
- No offence.  
- Anyone got a cigarette?  
I haven't. You have lived abroad, Skipper,  
and they reckon Frank's a first-class actor.  
Sorry, last one.  
A football pro is used to travelling with  
his team. Bob'll get lost on his own.  
Let's face it. He is lost.  
We want to watch things like that.  
And we'd better keep down too.  
Bob might turn up here.  
Well, he's three hours overdue.  
Got a match?  
We've wasted enough time already.  
John, you command in the air.  
You should command on the ground.  
Why should anyone command?  
Let's all have a say.  
- That won't work.  
- I take John's view.  
Very well. What do you suggest?  
Well...the first thing  
we've got to do is to find Bob, obviously.  
We can't let him down.  
And then... Well, then  
we make a plan of campaign.  
Decide what to do and what not to do.  
- Don't you agree, Tom?  
- Hm.  
Then er...well, act accordingly.  
Very explicit.  
Clear as mud.  
- Here, come on down.  
- I must say, Frank...  
Now, listen, I've been lost dozens of times.  
Sometimes alone,

sometimes with a regiment,  
so I know this much, either we separate  
here and now and it's each man for himself,  
or we stick together  
and somebody must command.

- Who's for separating?

- What are you for yourself?

I'll put another question.

Do we surrender

or do we try and get back home?

- Well, what do you think?

- Frank, you're navigator. Where are we?

I'd say somewhere...somewhere here.

There's Hilversum to the west,

Amsterdam and the Zuider Zee up there.

Now, we want to aim at a spot

somewhere south of Haarlem,

between Zandvoort and Katwijk...

but there's several main roads

and it's swarming with people.

- What's 'polder' mean?

- Land that's reclaimed. Dykes and dams.

It's nearly all polder country

south of Haarlem. Tulip fields.

Pity about that, I like a nice tulip.

What are we going to do about our clothes?

We've got to get into civvies somehow.

Well, what's George doing?

- Going swimming in the canal.

- How do you know there is one?

There's always a canal in Holland. The next

best thing to civilian clothes is to have none.

I'll be a swimming Dutchman

and spy out the land.

- Suppose you meet a Dutchman.

- I'll use gestures.

- Suppose it's a girl.

- Can you speak Dutch?

- No.

- Well, I can.

- Well?

- Well enough. Diplomat's Dutch.

I think you're going to be

the swimming Dutchman, my lad.

Shh. Somebody coming, I think.  
Vicky! Vicky!  
(Pig squeals)  
Vicky! Vicky!  
(Speak Dutch)  
Vicky! Vicky!  
That dog spots us, we're jiggered.  
(Girl) Willem! Willem!  
(Speaks Dutch)  
(All) Vicky!  
- (Barks)  
- Lie down. Get!  
Shut up. Shut up.  
- (Continues barking)  
- Vicky! Vicky!  
Willem! Willem!  
Maartie! Vicky!  
Vicky! Vicky!  
- (All) Vicky!  
- (Barking)  
(Speaks Dutch)  
(Speaks haltingly)  
Niet...afraid...zijn. Niet rennen weg.  
Ik vrienden. Engels.  
RAF. R-A-F.  
R-A-F. R-A-F.  
Royal Air Force!  
Ja. Royal Air Force. Ben jij een vriend?  
Allebjij vrienden.  
- He says they're friends.  
- Let's go and talk to them.  
I hope they don't scam.  
(Speaks Dutch)  
He asked if we've come to invade Holland.  
(Laughs) What with?  
Hello.  
Hello, young fella.  
We jumped out of our aeroplane.  
Bailed out.  
One, two, three, four...  
five, six allez.  
Six disparu.  
- That's French.  
- Well?

Johnny, over to you, over.  
(Speaks haltingly) Er... Verloren...lost,  
een cameraad, hier ergens.  
Heb je hem niet gezien?  
Hoe... Your names?  
Willem, Maartie.  
- Jannie.  
- Hendrik.  
Jan.  
Tom.  
Geoff.  
Frank. George.  
(Speaks Dutch)  
- Ja. lk begrijp.  
- What's this safety pin gag?  
It's a sign against Germans and quislings.  
A safety pin means keep together.  
Keep your mouth shut.  
(Speaks Dutch)  
There's someone at the farm  
who speaks English. Her name is Els...  
Els...Els Meertens. Els Meertens.  
Els Meertens.  
- Zij is schooljuffrouw.  
- She's a schoolmarm.  
Sounds a useful old bird.  
Is dit invasie van Holland?  
No, young fellow, we have not  
come to invade Holland...yet.  
I know that much Dutch already.  
(Excited chattering)  
Kind of a debate going on in there, I think.  
(Speaks excitedly in Dutch)  
Miss Meertens.  
I'll never put a ferret down  
a rabbit hole again, I know that.  
It's quite stuffy in here,  
as if it might be a trap.  
I'm not so sure it isn't.  
Must be 20 of them, talking for half an hour.  
What about? That's what I'd like to know.  
Fetching Germans.  
I wouldn't put it past 'em.  
- I would.

- You would? Why?

I've been watching the road

ever since we got here.

No one's left the house.

Shh.

(Chattering stops)

Sorry, gentlemen, to have kept you waiting.

I am Els Meertens,

schoolteacher from Emmen.

How do you do, Miss Meertens?

My name is John Glyn Haggard and these...

The identities of all five of you are

of the greatest importance to us

but if you don't mind,

we prefer to check them for ourselves.

Excuse me, Miss Meertens, how do you

propose to find out if we don't tell you?

I see you wear an identity bracelet.

I'm sure you can tell me your friend's name.

Well? Can you or can't you?

- Of course. I've known him a long time.

- I didn't ask how long you had known him.

What is his name?

He's Mr Tom Earnshaw,

our second pilot, of course.

Right.

- You jumped out of your aeroplane, why?

- We didn't want to crash with it.

- Where did it crash?

- It didn't.

- The engine picked up after we bailed out.

- I don't know very much about aeroplanes.

But that means you can't prove

your aircraft has crashed.

It might have gone on for miles.

Would it surprise you to know

that so far as is known

no aircraft has crashed in West Holland

during the night?

I suppose Bertie

could have reached the sea.

- What do you say, John?

- Don't ask me. Your witness.

- Where are your parachutes?

- We buried them.
- All five?
- Five are all we know about.
- What do you mean by that?
- There were six in my crew.

You are captain?

Yes.

- Where is the sixth man?
- I don't know. We never found him.

I see. And where did you bury your parachutes?

- Look here, I've had enough of...
- You don't know?

Of course I know.

Along the railroad where we landed.

Can any of you prove beyond reasonable doubt that you are what you say you are?

I'll be jiggered. I've never heard such a thing.

- But our uniforms...

- Prove nothing.

- Why not?

- Anybody could get a uniform.

If some people were anxious to find out how we were to behave towards English airmen, wouldn't that be the simplest way?

You mean you think we've come here to get you to give yourselves away?

But we're English. We wouldn't do a thing like that, would we, Frank?

You're not so sure about the others?

What are you trying to make me say?

Of course I'm sure.

What is the name of this gentleman?

- Go on, George.

- This is Frank Shelley. He's an actor.

And his wife is to broadcast tonight.

**(All) 9:**

Frank, contrary to mess regulations, I saw you tearing a piece out of the Times.

You got it on you?

I think that's the sort of proof

Miss Meertens wants.

Here you are.

' 'Broadcasting, home and forces  
programme, Sunday 9:40...'

That's tonight.

' 'Hazel Mason...'' That's my wife.

There's the date

and there's the date on the newspaper.

Yes, this is yesterday's Times.

Your witness.

Does that satisfy you, Miss Meertens?

It will do, I think.

I'm going to show it to the others.

You're not the only one

that had their doubts.

Not the only one?

No, there's nothing to stop you

sending for the Nazis.

I thought airmen had

better eyesight than that.

- What a girl.

- As you say.

- She shot you down in flames.

- What did she mean about our eyesight?

- Something we missed in this room.

- Let's find it.

- Orange blossom.

- What's orange blossom got to do with it?

That's their Oranje altar, Orange altar,

to honour Queen Wilhemina.

(Geoff) But why Orange?

(Tom) William of Orange,

the House of Orange, shows they're loyal.

There should be a picture of the queen too.

There is.

Quite foxy. That Elsie Meertens, what a girl.

- We heard you the first time.

- Gentlemen, won't you come in?

Thank you.

Pieter Sluys, your host, gentlemen.

(Speaks Dutch)

Come on, John.

(Clears throat and speaks Dutch haltingly)

(People laugh softly)

(People laugh good-humouredly)

I always thought speeches

came at the end of a meal.  
Wouldn't mind a little bit  
of that ham anyway.

(Speak Dutch)

- (Els) Won't you sit down, please?

- Thank you.

This is very good of you  
but aren't you short of food?  
Sometimes but don't worry,  
we have enough for our friends.

(Speaks Dutch)

He says, ''Don't worry, eat him.

He was a quisling pig.''

(Speaks Dutch)

- Thank you.

- Erg lekker.

Thank you.

Gesundheit.

Very nice.

We are worried about  
your comrade who is lost.

So are we, miss.

Bob's brains are in his feet.

- In his feet?

- Bob's a football player. A very good one.

But not very bright.

Still it's a pity his brains are not in his head.

If he's found, the Germans  
are going to look for you five.

Burying the parachutes was a mistake.

Freshly-dug earth will be examined.

- Can't we send someone to dig them up?

- We have.

And we will hide them,  
this time in a safer place.

You know, young lady,  
you've got your head screwed on.

Thank you.

The main thing is your escape.

- Any ideas?

- You agree that we can escape?

Others have done it. Why not you?

First we must get to the sea.

The sea is 58 kilometres away



and every village has its German post  
and every road is patrolled.

- First we must get you to church.

- Why church?

Our church is ten kilometres west of here.

Ten kilometres nearer the North Sea.

You must go at once.

Excuse me, Miss Meertens,

what is your church?

We are Catholics.

I'm chapel.

So am I.

What is chapel?

- Independent Methodist.

- Baptist.

Those are your English Reform churches?

That's it.

(Els) But it's our only plan.

If this gets back to Halifax,

I shall never hear the last of it.

We will dress you in Dutch clothes.

Nobody will know.

(Tom) You don't know chapel folk.

But surely your escape

is the most important thing.

End justifies the means, Tom.

That's settled. Would it be safer to travel

at night? We'd be at the coast in three days.

By our plan, you will be at the coast tonight.

Jo will be waiting for you.

Jo? Who's Jo?

Jo de Vries, the wife of Hendrik de Vries.

Oh? Who's Hendrik de Vries?

Hendrik de Vries was killed by the British  
in the mass air attacks on Haarlem.

Since then his wife hates the British  
more than anything in the world.

A very good choice for a hostess.

What is this, a conundrum?

- I never heard that we bombed Haarlem.

- The Germans want us to believe it.

So Jo de Vries obliges them.

They like her because

they believe she hates the British.

That is what she wants,  
so everyone is happy.

Oh, I see, a bit of camouflage.

Yes. We have our own ways  
of managing things. Did you hear our motto?

(Speaks Dutch)

No?

It means the sea's a common enemy and  
against a common enemy one must unite.

Do you think we Hollanders  
who threw the sea out of our country  
will let the Germans have it?

Better the sea.

- (Speaks Dutch)

- Can you all ride a bicycle?

Well, I'm not much of a hand  
at a bike myself. I never was.

We will find a way  
but first we must find you all clothes.  
Better keep our uniforms on,  
gives us a chance if we're caught.

(Els) You can wear  
your disguises over them.

If we're going to be pushing off,  
I would like more ham, Mother.

Ham, natuurlijk.

Talking of ham, Frank, this is your big  
chance. What disguise will you wear?  
You're going to see a series of perfect  
Dutch character sketches, real little cameos  
but er...what do we do for boots?

Klompen.

- Klompen?

- Clogs.

Ah, clogs.

(Giggles)

(Whispering)

I should like to see you walk up  
Halifax High Street in a pair of these, Tom.  
The old Yorkshire saying,

'From clogs to clogs in three generations.'

I never hoped to co-star with the great  
Francis Shelley in a Dutch epic.

Now, George, you're doing quite well, really,

quite well, but...co-star? Really.  
I haven't been to church since my wedding.  
- You must have acted in church scenes.  
- I did once.  
- It was a spy story and we all got shot.  
- That can happen here too.  
(Man reads in German)  
(Bicycle bells ring)  
- How am I doing?  
- Quite well.  
For a beginner.  
(Engine roars)  
Noisy beggars, aren't they?  
I wonder why he's in such  
a tearing hurry for on a Sunday morning.  
Probably going on leave.  
(Bicycle bells ring)  
(Singing hymn)  
Anything wrong?  
Germans found one of your parachutes.  
But you dug them up.  
I thought they were safe.  
They are. Very safe.  
Then it must be another one.  
George.  
The Jerries have found  
another parachute. It must be Bob's.  
- Found Bob's parachute.  
- Bob's parachute's found.  
That means Bob's safe.  
- Not so good for us.  
- It's us the armoured cars are looking for.  
Els says they're searching villages  
in the neighbourhood.  
So long as they don't find  
our parachutes, we're safe.  
- Where are they hidden?  
- Where are they hidden?  
Where are they hidden?  
She says that they're quite safe  
and they're with us in here.  
(Speaks Dutch)  
Shh.  
(Conducts ceremony in Dutch)

(Approaching roar of engine)  
(Engine stops)  
(Distant shouts and doors banging)  
(Shouting in German)  
(Shouting continues)  
(Speaks Dutch)  
(Shouting in German)  
(Priest gives blessing in Latin)  
(Congregation respond in Latin)  
(Continues in Latin)  
Parachutes.  
(Priest continues in Latin)  
(Organ plays Dutch national anthem)  
Our national anthem.  
(Plays national anthem softly)  
(Organ stops)  
(Resumes playing organ)  
(Shouts in German)  
(Upbeat hymn)  
(Congregation sing heartily)  
(Man reads in German)  
(Shouts in Dutch)  
(Speaks Dutch)  
Cornelis, my young brother,  
always in trouble.  
Same in England. Same everywhere.  
I've got a young brother, you know.  
Regular little devil.  
English boys not as bad as Dutch.  
You see the school?  
German military post, 20 soldiers.  
Boys love to tease the sentries.  
They line up on the wall and sing,  
'Eenie meanie, minie, mo,  
'catch a German by his toe...'  
(Bell rings)  
Cornelis? What's he doing at the post?  
(Mutters angrily in Dutch)  
What he doing at post?  
(Shouts in Dutch)  
(Woman speaks Dutch)  
(Speaks Dutch)  
(Mutters angrily in Dutch)  
(Says blessing in Latin)

De Jong is a quisling.  
I am ashamed to speak so of  
a man of my village but it is true.  
He is a traitor, paid by the Nazis.  
He is always trying to persuade us  
to fraternise with the soldiers at the post  
and now he has sent them  
gramophone records to play.  
And my son has carried them! My son!  
We are all trying to bore them to death and  
my son carries them gramophone records  
and from that traitor de Jong!  
(Mutters angrily in Dutch)  
No dinner for Cornelis. Father says  
he must not go to the football match.  
Poor Cornelis, he loves the football.  
All week he's been so excited.  
I think something very...  
how do you say...buried?  
- Dug in?  
- More than meets the eye.  
Ja. Very good.  
More than meets Father's eye.  
Poor Cornelis, he very bad but very cute.  
He has more than meets the eye.  
- (Speaks Dutch)  
- (Telephone)  
Oh.  
(Speaks Dutch)  
A quarter gelder...paid that quisling  
by the stinking Germans.  
It's what my son pockets for helping  
to entertain German soldiers.  
(All speak Dutch)  
(Knocking)  
(Speaks Dutch)  
(Makes introduction in Dutch)  
(De Jong speaks Dutch)  
Get out of the way!  
Do you speak English?  
- Yes.  
- Then don't shout.  
- You wouldn't dare to keep me here.  
- Dare? Huh, you're kept.

You, you, all of you, you're British airmen,  
the men we're looking for.

- You're risking your head.

- It's nothing to do with him.

- He'll be shot before he can prove it.

- Talking of shooting...

You wouldn't dare fire here.

Wouldn't we?

(Distant gramophone plays

Dutch national anthem)

The Wilhelmus...our anthem.

It comes from the post, from the Nazis.

(Anthem continues)

- What is it, the radio?

- Sounds more like a gramophone to me.

(Shouting in German)

(Jet van Dieren) It is a gramophone!

(Shouting in German continues)

(Jet) Father, isn't it strange?

Wait a minute. Wait a minute.

Perhaps it's not so strange.

I don't understand.

(Van Dieren laughs)

Yes, but I do. Your German friends  
at the post asked you to send them  
some gramophone records, didn't they?

And you chose my son for the honour  
of carrying them, didn't you?

And you gave him a quarter  
for doing it, didn't you?

Ah. My son... Well, he changed  
all your records for ours  
and he chose

some good ones too, trust him.

All records of our national anthem.

(Chuckles)

All different labels, foxtrots, tangos,  
all pasted on so the Germans  
wouldn't know what they were.

Oh, your friends will like you now,  
won't they, quisling?

(National anthem plays  
and shouting in German)

(Record slips, shouting in German)

(All) De Jong!

They won't think it's me. Why should they?

Why shouldn't they?

If I was a German, I'd say,

'De Jong sent records.

He didn't bring them himself.

'They turned out to be the Dutch anthem.

Very funny joke. Let's look for de Jong.'

And there they go, looking,

with fixed bayonets.

Your move, mah jong.

- They'll believe me if I tell the truth.

- You'll be shot before you can prove it.

- Shot? They can't shoot me.

- Can and will.

Well, it really doesn't matter. Either

we shoot you now, or they shoot you later.

Shot? I won't be shot!

Father...help me! Tell me what to do! They'll

be after me if they don't find me at home.

Evidently you know your friends. You don't

think they'll believe you if you tell the truth.

They believe everyone wants to kill them.

They will shoot first

and ask questions afterwards.

You are a servant of God!

You can't let them kill me!

You expect God to help you escape but I

think you were meant to fall into our hands.

(Man reads in German)

(Shouting in Dutch)

(Rhythmic clapping)

(Both speak Dutch at once)

Achtung! Achtung!

(Announcement in German)

- What's he say?

- What's Jerry say?

'The authorities of occupation have

to the number 200 of the crowd limited.

'50 must the football field at once leave.'

A fine cheek, ordering other people about.

What will the people do, Mr Burgomaster?

- What would you do in your own country?

- Tell 'em to go to hell.

- That would cause trouble.  
- It would that.  
- Many people might be killed or injured.  
- On both sides.  
In Holland, we've found a new system.  
If 50 are ordered to go, we all go.  
Come along.  
- That's playing their game.  
- You don't understand Germans.  
They have orderly minds.  
If they say 50, they mean 50.  
Achtung! Achtung!  
(Announcement in German)  
'As you were, it is equally forbidden  
that everybody should leave.  
'Cancel the previous order  
and continue to enjoy the game, please.'  
Jerry seems a bit flustered.  
Now we get on with the football.  
(Whistle)  
(Whistle and applause)  
There you are, you see? Dead easy.  
Bob Ashley.  
There's Bob!  
- It is Bob!  
- Well, I'll be jiggered.  
Hurray! What's he Dutch for hurray?  
- Hurrah.  
- (All) Hurrah!  
(Man reads hesitatingly in German)  
(Low chattering)  
You strolled around  
with your hands in your pockets  
speaking English  
and pushing men in canals.  
- They shouldn't have got in a flap.  
- You left your parachute in a canal.  
It was time to get cracking.  
I came back later but I couldn't find it.  
- The Germans had it by then.  
- Did they?  
I don't understand how you could  
walk along without Geoff spotting you.  
- I don't either. Perhaps he was asleep.



- (Geoff) I certainly wasn't.  
Did you see a train about 6:30?  
Oh, yes, sir, it overtook me. I hid.  
Overtook you?  
You were walking the wrong way, my lad,  
walking into Germany instead of England.  
- Then you met a shepherd.  
- Whose dog bit you.  
Then they took me to the village  
where the schoolteacher spoke English.  
- Schoolteacher? What was she like?  
- OK. That's where I had me breakfast.  
And then they passed you along  
by barge and ox cart...  
- Bicycle.  
- And what have you.  
..until you find yourself  
on the way to a football match.  
And they said, 'Good gracious'.  
They told me a truck would take me  
after the game to some man called Joe...  
Not Joe, Jo. It's a woman, not a man,  
otherwise you're all right.  
Her name is Jo de Vries.  
Half a minute.  
(Sniffs)  
- I smell the sea.  
- The North Sea.  
(Distant bugle)  
- Hear that?  
- German.  
- How do you know?  
- Heard 'em often enough in the last war.  
(Distant bugle)  
Hope Mrs de Vries  
has her weather eye open.  
(Shouts in German)  
Ich bin ein Chauffeur von Jo de Vries.  
(Speak German)  
(Loving)  
(Woman speaks German)  
(Officer shouts in German)  
Said tomorrow's dinner would be  
held up if he didn't let us get through.

- Would that be Mrs de Vries?

- Suppose so.

(Woman and driver speak Dutch)

(Jo) Are you there?

- Englishmen, are you there?

- Yes, all six of us.

When the truck stops, the driver  
will open up, get out at once.

(Lorry door closes)

- Which way?

- There.

(Speaks German)

(Speak German)

She's getting the Jerries  
to unload the truck for her.

- She's a cool customer.

- These Dutch girls are wizard.

They are. Our girls would do just  
the same if they had the chance.

(Men chat in German)

(Distant murmuring)

(Men sing in German)

(Singing ends,

men chat and laugh in German)

(Jo whispers) We're passing over  
the quarters of 200 German soldiers.

(Singing resumes)

Louis?

(Chat quietly in Dutch)

(Dripping)

We're over my house.

It's the German headquarters.

My rooms are at the end of the wing.

All of you, in the other room.

Take it easy.

You are safe here.

This place has good walls and floors.

You can talk as much as you want to  
and you can take off those things.

There's a radio here.

It's tuned in to the BBC.

Use it if you like.

Only don't start dancing.

Just below here is the officers' mess.

I must leave you now. Got to go back the way we came and come in by the front door, or they might start thinking.

Lock the door behind me and only open it to this knock.

(Three knocks and rap)

- V.

- Yes, V.

Pity, isn't it?

I never felt more like dancing in my life. Just imagine, officers' mess below, Jerries all over the place and no dancing. Such charming partners too.

- What time is it?

- **21** :

Pity. We've missed the news.

- What time did you you say it was?

- **21** :

- Hazel!

- Who?

(All) Hazel Mason, home and forces programme.

Oh, your wife.

I thought I recognised the voice.

(Woman singing on radio)

Steady, steady.

Not so fast.

That's better.

She's good.

She's damned good.

I hope your wife won't object to us undressing during her big scene.

- If she knew where you were, she'd twitter.

- Shh.

(Singing ends)

- All over.

- How was she?

Not bad. Not at all bad.

Yes...very good.

I hadn't thought about it till now but we'll have been posted missing this morning.

- I had thought of it.

- I don't think the others have.  
All the better for them.  
I suppose Hazel knows about Frank by now.  
Bound to. They'd get her at the BBC.  
She's on tonight.  
Where do you expect her to be, off?  
(Bugle plays)  
(Rhythmic marching)  
Good blackout they got here.  
You know, that's funny,  
them blacking out because of us.  
- I suppose we do fly over here, eh, Frank?  
- Katwijk? Yes, often.  
It feels like the end of a long term  
with a cheap supporting cast.  
No good looking in there  
for small change, my boy.  
You know, that's very significant.  
Five of these woollens  
are German to one British.  
Might be something in that after the war.  
Yorkshire woollens in Holland,  
they might go for it in a big way.  
Don't let anybody know I said so.  
I don't promise. I never talk about anything  
but woollens. Can't cure myself.  
- What's funny about woollens?  
- All right, don't get excited.  
Which should the world know more about,  
British actors or British cloth?  
(Three knocks and a rap)  
Now, let me see you all.  
- Frau de Vries, may I introduce...  
- No, you may not.  
I shall forget your names anyway.  
- Well, you don't mind us thanking you?  
- No.  
Why did you do that?  
I don't know. I was thinking of my own wife.  
- It wasn't only you.  
- I see.  
- Were you a diplomat before the war?  
- No, Johnny's the diplomat.  
- I'm just an actor.

- Of course.

No Englishman would kiss a woman's hand,  
except perhaps an actor.

- Snub or compliment?

- Compliment.

The way you handled those Germans  
taught me something about acting.

It isn't so difficult.

They're an unhappy people.

I would rather be a Dutchman  
in Holland now than any German soldier.

They want to believe that somebody's  
their friend and that's the trick.

A dangerous trick for a woman.

You don't seem to think much of women.

Besides I have Louis and Willem.

He was your driver.

They're the only servants left  
but they won't leave me.

I was afraid when I first started,  
just as a pilot is afraid  
the first time he goes solo.

Then after a few minutes, when he finds  
he's still alive, begins to like it.

- Will you do something for me?

- Yes, of course.

I want you to go and see my husband  
when you get back to England.

- Your husband?

- I'm not mad.

He's in London. I'll give you his address.

- But we heard...

- I know. I spread that story myself.

Nobody knows the truth,  
not even my friends.

But he's alive and in London.

Do you ever hear from him?

Five times a week. He's one of  
the Dutch announcers of Radio Oranje.

- What...

- Radio Orange.

Oh.

So you see we're two, on both sides  
of the channel. We're still fighting.

Well, leave it to us.

Can we get cracking tonight?

You may be here for days or hours.

It depends on your air force.

- You can only get away in a raid.
- We want to get back, raid or no raid.
- Look here...
- Are you in command?
- No, he's a Yorkshireman.
- Are you in command?
- No. You are.
- We have to get you back to England.

You won't be the first or the last  
to leave this house for England.

You'll reach the sea in a fishing boat  
and the fishing boat by a row boat  
from the cellar of this house  
and to the cellar by a back staircase.

The corridor which passes  
my door leads to that staircase.

The corridor has two features,  
a sentry...and a glass roof.

- And so?
- If you were his officer,  
what orders would you give in an air raid?

Well, tell him not to stand about  
under a glass roof, I suppose.

Exactly. During a raid,  
the corridor is left unguarded.

Now, do you understand?

Exactly.

Everything is prepared.

There's nothing to do now but wait.

(Rain falling)

Owing to bad weather conditions,  
there were no operations over  
enemy territory last night.

You're telling me.

Mon herr.

Pardon, mon herr.

Our wine has been drunk by the Germans  
but being a Dutch woman,  
I think that Dutch water is a better drink  
than French champagne.

I'm sorry I haven't been able to give you  
the food I would have liked to  
but we haven't very much left.  
I mean, not very much left to eat.  
But we've kept everything else.  
We can think and hope...  
and fight.  
I give you a toast. Louis.  
Our motto since the house of Orange  
drove out the Spaniards 300 years ago.  
'Je maintiendrai.'

It's nice to be a woman again,  
even for half an hour.  
What do they reckon that motto  
of yours means, then, ma'am?  
'We can take it.'

Well, I never. 300 years ago. We don't  
seem to have progressed much, do we?  
George.  
Come on, George.  
I don't know why everybody's looking at me.  
After all we have a diplomat  
and an actor here.  
I suppose it's my age.  
Well, my dear young lady, we can't  
offer you anything except our love...  
our gratitude and our admiration for  
a brave woman and a fearless country.  
But we can promise you one thing...  
a growing help, an attack,  
which will sweep these Germans from...  
(Distant hum of aeroplane engines)  
(Air-raid sirens blare)  
Air raid!  
(Jo and Louis speak in Dutch)  
Come here, all of you.  
(Distant shouts in German)  
You see? That's what you're doing for us.  
Can you hear them running for shelter?  
Can you understand what that means  
to all the occupied countries,  
to enslaved people  
having it drummed into their ears  
that the Germans are masters of the earth?

Seeing those masters running for shelter,  
seeing them crouching under tables  
and hearing that steady hum  
night after night,  
that noise which is oil  
for the burning fire of our hearts.  
(Distant booming and hum of aircraft)  
(Distant booming continues)  
(Door thumps)  
(Men shout in German)  
(Speaks German)  
(Man replies)  
(Whispers) Stop here.  
(Men speak German)  
(Whistles appreciatively)  
(Men talk excitedly in German)  
(Jo speaks German)  
She's leading him up  
the garden path beautifully.  
(Men chat excitedly)  
- They're expecting another chap, Fritz.  
- A little reception committee for Fritzy.  
He's gone to get a Korkenzieher.  
I don't know what Korkenzieher means.  
(Jo and soldiers flirt in German)  
Oh!  
(Whispers) She's dropped his torch  
in the drink.  
- Since when did you speak German?  
- I can understand that much.  
(Footsteps)  
(Calls out happily in German)  
Hello, Fritzy.  
OK.  
Now, what about this Korkenzieher?  
- Of course.  
- What is it?  
Corkscrew.  
Cut it out.  
I'll be Fritz.  
You others follow as soon as the fight starts.  
(Men speak German with Jo)  
(All shout)  
(Gagging)



(Shouts in German)

- All right, Mrs de Vries? Tom?

- Yes.

- Kiboshed.

- Bob?

KO.

- Frank? Geoff?

- All correct, sir.

(Speaks Dutch)

Louis!

(Both speak Dutch)

You can't wait for the tide to turn or the fishing boat. These three will be missed.

- We can't leave you in a spot like this.

- Don't worry about me.

And don't worry about these Germans.

We didn't invite them to our country but we can take care of them once they're here.

(Speaks Dutch)

That tunnel leads to the river.

Watch out for a fishing boat coming upstream with two white diamonds on it.

Try and contact the fishermen.

If you can't, trust to luck.

The danger will be at the swing bridge at the mouth of the river. It's guarded.

You may be challenged.

You must use your own judgment.

Now, hurry.

- What about the course?

- Due west.

Steer by a light

you will pick up eight miles out.

It's a German rescue buoy for their airmen who hit the sea.

Keep well to the left of it and watch out for E-boats.

- You have your compass?

- Yes.

Don't waste my corkscrew, bring a bottle.

Well, God bless you.

I suppose that's

the one advantage of being old.

(Distant hum of aircraft)

Good luck.  
(Distant booming)  
Stand by.  
In.  
- Out!  
- (Booming)  
(Explosions)  
Swing bridge ahead.  
(Klaxon blasts)  
(Mutters in German)  
(Distant booming)  
Here come the fishing boats.  
(Happy chattering)  
Two white diamonds.  
Our buoy friends.  
Our chance will be when  
the bridge starts to close again.  
Stand by to cast off.  
When I give the word, roll.  
Get set.  
Cast off.  
(Distant booming)  
(Whistles romantic melody)  
In.  
Out.  
In.  
(Whistling continues)  
Quicken up.  
Out.  
(Stops whistling)  
(Resumes whistling)  
(Stops whistling)  
Halt!  
Now, row!  
(Guard) Halt!  
- In, out, in...  
- (Gunshot)  
- Keep down.  
- We're not going to be caught!  
- (Gunshot)  
- In, out...  
(Machine-gun fire)  
- In, out...  
- (Heavy machine-gun fire)

- In, out, in, out...

- (Machine-gun fire continues)

(Distant hum of aircraft)

Our luck.

They don't dare use searchlights  
cos of our chaps.

Let's slow it down. I'm done.

What's your course, George?

We're going a bit north.

Do you want any help, sir?

You all right, George?

George?

- He's hurt.

- Steer, somebody.

- Are you hurt badly, George?

- The tiller...

Oh, don't worry about that.

Here. Geoff.

(Mutters)

Here, pass me that sack.

Oh, Lord.

You all right now, George?

If I can stick it till morning, I'll do all right.

I suppose this is what they call choppy.

It's what I call nasty.

Hey, here they come.

- They've spotted us, sir.

- Blast.

They'll be here in three minutes.

- If this comes off, we're going to be all right.

- Shut the hatch.

(Clanking)

- Are they still jabbering, sir?

- Yes.

They're ordering these two thugs  
to sit quiet till E-boats get here.

(Speaks German)

What are we going to do about  
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?

You two stay put, understand?

(Speaks German)

You're far too cocky.

You understand that all right.

OK.

No need to have an empty stomach anyway.

(Klaxon blares)

(Klaxon stops)

Try to pick up something from our side.

(Approaching engine)

(Shouting in German)

Out!

(Man) They don't seem

to understand my German, sir.

He's one of us!

All line up!

Steady! Watch it!

- Hello? Air Force?

- That's right, six of us.

What are you birds doing here?

- A wonder Jerry didn't pick you up.

- Matter of fact, we picked up two of them.

Jerries? Are they your prisoners?

We've been arguing

about that since we got here.

They were here first and radioed for help.

I see their point.

Technically you're their prisoners.

(Geoff) What, six to two? I like that.

Sir.

Got a bit too cocky, so we took their guns.

Legally that weakens your status but don't

mind me, I'm a barrister when I'm ashore.

Then we loosened the cables

and hoped we'd drift.

You drifted all right. Another hour with  
this tide and you'd be in our own minefields.

- How long have you been in the pot?

- Since four.

We saw you coming, sir.

We thought you was Jerries, sir.

Trouble with you fellows is you can't see  
anything unless you're 10,000 feet up.

We heard they were sending E-boats.

- When did you hear?

- Ten minutes ago.

Ten minutes? What are we waiting for?

Get aboard.

One of us is wounded.

We shan't be able to get him  
across to your boat.  
Yes. I quite agree. He can't be moved.  
Bit old for a flyer, isn't he?  
Well, how do you feel about it?  
He's our rear gunner.  
Yes...if it wasn't for those E-boats.  
Of course, you don't want to leave him.  
It would be the wisest thing to do.  
We can't do that.  
We're all the one crew, you see?  
Yes, I quite agree.  
- Coxswain!  
- Aye, aye, sir!  
- Take this lobster pot in tow!  
- Aye, aye, sir!  
What about the E-boats?  
That to the E-boats. Next stop Dover.  
- That's all, Corbett.  
- Thank you, sir.  
Well, George, this is the new kite.  
How do you like it?  
Yes, that's more my size.  
Right. The target's Berlin.