

BARRIERS

OR

GRANDMA'S SAGA

BY ALAN PLATER

WITH MUSIC BY PETER MAXWELL DAVIES

6 December 2001

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BARRIERS

CAST LIST:

MORAG
GRANDMA
BETTY
SANDY
BUCKLAND
McKAY
RACHEL (GRANDMA AS A GIRL)
SARAH
SAMUEL
GIOVANNI
*BERTONI
NICOL
MARIO
ELLEN
*CHIOCCHETTI
LILIAN
MARY
BELLA
GRAEME
MRS GRAEME
FERGUSON
MRS FERGUSON
AUNTIE MARGARET (FIDDLE PLAYER)

BRITISH SOLDIERS
ITALIANS
OFFICERS, VIPs, ORCADIANs, ETC., SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY
AND SPACE ONSTAGE.

*MUSICAL SKILLS REQUIRED:
BERTONI PLAYS ACCORDION, CHIOCCHETTI SINGS.

THE SET:

Centre-stage: the interior of a Nissen hut, later the Italian chapel.

To one side, Rachel's cottage, **to the other,** the Italian camp and music-making area.

Optional: a screen for projections.

BARRIERS is set in Orkney in the Present and during the Second World War. There is no interval.

Barriers was first performed on Friday 21st June 2002 at Orkney Arts Theatre, Kirkwall, Orkney

Director Penny Aberdein
Musical Director Glenys Hughes

Cast:

Morag	Cally Bevan
Grandma	Naismi Flett
Betty	Niamh Delaney
Sandy	Ben Chaddock
Buckland	Gareth Williams
MacKay	Bob Ross
Rachel	Carmen Luke
Sarah	Margaret Laughton
Samuel	Jim Chalmers
Giovanni	Magnus Dixon
Bertoni	Bob Gibbon
Nicol	Iain Campbell
Ellen	Alison Ballantine
Chiochetti	Graham Garson
Mario	Ben Chaddock
Marianne	Lorna Hirst
Lilian	Phyllis Brown
Mary	Fiona Matheson
Bella	Allison Dixon
Mrs Graeme	Cynthia Chaddock
Ferguson	David Fidler
Mrs Ferguson	Edwina Cook
Auntie Margaret	Lesley McLeod

Other parts were played by members of the cast

Marching band: Ben Chaddock, Kristin Leslie, Keith Hartmann, Andrew Stanger, Erik Spence

Italian Musicians: David Griffith, Eddie Nicolson, Tom Pickles, Steve Miller, George Rendall, Mark Rendall, Ian Tait

Set design: Leslie Burgher
Dave Grieve

Props Fraser Dixon

Slide projection Colin Keldie

Costumes Laura Grieve
Claire Burgher

Stage management: Jude Barnes
Doreen McLellan
Sandra Ballantine

Prompt: Margaret Sutherland

BARRIERS

MORAG, a teacher in her twenties or thereabouts, centre-stage, addresses the audience.

MORAG: We all know the Orkneyinga Saga. And if we don't know it, we pretend we do. And we know the story of the warriors who came from a foreign land and left their footprints forever on the islands. But I am the only person in the whole of Orkney who knows Grandma's Saga. The full inside story. Apart from my Grandma, that is.

Light on GRANDMA, who's sitting at a table in the cottage.

There's a little transistor radio on the table.

MORAG: I was home from Edinburgh and, as usual, I went to see her. When I arrived, she was listening to her radio.

On the radio we hear some Italian music: let's assume it's a version of Max's instrumental.

MORAG sits down at the table, looks closely at GRANDMA.

MORAG: Grandma...

GRANDMA: Yes dear.

MORAG: Are you crying?

GRANDMA: Don't be silly.

She switches off the radio and dabs her eyes with her pinny.

MORAG: Yes you are.

GRANDMA shrugs.

MORAG: Was it the music?

GRANDMA: *(Hesitates then:)* Yes.

MORAG: Tell me.

GRANDMA: It's a secret.

MORAG: Better still.

Again GRANDMA hesitates then:

GRANDMA: Well, I suppose now your grandfather has passed on, there would be no great harm in the telling.

MORAG: Is it a love story?

GRANDMA: No, of course not! The very idea...

MORAG: Excellent. Love stories. My favourite.

GRANDMA: It isn't a love story.

MORAG: The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

GRANDMA: And methinks the folk at that university taught you too much cleverness and not enough respect for age.

MORAG: I'm sorry, grandma. All right. It isn't a love story. What sort of story is it?

GRANDMA: It's a war story.

MORAG: The second world war?

GRANDMA: Yes. Do you know about the war?

MORAG: I know we beat Germany. Kenneth More sank the Bismarck and Steve McQueen jumped over a fence on a motor-bike.

GRANDMA: I don't know about those people. I know the war began in the village the night my friend Betty saw the whale.

MORAG: Sorry? I know what a whale is but who's Betty?

GRANDMA: She was in my class at school. She was what we used to call a bit fast. She liked to canoodle with boys.

MORAG: Canoodle?

GRANDMA: Oh I know you're all at it like rabbits these days what with your co-habiting and so on...

MORAG: No we're not.

GRANDMA: Now who is protesting too much? I know what goes on. I see it on Channel 4. But in our day you didn't canoodle until you were married, for fear God might be watching.

MORAG: But Betty didn't worry about that.

GRANDMA: She did not.

Light on BETTY and SANDY, a couple of teenage kids, sitting on the edge of the stage, canoodling.

It's a chill October night and they're swathed in big coats, hats and scarves.

GRANDMA continues her tale.

GRANDMA: And on this night she was canoodling with Sandy, a farmer's son from the next village, in the shelter of the harbour wall.

Over to BETTY and SANDY.

BETTY: It's time I went home.

SANDY: Not yet.

BETTY: It's late. And you smell.

SANDY: So would you smell if you'd been spreading muck all day.

BETTY: Ugh!

She pulls away.

SANDY: I washed my hands and face before I came out.

BETTY: It's the rest of you that smells.

SANDY: One more kiss.

BETTY: But it never is only one more, is it?

SANDY: You'll miss my kisses when I join the army.

BETTY: (*Hesitates then:*) All right. Just one more.

As they start to embrace, a huge shadow falls across them and BETTY, who's facing the water, lets out a squeal.

SANDY: I didn't touch you!

He pulls away.

BETTY: Look!

He turns to look.

BETTY: Is it a whale?

SANDY: Of course it isn't a whale.

BETTY: It's big enough for a whale.

Then they hear the throbbing sound of ship's engines: to be precise, a submarine's engines.

SANDY: Whales don't have engines.

BETTY: Engines?

SANDY: Listen.

They listen.

SANDY: It's a submarine.

BETTY: One of ours?

SANDY: Obviously.

BETTY: Do you think they saw us?

SANDY: What if they did?

BETTY: They might tell my father.

BETTY gets up.

BETTY: I'm going home.

SANDY gets up.

SANDY: One more kiss?

BETTY: No more kisses.

CROSS-FADE to MORAG and GRANDMA.

GRANDMA: But it wasn't one of ours. It was the German submarine that sank the Royal Oak.

An explosion.

And possibly - if we have a screen and projection facilities - a brief MONTAGE of the disaster, before we resume the quiet domesticity of the scene with MORAG and GRANDMA.

MORAG: And they saw the German submarine?

GRANDMA: According to Betty's account, they saw it.

MORAG: Didn't they tell anyone?

GRANDMA: No. Betty told me and nobody else. You have to see it from her point of view.

A light on BETTY.

BETTY: What were we to do? Nobody knew we were there. Sandy's parents didn't approve of me. My parents didn't approve of Sandy. I didn't approve of Sandy. That's why I liked him so much. And even if we'd known it was a German submarine, what could we have done? Shouted rude words at it? Thrown stones at it? Swum across Scapa Flow ahead of it to warn the sailors? So we kept quiet. And I pretended what I'd seen was a whale.

CROSS-FADE to GRANDMA and MORAG.

GRANDMA: And that's the story Betty took to her grave, God rest her sweet soul.

MORAG: But you still haven't told me why that music made you cry.

GRANDMA: You're the only one who says I was crying.

MORAG: I saw you.

GRANDMA: So it's your word against mine and remember, this is my saga, not yours.

MORAG: I'm sorry.

GRANDMA: Be patient and pay attention. In 1939, the British Army invaded these islands. They looked well. I always thought the khaki was a good Orcadian colour.

A military style drum beat.

The British Army makes its entrance!

How this happens depends on the size and shape of our theatre space. The soldiers could process down the aisle or aisles or simply make a conventional entrance from the wings.

They are led by MAJOR BUCKLAND and SERGEANT McKAY, who will be main players in the drama. They are followed by between six and a dozen SOLDIERS.

They march on stage, stand in a tidy military line and the drum beat segues into the backing for them as they sing their Soldiers' Chorus:

SONG: This bloody town's a bloody cuss -
No bloody trains, no bloody bus,
And no one cares for bloody us -
In bloody Orkney.

The bloody roads are bloody bad,
The bloody folks are bloody mad,
They'd make the brightest bloody sad,
In bloody Orkney.

All bloody clouds, and bloody rains,
No bloody kerbs, no bloody drains,
The Council's got no bloody brains,
In bloody Orkney.

Everything's so bloody dear,
A bloody bob, for bloody beer,
And is it good? - no bloody fear,
In bloody Orkney.

The bloody films are bloody old,
The bloody seats are bloody cold,
You can't get in for bloody gold,
In bloody Orkney.

The bloody dances make you smile,
The bloody band is bloody vile,
It only cramps your bloody style,
In bloody Orkney.

No bloody sport, no bloody games,
No bloody fun, the bloody dames
Won't even give their bloody names
In bloody Orkney.

Best bloody place is bloody bed,
 With bloody ice on bloody head,
 You might as well be bloody dead,
 In bloody Orkney.*

** Authorship note. These words come from a book called The Nation's Favourite Comic Poems and are credited to a Captain Hamish Blair. My folk contacts assure me it's an old, all-purpose military anthem and indeed, we used a Bloody Hull version in a show in 1970.*

The Generations CD version credits it to Unknown and is significantly different.

What does this mean? We can fiddle around with it to suit our needs, both musical and dramatic.

At the end of the song the SOLDIERS salute the audience then march smartly offstage.

They are watched by three women: MARY, BELLA and LILIAN. They are doing their messages and carry shopping bags. They are our occasional Greco/Orcadian chorus.

MARY: So that would be the British army?

LILIAN: Apparently.

BELLA: They don't seem very impressed with our island.

MARY: Nor am I very impressed with them.

LILIAN: They drink a great deal, I'm told.

MARY: One of them winked at me in the street the other day.

BELLA: Never!

MARY: And he said something impertinent.

LILIAN: What did he say?

MARY: Bless you, I couldn't understand a word. My Betty was with me and she said he was speaking in London cockney.

BELLA: How does your Betty know about London cockney?

MARY: They speak it in films at the cinema, she says.

LILIAN: Is it true your Betty saw a whale?

MARY: Who told you that?

LILIAN: Sandy Flett's mother.

MARY looks offstage.

MARY: Oh look. The butcher has opened and there are sausages in the window.

BETTY, MARY and LILIAN exit, in pursuit of sausages.

As they do so, BUCKLAND and McKAY, enter the Nissen hut, now transformed into BUCKLAND'S HQ - indicated by a desk, a filing cabinet and a couple of chairs.

BUCKLAND is English. McKAY is a mainland Scot.

MORAG and GRANDMA enter, watch from a distance.

MORAG: Who are those two?

GRANDMA: That's Major Buckland, the commanding officer. And Sergeant McKay.

MORAG: Did they really hate Orkney?

GRANDMA: Why do you say that?

MORAG: I heard them singing that song.

GRANDMA: Ah. We were a little upset at first. But then it was explained to us that this was the English sense of humour that would, in the end, win the war.

MORAG: I see. Well, it's a point of view but...

GRANDMA puts her fingers to her lips.

GRANDMA: Hush. The major is about to address his senior officers. We must all show respect for rank.

MORAG: If you say so.

BUCKLAND stands up and addresses the audience, which becomes, for our purposes, an assembly of senior officers.

BUCKLAND: Gentlemen. Let me explain what we are doing here in what some of you are pleased to call bloody Orkney.

GRANDMA: You see? The English sense of humour.

MORAG: Hush. Show respect for rank.

Now we need a visual aid.

If we have the screen and projection facilities mentioned earlier, we can use them again. If not, McKAY unrolls a large map of the islands, with the BARRIERS marked in red.

BUCKLAND: We are here to oversee the building of a series of barriers to link mainland Orkney with the islands of Lamb Holm, Glimps Holm, Burray and South Ronaldsay. The effect will be to close all the eastern entrances to Scapa Flow, the means by which the German submarine was able to enter and sink the Royal Oak with the loss of over eight hundred lives in October of last year. The barriers are being built at the express orders of Winston Churchill and as you will all understand, when Winston Churchill orders you to build barriers, you say: yes sir, how high would you like them? But naturally, it isn't as simple as that.

GRANDMA: This is the important bit. Pay heed.

MORAG: I am paying heed.

BUCKLAND: You may also be aware that the engineers have had serious labours problems through losing men to military service.

McKAY: Don't forget the Irish, sir.

BUCKLAND: And I wasn't going to mention this but since my sergeant has been thoughtful enough to draw it to my attention...

McKAY: Sorry sir.

BUCKLAND: Most of the Irish workers have also been sent home because of lingering doubts about which side they are on. Not, if you will pardon a personal observation, a new problem where the Irish are concerned. All that being so, we are soon to take delivery of six hundred Italian prisoners-of-war who will assist in the completion of the Churchill barriers.

As he is speaking, there is a repeat of the drum beat that preceded the arrival of the British Army.

Then, echoing that scene, the ITALIANS march in, wearing their P.O.W. uniforms with target patches on the back.

Among them is GIOVANNI, a young man who will become a main player in the drama.

And crucially they make their entrance with right arms upraised in the Italian fascist salute. They march onstage, parade up and down, then march off.

McKAY: Well, they're obviously thrilled to bits to be here.

BUCKLAND: Thank you, gentlemen.

The meeting, by implication, breaks up.

BUCKLAND and McKAY cross to their office in the Nissen hut.

McKAY puts some paper in a lovely old-fashioned typewriter. It should, I believe, be an Imperial. He starts typing, slowly and painfully.

BUCKLAND picks up the receiver of his telephone and is about to dial a number when he becomes aware of RACHEL staring at him.

RACHEL is GRANDMA, aged sixteen or so, from a farming family. In this context, she might as well be marooned on Mars.

BUCKLAND: Who are you?

RACHEL: Rachel.

BUCKLAND: Rachel.

MORAG and GRANDMA react.

MORAG: That's you!

GRANDMA: That's me. Wasn't I bonny?

MORAG: You certainly were.

GRANDMA: It makes you weep to think what happens to us all later on.

MORAG: Hush.

She wants to see what happens next.

BUCKLAND: Are you lost?

RACHEL: I don't know.

McKAY comes to BUCKLAND'S rescue.

McKAY: Where are you supposed to be?

RACHEL: I don't know where I am supposed to be. That is why I don't know whether I am lost.

BUCKLAND: There's an undeniable logic in that.

RACHEL: But Mansie said I should come here for work.

McKAY: Mansie?

RACHEL: Mansie the boatman.

McKAY: You've come for a job?

RACHEL: Mansie said the army needed women to do the cleaning for them. I can do the cleaning for you. I am very good at the cleaning.

McKAY: Can you sweep a floor?

RACHEL regards this as a really silly question.

RACHEL: Of course I can.

McKAY: Clean windows?

RACHEL: Easily.

McKAY: I don't suppose you can type?

RACHEL: No, but I can milk a cow.

She sees the typewriter.

RACHEL: Is that a typewriter?

McKAY: It is.

RACHEL: My my, that's a wonderful machine.

She takes a closer look.

- McKAY: Can you read and write?
- RACHEL: Of course I can! And I can recite over half of the hundred and fifty psalms in the Bible from memory.
- BUCKLAND: We clearly need people like you on our side in the war, Rachel. I'm sure the sergeant agrees.
- McKAY: I imagine Hitler is trembling already. Start tomorrow young lady?
- RACHEL: Good.
- BUCKLAND: But remember. You may hear confidential military matters being discussed here. You know about careless talk?
- RACHEL: Careless talk costs lives.
- BUCKLAND: Quite so.
- RACHEL: Don't worry, major. I won't say a word to anyone. Apart from my mother and father. I tell them everything.

BUCKLAND hesitates then:

- BUCKLAND: Off you go, Rachel.
- RACHEL: Just a minute.

She fishes in her shopping bag and brings out a couple of eggs.

- RACHEL: My father sent those.

She looks from one to the other.

- RACHEL: Perhaps you can share them. That will be one each.
- BUCKLAND: Thank you, Rachel. Now, if you will excuse us, we have a war to fight.
- McKAY: We'll see you in the morning, hen.
- RACHEL: I'll be here first thing, unless Mansie's been on the drink and his boat is late. Good bye, major and sergeant.

She goes.

BUCKLAND looks at his egg.

- BUCKLAND: Nobody ever gave me an egg before.
- McKAY: Nor me, sir.
- BUCKLAND: We could save up for an omelette.

BUCKLAND'S telephone rings. He answers it.

BUCKLAND: *(On phone)* Buckland. *(Listens then:)* All of them? *(Listens then:)* No, I'd rather you didn't shoot anybody. *(Listens then:)* We'll open negotiations tomorrow.

He hangs up.

BUCKLAND: The Italians are refusing to work.

McKAY: They're on strike?

BUCKLAND: Yes, I suppose they are.

McKAY smiles.

McKAY: I know all about strikes, sir.

BUCKLAND: You do?

McKAY: I come from a mining family. It's in the blood.

BUCKLAND: Well on this occasion you're on the side of the wicked bosses. It's not our job to see the other side's point of view.

McKAY: With respect, sir, unless you see the other side's point of view, you will never solve the problem.

BUCKLAND: Why are you still a sergeant?

McKAY: An unfortunate tendency to hit people, under the influence of drink, at crucial moments in my military career, sir.

BUCKLAND gives him a look.

BUCKLAND: I'll bear that in mind in our future dealings.

CROSS-FADE to RACHEL, having supper in the family kitchen - the same set as GRANDMA'S cottage - with her parents, SAMUEL and SARAH and her AUNTIE BELLA, whom we met earlier when she was doing her messages.

They're an old-established farming family.

RACHEL: They said thank you for the eggs.

SARAH: Tomorrow you shall take some cheese.

BELLA: But you must be sure to keep a safe distance from the soldiers, Rachel. One of them winked at Mary Manson in the street the other day.

SARAH: Don't worry. Neither of them did any winking at me, Auntie Bella.

BELLA: I'm pleased to hear it.

RACHEL: But I saw some Italians.

SARAH: Close to?

RACHEL: Oh no, they were a long way away.

SAMUEL: You must certainly keep a safe distance from them. They are the enemy.

SARAH: Are they still enemies if they're prisoners?

SAMUEL: Of course they are, woman. Didn't they march off their ship and through the town giving the fascist salute?

BELLA: I'm surprised the soldiers didn't shoot one or two of them. To remind them how to behave.

RACHEL: I don't think the soldiers are allowed to shoot people, just like that.

SARAH: And they probably did their saluting in case anyone was watching. It could get back to Mussolini.

RACHEL: Who would tell Mussolini?

SARAH: Enemy spies.

RACHEL: Are there enemy spies in Kirkwall and Stromness?

BELLA: I read in the newspaper. Spies don't look like spies in books. They're more likely to look like your next door neighbour.

RACHEL: But our next-door neighbour's as blind as a bat.

SAMUEL: And your Auntie Bella, as usual, is talking total nonsense. There are no spies in Orkney. And if there are, they'll be no nearer than Stromness.

RACHEL: Good.

SAMUEL: But Italy is fighting on the other side and even if the prisoners are prisoners, they are still our enemy and you mustn't have anything to do with them.

RACHEL: All right.

SAMUEL: Promise?

RACHEL: Promise.

CROSS-FADE to the Nissen hut.

It's the next morning. The place is empty.

RACHEL enters, carrying a bucket and a mop. She starts work.

After a while, GIOVANNI enters. He's a young Italian in his twenties. He's wearing the standard issue uniform with the target on the back.

He sees RACHEL.

GIOVANNI: Buon giorno, signorina.

RACHEL says nothing.

GIOVANNI: Good morning.

Still she says nothing.

GIOVANNI: It's a beautiful morning for the time of year.

His English is perfect, maybe with a hint of an accent but no more.

GIOVANNI: And you are a very beautiful young woman and I am very sorry you were born unable to speak.

RACHEL: I can speak.

GIOVANNI: So why don't you speak to me?

RACHEL: Because you're the enemy.

GIOVANNI: My name is Giovanni and I am nobody's enemy. What is your name?

RACHEL: It's a secret.

GIOVANNI: Are you a spy?

RACHEL: No. But careless talk costs lives. And you might be a spy.

GIOVANNI: Signorina. I am shipwrecked on a cold and windy island two thousand miles away from Italy. How can I be a spy? What do you think I can do? Swim all the way to Rome and tell them the vital information that will win the war? I have the name of the beautiful girl who sweeps out the Nissen huts.

RACHEL considers this then:

RACHEL: Rachel.

GIOVANNI: Bella.

RACHEL: No. Rachel. Bella's my auntie.

GIOVANNI: Bella means beautiful in Italian. Rachel is a beautiful name. And you are a beautiful girl.

RACHEL: No I'm not.

GIOVANNI shrugs.

GIOVANNI: It's my word against yours.

RACHEL: Do you really think so?

GIOVANNI: I do. And I am an expert.

Something else for RACHEL to think about.

She reaches a decision.

RACHEL: Would you like some cheese?

GIOVANNI: I would love some cheese.

RACHEL dips into her bag and gives GIOVANNI the cheese, home-made, wrapped in a piece of grease-proof paper.

He opens it, smells it, nibbles a piece.

GIOVANNI: Did you make this?

RACHEL: My mother made it.

GIOVANNI: It's lovely.

RACHEL: Bella?

GIOVANNI: Sì. Grazie, signorina.

RACHEL: Promise you won't tell anyone.

GIOVANNI: What about?

RACHEL: I promised my father I wouldn't talk to any Italians. And I certainly wasn't supposed to give the cheese to any Italians.

GIOVANNI: I promise not to tell your father.

RACHEL: Or my mother.

GIOVANNI: Or your mother.

RACHEL: Or my Auntie Bella or any of her friends. They're terrible gossips.

GIOVANNI: The cheese will be our secret.

He slips it in his pocket.

RACHEL: Are you a proper Italian?

GIOVANNI: Of course I am. Why else would I be wearing a prisoner's uniform? With a target on the back so they can shoot me if I run away?

RACHEL: You don't sound like a proper Italian.

GIOVANNI: Because I speak good English?

RACHEL: You speak...English English.

GIOVANNI: I came to England when I was a boy to work in my uncle's restaurant in Soho.

RACHEL: Where is Soho?

GIOVANNI: It's in London.

RACHEL: I've never been to London.

GIOVANNI: It's in England.

RACHEL: I've never been to England.

GIOVANNI: Go to Scotland and keep going South. You'll arrive in England.

RACHEL: I've never been to Scotland.

GIOVANNI: Have you been anywhere?

RACHEL: Of course I have. I've been to Hoy. And Shapinsay.

GIOVANNI: Ah. A woman of the world.

RACHEL: A woman of the world? I don't know what that is.

GIOVANNI: After the war you must come to Soho and I will show you.

RACHEL: No. I don't think my father and mother would permit me to do that.

GIOVANNI: As you wish. But that is why I am here.

RACHEL: To invite people to Soho to see these women of the world?

GIOVANNI: I am here because I speak good English and the senior officers need me. For their very important meeting. I think I hear them.

He reacts to the sound of people approaching.

BUCKLAND enters, accompanied by McKAY and CAPTAIN BERTONI.

BUCKLAND: Good morning, you must be our interpreter.

GIOVANNI: Giovanni Di Fiore.

BUCKLAND: Major Buckland. And this is Sergeant McKay.

McKAY gives GIOVANNI a curt nod.

BUCKLAND: And I expect you know Captain Bertoni.

GIOVANNI: Of course. Buon giorno.

BERTONI: Giorno.

BUCKLAND sees RACHEL, busying about the place, trying to look invisible.

BUCKLAND: Good morning, Rachel.

RACHEL: Good morning, sir.

McKAY: How are you this morning, hen?

RACHEL: I am well, thank you.

McKAY: You and this bonny wee lad been making friends?

RACHEL: Oh no, my father won't allow me to speak to the Italians.

McKAY: He's probably a very good judge. They all fancy themselves as lady-killers. Romeo was an Italian, you know.

RACHEL: I didn't know that.

While this is going on, BUCKLAND organises three chairs around his desk.

Then he turns to RACHEL.

BUCKLAND: Would you mind leaving us, Rachel? We have confidential matters to discuss.

RACHEL: I was thinking the windows need washing.

BUCKLAND: I was thinking the rain did that rather well up here but I'm sure you're a better judge than I am.

RACHEL: I'll...away and wash the windows then.

RACHEL exits.

BUCKLAND: If you'd like to sit down, gentlemen...

BUCKLAND, GIOVANNI and BERTONI sit around the table.

McKAY stands guard by the door.

BUCKLAND: Good. To business. Why are you refusing to work?

GIOVANNI: Under the Geneva convention, prisoners of war are forbidden to do war work. And building the barriers between the islands is war work.

BUCKLAND: Why do you say that?

GIOVANNI: Because with the barriers in position, submarines will no longer be able to enter Scapa Flow and sink the British navy.

BUCKLAND: Supposing I tell you these are not barriers but bridges.

GIOVANNI: Bridges?

BERTONI reacts to the word.

BERTONI: *(In ITALIAN)* Bridges?

GIOVANNI: *(In ITALIAN)* Bridges.

BUCKLAND: We...with your help, I hope...will be building roads on top of the barriers, linking the islands for the benefit of the people who live here. It will be our permanent memorial and yours too when the war is over and long forgotten. We build barriers for war. We build bridges for peace. And after all, wasn't it the Romans who taught us how to build roads and bridges in the first place?

McKAY: Very good, sir.

GIOVANNI has a murmured conversation with BERTONI.

GIOVANNI: We are very happy to build bridges.

BUCKLAND: Good.

GIOVANNI: But you must not use the word barriers where any of us can hear you. Only bridges.

BUCKLAND: May we shake hands on that?

He holds out a hand. BERTONI shakes it.

BUCKLAND: *(A half-rise)* Thank you. Shall we start work?

GIOVANNI: There are some other matters.

BUCKLAND: How many?

GIOVANNI looks at a list BERTONI gives him.

GIOVANNI: Four.

BUCKLAND: Carry on.

GIOVANNI: Item one. Tea and coffee.

BUCKLAND: You'll have to explain that.

GIOVANNI: You give us lots of tea to drink and it's horrible. We hate it.

BUCKLAND: It must be the way you prepare it. It's good quality tea, the same as we drink.

GIOVANNI: I'm in charge of the catering. We prepare it perfectly. It still tastes horrible. Give us coffee. It won't cost any more. I know how to make it go a long way.

BUCKLAND hesitates then:

BUCKLAND: I'll see what can be done. You do realise coffee doesn't grow in the British Isles?

GIOVANNI: Neither, I think, does tea.

BUCKLAND: And saddest of all, neither do grapes. But, as I say, we'll do what we can.

GIOVANNI puts a tick on the list.

BERTONI smiles.

- BUCKLAND: And the second item?
- GIOVANNI: Concrete.
- BUCKLAND: Concrete.
- McKAY: (*Quietly*) Bloody hell.
- GIOVANNI: Every day when they finish work, the contractors throw away the unused concrete.
- BUCKLAND: I'm assured by the experts that you can't keep concrete overnight.
- GIOVANNI: May we have it?
- BUCKLAND: I suppose so. What on earth will you do with it? You're not going to eat it, are you?
- GIOVANNI: We'll use it to make a billiard table.
- McKAY: A concrete billiard table?
- GIOVANNI: Yes.
- BUCKLAND: Can you make a concrete billiard table?
- GIOVANNI: (*Shrugs*) Nobody knows. But we invented roads and bridges. Now we'll see whether we can invent the concrete billiard table.
- BUCKLAND: We wish you luck.
- GIOVANNI: And one of the prisoners, Domenico Chiocchetti, would like to make a statue of St George.
- BUCKLAND: Also out of concrete?
- GIOVANNI: Domenico is an artist. He says if concrete is what there is, concrete is what he'll use.
- BUCKLAND: Why St George?
- GIOVANNI: St George is the patron saint at home where he was born.
- BUCKLAND: St George is the patron saint at home where I was born.
- GIOVANNI: That's fine. He must be a very good saint that so many people want him. So you say yes to the concrete?
- BUCKLAND: Yes to the concrete.
- GIOVANNI: And any other bits of scrap metal we find lying about?
- BUCKLAND: Yes to the concrete. Scrap metal is much too vague a phrase to have meaning in

military law. You could interpret it to mean parked cars and the occasional tank.

McKAY: Or my bike.

BUCKLAND: Precisely. I've seen your bicycle, sergeant. But we'll say yes to the unused concrete.

GIOVANNI turns to BERTONI.

GIOVANNI: *(In ITALIAN)* Yes to the concrete.

BUCKLAND: So we have item one, coffee. Item two, concrete. Item three?

GIOVANNI: We would like a Nissen hut.

BUCKLAND: A Nissen hut?

GIOVANNI: One like this would be perfect.

BUCKLAND: Why do you need a Nissen hut?

McKAY: Probably for a bloody billiard hall. For the concrete billiard table.

GIOVANNI: No. For a chapel.

BUCKLAND: A chapel.

BERTONI: Una piccola cappella.

GIOVANNI: Wherever we go, we make a chapel. Domenico has drawn some plans.

BERTONI brings out some sketches for BUCKLAND to inspect.

BUCKLAND: Domenico?

GIOVANNI: Domenico Chiocchetti.

BUCKLAND: This is the same chap who's going to make the statue of St George?

GIOVANNI: Yes. He's a fine artist.

BUCKLAND: And a hard worker? This will have to be done in his spare time.

GIOVANNI: He has people to help him. And God of course.

BUCKLAND: Of course.

BUCKLAND makes a note.

BUCKLAND: I'll see what can be done about a Nissen hut.

GIOVANNI: Two would be better.

BUCKLAND: Two Nissen huts?

McKAY: Cheeky devil.

GIOVANNI: We are six hundred men from a devout nation. One Nissen hut would be good. Two would be better.

McKAY: Mind you, you can look on the bright side, sir. At least there aren't any Protestants to contend with.

BUCKLAND: Thank you, sergeant.

BUCKLAND checks his list.

BUCKLAND: Item one, coffee. Item two, concrete. Item three, one...or possibly two Nissen huts. And item four?

GIOVANNI: An accordion.

BERTONI nods his approval.

BUCKLAND: An accordion?

GIOVANNI: A musical instrument. You play it by squeezing it gently...

BUCKLAND: Thank you, I know what an accordion is.

GIOVANNI: ...gently and tenderly, as you would a beautiful woman.

BUCKLAND: It sounds as if you play yourself.

GIOVANNI: No. Captain Bertoni plays in our orchestra. He is a fine artist.

BERTONI smiles. He gets the gist of what is being said, and approves.

McKAY: Another one.

GIOVANNI: We are a nation of artists. Captain Bertoni's accordion was killed in action in the desert.

BUCKLAND: We'll save the details for another time, if you don't mind. Though I'm sure it was a heroic death. Tell me about your orchestra.

GIOVANNI: We have *two guitars, a trumpet and a drum. All of them have survived the war without injury. Only the accordion was killed.

** N.B. This is an adjustable line, depending on the line-up of our actual Italian band on the night.*

BUCKLAND: My condolences. But I'm not sure I can help you. Coffee, concrete and Nissen huts fall within my official sphere of responsibility. Accordions are something of a grey area. Maybe the Red Cross could help you...

Whereupon RACHEL pops into the hut, with her bucket.

RACHEL: I might be able to help you.

BUCKLAND: You?

McKAY: You're not supposed to be listening.

RACHEL: I wasn't listening. I overheard.

McKAY: Is that different?

RACHEL: I was cleaning the windows and I overheard by accident. That's not the same as listening on purpose. And I definitely didn't hear any state secrets. Unless it's a secret about the accordion.

BUCKLAND: Let us assume the accordion isn't a state secret. What did you hear and how can you help?

RACHEL: We could lend you cousin Andrew's accordion.

GIOVANNI: Grazie, signorina.

BUCKLAND: What would cousin Andrew have to say about this?

RACHEL: He's away in the Navy on a ship.

McKAY: That often happens when you're in the navy.

RACHEL: He left his accordion but he said it would be better if somebody could play it while he was away. He said it was like walking a dog. He said dogs and musical instruments need regular exercise.

GIOVANNI: Captain Bertoni would take great care of such an instrument.

BUCKLAND: No doubt. However...

BUCKLAND hesitates.

GIOVANNI: There is a problem?

BUCKLAND: Somewhere in my in-tray is a directive from Whitehall forbidding direct contact between the civilian population and the prisoners-of-war.

GIOVANNI: Perhaps you have lost the piece of paper?

RACHEL: That would be cheating.

McKAY: It's none of your business. Officially you're not even in the room.

RACHEL: But there is no problem, even if I'm not in the room.

The men all look at her.

BUCKLAND: How so?

RACHEL: If I lend the accordion to Major Buckland, he can lend it to Mr Giovanni, and then nobody will break any rules.

A beat then:

BUCKLAND: Thank you, Rachel. We accept your offer. Now perhaps you'll be good enough to leave us before we notice you're here.

RACHEL takes her bucket and goes.

CROSS-FADE to MORAG and GRANDMA, watching the scene from a distance.

GRANDMA: It was an important day for me.

MORAG: Was it? Why?

GRANDMA: It was the day I discovered that putting men in uniform and giving them offices and telephones and typewriters doesn't necessarily make them all that bright.

MORAG: You struck a blow for women.

GRANDMA: Not really. I just used my common sense.

MORAG: And did it really happen that way?

GRANDMA: That's the way I remember it, dear. And as I keep saying, it's my saga. No doubt they all had theirs.

While GRANDMA and MORAG are talking, GIOVANNI and BERTONI get up, shake hands on the deal with BUCKLAND, and leave.

CROSS-FADE to BUCKLAND and McKAY.

BUCKLAND: Come on, sergeant. You're the expert on industrial relations. How did I do? Honest opinion.

McKAY: Well, you made several concessions, sir...

BUCKLAND: Unused concrete? Coffee instead of tea? A Nissen hut? These islands are overflowing with Nissen huts. And somebody else's accordion? And the Italians are going back to work. I'd say that was pretty good.

McKAY: Yes, that's very good. You get your barriers.

BUCKLAND: Bridges, sergeant. Bridges.

McKAY: Sorry sir.

BUCKLAND: Something else...

McKAY: Sir?

BUCKLAND: Did you notice a smell of cheese?

McKAY: Yes, I did, now you mention it.

BUCKLAND: Very odd.

CROSS-FADE to RACHEL, at the kitchen table with SAMUEL, SARAH and BELLA.

In effect, they're in mid-row.

- SAMUEL: You said what?
- RACHEL: I said they could borrow cousin Andrew's accordion.
- SAMUEL: You had no right to do that.
- RACHEL: But it's for Captain Bertoni. He's a fine artist, apparently. And Auntie Bella, didn't your Andrew say it would be good for his accordion if somebody could play it while he was away?
- BELLA: I'm not sure he meant for Italian music.
- SARAH: How is Italian music different from our music?
- SAMUEL: Mr Linklater says it's mostly operatic music, about broken-hearted clowns and bullfighters. And he plays the organ at the church.
- SARAH: Do they have bullfighters in Italy? I thought that was Spain.
- RACHEL: But whatever sort of music it is, it's bound to use the same notes, isn't it?
- SARAH: And Mexico, I think. I'm sure they have bullfighters in Mexico. But not in Italy.
- SAMUEL: I will tell you what they have in Italy. Lions and Christians. And those are the people you want to trust with Andrew's accordion.
- RACHEL: All right. But it will be your fault.

A pause, sulky on RACHEL'S part.

SAMUEL, SARAH and BELLA look at her, baffled.

- SAMUEL: What will be our fault?
- RACHEL: The strike.
- SAMUEL: What are you talking about, child?
- RACHEL: I can't tell you. I'm sworn to secrecy. I could be arrested as a spy and a traitor.
- SARAH: You don't have secrets from your mother.

RACHEL looks at her mother: realises she's right. No secrets there.

- RACHEL: You mustn't say anything to anyone else.
- BELLA: How can we? We have no idea what you're talking about.
- RACHEL: I'll tell you. The Italians went on strike.
- SAMUEL: They can't do that. They're prisoners-of-war.

RACHEL: Well, nobody told them they're not allowed to go on strike and they did. So there were secret negotiations that I'm not allowed to tell you about and the strike was settled. And part of the settlement was cousin Andrew's accordion.

BELLA: They went on strike because they wanted to borrow Andrew's accordion?

RACHEL: No. They want a chapel as well.

SAMUEL: A chapel and an accordion?

RACHEL: There was lots more than that. Five things altogether. But I'm not allowed to tell you about the other things. I shouldn't really have told you about the chapel. And in any case, I wasn't even there.

SARAH: If you weren't there, how do you know?

RACHEL: I was cleaning the windows.

SAMUEL: So the heart of the matter is this. If we don't lend them the accordion, the Italians will stop work on the barriers.

RACHEL: Not barriers. Bridges.

SAMUEL: Bridges?

RACHEL: That's something else I'm not allowed to tell you about.

SAMUEL: What are you allowed to tell us?

RACHEL gives this some thought, then reaches her decision.

RACHEL: If we don't lend them the accordion, we would be guilty of undermining the war effort. We could even end up losing the war.

SAMUEL stands up.

SAMUEL: I'm going for a drink.

SARAH: You don't drink.

SAMUEL: That girl is driving me to it.

SAMUEL exits.

CROSS-FADE to MORAG and GRANDMA watching the scene from a distance.

MORAG: Did you drive him to drink?

GRANDMA: No, of course not. He would say that but what he usually did was go out into the fields and swear at the cows.

MORAG: How do you know that?

GRANDMA: I once followed him. I hid behind a wall and listened. It wasn't serious swearing.

Not like you get on the television. Mostly words beginning with B. And an occasional damn. He never swore in front of us. He was a very good man, my father. They don't make men like that any more.

MORAG: What about Giovanni, your beautiful Italian?

GRANDMA: He wasn't my Italian.

MORAG: Oh come on. Isn't this a great love story?

GRANDMA: Certainly not.

MORAG: But he must have been grateful for the accordion.

GRANDMA: I don't know. I didn't see him for months.

CROSS-FADE to the Nissen hut.

McKAY is at his table, typing slowly.

RACHEL enters, carrying the accordion in its case.

McKAY: Good morning.

RACHEL: Morning.

McKAY: Just leave it somewhere.

RACHEL: Will it be all right?

McKAY: This is the British army. We've protected the Empire from evil-doers for a hundred years. I think we can manage to deliver an accordion.

RACHEL puts the accordion down.

RACHEL: Where's Mr Giovanni today?

McKAY: I imagine he's shovelling concrete on number one barrier.

RACHEL: Number one bridge.

McKAY: Why do you want to know? Have you taken a fancy to him?

RACHEL: Of course not.

McKAY: Keep your distance.

RACHEL: Don't know what you mean.

McKAY leaves his typing.

McKAY: I used to be a proper soldier.

RACHEL: You are a proper soldier. You've got stripes.

McKAY: I used to have a Bren gun. Now I'm a bloody nursemaid with a typewriter. When I still had my gun I fought in Belgium and France, all the way to Dunkirk.

RACHEL: You were at Dunkirk?

McKAY: The Germans fired a big shell at me. I've got lumps of it in me to this day. That's why I'll always be a nursemaid.

RACHEL: I'm sorry. What has that to do with keeping my distance?

McKAY: While we were retreating through France, I met a wee lassie.

RACHEL: A wee French lassie?

McKAY: She lived in a village near Amiens. The war went quiet for twenty-four hours. They let us go for a drink. That's when I met her. Her name was Marianne. A farmer's lass, like you. Bonny she was.

RACHEL: Did you canoodle?

McKAY: Aye. We canoodled. She was very frightened about what might happen to her and her family. I promised the British army would protect her.

He hesitates.

RACHEL: And...?

McKAY: The next day the Germans dive-bombed the village. She and her family were all killed.

RACHEL: I'm sorry. That's a very sad story. But I still don't see what it's got to do with me.

McKAY: Never make promises in wartime. And more than that, never make a promise and seal it with a kiss. Because you'll end up betraying that promise.

RACHEL: And the cock crowed a third time.

McKAY: Got it in one.

RACHEL: But it wasn't your fault.

McKAY: But you can't go through the whole of your life saying it isn't my fault. In the end, it's got to be our fault, hasn't it? If governments start wars, then it's up to us to get ourselves some better governments. We've got to do better than this.

RACHEL: If you say so.

A beat then:

McKAY: Sorry, hen. I didn't mean to preach at you.

RACHEL: It's all right. My father preaches all the time. And my mother and my Auntie Bella. Except it doesn't sound so much like preaching when women do it. But thank you for telling me your story.

She dips into her shopping bag.

RACHEL: My mother made some scones for you and the major to have with your tea.

She gives him the scones.

McKAY: Thank you. I'm told she makes very good cheese, too.

RACHEL: She does. It's famous across the island.

Then she reacts: how does he know about the cheese?

RACHEL: How do you know?

McKAY: I make it my job to know things. It's by way of compensation when you're not allowed to carry a gun.

His attention returns to his work.

McKAY: I've got work to do. And so have you, I daresay.

RACHEL: I've got to clean out the sergeants' mess.

McKAY: That'll keep you going until summertime. Do you have summertime in Orkney?

RACHEL: Oh yes.

She crosses to the door.

RACHEL: But not every year.

She exits.

McKAY starts typing.

He gets cross with his work, tears the paper from the machine, rips it up, throws it in the bin, puts some fresh paper in the typewriter, starts again.

BUCKLAND enters.

BUCKLAND: Happy in your work, sergeant?

McKAY: Honest answer, sir?

BUCKLAND: Honest answer.

McKAY: Miserable as sin.

BUCKLAND: Prepare to be cheered up.

GIOVANNI enters, with two mugs of coffee, which he places in front of BUCKLAND and McKAY respectively.

GIOVANNI: Freshly made coffee.

McKAY: I thought you were away shovelling concrete.

GIOVANNI: I've been appointed chief cook to Camp 60.

McKAY: Congratulations. Is it a good job?

GIOVANNI: The only thing I know for sure about life is, a cook never starves. Also, a cook doesn't shovel concrete.

BUCKLAND: We've added a codicil to the coffee agreement. Two mugs to this office each morning in addition to supplying his three hundred comrades in the camp.

McKAY: It must be a Hell of a percolator.

GIOVANNI: I have a two hundred gallon tank which will supply coffee for all of us for two days at a time.

McKAY: Let me tell you something, Giovanni. I love the smell of coffee. It's my favourite non-alcoholic smell in the whole world. Unfortunately, I don't like the taste. No offence. So that'll save you a wee bit of work of a morning.

He returns his mug to GIOVANNI.

GIOVANNI: That's all right. I can solve the problem.

GIOVANNI passes it on to BUCKLAND.

BUCKLAND settles at his desk with the two mugs of coffee.

GIOVANNI: Another thing I know. Always be nice to the commanding officer.

McKAY: And I'm sorry I told your girlfriend you were a mere shoveller of concrete.

GIOVANNI: My girlfriend?

McKAY: The wee lassie who does the cleaning.

GIOVANNI: She is a girl and she is a friend. But she isn't my girlfriend.

McKAY: Have you got a girlfriend?

GIOVANNI: Two.

BUCKLAND looks up from his work.

BUCKLAND: Two?

GIOVANNI: One in Soho where I work. One in Verona, when I go home to my family.

BUCKLAND: It's probably enough.

GIOVANNI: A cook should not be greedy.

McKAY: Well, the wee lassie who isn't your girlfriend left that for you.

He indicates the accordion in its case.

GIOVANNI: That's wonderful. Thank you.

He opens the case, brings out the instrument carefully, reverentially.

GIOVANNI: She's beautiful. Captain Bertoni will be delighted.

McKAY gets up, crosses to look at the accordion.

McKAY: Now I am no musician but it looks to me as if that accordion is in perfect condition.

GIOVANNI: Yes, it looks to me the same.

McKAY: And if it isn't returned to its owners in perfect condition, I will take you and the captain out and have you shot.

BUCKLAND: I don't think you have the authority to do that, sergeant.

McKAY: So I'll beat their brains out with this typewriter.

GIOVANNI: You have nothing to worry about.

He packs the instrument away.

GIOVANNI: This accordion has now joined our family.

BUCKLAND: We look forward to hearing the music.

GIOVANNI: You shall. Most definitely.

GIOVANNI exits with the accordion.

CROSS-FADE to LILIAN, MARY and BELLA in shopping mode.

LILIAN: Mansie the boatman told me something very strange about the Italians today.

MARY: What would that be?

LILIAN: Apparently they have washing lines hung between their Nissen huts. But do you know what Mansie saw hanging on the lines?

MARY: Washing I should think.

LILIAN: Not washing. String.

MARY: String? Yes, that's very strange. I've been saving useful bits of string for years. But I don't wash it and dry it. It would be likely to shrink, I fancy.

BELLA: I'll ask Rachel about it. She seems to have become an expert on the Italians.

MARY: Not too much of an expert, I hope.

BELLA: Oh no. Not Rachel.

LILIAN looks offstage.

LILIAN: I spy fresh haddock.

She and MARY exit.

BELLA crosses to join RACHEL, SAMUEL and SARAH sits at the kitchen table.

RACHEL: It looks like string but it isn't string. It's spaghetti.

SAMUEL: Spaghetti?

RACHEL: They eat it instead of potatoes.

SARAH: After it's been hanging on a washing line?

RACHEL: They make flour and water into a sort of paste. Then they roll it into long strips and dry it. And then they boil it and eat it.

SAMUEL: It must be like eating worms.

SARAH: How do you know? You've never eaten any worms. Not since we were married at any rate.

SAMUEL: I mean all long and slithery.

RACHEL: Major Buckland is very happy about it. He says supplying them with flour is much cheaper than supplying them with potatoes.

BELLA: They're very strange people, these Italians.

RACHEL: They're harmless.

SAMUEL: As long as they're under lock and key, they're harmless.

SARAH: They're not really under lock and key, are they? They're marooned on an island.

SAMUEL: That's the same thing.

RACHEL: We're all marooned on an island.

SAMUEL: I suppose we are.

SARAH: And we're harmless, aren't we?

SAMUEL: But we're marooned here because God intended it that way. It isn't so with the Italians.

RACHEL: Yes it is. I was taught in Sunday school that everything is God's will. So he must have intended the Italians to come here.

SAMUEL: You're too clever for your own good, young lady.

SARAH: Don't take any notice of your father. He's still sulking about cousin Andrew's accordion.

And exactly on cue we hear the accordion.

Across the other side of stage we see the ITALIAN BAND - exact instrumentation yet to be determined - but CAPTAIN BERTONI leading the music on accordion.

They play a piece with the working title: MAX'S INSTRUMENTAL. By definition, that's all I know about it at the moment. Theatrically, the spirit of it should be cheerful and optimistic.

As the music develops, RACHEL gets up from the table and walks to the edge of the stage where she stands and listens.

Then, as the music ends, we FADE UP on MORAG and GRANDMA centre-stage.

GRANDMA: I remember the first time I heard the music. I'd gone for a little walk after supper and the wind must have been in the right direction. I walked down to the water's edge and I heard the accordion.

MORAG: And was it good?

GRANDMA: I didn't say this to the family, but Captain Bertoni was a better player than cousin Andrew. I don't really understand about music, but he made it sound Italian.

MORAG: That might be because he was Italian.

GRANDMA: You're too clever for your own good.

She reacts to what she's just said.

GRANDMA: Oh my, isn't that terrible?

MORAG: What?

GRANDMA: My father used to say that to me. You're too clever for your own good.

MORAG: What's wrong with that?

GRANDMA: We all swear we'll never end up talking like our parents and we all do.

MORAG: Never mind, grandma. It'll be our secret. I'll put it with the others.

GRANDMA: What others?

MORAG: About your secret love affair with Giovanni.

GRANDMA: How many more times? There wasn't one. I didn't see the lad again for about a year.

MORAG: But you did see him.

GRANDMA: It was the day of the conducted tour and the great escape.

They move to one side of the stage to make way for a conducted tour comprising a small party of

local VIPs. They include GRAEME, a local landowner, his wife, MRS GRAEME plus a minister - and let's call him FERGUSON for fun, and MRS FERGUSON.

They are being guided around the sights by NICOL, the chief engineer to the project, and BUCKLAND.

For theatrical purposes, at all time we'll use the edge of the stage as the water's edge.

GRANDMA: Mr Nicol, the chief engineer, was telling some local bigwigs how well we were doing.

MORAG: Who were they? These bigwigs?

GRANDMA: I had no idea. Landowners and clergymen and their wives, I suppose. They all seemed very old and posh to me.

GRANDMA and MORAG exit and, in effect, hand over the stage to NICOL, BUCKLAND and the VIPs.

N.B. If we have screen and projection facilities, NICOL'S words could work in parallel with a visual montage of stills and any archive footage that might be available.

NICOL: I'm very happy to report that the work is proceeding smoothly and we are, if anything, slightly ahead of schedule. All the barriers are completed, in the sense that no submarine could possibly find a way through. So Mr Churchill's primary purpose has been achieved. It is also theoretically possible to cross number one barrier across Kirk Sound linking the island of Lamb Holm with mainland Orkney. Yes?

GRAEME holds up a hand.

GRAEME: Would you like to elaborate on...theoretically possible?

NICOL: It can be done, on foot, at low tide, but it is extremely hazardous. It has been attempted by one or two people, late at night and under the influence of drink, so far without loss of life.

MRS GRAEME: Has there been loss of life?

NICOL: Engineering is dangerous work. So far we have lost four people.

FERGUSON: And how have our Italian friends behaved?

NICOL: Better than I expected. The best of them have developed useful specialist skills. They work as pointsmen on the railway, they operate the pumps and, as you know, they make very good coffee.

MRS GRAEME: I do hope they're eating well.

NICOL: Very well. Their chief cook used to be a chef in the West End of London.

MRS GRAEME: Goodness me.

BUCKLAND: I think he was a waiter, actually, but ambitious and a quick learner.

GRAEME: Any disciplinary problems?

BUCKLAND: No. I think by making one or two concessions in areas that matter a great deal to them, we won their trust and therefore their cooperation.

FERGUSON: What are these areas that matter so much to them?

BUCKLAND: Art, music and religion.

FERGUSON: Good. I'm in favour of religion.

MRS FERGUSON: But Catholic, I suppose?

MRS GRAEME: Bound to be, I should think. It appeals to the Latin temperament.

BUCKLAND: It's very impressive. When they finish work for the day, they start their own work. They have an orchestra. They put on an opera last month. They are deeply involved building their own chapel and if you look over there...

He draws their attention to something on their horizon.

BUCKLAND: (Cont.)...you will see Domenico Chiocchetti's statue of St George and the dragon...

On the screen: the statue.

FERGUSON: That's wonderful.

GRAEME: Very impressive.

MRS GRAEME: Why St George? I thought he was ours.

BUCKLAND: Apparently we share him with Domenico.

MRS FERGUSON: How extraordinary.

BUCKLAND: So I think we can claim that the Italians are as contented as possible, bearing in mind they're prisoners and two thousand miles away from home.

A siren sounds.

BUCKLAND and NICOL look at each other. They know what it means. The others don't.

BUCKLAND: You'll have to excuse me, ladies and gentlemen.

BUCKLAND exits.

GRAEME: What's happening?

MRS GRAEME: Is it something we should worry about?

NICOL: It means one of the major's happy prisoners has tried to escape.

MRS GRAEME: Good heavens.

NICOL: Now, if you'd like to step this way, we'll share a bumpy ride on our little railway.

There's the sound of a steam loco.

They exit.

CROSS-FADE to the Nissen hut.

Those present: BUCKLAND, McKAY, GIOVANNI and MARIO, the failed escapee, who's looking a bit sorry for himself.

BUCKLAND: What happened, sergeant?

McKAY: It seems this wee specimen found an old rowing boat on the eastern side of the island.

GIOVANNI: It was broken. Nobody wanted it any more.

McKAY: So every evening, while the others were working on the chapel, or doing their operas, or playing billiards, he's been sneaking off with bits of wood and repairing this boat.

BUCKLAND: With a view to escaping?

GIOVANNI: No. Mario likes boats. Boats are his hobby. After the war he plans to go home and become a fisherman.

BUCKLAND: Where does he live?

GIOVANNI: Fiesole.

BUCKLAND: Giovanni. I used to spend holidays in Italy. I have been to Fiesole. It's a hill town. You can't be a fisherman in a hill town.

GIOVANNI: There would be very little competition.

McKAY: Don't upset me, laddie. You're not the only one who's a long way from home.

BUCKLAND: Could we hear the evidence, sergeant?

McKAY: Sorry sir. Evidence. Yesterday, he went into Kirkwall with some of the contractors to pick up some stuff. Went off to buy cigarettes and was seen in Leonard's buying an atlas.

GIOVANNI: Mario likes geography. Geography is also his hobby.

BUCKLAND: Boats and geography.

GIOVANNI: Yes. Two hobbies.

McKAY: So we searched his hut. And discovered he's been storing food.

BUCKLAND: Is food also his hobby?

GIOVANNI shrugs and smiles.

GIOVANNI: O.K. It's a fair cop.

BUCKLAND: A fair cop? Where did you learn that phrase?

GIOVANNI: I used to hear it all the time in Soho.

BUCKLAND: So what really happened?

GIOVANNI looks at MARIO.

GIOVANNI: *(In ITALIAN)* Do I tell him the full story?

MARIO shrugs.

MARIO: Si.

GIOVANNI: Mario has a wife and many children at home in Fiesole. He misses them very much. So he was planning to escape.

BUCKLAND: In the boat.

GIOVANNI: Yes.

BUCKLAND: It's a rowing boat.

GIOVANNI: Yes.

BUCKLAND: Where was he planning to row?

GIOVANNI: Somebody told him if he travelled North-East he would arrive in Norway.

McKAY: It's hundreds of miles across the North Sea. There are gales and icebergs.

GIOVANNI: That's why he needed the atlas. To see how far it is to Norway.

MARIO murmurs something to GIOVANNI.

GIOVANNI: Si.

BUCKLAND: What was that about?

GIOVANNI: Mario says when he looked at the atlas, he realised it was too far to row.

McKAY: He was sitting in his boat reading his atlas when we found him.

GIOVANNI: You found him at the very moment he had abandoned his plans to escape.

BUCKLAND: The very moment? What an amazing coincidence.

GIOVANNI: That's what Mario said.

BUCKLAND: Fourteen days loss of privileges.

GIOVANNI: *(To MARIO, in ITALIAN)* Fourteen days loss of privileges.

MARIO shrugs, murmurs to GIOVANNI.

GIOVANNI: He says he's already lost his privileges because he's separated from his wife and children.

McKAY: He's breaking my bleeding heart. We've all lost those privileges.

BUCKLAND: Sergeant...

McKAY: Sir...

McKAY gets up, crosses to MARIO.

McKAY: Come on, Sunny Jim.

McKAY and MARIO exit.

BUCKLAND resumes his work then realises GIOVANNI'S still there.

BUCKLAND: Do I assume there's something else?

GIOVANNI: A message from Captain Bertoni. He and the orchestra are giving a recital tomorrow evening and would be honoured if you would attend.

RACHEL enters, carrying cleaning materials, hesitates...

RACHEL: Sorry. Are you having secret talks?

BUCKLAND: No secrets today, Rachel.

GIOVANNI: Signorina Rachel. My Orkney sweetheart.

RACHEL: What?

She's wrong-footed and embarrassed.

GIOVANNI: Forgive me. It's Sergeant McKay's joke. He calls you my Orkney girlfriend.

RACHEL: No I'm not.

GIOVANNI: I know. I tell him I already have two girlfriends.

RACHEL: Two?

BUCKLAND: One in Verona, one in Soho.

RACHEL: I think that's disgusting.

BUCKLAND: Quite so.

GIOVANNI: But you are prettier than either of them.

RACHEL: And that's even worse.

BUCKLAND: Do you mind? I am the commanding officer of a large military establishment and you two are turning it into the sloppiest kind of romantic fiction. It's like trying to work in Woman's Own.

RACHEL: It's not my fault.

GIOVANNI: Forgive me. *(To BUCKLAND)* Will you come to our concert?

BUCKLAND: If the war permits me.

GIOVANNI: May I invite signorina Rachel?

BUCKLAND: No you may not. Selected military personnel only.

GIOVANNI: Captain Bertoni will be playing cousin Andrew's beautiful accordion.

BUCKLAND: Captain Bertoni must play very loudly, and pray that the wind is blowing towards the mainland.

RACHEL: We often hear the music from the camp.

GIOVANNI: One night you must play some Orkney music so we can listen to you.

BUCKLAND: Giovanni. Shouldn't you be hanging your pasta out to dry?

GIOVANNI: Forgive me, major. I talk too much.

BUCKLAND: You noticed.

GIOVANNI: Arrividerci signorina.

GIOVANNI exits.

BUCKLAND gets on with his paper work.

RACHEL gets on with her cleaning. Then she remembers...

RACHEL: I've got something for you.

She dips into her bag, brings out a packet.

RACHEL: My mother's home-made shortbread.

BUCKLAND: Do thank your mother for me.

He nibbles a corner.

BUCKLAND: It's delicious.

RACHEL: I know. She's a wonderful cook.

They resume their work.

RACHEL: Are they really fine artists?

BUCKLAND: The Italians?

RACHEL: Giovanni's always going on about this one being a fine artist and that one being a fine artist and I wondered if it was true.

BUCKLAND: Yes. It's true. Think of Raphael and Michelangelo. Or Vivaldi and Verdi.

RACHEL: Are they all in the camp?

BUCKLAND: No. They were all great artists who changed the world.

RACHEL: You like Italians, don't you?

BUCKLAND: Italy's my favourite country.

RACHEL: More favourite than England?

BUCKLAND: In many ways, yes.

RACHEL: Is that allowed?

BUCKLAND: Probably not. Better make it a secret.

RACHEL: Another one.

CROSS-FADE to GRANDMA and MORAG at the cottage side of the stage.

GRANDMA: There were so many secrets during the war. I'll tell you a good one. The Italians played a football match against a Scottish regimental team and beat them.

MORAG: I can see how that would be kept a secret.

GRANDMA: Apparently it was the fault of the referee, who was an Englishman.

MORAG: Yes, that would do it.

GRANDMA: But the biggest secret was the major's.

MORAG: You'll have to explain that.

GRANDMA: When he said Italy was his favourite country. I didn't know you could have a favourite country that wasn't yours. Especially when you were fighting against the one you liked best.

MORAG: Would that make him a traitor?

GRANDMA: I don't know. I think what he meant was all countries are equal. They're bound to be if you think all people are equal. But we only start fighting wars when the countries fall into the wrong hands and the leaders decide they're better than all the other countries. I think that was the secret. It's quite a good secret, don't you think?

MORAG: An excellent secret.

GRANDMA: But that's what the war did for us. Strange things happened and we had to try to work out what they were all about.

MORAG: You started to think for yourself. Make your own decisions, without asking your parents first.

GRANDMA: Very good. You obviously didn't waste all your time at that university.

MORAG: Thank you, grandma.

GRANDMA: Just most of it.

MORAG: And I thought I was doing so well.

GRANDMA: No, you're right. The night the Italians were giving their concert, I made a decision. I went down to the water's edge to listen. And I took a friend with me.

GRANDMA and MORAG step back into the shadows.

RACHEL enters with ELLEN, who is more or less the same age.

ELLEN: What are we doing here?

RACHEL: We are going to listen to some music.

ELLEN: But I'm missing ITMA on the wireless.

RACHEL: ITMA's on every week but you've never heard music like this before.

Then, across the other side of the stage, we find BERTONI'S BAND in position.

BUCKLAND sits nearby, listening. Also, if there's room for them on stage, the GRAEMES and the FERGUSONS.

BERTONI counts them in and they reprise MAX'S INSTRUMENTAL.

Across the way and, ergo, across the water, RACHEL and ELLEN listen, the latter with increasing interest.

The piece ends. The musicians stand up, acknowledge the applause led by BUCKLAND and - obviously - our audience.

Then GIOVANNI steps forward and addresses the audience.

GIOVANNI: For the benefit of the English-speaking members of the audience, let me explain the next piece. It is a song, with words written by our famous artist and sculptor, Domenico Chiocchetti, who will lead the singing.

CHIOCCHETTI steps forward.

GIOVANNI: It is a song about our Italian chapel, about this island and about peace.

CHIOCCHETTI performs MAX'S ITALIAN SONG.

CHIOCCHETTI: *(Sings)*
Un velo candido
Copre i resti di errore umani

Ma una piccola cappella
 Si erge sull'isola deserta:
 E'una sfida alle divisioni,
 Un segno di speranza
 Un augurio di pace.

The song, gentle and elegiac, with a hint of longing, drifts across the water to RACHEL and ELLEN.

As the music dies down, we lose the lighting on the BAND and we focus on RACHEL and ELLEN.

ELLEN: That was lovely.

RACHEL: I knew it would be.

ELLEN: They're very musical, the Italians, aren't they?

RACHEL: Of course they are. They're fine artists. They invented opera.

ELLEN: Did they?

RACHEL: Major Buckland says there are hundreds of great Italian composers. I've been learning their names. Verdi and Vivaldi and Scarlatti and Ravioli. Except I think you eat one of them.

ELLEN: Rachel. Why are you giving me lessons? We left school two years ago.

RACHEL: I just need to know whether you liked the music.

ELLEN: I said so. It was lovely.

RACHEL: Good. Because I want you to do something for me.

ELLEN: As long as it doesn't cost any money.

RACHEL: I promised Giovanni...

ELLEN: *(Breaks in:)* Who's Giovanni?

RACHEL: My Italian friend.

ELLEN: Should you be making promises to an Italian?

RACHEL: Pay attention.

ELLEN: You're being a schoolteacher again...

RACHEL: I promised him that we would listen to the Italian music and then, one night, we would play some Orcadian music so they could listen. And your Auntie Margaret's the best fiddle player on the island...

ELLEN: Where would she play?

RACHEL: Here. By the water. So they can hear her.

ELLEN: You want me to ask Auntie Margaret to play the fiddle down here on the shore?

RACHEL: Yes. Why not?

ELLEN: If it's cold like tonight, she'll get frostbite.

RACHEL: Don't be silly.

ELLEN: You can't play a fiddle wearing mittens, you know.

RACHEL: I'll try to pick a warm evening.

ELLEN: We could wait years for a warm evening. The war could be over by the time we get one. And somebody might see us.

RACHEL: What if they do?

ELLEN: They'll think we've gone mad. They'll have us put away.

RACHEL: All right. I'll ask Ernie Marwick instead.

ELLEN: Ernie Marwick!

RACHEL: He's the only other fiddle player I know.

ELLEN: He's got fingers like bananas.

RACHEL: And it would be an insult to the Italians to have Ernie Marwick playing for them.

ELLEN: Yes, it would.

ELLEN hesitates.

ELLEN: Is he handsome?

RACHEL: Ernie Marwick? No. He looks like the back of a cow.

ELLEN: Not Ernie Marwick. Your friend Giovanni.

RACHEL: I've never really noticed.

ELLEN: He is, isn't he?

RACHEL: All right. Yes he is.

ELLEN smiles.

ELLEN: I don't mind asking Auntie Margaret, if he's really handsome, your Giovanni.

RACHEL: He isn't my Giovanni.

ELLEN: And when will Auntie Margaret be required to attend upon the seashore?

RACHEL: I'll give her plenty of notice.

ELLEN: Good. May I go home now?

RACHEL: Yes. And we'll invent a story for our parents.

They exit.

In effect, they cross with MORAG and GRANDMA, who stand in the same spot by the water.

GRANDMA: Yes. This is where we heard the music over the water.

MORAG: And where Ellen's Auntie Margaret played her fiddle?

GRANDMA: Yes. But not immediately. You see, the war intervened in the autumn of 1943.

MORAG: That was a bit inconsiderate. What happened?

GRANDMA: Well it was all a little complicated for me to understand at the time, but the Italians seemed to surrender and come over to our side.

MORAG: Is that allowed?

GRANDMA: Apparently it is. It certainly caused a great deal of excitement and everybody forgot about fiddle-playing for a while.

CROSS-FADE to the Nissen hut where BUCKLAND, McKAY, GIOVANNI and BERTONI are in conference.

BUCKLAND: The new Italian prime minister, Marshal Badoglio, has signed an armistice agreement with General Eisenhower.

GIOVANNI: So now we are on your side?

BUCKLAND: Technically, you're on nobody's side.

BERTONI: We can go home?

McKAY: Some hopes.

BERTONI: I know we cannot go home. I just try my English.

McKAY: You're doing very well, Captain.

BERTONI: Grazie.

McKAY: That should be thank you.

BERTONI: Thank you.

BUCKLAND: The military situation is that the greater part of Italy remains in German hands. Your country is still a battlefield.

BERTONI: Si.

- BUCKLAND: Though the politicians seem to think that in the near future, Badoglio will declare war on Germany and Italy will be on our side, officially.
- GIOVANNI: It's very difficult for a cook to understand.
- McKAY: It's none too easy for a sergeant.
- BUCKLAND: But as far as you and your colleagues are concerned, I think you'll be in Orkney for the foreseeable future. For one thing, we don't know where else to put you. And even if we did, we don't have the transport to get you there.
- GIOVANNI: We're very happy to remain here.
- McKAY: You are?
- GIOVANNI: We have to finish our work.
- BUCKLAND: The bridges?
- GIOVANNI: Maybe now we can call them barriers.
- BERTONI: And Domenico.
- BUCKLAND: Domenico?
- BERTONI: Domenico Chiocchetti. *(To GIOVANNI)* Tell the major.
- GIOVANNI: Domenico says he can't possibly leave Orkney until he has finished work on his chapel. If necessary he will stay here after the war is over.
- BUCKLAND: If Domenico will let me know how long he needs I'll pass the message on to Winston Churchill and I'm sure he'll organise his strategy accordingly.

RACHEL enters, with bucket and wash leather.

- RACHEL: Are secrets happening or may I wash the windows?
- BUCKLAND: No secrets, Rachel.
- RACHEL: If there are no secrets, may I have a word with Giovanni?
- BUCKLAND: Of course. I'm going to take Captain Bertoni to the officers' mess for a celebratory drink.

BUCKLAND and BERTONI cross to the door.

- McKAY: And why don't I pop to the Naafi for some fags? I'm sure you two want to be alone.
- RACHEL: No we don't.
- McKAY: Don't worry. I was young once.
- BUCKLAND: Are you sure about that, sergeant?

McKAY: Ask Queen Victoria. She was there at the time.

BUCKLAND, BERTONI and McKAY exit.

GIOVANNI: You want a word with me? I wonder what the word is.

RACHEL: Music. We heard your music.

GIOVANNI: Across the water?

RACHEL: Yes.

GIOVANNI: You said...we heard the music.

RACHEL: Yes. Me and my friend, Ellen. Her Auntie Margaret's the best fiddler on the island.

GIOVANNI: A violinist?

RACHEL: No. A fiddler.

GIOVANNI: Did you enjoy our music?

RACHEL: Oh yes. It was beautiful. And Auntie Margaret would like to play some of our music for you.

GIOVANNI: Some fiddle music?

RACHEL: Yes. But we need to know when would be a good time.

GIOVANNI: Saturday evening. We finish work on the barriers at lunchtime...

RACHEL: Bridges.

GIOVANNI: Now they are barriers against the enemy. Then, after we finish on the barriers, we work on the chapel. We finish when it gets too dark. Shall we say Saturday evening, nine o'clock. Is that a good time?

RACHEL: As long as it doesn't rain.

GIOVANNI: I give you my word, signorina. It never rains on fiddlers called Auntie Margaret in the island of Orkney.

Lighting change as RACHEL and GIOVANNI go to either side of the stage - to their respective islands.

On her side, RACHEL is joined by ELLEN and AUNTIE MARGARET with her fiddle.

On his side, GIOVANNI is joined by the chapel work-force, including CHIOCCHETTI and BERTONI. In effect, this is our Italian music group.

MARGARET looks at ELLEN.

MARGARET: When do I start?

ELLEN: Ask the boss.

RACHEL checks her watch.

RACHEL: No. I said nine o'clock. They might not be ready. I'll tell you when.

On the Italian side:

BERTONI: *(In ITALIAN)* So where is the music?

GIOVANNI: *(In ITALIAN)* Wait until nine o'clock.

On the Orcadian side:

ELLEN: It's a lovely evening. Your boyfriend was right.

RACHEL: How many more times? He's not my boyfriend. And I'm not his girlfriend. He's got two already. One in Soho and one in Verona.

ELLEN: They're not much use to him if he's here. He's a man, remember. And Romeo was an Italian.

RACHEL: I know Romeo was an Italian. And Robbie Burns was a Scotsman and George Washington was an American. I'm quite clever, you know. I've read several books and they didn't all have pictures in.

MARGARET: Is it nine o'clock yet?

RACHEL checks her watch. It's nine o'clock.

RACHEL: It's nine o'clock.

MARGARET: I'd rather play my fiddle than listen to you two squabbling.

MARGARET plays.

The ITALIANS listen.

She plays MAX'S ORCADIAN PIECE. Maybe ELLEN joins in on flute.

At the end, a silence, then on a silent count from CHIOCCHETTI, they sing their response: a reprise of their song, maybe this time in a choral version.

ITALIANS: *(Sing:)*
 Un velo candido
 Copre i resti di errori umani
 Ma una piccola cappella
 Si erge sull'isola deserta:
 E'una sfida alle divisioni,
 Un segno di speranza
 Un augurio di pace.

RACHEL, ELLEN and MARGARET listen, entranced.

The music ends.

There's another silence then:

GIOVANNI: *(Shouts:)* Thank you, Rachel. Thank you, Ellen. Thank you, Auntie Margaret.
Good night.

RACHEL: *(Shouts:)* Grazie, Giovanni. Buona notte.

ELLEN looks at RACHEL.

ELLEN: Was that Italian?

RACHEL: It was. And you are not to say a word, or I will hit you.

ELLEN: I won't say a word. Not to anyone.

RACHEL: But thank you for the music. It was lovely.

Darkness descends on the two islands.

Lights on MARY, LILIAN and BELLA, on their way to the shops.

LILIAN: They were doing what?

MAY: Serenading each other across the water.

LILIAN: My my.

MAY: Your Rachel was there. I'm told it was her idea.

BELLA: It's very romantic though, isn't it? Soft, what light through yonder
window breaks?

LILIAN: I beg your pardon?

BELLA: It's what Romeo said to Juliet. We learned it in school, don't you remember?

MAY: And that all ended in tears, didn't it?

And they exit.

CROSS-FADE to BUCKLAND, centre-stage, as he gives another briefing, with McKAY in attendance. As previously, the audience becomes an assembly of senior officers.

BUCKLAND: Gentlemen, I thought it sensible to say a few words to you on the changed
situation in what, I am delighted to report, nobody any longer refers to as bloody
Orkney. Since Italy has now officially declared war on Germany, we now have six
hundred allies in our care, rather than six hundred prisoners under our guard. Our
Italian friends will be free to move about the islands, subject to availability of
transport...

McKAY: And keeping in with Mansie the boatman.

BUCKLAND: Quite so. Previous restrictions on contact between the Italians and the local
civilian population no longer apply. We naturally hope that...(He hesitates)...how
can I best put this...?

McKAY: If they can't be good, we hope they'll be careful.

BUCKLAND: Thank you, sergeant. I don't know how I'd manage without you. Any questions?

CROSS-FADE to the cottage: RACHEL, SAMUEL, BELLA and SARAH sitting at the table.

SAMUEL: I saw one riding a bicycle yesterday. Where do they get money for bicycles?

RACHEL: They get wages for working on the barriers.

BELLA: Some of them have been helping with the harvest on Burray.

SAMUEL: And I'm told Mansie the boatman left the pub at closing time the other night and as he walked home he was singing in Italian. O sole something...

RACHEL: O sole mio.

SAMUEL: What's that?

RACHEL: It's a famous Italian song.

BELLA: Would it be a serenading song?

RACHEL gives BELLA a look.

RACHEL: I don't know what it's about. It's in Italian.

SAMUEL: O sole mio? Mansie probably thinks it's about fish.

RACHEL: All I know is, it's famous and Caruso used to sing it.

SARAH: Would that be Enrico Caruso?

RACHEL: Well obviously not Robinson.

SARAH: There's no need to be sarcastic with your mother. I'm trying to be on your side.

RACHEL: But that's what I'm trying to explain. There are no sides any longer. We're all on the same side.

SARAH: Yes. And I understand that, dear. But it might take a little longer for your father.

SAMUEL: Forgive me, but I do not understand how anyone can be fighting on one side in a war one week, and on the other side the week after.

RACHEL: But it isn't the soldiers who decide, is it? Isn't it the politicians?

SAMUEL: I don't know what's happening to my daughter. She's thinking for herself and even disagreeing with me.

SARAH: She's doing very well. I only ever disagreed with my father when one of us was out of the house.

There's a knock at the door.

SAMUEL: *(To RACHEL)* That will be for you. No doubt, one of your friends come to play silly games down by the harbour.

RACHEL gets up, crosses to the door which, for maximum effect, should be off stage.

SAMUEL: Am I harsh on the girl?

SARAH: Yes.

SAMUEL: Good.

RACHEL returns with GIOVANNI, who's carrying a large cardboard box.

There's a slightly awkward silence then:

RACHEL: This is Giovanni. Giovanni, this is my mother.

SARAH: Hallo, Giovanni.

She stands up, holds out a wary hand.

GIOVANNI: I am honoured to meet you.

He kisses her hand.

SAMUEL'S not at all sure about that.

RACHEL: And this is Auntie Bella. Cousin Andrew's mother.

BELLA: Hallo, Giovanni.

She stands up, holds out a wary hand.

GIOVANNI: I am honoured to meet you and thank you in person for the loan of the accordion.

He kisses her hand.

RACHEL: And this is my father.

GIOVANNI: You told me the women in your family were beautiful, but you didn't tell me your father was handsome.

SAMUEL'S still not sure but stands up, shakes GIOVANNI'S hand.

GIOVANNI: Is this not a good moment?

SAMUEL: It's much the same as any other moment.

GIOVANNI: It won't take long. I come bearing gifts.

SARAH: Gifts?

GIOVANNI: Our thank you for all the kindness you have shown to us.

SAMUEL: What kindness would that be?

GIOVANNI: For example...(To SARAH)...your wonderful cheese.

SARAH: (To RACHEL) You gave him my cheese?

RACHEL: Only twice, or perhaps three times.

GIOVANNI: And, of course, the friendship of your daughter.

He delves into his box and brings out, first, a cigarette lighter.

GIOVANNI: First, for father, a cigarette lighter, made by my friend, Dino, the metalworker.

He demonstrates how it works.

GIOVANNI: See? A flame every time.

He gives the lighter to SAMUEL.

SAMUEL: Thank you. But you must explain to your friend, Dino, that I don't smoke.

GIOVANNI: It doesn't matter that you don't smoke. It's a versatile flame. It will light your fire in the morning, and your lamps in the evening. Now, for mother and Auntie Bella...

He goes into his box and brings out two wooden boxes, with inlaid marquetry.

GIOVANNI: ...boxes made by my friend, Gianfranco, the carpenter...

He gives one box to SARAH.

SARAH: Thank you. I can keep my buttons in it.

GIOVANNI: Gianfranco said to me, such a box is perfect for buttons.

He gives the other box to BELLA.

BELLA: Thank you. It will be perfect for Andrew's collection of foreign coins.

GIOVANNI: And also perfect for foreign coins.

He goes into his box. RACHEL watches eagerly, assuming it's her turn.

He brings out a violin.

GIOVANNI: (To RACHEL) For your friend Ellen's Auntie Margaret, who plays such beautiful music, a fiddle made by my friend, Paulo, the cabinet-maker.

He presents it to RACHEL.

GIOVANNI: Paulo says he doesn't know whether a violin and a fiddle are the same thing. But he has made a violin, because that's all he can make.

RACHEL: They are the same thing.

GIOVANNI: Good.

RACHEL: Thank you. Auntie Margaret will be delighted with it.

GIOVANNI closes up his box.

GIOVANNI: I have delivered my presents. I will leave you in peace.

Then he sees RACHEL'S face.

She's a young woman of impeccable manners but even so, she has a look that says: but what about me?

GIOVANNI: Signorina Rachel, forgive me. I have a present for you but it isn't finished yet. May I give it to you at the party?

RACHEL: The party?

GIOVANNI: When we leave.

SAMUEL: Are you leaving?

GIOVANNI: We have finished our work on the barriers. The engineers will build the roads on top after we go but there's nothing else for us to do. They're taking us to England while they decide what to do with us next.

RACHEL: Nobody has told me about the party.

GIOVANNI: There's to be a great athletics tournament with races and competitions for jumping and throwing. And three-legged races and egg-and-spoon races. And the band will play, and I am preparing several kinds of pasta with a secret sauce.

RACHEL: But will I be invited?

GIOVANNI: British officers and their wives only will be invited. For reasons of security.

SARAH: So how will you give Rachel her present at the party if she is not invited to the party?

GIOVANNI: At two o'clock on the appointed day, signorina Rachel will walk, very carefully, across the barrier we have built specially for her. We will be waiting at the other side. We will take great care of her, because she is very precious to us.

He picks up his box.

GIOVANNI: Now I must go. I have a lot of cooking to do. Goodbye father.

He shakes hands with SAMUEL.

GIOVANNI: Goodbye mother.

He kisses SARAH'S hand.

GIOVANNI: Goodbye, Auntie Bella.

He kisses BELLA'S hand.

GIOVANNI: Arrividerci, Rachel.

He kisses RACHEL'S hand.

RACHEL: Arrividerci, Giovanni.

GIOVANNI exits, leaving a somewhat bewildered SAMUEL, SARAH and BELLA.

SARAH: So that's an Italian.

SAMUEL: I've never seen anything like it in my whole life.

BELLA: But he's certainly generous with his presents.

SAMUEL plays with his lighter.

SAMUEL: The boy's right. A flame every time. Perhaps I should learn to smoke.

SARAH: Not in the house.

Then we CROSS-FADE to the Sports Day.

The ITALIAN BAND plays a reprise of MAX'S INSTRUMENTAL.

Across the stage we drape the flags of all the allies.

The winning ATHLETES, in shirts and shorts, line up to receive their prizes from BUCKLAND, who's flanked by an array of dignitaries, including the GRAEMES and the FERGUSONS.

Among those watching and joining in the applause are GIOVANNI and RACHEL. It might be fun if GIOVANNI'S wearing a cook's apron.

After the final athlete has received his prize, BUCKLAND addresses the crowd.

BUCKLAND: Ladies and gentlemen. Today marks the end of an extraordinary period in the life of everyone here. We are saying goodbye to six hundred men who came here as captives and leave as our friends and comrades. This transformation has been brought about partly by the politicians, but also, I believe, by the special quality of these islands. Something has changed for ever, for all of us, whatever our nationality, by the experience of being in Orkney. For that, we thank the representatives of the community with us here today.

And maybe he spares a special smile for RACHEL.

BUCKLAND: But one of our Italian friends is not leaving us. Domenico Chiocchetti is staying on to finish his work on the chapel. This is by special arrangement with Winston Churchill. The special arrangement is we haven't told Winston Churchill. The only other announcement is that Pasta Orcadiana is now being served in the canteen.

There's applause and they all exit.

RACHEL is about to follow.

GIOVANNI: Wait.

She waits. Now they're alone.

GIOVANNI: There is something I would like you to see.

RACHEL: What?

GIOVANNI: Our chapel. This way.

A major transformation.

We lose the flags.

And the Nissen hut is transformed into the interior of the Italian chapel.

CHIOCCHETTI is at work, with paint-brush, around the altar area.

GIOVANNI and RACHEL 'enter' the chapel.

CHIOCCHETTI is singing softly to himself as he works.

GIOVANNI: Very beautiful, si?

RACHEL: Si.

RACHEL registers CHIOCCHETTI'S singing.

RACHEL: That's the song we heard across the water.

GIOVANNI: It is.

RACHEL: What does it mean?

GIOVANNI: Domenico wrote the words himself. He is singing...

GIOVANNI does an instant translation, overlapping slightly with the song.

GIOVANNI: A white veil covers the scars of war;
and a little chapel stands on an empty isle.
It is a challenge to all that divides us,
a symbol of hope,
a desire for peace.

RACHEL: Amen.

GIOVANNI: Amen?

RACHEL: It seems the right thing to say.

GIOVANNI: I suppose so.

And at this point we become aware of GRANDMA and MORAG watching from the side of the stage, as we near the end of the tale.

GIOVANNI: And here is your present.

He gives her the present: a signet ring.

RACHEL: A ring?

GIOVANNI: My friend Franco, the silversmith, made it from a half-crown. If you look, see, it has your initials on it.

RACHEL: Thank you.

She puts it on her little finger.

Across the stage, GRANDMA shows MORAG the ring, still on her little finger.

MORAG: I always liked that ring.

GRANDMA: It'll be yours one day.

MORAG: Is that why you cried when you heard the music? Because he gave you a ring?

GRANDMA: No. It was what happened next.

They look across to RACHEL and GIOVANNI.

GIOVANNI: I have a request.

RACHEL: What?

GIOVANNI: Because I will never see you again...may I have a kiss?

RACHEL: A kiss?

She hesitates, then offers her hand.

GIOVANNI: No. A proper kiss.

RACHEL is startled.

GRANDMA comments.

GRANDMA: I was very young and totally innocent. I'd never kissed a man in my life. We were in a chapel and he'd just given me a ring. And I suppose I thought, in some strange way, if I kissed him that would mean we were married.

So...

She looks across at RACHEL.

RACHEL: I don't think that would be sensible.

She leaves the chapel.

GRANDMA: I was wrong. I never saw Giovanni again. But I think about that moment every day

of my life. And that's why the music made me cry.

GIOVANNI leaves the chapel.

CHIOCCHETTI continues with his work, low down on the wall behind the altar. Then he straightens up, feels the ache in his back, smiles.

CHIOCCHETTI: Finito.

BLACKOUT

THE END