Underground

First performed at Gasworks Arts Park 7,8 and 9 of March 2019, production supported by Small Gems Consortium.

Tours: The Bowery Theatre; Burrinja Cultural Centre; Shirley Burke Theatre Kingston and Knox Community Arts Centre.

Writer: Christine Croyden
Director: Sara Grenfell

Stage Manager: Rachel Nagy

Cast
Nancy Wake: Margot Knight
Young Nancy Wake: Emma Annand
Henri Fiocca: Ezra Bix
Maquisard
John (Nancy’s second husband)
SOE official
Gestapo officer
Denden and Nazi: Billy Sloane
Sabine and Carer: Tory McCann

Creatives
Set and Costume design: Christina Logan Bell
Lighting design: Shane Grant
Sound Design: Ryan Smedley
Characters:

Nancy Wake, (80s)
Young Nancy, (25-30)
Henri Fiocca, (35-40) plus,
  Tardivat
  Young man in bar,
  John (Nancy’s second husband),
  SOE training officer,
  Gestapo officer in car

Denden & Nazi, (30)

Sabine & Carer, (20-25)

Different temporal spaces achieved with lights

Suggested Music

* Falling in Love again, Frederich Hollaender
* Lily Marlene, in German and English
* The Ballad of the Soldier’s wife, Brecht and Weill
* The Marseillaise

OPTIONAL/Director’s choice:

Each time shift may be preceded by a short sequence of Morse code.

Filmed footage of Liberation of Paris and Fall of Berlin may be used.
Scene one

Present Time (circa 2003), Nancy’s Home in Sydney.

Old Nancy enters looking for her pearl earrings. She sits to put them on.

The Carer enters and watches Old Nancy for a moment before she speaks.

Old Nancy is getting ready to attend a ceremony to receive her Order of Australia Medal (OAM)

1.1

Carer:
Are you going to tell them what they want to hear?

Old Nancy:
I’ll be making one thing clear right from the start.

Carer:
And what will that be?

Old Nancy:
I’m not having anyone messing with my story. I’m telling it my way, and if they don’t like it/

Carer:
How will you begin?

Old Nancy stands and sings her speech as a Haka, with traditional movements, foot stamping and ending with a fierce tongue out, facial expression.

Old Nancy:
Whakaaria mai, to ripeka ki au
Tiaho mai, ra roto I te po
Hei konei au, titiro atu ai;
ora mate, hei au koe noho ai

Carer:
A Haka ... in Maori?

Old Nancy:
They can work it out. They’re always happy to claim me as an Australian when it suits them.

Carer:

It seems a bit *(complicated)*... do you have it written down?

Old Nancy:

I’ll remember!

Carer:

Of course, let me type it out for you and we/

Old Nancy:

My grandmother was Maori for god’s sake?

Carer:

But you’re Australian?

Old Nancy:

I’ve waited a long time.

Carer:

It will be a wonderful ceremony... it’s a great honour/

Old Nancy:

That scoundrel Bob Hawke got one... Malcolm Fraser too, oh he is a fine fellow... and now lil’ ol’ me

Carer comb’s Nancy’s hair

You’re coming?

Carer:

To help you on stage and/

Old Nancy:

Grab a piece of the limelight for what it’s worth

Carer gets Nancy’s hearing aid
Put that away, I’m not wearing it!

Carer:
No one will see.

Old Nancy:
I’m not wearing it!

Carer:
You may want to hear what people say to you

Old Nancy:
You can tell me

Carer:
Yes but/

Old Nancy:
I’m wearing my pearl drops... Henri gave them to me. I’m not having an ugly piece of plastic stuck in my ear for the world to see!

Carer:
You might miss something

Old Nancy:
I never miss anything...and besides, the big brass will be there. I don’t want them thinking I’m some deaf, old has been/

BEAT

Carer:
The taxi will be here in an hour.

Carer exits
1.2

*Present Time, Nancy’s Home in Sydney*

*Henri Fiocca enters Nancy’s memory*

**Old Nancy:**
Recognize me?

**Henri:**
Of course

*BEAT*
Now, don’t allow your temper to spoil this for you.

**Old Nancy:**
I don’t have any temper left.

*BEAT*
You always liked to keep me in check.

**Henri:**
It was a different time. You were a different woman.

**Old Nancy:**
Younger you mean?

**Henri:**
In marvelous Marseille

**Old Nancy:**
I was so young

*A few bars of piano music ‘Falling in love again’*

**Fresh-faced, almost breathless Young Nancy Enters**

**Young Nancy:**
It was all new...hot sun so early in the day, the birds...sounded different, and that thrill...I can’t
explain it, it’s physical but you know you’re in another place…a new world.

The salty air…colors, buildings… never been anywhere like it.

**Old Nancy:**

Left Sydney ‘a nobody’… so my mother said… between her prayers and insults ‘Don’t put on any airs and graces or people will see right through you.’

I couldn’t wait to get away from her. Same way my father did …the day he walked out on us.

I’d lie awake at night straining to hear a footstep or sound…that he was near but he never came back.

**Young Nancy:**

Docked in France and life just …opened… Paris… the South… sunny village squares, fountains, friends, the language, now that was hard…loved it…loved it all. Then I met Henri.

*Henri and Young Nancy share a look.*

Spotted him watching me in a bar …Rue Saint André des Arts…so dapper,

*She winks at him*

I winked at him and he came over

*Henri joins Young Nancy*

Just like that and…oooh la la la la la la!

We roamed the streets of Paris till dawn.

**BEAT**

*Nancy and Henri embrace*

How…how could anyone give in?
To think of Paris... Paris of all places... occupied by Germans?

*Young Nancy exits*

*Henri returns to sit with old Nancy.*

**Henri:**

Be proud, be who you were. A member of the French Resistance... a spy... a saboteur!

**Old Nancy:**

Last time I received thumbs up it was... at the RSL, in Sydney. Some old nincompoop came up to me afterwards and said, ‘You must be the one the Gestapo called the White Rabbit?’

**Henri:**

Rabbit?

**Old Nancy:**

Rabbit. I said, ‘You’d be thinking of Alice in Wonderland. I was known as The White Mouse... Die Weisse Maus.’
1.3

1943 in Nancy and Henri’s Marseille Apartment.

*Henri turns towards young Nancy. He’s been out on the town with another woman.*

*Uncomfortable PAUSE*

**Young Nancy:**

I didn’t sleep at all last night

**Henri:**

We don’t have to talk about it.

**BEAT**

Do we?

*She ignores him*

Have you heard from O’Leary?

**Young Nancy:**

They got through.

**Henri:**

Fantastic.

**Young Nancy:**

There are seven children, he’s not sure how to do it but he wants them out by tomorrow morning.

**Henri:**

Out?

**Young Nancy:**

He mentioned me driving... towards the Pyrenees.

**Henri:**

Four hours with three checkpoints!

**Young Nancy:**

Can I take your car?

**Henri:**
We should be celebrating tonight...I haven’t seen you for a week/

Young Nancy:
I’ll be fine. I know the roads.

Henri:
You can’t possibly be serious/

Young Nancy:
I’ve told Marie exactly how you like your meals cooked. She comes well recommended but it will take her time to get used to cooking for you/

She’ll pick up your jacket from the tailor on Thursday, and don’t worry she knows how to look after your suits.

Henri:
I’m coming with you.

Young Nancy:
This apartment is too big. I’ve been saying that ever since we moved here. You’re never going to find anything. If you lose something...please just ask Marie, she’ll know where it is.

Henri:
I don’t need anyone to look after me.

\textit{PAUSE}

Young Nancy:
You won’t be able to contact me.

Henri:
Money?

Young Nancy:
I have enough/

Henri:
What!
This is ridiculous you can’t go!

Young Nancy:
I have to.

Henri:
How will I know if something/?

Young Nancy:
They’re not going to find me.

Henri:
I’ll speak to O’ Leary and we’ll work out a way for you to stay in Marseille.

BEAT

Young Nancy:
There’s a bounty on my head.

Henri:
Who told you that?

Young Nancy:
It’s true

Henri:
How do we know?

Young Nancy:
It’s a lot of money

BEAT
I have to get out of France.

Henri:
We’ll solve this tomorrow.

Young Nancy:
It can’t be solved.

Henri:
If it were me/
Young Nancy:

Well, it’s not you.

PAUSE

Young Nancy Exits

Henri turns back to Old Nancy
1.4

Present Time in Nancy’s Sydney home

Henri sits with Old Nancy.

Old Nancy:
The market at the Vieux Port... the fish, the poissonnerie ... sparkling eyes, scales glistening in the sun, beautiful and so fresh/

Henri:
Monsieur Honoré selling spices and his homemade saucisson/

Old Nancy:
The little dwarf man playing his piano accordion

Henri:
Pastis?

Old Nancy:
Of course, we always had to stop on the way home... what was it called?

Henri:
Le Roi Rouge

Old Nancy:
These days I can’t smell a thing. And when I walk to the end of the street, I meet no one... only hear the sound of my footsteps, one following the other.

I swear this hill gets steeper every year. Still I puff on upwards. This city is so bloody hilly.

Henri:

Like Marseille?

Old Nancy:
Hills are okay when you’re young.

Henri:
You always said Sydney was beautiful.
Old Nancy:
Then I came home to it. After the war...you’d have hated it... there was nothing. Empty streets, Boofheads spewing out of pubs, grocers with no decent cheese ...I had to forget cheese, and no one drank wine.

Henri:
Mon Dieu!

Old Nancy:
Couldn’t believe it. It was beer and a shandy for the lady.

Henri:
What about your gin?

Old Nancy:
I have one or two. Four or five ...a good day is when I open a fresh bottle.

PAUSE

Old Nancy pours herself a gin

Henri:
Sometimes if you look back on something ...you might see it differently

Old Nancy:
Perhaps

BEAT

If I’d known they’d come after you... I’d never have left ...you know that!

BEAT

I promise.

Henri:
You broke many promises

Old Nancy:
So, did you.
Henri:

People will want to know why you joined the Resistance?

Old Nancy:

Why do they bloody think! The world was about to end.

Henri:

We had enough money to get out of France?

Old Nancy:

Perhaps if they’d seen Vienna, seen what I saw, Jewish girls biting the hands of German thugs as they ripped jewels from their ears, and groped their bodies.

Old people …teeth kicked in bleeding and crying on the streets. The windows… that night …I still hear the glass shattering… splinters and shards everywhere. They threw pianos, sewing machines …typewriters onto the streets…what sort of/

BEAT

Lists. I don’t know how they got their dirty hands on names, but they knew everyone who was anyone in Vienna. Forced them to kneel and clean the streets with toothbrushes!

Doctors, lawyers, writers, professors, musicians … all of them scrubbing away …brown shirts standing over them with dog whips.

BEAT

It doesn’t matter anymore.
Every one’s seen the photos... the films... the gold from the teeth. There’s nothing to be said. All the stories have been told.

Henri:

Try to remember how you felt.

Old Nancy:

I felt like killing them.

Henri:

You did.

Old Nancy:

The Jews did too, nobody talks about that... they fought...the men kicked those bastards... and were kicked back twice as hard.

Henri:

What about the ones you killed?

Old Nancy:

All Germans. I still remember that girl/

Henri:

A girl?

Old Nancy

Sabine was her name... she must have been about twenty.

BEAT

Have you forgotten what those bastards did to you?

Henri:

How could I?

Old Nancy:

I still can’t think of it. I know what they were capable of... the way you/

BEAT

When I went back to clear out our apartment your father spat at me in the street in Marseille.
Henri:
He never liked you.

Old Nancy:
It was as if I’d killed you myself!

**PAUSE**

Once you’ve killed someone you can do it again...and again... not long before John died/

Henri:
My replacement?

Old Nancy:
Yes. He was a good man.

In London... after the war...stuck in that bloody, boring home office...after work he’d arrive with a big bunch of flowers and take me to restaurants, like the ones we went to... linen napkins and little red table cloths.

He knew about wine too... once he ordered us a Mille neuf cent quarante trois ‘Chateau Petit Village’.

Henri:

*(Scoffs)*

1943? The ‘37 was much better.

Old Nancy:
We had our moments ... he’d always fall asleep on the couch then wake me up when he came to bed. Every night...same fumbling around in the dark looking for his pyjamas... drove me mad.

*Henri falls asleep and impersonates John (Nancy’s second husband) sleeping.*
One night I got up and there he was, asleep in his chair with the lamp on... mouth open, snoring his head off.

He looked like a child... old and ugly one with whiskers...but still something of a child. I put my hands around his neck softly at first...I could feel the beating of his pulse under my fingers. Then I tightened my hands...and tightened them some more.

He didn’t stop snoring.

For an instant I thought I should kill you.

BEAT

It was if some sort of devil had got in me. I never told him...just eased the pressure of his neck and went back to bed.

PAUSE

Henri wakes abruptly and feels his neck.

He returns to Young Nancy.
1.5

1943 return to Marseille Apartment

Young Nancy Enters

Young Nancy:

I’ll wait till tomorrow.

BEAT

At least let me buy us something for dinner... we don’t even have a baguette.

Henri:

Do you know why a baguette is shaped like a stick?

Young Nancy:

Do you?

Henri:

Napoleon ordered his bakers to create loaves that his soldiers could stuff down their trouser legs... while they were on the march

Young Nancy:

So, they wouldn’t get hungry?

Henri:

Yes

Young Nancy:

Who told you that?

Henri:

Marcel, he knows everything.

Young Nancy:

Marcel ...your friend? The one whose mother was Jewish and has a wife who’s a member of the Nazi party?

Henri:

You can’t possibly believe that she’s a Nazi/

Young Nancy:

I can!
Henri: Ridiculous.

Young Nancy: What was she saying about Berlin the other day...‘C’est magnifique!’ What will she admire next...their uniforms...polished boots?

(Nancy is being irrational)

Henri: Naneeeee

Young Nancy: And why visit Berlin...honestly why would anyone visit Berlin!

Henri: It was before this started... they travel ... they’re interested in architecture...always have been.

Young Nancy: Huh!

Henri: I’ve known him all my life

Young Nancy: I’m telling you ...your friend Marcel is married to a Nazi sympathizer.

Henri: She is not a/

Young Nancy: You’re trying to make me angry?

Henri: I’m trying to...I don’t want to argue ...I want you to think about this/

BEAT

Old Nancy enters and is anxious as she watches them argue.
Young Nancy:
I won’t be long

Henri:
How long?

Young Nancy:
No more than an hour. I promise.

Old Nancy joins Young Nancy in this memory

Old Nancy:
I promise.

BEAT

Young Nancy:
I’ll get fish and we can have it with your favorite potatoes. I’ll take the car to be quick.

Henri:
Why don’t we go to a restaurant where we can talk?

BEAT

You know ...it didn’t mean anything

BEAT

Young Nancy:
It never does.

Henri:
Well ...you go...buy us dinner if you like and then we can talk some more. I’ll find a good bottle of wine.

Young Nancy
I’ll be back before you’ve opened it.

They embrace. Nancy holds him tight. Piano music from Hollaender’s ‘Falling in love again’ plays softly in background as she puts on her coat. She picks up her bag then walks over and kisses Henri goodbye again.
Young Nancy Exits, Henri Exits

Old Nancy reaches out to him as he leaves, but he doesn’t see her.

Old Nancy Exits
Scene two

2.1

The Auvergne region of France 1944

Thousands of Resistance fighters (Maquis) are hiding in the forest. Nancy is about to be parachuted in to join them. She has completed her training with the SOE in Scotland and is now a British Special agent.

SFX: air raid sirens and lighting effects of a small plane above followed by Radio London messages.

The Radio crackles and there’s interference. Young Nancy, who is in the plane is about to jump, the off stage voices say what she can hear.

Off Stage voices:

  Denden:
  Ici Londres! Les français parlent aux français
  Henri:
  Se jeter dans la gueule du loup.
  Denden:
  Jean veut venir chercher ses cadeaux
  Henri:
  Le garagiste a les mains tachées de graisse
  Young Nancy:
  That’s it! The garage man has greasy hands. I have to...to jump!

  BEAT

I can’t do it. You’re going to have to push me! She who hesitates dieeeees!

Young Nancy lands.
Old Nancy enters just as Young Nancy lands in a tree.

Old Nancy:
The crack of the parachute filling with wind, the black bulk of the aircraft roaring away then...alone... falling to earth. A dog barked in the distance/

Young Nancy:
I landed in a tree... hip was killing me/

Old Nancy:
Had my ankles strapped so tight I could hardly move/

Young Nancy:
Wearing my new camel hair coat.

BEAT

Old Nancy:
An agent I knew/

Young Nancy:
Was dropped into the hands of waiting Germans.

Old Nancy:
Jean Hadley was her name/

Young Nancy:
No one ever found out what happened... just gone/

Old Nancy:
Jean’s face went around and around in my head.

Young Nancy:
Finally, ...there were voices... And thank god/

Old Nancy:
They were speaking French.

Off stage voices calling to her

Tardivat:
Il y a quelqu’un?

Qui est là?

Young Nancy & Old Nancy:

Je suis là! Je suis là!

BEAT

Fuck knows what would have happened if Tardivat hadn’t cut me out of that tree.

Tardivat enters, he is a resistance fighter in charge of the local group

Tardivat:

I ‘ope that all zee trees in France bear such beautiful fruit this year.

Young Nancy:

Liked me straight away...I could tell.

Old Nancy:

Don’t give me any of your French shit!’ I said, Hah! I was ready for him!

Young Nancy:

Ready for anything.

SFX and lighting effects of a bomb dropping nearby

Tardivat:

Allez! Allez! Vite! Vite! Vite!

Old Nancy, Young Nancy and Tardivat run offstage.
2.2

In the Forest one week later, 1944

Nancy is with Denden, her British/Belgian radio operator and friend has just arrived from London. They both trained with the SOE.

He is setting up his radio equipment to hear when the next weapon drop will occur. There’s a sense of urgency to receive a message from London.

Young Nancy:

Has anything come through?

Denden:

We may be out of range...or maybe they’re having another blasted biscuit break.

Young Nancy:

If you’d arrived when you were expected they’d have had something for us.

Denden:

Please ...don’t start. I’m here now

What’s his name/?

Young Nancy:

Tardivat. He is not happy! Hasn’t done anything but grunt at us since you arrived late

Denden:

So full of Gallic charm

Young Nancy:

Why did you take so long?

Denden:

I had a small diversion

Young Nancy:

Who?
Denden:
It doesn’t matter

Young Nancy:
Yes, it does! Don’t you see, these boys are young, Catholic... completely unsophisticated.

Denden:
You’d be surprised

Young Nancy:
I hope you/

Denden:
What if I have?

Young Nancy:
How do you think the men would regard/?

Denden:
I don’t expect you to understand.

Young Nancy:
I can tell you who wouldn’t understand LONDON.

Denden:
How would they find out?

Young Nancy:
It would really cook your goose if they did!

Denden:
You’d best jump in the pot with me then.

Young Nancy:
I am trying to help.

Denden:
I don’t want ‘help’, thank you very much.

Young Nancy:
I just wish you’d be more discreet.
Denden:
I am.
Wait ...here’s something.

*SFX Morse code comes through*

Nancy:
What does it say?

_Denden listens to the code then says it in French_

Denden:
Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Blessent mon cœur
D’une langueur monotone

Young Nancy:
A poem?

Denden:
By Paul Verlaine, it’s ‘The Song of Autumn’

Young Nancy:
‘The drawn-out sobs of Autumn’s violins wound my heart with their monotonous languor?’

Bloody encryption always stumps me.
How do you do that?

Denden:
That’s why I’m the ‘pianiste’ and you’re ‘chef de parachutage’

Young Nancy:
Thank god!

Denden:
You must have learned to change messages using a double transposition cipher when we were in Scotland?
Young Nancy:
I’m not as fast as you

Denden:
In more ways than one

Young Nancy:
Touché

Denden:
It means that once we receive the last line the landings start.

Young Nancy:
But we need weapons before the landings start

BEAT

When’s the next full moon?

SFX more Morse code. He quickly puts on his headphones and listens while Nancy waits anxiously.

Denden:
Our next parachutage is scheduled for Thursday.

He listens some more

If there’s no fog

Young Nancy:
Two days away

Denden:
We haven’t a choice. We wait.

Young Nancy:
The attack on Montluçon is planned for tomorrow.

Denden:
Did you talk to Tardivat...did you tell him we’re getting weapons soon?

Young Nancy:
He’s not listening.

Denden:
(Sadly) They’re only boys.

Young Nancy:
Yes, boys from the village not soldiers. I can’t believe he wants to go ahead. I have to convince him to wait

Denden:
Don’t like your chances Ducky.

*Denden puts away his headphones and begins choosing what to wear to go out, his clothes are in his bag.*

Young Nancy:
What are you doing?

Denden:
Putting on the Ritz

Young Nancy:
What for!

Denden:
While you were crawling under barbed wire and swinging across rivers in the wilds of Scotland/

Young Nancy:
You were?

Denden:
In Paris entertaining Germans with my cabaret act.

Young Nancy:
Really?

Denden:
Undercover ...as an agent of course

Young Nancy:
That must have been/
Denden:
Dangerous?

Young Nancy:
Bloody dangerous

Denden:
Nothing is safe... it was fun.

Young Nancy:
Fun! Despite the raids... meaningless arrests...not to mention the Palais de Justice covered in swastikas.

Denden:
Autumn leaves still fall on Boulevard Saint Michel, La tour Eiffel is there in all her glory. Paris is still Paris.

Besides, the mark of a good agent is when you can’t tell whose side they’re on.

And if I’ve learned anything from this war it is that we don’t have time to waste.

BEAT
You won’t change his mind.

Young Nancy takes a compass out of her bag.

Young Nancy:
(Thinking aloud)
If we intercept the train to Toulouse and block the road that will slow them down... then we could wait for the weapon drop.

He’s stubborn but surely, he’s not stupid.

Denden:
I’ve met men like him
Young Nancy:
Do you think I haven’t?

Denden:
It’s hubris ...a condition that renders him unable to be reasoned with

_Denden puts on a flamboyant jacket._

Young Nancy:
He’ll have an absolute fit if you wear that!

Denden:
I don’t care.

Young Nancy:
I do!

Denden:
Would you please lighten up! He may be the boss, but he is not my costume consultant!

Young Nancy:
Please...it will only cause trouble

Denden:
I like trouble... and besides we need to kick up our heels tonight! We could be digging graves this time tomorrow

_Denden takes a lipstick out of his pocket and applies it_

Young Nancy:
Noooo

_He makes a ‘moue’ for her to comment on his lipstick_

Denden:
What do you think Ducky, pretty in pink?

Young Nancy:
Imagine ...getting drunk before a siege?

Denden:
Please, lighten up Ducky.
PAUSE

Young Nancy takes a lipstick out of her bag and gives it to Denden.

Young Nancy:
The Helena Rubenstein lasts longer...and you’re better with red.

Young Nancy applies the lipstick on Denden and puts it back into her bag.

Denden:
Do you want to hear the song I’ve written for them?

Young Nancy:
Not really

Denden:
You’ll like it

Young Nancy:
I won’t

He does a few dance steps to try to jolly her on. Nancy gradually joins him, laughing. He turns her around and sweeps her back in a fancy dance move. He shows her more steps and sings as he dances.

Denden (Singing):

I’M LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS
FOR A TOP-SECRET MISSION

YOU WILL HAVE TO ASSUME
A MOST STRATEGIC POSITION
I’LL BE STATIONED IN THE REAR
ALL I’LL KEEP YOU CLOSE, MY DEAR

NEVER VOLUNTEER FOR ANYTHING
ANYTHING AN OFFICER MAY ASK
NEVER VOLUNTEER FOR ANYTHING
UNLESS YOU’RE EQUAL TO THE TASK
They are laughing and enjoying themselves

Denden:

See, I told you you’d like it, Ducky. Let’s go!

Denden and Nancy head for the bar, singing.
2.3
A Bar in a nearby village.

In the bar piano music of ‘falling in love again’ plays softly in background.

Sabine, the German girl, is lit backstage in the bar. She is getting ready for her show. She turns to face the audience.

She sits on a bar stool centre stage and we enter her headspace.

**Sabine:**

People who died long ago, there is not even a vibration in the air of them.

My grandmother Freda, if only I could ask her ...how it is to be burned alive. I always wondered when I was a child... after my father told me about her little wooden house in Strasbourg. I would sit and watch the sausages cooking in the pan and think, does skin turn black like wood? Or does it sizzle and split and spit sticky fat onto the wall.

It’s the smoke that kills you ...choking...like a hundred cigarettes inhaled at once ...happens long before your skin turns black.

‘She died in her favorite chair saying her prayers’ my father said.

Once, it was easy for me to picture her baking bread or pushing the cat off the step with her broom... so she could sweep it properly. She loved to sweep. Now she’s gone.

She always wanted me to stay clean and to wear white cotton underwear. I have no white underwear. ‘People
will like you if you are clean and tidy’ she said ... I believed that as well.

People prefer if you are not ... so long as you are flesh and blood, and you are still breathing.

When my father spoke, it made me shake. He had no time for weakness, and he told us every day with our morning milk ‘Be strong’.

When he said this to me, I could stop myself from saying the wrong thing...but I didn’t have my physical reactions under control...my blushing...I had to hide my face.

If my father saw that I was afraid...He never saw. Once, I had to turn my head away so fast...towards the woman in the corner of our shop. She was mending a fur coat that day. When she saw my color, she stopped sewing and called me over to help her. I stood beside her with my back to my father until my face became cool again.

My brother Karl ...he was never afraid

BEAT

Will he be there to pick me up on the corner after it is done? Or will he be laughing in another bar with his friends, so lost in beer that he will forget to collect his little sister from Alsace.

I could stay in this town... in this bar...and become the Frenchman’s whore. Close my eyes and imagine our oven propped open... the smell of nutmeg and cinnamon. They would be the same as German boys. Besides, I could push them off if they hurt me.
'You are among our finest athletes,' they told me... my father was so proud, he said work harder, always work harder than the others and you will better than them, you will be the lucky one.

I’d run and jump and fly over the hurdles, my brother and I ... together, marching and singing their songs so loudly. My father wanted so much for us to follow in his boot steps.

For me these are dancing boots...not good for marching. And, I have my new silk stockings from Paris. *(she caresses her legs)*

> Music becomes louder as Sabine adjusts her microphone and enters the stage space of the bar.

*SFX Bar sounds, glasses clink, men cheering her on*

**Sabine**

Now I am underground, at least I can sing what I want.

*(This action takes place while Sabine sings)*

Nancy and Denden arrive in the bar, another young Resistance fighter arrives. Denden likes the look of him but the fighter is more interested in watching Sabine. They are drinking wine and smoking.

Denden begins to try to chat up the young man. He walks over and pays close attention to Sabine.

Nancy is put out by the way the men are so interested in Sabine.
Sabine sings ‘FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN’ by Freidrich Hollaender

When she finishes her song, she flirts with the Young fighter and they leave the bar together.

Young Nancy and Denden finish their drinks, they’re laughing and horsing about as they watch the couple leave.
2.4

The Bar

*SFX There is shouting outside the bar. The Music stops abruptly. Denden and Nancy listen.*

_Sabine screams._

_Denden:_

_Do you want me to come with you?_

_Young Nancy:_

_Let me see first._

_Young Nancy goes out to see what is happening._

_Sabine is struggling with the young man. Nancy approaches them. The man is defiant._

_Young Maquisard:_

_She’s a German whore_

_Young Nancy:_

_What!_

_Young Maquisard:_

_Said we could... then... she disappeared. I found her/_

_Young Nancy:_

_Found her where?_

_Sabine appears to be choking._

_Young Maquisard:_

_In the forest...half way to the mountains, there’s something wrong with her._

_Young Nancy:_

_I can see that!_

_Nancy tries to help her get her breath. The girl coughs and splutters._

_Young Nancy:_

_Find Denden and tell him I want to see him. Now!_

_The Young Maquisard runs off and Nancy helps the girl._
Denden enters.

Denden: Does she speak English?

Young Nancy: She can sing in English.

Denden: Wie heissen sie?

She stops choking.

Sabine: Sabine.

Young Nancy: Parlez-vous français?

She looks at him not understanding so he speaks to her in English

What happened to your leg?

Sabine: I can walk enough

Young Nancy: Can you tell us how you got here?

Sabine: I am here for my family. We are from Alsace, we make choucroute and I bring it to the market in the village... to sell in the morning.

Young Nancy: And you sing in the bar?

Sabine: Yes, every week on the night before market day.

(To each other)

Denden: The market is tomorrow

Young Nancy:
She’s a German agent!

Denden:

Don’t be ridiculous. Leave her, she can take care of herself...the men won’t hurt her

Young Nancy:
They already have. What if I’m right?

Denden:

She’s far too young/

Young Nancy:

Don’t be stupid

Nancy notices her bracelet. She grabs the girl’s arm. Sabine is wearing an authentic diamond bracelet.

Young Nancy:
Where did you get this?

Sabine:
It was my grandmother’s.

Young Nancy:
A cabbage farmer from Alsace doesn’t own diamonds like these?

Sabine:
My grandmother was not a cabbage farmer.

Nancy takes the bracelet off Sabine and gives it to Denden. He looks at it carefully maybe he bites a diamond.

(To Denden)

Young Nancy:
Made from diamonds stolen from Jews.

(To Sabine)

Who gave you this bracelet?

Sabine:
It was my grandmother’s

Denden:
Perhaps she’s being paid by them?

*Young Nancy throws Sabine to the ground*

Denden:

Ducky!

*Young Nancy:*

What’s your mission here?

Sabine:

I have no mission

*Young Nancy:*

Do you have identity papers?

Sabine:

Sabine nods no

Denden and Young Nancy look at each other, everyone has to have identity papers.

*Young Nancy:*

What did you want from that man?

Sabine:

Nothing. I tried to run away but he/

*Young Nancy:*

Found you half way to the mountains?

Sabine:

I am a singer... ask in the village if you don’t believe me... every week the night before the market/

*Young Nancy:*

You come all the way from Alsace?

Sabine:

Colmar

*Young Nancy:*

That’s a long way to sell cabbage

Sabine:

It is the best choucroute in France
Young Nancy:
I don’t doubt that…but people make it locally.

Sabine:
We use an ancient recipe and the people prefer it.
If you were French, you would understand its value.

Young Nancy:

Pleasssse.

Denden:
She doesn’t know anything. It’s been hell for them
in Alsace, and it’s getting worse.

*Sabine implores Denden*

Sabine:
The house of my grandmother was burned to the
ground!

My people have been traded like animals… for French…
for Germans. My brother was sent to a camp for
refusing to join the SS. My father is gone.

*Young Nancy is not moved*

In my village the dead were piled on windowsills to
make way for the tanks.

*The girl starts coughing and spluttering again*

Young Nancy:
Where’s her choucroute then?

Denden:
Ducky…this girl is not a spy.

Young Nancy:
She was flirting with him for a reason.

Denden:
For a normal reason, the man knows nothing. I spoke to him, he barely speaks English and she has no French. He wasn’t interested in talking to her.

**Young Nancy:**

You underestimate her.

**Denden:**

She’s a *singer*

**Young Nancy:**

What difference does that make?

**Denden:**

And she’s in no state to tell you anything. Please let her sleep and talk tomorrow.

**BEAT**

**Young Nancy:**

She has our coordinates… she knows who I am.

**Denden:**

Fine! I’m going to bed. I’ve missed enough beauty sleep… and so have you.

*Denden leaves.*

**Young Nancy thinks. They settle.**

**Suddenly the girl speaks/**

*Old Nancy enters*

**Sabine:**

Kill me! If that is what you must do

**BEAT**

You cannot win this war.

**Young Nancy:**

Fraulein …you are wrong, we will win.

**Sabine:**

The German army gets stronger every day.
Young Nancy:
Berlin is finished/

BEAT

We will win

Sabine:
You’re not French. I can tell by your face.

Young Nancy:
Nor are you

Sabine:
No, I am not.

BEAT

Young Nancy:
I’m Australian...born in New Zealand.

Old Nancy:
My grandmother was from warrior stock.

Sabine:
A warrior... is that what you think you are? Why are you here... hiding in the forest ...with guns and communists and village boys? You should go home... your power is/

Young Nancy:
What power?

Sabine:
You’re sick with it. I’ve done nothing to/

Young Nancy:
/You know who I am?

Sabine:
You are nobody. Like me. There is no difference between us.

Young Nancy:

You’re a Nazi.

Both Young Nancy and Old Nancy spit on Sabine.

Sabine:

You would be a Nazi if you were German

Young Nancy:

Tell me where you got the bracelet!

BEAT

Sabine:

My Grandmother. Her name was Frida Rose Bartel and she lived at 14 Fredricksen Strasse in a little wooden house in Strasbourg... she was a fine person.

BEAT

Her first husband gave it to her. He bought it in Paris... from a jewellery shop in Place Vendôme... it was called ‘Pierre Ster...’

(Finishing her sentence)

Young Nancy:

Pierre Sterlé... I know it.

Sabine:

It is all I have... it survived the fire. I wear it so I can survive too.

BEAT
Will you keep it ...if you kill me?

*Old and young Nancy line up to shoot her.*

*SFX Gunshot.*

*Young Nancy and Old Nancy drag Sabine’s lifeless body offstage.*
Scene Three

3.1

In the Forest after Sabine has been shot and buried.

Young Nancy is having her lunch and enjoying a bottle of wine.

Denden runs on stage looking for her. He is panting and desperate.

Young Nancy continues eating and drinking.

Young Nancy:

For god’s sake, what’s wrong with you?

Denden:

Our codes and crystals are gone. Stolen

Young Nancy:

What?

Denden:

Why...why did you shoot her?

Young Nancy:

You know why.

Denden:

It hasn’t even put you off your lunch

Young Nancy:

Will you settle down!

Denden:

I begged you NOT to!

Young Nancy:

What’s this about?

Denden:

We’re finished. Finished!

Young Nancy:

Stolen? By who for Christ’s sake!
Denden:
We’ll both be shot for this.

Young Nancy:
Tell me what happened to the radio?

Denden:
Don’t you see?

Young Nancy:
No!

Denden:
What do you think she was choking on?

Young Nancy:
I have no idea

Nancy takes another swig on her bottle of wine

Denden:
Think!

BEAT

Nancy swallows her wine

Young Nancy:
She swallowed them?

Denden angrily takes the bottle of wine from Young Nancy and exits.
3.2

Nightmare/Dream Ballet

Old Nancy:
Now days if someone pops by to see me ...when they leave, I watch them from my window as they walk down the street, doesn’t matter who...I love any visitor. I watch right up until they disappear into the distance.

Sometimes they glance back to look at you. I always wonder why people do that, what are they thinking?

Feels as if they don’t like me much, especially if they know who I am. I can’t tell. I’ve never been good at telling what people think of me.

I just like to keep them in my sight for long as I can. Until I’m sure they’ve really gone.

Young Nancy:
When lining up a target your whole body must be aligned ...feet on the ground, rifle butt in your shoulder. And you hold it steady until you feel your mind and body coming together, and then...there’s a moment, an instinct... and ...sometimes you feel something well up behind your breastbone...you have to just ignore it and shoot.

Old Nancy:
I saw a horse shot once. On our way to church, I was maybe five, it was hit by a car. My brother told me it was a new Model T Ford and my mother tried to pull me back, nearly yanked my arm out of its socket, but I ran...got right up close. The blood bubbled out of the horse’s nose.
Young Nancy:
The same thing happens when you shoot someone through the head...if you do it properly. If you don’t well, I’ve seen that too.

Old Nancy:
When I wake I’m rigid and my arms ache. I’ve been holding on...holding onto those bloody handlebars all night. I’m on the bike again.

They say I try to get up during the night ...they’re imagining it. I’d remember if I did. I’m a light sleeper. In the forest at night, I was always listening ...the way animals do. Ready to pounce...ready for any predator!

Old and young Nancy line up as if they’re in a SOE training lesson.

A very British SOE training officer enters and surveys them both. They stand to attention and salute as he enters.

SOE training official:
Some of the qualities we’re looking for in our agents are... how shall I put it, not particularly admirable.

Young Nancy:
First thing they told us at the SOE.

Young and old Nancy act out what he is telling them to do

SOE training official:
Cut the brachial artery with a quick slash to the forearm... dislocate your enemies' knee with a single stab of your foot... Of course, you remember the goal is to cause maximum damage/

Young Nancy & Old Nancy

(In unison) As fast as you can/

SOE training officer

Very good!

SOE officer exits

Old Nancy:

I rode so bloody far to get crystals for that radio... too scared to stop. Mountains... check points... lost count of how many I got through. I had to get them back in time for Denden to organize the weapon drop.

Old Nancy and Young Nancy stand side by side, they are cycling furiously through the mountains.

Young Nancy:

On the way back I had to stop at a level crossing, the transmitter was in my bicycle basket... strapped under a big bunch of carrots and/

Young and Old Nancy:

(In unison) wrapped in a tablecloth.

Old Nancy:

A car full of Gestapo pulled up and one of them rolled down his window.
Gestapo Officer pulls up beside them and winds down his window

**Gestapo:**

Fräulein, tell me what do you have in your basket?

**Young Nancy:**

I’ve got a radio transmitter and I’m going to contact London and tell them/

**Young and Old Nancy:**

(In unison) All about you

**Gestapo officer:**

You’re far too pretty to risk your neck with such stupidity

__Coarse laughter from Gestapo officer, old and young Nancy flirt with him.__

__He drives away and they cycle off as fast as they can__

**Old Nancy:**

Wet my pants on the way back but I didn’t care…just kept riding.

**Young Nancy:**

Rain…mud…it nearly killed me, But/

**Young and Old Nancy:**

(In unison) I had it safe!
3.3
A Nazi Torture Chamber near Marseille.

Henri Fiocca is lit. He drags himself to centre stage. He has had a severe beating.

Henri sits in a chair. He is slumps and is barely conscious.

Nazi enters, and turns on radio, an old recording of the song begins to play.

SFX ‘Ballad of the soldier’s wife’ by Brecht and Weill plays underneath the entire scene.

He slowly lights a cigar and takes off his coat.

Nazi:
Breathe deeply… in and out…this is not over yet.

Nazi smokes his cigar.

Nazi:
Cuban, you’d like these. Man, of taste that you are.

BEAT
I could rip off your nose…or point my Valter at your testicles …but I won’t …if you tell me where she’s hiding.

Henri:
Underground. I don’t know where

Nazi:
Oh, I think you do
BEAT

We watched your lovely wife with interest for some time... whether walking about the Panier quartier with her little dog, what was its name... (he remembers) Picon.

Henri:

Picon!

Nazi:

Or shopping in her favorite shop...expensive taste

Henri:

You followed her?

Nazi:

Of course, we followed her. We followed her for months. Always managed to slip out of sight... that’s why we call her ‘Die Weisse Maus’/

Henri:

In Marseille they call you Schweinhund

Nazi:

So, I’m told

Henri:

You’ll never find her.

SFX

The last verse of the song is played with volume increased during the following action.

WHAT WAS SENT TO THE SOLDIER’S WIFE
FROM THE FAR OFF RUSSIAN LAND
WHAT WAS SENT TO THE SOLDIER’S WIFE
FROM RUSSIA THERE CAME JUST A WIDOW’S VEIL
FOR HER DEAD TO WE WAIL IN HER WIDOW’S VEIL
FROM THE FAR OFF RUSSIAN LAND
FROM THE FAR OFF RUSSIAN LAND.

Nazi:
I’ve heard she’s somewhere in the forest... enjoying plenty of ‘collaboration horizontal’ ...with farmers ...communist scum, and who knows who else... perhaps some of my fine young German officers?

BEAT

Where is she?

Where is die Weiss Maus, tell me now!

Nazi takes out some instrument of torture and looks at it.

Music ends as image of Nazi about to murder Henri is frozen.
Scene Four

4.1

*After the Battle of Montluçon / Filmed footage of the devastation of Berlin may be used during the song. Germany is losing badly.*

*SFX Sabine Sings ‘Lili Marlene’ in German. She may be seated behind scrim screen.*

As Sabine sings and after the OAM ceremony Nancy enters her home. She is wearing her coat with all her war medals pinned to it.

She walks past Sabine who continues singing. Sabine is wearing her Hitler Youth outfit with her hair in plaits. She remains in the background.

Old Nancy enters a Memory.

1944 *After the battle for Montluçon, Denden and Young Nancy enter.*

They are stepping over the dead bodies of young Resistance fighters who have been slaughtered by Germans. They are in a field.

Y*n*ng Nancy: What have they done!

Denden: While you were in Montluçon they must have come from the east.

Y*n*ng Nancy: How would they know?

Denden: The Germans are starting to track our signals.

Y*n*ng Nancy: So, they heard these boys were on their way from Chateauroux?
Denden:
Must have/

BEAT

Young Nancy:
Schweinhund ordered them to do this/

Denden:
Who?

Young Nancy:
He knew I’d be in Montluçon ...waiting for these boys to arrive.

BEAT
The one they call Pigdog. You know him? I first met him on a train when I started to work as a courier...managed to lose him at the station.

Denden:
Round belly and little deep-set eyes...roll of fat squeezing over the top of his tight Nazi collar /

Young Nancy:
That’s him

Denden:
Schweinhund, also known as Commandant Kraus?

Young Nancy:
Yes.

BEAT
At least he’s dead.

Denden:
What! How do you know... who killed him?

Young Nancy:
I did.

Denden:
When?

Old Nancy:
I broke his neck

**Young Nancy:**

Before we blew up their headquarters this morning… surprised him from behind.

**Denden:**

You what?

**Old Nancy:**

With my hands/

**Young Nancy:**

It took a while/

**Old Nancy:**

Neck so bloody thick and greasy/

**Young Nancy:**

But I held on until he went blue…and his tongue flopped out of his mouth.

**PAUSE**

Young Nancy and Denden are squatting and looking at the dead around them in the field.

**Young Nancy:**

Know any prayers?

**Denden:**

No. You?

**Young Nancy:**

*(She nods ‘no’)*

**BEAT**

We’ll bury them tomorrow.

**Old Nancy:**

Wash them first… then wrap them in the silk parachutes …before their mothers come to say goodbye/

**Young Nancy:**

Yes, they’re washed and folded in the store…soft white silk.
Will you help me?

Denden:

Yes

BEAT

Old Nancy

In the end... it didn’t matter how many drills ...how much training ...how ready I thought I was/

BEAT

None of it made any difference when we saw what they did...on the last
day...we saw those boys slaughtered in the field.

BEAT

Babies they were... on the way to help me... those fucking, dirty Boche bastards!
4.2

Present Time in Nancy’s Home, following the OAM Ceremony.

SFX Sabine sings ‘Lili Marlene’ in English underneath the following scene.

Old Nancy can hear the song as Sabine continues to haunt her. Henri enters

Old Nancy:
I want to be left in peace, I’m old and I’m tired.

Henri:
Where you jealous of her?

Nancy:
Who?

Henri:
Sabine, when you saw her singing/

Nancy:
In the bar?

Henri:
Yes.

Nancy:
Why would you say that?

Henri:
What did you think?

Old Nancy:
She was beautiful and young ...wearing a lace chemise ... similar to one I bought in Paris before we were married.

She was Marlene to them/

Henri:
You were young too/

Sabine stops singing

Young Nancy enters. Henri turns to her

BEAT

Young Nancy:
So perfect the life we had. Shop until lunchtime, stop for pastis.

Old Nancy:
Meet you at the port for lunch, go to the beauty parlour... have my nails done.

Henri:
Cook

Old Nancy:
Loved to cook

Henri:
And you were very good at it. Your Bouillabaisse/

Young Nancy:
The night we entertained Josephine Baker

Henri:
And Maurice Chevalier/

Old Nancy:
How could I forget him...what a night!
Henri:
You charmed them all in that satin dress

Young Nancy:
Silver satin/

Old Nancy:
It was Schiaparelli

Henri:
I can see you in it... no one believed you had made our special dish

Young Nancy:
Because I’m not French...I wanted you to be proud of ‘the Australian girl’

Henri:
I was. Always the best wine, the best food, my Nannee.

Young Nancy exits

BEAT

SFX Sabine sings Lily Marlene

Old Nancy:
The men loved Sabine...she had them in the palm of her hand. In the forest...I couldn’t be/

Henri:
A woman like her?

Old Nancy:
She was a Nazi!
Henri:

A special agent... same as you

Old Nancy:

Knew soon as I set eyes on her/

Henri:

You never had any doubts?

Old Nancy:

Yes, I suppose/

BEAT

Have you forgotten what they did to you?

BEAT

Henri:

The women lost their sons, their husbands... homes... they cleared the rubble in Berlin for years

Old Nancy:

Huh! No men left to do it.

BEAT

They got what they deserved

Henri:

Is that what you think after all this time?

BEAT

Sabine exits

Old Nancy:
There was a man at the reception tonight... had those ice blue eyes you only see in Krauts... didn’t have a German name... but he had it in him. I could tell, came up to congratulate me afterwards.

Henri:

That was kind

Old Nancy:

I suppose

Henri:

Did you shake his hand?

BEAT

Old Nancy:

Yes... yes, I did

BEAT

Henri:

So how did it feel shaking the hand of a German?

Old Nancy:

It was fine

Henri:

End of a chapter for you?

Old Nancy:

I suppose, something like that... I realised tonight... how tired I am of spouting the same old woolly nonsense.

Henri:

I told you people are interested. They’ll always be interested.

Old Nancy:
Yes... but I feel like I’ve been doing it for a thousand years... it’s only when I close my eyes... I’m in the forest ...and it’s real again.

Henri:

What will you do now?

Old Nancy:

Go to England.

They can prop me up in a chair somewhere with a view of the sea. Or, maybe there’s still a seat for me in the American bar at the Stafford...bloody loved that place.

Henri:

Why not France?

Old Nancy:

Everyone’s dead. I’ve outlasted the lot of them. And I’m selling these to pay for it.

Henri:

Your medals?

Old Nancy:

This little beauty is worth a lot of money.

Henri:

A Legion d'Honneur!

Old Nancy:

I’ve contacted Sotheby’s and they’re interested. Bloody RSL say I can’t do it.

Henri:

You are an Officier de Legion d’Honneur! France’s highest honour. You can stop traffic in Paris with this medal.

You must not sell it.

Old Nancy:

Watch me! Besides where I’m going it will be hot and they’ll melt.

Henri:

Nanneee
Old Nancy:
I’ve been fighting all my life… don’t need medals to prove it.

Henri:
But you worked so hard

Old Nancy:
When they ask me why I did it? I don’t even know… I’ve been two women ever since. The one in the war and the one after… I can’t do it anymore.

Henri:
Yes, you can.

Henri exits

Old Nancy
Don’t leave, come back…please. Come back.

Nancy reaches out to him as he exits.
Scene Five

Present Time in Nancy’s Home AFTER OAM Ceremony

Old Nancy:

A woman I barely knew came up to me once... at the market in Marseille... we were both buying apricots... just in season and still warm from the sun.

She looked straight at me and said, ‘There’s a big advantage to marrying an older man... when he dies you’re still young enough for another’.

I couldn’t believe it... had no idea how much I loved you until I lost you.

Denden appears and walks over to Nancy (to comfort her).

Yet... to this day people think I did what I did for myself, not for Henri... not for La France.

Denden:

We all did what we did for France.

BEAT

Old Nancy:

Remember after a bombing... once that deep distant thumping in the earth subsides, and the damage is done.

Denden:

Everything vibrates for so long afterwards

Old Nancy:

One more bomb avoided next one on its way.

Denden:

Ducky! You know I hate explosives/

Old Nancy:

/I knew how to use them. To blow up a bridge/
A train full of people

Old Nancy:

Who were those people?

Denden:

We’ll never know will we.

Old Nancy:

Some of them must have been Nazis, or at least German.

Denden:

I hope so

Old Nancy:

We really buggered things up for them didn’t we/

Denden:

Yes, general insurrection was our mission

Old Nancy:

You’d have to be living under a rock not to see that it will come again.

First part of De Gaulle’s Liberation of Paris speech plays (in French)

PARIS! PARIS outragé! PARIS brisé! PARIS martyrisé! MAIS PARIS LIBERE! LIBERE PAR LUI-MÊME PAR SON PEUPLE AVEC LE CONCOURS DES ARMÉES DE LA FRANCE, AVEC L’APPUI ET LE CONCOURS DE LA FRANCE TOUT ENTIERE, DE LA FRANCE QUI SE BAT, DE LA SEULE FRANCE, DE LA VRAIE FRANCE, DE LA FRANCE ÉTERNELLE.

Henri Enters. He is marching and singing ‘The Marseillaise’.

Henri:

ALLONS, ENFANTS DE LA PATRIE
LE JOUR DE GLOIRE EST ARRIVÉ!
CONTRE NOUS, DE LA TYRANNIE
L’ÉTENDARD SANGLANT EST LEVÉ
ENTENDEZ-VOUS DANS LES CAMPAGNES
MUGIR CES FÉROCES SOLDATS?
ILLS VIENNENT JUSQUE DANS NOS BRAS
ÉGORGER NOS FILS, NOS COMPAGNES!

Young Nancy enters and joins Henri singing.

AUX ARMES, CITOYENS!
FORMEZ VOS BATAILLONS
MARCHONS, MARCHONS!
QU’UN SANG IMPUR
ABREUVE NOS SILLONS!

Denden and Old Nancy watch them sing, they are ambivalent about the nationalistic song.

Young Nancy:
When people said Paris would fall no one believed them.

Henri:
And after it had ...Parisians swore that it hadn’t.

Old Nancy:
That’s right sullen acceptance, very French

Henri:
Don’t forget ‘Collaboration’ was the official policy

Old Nancy:
True...most Parisians were busy denouncing their Jewish neighbours, rivals in business, women their husbands had affairs with five years ago...you name it. It all came out after the war.

Henri:
But You helped to liberate Paris
Old Nancy:
We helped yes...but the allies...the airmen...they were the bravest

Denden (Singing):
THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES,
THEY GO UP TIDDLY UP UP,
THEY GO DOWN TIDDLY DOWN, DOWN

Old Nancy:
What’s the next bit?
(The others join in singing and moving as aeroplanes)
THEY ENCHANT ALL THE LADIES AND STEAL ALL THE SCENES
WITH THEIR UP TIDDLY UP UP
AND THEIR DOWN TIDDLY DOWN DOWN

Old Nancy:
That’s right.
UP, DOWN, FLYING AROUND
LOOPING THE LOOP AND DEFYING THE GROUND

Old Nancy:
She is laughing
‘Looping the loop’ I love that bit!
Nancy becomes reflective again
BEAT

Old Nancy:
The day Paris was liberated...was a sad one for me

Henri:
Why?

Old Nancy:
The day I found out what happened to you

Old Nancy:
Your friend ...Marcel...it was his wife who told me.

Henri:
Ha! And you thought she was a Nazi sympathiser.

Old Nancy:
She’d been in Ravensbrook. She was one of us all along.

Henri:
She was a Résistante?

BEAT
So... you were wrong? It’s taken all these years for me to be able to say I told you so!

Old Nancy:
I was wrong about many things.

BEAT

Henri:
You certainly were.

Old Nancy:
Leaving you...without saying goodbye...the same way my father left us...the day he walked out.
I never thought of consequences.

Henri:
She who hesitates dies

Old Nancy:
They all died! Half the SOE didn’t come back and the ones who did ... couldn’t live the rest of their lives.
I was lucky. I was still in the embryonic sac when I came out...means luck.

Henri:
Really?

Old Nancy:
I believed it ... I believed I would never die.

For the entire war...avoided so many bullets...even when I jumped off that moving train...seize the moment ...think, and you’re gone.
Henri:
Eventually we all die.

Old Nancy
Yet...I never felt more alive than when I was near so much death.

Henri
You were lucky

Old Nancy
Yes...not to be torn to pieces by a shell, shot or god only knows what... somehow, I will never know why I survived.

Special lighting effect
She turns to Henri and perhaps touches his face, then walks forward into a different light as a lighting effect of ashes falling from the sky begins.

Lights down on Henri

BEAT

SFX birds of the mountains sounds begin

Old Nancy:
Now, I want to go back and be with them. And I want to go soon!

Henri:
You will

Old Nancy:
Have my ashes spread over the Auvergne.

Henri:
Where our comrades fell.

Old Nancy:
Best people I ever knew.
They kept me going... such great mates.

FIN
AUSTRALIAN PLAYS IS ASSISTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL, ITS ARTS FUNDING AND ADVISORY BODY.