

The Schuman Plan

by Tim Luscombe

MID-REHEARSAL/PUBLICATION DRAFT

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Representation:

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Scenes:

Prologue

Act One

Scene One	Suffolk, 1935
Scene Two	Wilrijck, The Netherlands, 1944
Scene Three	Suffolk, 1992
Scene Four	Whitehall, 1950

Act Two

Scene One	Suffolk, 1992
Scene Two	Whitehall, 1972
Scene Three	Suffolk, 1992

Act Two

Scene One	Messina, Sicily, 1979
Scene Two	Salisbury, 1984
Scene Three	Suffolk, 1992
Scene Four	Suffolk, 2006

The play can be played with one interval after act two or with two intervals.

Characters:

Five actors play the following characters:

- 1 Actor 1, Bill
- 2 Actor 2, Hilary Barry, Mrs L, Marcella Cataldo
- 3 Actor 3, Teddy, Jean Monnet, MacLean, Gaetano Tantillo, Priest
- 4 Actor 4, Kit, Lis, Pippa Duffy, Selima Sakaria
- 5 Actor 5, Albert Bretherton, Ken Barry, Clement Attlee, Trygve Bratteli, Jan Lijgens, Ciccio Cataldo

Design:

Fluidity of transformation is vital, as the action should never stop.

Accents:

Aldston is an imagined name for a fishing town in Suffolk. I've had a stab at rendering the Suffolk accent phonetically.

Languages:

In Act Two Scene One, the characters Gaetano, Ciccio and Marcella speak in Sicilian dialect for which apparently there is no written standard. So the language is rendered somewhat phonetically in the text.

[The translations for lines in a language other than English are given in square brackets, except when another character translates them immediately after they are spoken]

Punctuation:

- means that a character is interrupted by another
- ... at the end of a speech means that a character peters out
- ... at the top of a speech means that the character who was speaking before carries on speaking

Acknowledgments:

Teddy's speech about the Proms is adapted from Ted Heath's keynote speech delivered to the Conservative Party Conference in October 1965. The lyrics from the musical 'Cabaret' are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. It was in Christopher Booker and Richard North's excellent book 'The Castle of Lies' that I read the true story of the burning of the fishing boat, the 'Alvic'. For translation work I am indebted to Yolanda Fernandez, Richard Hands, Robert Hands, Evelyn Kelly, Giovanni Marchione, Ellie Marchione, Tim Morgan and Giovanna Vaccaro. I am extremely grateful to James Lloyd, Ted Haslam, Jane How and Richard Durden who let me stay in their houses and write this play. I am also in the debt of the many ex-fishermen and others I met in Suffolk who generously gave me their time and shared with me their knowledge and experience. Finally, my thanks go to Anthony Clark and Frances Stirk who dramaturged the play so skilfully.

Dedication:

To Fi, Biff, Tom and Izzy

Prologue

Actor 1 She's awake

Actor 2 Suddenly

Actor 3 Propelled by a dream

Actor 4 She can't recall

Actor 5 The more she commands it into conscious thought, the further it retreats.

Actor 4 Princess Europa

Actor 5 Daughter of the King.

Actor 3 Europa

Actor 5 Fairest of the fair

Actor 2 From the land of Phoenicia

Actor 1 On the borderlands of Asia Minor.

Actor 3 Baffled.

Actor 2 In the cool of an Asian dawn

Actor 4 She abandons sleep

Actor 2 And, as the morning sun splashes a bright new day on a lambent sky

Actor 3 Gathers her friends around her

Actor 1 And wanders out into the meadow, close by the sea.

Actor 2 Yellow crocus, sky-blue hyacinths

Actor 4 The young women gather the spring flowers in their baskets

Actor 1 Crimson wild rose, sweet-smelling narcissus

Actor 5 Dangerous drowsy-scented white lilac.

Actor 1 They joke and laugh under the potent sun

Actor 4 Becoming close to delirious, drunk with the heady odours.

Actor 5 While, perched high above on Mount Olympus, Zeus

Actor 2 God of Gods

Actor 3 Idly surveys these dizzy mortals

Actor 1 Laughs out loud as, far below

Actor 4 The women swoon, blissful with bucolic intoxication.

Actor 5 And Zeus falls

Actor 3 Captivated by Europa's unimaginable grace and beauty

Actor 2 A stranger to restraint

Actor 5 Falls utterly in love.

Actor 3 He thinks to transform himself

Actor 2 A stranger to convention

Actor 4 The better to gull the girl

Actor 3 And in a flash appears to the startled women

Actor 1 On the edge of the meadow

Actor 5 As a bull

Actor 2 His passion erect, throbbing proud and tumescent, for all the world to see!

Actor 4 The women are terrified

Actor 2 And yet

Actor 3 At the same time

Actor 1 Transfixed by his beauty

Actor 5 Hypnotised by his confident progress towards them.

Actor 1 With a silver circle on his brow and horns like the crescent of a young moon

Actor 3 His heavenly stench, more alluring than the meadow itself, draws the women to him.

Actor 2 Europa, compelled to approach the animal herself

Actor 4 Is amazed by the feckless fervour of her friends

Actor 3 Girls normally of great decorum

Actor 5 Who gather closer

Actor 2 Jostle each other to caress his hide

Actor 4 Feel the hot air steaming in passionate bursts from his muzzle.

Actor 2 They want to mount him

Actor 3 Mount him, all at the same time!

Actor 2 Frantic and sharp-elbowed, they thrust each other out the way.

Actor 5 But Zeus has singled out Europa

Actor 3 And nuzzles close to his prey

Actor 1 He meekly kneels at Europa's feet

Actor 3 Lows more melodiously than a flute could ever sound

Actor 5 Offers Europa the sinuous spoon of his seductive back

Actor 3 And she, grateful for an escape-route in the middle of this dusty tumult

Actor 1 In a trice

Actor 4 Is on him!

Actor 5 Unthinking, unconscious, unpremeditated!

Actor 2 'There's room for all of us'

Actor 4 The women cry

Actor 5 But the bull's on his feet

Actor 1 Pawing and snorting

Actor 5 Stamping towards the water with his fast-sobering prize clamped to his back

Actor 3 Surging towards the sea, charging in.

Actor 4 Horrified, Europa grips the bull's horns

Actor 2 While a stiff breeze catches her purple skirts, lifting them into sails.

Actor 1 The pounding white-topped waves present a mountain range to climb ahead

Actor 3 And behind, pursuing like a boats' trails fanning out to shore, follow watery nereids on dolphins, tritons blowing trumpets and, in their wake, Zeus' brother, Poseidon himself.

Actor 4 'Where are we going?'

Actor 1 Cries Europa

Actor 1 But Zeus merely protests his love.

Actor 4 Her face grey with fear and streaked with tears

Actor 2 She begs to be released and returned to Asia.

Actor 1 His progress, rapid and remorseless,

Actor 3 All she's aware of is the pounding

Actor 5 The pounding of his heavy hooves

Actor 2 The pounding of the waves

Actor 1 The pounding filling her entire body

Actor 4 Filling her full.

Actor 3 Then the drumbeat of the ocean's unfathomable rhythms lulls her at last into a fitful sleep

Actor 4 Where a breathless dream awaits her

Actor 3 As disturbing as it's familiar

Actor 4 'This is what I always dream'

Actor 3 She realises

Actor 2 'That two continents

Actor 5 In the shape of two women

Actor 4 Are fighting over me'.

Actor 3 One woman-continent is Asia

Actor 2 The other has no name.

Actor 3 'The girl belongs to me'

Actor 1 Claims Asia

Actor 3 'That is where she was born'.

Actor 2 'Where the girl was born'

Actor 5 The other continent insists

Actor 2 'Is of no importance. She belongs to me. Zeus will give her to me'.

Actor 5 The dream ends

Actor 1 And Europa's awake

Actor 2 Suddenly

Actor 3 Her vision filled with a thousand stars in a black sky

Actor 5 And in the centre, the constellation of Taurus

Actor 2 For Zeus has ripped off his disguise and

Actor 3 Like a fisherman casting his net to the skies

Actor 2 Has thrown it heavenwards, where it's formed a new constellation.

Actor 5 The bull made of stars in the sky reminds her

Actor 4 Reminds her

Actor 3 Reminds her.

Actor 4 It takes a while to pull it together

Actor 1 She must have been travelling an entire day

Actor 3 And they have arrived

Actor 4 And everything has changed

Actor 1 And she's cold

Actor 2 On her back, deposited like driftwood, on an unknown beach in an unnamed land.

Actor 3 She looks around and she sees him.

Actor 5 Zeus.

Actor 2 Zeus as Zeus

Actor 1 Standing over her, grim and proud.

Actor 5 You will bear me many famous sons

Actor 2 He says.

Actor 4 And she feels her belly

Actor 2 And knows

Actor 4 She knows it's true.

Actor 5 And this place will be named after you

Actor 3 He says.

Pause.

Actor 1 And it was.

Pause.

Actor 4 Europe.

Act One

Scene One

The year is projected onto the set. It is 1935.

The front room of a fisherman's house in Aldston, Suffolk.

There's a fireplace.

Bill (9 years old) is carefully sorting stamps from a disorganised pile into a stamp album. An atlas lies open nearby, which he looks at occasionally.

Albert (70), a weatherworn ex-fisherman, is whittling a small piece of wood with a metal tool. The wood is about the size of two fists. He whittles mostly to give himself something to do and avoid thinking.

Bill Polska. Where do that goo?

Albert takes no notice of Bill.

...Grandpa! Polska? Where do it goo?

Albert Eh?

Bill Polska. I ent got no page fer it.

Albert Polska? That's Poland. Russian Empire.

Bill Russian Empire. What about Romania then? I ent got noo page fer tha' neither.

Albert Romania? Dunno, Billy. Russian Empire.

Bill Russian Empire ent got enough pages. Where's this then, Latvija?

Albert Latvija? Never heard on it.

Bill It's got to be somewhere.

Albert Look in yer atlas.

Bill I looked. It ent there.

Albert Russian Empire, then.

Bill This is useless, this. There's no page fer Cesko-slovensko or Jugoslavija
—

Albert Them new-fangled places ent proper countries.

Bill They got stamps, that means they're proper.

Albert They're just bits of Austria, boy.

Bill Austria's Austria-Hungary, an' it don' exist n'more. I got five pages fer Austro-Hungarian Empire and it don' exist, and noo pages for Jugoslavija and it do. I need a noo album. This one ent worth dut.

Albert (*Smacking the back of Bill's head*) 'Ere, that's my olden. (*Poking the pile of stamps*) Where yoo get all them new uns? Them all new, Bill?

Bill Me dad got em off the Dutchies.

Albert What Dutchies?

Bill The Dutch fish'men stayed 'ere in the storm.

Bill hears his mother (Kit) approaching from outside. As soon as Kit is heard offstage, Albert hides the whittling tool and the piece of wood (perhaps in his pocket). Kit enters. She's forty years old, in a state of trance-like limbo, with no energy. More like a ghost. She wears several layers of outside clothes and a hat. She looks at Bill and Albert, is unable to say anything, and then walks further into the house, towards the kitchen, until Albert halts her.

Albert Well?

Kit (*Directing herself to Albert, away from Bill*) The 'erring fleet from Yarmouth, tha's all.

Albert Good sign.

Kit (*Dismissing this*) They was comin' from the south.

Kit continues her journey offstage, but is stopped by Bill.

Bill Mam, I need a new book fer me stamps.

Kit Not now.

Bill (*Passionately*) Godverdoemen [God damn]

Kit What's tha' wha' yoo said?

Bill Nuthin'.

Kit Don't gi' me n'sauce.

Albert How long yoo been up there?

Kit Since dawn.

Albert Yoor a block on ice.

Kit (*Not wanting any fuss made, putting all her energy into feeding Bill*) Yoo 'ad an egg?

Bill I 'ad bread.

Kit (*To Albert*) Yoo din't get 'im an egg? 'Ee needs an egg. (*To Bill*) What 'bout yer brother?

Bill Playin' football up the park.

Kit Without an egg!

Bill Barmy, in this cowl ent it.

Kit *(To Albert, increasingly dementedly about the eggs)* Why couldn't yoo ave got 'em an egg? I got in eggs specially. I'll get one on.

She goes to exit again.

Albert I warned 'im 'bout workin' on a steel 'ull [hull].

Kit Don't start w' tha'.

Albert The wooden craft'd right themselves in time, but once a steel hull's in trouble it gets in more trouble...

Kit is exiting.

Bill *(Another attempt to get the subject of the new stamp album addressed)* Mam... *(Failing to keep Kit in the room, swearing again)* Blauwe Knop!

Albert *(Trying to sound calmer than he is, to Bill)* They'll 'ave gone up 'Elgoland [Helgoland], I'll bet. Be back in a day or two, righ' as roses.

Albert gets out the wood again, now Kit's gone.

...Them Dutchie fish'men teach yoo them cussin' words an all?

Bill Yeah, them with the names. Rijk, Ton –

Albert You don't want to be takin' nuthin off them Dutchies. They're a mad lot.

Bill What, all of em?

Albert Stoopid country. I ate it [hate it].

Bill You ent never gone there, Granddad.

Albert Don't cheek me. Don't 'ave to goo there. 'S'all cheese and dykes.

Bill What yoo mean? Don't make no sense t'ate a country.

Albert Yeah it do, boy. You 'ate Germany.

Bill No, I don't.

Albert You bloody should 'ate em, what they did in the war. Nah, Germans are wicked people, every breathin' one of 'em.

Bill Wickedder 'an Norfolk men? Me Dad says Norfolk men're evil.

Albert They are.

Bill Wouldn't know. Never met none.

Albert You don't wanna.

Bill (*Returning to the stamps*) Where they goo, these owd places when they're not places n'more? (*Flicking through the atlas*) Bessarabia, Herzegovina, Karelia... Great big area a land dis'ppearing down an 'ole in the ocean? Ruthenia, Samaria... Come and goo like tides gooin' in and out. No one notices.

Albert Yoo are the strangest bloomin' nine-year-old I ever did know.

Bill Great statues a the soldiers and generals 'oo won the wars for 'em. Where d'*they* goo? Don' understan' the point bein' patriotic when they keep changin' 'oo yoo are.

Albert They ent changing 'oo we are, boy. We got the sea protect us. Keep our borders safe.

Bill I'm gooin' a 'ave t'pretend Swaziland's Poland. And Rhodesia can be Jugoslavija. Granddad, d'yoo know anythin' about Hellas? They got righ' borin' stamps.

There's a knock offstage. Kit immediately appears from the kitchen, now with an apron on, alert and frightened. Albert and Bill stop in their tracks. Albert, not thinking to hide it this time, puts the wood and whittling tool down where he stands. Kit nervously and repetitively wipes her hands on a dishcloth. They all look at each other.

Kit (*To Albert*) Yoo get it.

Albert goes to the door. The wait is agonising for Kit. Albert returns.

Albert It's jus' the coal.

Bill seizes his opportunity.

Bill Mam, I need a new stamp book, mam.

Kit (*Not taking in what Bill says*) I'll go up Mearston Road agen.

Albert There ent no point. If there's news someone'll come.

Kit I'll goo mad stoppin' 'ere.

Turning to go, she sees the whittling tool and the wood.

...What the 'ell's this?

Albert (*Trying to avoid answering*) It's the shape on a cod.

Kit Fer wha?

Albert Put on the prow. The cod'll keep 'em safe.

Kit Yoor still makin' tha' boot [boat]?

Albert It's when they're young they learn, Kit.

Kit (*Her emotions finding expression in tearful rage*) I told yoo, they ent getting' in no boot. Not while I'm 'ere to stop it.

Albert Just a little skiff. Fer the inshore. Get em used t' the water.

Kit You stoopid, stoopid owd man.

Kit snatches up the wood, eluding Albert.

Albert Thousands a years we been fishin' cod from this coostline...

Kit throws the wood in the fire.

...What they goin a do if they ent fish'men?

Kit I don't care. Anything! Thousands a years, aye. Women wearin' out a groove in the floor waitin' for their men who ent comin' back. Yoor Dad drowned out there. Owt there on 'is own. Yoor mam traipsin' up the top a Mearston Road everyday searchin' the 'orizon with some vain 'ope. Now I'm dooin' it for yoor son. An' yoor makin' a skiff for my boys? Yoor mad. 'Oo can understan' yoo?

She exits to the kitchen. As soon as she's gone, Albert rescues the wood from the fire. It's now charred.

Albert Good thing I ent got no feelin' in me 'ands n'more.

Bill is reeling from what his mother has said.

...She's a righ' worrier. Don't take n'notice. Likeliest thing is they took some damage and put into 'arbour somewhere up Skaggerak. Or the Bight.

Bill can't take in what his grandfather is saying. He tries to immerse himself in his stamp album but can't concentrate on that either. He stares at it, immobile, a trembling mass of constrained emotion.

...See, boy, my owd man, God res' 'is soul, 'ee taught me. An' someone's goin a 'ave t'teach yoo. 'E'd take me out ev'ry day, 'e would, all through the winter even. We 'ad sails me Ma used to sew together out on flour sacks! Can

yoo credit it? Not when yoo reckon what they got today. Bloody flour sacks a riggin'!

Bill Me Dad's drowned, ent 'e?

Albert (*Ignoring Bill's question*) Now, listen. In them days it were jus' an 'ook an 'im an the fish. 'Ee'd take me owt in 'is smack – open, deckless thing, 20 foot long – an' we'd 'aul up one, two thousand pounds on cod. Yoor gunwales'd be that low, yoo take anythin' over yoor stern yood sink like lead. Sometimes fog so thick yoo couldn't see the lantern of another boot till it's on top a yer.

Bill Ent 'e!

Albert decides he can't avoid it any longer.

Albert A fish'man gives 'is life t'the sea, boy, tha's the truth, whether it kills 'im or not.

Bill looks away from Albert, back to his stamps. Instead of the previous careful selection of one stamp at a time, Bill now roughly picks up a bunch of loose stamps and deposits them onto a page.

Bill Tha's Norway.

Bill angrily turns the page and deposits another bunch of stamps arbitrarily onto it.

...An' tha's Portugal.

Albert Don't be daft. Careful now.

Albert moves to Bill, puts a hand on his shoulder and a hand on the album, trying to restrain the child and the manic activity.

Bill eludes Albert, taking the album and atlas with him. Once he's away from Albert, Bill opens the album and the atlas and starts flicking through the pages, increasingly out of control.

Bill Look. Lithuania – tha's a good place.

Albert regards Bill with sorrow, but doesn't know how to help him. Bill's roll call of countries becomes increasingly demented.

...(Turns some pages) An' Montenegro is good too. (Turns some pages) This is the best name. Look. Herzegovina. (Continuing to flick through the pages) An' Slovenia an' Moravia, an' Bukovina's good and Galicia's really good. Luxembourg. It's grand, ent it?

A knock at the door is insistent enough to wrench Bill's attention back to reality.

Kit rushes in.

Bill and Albert stare towards the door.

The lights fade as they continue to stare.

Scene Two

1944 is projected onto the set and light comes up on a basement cellar.

Wilrijck, The Netherlands. Night.

The evidence that the building above the cellar has been heavily shelled is the wood and brick that lies scattered, half blocking the entrance. Through a hole in the floor above, moonlight dimly illuminates the space. There is dust in the air, a few packing cases chaotically lying about, and, incongruously, an upright piano sitting in one corner.

Bill, now 18, is in (or, in fact – mid-passion – half out of) the British military uniform of a lieutenant of the Royal Artillery. He clammers down into the cellar, hand in hand with a young Dutch woman, Lis (20 years old). Between them there's a wild sexual electricity. They both speak each other's languages, more or less falteringly, unconsciously slipping from one to the other.

Lis Kom. [Come on.]

Bill (*Laughing*) Ik zie geen moer.[I can't see a thing.] (*Banging into something*) Ow! Blinkin' 'ell.

Bill pins Lis against the piano.

...Hier. [Here.]

Lis takes Bill's head in her hands, and speaks with earnest force.

Lis Zij moeten ze laten hangen. Verstaa je? [They must leave them there. You get me?] They *must* leave them there...

Bill I gave orders. Niemand zal ze aanraken. [No one's gonna interfere with them]

Lis My brave Englisher soldier.

He kisses her.

...(Breaking off from the kiss, obviously seriously preoccupied) You are sure, Bill?

Bill Sure as roses. Now –

Lis Ik weet niet hoe je het in het Engels zegt... Ik wil dat zij daar blijven hangen tot dat zij verrotten! (*Wildly*) Ze zijn smeerlappen! Smeerlappen, schoften! [I don't know how to say it in English... I want them left there till they rot. They're filth. Filth, scum]

Bill (*Kissing her passionately*) Kom maar. Het is hier best. Kom. Hier is het wel goed. [Come on. Here's ok. Come on. Here's good]

Lis (*Laughing, almost hysterically*) Maar het is hier afschuwelijk! [But this place is disgusting]

Bill We can doo it in yer Mam's front room, als je dat liever hebt. [...if you prefer]

Lis (*With abandon*) Ach, het kan me niet schelen. Neuk me. [Oh, I don't care. Just fuck me.]

Bill Or try balancin' on the joanna –

Lis Hou je mond en neuk me! [Shut up and fuck me]

They begin to make love passionately. A light appears in the entrance. Lis becomes aware of it first.

...Jezus, als dat mijn moeder is ... [Christ, if that's my mother...]

Bill decides to ignore the intruder.

...(Hissing) Hou op! Laat me los! [Stop! Get off!]

Bill reluctantly desists, and he and Lis hide behind the piano.

Teddy, 28, enters. He's also Royal Artillery; rank of captain. Sleek and apparently unruffled, he carries a candle. He inspects the room, studies the contents and observes the piano. He approaches it, lays the candle on it and opens the lid. He wipes dust off the keys with a clean handkerchief. He runs his hands over the ivory, savouring its coolness.

He starts to play, very quietly and very well, the first Prelude from Bach's 'Preludes and Fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavier'.

The gentle music lulls the hiding couple into a feeling that they've fooled the intruder. They are so confident that they begin to make love again, their need to be silent adding a delightful focus and intensity to the moment.

Teddy It's hot out there. Sweltering. Moonlight so strong, you'd think it was day. It's not possible you could miss the bodies of five young men hanging from telegraph poles...

Bill and Lis stop making love, and listen, not sure what's going on.

Bill (*Mouthing to Lis*) What the 'ell...?

Teddy Those that aren't too drunk celebrating their liberation are having a great time gaping at death. Revelling in their revenge, I imagine.

Bill reveals himself to Teddy, staring in disbelief. Teddy continues to play the Bach prelude, apparently ignoring Bill

...The sweet sour smell alone is gruesome enough to turn your stomach. The skin on their faces and arms looks like it's turning purple and an odd shade of green.

The girl emerges and stands next to Bill.

...(To Bill) I hope I haven't put you off your stroke.

Bill (*Still – just – good-humoured*) Yoo bastard!

Teddy Please don't let me deter you.

Bill Tonigh's a bit off-limits, ent it, Teddy?

Teddy (*Becoming steely and purposeful, the better to hide his emotions*) Put your uniform on, Bill.

Bill Everyone's 'aving a party tonigh'. It's –

Teddy And ask that slut to leave, would you?

Lis You may ask me yourself.

Teddy Ah. I'm so sorry, Miss. I didn't think –

Lis You can find another piano in another cellar, perhaps?

Teddy I'm afraid, with great respect, I must insist.

Lis concedes rank.

Lis (*To Bill*) Laat ze alsjeblief de lijken niet weg nemen! [Please, don't let them take them down]

Bill (*Quite curtly*) Ik zal je wel later zien. [I'll see you later]

As Lis goes, she pleads with Bill.

Lis Beloof me! Alsjeblief! Je moet het me beloven! [Please promise me! You must promise me!]

Dissatisfied with Bill's silence, Lis leaves dejectedly.

Teddy What's going on?

Bill blows up his cheeks, uncertain what tone to adopt.

...I don't mean with her, you idiot. I put you in charge of a platoon to take those German soldiers down –

Bill They killed that girl's father and 'er brother, an' God knows 'ow many others –

Teddy Happens in war –

Bill The people'd surrendered their village. The soldiers shot 'em in crowd blood –

Teddy So the villagers ambushed the soldiers and strung 'em up. We have standing orders about that sort of thing. You're familiar? "Under no circumstances to permit the public display of enemy corpses –"

Bill *(Coldly)* I'm familiar, yeah. *(Fiercely)* Those Nazis was animals.

Teddy I see.

Bill It's righ' they're treated like animals, and the people 'oo live in this place 'ave got t'be allowed t'feel some kinda –

Teddy Fine, Bill. *(Starts to leave)*

Bill Sure, Ted, yoo can't un-see what we seen here? What these –

Teddy *(Passionately)* Those soldiers you left hanging in the street, do you think they wanted to be here anymore than you do? They were forced into fighting just like you were. And in Wehrmacht uniforms because that's just the way the cards fell. Did you actually look at them? They're boys; they're your age.

Bill They shot 'er 8-year-old brother dead! Let 'em 'ang!

Teddy *(Angry)* Of course! All of 18 years old yourself, you'd know best. It's not enough those soldiers were killed. There should be more humiliation! And where does it end, Bill? What do you think? The same as before? We humiliate every single German one more time?

Bill A course not, but –

Teddy Stop playing Bach and Beethoven, perhaps? Demand a few more crushing reparations so that some new Hitler claws his way out of the rubble?

Bill, ashamed, stays silent.

...Not to mention that I could have you court-martialled for disobeying orders.

Bill (*A playful rebuttal*) Fuck off, Teddy.

Teddy attempts a different tack.

Teddy Before this war, when I was in Germany, I stayed with a family in a grand house in Hanover that would have been just like this one. Doesn't exist anymore. The entire city is flattened. There were four teenage boys. I used to play duets with the oldest. One of those boys you left hanging there reminded me...

Teddy runs his hands over the piano keys.

...You and I were agreed. We've got to see beyond what's happened in this village.

Bill still doesn't respond.

...Europe has destroyed itself.

Bill Again.

Teddy Not just the buildings and the people. The ideas that could unite a civilised Europe have been wiped out. However we do it, whatever role we take, our job's got to be to reunite it, Bill. But in such a way that this can never be repeated. Reconciliation. Reconstruction.

Bill A completely new form a government!

Teddy So you read the Arthur Salter I lent you!

Bill A course! I'm jus' as much a European as yoo are!

Teddy You can speak the languages and fuck the women alright. It's not quite the same thing!

Bill Oh come on! I ent noticed many other C.O.s steppin' forward to debate Spinelli and Arthur Salter with yoo! Wha' do yoo think those berks would think if yoo asked 'em their opinion of a 'supra-national government'? They'd prob'ly jus' think yoo were a homosexual.

Teddy It's infuriating the way you slip back into the mentality of a Suffolk fisherman. You're bright. You can speak languages men in your platoon haven't even heard of. You've got to hack away at those roots, my friend. My father was a carpenter. Grew up in Broadstairs for goodness sake. But I'm damned if I'm going to let that hold me back.

Bill Learn t'talk posh yoo mean!

Teddy Not just that, but it would certainly be an excellent start! No, the civil servant had it right! Arthur Salter. He understood.

Bill Yeah! Tha's wha' I'm gooin' a be once this is over. A civil servant!

Teddy Not talking like that you're not. A government beyond the control of nation states and politicians. Beyond even electorates. That's Salter's breakthrough.

Bill In a way, *Hitler* had the same idea too, di'n't 'e. Got it upside down though. Tryin' t'make Europe German. What Salter's sayin' is we wanna make Germany European –

Teddy That's it –

Bill An' create a union of equal states.

Teddy Absolutely! So presumably you can now make a distinction between Germans and Nazis.

Bill A course!

Teddy And the men outside...

Bill (*Realising he must take action*) Yeah, I get it.

Lis enters. Ted watches Bill carefully to see what Bill will do.

Bill is undecided, torn. He makes no move to go.

Teddy sits at the piano. He begins to play the slow movement from Schubert's Piano Sonata No.21 in B flat major, sporadically.

Teddy These people here are comparatively well off: at least they've got some cows and a few fields. In the cities they eat books, make soup from tree bark, or starve.

He looks at Bill.

Bill (*To Lis, apologetically*) Het spijt me heel erg, Lis, maar ik moet de lijken naar beneden haalen. [Excuse me, Lis. I have to take the corpses down] (*Exits hurriedly*)

Lis, angrily, follows Bill's exit with her eyes.

Teddy *(To Lis)* He didn't have a choice.

Lis stares at Teddy, raging and impotent, and hopelessly sad. She exits.

Teddy continues to play the Schubert sonata, alone in the dusty cellar, the music creating for him the memory of a lost past...as the lights fade.

Scene Three

A pebble beach in Aldston on the Suffolk coast.

It's a calm but cold winters day, about noon.

The sound of the sea (out-front) can be heard.

A wood-hulled fishing boat is beached on the shingle, prow end pointing towards the audience. If we were able to see the entire boat we would see a 40-foot, two-man fishing craft, with a stern rigged for bottom dragging. The visible prow is at least six feet tall. Currently there is a ladder leaning up against it, via which the deck can be reached.

The name of the boat, 'The Mearston', is visible on the prow.

Around the boat, the beach is littered with debris: a black plastic dustbin, bits of styrofoam fish boxes, rope, empty plastic fuel tins, buoys, floats, beer cans, food wrappers etc.

Additionally, near the boat there is a little pile of old-looking electronic equipment, wires sticking out at all angles, together with a few personal items; mugs, toiletries, jackets, boots, a sleeping bag, a transistor radio and a framed photo.

A projection tells us it's 1992.

The transistor is tinnily playing pop music.

Ken, 40s, appears on the deck of the boat, holding a navigation device, which he has just ripped out of the pilothouse. He clammers down the ladder with it. One of his hands is bandaged.

On the radio, the song ends.

Radio And now, on BBC Radio Suffolk, the shipping forecast issued by the Met Office, on behalf of the Marine and Coastguard Agency, at 1105 on

Tuesday 06 January 1992. There are warnings of gales in Viking, South Utsire, Forties, Fisher, Trafalgar –

Ken who's added the navigation equipment to the pile, has started to go back up the ladder. On hearing the shipping forecast, he swiftly reverses his direction, shins down the ladder and turns the radio off.

He takes cigarettes and a lighter from his pocket and lights a cigarette with difficulty. Even on a calm day there's a wind on the beach.

He catches sight of something out-front (i.e. out at sea) that grabs his attention.

Ken (*Horried*) Yoor kiddin' me.

He crouches down on the pebbles to smoke his cigarette and stare, absorbed, at what he's spotted.

...(Mumbling to himself) Yoo 'ave got t'be kiddin me. They're 'aving a flamin' laugh. (Blowing out smoke, wearily) Wha's the point?

Hilary, Ken's wife, arrives. She's wrapped up well in old clothes.

Hilary (*With forced cheerfulness*) Yoo talkin' t'me?

Ken (*Quietly, but not caring much if she hears*) Why would I wanna do tha'?

Hilary heard.

Hilary Wha'? Yoo talkin' to yoorself these days. Gooin' mad are yoo?

Ken Yeah, gal, I'm gooin mad, yeah.

Hilary's adrenalin is up. She has to keep a lid on it, as she intends to be calming and sympathetic. Hilary has lost touch with how to reach Ken, and is daunted by his mood.

Hilary (*Suspiciously*) Wha' you dooin' down 'ere?

She gets no response. She sees the pile of things that Ken has taken out of the boat.

...Wha's all this then?

Ken doesn't answer. Hilary picks up some electronic equipment.

...They want the boot [boat] complete. Yoo ent meant t'take nuthin' owt. Regoolation says.

Ken (*Scornfully*) Regoolation!

Hilary I ent defendin' it, but yoo ent allowed to sell stuff on.

Ken It's just a few bits.

Hilary I don't want them findin' no reason for not givin' us the money, boy.

Ken Wha'? Yoo think they're goin a get up there an' inspect it?

Hilary They might do. Yoo know wha' they're like.

Ken MAFF men never been in a boot. They wouldn't know what they was lookin for. Anyroad, this stuff's just scrap mostly.

Hilary picks up the framed photo from the pile and inspects it.

Hilary This ent scrap.

Ken doesn't want to engage with her about it.

...Where was we there? Didn't know you 'ad this in the boot. My God, were that when we went up Sherrin'am? Bloody 'ell, yoo got all yoor hair! Phworr, lovely!

Ken Keep it if yoo want.

Hilary Wha' was you goin a do with it? (*Joking*) Chuck it?

Ken doesn't answer.

...Yoo weren't, Ken!

Ken looks at the photo, over Hilary's shoulder.

Ken Long time ago, eh?

Hilary puts the photo down.

Having finished his cigarette, Ken goes to climb the ladder again. Hilary sees what Ken had seen out-front.

Ken Dutch.

Hilary How yoo know? Could be Danish, or Spanish.

Ken What yoo after 'ere, any'ow?

Hilary Been talkin' t'MAFF.

Ken Yoor always talkin' t'MAFF.

Hilary No, they phoned us. Young gal.

Ken Wha' they want?

Hilary You ent gooin a like it.

Ken Don't tell me then.

Ken, now on deck, disappears from view.

Hilary They want t'move it forward to t'morra.

Ken immediately reappears.

Ken (*Appalled*) T'morra? T'morra? No. Ent no way.

Hilary Come on, boy. Makes no odds, t'morra or Friday.

Ken Three days is a difference.

Hilary I don't know what yoo think can 'appen 'tween now an' then. Yoov done the 'ard part, yoov made the decision –

Ken (*Climbing down the ladder*) No way. Tell em no.

Hilary Let's just get the thing decommissioned now –

Ken (*Snorting derisively*) Decommissioned! Destroyed, yoo mean.

Hilary The sooner we get the money an' pay off the fine, the sooner we'll be straight and we can start again.

Ken *I'll* tell 'em, then.

Hilary Listen t'me. This 'as been draggin' on too long. Ent no good fer yoo nor me. Let's bring it to an end an' move on.

Ken They said Friday. It's gooin' a be Friday. (*Starts to leave*)

Hilary I said ok to 'er, Ken.

Ken (*Stopped in his tracks*) Yoo wha'? Yoo din't ask me first?

Hilary They weren't phonin' to ask us.

Ken Why?

Hilary She said it's impossible for them now to get anyone up to Aldston Friday.

Ken Not my problem, Hils.

Hilary Don't s'pose they're tryin' t'muck us abowt intentional.

Ken Course they are, they've been muckin' us abowt fer years. Tha's why we're in this mess in the first place.

He kicks some fishing boxes in anger.

Hilary T'be honest it's better fer me. If I ent 'ere Friday I can make the meetin' down Low'stof [Lowestoft] with Clayton.

Ken Oh, I get it! Tha's what this is all abowt.

Hilary Course it ent. It's just the way it's fallen owt.

Ken Reckon yoo phoned *them*.

Hilary Course I bloody din't. But it's 'andy [handy] now I can do both.

Ken Do both? This ent gooin' a be no social occasion.

Hilary Ent you pleased fer me? Fine'ly got 'im t'meet us.

Ken I don't give a stuff about that twot.

Hilary 'E's given us fifteen minutes to sell 'im the campaign. E's a Junior Minister now. If we can get the information to *'im* –

Ken Yoor not listenin' a me.

Hilary (*A bright idea*) Listen, this way I could even get some photos t'morra. Show Clayton what MAFF's doing t'these parts.

Ken Yoo tryin' t'turn this into a circus?

He moves away from her, toys with his cigarettes.

Hilary Yoor Mam's tiptoeing round the 'ouse, don't dare to be in the same room as yoo. An' for Jase's sake an all. Let's just get it done.

Ken Jase? 'E don't understan' this.

Hilary He's twelve. Course 'e do. Wouldn't go t'school t'day. Cryin' like a little kid, 'e was.

Ken Wha' did yoo say to 'im?

Hilary Why don't *you* talk to him? *Talk* to him, Ken.

Ken Ent nothin' t'say.

Hilary looks at Ken with amazement. He is equally baffled by her position. They shift away from each other.

Hilary Well, talk t'me.

Ken moves towards the boat and leans on it.

Ken (With difficulty) No... (A fresh attempt) It's...

Ken is perhaps about to open up. A mobile phone rings. Hilary feels about in her pockets. She withdraws an early 90s style handset.

Hilary (Into phone) Yeah? Alrigh'. Bit busy now.

Hilary glances at Ken, who dejectedly lights another cigarette. Hilary becomes absorbed with her phone call.

...Wha'? No, if yoo can... Yeah, that sounds great. We'll use that. No, I can make it on Friday now for the meeting with Clayton, definitely.

Ken picks up the photo.

...And I got Townsend at the 'Erald [Herald] to agree t'cover the decommissioning of the boat. Yeah, thanks. 'E's goin' a bring a camera an all.

Looking at the photo, Ken is moved to tearful sadness, but hides his feelings from Hilary, who anyway is still absorbed by her phone call.

...So, at the Clayton meeting, if we include George Henson's tachograph-in-the-van situation an' Audrey Benn's livestock, an' we've got the 'ealth and safety thing with Staples Senior 'Ome, that prop'ly covers all the bases, don't it.

Ken discards the photo to one side and starts packing the rest of the things into a cardboard box.

...They're goin' a have t'listen to us! Ent goin' a write us off n'more! Yeah! Listen, I gotta goo. Talk t'yoo later.

Hilary hangs up.

Ken I ent letting 'er go when there's one of them ships owt there, gal. It ent 'appenin'.

Hilary There's always goin' a be one a them ships owt there. Forget bowt them. It'll drive yoo mad.

Ken And there ent gooin' a be no newspapers 'ere, I tell yoo tha', so yoo can call off Townsend an' the flamin' Ipswich 'Erald righ' now.

Hilary They're gooin' a destroy yer boot, boy. We ent able t'pay the fine. We couldn't pay it if yoo fished till –

Ken They ent 'aving er t'morra. (*Indicating the ship out-front*) Not while that flamin' ship –

Hilary It'll 'ave moved on by t'morra.

Ken Righ'! To spew owt 'undreds a tons a cod in Rotterdam or wherever, while my boot is destroyed 'cause she caught 300 lbs over 'er quota. Yoo think I'll go mad? Too late t'worry bowt tha'. And just so yoo know, watchin' my wife poncing bowt in Low'stof an' London with Ministers an' Councillors an' God knows 'oo ent makin' me no saner.

Ken's finished boxing his things up and marches off, leaving the photo behind.

Hilary notices the discarded photo.

Light shift.

Scene Four

An office in 10 Downing Street.

A splendid portrait of King George VI hangs prominently.

1950 is projected onto the set.

Mrs L, a matter-of-fact middle-aged secretary, and Bill (now 24) occupy stations in a large and luxurious office.

There is an empty desk next to Bill's.

In the intervening 6 years, Bill has taken Teddy's advice and learned to 'talk posh'.

Mrs L How long's she going to be in there? *He'll be here in a moment.*

Bill She'll make it.

Mrs L In fact he's overdue. What allows Pippa to think she can swan around like this?

Bill (*Casting his eye over the unoccupied desk next to his, and the papers spread over it*) She's coordinating Korea, isn't she?

Mrs L Don't you start sorting it out. If she thinks she's ever going to make it beyond junior officer –

Bill Now, Mrs L, you know you love her really –

Mrs L If he arrives and it's... Leave it, Bill!

Bill (*Sorting out Pippa's desk*) I've got to do something.

Mrs L You've got enough work of your own, haven't you?

Bill Masses. They're discussing the Schuman Plan this morning. I've had notes from almost every embassy in town to correlate. It's incredibly exciting. I hope I get to meet the man himself.

Mrs L Who? Schuman?

Bill No. Monnet! Jean Monnet! Monnet's the man who wrote the plan. He needed a famous name to launch it, and he got the French Foreign Secretary, Robert Schuman. That's why it's called the Schuman Plan. I heard Monnet speak about it at the Federal Union. He's a true visionary, Mrs L.

Mrs L One of those crank federalists, are you?

Bill (*Proudly*) Very much so. See, Schuman's – well, Monnet's plan is an idea of pure genius. Takes all the federal theory from the last half century – Salter, Spinelli – and sets it in motion with a concrete –

Mrs L (*Dismissively*) Do you honestly think industry'll wear it, Bill? Mark my words, it won't want to get involved with Europe. Britain's streets ahead of France or Germany. That's the way industry'll see it.

Bill (*To Pippa*) But what do you think of the idea yourself, Mrs L?

Mrs L I don't suppose what *I* think is of any importance. You're new Bill, so you won't mind me reminding you. You're a junior clerical officer. You're not paid to have an opinion. Look at the time. If that young woman's not –

Pippa enters. She's a very attractive, intelligent young woman with a bad hangover.

Bill unconsciously smooths his hair down.

Mrs L At last!

Bill Better?

Mrs L No one would guess by your behaviour that you're on your final warning. Get that desk in order. The PM'll be down in a second.

Pippa (*Sits at her desk*) Christmas.

Mrs L Quick!

Bill Here, let me help.

Pippa You're a poppet.

Bill beams with satisfaction.

Mrs L You're a fool.

Bill (*Sorting Pippa's folders efficiently*) That's the up to date file, as of midnight last night. These are the telegrams that have arrived since then. Pippa, what are you going to say when he asks for an overview?

Pippa Bill, I can't see straight. I have no overview.

Bill The Korean Ambassador says he can't come till after lunch. (*Holding a telegram*) Look.

Pippa Oh.

Bill Something's up.

Pippa What's up, Bill? Quickly tell me what to say.

Bill He's probably waiting to talk to Washington.

Pippa Clever!

Mrs L Disgraceful.

Bill She needs to know!

Mrs L Don't cheek me!

Bill Sorry.

Pippa Bill, don't be craven. Stand up for yourself for once!

Bill Yes, yes, I will.

Pippa (*To Mrs L*) It's not often I –

Mrs L You treat this place like you own –

Pippa I may have had a few too many drinks last night –

Bill In Switzerland?

Pippa Where?

Bill Switzerland.

Pippa What are you talking about?

Bill On Friday you said you were going with your father to Switzerland.

Pippa Did I?

Bill Yes, that's why you couldn't meet me.

Pippa (*Blithely*) Oh. No. Helmut was in town.

Bill (*Disgruntled*) Oh. Right.

The phone on Mrs L's desk rings.

Mrs L This'll be him. (*Into phone*) Right. (*Hangs up*) Mr Attlee's on his way.

The three of them gather folders and stand in front of their desks.

Now the conversation becomes hushed and urgent, as they wait for the entrance of the PM.

Pippa (*To Bill*) How do I look?

Bill (*Trying not to sound too smitten*) Lovely.

Pippa senses the feeling underneath Bill's response. She smiles. Bill is embarrassed.

Mrs L (*Under her breath*) God help us.

They now wait, Bill awkward, in tense silence for the arrival of the PM.

After a moment, Mrs L breaks it.

...The arrogance of it I can't get my head around. As if any ordinary person wouldn't kill to have your job.

Pippa (*Turning her back on Mrs L*) Talk to me Bill.

Bill Erm, alright. Jean Monnet's here for a meeting with the PM. Jean Monnet. Here, in Number Ten!

Pippa Not about politics. What did you do at the weekend?

Bill I spent Saturday back home in Aldston with my brother, Tom.

Pippa Oh, how dull.

Mrs L (*Keeping her eye on the door*) Shhh.

Pippa Why don't you stay in town and meet girls?

Bill (*Swallowing his impulsive reaction and ploughing on*) And on Sunday my old chum Teddy invited us to Broadstairs for lunch. Took us to Bexley and showed us where he meets his constituents. It's incredibly exciting –

Mrs L (*About the PM*) Quiet. I can hear him.

Pippa He's with the other lot, isn't he? How on earth can you be friends?

Bill We agree on the fundamentals.

Pippa Fundamentals?

Bill Europe!

Pippa Well, he'll probably have a better career with the Tories. This bunch certainly won't be around much longer.

Mrs L Shhh! For goodness sake!

Pippa Quite apart from old Clem's lumbago –

Mrs L Please!

Pippa I don't care if the cripple hears me! – the Foreign Sec's practically dead, and the Chancellor's completely bonkers, isn't he?

Mrs L Shhhhhhhhh!

Pippa Stop shushing me, you witch. (*To Bill*) Hold this. I won't be a sec.

Bill (*Desperate*) No, wait!

Mrs L (*Equally desperate, together with Bill*) Don't go anywhere!

Pippa I have to!

Pippa exits.

Mrs L That's it. She's had her lot.

Bill Mrs L, please. Please!

Mrs L I'm the manager of this office – I'll do what's right, thank you. Any rate, the moment Mr Attlee makes a complaint, it's out of my hands. You've fallen in love with an idea of something there, Bill, if you don't mind my saying.

Bill In love?

Mrs L Can't you see what she's really like?

Bill She's perfection.

Mrs L My arse. Shhh. Here he is.

The Prime Minister enters, talking to someone, over his shoulder, off stage.

Pippa runs in from the other side, smoothing down her skirt, takes her folders from Bill and gets in line, just – just! – in time for the PM to turn round and see them all.

Attlee Right. What's the schedule?

Mrs L Briefing with Jean Monnet, sir, about the Schuman Plan.

Attlee Ah yes. Come to have his knuckles rapped.

Mrs L Then the National Executive at eleven.

Attlee What have we got on Korea?

Pippa *(Handing over a report)* Received at midnight.

Attlee *(Reading)* When's the Ambassador due?

Pippa Requested a postponement.

Attlee What's his name?

Bill *(Sotto)* Kim Jin-pyo.

Pippa Kim Jin-pyo.

Attlee *(Closing the folder)* Won't do. We need him in ASAP. Let me know the moment he arrives. I must see him before lunch.

Pippa Very good, sir. *(Exits)*

Attlee Now, to this blasted Frenchman. Let's have a look.

Bill passes the relevant folder.

...(Reading at the same time) Hmm. Jean Monnet. Who's with me on this one?

Mrs L No one, sir. You remember, Mister Monnet requested a one to one, without aides?

Attlee Why did we agree to that? We had dealings with him when he was Deputy Secretary General of the League of Nations, didn't we?

Mrs L Yes, sir.

Attlee He's arrived?

Mrs L Yes.

Attlee A *fonctionnaire*, for God's sake. An international palm presser; an elbow squeezer with a large address book. (*Shaking his head at the notes*) We spend far too much time rescuing these damned Europeans from one self-inflicted disaster after another. (*Looking up at Bill*) What do you make of it?

Bill (*Surprised*) Me, sir?

Attlee I know your true colours. Do you see anything in this plan? Anything good, I mean.

Bill Absolutely. I think we should jump in with both feet.

Attlee laughs.

...In my opinion, it's a first step along a path that could actually lead to permanent peace in Europe. It might even be the beginning of a movement away from old forms of nationalism, even of state government.

Attlee Oh, good-oh! Got the Treasury report on it?

Bill hands over another folder.

...(Again, speaking and reading at the same time) I can't decide whether it's a Catholic conspiracy or a German one. If it's another attempt at Federalism, it'll be Catholic. Every major European government except this one's run by religious fanatics and sponsored by the Church. Nothing'll stop the buggers till they've created a new Holy Roman Empire from the Atlantic shores of Portugal to the borders of Soviet Russia. Close your mouth, Bill.

Bill (*Who's gaping in horror at what he hears*) Sorry, sir. I'm sure it's not a conspiracy of any sort.

Attlee Bring him in.

Bill Right you are, sir.

Attlee Apologise for keeping him waiting, and, Bill, stay with us, will you?

Bill (*Amazed*) Really?

Attlee Yes, he can't object to you, you're not senior enough.

Bill (*Delighted*) Absolutely, sir.

Attlee And perhaps you can make some sense of it.

Bill Sir! (*Exits*)

Attlee If I ever want to know what to think about something, Mrs L, I ask that young man his opinion and then I take the opposite view.

Mrs L You'd have thought the war would have knocked some of that silliness out of him.

Attlee I don't know where personnel get them.

Mrs L Tea, sir?

Attlee No, it won't take long enough for tea. You know what this is? It's classic French expediency. German industry's getting back on its feet, and the French can't bear it. They start taunting Germany and the tit for tat begins all over again. So the Americans weigh in, pressurizing the French to stop. The last thing they want's another European war. The French need to save face and find a way out. Monsieur Monnet hatches a plan with what looks to me, by the way, like a thinly veiled federalist plot. Schuman sees it as his chance to get the Americans off his back, and then, with no warning whatsoever, announces it as a bloody *fait accompli* on French radio. As if they actually intend to go ahead with it! And now I have to give my time to the bloody civil servant –

Monnet and Bill enter.

...(Smoothly) My dear Jean, how are you?

Monnet Prime Minister.

Monnet is a huge force, tactical and brilliant. Here, anticipating cynicism and obstruction, he is concerned to keep his emotions in check.

Monnet speaks with a slight accent.

Attlee Come in. Sit down.

Mrs L exits. Attlee, Monnet and Bill move to a separate part of the stage where there are two comfortable chairs and an upright, set out for a meeting.

...(Introducing and explaining Bill) You don't mind? Bretherton. He's not departmental.

Monnet goes to object but Attlee continues.

...Now then, I don't have long. If the Koreans arrive, I'll have to leave you.

Monnet Of course.

Bill sits between the other two men, on the upright, and prepares to take minutes. He excitedly cracks open a fresh new notepad.

Attlee I simply don't understand how this can have happened. We told the *Quai D'Orsay* if they want to make any announcement that affects Germany they're to pass it through me first.

Monnet I apologise sincerely, Prime Minister, if the timing caused you any embarrassment.

Attlee (*Bristling*) Embarrassment? It's just that it's hard to imagine how we can go back on it now it's been said.

Monnet We don't want to go back on it.

Attlee You don't? But surely –

Monnet You think we are joking?

Attlee As I understand it, your plan proposes you and Germany pool your coal and steel resources –

Monnet It is the French Foreign Minister's, Monsieur Schuman's plan.

Attlee I am quite aware whose plan it is.

Monnet I am the architect. The French Foreign Minister is the sponsor.

Attlee (*Irritably*) I really don't care.

Monnet But I think it's important to understand that the Plan has the entire backing of the Foreign Minister –

Attlee Yes, and why has Schuman got involved? Because France got its wrists slapped by the Americans. The first sign of new growth in German heavy industry and France starts –

Monnet Precisely. And the Plan addresses this point exactly.

Attlee Well, go on then. Explain it to me.

Monnet I intend to.

Attlee I understand what you're aiming for but I can't for the life of me see how it could work.

Monnet The outcome of both European wars this century has been decided purely and simply by one factor. Neither national merit nor personal bravery. Simply by whose industrial system can deliver the shells to the front with most efficiency. But if no one were to own the industry...

Attlee is staggered.

Attlee What do you mean 'no one were to own it'? Someone will own it.

Monnet We want to tie France and Germany so tightly together in a mutual embrace, if you catch my meaning, that neither can pull away far enough to hit the other one.

Attlee You haven't answered the question. Who would own the industry?

Monnet There would be a High Authority.

Attlee Controlled by you?

Monnet Me?

Attlee France.

Monnet No.

Attlee Well it certainly wouldn't be controlled by Germany! We only gave them back the right of self-government in the spring.

Monnet No. It is autonomous. It is above.

Attlee Can you explain what that means?

Monnet The scheme involves an amount of sinking of national interests into a supra-national body –

Attlee How would it be elected?

Monnet French and German citizens, experts in their field, would run it, but their role would transcend nation. They would, in effect, be the functionaries of a new community.

Attlee It wouldn't be democratically elected then?

Monnet Not in the sense that you mean, no.

Attlee What other sense is there?

Bill is so caught up in the argument that his notes slide off his knees.

Monnet I have come here today to ask you, Prime Minister, what chance is there that Britain will join in the plan?

Attlee (*Aghast*) I rather thought that you had come here today so that I could haul you over the coals for announcing this sch –... Britain join in?!

Monnet Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg have all expressed their willingness to join their industries to those of France and Germany. They see the opportunities that this plan affords.

Attlee I'm sure they do. But what on earth has it got to do with us? Do you imagine I would want to tie the United Kingdom to a living corpse?

Monnet Sir, if you fear losing influence by working together with other nations, rather than simply dictating terms, how do you think a country like...Luxemburg faces this dilemma?

Attlee (*Laughing*) Perhaps it makes sense for the dear old Duchy of Luxembourg. The minnows of Europe have always needed the protection of a bigger neighbour. But I really can't imagine any *serious* country engaging –

Pippa enters. Bill stands.

...What is it?

Pippa Our man in Korea, sir, on the telephone.

Attlee Excuse me, gentlemen.

Attlee exits with Pippa, leaving Bill alone with Monnet.

Bill is beside himself with excitement. Monnet is frustrated about being abandoned.

Bill Voudriez-vous quelque chose a boire? Du thé? [Is there anything I can get you? Tea?]

Monnet (*Indicating that he is flattered by the use of French*) Non, merci. [No thank you.] And do not think of offering me your coffee.

Monnet gets up and irritably wanders about. After a while, Bill summons the courage to speak.

Bill Sir, I –

Monnet (*About the painting of the King*) Extraordinary the resemblance, don't you think?

Bill To whom?

Monnet Kaiser Wilhelm. A real Hohenzollern face.

Attlee re-enters.

Monnet What news, Prime Minister?

Attlee If the North doesn't invade the South within the week it'll be a miracle. (*Opening the Treasury folder*) Now, the Treasury boys tell me that, according to their calculations, for a while British steel could hold its own outside the plan, but eventually you could attack our exports and probably even our domestic markets.

Monnet I see. So you are making a case to join the scheme?

Attlee No, I am making a case to destroy the scheme.

Monnet But if you will engage with these issues only from a detailed fiscal point of view –

Attlee I don't regard the jobs of the 1.2 million British men who are engaged in the coal and steel industries as 'detail'. Or is there more to your scheme than you're letting on? Of course! That's right! The political implications. What do you say, Jean? Is political federation an essential prerequisite for your plan to work?

Monnet Not necessarily. Not yet, at any rate.

Attlee But it's what you're aiming for eventually.

Bill (*Who can bear it no longer*) Yes! (And then immediately) Sorry sir.

Attlee Is he right?

Monnet There would be political implications, but federation is a long way off.

Attlee You see! You bloody federalists. You're all the same. You speak in commerce but you think in politics.

Bill, working hard to cover up his horror at this rudeness, manically fiddles with his pen top. Monnet swallows the insult.

Monnet I do not speak in commercial terms. You are the person who reads Treasury figures to me. Sir, attempt to rise above the mercantile. There is more to life than prudent economics.

Attlee And so we should hand over to some supranational authority, staffed by Frenchmen and Germans, the right to close down our pits and steelworks, and perhaps turn over large sections of our populous to unemployment? No. That's the National Government's prerogative!

Monnet So it is the political implications of the plan you object to?

Attlee Only because you pretend there are none.

Monnet I am hiding nothing.

Bill continues to fiddle with his pen, bursting to speak, but dares not. Pippa enters. Bill stands. Pippa approaches Attlee as before, but he stops her.

Attlee *(To Pippa)* Wait a moment.

Monnet There is an open federalist debate raging in Europe that has not even begun here—

Attlee People aren't interested —

Bill *(Emboldened by Pippa's presence)* Because they're not educated! If they only knew... Sorry, sir.

Monnet Speak up, young man! If you are on my side, I need your support.

Bill *(Contrite)* I'm sorry. I shouldn't say anything — it's not my place.

Attlee No, go on. Give the argument some balance, Bill.

Bill May I really speak openly, sir?

Attlee But not naively, if at all possible.

Bill *(Intensely aware of Pippa's gaze, as well as Monnet's potential approval)* I believe it is vital that the full scope of this plan is not withheld from the people of this country. They only think nationalistically out of habit and ignorance. If the plan and its implications were explained to them, they would understand and embrace it. I'm sure about that.

Monnet Ah, this young man has insight!

Bill The vital importance of the plan should not be underestimated.

Monnet You need to listen to the people of his generation, Prime Minister.

Bill (*Gesturing to Monnet*) I, I, I, I... Well, the humiliation of the French at a point when they are prepared to act *altruistically* towards their old enemy would be a mistake of tragic proportions.

Monnet Bravo.

Bill (*To Attlee*) I'm sorry sir, I –

Attlee But I simply don't see anything altruistic in it.

Bill (*Now a little carried away*) And if the plan falters without us, we might be blamed.

Attlee Or thanked.

Bill And, purely practically, getting in at this stage we'd have more power to shape it.

Attlee Alright, Bill, that's enough! (*Turning to Pippa*) What is it?

Pippa The National Executive is here, sir.

Attlee Alright.

Pippa exits.

Monnet These constant interruptions, Prime Minister! What we are talking about here is of immense international significance –

Attlee (*Angry*) Quite so. The Koreans, the Americans and the National Executive must wait while we discuss your airy-fairy federalist claptrap. Altruistic? No. Your foreign policy is governed entirely by fear of a resurgent Germany –

Monnet Is that ignoble? English foreign policy is governed entirely by fear of another Armada –

Attlee Absolutely. And what your plan proposes would wipe out everything we've gained in two World Wars. For French fear of losing sovereign power, we must sacrifice some of our own? No. Not with a parliamentary majority of three. We are an island of coal, surrounded by fish. None of it is negotiable. Now, I must attend to the Executive –

Monnet Only three seats, yes. And Winston understands the necessity of federation. He urges the creation of the United States of Europe.

Attlee Only while he's out of power. Currently, he is painting and sketching in Marrakech as far as I know, and I am the Prime Minister. When the old man talks of the United States of Europe he doesn't imagine Britain *in* it! *Running* it maybe, or sitting by making encouraging noises. If this country is allied with

anyone, it's with the Commonwealth and what's left of the Empire, not with you Europeans.

Monnet Are *you* not Europeans?

Attlee We have full employment as our avowed aim. France, Germany, Italy, Holland... They're all run by Catholic anti-Socialist parties.

Monnet Did you say Catholic? What is the significance that they are Catholic?

Attlee Well, who *is* behind it? Germany?

Monnet No one is 'behind it'. This is paranoia!

Attlee The main supporters of the plan are yourself, Schuman, de Gasperi and Chancellor Adenauer. That's a Germanic alliance, culturally speaking.

Monnet This is preposterous.

Attlee Believe me, I'm mild in my response. If the Foreign Secretary were here he'd be screaming 'betrayal' at our even discussing the possibility of an alliance of any sort with Germany. (*Warming to his task*) Let's see. The Italian President, de Gasperi, is a German speaker, isn't he? He might be running Italy now but in the last days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he was a pro-German politician in charge of Vienna. Right? The German Chancellor hates the British since an English brigadier ousted him as the Mayor of Cologne in the war and banished him to the countryside. And he speaks absolutely no English! Schuman might be the French Foreign Secretary but German's his first language. Actually, let's not beat about the bush. The French Foreign Secretary's a German, isn't he?

Monnet (*Only just keeping his rage in check*) You use the fact that Monsieur Schuman is German to discredit the Plan? He is not German. Luxembourg may be a country of no significance to you, but Monsieur Schuman was born there. The German Chancellor doesn't speak English? Does the Prime Minister speak German?

Attlee Now, take care, Jean.

Monnet Well, do you?

Attlee No, I don't!

Monnet Precisely. But the German people do not see this as a conspiracy against them! The Italian president is Austrian. Yes! Good! Why not? And to you I am French. '*You*', he says to me, when he means 'France'. '*Your* foreign policy' when he means 'French foreign policy'. I do not speak for France. I am not French. I am not German. Sir, I am European! This determination to assign us all to our little nationalities will no longer work. People who grew up

in Saarland, Lorraine, Alsace are neither French nor German, or they are both. Fighting in the German army in the First World War and then for the French Army in the Second, because the land had reverted to France. Murdering their neighbours and those they grew up with. Where I come from on the mantelpieces they have the Legions D'honneurs alongside the Iron Cross. Monuments to French and German dead in the same town squares. *(He is too moved to continue easily)* Please let us not continue to sit around awarding black marks to countries for bad behaviour, like school children playing war games. Let us, now we have finally crawled broken and bitter into the second half of the Twentieth Century, grow up a little, put behind us the old concepts. Prime Minister, this is not about who is, at the moment, 'top dog', as you would say. This is an exercise in collaboration, in which countries will relinquish some of the old aspirations, aspirations that have kept the endless competition for 'top dog' alive.

Bill, just preventing himself from spontaneously clapping the last speech, nods and takes notes passionately.

Attlee takes a deep breath and sighs. He rises, stiff with lumbago. There is a pause.

Attlee That's enough. The meeting's over, gentlemen. I think this room needs some air through it. I'll meet the National Executive upstairs. I'd better have a quick look at the notes before I go up. *(Noticing that Monnet seems incapable of moving)* Goodbye, Jean.

Bill gives Attlee another folder.

Monnet It is over?

Attlee *(To Monnet, while simultaneously reading from the folder)* You know, I'd be more impressed with your request for us to join your scheme if I actually believed you meant it.

Bill *(Without thinking)* What?!

Attlee *(To Bill)* You think he means it?

Bill Of course he means it.

Attlee Really? Is Monsieur Monnet not playing with us?

Bill, aghast, looks to Monnet for a contradiction.

Monnet It is immaterial what I want. You have excluded yourselves. You will wait and see first how the thing functions. You always do.

Attlee Sounds like eminent sense to me.

Monnet (*Becoming stonier*) But maybe it will be too late. The happy picture of Britain leading Europe cannot last forever. The time will come when you will need us. Perhaps then you will find it hard to persuade us that you are sufficiently European.

Attlee Is that a threat?

Monnet You obstruct the Council of Europe, so that it has no power. You destroyed the Customs Union in '48.

Bill (*Incredulous, to Monnet*) So you don't want Britain to join in the plan?

Monnet (*With thunder in his voice*) I will not let you destroy yet another genuine Franco-German attempt at a solution to our own problem. The new authority will meet in Luxembourg. I will chair it. I will set the agenda.

Attlee Who are you, sir, to dictate the future? You are not even in the French Government. You are merely a civil servant! Good day to you. Bretherton will see you out. (*Exits*)

Monnet (*Shouting after Attlee*) I will welcome the participants to the Grand Duchy with the words, "Gentlemen! You are the first Government of Europe".

Monnet gathers himself.

...(To Bill) I know the way, thank you.

Monnet strides off in the opposite direction from the PM, leaving Bill alone on stage, dazed. Pippa re-enters, and potters pointlessly round her desk while Bill clears up after the meeting.

Pippa Blew poor Monsieur Monnet out of the water?

Bill (*To Pippa*) The word 'federal' sent Clem into a panicking tailspin. It's going to take longer than we imagined.

Pippa At last he realises.

Bill You're not surprised?

Pippa You're really rather stupid for such a clever person, aren't you? They may be socialists but they've still got an empire.

Bill They're internationalists, aren't they, in their own way.

Pippa Keep dreaming, Bill.

Bill They're a radical government. They've been radical in their approach to everything else.

Pippa But Europe's different altogether. A quantum leap too far, even for this lot. Anyway, they haven't been radical for a while now –

Bill What about the others? Do you think they'd be any better?

Pippa Worse I'd think.

Bill But Churchill –

Pippa Some of them might get it, I suppose. Your friend Teddy does anyway. Their education sort of encourages them to flirt with the idea of a cosy kind of European togetherness, doesn't it. Well, at least, they sometimes go there on holiday, speak a bit of French, know a bit of Italy.

Bill Do you think I overstepped the mark with the PM?

Pippa What?

Bill You said I should stand up for myself and I did.

Pippa Oh sorry Bill, I really wasn't listening.

Bill Oh, what an appalling fiasco.

Pippa (*Picking up her handbag*) What are you talking about? I'm the one with the hellish hangover. (*Exits*)

Bill trots after Pippa as the lights fade.

Act Two

Scene One

We return to the pebble beach in Aldston, Suffolk.

A projection reminds us that it's 1992.

It is late afternoon, the day after Scene Three took place.

The wind has picked up. The sea is rough. It's bitterly cold.

The wood-hulled boat is still beached on the shingle.

We're aware of other boats too, because we hear the wind banging against rigging, metal and rope, and the creak and groan of boats in the water.

The ladder remains in place.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO READ THE REST OF THIS PLAY PLEASE CONTACT
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