

Rachel Slattery
January 19, 2012
COMM-382-002
Blair
Silent Fiction Film Story

Cabaret

A young man strolls down the streets of a Nazi-occupied Paris at night. He is garbed in a white, collared, button-up shirt and black trousers, complete with a black cummerbund and bow tie, which hangs nonchalantly around his neck untied. Over this, he has a waist-length black mess jacket, which remains open. Most businesses are closed for the night and the city is almost completely devoid of people. Descending a set of stairs that leads to a path along the Seine, the man rummages into one of his jacket pockets, and pulls out a battered cigarette. Lighting it, he takes a long drag and takes a moment to admire the scenery. To his right, the Notre Dame de Paris sits proudly, rising high above the bank of the Seine and cloaked in shadow. To his left, Le Tour Eiffel glimmers brightly in the night. Making his way towards Le Tour Eiffel, the man ambles at a leisurely pace, taking a drag from his cigarette every now and then, simply enjoying the quiet. As he rounds a shoulder, he spies a couple making their way quickly in his direction, both of their gazes averted to the ground. The young man looks around, as if wondering what could possibly cause their hurry. He stops dead in his tracks, cigarette dangling precariously from his mouth, when he sees two of the Gestapo standing further ahead, twirling their batons menacingly. Despite the distance, he manages to make eye contact with one of the soldiers, who nudges his companion and points his baton in the young man's direction. His eyes widen in panic and immediately, he turns around and starts walking as fast as his legs will allow. Looking behind him, he sees that the two are following him, though neither seems to be in a hurry. Scrambling up the bank, he wends his way through alleyways and narrow streets until he can no longer see the Gestapo. His cigarette has

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long since gone out and he throws it in frustration. At a slower pace, the man continues walking, wandering through the streets aimlessly. Shoulders hunched and looking down at the ground, he lets his feet guide him through the city. After some time, bright red lights begin to reflect off the cobblestone. Noticing this, the man's steps falter and he looks up to see a great windmill and flashing lights. Beneath the mill, a sign reads Le Moulin Rouge. Entranced and curious, he stuffs his hands in his pockets and makes his way into the cabaret. Looking around the dimly ballroom, he sees that most of the audience is German officers and he hurriedly takes a seat towards the back. A spotlight falls on the curtain, signaling the next number. The curtains draw back and the show begins. The young man begins to choke on the glass of water that is set before him. The women on stage are wearing black leotards with thin straps, sheer black lace panty hose, shiny black high heels, and on the top of their heads, stahlhelms. The women proceed to goose-step and salute Hitler and the German officers clearly enjoy this. The man's knuckles turn white around his glass and his face contorts in anger. In one fluid motion, he gets up and walks towards the exit. Before he leaves, he takes a look back and memories of Le Moulin Rouge at its former glory swim before his eyes and replace the women presently on stage.

Mistinguett is putting on her final performance at Le Moulin Rouge and the ballroom is crowded, all eyes on the star of the cabaret. She starts with a number from her performance in 1926, "Ça c'est Paris." Mistinguett is beaming and resplendent in her intricate costume. She bears a white cap adorned with a large white feather and a white sequined dress with a low cut V-neck and slit at the bottom that begins at mid-thigh that

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trails out into a feathery train. The audience is going wild as more dancers join her onstage and dance to the fast tempo, twirling and kicking.

And then the vision stops and again, the young man looks upon the goose-stepping cabaret girls. A determined look passes over the man's face as he turns his back on the performance and walks out of the club. He walks with purpose as he deftly wends his towards a questionable looking district overlooking the Seine. Turning into an alleyway, he swiftly walks to the other end and cautiously looks both ways before turning right and stopping before a door to a dilapidated warehouse. Straightening his jacket, he knocks on the door in a particular manner, almost as if it is a code. The door opens slowly from the inside and another young man peers, surveying the other man, recognition written on his face. Nodding in approval, he motions for the young man outside to come inside and he does so quickly. In a survey of the room, he sees a group of about twenty men all scattered about the room, heads bowed together and talking to each other conspiratorially. All along the walls are posters saying things like "Vive la France!" and "La Résistance française" adorned with the Croix de Lorraine, the symbol of the resistance. At the head of the room, a middle-aged man, clearly the leader of the men, is sitting at a table, pouring over maps and papers. He looks up when the young man enters and smiles broadly and gets up. They walk towards each other and embrace and shake hands when they meet. Directing the young man towards the table he just came from, the leader claps a hand genially on the other man's back.

At that moment, the men in the room turn towards the entrance of the warehouse, tense, as if there is a disturbance outside. Soon after, the door is kicked in and at least forty

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Nazi soldiers and Gestapo fill the room, guns pointing at the men gathered. All looking at each other, the men of the resistance raise their hands in surrender, many of them with terrified looks upon their faces. Quickly, the soldiers round up the men and arrest them. During this process, two of the Gestapo, the same two that the young man encountered earlier, gesture towards himself and the leader, who is still standing next to him. Bringing some of the Nazis with them, they walk over to the two. One of them says something to two of the soldiers, who nod. One takes a baton and immediately knocks the leader over the head, effectively knocking him out. The other takes a burlap sack and shoves it over the young man's head and his world goes black.