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Quartet for the End of Time

de
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traducción de
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(fragmento en inglés)

C'est grâce à la musique que nous avons été libérés
Étienne Pasquier

Characters

Olivier

Jean

Henri

Étienne

Pablo

Guard

Commandant

The action takes place in the Stalag V111 A, a Prisoner of War camp in Görlitz, (Silesia). Winter 1940.

1. Liturgy of Crystal.

Camp Hut

ÉTIENNE

Where is Olivier?

HENRI

I don't know.

ÉTIENNE

If he's not here in five minutes we're all in the shit.

HENRI

I thought he was with you.

ÉTIENNE

And I thought he was with you. What the hell does he think he's doing?

HENRI

Jean's not here either. Perhaps they're together.

ÉTIENNE

I doubt it.

HENRI

You know what Olivier's like.

ÉTIENNE

That doesn't mean he can put us in danger.

HENRI

Sometimes he's like a child.

ÉTIENNE

I know.

HENRI

(cautiously peering outside the door.) There's not a soul outside.

ÉTIENNE

He can't have forgotten. He can't.

HENRI

He'll come. You'll see.

ÉTIENNE

I don't understand.

HENRI

Don't worry. I bet he turns up at the last minute, running and in a sweat, begging forgiveness.

(JEAN enters.)

JEAN

Hello.

ÉTIENNE

Where's Olivier?

JEAN

Eh?

HENRI

Isn't he with you?

JEAN

Isn't he here?

ÉTIENNE

Damn it. They'll punish us all because he goes around with his bloody head in the clouds.

JEAN

I thought he'd be here.

HENRI

And we thought he'd be with you.

JEAN

Could he have forgotten?

HENRI

Let's hope not.

JEAN

Do you know what happened to the Chinese man?

BOTH

Yes.

(Long silence.)

ÉTIENNE

Where is he? Where is he?

HENRI

He'll turn up. He has to.

ÉTIENNE

I'm going to look for him.

JEAN

Calm down. What are you doing?

HENRI

It's too late now. We can't go out.

JEAN

We're better off waiting here.

ÉTIENNE

And what if he's forgotten?

(Silence.)

HENRI

What are we going to do?

(GUARD enters.)

GUARD

All here?

ÉTIENNE

Except Olivier.

GUARD

What??

JEAN

We don't know where he is?

GUARD

What?? (He grabs Jean.) The fucking stupid cunt. If he's not here in one fucking minute I'll kill the bastard. Where is he? Where the fuck is he?

JEAN

Let go of me.

HENRI

Leave him alone. He told you. We don't know.

GUARD

Are you . . . are you mad? Are you off your heads? Do you want them to shoot us all as if we were Jewish scum? If that bastard doesn't come through that door before the Commandant arrives . . . if he doesn't get here . . .

(OLIVIER enters.)

OLIVIER

Sorry I'm late.

GUARD

(throwing himself upon OLIVIER and beating him) You piece of shit. You bastard.

(The others separate them. OLIVIER looks for his glasses on the floor.)

JEAN

Stop! That's enough!

OLIVIER

My glasses. My glasses.

ÉTIENNE

Are you mad? Who do you think you are?

GUARD

I'm sick of risking my life for you lot. You're the camp's fucking spoilt brats. Privileged pieces of shit. Don't piss me off. You hear? If the Commandant appeared before this asshole turned up, you know what they'd do to us all? Fucking hell!

OLIVIER

Please.

GUARD

(confronting OLIVIER) Fucking hell!

ÉTIENNE

Alright. It's alright. Leave him alone.

JEAN

Someone's coming.

GUARD
Attention!

(They stand to attention. PABLO enters. They relax.)

PABLO
At ease! *(He bursts into laughter.)*

GUARD
You. What the fuck do you want?

PABLO
Calm down. You don't have to show off all your medals to me. Get that clear. Commandant's orders. A change of plan. He's too busy collecting samples of ladies' underwear to visit this dump of a hut. He wants to see you in his office.

ÉTIENNE
Us? In his office?

GUARD
Now?

PABLO
Didn't I just say he's very busy? Later. At five. You too.

GUARD
Me? Why?

PABLO
No idea. But he wants you there. He said: 'the sewer rat comes too.' That's you, isn't it? Doesn't he call you that? *(He guffaws.)*

GUARD
(with clenched teeth) Spanish pig.

PABLO
You should have seen the legs on the blonde who was waiting outside his office. Unbelievable.

GUARD
Right. You heard. Five o'clock in the Commandant's office. Five. On the dot. All of you. You hear, Olivier? *(Silence.)* Olivier, did you hear?

OLIVIER
(under his breath) Yes.

GUARD
What?

OLIVIER

I said yes!

The GUARD and OLIVIER look defiantly at each other. The GUARD leaves.)

PABLO

Fucking bastard. What's happened?

JEAN

Nothing. The guard's afraid for his own back.

HENRI

What does the Commandant want us for?

PABLO

No idea.

ÉTIENNE

For nothing good, that's for sure.

PABLO

Do you know about the Chinese man?

JEAN

Yes.

ÉTIENNE

(to OLIVIER) Are you going to tell us where the hell you were?

OLIVIER

I'm sorry. I . . . I was listening to some birds.

(Blackout)