

**ZONE**

DARKENED STAGE. LARGE STONE S.R. SPOLIGHT

CS. SFX RAIN

ENTER RAOUL SL He is dressed in a heavy worn army coat and bundled against the cold. He is unshaven and walks in a stooped self-protective way. He stops in the light, not moving, but his eyes go left and right. He listens. Comes downstage and peers out. He looks worried, on edge. He listens carefully.

RAOUL

**No birds.**

Shakes his head

He sees the rock. Pauses

**Ah!**

He goes to the rock. Feels it. Seems pleased. Looks left and then right. Lifts it and with great effort moves it CS in the light. Sits on it with great relief.

**Ah...ah....**

He smiles and nods. A noise off stage  
(He fearfully crouches behind  
stone)

**Ahhh?**

He peers into the wings then he sees who it is.

**Ohhhh...it's you.**

Enter Boris. He is short and limps. He wears an army coat, which is a different color to Raoul's and has mud stains. Half his head is covered with a dirty bandage. There's a reddish stain of dried blood.

BORIS

**I hurt my foot.**

RAOUL

He sits back on his stone

**Huh?**

BORIS

**My foot. I hurt it.**

Raoul does not react. Pause.

**Has anyone ever told you that you  
lack compassion?**

Raoul grunts and reaches in his pocket and pulls out a crust of bread wrapped in newspaper and unravels it carefully as Boris watches him.

**I'm hungry too you know.**

Raoul waves him away. Boris looks around

**Made yourself comfy I see...as usual...**

RAOUL

**Mm... The rock was over there...I moved it.**

He begins chewing at his piece of bread. There's a pause

BORIS

**I have an injury, which held me back.**

RAOUL

(Indifferently)

**Oh yes?**

BORIS

**Yes... it's sore.**

RAOUL

**This is my rock. I lifted it.**

BORIS

He looks around

**You took the last one.**

RAOUL

**... Probably**

BORIS

**And I have nothing to eat.**

RAOUL

**Mmmmmmm...**

Raoul continues chewing on his piece of bread.

From a distance

SFX gunfire... a machine gun and then a few sporadic shots. Boris and Raoul go to ground. Fearfully.

**It's... quite a way...  
away... you...go and see...**

BORIS

Me?

RAOUL

Yes. You. And take the bandage off.  
It attracts attention.

BORIS

I have a wound.

RAOUL

No you don't.

BORIS

I need the bandage.

RAOUL

It makes you stand out

BORIS

That's the point. They don't shoot  
people with bandages.

RAOUL

Go and see what's going on.

BORIS

I need food.

RAOUL

I don't have any.

BORIS

He whines

A little bit will do.

RAOUL

When you get back. If there's any  
left.

BORIS

He takes the bandage off his head.

I always have to do the difficult  
things.

RAOUL

(Angrily but without  
getting up)

I'll go then.

BORIS

**No. I have better eyesight than you.**

RAOUL

**Mmmmm...**

BORIS

He takes off the bandage.

(proudly)

**And I have the more adventurous soul...I will find out what's happening.**

Exits

RAOUL

(shouts after him)

**I am relying on you.  
This is very strange. I don't like it. It feels as if time is standing still.**

(pompously)

**A zone of disquietude.**

Maniacal laugh.

Pause. He gets up. Starts pacing back and forth

**How long have we been walking? Let me see.**

He counts on his fingers

**Days? It feels like...weeks?  
Months? Difficult to count.**

He gives up counting on his fingers

SFX Machine gun sound again followed by sporadic shots.

**Oh dear...**

(pause)

**We must have a plan or we're doomed. With a plan we have hope...**

(he addresses the stone)

**And you old Mr. Stone.**

He wags his finger

**You should know better.**

(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

**You, who have been here since the beginning of time. You, who have witnessed the petty squabbling of humankind for six million years should understand that permanence is no excuse for moral indifference. What's more...**

Pause. He loses his train of thought.

**Huh?**

Then sadly, his face trembling on the verge of tears

**I'm upset. I cannot hear birds. There should be birds. A cuckoo even a crow...that would be comforting...well, at least the rain has stopped. Wait a minute.**

Looking out into the audience, he tries to see from different angles. Points out into the audience.

**What's that? The light?**

(excitedly)

**There, between the trees.**

(desperately)

**There. Don't you see it? It could be a house. There may be some food... Boris?...Boris? Where are you? Boris. Come here.**

Re-enter Boris crawling on all fours.

**What are you doing? Why are you walking on all fours?**

BORIS

**I am?**

RAOUL

**Get up man.**

BORIS

He stands up.

**I didn't know.**

RAOUL

**Listen, come, look, there's a light  
over there. It might be a house.**

He points

BORIS

(with great wonder)

**You're right. It's a light.**

He smiles

RAOUL

**A house where there may be food,  
shelter and a warm welcome.**

BORIS

**Oh please...**

Pause

**Please...**

He goes in the direction of the light.

RAOUL

**Well?**

BORIS

He stops

**Well what?**

RAOUL

**What?**

(angrily)

BORIS

**What?**

RAOUL

**Did you see anything?**

BORIS

**The light?**

RAOUL

**No back there.**

BORIS

**Oh... back there.**

Raoul points upstage to where he came from

**Oh. Yes.**

Pause

RAOUL

**And?**

BORIS

**You really think there's food over there?**

RAOUL

**What did you see for God's sake?**

BORIS

**People... in their underwear.**

RAOUL

(totally amazed)

**In their underwear?**

BORIS

**Yes.**

RAOUL

**But...but...the shooting?**

BORIS

**There were men shooting them.**

RAOUL

**Shooting?... Them.**

BORIS

**Yes. Men in uniforms.**

RAOUL

**Shooting people in their underwear?  
Are you sure?**

BORIS

**Yes...**

RAOUL

**Are they still there?**

BORIS

**I suppose so...who?**

RAOUL

**Those doing the shooting?**

BORIS

**I don't know. I left.**

RAOUL

He is very agitated

**We must take control of this situation. It is time to move on. But, first you must investigate the light.**

BORIS

**Me? Why always me?**

RAOUL

**You are a man of exceptional courage and fortitude. A man above other men.**

BORIS

**I am?**

RAOUL

**We're starving. We have no bread left.**

BORIS

**I will not go.**

RAOUL

**You will not?**

BORIS

**No. I am...too...upset.**

RAOUL

**Then I WILL. I will show courage. You will stay here. I will allow you to sit on my rock.**

BORIS

**Oh...how kind.**

RAOUL

**I shall return. You may  
sit... temporarily.**

Exits towards the light in a crouched position

BORIS

He sits on the rock.

**Very comfortable. Isn't it lovely  
to hear the birds singing. Such  
cheeky things, so full of life.  
Without a care. Beautiful.**

SFX: Birds singing

**I do hope he finds something...I  
am very hungry. Food would be so  
welcome. At heart I'm an optimist.  
My parents taught me that you  
could change the world with your  
imagination.**

He closes his eyes and concentrates and speaks in a sort of  
trance.

**He will find food. Fois gras, pig's  
trotters in aspic, snails a la  
Bourgogne, crevettes lightly  
tossed in olive oil with a touch of  
tarragon. And a warm baguette  
straight from the oven. And  
wine...oh the wine he will find. A  
Chateau Lafitte Grand cru classe  
1945, rich powerful with the  
fragrance of blackberry. .**

He opens his eyes

**Perhaps too much to ask? A loaf of  
bread would be just fine....**

Raoul returns... he carries a sack over his shoulder made  
from a tablecloth.

RAOUL

He is crying. The tears falling down his cheeks.

**You wouldn't believe it.**

(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

**It was a house. A nice house. I looked in the window. The lights were on and there was a warm fire burning in the hearth. And a table with a candelabra and... there was nobody there. Nobody.**

He whimpers

**Nobody there. But there was food on the table. So I went in. Not a sound. There was nobody. So...I stole the food**

BORIS  
(accusingly)

**You stole the food.**

RAOUL

**It was immoral I admit. But...it might have gone to waste..... I didn't take it all... Look...**

He puts the sack down and reveals the contents.

**I don't know what half of it is.. but the smell, oh the smell...there's this brown stuff.**

He shows Boris a small bowl

BORIS

**Fois gras**

RAOUL

**A jelly thing.**

BORIS

**Pig's trotters in aspic**

RAOUL

**These look like snails or something...perhaps they're not edible.**

BORIS

**Escargots...in red wine**

RAOUL

**Fishy things... they smell of  
aniseed. I hate aniseed but...**

BORIS

**Shrimp fried with tarragon.**

RAOUL

**Oh and bread... warm crusty bread.  
Feel it.**

BORIS

**And wine?**

RAOUL

**Fancy wine... look ...**

He tries to read it

**Chetter laft it...**

BORIS

He looks around in terror. Suddenly very seriously

**We must go.**

RAOUL

**I don't understand.**

BORIS

**We are in the wrong zone.**

RAOUL

**But can't we eat now? Have a glass  
of wine? The warm bread?**

BORIS

**Not now. Put it away.**

RAOUL

**But...**

BORIS

He screams at him.

**Put it away... we must leave. Now!  
Don't you understand?**

RAOUL

**All right. Don't shout at me.**

BORIS

I'm sorry. Here let me help. I'll carry some of it.

RAOUL

I can't wait to eat. That's good wine, I know it is. A special bottle. It looks posh. I'm so excited.

Boris looks at the food smells each bowl with great delight and longing.

At last food. Yes? After so long, beautiful food and warm bread.

BORIS

I must find my bandage. Damn it. I've lost my bandage. Give me whatever you can't carry.

RAOUL

Your bandage is over there behind the stone.

(pause)

Do people really eat snails? You know we could have used my rock as a table...

BORIS

He is rewinding the bandage round his head

Come. Follow Me. This is regrettable. But this zone is not safe. We have to get away from here, otherwise we are lost. Hurry. I will lead the way. Let us go in that direction. Come as quickly as you can. I will lead.

He points to downstage right.

Exits

RAOUL

I'm coming. Couldn't I at least taste it. The food. It will keep us going for weeks.

(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

**I left the glasses but we can drink  
the wine from the bottle. I didn't  
want to bring them... the glasses.  
They might have broken. There. I'm  
ready...I think.**

He struggles to get everything wrapped in the tablecloth.

He stops.

**Wait a minute. Oh no... would you  
believe it? I forgot the  
corkscrew! Do you hear me?**

He shouts as he leaves the stage.

**I forgot the corkscrew. Wait for  
me...no corkscrew.**

The stage is quiet. Then a bird starts singing.... 15  
seconds SFX the sound of gunfire... a little closer than  
before.