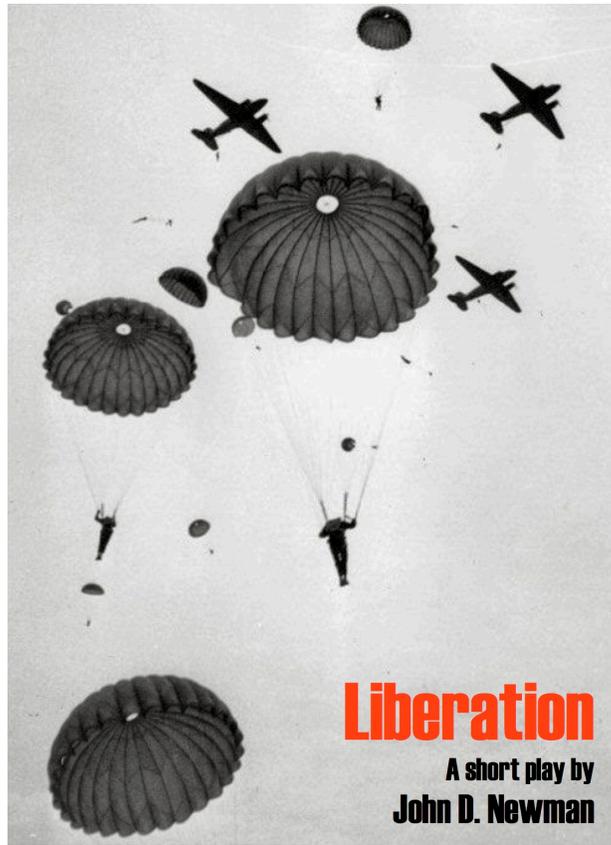


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Newport, Maine

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LIBERATION

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Cast of Characters -- (4f 1m)

Atalante (AT-uh-LAWNT) A young woman of German heritage with long, blonde hair that is loose and flowing - the physical ideal of an "Aryan maiden." She is an avid scholar of the classics. Although she became a citizen of France before its occupation, she was considered to be German by the native French and was therefore scorned.

Benedicte (BAY-nuh-DEEKT) A pious young lady who once aspired to become a nun before she went into hiding. She is blind, but that is not apparent at the outset.

Colombe (koh-LOHMB)The teenage daughter of a collaborationist family. She is in hiding because she is pregnant with the child of a German soldier.

Domremy (DOHM-ray-MEE)An adolescent girl who used to be a messenger for the resistance. She has short hair and is disguised as a boy. Her twin brother sacrificed his life so that she might live.

Franz A young German soldier who has deserted his unit who discovers the girls' hiding place.

Setting -- Inside a stone barn in the town of Valognes in the Normandy region of France.

Time -- Early on the morning of June 20, 1944, two weeks after D-Day.

LIBERATION by *J.D. Newman* 4f 1m About 40 minutes. Four French maidens, hiding from the occupying German army and concealing their identities from each other, capture a soldier who discovers them. One of the young women insists on showing the soldier the stories of misfortune that brought them to their current condition. They enact their stories in metaphor, drawing on a Greek myth, a Biblical story, and the legend of a local saint. When the German soldier reveals that the village has been liberated, he asks to be liberated by death rather than facing the shame of what his people have done to the French people. **Order # 3122**

HISTORICAL NOTES

Liberation is a fictional play based on the actual events of the occupation and liberation of Normandy, a region of northern France.

The play is set on the morning of June 20, 1944, two weeks after "D-Day." The town of Valognes, in which the play is set, is located at the center of the Contentin Peninsula that extends northward into the English Channel. Utah Beach, where many of the American forces first came ashore, is located at the southeast base of the peninsula, with Omaha Beach further east along the northern coast. A few miles inland from Utah Beach, in and around the town of Sainte Mere Eglise, is where many of the first American paratroopers landed in the flooded fields and sank forever into the marsh. The strongly fortified port city of Cherbourg, a vital military objective, is located in the middle of the northern coast of the peninsula. In order for the liberation to succeed, American ground forces have to move from Utah Beach, through Valognes, and take the port of Cherbourg before winter sets in. Cherbourg is key to maintaining the Allied supply lines, since Utah Beach and Omaha Beach would be ineffective ports in the rough winter seas.

Because of its strategic location and because of the thick, stone walls of the town, Valognes had become a stronghold of the occupying German forces. Because of this, Valognes was heavily bombed by U.S. planes from June 8 to June 10, laying in ruin much of the center of the town. Ironically, Valognes had been deserted by the German forces slightly before the bombings because the German forces had opted to establish their stronghold at Montebourg, several miles south and east. In the attack, the Chapel Saint Malo, which was built under William the Conqueror in the eleventh century, was demolished. Many of the townspeople had taken shelter in the church when the roof collapsed, killing most of the people inside.

When the American infantry entered Valognes on June 20, they found the town abandoned by both the local residents and the German forces. The Germans had retreated to take their stand at two strategic points: the port of Cherbourg and Cap de la Hague.

VERSE NOTES:

The play is written "blank verse" (unrhymed iambic pentameter).

In order to make the scansion of the lines more clear, certain words are broken by apostrophes. If an apostrophe replaces a letter or letters in the middle of the word, this indicates that a syllable has been eliminated. For example, "ev'ry" would be pronounced with only two syllables whereas "every" would be pronounced with three syllables. Similarly, "fam'ly" is pronounced with only two syllables.

If an apostrophe does not replace letters from the word, the apostrophe indicates that the word has been broken down with an additional syllable and it to be pronounced with one more syllable than normal. For example, the word "bless'ed" would be pronounced with two syllables whereas the word "blessed" would be pronounced in the more common way with only one syllable. Also, the word "comrade" is intentionally misspelled as "comarade" in order to indicate that the word should be pronounced with an additional syllable in the middle. The pronunciation of most such words should be sufficiently clear from the scansion of the rest of the line.

Liberation

AT RISE: *We are inside a stone barn in Valognes, France. In this place, four adolescent girls have been living in hiding from the occupying German forces. There is a large wooden door in the upstage wall that is the only opening into the space. There is a manger downstage center that conceals a hardback notebook. In each of the four corners of the space, there is a pile of hay and a milking stool. BENEDICTE, COLUMBE, and DOMREMY lie asleep on three of the piles of hay, their blankets concealing them from view. There is a wooden stool in each corner of the barn. A hint of early morning light might shine through the door. ATALANTE stealthily enters the barn through the wooden door, shutting it carefully behind her. She wears a half-mask and carries food with her from the abandoned shops and homes of the town. She puts her goods in the manger and places a half-mask over her face. FRANZ, a young German soldier in uniform, opens the door and appears in the doorway with his lantern in his hand. ATALANTE senses his presence but does not turn to face him. The other girls do not stir.*

FRANZ: *(Softly and politely.)* Good morning, Mad'moiselle.

(ATALANTE freezes.)

Hello, my friend.

(He closes the door and carefully approaches ATALANTE.)

I speak your French. I know you understand.

(ATALANTE fidgets in the manger, making sure her notebook is completely concealed. FRANZ sets the lantern on the edge of the manger, then gently removes ATALANTE's mask looks into her terrified face.)

You are like me!

(BENEDICTE, COLOMBE, and DOMREMY arise, suddenly and simultaneously. They all wear half-masks that conceal their identities from one another. BENEDICTE wears a bonnet. Each of the three girls raises a stool over her head.)

DOMREMY: Release the girl! We're three and you are one.

(Startled, FRANZ complies. ATALANTE moves away from FRANZ, replacing her mask, and picks up the fourth stool.)

Now raise your arms! Obey or we shall strike!

FRANZ: *(He slowly picks up the lantern and raises his arms, calmly regaining his composure.)* All I have to do is drop the light.

The straw will burn and force you from this place.

DOMREMY: All I have to do is give the word

And they will crack your skull!

FRANZ: They would not dare

These gentle damsels do not have the nerve.

DOMREMY: They hate you. They will kill you, if they must.

FRANZ: *(Becoming fierce for the first time.)* I stake my life on it: they will not strike!

(He approaches COLOMBE. He shines the light in her face. She lifts her stool higher but does not attack.)

COLOMBE: You are not welcome here.

FRANZ: That is a lie!

I know you. I have eaten in your home.

Your parents are like most the French.

(He grabs the stool and forces COLOMBE to her knees as she continues to grasp it.)

They kneel to serve their German conquerors.

(He approaches ATALANTE and shines the lantern in her face. ATALANTE raises her stool but does not strike. COLOMBE stands but does not raise her stool.)

You think that mask can hide your German face?

ATALANTE: I do not hide from you.

(She indicates the other girls.)

I hide from them.

(FRANZ slowly approaches BENEDICTE. As he shines the light in her eyes, she does not react. He slaps her, but she still does not respond.)

FRANZ: You did not even try to threaten me.

BENEDICTE: I turn the other cheek.

(FRANZ slaps her hard on her other cheek.)

FRANZ: Put down the stools.

(BENEDICTE complies. The sound of the stool hitting the floor reverberates. FRANZ reaches for his shirt pocket as if to pull out a pistol. ATALANTE complies and puts down her stool.)

Now sit upon your stools.

(Slowly but surely, BENEDICTE, ATALANTE, and COLOMBE comply. DOMREMY alone remains standing, her stool still raised. He speaks to DOMREMY.)

You stand alone, my boy.

DOMREMY: *(With increasing determination)* We will have our satisfaction soon.

Avenging angels in white parachutes

Will sail to the earth to save our land.

The warriors in their legions cross the sea

And walk upon the water to the shore,

And in the ancient towns of Normandy

The people weep...

(Beat)

And fall upon their liberators' necks.

FRANZ: *(He laughs derisively.)* Avenging angels in white parachutes?

They fell into the marsh and disappeared.

Your warriors washed the beaches with their blood

And Germany will sweep them to the sea.

Your liberators will not come.

DOMREMY: They'll come.

FRANZ: Put down the stool or die!

DOMREMY: I'd rather die

Than harken to your orders.

FRANZ: As you will.

When you are gone, then I will have my way
With all these damsels. Courage, brother. Die.

(DOMREMY lowers her stool and sits. FRANZ removes his hand from his shirt pocket.)

Four of you and only one of me,
And yet you do whatever I command.
Normandy belongs to Germany!

BENEDICTE: *(standing)* He lies! The liberation will succeed!

FRANZ: *(approaches ATALANTE and seizes her suddenly.)* You have seen Valognes*, have you not?

[*Pronounced vah-LOH-nyuh]

ATALANTE: I only see this town when it is dark.

FRANZ: The Chapel Saint Malo,* does it still stand? [*Pronounced SAN-muh-LOH.]

ATALANTE: It stands in ruins, as does most the town.

(FRANZ throws ATALANTE to the ground and approaches BENEDICTE.)

FRANZ: You heard it from her lips. The chapel fell.

BENEDICTE: God will not allow his church to fall!

FRANZ: *(He approaches BENEDICTE, seizes her, and pulls her to the door.)* You ought to see the church's
spire from here. Look out the door and see if it is there.

BENEDICTE: The spire may have fallen; not the church!

FRANZ: Who made the spire fall?

DOMREMY: *(Standing)* Your German friends.

FRANZ: *(releases BENEDICTE and approaches DOMREMY.)* The planes that bombed Valognes from the air,

They were not German. No! American!
Americans and Englishmen, your foes,
The ones you call your "liberators."

DOMREMY: Yes!

They bombed Valognes because you were here.

FRANZ: *(Reaching into his shirt pocket)* Sit down!

(BENEDICTE begins to sit.)

DOMREMY: *(To BENEDICTE)* No, stand!

(BENEDICTE remains standing. To FRANZ)

You're bluffing.

FRANZ: *(Reaching into pocket)* Are you sure?

DOMREMY: *(To the other girls)* He has no gun!

If we stand together, we are strong.
He has no gun. Rise up!

(ATALANTE stands. COLOMBE stands, with trepidation.)

FRANZ: *(He pauses a moment and then produces a small pistol from his shirt pocket.)* Sit.

(One by one, the girls comply.)

The curfew law forbids you to be out.
A villager who wanders in the dark
Must not be trusted. All must stay at home.

DOMREMY: This is our home.

FRANZ: This little barn of stone?

(He feels the walls.)

These cold, thick walls are fine for cows and sheep,
But not for sheltering four villagers.
You were hiding, and now you have been found.
For breaking curfew, lurking in the dark,
And threatening a soldier...

(He notices ATALANTE staring at the manger.)

I may shoot!

Your eyes betray you. What is in the hay?

(He forages in the hay in the manger and discovers the notebook.)

Here's a fine discovery... a book!
Hidden in the manger... curious.
You meant to feed this journal to a cow?
This journal is a treasure. Do you mind?

(He flips through the book.)

These recollections of the underground...
They int'rest me. I'll take the book from you
And read it from beginning to the end.
No maps? No dates? No plans for sabotage?

ATALANTE: It's just a book of dialogues I wrote.

FRANZ: A book of dramas? I've seen many plays.

I once saw Goethe's* Faust, parts one and two, [*Pronounced: GAIR-tuhz FOWST.]
And Shakespeare in its native German tongue.
A play tells much about its writer's life.
The playwright takes the people she has known
And makes them characters by masking them.

(He points the gun at ATALANTE's temple.)

The plays have been performed?

ATALANTE: Among ourselves.

FRANZ: How often?

ATALANTE: Once or twice...

(The gun touches her skin.)

Or many times.

FRANZ: You know these plays by heart?

ATALANTE: We know them... well.

FRANZ: Perform the play that you call "Atalante."

(He releases ATALANTE and shouts to the other girls.)

She cannot do the play alone. Arise!

(The other girls do so.)

What sort of story does your play contain?

The story of your life?

ATALANTE: It is a myth;

A story from the Greeks.

FRANZ: I know the Greeks.

I studied them before I burned their books.

Perform it word for word; I have the text.

(The girls take their places and perform the playlet "ATALANTE." The cast is as follows:

Atalante.....ATALANTE

Artemis.....BENEDICTE

Boar.....COLOMBE

Meleager.....DOMREMY

(The character names are used in the text. There might be some slight change in lighting, in costuming, or in use of space while the playlets are being performed in order to establish the convention. ARTEMIS starts somewhat hesitantly, then the text of the playlet overcomes her and she and the others perform with conviction.)

ARTEMIS: I'm Artemis, the Goddess of the Hunt.

The Academians all workshop me...

All of them excepting Atalante.

The harvest has arrived and through the land,

The women offer living fruit to me.

But Atalante... she does not bear me fruit.

Among all women, Atalante is cursed

And brings a plague on Academia.

ATALANTE: What fruit requires Artemis of me?

ARTEMIS: The men bring Artemis their grapes and wine.

Men bear the Goddess pears and apricots

But women bear a solitary fruit.

(She pats her own belly.)

The fruit of childhood and human life.

ATALANTE: Artemis, be merciful to me!

Like you, I am a huntress of the woods;

Like you, no man has joined with me in love.

ARTEMIS: You are but a maiden, Atalante,

And I... I am a Goddess.

(Threateningly)

Bear me fruit.

ATALANTE: Great Artemis, my harvest is not yet!

I feast on wisdom's fruit here in the woods
And when I'm fully nourished, I'll obey.

ARTEMIS: A curse upon you, prideful Atalante.

The fruit of wisdom isn't for a maid.
Because of you and those who share your thoughts
I've sent a boar through Academia.
The wild boar will teach you to submit.

(Exit ARTEMIS.)

MELEAGER: *(He calls as he approaches.)* Atalante!

ATALANTE: My trusted Melager... [Pronounced MEL-uh-ZJAY.]

(She seizes both his hands.)

Your face is troubled. Tell me, friend, what news?

MELEAGER: A wild boar now roams these woods with us.

ATALANTE: A boar is not the wildest of beasts.

MELEAGER: But this one is like none we've ever fought.

It is enchanted, fierce, and merciless.
No man's arrow penetrates its skin.
Its tusks are poisonous and sharp as spears.
Already it has chased the other maids
Who, in their blossom, eat from wisdom's tree.

ATALANTE: Artemis has warned me of the boar,
And yet I do not fear it.

MELEAGER: Atalante...

ATALANTE: Together you and I, as comrades* [*Stretched to three syllables for scansion.]

Can track and overcome the fiercest prey.

MELEAGER: Do not be conceited, Atalante!

This beast was sent by Artemis herself.
Only fools dare fight against the Gods!

ATALANTE: A beast, though heaven-sent, is still a beast!

(The BOAR enters.)

BOAR: Atalante, the other maids like you,
The ones who sought to learn the ancient truths,
Have all retreated to the nearest town.
With wine, they shall be wooed and will forget
The things that only men should ever know.

ATALANTE: *(In pantomime, she removes an arrow from her quiver, places it in her bow, and aims.)* Your
taunts and chidings do not frighten me.
Depart.

BOAR: No man's arrow penetrates my hide.

ATALANTE: But I am not a man!

(She shoots and wounds the BOAR. The BOAR, enraged, charges MELEAGER. MELEAGER, in stylized pantomime, removes a knife from his belt. The BOAR gores MELEAGER in the arm with his tusk, but after a struggle, MELEAGER strikes a victorious blow.)

He only gored your arm. You soon will heal.

We are victorious; the beast is dead!

MELEAGER: The boar called me your lover.

ATALANTE: *(laughing slightly)* Yes, I know.

He doesn't understand the bond we share.

MELEAGER: *(Sternly)* What bond is that?

ATALANTE: *(Surprised at his response)* The hunters' bond, of course.

The two of us are equal comrades.

You treat me like a brother, like a friend.

MELEAGER: *(He moves away from her.)* Is that all I am to you? A friend?

ATALANTE: For now it is. That all may change... with time.

MELEAGER: Atalante, of the huntresses

Who roamed the woods of Academia

Only you remain

ATALANTE: That is correct.

You kept the boar from chasing me away.

Thank you, Meleager. You kept me free.

I love these woods. I feast on wisdom's fruit.

I understand the complex web of life

That makes all nature one eternal round.

MELEAGER: The woods are man's domain.

ATALANTE: They are man-kind's!

MELEAGER: The man must hunt; his wife must tend the hearth!

(He turns away.)

I do not wish to hunt with any maid.

ATALANTE: *(regretfully)* My friend, I fear the poison from the tusk

Has reached your heart and penetrated it.

MELEAGER: Let me braid your hair.

ATALANTE: Leave me alone!

MELEAGER: *(He grabs ATALANTE's hair.)* Atalante is fair with untamed hair,

But twist it into straight, submissive braids...

ATALANTE: *(She tries to escape but is held by her hair.)* Leave it as it is. Release my hair!

MELEAGER: *(He holds ATALANTE by the hair.)* You will become my wife, my Atalante.

ATALANTE: Liberate me, Meleager! Let go!

Do you not see?

(She struggles. MELEAGER holds fast.)

The poison from the boar has changed you.

You are not the man I loved.

(MELEAGER remains unmoved.)

I will not be compelled by any man!

(ATALANTE grabs MELEAGER's imaginary knife from his belt and cuts her hair in order to escape. Once away from MELEAGER, ATALANTE tosses the knife at his feet. ATALANTE runs to the side opposite of MELEAGER. MELEAGER starts to run after ATALANTE, but realizing the futility of such an effort, supplicates ARTEMIS.)

MELEAGER: Artemis, who turned my heart toward light,
Who sent the boar to tame rebellious hearts,
Atalante has fled from me.

ARTEMIS: I know.

MELEAGER: Tell me what to do, great Artemis.

ARTEMIS: I shall reckon with the brazen maid;
I'll banish her from Academia!

(End of playlet "Atalante." FRANZ applauds slowly and sarcastically.)

FRANZ: Atalante, bravo! Your little play
Has shown me more than any diary.
You're German, like myself.

ATALANTE: No, not like you.
I fled your Germany to study here.
Women cannot read the ancient books
Or seek the classic truths in colleges.
Their purpose is to tend your hearths and homes.

FRANZ: We both are strangers in this conquered land.

ATALANTE: I am not a stranger! I am French!
France is now my homeland!

FRANZ: What is France?
France is just a German colony.
I will spare you Atalante. Come close.
(He smiles at ATALANTE and approaches her.)

You could be my wife. I am unwed.
A German soldier has the right to choose
Any German maiden as his wife.

ATALANTE: I am aware. Because of that, I hide.
A soldier, who I loved, laid claim to me.
It was an honor, or so I was taught,
To raise his sons as warriors for the state.
Perhaps I would have chosen to accept
But when he tried to force his claim...

(Beat. She stares at FRANZ.)

You will not force me to accept your hand.

FRANZ: Then you will die with them.

ATALANTE: *(Stoically)* If that's my fate.

FRANZ: Pride will be your downfall, Atalante!

Your friends would gladly take my name on them.

ATALANTE: Offer it to them!

FRANZ: I couldn't wed

A bride who is unworthy of my blood.

COLOMBE: And yet you mix your blood with local girls.

(All stare at COLOMBE. She approaches FRANZ.)

You mix with them but do not marry them.

FRANZ: Are you so anxious for your death?

COLOMBE: I'm not afraid. Pull the trigger, Franz.

FRANZ: The name is Private Schultz.

COLOMBE: Pull the trigger, Franz.

I know too much. It's better that I die.

I might betray you. Pull the trigger, Franz.

(FRANZ lowers his pistol. COLOMBE kicks or knocks the gun out of his hands. ATALANTE and DOMREMY rush FRANZ. COLOMBE grabs the fallen pistol.)

Tie his hands behind his back

FRANZ: You wretch!

COLOMBE: Tie him to the stool.

(ATALANTE and DOMREMY do so.)

Do not move!

ATALANTE: You snake! You've opened up Pandora's box.

Now you will see what furies it contains.

We'll play the other plays for him.

DOMREMY: We can't.

What if he escapes?

COLOMBE: It's worth the risk.

We'll play "Colombe." It's nothing new to him,

Except that now he'll see it through my eyes.

(She subtly places her hand on her belly.)

He's the one who...

ATALANTE: *(She nods.)* Yes. I understand.

DOMREMY: It's your life that you're risking.

COLOMBE: Play "Colombe."

FRANZ: Who's this "Colombe?"

COLOMBE: A sainte who dwelt near here.

Colombe was very beautiful and wise,

And yet she was naïve to manly ploys.

(To FRANZ, threateningly.)

You'll watch the play and will not make a noise.

(COLOMBE hands the pistol to ATALANTE. The playlet begins. The casting is as follows:

Colombe.....COLOMBE

François.....DOMREMY

Mother.....BENEDICTE)

FRANÇOIS: Colombe...

COLOMBE: Hello, François ...

FRANÇOIS: Come in, my friend.

(FRANÇOIS escorts COLOMBE through an imaginary door.)

COLOMBE: Here's the book you lent me.

FRANÇOIS: Very good.

Did you enjoy it?

COLOMBE: What I understood.

I have to go.

FRANÇOIS: *(He blocks COLOMBE's exit.)* But tell me what you learned.

COLOMBE: I didn't read it all.

FRANÇOIS: Then what do you recall?

(He produces an imaginary lily.)

Here. For you.

COLOMBE: *(She smells the flower.)* A lily!

FRANÇOIS: From my garden.

COLOMBE: You are kind.

FRANÇOIS: And you are modest. You have no idea

How beautiful you are to finer eyes.

COLOMBE: *(She lowers her eyes.)* The boys within the parish think not so.

FRANÇOIS: The boys are young. Their eyes are not yet ripe.

They don't perceive your charm and saintly grace,

And yet Colombe, I see you as you are:

A maiden pure and pious, charming, wise.

COLOMBE: You have no leave to say such things to me.

You are preparing to become a priest...

FRANÇOIS: Indeed.

COLOMBE: And priests are single...

FRANÇOIS: That was always so.

COLOMBE: And always will be.

FRANÇOIS: *(He shows her a piece of paper.)* Here, read this decree.

COLOMBE: But it's in Latin...

FRANÇOIS: Let me translate it.

"The Roman Bishop, bridge from God to man,

Declares that priests may marry if they choose."

COLOMBE: I can't believe that...

FRANÇOIS: Do you trust me?

COLOMBE: Yes...

FRANÇOIS: It took me by surprise, as it does you.

COLOMBE: A change like this...

FRANÇOIS: Will be on ev'ry tongue.

When it has been announced throughout the world,
Imagine how our village will react.

COLOMBE: What maid who seeks to elevate her state
Would not pursue your hand in marriage?

FRANÇOIS: Yes,

You understand. Before it's known to all,
I want to choose my bride. I choose Colombe.

COLOMBE: Are you constrained...

FRANÇOIS: By custom, by the priest...

COLOMBE: You wish to marry soon?

FRANÇOIS: And secretly.

COLOMBE: But who would bind our hands?

FRANÇOIS: I have the right

To marry couples. I shall marry us.

COLOMBE: The priest, he could annul it...

FRANÇOIS: Not if we

Have joined as man and wife. Forgive my haste
And my presumption...

COLOMBE: No, I've dreamed of this. It seemed impossible...

FRANÇOIS: A miracle. A sudden miracle.

(FRANÇOIS leaves COLOMBE alone and she is confronted by her MOTHER.)

MOTHER: And you believed him? Foolishness, Colombe!

COLOMBE: I trusted him... is that a sin?

MOTHER: It is. He'll bear its guilt but you will bear its weight.

COLOMBE: François is pure of spirit. He succumbed

And fell from grace, but he is good.
He'll own his deed and claim me as his wife.

MOTHER: You stake your faith on one who broke your trust?

COLOMBE: I loved him for his purity of soul,

His angel's voice, his countenance of light...
If he proves false now, in his time of truth,
Then I'll believe in nothing but the dark.

(FRANÇOIS appears. He tries to turn away but realizes that he has been seen.)

FRANÇOIS: Good day, Colombe.

COLOMBE: You know me, do you not?

FRANÇOIS: No more than any other village maid.

COLOMBE: I'm married...

FRANÇOIS: My congratulations. Who...

COLOMBE: You married me.

FRANÇOIS: To whom?

COLOMBE: Why, to yourself!

FRANÇOIS: *(To MOTHER)* Your daughter, has she been delusional?

MOTHER: She has been disillusioned.

FRANÇOIS: I will tell

The priest of her infirmity. Perhaps...

COLOMBE: You told me lies and neither blinked nor blanched.

FRANÇOIS: Would any in this village trust the words

Of foolish maids against the man they trust?

MOTHER: You know the truth. Can you endure your lie

From now till judgment day?

FRANÇOIS: I am believed.

(FRANÇOIS exits. MOTHER tries to comfort COLOMBE but COLOMBE shrugs her off. MOTHER exits. COLOMBE falls to her knees in prayer.)

COLOMBE: Sweet Mary, have I sinned? Is trust a sin?

I feel filthy, so it must be so

But unlike him, I sinned in ignorance.

Holy Lady, I'll confess to you,

For I could never trust a priest again.

(She reaches her arms heavenward.)

You too were once accused as I am now.

Please... liberate me, Mary, from my shame.

(She looks at her outstretched arms.)

Wings! Great Lady, I see angels wings!

(She reaches up but finds herself earthbound.)

I cannot fly from this. I must remain,

But I will be as peaceful as a dove

While he'll be tortured with a raven's heart.

(End of the playlet "COLOMBE")

BENEDICTE: The women tell the tale of Sainte Colombe..

They say the angels changed her to a dove...

COLOMBE: It would have been a better fate than mine.

FRANZ: A priest in training didn't trick you.

COLOMBE: No.

It was a soldier from another realm.

He swore to never mix with local girls

And yet he did so. Now I am condemned

By Germans and by Normands, so I hide.

Colombe was pardoned. She became a sainte,

I'll always be a sinner in this town.

DOMREMY: Colombe, you are not safe. He knows too much.

COLOMBE: He knew it all before.

(She stares at FRANZ and touches her belly)

Franz "knew" Colombe.

FRANZ: "Colombe" is not your name.

COLOMBE: I have no name!

A name is dangerous. It tells too much.

They gave us letters when they brought us here

And with our letters, we have borrowed names

From characters and saintes and heroines.

FRANZ: Remove your mask. I recognize your face.

COLOMBE: But they do not. I hid my face from them.

FRANZ: With realization

You do not trust each other! Now I see!

You mask your face and cloud your history

So they will not betray you when you're caught.

COLOMBE: Once I trusted you. You lied to me.

You swore that you could take me as your wife,

And yet you flew from me on raven's wings.

Never will I be deceived again!

Perhaps you'd care to see your other deeds?

The damage that you've caused to other lives?

FRANZ: I do not wish to see...

COLOMBE: You have no choice!

Benedicte, perform your play for him.

BENEDICTE: Colombe, I'd rather not.

ATALANTE: The play's the thing

With which we'll catch the conscience of the fiend.

DOMREMY: Atalante! Colombe! This isn't wise!

Stop now. There is no need to show him more.

ATALANTE: Let Benedicte decide.

COLOMBE: Please, Benedicte.

Do not allow this wide-eyed German boy

To stay so blinded to the pain he's caused.

BENEDICTE: *(With resignation, not enthusiasm)* Very well, Colombe. Play "Benedicte."

COLOMBE: The story's from the Bible's Book of Job.

You know it?

FRANZ: Yes. I heard it as a child.

(The playlet "Benedicte" begins. The casting is as follows:

Lucifer.....ATALANTE

PERUSAL SCRIPT Liberation by J.D. Newman

Benedicte.....BENEDICT

Mother.....COLOMBE

God, Father.....DOMREMY

13 more pages to the end of the play