

**MARQUIS**

My friends, my friends, quiet please... My friends, we all know the purpose of this gathering. Because of certain unfortunate circumstances, we are faced with a man in torment for lack of his wife, and our village in torment for lack of our bread. I might also mention the lack of my Peugeot... but that's a personal matter. In any event, we all know the problem. The solution is equally clear. The foolish woman must be induced to return to that hysterical husband of hers before he does something really serious, like leave our village without a baker.

**THERESE**

*(Calls out)*

She is not fit to be with decent people. He is better off without her.

**MARQUIS**

Perhaps. But we certainly are not!

**PIERRE**

They may be very far by now.

**MARQUIS**

I don't believe so. A man on such an errand as his will spend as little time as possible traveling. Any suggestions?

**ANTOINE**

Why don't we shoot the baker in the leg. Then he won't be able to leave.

**MARQUIS**

*(After a pause)*

... Any other suggestions?

*(Silence)*

Good! I have a proposal... that we divide into pairs... each to investigate a different area...

*(General agreement)*



AD LIBS

Good idea... Right... etc.

MARQUIS

I'm glad you agree. I will now give you your assignments... Barnaby, Claude, you will you go to the area around Valois...

CLAUDE

*(breaks in)*

I will not go with him, we don't speak.

MARQUIS

You don't have to speak.

CLAUDE

*(annoyed)*

What if I see them? I will call out, "I see them." To whom was I speaking? To no one?

MARQUIS

He will hear you.

BARNABY

I will hear but I will not answer. I will not say, "I see them too" ... Or, "That's not them, idiot!"

CLAUDE

You see, he called me an idiot. Just because I saw them first!

BARNABY

He is an idiot! He saw nothing!

AD LIBS

*(general hubbub)*

He shouldn't call names... They're both crazy... What can you expect from those two... etc.

MARQUIS

Please, please... M. Martine, perhaps if you went with...

TEACHER

Please do not include me in this enterprise. Going after them defies all logic... Clearly, if A and B are mismatched and B decides to go off with C, it is not for us to...

HORTENSE

What is he talking about?

BARNABY

Quiet! Just listen!



**DOUMERGUE**

Sit down, teacher, this isn't a classroom...

**ANTOINE**

Wait. I'd like to hear more about A and B.

*(Hubbub)*

**MARQUIS**

Pierre. Will you and Doumergue go to the area around Valois?

**PIERRE**

All right - if he cuts down his oak tree.

**DOUMERGUE**

My tree stands! I will bury you under that tree.

**PIERRE**

What about my spinach plot? It's dying.

**DOUMERGUE**

Let it die. And you too.

**PIERRE**

You hear that? He curses me and my spinach.

*(Hubbub)*

**PRIEST**

Quiet, please. What must not be forgotten is the seriousness of that woman's transgression.

*(Sings)*