

**THE EYE OF DAY**

**By**

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**English Version by NIGEL GEARING**

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**Characters:**

H21

The angel

Adam Zelle, Mata Hari's father

John MacLeod, Mata Hari's husband

Journalist 1

Small ads

Journalist 2

Journalist 3

Journalist 4

Guillemet, a painter

Guimet, an industrialist & collector

Journalist 5

Gabriel Astruc, the manager of Mata Hari & Serge Diaghilev

Captain Bouchardon, Mata Hari's examining magistrate

Newspaper 1

Journalist 6

Journalist 7

Journalist 8

Léon Bakst, a painter & set-designer for the Ballet Russe

Newspaper 2

Postman

Alfred Kiepert, a German officer & landowner

Newspaper 3

Journalist 9

Cramer, the German consul in Holland

English customs officer

Serge Diaghilev, the artistic director of the Ballet Russe

George Ladoux's secretary

Georges Ladoux, the head of French counter-espionage

Kalle, the German military attaché in Madrid

Police Inspector and arresting officer of Mata Hari

Vadime (de) Masslow, a Russian Army lieutenant

Georges Clemenceau

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, known as Lenin

Police Officer summoning Mata Hari to execution

Chorus of Journalists X

Journalist 10

Officer in charge of the execution squad.

The stroke / indicates a change of speaker or addressee.

The stroke (/) indicates a possible change of speaker.

Ö indicates room for action (mime, gesture, meaningful or agitated silence, expressive freeze etc.)

H21.                    So soon?

ANGEL.                Soon. Now. Later.

H21.                    Am I dead already Ö or do I still have that to look forward to?

ANGEL.                You are Margaretha Geertruida Zelle, known as Mata Hari, convicted of intelligence work with the enemy and of stupidity with everyone else.

H21.                    It's not possible.

ANGEL.                They slip a sedative into your evening drink, they grease the door-hinges, outside your cell they lay down mats so you won't hear them preparing for your execution.

H21.                    I'm innocent.

ANGEL.                You wake up with no time to faint again at the sight of your stealthy executioners.

H21.                    Tell me if I'm dreaming.

ANGEL.                Come now. If I swore on your soul, if I swore on all your five senses, would you believe me?

H21.                    First I'm tricked by men and now here I am, the sport of angels.

ANGEL.                Or the other way round? – me your Öpillow-prisoner?

H21.                    What if I'm really awake?

ANGEL.                You mean I'm the one who's sleeping?

H21.                    I have this recurring dream - in which they didn't shoot me.

ANGEL. You take a boat going North, your trunks are full of all manner of stuff, at least twenty-five pairs of shoes.

H21. I sidle up to the ship's topside, I open three bottles of invisible ink and empty them into the canal connecting Amsterdam to the North Sea.

ANGEL. Except this is no dream.

H21. No.

ANGEL. When were you born?

H21. No!

ANGEL. August 7th, 1876, a childhood too blissful to be entirely respectable. Your Papa is here, shall I bring him on now?

H21. To be part of this game you're playing with me now? No! Ho Papa!

ADAM ZELLE. What are you playing at, my girl, you look quite flabbergasted. You'd do better to consider what's waiting for you just the other side of that door.

H21. I pushed it open to discover the rare treat he'd lined up for me, millions of blinds already ogling, as if from the start I were the world's prime target and it was just a matter of time before that ring of rifles pointing at my chest.

ADAM ZELLE/  
ANGEL. We are nobly born, M,'greet, we come from the first family of Dutch aristocracy./ And your mother?

H21. Not quite how she saw it but in all matters she followed my father blindly. Then she died nice and quietly from the nice and quiet ravings of Adam Zelle.

ANGEL. Any brothers?

H21. Me. Just me!

ADAM ZELLE. And how do you like that coach outside, M'greet?

H21. It was like a charming carriage drawn by four goats, I would venture out in this cut-rate Christmas sledge, my schoolmates would stare at me like some hateful, spoiled monster – like an idol they themselves worshipped.

ANGEL. Till their dying day the girls you knew then will still remember what a stuck-up little Missie you were.

H21. Now – now? – the other women in the prison call me Madame Kraut. For my protection a carriage takes me and me alone from my cell to the interrogation-room – otherwise they'd lynch me. Even the thieves and the whores get all fired up with patriotism.

ADAM ZELLE. Don't spare the horses!

H21. My father was a wealthy milliner but he gave himself the title of baron and so he was called.

ADAM ZELLE. We should consider such things as beneath us, M'greet, beneath the dignity of our kind, we should, we shouldÖI meanÖ A man like myself, M'greetÖ

H21. What's happening?

ADAM ZELLE. ÖÖÖÖ..

H21. It's not possible

ANGEL. Your father's ruined, the spectacular collapse of his shop, all those hats gone to buggery, the title of 'baron' snatched away – spirited into thin air.

H21. It's not possible.

ANGEL. You can no more imagine the ruin of Adam Zelle than you can your own death.

H21. They'd do that to me? To me?

ANGEL. A child who's been properly brought up can tell when her parents are lying to her.

H21. Our parents were on nodding terms with the King. At the battle of Öer, at a certain battle, my great grandfather gathered up his sovereign's sword, handing it back to him. His Majesty, in turn retrieving it from his vassal, found his life thus saved. And now you'd have me believe we don't have a penny to our names?

ADAM ZELLE. She's giving me a headache - it's like history-lessons for a five-year-old - I've said and will say again, M'greet, I had nothing left!

H21. Adam Zelle dumps me in boarding-school, a hideous place for only women and girls, old maids and tarts.

ANGEL. So you began to dance?

H21. My solitary pas de deux in my schoolgirl room – especially when christening a new pair of shoes.

JOURNALIST 1. Lady MacLeod, our Paris readers have been enchanted by your Oriental dancing. They'd like to know where you come from and how you acquired your venerable skills.

H21. I was born in India and lived there till I was twelve. I managed to slip into holy temples where, shielded from the eyes of the profane, the nautch-girls and the Vedishi danced at the altar of Vishnu.

ANGEL. On your mother's side the "Wundkers", an old Dutch clan. Seek no further for your fine Mocha complexion.

H21. I'm the daughter of a Javanese prince and a European prima donna.

JOURNALIST 1/  
ANGEL. Fascinating./ On your father's side, Frisian stock, legendary in Holland for their stubbornness.

H21. I was brought up in the Vedic rituals.

ANGEL. When you married John MacLeod you conformed to local parish custom.

H21. One day I find myself reading the small ads.

SMALL ADS/  
JOHN MACLEOD “Officer on furlough from the Dutch Indies wishes to meet young lady of pleasant disposition with a view to matrimony.”/ My comrades, concerned that I was still a bachelor, had the bright idea of placing a small ad on my behalf.

H21. I reply, I send a photo of myself.

JOHN MACLEOD. I, John MacLeod, plead guilty of having ruined a part of my life and of having tied myself to this public pestilence as the result of a prank I did not even initiate myself.

H21. I’d have done anything to escape boarding-school but I liked him, he was an officer, it was thanks to him I realised I liked officers and would do so until I died.

JOHN MACLEOD. I liked her from the moment I saw the photo, I should have guessed she was a slut.

H21. I realised he was Man and I was Woman, ours the Original Sin – you could have shown it on a penny postcard – uniting us in the foyer of the Rijksmuseum. From the first glance, we were as if already naked to each other. In six days we were betrothed. In seven, all but lovers. In three months, married. In two years, parents twice over – of “Norman” and of “No”. In three years mourning the death of our son Norman. In four, deadly enemies of each other’s sex and I had lost No.

ANGEL. Even for me, you’re going too fast.

H21. And you consent, Papa?

ADAM ZELLE. M’Greet, you have my permission, my consent as a man of the world, though this marriage, well, so hasty, for a man such as myself

H21. John is an officer.

ADAM ZELLE. You'll come by carriage to my home to ask for my consent.

H21. In a carriage?

ANGEL. There was a problem here?

H21. At the time he was living in a squalid suburb, the street was too narrow, only a fiacre could get past. We knocked the heads off letter-boxes, ran over a few cats, carried flower-pots away in our wake, but he got his carriage, trade-off for my childhood "bokkenwagen" . We sobered him up in a corner of the registry-office, his face glazed by alcohol beneath the top hat he never once removed.

ADAM ZELLE. Into the carriage!

H21. John, I have a father.

JOHN MACLEOD. That can happen even in the best of families, Griet.

H21. Yes, but mine is still alive.

JOHN MACLEOD. "I'm a poor little orphan girl" – that's what I understood, Griet.

H21. I lied when we were betrothed because I wanted to forget Adam Zelle. He'd treated me like a princess when I was a child and since then he'd made me grow up poor and ashamed and I loathe him.

ANGEL. You don't like the poor?

H21. I loathe them, with their sordid, mealy-mouthed way of eating, their blank looks, their fretting about tomorrow. They disgust me.

ANGEL. No one could ever say you were nice.

H21. When I gave myself to rich men my first thought was always of pleasure Ö and only my second thought of money.



ANGEL. But you are beautiful.

H21. My angel.

ANGEL. You still are.

H21. Liar. If your body no longer brings you riches, at least you still have your soul. You can sell it to the devil at a crossroads and he'll still give you a hundred francsÖ

ANGEL. Better still is to not pay what you owe, right?

H21. I owe you nothing, not even my death.

JOURNALIST 2/  
ANGEL All that time in Java and India?/ And your soul?

H21. Spent in the unimaginable splendour of my father's palace./ Who knows?

ANGEL. Your life – meted out to the masses in lying titbits.

H21. Java. My husband returned to his posting as his preferments dictated, we moved hither and thither from one village to the next – empty and stinking every one of them. I was nineteen. Officers and settlers swarm around me. I banish corsets and all unnecessary padding, the heat is unconscionable. I go around clothed in a sarong and kabaja, a native's skirt and blouse; we set up camp in insanitary houses, we live beneath the ceaseless drizzle of insects.

ANGEL. And the dancing?

H21. I saw it done in Java and Sumatra, the steps engraved on my memory. The notion of dancing obsessed me, already I had my name.

MACLEOD. Griet!

H21. Mata Hari.

MACLEOD/  
ANGEL. Never stop sweeping, Griet. Never forget to move the flower-pots around, and make the beds

twice a day lest the bugs take over, I see that my darling little wife has a proper sense of her dutiesÖ

You'll need to move the flower-pot, Griet, the scorpions are getting at itÖ

In God's name, Griet, that flower-pot's been in the same spot for two days!/ Was he always like that?

H21. And worse. When he swore. When he insulted me. Or when he beat me.

ANGEL. When you cheated on him?

H21. What are you getting at? I like officers.

ANGEL. Word has it that John McLeod cut off one of your nipples so no one else could put it in their mouth.

H21. Wouldn't you like to know! Actually, you do know – if you are who you are.

ANGEL. He cheated on you?

H21. So he once shouted in my ear when he was coming, O angel of indiscretion.

JOHM MACLEOD. Griet, Norman can't stop vomiting and No has a raging fever. The doctor's coming. What did you give them to eat?

H21. Our two childrenÖ but No survived.

ANGEL. Who gave them the poison?

H21. Not me!

MACLEOD/  
ANGEL.

It was her poisoned the children with unripe apples because she wanted to go to Paris – that woman my wife is a filthy animal!/ What language!

H21. It wasn't me, John!

ANGEL. Unripe apples, what an imbecile.

H21. You the all-knowing angel, you know it's not me.

ANGEL. Word has it that your husband made a play for the nanny and that the nanny's boyfriend got his own back. Word has it that your husband beat a native who was chasing you and that the native got his own back.

H21. Occult rituals, arcane rites of vengeance, that hell-hole of a country, the natives hating the colonials and the soldiers – but I loved my children, I'd have liked to see No just once more in my life.

JOHN MACLEOD. Over my dead body, on my word as a MacLeod!

H21. My daughter only knew me by the biscuit-tin she took to school every day. It had my picture on the lid.

JOHN MACLEOD. No way can I get that bloody tin off her. When I try to throw it away she screams.

H21. I catch typhoid fever just as they are opening the World Fair.

ANGEL. Gay Paree.

H21. I thought all women who left their husbands went to Paris.

JOURNALIST 3. And your husband, Mata Hari?

H21. He was a Scottish baron. I loved him to bits but alas he died from a fever in the colonies. He taught me Freedom and Independence.

JOHN MACLEOD. Fucking slutÖ

H21. I miss him to this day and I have no intention of remarrying.

JOURNALIST 3. Lady MacLeod, for a woman who's spent all her childhood out East, this first encounter with the capital must be a shock – our city-bustle must seem very different from the hushed atmosphere you were nurtured in.

H21. Yes./ I don't have a penny, I try to scratch a living by modelling for painters.

GUILLEMET/  
ANGEL. Magnificent shoulders, beautiful hips, ravishing legs but yours are breasts impossible to capture with a paintbrush. You have an interesting face but your bosom droopsÖ You could pose for the head alone but it doesn't pay well. Where are you going?/ Where are you going?

H21. I'm getting the hell out, crawling on my belly, tits to the wind, just a shirt-tail to cover my backside. I head straight for the nearest first-class hotel, clutching in my pocket a one-franc coin.

ANGEL. You have littered the finest hotels in Europe with your unpaid bills.

H21. I make a vow that lovers will spring up wherever I tread and that the pavements will be carpeted with bank-notes.

ANGEL. Still painters?

H21. No. A riding-instructor choreographs my first Oriental show. I dance all but naked in fashionable salons. Guimet, the industrialist and collector, is in raptures.

ANGEL. How did you get the idea?

H21. It's something I could do since I was a child. My father was a high priest of Ö

ANGEL. Of stripping you naked. You're not talking to a journalist now.

H21. It all seemed so natural, I can't even say when I first got the idea.

ANGEL. Is that when you came to hear of Diaghilev?

H21. He was so famous I've no idea when. All I know is my first show was on March 13th, 1905, courtesy of Guimet.

GUIMET. I'll refit my museum in the Place Léna for you and you'll have everything you could wish for.

JOURNALIST 4/  
ANGEL. "And so Mata Hari with a single brutal gesture tears off her ornaments, rips asunder all her veils. She tosses aside the metal tags which conceal her breasts. Now naked, monumental in her size and pallor, she lies down, mighty in the darkness, violent in her surrender unto God!"  
What language?

H21. I remember. Just thinking of it makes me want to dance.

GUIMET. Your name is Ö

H21. Mata Hari, Monsieur Guimet.

GUIMET. Call me Emile. Mata Hari, in Hindu that means Ö

H21. The Eye of Day.

ANGEL. In Malay. I thought he was meant to know about such things Ö

H21. I can make a man stupid just by letting him look at me.

JOURNALIST 5. She wears the simplified costume of a nautch-girl Ö and ends up simplifying it to its bare essentials.

H21. I recognise no difference between my body and my face. On stage I have exhibited my body deliberately and with indifference.

JOURNALIST 5. It is art, an extraordinarily chaste art, the nudity of a vestal virgin: we are overwhelmed, we'll return to her in later columns.

H21. I have a manager. Astruc's intelligence made him a natural manipulator.

ANGEL. He was also Diaghilev's manager.

H21. Yes.

ASTRUC. I've got you a booking at the Olympia, Margarethe.

H21. At the Olympia?!

ASTRUC. You'll be on the same bill as Fred Karno, the famous mime. You've heard of him?

H21. No. And then what?

ASTRUC/  
ANGEL. On the same bill will also be Arabian dancers and a juggler followed by "Leo and his diabolic violin"./ What did he do exactly?

H21. He played the violin in every conceivable position, not excluding the most awkwardÖ/ And then?

ASTRUC. A few celebrated acrobats and, of course, some cinematograph showsÖ

H21. Oh no, I beg you. I can't stand the cinema.

ASTRUC. These days there's no escaping it. Fear not – we shan't tie you to the railroad track when the Lumière brothers shunt in from La Ciotat – you'll get 10 000 francs.

H21. Ten thousand francs.

ASTRUC. I'm talking about one evening's work.

H21. Ten thousand francs.

ASTRUC. Remember – you'll also be dancing in the King of Lahore by Jules Massenet.

H21. Massenet, yes. Ten thousand francs.

ANGEL. You cause riots in Madrid. In Vienna, the students would sell their souls to see you naked, they'd yank Isadora Duncan down from her throne for just one of your handkerchiefs.

H21. I dance naked in the Dissidents' Gallery and I wear a body-stocking to appear at the Apollo.

ANGEL/  
BOUCHARDON. You become the mistress of Alfred Kiepert, which will cost you dear when Bouchardon interrogates you / to be precise, Zelle? – Lieutenant in the Second Company of the 11th regiment of the Westphalian Hussars?

H21. He was also a rich landowner.

BOUCHARDON. I repeat the question and you must answer, Zelle : from the 9th to the 12th December 1906, you are witness in the company of your lover Alfred Kiepert to military manoeuvres at Jauer-Streigau in Silesia. Already you're working for the Germans, are you not?

H21. No. Never!

BOUCHARDON. And Kiepert?

H21. He was my lover. He took me with him to watch the manoeuvres. He said it was a rare show. I was delighted to go.

BOUCHARDON. A German lover. The German army.

H21. He had set me up in an apartment, a stone's throw from the Kurfurstendamm. He spoiled me, he gave me pleasure.

BOUCHARDON. And what did you see on that day?

H21. A lot of handsome officers.

ANGEL. What did you see on that day, Eye of Day?

H21. A lot of handsome officers.

ANGEL. Blind by definition.

H21. A lot of handsome officers.

ANGEL. Warrior faces reflected in the snow?

H21. I told myself I would end my days in Kiepert's company on the banks of the Spree.

ANGEL. At the foot of a fir-tree there was a dead bird – crushed by a horse’s hoof.

H21. Snow as in Weisbaden during my honeymoon.

BOUCHARDON. If truth be told you were paving the way for your future career – the real one – the career of a spy.

H21. I’m more than just a celebrity. Kiepert opened my eyes to Italy.

ANGEL. They start to bring out books on you.

H21. Papa, that dirty old skinflint bathing in my reflected glory.

ADAM ZEELE. Yes, my girl, I thought your European fame could furnish a comfortable pension for my old age, so I resolved to draft your intimate memoirs since you yourself are still too young to write them and since your husband has dared spread the most salacious rumours about you

H21. Papa, go to bed.

JOHN MACLEOD. You don’t even know your own daughter, you old fool!

H21. Stop this.

ADAM ZEELE. With the approval of my publisher, a most excellent and farseeing person, I resolved to entitle my work: “The Life Of Mata Hari, a biography of Mata Hari and an account of my causes for resentment on meeting her husband.” So there you have it.

H21. Papa, I don’t think this is a great idea.

JOHN MACLEOD. On my honour as a MacLeod I shall answer these calumnies of yours, I too shall bring out a book! I have all the dirt on her. She’s got flat feet and can’t dance, she used to tread on my toes at the officers’ ball.

H21. You’re lying!

ANGEL. Calm down.



H21. I'm famous throughout Europe.

JOHN LACLEOD. My book will be called "Mata Hari – The Whole Truth."

H21. I became "Mata Hari - the cigarette".

ADAM ZELLE. Scoundrel!

H21. "Blended from the finest tobaccos of Turkey and Sumatra."

JOHN MACLEOD. Old fart!

H21. I come in yellow and white, I cost one florin twenty-five.

ADAM ZELLE. A man such as myself. Louse! Creep!

H21. I became "Mata Hari – Assorted Biscuits", various photos of me are printed on the tin-lid. I'm inflammable, I'm edible. Smoke me, nibble me!

ANGEL. The books written by your father and husband are a flop, whereas the biscuits, the cigarettes

H21. I leave all this behind. I go to Egypt, I go to Rome, I come back to Paris, but there some nasty surprises lie in store for me.

JOURNAL 1. Mata-Hari appeared yesterday at the Longchamp Autumn Cup draped in an extraordinary dress made of blue velvet with chinchilla trimmings.

H21. Each of my outfits on display to the crowd. Mere images!

ANGEL. Which nonetheless you stick in your photo album.

H21. I stick everything about me in my album. Each morning I go riding in the Bois de Boulogne, I ride side-saddle and perfect strangers get up early to goggle at me.

JOURNALIST 6. Mata Hari, you acknowledge that you are not the only Oriental dancer in Paris?

H21. Some individuals, with the complicity of a deluded press – naturally, I exclude yourself – grace themselves with the title of Oriental Dancer, but to dance our dances, you have need of our culture, of our training which stretches back some three thousand years! I should be delighted for the public at large if these displays had the slightest artistic or scientific merit but I assert there is none.

ANGEL. Usurping the usurper – are these women aware of what they do? Do they catch themselves in the mirror?

H21. I ride my horses in the Bois de Boulogne, I buy shoes by the dozen, I agree to dance anywhere I'm asked in order to pay off Ö

ANGEL. Or not pay offÖ

H21. Ö My monumental debts.

JOURNALIST 7. Yesterday evening Mata Hari appeared at a Charity Gala in aid of the Clementin Hospital at Sofia.

H21. What's that?

JOURNALIST 7. The programme consisted of Bulgarian music, Bulgarian dancing, a setpiece danced by Bulgarian students, a Bulgarian rhapsody and some cinematograph shots of Bulgaria.

H21. I despise the cinema. Has anyone ever seen anything more stupid than Max Linder?

ANGEL. You're the show's final number and its finest star, remember.

H21. I feature under the name of a Pan-Oriental dancer.

ANGEL. As befitting this interview or that society event, you successively endowed yourself with blood

from Holland, Java, India , the Balinese and Maduran Islands.

- H21. You're most amusing – or so you believe.
- ANGEL. Some little lost drop of Bulgaria splashing around in your veins - you might have overlooked it in your breathtaking list of origins.
- H21. I imagined angels to be devoid of all vanity. Show me some respect – you don't even exist!
- ANGEL. But you could well have some Bulgarian blood in you, you could well have some Bulgarian blood, you might have made a blood-pact with some princess of the highest vintage, mingling hers and yours. Or maybe a student from Sofia opened his veins for you and you drank a little of his blood out of some misguided sense of courtesy and a few drops of barbarous Bulgaria dripped down inside of you
- H21. You're mad, I'm being victimised by a mad angel.
- ANGEL. And yourself?
- H21. I'm so mad they've had to tie me up. Look, I've even got the handcuffs.
- ANGEL. With all your prison ramblings is it not you who's forcing me to play the fool?
- H21. I eat their thin foul soup, I drink their brackish water, I defacate into a bucket.
- ANGEL. What are you thinking of, Eye of Day?
- H21. Of the rats in my cell – which I prefer to you and which are at least predictable. Of my daughter No, who I'll never see again, of the pair of shoes I didn't buy, of the officer who died without knowing me, of Serge Diaghilev, who never saw me dance.
- ANGEL. It's true that nothing of importance in European art ever passed him by.

H21. I passed him by time after time. I badgered Astruc and Astruc ducked and weaved, oh he had a talent for that! Astruc?

ASTRUC. Yes, Margarethe.

H21. Once again I beg you to put me in contact with him.

ASTRUC. Ö..

H21. You have on your books the two biggest names in Europe and you're unable to get them to meet.

ASTRUC. Just as well you didn't say 'get them to mate', Margarethe, because, believe me, you don't interest Diaghilev from that point of view!

H21. My name is Mata Hari.

ASTRUC. It's my job to know your name.

H21. For which you are paid handsomely. Diaghilev and myself – a winning hand still left to play. Present us together in a great ballet and you could be the king of all Europe.

ASTRUC. Margarethe, you are a great artist and I admire your work.

H21. ÖÖÖÖ

ASTRUC. I am Gabriel Astruc and I do not work to order. Be it by the artists I champion, by chance or by diktat. And I'm telling you the time is not right. Furthermore the least one can say is that your style – unique though it be – scarcely accords with that of the Ballet Russe!

H21. So what? Send Diaghilev a contract. I'll sign it. He'll sign it too. He finds me interesting.

ASTRUC. I do not think, Margarethe, that things can be arranged quite so casually.

H21. Send it. / He sent it. Diaghilev did not reply.

ANGEL. And what did you make of that?

H21. That I should never dance for Diaghilev?

ANGEL. Who can say?

H21. I danced at the Scala, Milan. I played Venus without a wig and therefore with dark hair. I explained to them that Venus was an abstraction, so she could be played as a blonde, a redhead, with – why not – green hair even. They could find nothing to say. I bent to my will the Scala, Milan!

ANGEL. Venus as a brunette – and naked no doubt?

H21. I danced Salomé in Rome for Prince Geraldo all but fully clothed.

ANGEL. I can't be expected to remember all the degenerate aristos of Europe.

H21. I've letters praising my skill from Puccini and Massenet.

ANGEL. Praising yourself.

H21. My skill!

ANGEL. Society invitation-cards, tossed off in a moment, but which no doubt feature in your album. Actually, what did you make of Massenet?

H21. Such was his affection that when he'd embraced me I wanted to go and wash my face.

ANGEL. Did he write the score for the ballet you commissioned?

H21. Never – so all men live lives lost in illusion?

ANGEL. All of them.

H21. I didn't know how to dance but I was the first to appear naked, to offer up my body to the poisoned chalice of the National Treasury. And all of them waiting for that moment some would call art and others indecency.

ANGEL.                   Ö..

H21.                     But in dancing I did indeed become a dancer, I could eventually progress to what I'd dreamed of because I worked at it.

ANGEL.                   You worked on your fame and conspired for it to last.

H21.                     So this is the moment of grace? Lifting the veil on one's own illusion just before dying – or just after?

ANGEL.                   Not even.

H21.                     As a matter of fact, I've written to Guimet, I've a new idea to propose to him, do you hear me?

ANGEL.                   Just to gauge the strength of that illusion, to stroke its fullness, to marvel – are you listening?

H21.                     Here we are: Dear Emile, I've had an idea for an Egyptian ballet and I'd like you to help me make it a reality.

ANGEL.                   The Eye of Day is deaf.

H21.                     It would be called : 'Chimera, or Profane Vision'. The subject is as follows:

ANGEL.                   Your life.

H21.                     A young Hindu priest, very handsome and very pious, is literally haunted by a woman who appears to him in a dream. He neglects his duties and suddenly, on entering a palace Ö

ANGEL.                   This is Hindu or Egyptian?

H21.                     Guimet, do you hear me? Answer me, I've been waiting for your letter for two weeks now Ö

ANGEL.                   But no reply...

H21.                     I go to Egypt to gather material.

ANGEL.                   And now you're back Ö And Guimet meanwhile?

H21. "Guimet"? Who's this "Guimet"? Diaghilev, Diaghilev, nothing else matters. Diaghilev! The most important ballet in all Europe and I'm not in it. In fact, what is Astruc up to?

ANGEL. He's at your bedroom door.

H21. Astruc, I was just thinking of you.

ASTRUC. Forgive me for turning up unannounced at your hotel, Margarethe, but tomorrow you leave for Monte Carlo.

H21. Diaghilev has signed?

ASTRUC. No, Diaghilev won't sign without seeing you first.

H21. So I've got an appointment?

ASTRUC. Yes, but first of all you must go and see Bakst. And then after he's finished rehearsing Diaghilev will set you to work.

H21. "Bakst"? "Set me to work"?

ASTRUC. You know - Léon Bakst, set-designer, painter. It was he who did the sets for 'Cleopatra', with carpets in lapis-lazuli, slaves dressed in topaz, all those extraordinary colours, hitherto unseen.

H21. Right you are, Astruc, I'll go.

BAKST. Mata Hari.

H21. Monsieur, I am very tired, a sleepless night on a train.

ANGEL. The Eye of Day who never sleeps.

H21. Monsieur Diaghilev will see me?

BAKST. He'll rehearse with you this evening at the hotel. You know, you have a marvellous figure.

H21. What are you doing?

BAKST. I'm undressing you. If you dance in the ballet, I must dress you. To dress you, I must first

undress you so I have some idea of your measurements.

- H21.                   ÖÖÖ.
- BAKST.               How beautiful she is! Don't move, I'm going to do a few sketches of you.
- H21.                   I didn't come here to pose for a painter.
- BAKST.               If you dance in the ballet, I must draw you and draw your costumes. Let me sketch you. You have nothing to fear.
- H21.                   I want to dance for Serge Diaghilev.
- BAKST.               I am Diaghilev's right arm, his right eye, the right side of his brain, as he'd be the first to say. And now dance!
- H21.                   I danced the Dance of the Seven Veils, I stripped off for Bakst. He said absolutely nothing.
- ASTRUC.             What's happening, Margarethe? What are you doing in Paris? You're still meant to be in Monte Carlo.
- H21.                   Diaghilev didn't show up! He sent word to my hotel, he wrote to say his rehearsals had finished very late and he was sorry but he couldn't rehearse with me at all that week!
- ASTRUC/  
ANGEL.               I don't know what to say, Margarethe/ So what do you do?
- H21.                   Nothing, nothing at all. I buy shoes, I ride my thoroughbreds, Cocoa and my beautiful Radjah, in the Bois de Boulogne. A riding-instructor choreographed my first show and the men spying on me must be saying that I ride a horse better than I dance.
- NEWSPAPER 2.       Mata Hari has been seen at Auteuil competing for the President's Cup.
- H21.                   Please!



ANGEL. It seems that because you were short of money you serviced provincials in *maisons de rendez-vous*.

H21. My fee as a dancer drops to six hundred francs, I nearly fall out with Astruc for failing to get me bookings or for not even trying.

ANGEL. ÖAnd that you'd have these Madames believe your "services" are theirs exclusively, whereas in reality you put it about – and stash it away – with any number of them.

H21. I'm tired of appearing in public. I could almost tire of men.

ANGEL. A whole squad of creditors is regularly hanging around the entrance of your hotel, beneath your feet is a carpet of IOUs.

H21. Thank God Astruc calls me with a contract.

ASTRUC. Margarethe, you don't look well.

H21. I went on so about the Ballet Russe, I made it seem as if I'd already been signed up. I thought that if, in the eyes of Society and the press, I made out I'd been taken on, how it looked would become how it was and eventually I'd be hired.

ASTRUC. But since you bring the subject up again, Margarethe, I'm bound to tell youÖ

H21. Now I am Mata Hari, the dancer Diaghilev did not hire.

ASTRUC. MargaretheÖ

H21. Will you come to my next garden-party, Astruc? I shall dance in my home the dance of the Magic Flower in Dravidian costume. There will be ice-cream, will you come?

ASTRUC. At the Champs Elysée Theatre, the Ballet Russe are back with something quiteÖ

H21. What are you talking about?

ANGEL. You mean you didn't see 'The Rites of Spring'?

H21. I knew that Serge Diaghilev was the most important director in Europe.

ANGEL. So you didn't go and pay homage?

H21. To Diaghilev?

ANGEL. To the show.

H21. Some of my former society patrons choked on the Ballet Russe, one of them slapped a young man in mid-show because – above all the booing – he was shouting that it was the most important artistic event of the century.

ANGEL. You were there?

H21. And you? (/) All of you?

ASTRUC. I'm here to tell you that I was there, Margarethe, and that it was extraordinary. There was a young man seated behind me. He got so carried away he began beating out the incredible rhythm of the music with his fists not realising he was doing so on my head. Me neither, come to that – I was so caught up in what I was hearing. The people were beside themselves with hate or adulation. Remember: the rhythm of that music is completely new, we've never heard the like in Europe before!

H21. You had something else to tell me, Astruc?

ASTRUC. Yes. Next month you will dance at the Trianon-Palace in Palermo between two cinematograph shows and a performing dog.

H21. The cinematograph shows will kill me, perhaps the dog will take pity on me.

POSTMAN. Some post for you, Madame Zelle!

H21. In prison, we are given rice-soup so filthy that a dog would have none of it, scraps for Madame Kraut as they call me - notwithstanding I'm one hundred per cent Dutch.

ANGEL. A scoop!

H21. I'm not permitted to write to the Dutch legation.

POSTMAN. A letter for you, Madame Zelle.

H21. Guimet. At last.

ANGEL. Who is this Guimet?

H21. Open it. I'm not in prison yet, my post is not censored. Open it and see.

GUIMET/ANGEL/  
GUIMET/ANGEL. Dear Mata Hari, I have received your letter, please forgive me for not having replied earlier. I was much taken up with an exhibition, a number of pieces to be brought from Tonkin et cetera. I find your idea of an Egyptian ballet excellent, above all if it is really Egyptian. If you were in Paris, you'd of course find all necessary information at the museum. I understand you are in Berlin./ You're not any more. / Feel free to visit, giving my name as a reference, Professor Erman at the Egyptian Museum, he will advise you in your research. Till we met again, my dearest./ Is that all?

H21. No money, no theatre, nothing.

ANGEL. Does he imagine you'd enjoy rotting away in academic libraries?

H21. I must go.

ANGEL. To Egypt?

H21. To Berlin.

BOUCHARDON. And of course it's there you turn up just before war is declared.

H21. Yes.

BOUCHARDON. Were you already working for the Germans?

H21. I have never worked for the Germans! Never!

ANGEL. And so you danced, went out to dinner, you slept and slept around, in short Everyday Life in Berlin.

H21. One evening I dined in the private apartment of one of my lovers, Griebel, the Chief of Police. Over dessert, we hear through the windows the almighty racket of a demonstration and soon that hullabaloo of voices becomes deafening, we stop eating, our appetites gone.

ASTRUC. Griebel? And Kiepert? I get lost in your love-life.

H21. We went down into the street. There was an enormous crowd in front of the Emperor's palace, they were all shouting: "Deutschland uber alles". The men were bellowing and the women donating their hair. They held a knife at my throat and asked me if I was French or Russian./ Do you seriously imagine, seeing all that, I'd want to take up espionage?

BOUCHARDON/  
ANGEL. Confine yourself to answering the questions asked of you by the examining magistrate./ On that occasion you are not seeing any officers, right?

H21. It was the people who were shouting, the wretched people. The full horror of that crowd touched my very heart.

KIEPERT. Mata, you should get ready to leave Germany very soon.

H21. You're joking, darling. I've signed a contract with the Metropole Theatre and it's still got three months to run.

KIEPERT. You'll be in Paris before the three months are up, Mata. Me too.

H21. Kiepert was right.

ANGEL. What, Kiepert again?! Kiepert or Griebel? We need to know.

H21. Kiepert. We stayed good friends and Griebel bored me. Kiepert warned me but I didn't believe him. The theatre's wardrobe-mistress swiped my jewels and my furs.

NEWSPAPER 3. Franz-Ferdinand the Archduke of Austria has been assassinated at Sarajevo by a Serb terrorist.

H21. All my furs taken hostage by Germany, my mink coat in the clutches of the odious Kaiser.

NEWSPAPER 3. War.

H21. Returning post-haste to Holland, my luggage impounded, I've got nothing left.

ANGEL/  
JOURNALIST 8: So you end up dancing – your one true home./ Lady MacLeod, please tell us about Ö

H21. Don't call me that. Indian blood runs in my veins. I'm the daughter of a maharaja from Rajahstan and one of his Dutch concubines. My name is Mata Hari.

JOURNALIST 8. Holland can finally see for itself on the stage of the Royal Theatre of the Hague one of its most famous offspring. Mata Hari has danced "The French Follies" to music by Francois Couperin.

H21. No.

ANGEL. Are you sure?

H21. No, No. It comes from Nonah – Malay for girl. I'd like to see my daughter No again.

JOHN MACLEOD. I refused. After all, the girl saw her mother regularly and that was enough. I had remarried, I had a proper wife. At any rate, better than the firstÖ When No took up her first job as school-teacher she would carry her sandwiches in a biscuit tin decorated with various photos of that bitch and I did not object. So you see – on my word as a MacLeod – I did not prevent my daughter from seeing her mother, ah hah ah hah! What do you say to that?

H21. Nothing. Holland suffocates me.

ANGEL. One evening he comes to your place while you're packing your bags.

H21. Who?

ANGEL. FateÖ

H21. I can tell where he comes from by his slight accent and I nearly slap him butÖ

ANGEL. My name is Cramer, I'm the German Consul in Holland. I know you're going to France. Would you care to do us a few favours?

H21. I don't know.

CRAMER. It's a question of gathering different kinds of information about matters which might be of interest to us. If you care to accept, I can give you twenty thousand francs here and now.

H21. What makes you think I can help you?

CRAMER. Your travels have taken you to all the cities of Europe, you speak five languages, by your presence alone you can seduce men. You are Mata Hari, the Eye of Day. You could be Germany's eye in France.

H21. Twenty thousand francs isn't much.

CRAMER/ANGEL. For a first missionÖ./ What did you do?

H21. I said yes.

CRAMER . You will be Agent H21.

H21. H21.

CRAMER. And here are three bottles of invisible ink. With Number One you treat the surface, with Number Two you write your message, with Number Three you make it disappear until, at our end, we make it readable once more. You understand?

H21. Fine./ I took the bottles of invisible ink, I pocketed the twenty thousand francs. My furs and my jewels alone were worth eighty thousand but I told myself the Germans owed me no more than this and likewise I owed no more to the Germans. I left for Paris, via England, and I emptied the bottles of invisible ink into the canal joining Amsterdam to the North Sea.

ANGEL. You didn't think it foolish to get back the price of your furs by way of a country's hidden budget?

H21. I'm off to Paris, la-la-la, la-la-la.

ANGEL. Do you hear me?

H21. I stay at the Plaza Athénée; every night I sleep with a different officer. From memory I can make a list of every one of my short-leave suitors. Men have their harems, I have my mobile Military Academy. As the mood takes me, some I ask to pay, others not.

ANGEL. The Eye of Day!

H21. Ah yes, before I can get there, I'm stopped at the English customs.

ANGEL/  
ENGLISH CUSTOMS OFFICER.

A warning you'd have done well to take note of./ Height: five feet, five inches; medium build; dark hair; round face; olive complexion; low forehead; grey-brown eyes; dark eyebrows; straight nose; small mouth; age 39. Speaks French, English, Italian, Dutch and probably German. A woman both beautiful and brazen. Elegantly dressed in dark brown trimmed with racoon fur and matching hat.

H21. They let me go.

ANGEL. Paris, la-la-la, la-la-la.

H21. I see that Diaghilev is still there whereas me, I'm nowhere. I write to Astruc – with whom my relations have become dreadfully strained – for one last go.

ANGEL. No, please Ö

H21. Everyone deserves a second chance.

ANGEL. Don't do it, la-la-la, la-la-la.

H21. I've a new idea to put to Astruc.

ASTRUC. Margarethe, I don't think it's a good project but if you need money or anythingÖ

H21. If only he had kept that appointment in Monte-Carlo.

ASTRUC. Perhaps it would have made no great difference, Margarethe.

H21. If he'd kept the appointment, if he'd had me dance the Dance of the Seven Veils in my hotel room.

ANGEL. What would have happened? You know, don't youÖ

H21. If he had seen me?!

ANGEL. As you are at present?

H21. NoÖ

ANGEL. As you are now?

H21. No, no! You're lying, he never saw me, he never deigned to look at me, you're lying, your whole body's lying, your face is a mask, this is is a trick and I would like to wake up from this nightmare, for pity's sake! Angel, my angel, stop this.

DIAGHILEV. Ö.

H21. He's so big-headed, how can he ever find a hat to fit him? But how glorious he looks. If I dared, if I dared, I think I'd still know how Ö Monsieur Diaghilev?

DIAGILEV. At the root of all creative activity is an original source, that unique link between all differences,



the all-powerful and all-conquering, the unique creative force, the human character, the star which illuminates our darknessÖ

- H21. If only I had my Dravidian costume!
- DIAGILEV. We shall accept or we shall refuse in equal measure everything which came before us..
- H21. Any costume at all! A diadem!
- ANGEL. Look at me, Eye of Day.
- H21. I think I'd still know how.
- ANGEL. What are you doing?
- H21. I'm dancing the Dance of the Seven Veils for you.
- ANGEL. What are you doing?
- H21. I 'm stripping myself naked for you.
- ANGEL. What are you hoping for?
- H21. I've tripped, I've caught my foot in the Fourth Veil.
- ANGEL. Why are you screaming?
- H21. I've twisted my ankle, I'm like a beast to the slaughter..
- ANGEL. What can I do for you?
- H21. If you're my executioner, lift me up. If you're my angel, leave me on the ground.
- ANGEL. I take you up into the air. Diaghilev has swept away all that came before him. Why seek to survive the hurricane of the Ballet Russe, the picturesque debris of another era? I bear you aloft through light with no more than my arms, my downy wings.
- H21. An angel passes overhead and me along with him. Stop, this is Paris.

ANGEL. Stay with me.

H21. I'm getting down.

ANGEL. But don't forget that you accepted money from the Germans.

H21. I have a fabulous gift for forgetting things. I threw the bottles of invisible ink into the sea.

ANGEL. You meet the love of your life in the person of Masslov.

H21. Monsieur, MonsieurÖ

ANGEL. Who claims his father is a general while in fact he's only a colonel.

H21. Look at me.

VADIME (DE) MASSLOW.  
ÖÖ

H21. It's over, I've practically quit dancing, I have a kidney infection. But when ambition dies how beautiful the world seems. Paris is crawling with idle, ravaged officers. Like this one.

VADIME (DE ) MASSLOW.  
ÖÖ.

H21. Monsieur, I've been following you from the fairground. I think I want you.

VADIME (DE) MASSLOW.  
ÖÖ.

H21. You're so handsome I'm trembling. What is your rank?

VADIME (DE) MASSLOW.  
ÖÖ

H21. Would you like to come to my hotel?

VADIME (DE MASSLOW.

Lieutenant.

H21. Lieutenant, give me your little lieutenant's hand, you look so young. (/) And me?

ANGEL. Your bottles of invisible ink surface from the Amsterdam canal like so many depth-charges.

H21. Come in, close the door, the bathroom is there. Undress me and take off your uniform. Kiss me. Have your way with me. I'll have mine with you. Love me. I love you. You belong to me and not to the trenches. You belong to me and not the battlefield, you're all mine.

ANGEL. In the darkness of a town at war.

H21. I love for the second time – so passionately that I know it must be the last.

ANGEL. In the depths of your cell.

H21. He calls me Greta. I discover I am another self beneath his artless kisses, his youthful and almost fearful embrace.

ANGEL. A night unlike other nights.

H21. My angelÖ

ANGEL. Who are you talking to?

H21. From my tormented bed, I dream of his manly thighs and I kiss his boyish cheeks.

ANGEL. The next morning, you ring the ministry bell.

H21 I would watch him as he lay sleeping. The shadow of his moustache on his lower lip made his mouth look weak. I looked at my watch. I should have realised.

GEORGE LADOUX'S SECRETARY.

Good morning, Madame, how may I help you?

H21. I'd like to see Monsieur Georges Ladoux.

LADOUX'S SECRETARY/

ANGEL. Did you have an appointment?/ Did you have an appointment for that day?

H21. No. I had a kidney infection. I wanted a permit to go to Vittel and take the waters.

LADOUX'S SECRETARY.

I'll see if he is available. Please to wait here.

H21. I wait. He is not. I come back next day. Again I wait. And if I'd tired of waiting?

BOUCHARDON. Admit it, Zelle – by then you were already working for the Germans. In visiting Ladoux you hoped to benefit Germany by playing double agent!

H21. Vadime's regiment was stationed there. My kidneys were giving me trouble. I was looking for a cure.

BOUCHARDON. Why Vittel? - if not to guage the capability of the French airforce. You quiz your French officers in bed, do you not?

H21. My only thoughts now were of loveÖand just a little of money.

LEDoux'S SECRETARY.

Monsieur Georges Ladoux will see you now and begs forgiveness for keeping you waiting.

H21. At the other end of his fishing-rod, a sweet old pussycat.

ANGEL. Ladoux.

H21. He it was who could reel in my life-line or let it out again.

ANGEL. The devils in power divide men into two categories: those they've marked down to serve them and those they'll destroy as whim and circumstance see fit.

H21. Am I dead? It seems to me that if I am sleeping, it's for the last time – but death also is a last

sleep. The rats won't break their worrisome silence but my bed is squeezed between two others, ear-splitters both. I am flanked by two sleeping women, informers no doubt, whose snoring makes no end of a racket.

- ANGEL. Ladoux, the head of French Counter-espionage.
- H21. When you look at him, you see nothing: the fleeting kindly smile of a schoolmaster; the statutory paunch of all powerful men, but not as powerful as all that; rounded spectacles framing eyes glassy in diplomacy.
- LADOUX/ANGEL /LADOUX. Good morning, dear lady, forgive me for having made you wait/. This one was different. On him a woman's beauty had no effect./ Would you remind me of your name?
- H21. A very dark horse indeed./ Margaretha Geertruida MacLeod, maiden name Zelle.
- LADOUX. So you wish for a permit to Vittel? You are not unaware that this is a sensitive spot, the French airforce is stationed there.
- H21. I'd scarcely be going to Fuggia in Italy to take the waters, now would I? I adore your country.
- LADOUX. You speak our language wonderfully.
- H21. I speak French, Dutch, English, Spanish. And German.
- LADOUX. I could tell at once she was a German spy.
- H21. You could tell nothing of the sort. I emptied the bottles of invisible ink into the sea!
- ANGEL. The moment he saw you, he marked you down for the clandestine abbatoir of all and every nation.
- H21. Prison has destroyed my body and my face.
- LADOUX. Tell me. I have a little idea. With your knowledge of men, your celebrity as a dancer and your

society connections, the five languages you speak, you could be of service.

H21. He tells me I could reckon on twenty-five thousand francs for every enemy spy who is blown. I answered that I'd like to oblige him in all things but that denouncing people disgusts me.

LADOUX. Then you should go to Belgium, MacLeod, and infiltrate the German High Command. You could ferret out what they plan in the way of manoeuvres.

H21. This I can do and I have other ideas as well./ I asked for a million.

LADOUX. That's quite a figure, MacLeod.

H21. I told myself: I'll ask for as much money as will spare me having to cheat on Vadime with other men just for the sake of money.

BOUCHARDON. And you claim, Zelle, that you had lofty ambitions for France!

H21. I was the mistress of the Duke of Cumberland's brother. The Duke married the Kaiser's daughter and from time to time I enjoyed a certain intimacy with him. The heir-apparent his brother-in-law made him promise not to lay claim to the throne of Hanover. I could have renewed my relations with the Duke, I could have become his mistress, I could have done all in my power to alienate him from his wife and from Germany. All it required was for me to promise him – should the Allies prove victorious – the throne of Hanover.

ANGEL. The Lady Spy, dreaming at the Military Ball.

H21. Yes. Vittel is so beautiful, we're in love.

BOUCHARDON. Zelle, I do not think that the jury will take seriously these grandiose projects you lay claim to.

H21. Vadime has been seriously wounded in his left eye from mustard-gas. We'll need a lot of money.

LADOUX. Rest up in Vittel, I'll get you your permit. Then Belgium, MacLeod . We'll see if you deserve a million. We've already given two million to one of our agents.

H21. What was his mission?

LADOUX. ÖÖ.

H21. Ladoux, the slippery tyrant, the slothful predator.

ANGEL. And Bouchardon?

H21. Bouchardon the scrupulous, the punctilious judge, the tortuous torturer.

ANGEL. The bureaucratic ballet of men all around you, the conspiracy of nations against your body laid bare with impunity across all the stages of Europe.

H21. The Germans got my furs and now the French will have my hide.

BOUCHARDON. We found this among your possessions – oxycyanide of mercury. Admit that you use this product to mix invisible ink.

H21. Captain Bouchardon, that substance has antiseptic and contraceptive properties – I use it after sexual intercourse.

BOUCHARDON. You must have drunk gallons of the stuff. The 15th,16th,17th and 18th of July you slept with the Belgian commanding officer at Beaufort. The 30th of July you were deep in conversation with a major from Montenegro, Monsieur Yovilcevic, over here on a posting. The 3rd of August you were seen with sub-lieutenant Gasfield. The 4th of August you dined withÖ

H21. I did not sleep with all these men but, it's true, I like officers. I've always had a soft spot for a uniform. And then I like to draw comparisons between the anatomy and the appetites of different nationalities. I exclude such as yourself, of course.

BOUCHARDON. I am forewarned. And Masslov?

H21. I intend to marry him, I love him.

BOUCHARDON. You say you were minded to go to Belgium via England but you were turned back into Spain. What did you do in Madrid, Zelle?

H21. I find myself in Madrid by order of the French government.

BOUCHARDON. What did you do in Madrid, Zelle?

H21. What do you think of all this, Kalle?

KALLE. I think that everything you tell us is most interesting.

H21. I wanted to show Ladoux what I was capable of, while waiting to get to Belgium. In Madrid I met the German military attaché, I had him believe that I was fooling the French and as an aperitif I served him up an oral cocktail of newspaper-cuttings which he took to be information direct from source.

KALLE. All this is well and good, Mata Hari! And now let's take a little break.

H21. The country keeps you well stocked in cigars?

KALLE. I have my contacts.

H21. I love to see an officer smoke a cigar in the evening and shave in the morning.

KALLE. I'm most dreadfully tired.

H21. Would you like me to massage your feet? I learned that in Java.

KALLE. For the moment I'm in the process of disembarking a submarine's worth of German and Turkish officers, as well as their munitions, off the coast of Morocco. And I'm up to my eyes.



H21. It must be quite a task to disembark a submarine over there. How have you managed?

KALLE. Pretty women should not ask too many questions.

H21. I did what any woman must do to attract the favours of a gentleman. I understood he was mine for the taking.

ANGEL. Idiot, you are the local idiot in a village called Europe At War and over which I've been patrolling the better to survey the bloody doings of mankind.

H21. I was dying to do more.

KALLE. Agent H21 has just reached Madrid and has given me an oral report on various matters. He has got himself recruited by the French Secret Service but was driven back by an English maritime blockade and has requested instructions and money.

H21. What is all this?

ANGEL. Kalle sends several telegrams which will be intercepted, likewise Cramer's reply, by the French, who have broken the code: you're as easy to identify as one of your portraits on the cover of Vogue.

H21. Apart from my body, I never gave anything to the Germans!

BOUCHARDON. "Tell Agent H21 to return to France and to continue his mission there. He will receive a cheque for five thousand francs from Cramer at the bank." What is this, Zelle?

H21. I'll explain everything. I've served France loyally and I've fooled the Germans.

BOUCHARDON. But when you found yourself in the presence of our intelligence services you carefully concealed from Georges Ladoux your relations with Cramer, the invisible ink, the code-number H21 and the mission you had been given. When, on

the other hand, you found yourself with Kalle your first priority was to confide in him that you had pretended to accept a mission from the French. So who exactly were you working for in all this affair? So who exactly have you betrayed? France or Germany?

H21. Ask Ladoux! He recruited me.

LADOUX. MacLeod was never recruited by us. An agent is on our payroll when he has been given a mission, a code-number, means of passing on information and money.

H21. But it was he who suggested I spy for France – it was you!

LADOUX. It was MacLeod who asked for one million, I agreed to judge her on results but I did not hire her on the suspicion she was a German spy. I have calmly waited for her either to give satisfaction or to be unmasked – which she has not been remiss in doing.

H21. I passed on nothing of importance to Kalle, I only told him what I had to if I was to extract the essentials!

ANGEL. But he played the same game with you and gave you nothing the French didn't know already. Two gas-balloons squeezed together in a Madrid hotel room, trading in hot air and rubbing against each other – except it was you who got taken for a ride.

H21. I went back to Paris.

BOUCHARDON. It's self-evident: this woman is a spy to the manner born.

H21. I wanted to throw my findings down in front of the French and claim my rich reward but Ladoux wouldn't see me.

ANGEL. When you come back from Madrid, your cover is blown, you walk through the streets but you're just on borrowed time, waiting for the axe to fall.

They keep you dangling, all unknowing, for one more month.

H21. One morning as I'm taking my bath there comes a knocking at the door and I wonder what Vadime can have forgotten.

ARRESTING OFFICER.

Miss Zelle, Marguerite, known as Mata Hari, residing at the Palace Hotel, of Protestant faith, a foreigner, born in Holland August 7th, 1876, height one metre seventy-five, capable of reading and writing, is charged with espionage.

H21. I must get dressed.

ARRESTING OFFICER.

You will come with us, naked or dressed but dressed for preference.

H21. I am locked in a squalid cell, I ask if I might have a bathtub and a telephone Öbut even as a joke it falls on deaf ears.

BOUCHARDON. Do you wish to hear Lieutenant Masslow's statement, Zelle?

H21. Yes.

ANGEL. Really?

H21. Oh yes, you cruel creature.

VADIME (DE) MASSLOW.

I hereby submit that the relationship with this woman was of no significance.

H21. This is the man for whom I went through hell and high water?

VADIME (DE) MASSLOW.

Greta fastened onto me while I was a young, fit officer. Inexplicably she clung to me when I became disabled. I have no explanation for her fervour beyond the – to me – unfathomable desperation of an ageing woman, unless indeed it be a question of love, but my superior officer has told me this was an unscrupulous

adventuress who displayed herself naked on stage for money and went to bed with men for the same reason. I am not surprised she should have sold herself to the Germans.

H21. Let him spew it all up – but spare me the sight of his soul. I don't want to see its colour.

VADIME (DE) MASSLOW.

I further submit that I benefited from this woman's generosity and that no one should sit on judgement against me in this respect since it is she who is to be judged, without mercy, in my view. I submit that I was a small-time opportunist, that I extorted money from her and became disabled. Neither an opportunist nor one disabled like myself can or should wish either to save her or defend her.

H21. He gave himself a title but he was not truly noble.

VADIME (DE) MASSLOW.

I have nothing further to say as regards Greta. I lost an eye.

H21. My God.

BOUCHARDON. Do you have anything to add, Zelle, to this declaration by one you claim to be your lover?

H21. No, Monsieur, I have no comment to make.

ANGEL. And yet you asked for his photos back.

H21. I have my pride but my love for him is greater than my pride. And I'm proud of my love. Pride in my love has killed my pride.

BOUCHARDON. Zelle, I am passing the magistrate's report onto the military tribunal.

H21. At worse I'll spend a few years in prison.

ANGEL. At best you'll beÖ

H21. The papers say I dance naked in my cell – with real rats as my corps de ballet?

JOURNALIST 9. They say that Clémenceau is stirring on the floor of the Assemblée: the Tiger wakes and all traitors tremble.

H21. When I'm back with Vadime and his newly-restored eye what will he make of my face – the face of an old woman who has been in prison?

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU.

We are at war, yet we're not talking old wars, nor even modern ones. The whole world has taken up arms. Those claiming neutrality are spies and traitors. Those in the thick of it are killing each other off at an incredible rate – we have never seen the like. Somewhere near Verdun there is an enormous shell-crater, half the size of this chamber, where two men are buried, piled on top of each other, a Frenchman with his teeth clamped on the Kraut beneath him: they are there in the same hole, a symbol of this war. Back whence they came is the civilised world.

H21. I've separated the memory of Vadim's face from the foul memory of his betrayal.

ANGEL. Forget your lovers just as you forgot those bottles of ink you secretly destroyed. Can you not hear the helpless screams of the gunners in the trenches? And the silence of men hurriedly tied to the stake? International woman, can you not hear the Internationale? There where you can scarcely breathe, can you yet smell the raw fragrance of mutiny?

H21. The outside world, the sky, fresh air on my face.

ANGEL. The prisoners' regulation walk – strapped to my wings.

H21. What are you looking at as I lie dying?

LENIN/ ANGEL. Democracy too goes only so far, is only one stage in the road from capitalism to communism./ A red storm coming from afar.

H21. From where?

ANGEL. From the East.

H21. From the Orient? How I've longed to see it again!

ANGEL. No, not from the Orient, from Russia the Orient's violent antichamber.

H21. What are they up to over there?

ANGEL. Revolution! Vladimir Illyich Ulyanov. Trotsky. Others. They are killing the aristocrats and the landowners, the poor are seizing the property of those who before them seized the property of the poor.

H21. Would they too have stolen my furs?

ANGEL. The poor or the landowners?

H21. Confiscating the furs of a woman on her travels is like skinning a stray dog.

LENINE. The State may die, disappear altogether. Society will no longer discourage the acquisition of personal possessions: each will help himself according to his needs. We've done with the bourgeoisie and its gloating. Now each citizen can stock up to his heart's content on truffles, motor-cars or pianos.

H21. I might have seduced him, I might have become the accidental figurehead of the revolution.

ANGEL. But at present Vladimir Illyich has other things on his mind—and he's not an officer.

H21. Every epoch has its officers.

ANGEL. Why did you like them so very much?

H21. I enjoyed shielding from battle those who were trained for it.

ANGEL. And the simple squaddie?

H21. Their officers' stripes flattered my vanity and stimulated my senses.

ANGEL. And the business itself, this too you liked?

H21. Love, you mean?

ANGEL. The business itself. What we do of a morning when it's called love, of an afternoon when it's adultery, and of an evening when it's called marriage.

H21. I loved the dark bodies of men against my own dark body, the doubling of our shadows. It is not as if by taking off their uniforms they banished the shades that haunted them, that haunted us all. Their jackets, hung on the back of a chair or on a bedpost, were a kind of white flag offered as a token of our secret truce. Come the morning, did I not rejoice to be seeing them for what was perhaps the last time?

ANGEL. Deliver unto the firing-line those who are so destined.

H21. My declarations of love were so many stray bullets, hitting at random this man or that.

VADIME (DE) MASSLOV.  
I knew all along: I was just one among many.

H21. No! No! With him, it was love. Vadime, Vadime!

ANGEL. He went blind.

H21. I'd like to speak to him, touch him. Just by kissing him I'd wipe his boyish cheeks clean of the last stigmata of mustard gas.

VADIME (DE) MASSLOV.  
Goodbye Greta, I'm marrying a girl who's twenty years old and who will be my nurse. You weren't the ideal woman for that sort of work.

H21. You don't say.

ANGEL. Dawn.

H21. Where am I now?

ANGEL. Where, amid the confused and crimson clouds, anonymous men rub shoulders with new machines, where scattered files yield to bloodthirsty speeches. Come – take wing, look down on all this with me. I promise you: this isn't cinema.

H21. It's lovely. It's horrible.

ANGEL. I have shown you the face of time, wiped bare.

H21. I feel I'm in my bed, my two partners-in-crime have disappeared and my love lies bleeding through these my closed eyes.

ANGEL. Its name?

H21. She who I scarcely knew and whose name is:  
No.

ARRESTING OFFICER.

Wake up, get up, Margaretha Zelle. The President of the Republic has rejected your petition for a reprieve.

H21. No!

ANGEL. By firing-squad.

H21. At least a condemned man who is unfamiliar with the taste of tobacco and rum has something new to learn before you chop his head off. Why should you seek to riddle with bullets someone so ignorant?

CHORUS OF JOURNALISTS X.

She refused the offer of a blindfold and looked death in the face./ She stood upright with dignity and was well-dressed./ Did you know that this pseudo-Hindu was in fact a filthy Kraut?/ With her obscenely naked dance this woman paved the way for the fall of France./ I have calculated that some fifty thousand of our native sons owe their death to her./ Who could ever have found some iota of talent in her, what manner of imbecile could ever have written such things?!



H21. I am nothing, for a moment I fooled Europe. A convenient blot on the landscape for whoever believed blindly in himself and in the blindness of men. My crime is to have squandered wealth, to have been a relentless collector of shoes, an unashamed glutton of officers. Why are you so set on killing me?

JOURNALIST 10. In her last moments did she reveal anything new?

H21. If I could believe He existed, it would be to God alone that I entrusted the news of His existence. Not you?

ANGEL. The ABC of the Lady Spy.

H21. I am not H21.

ANGEL. And now you know the name of your last *maison de rendez-vous*.

H21. Facing the firing-squad, I shall write to Serge Diaghilev, the bullets will pierce pen and paper, my saliva shall be my last invisible ink.

ANGEL. I shall lay your body across the soldiers who died in the Nivelle offensive.

H21. But beneath this sky full of screams and blood tell me which of us is dreaming the other ?

OFFICER IN CHARGE OF FIRING SQUAD.  
Fire!

H21. Is anyone out there?

ANGEL. The 15th of October, 1917.

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## MATA HARI: THE EYE OF DAY

### A SPY IN THE HOUSE OF THE XXth CENTURY

In 1917, Margaretha Gertruida Zelle, called Mata-Hari, died, sentenced to death by a French Tribunal.

During a night - whether it is the night following or preceding her death, who knows ? - she sees her Life back and talks with a mysterious angel who revives all the male figures she encountered. And they were many : father, husband, protectors, juges... and a lot of european officers, because she liked to establish international comparisons between men she had sex with. In one gesture, of accent, one attitude, the masculine angel transforms itself into another man and unfold all aspects of this condemned woman. So the play is for two actors. While a female actress plays Mata-Hari, the male actor plays more than thirty parts in a huge theatrical game, that is like the kaleidoscope of this Time. And the audience doesn't know who dreams under the roof of the theatre. Perhaps the angel is a tricky devil that plays with a creature, perhaps the angel is just Mata-Hari's nightmare.

In the memory of people, Mata-Hari is the female type of spy, being popular through movies. As a matter of fact, she was a very unconscious and amateurish spy under the name of H21, who was the victim of harsh nationalism and shot with little proofs. At the beginning of her career, Mata-Hari wanted to be a dancer. She spent some time in Indonesia with her husband and saw some oriental dances. With a certain sense of mystification, she made the Europeans believe that she had been initiated to Indian dance and became famous in all Europe, but she never managed to convince Diaguilev, the most famous artistic director of Russian Ballet, to audition her. In the play, where the angel plays Diaguilev for a minute, this single defeat is the symbol of a life that was an entire lie, that was sacrificed to appearance and we could see with irony as long as pity.

## RESUME

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**Jean-Marc LANTERI**, born in 1962, is a playwright, translator and lecturer in Lille III University.  
He worked as a lecturer in French in Dartmouth College (1988-89) and as a cultural attaché at the French Institute in London (1990-1993).

### Plays :

2005 L'Oeil du jour  
( The Eye of Day)  
Rousse, Lyon.  
Compagnie Gazoline  
Nîmes.  
  
Tournon.

2004 Initiales D.J  
published by  
Les Solitaires intempestifs

Compagnie X-TNT

2003 L'Oeil du jour  
Centre Dramatique  
National  
Compagnie Gazoline  
Published by Espaces 34  
Lille.  
English translation by Nigel Gearing.

2002 La Tristesse des sentinelles  
Lille. Tour  
Compagnie Fabrique de théâtre  
Calais, Montreuil.  
Published by La Fontaine

### Venues :

Théâtre de la Croix-  
  
Théâtre du Périscope,  
  
Théâtre, “ A découvert”,  
  
Théâtre de la Tempête  
La Cartoucherie, Paris.

Comédie de Valence,  
  
Théâtre d'O, Montpellier  
Théâtre les Tisserands,

Théâtre de la Verrière,  
  
in Arques, Boulogne,

- 1998 Antigone (42) Theatre de Sète  
 Compagnie Adesso e sempre  
 Published by Espaces 34
- 1997 Antigone (42) La Rose des vents,  
 Scène Nationale de Villeneuve d'Ascq.  
 Compagnie Les fous à réaction Le Vivat,
- 1997 Les Petites Baleines de la côte est Festival de Sigean  
 Compagnie Gazoline  
 Published by Crater  
 Radio version for France-Culture  
 ( January 1997)
- 1997 Le goûter de Massada  
 Published by Lansman

### Translations into French:

- 2005 King Lear by William Shakespeare
- 2004 I licked a slag's deodorant  
 de Jim Cartwright  
 (J'ai léché le déodorant d'une  
 pute)  
 Compagnie Les Voyageurs  
 Immobiliers.  
 Published by Les Solitaires  
 Intempestifs.
- 2003 Hamlet by William Shakespeare  
 Published by La Fontaine
- 1999 Bed ( Lit) by Jim Cartwright
- 1998 Two (Deux) de Jim Cartwright  
 Published by les Solitaires Intempestifs  
 Compagnie TNT, Montpellier  
 Various amateurish performances

in France and Belgium

**Essay :**

2002 “Dramaturgies Britanniques (1980-2000)” Éditions Minard  
A various collection of essays gathered by Jean-Marc Lanteri on  
emerging or established British Contemporary playwrights.

**Awards and distinctions :**

2006 Writer’s bursary (Centre national du livre)  
2000 Writer in Residency - Château de La Napoule  
1999 Writer’s bursary ( Centre National du Livre).  
Writer in Residency in La Chartreuse  
1998 Chevening grant for Resarch (British Council),  
1986 Agregation de Lettres Modernes.  
1983 Ecole Normale Supérieure de Fontenay Saint-Cloud