

PERSHING

ADJUTANT

(from outside)

General Pershing is here and wishes to inspect the ladies' billet. May we enter?

GRACE

Yes — please come in.

RISER

Attention!

(RISER and the girls quickly fall into line, and stand at attention. PERSHING and ADJUTANT enter.)

PERSHING

As you were... Hello, ladies. I'm sorry I wasn't here to give you a proper welcome to Chaumont. But I'm delighted to see you now. Which of you is Chief Banker?

GRACE

(snapping to attention again)

I am, sir.

PERSHING

At ease. Are you properly settled here? Is the equipment working well?

GRACE

Yes, sir.

PERSHING

And the accommodations satisfactory?

GRACE

Better than we could have hoped.

PERSHING

Good. I imagine the rough and tumble of army life must be a bit of a shock.

GRACE

It's hardly rough, sir. Nothing compared to what you must have gone through on the Mexican border.

PERSHING

You've followed my career, I see.

GRACE

Well... you're famous, sir.

PERSHING

I might say the same of you. Ever since your unit arrived, I've been hearing glowing reports. As soon as I got back, I picked up my telephone just to see if I really had the famous "Hello Girls" working at my headquarters. One of your operators - Miss LeBreton, I believe it was - gave me the time.

LOUISE

She didn't believe me, sir. She confined me to quarters for a month for telling everyone you'd called the switchboard!

PERSHING

I see.

(to GRACE)

And will you absolve your operator now that you've learned the truth?

GRACE

No. The punishment stands.

PERSHING

Very good. I'm sorry to have gotten you in trouble, Miss LeBreton. But if the punishment was undeserved before, you've certainly earned it now by speaking out against your superior.

(to the group)

Discipline is the lifeblood of the army. We can never afford to be lax about anything—even our living spaces. These foot lockers should always be kept closed, Chief Banker.

GRACE

(exchanging a glance with Riser)

I'm sorry about that, sir. We'll do better.

PERSHING

Captain Riser, you've done excellent work training and preparing this unit.

RISER

Thank you, sir.

PERSHING

Are you confident that Chief Banker can carry on here at Chaumont if I send you to the Amiens sector?

RISER

Yes, sir. But, what's in the Amiens sector?

PERSHING

Our first offensive of this war. We'll need our Signal Corps there at the front.

GRACE

We're ready, sir.

PERSHING

That's very brave, Chief Banker. But I cannot put any of our women in harm's way.

GRACE

Sir, we all knew what we were signing up for—

PERSHING

I'm sorry, but I've made my decision. I'll be here at headquarters receiving reports from the field — so I'll need your team running the switchboards here at Chaumont.

GRACE

Yes, sir.

PERSHING

Captain Riser, you leave tomorrow morning. Report to Colonel Hanson Ely upon arrival.

RISER

Yes, sir.

PERSHING

Carry on.