



Casablanca

Sequence 9

Rick and Laszlo

- ✱ Laszlo attempts to buy the letters of transit from Rick, but to no avail.
- ✱ Rick maintains that 'The problems of the world are not my department'.
- ✱ Laszlo challenges Rick's seeming neutrality, telling him that his contacts in the Resistance have told him of Rick's actions in Ethiopia and Spain.
- ✱ Rick says that fighting for the underdog cost him a lot of money. This contradicts what he told Renault in an earlier scene, where he said he had been 'well-paid' on each occasion.
- ✱ Rick refuses to sell the letters of transit at any price, and advises Laszlo to ask his wife why he won't do so.

Battle of the Anthems

- * A chorus of German voices intrudes on their conversation.
- * The German officers are standing around the piano, singing a patriotic song: *Die Wacht Am Rhein*. (The original intention was to use the Nazi anthem *Horst-Wessel-Lied* but the copyright was owned by a German company.)
- * 'Die Wacht Am Rhein' is about protecting Germany from French invasion. This is ironic in the context of Casablanca.
- * Rick has made it clear that he won't tolerate politics in his bar.
- * The Germans' singing could be viewed as a challenge to Rick's authority.

- * We see Yvonne sitting alone, used and then abandoned by her German friend. This may be a symbol of the Germans' exploitation of France.
- * Laszlo takes charge, telling the band to strike up the *Marseillaise* in response to the Germans.
- * The band members look to Rick for confirmation of the order, and he nods. Again, we see both his authority and his anti-German feelings.
- * Rick is moving further and further away from neutrality, despite his claims that he doesn't care about anything but himself. His actions belie his words.

Vive La France!

- * The patrons rise to the challenge and drown out the Germans with their passionate rendition of the French national anthem.
- * Ilsa looks at her husband with admiration and pride.
- * The Germans grudgingly concede defeat, but Strasser looks furious.
- * Yvonne defiantly shouts 'Vive La France! Vive La Democratie!' Renault's prediction was correct: Yvonne is 'an entire second front'!
- * Rick's cafe has become the staging ground for the fight between right and wrong.
- * The *Marseillaise* is the theme of freedom and the struggle against The Third Reich.

Strasser's Threats

- ✱ The music becomes darker and more ominous as Strasser goes to Renault and orders him to close Rick's.
- ✱ Capt. Renault protests that he has no reason to close the bar, but gives in in the face of Strasser's anger.
- ✱ He closes the bar on the grounds that there is gambling taking place. His hypocrisy is shown clearly at that moment as a croupier hands him his winnings.

- ✱ Strasser attempts to frighten Ilsa by telling her that it is not safe for Laszlo to remain in Casablanca.
- ✱ Ilsa shows spirit and courage when she stands up to Strasser, throwing his 'guarantee' back in his face by pointing out that Germans do not stick to their promises and cannot be trusted.
- ✱ Laszlo and Ilsa leave. She asks him what transpired between him and Rick.

Almost an Admission

- * Back in their hotel room, Laszlo and Ilsa talk.
- * He knows there is - or was - something between Rick and Ilsa, but he does not judge her harshly.
- * He tells her that he knows what it is to be lonely, and asks if she wants to tell him anything about Paris.
- * Ilsa demurs.
- * Laszlo is tolerant and affectionate, but we cannot help compare his lack of passion with Rick's strength of emotion.

- ✱ Laszlo kisses Ilsa chastely on the cheek. Again, we contrast this with the passionate kisses Rick and Ilsa exchanged.
- ✱ Laszlo loves Ilsa, but he is only truly passionate about his work. We have seen him roused to anger and contempt by Major Strasser, but the thought of his wife's infidelity does not evoke anything more than kindness and understanding.
- ✱ Laszlo speaks of love, but does not demonstrate it. Rick denies he has feelings, but his actions show that he has.
- ✱ Laszlo leaves to go to a resistance meeting.
- ✱ We cut to Rick's, and see him discussing finances with Carl.
- ✱ Rick says that the staff will remain on full pay despite the closure. Again, Rick's actions show him to be a decent, principled, thoughtful man who cares about others despite his claim only to serve himself.