

# e11even days

OF REMEMBRANCE

## Performance Script

### Character list:

Young Solider (Depending on ages of solider cast, give this line to youngest soldier other than Son)
A young Son (could also be daughter - you may wish to use a boy/girl for this one line, could also be the child of David & Elizabeth)
Soldier Narrator/ Reedy Oliver (can double up or be 2 different performers. Reedy Oliver has 1 line and sings a solo. Talented tenor needed for the part)
Mother
Son
Father
Sergeant Major
Vera Britain
Elizabeth
David
David & Elizabeth Children - 2/3 children needed. no speaking lines but do sing nurse song. Aged about 11 and under
Private Bryan/Private Ernest Todd (could also be 2 separate roles)
Mir Dast
Private Jack Dorgan
Private W Underwood/Corporal Clifford Lane (could also be 2 separate roles)
Vernon Lee
German Prayer Wife (can be doubled up with Mrs Hall if not enough women)
Private Frank Sumpter/ Corporal Reginal Leonard Haine (could also be 2 separate roles)
Soldier 8/German Soldier
Mrs M Hall
Edith Cavell
Marjorie Pickthall
Elsie Inglis
Reverend David Railton
Nurse (can also be split between Edith Cavell & Vera Brittain if not enough female readers)
Maude Onions

## NOTES

- **DIRECT ADDRESS** - All narration lines throughout entire performance are shared direct address to audience. For the scenes, they can also be direct address to audience, if you so choose, as if cast members "see" fellow cast members out in the audience, rather than looking at each other on stage. However, you may also choose to stage the actual scenes in a more traditional theatrical style, with only narration as direct address. It takes more skilled performers to stage the scenes more traditionally. All scenes being played direct address to audience is much simpler, and is more effective if there is limited rehearsal time. You may choose to explore both options; just keep all narration/other lines as indicated, as direct address to audience.
- **CAST ON STAGE** - The performance or reading may be most effective if you keep the entire cast on stage the entire time, with people doing to the back of the stage and taking up positions of reading and writing letters - not frozen, but quietly and thoughtfully engaged with that key war time activity during scenes they are not involved with
- **CHOIR** - A choir ranging from 10 to 50 or 60 people can be part of the performance, sat to the sides of the stage. They can join in with all singing apart from solos, or selected songs only, as you see fit.

## 11 Days of Remembrance Performance

### MUSIC CUE 1 –

#### SCENE 1 – OVERTURE – WE MEET THEM

FIGURES FROM THE PAST SLOWLY FILL THE STAGE, DRESSED IN PERIOD COSTUMES FROM WORLD WAR 1 ERA. SIMPLE AND POIGNANT ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIFE ARE MIMED, SLIGHTLY SLOWER,  $\frac{3}{4}$  SPEED, WITH A DREAM LIKE QUALITY EG: A MAN SMELLS & PICKS A FLOWER AND PLACES IT IN HIS LAPEL; A MOTHER SINGS TO HER SWADDLED BABY; FRIENDS CHAT; SOMEONE WRITES A LETTER OR READS A BOOK; CHILDREN PLAY. SIMPLE SET PIECES OF CRATES, BOXES, STOOLS, SOME CHAIRS ETC: THE RICHNESS OF OUR LIVES TOGETHER IS REVEALED. THEY START TO “AAAAH” TO THE UNDERSCORING, “I VOW TO THEE MY COUNTRY.”

MEN, WOMEN & CHILDREN COME FORWARD AND SHARE LINES FROM ACTUAL LETTERS, DIRECT ADDRESS TO AUDIENCE. IT IS A MONTAGE OF VOICES, AND EACH NEW CHARACTER JUST OVERLAPS THE LAST.

### MUSIC CONTS.

#### SON

They had one room, mother, quite small,  
where we were billeted. But it were like  
going to Buckingham Palace for us,  
'cos it were so warm.<sup>1</sup>

#### SERGEANT MAJOR

A few quiet days without any  
battle going on – surely the moment  
for a test match! You’ll be pleased to know we  
beat the Australians.<sup>2</sup>

#### MOTHER

I’ve included some flower seeds for you, to plant  
somewhere. It may be a voice of cheer to some other  
lonely soldier. Love Mother<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Forgiven Voices of the Great War, p47

<sup>2</sup> Forgiven Voices, p213

<sup>3</sup> A Broken World, p235

YOUNG SOLDIER

Dear Father, I want some safety razors as soon as poss, as I have run out of them. Your ever grateful son.<sup>4</sup>

ELIZABETH

One must have courage these days. One has moments, but it is no good to weep.<sup>5</sup>

A YOUNG SON

Dear Daddy, I rushed to the window and looked out and there right above us was the Zepp!

SERGEANT JACK DORGAN

After two hours of lying still in no man's land, all I could think was "What wouldn't I do for a hot cuppa?"<sup>6</sup>

NURSE

I find myself clenching my hands tight 'til it hurts<sup>7</sup>  
There are no words for it.

ALL CAST SING

(THE FINAL LINE OF THE SONG ONLY)

*The love that makes undaunted, the final sacrifice*

MUSIC FADES.

**Scene 2 - WE REMEMBER**

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Welcome Friends. We are . . . like you. Not so very long ago we lived,

(ALL FOLLOWING NARRATIONS SEAMLESSLY CONTINUE A SINGLE LINE OF THOUGHT. CAST MEMBERS COME FORWARD TO JOIN A UNIFIED LINE AT THE FRONT OF THE STAGE. DIRECT ADDRESS TO AUDIENCE)

MOTHER

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<sup>4</sup> A Broken World, p238

<sup>5</sup> A Broken World, p176

<sup>6</sup> A Broken World, p213

<sup>7</sup> A Broken World, p143

Felt the dawn,

ELSIE IGLIS

Saw the glow of sunset.

MUSIC CUE 2

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD

Loved and were loved,

SOLDIER NARRATOR

And then - our bodies were lain in Flanders Fields,

MIR DAST

In the fields of Ypres,

SERGEANT MAJOR

In the fields of the Somme,

MOTHER

And in the little cemetery up the road from home.

PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER

In the fields of Arras.

PRIVATE W. UNDERWOOD

And some of us came home. Though many of us were broken.

Deleted: .

SERGEANT MAJOR

There's lots we could tell you

NURSE

Perhaps lots we should tell you

DAVID

And lots we've already said . . .

EDITH CAVELL

In our letters

PRIVATE W. UNDERWOOD

Our diaries

REEDY OLIVER  
Our songs and recollections

PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER  
Our poems

SERGEANT MAJOR  
Our paintings

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD  
Our prayers

MOTHER  
For we're mindful of you, more than you know.

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
And to be remembered by you, well... that knits all our  
hearts together in love.<sup>8</sup>

MARJORIE PICKTHALL  
He was a good man and the best of  
husbands--

**MUSIC FADES**

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
Wrote one widow from London in March of 1919--

MAJORIE PICKTHALL (cont.)  
Therefore, I want to do all I can so that he shall not be  
forgotten.<sup>9</sup>

SERGEANT MAJOR  
(LOUDLY & ELONGATED)  
Recruuuuitment!

**SCENE 3 - RECRUITMENT**

<sup>8</sup> Heb 11:40, D&C 128:15, 18, Malachi 4: 5 - 6

<sup>9</sup> Broken, p233

WE SEE A FAMILY COME TO THE FRONT. A MOTHER, FATHER AND 15-YEAR-OLD SON. THEY TAKE CENTRE STAGE. DIRECT ADDRESS TO AUDIENCE OR MORE TRADITIONALLY STAGED.

SON

It will all be over by the  
October Father. I'll be home before you  
realise I've gone!<sup>10</sup>

FATHER

You're doing just as much for your country Thomas, for  
your nation, here at the steelworks as in the Army boy!<sup>11</sup>

MOTHER

Did you tell the recruiting officer you were too young?

SON

He turned me away at first. Said come back in a year or  
so. So, I came home, got my good hat -

MOTHER

Your Sunday hat?

SON

Yes - the one you make we wear to church Mother - and I  
went back. Well, they signed me right up.<sup>12</sup>

MOTHER

A fifteen-year-old's to war because of a hat?  
You're not to go. Tell him.

SON

I was looking in a shop window yesterday. I felt someone  
press something into my hand. It was a woman and she had  
given me a white feather. She whispered "coward" -  
looked at me with utter scorn.<sup>13</sup>

**MUSIC CUE 3**

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<sup>10</sup> Forgotten Voices, p16

<sup>11</sup> Forgotten Voices, p16

<sup>12</sup> Forgotten Voices, p9

<sup>13</sup> Forgotten Voices p19

FATHER

Don't you fret about some white feather lad.

SON

My friends are all going! We can go together.

MOTHER

Did they not ask for a birth certificate?<sup>14</sup>

SON

No - there were no queries. I was accepted. I told you.  
With the hat.<sup>15</sup>

MOTHER

(MEASURED, YET BREAKING)

I didn't raise you for you to be cannon  
fodder son.

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Mother remembered the lullabies she would sing to him..

MOTHER

(SINGING LULLABY, STEPPING ASIDE. HER SHAWL BECOMES HER  
SWADDLED SON - A MEMORY. WOMEN IN CHOIR JOIN IN "OHS")

*Compose thy dimpled hands to rest,  
And like little birdling lie  
Secure within thy cozy nest  
Upon my loving mother breast  
And slumber to my lullaby*

SON

I report in the morning mother.

FATHER

You can change your mind you know. You're underage.

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<sup>14</sup> Forgotten Voices, p19

<sup>15</sup> Forgotten Voices, p9

MOTHER

I don't want you to go and be a soldier. You'll come back to us all in pieces.<sup>16</sup>

SON

Some mothers are proud of their sons for being enlisted you know. You can see it in their faces.<sup>17</sup>

MOTHER

And they shall mourn.

SOLDIER

Do I have your blessing? Father? Mother?

FATHER

You do son. Yes.

MOTHER

Not my blessing. No. But my love? Yes. Every bit of you is loved. And my love's more fierce than my blessing. Come here, you great lump.

MUSIC FADES

(THEY EMBRACE)

What have you gone and done?

SERGEANT MAJOR

(Loudly & elongated)  
Departure!

#### SCENE 4 - DEPARTURE

SX - TRAIN STATION

A TRAIN STATION. SOUND EFFECTS EITHER PRE-RECORDED OR MADE BY THE CAST. WE SEE ALL THE CAST GATHER ON STAGE, ACTING OUT A MEDLEY OF HIGH-ENERGY FAREWELLS, AN INDISTINCT DIN OF NOISE IN THE BACKGROUND, TELLING DIFFERENT STORIES IN THEIR ACTIONS. SEVERAL SMALL GROUPS OF LOVED ONES SURROUND SOLDIERS, WISHING THEM WELL, WITH SPACES INBETWEEN GROUPS. THERE IS BOTH JUBILATION & TEARS. FLAGS ARE PULLED OUT AND ARE FLYING. A FEW LINES JUMP OUT ABOVE THE NOISE FROM THE CROWD.

<sup>16</sup> Horace Iles letter. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBo8y6mNmVQ>

<sup>17</sup> Forgotten Voices, p22

SERGEANT MAJOR  
Say your goodbyes! A minute 'til departure!

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD  
It'll be over by Christmas!

MUSIC CUE 4  
VERA BRITTAIN  
I'll write! Every day!

SOLDIER 3  
Look after my pigeons for me! They do so like to be  
fussed.

SOLDIERS START TO TAKE A GROUP FORMATION, DOWNSTAGE  
SINGING OUT TO THE AUDIENCE, PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. THEY ARE  
MAGNIFICENT,<sup>1</sup> UPBEAT, FULL OF LIFE.

SOLDIERS (SINGING)<sup>18</sup>  
*Keep the Home Fires burning  
While your hearts are yearning  
Though your lads are far away  
They dream of home*

WOMEN JOIN THE SONG  
*There's a silver lining  
Through the dark cloud shining  
Turn the dark cloud inside out  
Till the boys come Home*

MUSIC CONTS.  
- A CHANGE  
(THERE'S A SHIFT IN THE MOOD ON STAGE AS ALL THE CAST  
FREEZE IN ENGAGING GOODBYE POSITIONS; DIFFERENT LEVELS  
AND ACTIONS IN THE FREEZES THAT TELL MULTIPLE STORIES,  
POTENTIALLY A LIGHTING CHANGE TOO. WE SEE A HUSBAND &  
WIFE COME FORWARD WITH THEIR CHILDREN HUDDLED CLOSE  
TOGETHER. THE CHILDREN SIT ON THE FLOOR AND PLAY WITH  
TOYS.)

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
But as the time came to say goodbyes, those home  
fires could almost be doused with tears.

<sup>18</sup> See - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T80\\_laj-B90](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T80_laj-B90) (more upbeat version than this needed)

(DAVID AND ELIZABETH SWITCH BETWEEN DIRECT ADDRESS TO AUDIENCE & PERFORMING THE SCENE, OR YOU CAN DO THE WHOLE THING AS DIRECT ADDRESS TO AUDIENCE.)

ELIZABETH

This was not a time when words of affection were bearable.<sup>19</sup>

DAVID

In the evenings, before this moment came, we would sit by the fire with the children and read aloud and sing songs together

DAVID AND ELIZABETH CROUCH DOWN LEVEL WITH THE CHILDREN AND JOYFULLY SING TOGETHER. THIS IS A SONG THEY HAVE SUNG MANY TIMES AS A FAMILY.

DAVID, ELIZABETH & CHILDREN  
(SINGING)

*The big ship sails on the ally-ally-oh  
The ally-ally-oh, the ally-ally-oh  
Oh, the big ship sails on the ally-ally-oh  
On the last day of September.*

DAVID

During the day the children helped me saw fallen trees into logs

ELIZABETH

We knew each other's agony. All we could do was to speak sharply to each other...

DAVID

Remember, Elizabeth, that this key is for the box that holds all important papers like our marriage certificate and the children's birth certificates, and my life insurance policy. You may want them at some time; so, please don't go leaving the key about.

ELIZABETH

Can't you leave all this unnecessary tidying business, and put up that shelf you promised me?

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<sup>19</sup> This whole exchange is verbatim from Elizabeth's write up of it. Forgotten Voices

DAVID

The wall is too rotten for a shelf.

ELIZABETH

The last evening comes.

(DAVID AND THE CHILDREN TICKLE ONE ANOTHER, TWIRLING AND LAUGHING)

ELIZABETH CONTINUES

For a treat the children are to have their bath in front of the blazing fire. David scrubs them in turn - they laugh, making the fire hiss with their splashing. After the bath David reads to them.

(DAVID KNEELS DOWN HUGGING THE CHILDREN.)

ELIZABETH CONTINUES

They sit in their nightgowns listening gravely, and then, just before they kiss him good-night, he says:

DAVID

Remember while I am away to be kind. Be kind, first of all, to Mummy, and after that be kind to everyone and everything.

ELIZABETH

And they assent together, and joyfully hug and kiss him, and he carries them up, to their bed. We are then left alone, unable to hide our agony, afraid to show it. We speak of the garden.

DAVID

Put the beans in directly as the snow disappears. If I'm not back in time, you'd better get someone to help you with the digging.

ELIZABETH

And I nod because I can't speak, and I try to smile. I sit and stare stupidly at his luggage by the wall, and his roll of bedding and kit-bag, but I cannot see, for the tears.

DAVID

Shakespeare's Sonnets. Shall I read you some?

MUSIC CUE  
5

*So are you to my thoughts as food to life,  
Or as sweet seasoned showers are to the ground...<sup>20</sup>;*

(DAVID QUIETLY  
CONTINUES)

*And for the peace of you  
I hold such strife  
As 'twixt a miser and  
his wealth is found*

ELIZABETH

(OVERLAPPING WITH DAVID)  
He reads one or two to  
me. His low, tender voice  
trembles as he speaks the  
words. That tremor is my  
undoing --- (TO DAVID)

Don't read any more David. I  
can't bear it.

DAVID

No one else but you has ever found my heart  
Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

We talked all night, of our love and of the  
children. All was right. In the morning, David got  
up and made the fire and the children clambered onto  
our laps. I was not afraid of crying any more. My  
tears had been shed, my heart was empty, stricken  
with something that tears would not express or  
comfort.

(PAUSE, THEN TO DAVID)

We'll come to the station with you; for now you must  
be off.

DAVID

Hand in hand we went downstairs, out to the children  
in the garden, and walked to the station.

ELIZABETH

Before he got on the train he said:

DAVID

Remember Elizabeth that, whatever happens, all is  
well between us, for ever and ever.

SOLDIER NARRATOR

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<sup>20</sup> Sonnet 75

Those were the last words Second Lieutenant David Thomas, Royal Garrison Artillery ever said to his wife.

ELIZABETH

As the train pulled away he turned back to wave. I put my hands up to my mouth to call out, but no sound came. Panic seized me, and I ran, following the train, and stood there a moment dumbly, with straining eyes and ears. Then with leaden feet which stumbled in a sudden darkness that overwhelmed me I groped my way back to the empty house.

(ELIZABETH REMAINS CENTRE STAGE. WE SEE THE CAST UNFREEZE AND THE TRAIN SCENE COME ALIVE AGAIN. THE SAME GOODBYES CONTINUE, AND A SHIFT BACK IN THE MUSIC & LIGHTING. THERE IS A MIX OF BOTH JUBILATION AND SADNESS, THE MUSIC MAY BE SOFTER NOW TO KEEP THE TENDER FEELING. THE SOLDIERS CONTINUE TO SING. THIS TIME WITH GREATER PATHOS AND THE ENTIRE CAST AND CHOIR JOIN IN APART FROM ELIZABETH.)

SOLDIERS & WOMEN (SINGING TENDERLY)<sup>21</sup>

(DURING THIS SONG THE MEN LINE UP, SING TOGETHER, AND THEN EXIT IN A LINE FORMATION, LEAVING THE STAGE WITH WOMEN ONLY FOREGROUDED.)

*Keep the Home Fires burning  
While your hearts are yearning  
Though your lads are far away  
They dream of home  
There's a silver lining  
Through the dark cloud shining*

(BECOMING MORE TENDER AS WE SEE THE SOLDIERS EXIT)  
*Turn the dark cloud inside out*

ELIZABETH

(SOLO)

*Till the boys come Home*

MUSIC CUE  
FADES

THE TRAIN SCENE DISPERSES

## SCENE 5 - TRAINING<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T80\\_laj-B90](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T80_laj-B90) (more upbeat version than this needed)

<sup>22</sup> Entire scene taken almost verbatim from soldiers account in *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*

SERGEANT-MAJOR  
FORMAAAAAATTION!!

THE SOLDIERS TAKE UP CENTRE STAGE, LINED UP IN FORMATION  
FOR DRILLS.

SERGEANT-MAJOR  
(WITH ENERGY AND SIZE)  
When I says 'fix', you don't 'fix', but when I says  
'bayonets' you whips 'em out and whops 'em on.<sup>23</sup> What do  
you do?

ALL SOLDIERS  
Whips 'em out and whops 'em on!

SERGEANT-MAJOR  
Sarnt-Major!

ALL SOLDIERS  
Sarnt-Major!

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
When out on the front line, we would remember the lighter  
moments like this from training, and the laughter helped  
us shoulder our burdens.

SERGEANT-MAJOR  
Now - Private Ernest Bryan.

PRIVATE BRYAN STEPS FORWARD OUT OF FORMATION WHEN HIS  
NAME IS CALLED.

I've heard you have been a grumbling and complaining. Is  
this the case?

PRIVATE BRYAN  
No sir Sarnt Major sir!

SERGEANT MAJOR  
I am glad to hear it because -

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<sup>23</sup> Forgotten Voices, p.21

PRIVATE BRYAN

Just that we can't actually carry everything. Sir.

SERGEANT MAJOR

I begs your pardon Bryan?

MUSIC CUE  
5.5

PRIVATE BRYAN

Do you mind sir? If we were to demonstrate on you? What I mean? That now that we have full kit and everything to train with sir - we can't actually carry it all. Sir.

SERGEANT MAJOR

Can't carry it all?! Are you men or mice? If you are prepared to be put to shame Private Bryan, then certainly - let me show you how it's done!

(THROUGHOUT THE FOLLOWING FROM PRIVATE BRYAN, WE SEE ONE OR TWO SOLDIERS LADEN UP THE SEARGEANT MAJOR WITH EVERYTHING BRYAN MENTIONS. HE IS VISIBLY STRUGGLING.)

PRIVATE BRYAN

Bombs in your pockets sir, sandbags, spade, kit, rations, extra ammunition round the neck. How did you feel Sir?

SERGEANT MAJOR

It's quite the weight. I'll give you that.

PRIVATE BRYAN

You haven't started yet! You forgot the rifle, you've got to put that up, and how are you going to carry it, Sir, slung over your shoulders? You can't, because you've got to have it in your hand ready, but you can't take it in your left hand because in that you've got a pannier which weighs 46 pounds . . .

SERGEANT MAJOR

(REALLY STRUGGLING NOW UNDER THE WEIGHT)  
I can see you feel strongly about this Private.

PRIVATE BRYAN

Wouldn't you sir? Marching with all that, there won't be no need for bullets nor bayonets to bring us to our knees. The British Army will have managed it successfully already!

SERGEANT MAJOR

Point taken Private Bryan. Point taken. I'll take it up with them in charge. Now help me get this bloomin' lot off will you...

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Through a thousand other moments, whether training, travelling or in the trenches, we become brothers.

SOLDIERS SING

(ROUSING & FULL OF LIFE)

*Smile, boys, that's the style.  
What's the use of worrying?  
It never was worthwhile, so  
Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,  
And smile, smile, smile!*

(MEN MARCH AND EXIT DURING THE SONG.)

SERGEANT MAJOR

Prepare to go over the top!

**SCENE 6 - OH FOR THE WINGS OF A DOVE**

THE STAGE IS LEFT EMPTY WITH SERGEANT JACK DORGAN FRONT AND CENTRE.

SERGEANT JACK DORGAN<sup>24</sup>

7TH BATTALION, NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS.

During the attack on the 26th of April a shell dropped right in amongst us, and when I pulled myself together I found myself lying in a shell-hole.

SOLDIER NARRATOR

So remembers Sergeant Jack Dorgan, Northumberland Fusiliers.

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<sup>24</sup> Forgotten Vocies, p54

SERGEANT JACK DORGAN

There was one other soldier who, like me, was unhurt, and he said to me, 'We're not all here, Jack,' so I climbed out of the shell-hole and found two more of our comrades lying just a few yards from the shell-hole. They had had their legs blown off. All I could see when I got up to them was their thigh bones. I will always remember their white thigh bones, the rest of their legs were gone. Private Jackie Oliver was one of them, and he was unconscious. I shouted back to the fellows behind me, 'Tell Reedy Oliver his brother's been wounded.' So Reedy crawled out and lay with his brother, by his side, as he died. But the other fellow, Private Bob Young, was conscious right to the last. I lay alongside of him, put my arm around him, and said, 'Can I do anything for you, Bob?' He said, 'Straighten my legs, Jack,' but he had no legs. I touched the bones and that satisfied him. Then he said, 'Get my wife's photograph out of my breast pocket.' I took the photograph out and put it in his hands. He couldn't move, he couldn't lift a hand, he couldn't lift a finger, but somehow he held his wife's photograph on his chest. And that's how Bob Young died. And then we heard the singing,

MUSIC CUE 6

SOLDIER SINGS

*Oh, for the wings, for the wings of a dove<sup>25</sup>,  
Far away, far away would I rove!*

SERGEANT JACK DORGAN

(AS VOCALS BECOME OOHS FROM CHOIR)

Reedy Oliver was said to sing in a church choir before the war. And so we just lay there and listened to him sing his brother home.

Deleted:

SOLDIER SINGS

*In the wilderness build me a nest  
And remain there forever at rest  
In the wilderness build me, build me a nest  
And remain there forever at rest*

SERGEANT JACK DORGAN

I Sometimes think of Bob Young, and his wife. And I trusted that, somehow, through God, we would all be forever at rest.

<sup>25</sup> This was the actual song sung in the account given about this moment

SOLDIER SINGS (  
*In the wilderness build me a  
nest,  
And remain there forever at  
rest,  
Forever at rest  
Forever at rest  
And remain there forever at  
rest  
And remain there forever at  
rest*

ALL OTHERS  
Still all my song shall be  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee.  
(*slower*)  
Nearer to Thee.

MUSIC CUE  
FADES

**SCENE 7 - CHRISTMAS**

GROUPS OF SOLDIERS "HUDDLE" ON EITHER SIDE OF THE STAGE,  
REPRESENTING THE BRITISH AND GERMAN TRENCHES PEERING OVER  
THE TRENCHES TOWARDS EACH OTHER... THERE IS EXCITEMENT  
BUBBLING AS THEY DECIDE TO CALL OVER.

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Meanwhile, the promise of Christmas gave us all a little  
earthly rest, both for those of us at the front line..

GERMAN SOLDIER (GERMAN ACCENT)

'Happy Christmas, Tommy!'

BRITISH SOLDIERS LOOK AT EACH OTHER. ONE SPEAKS.

PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER

Merry Christmas Fritz!

SOLDIER NARRATOR

And those back home...

(A WOMAN REPRESENTING VERNON LEE COMES TO CENTRE STAGE,  
BETWEEN THE GERMAN AND BRITISH TRENCHES.)

VERNON LEE<sup>26</sup>

I was at our local village church on Christmas Eve - they had decided upon a concert of Bach's music.

SERGEANT MAJOR

'Get down you lunatics! Do you want to get your heads shot off!'

PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER

Shut up Sergeant, it's Christmas time!

VERNON LEE

The church was full of elderly men, us women of all ages, and a sprinkling of soldier-lads - on what may be their last Christmas in this world. Everyone seemed grave, sincere, aware of all it meant.

PRIVATE FRANK

We ignored the serg and all went forward to the barbed wire, and . . . just shook hands through the wire. I talked to one of their lads--

SOLDIERS FROM EITHER SIDE START TO GREET EACH OTHER BEHIND VERNON LEE AND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE TRENCHES.

GERMAN SOLDIER (GERMAN ACCENT)

Do you know where the Essex Road in London is?

PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER

Essex Road? Yes, my uncles had a shoe repairing shop there.

GERMAN SOLDIER

Ja wirklich. Really?

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<sup>26</sup> Sebastian Faulks with Hope Wolf. *A Broken World: Letters, Diaries and Memories of the Great War* (pp. 158-159). Random House. Kindle Edition.

VERNON LEE

With the first rasping notes of music, there came before my mind the fact that there also, in Bach's own country, were crowds like this one, listening to this same Christmas Music.

GERMAN SOLDIER (GERMAN ACCENT)

There's a barber shop on the other side where I used to work.

PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER

You probably cut my hair! [AD LIB]

VERNON LEE

(THE PRAYER IS REPEATED IN PHRASES IN GERMAN AFTERWARDS, PAUSE BRIEFLY AFTER EACH LINE FOR IT TO BE SAID IN GERMAN)

WE SEE A GERMAN WIFE STEP BEHIND AND TO THE RIGHT OF VERNON LEE. SHE REPEATS THE GERMAN PRAYER AS VERNON LEE SAYS IT. THEY OVERLAP

There, German women were Praying - just like us:

Give us, O God, strength to live in such times; teach us to forgive; give us such peace, through thy Son, as will never be broken.

GERMAN WIFE

Gib uns, Gott, Kraft, in solchen Zeiten zu leben; lehre uns zu vergeben; Gib uns solchen Frieden, durch deinen Sohn, als werde nie gebrochen werden

PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER

We chatted some more, and then we shook hands again, and wished each other luck.

(THE SOLDIERS RETURN TO THEIR RESPECTIVE SIDES. THEY SETTLE BACK INTO THEIR TRENCHES, HUDDLING TOGETHER, CREATING ALL DIFFERENT LEVELS, SOME SITTING, SOME STANDING, THEIR COMRADARIE EVIDENT.)

GERMAN SOLDIER (GERMAN ACCENT)

Will you send this off to my girlfriend in Manchester? A Christmas poem for her inside; a little gift.

VERNON LEE

We are united, us English & Germans, in the same hopes and fears and prayers, even as we are united in these same melodies. And beneath any differences? The harmonies of collective sorrow.

PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER

So, I took his letter, and sent it off to his girlfriend when I got home.

VERNON LEE

And, the service over, so many of us English and German women will go back to our homes, light up the Christmas tree, and laugh and play, so that our children at least may forget the war, and remember only that the Christ Child was born.

SOLDIERS SING A VERSE  
TOGETHER IN GERMAN & ENGLISH

*Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy Holy Face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy Birth!  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy Birth!*

*Stille Nacht! Heil'ge  
Nacht!  
Die der Welt Heil  
gebracht,  
Aus des Himmels goldenen  
Höhn,  
Uns der Gnaden Fülle läßt  
sehn,  
Jesum in Menschengestalt!*

SOLDIER NARRATOR

The songs we sung and the gifts we sent and received that Christmas, warmed our hearts. Because we were remembered.

MUSIC CUE  
FADES

**SCENE 8 - A LARK SINGS**

SINGLE SOLDIERS COME FORWARD TO SHARE THEIR ACCOUNTS.  
TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM LETTERS AND JOURNALS.

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Winter turned to summer. The snow melted, and sometimes you could forget where you were, or why. But even then, we remembered home...

PRIVATE W. UNDERWOOD<sup>27</sup>  
1ST DIVISION

It was a beautiful day. I was lying in a field writing a letter to my mother. The sun was shining and I remember a lark singing high up in the sky. Then, suddenly, the bombardment started and we got orders to stand to. We went up the line in two columns, one either side of the road. But as soon as we reached the outskirts of the village the bullets opened up, and when I looked around I counted just thirty-two men left on their feet out of our whole company of 227. Just 32. We were commanded to retreat.

MUSIC CUE 9  
(THE LARK  
ASCENDING -  
VIOLINIST)

GERMAN SOLDIER

As we went down after their retreat, I passed one of the dead soldiers and I saw he was holding a picture, clutched in his hand. I took it carefully from him. It was a picture of him with what I assumed was his wife and young son. I was stood surrounded by so many dead and dying, holding this beautiful picture, and I just wanted to cry at the madness that is war. On the back of the picture it had an address and said "Please forward to my loved ones if I am killed." I posted it to the red cross in Geneva to forward to them... May he rest in peace.<sup>28</sup>

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Moments of humanity in the carnage of war.<sup>29</sup>

LIGHT SMOKE IF POSSIBLE - THE AFTERMATH OF BATTLE.  
SOLDIERS HELPING THE INJURED, SOME SIT, HEAD IN HANDS; A SLOWED, ETHEREAL DANCE LIKE QUAKITY TO ANY MOVEMENT. A

<sup>27</sup> Forgotten Voices, (25% in on kindle)

<sup>28</sup> Story this is taken from - but no names etc included: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world-war-1/464768/First-World-War-hero-s-dying-wish-carried-out-by-his-German-killer>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

SOLO MALE DANCE EMERGES OUT OF THE ACTION, AND DANCES TO THE LARK ASCENDING.<sup>30</sup>

**SCENE 9 - "CORNET JOE"**

AS PRIVATE ERNEST TODD SPEAKS, THE SOLDIERS GATHER WITH LAUGHTER, JOKING WITH EACH OTHER; A GREAT SENSE OF COMRADERIE.

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD<sup>31</sup>

On a nice summer's day, when there wasn't any action, you could forget there was a war on really. The birds might start singing if the sun was up. The lads would sit on this fire step and talk and sing.

ALL SOLDIERS & MEN IN CHOIR  
(ENERGY & HUMOUR)

MUSIC  
CUE 10

*<sup>32</sup>If you want to find the General, I know where he is,  
I know where he is, I know where he is.  
If you want to find the General, I know where he is,  
He's pinning another medal on his chest.  
I saw him, I saw him, pinning another medal on his chest,  
I saw him, pinning another medal on his chest.*

*If you want to find the Major, I know where he is,  
I know where he is, I know where he is.  
If you want to find the Major, I know where he is,  
He's home again on seven days' leave.  
I saw him, I saw him, home again on seven days' leave,  
I saw him, home again on seven days' leave.*

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD  
(FULL OF ENERGY)

Then there was the man we used to call Cornet Joe.

MUSIC  
CONTINUES

THE SOLDIERS ALL LOOKING OVER THE TRENCHES AT THE AUDIENCE AS IF THEY CAN SEE CORNET JOE.

<sup>30</sup> It may feel like moments of this dance – the solo section: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbfsvbocxpg> )

<sup>31</sup> Forgotten Voices - 29% in on kindle

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_K1BdVvV9Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K1BdVvV9Q)

SOLDIERS  
(AD LIB)  
"Hey Cornet Joe!", "Play us a song!" ETC.

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD  
Cornet Joe was over in the German Front Line. He used to  
blow his cornet and play British songs to us. When he  
played we would shout out,

SOLDIER ?  
'Good one!'

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD  
and,

SERGEANT MAJOR  
'Give us another one, Joe!'

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD  
As the lines weren't too far away, he would ask us what  
we wanted to hear, and we would call them out.

(WITH EACH FOLLOWING SUGGESTION, SOLDIERS SPIRITED AND  
GOOD-NATURED REACTIONS BUILD LOUDER AND LOUDER.)

A SOLDIER  
What about "Are We Downhearted"?

A SOLDIER  
"There's a long long trail a winding?"

A SOLDIER  
"Take us back to dear old Blighty"!

CORNET JOE STARTS TO PLAY *TAKE US BACK TO DEAR OLD  
BLIGHTY*; THE SOLDIERS CHEER. THE SONG GROWS BIGGER AND  
BIGGER THROUGHOUT.

SOLDIERS  
*Take me back to dear old Blighty!*  
*Put me on the train for London town*  
*Take me over there*  
*Drop me anywhere*

**Comment [SB1]:** Suggested Text: "WITH EACH SUGGESTION,  
SOLDIERS SPIRITED AND GOOD-NATURED REACTIONS BUILD  
LOUDER AND LOUDER."

*Liverpool, Leeds, or Birmingham, well, I don't care!  
I should love to see my best girl  
Together again we soon should be  
Whoa!  
Tiddley-iddley-ighty  
Hurry me home to Blighty  
Blighty is the place for me!*

(REPEAT ONCE MORE. WOMEN JOIN IN DURING FIRST OR SECOND SHARING, DANCING WITH GREAT JOY WITH THE SOLDIERS. THE WOMEN FADE OUT TOWARDS LAST TWO LINES OF SECOND REPEAT...THE MEN SLOW DOWN THE SINGING A GREAT DEAL FOR LAST TWO LINES OF SECOND REPEAT; THE SOLDIERS REMEMBER HOME.)

A SOLDIER

This won't do lads - snap out of it! Cornet Joe - give us "Pack up Your Troubles."

(CAST INVITE THE AUDIENCE TO JOIN THE SINGING AT SOME POINT. PROBABLY THE SOLDIER NARRATOR. IT IS NO LONGER JUST THE MEN & WOMEN OF WWI, BUT EVERY VOICE JOINS TOGETHER IN HOPE, SORROW, AND LOVE.)

*Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag  
And smile, smile, smile  
While you've a lucifer to light your fag  
Smile, boys, that's the style!  
What's the use of worrying?  
It never was worthwhile  
So pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag  
And smile, smile, smile*

*It's a long way to Tipperary  
it's a long way to go  
It's a long way to Tipperary  
to the sweetest gal I know  
farewell to Piccadilly  
so long Leister Square  
It's a long way to Tipperary  
but my heart lies there*

PRIVATE EARNEST TODD

Well, on days like this there was nothing else to do but talk, reminisce, and sing. But then you'd hear a whistling bullet, and wouldn't know if it was a bird overheard - as they mimicked the bullets now - or Cornet

MUSIC  
CONTINUES

MUSIC  
FADES

Joe and his men being given their orders to shoot at us once again.

(THE SOLDIERS SING ONE LAST VERSE OF A SONG, ACCAPELLA. A LAMENT IS IN IT.)

*There's a long, long trail a-winding  
Into the land of my dreams,  
Where the nightingales are singing  
And the white moon beams.*

(WOMEN JOIN)

*There's a long, long night of waiting  
Until my dreams all come true;  
Till the day when I'll be going down  
That long, long trail with you.*

#### **SCENE 10 - MUNITIONS / WOMEN OF WAR**

SOLDIER NARRATOR:

Whilst we could never share the suffering of it all with our loved ones at home, we knew they too shared the grief, and some of the burden of the work of war. Our dear mothers and wives and sisters and sweethearts joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the Women's Royal Naval Service and the Women's Royal Air Force. They became police officers and nurses.

AS THE NARRATOR MENTIONS THE MOTHERS, SISTERS, WIVES, ETC., THE WOMEN STEP FORWARD ON THE STAGE, EXUDING STRENGTH, CHARITY, AND DILIGENCE IN SERVING THEIR COUNTRY AND LOVED ONES

VERA BRITAIN - NURSE

I served on the front line and in many hospitals. I could only acknowledge that even there, God was to be found. For in those holy places, God in man had been revealed, where mending broken bodies slowly healed my broken heart. Vera Britain, English Voluntary Aid Detachment Nurse

SOLDIER NARRATOR

One Scottish doctor named Elsie Inglis offered to help on the front. She was told:

A MAN  
My good lady, go home and sit still.

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
But, ignoring such 'advice,' and driven by a deep desire to serve all people, she went on to set up the Scottish Women's Hospitals on the front lines, and treated thousands of injured men from many nations. She wrote to her sister

ELSIE INGLIS  
(SCOTTISH, AGED 51)  
You cannot imagine what war is. The sights and smells are beyond description. We arrived at Braila to find 11,000 wounded, and only one surgeon. The wounded had overflowed into empty houses, and were lying about in their uniforms, their wounds not dressed for 4 or 5 days. So we just turned up our sleeves, and went to work.

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
Elsie Inglis and the nurses she trained and led saved thousands of lives. Said Winston Churchill of them: "They will shine in history."

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
Thousands of women also worked in munitions factories. Like Mrs. M. Hall who remembers:

AS MRS HALL COMMENCES OTHER WOMEN DRESSED AS MUNITIONS WORKERS ALONGSIDE HER, A STRAIGHT LINE FACING THE AUDIENCE, MIMING THE REPEATED ACTIONS OF MUNITIONS WORK.

MRS M HALL:  
(COCKNEY)  
It was terribly hard, terribly monotonous, but we had a purpose. There wasn't a (murmur) in that factory and every girl worked and worked and worked. I didn't hear one grumble. I was working with sailors' wives from three ships that were torpedoed and sank. It was pitiful to see them, so we had to cheer them up as best we could, so we sang (to them). It was beautiful to listen to

MUSIC  
CUE 9B

BEGINNING WITH ONE SOLO VOICE, GRADUALLY ALL THE WOMEN JOIN. THEY ACKNOWLEDGE EACH OTHER WARMLY AS THEY WORK AND SING IN HARMONY.

*Shall we meet beyond the river,  
Where the surges cease to roll?  
Where in all the bright forever,  
Sorrow ne'er shall press the soul?*

Refrain:

*Shall we meet, shall we meet,  
Shall we meet beyond the river?  
Shall we meet beyond the river,  
Where the surges cease to roll?*

*Shall we meet in yonder city,  
Where the tow'rs of crystal shine,  
Where the walls are all of jasper,  
Built by workmanship divine?*

*Shall we meet with Christ our Saviour,  
When He comes to claim His own?  
Shall we know his blessed favour,  
And sit down upon His throne?*

Refrain

*Shall we meet beyond the river,  
Where the surges cease to roll?*

MUSIC FADES

#### **SCENE 11 - THE SOMME**

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Months turned to years. Once, I found a German prayer book in the pillbox of Poelcappelle - on the cover 'Mit Jesus I der Feld,' and inside a coloured picture of Christ looking with pity on a dead German soldier. The same picture as in our own field prayer book, 'With Jesus in the Field.' The only difference was in the uniform of the dead soldier - German in one, our khaki in the other. You looked at those two pictures, and had the feeling that the heavens must be weeping, and that whole war was a horrible mistake.<sup>33</sup> For those of us who had been in since the start, and survived, we thought we had seen it all. But then came the battle of the Somme. One night in the depths of it, I was about 30 yards behind the lines, and I heard a French tenor sing. He had the most wonderful voice.

<sup>33</sup> The Soldiers War - The Great War through Veterans eyes, p266

FRENCH TENOR SINGS  
(French version of *Sing We Now at Parting*)

Que nos voix s'unissent  
Pour quitter ce lieu.  
Que nos cœurs bénissent  
Le sabbat de Dieu.  
Chantons nos louanges  
Pour ses tendres soins.  
Aux accents des anges,  
Joignons nos refrains.

Louons notre Père  
Pour son grand amour.  
Nos voix puissent plaire  
Aux cieux, en ce jour!  
L'Éternel mérite  
Lui seul tous nos chants.  
Sa bonté suscite  
Nos plus doux accents.

Ecoute à cette heure,  
Jésus, Rédempteur,  
Quand dans ta demeure  
On te loue en chœur.  
Conduis-nous et guide  
Chacun de nos pas.  
Que sous ton égide  
Nous ne péchions pas.

TENOR SINGING CONTINUES UNDER SPOKEN WORDS BELOW. WE SEE  
CAST MEMBERS STEP FORWARD AND GIVE THEIR LINES, AND  
REMAIN FORWARD IN SOLEMN REVERENCE.

SOLDIER NARRATOR

First day of the Somme - July 1st, 1916. 57,470 British  
casualties--the greatest loss of life the British Army  
has ever experienced in one day.

ELIZABETH

Have mercy, O Lord, upon all the nations of the earth;<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> D&C 109:54

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Total British casualties for the Somme, 415,690.

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD

Remember the nobles, and the great ones of the earth,

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Total French casualties for the Somme, 202,567.

FATHER

and all people, - all the poor, the needy, and afflicted  
ones of the earth;

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Total German casualties for the Somme, 434,500.

SERGEANT MAJOR

O Lord, we delight not in the destruction of our fellow  
men; their souls are precious before thee;

SOLDIER NARRATOR

So many of the Commonwealth soldiers also died in the  
Somme, defending these realms. Canadian casualties,  
24,029. Australian casualties, 23,000. New Zealander  
casualties, 7,408. South African casualties, 3000.

EDITH CAVELL

"The spirits of all men as soon as they are departed from  
this mortal body are taken to that God that gave them  
life"

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Total estimated British, Commonwealth, French & German  
casualties for the Battle of the Somme: 1.5 million

MARJORIE PICKTHALL

Under the level winter sky  
I saw a thousand Christs go by.  
They sang an idle song and free  
As they went up to Calvary.

With souls unpurged and steadfast breath  
They supped the sacrament of death.  
And for each one, far off, apart,  
Seven swords have rent a woman's heart.

ALL JOIN SINGING FINAL LINE OF HYMN

MUSIC  
FADES

*Que sous ton égide  
Nous ne péchions pas.*

**SCENE 12: THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER**

SOLDIER NARRATOR

Thousands of soldiers were not able to be identified in death, and fully remembered and honoured - a thing of terrible sorrow for the Reverend David Railton.

REVEREND DAVID RAILTON

I was an army chaplain at Armentières on the Western Front, 1916. One day, I saw a grave, with a rough, wooden cross, and on it, in pencil, was scrawled "An unknown British soldier." How that grave caused me to think!<sup>35</sup>... Who was he, and who were his people?... Was he just a boy.... I thought and thought and wrestled in thought. What can I do to ease the pain of

MUSIC CUE  
12

OTHER CAST MEMBERS STEP FORWARD AND JOIN REVEREND DAVID IN SAYING THE FOLLOWING LINES. THEY STAY IN POSITION, READY TO JOIN IN THE CHURCH SERVICE OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER.

MOTHER & REVEREND DAVID

Mother

FATHER & REVEREND DAVID

Father

PRIVATE W. UNDERWOOD & REVEREND DAVID

Brother

---

<sup>35</sup> "O God our help in ages past," "Lead Kindly Light" & "Abide With Me" were all sung at "The funeral service for a British Warrior" in Westminster Abbey, November 11<sup>th</sup> 1920

Sister MARJORIE PICKTHALL & REVEREND DAVID

Wife ELIZABETH & REVEREND DAVID

REVEREND DAVID  
and friend? Quietly and gradually there came out of the  
mist of thought this answer to my soul, clear and strong:  
"Let this body - this symbol of him - be carried  
reverently home over the sea to his native land." And I  
felt some peace.<sup>36</sup> His body was brought home. Chosen from  
amongst our unknown dead buried hastily in

the Aisne, PRIVATE BRYAN

the Somme, SERGEANT MAJOR

Ypres MIR DAST

or Arras PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER

REVEREND DAVID  
He was brought home. He is buried now in  
Westminster Abbey -

And etched in stone, VERA BRITTAIN

Not pencil on wood NURSE

PRIVATE ERNEST TODD  
Are these words for all to read -

---

<sup>36</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Railton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Railton)

SERGEANT MAJOR  
Beneath this stone rests the body  
of a British warrior

MIR DAST  
Unknown by name or rank

FATHER  
(He)gave the most that man can give

MOTHER  
Life itself

SERGEANT JACK DORGAN  
For God

PRIVATE W. UNDERWOOD  
For loved ones,

PRIVATE FRANK SUMPTER  
For King & Country

PRIVATE EARNEST TODD  
For home

ELIZABETH  
They buried him among the kings Because he had done good  
toward God and toward his house<sup>37</sup>

REVEREND DAVID  
And as the congregation at his funeral we sang  
together,

---

<sup>37</sup> These scriptures are also etched onto the grave: The lord knoweth them that are his; Greater love hath no man than this; Unknown and yet well known, dying and behold we live; **In Christ shall all be made alive.** (Will want to use in this scene or elsewhere)

DURING THE FOLLOWING VERSE, FOUR SOLDIERS MOVE DOWN FRONT CENTRE, IN VIGIL POSITION AT THE CORNERS OF THE "GRAVE", THEIR BACKS TO EACH OTHER, HEADS BOWED. CAST STAY ON STAGE AS IF SAT IN THE CONGREGATION.

ALL CAST & CHOIR

*Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

REVEREND DAVID

A vigil was kept all the night, and the Abbey was empty, save for the guard of honour, heads bowed about his grave, quite still - the whole scene illuminated by just four white candles.<sup>38</sup>

ALL CAST & CHOIR

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see;  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.*

SOLDIER NARRATOR

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," read the inscription on his tomb. And the prayer we sang reverberated off the stones of Westminster Abbey, in the trenches of France, and off the stones of a tiny prison cell in Belgium.

MUSIC  
FADES

### SCENE 13 - EDITH CAVELL; FAITH IN THE DARKNESS

THE SCENE CHANGES. THE SCENE CHANGES AND EDITH IS ALONE, IN A PRISON CELL AWAITING HER SENTENCE TO BE PASSED.

EDITH CAVELL

(SINGING - ACCAPELLE)

*I need Thy presence every passing hour.  
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?  
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.*

SOLDIER NARRATOR

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/unknown-warrior>

(after first two lines of hymn)  
So sang Nurse Edith Cavell before  
she faced a firing squad in occupied Belgium.  
Her crime? Helping hundreds of men return safely  
home to these shores.

A NURSE RUNS ONTO STAGE WITH A LETTER IN HER HAND FROM EDITH,  
AND IS JOINED BY OTHER NURSES. SEPARATE PART OF THE STAGE TO  
EDITH TO GIVE THE FEELING OF BEING APART.

NURSE  
Letter from Sister Cavell!

WE SEE OTHER NURSES GATHER AROUND THE LETTER, MIMING READING  
ALONG AND REACTING TO THE LETTER AS EDITH SPEAKS THE TEXT.

EDITH CAVELL  
Tell everybody I am quite all right here.  
Though I should be very glad to have  
a red blanket, and cup, fork, spoon and plate.  
Not the best ones though.<sup>39</sup>

MUSIC CUE  
13

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
She had written many letters  
from that small and lonesome cell

EDITH CAVELL  
I am so happy to know you are each devoted  
to your patients. Study well. Here I am learning how  
precious liberty truly is!<sup>40</sup>

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
Letters to the nurses she led at a little hospital in  
Belgium, where they had saved the lives of hundreds of  
soldiers from both sides of the conflict.

EDITH CAVELL  
When it comes to it, I find I am not afraid - what  
matters in the last hour is a clear conscience.<sup>41</sup> Do look  
after my little dog Jack for me. He shall be so sad.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Edith Cavell – Faith before the Firing Squad p.155

<sup>40</sup> Ibid p160 & 161

<sup>41</sup> P172 & 173

<sup>42</sup> Ibid p159

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
In her last letter she wrote this:

EDITH CAVELL  
If God permits, I shall watch over (each  
of) you and wait for you on the other side.  
Be sure to get ready for then.<sup>43</sup>

SOLDIER NARRATOR  
When she came to face the firing squad she declared:

EDITH  
Standing in view of God and eternity,  
I realise that patriotism is not enough. I must have  
no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.<sup>44</sup>

EDITH CAVELL,  
(NURSES JOINING)  
*Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;  
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.*

(WE SEE EDITH CAVELL TURN TO EXIT FOR HER EXECUTION,  
LEAVING THE NURSES ON THE STAGE STANDING TOGETHER.)

*Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

SOUND EFFECT FROM CAST, OR PRE-RECORDED OF WIND - TO  
SUGGEST THE BARRENESS OF THE FIELDS OF WAR.

MUSIC  
FADES

#### SCENE 14 - ARMISTICE

(WE SEE A SOLDIER STEP FORWARD AND ACCOUNT HIS WITNESS OF  
THE ARMISTICE. AS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS IS  
COMPLETED, THE SPEAKER REMAINS STANDING IN PLACE, A  
SOLEMN WITNESS IN THE STILLNESS. THE FEELING OF THE SCENE  
IS DIFFERENT, IT IS QUIET. THERE IS NO UNDERSCORING.)

SOLDIER NARRATOR<sup>45</sup>  
The Armistice eventually came, the day we had dreamed of.  
The guns stopped, the fighting stopped. Four years of  
noise and bangs ended in silence. The killings had  
stopped. We were stunned. I had been out since 1914. I

<sup>43</sup> P174

<sup>44</sup> P179

<sup>45</sup> Forgotten Voices – 90% kindle

should have been happy. I was sad. I thought of the slaughter, the hardships, the waste and the friends I had lost.

CORPORAL REGINALD LEONARD HAINE  
1ST BATTALION, HONOURABLE ARTILLERY  
COMPANY

It wasn't like London, where they all celebrated of course. No, it wasn't like that, it was all very quiet. We were so dazed we just didn't realise that we could stand up straight and not be shot. Corporal Reginald Leonard Haine. 1st Battalion, Honourable Artillery Company

CORPORAL CLIFFORD LANE  
1ST BATTALION, HERTFORDSHIRE REGIMENT

There was no cheering, no singing. We simply celebrated the Armistice in silence and thankfulness that it was all over. We were drained of all emotion. Corporal Clifford Lane. 1st battalion, Hertfordshire Regiment

MAUDE ONIONS<sup>46</sup>  
SIGNALLER

On the morning of November 11th, 1918, at the little signal office in Boulogne, France, where I was serving, I tapped out the official message to the armies in the field . . . 'Hostilities will cease at 11.00 hours November 11th.'-In the little Signal Office at Boulogne nothing happened at eleven o'clock, nothing except a silence, and an involuntary glance at the clock.-It was the first great silence of armistice. It was as though France had just heaved a vast sigh of relief. ...Then, as I made my way down to the quay side, on the stroke of three, every siren and hooter was let loose, every church bell clanged out - a deafening roar. But not a sound, not a movement, came from the hundreds of human beings who thronged the streets. ... Some of us tried to cheer, but voice failed. Then suddenly through the noise and din, the sobbing of a woman, a few yards away - 'Finis - finis - incroyable...' Almost unconsciously, I found myself in the little military cemetery behind the congested streets

MUSIC CUE 14  
-continues  
until end of  
show

<sup>46</sup> Sebastian Faulks with Hope Wolf. A Broken World: Letters, Diaries and Memories of the Great War (p. 170). Random House. Kindle Edition.

of the town, where our men were buried three deep... I could not distinguish the names, for the mist of tears. As I turned to go, I stumbled and almost fell over something on the ground, a broken piece of wood, ... It was the grave of a German soldier. I stooped and placed some flowers at the foot of the broken cross. Somewhere in Germany, a woman was sorrowing.

**SCENE 16 - AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH**

SOLDIERS START TO APPEAR SINGING DIRECTLY TO THE AUDIENCE.

*Keep the Home Fires burning  
While your hearts are yearning  
Though your lads are far away  
They dream of home*

WOMEN JOIN AND CAST CONTINUE TO OOH THE NEXT PART OF THE SONG AS THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES.

SOLDIER NARRATOR

We have come to remember. And whilst we rightly remember the broken hearts, the broken bodies, the broken minds and broken world of war, we must not forget that "He healeth the broken hearted." He who descended below all things that he may ascend above all things<sup>47</sup>.

THE SON FROM THE OPENING SCENE EMBRACES HIS MOTHER & FATHER, AND ELIZABETH AND DAVID AND THEIR CHILDREN EMBRACE

VERNON LEE

Through Jesus Christ, mother will embrace son;

DAVID

children their fathers,

MRS M HALL

husbands their wives: for all that is lost shall be restored.

SOLDIER NARRATOR

And "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,

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<sup>47</sup> Ephesians 4:10-11 & D&C 88:6

neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."<sup>48</sup>

MOTHER

And then we shall see clearly - that each of us are His; daughters and sons of a loving Heavenly Father -

SOLDIER NARRATOR

who in His wisdom and love, gave His Only Begotten Son that we may love and sing and weep, and love and sing again -

THE CAST ARE ALL ON STAGE AND IN FAMILY GROUPINGS, SYMBOLISING THE ETERNAL PROMISE OF BEING TOGETHER WITH OUR FAMILIES ONCE AGAIN AND UNITED WITH OUR DEAD.

SOLDIER NARRATOR

So that we may learn, if we so choose, to become like Him, and return to live in that other country, our heavenly home; a place of gentleness and peace, where we may live as one with Jesus Christ, our King.

*I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,  
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love;  
The love that asks no question, the love that stands the test,  
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;  
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,  
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.*

(CAST ALL COME FORWARD IN A LINE TOGETHER)

(PARTS)

*And there's another country,  
I've heard of long ago,  
Most dear to them that love her,  
most great to them that know;  
We may not count her armies,  
we may not see her King;  
Her fortress is a faithful heart,  
her pride is suffering;  
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds  
increase,  
And her ways are ways of gentleness,  
and all her paths are peace.*

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<sup>48</sup> Revelations 21:4

*The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.*

**ENDNOTES :**

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<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2627052/My-darling-Zen-I-love-sure-turn-end-Heartbreaking-letters-WWI-soldier-fiancee-just-months-died-Somme.html>

