

DAD'S ARMY

THE DEADLY ATTACHMENT

Original television transmission by the BBC on 31st October, 1973 with the following cast of characters:

CAPTAIN MAINWARING	Arthur Lowe
SERGEANT WILSON	John Le Mesurier
LANCE CORPORAL JONES	Clive Dunn
PRIVATE FRAZER	John Laurie
PRIVATE WALKER	James Beck
PRIVATE GODFREY	Arnold Ridley
PRIVATE PIKE	Ian Lavender
U-BOAT CAPTAIN	Philip Madoc
CHIEF WARDEN HODGES	Bill Pertwee
VERGER	Edward Sinclair
COLONEL	Robert Raglan
PRIVATE SPONGE	Colin Bean
PLATOON	Desmond Callum-Jones, George Hancock Evan Ross, Leslie Noyes, William Gossling, Freddie White, Freddie Wiles, Roger Bourne, Michael Moore
POLICEMAN	Ray Emmins
NAZI SAILORS	Les Conrad, Reg Turner, Clive Roger, Danny Lions, Alan Thomas, Emmett Hennessy, Barry Summerford

CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN MAINWARING
SERGEANT WILSON
LANCE CORPORAL JONES
PRIVATE FRAZER
PRIVATE GODFREY
PRIVATE WALKER
PRIVATE PIKE
PRIVATE SPONGE
PRIVATE HANCOCK
COLONEL
U-BOAT CAPTAIN
CHIEF WARDEN HODGES, ARP Warden
MR YEATMAN, the Verger
Other members of the PLATOON and seven U-BOAT SAILORS

The action takes place in the church hall and office at Walmington-on-Sea on the south coast of England

Time—1940

Scene One

The Church Hall.

The lights come up on a tableau: the platoon in heroic pose. Above them is a scroll sign with the words "Wilmington-on-Sea Home Guard". Hold the tableau for applause.

The platoon form up in two ranks at attention. PIKE is wearing a woolly scarf over his uniform.

MAINWARING Wilmington-on-Sea Home Guard, slope arms. Forward march.

The platoon march right downstage.

Platoon, halt. Salute. Order arms.

JONES *is a beat behind.*

Stand at ease. Attention.

JONES *is a beat behind.*

Try and keep up, Jones.

JONES Sorry, sir. I'm not myself today. You see my brawn went runny, and you can't slice runny brawn, sir.

MAINWARING All right, Jones.

JONES You have to serve it by the spoonful, and then you can't wrap it, it drips through the paper.

MAINWARING That will do, Jones. Now pay attention, men. Now I'm going to inspect the men, Wilson. Call them to attention.

WILSON Rightho. Attention!

MAINWARING Not like some nancy boy. You're supposed to be a sergeant. Bark it out.

WILSON (*barking*) Attention!

JONES Permission to speak, sir. I have to inform you that we are already at attention.

WILSON So you are. Stand at ease.

The men stand at ease. JONES is a beat behind.

JONES I wasn't ready then. You caught me on the hop.

MAINWARING Attention! (*He inspects JONES*) Very smart, Jones.

JONES Thank you, sir. I am also very alert. Even as I am talking to you, my eyes are everywhere. Whoa! (*He grabs PIKE's throat*)

PIKE What are you doing, Mr Jones?

JONES You moved. He moved, sir. And my reflex action came into play instantly.

PIKE Can I stand somewhere else, please Mr Mainwaring?

MAINWARING Stay where you are, Pike. How many times have I told you, Pike, not to wear that scarf on parade?

PIKE My mum makes me wear it. I've got a weak chest. You ask Uncle Arthur.

MAINWARING Wilson. (*He takes him downstage*) That boy's mother pampers and spoils him to death. Can't you do anything about it?

WILSON Not really, sir. You see Mavis, I mean Mrs Pike, makes him wear a scarf because he gets croup.

MAINWARING Croup? That's what chickens get.

WILSON He gets it as well.

MAINWARING Extraordinary! (*He passes on to FRAZER*)

FRAZER Captain Mainwaring, may I point out that while you're walking up and down wasting time, the Germans are just across the channel waiting to invade us.

MAINWARING Thank you, Frazer. I've made arrangements, Frazer. (*He passes on to WALKER*) Very smart, Walker. (*He taps him on the chest*) Just a minute. What's that?

WALKER (*pulling a flat half bottle of whisky out of his blouse*) A bottle of whisky.

MAINWARING How many times have I told you not to bring your black market activities on parade. Get rid of that bottle.

WALKER (*to the man next to him*) It's up to him. He ordered it.

MAINWARING What? Well... I'll overlook it this time. (*He passes on to GODFREY*)

GODFREY Good-evening.

MAINWARING Good-evening? This isn't a church social, Godfrey. This is war—and take that smile off your face. I am carrying out a military inspection.

GODFREY Do you think you'll be long, sir?

MAINWARING Why do you ask?

GODFREY Well I'd rather like to...

MAINWARING You'll just have to wait. Stand at ease. (*He crosses back to WILSON*) Now pay attention men. I have just received a new directive from GHQ regarding Nazi parachutists, and I'll read it to you. (*Reading*) "There is a danger that the Home Guard might confuse British pilots and air crews who are bailing out, with actual German parachute troops". (*Pause*) Not that our chaps get shot down very often, of course, but this could happen. (*Pause*) "A good point to remember here is the fact that no British plane contains more than six men. (*Pause*) So if you see a bunch of parachutists floating down, you count them, (*pause*) and if there are more than six, you shoot them in the air."

PIKE Mr Mainwaring.

MAINWARING Yes.

PIKE Mr Mainwaring, if they're dressed as nuns, do we still count them?

MAINWARING You count them however they're dressed, although it isn't likely that a whole plane-load of real nuns would drop by parachute.

JONES You never know, sir. I look at it this way. Supposing somewhere in occupied France there is a nunnery. And one day the chief nun calls all the other nuns together and she says, "Now listen, girls, I've had enough of being under Nazi heels, let us escape to dear old England", and they all creep out and steal a plane. And they fly, and fly and fly. And when these flying nuns get here, they don't know how to land, so they all jump out in parachutes.

MAINWARING I think you're getting into the realms of fantasy now, Jones.

JONES But it is a possibility, sir. It is a possibility.

MAINWARING It's a million to one chance. But I suppose we should take every precaution.

WILSON Excuse me, sir. If I may be allowed to interject at this point of the discussion?

MAINWARING Hmmmm?

WILSON It's really perfectly simple, you see. As they float down, the turbulence of the air will cause the habits to rise, and we shall be able to see their legs. Then we can tell if they're real nuns or not.

MAINWARING A very good point, Wilson, very good. You must look at their legs.

GODFREY Mr Mainwaring, *(pause)* I'm afraid I don't think I should care to look at nuns' legs, sir. It would be very impolite.

MAINWARING You'd just have to force yourself, Godfrey. This is war.

PIKE Mr Mainwaring, I don't know what real nuns' legs look like. I've never seen them.

WALKER If it comes to that, I don't think anybody has.

FRAZER Hairy 'uns!

MAINWARING I beg your pardon, Frazer?

FRAZER If they're Nazis, they'll have nasty hairy legs with jackboots on.

WALKER What do we do if the real nuns have got nasty hairy legs with jackboots on?

MAINWARING That will do, Walker. Now. *(Reading)* "If a Nazi parachutist was floating down with his hands up, would you think this was strange?"

WALKER Not half as strange as if he was floating up with his hands down.

MAINWARING I shan't tell you again, Walker. If he is floating down with his hands up, this does not necessarily mean that he is surrendering. He could have a grenade concealed in each hand, so watch it.

The phone rings in the office.

Answer the phone, Pike.

PIKE Yes, Mr Mainwaring.

PIKE crosses to the office.

MAINWARING By the way, Wilson, while we are on the subject of grenades, have you primed our stock of Mills bombs?

WILSON No, sir.

MAINWARING I told you to do it yesterday.

WILSON But it's awfully dangerous, sir.

MAINWARING War is awfully dangerous, Wilson. What would you do if a hoard of Nazi parachutists were to descend on

the Church Hall? Say "Wait a minute while we prime our grenades?" I want those bombs ready for instant use. See to it tonight.

WILSON Yes, sir.

PIKE *returns.*

PIKE You're wanted on the phone, Mr Mainwaring. GHQ, it's very urgent.

MAINWARING Of course. *(He crosses to the door)* Take over, Wilson.

MAINWARING and PIKE *jostle through the office door.*

MAINWARING Get out of the way, boy! And shut the door.

PIKE Yes, sir. *(He shuts the door, remaining in the office)*

MAINWARING From the other side.

PIKE Well you should've said. *(He sulks off into the hall, shutting the door behind him)*

MAINWARING *(picking up the phone)* Stupid boy!

The lights come up on the COLONEL on the phone, sitting at his desk.

COLONEL What was that, Mainwaring?

MAINWARING Nothing, sir, you wanted me?

COLONEL Yes, Mainwaring. I've got a very important job for you to do.

MAINWARING Excellent. What is it?

COLONEL I've just had a message from the police. A fishing boat has picked up a U-Boat captain and seven members of the crew. They're down at the harbour now, locked in the ship's hold.

MAINWARING By Jove, that's good news.

COLONEL I want you to pick them up and take them back to the church hall. I'll send an armed escort over to collect them.

MAINWARING Face to face with the enemy at last, eh, sir? Don't worry, we'll take good care of them.

COLONEL They won't give you much trouble. They've been drifting at sea for two days in a rubber dinghy. Good luck.

MAINWARING Thank you, sir.

The lights go down on the COLONEL.

MAINWARING *hangs up, strides to the door and opens it.*

Good news, men! After all these months of waiting, we're finally going to get to grips with the enemy.

WALKER *(to JONES)* Blimey, don't tell me we're going to invade France.

WILSON *hurries over to MAINWARING.*

WILSON You're not going to do anything too hasty, are you, sir?

MAINWARING I've got something very important to say to the men.

WILSON Have you found out what nuns' legs look like?

MAINWARING All right, Wilson. *(To the men)* A fishing boat has picked up a U-Boat crew, and we're going down to the harbour to collect them.

JONES Fix bayonets! We're going to collect a U-Boat crew. Fix bayonets! *(He rushes over to MAINWARING, waving his rifle with bayonet fixed)* I can't wait to get at 'em, Mr Mainwaring, I just can't wait.

MAINWARING Put that bayonet away, Jones. There's plenty of time for that when we get there.

JONES I can't help it, sir. When I get a whiff of action, I reach for my bayonet. It's a second nature, I tell you, second nature.

MAINWARING Fall the men in outside.

JONES Yes sir, yes sir. Fall in outside to collect a U-Boat crew.
Rifles and bayonets at the double.

JONES starts to hustle the men out.

MAINWARING Wilson! Pike! Wilson, while we're gone, I want you and Pike to prime all the grenades.

WILSON If you insist, sir.

MAINWARING I want it done by the time I get back. Right men, get a move on.

MAINWARING follows the men out.

The lights fade as they exit. Music.

Scene Two

In the office. A little later that evening.

The music fades out as the lights come up in the office on WILSON by the desk and PIKE in the doorway with a bomb in his hand. There are some Mills bombs laid out on the desk.

PIKE OK, youse guys, dis is a showdown. Share this pineapple amongst you! *(He pretends to pull the pin with his teeth and bowl the bomb through the door)*

WILSON For goodness' sake, put that down, Frank.

PIKE Those Chicago gangsters used to call them pineapples, Uncle Arthur. I saw it in that film *Scarface* with Paul Muni.

WILSON I don't care what they called them, they're very dangerous.

PIKE These are quite safe, they haven't got detonators in. *(He holds it up to his eye)* Look you can see right through. Shall I get them? *(He goes to move)*

WILSON Stay where you are, Frank, and don't do anything. I'll get the detonators. *(He crosses to the cupboard and gingerly takes out a box)* This is so risky. *(He opens the box. Pause)* There's only two in this box!

PIKE *(lurching enthusiastically towards the cupboard)* There's some more boxes at the back of the cupboard. Shall I—

WILSON *(fending him off)* I don't want you to touch them, Frank. *(He pulls a box from the back of the cupboard and looks at the label)* Hmmm! *(Reading)* "Dummy primers for training purposes only".

PIKE We don't want dummy detonators, they're no good. There's a box of real ones at the back.

PIKE lurches for the cupboard again, **WILSON** stops him.

WILSON Wait a minute, Frank. Look, er...um, how would it be if we were to put these dummies in the grenades, instead of the real thing.

PIKE But Mr Mainwaring said we had to have them ready for instant action. What would we do if the Germans came along?

WILSON We could soon change them round, it wouldn't take a moment. I mean we could get it done before the bells had stopped ringing.

PIKE Mr Mainwaring will be awfully cross if he finds out.

WILSON Yes, but I can't help feeling he'll be even more cross if we all get blown up, now come on let's do that.

They move to the desk and begin putting detonators in the bombs.

Blackout.

Scene Three

The Church Hall. Later that evening.

MAINWARING, WALKER, FRAZER and GODFREY enter, followed by the U-BOAT CAPTAIN and SEVEN SAILORS. The rest of the platoon bring up the rear with fixed bayonets. JONES is milling around waving his bayonet at the prisoners, who have their hands on their heads.

JONES Left, right, left, right. *(As they enter)* Hande Hoch! Hande Hoch! Keep those Handeys Hock!

MAINWARING All right, Jones. They can put their hands down.

JONES Right. Handeys down! Handeys down! Nix Hock! *(He gestures with his rifle)*

MAINWARING What are you doing, Jones?

JONES They're still hocking, sir!

MAINWARING Never mind that. Now, Frazer, get the Lewis gun and set it up on the stage, so that it has a clear sweep of the entire hall.

FRAZER Ay, ay, sir.

FRAZER goes into the office.

MAINWARING Sponge! Hancock!

SPONGE }
HANCOCK } *(together)* Sir!

MAINWARING Go and get a stepladder.

SPONGE Right you are, Mr Mainwaring.

SPONGE and HANCOCK exit.

MAINWARING Corporal Jones!

JONES Yes, sir.

MAINWARING Get those prisoners into a tight huddle in the middle of the hall.

JONES Yes, sir. *(To the prisoners)* At the double in a tight huddle. In a small group in the middle of the hall. Move! Come along now.

JONES *and the rest of the platoon push the prisoners into a tight group in the middle of the hall.* **WILSON** *comes out of the office, followed by PIKE.*

WILSON *(entering through the office door)* You got back then, sir. Did they give you any trouble?

MAINWARING Not really. *(Lowering his voice)* But they're an ugly mob. You see that captain, you want to watch him, he's a surly brute. He's done nothing else but sneer and smoke cigarettes.

WILSON That reminds me, sir, I wonder if he's got any left. I seem to have run out.

MAINWARING This isn't a cocktail party, Wilson. Did you prime those grenades?

PIKE Well, Mr Mainwaring, we—

WILSON I think I can honestly say, sir, that all the grenades now have detonators in them.

At this point GODFREY makes himself comfortable in a chair by the stage and slowly nods off to sleep unnoticed during the following.

MAINWARING Good. Pike, get the Tommy gun.

PIKE *(with disbelief)* The Tommy gun!

MAINWARING The Tommy gun.

PIKE Thank you! Yes, Mr Mainwaring.

PIKE *goes into the office.* **JONES** *comes over to MAINWARING and WILSON.*

JONES The prisoners are now in a huddle in the middle of the hall, sir.

MAINWARING Thank you, Jones.

WALKER *(to one of the SAILORS)* 'Ere listen. Tell your mates that I am in the market for purchasing Nazi daggers, swastikas, badges, signed pictures of Hitler or similar souvenirs. I'll give you a good price.

The Sailor shakes his head.

Oh blimey, you don't speak English, do you? Look, Nazi daggers, see daggers.

WALKER *makes a stabbing motion at the sailor, who jumps back.* **The CAPTAIN crosses to WALKER.**

CAPTAIN Get away from my men at once.

WALKER Don't start on me, mate.

MAINWARING Come over here, Walker.

WALKER *crosses to MAINWARING, WILSON and JONES, who are standing in a tight group away from the prisoners.*

How dare you fraternize with the enemy.

WALKER I was only asking them if there was anything they needed.

MAINWARING I'll attend to that. *(Lowering his voice)* Now listen. The armed escort will be here shortly to collect these prisoners. Meanwhile we want maximum security, Wilson, maximum security.

WILSON Yes, sir. Maximum security.

FRAZER *comes out of the office with the Lewis gun.*

JONES *(seeing the Lewis gun and reacting excitedly)* Whoop!

FRAZER Here you are, sir. It's all loaded and ready.

MAINWARING Right, set it up.

FRAZER *crosses to the stage, puts the Lewis gun on a card table and sits behind it.*

JONES Permission to speak, sir. How about cutting their trouser buttons off?

MAINWARING What?

During this speech, the CAPTAIN moves up quietly behind JONES.

JONES Well, sir, if we cut their trouser buttons off, and they try to run away, it will show at once that they are something unusual. Then a person walking along the street, nonchalant like, will see these men running, with their trousers round their ankles, and they will investigate.

CAPTAIN You!

JONES What?

CAPTAIN You don't dare do anything of the sort. The Geneva Convention clearly states that prisoners of war will not be put in humiliating positions.

JONES *gestures with his bayonet.*

JONES You'll be in a humiliating position, mate, if you get this up you.

CAPTAIN Don't threaten me, you silly old fool. *(He lights a cigarette)*

JONES You!!! You!!! *(He gestures at the CAPTAIN with his rifle)*

MAINWARING Jones. Jones! That will do, Jones.

JONES He called me a silly old fool, sir!

MAINWARING We're not savages. *(To the CAPTAIN)* You get back in your place and speak when you're spoken to.

WALKER Yeah that's right, get back in the huddle.

PIKE *comes out of the office with the Tommy gun.*

CAPTAIN I'm warning you, Captain.

MAINWARING *(in the CAPTAIN's face)* Just do as you're told.

The CAPTAIN blows smoke in MAINWARING's face. He holds his expression for a while, but stifles a cough as he crosses to WILSON.

You see the sort of *(he coughs)* insolent swine *(he coughs)* we're up against, Wilson?

WILSON Yes, sir. He has got rather an abrupt manner. But you must make allowances for him, he's probably upset because we sunk his submarine.

SPONGE and HANCOCK *enter with a stepladder.*

SPONGE Where do you want this stepladder, Mr Mainwaring?

MAINWARING Set it up here.

PIKE Here, Mr Sponge, I'll give you a hand.

MAINWARING Pike, get up there with your Tommy gun, then you've got a clear view of the entire hall.

PIKE You know I don't like going up ladders, Mr Mainwaring, with my vertigo.

MAINWARING Get up there at once, boy!

PIKE *starts to go up the ladder.*

PIKE It's ever so wobbly.

MAINWARING Get up!

PIKE I've got a note from the doctor.

MAINWARING Will you get up there! Godfrey—where's Godfrey?

GODFREY *is now dozing in a chair by the stage.*

Godfrey!

GODFREY *wakes with a start.*

GODFREY Did you call, sir? *(He goes to MAINWARING slowly)*
I'm terribly sorry, sir, I must have dozed off.

MAINWARING Dozed off! Here we are guarding a dangerous gang of cutthroats and you doze off. You're supposed to watch him like a hawk, like a hawk. *(Pause)* Hold the ladder.

GODFREY Yes, sir.

SPONGE *gets him a chair and he sits to hold the ladder.*
The phone rings.

MAINWARING Take charge, Wilson.

The lights fade down in the hall and the cast freeze. The lights fade up in the office.

MAINWARING *goes into the office, crosses to the desk and picks up the phone.*

Mainwaring here!

A spot comes up on the COLONEL at his desk on the other side of the stage.

COLONEL GHQ here. Everything all right, Mainwaring?

MAINWARING Yes, sir. I've got the prisoners safe and sound. They're all ready for you to pick up.

COLONEL I'm afraid the escort won't be able to get over there until tomorrow morning.

MAINWARING Do you mean to say that we've got to look after them all night?

COLONEL Sorry, can't do anything about it. Just give them a blanket each and bed them down. And give them something to eat, of course.

MAINWARING I'm afraid we've only got our own sandwiches, Colonel.

COLONEL Well, send out for some fish and chips.

MAINWARING Fish and chips!

COLONEL I'll see that you get the money back. Be over about eight in the morning. Cheerio.

MAINWARING *hangs up.*

The spot goes out on the COLONEL and he exits.

MAINWARING Fish and chips!

The lights crossfade from the office to the church hall.

(he quickly strides to the office door) Wilson!

WILSON Yes, sir. *(He joins MAINWARING)*

MAINWARING Come here—Jones! *(He gestures for him to join them)* The armed escort can't get over until the morning. They've got to be here all night.

JONES Well in that case, I really think we ought to cut their trouser buttons off, sir. *(He gestures with his bayonet)* Let me do it! Let me do it, sir!

MAINWARING Put that away, Jones. I shall have a word with the prisoners, Wilson.

WILSON You can't speak German, can you, sir...?

MAINWARING Oh, they'll know by the tone of my voice who's in charge. Believe me, Wilson, they recognize authority when they see it.

WILSON Yes, but—

MAINWARING *(concerned)* You'd better come with me.

WILSON Yes, sir.

They cross to the prisoners, followed by JONES.

MAINWARING Right now, pay attention.

The prisoners all come smartly to attention.

WILSON I say, they're awfully well disciplined, aren't they, sir?

MAINWARING Nothing of the sort. It's a slavish blind obedience. Not like the cheerful, light-hearted discipline that you get with our Jolly Jack Tars. I tell you they're a nation of unthinking automatons, led by a lunatic who looks like Charlie Chaplin.

CAPTAIN How dare you compare our glorious leader with that non-Aryan clown!

MAINWARING Now look here.

CAPTAIN *(taking out a notebook and pencil)* I am making a note of your insults, Captain, and your name will go on the list. And when we win the war, you will be brought to account.

MAINWARING You can write down what you like. You're not going to win this war.

CAPTAIN Oh yes we are.

MAINWARING Oh no you're not.

CAPTAIN Oh yes we are.

PIKE *(singing)*

"WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK, HITLER IS A TWERP, HE'S HALF BARMY, SO'S HIS ARMY..."

The CAPTAIN crosses to the ladder. The words die on PIKE's lips.

"Whistle..."

CAPTAIN Your name will also go on the list. What is it?

MAINWARING Don't tell him, Pike.

CAPTAIN Pike. Thank you.

MAINWARING *(boiling)* Now look here. I've had just about enough. Tell your men from me that they're going to be here all night and they'd better behave themselves. Now get on with it.

The CAPTAIN shrugs his shoulders. During the following, he speaks to the prisoners in German.

PIKE *(to WILSON)* Uncle Arthur.

WILSON Yes, what is it, Frank?

PIKE It's not fair that my name should be on the list. I was only joking.

WILSON You really should try and be more careful, Frank. You must realize by now that the Germans have absolutely no sense of humour.

PIKE But you've said much worse things about Hitler. *(Raising voice towards the CAPTAIN)* He's said much worse things.

WILSON Quiet, Frank. He'll hear you.

PIKE Do you think if you had a nice word with him, he'd take my name off the list?

WILSON OK I'll have a nice word.

MAINWARING *(to the CAPTAIN)* Have you told them what I said?

CAPTAIN Yes

MAINWARING Walker!

WALKER Yes, Captain Mainwaring.

They look around to check no-one is listening.

MAINWARING Is the fish and chip shop still open?

WALKER Yeh! I think so. Why?

MAINWARING *hands him a ten-shilling note.*

MAINWARING Here's ten shillings. Buy some for the prisoners. Jones. Wilson, a conference. *(He walks over to WILSON and JONES)*

WALKER *(taking out a notebook and licking a pencil)* Right then. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight cod and chips.

CAPTAIN I want plaice.

WALKER Right. One plaice and chips and seven cod and chips.
Right! Who wants vinegar?

CAPTAIN Wer mochte Essig? [*Who wants vinegar?*]

Four hold up their hands.

WALKER One, two, three, four, vinegar. Right. Who wants salt?

CAPTAIN Wer mochte Salz? [*Who wants salt?*]

Three hold up hands.

WALKER One, two, three for salt. Who doesn't want salt or vinegar?

CAPTAIN Wie viele ohne Salz und Essig? [*How many without salt and vinegar?*]

Two hands.

WALKER That's two without salt or vinegar. (*To the CAPTAIN*) 'Ere, c'mon now, let's see if I've got this right. Now, you want plaice and chips, and they're gonna have cod and chips. That's four with vinegar, three with salt and two without salt or vinegar.

MAINWARING (*approaching*) Walker! Walker! What do you think you're doing?

WALKER I'm taking the order.

CAPTAIN And I don't want nasty, soggy chips. I want mine crisp unt light brown.

WALKER (*writing it down*) Crisp unt light brown.

MAINWARING Never mind that rubbish! Now listen to me, if I say you'll eat soggy chips, you'll eat soggy chips.

The CAPTAIN writes it on his notepad.

WALKER (*also writing it down*) Soggy chips.

The tabs close and the lights fade to blackout. Music fades up as required to cover movement on stage.

Scene Four

The Church Hall. Later that night.

The tabs open, the music fades and the lights come up to full.

JONES is sitting behind the Lewis gun on the stage. **WALKER** and **FRAZER** are sitting beside him. **WILSON** is sitting in front of the stage, reading *Picture Post*. **PIKE** is up the ladder with the Tommy gun. **GODFREY** is sitting on a chair holding the ladder. **MAINWARING** is walking up and down, watching the prisoners, who are sitting on benches in the middle of the hall. The rest of the platoon are sitting in a circle round the prisoners. The **CAPTAIN** is smoking and following **MAINWARING** with his eyes all the time.

FRAZER Fancy giving those Germans fish and chips. All I've had to eat tonight is paste sandwiches.

JONES You've got to treat prisoners of war properly, you know, Jock. I shall never forget when we was in the Sudan, we had a young officer, Captain D'Arcy Holdane his name was, and he used to say, "Boys, always treat them Dervish prisoners well. See that they get plenty of betel-nut. If we treat them well, they'll learn by our example and treat us well." Anyhow, a few days later he was captured.

WALKER What happened to him?

JONES They chopped his head off.

FRAZER Look at the time. One o'clock in the morning. You'd think he'd let some of us take it in turns to sleep.

WALKER It's no use, Taff. Captain Mainwaring won't let us take our eyes off them. He's obsessed.

MAINWARING is still walking up and down. GODFREY stops him as he passes.

GODFREY Do you think I could possibly be excused, sir?

MAINWARING Certainly not. Stick to your post.

PIKE Yes, you hang on to this ladder, Mr Godfrey.

MAINWARING walks back towards the stage. He stops when he gets level with the CAPTAIN, who is watching him like a hawk. He moves and turns again, and waves his hand at the CAPTAIN.

MAINWARING Don't keep staring at me all the time. Can't you look in another direction?

He walks towards the stage and as he passes WILSON he knocks his newspaper.

Put that down, Wilson. I told you to watch the prisoners. *(He goes up on the stage)* Keep them well covered, Jones.

JONES Don't you worry, sir, I'm watching 'em.

FRAZER Yon captain never takes his eyes off you for a minute, Mr Mainwaring. If you were to ask my opinion, I don't think he likes you very much.

WALKER I wouldn't want to be in your shoes, sir, if he were to turn the tables on us.

MAINWARING There's not much chance of that, Walker.

The cast freeze as the lights crossfade to the office.

HODGES and the VERGER enter the church hall office by the back door.

HODGES Well I've had a good night tonight. I've booked three houses for showing lights and we've shared a bottle together, Mr Yeatman.

VERGER By the way, Mr Hodges, not a word to his reverence that I keep a bottle in my hidey hole.

HODGES You can rely on me. I'm the soul of discretion. Mum's the word. Better go and say good-night to Napoleon.

The lights crossfade to the hall.

HODGES and the **VERGER** enter the hall.

Good-night, Napoleon. (*He sees the prisoners*) Blimey, what's all this?

MAINWARING They're Nazi prisoners of war. Keep away from them.

VERGER You've no right to keep Germans in the church hall. The vicar will be furious.

MAINWARING You mind your own business.

The CAPTAIN suddenly clutches his stomach and groans.

HODGES What's the matter with you, mate?

CAPTAIN I feel so ill. (*He groans and slips to the floor*) It's my stomach.

HODGES 'Ere give me a hand, Verger.

They both cross to the CAPTAIN.

MAINWARING Get away from him.

HODGES What are you talking about? Can't you see the man's sick?

The CAPTAIN is groaning and rolling on the floor.

FRAZER He looks bad to me, sir.

WALKER Perhaps it was them soggy chips you made him eat.

MAINWARING crosses to **WILSON**.

WILSON I really think we ought to do something, sir.

MAINWARING I don't trust him, Wilson.

WILSON We can't just leave him lying there.

HODGES Well, don't stand there, Mainwaring. Do something. He's somebody's son, you know.

VERGER He's got a heart of stone, you know, Mr Hodges.

GODFREY There's some bicarbonate of soda in my first-aid kit if you think that will help.

MAINWARING Stay where you are, Godfrey.

PIKE Yes, don't let go of the ladder, Mr Godfrey.

MAINWARING Jones, keep them well covered. Watch them like a hawk, like a hawk do you understand?

JONES Yes, sir, I'm completely cocked.

MAINWARING And you, Pike, I'm going in.

FRAZER and WALKER come down from the stage with their rifles and bayonets. MAINWARING crosses to the CAPTAIN, who is cradled in HODGE's arms. The CAPTAIN gives another groan and passes out.

There's something funny here.

HODGES What are you afraid of? They're only a few harmless German sailors.

MAINWARING kneels over the **CAPTAIN**.

MAINWARING He seems to be breathing all right. How's his pulse?

Suddenly the CAPTAIN grabs MAINWARING's revolver, gets his arm round HODGE's neck and presses the revolver against it.

CAPTAIN No-one is moving!

MAINWARING You, you...

CAPTAIN Hold as Maschienengewhr! [*Get the machine gun!*]

Two SAILORS advance on JONES, who picks up the Lewis gun and backs away.

JONES Get back—you're not having it. Get back! Get back!

WILSON Please be careful, Jonesey.

The two SAILORS jump up on the stage. JONES backs away, trips, the Lewis gun goes off and blows holes up the back wall and in the roof. PIKE falls off the ladder. Everyone dives for the floor as clouds of dust and bits of roof fall down.

Blackout.

Scene Five

The Church Hall. Later that night.

The lights come up full on the office and the church hall.

MAINWARING and the platoon are standing in a tight group in the middle of the hall, facing the door of the office. **JONES** is squatting behind the Lewis gun, which is on the card table. **FRAZER**, **WALKER** and **PIKE** are standing beside him with rifles and bayonets. The rest of the platoon are grouped round them, except **SPONGE**, **Desmond** and **HANCOCK** who are off stage. They all have fixed bayonets. **GODFREY** is hovering in the background. **MAINWARING** is in the middle with the Tommy gun. All weapons are pointed at the office door. In the office, **HODGES** is sitting at the desk. The **CAPTAIN** is standing beside him with the revolver stuck in **HODGES'** head. The rest of the **SAILORS** are standing round the desk, the **VERGER** is towards the back, standing nervously.

WILSON enters the church hall from the main doors.

MAINWARING Everything all right, Wilson?

WILSON Yes, sir. I've posted Sponge, Hancock and Desmond outside. They've got the back door and window of the office covered.

MAINWARING That stupid drunken fool Hodges!

JONES I didn't let them have the gun, did I, sir?

MAINWARING No, you behaved very well, Jones.

JONES I haven't felt like that since I was in the trenches in 1916... I did do well, didn't I, Mr Wilson? Didn't I do well?

WILSON Yes you did, Jonesey, awfully well, very well indeed!

JONES Yes and you behaved well as well. You kept cool you did, you kept cool.

WILSON Oh you thought so did you, very cool was I?

FRAZER Hey hey hey, when you've quite finished this mutual admiration society, perhaps you'd like to tell us what we're going to do now, Captain Mainwaring?

WALKER He's right, we can't hang around here all night.

MAINWARING They've only got one revolver, and they can't get out of the office. Believe me, Walker, we hold all the trump cards.

The office door opens a few inches. They all cock their rifles. The VERGER's hand comes round the door and waves a white handkerchief.

MAINWARING Do they want to surrender, Verger?

VERGER No. I've got a message from the captain. He says he wants you to take him and his men back to the fishing boat so that they can cross to France.

MAINWARING He wants what!

VERGER If you don't agree to his terms, he's going to blow Mr Hodges' head off.

JONES Mr Mainwaring, if you let them escape back to France they'll get another submarine and start sinking British ships again.

WILSON Jones is right, I'm afraid, sir.

WALKER It's one man's life against thousands.

FRAZER A terrible decision you've got to make, Captain Mainwaring... But you must admit, you've never liked the man!

MAINWARING Tell him we need time to think it over.

VERGER Right.

He hurries back to the office. Inside the office HODGES is still sitting at the desk with the CAPTAIN beside him

with the revolver stuck in HODGES' neck. The rest of the SAILORS are standing round. The VERGER goes into the office.

The lights fade down in the church hall and the cast freezes.

Scene Six

In the Office. Immediately following.

The lights fade up in the office.

CAPTAIN Well?

VERGER He's thinking it over.

CAPTAIN I'll give him until dawn.

HODGES What did Mainwaring say?

VERGER I must admit, Mr Hodges, it doesn't look good for you.

HODGES Oh no!

The lights fade in the office.

Scene Seven

In the Church Hall. Immediately following.

The lights come up in the church hall.

WALKER If only we could get that gun away from him somehow.

JONES Permission to speak, sir. I have an idea. Supposing I was to put on some old clothes, black my face, knock on the door and say I am a chimney sweep? And when I see Mr Hodges, I will say, "Hallo, Fritz". And they will say, "Why do you call him Fritz?" And I will say, "Because he is not British, he is a German prisoner of war, who works as an ARP Warden in his spare time".

MAINWARING Please, Jones.

JONES But it will sow the seeds of doubt in their minds, sir. And while the seeds are being sown, I will jump on the captain, and if the gun goes off, it might not hit Mr Hodges.

MAINWARING gives JONES a look of despair.

PIKE Mr Mainwaring, I saw a film called *The Petrified Forest*. And Humphrey Bogart was holding Leslie Howard by gunpoint in a cabin all night. And Leslie Howard kept quoting poetry and using long words. And it didn't half upset Humphrey Bogart. Perhaps you could do that.

WILSON I missed that film. What happened to Leslie Howard in the end?

PIKE He got shot.

MAINWARING You stupid boy.

GODFREY I saw Freddie Bartholomew in *David Copperfield*, sir. But there wasn't really anything in that.

MAINWARING I haven't heard so much drivel in all my life! ...*David Copperfield!* ...Wait a minute. Mr Micawber! "Something's bound to turn up." That's it. We'll play along

with them. We've got to go through the town to get to the harbour. Someone's bound to raise the alarm. (*Shouting at the office*) All right, we agree to your terms. (*To WILSON*) Even if they get to the boat, Wilson, the Navy will blow them out of the water before they've gone a mile.

The office door opens and the CAPTAIN, with HODGES at gunpoint, comes out of the office. The VERGER and the rest of the SAILORS follow.

CAPTAIN I'm glad you have come to your senses, Captain. (*To one of the SAILORS*) Hold as Maschienengewehr! [*Get the machine gun!*] Passt auf die auf! [*Cover them!*] (*To the platoon*) Put down your rifles.

They hesitate.

MAINWARING Do as he says.

They pile their rifles on the floor.

CAPTAIN Get me a grenade and a piece of string.

MAINWARING See to that, Wilson.

WILSON Yes, sir. (*He goes into the office*)

CAPTAIN (*to the SAILORS in German*) Gewhre abladen und Bayonette abnehme. [*Unload the rifles, take the bayonets off.*]

They unload the rifles.

MAINWARING You won't get away with this. We're bound to be spotted going through the town.

CAPTAIN No-one will interfere, Captain, because you will be escorting us through the streets with empty rifles.

MAINWARING And how do you propose you're going to make us do that?

WILSON *returns with a Mills bomb and a piece of string.*

CAPTAIN Very simply.

He hands the revolver to one of the SAILORS, who holds it against HODGES's neck. He takes the bomb and string from WILSON.

Is it primed?

WILSON Oh yes.

The CAPTAIN unscrews the base plug.

CAPTAIN You don't mind if I make sure?

WILSON By all means.

The CAPTAIN looks in the bomb.

CAPTAIN Good. (*He screws back the base. To JONES*) You, old man, take off your belt and undo the back of your tunic.

JONES I beg your pardon?

CAPTAIN Do as I say. Remove your belt. (*He ties the end of the string to the ring of the pin*)

JONES takes off his belt and unbuttons the back of his blouse.

And just to make sure, Captain, that your behaviour is correct, the old man will march in front of me... (*He puts the bomb in the waistband of JONES's trousers. Pause*) One false move from you— (*Pause*) —and I pull the string. (*He buttons up the back of JONES's blouse*)

JONES Don't make any false moves, Mr Mainwaring, and don't make any real ones either!

CAPTAIN Seven seconds will give me plenty of time to get clear, but I think it is not enough time for the old man to unbutton his tunic.

FRAZER A terrible way to die.

MAINWARING You unspeakable swine. Now look here. I'm the commanding officer of this unit and as such I reserve the right to have the bomb in my waistband.

JONES I will not allow you to have a bomb in your trousers, sir. Don't you worry about me, they can put twenty bombs in my trousers and they will not make me crack.

MAINWARING You can't win this war! You see the sort of men this country breeds?

CAPTAIN Rather stupid ones.

MAINWARING You can sneer, but you've forgotten one thing, Captain.

CAPTAIN Oh yes, what is that?

MAINWARING The Royal Navy! You've got to cross twenty-five miles of water. You'll never make it.

CAPTAIN Oh yes we will, because all of you will be on the boat with us. (*Pointing to GODFREY*) We shall leave the old man behind, to tell them. Your Navy won't fire on their own people. (*He takes MAINWARING's revolver, empties it and puts it back in the holster*) And when we get to France— (*Pause*) —you will be my prisoners— (*Pause*) —and then — (*Pause*) —we shall examine the list.

Blackout.

Scene Eight

In the street, on the way to the Harbour.

The half tabs are closed to hide the church hall. The lights fade up to full.

We see the procession marching along (on the spot for the purposes of dialogue once centre). MAINWARING is in front and HODGES and the VERGER are marching level with him, the CAPTAIN is close behind him with the rest of the SAILORS. They are surrounded by FRAZER, JONES, WALKER and GODFREY and the rest of the platoon carrying rifles. WILSON and PIKE are in the rear.

PIKE Uncle Arthur?

WILSON Yes!

PIKE If I tell the German there's a dummy detonator in the grenade, do you think he'll take my name off his list?

WILSON Be quiet, Frank!

The COLONEL comes round the corner.

WALKER Blimey, sir! Look, it's the colonel.

MAINWARING (*over his shoulder to the CAPTAIN*) The game's up! What are you going to do now?

CAPTAIN I am not going to do anything. You will bluff your way out.

MAINWARING I refuse to co-operate with you in any way whatsoever. He won't go through with it, Jones!

JONES Please, Mr Mainwaring, if you don't do as he says he'll pull the string.

MAINWARING Oh no he won't.

CAPTAIN Oh yes I will.

JONES He says he will, Mr Mainwaring.

They draw level with the COLONEL.

MAINWARING Platoon, halt!

COLONEL Where on earth are you taking the prisoners, Mainwaring?

MAINWARING The fact is sir, I—

WALKER We're going for a walk, sir. Captain Mainwaring thought it would be a good idea if we gave them a breath of fresh air. They've been cooped up in a submarine for weeks.

COLONEL What on earth's the matter with you, Mainwaring? You're as white as a sheet. You look as if you've seen a ghost.

FRAZER A breath of fresh air will do him the power of good, sir.

GODFREY We're taking them down to the harbour. The Sailors like a sea breeze.

COLONEL Well, all right then. I'm on my way to the railway station to pick up the escort for the prisoners. I'll see you later.

MAINWARING Yes sir, yes sir. Platoon, by the right, quick march!

They start to move.

COLONEL Wait a minute! Halt!

They halt.

You know, I'm surprised at you, Mainwaring. Your men are usually so smartly turned out. Why isn't Jones wearing his equipment? And what's that great lump of string hanging down his back?

MAINWARING Where?

COLONEL Here.

He pulls the string and holds it up. We see the pin on the end of it.

MAINWARING Oh no!

Everyone except the COLONEL, JONES, WILSON, PIKE, MAINWARING, WALKER and FRAZER dive for cover and flatten themselves against the ground. MAINWARING, WALKER and PIKE try to get the bomb from JONES's trousers.

JONES I've got a bomb in my trousers. Don't panic! Don't panic!

MAINWARING Get it out, Jones.

He starts to unbutton the back of his blouse. HODGES is holding the VERGER, who has his fingers in his ears. The COLONEL looks on aghast.

FRAZER I'll get it, sir, I'll get it.

JONES It's slipped down, sir. Save yourself, Mr Mainwaring.

WALKER Hang on, I'll cut it out. *(He goes at JONES with a bayonet)*

FRAZER thrusts his arm down the back of JONES trousers.

WILSON crosses to the COLONEL.

WILSON I wonder if I might borrow your revolver, sir.

MAINWARING and JONES are dancing in the road.

JONES Don't panic, sir. Don't panic, sir.

COLONEL What the hell's going on?

WILSON I'll explain later. *(He waves the revolver at the prisoners)* Now listen to me, you German chaps. Would you mind awfully getting up against the wall, with your hands up please.

The prisoners obey.

Go on, do as you're told, there's good fellows.

MAINWARING Jones! Jones! Wait a minute. Wait a minute. It should have gone off by now.

They both stop.

JONES So it should. I've been saved, sir. I've been saved.

MAINWARING *crosses to WILSON.*

MAINWARING I thought I told you to prime those grenades.

WILSON I did, sir, with dummies.

MAINWARING Why is it you can never do anything you're...
You've saved Jones's life, Wilson.

WILSON Well now perhaps you'll agree with me that it's awfully
dangerous to keep them primed.

JONES Now that the crisis is past, Mr Mainwaring, would
you mind asking Private Frazer to take his hand out of my
trousers?

Blackout.

MUM'S ARMY

	CAPTAIN MAINWARING
	SERGEANT WILSON
	LANCE CORPORAL JONES
	PRIVATE FRAZER
	PRIVATE WALKER
	PRIVATE GODFREY
	PRIVATE PIKE
	MISS GRAY
	EDITH PARISH
	MRS EISE
	MRS FOX
	MRS HOWARD
	IVY BARWYS
	WAITRESS
	SUDDIT ATTENDANT
	SERVICE MAN
	MRS PROSSER
	PORTER
	HEADROOM
	Leslie Nover, Freddie White, George Hanon
	Hugh Cecil, Desmond (Jimmy) Jones
	Frank Godfrey, Frankie Watts
	Eric Stark, Les Corrad, David McArthur
	Henry Martin, Ann Downes, Carol Smith
	Clifford Hemmings, Mavis Cook
	SERVICE GIRLS
	CUSTOMERS

MUM'S ARMY

Original television transmission by the BBC on 20th November, 1970 with the following cast of characters:

CAPTAIN MAINWARING	Arthur Lowe
SERGEANT WILSON	John Le Mesurier
LANCE CORPORAL JONES	Clive Dunn
PRIVATE FRAZER	John Laurie
PRIVATE WALKER	James Beck
PRIVATE GODFREY	Arnold Ridley
PRIVATE PIKE	Ian Lavender
MRS GRAY	Carmen Silvera
EDITH PARISH	Wendy Richard
MRS PIKE	Janet Davies
MRS FOX	Pamela Cundell
MISS IRONSIDE	Julia Burbury
IVY SAMWAYS	Rosemary Faith
WAITRESS	Melita Manger
BUFFET ATTENDANT	Deirdre Costello
SERVICEMAN	David Gilchrist
MRS PROSSER	Eleanor Smale
PORTER	Jack Le White
PLATOON	Colin Bean, Hugh Hastings, Vic Taylor, Hugh Cecil, Desmond Cullum-Jones, Leslie Noyes, Freddie Wiles, George Hancock, Frank Godfrey, Freddie White
SERVICEMEN	Eric Stark, Les Conrad, David Melbourne, Peter Wilson
SERVICE GIRLS	Hilary Martin, Ann Downs, Carol Brett
CUSTOMERS	Clifford Hemsley, Maria Cope

CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN MAINWARING
SERGEANT WILSON
CORPORAL JONES
PRIVATE FRAZER
PRIVATE GODFREY
PRIVATE WALKER
PRIVATE PIKE
PRIVATE SPONGE
PRIVATE HANCOCK
MRS FOX
IVY SAMWAYS
EDITH PARISH
MRS GRAY
MISS IRONSIDE
MRS PIKE
WAITRESS
MRS PROSSER
SERVICEMAN
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PLATOON
RAIL PASSENGERS

The action takes place in Walmington-on-Sea on the south coast of England

Time—1940

Scene One

The Church Hall. Night.

The platoon is on parade. MAINWARING and WILSON are in their usual positions. JONES is at the far end, away from them.

MAINWARING Platoon—stand at ease.

JONES *is late.*

Platoon—'shun!

JONES *is late.*

WILSON Try to do it with the others, Jones.

JONES Sorry, sir.

MAINWARING Thank you, Wilson. Platoon—stand at ease.

JONES *is late yet again.*

JONES I think what is causing it, sir, is that—you being at the end of the line—the sound of your command is taking longer to cross the air to reach me, sir.

MAINWARING Yes—it must be something like that.

WALKER Perhaps, if you was to nod your head, sir, he would catch on a bit quicker.

JONES That's right, sir, you nod yer head, sir, and I'll not be found wanting.

MAINWARING I don't think we'll get involved with that, Jones. Now, pay attention. Some of your uniforms are looking pretty shoddy and one or two badges could do with brassing up a bit. Now, this brings me to a little scheme that we have been discussing—haven't we, Wilson?

WILSON That's right, sir.

MAINWARING *nods.*

JONES (*coming suddenly to attention*) H'up.

MAINWARING What's the matter, Jones?

JONES You nodded, sir, so I sprung to it.

MAINWARING We're not doing that, Jones.

JONES I'm sorry, sir.

MAINWARING Now, we've been approached by several of the womenfolk.

JONES Ay 'up. (*He stands at ease*)

MAINWARING What's the matter now, Jones?

JONES I was standing at attention, sir. Now I'm easing myself.

MAINWARING We have been approached by several of the womenfolk, who would like to join with us in our fight against the common foe. Wilson and I think this is quite a good scheme—don't we, Wilson?

WILSON Yes, sir. Don't nod, will you, sir?

MAINWARING I'll watch it. They could take over some of the paperwork and the making of tea and cocoa, etc...

FRAZER Buttons!

MAINWARING I beg your pardon, Frazer?

FRAZER Buttons, sir. They could sew on buttons.

MAINWARING Precisely—a very good point. Make a note of that, Wilson.

WILSON Yes, sir.

MAINWARING (*nodding*) A very good point, indeed.

JONES (*jumping to attention*) Ay 'up.

MAINWARING Jones!

JONES You nodded, sir. Oh—sorry, sir—I forgot we wasn't doing it.

MAINWARING (to **WILSON**) We're going to have to let him go.

GODFREY My sister is very good at sewing—petit point and all that sort of thing—providing someone else will thread the needle.

MAINWARING I think perhaps we should concentrate on rather a younger age group, Godfrey.

PIKE There's a new girl at the sweet shop—she's very obliging.

MAINWARING That sounds more like the girl we need.

WALKER That's right—comforts for the troops.

MAINWARING We don't want any of that sort of talk, Walker.

FRAZER There's a lassie works for the Gaslight and Coke Company. She's a good weight-bearing sonsie girl with a firm body and big strong thighs.

JONES They're very strong—the ones with big thighs.

MAINWARING Well, I'm sure between us, we can round up the right sort of material. What does sonsie mean?

WILSON An obscure Scottish term.

MAINWARING Anyway, bring them along to the office tomorrow. We only need a handful. Properly trained, they'll release us—the frontline troops—so that we can grapple with the enemy.

WALKER I don't suppose Taffy and Jones' ere will have much energy left after grappling with those big thighs.

MAINWARING Walker, I shan't tell you again.

Blackout.

Scene Two

In the Office and the Church Hall. Night.

WILSON *is in the office at the desk doing some work. In the church hall stands a group: JONES is waiting with MRS FOX; PIKE is with IVY SAMWAYS—a very quiet, retiring girl; FRAZER is without his girl; WALKER has brought EDITH PARISH who is a blonde, forthcoming cockney.*

MAINWARING *enters the office by the outside door.*

MAINWARING Ah, good-evening, Wilson. How goes the recruiting?

WILSON The men seem to have brought quite a few along.

MAINWARING Right, we'd better bash on. Get them in—one at a time.

WILSON *crosses to the hall door.*

WILSON Ah, now, who's first?

JONES This is Mrs Fox, Sergeant.

WILSON Ah, yes, Mrs Fox. I wonder if you would be so kind as to come in.

MRS FOX Oo—thanks ever so.

MRS FOX *comes into the office with JONES.*

WILSON What an awfully humid day it's been.

MRS FOX Yes, hasn't it.

WILSON Still—you're looking marvellously cool. This is Mrs Fox, sir.

MAINWARING (standing and saluting) How do you do, Mrs Fox.

MRS FOX Nicely, thank you.

JONES She's one of my best customers, sir. I think you will find she will give every satisfaction.

MAINWARING Thank you, Jones.

WILSON By Jove, how rude of me—please have a chair. (*He draws up a chair*) Now, is there anything we can get you? Would you like a nice cup of tea or something?

MRS FOX Oh, I don't think so.

MAINWARING Wilson.

WILSON The kettle's on, it won't take a moment.

MRS FOX Well...

MAINWARING Wilson, I would like a word with you outside for a moment. Please excuse me, Mrs Fox.

He takes WILSON into the church hall.

Wilson, I know you are something of a ladies' man, but these women are going to be subject to discipline like the rest of our force. Let's start as we mean to go on, shall we?

WILSON Well, surely we can be polite!

MAINWARING I quite agree, but we don't have to have all this Jack Buchanan stuff. We'll just stick to the business in hand, if you don't mind.

WILSON Whatever you say, sir.

They return to the office.

MAINWARING Sorry about that, Mrs Fox. Name—Fox. Christian name?

MRS FOX Marcia.

MAINWARING (*writing*) Marcia.

WILSON What a pretty name,

MRS FOX Do you think so?

WILSON It's one of my favourites.

MAINWARING Wilson!

MRS FOX (*handing over a card*) Oh, there's my address. (*Confidentially*) I've written my age on the bottom.

MAINWARING Thank you.

MRS FOX (*turning to JONES*) I was just telling Mr Mainwaring—I've written my age on the bottom.

JONES *thinks this is a very strange thing to have done.*

MAINWARING Occupation?

MRS FOX Widow.

MAINWARING Is that an occupation?

WILSON (*being charming again*) In Mrs Fox's case, I would say it was almost a calling.

MAINWARING (*throwing down the pencil*) Wilson!

WILSON Sorry, sir.

JONES Mrs Fox is a very fine looking lady, sir—and a most understanding and warm female person.

MAINWARING Well, I'm sure that will be most useful. Would you like to join us?

MRS FOX I didn't know you'd come apart.

WILSON laughs cordially. MAINWARING is deadpanned.

WILSON Awfully good—don't you think so, sir?

MAINWARING I'll take that as an affirmative answer. Thank you, Mrs Fox. Next one please, Wilson.

WILSON This way, Mrs Fox.

WILSON shows MRS FOX out to the hall.

MRS FOX (*as she goes*) Thank you, Mr Mainwaring.

JONES (*leaning over the desk*) She's a very dry wit, sir, is Mrs Fox.

MAINWARING Yes, I'm sure. Thank you, Jones.

WILSON *ushers PIKE and IVY SAMWAYS into the office.*

PIKE Oh, this is the young lady I was telling you about, sir.
Ivy Samways.

MAINWARING Ivy Samways.

WILSON You may remember, sir—she was the one who was very obliging.

MAINWARING Thank you, Wilson.

JONES *looks at IVY.*

There's no need for you to stay, Jones.

JONES Thank you, sir.

JONES *starts to go back to the church hall with elaborate about turns, left turns, right turns, etc.*

MAINWARING Now, you're a shop assistant, aren't you?

JONES *salutes.*

Get out, Jones.

JONES *goes into the hall.*

You're a shop assistant, aren't you?

She nods.

Address?

IVY (*completely inaudible*) Twenty-seven, Jutland Drive.

MAINWARING I beg your pardon?

IVY (*inaudibly again*) Twenty-seven, Jutland Drive.

MAINWARING I... I'm afraid I didn't quite catch that.

PIKE Jutland Drive, sir.

MAINWARING Oh, Jutland Drive. (*He writes*) What number?

IVY (*inaudibly*) Twenty-seven.

MAINWARING Umh?

IVY (*inaudibly again*) Twenty-seven.

PIKE Twenty-seven...sir.

MAINWARING Ah...now I wonder what sort of task we can find to fit Miss Samways.

WILSON Answering the telephone, sir?

MAINWARING You're trying my patience rather far today, Wilson.

WILSON She can look after the secrets file, sir, most admirably.

MAINWARING Right...thank you, Miss Samways.

FRAZER *pops into the office. PIKE and IVY go back to the hall. During the following, WALKER comes into the office with EDITH PARISH.*

FRAZER A word, sir?

MAINWARING Yes, Frazer.

FRAZER The lassie from the Gaslight and Coke Company cannot be here tonight, sir, but I have asked her, and she wants to join. She's just the sort we want, sir. A fine, firmly built girl—you know—strong...with big thighs.

MAINWARING Yes...thank you, Frazer. Bring her tomorrow.

WALKER *is in front of the desk with EDITH PARISH.*

WALKER Er, Mr Mainwaring, this is Edith Parish—she's a friend of mine.

MAINWARING I see...do you have an occupation, Miss Parish?

EDITH Yeh—I'm an usherette.

WALKER That's right—the Tivoli Cinema—you know—with the torch.

MAINWARING Ah... I expect you see a lot of pictures.

EDITH Yeah... I see a lot of other things an' all.

WALKER (*confidentially*) Any time you want to see a film... knock three times on the fire exit round the side alley and she'll fit you in.

MAINWARING Y-e-s, well, I don't think I shall be taking advantage of your hospitality, Miss Parish. Now, where do you live?

EDITH Down Berwick Road—thirty-five—I live with my dad and he's six foot three—so you needn't get any ideas.

MAINWARING I think that will be all, Miss Parish.

WALKER I'll see that she's here tomorrow, sir.

WALKER and EDITH go back to the hall.

(*to EDITH, as they go*) You shouldn't have said that to 'im—he don't get ideas.

WILSON and MAINWARING are alone in the office.

MAINWARING I don't think that is the right class of girl for us at all, Wilson. Are there any more?

WILSON No, that's all, sir.

MAINWARING Send the men home then, Wilson. They were very late last night. I'll sort some of this out.

WILSON Very good, sir. (*He goes into the hall*) Er, right—that's all for tonight, ladies and gentlemen. I hope you've enjoyed it, and we'll look forward to seeing you at the same time tomorrow.

Everyone starts to exit.

The lights fade to blackout.

Off you go then.

Scene Three

In the Church Hall and Office. Immediately following.

There's a knock on the outside door.

MAINWARING Come in.

MRS GRAY enters. She is a good-looking, middle-aged woman with great charm, very neatly dressed.

MRS GRAY Captain Mainwaring?

MAINWARING That's right.

MRS GRAY I heard you were needing women helpers for the Home Guard—is that right?

MAINWARING Yes, yes, quite correct. Do sit down.

MRS GRAY I've heard about this platoon since its very beginning. I think you've done a wonderful job.

MAINWARING Well, we just try to do our best for old England in her hour of need.

MRS GRAY I'd love to help. Just to feel that I was doing something.

MAINWARING Your face seems vaguely familiar. Have I seen you at the Golf Club?

MRS GRAY No... I've not been in Walmington long. I had to bring my mother away from London because of the bombing.

MAINWARING I see.

MRS GRAY I'd loved to have stayed—not that there was much that I could have done, but just being there would have shown that wretched little Hitler that we're not going to give in.

MAINWARING By Jove—that's the sort of talk I like to hear. (*Getting down to business*) Now, what's the name?

MRS GRAY Gray.

MAINWARING Shall we see you tomorrow night, then? We usually parade about seven o'clock.

MRS GRAY I can't wait to start. At the moment my life consists of morning coffee at Ann's Pantry and making the dahlias grow.

MAINWARING I'm very fond of dahlias.

MRS GRAY Really? Do you grow them, too?

MAINWARING No—no, unfortunately. My wife says they attract earwigs.

MRS GRAY What a shame, but she's quite right. *(She gathers her bag and gloves)* Captain Mainwaring, may I say something awfully personal?

MAINWARING Well, of course.

MRS GRAY Do you always wear spectacles?

MAINWARING Well, yes I do.

MRS GRAY Would you take them off for a moment?

MAINWARING Well, er, yes, if you wish. *(He takes them off)*

MRS GRAY That's so much better—I always think they act as a sort of...well...they cut off the warmth in a person's eyes—just as a fireguard takes away so much of the heat.

MAINWARING Yes, I suppose you're right. I... I've never thought of it that way.

WILSON *enters from the hall door.*

MAINWARING *hastily replaces his glasses.*

WILSON Oh—still here, sir?

MAINWARING Ah...Sergeant Wilson—this is a new recruit—Mrs Fiona Gray.

WILSON Fiona! I say, what a pretty—

MAINWARING And the Christian name?

MRS GRAY Fiona.

MAINWARING Fiona—what a pretty name.

MRS GRAY Do you think so?

MAINWARING It has always been one of my favourites.

MRS GRAY Thank you.

MAINWARING Occupation?

MRS GRAY Well...widow, I suppose—if you can call that an occupation.

MAINWARING Well, in your case I would say it was almost a... *(He decides not to say it, and instead writes)* Widow—and the address?

MRS GRAY Thirty-one, Wilton Gardens.

MAINWARING Wilton Gardens! That's quite near me.

MRS GRAY I know... I see you go to the bank every morning.

MAINWARING I say, do you really?

MRS GRAY And how marvellously punctual you are. We thought you were three minutes late the other day.

MAINWARING Was I?

MRS GRAY No. The clock was wrong.

MAINWARING Oh well...in my position one must set an example to the youngsters.

MRS GRAY Oh, I agree. All the old standards are declining so rapidly.

MAINWARING They are—indeed they are.

She looks at him. He looks at her.

MRS GRAY Well, I mustn't keep you.

MAINWARING (*interrupting*) Yes...well... I have all the details, Mrs Gray, and I'll see you tomorrow at seven thirty.

MRS GRAY I shall look forward to it.

MRS GRAY goes.

MAINWARING Most charming woman that, Wilson.

WILSON Is she, sir?

MAINWARING Just the sort of material we need.

WILSON Well, you're such a good judge as a rule, it will be most interesting to see how they all shape up.

Blackout.

Scene Four

The Church Hall and the Office. The following night.

The girls and the platoon, including, FRAZER, JONES, WALKER, PIKE and GODFREY, are in the hall. FRAZER's girl, MISS IRONSIDE, is apart from the rest. FRAZER crosses to JONES.

FRAZER There she is, Jones, over there.

JONES looks.

JONES I don't think she's got big thighs, Mr Frazer. Long ones maybe.

FRAZER What's the matter with your eyes, man. They're like tree trunks.

The lights come up on the office.

There are dahlias on MAINWARING's desk and the whole place is neater than usual.

MAINWARING enters from the outside door. He goes to the desk and puts down his stick and gloves. He sees the dahlias. He is pleased. He crosses to the mirror, he removes his glasses and admires the result with some difficulty. He puts them in his top pocket.

WILSON calls to **MRS PIKE** from outside.

WILSON (*offstage*) Go through the main door, Mavis, and we'll be with you in a moment.

WILSON enters the office from outside. During the following, **MRS PIKE** enters the hall from the main door.

Ah, good-evening, sir.

MAINWARING Good-evening, Wilson.

WILSON Dear, dear, have you broken your glasses, sir?

MAINWARING No, Wilson, I just left them off for a moment.
(*He puts them on again*) Right, let's get on with it.

MAINWARING *goes into the hall, followed by WILSON.*

WILSON Platoon—'shun!

WALKER, FRAZER, JONES, PIKE and GODFREY *are in the front row with their girls in the row behind them.*

MAINWARING Now, welcome, ladies.

LADIES Good-evening. (*Etc.*)

MAINWARING Since sooner or later we will be getting you uniforms, I thought it best today to teach you just the rudiments of foot drill, so that we can look like a disciplined body of men and—er women. Now, first of all—the "at ease" position. The legs should be comfortably apart—about eighteen inches or so.

They do so.

The hands are placed right over left—just over your bot... over your beh...at the back. Have you all got that?

MRS PIKE A lot of red tape nonsense.

PIKE No talking in the ranks, Mum.

MAINWARING Pike. No talking in the ranks. Now, to come to attention—you transfer your weight on to your right foot.

They lean.

You raise your left foot. I'm doing it in slow motion, of course, and—then place your left foot beside your right.

MAINWARING *totters and WILSON steadies him.*

Thus. Now, here's the tricky bit. At the same time, bring your hands to your sides, with thumbs in line with the seams of your trousers.

JONES Permission to speak, sir? These ladies are not wearing trousers, sir—they being ladies.

WALKER They can put their thumbs in line with the seams of their knickers.

MAINWARING Walker, fall out and stand over there. You will take no further part in this parade.

WALKER (*moving to the side*) Blimey, what have I said?

EDITH If we wasn't wearing 'em, he'd have something to go on about.

GODFREY (*to the ladies behind him*) He's very coarse, but very good-hearted.

MAINWARING Right, now, let's try it. Give the command, Wilson.

WILSON Squad—'shun.

They come to attention.

MAINWARING Oh, no—that was very sloppy. Not you, Mrs Gray, that was very good. You must all stand up straight. Stomachs in, chests out.

JONES Not you, Mrs Fox, that's very good.

MAINWARING Right, now, let's go once more. Stand at ease. Squad, 'shun...

They do so. MRS FOX is behind the others.

Now, come along, Mrs Fox.

JONES Yes, come along, you're all behind.

MRS FOX I was following you.

JONES You mustn't undermine my position, you know.

MAINWARING Stand at ease.

MRS PIKE Silly red tape.

PIKE Mum, no talking in the ranks.

MAINWARING Pike! I shan't tell you again.

FRAZER Captain Mainwaring. Miss Ironside here is doing it very well. Her legs are going with a very firm, strong action.

MAINWARING Yes, thank you, Frazer. (*To WILSON*) She doesn't seem to have very big thighs to me, Wilson.

WILSON Quite long, though.

MAINWARING Yes, now, let's move on to left and right turn. Now to turn right, you swivel on the right heel and left toe—thus. One—two, one—two.

MAINWARING *demonstrates and totters a little.* **WILSON** *helps him.* **WALKER** *hums.*

Walker! Now brace the rear thigh hard as you go.

FRAZER Ay, that's right. Do as the captain says—those thighs have to be braced firm and strong.

MAINWARING Yes, thank you, Frazer. Then you lift the rear leg high, and place it beside the front one.

EDITH Blimey—what a way to win the war.

GODFREY You'll find the captain knows best, if you'd listen to him.

MAINWARING Godfrey, face front and don't keep staring at the ladies.

WALKER Woman mad—woman mad 'e is.

MAINWARING Any more from you and you'll be sent home.

WALKER *reacts.*

Look to your front. Now, let's try it. Squad—'shun. Very good, Mrs Gray.

MRS GRAY *reacts.*

Squad—left turn.

They turn different ways.

Ah—face your front.

WILSON There seems to be a little confusion as to which is which, sir.

MAINWARING I know, Wilson.

JONES They had the same trouble, sir, during the American Civil War, when they had to have all sorts of crude, rough, country yokel men as soldiers and they didn't know their left foot from their elbow, sir. So, to overcome this ingeniously, they tied a piece of hay to one foot and a piece of straw to the other, and when they wanted to turn left, the commanding man said "Hay turn" or "Straw turn"—according to whether the hay was on the left foot or the straw was on the left foot. Mind you, they had to be careful to get straws on all the left feet or hay, as the case may be. Do you think that would help, sir?

WALKER I think that's a good idea, sir. Then you would be able to come in and say, "Good-evening, ladies, what nice straws you are wearing."

MAINWARING That's it—go home, Walker.

WALKER I didn't say anything.

MAINWARING I'm not arguing—it's an order.

The lights fade to blackout.

Scene Five

Ann's Pantry. Day.

The café is two or three tables wide by two or three tables deep. There is a window and a door to the street.

GODFREY, in his everyday clothes, is sitting by the window, concealed by a newspaper.

MAINWARING enters. He is in his business suit. He selects a table in the foreground, looks round and sits. He removes his spectacles, and takes up his paper. He can't see it, so he puts his specs on again.

MRS GRAY enters. She is about to sit at the next table when she sees **MAINWARING**.

MRS GRAY Oh, good-morning, Mr Mainwaring.

MAINWARING (*rising*) Ah, what a surprise. Won't you join me?

MAINWARING takes off his spectacles. **GODFREY** drops his newspaper. He reacts to the scene.

MRS GRAY Thank you. (*She sits*) I haven't seen you here before.

MAINWARING Oh, I come here from time to time, you know—when I get my nose away from the grindstone.

The WAITRESS brings the menu.

WAITRESS Yes, please?

MAINWARING (*taking it*) Ah, thank you. (*He can't read it, so he puts on his spectacles and looks*) Ah, oh no, I don't think I'll bother with any of that. (*He realizes that MRS GRAY should have it first*) Oh, I do beg your pardon. (*He hands it to her and takes off his spectacles*)

MRS GRAY No, just coffee for me, as usual.

MAINWARING Yes, that's a capital idea—coffee, please.

The WAITRESS goes.

They used to do the most marvellous Devonshire teas here, you know.

MRS GRAY With jam and cream?

MAINWARING That's right.

The WAITRESS enters and gives GODFREY his bill and then exits.

I remember just after the last war. I'd just joined the Guildford branch—a chum and I borrowed a flivver and took a spin down here to Ann's Pantry, just for the Devonshire tea. When I got home, I had the rough end of my governor's tongue, I can tell you. He thought I had toddled off with a bit of fluff.

MRS GRAY Oh, it was all harmless fun, in those days.

MAINWARING Of course it was. Mind you, we used to go the pace now and then. (*He laughs reminiscently*)

MRS GRAY You know, your whole face seems to light up when you laugh. I think you're a very jolly person at heart.

MAINWARING Yes, I think I probably am. Mind you, bank managers don't get much chance of joking and jesting.

The WAITRESS delivers the coffee.

WAITRESS Separate bills?

MRS GRAY Yes, please.

MAINWARING No, no please. Have it with me.

GODFREY passes by to pay the bill.

GODFREY Good-morning, Captain Mainwaring.

MAINWARING Godfrey, is it?

GODFREY I haven't seen you in here before.

MAINWARING Oh, I pop in from time to time, you know.

GODFREY I'm just on my way to the clinic. *(He sees MAINWARING properly)* Oh, dear—have you broken your spectacles, Mr Mainwaring?

MAINWARING Oh, no—just giving my eyes a rest, you know.

GODFREY Well, will you excuse me?

GODFREY *pays the WAITRESS and goes.*

MAINWARING *(to MRS GRAY)* A charming man—one of my most loyal soldiers.

WALKER *enters. He is dressed in civilian clothes and has a small suitcase.*

MRS GRAY They're a wonderful band of men.

MAINWARING I'm very proud of them.

WALKER *comes to the table.*

WALKER 'Allo, Captain Mainwaring—haven't seen you here before.

MAINWARING Well, I come in from time to time.

WALKER 'Ere, if you've bust your specs, I know a bloke that's got five hundred frames—hardly used.

MAINWARING No, I haven't broken them, thank you.

WALKER 'Ere, if anyone asks you—you haven't seen me. I'm just delivering a bit of the sweet stuff—savvy?

MAINWARING You mean—sugar?

WALKER Shhh—you haven't seen me. *(He moves off and comes quickly back)* I haven't seen you too, so don't worry.

WALKER *goes.*

MRS GRAY *reacts.*

MAINWARING Heart of gold that man—do anything for you. What part of London do you come from?

MRS GRAY Oh, just near Regent's Park. Of course it was hopeless for Mother. They have the ack-ack guns there, you know. Oh dear, was that careless talk?

MAINWARING That's all right — any secret is quite safe with me.

JONES, *in his everyday clothes, enters with MRS PROSSER.*

JONES Hallo, Mr Mainwaring, don't often see you 'ere.

MAINWARING I do come in—

JONES This is Mrs Prosser. This is Mr Mainwaring.

MAINWARING How do you do. Er—this is Mrs Gray.

MRS GRAY How do you do.

JONES *(to MRS PROSSER)* You sit there, my dear. I'll join you in a moment. *(To MAINWARING)* Mrs Prosser is a very good friend of mine, sir, but there is nothing in it.

MAINWARING Oh, I see.

JONES All the same, you won't tell Mrs Fox you've seen me with her, will you, sir? It's just that I give her pieces for her cat and on 'er part she keeps me company from time to time.

MAINWARING Thank you, Jones.

JONES *sits at MRS PROSSER's table.*

I'm sorry about all these interruptions. I must say I was looking forward to a nice cup of coffee and a quiet chat.

MRS GRAY So was I.

MAINWARING I have to confess I came here quite deliberately on the chance you'd be here.

MRS GRAY I'd rather hoped you might.

PIKE *enters and comes to the table. He is wearing a suit.*

PIKE Captain Mainwaring, Mr Wilson says he is sorry to spoil your *tête-à-tête*, but the bank inspectors are here and will you come straight away.

MAINWARING Yes, right—all right, Pike—I'm coming. (*To MRS GRAY*) I'm sorry about this. Let's meet again very soon.

MRS GRAY I'd like that.

MAINWARING I shall see you tonight anyway, on parade.

MRS GRAY Yes, of course, I'll look forward to it.

MAINWARING So will I—sorry, I must go.

MAINWARING *exits.*

The WAITRESS approaches.

WAITRESS Two coffees—that's one and tuppence.

MRS GRAY *realizes he hasn't paid, smiles and reaches for her handbag.*

Blackout.

Scene Six

The Church Hall and the Office. Night.

JONES, FRAZER, PIKE, GODFREY, WALKER, and all the ladies, with the exception of MRS GRAY, are talking amongst themselves in the hall. MAINWARING is at the desk in the office. The men are wearing their uniforms.

FRAZER Yon Mainwaring's making an utter fool of himself. There's no other way of putting it.

EDITH Three times they come last week to see *Forty Little Mothers* with Eddie Cantor and they come again last night to see *Shipyards Sally* with Gracie Fields... Shirley shows them in, so they think I don't see, but they're always in the back row—only holding hands, mind. Not like some people I know who seem to have more arms than an octopus.

This last remark was for WALKER's benefit but JONES takes it.

JONES I've a very possessive nature, Miss Parish.

WILSON enters, and hears some of the gossip.

PIKE They have coffee every morning together.

GODFREY I've not seen them.

PIKE They go to the Dutch Oven now, I have to come and get 'im if there's anything important.

FRAZER Folly, sheer folly—it'll be the ruin of him—somebody should tell him.

GODFREY Well, I think it is none of our business. We shouldn't talk about that sort of thing behind their backs.

WALKER Blimey, you're one to talk. It was you what told us about them playing clock golf at the municipal gardens.

GODFREY I thought... I thought it was rather nice.

The lights come up on the office.

MAINWARING *is at his desk.*

WILSON *goes into the office.*

MAINWARING Ah, good-evening, Wilson. It's about time for parade, isn't it?

WILSON Just a few more minutes, I think, sir.

MAINWARING Good. I have rather an important announcement to make concerning the ladies' section.

WILSON Ah, yes—the ladies' section. Er—I did rather want to talk to you about that some time.

MAINWARING Oh, yes?

WILSON I know it is none of my business, but if I don't say something, well... I mean who will?

MAINWARING What are you talking about, Wilson?

WILSON Well, we've know each other a long time—in the bank, with the platoon. You might almost say we're practically friends—nearly?

MAINWARING Wilson—if you have something to say—stop shuffling from one foot to another and cough it up. Are you in some sort of trouble?

WILSON Good Lord, no. It's just that, with the ladies' section, do you think it is just possible that some of us are making tiny little fools of ourselves?

MAINWARING Ah... I see. Well, I appreciate your frankness, Wilson.

WILSON Thank you, sir.

MAINWARING It can't have been easy for you to talk to me on such a delicate matter.

WILSON Well, I only did it for the best, sir.

MAINWARING I'm not insensitive to what people have been saying, so I've decided to dismiss the female section and just hang on to one or two special helpers.

WILSON I see, sir.

MAINWARING So that should solve your problem and get Mrs Pike out of your hair. Come along, I'll make the announcement.

MAINWARING *goes into hall.* WILSON *follows.*

Right—pay attention please. Is everybody here, Jones?

JONES Everybody, except Mrs Gray, sir...that is.

MAINWARING Mrs Gray, not here? How strange—perhaps she is a little bit under the weather.

FRAZER Favouritism.

PIKE Ivy says she thinks she is all right, because she saw her carrying two big, heavy cases to the station.

MAINWARING The station!

IVY *whispers to PIKE.*

PIKE About ten minutes ago.

MAINWARING Ten minutes ago! You saw her go to the station.

WALKER There's only one train, the eight forty to London.

MAINWARING Take the parade, Wilson.

MAINWARING *hurries out through the office.*

WILSON (*calling after him*) Do you want me to make the announcement?

MAINWARING *has gone.*

Oh, Lord.

Blackout.

Scene Seven

The Station Waiting Room and Platform. A little later.

It is small and dimly lit by gas. There is one small refreshment counter with a hot-water machine, some tired-looking sandwich cases, etc. MRS GRAY is at the counter getting a cup of tea.

MRS GRAY Not too strong, thank you.

GIRL Not much chance of that, dear. Anything else?

MRS GRAY No, thank you.

GIRL Just tuppence then.

MRS GRAY pays and takes the tea to a table.

MAINWARING enters. He sees her and crosses. During the following, a SERVICEMAN enters and goes to the counter to get a cup of tea.

MAINWARING What's this then, what's happened?

MRS GRAY Nothing's happened, I'm just going back to London, that's all.

MAINWARING How long for?

MRS GRAY I don't know—a month or two—for good perhaps.

MAINWARING Why? You never mentioned it—you never even hinted.

MRS GRAY I just thought it would be best.

MAINWARING But I don't want you to go. My whole life is completely different. I just live from one meeting to the next.

MRS GRAY I know—I'm just the same, but it's the only thing to do. People are talking.

MAINWARING People always talk—who cares about that?

MRS GRAY But there's your wife.

MAINWARING They won't talk to her. She's not left home since Munich.

MRS GRAY Be sensible, George. You can't afford to have scandal and tittle tattle.

MAINWARING I don't care.

MRS GRAY But there's the bank.

MAINWARING Damn the bloody bank!

MRS GRAY George!

MAINWARING I'm sorry, but don't take that train.

MRS GRAY George, I must.

MAINWARING I implore you—don't take that train; we'll only see each other once a week.

MRS GRAY You're making this very difficult for me, but I've made up my mind—it's the only way.

The sound of a train approaching in the distance.

PORTER'S VOICE Victoria—Victoria train.

MRS GRAY There's my train.

MAINWARING Fiona. I've never begged anyone for anything in my life, but I'm begging you not to go. *(He rises)*

The SERVICEMAN comes up with a cup of tea.

SERVICEMAN Finished with those chairs, mate?

MAINWARING Yes, take the damn things.

SERVICEMAN Oh, all right, I only asked.

MRS GRAY I'm sorry, George. *(She picks up her cases and moves to the door)*

MAINWARING Here, that's heavy, let me.

He helps her with the case. They move on to the platform.
MAINWARING *is separated from MRS GRAY a little.*

Look, let's talk about it. Go tomorrow.

The train stops. She struggles towards a compartment.
He follows her.

PORTER'S VOICE Walmington-on-Sea. Walmington-on-Sea.
 Victoria train.

The lights fade.

Scene Eight

A Train Compartment. Immediately following.

There are seven people in the compartment, most of them
SERVICEMEN *with kit bags, equipment, etc.*

MRS GRAY *moves into the compartment. MAINWARING*
catches up and follows in as well.

MAINWARING Look, do you mind making room for this lady.

MRS GRAY *is trying to put her case on the rack.*

Here, let me help you.

PORTER'S VOICE Hurry along, please—hurry along.

MAINWARING *struggles to get the case on the rack.*

MRS GRAY Hurry up, or you'll be coming to London, too.

She bundles him out and shuts the door.

MAINWARING *(on the platform)* How do I get in touch with you?

MRS GRAY You won't be able to.

MAINWARING You'll write, won't you?

MRS GRAY Maybe—after a while—I don't know.

PORTER'S VOICE Stand clear, please.

The PORTER's whistle sounds.

MAINWARING But, please, you must—promise me you'll write.

MRS GRAY Very well—I promise.

The train whistle blows and there is the sound of the
train moving off.

The lights fade to a spot on MAINWARING.

MAINWARING Please make it soon.

MRS GRAY (*more distant*) Goodbye, George.

MAINWARING Goodbye, Fiona... Bye...

Steam blows across him as the sound of the train recedes into the distance and the lights fade to blackout.

THE FLORAL DANCE

CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN MAINWARING

SERGEANT WILSON

LANCE CORPORAL JONES

PRIVATE FRAZER

PRIVATE GODFREY

PRIVATE WALKER

MRS FOX

CHIEF WARDEN HODGES, ARP Warden

MR YEATMAN, the Verger

VICAR

MRS PIKE

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PLATOON

MRS HART

WARDENS

LADIES

The action takes place in Walmington-on-Sea on the south coast of England

Time—1940

We have included "The Floral Dance" sketch because it was so successful in the production at The Shaftesbury Theatre, London, and was also performed by the Dad's Army team when they appeared in the Royal Command Variety Performance. If the length of the entertainment permits, it makes a wonderful finish to the first or second half of the show and includes a larger cast of Wardens and Ladies.

Scene One

In front of the tabs.

MAINWARING and **HODGES** enter.

MAINWARING No, no, certainly not. I've never heard of anything so outrageous in all my life.

HODGES Why should you be in charge of the choir any more than me, what do you know about music?

MAINWARING Now look here, Hodges. For the last time I'm telling you that this choir is my idea, and I'm conducting it.

HODGES Listen, Napoleon, you asked for some Ladies. I'm bringing 'em along, so why can't I conduct?

MAINWARING Because most of the choir come from my platoon and they're all men.

HODGES I've only got your word for that, mate.

MAINWARING How dare you!

HODGES Those wounded soldiers don't want to look at a lot of old men, they like to see pretty women.

MAINWARING We'll toss for it. *(He produces a coin.)* Heads I conduct the choir, tails you conduct it.

HODGES Oh, all right.

MAINWARING *tosses the coin.*

MAINWARING Heads! I conduct the choir.

HODGES Best out of three.

Blackout.

Scene Two

The Church Hall.

The tabs go up on the Church hall.

WILSON *marches on the platoon.*

WILSON Platoon, halt! Now just get into a choir arrangement.

JONES Right, you heard what the sergeant said. Into a choir arrangement at the double.

The platoon take their places.

The VICAR and VERGER enter with MRS HART, MRS PIKE and MRS FOX.

VERGER Left, right, left, right.

VICAR Oh, don't be silly, Mr Yeatman. They're not soldiers, just take your places, ladies.

The ladies take their places.

HODGES *marches on the WARDENS.*

HODGES Left, right, left, right, halt. Into position please, ladies and gentlemen.

The WARDENS don't move.

(to WILSON) You'll notice that I don't have to bawl and shout to keep my people in order. I dominate them by the power of my personality.

WILSON It doesn't seem to be working awfully well.

The WARDENS still haven't moved.

HODGES *(shouting)* Will you get in position.

The WARDENS take their places. HODGES stands in front of MRS FOX.

MAINWARING *enters.*

Evening, Sir Thomas.

MAINWARING Thank you for coming along, ladies and gentlemen. As you know, we are giving this concert next Saturday night for wounded soldiers, and as quite a number of the men are from the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, I have chosen the Floral Dance to open the proceedings. *(To WILSON)* Take your place at the piano, Wilson.

WILSON Right, sir. *(He sits at the piano; finger business)*

MAINWARING What are you doing?

WILSON Just limbering up the digits, sir.

MAINWARING You're not Charlie Kunz, you know. Mr Hodges.

HODGES Yes?

MAINWARING I don't think it's necessary to wear your steel helmet to sing in.

MRS FOX I don't mind him keeping it on. I can rest my music and things on it.

HODGES I'll take it off. Not because of what you said, but because of what she said. *(He takes it off)*

PIKE *(to GODFREY)* I've never seen him without his helmet before. I always thought he hadn't got a top to his head.

HODGES I heard that, you stupid, sappy-looking boy.

MRS PIKE Don't you call my son a stupid, sappy-looking boy.

HODGES Well, he is a stupid, sappy-looking boy.

MAINWARING Please, ladies and gentlemen.

MRS HART Can we get on, please.

MAINWARING Yes, of course, Mrs Hart. *(Grin business)* Now most of you know the tune. It's very simple. The first bit's nearly all one note like this. *(He la's the first few bars)* Right, Wilson, just play the tune through for them in single notes.

WILSON *plays the first few notes. Nothing happens.*

WILSON I'm afraid the note's broken, sir.

MAINWARING Well, play the next note.

WILSON That's not the right one.

MAINWARING All right then, play one like it.

WILSON There isn't one like it in this part of the keyboard.

MAINWARING Don't try and blind me with science, Wilson.

WILSON I can manage it an octave lower, sir.

MAINWARING Well, play it then.

WILSON *plays the first few bars through with one finger an octave lower.*

That's it! We'll take that bit first. Are you ready? One—two...

OMNES *(singing)*

AS I WALKED HOME ON A SUMMER NIGHT
WHEN STARS IN THE HEAVENS WERE SHINING BRIGHT.

It is very low for them. MAINWARING stops them.

JONES Permission to speak, sir. It's too low. I think the ladies are having a little trouble.

MAINWARING It's too low, Wilson.

WILSON All right, sir. I'll go up a bit.

MAINWARING Good. Ready, one—two...

WILSON *plays it two octaves higher.*

OMNES *(singing)*

AS I WALKED HOME ON A SUMMER NIGHT
WHEN STARS IN THE HEAVENS WERE SHINING
BRIGHT.

JONES *(speaking)* Mr Mainwaring, it's too high. The men are having a bit of trouble.

MAINWARING It's far too high, Wilson. We don't want the one below or the one up there—we want the one in the middle.

HODGES I can't stand any more of this—I'll give it to you. (*He sings*)

AS I WALKED HOME ON A SUMMER NIGHT
WHEN STARS IN THE HEAVEN WERE SHINING BRIGHT
FAR AWAY FROM THE FOOTLIGHTS GLARE
INTO THE SWEET AND SCENTED AIR
OF A QUIANT OLD CORNISH TOWN

(*speaking*) How's that?

JONES Rotten.

VICAR Wait a minute. (*He gets out a pitch pipe*) I'll give it to you on my little pitch pipe.

He blows it, they all "la."

MAINWARING Thank you, Vicar.

VICAR It's such a handy little thing. I carry it with me everywhere.

VERGER His Reverence uses it to tune boy scouts.

MAINWARING Right, ladies and gentlemen, we'll take it from the beginning. We want someone for the solo "Borne from afar on the gentle breeze".

JONES Permission to speak, sir. I should like to volunteer to be the one "Borne from afar on the gentle breeze".

MAINWARING I was afraid you might—all ready? One—two...

They sing the first six bars properly. When they reach the word "town" they hold the note for the next two bars and the girls harmonize.

JONES (*singing, coming in two beats too soon*)

BORNE FROM AFAR ON THE GENTLE BREEZE.

MAINWARING (*stopping him*) Jones! Jones!

The rest stop. JONES still carries on.

Stop him, someone.

HODGES Hey—hey! (*He touches JONES*) Hey!

JONES Whoa-er. (*He grabs HODGES by the throat*) Oh, I'm sorry.

MAINWARING You came in too soon, Jones—try it again. From "Into the sweet and scented air".

MAINWARING This time we'll count for you, Jones. It's two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight in. From the same place. One—two...

They all sing from "INTO THE SWEET AND SCENTED AIR". They break off on the word "town" and count while the girls harmonize.

OMNES (*speaking*) Two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight in.

JONES gives a start and comes in.

JONES (*singing*)

BORNE FROM AFAR ON THE GENTLE BREEZE
JOINING THE MURMUR OF THE SUMMER SEAS
DISTANT TONES OF AN OLD WORLD DANCE
PLAYED BY THE VILLAGE BAND PERCHANCE

OMNES

ON THE CALM AIR CAME FLOATING DOWN, AH, AH, (*ETC*)

MAINWARING stops them. **WILSON** continues to play.

MAINWARING Thank you, Wilson.

WILSON stops.

Watch my stick. Not bad—not bad at all. Now, we'll take the next bit. "I thought I could hear the curious tone of the cornet, clarinet and big trombone." I think we'll split this up. Godfrey, you take the cornet and clarinet.

GODFREY Cornet and clarinet—yes, sir.

MAINWARING Frazer—big trombone.

FRAZER Ay.

MAINWARING Pike, you take the fiddle and cello.

WILSON *starts to giggle.*

What are you laughing at, Wilson?

WILSON Well, I was just thinking, wouldn't it be better if Walker was on the fiddle?

He laughs. The rest of the platoon stare at him in stony silence.

MAINWARING Walker, you take the big bass drum.

WALKER Right ho!

MAINWARING Now we want someone to do the euphonium.

WALKER Why don't we split it up. Jonesy can be the U, I'll be the phone, and the vicar can be the bum.

MAINWARING One more remark out of you, Walker, and I shall ask you to leave.

HODGES I'll do the euphonium.

MAINWARING Thank you, Mr Hodges. Right, are you ready?

WILSON *starts.*

Don't anticipate me, Wilson—watch my stick. Ready—one—two...

OMNES

I THOUGHT I COULD HEAR THE CURIOUS TONE

GODFREY

OF THE CORNET, CLARINET

FRAZER

AND BIG TROMBONE. *(YELLING)* AI!

MAINWARING *(stopping them)* Just a minute. There's no "Ai!" after "trombone", Frazer.

FRAZER I know there isn't—I just put it in. It gives a bit of guts. Washed out English tune.

MAINWARING We'll do without it, if you don't mind.

FRAZER *mutters to himself.*

From the top, once more. Watch my stick, Wilson. One—two...

OMNES

I THOUGHT I COULD HEAR THE CURIOUS TONE

GODFREY

OF THE CORNET, CLARINET

FRAZER

AND BIG TROMBONE.

PIKE

FIDDLE, CELLO

WALKER

BIG BASS DRUM

JONES

BASSOON, FLUTE

HODGES

AND EUPHONIUM

OMNES *(soft)*

FAR AWAY AS IN A TRANCE

(very loud)

I HEARD THE SOUND OF THE FLORAL DANCE

MAINWARING *falls off the podium. WILSON helps him up.*

MAINWARING Excellent—excellent. Now, we'll go straight through to the end. Pike, you take the solo. I've marked it for you. Slowly and dreamily.

PIKE Yes, Mr Mainwaring. Slowly and dreamily.

MAINWARING Are you ready? One—two...

PIKE

I FELT SO LONELY STANDING THERE
AND I COULD ONLY STAND AND STARE
FOR I HAD NO BOY GIRL WITH ME
SLOWLY I SHOULD HAVE TO...

MAINWARING (*stopping him*) Stop! Stop! Why are you singing
"for I had no boy girl"?

PIKE That's what it says here, Mainwaring. For I had no boy
girl with me.

MAINWARING If you're a boy, you've a girl, and if you're a girl,
you've a boy. Do you follow?

PIKE Yes.

MAINWARING You stupid boy

PIKE Well, what am I then?

WALKER We're all beginning to wonder!

MAINWARING You sing girl. Now once again. One—two...

OMNES

I FELT SO LONELY STANDING THERE (*ETC*)

*They all sing right through each doing his solos—
working up to a big finish. WILSON goes off the end of
the piano. MAINWARING falls off the podium.*

Blackout.

FURNITURE AND PROPERTY LIST**THE DEADLY ATTACHMENT**

Scene One

On stage: Office
Desk. *On it:* phone
2 chairs
Cupboard. *In it:* 2 boxes of Mills bombs, detonators
Mirror on wall

Hall
Stage. *By it:* chair
Card table
Chairs
Benches
Curtains at the windows

Downstage
Desk. *On it:* phone
Chair

Personal: **Platoon:** rifles, bayonets
Walker: flat half bottle of whisky in blouse
Mainwaring: spectacles (worn throughout), paper
in pocket, swagger stick, revolver in holster

Scene Two

Set: Office
Mills bombs on desk
Mills bomb for **Pike**

Scene Three

Off stage: Lewis gun (**Frazer**)
Tommy gun (**Pike**)
Stepladder (**Sponge** and **Hancock**)