



The Painted Acorn

A Stage Play in Two Acts

By

Brian Wrixon

With a Musical Score

By

Scott Endsley

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Canada

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Cast of Characters in Order of Appearance

<u>Captain Smyth:</u>	A military officer
<u>Doctor Connelly:</u>	A military doctor
<u>Sister Fredericks:</u>	Matron of the Army Field Hospital
<u>Becky Cartwright:</u>	A young Red Cross nurse
<u>Sally Benson:</u>	Becky's friend, also a young nurse
<u>Jacob Foster:</u>	A young infantry soldier
<u>Elijah Foster:</u>	Jacob's twin brother, also a soldier
<u>Additional Characters:</u>	Soldiers of "B" Company Nurses of the Field Hospital

Scene

Several locations on the Allied Western Front in Flanders:
army camp, field hospital, village of Bonneville, cemetery

Time

Summer of 1918

OVERTURE

(The OVERTURE "In the Wind" is sung by the entire cast. The curtain remains down during the singing of the OVERTURE and the distant sound of a military bugle is heard at its conclusion as the curtain rises)

OVERTURE "IN THE WIND" ALL CAST MEMBERS

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley5-07_hifi.mp3

"In the Wind"

In the wind there's a fear

And the fear is all around,

But the sky may never fall.

In the wind there's a hope

And the hope may soon be found,

But we must abide its law.

Well you'll never know the score

Till your money's laid out on the floor,

Or you pave the road to stand the bitter cold.

Well the sky may never fall

But I'll never doubt it at all,

For I've seen the sun fall in the evening.

In the wind there's a war

And the war is all around,

But the sky may never fall.

In the wind there's a love

And the love may soon be found,
but we must abide its law.

Well you'll never know the score
Till your money's laid out on the floor,
Or you pave the road to stand the bitter cold.
Well the sky may never fall
But I'll never doubt it at all,
For I've seen the sun fall in the evening.
And the sky may fall tomorrow.

(A bugle sounds "Fall In" as the curtain rises)

http://www.royalengineers.ca/17_Fall%20in.mp3

ACT IScene 1

SETTING: Allied Army camp on the Western Front in Flanders. At stage right is the brown exterior wall of the soldiers' barracks with a door bearing a sign that reads "Company B". At stage left is the white exterior wall of the field hospital with a door bearing a red cross. At centre stage there is an open area that is part of the camp's parade ground.

AT RISE: Captain Smyth, Doctor Connelly and Sister Fredericks are gathered together at front centre stage on the parade ground. They are dressed in full uniform. Nurses Becky Cartwright and Sally Benson are at the door of the field hospital stage left talking to each other privately. They are in their nurses' uniforms. Elijah and Jacob Foster are at the door of the barracks stage right talking to each other quietly. They are not in full uniform, but their tunic jackets are hung on a railing beside the barracks door.

(Captain Smyth is addressing Doctor Connelly and Sister Fredericks while the nurses and the soldiers continue their two private conversations out of the audience's hearing. The spotlight is on the three officers at front centre stage)

CAPTAIN SMYTH

You know Doctor Connelly and Sister Fredericks, our boys have been through hell these past four years and there's more to come. The Germans are on the run, but it will still take some major fighting to push them back all the way and finally defeat them.

DOCTOR CONNELLY

When this all started in 1914 nobody could have predicted the horror of Mons, the Somme, Vimy Ridge and more. Millions dead, many more millions injured, and millions more still missing. What my doctors have witnessed and what Matron and her nurses have seen is beyond belief!

CAPTAIN SMYTH

Yes, when this started four summers ago, it was supposed to be over by Christmas. We've been stuck here in these trenches staring at the enemy for what seems like an eternity. It's only been in the last few weeks that we appear to be making any gains. But you're right Doctor. The price paid has been enormous!

SISTER FREDERICKS

(Pointing to Becky and Sally)

Look at them! Becky Cartwright and Sally Benson - they're just young girls and every day they wake to a new round of horrors. We ask so much of them and there seems to be no end to what they are able to give. These nurses are truly unsung heroines.

CAPTAIN SMYTH

(Pointing to Elijah and Jacob)

Some of my best soldiers are just youngsters as well. The two Foster twins there, Elijah and Jacob, I don't think that they're

much older than twenty. And there are thousands like them all along the Western Front. Some of the Germans that we've captured are even younger, just teenagers. By the way Matron, on a happier note, I think that one of the Fosters is sweet on your nurse Cartwright.

SISTER FREDERICKS

(Laughing)

I didn't know that the feeling was mutual but I did overhear that Becky has a soft spot for Jacob Foster. I am happy that there is a little joy in someone's life, regardless of the rules from HQ. Let's just pray that they both survive this mess we're in.

DOCTOR CONNELLY

I agree with you Sister. With all that is going on with the war right now, the least concern of mine is a soldier fraternizing with a nurse. From what I hear, there is speculation that this will be all over by the end of the year and at that point, what difference would it make any way! What do you hear Smyth? Is the end in sight? Can we look forward to going home sometime soon?

CAPTAIN SMYTH

The big German Spring offensive has failed and we have them retreating, that's for sure. The Western Front is advancing every day after three or four years of stalemate in the trenches. The Huns are still putting up some resistance but things are looking much better. There is talk that the end is in sight but the fighting still goes on. I expect that we will get the call to push forward again within the hour.

SISTER FREDERICKS

Well you and your lads be very careful Captain. I certainly don't want to see any of you back at my hospital! My girls have got enough patients to look after already.

DOCTOR CONNELLY

Amen to that Matron! Good luck Smyth. Stay safe!

(Captain Smyth, Doctor Connelly and Sister Fredericks turn and start to walk slowly towards the back of the parade ground at stage rear. They continue speaking to each other but out of the audience's hearing. The light shifts to stage left to highlight Becky Cartwright and Sally Benson at the field hospital door)

BECKY

Look Sally but don't point or stare! There's Jacob and his brother Elijah over by the barracks. I know that they're twins but they don't look that much alike. Elijah is nice looking, but isn't that Jacob Foster just the most handsome soldier you've ever seen?

SALLY

(Laughing)

Nurse Becky Cartwright has fallen in love with a soldier! Do you want me to call your lover boy over? (Makes kissing noises)

BECKY

(Putting her hand to her face and blushing)

Shush now! You stop your teasing Sally Benson. Jacob knows how I feel about him and he feels the same about me, but we have to keep it under wraps because of the rules you know. What about you and Elijah? I saw you talking with him yesterday. Is there anything going on between the two of you?

SALLY

(Laughing)

Elijah? Why he's hopeless. All he's interested in is being a good soldier and getting his brother back home safely from the war. He's never shown any interest in me but I have feelings for him. I've never given him any reason to think so though. I think I would be wasting my time. You're so lucky, you and Jacob. And I don't think that the officers are too concerned any more about soldiers and nurses falling for each other.

BECKY

I just hope and pray that the two of them, and all the fellows, will stay safe and sound when they go off to fight again. The suffering and death that we have seen in this hospital is almost too much to bear. Can you imagine if it was someone you know?

(The light fades from Becky and Sally. They continue to talk with each other but out of the audience's hearing. The light now highlights Jacob and Elijah at the camp barracks door)

JACOB

Did you see the brass talking Elijah? I hear we're going to get called up again soon. The front has advanced and they say they want us to keep the pressure on the enemy.

ELIJAH

It can't come too soon for me Jacob. I'm itching to get back into the fight and chase the Huns back to Germany once and for all.

JACOB

(Laughing)

You're the fighter and I'm more the lover Elijah. Captain Smyth would give anything to have a hundred more like you, I'm sure! After all that we've been through so far, now I'd rather be sitting dry in a mess tent drinking coffee with a nurse than huddled in a muddy trench with you! Look, there's Becky over there by the hospital with Sally. I sure hope I can talk to her again before we pull out.

(A bugle sounds the "Call to arms" alarm)

[http://www.royalengineers.ca/26_Alarm%20\(for%20Troops%20to%20turn%20out%20under%20Arms\).mp3](http://www.royalengineers.ca/26_Alarm%20(for%20Troops%20to%20turn%20out%20under%20Arms).mp3)

ELIJAH

There's the call up Jacob. We've got to get into uniform and fall in. You better say your good-byes to Becky while you've got the chance.

(Jacob puts on his uniform jacket that has been hung on the railing and he and Becky meet centre stage on the parade ground.)

Elijah puts on his jacket and stands at the barracks door. He looks across the parade ground at Sally who is now standing alone at the field hospital door. Jacob and Becky talk quietly together out of the audience's hearing. Sally looks at them wistfully. Attention is focused on Elijah who sings aloud but only the audience hears him.)

"THINGS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN" ELIJAH FOSTER - SOLO

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley5-16_hifi.mp3

"Things That Might Have Been"

You're the kind of woman that I'd really like to know,
So maybe I should leave you alone.

You'll only break my heart like a hundred times before,
And baby, I don't need that anymore.

So let us keep it quite simple, just tell me your name---
And do you think that it's gonna rain?

Let us end this sweet memory, before it begins---
Yes I do believe it's safer that way.

I'd like to say I love you, but it seems so far away
And echoes a voice from yesterday.

I see her in your smiling face, she's laughing through your
eyes---

And she knows I'm tryin' to look away.

And though it's only a memory that plays with my mind
Till there's no hope and the future is blind,
Well I'll say I don't need you, just simply pretend;

But I'll dream about the things that might have been.

Why are there so many people who dare disturb the odds

And carry on anyway---

Some walk on fire, others brave the wind and waves

While some of us will foolishly bear flowers on our bended
knees.

But some among the fools' parade, will sit alone a serenade

And dream of the things that might have been.

So let us keep it quite simple, just tell me your name

And do you think that it's gonna rain?

Let us end this sweet memory before it begins,

But we can dream about the things that might have been.

(Elijah exits through the barracks door stage right and Sally
exits through the field hospital door stage left. The audience
can now pick up the ongoing conversation between Jacob and Becky
on the center of the parade ground)

JACOB

They've just sounded the call up. It looks like we're moving out
soon Becky. I'll see you when we get back my love, I promise.

BECKY

You and Elijah take care of yourselves and return safely. Don't
take any chances that you don't have to. I don't know what I'd
do if you were hurt, or worse.

JACOB

(Laughing feebly and putting on a brave face)

Don't you worry about me! I've got an extra special weapon protecting me that the Germans don't know about. It's called Elijah Foster!

BECKY

I cannot help but worry. My love for you is strong my dear and I will love you forever.

JACOB

Forever is such a nice word Becky.

(Becky and Jacob hold hands and face each other)

"FOREVER" DUET - JACOB & BECKY

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley5-04_hifi.mp3

"Forever"

How was I to know you'd fill this hollow soul

When there was little chance that you would even know

How my heart yearned for you,

To hold and love me the way you do

Am I asking too much of you,

O my dear, to love me this way, forever

I guess I wasted time looking for a friend

Without me even asking you gave me your hand

You don't know how good it feels

To know someone believes I'm real

My heart can only feel a thrill

O my dear, please love me this way, forever

I know it seems so hard to follow what's been told
But what words can I give you to trust this heart I hold
Let me lay your burden down
And you won't have to make a sound
Just realize the love you've found
O my dear, I'll love you this way, forever

JACOB

I will see you soon my love. Try not to worry but say a prayer for all of us. I love you truly you know. When I get back we'll talk about our plans for after the war. Surely this fighting can't go on too much longer.

BECKY

I love you too Jacob. Come back to me safe and sound. Now put this in your pocket for good luck. It's an acorn from that oak tree in the woods where you carved our initials. I painted it and hung it on a ribbon. Whenever you touch it you will be reminded that I am here waiting for you. Put it right there in your breast pocket.

(Becky gives Jacob a painted acorn hung on a ribbon. He places it in the breast pocket of his uniform jacket. Jacob and Becky embrace and both exit, Jacob to the barracks stage right and Becky to the field hospital stage left)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

(In the distant dark, a military bugle sounds "Fall in" again)

http://www.royalengineers.ca/17_Fall%20in.mp3

ACT IScene 2

SETTING: The parade ground of the Army camp in Flanders. The action takes place at front centre stage in the open space between the barracks and the field hospital. A wagon and boxes are seen at stage rear.

AT RISE: Elijah and Jacob Foster are dressed in their uniforms and have gathered with a number of their fellow soldiers. Captain Smyth is about to address the troops who are milling about talking and joking.

CAPTAIN SMYTH

(Raising his arms to quiet the troops)

OK, fall in men, we have a big job ahead of us. I have received word from headquarters that the Germans have abandoned the village of Bonneville and that they have retreated further from the front. But before they left, they forced the villagers out of their homes and burned a big part of the town. We need to hit the bastards hard and pay them back for what they've done to these people and to our own boys. Our plan is for us to drive them back from their current position and teach them a lesson that they'll never forget! What say you?

(A great cheer erupts from the troops and they break into a chant as Captain Smyth looks on)

SOLDIERS

We've got the guts! We've got the sass! We will kick the Kaiser's ass!

We've got the guts! We've got the sass! We will kick the Kaiser's ass!

(General laughter erupts among the soldiers)

ELIJAH

What are our orders Captain? How would you like us to proceed Sir?

CAPTAIN SMYTH

B Company will leave here in a few minutes and meet up with our Battalion beyond Bonneville. We'll stop at the village first and see what we can do to help the townspeople. I want you two Foster boys to stay at Bonneville with a small contingent of men, tend to the townsfolk and secure the village in case the Germans try anything sneaky. The rest of us will press on beyond Bonneville and engage the enemy.

ELIJAH

You can count on us Captain. We'll hold the town but we would rather be fighting Huns with the rest of our guys at the front.

You could just yell "Hey Fritz!", and when they all pop their heads up we could just nail them. It would be over in 15 minutes!

(General laughter erupts)

CAPTAIN SMYTH

Always the warrior and the joker, aren't you Elijah? You and your brother Jacob will have plenty to keep you busy. I reckon you'll need about twenty men at Bonneville. Just keep an eye out for stragglers and German supporters. Not everyone in these towns is on our side you know. Our troops will get the job done across the river and then maybe your brother can get back to that nurse sweetheart of his. (Laughing)

(Captain Smyth points to Jacob and all laugh and begin to cajole him)

CAPTAIN SMYTH

(Laughing)

I think Foster wants to become a farmer back home and settle down with that Cartwright girl. What do you say Jacob?

JACOB

(Laughing)

I didn't know that you knew about her Sir. These guys are just jealous. It's pretty obvious why she picked me since I'm the most handsome guy in Company B! After all, I'm the one she gave the lucky acorn to!

(Draws the acorn and ribbon from his pocket and waves it about for all to see)

ELIJAH

(Laughing)

Most handsome guy? That can't be it. I'm your twin but mother always said that I was the better looking one. Maybe you'd just look better holding a pitch fork instead of a rifle. Somebody find Jacob a rake or a hoe! That's it! Jacob the farmer!

(All laugh)

CAPTAIN SMYTH

For now we need him to be Jacob the soldier, not the farmer. OK men, get your equipment ready. We pull out in thirty minutes. God bless and good luck!

(Soldiers move towards stage rear and mill about preparing equipment and loading the wagon in the background. They begin to whistle the tune to "It's a Long Way to Tipperary")

SOLDIERS' CHORUS - (Whistled)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33kZaftz8sE>

(Lyrics below for reference purposes)

It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go;
It's a long way to Tipperary,
And the sweetest girl I know.
Good-bye, Piccadilly,
Farewell, Lester Square:
It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
But my heart's right there.

(Captain Smyth is off to one side while the company of soldiers is at stage rear. Elijah and Jacob move away from the group to stage front and talk together)

ELIJAH

I don't know about you brother, but I would rather be part of the main action instead of babysitting a burned out village. It sounds like our troops have already secured the place anyway.

JACOB

I know you want to be part of the fighting but I guess we'll just have to make the best of it. It sounds like there is work to do in the town since the Germans burned it. I suppose we'll have to coordinate housing and supplies for the townspeople.

ELIJAH

I'm sure that your nurse sweetheart won't be sorry to hear that you've been taken out of harm's way. I keep thinking about you as a farmer! But at least you won't need Becky's lucky acorn, will you?

(Elijah laughs and Jacob punches him on the arm)

(Jacob stares wistfully at the painted acorn on the ribbon before putting it back in his uniform breast pocket)

(The soldiers exit at stage rear in a column led by Captain Smyth. Jacob and Elijah catch up to the rear of the column and join it. The soldiers again whistle the "Tipperary" tune as they exit. The nurses of the hospital have gathered on the parade ground to bid farewell to the soldiers. The nurses wave and sing "In the Wind" - a repeat of the OVERTURE)

NURSES' CHORUS (joined by Becky, Sally & Sister Fredericks)

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley5-07_hifi.mp3

"In the Wind"

In the wind there's a fear
 And the fear is all around,
 But the sky may never fall.
 In the wind there's a hope
 And the hope may soon be found,
 But we must abide its law.

Well you'll never know the score
 Till your money's laid out on the floor,
 Or you pave the road to stand the bitter cold.
 Well the sky may never fall

But I'll never doubt it at all,
For I've seen the sun fall in the evening.

In the wind there's a war
And the war is all around,
But the sky may never fall.
In the wind there's a love
And the love may soon be found,
But we must abide its law.

Well you'll never know the score
Till your money's laid out on the floor,
Or you pave the road to stand the bitter cold.
Well the sky may never fall
But I'll never doubt it at all,
For I've seen the sun fall in the evening.
And the sky may fall tomorrow.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 3

SETTING:

The village of Bonneville. There is rubble stage left and stage right. Burned out homes can be seen in the distance with smoke still rising from them. An empty military wagon stands at stage rear.

AT RISE:

Jacob is standing at the front of the stage facing the audience while a number of soldiers work away in the background.

JACOB

(Talking aloud to himself)

Well the Germans sure did a job on Bonneville! They burned just about every house down before they took off across the river. I sure hope our guys give them what's coming to them. We've got things under control here but I don't know how we're going to get supplies to all these folks. Maybe Elijah will have some ideas when he gets back from his survey of the village.

(Two soldiers come rushing from offstage towards Jacob)

SOLDIER ONE

Jacob! Your brother Elijah has been shot!

JACOB

Is he all right? Is he alive? Where is he? What happened?

SOLDIER TWO

A German straggler got him at the edge of town. He was hiding in a hedgerow, wounded. He must have been left behind when the bastards pulled out. Our guys got him but Elijah has taken a bullet to the head.

JACOB

Oh my God! Is he going to be OK?

(Jacob faces the audience and speaks)

JACOB

My brother, my best friend. Maybe we haven't always got along. We often competed with each other or compared or sometimes even envied, but there's always been a bond between us. I love you my brother but what a fool I've been. I don't think I've ever said those words to you. O god, please keep my best friend safe!

"BEST FRIEND" JACOB - SOLO

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley5-01_hifi.mp3

"Best Friend"

No I'll never understand just why I've come to play
The fool again, and I'll never know just why this heart of mine
Would even want to try.

But I do know that I love you, and I always will---
You are the best friend I've ever had.

When the world of make believe is all that I'm left
To conceive, when the rain won't stop, stop falling down
On this lonely clown---

Well I'll just pretend you're right here
Like I've done before---
You are the best friend I've ever had.

And you may never know just what you really mean to me,
I've tried to hide it for so long.

Well if I could find the words to tell you what I feel---
I wouldn't mind lookin' like a fool, if that's what fools are
for.

Ooh ooh ooh etc.

Well I do know that I love you
And I always will---
You are the best friend I've ever had.

No, I don't mind sayin'

You are the best friend I've ever had.

SOLDIER ONE

They're bringing him now Foster.

SOLDIER TWO

Bring him over here!

(Two soldiers enter carrying Elijah on a stretcher. Jacob rushes over and kneels beside his brother. Everyone else crowds around the two brothers)

JACOB

Elijah! Elijah! Are you all right? Can you hear me?

(Elijah is non-responsive)

JACOB

He's unconscious. We've got to get him back to Doc Connelly at the field hospital. He's the only one who can save him now. Get the corpsman to put a fresh dressing on that head wound and load him on the supply wagon that's going back to camp. I can't go back with him because I've got to stay here until we get word from Captain Smyth across the river and I can be relieved.

(Two soldiers prepare to carry the stretcher to the wagon)

JACOB

Just a minute!

(Jacob removes the painted acorn on the ribbon from his breast pocket and kisses it. He kneels beside Elijah)

JACOB

Here brother, you're going to need Becky's lucky acorn charm more than me. You carry it for me. I'll put it in your jacket pocket.

(Jacob places the painted acorn in the breast pocket of Elijah's uniform jacket)

JACOB

OK boys, load him up. Be careful now! Try not to jostle him too much!

(The soldiers load the stretcher into the wagon and begin to leave. Jacob stares at the wagon as it departs and repeats the last few lines of "Best Friend")

"BEST FRIEND" JACOB SOLO

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley5-01_hifi.mp3

Well I do know that I love you

And I always will

You are the best friend I've ever had

And I don't mind saying

You are the best friend I've ever had

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 4

SETTING: Outside the door of the field hospital
at the Army camp.

AT RISE: It is early morning. Becky Cartwright,
Sally Benson and Sister Fredericks have
met after breakfast. The two nurses are
about to start their morning duties.

SISTER FREDERICKS

(Brushing her uniform with her hands)

It was rainy out there this morning and I don't envy our soldier boys if they didn't have good shelter last night. Now that breakfast is done we'll have to get a start on rounds when Doctor Connelly arrives. You two are on duty this morning are you not?

SALLY

Yes Matron, but we'll have to get some additional help because several of the patients need to be moved to the other ward.

BECKY

It's always a dreadful time when we have to make room for new arrivals. If only we could go a week with no new wounded!

SISTER FREDERICKS

Well that's not likely to happen. Have you heard anything from the Foster boys or any of the others at the front?

BECKY

I've not heard a word since they went off to Bonneville. One of the fellows told me that Jacob and Elijah were supposed to be guarding the village and providing local relief while the rest of them went across the river toward the Germans. I know it's selfish of me but thank God that at least they are away from the main fighting. Isn't that right Sally?

SALLY

We can't help it. As nurses we try to stay detached but we all worry about our boys, especially those that we are close to like Elijah and Jacob. Was there anything in particular that Doctor Connelly asked us to do this morning Becky?

BECKY

He wants us helping out in the ward with the severely wounded. The most painful thing for me though is when he asks me to sit and comfort a man for whom there is little hope. He tells me

that sometimes the only thing we can do for a soldier is to provide him with someone with a pretty face to hold his hand while he dies.

SISTER FREDERICKS

Oh Becky! It always amazes me the strength that sensitive young girls like you show in the face of tragedy. Doctor Connelly has a point though; comfort is often the best medicine, at least when everything else fails.

BECKY

It's very hard Matron, but it's something that I feel I need to do. After all, these boys are fighting and dying for us. It's the least I can do.

SALLY

You're a good girl Becky and I am proud to be your friend and fellow nurse. I just hope Jacob Foster knows what a prize he is getting (laughs). Shall we go to work Matron?

(Sister Fredericks and Sally exit stage left through the field hospital door. Becky remains behind with her hand on the door knob, and standing there quietly sings "Forever" from Act I Scene 1)

"FOREVER" BECKY - SOLO

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley5-04_hifi.mp3

"Forever"

How was I to know you'd fill this hollow soul

When there was little chance that you would even know

How my heart yearned for you,

To hold and love me the way you do

Am I asking too much of you,

O my dear, to love me this way, forever

I guess I wasted time looking for a friend
Without me even asking you gave me your hand
You don't know how good it feels
To know someone believes I'm real
My heart can only feel a thrill
O my dear, please love me this way, forever

I know it seems so hard to follow what's been told
But what words can I give you to trust this heart I hold
Let me lay your burden down
And you won't have to make a sound
Just realize the love you've found
O my dear, I'll love you this way, forever

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

(CURTAIN FALLS)

(Once again the sound of the bugle is heard playing "Dismiss" in
the distance, off stage in the dark)

http://www.royalengineers.ca/18_Dismiss%20or%20No%20Parade.mp3

(INTERMISSION)

ACT IIScene 1

SETTING:

The medical ward of the field Army hospital. An entrance door is to one side at stage right, windows on the other side at stage left. A hospital cot is stage front and centre.

AT RISE:

Doctor Connelly is standing at the entrance door of the medical ward at stage right, directing those on the parade ground out of sight beyond the doorway.

DOCTOR CONNELLY

(Through the doorway addressing those out of sight on the parade ground)

Yes, take him directly to surgery. I'll scrub up and attend to him shortly. That one, just dress that hand wound and send him back to the barracks. No, don't take this one to surgery. I've looked at his head wound and there's not much we can do for him. Bring him in and put him in this bed here and we'll try to make him comfortable.

(Doctor Connelly steps aside as two soldiers carry in a stretcher with Elijah on it. Most of his head and face are covered with a large wound dressing. The two soldiers lift him from the stretcher and place him on the bed. One soldier hangs Elijah's uniform jacket over the end of the bed)

DOCTOR CONNELLY

Do we know who the poor fellow is? I can't tell because of the extent of his injuries.

SOLDIER ONE

It's one of the Foster twins. I don't know whether it's Jacob or Elijah. The chart just says "Foster", with no first name on it. Apparently some German shot him as he was checking out the town of Bonneville. It doesn't look good, does it Doc?

DOCTOR CONNELLY

(Taking Elijah's hand and checking his pulse)

No, it certainly doesn't. Somebody should get word to his brother and see if they can get him back here. For now we can only hope and pray. There's not much that medicine can do.

SOLDIER TWO

I'll see if I can find Nurse Cartwright. She knows both the Fosters well and she might be able to identify which one this is. She's pretty close to one of them and she will want to know.

DOCTOR CONNELLY

There's no need going to look for Nurse Cartwright. Young Becky is on duty and should be here any minute now. I asked her to give me a hand this morning. You fellows can go back to the barracks.

(The soldiers exit through the field hospital door and Doctor Connelly stands looking at Elijah who is still unconscious on the cot)

(At that moment Becky enters the medical ward)

BECKY

(Cheerfully)

Good morning Doctor Connelly!

DOCTOR CONNELLY

I'm afraid that it's not really a good morning Becky. One of the Foster boys has been shot and it's pretty serious.

BECKY

(Alarmed and frightened)

Jacob? Elijah? Which one? Where is he?

DOCTOR CONNELLY

(He puts his hand on Becky's shoulder)

Now we don't know Becky. He was brought in from Bonneville and the only thing that's on his chart is the name "Foster", no first name. He took a bullet to the head and he's so bandaged up that we don't know which lad it is. I'm very sorry to have to tell you that things don't look too good. I don't think he's going to make it and he doesn't have long. He's unconscious so he's not feeling any pain. I'll leave you with him and call me if there's any change in his condition.

(Doctor Connelly exits)

(Becky kneels beside the bed, clasps Elijah's hand to her chest and sobs loudly)

BECKY

Can you hear me? It's Becky. Jacob? Elijah?

(After a few moments, Becky turns and notices the uniform jacket hanging on the end of the bed. She slowly gets up and searches in the breast pocket of the jacket. From the pocket of the jacket she pulls the painted acorn on the ribbon that she had given to Jacob)

BECKY

(Screaming in horror and dropping to her knees beside the bed)

Jacob! Jacob my love! You promised you would stay. You promised to love me forever. Don't leave my love. I can't live without you. Life without you is nothing. You promised you would stay. You promised to love me forever.

"(HE) WAS ALL" BECKY - SOLO

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley3-15_hifi.mp3

"(He) Was All"

(He) was all of the sparkling winter white.

(He) was all of the warmth of winter night.

And (he) was every bit of the colors in the fall.

And through the spring (he) loved me---

Until summer, (he) was all.

(He) was all, but all at once (he) went away.

Dark is the sky, no matter night or day.

My heart is cold and naked as the trees in late fall,

And yearning for (his) warmth again

In the spring when (he) was all.

(He) was all of the sparkling winter white.

(He) was all of the warmth of winter night.

And (he) was every bit of the colors in the fall.

And through the spring (he) loved me---

Until summer, (he) was all.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIScene 2

SETTING:

The medical ward at the field Army hospital. An entrance door is to one side right, windows to the other side left. A medical bed is stage front and centre. The scenery is unchanged from Scene 1. Elijah Foster is on the bed still bandaged and unconscious. Becky Cartwright is kneeling on the floor with her head on the bed, asleep.

AT RISE:

Doctor Connelly enters the ward, sees Becky asleep on the floor. He feels for Elijah's pulse.

DOCTOR CONNELLY

(Shakes his head, covers Elijah's face with the sheet and then places his hand on Becky's shoulder)

Becky my dear, you've been here for two days now. He's gone. He passed sometime during the night while you slept. I am so sorry that you have lost your Jacob.

BECKY

(Putting on a brave face)

I've known from the start that it was hopeless but I still prayed for a miracle. He never regained consciousness so at least he didn't suffer. I'd best go and change and later I would like to know about when and where he will be buried.

DOCTOR CONNELLY

Yes my dear, you do that. He'll be buried in a plot here at the camp with all the others but likely not before his brother Elijah gets back from Bonneville. They tell me that he's on his way back and I'll send word to you at the nurses' quarters when he arrives. You go now and rest a little. It's been a great shock for you, caring for him as you did.

(Becky rises, takes the painted acorn on the ribbon that she has been holding in her hand, kisses it and hangs it on Elijah's bed above his head)

(Becky exits)

(The lights dim briefly and then come back on to denote the passage of a brief period of time)

(Jacob enters the medical ward, still in uniform)

JACOB

I got here as soon as I could. Where is my brother? How is he? Where is my brother?

(Doctor Connelly is busy consulting a chart when Jacob enters the medical ward)

DOCTOR CONNELLY

(Placing his hand on Jacob's shoulder)

Foster, is that you? Elijah, I'm sorry to have to tell you that your brother Jacob died early this morning in his sleep. There was nothing we could do for him.

JACOB

(Surprised and bewildered)

No! I'm Jacob! It was Elijah who was wounded. Please don't tell me he's dead. Where is he?

DOCTOR CONNELLY

There was no first name on the chart. We all thought it was you Jacob. He's right here son, we haven't moved him yet.

(Jacob falls to his knees beside his brother's body, places his hands to his face and weeps)

JACOB

Oh Elijah, Elijah! What am I going to do without you brother?

(Jacob lifts his head slightly and notices the painted acorn on Elijah's bed. He removes it and stares at it intently)

JACOB

(Screaming)

O my god! Becky! Becky!

(Jacob rises quickly and runs from the medical ward through the door on the right)

(The Nurses' Chorus enters from stage rear left and the Soldiers' Chorus enters from stage rear right)

(They sing "The Final Chapter", together.)

NURSES' CHORUS & SOLDIER'S CHORUS in unison

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley3-18_hifi.mp3

"The Final Chapter"

Washed ashore, the tide is turning,
on the edge of no returning--
in between the cold and burning... Ahhhh

Here the sound of silent laughter
like a dream the morning after
the last page, the final chapter.... Ahhhh

One blink of an eye--
illumination.
Touch the sky--
a sweet sensation.
Harmonize with jubilation.... Ahhhh

Hear the sound
of angels singing,
all around,
you'll see them winging.
Hear the chimes of freedom ringing.... Ahhhh

Like the blazing Sun
You'll see him coming,

with opened arms,
you'll see him running.

The Morning Star of everlasting... Life

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIScene 3

SETTING: The parade ground between the barracks and the field hospital.

AT RISE: Sally Benson and Sister Fredericks are hugging Becky Cartwright. The three are standing stage centre, front.

SISTER FREDERICKS

(Wiping her eyes)

There, there my dear Becky, you have a good cry. Jacob was a wonderful boy I'm sure of it, and we will all miss him greatly. Your heart is broken now but one day it will mend.

BECKY

Oh Matron, I loved him so, and I still do. However will I carry on?

SALLY

(Dabbing her eyes with the bottom of her apron)

I am so sorry for you Becky. Thank the Lord he didn't suffer. I don't suppose he ever regained consciousness, did he?

BECKY

No Sally, and that makes me feel even worse. Not the fact that he wasn't awake. It's just the fact that I never got a chance to tell him how much I loved him or to say good-bye.

(The three of them hug together again as the field hospital door on the left opens suddenly and Jacob rushes onto the parade ground. He has the painted acorn on the ribbon in his hand)

JACOB

Becky my love! Oh Becky my dearest!

(Becky breaks from the grasp of Sally and Sister Fredericks. She stares in wonder at the sight of Jacob)

BECKY

Jacob! But... But...

(Becky flies into Jacob's arms)

(At the same time, Sally Benson utters a strangled gasp, clutches her throat and exits quickly through the field hospital door. The others do not notice her leaving the parade ground nor exiting stage left)

JACOB

No my dear, it's really me! I am alive but Elijah is gone. They couldn't save him, Doctor Connelly told me.

BECKY

I know they couldn't. I've been with him for two days. But we all thought it was you who was wounded. There was no first name on his chart and his head was so bandaged. I found the painted acorn in your pocket and that's how I knew it was you!

JACOB

Oh Becky, I put the acorn in Elijah's pocket when they were transporting him back to the camp. I thought that he could use the good luck more than me. What you must have been going through! It pains me so to lose my brother but I cannot fathom what it would be like to lose you.

BECKY

My heart was broken but now it is whole. I thought that I had lost you but you have come back to me. Love will make both our hearts strong and whole again. It's as if our being together was predestined.

(Jacob and Becky move stage front and center to sing, "Set on Fire")

"SET ON FIRE" JACOB & BECKY - DUET

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley4-19_hifi.mp3

"Set on Fire"

Blue, blue sky set on fire

dazzling color dance on silver clouds.

I can see them in your lovely eyes

reflection of the new sunrise.

It should come as no surprise

That I'm in love with you.

Cold, cold heart set on fire

Hopelessly resisting, feel it burn.

Tears and pain I've spent in jest

Just can't seem to find no rest.

Hide me in your loving breast,

I'm in love with you

I'm in love with you.

Blue, blue night set on fire

Watch the sun hide his (her) face, almost ashamed.

Whispered words, there's none to tell.

Sun and moon they'll know so well---

When they hear the wedding bell.

I'm in love with you

I'm in love with you

I'm in love with you.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

(A bugle plays "Lights Out" in the distance)

http://www.royalengineers.ca/41_Lights%20Out.mp3

ACT IIScene 4

SETTING: A military burial ground in Flanders. The barracks and field hospital can be seen nearby. A wooden cross marks Elijah's grave site stage centre front. There are several other crosses in a row on one side and a blasted tree stands on the other side.

AT RISE: Sally Benson stands alone stage front left. Becky and Jacob are together at Elijah's grave. Captain Smyth and Doctor Connelly stand stage right with the Soldiers' Chorus. Sister Fredericks and the Nurses' Chorus stand on the other side of the stage to the rear of Sally.

SALLY BENSON

(Standing alone stage front left near the hospital door, facing
the audience)

"THINGS I NEVER SAID" - SALLY BENSON (SOLO)

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley3-19_hifi.mp3

"Things I Never Said"

Things I never said keep runnin' through my mind
Though I left along the way some clues for you to find.
You'll just never know how deep I felt inside,
Could have quenched the desert Sun with all the tears that I
cried.
And I'll just never know if somehow we could have loved,
Seems as though we met half way, but it simply wasn't enough.
And to face another day is to meet head on with dread.
Looking back on day to day on all the things I never said.

Things I never said have brought me where I am,
So confused without your love; one emotional traffic jam.
Had to do it all again I'd be broken to my knees.
There'd be no lack of love and no shame in my pleas.
Love you more than life itself and without you all is vain,
But we only met halfway so nothing's lost and nothing's gained.
But to face another day is to meet head on with dread,
When looking back from day to day on all the things I never
said.

(A bugle plays the final few bars of "The Last Post")

[http://www.royalengineers.ca/40_Last%20Post%20\(Tattoo\).mp3](http://www.royalengineers.ca/40_Last%20Post%20(Tattoo).mp3)

CAPTAIN SMYTH

Here lies our brother Elijah Foster who we have laid to rest with his comrades, a brave soldier who gave his life in service to his king and country. May he rest in peace and always be remembered by his fellow soldiers and by those who loved him dearly.

ALL

Amen!

DOCTOR CONNELLY

(Turning away from the grave and speaking to Captain Smyth)

I fear that he will not be the last of our boys who will be buried here Smyth. You have the Germans on the run but I don't think they are finished yet.

(Captain Smyth, Doctor Connelly and the soldiers remain in sight but move slightly to the rear. The group of nurses with Sister Fredericks move to one side and appear to be talking quietly and sadly together. Sally remains standing to the left, downcast.

Only Becky and Jacob remain at Elijah's grave stage centre front, holding hands.)

BECKY

I find it difficult dealing with my mix of emotions Jacob. I am saddened at Elijah's death, but I am so thankful to God that you are alive. For two days I thought that I had lost you, but I feel guilty being happy that I didn't.

JACOB

We'll work our way through this sorrow my love. Time will heal this wound I'm sure, although it doesn't feel like that today. We have our futures and our lives together. When this stupid war is over I will be leaving the army and we will both be heading

home. My parents will love you. My Pa has said that when I am married I can take over the farm from him. We can add on to the house and look after the folks as they get older. We'll also need a place for our children.

BECKY

A whole bunch of children Jacob! And I have already picked out the name for our first son.

JACOB

What would you name him my love?

BECKY

Why Elijah, of course!

(Becky and Jacob hug each other. Then Becky breaks the hug, takes the painted acorn on the ribbon that she has been holding and drapes it over Elijah's grave marker)

JACOB

Yes my dear, Elijah will be a perfect name for our son. There are many oak trees on the farm back home and their acorns will always remind us of the brother and friend we have lost and the love that we have found.

BECKY

O Jacob, I pray that song and laughter will fill our lives, that god will watch over us, that the sun will shine and that peace will reign. I pray that the clouds of war be swept away and that the world will let us all live in peace. They call this the war to end all wars. Pray that it ends soon and let gentleness rule the world forever.

"WINTER" FINALE (All cast members sing together)

http://scottendsley.com/audio/MP3-320-scottendsley5-21_hifi.mp3

"Winter"

Winter holds you in my mind,

Thoughts of you come to me.
A colorless sky, for no reason why,
Holds the canvas of my memory.

Ahhh Ahhhh Ahhhhh etc.

When the winter blows away the deaden leaves of fall,
New life begins, as well as love, and mine is yours to call.
We'll hear the sounds of changing sights through snow
The wind and rain,
And springtime will reign once again

There's a hope that exists that tomorrow will bring
All the hopes that have faded and a new song to sing
That what was is again for today,
And today what will be will remain.

Hold your memories close to you and never let them go,
They're all you'll have in time to come---
A place you not yet know.
The future's in your hand today, tomorrow's not that long---
Make sure that your song is well sung.

(GRADUAL FADE TO BLACKOUT)

Bugle plays "Fatigue" during fade

http://www.royalengineers.ca/20_Fatigue.mp3

(END OF SCENE)

(FINIS)

(CURTAIN FALLS)

About Brian Wrixon

Brian Wrixon is a retired business executive who, after serving over 40 years in the financial services industry, now devotes his time to creative endeavours. In addition to writing and publishing numerous poetry and prose works of his own, he has been instrumental in assisting hundreds of young and emerging authors from around the world get published, either personally or as contributors to group anthologies.

Brian is the founder of the almost 1,500 member international writers' group "Poets with Voices Strong", as well as the advocacy group N♀W – Needs of Women International. He is a member of the advisory boards of "Writing For Peace" in Colorado USA, and "Express Journal" in Moradabad (U.P.) India. He is a member of the senior editorial board of Bharat College of Commerce and Science in Kulgaon Badlapur, India, and serves on the editorial board of The World Peace Mission in Kankerkhhera, Meerut (U.P.) India. Brian is also Chair of the Advisory Board of Reflection Magazine and likewise functions as an editor and reviewer for the independent publisher MCI Writer's House. Brian has contributed to several journals, scholarly texts, anthologies and other publications around the globe.

He graduated from Laurentian University in Canada with a degree in Classical Studies, and is a former faculty member, online curriculum design consultant and program coordinator at Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario. Along with his lengthy career in the corporate world, he also built a highly successful consulting practice and now provides consultancy services in distribution chain management and strategic planning for small businesses on a volunteer basis, through his facilitated planning process "Growth By Design".

Brian has been married for almost 50 years to Dr. Cheryl Wrixon, an educational consultant, and they are fortunate to live nearby their children and grandchildren. Their extended family includes five children sponsored through Chalice Canada, three in Africa, one in Haiti and one in India.

Brian Wrixon Books (Canada) is a private and independent publisher registered with Library and Archives Canada. It operates on a not-for-profit basis and has produced almost 200 titles. The publisher's printing needs are handled by Blurb Inc. of the USA. All publications of Brian Wrixon Books (Canada) are available from the printer's online bookstore at: www.blurb.com

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About Scott Endsley

Scott Endsley is an independent Singer/Songwriter & Author who has composed well over 200 songs in his lifetime in nearly all genres, and writes short stories, essays, humorous musings and daily posts. He currently resides in Lawton, Oklahoma.

"I was seriously born breech birth; yep, I came into this world making a literal butt of myself. Once arriving on May 1, 1958, my parents were told that I had spina bifida and that I would never walk, nor father any children. Nevertheless, I compensated quite well, and must have learned to not only walk, but run fast enough to catch up to my first wife and successfully spawn two healthy kids! My love for music began in February, 1964 at the age of five, when my father allowed me to stay up and watch, The Ed Sullivan Show, featuring for the first time in America, a live performance by The Beatles. Years later, I discovered Bob Dylan and Paul Simon, and knew that I wanted to write songs. I was kicked in and out of the only band I ever joined, at least six times! We called ourselves Close To Home, which was quite fitting considering that that was the only place we ever played. I have written over 200 songs in my lifetime, and have just begun seriously pursuing my Singer/Songwriter career since retiring from the phone company. I have authored one unpublished humorous novel, Aboard My Train of Thought, and am working on many more. I graduated from Ashford University in 2016, with Bachelor of Arts degrees in both History and English Literature, with a minor in Psychology. What I gained from school sharpened my raw talents in writing, and as a result of having to write papers, week after week, my writing has become more prolific. I am just now at the threshold of my career in both music and literature. I hope you will join me for the rest of the ride." --- Scott Endsley

<http://www.scottendsley.com>