

THE BLOWING AND THE BENDING

A Musical Drama in Two Acts

by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Solomon Unruh, Mennonite farmer	Bass
Sarah Unruh, his wife	Mezzo-soprano
Menno Unruh, 21, their eldest son	*Bass (or tenor)
Carl Unruh, 19, second son	Tenor
Bessie Unruh, 16, their daughter	Soprano
Jeff Peterson, 20, neighbor to Unruh's	Baritone
Frieda, a neighbor	Soprano
Sam Wilson, a friend of Jeff	*Tenor (or bass)
Abner Schmidt, acculturated American-Mennonite	
Nancy Peterson, sister to Jeff, friend of Bessie	
Uncle David, church elder	
Soldiers, at Camp Funston	
Chaplain	
Marie, Susanna, Mennonite women	
Henry, Peter, Levi, Amos, Jake, Mennonite men	
Church elders	
Mob members	
Chorus of friends, neighbors, townspeople	

*Carl Unruh and Sam Wilson sing as bass and tenor in a quartet; their voice range assignments are interchangeable.

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

ACT I

Scene 1:	City park in Pershing, Kansas (p. 1)	July 9, 1918
Scene 2:	A street in Pershing (p. 4)	A few minutes later
Scene 3:	Unruh family farm home (p. 8)	July 10, 1918
Scene 4:	Somewhere on Unruh farm (p. 21)	July 12, 1918
Scene 5:	Unruh farmyard (p. 24)	July 13, 1918
Scene 6:	Unruh farmyard (p. 30)	July 15, 1918

ACT II

Scene 7:	Unruh farmyard (p. 34)	July 21, 1918
Scene 8:	Mennonite church (p. 39)	July 23, 1918
Scene 9:	Between Unruh and Peterson farms (p. 46)	July 24, 1918
Scene 10:	Unruh farmyard (p. 49)	July 26, 1918
Scene 11:	Unruh farmyard (p. 58)	July 27, 1918

MUSICAL SELECTIONS:

ACT I

Scene 1:	1.	Hip Hip Hurrah for America	Chorus
Scene 2:	2.	It Is Too Bad	Quartet (Menno, Carl, Jeff, Sam)
Scene 3:	3.	Nobody Asked Me	Bessie
	4.	Love Must Build a Home	Sarah
	5.	Duet	Bessie and Sarah
Scene 4:	6.	Let Me In, Let Me Out	Carl
Scene 5:	7.	Harvest Time Today	Frieda and Chorus
	8.	Alpenkreuter	Chorus
	9.	Thresh the Mountains (Isaiah 41)	Solomon and Chorus
	10.	Interlude	Instrumental

ACT II

Scene 7:	11.	Happy is the Miller Man	Chorus
	12.	Putting on the Style	Carl and Bessie
Scene 8:	13.	Jesu Geh Voran	Chorus
	14.	I've Got to Go; Send Me a Storm	Carl, Bessie and Chorus
Scene 9:	15.	Will You Miss Me?	Bessie and Jeff
Scene 10:	16.	God Made Man for the Land	Solomon and Chorus
	17.	Hip Hip Hurrah for America	Chorus
Scene 11:	18.	Finale	Solomon and Chorus

Scene I. Pershing County Courthouse Lawn

The scene opens with a big patriotic celebration in the county courthouse park, flags, and banners flying, placards proclaiming loyalty, cheers, shouts, whistles, and everyone marching around as the company sings, "Hip, Hip, Hurrah."

Chairman: (Circus barker type) Attention. Your attention ladies and gentlemen. Attention!

(The crowd settles down only reluctantly. Noise comes through "Sock it to them Huns," "Rah, Rah America," "Hang the Kaiser, Hang the Kaiser," "Hip, Hip, Hurrah," etc.)

Chairman: Ladies and gentlemen. May I introduce to you . . . May I introduce to you the next speaker at our great Liberty Loan Kickoff Celebration. Ladies and gentlemen, I give to you a man who needs no introduction, (a great home-grown American.) Yes. Here he is folks, ABNER SCHMIDT.

(Wild Cheering. Enter Menno, Carl, Jeff, Sam)

Schmidt: Mr. Loyalty Day Chairman, Honorable Mayor, and my fellow citizens of the United States of America. (cheers) I stand before you today a humble man, proud to be an American. What can I add to the great speeches given here today? Nothing at all.

But let me remind you today that it was not three years ago that the awful tornado of 1914 hit our fair city of Pershing, Kansas. That storm destroyed some of our finest homes, wrecked some of our thriving businesses, killed some of our most beloved neighbors (hand over heart, solemn face). But we survived that storm and we have built a stronger and fairer city than we had before.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was on that very same awful week that another storm broke out in Europe--the great world war. Today we Americans are called to get that tornado under control. The German Kaiser is sending his murderous armies across Europe. The Kaiser must be stopped before he reaches our shores. And we can do it! (cheers) We can blow him off the face of the earth! (wilder cheers)

Today I speak for all German Americans who rally to the flag of their country. I am not ashamed that I was raised in a family of German background. I am not ashamed that I grew up speaking the German language. But I am not now a German.

I am an American and proud of American democracy. I am proud to have been Americanized in our great American melting pot of all peoples. We will all be loyal to America. (cheers)

I do not want to boast today. My father helped lead the Mennonites out of Russian despotism to American freedom forty-five years ago. And they brought the Turkey red winter wheat which has made Kansas the breadbasket of America. Let there be no doubt where Mennonites stand. The Mennonites know of despotism and they love freedom. The Mennonites know how to survive a storm. This land has been good to them and they will be loyal Americans. They will not let down their adopted country, the United States of America. (cheers)

So let us all band together and put the Pershing County Liberty Loan Drive over the top. All of us: Mennonites, Catholics, Protestants, German-Americans, English-Americans, Mexican-Americans--all of us will buy bonds until it hurts.

Today America needs us. Today we will answer her call. (wild cheering, dancing, marching as scene ends with another chorus and verse of "Hip, Hip, Hurrah.")

Hip, Hip, Hurrah for America.

1. Hip, Hip, Hurrah for America
Land of the brave and free
Rally round the flag, boys
Never let it sag, boys
America, for me.
2. Hip, Hip, Hurrah for America
Land of the brave and free
Let the world be free, boys
For democracy, boys
America, for me.
3. Hip, Hip, Hurrah for America
Land of the brave and free
Hang the Kaiser high, boys
We will do or die, boys
America, for me.

4. Hip, Hip, Hurrah for America
Land of the brave and free
Let's go kill the Hun, boys
Fight till we have won, boys
America, for me.

-End of Scene-

Scene II. A few minutes later

Unruh family on stage front of curtain: Father, Mother, Carl, Bessie, Menno.

Father: We will be leaving for home in just half an hour. Carl. Bessie. Be at the car on time. Verstanden? Nicht?

Menno, Carl, Bessie: Yes, Pa. We'll be there.

Father: Mother needs to get some sugar at the store. I want to have a few words with Elder Krehbiel about these war bonds.

Bessie: Will you need some help with the sugar, Ma?

Mother: You can come, Bessie. I will need about two dollars, Solomon.

Father: Yes, here. (He gives her some money, and says gruffly over his shoulder to the boys as Father, Mother and Bessie leave:) Eine halbe Stunde, nicht? Sich das du do bist.

Carl: What's Pa so upset about? He talks German every time he gets mad.

Menno: I don't think he liked Abner Schmidt's speech at all.

(Jeff and Sam, two Americans, come onstage opposite, Jeff strutting with chest out in mock bombast)

Sam: "I stand before you a humble man, and I want you all to know I'm prrrroud to be a hummmble American. "

Jeff: What a blowhard!

Carl: Jeff Peterson! And Sam. Where have you fellows been?

Sam: "And I don't mind telling you folks that I've been boiled in the melting pot. And I'm prrrroud to be a hummmble Amerrrican. "

Jeff: We were at the big war bond rally like everyone else. We heard your big Mennonite leader say how all you Mennonites are going to help whip the Kaiser.

Carl: (evading) This your bike, Sam? Looks like a beauty.

Jeff: (persisting) Come on, Carl. How about it? The Mennonites now all pushing this war?

- Carl: Abner Schmidt is no big Mennonite leader.
- Jeff: But he said he was speaking for Mennonites. And he took credit for Mennonite Turkey Wheat.
- Menno: Mennonites are against war. That won't change just because Abner Schmidt says so.
- Jeff: But, Menno, you've already been drafted. Aren't you going to go?
- Menno: There's no choice.
- Carl: Menno has to leave for camp next Tuesday. But the War Department promised that Mennonites wouldn't have to fight if it was against our religious convictions.
- Jeff: Then why go to camp at all?
- Sam: Why have a war at all? Did the German Kaiser ever threaten to do anything to you? or to you? or to me?
- Jeff: I don't know, Sam. I do sort of like a democracy.
- Sam: You call that democracy? Just the young people gettin' drafted and killed? That's no equality.
- Carl: Has anybody asked Abner Schmidt why he hasn't joined the army if he's so heated up about the war?
- Sam: Abner Schmidt to France? Not on your life. When somebody's got to be sacrificed for the sins of the older generation, it's always the young people who are pushed up to the altar.
- Jeff: It's not that simple, Sam.
- Carl: You two fellows out of the draft?
- Sam: Sheer luck. Our numbers were way down on the list. But they'll catch up with us, that's for sure.
- Jeff: I don't know. I even thought of volunteering, but my folks wouldn't let me go.
- Sam: Hey, Carl. You're right! Let's go up to Abner Schmidt and ask him to go in our place! How could he turn us down?

Jeff: Be serious, Sam.

Sam: I mean it, Jeff. I can see it now. We could appeal to Abner Schmidt's great patriotic spirit.

Quartet: "It Is Too Bad"

Sam: Well now Abner Schmidt's a patriot. He's panting hot for war
He's a home grown Kansas hero you see
He would love to go battle for the big red white and blue
But here is what he said to me:

REFRAIN:

It is too bad, I am so sad, that I
cannot join the battle that will make men free; But I've
duties here today. I just cannot get away. So
You can do the fighting for me.

Carl: Well the banker and the broker were a-counting up their dough
They think war is great for profits you see
They remember the Maine and the Lusitania too
But here is what they said to me:

(REFRAIN)

Jeff: Well the preacher in the pulpit says that God is on our side
He says righteousness must triumph you see
He could slay those Philistines with the jawbone of an ass
But here is what he said to me:

(REFRAIN)

Menno: Now the politician hollers 'til he's purple in the face
We should send him back to Congress you see
He is ready to go anywhere he might be called
But here is what he said to me:

(REFRAIN)

Menno: Carl, we've got to go. Pa and Ma will be waiting.

Sam: Good luck in camp, Menno. We'll probably all meet you there
in a month or two.

Carl: Jeff, why don't you ride home with us. There's room. We can drop you off at your place just a quarter mile from our home.

Jeff: Well, I don't know.

Bessie: (enters in a hurry) Menno, Carl, hurry up. The folks are waiting.

Carl: We're coming just now.

Jeff: Hi, Bessie.

Bessie: (looks down shyly) Oh. Hi, Jeff.

(They all exit.)

-End of Scene -

Scene III. Unruh family living-dining room

Curtain rises on the Unruh family (Father, Mother, Carl, Bessie) which has just finished eating breakfast and is kneeling in prayer. Simple furniture, grandfather clock, motto on wall.

Father: O God, thy name is above every name in heaven or on earth,
And there is no other name by which men can be saved.
Thou art our God and we are thy people.
Be with us on this day.
Guide the president of our land and the leaders of all nations.
Teach the nations peace. Let this war soon come to an end.
Be with our son Menno and all our boys in camp.
Give all thy people strength to be faithful this day and
forevermore.
Amen.

(Shuffle as family gets up from kneeling. Father returns Bible to shelf. Women start clearing table.)

Mother: Bessie, you didn't finish your eggs.

Bessie: I don't like the yolks.

Mother: The yolks are the best part. They are good for you.

Bessie: Besides, the eggs were too greasy. I'm watching my weight.

Mother: You have nothing to be worrying about.

Bessie: Except that I'm starting to bulge and sag like an old woman.
And none of my clothes fit me anymore. Which really doesn't
matter because it's high time I got rid of those old rags and
found something decent to wear.

Mother: Land sakes, Bessie! I do declare! (Exit with some dishes.)

Carl: (Teasing chant) Fatty little sister, nobody ever kissed her.

Bessie: So who asked for your comment, dummm Kopf?

Carl: Sometimes the truth comes without being asked for, Sis.
(He grabs some last crumbs from the table.) Count your
blessings. We Mennonites like our women stout. (Chant again)
Fatty little Sis. . . .

- Bessie: That's enough music this morning, beanpole. You sop up the leftover grease like a sponge and still you're all knees and elbows.
- Carl: If you would get up and milk six cows before breakfast you'd be hungry too. In fact, some good honest work would do wonders for those bulges.
- Bessie: Four cows.
- Carl: Okay, maybe four this week.
- Bessie: And who do you think fixed breakfast this morning?
- Carl: If you did it, what's the big gripe about the eggs?
- Bessie: Watch out or I'll quit working and you'll have to wash the milk buckets this morning.
- Carl: Oh yeah?
- Bessie: Yeah! (She playfully throws a dishrag at him, he dodges, throws it back. They feint and scuffle in a mock fight.)
- Mother: (entering rapidly) Children! I do declare. This isn't the chicken house. When are you going to start behaving like civilized Christians? Come Bessie, help finish clearing the table. (They clear remaining dishes and exit.) As if we didn't have enough confusion without two children hopping around like Banty roosters. I wonder when you are all going to grow up.
- Bessie: Faster than you think, Ma.
- Father: (Has been over at side desk making notations in farm notebook. Now returns and addresses Carl.) The threshers will be here in five days, if it doesn't rain. We must get ready.
- Carl: It won't rain. Hasn't for weeks.
- Father: It will not be easy to get ready for the threshing crew in time. We're already behind in our work since Menno was drafted.
- Carl: We sure could use Menno for harvest.

- Father: I want you to fix up the leaks in the wagon wheels box. But first finish cleaning the manure out of the cowbarn. If you get finished before dinner, fix the hitch on the hay rack. And the chicken house ought to be cleaned. And if you finish . . .
- Carl: Pa, that's three days work already.
- Father: I am not worried you are going to kill yourself working. I will walk over to the Petersons and drive back those two steers that jumped the fence again. Don't know where they are finding their way out. You know what you are supposed to do?
- Carl: Yeah, I guess.
- Father: Good. Spread the first manure load on the old potato patch. The rest can go over south of the house. (He is on his way out of the door.)
- Carl: Pa?
- Father: Yeah?
- Carl: Have you decided if I can go back to college? They'll be wanting to know.
- Father: I do not see how we can afford it, son.
- Carl: But Pa, we've got the best wheat crop in years. And the wheat prices are higher than they've ever been.
- Father: I mean we need you for work. There is no way to get everything done with Menno gone and all.
- Carl: I could come home some weekends and maybe take a week or so off when it was absolutely necessary.
- Father: You know how behind we are already. And there are not any farm hands around for hire. Everybody is away killing the Germans.
- Carl: Pa, I just got to go to school.
- Father: What for? What good is it going to do you? I thought to get it out of your system, maybe one year at college would be enough. I never finished high school. My father never finished grade school. Has the world so much changed?

- Carl: Lotsa things are changed, Pa. Lotsa things.
- Father: There are two reasons to be leaving the farm and going to college. One is to be a better preacher in church. The other is to be a better teacher in school. And you are not wanting to be either one.
- Carl: I don't know what I want to be. I can't say. But I got to go to college to find out.
- Father: Ya, you for sure do not know what you want. You do not know if you want to be baptized. You do not know if you want . . .
- Carl: (angry) Baptized! What does that have to do with college?
- Father: Everybody else in your class is baptized all at once. But, No, you say no and everybody wonders.
- Carl: Pa. That was three years ago. And you're still talkin about it.
- Father: Ya. Three more years and still not baptized.
- Carl: But I didn't wantI don't know
- Father: The important things we do know. Like we have work to do. You have to forget about college until the war is over. I have one son in camp and I cannot let another one go too. Now we want to get to work before half the day is gone. (Almost out of door.) Kommst' du?
- Carl: In just a bit.
- Father: I am going already. See to it that you do not spend the morning down at the creek fishing for mudcats. (door slams)
- Carl: Who said anything about fishing? (he stiffens) Why was that comment necessary? Sometimes it gets to be more than I am willing to . . .
- Mother: (Enters opposite side, behind Carl) What's the matter, son?
- Carl: Pa just told me I had to get baptized before he'd let me go to college.
- Mother: That's not it, son. He needs you on the farm.

- Carl: And he thinks I want to go fishing. I'm not scared of work.
- Mother: No one said you were, son. You were born into an Unruh family. A family of hard working men. Pa's not mad at you.
- Carl: No, he's not mad. He just always lets me know he's not satisfied with me. I'll never please him, Ma, no matter how hard I try. And one of these days I'm gonna stop trying.
- Mother: It's not your nature to stop, son. Not my boys. Not you or Menno . . .
- Carl: Menno, Menno, Menno. Menno always does the right thing. Menno does what Pa wants. Menno knows what's right.
- Mother: (musing) Menno was the firstborn.
- Carl: Well just let Menno inherit the farm. I don't want it. Maybe God would love me even if I'm not a farmer.
- Mother: But Menno isn't even at home anymore.
- Carl: (sulky) Maybe I will go fishing this morning. It was Pa's idea after all. (leaves angrily)
- Mother: You know what is right Carl. (door slams) The Lord knows what I would have done with twelve children like my mother had. Menschenskind! How did she do it? I do declare. Was life then so much easier? (looking out of doorway) Clouding up a bit. No rain maybe, but at least the relief from the heat is good.
- Bessie: (flouncing in) It's not fair. It just is not fair!
- Mother: What's the matter now, Bessie. What's not fair?
- Bessie: All the exciting things happen to boys and nothing happens to girls. That's what.
- Mother: Shush girl. Mind your tongue. Are you now all at once wishing to be drafted into the army or something?
- Bessie: Maybe I am, Ma, maybe I am. At least that would get me away from this booring farm. Ma, do you know it is over a year since I have been more than ten miles away from home?

- Mother: There is plenty to do right here. It is only six months now since your father had that heart attack. He works too hard. He needs help.
- Bessie: Well, it doesn't look like I'm gonna have an attack of anything.
- Mother: Count your blessings, child. Think of our boys at camp who do not know if they will be persecuted from one day to the next. There is many a Mennonite boy in camp who wishes he were within ten miles of home.
- Bessie: So what am I supposed to do about it? Nobody asked me to stand up and fight for my glorious country. Nobody asked me to stand up and refuse to fight for my glorious Mennonite church. Of course nobody asked me. I'm a girl. I'm supposed to stay at home and twiddle my thumbs.
- Mother: There are things a girl can do. Were you asleep in church last Sunday when the women were told their duties?
- Bessie: Women never say anything in church. We aren't even allowed to vote.
- Mother: We are supposed to pray for the boys in camp. We should write letters to them. We are supposed to . . .
- Bessie: Okay, let's pray. (mock prayer, eyes to heaven) "Dear God, help all our Mennonite boys at camp to be faithful to your will. Uplift them and strengthen them. Amen, amen, amen." That's finished. Now what? Oh yes, write letters. "Dear Menno. How are you? We are fine. It didn't rain yesterday. It didn't rain today. Everything is dry, dry, dry, dry, dry, blah, blah, blah, your humble and obedient little dried up sister, amen."
- Mother: Hold your tongue girl. I do declare I don't know what is going to become of you.
- Bessie: Nor do I, Ma. Nor do I. There's so much to do in this world and nobody ever asks me.

Nobody Asked Me

(REFRAIN)

Nobody asked me, Nobody asked me
I was ready to go, I was set for the show
But Nobody asked me.

1. There's a fire in the pasture, smoke is billowing overhead
It is blowing toward our schoolhouse; someone act or we'll be dead
Send the boys to put the flames out--let the men our heroes be
Let the girls hide in the basement waiting rescue anxiously.

(REFRAIN)

2. Who'll defend our alma mater, who will hold the flag up high
On the sport field charged with glory; who for us will do or die?
Send the boys to win the ball game--let the men our heroes be
Girls can lead cheers on the sidelines, decorated prettily.

(REFRAIN)

3. Now our country sounds that trumpet; there's a war on over there.
Who will brave the field of battle, fight for justice everywhere,
Send the boys to whip the Kaiser--let the men our heroes be
Girls can pray, crochet, write letters; girls are girls . . .
oh say can you see.

(REFRAIN)

Mother: Bessie, I guess you'd last about twenty-four hours in all that excitement you think you want. And then you'd hurry back home to where it's safe and warm.

Bessie: But I'll never get a chance to try. I know I won't.

Mother: Women weren't meant to go chasing all around the world. We were meant to love. We were meant to build a home.

Love Must Build a Home

1. Love must build a home
Birds must have a nest
Where the hungry feed
Where the weary rest.

2. Love must build a home
Broken souls must mend
Aching hearts need calm
Fears must find their end.
3. Love does not ask why
How it came to be
Some were called to serve
Some like you and me.

Bessie: Maybe I'll think like you in twenty years when I have my own family. But I'm me. Bessie Unruh. Sixteen years old. Stuck on a Mennonite farm. How can I sit at home and do nothing just because I'm a girl. It's not fair. It just is not fair! (sings duet with Mother using first verse of previous song)

(REFRAIN)

Nobody asked me . . .

(Mother) It's not up to you.

Nobody asked me . . .

(Mother) There's nothing to do.

I was set for the show, I was ready to go, but nobody asked me.

(Mother) You must learn to wait, accept your fate, let love build a home.

Father: (enter) The mail is here. There are two letters besides the Herald and the Vorzeiger. One is for Carl. The other looks out like it might be from Menno. Thought I ought to bring it right in.

Bessie: (rushes up) Oh, Pa! A letter from Menno?! Can I open it Pa? Can I read it? Please Pa?

Father: Read it aloud to us all.

Mother: Wait. Look first if the letter has been opened. I heard they sometimes open the letters and read them and even take things out they don't like.

Bessie: (holds letter up to light) I can't tell if it's been opened. Aw, let's read it. (tears it open) Oh, Menno, you can do better than that. It's only two sheets and with big handwriting.

Mother: Well go ahead and read it or give it to me.

Bessie: "Dear Ma, Pa, Bessie and Carl: Thanks for all the cookies and stuff. Sure was good. We Mennonite boys who refused the uniform are together in a group with nothing to do. They test us every now and then. My biggest test was yesterday. Three soldiers came and took me a little way from camp. One was an officer. They said they had orders to shoot me if I wouldn't . . .

(Shift to spotlight on Menno and two uniformed soldiers)

Soldier 1: Here we are, soldier. It's your last chance. Attention, soldier.

Menno: (Says nothing. Head slightly bowed. Shoulders drooped.)

Soldier 1: (shouts) I said, Atten-hut! (Pokes him with gun.) That's better. Now we don't want no more disrespect, soldier. Is that clear?

Menno: (mumbles) Umm Huh.

Soldier 1: (shouts) I said is that clear?

Menno: Yes sir.

Soldier 2: We got orders to do whatever it takes to put this uniform on you. And we're gonna do it dead or alive.

Soldier 1: Soldier, we're gonna shoot you at the count of three if you don't put on that military uniform. You ready to die?

Menno: I am a Mennonite and it is against my conscience to . . .

Soldier 2: We been through that religious shit before. We had enough. Here, blindfold the bastard.

Soldier 1: Get down on your knees.

Soldier 2: This gun goes off at the count of three. Just let us know if you change your mind.

Soldier 1: One! Two! (long wait) Three!

Soldier 2: Funny. The gun didn't go off. Funny. Ha. Ha. You're damn lucky, soldier.

Soldier 1: (rips off blindfold) Guess we'll have to put this uniform on you alive instead of dead. (With general roughness and cursing they start taking off Menno's clothes and putting on a uniform. Light fades and shifts back to Unruh family.)

- Bessie: (reading) I had a pretty good idea all along they wouldn't shoot me. I don't think they'll try it again.
- Mother: (shock) Solomon!
- Father: What's going on in this country? Who do they think they are?
- Bessie: There's some more, Pa.
- Father: Go ahead. Finish it.
- Bessie: I heard I can get away from camp on a farm furlough if I can get someone to sponsor me. Dad, do you know anyone on a farm outside of Kansas who could send in a request for me to come work? I'd sure like to get away from this camp. Don't worry about me. Love, Menno."
- Mother: May heaven protect us.
- Bessie: Two little pages. He's got so much to write about and he sends two measley pages. Think of it. They've got a gun in his ear and his life is in the balance. And all he can write is "I had an idea they wouldn't shoot me." I call that gratitude for the ten page letter I wrote to him about nothing at all.
- Mother: Bessie!
- Bessie: Pa, can I tell Carl to come in and read the letter? I know he'd like to hear. (She doesn't wait for an answer but rushes out.) Carl! Carl! We got a letter from Menno! Menno almost got shot!
- Father: We have got to have a church brotherhood meeting. This has to stop.
- Mother: But what can we do?
- Father: The government promised there would be no trouble if our Mennonite boys went to camp. We would not have to take up the gun. That was their promise.
- Mother: But the government is . . . is far away. Why would they listen?
- Father: Menno said an officer was in that bunch that threatened to shoot him. We can see that that man is punished for disobeying orders.

- Mother: Maybe he was obeying orders, Solomon.
- Father: Then the American government is a liar. We can get that officer's name.
- Mother: Menno does not dare to tell you that, Solomon. It could get him into awful trouble. Maybe even sending this letter was a big risk.
- Father: Yeah, and maybe he was writing only just part of the story. Maybe a lot worse things are going on.
- Carl: (comes in behind Bessie) Where's the letter?
- Mother: Oh, be careful, Carl. You're getting manure all over the floor. Please take off your shoes at the door.
- Carl: Okay, then bring the letter over here.
- Bessie: Let me read it to you. I've been through it once.
- Father: Once is already enough for me. I am going out to give this a good think. (He exits past Carl, struggling with his shoes.)
- Mother: (calling after Father) Don't forget what Menno asked about a place for a furlough.
- Carl: Ugh. (struggling with shoes) Give me that letter Bessie.
- Bessie: (on other side of room) I can read it just fine. "Dear Ma, Pa, Bessie and Carl: Thanks for all the letters and cookies and stuff" (she keeps reading until Carl finally gets his shoes off, runs over to Bessie and grabs letter)
- Carl: Give it. I don't need you to read at me like a Sunday School teacher.
- Bessie: Spoil sport. Bean pole. (sniff) Wow! You stink like thirty dead horses. Don't hold that letter too hard or we'll have to burn it and bury the ashes. (Carl is absorbed in letter; doesn't even look up)
- Mother: I wonder if they hurt Menno. I wonder if they beat him or anything like that.
- Bessie: The letter doesn't say. It doesn't say much at all.

- Mother: Menno might not write about it, even if it did happen. He would just keep it to himself so we wouldn't worry.
- Bessie: He just keeps things inside. And to think that I'm his sister!
- Mother: I wonder why they chose Menno? We got dozens of Mennonite boys at Camp Funston but only a few have been really attacked. Menno is not the kind of person you'd think they'd go after first.
- Bessie: Maybe he decided to talk back to them just once. I hope so.
- Carl: (finishes letter, puts it on table) I think they pick on him because he made up his mind and won't change it. Some of the boys in camp agree to do kitchen duty or work in the quartermaster corps. Menno won't compromise.
- Mother: Maybe it would be better if Menno were willing to bend a little more. But what can I say? He's so far away.
- Bessie: Well at least something is happening to him. I think it's exciting. Almost like going to France. I can't get over it. There he is blindfolded and on his knees. And the officer is counting one, two, three. I wonder if they tried to make a noise like a gun--clapping their hands or breaking a stick or something. Maybe Menno thought he was in heaven for a minute. Oooh! It makes me shiver.
- Mother: Well, let's not go through it again. I've had enough shivering for one summer day, please.
- Carl: (notices letter which had been put aside) Hey. There's a letter for me. Why didn't anybody say anything?
- Mother: I'm sorry Carl. We just got carried away by Menno's letter.
- Carl: (angrily as he opens letter) Yeah, I know. Menno this, Menno that. Menno something else. It's the story of my life.
- Mother: (as Carl reads) I'm sorry son. It was the first letter from Menno in three weeks. And it did have some important news. (momentary silence as Carl's hand holding his letter drops on the table) What is it son? Who is it from?
- Carl: It's from the United States Government. It's my draft notice. My number's up. I've got to report to Camp Funston on July 27.

Mother: Carl!

Bessie: No, it's not true. It's not true.

Mother: The 27th. Why that's just two weeks.

Carl: (to Bessie) Have a look if you don't believe me--and if you can stand the smell.

Bessie: It sure looks official. Look at all those stamps and fancy signatures.

Carl: Yeah. It's official. It's the real thing. Now maybe you have some news for your next letter to Menno.

Mother: But I was sure you wouldn't have to go. Carl, Pa will work himself to death without you.

Bessie: This sure cooks your college goose, doesn't it Carl?

Mother: I do declare! There won't be any boys at all in college this year. They'll all be in camp.

Bessie: (reading from draft notice) Hey, listen to this. "Willful failure to report, with an intent to evade military service, constitutes desertion from the Army of the United States, which in time of war is a capital offense."

Mother: What means "capital offense?"

Carl: It means what happened to Menno. Except this time they pull the trigger.

Mother: Oh, Carl!

-End of Scene-

Scene IV. Somewhere on Unruh farm (front of curtain)

Carl is sitting on a stump whittling at a stick. Bessie sneaks up and surprises him.

Bessie: Booh, Beanpole!

Carl: Aw, lay off, sis.

Bessie: Whatcha doing? Daydreaming?

Carl: I have three choices and each one is a trap.

Bessie: Three?

Carl: One. Stay at home and let them get me for a capital offense.
Two. Go to camp and just be another Menno.
Three. Go away to Canada.

Bessie: To Canada? Carl, would you run away?

Carl: Maybe it's not running away. There'd be farm work with the Mennonites up there. And then I could probably go to school in the winter.

Bessie: Would you ever come back?

Carl: Not while the war lasts. Maybe never.

Bessie: Pa wouldn't like that.

Carl: Yeah. Maybe that's one reason to do it. Just to get away.

Bessie: Ah yes. To get away.

Carl: There's choice number four--to go to camp and volunteer to fight in France like a patriotic American. If I just wanted to kill the Germans.

Bessie: Well, whatcha gonna do?

Carl: Bessie, about a month ago we were cutting oats and a big bull snake got caught in the sickle. When I pulled it away I saw its head was cut off and hanging by a thread. While it was twisting, three baby cottontail rabbits squirted out of its bloody neck, one after the other.

Bessie: Yeechch.

Carl: Those rabbits had been eaten for breakfast. They never knew what happened. Their eyes weren't open yet.

Bessie: What does that have to do with you?

Carl: Ever since then I keep having this dream. I'm in the belly of a snake--just like those rabbits. It's sorta warm and comfortable in there but I don't like it. I want more room to move. Then this snake gets its head cut off and I start sliding along that body heading for freedom. Suddenly I realize I don't want out. I'm scared and crying in the middle of the snake's belly--afraid to be born again.

Bessie: Aw, it's just a nasty dream.

Carl: No, Bessie. It's me. I want in and I want out at the same time. And I'm scared to go anyplace. Every place is a trap.

Let Me In, Let Me Out

1. Let me in; let me out; let me sing; let me shout
Let me be what I'm longing to be
Let me go; let me stay; tell me which is the way
What must I do now to be me?

(REFRAIN) For the crow flies straight and the coyote knows his home
And the buzzing of the beehive has a purpose all its own
And the sun and the rain find the barley where it's sown
But who holds the plan for me?

2. When will I hear that the answer is clear
Does the fork in the road have a sign
Is the path very far as I follow the star
And which of the stars could be mine?
3. How can I know, if I stay, if I go
What will be waiting for me
Where can I send to learn how it will end
What do I do to be free?

Bessie: Anyhow, I'd rather have your problem than mine. At least you're going somewhere.

Carl: Home can be a trap too, I guess.

Bessie: You're telling me! Girls can pray, crochet, write letters. Girls are girls. And so it must be.

Carl: I've got it. I'll go to Canada. You can disguise yourself and go to military camp in my place!

Bessie: There's a thought that'd really make Pa happy!

Carl: Really, Sis, you're gonna have to help Pa with the field work.

Bessie: I don't mind. Do you think Pa is really sick?

Carl: You couldn't tell by the way he works. Ma worries too much. I wonder whether he really had a heart attack. He was up milking the cows again in three days.

Bessie: The doctor said it was his heart.

Carl: Maybe Pa can get Jeff Peterson to come over and help with some work now and then. That is if he can keep you and Jeff from seeing too much of each other.

Bessie: Stop that, Carl. There isn't anything between me and Jeff.

Carl: Oh?

Bessie: Well there isn't. Besides he's probably going to the army and I'll be alone anyhow.

Carl: To the army, huh? How'd you find that out if there isn't anything between you?

Bessie: None of your business. You hear? And don't you dare say anything to Ma or Pa!

-End of Scene-

Scene V. Unruh farm

The harvest scene is out of doors by the Unruh home. Women are setting tables under some trees. Children playing nearby. Lots of hustle and bustle as things get ready for the meal. Frieda and Mother are setting tables.

Mother: Bessie! Oh, Bessie, it's twelve thirty already. Will you go tell the men to come and wash up. It's dinner time.

Bessie: Okay, Ma. (she hurries off)

Mother: I never know how we'll get everything ready in time. We're sure to forget something. Land sakes! I do declare.

Frieda: Don't worry. Everything always tastes good on harvest day. We should eat out of doors more often.

Mother: It sure makes more work. Oh my goodness, we forgot the salt. Here, take this while I find some. (she hurries off)

Frieda: (continuing to set tables) Everybody runs around so busy. But maybe it's the buzz of busyness that makes harvest so much fun.

Marie: Frieda, have you heard about Aganetha? Her man got her one of those fancy washing machines!

Frieda: Fancy?

Marie: She washes a whole tubful of clothes all at once with a machine. All she does is turn a crank to get it started.

Susanna: Why does Aganetha always get the fancy things? Does her man love her so much more?

Frieda: Well, she married into the Stucky family. They always have to be better than anyone else. Aganetha doesn't even make soap anymore -- has to buy it from the store.

Marie: I wouldn't care if my man got me something for love or for show. But no. All he has money for is a new tractor or a bigger barn.

Susanna: We women better face it. Mennonite men don't love their women. They love their farms.

- Marie: Except maybe Aganetha's man.
- Frieda: Don't be so sure.
- Susanna: Well, what other reason could there be?
- Frieda: Come now. Let's stop gossiping. It's too nice a day.
- Marie: It's not gossip if it's the truth. Which it is.
- Frieda: At harvest time we should rather enjoy the sunshine, and the wheat, and those delicious smells coming from the kitchen.

Harvest Time Today (Frieda)

1. Listen to the rustle and the whisper of the wheat
Smell the fried potatoes as they crackle in the grease
Hear the children chatter in the farmyard as they play
Even the cicada knows it's harvest time today.
2. In Kansas and Nebraska--Oklahoma too--they say
Farmers hurry, rabbits scurry, harvest's on its way
Wind's a-blowing, wheat's a-bending, clouds are far away
Even the mosquitoes think it's harvest time today.

A time to sow, a time to grow
A time to weep and a time to reap
A day of days to sing God's praise
Harvest time today.

(The men come in. Cross stage to wash basins, begin washing and drying hands and face. Children gawk and giggle as men comb beards vigorously over the top and then underneath.)

- Mother: Come and wash up over here. There's plenty of water. Bessie'll pump some more.
- Henry: Mmmm. The bread smells great. "Buttabrot schlagt den Hunga dot." I'm as hungry as that threshing machine.
- Peter: Yep, that machine sure had a big appetite this morning. Clogged up only once.
- Levi: It takes a good man to know how to feed a machine.
- Henry: Or a good woman to know how to feed a man.

- Peter: Henry, how's come you always talkin' about women?
- Henry: I could tell you except that Carl's here and he's too young for such things!
- Carl: Aw, cut it out, Hank.
- Peter: Henry learned all about it from the Montgomery Ward catalogue-- All those pictures of women in their underwear.
- Levi: Heard you got drafted, Carl.
- Carl: Yeah. Gotta leave for camp in 12 days.
- Levi: If you'da been smart like Henry, you'da got married and started a family so's you could get a farm exemption. Why, Henry got hitched at the first hint of war.
- Henry: Hey now. That wedding had been planned a long time.
- Levi: Planned? Why as soon as this war broke out everybody started gettin' married like it was an epidemic. Best thing for romance in years. Everybody tryin' to beat the draft.
- Peter: Come on, Henry. Might as well admit it.
- Henry: I ain't sayin' anything. But just don't tell Agnes. She still thinks she got a good deal! (laughter)
- Amos: Maybe she did. This war should have something good about it.
- Peter: I don't know what. I heard they're going to take married men in the next call-up. You're not in the clear yet, Henry.
- Father: (coming on later) How does it come that the guys who do the most talking always get to the table the first?
- Henry: We just worked harder than anybody and deserved a longer break for dinner.
- Father: It went well this morning. No machinery breakdowns. We'll be done in a couple more hours at this rate.
- (Action shifts to an unruly child running up to his mother)
- Anna: Was ist los, du klener teihenker?

Child: Ma, Ma, I think I'm getting sick.

Anna: Where does it hurt?

Child: Right here in my tummy. It's really awful.

Anna: Just a minute. We'll fix it with some Alpenkraeuter. You'll feel better in no time.

Child: Alpenkraeuter??!!

Anna: Yes. (calls) Bessie, can you get the Alpenkraeuter? It'll fix anything.

Child: Mommy. I'm feeling a little bit better. Maybe I don't need any.

Alpenkraeuter

Anna: 1. What's your ailment, your complaint?
 Constipation? Feeling faint?
 Coming down with Spanish flu?
 Alpenkraeuter--it's for you.

REFRAIN

Alpen, Alpen, Alpenkraeuter
 Alpenkraeuter, it will do
 Alpen, Alpen, Alpenkraeuter
 Alpenkraeuter, it's for you.

Henry: Have you heard the latest about Grandpa Schroeder?

Peter: No. What?

Henry: You know he's had a wooden leg for twenty years?

Peter: Yep.

Henry: Well, three weeks ago he started taking Alpenkraeuter, and now it's sprouting some new twigs.

Henry 2. Does your back ache, or your neck?
 Are your bones and joints a wreck?
 Have your legs turned black and blue?
 Alpenkraeuter, it's for you.

(REFRAIN)

Frieda: Do you know what happened when we mixed some Alpenkraeuter
 in the old cluck's drinking water?

Bessie: No. Did it kill her?

Frieda: She started laying three eggs a day!

Anna: 3. Does your nose bleed? Are you weak?
 Have your knees begun to creak?
 Can't you sleep the whole night through?
 Alpenkraeuter --it's for you.

(REFRAIN)

Henry: Dicke Hannes was dead and in his casket when a little
 Alpenkraeuter was spilled on him.

Peter: Don't tell me he came back to life!

Henry: No, but they buried him with a smile on his face!

(REFRAIN)

Henry: Solomon, do you think we could end this war if we got
 President Wilson and Kaiser Bill to negotiate over a couple
 of glasses of Alpenkraeuter?

Father: There's not enough medicine in the world to solve the problems
 caused by this war.

Peter: The war is sure making liars out of everybody. First
 President Wilson said he was going to keep us out of war.
 And I voted for him--first Democrat I voted for in my life.
 So what does he do? Takes us right into war.

Levi: Teaches you right for abandoning your party.

Father: Teaches you right for going in to vote at all.

Mother: Everybody find seats. The food's going to get cold.

Peter: Then the government says Mennonite young men won't have to wear uniforms or take the gun if only we send them to the military camps. Now we hear that forty-five of our boys are put into military prison because they won't put on the uniform.

Levi: Mennonites are still lucky. None of our boys have died in this war yet.

Peter: I call it a crazy way of making freedom for the world. What kind of freedom is this?

Levi: Well the Republicans wouldn't have done any better.

Father: Enough of politics. Before we eat, let's all bow and give thanks.

O God we thank you on this harvest day for your gifts to us.
 We thank you for this food.
 We thank you for the grain we thresh today.
 And we thank you for your promise that we shall one day
 gather again on the great final harvest day of the Lord,
 A day when we shall thresh the mountains and make the hills
 as chaff.
 Help us so to live that we may be prepared for that wonder-
 ful day.
 In Jesus Name. Amen.

Thresh the Mountains Isaiah 41 (Father and chorus)

We shall have no fear
 For the Lord of harvest calls us to his great harvest day.
 And we shall be made a sharp threshing sledge
 To thresh the mountains, reduce them to chaff
 To winnow the hills, and to make the hills low.
 The thirsty shall drink and the hungry shall feed
 and the despised of man shall inherit the earth
 On that great harvest day of our God.

Then we shall thresh the mountains and reduce the hills
 to chaff
 And we shall shout the praises of our Lord
 On that great harvest day of our God.

Father: Greif zu, everyone. Today we must eat like threshers.

-End of Scene-

Scene VI. Unruh farm

The Unruh family (Mother, Father, Bessie, Carl) are on the farmyard in front of their house.

- Bessie: Ooh, what a beautiful sunset. The whole sky is orange.
- Mother: Seems like we never have time to look at the sunset until after the harvest is in.
- Father: Say, who is that turning in the lane?
- Carl: Unless I am mistaken, it's Mr. America himself. Abner Schmidt.
- Mother: Carl, now you behave. There is no need to make anybody mad. Bessie, maybe we ought to go in.
- Bessie: Aw, Ma. I wanna see what Abner wants.
- Father: (greeting Abner Schmidt as he walks on) Good evening, Abner. Come join us. Would you like to go inside?
- Abner: No thanks, Solomon. I can't stay long.
- Father: Suit yourself. What brings you out to the countryside this evening? You do not think you can try and sell me some insurance again, do you?
- Abner: It's a somewhat private matter, Sol. I don't know about the children. (he nods at Bessie and Carl)
- Father: Bessie, why don't you go in and help your mother. Carl, you can go and . . . No you can stay right here. I want you to hear this.
- (Bessie exits, with a parting grimace at Carl)
- Abner: It's all right with me.
- Father: I guess I know what you want Abner. You are raising money for the war.
- Abner: I wouldn't put it exactly that way, Sol.
- Father: So I guessed right. How would you put it Abner?

- Abner: America has been good to us Mennonites, Sol. Now it's time for us to do something for America. It's about that simple.
- Father: I did not know you were still a Mennonite. One Mennonite goes around to other Mennonites to raise money to fight a war. What would Menno Simons say to that one?
- Abner: Menno Simons is dead, Sol. We're not living in Holland or Switzerland or Russia anymore. We're Americans, and we'd better start showing gratitude for our freedom.
- Father: You call this freedom. They drafted my oldest boy and now they make Carl go too. How do they expect me to run this farm?
- Abner: America is at war, Sol. She's fighting for her life, and Germany is the enemy. You don't have any right to expect Germans to be popular in this country.
- Father: I never lived in Germany. But of German speaking I am not ashamed. Have you forgotten German, Abner?
- Abner: Sol, I'm responsible for the liberty bond drive in this part of the county. We've got to do better than the American parts of the county because there is pressure on us. We need to prove that Mennonites are not slackers, that they are solid citizens who will come to the aid of their country.
- Father: So it is money you want. How much money?
- Abner: Your quota is three hundred and seventy dollars. But I'm sure you can buy more. The wheat crop was good and the prices are sky high. Face it, Sol, this war has been good for pocketbooks.
- Father: I am ready to give money for relief of war sufferers. We have through the church given much already.
- Abner: This drive is for war bonds, not for relief. I have a lot of people to see before the deadline. You can just make the check out to the Liberty Campaign.
- Father: Just a minute. Now I know what you want and you can listen to me. When the Mennonites came to this country they were promised exemption from military service. Now my boys are forced into camp. Here you want me to buy bonds to show the Americans that Mennonites favor this war. It's not true. We don't have anything to do with wars and killing.

- Abner: But a lot of Mennonites already have bought war bonds.
- Father: There are a lot of confused people around these days.
- Abner: Mennonites have always paid taxes.
- Father: The war bond is no tax. Abner, why do Mennonites like you who move to town forget what it means to be a Mennonite? Once you get done protecting our people from the Americans there won't be anything left that is Mennonite enough to be worth protecting.
- Abner: Sol, I'm warning you. You're asking for trouble. I came out here to help you.
- Father: Well, thanks for your help. I am not interested myself in your bonds.
- Abner: Then I'd better lay my cards on the table, Solomon. Get this straight. There happen to be two kinds of people that aren't tolerated in America today--slackers and Germans. Now a slacker is someone who won't help his country in its time of crisis; and a German is someone who talks, thinks, and lives German. The Mennonites are both German--and pacifists. You can do all the explaining you want. The Americans will have their own theory on why you refuse to buy liberty bonds. And they might just be right.
- Father: Make yourself clear, man.
- Abner: Solomon, back in 1914 and 1915, before America got into this war, the Mennonite newspapers began collecting money for the Germans. You know about this. Every week they published a list of contributors and the total amount which had been sent so far to the German Ambassador in Washington, D. C. for the encouragement of their war-making German brethren.
- Father: Abner, that money was collected for the Red Cross. It was not for war-making.
- Abner: I clipped every one of these notices, Solomon. I have proof in my pocket that on April 27, 1915 you contributed \$25.00 to be sent to Germany. That is a dangerous document, Solomon. It wouldn't be healthy for you if the American patriots in town knew about this, especially if your name appears on a public list of slackers who refused to buy Liberty bonds. Think of that, Solomon, when you decide whether or not to invest.

Father: It was for the Red Cross. It was to relieve suffering, not to make suffering.

Abner: That money went to help Germany in wartime, Solomon. That money showed which side you were on.

Father: But America was not even in the war then.

Abner: So what? We've got Americans in town whose boys are over there dying in the battle against the Kaiser. Meanwhile, Mennonites refuse to fight and get rich off of wartime wheat prices. Don't expect any American patriots to approve of your gift to Germany.

Father: How many other people are you threatening like this?

Abner: It usually isn't necessary to go this far, Solomon. You have really been quite difficult.

Father: (sputtering) This is . . . this is . . . How do you say it in English?

Carl: Blackmail.

Abner: Just buy your liberty bond quota and you'll have nothing to worry about. It's only a matter of being reasonable.

Father: Get out of my house, you, you, . . . you Judas. Get off my farm!

Abner: (in full command) As you wish, Solomon. But you understand that I am obliged to come back again in a few days after you have had some time to consider my proposition. Good day, Solomon. Good day, Carl.

(exit)

Father: Get out!

Instrumental music: Hip, Hip, Hurrah theme

-End of Scene-

INTERMISSION

Scene VII. Crowd on Unruh farm

Scene opens with large group of young people on the Unruh farmyard gathered in an after-church evening "crowd." They are clapping hands, singing, dancing, accompanied by a fiddle.

- Crowd: Oh, happy is the miller man that lives by the mill
The mill turns round with a free good will
One hand in the hopper, one hand in the sack
Ladies turn round and gents fall back.
- Fellow 1: Hey, Jake, what you got in that little brown jug?
- Jake: Thought maybe somebody'd get thirsty.
- Fellow 2: Gonna turn the whiskey bottle over, are you, Jake?
- Fellow 1: You girls stand back. I don't think this is going to be for you. (giggles and shuffling)
- Fellow 2: Here, give me some. (drinks) Aw, man, that's just water.
- Jake: Well, you said you were thirsty, didn't you? Ha! Ha!
What do you expect at a Mennonite crowd?
- Fellow 1: From you we expect anything.
- Fellow 3: (after a drink) Wait. I think it's spiked. Let's give some to the girls. (they chase the giggling girls)
- Bessie: (over to Carl who has been aloof) What's the matter, Carl?
- Carl: Huh?
- Bessie: Why don't you join in? It's so much fun when the crowd comes to our farm.
- Carl: Don't feel like it.
- Bessie: I'd find you a partner. I know somebody who'd really like to . . .
- Carl: I said I don't feel like it.
- Bessie: Worried about Pa?

Carl: Maybe about Pa. Maybe about me.

Bessie: Is Pa going to buy those war bonds?

Carl: How would I know?

Bessie: What if Abner comes back again?

Carl: Pa is too stubborn to buy bonds. He won't be pushed around.

Bessie: Sure he's stubborn. All you Unruh men are stubborn as mules.

Carl: Me? Stubborn?

Bessie: As good as a mule for this crowd tonight. Come on.

Carl: I don't feel like it.

Bessie: And Pa doesn't feel like buying bonds. And Menno doesn't feel like wearing a uniform. Mules. All the Unruh men. Mules. Mules. Mules.

Carl: We gotta find some way to send you to Camp Funston. I bet they could find work in the quartermaster corps for the sister of some mules.

Bessie: Carl, what do you think Menno is doing tonight?

Carl: Maybe I'll ask him when I get down there. (mimics) "Menno, what were you doing on the night of July 18?"

Bessie: Is he being stubborn? Or is he enjoying himself?

Carl: How would I know?

(cut to Menno and chaplain in guard house)

Chaplain: Believe me, I'm your friend.

Menno: Can you get me some food? Nothing but bread and water for five days.

Chaplain: Sure. Anything you want. If you just listen.

Menno: The other prisoners. They beat me. They said they'd kill me if I told. Can you get me out of this guard house? Do you have authority?

Chaplain: Of course. I can fix everything. I am the chaplain. I've arranged everything with the officers. You don't have to stay in the guard house anymore. Just agree to be reasonable.

Menno: Reasonable?

Chaplain: Just put on the uniform and work in the bakery.

Menno: The bakery? For the soldiers to eat?

Chaplain: Believe me, I am your friend. Everybody has to eat. There's nothing wrong with baking bread.

Menno: For the soldiers.

Chaplain: You're a farmer, aren't you?

Menno: Uh huh.

Chaplain: Your father raises wheat, right? He sells it in town. Maybe some of it is used right here in camp. What if you help bake it into bread? There's no difference between you and your father.

Menno: No difference?

Chaplain: Feeding the hungry is a great Christian calling. Everybody has to eat. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life."

Menno: Would I have to take up the gun?

Chaplain: Not unless you decided to. Maybe you'll see things differently after all this.

Menno: And the uniform?

Chaplain: Just the uniform and the bakery. That's all. Believe me, I'm your friend.

Menno: I wouldn't have to come back to this guard house?

Chaplain: Not if you cooperate like I'm sure you want to.

Menno: Could you get me something to eat yet tonight? Something more than bread?

Chaplain: Sure. I'll get something from the canteen. How about it?

Menno: (wearily, after pause) Well, let's go.

(Lights back to Bessie and Carl)

Bessie: Father like son; son like father. No difference. Pa, Menno, Carl. Like Ma says "the apple doesn't fall far from the trunk."

Carl: Well, what kind of tree do you think you fell out of?

Bessie: None at all. I was just an egg out on a rock and the Kansas sun hatched me.

Carl: That was a Mennonite egg, Bessie. And five minutes after you hatched you started putting on the style like everyone else.

Bessie: The style?

Carl: Sure. You never know us Mennonites until you understand that half the agony we go through is for the purpose of puttin' on the style.

Bessie: What kind of style?

Carl: Like the woman who pulls her corset so tight that her eyes pop out. All that agony for a little style.

Bessie: But Mennonites don't wear corsets. At least none I know about.

Carl: Aw come on. They've got their own corsets for their own Mennonite style. Look. Whaddya gotta do to be a good Mennonite? Speak the German language, raise a lotta kids, and stay away from cigarettes and whiskey. Right?

Bessie: Well, if you say so.

Carl: Here, sing along with me. You'll catch on.

Puttin' on the Style

Puttin' on the agony, Puttin' on the style
That's what all the Mennonites are doin' all the while
And as I look around me, I'm very apt to smile
To see so many people, puttin' on the style.

1. Grandpa says that God spoke German and he's got the proof
Right there in his German Bible. It's the gospel truth
God called out to Adam all decked out in fig-leaf style
(shout in German) ADAM WO BIST DU? Puttin' on the style.
2. My aunt Kate got married late but made up for lost time
Cousins I've got by the dozens--Kate's still in her prime
When it comes to fruitfulness, she's gone the second mile
Replenishing the earth - or - puttin' on the style.
3. Uncle Ben remembers when tobacco wasn't sin
He would chew a plug or two and flash his cockeyed grin
Now the preacher says it's wrong. He can't our land defile.
Ben's behind the barn now, puttin' on the style.

Carl: Here's a verse for you, Bessie.

Bessie: Aw. Come on, Carl.

4. Bessie Unruh goes to church, just to see the boys
Always laughs and giggles at every little noise
Turns this way a little, then turns that way a while
But we know she's only puttin' on the style.

Bessie: Awright. So try one on yourself and see if it fits.

Carl: Whaddya got?

5. Carl came back from college, quite a fresh young bird
Quoting Aristotle, using words we never heard.
He's too good to pitch manure or slop the hogs a while
Academic highbrow--puttin' on the style.

(REFRAIN)

Bessie: Oh, Carl. Thanks for joining in. It's just like it used to be.

Carl: It has changed, Bessie. Things are different. Nothing will be like it used to be.

-End of Scene-

Scene VIII. Mennonite Church

Scene VIII is three scenes simultaneously with the spotlight shifting back and forth. In the center is the church congregation with three elders at the front, men seated on one side, women on the other. They sit on simple benches.

At stage right Carl is talking with Uncle David who is in a wheel chair. At stage left Bessie Unruh and Nancy Peterson hold their conversation.

(Congregation is singing unison verse of "Jesu geh Voran" already before curtain opens. Elder rises as song ends.)

- Elder 1: As we explained at the beginning of this meeting, our elders had a long and prayerful session on this matter of war bonds. We have a decision to propose. Brother Peter will share the elder's recommendation.
- Elder 2: The elders have met and decided our brotherhood should let each person decide according to his own conscience in the Spirit of Christ. But we shall take no public position on buying war bonds. The elders commend this decision to the brotherhood.
- Elder 1: Is this decision acceptable to the brotherhood?
- Sol Unruh: Brethren, this is no decision at all. Leave it to the individual? What has become of our brotherhood? What are we afraid of? Brethren, if the church cannot stand together in the storm, how can one brother stand alone? War is sin. The people of God do not pay for war.
- Elder 2: It was the elders' view that a congregational decision against war bonds would cause division in the brotherhood and strife with the world.
- Elder 1: The elders are right. Let us not stir up trouble. St. Paul says to cause offense to no man. It is not for us to tell the world how to run worldly affairs.
- Brother 2: The bonds are like a tax. We are told to pay our taxes.
- Brother 3: It is not a tax. We are not legally required to buy bonds. But I fear the truth is that some here tonight have already bought bonds. This meeting is too late.

Brother 2: The Scriptures call us to obey the powers that be. There is no need to make the Americans angry with us as a brotherhood.

Elder 1: It appears that most brethren are in accord with the elders that each member must decide about war bonds according to his own conscience in the Spirit of Christ.

Sol Unruh: Yes, the Spirit of Christ. But how can we decide in the Spirit of Christ when the Spirit of America is breathing down our necks?

(Cut to Bessie and Nancy, stage left)

Bessie: A real hero, Jeff might be a real hero. Think of it Nancy. With a parade, and a band, and his picture on the front page of the paper.

Nancy: Do you really think so?

Bessie: Sure. See. Sergeant Jeff Peterson Cited For Bravery in Action. You'll be proud to be his sister.

Nancy: And you'll be proud to be his girlfriend.

Bessie: Nancy, that's not true. Anyhow, he'll probably forget he ever heard of me in all his glory.

Nancy: But Jeff hasn't even left home yet.

Bessie: Can't you see it right now, Nancy? Jeff's group is in this trench and the officer asks for volunteers to cross that dangerous stretch of ground to take an important message to another company. Jeff's hand is up first. He crawls along on hands and knees, bullets whistle overhead . . .

Nancy: Stop it Bessie, you give me the creeps.

Bessie: Aw, come on. You can't have a hero without a little danger. Jeff's got only thirty yards to go. But something explodes and tears a big hole in the ground halfway between him and his destination . . .

(Cut to Carl and Uncle David, stage right)

Carl: I'm not afraid of danger, Uncle David. I'm not worried about getting hurt. That's no problem. But I am afraid of having nothing to do--and of nobody knowing anything to do.

David: It will not be easy for you in camp. The other boys have baptism certificates to prove they are Mennonites. But you . . .

Carl: Baptism! Baptism certificates! What is baptism supposed to mean?

David: Baptism is a sign that you belong to God's people.

Carl: Uncle, do you think I should escape to Canada? Some of the others have gone there already.

David: No one has gone to Canada who had been called in the draft. You have your notice. For you it would be against the law.

Carl: Would you help me go if I decided to go anyway? I don't think Pa will help.

David: For me it would also be against the law to assist someone in escaping the draft. But what can they do to me? Put bars around my wheel chair? I could help see to it that you got across the border to Manitoba safely, and that you got a job there. But you must be sure in your own mind. And you must tell your Pa.

Carl: How can I be sure in my own mind what is right to do?

David: You take a step at a time and God shows the way. You are not alone. You have friends, family--the brotherhood.

(Cut to Congregation)

Elder 1: Brother Cornelius will report for the elders on the situation of our boys in camp.

Elder 2: We have received a letter from the War Department stating that Mennonite boys will not be forced into military service against their conscience. The elders recommend that we withhold action until the government sets forth a clear policy for conscientious objectors to war.

- Elder 1: Has anyone something to say?
- Sol Unruh: How long are we going to believe their empty promises? First they pretend nothing will happen to our boys in camp. Now they persecute our boys if they refuse the gun. I've got a letter here from my son Menno to show how good these promises are. It happened to other boys too. When will we take a stand?
- Elder 2: The persecution is illegal. It is only done by the lower officers and soldiers. The higher officials assure us our consciences will be respected.
- Brother 1: The elders are right. We should believe and respect our government. If we make a big protest the persecution may get worse.
- Brother 2: Let us not forget the war may be over soon. Let us do nothing that would bring us into disrepute with our neighbors.
- Brother 3: Only a few of our boys have been persecuted. My son doesn't report any trouble in camp. Most get along fine if they show respect to the officers.
- Brother 4: But we have our rights as citizens in this country too. If our privileges are denied we should say something.
- Brother 5: Let's just be happy for what God has given us in America. It could be much worse for us in other countries.
- Elder 1: Can we then agree to continue in prayer and in waiting for the government to set forth a clear policy for our boys in camp?
- Sol Unruh: What good is prayer if we are afraid to take a stand? We bend a little and buy war bonds. We bend a little more and let them persecute our boys in military camp. What with all our bending we Mennonites will never be able to stand up straight again. How can we look our young people in the eyes anymore?

(Cut back to Uncle David and Carl)

- Carl: Canada might not be such a bad place to live. Do you think I could go to college there?
- David: Maybe you could. But it is a serious thing. You might never be able to come home again without being arrested for evading the draft.

Carl: Even after the war is over?

David: One doesn't know. Maybe we all should have moved away right after America passed the draft law. Maybe to Canada, maybe Argentina. That's what my father would have said. Our people left Russia to escape the military. Now it's America. Maybe Mennonites will never find a home.

Carl: And maybe by the time this war's over nobody will want to be a real Mennonite any more.

(Cut to Bessie and Nancy)

Nancy: Bessie, are you really Mennonite?

Bessie: Well, I guess so, Why?

Nancy: Since when do Mennonites get all thrilled by war heroes?

Bessie: Aw, maybe I'm not a good Mennonite. Or even a good anybody.

Nancy: Why not?

Bessie: Nobody is supposed to like tornadoes either. But when that big tornado destroyed all those farms last Spring. Remember that?

Nancy: Never forget. It missed us by only a half a mile.

Bessie: Well, I thought that tornado was fun! It was so exciting. And all the people getting together to clean up the wreckage and build new barns. I kept thinking how if another tornado would come maybe I could rescue some little child out in a field and hide under a bridge.

Nancy: Bessie! There were eleven people killed in that tornado.

Bessie: I know. Nancy, do you think there's something wrong with me because I like danger and am scared at the same time?

Nancy: Well, now that you ask . . .

Bessie: Oh Nancy. I just had this feeling. Jeff's gonna be a big hero, but he'll come back on a stretcher. Both legs will be amputated. He'll spend all his life in a wheelchair. Nancy, what are we going to do?

(Cut to congregation meeting)

Elder 1: There is nothing to do now but to trust in the Lord and hope for the best. Any other course will break the unity of our brotherhood and endanger the safety of our church. We shall sing in closing two verses of "Take Thou My Hand O Father."

Congregation sings--Carl sings "I've Got To Go" and Bessie sings "Send Me A Storm."

I've Got To Go (Carl)

I've got to go, but no one can say where now
Something must give, but no one dares to dare now
The day is gone, and no one seems to care now
The time is now, and I stand in between.

Send Me A Storm (Bessie)

Send me a storm, a storm that I can play in
Send a debate, that I can have my say in
Give me a chance, a chance to have my day in
Give me some room, some room so I can see.

But here I am, when all the world is burning
I wait at home, my heart inside me churning
It isn't fair, to have no chance for earning
What life can give, when life can give so free.

(Cut to Carl and Uncle David)

Carl: (conversationally) I'm an American too, not just a Mennonite. It's my country. (pause) It sure would be a lot simpler just to forget the Mennonite part and join the other Americans. At least they know what they want. An American knows who he is.

David: (quietly) And you know who you are, Carl. You'll never be able to get away from yourself. Even in France, your past and your people would find you.

Carl: (impatiently) Why does it have to be so hard to be a good Mennonite and a good citizen at the same time?

David: We aren't the first to wonder what belongs to God and what belongs to Caesar. You know about the Christians in the Roman Empire. They would not even pretend to worship the emperor -- not even to burn a pinch of incense.

Carl: It seemed so much simpler in the history books. Wasn't it clear that worshipping Caesar was wrong? Nobody is forcing me to worship America.

David: Aren't they? One might see in military conscription a kind of forced worship.

Carl: Well, maybe. But who wants to be thrown to the lions today?

(Cut to Bessie and Nancy)

Nancy: It's getting late, Bessie. If your folks would find you not at home, you'd have some explaining to do.

Bessie: They think I'm at home, but it's not all they don't know. If they knew about Jeff and me there would be trouble. I'd better rush. It's only a quarter mile, but the church meeting will be over soon and they'll be getting back.

Nancy: Bessie, I think you're right. This war is a lot of fun.

(Cut to congregation meeting, which has broken up, with one member of the congregation coming up to confer with or encourage Sol Unruh:

Member: Sol, I just want to say that you're not alone. Some of us who never say much in church are behind you.

Sol Unruh: Well thank you. Sometimes it seems like one is standing alone.

Member: You just keep talking and working. If we wait for the whole church to take a stand, nothing will ever happen. Most of our people are blown down by the first puff of wind from the world. We depend on people like you to stand.

Sol Unruh: It's no easy time to stand, brother.

-End of Scene-

Scene IX. Between Unruh farm and Peterson farm
(front of curtain)

Jeff: I'm glad you came, Bessie.

Bessie: I'm afraid Jeff, the folks don't know.

Jeff: There's not much time.

Bessie: You leave early tomorrow?

Jeff: Yeah. I'll be on the same train as Carl.

Bessie: We've never really talked, Jeff.

Jeff: I know. Is it okay?

Bessie: Sure, sure it is.

Jeff: We're so different, Bessie.

Bessie: We are?

~~Jeff:~~ Your people are different.

Bessie: We are?

Jeff: Well, I mean, you're a Mennonite and I'm not.

Bessie: Jeff. You never talked this way before.

Jeff: We've never really talked, Bessie.

Bessie: I know.

Jeff: Do you care that I'm going to the army?

Bessie: Menno's in camp. Carl's gotta go. I'm the only one left.

Jeff: No, I mean really to the army. Menno's a conscientious objector. Carl is too. But I'm really going into the army.

Bessie: You do what you have to, I guess.

Jeff: First I thought the war was just stupid. Maybe it is. But somebody's gotta stop the Kaiser. Somebody has to fight for freedom or we lose it.

Bessie: Everybody does what they have to, I guess.

Jeff: So I guess I have to be an American and you have to be a . . .
a . . .

Bessie: Don't say that, Jeff. It sounds like we're so different. And we aren't. I'm an American too. We grew up next to each other. We went to school together. We're here together.

Jeff: I'm glad you feel that way.

Bessie: Jeff, are you gonna be a hero?

Jeff: I don't know. I don't feel like one.

Bessie: Promise me you'll keep your head down when you get into danger.

Jeff: Don't worry Bessie. Just write me now and then.

Bessie: Sure. If you write to me.

Jeff: I'll write.

Bessie: You'd better send the letters to Nancy. I can get them from her. So the folks won't find out.

Jeff: Sure, I'll ask Nancy. My sister will help.

Bessie: Jeff. I have to leave now.

Jeff: Maybe I'll see you when Carl leaves day after tomorrow. We can at least wave then.

Bessie: Yeah, we can wave.

Jeff: Goodbye Bessie.

Bessie: Goodbye Jeff.

Will You Miss Me? (Bessie and Jeff)

1. Will you miss me? Will you know why?
Do you care now? Is this goodbye?
When you're lonely will you think of me?
When you're dreaming what will your dreams be?
Will you miss me? Will you know why?

2. Have our eyes met? What can it mean?
Have I touched you? Where have we been?
Will our new worlds take us far apart?
Has it ended before it can start?
Have our eyes met? What can it mean?

-End of Scene-

Scene X. Unruh farmyard

Enter Abner Schmidt.

Abner: Hello, Solomon. (to mother) Good afternoon.

Mother: Hello. (father says nothing. looks away)

Abner: I know you don't want to see me. But I had to come. There was no alternative.

Father: The bond drive is over with?

Abner: Yes. Friday was the last day.

Father: And you know I am not buying.

Abner: I'm afraid so.

Father: Then why have you once again set your foot on my farm?

Abner: It's not too late, Solomon. I just had to give you one last chance.

Father: A chance to betray myself?

Abner: A chance to save yourself.

Father: In your kind of salvation I have no interest. That should now already be clear.

Abner: Solomon, listen. Things are getting out of hand. I've come to warn you.

Father: Warn me? What about?

Abner: They're coming out here this afternoon, or maybe this evening.

Father: Who is coming?

Abner: They are. A bunch of men from town.

Father: The Americans are coming?

Abner: They're not in a good mood, Solomon. It could be dangerous.

Father: And with them you will come. You will show them the way.

Abner: You're wrong, Solomon. You've got me wrong.

Father: You told them about that Red Cross money, did you? You said I was sending the money to Germany.

Abner: It wasn't necessary Solomon. They were stirred up without that. There's a list of slackers at the post office in town. A list of everybody who hasn't bought bonds.

Father: And my name is on the list. You put it there.

Abner: You put it there yourself. I just turned in my report.

Father: And what is it you now are wanting?

Abner: They've got a list of five slackers and Germans they are going to visit today. They got some tar and feathers and yellow paint along. You're number four on the list.

Mother: Oh! What are they doing to our people?

Abner: I went along to the first one. It was that Harder out east of town. He paid up right away. Said it was a misunderstanding-- he intended to buy bonds all along but he didn't have the money available before. They didn't believe him, but they just took his money and insulted him and laughed at him.

Father: You have also laughed?

Abner: This is no laughing matter, Solomon. I decided to come straight out here and let you know the situation.

Father: Well, now I know. Is there anything else you are wanting?

Abner: I don't want you to get hurt. Why don't you give me a check for a couple of hundred dollars. I'll make some kind of excuse for you.

Father: I do not understand why you came here. Did you really think to threaten me was possible?

Abner: I came here because I think everybody else is going to give in when they see that mob of cars driving up on their yard. But I don't know about you. I wanted to give you one more chance to listen to reason.

- Father: Reason?
- Abner: Solomon, these bonds are just like taxes. Your tax money is used for war. The Bible says to pay taxes. Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's.
- Father: And unto God that what God's is.
- Abner: All that money you get from the high wartime wheat prices-- is that God's money?
- Father: It is not the devil's money. And I am not giving it for the devil's work. Not for killing, destroying, murdering . . .
- Abner: So your final answer is no? (father doesn't reply) Is your final answer "No"?
- Father: A man who never learns to say "No" is never a man.
- Abner: You haven't answered, Solomon.
- Father: Abner, have you ever said "no"? When it was important? When it really cost you?
- Abner: We live in America--a land of freedom. No decent citizen ever has to say "No" to America.
- Father: God's people must always be ready to say "No". To any government in the whole world. There is no worldly government that is always doing God's will.
- Abner: Goodbye, Solomon. You had your chance. Now there's nothing you can do to stop them from coming. You'd better get down on your knees and do some heavy praying to that stubborn German Mennonite God of yours. (he storms off)
- Father: Did you see him shaking, son? He is afraid himself more than we are.
- Mother: What will we do, Solomon? Where can we go?
- Father: We will just right here remain. Just here on this land where God has put us. Won't we Bessie?
- Bessie: (faltering) Yeah. Yeah, I guess. But maybe I'll head for the storm cellar when I see them coming. Maybe they'd think we left.

Father: This kind of storm is coming into the cellar right after you. This storm is already smarter than a tornado.

Bessie: Oh, I know Pa. But you'll know what to do, won't you?

Father: God will give His strength for the day.

Mother: But Solomon, your heart!

Father: Carl, there is something we need to be talking about. You have it in mind to be going to Canada. Not?

Carl: (toe in dust, looking down) I didn't know you knew.

Father: Your Uncle David has told me. I wish you had spoken about it. Have you decided to be going?

Carl: Well . . . It's either to Canada or to camp.

Father: Before you decide, do one thing for me. Make once more a walk around the farm before you go--the yard, the cowbarn, the creek and the pasture, the north forty, the field behind the hedge. This is Unruh land, my son. Your grandfather with horses busted sod here already over forty years ago. It was then eighty acres, and now it is a hundred thirty. In this land is Unruh sweat. My father's, mine, yours, and Menno's.

Bessie: And my sweat too, Pa. I didn't shock oats two weeks last July for fun!

Father: And Bessie's and Mom's sweat too. This is Unruh land. It is good soil. It is where we have our roots put down. No one will be driving us off of this land. It is where God wanted us to be born, to live, and to die. You will remember, son. Not?

Carl: Yeah, Pa, I'll remember. It's good land.

God Made Man for the Land (Father)

God made man to be born on the land.
 God made man to be born
 To take root in the earth
 In the soil of his birth
 God made man to be born.

And the blowing and the bending make the oak tree strong
 And the seasons in their turning know the right from wrong
 And the grasses and the grainfields praise the Lord with song.
 God made man for the land.

God made man to grow on the land
 God made man to grow
 To reach up to the sky
 Like the corn waving high
 God made man to grow.

And the blowing and the bending make the oak tree strong
 And the seasons in their turning know the right from wrong
 And the grasses and the grainfields praise the Lord with song.
 God made man for the land.

God made man to work on the land
 God made man to work
 To reap harvests of grain
 Fed by sun, soaked by rain
 God made man to work.

And the blowing and the bending make the oak tree strong
 And the seasons in their turning know the right from wrong
 And the grasses and the grainfields praise the Lord with song.
 God made man for the land.

God made man to die on the land
 God made man to die
 To return to the soil
 To find rest from his toil
 God made man to die.

And the blowing and the bending make the oak tree strong
 And the seasons in their turning know the right from wrong
 And the grasses and the grainfields praise the Lord with song.
 God made man for the land.

(Cut to Menno and American soldier at camp bakery)

Soldier: Jesus, it's hot. Hotter 'n hell.

Menno: Can't bake bread without heat.

Soldier: Why don't they get the niggers to work in the bakery? They love it hot. I'da never told that sergeant to go to hell, if I'da known he'd send me here. The sonofabitch.

Menno: How long do you have to work here?

Soldier: Three days punishment--if I live through it. In two weeks my unit leaves for France. Jesus will I be glad to get outa here.

Menno: You want to go across?

Soldier: I didn't join up to eat dust in a goddam Kansas rathole. How long you stuck here for?

Menno: I dunno. Maybe 'til the war's over.

Soldier: Jesus! Why'd they put you on this job?

Menno: I didn't do anything. I'm a Mennonite.

Soldier: A Mennonite?! Jesus! Hey, we got one of them in our unit too. From Gussel. Ever hearda that town? Everybody calls him Kaiser-Gus. Speaks with a German accent.

Menno: Yeah, I heard of Goessel.

Soldier: Old Kaiser-Gus is going along to France with us. He'll be able to talk with all the Huns we capture. Ha! Ha!

Menno: He's going along? To be a soldier?

Soldier: Best soldier in the bunch. Hey, why don't you ask to be transferred to our unit? We're shorthanded since last week. It'd get you outa this bakery hell hole.

Menno: A Mennonite soldier?

Soldier: You guys make the best. You're tougher 'n nails.

Menno: I don't know.

Soldier: Aw, come on. It's a good unit. Even the sergeant. I was drunk when I mouthed off at 'im. Why don't you try it?

Menno: I guess you don't know me very well.

Soldier: In three days I'll talk you into it. Better die in France than here. Jesus it's hot. Hotter 'n hell.

(Cut to Unruh farmyard)

Sound of automobiles arriving and car doors slamming as the mob of bond collectors arrive. The scene will be somewhat stylized and ritualistic. Unruh family on one side, mob approaches from the other, Abner Schmidt in the lead.

Mother: Oh Solomon! They're here.

Father: Don't worry. They're the foreigners on this farm.

Abner: (formal, as if he hadn't been there before) Good afternoon, Mr. Unruh. It is good we find you at home. We have come to collect for the war bonds. Your quota is \$370. Perhaps there has been some oversight or misunderstanding.

Father: (waits--says nothing.)

Abner: Are you ready to pay? Don't you have anything to say?

Father: (still silent, but looking Abner straight in the eye)

Abner: This is your last chance, Mr. Unruh. In the name of democracy, in the name of the law, are you going to buy these bonds?

Father: In the name of what law? Where is it written?

Mobber 1: We don't need no law. Come on. Let's take care of the slacker.

Abner: Just a minute. It's no law, Mr. Unruh. It's American commitment to make the world safe for democracy. But you wouldn't understand that. You're no American. Just never forget now. You brought all this on your head yourself.

Father: You have no responsibility, Abner? Your hands are clean?

Carl: Look, Pa, he's got yellow paint on his hands.

Abner: (quick guilty look at hands, then . . .) All right men. He's yours.

Two mobbers come up and grab Father roughly bringing him over to their group, with appropriate exclamations, "Come on." "Let's go." . . .

Mobber 1: (reads from crumpled paper) By the authority vested in me by the Pershing County Liberty League . . .

- Carl: Stop! Let him go. He's not well. Let me take his place if you gotta have someone.
- Mobbers: What? Hey, stand aside. Just a minute here.
- Carl: Let me take his place. It won't make any difference.
- Mobber 1: How about it Abner? (quick conferral and agreement)
- Carl: (to Abner) Please? (to Father) Please, Pa? (they remove Father to sit on a chair by his family.)
- Mobber 1: By the authority vested in me by the Pershing County Liberty League, I hereby declare this man (glance at Father) . . . this whole family . . . to be slackers, cowards, yellow bellied Kaiser lovers, and unworthy to be called by the great name of American.
- Mobber 2: Now we're gonna have a parade and you're gonna lead it. (Two men on each side of Carl, put a flag in each hand, holding up his arms and marching around the yard as others follow, singing verse of "Hip, Hip, Hurrah." They wind up with Carl in the center of a semi-circle. As they let go of his hands a flag falls to the ground.)
- Mobber 1: He dropped the American flag. He dropped the American flag. Who do you think you are, traitor?
- Mobber 2: That's a holy flag, you slacker. That's a holy flag. You bend down and kiss that flag. You hear?
- Carl: (hesitates)
- Mobber 1: (comes up with whip or club and screams) You kiss that flag!
- Carl: (leans over slowly and kisses the flag)
- Mobber 1: Now, take off yer shirt and siddown. Ya gotta buncha yella stripes down your back. We're just gonna bring em out a little. We're gonna have a little yellow baptism, (Carl sits, head down, back to audience)
- Mobber 2: Here's one for every goddam German-lovin pacifist in this country. May they fry in hell. (cheers)
- Mobber 3: Here's one for every Hun soldier who's out killin Americans today. May they all catch a bullet in their brains. (cheers)

Mobber 4: And here's one for the Kaiser. May he hang till he rots from a cottonwood tree. (cheers)

(They march around Carl to another chorus of "Hip, Hip, Hurrah")

Mobber 1: Let's get outa here, men. We got more work to do.

Others: "Yeah, " Let's go. " "Let's get another slacker sonofabitch.

(As they leave, Mother and Bessie run up to see if Carl is all right. Abner crosses over to father still seated on chair, now with face in hands.)

Abner: I'm sorry, Sol. You know I'da stopped them if you'd given me half a chance.

Father: Abner, I feel sorry for you. Really sorry.

(Abner exits following mob, with last glance at Carl who rises slowly and faces his family. Father rises and takes a step toward Carl.)

Carl: It's all right, Pa.

Father: (huskily) Carl! . . . My son!

-End of Scene -

Scene XI. Unruh farm

Same place, next morning. Family and friends are gathered in yard for Carl's departure. Carl is wearing a coat (to cover up marks from previous scene for quick change), and carrying suitcase.

- Friends: (to Father) We know who they were Sol. We know every one. Some of the biggest big shots in town. We're taking our business someplace else. We won't set foot in their town for months. They'll learn something.
- Father: Time will take care of it. One of them was here already this morning to apologize. He said he didn't know what he was getting into.
- Friend: I heard the county sheriff caught up with them and gave them a good talking to.
- Friend: I heard they're coming back next week.
- Jeff: Mr. Unruh, I'd like to tell you something.
- Father: Yes, Jeff?
- Jeff: I'm going into the army now and I'm going to fight for my country. But I want you to know that those men who came yesterday were not really patriots. That's not the America I'm going to fight for.
- Father: Thank you, Jeff. May God protect you as you go.
- Carl: (crosses to Uncle David in wheelchair) Uncle, as you see I decided not to go to Canada. Suddenly, I knew it just wouldn't be right for me. It's best for me to take my stand against war in camp.
- David: It will not be easy. But I am not surprised by your decision. There is no baptism certificate. But God knows who you are. And we will be with you Carl. Perhaps our people are learning all over again to stand together.
- Carl: (to mother) Goodbye, Ma. Send me a box of those oatmeal cookies sometime.
- Mother: Goodbye, son. Take care of yourself. They say a lot of boys at camp got the Spanish flu. Give our love to Menno if you see him.

Carl: (to Bessie) Goodbye, Sis. Take good care of Ma and Pa. And don't fall in the manure when you're cleaning out the cowbarn.

Bessie: Well, thanks. For that I'll add one cup of sawdust to that oatmeal recipe. (they grimace fondly at each other)

Carl: (to Father) So long, Pa. Don't work too hard. The farm can wait.

Father: Do not worry about us, son. The harvest is done. We will somehow get the wheat planted. If something happens to me the brotherhood will help. The war might be over soon. Who knows? You might even be back in time for the second term at college.

Carl: Oh, Pa. Would you? Could I? That'd be great!

Father: It will all work out. I am more sure of that than ever. Son, I will not forget what you did yesterday.

Carl: It wasn't planned, Pa.

Father: God gives his people strength to be faithful, to be his servants.

(Father sings another verse of "God Made Man for the Land")

God made man to go forth from the land
 God made man to serve
 To share in His name, His great love to proclaim
 God made man to go forth.

And the blowing and the bending make the oak tree strong
 And the seasons in their turning know the right from wrong
 And the grasses and the grainfields praise the Lord with song
 God made man for the land.

Carl: Thanks for this big farewell, Pa. I didn't realize . . .

Father: That was not really planned either, son. Somehow people just knew after yesterday that the time was right to weep together and celebrate together. America may recover from this war madness. Maybe not. But our faith is in God and in his promises. You will remember that in camp, not?

Carl: Sure, Pa. I'll remember.

(Whole cast sings verse and chorus of God Made Man for the Land and, after short musical interlude, Thresh the Mountains.)

THE END