

**SCENE 2**  
**RALLY**

*Public garden, Leeds. Men, some in uniform, and women enter SR singing last stanza of "Keep the Home Fires Burning." Soldiers end up SL, with Sgt in front. One soldier, Lt. Hudgens, remains SR at bench . Women and civilian men stop center.*

MAY  
(to Owen)

Well, well. Look at you.

OWEN

Ay up, May Hughes.

MARIE

(to MAY) Who'd a thought- this one in uniform?

OWEN

And sister Marie. I think I cut quite a figure, if I do say so myself.

MARIE

Oh, yes, Owen Thompson, I'm sure you're quite pleased with yourself.

OWEN

I've told your brother that the two of us, all done up like this- the Germans don't know what's coming at them. And the ladies- the ladies dont stand a chance.

MAY

Don't you go corrupting our little brother, Owen Thompson.

OWEN

Now, now, May. Don't you worry.

MARIE

You may fancy yourself a ladies' man, but Victor's still a boy.

OWEN

I'll take good care of that brother of yours, Marie. Vic's in good hands. So... (*moving in between both, putting his arms around them*) You could be in good hands, too. They say women can't resist a man in uniform.

MAY

Well, Owen Thompson (slight pause)- there's a first time for everything.

MARIE

Guess you'll have to find some other use for those hands, eh? (*MAY and MARIE walk away*)

MILDRED

(*to WALTER*) You're getting too old for this, Walter. Soldierin's a young man's game.

WALTER

Now, Mildred. These young men need someone with experience to guide them. It's my duty to them, to the King...

MILDRED

You did your part a decade ago, Walter. You did your duty to King and country at Pretoria.

WALTER

My dear, these young men need me. I cannot stand idly by as they prepare to take on the hun. (*As he says this, VICTOR walks past; WALTER grabs him as his notices something askew*). No, son- this goes here, this one goes here. You've got them backwards. How many times do I have to show you?

VICTOR

Sorry, Walter-

WALTER

It's sergeant now, private.

VICTOR

Sorry, sergeant. I just keep mixing them up. Seems like the bayonet should go here so's I can reach it easier.

WALTER

No, son- you don't want to be having to reach backwards to grab the thing.

VICTOR

But sergeant-

WALTER

You pull it out from the left, like this, and you're ready for action, see? If you take it out from the right, you have to flip it around. By then, t'Hun's on top of you.

VICTOR

But sergeant-

WALTER

You'd best listen to what I say, son. I saw my fair share of action fighting the Boers in Southern Africa. T'right's no good for a man- it's too slow. You listen to your sergeant.

VICTOR

But sergeant-

WALTER

Well, what is it private? Spit it out.

VICTOR

Sergeant- I'm left handed.

JACK

(Approaching as he sees the look on Walter's face). Here you go, sarge. I'll get him sorted out. C'mon, Victor. (Walks away with Victor as Walter shakes head.)

WALTER

*(to Mildred)* They need me, Mildred. I couldn't live with myself if I didn't do my part.

MILDRED

You're a daft fool, Walter Gibson. A great big-hearted fool. *(kisses him)* That's why I love ye.

EILEEN

I'll slap thee daft, you try a stunt like that again, Eddie Bell.

EDDIE

C'mon, Ma. It was just a bit of fun.

EILEEN

A donkey in the Lord Mayor's office? What were ye thinking?

EDDIE

Thought he could use a little help with his next speech.

HENRY

Besides, it's not the first time an ass has held the office.

EILEEN

Well, he finds out it was you, you're paying to clean his rugs. I swear- the two of you keep at it like your normal selves, it won't be long before the Army's had enough of you and sent you both packing back home.

HENRY

I promise, Mrs. Bell, it's Eddie what's always up to tricks, not me.

EILEEN

But you never try to hard to stop him, do you Henry Wilson? There you allus are, cheerin' him on. You two, I swear. The Germans don't know what's coming at them. And god help the poor French who have to put up with you.

*(At this, the three share a laugh; Henry's laughter fades off as he sees Lucy enter SR.)*

EILEEN

Well, don't just stand there like some daft idjit. Go and talk to her.

HENRY

It's not that simple, Mrs. Bell.

EDDIE

Aye, Ma. First he's got to stumble and stammer a bit as he tries to profess his love. Then he has to go all quiet like, paralyzed by indecision and fear.

HENRY

Im trying to be subtle and dignified, thank you.

EDDIE

Sorry, mate. Subtly paralyzed by indecision and fear.

EILEEN

Henry Wilson. Would you stop playin' the fool? Everybody in Leeds can see you're mad about Lucy. And she's mad about you. You'd best be askin that girl to marry you, lest you come back home to find someone else had the good sense to while you were gone.

EDDIE

I've half a mind to ask her right now. *(starts off, but has his ear quickly grabbed by Eileen)*

EDDIE

Alright, ma. Alright. That really hurts, ma.

HENRY

(approaching Lucy) How do, Lucy? You were able to come, then.

LUCY

Aye, one of the looms got stuck up with summit. Mr. Crossley was in a right fine mood; thought he were sure to blow his top. He closed up the shop, sent us home early for the day. So...

HENRY

So... No, I'm pleased to see you. It's good you were able to come.

LUCY

I'm glad I was able. No way did I want to miss seeing the illustrious Leeds Pals as they make their way in all their finery. You're quite a sight in that uniform, Henry Wilson.

HENRY

You, too, Lucy. I mean, well, not in uniform, of course. What I mean to say is, well.. that you're always, well...

LUCY

Stop, ye silver-tongued devil, ye.

HENRY

What I'm trying to say is that you're always quite a sight. Loveliest girl I know.

LUCY

Ah, Henry Wilson, what will I do without you and your way with words? The days won't be the same.

HENRY

Listen, I've something to ask you. I suppose there's no time better than now, what with us about to leave-

VICTOR

Henry! Have you seen my sister? I can't find my wash kit anywhere. May will know where it is. Sargeant's gunna kill me if I lose that again before we even get started.

HENRY

Calm down, Vic, calm down. May's just over there. She'll help you get straightened out, alright? Nothing to worry about.

VICTOR

(leaving) Sargeant's gunna have me head... May!

LUCY

How that boy's ended up in the uniform is beyond my comprehension.

HENRY

We'll take good care of him. Don't fret. He's got Owen, Eddie, and me to look after him.

LUCY

That's what worries me.

HENRY

My dear, that truly hurts. (Pause) Lucy, I've something to ask ye-

WALTER

Alright, Wilson. Time to fall in. Lieutenant has a few words to say.

HENRY

Right, sarge. On the way. (turning back to Lucy) Lucy... I've something to ask ye. We've known each other for... well, forever. I can't remember a day without Lucy Turner. Not a good one, at any rate-

WALTER

Wilson!

LUCY

Go on then, Henry.

WALTER

(Loudly) Alright, Leeds Pals, fall in! Ready, all. Attention!

(Lieutenant steps onto podium)

LIEUTENANT

Stand at ease, men. Rest easy. (Pause.) Today, in Belgium and France, a conflagration ravages the land. We find ourselves in the flames of a great war that threatens not only Europe, but the world. We are a peace loving people. We strove for peace by all means to the last moment, but when, in spite of our efforts, war came we could not stand aside. The honour of Britain forbade it. This war is a great crime, the greatest in history, but a crime in which we, as a nation, have no share. And who is it we have to blame for this offense against humanity?

*(Some in the crowd shout "The Kaiser!")*

The Kaiser had but to whisper the word "peace" and there would have been no war. But he did not speak that word. He has drawn the sword. War has come. And so we must fight. We are fighting for right against might. We are fighting for the moral forces of humanity.

The Germans have spoken of us as a decadent nation, a nation of leisure and frivolity. Do they say that today? *(Shouts of "no!")* Let the long, drawn-out fight which began at Mons give the answer! *(Crowd cheers)* There, our troops, pitted against the choicest troops of the German Army, outnumbered three to one, were undefeated and unbroken. *(Cheers)* Your country has asked for you in its time of need, and the city of Leeds has answered loud and clear. You have answered loud and clear. *(Cheers.)* And I know, men of Leeds, that when the story of your fight comes to be written, it will form as glorious a page as is to be found in the whole record of our history. *(Cheers.)*

I was not born in this great city of Leeds, but it is endeared to me by the sacred oath these men have taken. And in this great struggle, the greatest the world has ever seen, I am proud of the honour of my adopted city. It has raised an army of friends, neighbors- of pals- as strong and determined as any I've seen. I want it to be at the forefront of our national life, and its name shall be the shining example of Britain. Your name shall live on. You are the Leeds Pals. You are the pride of Britain! *(Cheers.)* God save the King! *(shouts of "God save the King!")*

*(Sergeant has men stand at attention before dismissing them; the crowd continues to applaud and cheer as the troops rejoin family and friends. Henry, SL, looks around, searching for Lucy, who is SR, talking with May and Victor. He shouts over the crowd.)*

HENRY

Lucy! Lucy! Lucy Turner! *(The crowd goes quiet, looking to Henry. He begins to sing)* “If you were the only girl in the world, and I were the only boy, nothing else would matter in the world today, we would go on living in the same old way; *(Lucy joins in.)* A garden of Eden just made for two, with nothing to mar our joy. If you were the only girl in the world, and I were the only boy.”

EDDIE

There you go, mate. Nice and subtle.

HENRY

*(Crossing to Lucy)* What do you say, Lucy? I've allus known it. There's no other girl for me. Will you marry me?

LUCY

Aye, Henry Wilson. I will. I will. *(They embrace. Crowd cheers.)*

*Soldiers fall into formation, as crowd and soldiers exit left singing “Long Road to Tipperary.”*