

# The Monument

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Act 1 Scene 1

*A kitchen, with a table and chairs, an old fashioned stove with a kettle on top, and a cupboard. It is 2009, though little of what we see is modern. There are no walls, and beyond the kitchen we can see the cross of the memorial. Enter Beth and Alan Mutlow. Alan carries a rucksack and a lap top case. Alan is Harry's Grandson, and Beth is his daughter, Harry's great granddaughter.*

**Alan:** Granddad! Granddad?

**Beth:** Gramps!

*Alan goes to the table and puts down his bags. He starts looking in cupboards.*

**Beth:** Gramps! He must be asleep.

**Alan:** He must be.

**Beth:** Shall I put the kettle on, then?

*Without waiting for an answer, she does so.*

**Alan:** The food that he's got in here...

**Beth:** Like what?

**Alan:** Plenty of tins. Cheese spread in a tube. Well, about six tubes, actually. Digestives. Teabags by the thousand.

**Beth:** Any opened?

**Alan:** They'll be on the side in the maroon tin.

**Beth:** Got them. It's clean in here. Better than I was expecting.

*Alan goes back to the table and sets up his laptop.*

**Alan:** He pays a woman to come in. A Mrs Morgan. She lives in the village.

**Beth:** Do you need that thing?

**Alan:** I have to be in touch, and there's no mobile signal...

*He takes out a modem cable, and plugs it into a phone socket hidden by the cupboard. Beth goes out.*

**Beth:** (*From off.*) I can't find any milk. The fridge is empty. The whole pantry has been cleared out.

**Alan:** At least that's done. There's powdered in the cupboard.

**Beth:** (*Re-entering.*) It's not the only thing that's been done. The phone has been cut off.

**Alan:** Fuck!

**Beth:** It was off the hook in the front room. It's dead.

**Alan:** Fuck. You must be right. Fuck.

**Beth:** No e-mail?

**Alan:** No. No e-mail.

**Beth:** You know I could have come by myself.

**Alan:** I needed to see the house myself.

**Beth:** It's not like you to be sentimental.

**Alan:** That's a bit harsh. This was my childhood home. Mind you, I also need to see what sort of state the old place is in. Make sure the local estate agent is on the level.

**Beth:** The office will just have to manage without you, then.

**Alan:** If we miss a sale, we miss the commission. There are precious few sales at the moment.

**Beth:** So, it's not likely that you'll miss one if you are out of touch for an afternoon then, is it?

**Alan:** Sod's Law says otherwise.

**Beth:** Give over, can't you! Drink your tea.

*Pause.*

**Alan:** You'll have to go and wake him.

*Pause.*

**Beth:** He needs his sleep. If he's tired, let him sleep.

**Alan:** We need to get going. Anyway. You made him tea.

**Beth:** Ok. Ok. I'll take him his tea.

**Alan:** Good. I'll start binning stuff.

*Beth exits with tea. Alan opens a cupboard and begins taking out half used bags of flour and dried fruit. He gets a black bin bag from his rucksack and starts to fill it.*

**Alan:** Beth, there's stuff here that's more than three years out of date!

**Harry:** *(From off.)* What stuff?

**Alan:** Are you awake, then Granddad?

*Harry enters, sitting in a wheelchair pushed on by Beth.*

**Harry:** Of course I am. You're talking to me, aren't you?

**Alan:** Fair point.

**Beth:** We've come to collect you, Gramps.

**Harry:** I know, I know.

**Beth:** You're coming to stay with us. In Cardiff.

**Harry:** *(To Alan)* What are you doing with all of that?

**Alan:** It's out of date, no good to anyone.

*Beth helps Harry over to the table.*

**Harry:** Thank you, Beth.

**Beth:** No problem, Gramps. Where do you want your tea?

**Harry:** Just here, please, lovely girl. Now, Alan, did your dad not teach you anything useful? That's dried fruit, see. It's a way of preserving it, so it doesn't go off.

**Alan:** That doesn't make it keep forever. It's three years out of date.

**Harry:** Some things keep longer than others.

**Alan:** Yes, but...

**Beth:** Are you planning some baking, then Gramps?

**Harry:** Sorry?

**Beth:** Some baking. Scones, or a fruit cake?

**Harry:** No. I am not.

**Beth:** Not much point in hanging onto them then, would you say?

**Harry:** All right. You win.

**Alan:** We need to just grab essentials.

**Harry:** You win.

**Alan:** I need to get back to Cardiff, you see. Important things on.

**Beth:** Don't mind Dad, Grampy. He's hung up on one particular house. Half a million it's worth, or at least, that's what they've offered. He's waiting for his vendors to get back to him, and he doesn't want anything to go wrong. Doesn't think the people will wait for an answer!

**Alan:** I get paid for my services, and if I am not around, well, I don't get paid. It saw you through University, so don't knock it.

**Harry:** What are you two blithering on about?

**Alan:** We have to hurry, Granddad!

**Harry:** I'm too old to hurry.

**Alan:** Well, we'll have to hurry for you. *(He takes another bin liner from his rucksack.)* I'll sort you out some clothes.

*Alan exits.*

**Harry:** It's no wonder I am so fashionable, when I have youngsters picking out what I should wear.

**Beth:** I take the mick, but he does have to earn a living, Gramps.

**Harry:** I'm surprised that he ever sells anything, he never listens to what other people say.

**Beth:** Maybe.

**Harry:** Don't humour me, girl. I'm old, not stupid.

**Beth:** Ok. So why do you say he doesn't listen?

**Harry:** Because if he had listened, he'd know I'm going nowhere. I belong here.

**Beth:** You belong with your family, Gramps.

**Harry:** Oh, aye? Well last I checked, most of my family are resident in the graveyard on the Monmouth Road, including your Nana.

**Beth:** Gramps.

**Harry:** Oh, I'm sorry, my lovely. I'm not planning on joining them too soon, but a man shouldn't outlive his own children.

**Beth:** Since Nana went, it's not right you being here on your own.

**Harry:** Your Dad wants to sell this house.

**Beth:** That's right.

**Harry:** My house. I know. I'm too old to live here on my own, but the money from the sale will help. Your Dad doesn't want to wait for an inheritance.

**Beth:** Do you think that's fair, Gramps?

**Harry:** Maybe not.

*Pause.*

**Harry:** Beth, love, go and get me something. From the sideboard in the dining room.

**Beth:** What is it?

**Harry:** I'm the last of them, see. I have to pass it on.

**Beth:** Course you do, Gramps.

**Harry:** I'd told your Nana, thinking I'd go first. You don't think you'll outlive your own children, do you? It's some papers, in a folder. Go and get them.

*Beth exits.*

**Beth** *(From off.)* Are these important things? Do you need to take them with you?

**Harry:** I've written it all down.

**Beth:** *(Off.)* I'm not sure what you mean. I'll bring it all in, shall I?

*Alan re-enters, carrying a now full bin liner.*

**Alan:** I'm just going to put these in the car, then we'll be off.

**Harry:** I am not ready.

**Alan:** I've got you some clothes sorted. We've got everything else at our place.

**Harry:** I am not ready to leave, Alan. There are things to do. I don't know when I'll be back. If I'll be back.

*Beth returns with an armful of document wallets. She dumps them on the table.*

**Beth:** That's all the folders.

**Alan:** Christ! What's all this?

**Harry:** Help me up and I'll show you.

**Alan:** I'm taking these to the car. I'll be back in, and then you've got five minutes to find what you need. We can always come back when we've got more time.

*Alan exits.*

**Beth:** Stay there Gramps, I'll bring stuff over. What's in this folder you want.

**Harry:** I wrote it all down, what happened. There, that blue one.

**Beth:** *(Bringing over the blue folder.)* This is it? What is it?

**Harry:** It's all that happened. You read it. Read it.

*Harry is drifting off to sleep.*

**Beth:** Ok, then, Gramps. I'll have a quick flick through...

*She sits at the table and takes out the papers, of which there are a fairly big stack. She flicks through, estimating the length.*

**Beth:** Enough here, mind. Didn't know that you were a writer, Gramps.

*Alan returns, packing up his laptop.*

**Alan:** Are you ready for the off then?

**Beth:** He's asleep.

**Alan:** Oh, Jesus. Ten minutes and he'd be in the car. He'd have a good hour to sleep. (*Slight pause.*) We'll have to wake him. He'll moan like hell on the way, but we'll have to do it.

**Beth:** Why don't you let him sleep for a bit. You could drive up to the Ross Road. You'd get a signal up there. You could check in, and he could get twenty minutes kip.

**Alan:** Are you going to be ok?

**Beth:** We'll be fine. I'll check through this stuff while your gone, and so hopefully we'll be about set to go when you get back.

**Alan:** I'll believe that when I see it.

**Beth:** Dad, he has lived in this house most of his life. It's a big thing for him to leave it.

**Alan:** He can't stay here, Beth. He isn't capable of looking after himself any more. It was touch and go when Nana was around, but now... Well, he is in his nineties.

**Beth:** I'm not arguing with you, Dad. I just think he needs a little time. He doesn't need rushing.

**Alan:** Ok. I'll take a drive then. But I can't hang around all day.

*He goes over to Beth and kisses her on the cheek.*

**Alan:** I'll see you shortly. We'll come back again to sort out properly.

*Alan exits. There is the sound of a car moving away.*

**Beth:** You can stop snoring now, Gramps, he's gone.

**Harry:** Good girl.

**Beth:** Nana told me about that trick. Fall asleep when the unwanted visitor comes. It's not very nice.

**Harry:** Did the job, though, didn't it?

**Beth:** He's your grandson.

**Harry:** Aye, and your father, and it wouldn't have worked without your helpful suggestions, so don't go all holier than though on me. Now, do as you told your father and read.

**Beth:** I can multitask.

**Harry:** Fancy that. Well, in that case, I suggest that you read more than one page at a time then. Your father'll be back soon, and I can't pull the falling asleep trick again.

**Beth:** I'll read fast. It's not your whole life story, is it?

**Harry:** No, not all of it...

**Beth:** It's just there must be over a hundred pages, and all hand written...

**Harry:** You said you'd read, not talk. At least it's my handwriting, and not your scrawl.

**Beth:** All right, all right.

**Harry:** Now read. Reverend Addis wanted a monument...

**Beth:** Reverend who?

*Enter Rev. Addis. He stands separate to Harry and Beth.*

**Harry:** Reverend Addis. Vicar of the parish of Little Fownhope in 1918.

**Addis:** We must remember the men who have sacrificed so much for us...

**Harry:** Which men, Reverend?

**Addis:** The men who died, Harry. We can all unite on that, can't we, Harry? We can all unite on that.

**Harry:** No, Reverend.

**Beth:** Addis was the man who built the war memorial?

**Harry:** We all built it. We were all to blame.

### Act 1 Scene 2

*Harry stands and puts on the uniform of a postman from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He stands in a pool of light DSL.*

**Harry:** I began my working life as a postman.

*Beth moves into the light, sorting through the papers in her hand.*

**Beth:** There's a photo here somewhere.

**Harry:** Aye, that's me.

**Beth:** Quite the handsome young man.

**Harry:** Well, maybe. I was in my first job. No not quite my first. I'd done some casual work on the farms, but it was my first permanent position.

**Beth:** And this was when?

**Harry:** November 1st 1918, and I was 16 years old.

*Lights come up to a dim half-light on the stage. David Morgan is loading up a cart with baskets full of apples. Vernon Spring is working in his forge, the fire reflected in his face. Eileen Lewis is scrubbing her doorstep. The work is all silent, as if on film, and carries on in the background. Alice Mutlow, Harry's mother, steps into the spot, and begins combing his hair. She has brought on his satchel and cap. Beth exits, reading.*

**Alice:** Lets see you then?

**Harry:** What do you think Dad would think, Mam?

**Alice:** Oh, I think he'd be happy enough. A proper turn out, right enough.

*A second spotlight DSR. Into it steps William Mutlow. He is the very model of an ideal soldier, in a smart, well-fitted uniform, standing upright and alert. He stands as if posed for a portrait photograph.*

**Harry:** My father was a sergeant in the artillery, and although I remembered the time before he went off to war, in my mind he was the man in the photograph on the sideboard, a heroic figure, proudly staring out.

**Mutlow:** Do the uniform honour, lad. Wear it right, and remember all the men who came before you.

**Harry:** I'd not let you down, Dad. Not you.

**Alice:** Your shoes are well polished.

**Harry:** I know it's not the army...

**Mutlow:** Wear it with pride, son.

*DSR pool fades out.*

**Alice:** Go on, Harry. It wouldn't do to be late.

*Alice exits. As Harry approaches the lights come up on the individual scene he enters.*

**Harry:** Good Morning Mrs Lewis. I have a letter for you. Official looking.

*Eileen stands and takes the letter. She looks at it, but does not open it.*

**Eileen:** Thank you.

**Harry:** That's a nasty smell.

**Eileen:** Eggs. Well past their best.

*She puts the letter in her pocket and picks up her bucket and scrubbing brush.*

**Harry:** Had an accident with them?

**Eileen:** Children, with nothing better to do. Good morning, Harry.

*She exits. He moves over to Spring, who appears to be working with a lump hammer... As he goes we start to hear SFX of hammering metal. It is loud and insistent.*

**Harry:** Package for you, Mr Spring. *(Shouting)* Mr Spring!

*Spring stops his work, and the sound dies down.*

**Harry:** Package.

**Spring:** I can't stop, now. Put it in the hallway.

*He returns to work, while Harry goes off momentarily.*

**Harry:** Mr Spring? I need a signature for it.

**Spring:** If I stop now, this will cool and be ruined. You sign.

**Harry:** I don't think I can...

**Spring:** Course you can, Harry. Put my name, if you like.

*Harry moves towards David Morgan, and as he moves the sound dies down on Spring's work. Libby Jenkins enters, walking across the stage. As he sees her, Harry changes direction and intercepts her.*

**Harry:** Libby! Libby Jenkins!

**Libby:** Oh, hullo Harry.

**Harry:** On your way home?

**Libby:** I was on the night shift.

**Harry:** They work you hard at that filling factory, Libby. Night shifts, for women...

**Libby:** They need the shells, Harry.

**Harry:** I'm glad I caught you. Saved me a walk. How much easier would my job be if I could just bump into people, eh? Mind, they may not pay me, then!

**Libby:** I'm tired, Harry. I need to get home.

**Harry:** Sorry. I have a letter for you. It's from France. You can tell by the postmark.

**Libby:** Is that so?

**Harry:** Yes. It's a special military one.

**Libby:** Perhaps I could have my letter?

**Harry:** Sorry.

*He hands her the letter.*

**Libby:** Thank you.

**Harry:** Aren't you going to open it?

**Libby:** What business would that be of yours?

**Harry:** Well, nothing...

**Libby:** Goodbye, Harry.

*She exits.*

**Morgan:** *(Calling from his cart.)* Anything for me today, Harry?

**Harry:** I don't think so, Mr Morgan. *(Checking through his bag.)* No, nothing.

**Morgan:** It really was wasted time my brother spent learning to read and write.

*He pushes the cart off.*

**Harry:** David Morgan had been invalided out of the army, and though we didn't know it at the time, in 1921, he would be the last of our men to die due to the war. A week or two after I had started the news came we had all been waiting for... Reverend Addis! (*He takes out a yellow telegraph message.*) Reverend Addis!

*Enter Addis, obviously from his bed.*

**Addis:** It is six o'clock, Harry!

*Harry hands him the telegram.*

**Harry:** It just came...

**Addis:** Hold on, I'll need my spectacles...

*Addis exits momentarily, then returns wearing his glasses.*

**Addis:** It's marvellous. Marvellous.

*Addis rushes off again, and we hear a single church bell. Morgan comes on carrying a bow saw.*

**Morgan:** The church bell?

**Harry:** It's an armistice.

**Morgan:** An armistice?

*Morgan sits on the floor. He looks to be close to tears.*

**Harry:** It's good news, Mr Morgan. It's all over.

**Morgan:** I know...

*Enter Libby, in a coat and scarf.*

**Harry:** Libby! Have you heard the news?

**Libby:** Have I? Why do you think I'm here, and not in work? They've closed the factory for three days.

**Harry:** Closed it?

**Libby:** They had no choice. Only about a third of us turned up.

*Enter Alice.*

**Alice:** Harry Mutlow! What are you doing gassing?

**Harry:** There's peace, Mam!

**Alice:** So I hear. But people are still waiting for their post.

**Harry:** Mam! You think people will care about letters?

**Alice:** Yes, I do, Harry. They'll still be missing their men.

**Harry:** All right. Do you think Jack and Dad will be home soon, though?

**Alice:** It's possible.

**Harry:** I'm sure they will be.

**Alice:** Maybe. But at least they will be coming home. *(She embraces him.)*  
Now, off you go.

**Harry:** Yes Mam. I'll call on you later, maybe Libby?

**Libby:** Goodbye Harry.

*Harry exits. With the exception of the Lewis', the villagers who are not on stage come on, and begin congratulating each other. Eileen Lewis and Alan Lewis cross the stage without acknowledging the commotion going on around them and go off. The bell stops.*

**Alice:** Peace, is it? It has been a good while coming...

**Spring:** It's here now, though. A bit late for some, mind.

**Alice:** Yes, Mr Spring. I'm sorry that your boy did not see this.

**Spring:** Yes. *(He returns to work.)*

**Harry:** The news spread quickly around the district. I was first to get to quite a few people, what with my rounds, and I'll never forget their reactions. There was joy, of course, but with many there was relief, too. I got a kiss from Judith Bevan, and Old George Ruck, who lived up at the Tump got so excited he started leaping up and down and dancing around. He must have been eighty if he was a day, but that didn't stop him. I thought he might have a seizure, but in the end he made himself so dizzy he just fell into his duck pond and caught a chill. At his age Mam thought that might finish him off, but he recovered in a week or two. Mrs Lucas, of Oak Tree Farm, she was different. She just shook her head and turned away. She just didn't believe me. Most folks started planning, thinking up what they could do when the men came home.

*Rev. Addis enters. He is carrying a telegram.*

**Alice:** We should mark this in some way. A thanksgiving of some kind.

**Addis:** Harry?

*Harry crosses to Addis, who shows him the address on the telegram.*

**Morgan:** I hadn't considered it. What did you have in mind?

**Alice:** A service, perhaps...

**Addis:** Mrs Mutlow?

**Alice:** *(Stepping to the kitchen.)* What can I do for you, reverend?

**Addis:** Would you please sit down?

*The villagers all freeze in their celebration, then turn to face the kitchen.*

**Harry:** Mam...

**Alice:** No...

**Addis:** I am so very sorry...

**Alice:** But it's over. There's an armistice.

**Addis:** I know. But it takes time for the news...

**Alice:** There's peace...

**Addis:** There's a telegram.

*Alice sits.*

**Harry:** Here it is.

**Alice:** I don't want it.

**Harry:** It'll be about Dad, Mam, or our Jack.

**Alice:** I don't want it.

**Harry:** I'll put it on the table there.

*He puts the telegram on the table.*

**Addis:** Would you like me to open it, Mrs Mutlow? If you don't feel up to it?

**Alice:** Thank you, no.

*Pause.*

**Harry:** Shall I put the kettle on, mam? (*pause*) I'll make some tea shall I?

**Addis:** That's a good idea, Harry.

**Alice:** If I open it, I'll know.

**Addis:** That's right.

**Alice:** I don't want to know.

**Harry:** Mam.

**Alice:** I don't want to be a widow, or to have lost a son. I want your father and Jack to come home. To come home to us, Harry.

**Harry:** One of them might have been hurt...

**Alice:** Thank you, Reverend, but we are quite all right, and do not need your help. This is our business.

**Addis:** If you are certain...

**Alice:** Good morning.

**Addis:** Well, if there is anything I can do...

*Addis exits.*

**Harry:** Mam?

**Alice:** Like a crow, waiting to feed on the corpse.

**Harry:** (*To the audience*) She sat for over an hour, just staring at the telegram. I made tea, and it went cold beside her. No-one called at the house, though from time to time, people passed on the road.

*The villagers come to life, chattering excitedly, then stop, and turn away.*

**Harry:** Shall I open it, Mam?

**Alice:** It hasn't happened. Until I open it, it hasn't happened.

**Harry:** No.

*Pause. Suddenly, Alice takes the telegram and carefully unseals it, and reads.*

**Alice:** Bring me pen and paper.

**Harry:** What does it say?

**Alice:** Were you... Tea? Did you make tea?

**Harry:** I can make more.

**Alice:** Yes, make more. Bring me paper. I must write to your father.

**Harry:** Mam?

**Alice:** It's your brother, Harry. It's Jack.

### Act 1 Scene 3

*Eileen Lewis enters with a metal pail. She is dressed in well worn, functional, working clothes. She reaches into the bucket and begins scattering feed for 'hens'.*

**Eileen:** Come on, chicks. Feeding time. *(She mimes scattering feed, but after a short time, she gives up.)* Please yourselves.

*She empties the bucket in one go, goes off with it, then re-enters with a clothes basket. She mimes collecting washing from a washing line at the back of the stage.*

*Enter Vernon Spring. He stands watching Eileen for a short time before she notices him.*

**Eileen:** Mr Spring! I did not see you there.

**Spring:** Mrs Lewis.

**Eileen:** Is there something I can do for you?

**Spring:** Well, as I was passing, I thought I might call in. Pay my respects, like.

**Eileen:** Passing? Have you been somewhere?

**Spring:** I've been over to Ross for the market. Thought I might get a pig. Something to see me through the rest of winter.

**Eileen:** I don't see any pigs with you. Did they not have any?

**Spring:** Aye, they had some. They were just a bit more pricy than I was figuring to pay for them. I should have known they would be. Everything seems to cost more these days.

*Pause.*

**Eileen:** You must forgive me Mr Spring. I get very few visitors these days. Would you care for some cider? It is a long walk from Ross. You must be thirsty.

**Spring:** If you are having some, I would be delighted to join you.

*She picks up the washing and hurries out. Pause.*

**Spring:** You have a very fine vegetable patch, Mrs Lewis.

*Pause. Eileen reappears with two mugs of cider.*

**Eileen:** It serves our needs. *(She hands him a cider.)*

**Spring:** This is very welcome. *(He takes a long drink)* Very welcome, indeed. Is it your own?

**Eileen:** I have a few apple trees. This is very nearly the last of it, though.

**Spring:** Still, we are only a few weeks away from the apples being ready.

*They drink in silence. Harry has come into the shadows upstage. He has several eggs in his hands. He stands listening.*

**Spring:** I have not seen you for some weeks, Mrs Lewis.

**Eileen:** No? Why would you? I have no horse that needs your services, and very little money to spend.

**Spring:** What of church? I have not seen you, or your boy in church for a month or more. I have been concerned.

**Eileen:** I have not found church an easy experience in recent times.

**Spring:** Nobody judges you ...

**Eileen:** And I am sure that they do. But that is not the issue. I do not care if they judge me or not. Let them. But I judge them. I judge them.

**Spring:** Do you think I judge you?

*Silence.*

**Eileen:** I am perfectly well, Mr Spring. You may rest assured of that.

**Spring:** I want to be friendly with you Mrs. Lewis. I would rather you would call me Vernon, and that I would call you Eileen. I have no quarrel with you, and would hope that you have none with me. I would hope that we may be of help to each other.

**Eileen:** I do not follow you.

**Spring:** Well, you are a widow, and I am a widower. If you will pardon me, I was not telling the full truth when I mentioned I was passing. I intended to call and see you, to see if we might be a couple. (*Brief pause*) I am asking you if you will marry me, Eileen.

**Eileen:** You want to marry me?

**Spring:** I do.

**Eileen:** Why?

**Spring:** It has been more than a year since you were widowed, and a sight longer since my wife died. I could provide for you. I have a trade, and a good one. I am not rich, but I am not poor either. I have no children, but you have a son, and I would teach him. He could become my apprentice, and as I get older, he could take over the smithy. People will always need their horses shod. He would be made.

**Eileen:** You make it sound like a business proposition.

**Spring:** In a way, it is. I offer you security. You say yourself, you are not well off.

**Eileen:** What of love?

**Spring:** Love? Love grows from security, comfort. I would make you comfortable, and that would be enough for love to come, I think.

**Eileen:** I did not marry my husband because he was the richest man.

**Spring:** No? But then when we are young, we can wait for success to come. You need security now.

*Eileen has moved away from him, and turns her back.*

**Spring:** I will not humiliate myself. If you will not answer...

**Eileen:** You are very business like, so in fairness, I will examine your proposal. You offer financial support for myself and my son, as well as a trade for Jack to learn. It is a worthy offer. You promise that it will lead to love. What do you want in return? You want my son as an apprentice, who'll be free labour as you get older. As for me, I presume you will want me to perform all of the wifely duties?

**Spring:** I would expect you to cook and clean and wash...

**Eileen:** That's not what I mean.

**Spring:** I would expect you to fulfil your wedding vows.

**Eileen:** Aye. I will not lie to you, Mr Spring. You are an old man, and the prospect of sharing your bed is not attractive to me.

**Spring:** Very well, Mrs Lewis. Thank you for the cider. I will not trouble you further. Good day to you.

*He puts down the mug, and makes to leave.*

**Eileen:** Mr Spring. Vernon. Do not go just yet. I have not given you my answer.

**Spring:** You do not need to, Mrs Lewis. You have made yourself quite clear.

**Eileen:** I have not. I would like you to let me finish. I am as yet undecided. Jack and I would be provided for, that is true. I have no pension to fall back upon. I am in need of a husband to provide for us, and there are few prospects. Your proposal deserves consideration. Allow me a day or two to think things through.

**Spring:** Very well. I will call again on Sunday.

*Spring exits. Eileen looks after him, then turns to go. She notices Harry, and stands staring at him. Harry hurries off. Exit Eileen.*

#### Act 1 Scene 4

*The villagers begin singing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" while setting out benches as if they are pews in the church. They stand facing the audience. Reverend Addis takes a position behind*

*them, also facing the audience. The conceit is that the audience are seeing both sides of the church service simultaneously, and the congregation should react to the sermon Addis preaches.*

**Harry:** The following Sunday, the vicar's sermon was all "faith, hope and charity", and how Jesus had sacrificed himself for us.

**Addis:** ...for as it says in Acts 20, "...remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Those who give their goods, or their labour for a good cause, or for the aid of a neighbour, are indeed blessed. But how much more so are those that give up their life? All over the country there are monuments to mark the sacrifice of the glorious dead. Jesus sacrificed himself for our sins, and members of our armed forces sacrificed themselves for our freedom. The men who gave their lives should be remembered. They must be remembered. The question is what have we done to that end in this parish? Nothing, that's what! Shameful, shameful. What are we going to do about it? I call on you all to contribute to a collection, and not the usual plate passing that you drop an odd coin in. We need a decent collection to pay for our own parish memorial to our men who lost their lives in uniform. This is unconventional, but I put this idea forward to you as a congregation. Let us come together as a community. Let us remember them together. Let us build a memorial to fit their sacrifice! What do you say?

*Pause.*

**Spring:** A Memorial?

**Addis:** That's right, Vernon. A memorial to the men of the parish who died in the war.

**Spring:** What, all of them?

**Alice:** Don't be daft, Vernon.

**Spring:** I'm not being daft, Alice, just asking, that's all.

**Addis:** As you should, as you should. But put your mind at rest. It will be a memorial to those who deserve to be remembered and no-one else.

**Spring:** Got a figure in mind, have you? About how much is this memorial going to cost?

**Addis:** Is your first thought always of hard cash, Mr Spring. Do you always think of money?

**Spring:** No, but...

**Addis:** Rest easy, Vernon. Mr Partridge has already committed to a sizable donation. His contribution alone could pay for the erection of a basic monument.

**Libby:** That's a relief. I thought that you were asking us for money.

**Addis:** I am, I am. I want everyone to pay in what they can.

**Morgan:** To pay for something that has already been paid for. Don't be daft.

**Spring:** Aye, we're not made of money. If Partridge has enough brass to pay, why should we fork out too?

**Alice:** (*Quietly.*) To make it ours.

**Addis:** It is not Reginald Partridge's memorial.

**Spring:** Sounds like it is, especially if he's paying for it.

**Alice:** He mustn't. Here, Reverend, I have a shilling.

**Spring:** Don't be so daft, Alice. Keep your money. Someone else is paying.

**Alice:** I'll trouble you not to call me daft Vernon Spring. I know what I am doing. It is not right that Mr Partridge pays.

**Spring:** Why not? He owns half the district. He can afford it.

**Alice:** Half the district is enough. He will not own the memory of my son. I want to be able to say I contributed. Here, Reverend, take my money.

**Addis:** Bless you Alice.

**Spring:** It's not just your son that died.

**Alice:** No? Well that shilling is for all of them – my Jack, your George, Harold Morgan and the rest. And I'll be glad to think of Jack being remembered by all the other people who contribute money, to think that they thought enough of him to pay out and not let someone else do it all.

**Addis:** Let us come together and work with common purpose. I don't just want a memorial that belongs to the families of those who fell, though, but something that belongs to everyone. We all knew Jack Mutlow, Walter Parry, George Spring. We may not have the bonds of family, but they were a part of our community. They were our men, too.

**Spring:** Pass round your plate, Vicar.

**Libby:** I have some coins.

*There is commotion as the villagers contribute to the collection.*

**Spring:** I don't reckon you'll get this back to a regular service, now.

**Addis:** I fear that you may be correct, Vernon.

**Spring:** Right. The Bridge Inn should be opening shortly. I say we retire for some refreshment.

**Addis:** Well, I'm not certain...

**Spring:** What option have you got reverend?

**Addis:** Well, quite. Just please, everyone, don't mention it to the bishop..

*All exit, except Harry and Libby.*

#### Act 1 Scene 5

*SFX of an express train. Harry is stood apart from Libby, and both are waiting. There is a pause.*

**Harry:** Libby Jenkins! What are you doing here, then?

**Libby:** I am waiting for a train, Harry Mutlow. What do you think I am doing at the station?

**Harry:** A bit of a silly question that, wasn't it?

**Libby:** You see me here quite often. Each time, you ask me what I am doing, and where I am going. I'm off to work, Harry, in the Filling Factory, the same as the last six times I have seen you here.

**Harry:** I'm here to collect the postbag.

**Libby:** Good Lord. You were doing that last time I saw you here.

**Harry:** I'm sorry. I'm not too good at conversation. Not with a young lady.

**Libby:** You are blushing, Harry Mutlow.

*There is a silence.*

**Harry:** There is a dance next Saturday. In Hereford.

**Libby:** So I have heard.

*Pause.*

**Harry:** I've a mind to go to it.

**Libby:** Is that so? Can you even dance?

**Harry:** I can. I've been having lessons.

**Libby:** Dancing lessons! If I didn't know better, I'd think you were trying to impress a girl. *(Pause)* Are you going to go on your own?

**Harry:** I was hoping that you would like to come with me?

**Libby:** You've been waiting to ask me to step out with you for an age, Harry. Thank the Lord; you have finally plucked up courage!

**Harry:** So would you like to?

**Libby:** Well, yes, I would like to, but no, I can't.

**Harry:** Oh.

**Libby:** I'm working, Harry. They are mothballing parts of the factory, so there's overtime going. It's good money.

**Harry:** It's not right, women working in factories like that.

**Libby:** I probably earn more than you do.

**Harry:** No.

**Libby:** With the overtime I get. Still, I'm working on Saturday.

*There is the sound of a train approaching, possibly smoke and steam?*

**Libby:** I have to go. But call on me on Sunday. Good-bye, Harry.

*She goes to get on the train. She stops, returns to Harry and kisses him on the cheek, before disappearing onto her train.*

**Harry:** Blimey!

*More steam/smoke and the sound of the train leaving the station?  
B.O.*

Act 1 Scene 6

*There is light up stage, silhouetting three figures emerging from the steam/smoke. They move slowly, and spread out across the stage, appearing like a squad of soldiers crossing no-man's-land. In their hands they carry something long. There is the sound of birdsong.*

**Morgan:** All right. Let's get set.

*The lights come up and we see Morgan, Harry and Alice carrying the kit to knock/cut down the last of the apple harvest. Harry and Alice begin unfolding a large piece of canvas.*

**Morgan:** There's some windfall to collect first.

**Alice:** There's still a lot of the apples to get in. I don't think you'll manage it all...

**Morgan:** No? You may be right, Alice.

**Alice:** Frosts have started already. The apples on the ground are rotting, best to spend our labour on those still in the tree. Take the end, Harry.

*Harry and Alice pick up the canvas sheet, while Morgan picks up a pole. Over the next few lines, Morgan uses this to give the impression of knocking apples down from an imagined apple tree. The reactions of Harry and Alice show the apples landing in the sheeting.*

**Alice:** Keep the sides level, Harry.

**Harry:** I've done this before, Mam.

**Alice:** You wouldn't know it.

**Morgan:** To your left a bit, Harry.

**Harry:** Right you are. Are we going to get much cider, this year?

**Morgan:** You'll get your share, Harry, never fear. Still, your mother may be right about us running out of time.

**Alice:** See, Harry, you should listen to your mother.

**Harry:** I always do!  
*Enter Eileen Lewis.*

**Eileen:** Mr Morgan? Do you have a moment?  
*They all stop working.*

**Morgan:** Mrs Lewis.

**Eileen:** Hullo Alice, Harry.

**Harry:** Good Morning, Mrs Lewis.

**Morgan:** We are quite busy...

**Eileen:** Indeed? I talked to your brother. I thought perhaps that you could use an extra pair of hands harvesting? In return for a small share in the cider...

**Morgan:** Well...

**Alice:** Mr Morgan has all of the help that he requires.

**Eileen:** He has?

**Alice:** Yes. Haven't you?

**Morgan:** *(Beat)* I am afraid that we have almost finished. There is no job.  
*Eileen carefully looks around.*

**Eileen:** I can see that now.  
*She exits.*

**Alice:** Imagine. *(Beat)* Time to move to another tree.  
*Alice and Harry pick up the canvas and carry it off. Harry re-enters and picks up the other bags, etc. that they brought on.*

**Harry:** Imagine.

**Morgan:** Imagine what, Harry? Imagine what?  
*Exit.*

Act 1 Scene 7

*Alice is stood at the kitchen table, with a bowl in which she is making bread dough. William Mutlow enters, unseen to Alice. He is wearing a blue demob suit, which is too big. He is stooped. Harry stands watching from up stage.*

**Mutlow:** Hullo, Alice.

**Alice:** *(turning)* Bill.

**Mutlow:** I'm home.

*Pause.*

**Alice:** You look well.

**Mutlow:** I've lost some weight. You are well?

**Alice:** *(moving to embrace him)* Oh, Bill...

*The embrace is initially more from Alice than Mutlow, but slowly he yields.*

**Alice:** Sit down, Bill. You must be tired.

**Mutlow:** Thank you. I am.

**Alice:** You don't need to thank me. This is your home, Bill. You can sit in your own home.

**Mutlow:** Thank you. *(He sits.)*

**Alice:** People will be pleased to see you home safe and sound.

**Mutlow:** Will they?

*Harry enters. He is shocked at the sight of his father.*

**Harry:** Dad?

**Mutlow:** That's right, Harry. You've grown.

**Harry:** Yes.

**Mutlow:** And you're working.

**Harry:** I am. I'll brew up then, shall I?

**Alice** I was expecting you in your uniform.

**Mutlow:** They gave us suits when we were de-mobbed.

**Harry:** Would you like some tea?

**Alice:** It has a nice colour.

**Mutlow:** Doesn't fit too good.

**Alice:** I expect that you'll put some weight on, now you are home.

**Mutlow:** I am not going to change shape though.

**Harry:** I'll just go and get milk for the tea, then.

*Harry exits.*

**Alice:** How have you been?

**Mutlow:** I sent you letters.

**Alice:** And I read them. But what about the things that you cannot put in a letter?

*Pause.*

**Mutlow:** There's nothing I didn't put.

**Alice:** Nothing?

**Mutlow:** Nothing worth worrying about.

*Pause.*

**Mutlow:** I went. I did my duty. I've come home.

*Pause.*

**Mutlow:** I am home, and very glad of it.

**Alice:** (*Quietly.*) I am glad, too. (*A little louder.*) I am very glad that you have come home safely.

*She kisses him.*

**Mutlow:** Well. There is a welcome home.

*Enter Harry, with a jug.*

**Harry:** Tea up.

*He puts the jug and tea-pot on the table, and as he does he knocks a tin jug onto the floor.*

**Mutlow** (*violently*) Oh, for God sake Harry!

**Harry:** I'm sorry...

**Alice:** Bill?

**Mutlow:** It's all right, all right. The tea?

*Pause.*

**Alice:** Let's have some tea, then.

**Mutlow:** Yes, some tea.

**Alice:** Pour the tea Harry.

### Act 1 Scene 8

*Night. Harry, who carries a ledger, crosses from the kitchen area to the opposite side of the stage.*

**Harry:** After the agreement to build a memorial, a small committee was formed to collect the funds and agree a design. The Reverend chaired it, seeing as it was his idea, and I was there to take minutes.

**Addis:** There you are, Harry. Where the devil are the others?

**Harry:** My father should be here presently. (*To Audience.*) My father had been a late addition.

**Addis:** I am certain that he will be. I didn't mean any disrespect. You do know that, don't you?

**Harry:** No, Reverend.

**Addis:** He is well? Settling in at home again?

**Harry:** Aye.

**Addis:** And you have told him of our plans?

*Enter Morgan. He walks slowly, and using a stick.*

**Morgan:** I am sorry if I am a little late, Reverend. Good evening, Harry.

**Addis:** Not at all, Mr Morgan, not at all.

**Harry:** Are you all right, Mr Morgan?

**Morgan:** The evening air is not good for my chest. The cold, the damp, you understand.

**Addis:** Of course, of course. We will try and avoid delay, so that you can be indoors as soon as is humanly possible. As soon as Mr Mutlow arrives we can begin.

**Morgan:** Mr Mutlow?

**Harry:** My father is home.

**Morgan:** William?

**Addis:** Indeed. When I heard the news, I immediately sent an invitation to join us. As Reginald Partridge feels unable to take up a place on the committee, I thought a returning soldier would be the ideal alternative. I hope I have done the right thing.

**Morgan:** I have no objection. Mr Mutlow is welcome.

**Addis:** How long do you think your father will be, Harry?

**Harry:** I'm not sure. I thought that he would have been here.

**Morgan:** Perhaps we could begin, and then Mr Mutlow could catch up.

**Addis:** Of course, we must get you inside as soon as we can. Harry, can you bring in the model, please?

*Harry exits.*

**Morgan:** Model?

**Addis:** I have taken the liberty of having a wooden mock up made, so that we can see what it may look like, in situ, as it were. Here we are.

*Harry enters, carrying the base of the monument. It is a wide stepped box, with a slot in the top. He goes up stage with it.*

**Harry:** About here?

**Addis:** Perhaps a little to your left?

*Harry moves to his left and positions the base. As he does so, William Mutlow enters. It is not immediately obvious, but he has been drinking.*

**Mutlow:** What's this then?

**Addis:** William! Welcome home.

**Mutlow:** I'll say again, what's this? I thought we were meeting to talk about the memorial?

**Morgan:** It is a model.

**Mutlow:** Really. It's a bit small, isn't it?

**Harry:** It's just the base, father.

**Mutlow:** The base?

**Addis:** We weren't sure how long you would be, so I am afraid we began without you.

**Mutlow:** Well, I'm here now.

**Harry:** I'll get the other section.

*Harry exits.*

**Mutlow:** Why are we outside, then?

**Addis:** This is where we intend the monument to be erected.

**Mutlow:** Here? In the churchyard? Why?

**Addis:** Where else would you want it to be? The church is the heart of the village. All of the men were christened in the church, and some were married there. Why should we put the monument anywhere else?

**Mutlow:** I know who the men were, Reverend Addis.

**Morgan:** Where else would you suggest, William?

**Mutlow:** What about actually inside the church, then? What about that, then?

**Addis:** No, that is just impossible.

**Mutlow:** Why? There are memorials to past vicars all through. Why not these men, or are soldiers not as worthwhile as clergy?

**Addis:** I did not say that, nor do I believe any such thing.

*Harry re-enters carrying a wooden cross which is about 7 feet high. He slots it into the base as the conversation continues.*

**Morgan:** It is a matter of space.

**Addis:** There is no room for anything other than a plaque, where they would be just one amongst many. Is that what you would prefer? Better to stand out here, where it would be visible and obvious to all. Or would you rather your son's name to be lost in a crowd?

**Morgan:** Are you content, William, or do you have another location to suggest?

*Mutlow shakes his head.*

**Addis:** Well then.

**Harry:** Is this right, Mr Addis?

**Morgan:** Thank you, Harry. It looks very good.

**Addis:** Yes, thank you, Harry. What do you think, gentlemen? Do you think it is suitable?

**Morgan:** A cross? I think so.

**Addis:** Mr Mutlow?

**Mutlow:** It'll do.

**Addis:** It is the Cross of Sacrifice. We thought that it reflected the soldiers' graves in Flanders and in France.

**Mutlow:** Did you?

**Addis:** As a reminder of the magnitude of their sacrifice...

**Mutlow:** I dug those graves. Some of them, anyhow. I buried men in the evening who I had shared breakfast with. I don't think I need to be reminded.

**Morgan:** Not everyone has that knowledge. *(He has a coughing fit.)*

**Harry:** Mr Morgan?

**Mutlow:** What's wrong with him?

**Addis:** We have kept you out too long.

**Mutlow:** What's the matter with him?

**Morgan:** If you insist on knowing, I was gassed. But I am all right to continue.

**Addis:** If you are sure?

**Morgan:** I am. I say a cross.

**Mutlow:** A cross or not. What does it matter?

**Morgan:** Will you agree?

**Mutlow:** It will do.

**Addis:** Good. Now, to the inscription.

**Morgan:** I have been thinking of Joe Lewis. I wonder if we should reconsider his exclusion?

**Mutlow:** What?

**Morgan:** For his widow's sake. If nothing else...

**Addis:** He did not die a hero, David. He has no place here.

**Morgan:** Not every soldier is a hero, Reverend. If that is your measure, you may find we'll have a shorter list of names to include.

**Mutlow:** They all did their duty.

**Morgan:** Aye, they did.

**Addis:** Joe Lewis was shot for cowardice. He died because he failed to do his duty, and that is why he cannot be included, you know that.

**Morgan:** I know, I know. Why are we doing this, though?

**Addis:** To remember these men.

**Morgan:** Is that all? What about bringing the parish together.

**Addis:** Indeed. That as well.

**Morgan:** But we are pushing poor Mrs Lewis and her son out.

**Mutlow:** He ran away. We are not punishing them. He did this to them, not us, he did.

**Morgan:** Are you sure that everyone agrees with you?

**Mutlow:** There may be some who have some idiotic idea that Lewis should be included, but there are far more against.

**Addis:** If you want division, that's the way to get it.

**Morgan:** It is an impossible situation.

**Mutlow:** I'll not stand for a coward shaming the memory of my boy. I'll not have even the suggestion, do you hear?

**Morgan:** I just thought...

**Mutlow:** I'll not hear it!

*Mutlow advances towards Morgan.*

**Addis:** William!

**Harry:** He only asked the question, Dad.

**Mutlow:** Maybe he shouldn't have. And why am I explaining myself to you? You're nowt but a boy. I watched men die who did their duty. They didn't want to let their mates down, and I won't let them down. I won't let that name on our monument.

**Addis:** I agree, William. This monument is for the parish to come together to remember the men who died doing their duty. With pride.

*Slight pause.*

**Morgan:** As you wish. But how can we come together as a village when one man is excluded?

*Mutlow, Addis and Morgan exit.*

**Harry:** Clements and Son of Hereford received instructions from Reverend Addis to begin carving the monument. They agreed a completion date in time for an Easter dedication, and so planning for that began.

*Harry exits.*

Act 1 Scene 9

*Eileen Lewis enters. She sets up a washing line. She begins hanging out men's clothes. They are not wet, but are creased from having been put away. Alan Lewis enters. He is 8 or 9 years old. He has string, paper and some sticks. He begins making a kite.*

- Alan:** What are you doing?
- Eileen:** What are you doing? I asked you to lay the fire.
- Alan:** I've done that. I'm making a kite.
- Eileen:** And have you finished laying the fire?
- Alan:** Yes. Why are you hanging out father's clothes?
- Eileen:** They are getting musty, folded away in a closet.
- Alan:** That doesn't matter. He doesn't need them now, does he?
- Eileen:** No. He doesn't.
- Alan:** And they are much too big for me.
- Eileen:** That's right.
- Alan:** And you're not a man, so you're not going to wear them.
- Eileen:** Don't get cheeky.
- Alan:** It doesn't really matter if they get all musty.
- Eileen:** It might matter. It would matter if we wanted to give them to someone to get some use out of. Or if we wanted to sell them.
- Alan:** Sell them?
- Eileen:** We need to be sensible. Clothes are not cheap. If we wanted to sell them, we could have a little money put aside.
- Alan:** We'd have money if we sold them.
- Eileen:** A little. We'd still have to be careful, but we could replace your old shoes... You wouldn't mind, would you? I though you might have liked to keep them. As a memento. Something to remember him by.

**Alan:** I don't think so.

**Eileen:** Do you remember him wearing any of these? (*She goes to an item of clothing on the line.*) What about this? There is still just a hint of his smell.

**Alan:** No. I only remember him in his army uniform.

**Eileen:** Well. Maybe we will sell them.

*Eileen exits. Harry enters, carrying two eggs.*

**Harry:** All right Alan!

**Alan:** Harry! I'm making a kite. Do you want to help?

**Harry:** All right. Is your mother taking in washing?

**Alan:** No. They're my father's clothes. She's going to sell them.

**Harry:** You haven't got a father.

**Alan:** Not any more. He didn't come back from the war.

**Harry:** In some ways, you're lucky. I used to think the world of my father, but I'm not so sure now. He gets angry a lot.

**Alan:** What does he get angry at?

**Harry:** All sorts. He gets angry when we make lots of noise. I dropped a cooking pot and he yelled at me.

**Alan:** I can't really remember my father. What are they like?

**Harry:** What are they like?

**Alan:** Yes. What do they do, how do they act?

**Harry:** I could show you.

*Harry takes some of the clothing down, and uses it to fashion a rough dummy. Perhaps some of the string is used to link trousers to jacket, etc.*

**Harry:** I'll make you a father, and you can see what it's like. It's horrible.

**Alan:** I don't think you should be doing that, Harry.

**Harry:** We can put it all back in a minute. Do you want a father or not?

**Alan:** I think so...

**Harry:** Well, we need a head. Do you have a hat?

*Alan exits. He returns with a flat cap.*

**Alan:** This was my father's.

**Harry:** Perfect. *(Harry attaches the sticks for the kite, and has turned the clothes into a crude puppet.)* Alan. Meet your father. *(He makes the puppet stick out one arm.)* Shake hands then.

**Alan:** Very pleased to meet you.

**Harry:** Now, what do fathers do? They come home from work in the evening *(He parades around the stage with the puppet, and pretends to open the door. Throughout his speech, he acts out with the puppet all of the things he describes.)* He wipes his brow, and sits down to eat. He shouts a lot, and drinks his cider. *(The puppet points off.)* "Go and fill the coal scuttle!"

**Alan:** Yes father.

**Harry:** *(Points with the other arm.)* "Feed the chickens!"

**Alan:** Yes, father!

**Harry:** *(Raises both arms)* "And don't make so much noise!"

**Alan:** Sorry, father.

**Harry:** He drinks more and more cider, then he falls asleep. And don't wake him up, or there'll be trouble! "Do I have to take my belt to you?"

*He chases Alan around with the puppet, perhaps getting caught up in the washing line? Both boys collapse in giggles.*

**Alan:** I don't think I'd like a father.

*Enter Eileen.*

**Eileen:** What have you been doing? Look at this mess! We were going to sell these clothes. Who'd buy them in this state?

*The boys scramble to their feet.*

**Alan:** We can hang it out again.

**Eileen:** Don't bother yourselves. Just make yourselves scarce, the pair of you.

**Alan:** We're sorry Mam. Really we are, aren't we Harry?

**Harry:** Aye, Mrs Lewis. Sorry, like. But they're only Joe Lewis' rags. Nowt important.

*Both boys run off.*

*Eileen goes over to the line.*

**Eileen:** Might as well wash it all, now.

*She begins taking it down. As she works, she starts humming a tune, "Cold Blows the Wind on my True Love". As she has taken down the last of the clothes, she turns to deal with the boys' puppet. As she picks it up, she begins adding words to the song.*

**Eileen:** "Cold blows the wind on my true love"

*She holds the puppet as if it was a dance partner, and begins gently dancing with it.*

**Eileen:** "And a few small drops of rain.  
I never had but one true love  
In a greenwood he was slain."

*She dances over to the cross, perhaps singing again, perhaps silently. She hangs the puppet on the cross by tying its arms around the back. Eileen walks to her pile of clothes, gathers them together and picks them up.*

**Eileen:** We'll not sell your clothes my darling.

*Exit. There is the sound of a volley of shots. Snap Blackout.*

Act 2 Scene 1

*In the darkness, we hear singing. It is Addis, Libby Jenkins and Alice Mutlow. They are singing Deck the Halls, but with different lyrics, and are dressed against the cold. As they sing, the lights gradually come up, and we see the carollers, as well as Eileen Williams and her son Alan, who are listening.*

**Singers:**     *Deck the hall with boughs of holly,  
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.  
'Tis the season to be jolly,  
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.  
Fill the mead-cup, drain the barrel,  
Fa la la la, fa la la la.  
Troll the ancient Christmas carol,  
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.  
See the flowing bowl before us,  
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.  
Strike the harp and join the chorus.  
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.  
Follow me in merry measure,  
Fa la la la, fa la la la.  
While I sing of beauty's treasure,  
Fa la la la la, la la la la.  
Fast away the old year passes,  
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.  
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,  
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.  
Laughing, quaffing, all together  
Fa la la la, fa la la la.  
Heedless of the wind and weather,  
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.*

**Addis:**       Wonderful! Truly wonderful.

**Libby:**       The Mummers! The Mummers are coming!

*Enter Harry, William Mutlow, David Morgan and Vernon Spring. They are dressed in suits of rags with similar hats and carry staves of wood with bells on them. They form a line up stage. Morgan*

*steps forward, waving his stick. He will pause from time to time to cough or catch his breath.*

**Morgan:** “Room a Room brave gallants all,  
Pray give me room to rhyme;  
I am come to show you activity  
This merry Christmas time:  
Activity (*he coughs*) of youth, activity of age  
I will show you such activity  
That never was acted upon a common stage.” (*Another cough.*)

**Addis:** You sound like you could use a drink, David.

*He offers his hip flask.*

**Morgan:** I am Old Father Christmas, but thank you.

*He drinks, then hands it back.*

Come forth Royal Prussian King!

*Morgan steps to the side, whilst Spring comes forward, and takes up a martial pose.*

**Alice:** Vernon Spring playing a king!

**Spring** “In comes I the Royal Prussian King:”  
*All of the other characters boo.*

**Libby:** We’ve had enough of the Kaiser!

**Addis:** It is tradition, tradition.

**Spring:** Many a battle have I been in,

**Libby:** And you’ve lost most of them, too!

**Spring:** I am trying to perform, Libby Jenkins! (*Clears his throat and resumes his pose.*)

“Many a battle have I been in.  
I have fought this battle at home and abroad;  
I have brought the truth upon my sword.  
Where's the man that dares to bid me stand?  
I would cut him down with my creeagus hand,  
I would cut him and hew him as small as flies  
And send him to King George to make mince pies.  
Walk in Jack Vinney.”

*Harry steps forward. There are cheers. Addis is especially enthusiastic.*

**Addis:** Very good, very good! Hurrah for good Jack Vinney!

**Spring:** I'm pleased you're enjoying it, Reverend.

**Addis:** Oh, I'm sorry. Am I getting a little enthusiastic?

**Alice:** Just a little.

**Harry:** "In comes I Jack Vinney.  
Where's the man that dare to bid me stand?  
He said he'd cut me down with his creeagus hand."

**Eileen:** Creeagus? What's that, then?

**Harry:** I don't know. I think it must be German.

**Eileen:** Are you sure you've got your lines right, Harry? It doesn't sound right.

**Harry:** I've got it written down. Look. *(He takes out a battered script to show her.)*

**Mutlow:** Get on with it, Harry!

**Harry:** All right, all right.  
"A battle, a battle with him I will try,  
To see which on the floor shall lie."

*Harry and Spring use the sticks for a comic sword fight. At first Spring seems to be winning and there are cheers of encouragement - "Come on Jack!", "Don't let the Hun win!", etc - until Jack begins to do better.*

**Spring;** Hold on a moment.

*They pause. Spring is breathing heavily.*

**Spring:** Very well.

*They begin again. Eventually, Jack Vinney is defeated and collapses, unconvincingly, to the floor. Spring wanders around triumphantly.*

**Morgan** "Ten pounds for a good doctor if he was but here:  
Doctor, do no longer stay  
But mount your horse and ride away."

*William Mutlow comes forward, pretending to ride a horse. He also has a black doctor's bag. He rides back and forth across the stage several times, before coming to a halt by Harry's prone figure.*

**Mutlow:** "Hold my Horse, Jack."

*He gives his stick to Harry.*

**Harry:** "Yes, sir. I have it fast by the tail."

**Alan Lewis:** I thought he was dead?

**Eileen:** It is just pretend, Alan. Just a bit of fun.

**Alice:** Just a bit of fun...

**Mutlow:** "In comes I, Doctor Hero. I was bornd at home:  
I have travelled many parts of the country  
And I am well known at home."

**Morgan:** "Pray, Doctor, (*cough*) what can you cure?"

**Alan Lewis:** Death is not curable.

**Alice:** No, lad, it is not.

**Mutlow:** "Oh, all sorts of diseases,  
Whatever my physick pleases,  
If it's the itch, the pitch, the palsy and the gout,  
If the devil is in, I can fetch him out.  
Now if the man is not quite dead,  
Rise up, bold fellow, and fight again."

*He takes an enormous bottle out of his bag. It is labelled 'Cure for Death'. He uncorks it, takes a quick swig himself, before opening Harry's mouth and pouring the entire contents of the bottle into it. There is nothing actually in the bottle, but Harry pretends to splutter and choke.*

**Alice:** Enough.

*Harry leaps to his feet, as if ready to renew the combat. He looks about, spots Spring, who is posing triumphantly, goes over, and taps him on the shoulder. The fight begins again.*

**Alice:** We've had enough of fighting. Harry? Mr Spring? Please!

*She steps forward to break up the fight. Before they realise she is there, Alice is struck a heavy blow and knocked to the floor.*

**Harry:** Mam?

**Spring:** Look out there, lass, you'll get hurt.

**Alice:** I want you to stop this. I have had too much.

**Harry:** You shouldn't have got between us.

**Spring:** Stop the play?

**Alice:** Yes, the play.

**Mutlow:** It isn't finished, Alice.

**Addis:** There is the dance, and the collection still to come.

**Alice:** I have seen too much, already. It is just wrong.

**Addis:** But, Alice, it is the traditional story, the traditional words.

**Alice:** Is it? Then I don't think we need this tradition anymore. We have managed without it since 1913. We do not need it back, I say. I don't need to watch a fiction of men killed in battle coming back from the dead. It is a cruel taunting.

**Addis:** The mummers is not a taunting, Alice. It is done in the spirit of making merry, and I cannot think of a more suitable spirit for Christmas.

**Alice:** You think so? (*Indicating Harry*) This was not Harry's part before. It was my Jack's part. How can I watch his role acted out, to die and be brought back. (*Pause*.) Alan? Come here a moment. I have a question for you.

**Eileen:** It is all right, Alan.

**Alice:** Alan. I want to ask you something. Is that all right? (*Alan nods*.) If you had this potion, Alan, if you had the power to bring someone back to life, who would it be?

(*Pause*.)

**Alan Lewis:** Anybody?

**Alice:** Anybody you like.

**Alan Lewis:** My Father.

**Alice:** I am sorry, Alan.

*Eileen hugs Alan. After a slight pause, Spring takes off his hat.*

- Alice:** I have lost a son. Give me the potion so that I can bring him back from the dead and I'll not object to your play.
- Spring:** Perhaps you are right in what you say, Mrs Mutlow. Perhaps we should finish now.
- Mutlow:** But we haven't done the collection.
- Spring:** Aye, and we're not going to, either.
- Mutlow:** That's all very well, but there's been hours of work.
- Addis:** Is all that you are concerned with money? Are there not more important things?
- Mutlow:** It's easy for those with money to tell those without how unimportant it is.
- Alice:** Please William!
- Mutlow:** No. These are traditions, Reverend. It is Christmas, so we do the mummers. When we went to fight, we were told it was to defend our way of life. You said so in your sermons. We fought for the right to our traditional customs. So, who are you, or any of you who didn't fight to try and take them away?
- Addis:** This is not the same world, William.
- Mutlow:** Why's that? Because we let it change.
- Alice:** I cannot bare it, William.
- Mutlow:** Then leave. We will finish.
- Spring:** Not with me. I'll go no further.
- Mutlow:** You'd abandon us?
- Spring:** Look to your wife.

*Mutlow strikes Spring.*

**Mutlow:** Don't tell me of my duty. We will finish.

**Spring:** I will be no part of this. I will not stay.

*Spring exits, shortly followed by Eileen and Alan Lewis.*

**Morgan:** We are done, William. We cannot continue without the Prussian King.

**Mutlow:** The Doctor's part is done. I can take the King.

**Morgan:** No. Mrs Mutlow is right, so I am done, too. You have lost your Father Christmas.

**Mutlow:** What did you fight for, David Morgan? Why did you join the army? I bet you waited to be conscripted.

**Morgan:** I volunteered.

**Mutlow:** Really? What for?

**Morgan:** For King and Country, same as you.

**Mutlow:** What does that mean?

*Morgan begins to leave.*

**Morgan:** Merry Christmas, William.

*Morgan exits.*

**Mutlow:** We fought a war to keep our traditions. We won a war, mind, but now, after all that, we will give them up without a fight? We can still do the dance, Harry, even with just the two of us.

**Harry:** But...

**Mutlow:** The dance, Harry....

*Mutlow begins a dance. It is similar to morris dancing, and after a moment, Harry joins in.*

**Addis:** Merry Christmas, Mr Mutlow.

*Addis exits, as does Libby.*

**Mutlow:** *(Singing)* "Christmas comes but once a year..."

**Alice:** No-one is watching, William.

**Mutlow:** "And it's everyone's delight to keep it up, keep it up"

**Alice:** No-one.

*Alice exits. Harry looks after her, and stops dancing.*

**Mutlow:** We have to finish.

**Harry:** I'm sorry.

*Harry goes after Alice. Mutlow begins the dance again, but it rapidly becomes wild and uncontrolled. He stops, and looks around. He collects the various props up that have been left lying by the other mummers. Harry re-enters and addresses the audience.*

**Harry:** That was the last of the Mummers. I heard that some group over Ledbury way tried to revive them in the 1970s, and good luck to them, but the village of Little Fownhope was done with resurrections, excepting in the bible.

*Exit Mutlow and Harry.*

## Act 2 Scene 2

*The kitchen of the Mutlow home. Alice is preparing a meal of sandwiches, cakes, etc.*

**Alice:** *(Calling off.)* Bill? Bill! I need some water!

*She goes back to preparing the food. Mutlow enters. He is in his vest.*

**Mutlow:** Water?

**Alice:** For the washing up.

**Mutlow:** Right.

*He picks up the kettle, and goes to go out.*

**Alice:** Not the kettle. That's already on for tea. The Bucket.

*Mutlow replaces the kettle and picks up a bucket.*

**Alice:** And look at you. You're not even dressed yet.

**Mutlow:** Don't fuss, woman. I'll put on my good shirt presently.

**Alice:** Bill?

**Mutlow:** What?

**Alice:** You will be friendly, won't you?

*He exits.*

**Alice:** They're due now, and you not dressed.

*She gets a broom and begins to sweep the floor. After a pause, Mutlow re-enters with the now full Bucket and a shirt slung over one shoulder. He places the bucket by the stove, and starts to put the shirt on. Alice stops sweeping and looks at him.*

**Alice:** Well?

**Mutlow:** Well, what?

**Alice:** Well, will I do? Do I look all right?

**Mutlow:** Aye.

**Alice:** Bill?

**Mutlow:** You look fine.

**Alice:** Just fine? I wanted to look good.

**Mutlow:** I just said you did, didn't I?

**Alice:** You said 'fine'.

**Mutlow:** And that means good.

*She goes back to finish sweeping.*

**Alice:** We need a jug of cream and a jug of milk from the pantry.

*Mutlow takes a tie from a pocket and begins to put it on.*

**Mutlow:** Do you remember me taking you to meet my parents?

**Alice:** At least she already knows us. I was petrified of your father, and he didn't seem to like me.

**Mutlow:** Oh, he did.

**Alice:** Aye, for a Ross girl. It could only have been worse if I had turned out to be Welsh!

**Mutlow:** Nothing could have been that bad to him!

*Mutlow laughs.*

**Alice:** Come over here.

*She kisses him on the forehead.*

**Alice:** Now, go and fetch the cream and the milk.

**Mutlow:** As you wish.

*He exits. Alice fusses over the table. Libby and Harry come in from the opposite side of the stage. They are still out in the garden. Libby has a paper bag in her hand.*

**Harry:** Whatever is there to be nervous about?

**Libby:** I am meeting your parents, Harry.

**Harry:** You've met them before. Especially my mother, you've worked in the fields with her.

**Libby:** Yes, I know. But I am 'meeting' them. Properly meeting, Harry.

**Harry:** Do you really think it'll be that different?

**Libby:** Well, we are stepping out.

**Harry:** Look, fair's fair. You may not know my father that well, and he may not know you, but that's not the case with my Mam. She knows you and is fond of you. If she likes you, and I like you, why should my father not like you? It stands to reason.

**Libby:** Well, maybe...

**Alice:** Bill? They are here!

*Mutlow enters.*

**Alice:** They're in the garden.

**Mutlow:** Why the devil are they hanging around outside?

**Libby:** Do you think it is too late to run away?

**Harry:** I don't think that's the best way to win them over.

**Libby:** You could tell them I was ill.

**Harry:** I think they'll have spotted us by now.

**Alice:** It's a daunting thing, Bill, being presented. We must put her at her ease.

**Mutlow:** She's no reason not to be at her ease.

**Alice:** No?

*Mutlow goes into the garden.*

**Mutlow:** What are you two doing out here! Come inside and sit down.

*Harry leads Libby into the kitchen area.*

**Libby:** Good afternoon, Mr Mutlow. Good afternoon, Mrs Mutlow. I trust that you are both well?

**Alice:** We are, Libby, thank you. Are you well?

**Libby:** Very well, thank you. I have brought a small gift with me. *(She holds out the bag.)* They are french fancies, so I am told.

**Mutlow:** She doesn't always talk like this, does she, Harry? Do you always speak like this?

**Harry:** Father!

**Mutlow:** Well... I thought we were here to meet and eat, not act out some pantomime. Sit down, lass. There's food on the table and tea in the pot. And if you'd like anything stronger than tea...?

**Libby:** No. Tea will be fine.

**Mutlow:** Tea it will be, then.

*Mutlow pulls out a chair for Libby, who sits. Harry sits as well.*

**Libby:** Thank you.

**Alice:** I must apologise for my husband, Libby.

**Mutlow:** There's no need to apologise for me. I am on best behaviour.

*Mutlow goes to the cupboard and takes out a bottle of whiskey, then sits. As he talks, he pours himself a large measure and begins drinking.*

**Mutlow:** I suppose we should ask you some questions.

**Libby:** Questions?

**Mutlow:** Yes.

**Libby:** What sort of questions?

**Mutlow:** Well, for starters, what are your intentions for our son? Are they entirely honourable?

**Alice:** Take no notice, Libby, love. He's just trying to be funny. Here's your tea. There's sugar in the bowl if you want it, and cake or ham sandwiches. Help yourself.

**Libby:** Thank you.

*Mutlow pours himself another whiskey.*

**Mutlow:** Are you sure you wouldn't like a tot in your tea?

*Pause.*

**Libby:** No. Thank you.

**Mutlow:** You've no objection, though? You've not taken the pledge, have you?

**Libby:** No. I'll have a little cider or beer, but not spirits.

**Alice:** Quite proper.

**Libby:** Do you not drink, Mrs Mutlow?

**Alice:** Only occasionally.

**Mutlow:** I admit it. The whiskey in this house is mine and mine alone.

*Pause. Mutlow tops up his whiskey.*

**Alice:** Is your family well?

**Libby:** Yes, thank you.

**Alice:** Is your father keeping busy? I think I saw him up at Birch House?

**Libby:** He's been working for Mr Partridge to bring in a little extra.

**Mutlow:** A small holding is a living, not much more.

**Libby:** We have nothing to complain of.

**Alice:** No, of course not.

**Mutlow:** Though you'll not have your wages soon. No call for artillery shells now there's no war.

**Libby:** No.

*There is a brief silence.*

**Libby:** I understand you are part of the memorial committee, Mr Mutlow.

**Mutlow:** Aye.

**Alice:** It takes up so much of his time, it's sometimes like he never came home from Flanders.

**Mutlow:** Aye? Well since David Morgan resigned there is more work to go around. Visiting folks, making collections.

**Libby:** Mr Morgan has resigned?

**Mutlow:** Aye. Ill health, apparently. So it's just the Vicar and me chivvying money.

**Harry:** Some are keener than others to contribute, he says.

**Mutlow:** That's right.

**Libby:** I don't suppose you've asked Mrs Lewis, though, have you?

*Slight pause.*

**Mutlow:** No, I haven't. Perhaps I should?

**Alice:** She'd not contribute, would she?

**Libby:** I don't think that she'd have money to spare. If you could include her husband's name as well, she might find you something...

**Mutlow:** That's not something to even joke about.

*Silence.*

**Harry:** Libby's cousin will be home soon.

**Alice:** That would be George Harding?

**Libby:** That's right. He's in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

**Alice:** And he has his orders? He's coming home?

**Libby:** Well, we've not heard anything official, but it must be soon. I mean, you're home, Mr Mutlow. He cannot be too far behind you.

**Mutlow:** Don't you believe it. What was he, before the war? A dray man? No shortage there. Knowing the way the army works it'll be years before they let go of him.

**Libby:** But why would they want him, now?

**Mutlow:** I don't say they want him, but they'll need bodies to sort everything out. Only then will they let men go. Unless, of course, someone else needs them more.

**Libby:** His family needs him.

**Mutlow:** Huh! Families don't count. I mean the railway, or a factory or something. A job offer.

**Libby:** He's never even seen his little girl.

**Alice:** What's her name?

**Libby:** Florence. She's nearly a year old.

**Alice:** Already?

**Mutlow:** She'll probably be a good deal older before her father gets back.

*He pours more whiskey. There is a silence.*

**Libby:** What was it like?

**Mutlow:** What?

**Libby:** The front. Do you mind me asking?

**Mutlow:** Why do you want to know?

**Libby:** George writes, but he never puts that much. I am curious what he has been through.

**Mutlow:** Well I cannot help you. He is infantry, and I was a gunner. It is not the same.

**Libby:** But...

**Mutlow:** It is not the same.

**Libby:** I am sorry. I didn't mean to...

*Pause.*

- Harry:** I gave Mr Jenkins a hand with the pigs and hens.
- Libby:** He was very impressed, Harry. He said you were a natural with livestock.
- Mutlow:** Is that right?
- Libby:** That's what he said.
- Mutlow:** Did he?
- Alice:** That's good, Harry.
- Libby:** He's getting on. Someone's going to have to take it on soon.
- Mutlow:** And Harry's a natural. I see.
- Harry:** Oh, I don't think I'm ready for that.
- Alice:** Always good to have some land.
- Mutlow:** Better to have a trade. A skilled man will always earn. You don't want to get caught up in that.
- Libby:** What are you suggesting?
- Mutlow:** That your father has seen an opportunity for a bit of cheap labour. But mark my words, it'll be better for both of you if Harry gets a trade.
- Libby:** And that's what you call being a postman.
- Mutlow:** I didn't say that, did I? No. I've got him lined up for a fireman's position on the locomotives. After a couple of years, he can move on to engine driving.
- Libby:** You've never mentioned this, Harry.
- Harry:** I didn't know.
- Mutlow:** Well, it's time someone started thinking about your future, and seeing as you haven't shown any sign... Anyhow, it's better than slogging your guts out just to have to go and get a job elsewhere to make ends meet.

*Libby gets to her feet.*

**Libby:** Mr Mutlow. You have made your opinion of my family quite clear. Thank you Mrs Mutlow for tea. I'll not bother you again.

*She exits, and Harry goes to follow.*

**Mutlow:** Don't waste your time, Harry.

**Harry:** But...

**Alice:** Go. (*Harry leaves the kitchen but stops in the garden.*) You don't know everything, William Mutlow.

**Mutlow:** I never said that I did.

**Alice:** No, but you like to go on and on, sharing what little wisdom you have got. Do you never think? You tell everybody else what's right, what's wrong, what they should do, but you don't concern yourself with the effects of what you say and do. Don't you ever think?

**Mutlow:** Aye, I think. I think, Alice Mutlow. I think too much.

*Exit Mutlow. During the following speech, Alice clears up the meal.*

**Harry:** When I caught up with her, Libby refused to speak to me. I felt that I had let her down. After all, I had told her that my parents would welcome her, and my father did anything but. What trust could she put in what I said, now? Mam sent father around to speak to Libby and Mr Jenkins, but he didn't stay long, and whatever he said made no difference, at least nothing good. When the filling factory shut down, Libby applied for a nurse's position in the county hospital, and I saw her less and less, until eventually not at all. Two days after Libby's visit, a package came addressed to Mam. (*He takes out the package. It is wrapped in brown paper and tied with string.*) It bore a military post-mark.

*Harry enters the kitchen.*

**Harry:** Mam. It's for you.

*Alice takes it, and sits at the table. It contains a khaki canvas bag, and a short letter. Briefly, Alice reads the letter, then takes out of the bag a diary and a blood stained military tunic. She exits carrying both.*

**Harry:** My brother Jack's life in one canvas bag.

Act 2 Scene 3

*Addis brings on a bench, which he kneels behind to pray. After a moment, David Morgan enters.*

**Morgan:** Reverend Addis? Oh, I'm sorry, I am disturbing you.

**Addis:** Not at all. Please. Come and sit.

*Addis stands and helps Morgan over to the bench.*

**Morgan:** Thank you.

**Addis:** It is good to see a friendly face, David, good to see a friendly face.

**Morgan:** I am sure that all of the parish is your friend.

**Addis:** I think that you are, perhaps, not right. But what can I do for you?

**Morgan:** I need you to bless my plough next Sunday.

**Addis:** Your plough?

**Morgan:** It is an old tradition. Plough Sunday we have new ploughs blessed in church, and Vernon Spring has one for me. Mind, we've not had a new plough for some time.

**Addis:** Not in my time here. But if it is a tradition...

**Morgan:** Thank you.

**Addis:** Do you think that we were wrong to rush into erecting a war memorial?

**Morgan:** Sorry?

**Addis:** Do you think we were too hasty? Ever since we began planning it, there seems to be division. Alfred Jenkins has asked for the money he has contributed to be handed back, and he believes others may follow suit. I haven't let him have his money, I mean, is it even his anymore, but should I give it to him? William was involved in a disturbance two days ago with the Taylor boy from St. Weonards Lane.

**Morgan:** They were in The Bridge Inn. I think drink may have contributed to it.

**Addis:** Perhaps. Perhaps. But I fear that we would have been better waiting for emotions to cool a little before we started.

**Morgan:** We all agreed to it.

**Addis:** Yes, but I encouraged it. I wanted immediate action. I am ashamed to say I thought that prompt action would be a credit to the village.

**Morgan:** And to you?

**Addis:** As you say.

**Morgan:** You could stop it all, abandon the memorial.

**Addis:** Wouldn't people see that as a slight to the men who died? I don't believe that that would bring everyone together, but would merely reinforce the resentments.

**Morgan:** Then add Joe Lewis.

**Addis:** Mutlow, for one, still won't stand for that, and he's not alone.

**Morgan:** Then you will need to think of something else.

**Addis:** I know. I wanted to bring everyone together. Instead, I fear that I have driven a wedge through us all.

#### Act 2 Scene 4

*Harry is sat at the kitchen table reading his brother's journal. Also on the table are his jacket and postbag. Alice places a basin and a towel on the table next to Harry.*

**Alice:** You need to hang up your jacket, Harry.

**Harry:** What?

**Alice:** Your jacket.

**Harry:** Jacket? Oh, right.

*He continues reading.*

**Alice:** I'll do it then, shall I?

*She takes the bag and jacket off.*

**Harry:** Sorry.

*Enter Mutlow.*

**Mutlow:** Is the water on?

**Harry:** Mmm?

**Mutlow:** The water? Is it on?

*Mutlow takes his tie and jacket off and leaves them on the table.*

**Harry:** I think so.

**Mutlow:** I met Eileen Lewis down the lane. And she wasn't alone.

*Harry continues reading. Alice enters. She sees the jacket and tie, and without speaking, picks them up and goes out again.*

**Mutlow:** I'll talk to myself, then.

*Mutlow gets the kettle from the stove, and pours some hot water in the basin. Alice enters.*

**Alice:** The water is warm enough, then?

**Mutlow:** I think so. I was just telling Harry here about meeting Eileen Lewis as I came home. She is stepping out with someone, it seems.

**Alice:** I don't approve of gossip, William.

**Mutlow:** I'm not a gossip, Alice.

**Alice:** I don't want to know.

**Mutlow:** It's not gossip, girl, it's news. I'm telling you what I saw.

**Alice:** Really?

**Mutlow:** With my own eyes.

**Alice:** And what was that, then?

**Mutlow:** She was... Are you listening, Harry? You'll like this.

**Harry:** I'm listening...

*He turns a page and carries on reading. Mutlow rolls up his shirt sleeves and begins washing himself.*

**Mutlow:** She is stepping out with Vernon Spring. What an old goat.

**Alice:** Vernon Spring?

**Mutlow:** That's what I said. They were walking together down Holme Lacy Lane.

**Alice:** Arm in arm?

**Mutlow:** Well, no.

**Alice:** That doesn't mean anything, then. Just because you see her with some man...

**Mutlow:** Wait a moment. You haven't heard it all.

**Alice:** You hear that, Harry? Your father sees two people together and they are all set to marry!

*Harry does not respond.*

**Mutlow:** No, he told me.

**Alice:** No! Vernon Spring told you him and Eileen Lewis were courting?

**Mutlow:** More. He told me he had asked her to marry him.

**Alice:** No!

*Alice sits.*

**Mutlow:** Look, I didn't think that it was worth a trip out to Lewis' cottage, but seeing as I had bumped into her on my way home, I thought it might be fun to ask her if she would like to contribute to the monument collection.

**Alice:** Oh, Bill! What did you say?

**Mutlow:** I just asked if she'd like to give some money to remember those men who did their duty. Blow me if Spring didn't get mad with me. Kept calling me all sorts of names, names I won't repeat. I thought he was going to strike me.

**Alice:** So?

**Mutlow:** So I asked him if I should have ignored her, not given her the chance to contribute. Everyone else had done so. And after all, who was he to say what I could and couldn't say to her. And he told me.

**Alice:** He told you? He told you what?

**Mutlow:** Vernon Spring told me that he has asked Eileen Lewis for her hand in marriage. (*Beat.*) She is still considering her answer.

**Alice:** Really? Well, it's not the worst idea.

**Mutlow:** Vernon's older than me!

*Harry turns another page.*

**Alice:** True.

**Mutlow:** Anyway, he was quick to defend her, and her husband. She seemed quite keen to defend herself, mind.

**Alice:** What did she say?

**Mutlow:** It's not important.

**Alice:** No, what?

**Mutlow:** She told me her husband had done his duty, more in fact than Jack. Stupid.

**Harry:** No it's not.

**Alice:** What?

**Harry:** Joe Lewis was there for three years before deserting. Jack was at the front for three months. He was there longer.

*Silence. Harry looks up from his reading.*

**Harry:** I'm not saying she's right, just that it is not stupid.

*Pause.*

**Alice:** I'll get your food, Bill.

**Mutlow:** No need. I don't feel like eating.

*Mutlow exits into the house.*

**Harry:** You should read this.

*Mutlow returns with his jacket.*

**Alice:** Are you going to the pub?

**Mutlow:** Yes.

*Mutlow exits. Harry closes the journal and pushes it across the table toward Alice.*

**Alice:** He'll be late, now. Thank you Harry.

Act 2 Scene 5

*Church bells ringing. Eileen Lewis enters with a pair of men's trousers and a sewing kit. She gets a bench and sits, preparing to repair a small tear. Enter Alice, wrapped up and carrying a basket.*

**Alice:** Good morning, Mrs Lewis. The bells are lovely, aren't they?

**Eileen:** Can I help you with something, Mrs Mutlow?

**Alice:** No. *(Beat.)* Perhaps. It is quite cold for sitting out is it not?

**Eileen:** You came out here to ask me about the weather? You could poke your nose out of your own window to discover if it was cold or not, and the last day of the year is often cold.

**Alice:** Indeed.

**Eileen:** I hope you have settled your debts. If you don't pay up today, you'll be paying over all through the next year.

**Alice:** That's what I have been doing.

**Eileen:** I was doing some needlework, and there was too little light inside. If I want light, I must endure the cold.

**Alice:** Of course.

**Eileen:** Now, what is it you really wanted from me?

**Alice:** I am curious. I would like to ask you about your husband?

**Eileen:** Really? And why would that be? The better to mock?

**Alice:** No.

**Eileen:** I am sorry. You are a visitor, and I have not offered you any refreshment. But then, I do not have any cider to offer, unfortunately. I don't believe you, Alice Mutlow.

**Alice:** I suppose you've no reason to. I've certainly given you none.

**Eileen:** There we are then.

**Alice:** My son died. My husband returned.

**Eileen:** I was the other way around. My son is still with me.

**Alice:** Yes. I have wept for Jack. I have not said so to anyone. I could not cry with Harry. I don't think he'd cope. And William is not the same man he was. He is struggling with being home. By needs, I must cry alone.

**Eileen:** And do you still weep?

**Alice:** Oh, yes.

**Eileen:** I am afraid that I am all wept out. No more tears from me. Look, if you are looking for sympathy and understanding, I am not the person to give it.

**Alice:** Did Joe write? Letters, I mean.

**Eileen:** Of sorts. He wasn't a man of many words.

**Alice:** So you don't know much of what happened to him?

**Eileen:** I know enough.

*Alice sits.*

**Alice:** I had Jack's things, his personal effects returned.

**Eileen:** There was nothing interesting in Joe's personal things. A photograph, some bits and pieces.

**Alice:** Jack had kept a diary. This diary.

**Eileen:** Why are you telling me this, Alice? Why did you come all the way to my cottage to tell me about your son.

**Alice:** He was only at the front for a few weeks, but... Well, I read Jack's diary. I understand more what they all went through. I cannot believe any of them stood it.

**Eileen:** And so you forgive Joe? You forgive my husband?

**Alice:** What use would that be?

**Eileen:** I do not want your forgiveness.

**Alice:** I did not come to give forgiveness, I came to ask for it. I cannot condemn your husband. I do not know enough of what went on, of what he went through. And if I cannot condemn him, I cannot condemn you, I do not have the right. Will you forgive me, Eileen?

**Eileen:** And what does your husband think? Does he agree with you?

**Alice:** No. He does not.

**Eileen:** You are going against his wishes?

**Alice:** He doesn't know that I am here.

**Eileen:** Even worse!

**Eileen:** Very well. You want my forgiveness? You have it. But now I must get on.

**Alice:** I have something for you. It is around the village that Vernon Spring has asked for your hand.

**Eileen:** Really?

**Alice:** New Year's Day is the time to find a husband. I have brought you a dumb cake.

*Alice takes a simple salt dough cake from the basket.*

**Eileen:** A dumb cake?

**Alice:** I did this when I was younger. We share it, and then you will dream of your future husband tonight. If you dream of Mr Spring, you'll know to accept his proposal.

*She tears it in two and gives half to Eileen.*

**Eileen:** I am not sure that this will work, Alice Mutlow.

**Alice:** Maybe not, but we can give it a go, can't we?

*They both take a bite.*

**Eileen:** Are you trying to poison me? I said I would forgive you.

**Alice:** I had forgotten how bad it was.

**Eileen:** Do we have to finish it?

**Alice:** We do.

*They finish the cake.*

**Alice:** Make some tea, Eileen, please. It'll wash away the taste.

*Eileen stands.*

**Eileen:** If I am going to dream of my future husband, who will you dream of? You have a husband.

**Alice:** Me? Oh, I'll dream of William, or I won't dream at all.

### Act 2 Scene 6

*Night. William Mutlow is standing stage right. He is in his shirt sleeves. He take out a cigarette and lights it. Silence. Alice comes in to where the table and chairs are.*

**Alice:** *(Sotto)* William? William?

*She looks around the room in the semi darkness, but he is not there. She exits. He finishes his cigarette, and stubs it out. She re-enters, carrying a lantern, and comes into the garden.*

**Alice:** William? Is that you?

**Mutlow:** Yes.

**Alice:** What are you doing out here? It is three o'clock in the morning.

**Mutlow:** I could not sleep.

**Alice:** You were up last night, as well.

**Mutlow:** I couldn't sleep last night.

**Alice:** Come back to bed.

**Mutlow:** You go. I'll only keep you awake.

**Alice:** Come back to bed. I'll warm some milk for you, to help you sleep.

**Mutlow:** I'm woken by my dreams, Alice. Hot milk will do no good.

**Alice:** It must be worth trying.

**Mutlow:** A good tot of rum has helped at times.

**Alice:** Rum?

**Mutlow:** I know, I know. I've seen those who need their 'medicinal'. I don't do it often. But it helps with closing my eyes.

**Alice:** Why? What's wrong with your eyes?

**Mutlow:** *(He closes his eyes)* I see things, Alice.

*Flashes appear behind them, like the burst of occasional artillery shells. Initially, there is no noise, but gradually the sounds of battle become louder and louder, and the flashes become more frequent. Alice hears nothing of the battle, or of Mutlow's account.*

**Mutlow:** I am back up the line. All around me is noise. Rats scuttling, those that can sleep mumbling, those that can't talking, and there are orders being given. Over that are the guns. They are never silent, just a few seconds between each shell. The whistle over, and then a muffled crump as they find their target.

**Alice:** Come on. I don't mind if you do keep me awake.

**Mutlow:** You feel the shock wave from the shells. And this night is different. The shelling gets heavier, and heavier, until it is hard to perceive any gap between them.

**Voice 1:** Jerry's giving us a hammering tonight!

**Mutlow:** Yes, sir. *(He salutes.)*

**Voice 2:** Line's down to division, sir.

*A very loud shell burst.*

**Voice 2:** Fucking hell.

**Voice 3:** *(In the distance.)* Stretcher bearers! Stretcher Bearers!

**Voice 1:** Sergeant Mutlow? Take two men and repair that telephone line!

**Mutlow:** Yes sir! *(To Alice.)* I'd never seen such a bombardment.

**Alice:** What's that?

**Mutlow:** We crept back down the communications trench, Alice, looking for the break. We hadn't got 30 yards...

*There is one last enormous explosion.*

A '180' had dropped a heavy shell on our section dugout. A direct hit. No point in repairing the line, now. We didn't have a telephone.

- Alice:** It's all right, Bill. You're home.
- Mutlow:** Those lads didn't get home. The lads in my section.
- Alice:** Nor Jack.
- Mutlow:** Why did I?
- Alice:** I don't know, Bill.
- Mutlow:** I'd have willingly swapped places with Jack. You know that, Alice, don't you?
- Alice:** I do.
- Mutlow:** If you had wanted me to.
- Alice:** Yes.
- Mutlow:** Would you have wanted me to?
- Alice:** I don't know. I don't know I could ever have made such a choice. I am glad I never had to. I got my husband back.
- Mutlow:** I am not the same man I was, Alice. (*Beat.*) You must be cold out here. Get inside.
- Alice:** I am cold. But I'll not go in without you.
- Mutlow:** All right, mother. I'll do as you say.
- Alice:** I'll make us that milk. And we'll put just a tot of rum in it. For warmth.
- Mutlow:** Like you say.

#### Act 2 Scene 7

*Harry enters carrying a full postbag. He is pursued by Libby.*

- Libby:** Harry Mutlow!
- Harry:** I can't talk right now, Libby.
- Libby:** I'm not asking you to talk, I'm telling you to listen.

**Harry:** I've got my rounds to do.

**Libby:** Your father needs telling...

**Harry:** Oh, absolutely. He's definitely going to listen to me.

**Libby:** Harry!

**Harry:** Mr Morgan? Post!

**Libby:** Are you too scared?

**Harry:** Mr Morgan?

*David Morgan enters using a walking stick.*

**Morgan:** Harry?

**Harry:** I'm sorry, Mr Morgan. I need a signature.

*Harry takes out some paperwork and hands it to Morgan to sign.*

**Libby:** You remember Mr Lewis, Harry. He was a good man. That's right, isn't it, Mr Morgan?

**Morgan:** Joe? Aye, that he was. When the roof of our barn was damaged in that storm in 1911, he came and helped me fix it. Wouldn't take anything for his troubles.

*Morgan hands back the paperwork, and Harry gives him a letter. Morgan exits.*

**Libby:** See, a good man.

**Harry:** This isn't about what you think of Joe Lewis. It's about what you think about my father.

**Libby:** I don't like petty tyrants.

**Harry:** I'll thank you not to call him that.

**Libby:** I wasn't. Were you?

*Beat.*

**Harry:** I have to get on.

*Enter Addis and Spring. They are in heated discussion.*

**Addis:** I tell you, it is quite impossible.

**Spring:** Only because you won't try.

**Addis:** There is no money for it. Where would we get the funds?

**Harry:** Reverend? Mr Spring? Would it be all right if I gave you your post now, rather than go up to your houses?

**Addis:** I suppose so.

**Harry:** There're three for you. Just the one for you, Mr Spring.

*Harry hands over the post.*

**Spring:** Coal Merchant's account. The post never brings good news, does it?

**Addis:** That is my point, Vernon. People have no more spare money. Do you? Can you pay for it?

**Spring:** I'm not made of money!

**Addis:** No?

**Spring:** I'm just saying, that if we took some of the money you have collected...

**Addis:** No! We have enough to pay for what we have ordered, but not any spare.

**Spring:** Blimey! What have you ordered? Nelson's Column?

**Addis:** Craftsmanship is expensive, as you would know.

**Spring:** I'm not.

**Addis:** Good craftsmanship, anyway.

**Spring:** There is no call to be rude. And from a man of god, supposedly.

*Spring exits.*

**Libby:** That was a bit harsh wasn't it, Mr Addis? What had he done to deserve that?

**Addis:** You are right, Libby. I will go and apologise later. It is just he has this insane idea that he will not leave. He is like a dog with a bone. He wants to erect a second monument, just for Joseph Lewis.

**Harry:** I can't see my father liking that.

**Addis:** No, quite. Never mind where we would get the funds to pay for it. William Mutlow is not the only person who wants to leave Lewis out of our memorial. Mr Partridge contributed more than half of the money raised, and he's hard set against Lewis. I can't see him dipping into his pocket for a second memorial, can you?

**Harry:** No.

**Addis:** Thank you for the letters, Harry.

*Addis exits.*

**Libby:** I am sorry I called him a tyrant, Harry, but you have to stand up to him.

**Harry:** He won't listen.

**Libby:** Surely he'll listen to his son, Harry. His smart, handsome son. Surely he can think of something that will talk him around?

**Harry:** Libby...

**Libby:** You can be very persuasive...

**Harry:** Not half as persuasive as you. Why don't you come and have a go?

**Libby:** No, it's not got to be me, it has to be you, Harry.

**Harry:** That seems unfair.

**Libby:** Well, maybe it is, maybe it isn't. But either way that's what you have to do. I don't think I could respect a man who can't stand up for his beliefs. And I want to be able to respect you.

Act 2 Scene 8

*Mutlow enters the kitchen. He is returning from work. He hangs his jacket over a chair and inspects a tear in his trousers. Alice's Basket is on the table.*

**Mutlow:** Alice!

*Mutlow is taking off his trousers.*

**Mutlow:** Alice! I need needle and thread!

*Enter Alice.*

**Alice:** Well good lord, Bill. What have you done?

**Mutlow:** Needle and thread, woman. I've torn these.

**Alice:** Are they mendable?

**Mutlow:** Have you ever not been able to mend something? Something that's still got some use in it, not worn out?

**Alice:** Well...

**Mutlow:** Because if that's the case, I've not seen it.

**Alice:** Needs must. Get me a chair by the window, then.

*Enter Harry.*

**Mutlow:** Where have you been, lad?

**Harry:** On my rounds. And I went to see Libby.

*Mutlow carries a bench forward centre stage, while Alice goes off. Harry takes out the diary and begins reading through. As he reads he continues eating. Alice re-enters with a sewing bag, and sits at the bench.*

**Alice:** Tea's brewing in the pot. Should be ready to pour.

*Mutlow goes off, and after a second returns with two mugs of tea.*

**Alice:** So, how did you manage this, then?

**Mutlow:** Tripped on the signal box steps.

**Alice:** This looks like it caught on something sharp – a nail or something.

**Mutlow:** I've been meaning to hammer it down.

**Alice:** Bit late, now.

**Mutlow:** Lucky I didn't rip my leg open too.

**Alice:** Go and get some trousers on. This will take a while.

*Mutlow exits.*

**Harry:** (*Reading from the diary.*) "1<sup>st</sup> March. Moved up to the line for the first time. Shelled for an eternity, so it seemed, but probably only a matter of minutes. Waiting for the whistling of each shell to stop was unbearable. Each time I offered up a prayer of thanks they did not land too near me."

**Alice:** I do not want to hear it, Harry.

**Harry:** (*Crossing towards Alice*) Then read it for yourself.

**Alice:** I have done, Harry. Once was enough.

**Harry:** You haven't told him about the diary, though.

**Alice:** I don't think he needs reminding, at least not until he is settled. It'd just upset him.

**Harry:** "3<sup>rd</sup> March. No sleep for three days, or near as none that makes no difference. Our position seems to be getting special attention from their gunners. No hot food, and only a little water that tastes of petrol."

*Mutlow enters in a pair of trousers that were in the clothes that Eileen Lewis was airing in Act 1 Scene 7, and mending in the previous scene.*

**Mutlow:** What happened with the Jenkins girl, then?

**Harry:** Nothing.

**Alice:** Nothing?

**Harry:** It seems Alf Jenkins doesn't agree with father's career advice. I am no longer a good enough prospect for his daughter.

**Mutlow:** Best shot of that family, then. I was right about them.

**Alice:** William.

**Harry:** Is that what you think of everyone who thinks differently to you?  
Do you never think that you might be wrong?

**Mutlow:** What, and you're right?

**Harry:** Jack kept a diary.

*Pause.*

**Mutlow:** That was against regulations. Might be of use to the enemy.

**Harry:** Well why don't you have him court marshalled, then? You could dig him up and shoot him.

**Alice:** (*Slipping with the needle.*) Ow!

**Mutlow:** Now look what you have done, you stupid boy.

**Harry:** "March 4<sup>th</sup>. Colonel ordered a trench raid. Caught in cross fire after being shown up by a star shell. Only three made it back, and they took 4 hours. One had been dragged back by his mate, and died of his wounds before he could be evacuated. Don't know his name."

**Mutlow:** What are you trying to prove? That you know what it was like from reading it in a book? You don't know and I hope you never get the chance to find out.

**Harry:** "March 25<sup>th</sup>. We have been retreating for over a week. East Lancs mob virtually wiped out. They took over our old position. We are ordered to dig in and hold our position. Can we? I don't think I can."

**Alice:** I have heard enough.

**Harry:** Jack was afraid, Mam.

**Mutlow:** So? Everyone was.

**Harry:** So why are we punishing Joe Lewis?

**Mutlow:** Is that what this is about? Joe Lewis let down his mates, left them in the lurch.

**Harry:** His wife didn't.

**Mutlow:** His wife's name isn't the one you want to put on the memorial, is it?

**Alice:** She is called Lewis.

**Harry:** She took his name when they married. And what about Alan Lewis? He had no choice.

**Mutlow:** The sins of the father...

**Harry:** What sins are you passing on?

**Mutlow:** We cannot honour a man who dishonoured himself.

**Harry:** Where did those trousers come from?

**Mutlow:** They were in the cupboard.

**Harry:** They're Joe's, aren't they? They're some of those that Eileen Lewis was trying to sell.

**Mutlow:** Is this true, Alice?

**Alice:** She needed money, and you needed clothes.

**Harry:** I'm sure you got them for a very reasonable price.

**Alice:** What of that?

**Harry:** So, you'll wear his clothes while cursing his name?

*Mutlow slaps Harry. Pause.*

**Mutlow:** He dishonoured his own name. Joe Lewis is the cause of her suffering, not us. There is no forgiveness.

*Mutlow takes the trousers off.*

**Harry:** Nothing is forever. Nothing.

**Mutlow:** And I didn't know where these had come from.

**Alice:** You didn't ask.

**Mutlow:** I'll not wear his clothes. There's no dignity in it.

*Mutlow exits. Pause.*

**Alice:** Do you...

**Harry:** I'm sorry. It's just that it's double standards.

**Alice:** Is it?

**Harry:** We're not punishing Joe. We're punishing Eileen.

*Pause.*

**Alice:** I know. But what do you suggest?

**Harry:** I don't know.

### Act 3 Scene 1

*The Church. All of the benches are decorated in some simple, but noticeable way – some ribbon, perhaps. Rev. Addis is furiously polishing some religious artefact, perhaps a silver cross to be carried in procession, and humming a hymn. Enter Mutlow.*

**Mutlow:** Tables are set up.

**Addis:** Marvellous, William, Marvellous. Now, tell me, can you see your face in this?

**Mutlow:** Is that important?

**Addis:** Of course it is!

**Mutlow:** God likes his stuff shiny, does he?

**Addis:** God I don't know about, but the Bishop, he's another matter. He likes to see... glistening, sparkling.

**Mutlow:** He's not God, though.

**Addis:** No. (*Beat.*) He's worse.

**Mutlow:** Anyway, what needs doing now?

**Addis:** So much, so much... The wagon?

**Mutlow:** It's in position and has been swept down. Harry is decking it out with some bunting.

**Addis:** Will it do, do you think?

**Mutlow:** As a platform? For speeches? Aye, folks will see. I'll get the sheet for the unveiling, shall I?

**Addis:** That hasn't been done, yet!?

*Enter Alice.*

**Alice:** Reverend Addis? Is this a good time to speak with you?

**Mutlow:** If it isn't about the dedication, I'd leave it, Alice.

**Alice:** Oh? Hello, William.

**Addis:** I am a little busy. Is it about the teas?

**Alice:** No.

**Addis:** That is all ready.

**Alice:** As far as I am aware. Mrs Ruck has offered to help with them.

**Addis:** Mrs Ruck? She is helping you?

**Mutlow:** She won't be much use. She can't stand for more than ten minutes.

**Addis:** True. But I am sure that your wife will manage.

**Alice:** No, I won't.

**Addis:** Come, now. I am sure that you will be fine.

**Alice:** I am not going to be there, so I am sure Mrs Ruck will manage.

*Pause.*

**Addis:** You are not going to be there?

**Alice:** I am not going to be there.

**Addis:** This is a disaster...

**Mutlow:** Why are you not going to be there?

**Alice:** I have considered this, and I do not think that I can take part in this dedication.

**Addis:** I realise this could be upsetting, Alice, reminding you of Jack...

**Alice:** Indeed. But that is not the issue. I cannot accept Eileen Lewis being snubbed like this. You will not include her husband, and I cannot endorse this with my attendance. I cannot watch him so dishonoured.

**Mutlow:** But you'll not see your own lad honoured?

**Alice:** My son is my son to me. I don't need you to tell me how to honour him.

**Addis:** Alice, I need you to help today. I don't think we can manage without you. Is there anything we can do to make you change your mind?

**Alice:** You could add Joe Lewis to your monument.

**Mutlow:** No.

**Addis:** No, we won't. But more than that, we can't. There isn't time to do so before the dedication today, and as for afterwards, Mr Partridge has set himself against it, and would demand his contribution returned if we went against our word not to include him. You see, Alice, our hands are tied.

**Alice:** Then so are mine. The teas are arranged, but you must trust to Mrs Ruck.

**Mutlow:** This is stupid.

**Addis:** Certainly a little petty.

**Alice:** No. Taking revenge on a man's wife, that's petty.

*B.O.*

### Act 3 Scene 2

*In the darkness, 'The Last Post' is played by a single bugle. Addis in tight spot.*

**Addis:** ...and I'd like to thank his grace for the kind remarks, and for agreeing to dedicate our village war memorial. Each of us knew each of these men and today we honour their sacrifice. As a community, I think that we can be proud of the fact that we are one of the first villages in Herefordshire to erect a permanent monument to our fallen, and that this shows the value that we place on what they have done. They did their duty, and on this day, we can say we have done our duty to them. At the beginning of the day, we shall remember them...

### Act 3 Scene 3

*Enter Harry and Alice, from opposite sides of the stage. Harry carries a tool bag. US, the monument is clearly visible with the names of the dead men engraved. It is evening.*

**Alice:** Was I missed?

**Harry:** Yes, but Father told people that you were too upset to be there.

**Alice:** Who was there? Everyone?

**Harry:** Pretty much. Even Eileen Lewis was there, with Mr Spring.

**Alice:** And they all went on to the reception?

**Harry:** Aye, they're all up at the rectory now. You got around everywhere?

**Alice:** The main houses. So, there's no backing out, now.

**Harry:** Are you sure? You could say it was all a joke.

**Alice:** A strange sort of joke. You have everything? Give them to me.

*Harry takes out a chisel and mallet, and hands them to Alice.  
During the next speech, Alice goes over to the monument, kneels in front of it, and chisels off her son's name, leaving a gash on the stone.*

**Harry:** *(To the Audience.)* My mother took an unfamiliar tool that evening, and erased Jack's name from the monument. The pristine stonework was splintered, and instead of a neat and ordered list, somewhere in the middle was left a scar, a scar that mirrored our grief.

**Alice:** It is done.

**Harry:** Now what?

**Alice:** We wait.

**Harry:** Pass the stuff. I'd rather not hang around.

**Alice:** We are not thieves. We do not need to skulk away, ashamed, Harry.

*Pause. Alice drags one of the benches forward and sits patiently.*

**Harry:** Reverend Addis will be upset. Father will be furious.

**Alice:** You needn't stay, Harry.

**Harry:** But...

**Alice:** I did the act. Let any anger come my way. No need to meet trouble halfway.

**Harry:** I was here. I could have tried to talk you out of it. I didn't want to. I'm staying.

**Alice:** If you wish.

*Enter Addis, in a hurry and carrying a letter. He hurries to inspect the damage to the monument.*

**Alice:** Good evening, Reverend.

**Addis:** What have you done, Alice!?

**Alice:** I thought the note that I left you was quite clear.

**Addis:** This is criminal damage, Alice. You could go to gaol.

**Alice:** I am no lawyer, but I see nothing criminal here.

**Addis:** Nothing criminal! You have defaced a monument to our war dead.

*Enter Mutlow.*

**Addis:** William! Do you know what she has done?

**Mutlow:** I had a note. Is it true?

**Addis:** See for yourself.

**Mutlow:** This was your idea, boy! I know it.

*Mutlow advances on Harry.*

**Alice:** No, it was mine.

**Harry:** Though I agreed to it, proudly.

**Mutlow:** I must apologise for them Reverend...

**Alice:** Not in my name, you don't!

**Addis:** I think it may not be beyond fixing. Cut out the damaged section, insert a new piece.

**Alice:** Then I will simply chisel that out, too. Again and again if need be.

**Addis:** For the love of god, Alice, think. We may overlook this once – the grief of a bereaved mother – but not if it happens again. You'll end up in court.

**Alice:** What for? I have only taken back what is mine.

**Addis:** I am sorry?

**Alice:** He was my son, not yours. I wanted his name back, and so, I came and took it. I will take it again if you try to take it from me.

**Harry:** If this monument is not for all the men who died, it is not for Jack.

**Alice:** You took his name and made it a part of something that I find shameful. Is it fair to make me ashamed of my own boys name?

*Enter Spring.*

**Spring:** So it's true. *(He laughs.)*

**Addis:** This is no laughing matter, Vernon.

**Spring:** You think not.

**Addis:** Mrs Mutlow has defaced the memorial.

**Mutlow:** Did you or that Lewis woman have anything to do with this?

**Spring:** Keep a civil tongue, Mutlow, or I'll have something to say about it. Now let me see. *(He goes to inspect the monument.)* Do you still have the chisel?

**Harry:** I have.

**Spring:** Give them to me.

**Addis:** Can you fix it?

**Spring:** I can certainly improve things. I can take my son's name off as well.

**Addis:** Are you mad?

**Spring:** No, I don't think so.

*Harry passes the tools to Spring, who begins work.*

**Addis:** You would dishonour the memory of your own son?

**Alice:** And who are you to tell us what honours or dishonours them?

**Spring:** I say that to leave his name would dishonour his memory. All together, or not at all. Other families may feel different, but ...

**Addis:** This will make a mockery. You cannot have some names, and not others.

**Alice:** Quite.

*Pause.*

**Addis:** The Bishop was only here this afternoon.

**Alice:** Now, there are three of us to hand over to the police. Who will fetch a constable?

**Mutlow:** Not I. I'll not heap up more shame.

**Addis:** I'm not sure the police can solve this. Certainly not this evening.

**Spring:** Take your wife home, William, and your son. They might teach you something.

*Spring exits.*

**Mutlow:** But the Monument....

**Harry:** It's all right.

**Mutlow:** Is it?

**Harry:** It is. It's just some stone. It's all right.

**Addis:** And the other families, Mrs Mutlow? What of those that want the names on a memorial?

**Alice:** They must do what they think is right. I cannot tell them what to do.

**Mutlow:** But you will tell me.

**Addis:** I should go...

**Mutlow:** No, Reverend, I should.

**Alice:** Bill?

*Addis tries to lead Harry off.*

**Addis:** Come on, Harry.

**Mutlow:** There is no need. (*Beat.*) I am no longer the master in my own home, Alice. This is not the place I left when I went off to war, or maybe I am not the same man. I do not belong.

**Alice:** That is not true.

**Mutlow:** So, you will hear me? You will let me put Jack's name here? No? No. Here is my evidence that it is you, not I that rules our house.

**Addis:** This is ridiculous, William...

**Mutlow:** I think so too, but that does not change things.

**Alice:** Please, William, I cannot do what I think is wrong. Please do not ask me to.

**Mutlow:** Nor can I. And so I must go.

*He crosses to Alice and kisses her on the cheek.*

**Mutlow:** Good bye, Alice.

*Mutlow exits. Blackout.*

### Act 3 Scene 3

*Harry is sat in his wheelchair, Beth is sat reading at the kitchen table.*

**Beth:** I don't understand? Why did he go?

**Harry:** He was no longer the man of the house, or so he thought.

**Beth:** Where did he go?

**Harry:** I don't know. He sent the occasional letter, short and curt, though including some money. It was his duty, see, to provide for his family. But they stopped in about 1930. Maybe he found it hard to get work, or maybe... Anyway, we heard no more.

**Beth:** All over a couple of names?

**Harry:** It began with just the two, you see, our Jack and Vernon Spring's lad.

**Beth:** Began?

**Harry:** Aye. The vicar was right. It did make a mockery of the memorial. One by one, the families came and removed their lads' names, until there was just Lt. Partridge left. Reginald Partridge was so

embarrassed, and he hated that, so a few weeks later there were no names left.

**Beth:** Just scars. But why are you telling me this now?

**Harry** (*Standing.*) I'm passing it on to you, Beth. I'm the last, you see, the last one left who saw what happened, who was part of it all. They'll be no-one left to say the names.

**Beth:** Say the names?

**Harry:** Aye, every year.

**Beth:** This is the war memorial. Nana told me this story.

**Harry:** You need more than the story. You need to know more than just why I do it. You need the names, to know who these people were.

*In the half light around the kitchen the villagers slowly move on stage. They silently greet each other, then form a tableau.*

**Beth** The ten soldiers?

**Harry:** And more. All that were there. Vernon Spring.

**Spring:** Hello Harry.

**Beth:** The blacksmith?

**Spring:** Aye, lass, the blacksmith. Go on Jack show your mother.

*Alan Lewis, who has been stood with Spring, takes a hinge and gives it to his mother. She hugs him, and then smiles at Spring.*

**Harry:** Vernon and Eileen married in 1921, even had another son. He died in 1928, but she lived until the early 1970s. The forge closed in the 1940s. Tractors were replacing horses. Alan moved away.

**Beth:** What happened to their son?

**Eileen:** Died of his wounds, September 1944. He won the Military Medal.

**Harry:** She never had much of a liking for the army.

**Beth:** I'm not surprised.

**Harry:** I don't know what happened to your Alan, Mrs Lewis. I lost touch.

**Eileen:** You must call me Mrs Spring, Harry. Or Eileen, if you prefer...

**Alice:** Hello, Harry. What about our Jack? Where's he, Harry?

**Harry:** Hello mother. It's been a long time.

**Alice:** How long, Harry?

**Harry:** Fifty years, at least.

**Alice:** Where's Jack, Harry?

**Harry:** He died, Mother, years ago.

**Addis:** But the memorial still stands.

**Mutlow:** Time moves on.

**Addis:** Yes, but it is still there, William.

**Mutlow:** It is, it is...

**Beth:** I don't get it. Who's Libby Jenkins?

**Harry:** She was my sweetheart, just after the Great War.

**Beth:** Not Nana?

**Harry:** Not Nana, no. I didn't meet your Nana until some years later.

**Beth:** What happened, then? Was it her dad?

**Harry:** Partly. When I moved to work on the railways I was away more. She got a job as a housekeeper to an invalided captain, and by the time he died, only a year or two later, she had decided to give nursing a go. She was in London when I qualified as a driver, and by then it was too late. She was married to her job.

**Beth:** Still, you met Nana, so it all worked out.

**Harry:** Aye, it all worked out.

**Alice:** Do the names still get spoken, Harry?

**Harry:** Aye.

**Alice:** They still are?

**Harry:** Yes, but what about when I am gone?

**Eileen:** Will she?

**Spring:** Does she know them?

**Harry:** I am too old to be coming back, Bethan.

**Beth:** What do you mean? You'll be back.

**Harry:** I don't think so. Once Alan moves me, he won't be driving up and down. He's too busy. Anyway, I'll not be around much longer.

**Beth:** You've been saying that for years.

**Harry:** And sooner or later, I'll be right. Someone has to remember them, all of them. Someone has to speak the names, with knowledge of who they were.

**Beth:** Someone in the village?

**Harry:** They don't know them. It's all incomers. Commuters, driving off to Birmingham, or Cheltenham. You're linked to it. You're family.

**Beth:** But I don't really know them.

**Harry:** That's why I wrote it all down, so you'd know.

*The sound of a car is heard.*

**Beth:** *(Looking out of the window.)* Dad's back. I said that we'd be ready. What else do you need?

**Harry:** Nothing. My coat and hat.

*She gets them for him.*

**Harry:** Go and tell your father that I will be out in a moment.

**Beth:** Are you sure you will be ok?

**Harry:** I have been for more than sixty years, I think I can manage another two or three minutes, don't you? I just want to say goodbye to the old place.

**Beth:** Ok. I'll see you in the car.

*She picks up the folder, and goes out.*

**Addis:** Do you think that she'll do it, Harry?

**Harry:** Don't you worry, Reverend. She's a Mutlow. We know our duty.

**Alice:** But will she, Harry? She's not grown up in the village?

**Harry:** No, but she's family. I trust her.

**Eileen:** And if you are wrong?

**Spring:** We'll be forgotten.

**Harry:** I trust her. *(Beat.)* Now be quiet. I want to take it all in this last time.

*Harry walks slowly around his kitchen. As he goes, the villagers begin whispering. It is the names of the dead, and now includes their own. Harry finishes a circuit of the room, pauses, then slowly leaves without a backward glance. The whispering rises to normal talking volume, and it is noticeable that Harry's name is now being spoken. Slow B.O.*

## Critical Analysis

The process of writing the play *The Monument* involved a considerable development from the initial concept through to the final submitted draft of the text. Although the initial idea for the play is still at the heart of the story, new themes have emerged, and to a degree, different dramatic techniques have been employed from the ones originally envisaged.

### Original Concept

The idea for the play came initially from a documentary series called *Not Forgotten*, first broadcast in 2005 by Channel 4. It was written and presented by Ian Hislop. The series examined the stories behind the war memorials found on village greens, in schools and offices, and other similar locations. It attempted to bring to life some of the names that were in danger of becoming forgotten.

We say every year, 'At the going down of the sun and in the morning/  
We will remember them.' But will we? Do we? Sometimes I think it  
needs a kick. (Hislop, 2005)

One story detailed was about the absence of a memorial in the Lincolnshire Village of Fulstow. Although some villages lack a memorial because they suffered no deaths (and hence are known as 'blessed villages' or 'thankful villages'), Fulstow had lost eight men. One of the eight was a Private Charles Kirman, who had been shot for desertion, and consequently had been initially excluded from plans for a memorial. The families of the other nine men had subsequently not allowed their men's names to be included, reasoning that Kirman had been as much a victim of the war as those killed in action. Without any names to put on the proposed memorial, the plans were abandoned.

The apparent possibilities within the story were multiple. The lack of a monument breaches the social norm of remembering their war dead, to such an extent that more than thirty eight thousand memorials were created in the United Kingdom (the United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorial Website lists 38987 First World War memorials that they are aware of). As April de Angelis stated in her seminar, plays usually have a breaching of a taboo at their centre. David Edgar's Project/Reversal model is also present.

A dramatic action consists of a **project** (usually described in the form of a subject, verb and object: someone sets out to do something), followed by a **contradiction** or **reversal** (as like as not a clause beginning with the word 'but'). (Edgar, 2009, p.25)

In this model, the project might be seen as the villagers' attempt at remembering the men they have lost, whilst the reversal is the disagreement over which of the men deserve to be memorialised. In addition to this, the role of community, and specifically community action, was present as a dramatic possibility.

For a number of reasons, a documentary form was not suitable. Firstly, the initial source material was too sparse to provide the whole plot for the play. There was no information given in the programme about who objected to Private Kirman's inclusion, indeed the claim was made that this person's identity was lost. Nor was the identity of the person who came up with the idea of withdrawing the other men's names known. As both of these would be important elements of the drama, an element of adaptation and fictionalisation would be needed.

In addition, the absence of a monument through a lack of action, in this case a negative of *not* building, could be difficult to show (although clearly not impossible, as Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* demonstrates that the portrayal of inaction on stage can be made dramatic), and so an alternative method of showing the potential for a monument was needed.

The lack of any personal knowledge of Lincolnshire, the original setting for the source events, meant a relocation of the play would be necessary if it was to be written with a clear sense of location. Some consideration was given to using a generic rural location, avoiding identifying it too clearly. This would have had the advantage of allowing any audience or production to identify with their own locality but may also have left the characters without a depth or believability that comes from specific information being present in the play about their background. Consequently, a decision was made to reset the story for the play in my own locality, Herefordshire.

There are few, if any, well-known plays set in Herefordshire, although historical accounts of rural communities have featured in a number of notable dramatic works. Several of Brian Friel's works (notably *Translations* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*), and the adaptations of Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford*, dramatised by Keith Dewhurst for the National Theatre and Laurie Lee's *Cider with Rosie*, dramatised by James Roose-Evans, are examples. Herefordshire, however, had been somewhat neglected in this regard, and so the locating of the work to the county, in addition to allowing personal knowledge to help provide a grounded sense of location, also had the somewhat pleasing side effect of beginning to redress this imbalance.

## Genre

*The Monument* does not fit neatly into a single clear genre, though there are similarities to certain classes of plays or stories. As David Edgar has written,

Much more useful for playwrights is the idea of genre as a set of expectations of storyline, character, locale and outcome.... In other words, genre is the possession not of the writer but of the audience. (Edgar, 2009. p.65)

Accepting that genre is a result of the use of recognisable components that creates a pattern that leads to distinct audience expectations, it is possible to identify one main genre relevant to this play, which is the memory or reminiscence play. Just as with *Dancing at Lughnasa* or *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* by Frank McGuinness, there is a narrator who is recounting events that they themselves experienced in the past. These events are usually the build up to a crisis point that changes the characters in a way that they are not expecting. It is the narrator's knowledge of the future that creates a sense of dramatic irony, as we are usually in possession of knowledge that the characters do not have. In the case of *The Monument*, we are told that the monument is a source of shame when Harry, at the end of the first scene, says,

We all built it. We are all to blame.

The genre sets an expectation of this crisis point, with an accompanying sense of impending danger. As the counter to this, the reminiscence play often presents us with an attractive or positive situation to begin with, such as a secure domesticity in rural Ireland, or the excitement of the volunteers in the opening months of the Great

War. For *The Monument* this positive beginning is a tight knit rural community receiving news of the end of the war.

Often, in the plays where the positive situation is in the form of an idyllic community, there is an expectation that the coming crisis will taint or destroy it. For this reason, the memory is precious as it is of something that is imminently going to be lost. For example, *Lark Rise to Candleford* has the forthcoming Great War that we are told will devastate the community. For *The Monument*, it is the permanent divide in the Mutlow household that is the consequence of the events that we have seen.

As an element of this reminiscence, the play makes use of what David Edgar might describe as a disrupted time structure.

...cinema's appropriation of the flashback from the novel gave twentieth-century theatre a whole new structural repertoire. Non-linear structural forms embrace plays with **disrupted time**, in which incidents from the story are put in a different order from their literal chronology... (Edgar, 2009. p.101)

Whilst we begin and end the play in the present day, the majority of scenes are from a six-month period from the Armistice in 1918 through to Easter 1919. This allows for some events to be foreshadowed, and creates a degree of dramatic irony. For example, in Act 1 Scene 8 Addis says,

This monument is for the parish to come together to remember the men who died doing their duty. With pride.

This is a clear contradiction of what the present day Harry has told us happened, and as an audience, we know that Addis is mistaken. Also,

when Harry reveals that David Morgan, "...would be the last of our men to die due to the war..." in the second scene, as an audience, we are able to view the arguments over the method of marking the loss of the men while also being aware of one of those men on stage in front of us.

The initial concept of the play included a use of a modern day narrator, Harry Mutlow, remembering the action on stage. During the writing process, however, it became clear that there was a need to demonstrate the consequences of the action on both Harry and the community. In part, this could be achieved through Harry's narration, following a similar model to that used by Brian Friel in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. For example, Harry reveals in Act 1 Scene 2 the eventual death of David Morgan due to gas wounds suffered during the war. What this approach did not show was whom it is that Harry is remembering these events for. In order to show the degree to which the Great War was slipping from memory, one or more characters who had no knowledge of the period was needed. To this end, a short third act was included in the first draft of the play set in 2000, and using two descendants of the Mutlow family. One of these, Alan Mutlow, Harry's grandson, is uninterested in anything except his present day concerns. On the other hand, Alan's daughter, and Harry's great granddaughter, Beth, is prepared to listen with growing interest. The two characters symbolise the varied response to acts of remembrance. In addition, Alan's reluctance to spend time on anything except moving his grandfather adds an urgency to the telling.

As well as the genre of the reminiscence play, it would also be possible to describe *The Monument* as a 'coming of age' story, where Harry, as the son, has to come to

terms with his father's fallibility and rebel against him. The first image of William, in Scene 2, as an idealised figure of a soldier is undermined in Scene 7 when he returns home as a stooped figure wearing a suit that is too big for him.

### Plotting and Structure

The play is structured in three acts. Each act focuses on a different element of the story. Act 1 has as its main subject matter the growing divide in the community, whereas Act 2 concentrates on the divide within the Mutlow household. Act 3 shows the events that end with the resolution, and the partial coming together of the community.

Apart from the modern day scenes, the story is told in a chronological order. The complexity involved in a double time structure, using both past and present events, has the potential to be confusing. It is therefore desirable to make the plotting of the individual time periods as simple as possible to help the audience to understand the order of the events.

If a play can be too simple, it can also be too complicated. If one element is particularly complicated, keep the rest of it simple.  
(Ayckbourn, 2004. p.25)

Although the use of double time is not as complex as in Ayckbourn's own play *Time of My Life*, or Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, keeping each timeline chronological in its own setting allowed for greater complexity elsewhere.

## Character

The characters within the play each have a number of roles, and it is the conflict between these competing roles that creates a large proportion of the drama. The character's role may be an office, such as Addis' position as the parish vicar, a relationship to another character, such as Beth being Harry's great granddaughter or a simple function within the play, for example Eileen as a victim. As David Edgar has stated, if these various roles are not in harmony, then there is potential for drama.

...in great drama, the most memorable and indeed the most meaningful moment is when the character departs from and even challenges his or her role; when the old man is brave, the lackey eloquent, the page gives sage advice, the cleaner behaves like a princess (or, indeed, the other way around). It is the character – unpredictable, irrepressible – who declares unilateral independence from the tyranny of the preordained. (Edgar, 2009. p.58)

Harry Mutlow is the dutiful son, trying to follow his parents' desires and instructions. This is shown in Act 1 Scene 2, where his concern is not to let his father down as he prepares to start his new job. As well as the role of dutiful son, however, Harry also fulfils the function of a rebel who sees the ostracising of the Lewis' as an injustice to be fought.

Alice Mutlow has a similar dichotomy between her role as a dutiful wife, who follows her husband's wishes, and the grieving mother who recognises a similar pain in Eileen Lewis.

Eileen Lewis fulfils the role of the victim, the person who is excluded by the rest of the village for her husband's supposed crime. In Act 1 of the play, there are a number

of occasions when the audience is shown the villagers' hostility towards Eileen. This includes the rotten eggs that she is cleaning off her doorstep (with the suggestion that this is an act of persecution) in Scene 2 and Alice's refusal to work with her on the apple harvest in Scene 6. In Scene 3, Eileen recognises that she is the target of some disapproval when contradicting Spring's claim that "Nobody judges you." She is not a passive victim, however, displaying a degree of anger and defiance at times, but even in this, she can step out of this defiant role to display an ability to heal divides and take on the role of friend.

William Mutlow, when first seen, is an image of an ideal soldier, though this is a representation of Harry's view of his father at that part of the story. His roles otherwise can be seen as the father as a head (and ruling force) of the family, and the traumatised soldier who struggles to reconnect with his wife and son.

During the creation of characters for the play one concern was to show the different experiences of the soldiers. These soldiers would have suffered one of three possible fates; they would have died, been maimed or would have come home uninjured. Even the uninjured men would not be unaffected, however.

There were things a man could never share, even, or perhaps especially, with those he loved the most. For how could you describe being splashed by your best friend's stomach contents, seeing barbed wire draped with entrails, or praying that the next shell would kill anyone, however much you admired them, rather than you? (Holmes, 2004. p.631)

Each of these types is represented in at least one of the characters. William Mutlow, uninjured, but clearly affected is used to represent some of the psychological

consequences of the war, while David Morgan represents the physical consequences. The dead are represented through several unseen figures, most prominently Jack Mutlow and Joe Lewis. The prominent use of two characters that have suffered directly through their participation in the war is a constant reminder for the audience of what it is the community is trying to commemorate.

### Use of Language

As a play that is predominantly set in the period immediately after the First World War in rural Herefordshire, one of the challenges that was faced during the writing process was the creation of an idiom that would suggest both time and location of the action.

The initial approach to suggesting period looked at two key elements of the language, tone and vocabulary. The vocabulary of the period was reasonably different – that much is obvious from the novels, films and plays of the time – and so it was of key importance that the use of anachronistic terms and phrases was avoided. The use of everyday words such as ‘okay’, which was introduced to the United Kingdom through American films in the 1930s, would challenge an audience’s acceptance that they were seeing and hearing the events of ninety years ago. References to e-mail, mobile phones and laptop computers in the opening scene highlight the contemporary setting, along with Alan Mutlow’s response to being cut off from the world by calling out, “Fuck!” This exclamation contrasts with Harry’s “Blimey!” when Libby kisses him at the end of Act 1 Scene 5. There is a use of the harsher swearword in the earlier time

period, but this is by one of the voices that Mutlow hears in Act 2 Scene 6 in apparent response to being shelled while at the front, a provocation that is obviously far greater than a lost mobile phone signal.

The key to creating a tone that would suggest the period was the use of greater formality. With a society with a more differential manner, formality was important, particularly in dialogue between characters of different status. The first draft was written, therefore, in a consciously formal tone for all of the scenes set in the past. This resulted in many of the characters failing to find a voice of their own. Later drafts of the play used a more varied degree of formality depending on the circumstances of the particular scene. The highest status character, Reverend Addis, retains his predominantly formal tone, something that can be seen in the way he explains the funding of the monument in Act 1 Scene 4.

Mr Partridge has already committed to a sizable donation. His contribution alone could pay for the erection of a basic monument.

The use of a formal title instead of a first name, as well as the exact language (the 'erection' of a memorial instead of 'building', or the 'sizable' instead of 'big' donation) maintains the formality, and this formality suggests a status and education suitable for the village clergyman. Other characters level of formality is more variable. In a number of scenes, formality is used to suggest an awkwardness or discomfort in the characters. For example, in Act 1 Scene 6, Eileen looks for work with the apple harvest at a time when she is being ostracised by many of the villagers, particularly Alice. Alice's response and Morgan's confirmation give a clear indication of the divide between them and Eileen:

**Alice:** Mr Morgan has all of the help that he requires.

**Eileen:** He has?

**Alice:** Yes. Haven't you?

**Morgan:** (*beat*) I am afraid that we have almost finished. There is no job.

The absence of any contraction in "I am..." or "There is..." is a further way of creating the formality. Similar formal language is also used in Act 1 Scene 3, where Spring proposes to Eileen, for the same reason.

In other scenes, the degree of formality is reduced, though not entirely lost, in order to suggest the familiarity that would be present in a tight-knit village community. Family members may call each other by first names, but otherwise it is predominantly the title and surname or both first name and surname of a person that is used to address them. The exceptions show a number of different situations. Firstly, use of first name alone may demonstrate a familiarity beyond the norm, such as in the case of Harry and Libby's romantic relationship. It can also be used to suggest the youth of the character in relation to the person speaking to them. Harry, Libby and Alan Lewis are usually called by their first names alone. Finally, it may be used to suggest a status relationship, or that a character is trying to gain status on another. For example, during the apple harvesting, where David Morgan is effectively employing Alice, he uses her first name, though at other times he refers to her as Mrs Mutlow. During disputes, a first name is used on occasion to gain advantage through suggesting the person referred to has a lower status.

## Research Undertaken, and its Role in the Development of the Play

The research that was undertaken fell into three main areas; Rural Life in Herefordshire around the time of the First World War; the experience of soldiers in the war and during their return home; and the war memorials created both in Hereford and nationally.

A number of traditional Herefordshire activities of the time that were identified through research were eventually included or mentioned in the finished text. Most prominent of these was the mummers play, but also included was 'Plough Sunday' and the dumb cake.

Mummers plays are traditional folk plays performed by amateur groups of men, often, but not exclusively around Christmas. The most common type is the 'Hero-Combat' play, where a heroic figure (often Saint or King George) boasts of his fighting prowess before entering into a combat with a traditional enemy (a Turkish knight is a popular example). One of the combatants is seemingly killed, and a doctor is brought on to bring him back to life. The plays were recorded from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, but most modern examples are revivals, as the tradition seriously declined in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Certainly, one major watershed was the First World War. Not only did many of the mummers fail to return from the war, but many of those who survived or were left behind did not have the heart to revive the custom, particularly where previous participants were conspicuous by their absence. (Cass and Roud, 2002, p.19)

The mummings play as a form was present in Herefordshire to the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (in several locations, as in other parts of the country, it has been revived), and its central element of a combatant dying and then being brought back to life had an obvious resonance with the story of the play being written. The particular text used is a genuine one, taken from a traditional text performed in Cinderford in Gloucestershire (Folk Play Research Home Page, 2009). It was collected by R.J.E. Tiddy during or shortly before the First World War, and so is of the period setting, as well as being from a nearby location. In addition it contains just four characters prior to the resurrection of the figure killed in combat, allowing the remainder to be an audience. Finally, the villain in the script is the King of Prussia, an obvious resonance with the recently ended war, Prussia being a major part of Germany.

Plough Sunday was a tradition that, as David Morgan somewhat erroneously explains in Act 2 Scene 3, was an occasion to "...have new ploughs blessed in church..." In reality, ploughs both old and new would be blessed for the coming years work on the Sunday nearest the 6<sup>th</sup> of January. This change to the custom was to allow Reverend Addis to be unaware of the custom, so that the audience could have an explanation along with him. It is used as a motivation to bring the two characters together, and also as local colour.

The dumb cake was a traditional form of divination through which women could find their future husband, or so it was thought.

...women made and baked over the fire... a simple cake of flour, salt and water, called a Dumb Cake. If they ate it or slept with it below the pillow they would dream of their future husband. (Palmer, 2002. p.73)

Different communities had different dates when this could be done, but included in these was New Years Eve, also a day when all debts traditionally had to be settled to avoid paying out throughout the coming year. Once Alice has come to the conclusion that she has been unfair to Eileen, the gift of a dumb cake fitted both the time and the need for some physical representation of restitution.

Libby Jenkins job in the filling factory, or Rotherwas Munitions Factory, came about through a desire to show a degree of the sociological changes caused by the war, and specifically, the entry of women into the engineering workplace. The factory, one of twelve filling factories to be operated by the Ministry of Munitions during the First World War, was located on the southern edge of Hereford, and was primarily staffed by young women. When the Armistice was announced, a failure of the majority of the workforce to turn up for their shifts forced a three day shutdown, and shortly afterwards it was mothballed, leading to many women losing their jobs. The end of the war is shown, through Libby, to have negative as well as positive consequences.

Soldiers' experiences at the end of the war provided a rich vein of material for the writing of the play. The method of demobilisation allowed for a limit on how many men would have returned during the course of the play, as well as making it possible to justify the return of William Mutlow so soon after the Armistice. The initial recruitment had resulted in skills shortages during the war.

The best men volunteered first, and usually those who could least be spared. The civilian departments made desperate, largely unsuccessful, efforts later to recover coalminers and skilled engineers from the fighting line. (Taylor, 1966. p.56)

In World War Two, this would result in the creation of reserved occupations, exempt from conscription and prevented from enlisting in the armed services. At the close of the First World War, however, skilled men were rushed back to Britain. The potential for resentment at other men being still in military service was used in Act 2 Scene 3, where it becomes an additional point of conflict between Libby and William Mutlow.

The research into war memorials provided the majority of character names. In an attempt to anchor the play to its Herefordshire location, surnames for the characters were mostly taken from local memorials, primarily the one at Abbey Dore in South Herefordshire. Additional names were taken from my local families.

Several names for the village were considered, some had genuine memorials. For example, a monument used as an initial model for the one described in the stage directions of the play was discovered to be in the parish of Old Gore, but this was rejected as being an implausible reality. Further consideration of the use of a real village led to the conclusion that although it would assist the verisimilitude of the play, it would also leave the play open to charges of gross inaccuracy which were irrelevant to its themes. The name for the village was instead created from elements of existing village names.

### Dramaturgical Concerns

As the play deals with the story of a community divided, one challenge was how to portray the numbers and the familiarity of the characters making up this community

on stage. One obvious possibility was the inclusion of a large number of characters, showing a range of different classes and offices. *Lark Rise to Candleford*, for example, or *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder both take this approach, showing a wide cross section of people from the community on stage. The difficulties with this approach include a necessary slowing of the action of the play – each role must be introduced – and on a practical level, a greater expense with more actors needing to be paid in any production. Although doubling of actors may help with the economic problems, this would not prevent the slowing of the action, nor allow more than a handful of characters to be seen at any one time. The alternative was to use a limited number characters as representatives of the community, together with a single family, the Mutlows, to represent the divide in the village. The wider community are evoked through references such as stories told of unseen characters' reactions to the events of the play.

The setting for the piece was a more complex issue. In order to show a village community, either a range of different locations would be needed or a common location such as the country public house that is the setting for *The Playboy of the Western World* by J.M. Synge. A single location, or at least a single location for each act would have made it possible to perform the play as a naturalistic piece. As this is a play about memory, however, a more brechtian set design is specified, calling for a predominantly empty stage, except for a cupboard, a table and chairs and a range to one side to act as the Mutlows' kitchen. The church is represented by a few benches, which, at times, double for garden seats.

The most realised location is the kitchen, therefore, as it is the one that Harry Mutlow would have known best. It would consequently be most clear in his memory, which is important as he is the character telling the story. Other locations would be less vivid in his memory, and therefore less necessary to be shown in any detail. In practical terms, this lack of extensive set would allow for rapid changes between scenes, maintaining a momentum in the piece. Finally, the almost empty stage emphasises the monument that will be the major physical presence behind the action from Act 1 Scene 8 onwards. It remains there as a reminder to the audience of the sacrifice and loss that the community has suffered.

Whilst the set has been specified as being sparse, the costume is used to assist the audience in their understanding of the characters, their social position and role. It also gives the audience assistance in locating which of the time periods we are watching. Harry's initial transformation from old to young man is managed through a physical change of posture, pace of movement and voice, but also through donning a postman's uniform of the early twentieth century.

The stage directions specify a number of key props, including a journal, a bundle of men's clothes, and a chisel and mallet. The number of props is limited to allow for rapid changes between scenes to maintain the momentum of the storytelling. The specified props are used to help identify the activity that the character is involved in, or as a symbol of a man who has died. Some props take on both of these roles. For example, the clothes bundle that Eileen Lewis has in Act 1 Scene 9 demonstrate the domestic work that she is undertaking, as well as emphasising the absence of her husband, even more so when these clothes are made into a simple puppet.

Although some key props are used, there is no intention that a production would make use of other props that are not explicitly asked for, both for practical and stylistic reasons. If we examine Vernon Spring's work in the forge, for example, the script specifies that he uses a lump hammer, but does not ask for other blacksmith's equipment, such as an anvil, although the sound effects called for make it obvious that the aim is to give the audience the impression that one is being used. On a practical level, moving an anvil on and off stage would be somewhat impractical. In stylistic terms, the lack of many props or extensive set follows Brecht's ideas on the use of set.

Everything must be provisional yet polite. A place need only have the credibility of a place glimpsed in a dream. (Brecht, 1964 p.233)

With Brecht, the aim was to emphasise the situation to try and draw a political point.

With this play, the aim is to emphasise the fact that this is a memory.

### Use of Imagery

An important consideration during the writing process of the play was the use of physical imagery. While the characters, plots and lines are vital, the stand out moments from many of the great plays are visual. *Waiting for Godot* and the two tramps standing helplessly at the side of the road, *King Lear* and the blinding of Gloucester, and the equally horrific blinding of the horses in Peter Shaffer's *Equus* are all images that are dominant memories of any competent production.

As has been mentioned previously, the puppet made of Joe Lewis' clothing in the final scene of Act 1 is there to emphasise Eileen's bereavement, with the inclusion of a dance being used to suggest the romantic relationship between her and her unseen husband, thereby highlighting her loss. The tying of the puppet to the wooden cross at the end of the dance has connotations of both the crucifixion story (another form of sacrifice) and a final fate of Joe Lewis, tied to a wooden stake in front of a firing squad.

The entrance of Harry, David Morgan and Alice Mutlow at the beginning of Act 1 Scene 6 has deliberate echoes of the movement of soldiers. This is in an effort to remind the audience of the experiences that are being commemorated by the monument. While not a visual image, the voices that William Mutlow hears in Act 2 Scene 6 serve a similar purpose, as well as providing some insight into his dislocation from his family and the rest of his community. The Mummings play in Act 2 Scene 1 is a metaphor for death and resurrection in itself, but William Mutlow's attempt to complete the tradition by dancing alone is also a visual symbol of his growing isolation.

When Alice Mutlow and Vernon Spring use a chisel to remove their sons' names from the monument in Act 3, the scar left on the stonework is a symbol of the scar left by the Great War on this village, whilst the arrival of the villagers from 1919 in the present day cottage is a physical representation of the haunting that Harry has felt.

### An Outline of the Development of the Play from First to Final Draft.

The first draft of the play, completed in January 2009, established a number of key elements that would remain through to the final draft. The use of Harry Mutlow as a narrator and the inclusion of a final scene set in the last days of his life are present, as is a divide between members of the Mutlow family, though Harry is a more passive observer, and it is Alice who is against Joe Lewis' exclusion from the beginning. The concern that was raised with this was that the characters of both Harry and Alice were little changed at the end of the play, and therefore we had taken no form of dramatic journey with them. There was a need for them to alter their opinions, and indeed suffer some injury or cost through their decision. In light of this, by the final draft, they became a part of the initial persecution of Eileen, and also, through their refusal to continue in this, they become irrevocably estranged from William.

There are two scenes that were included in the first draft that can also be found in the final draft, with few, if any, changes, though they are moved to different positions in the play. These scenes are Vernon Spring's proposal of marriage to Eileen Lewis (Act 1 Scene 3 in the final draft, though Scene 8 in the first draft), and the scene where Mutlow cannot sleep, instead hearing the sounds of battle at the front (Act 1 Scene 7 initially, but now Act 2 Scene 6). Other scenes, or at least sections of scenes, would be retained, but with some significant modifications. Act 1 Scene 9 in the final draft can be seen in the first draft, though with the person who makes the puppet from Joe Lewis' clothes along with Alan Lewis is Harry's younger brother, Thomas. This was altered to Harry making the kite both to reduce the number of characters needed, but more particularly, to allow him an opportunity to see the damage done to the

Lewis family at first hand. This scene became one of the stages on his movement away from following his parents' view of Lewis' desertion.

All of the characters present in the final draft are present in the first draft, though there are a number of other characters that did not survive the redrafting process. Some of these are minor characters that Harry, as the narrator, would play in individual scenes. Although this technique emphasised his role as the storyteller, recounting these events, it had the potential for being somewhat confusing. From the second draft onwards, therefore, Harry became the clerk for the monument committee, rather than pretending to be a character called George Farr, as well as replacing Thomas Mutlow in making the puppet with Alan Lewis.

Another character written out in later drafts was Reginald Partridge, the local landowner. By the final draft, Partridge had become an off stage figure who was made all the more immovable in his opposition to including Joe Lewis on the monument through his absence, as his position could not be challenged.

Some characters, although present in the play, are considerably different in the first draft than in later ones. The most different is probably William Mutlow, who originally showed fewer signs of having been effected by his wartime experiences. He is against including Joe Lewis' name being included on the monument, but is willing to listen to reasoned argument, a position that he does not necessarily take in the later drafts. Alice Mutlow originally took an immediate position against the

exclusion of Lewis, rather than needing to be reminded about her own loss and the experiences that her son went through before coming to that conclusion.

There are a number of key concepts that were not present in later drafts. As has been previously mentioned, in this first draft, Harry takes on the role of several other minor characters. This was in part a practical consideration, made in an effort to keep the number of actors necessary for a performance of the play down to a minimum. It was also intended to allow the figure of Harry to be present on stage without merely being a passive observer. This use of doubling was also used in the final scene, where Alan and Beth Mutlow were to be played by the same actors who played William Mutlow and Libby Jenkins. Again reasons of economy were a part of this decision, but there was also a desire to suggest a family link between the characters. By the final draft, the idea of specifying such doubling had been rejected. Although it would still be possible for a director to opt for this doubling, the link between Harry's great granddaughter and his romantic interest could be seen as incestuous.

The mummings play was present in the first scene of the second act, but although the basic text of the traditional performance was the same one that was used in all of the later drafts, the character that stops the performance is Reginald Partridge. As the most wealthy of the characters he has the authority to make the performers stop, and the scene ended with a discussion with Reverend Addis about the difficulty Partridge has with believing in the Christian religion after the loss of his son during the war.



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