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WORLD WAR TWO.

CLASS ASSEMBLY

A number of stage blocks lying around to give a casual appearance but in reality giving height at the back.

Children all on stage in haphazard manner appearing to chat in a desultory fashion, some silly behaviour going on.

ABBIE: Stop messing about you two.

SARAH: Yeah, You'll get done!

KIERAN: Oh yeah, who by?

LISA: Mrs C.'ll be back in a minute and then you'll catch it.

ABBIE: We don't want our team to lose points again because of you Smith, so cut it out!

KIERAN: Try and make me *(Stands up trying to look tough).*

ABBIE: O. K. I will. *(Also stands up, makes a move towards him).*
(Everyone showing reactions: worried, excited, irritated, some looking concerned at the door in case the teacher comes back. etc.)

JENNY: Mrs C. will be coming soon.

CALVIN: Watch out - here she comes now! *A really loud stage whisper.*

Everyone reacts immediately by sitting up straight and to attention with folded arms and crossed legs. Some pretend to read their reading book, one has their book upside down..

There is a long pause.....

One by one the children start to look around...then at each other.....then look around again.....

One child in stage whisperto friend...

VICTORIA: Where is she?

CATHERINE: I don't know....Shhhhhanother pause....

STEVEN: She's not here *(stage whisper)*

others look around.

A number of children burst out laughing...

CALVIN, JENNY and ANTHONY: Fooled you Ha Ha!

Every one relaxes again and some start to get unruly Some are standing up on the blocks, others are moving around and tapping each other or throwing paper darts There is a lot of noise.

One child stands up, hands on hips, with a wagging finger and shouts above the noise.

AMANDA: Now look here you `orrible lot, get down, pipe down and sit down!

DANIEL: Ooo listen to `er. ...Thinks she's the teacher now!

TOM: Sergeant Major more like! *Others agree.*

Uh-up two three. At the double! One two, one two, left right, left right, get in line there! ATTENTION! *A number of the naughtier children leap to their feet and pretend to be soldiers. The others laugh and everyone settles down again.*

LAURA: I wonder where she can have got to.

VICKY: Yeah we're supposed to planning our assembly this morning.

LISA: I bet Mrs C. is still in the staff room drinking coffee.

ZARA: She hates organising class assemblies. Do you remember last year when she never showed up at all? Her class had to do everything themselves.

AMANDA: Oh yes, I do remember... in fact that assembly was better than the ones she had organised.

MARTIN: Why don't we do the same?

JAMIE: What?

MARTIN: Organise our own class assembly.

JAMIE: Don't be daft!

LISA: Well why not? Sergeant Major over there can be in charge. We'll have to have someone in charge or it will be chaos with that lot.

Uses thumb to indicate troublemakers at the back.

NATALIE: Who votes that we organise our own assembly? *Lots of hands go up and there is general agreement.*

LISA: Right then... NOW ... who votes that Amanda is in charge?
Most hands go up although a few of the `naughties` use downward pointing thumbs and moaning noises to indicate disagreement.

LISA: Will you do it Amanda? Please say yes... It'll be great fun.

AMANDA: Oh all right but don't blame me if it all goes wrong.
 And YOU LOT will have to behave *points to naughty children.* And you will all have to pull your weight *waves generally in direction of whole class.*

EVERYONE: O. K. O. K.

AMANDA: Right then what will it be about?

GAVIN: Noah's Ark!

KAY: Don't be daft that's been done before.

COLIN: Let's talk about what we are good at then I can bring in my tropical fish collection.

AMANDA: I don't think so Colin.

WARREN: I know, let's do all about the Magic Toy Shop and talk about the toys we made.

ANDREW: Nope Miss L's class did that. It would be just the same.

WARREN: Yeah I know. That would mean that we wouldn't have to think too much!

AMANDA: Tell us something we don't know!

WARREN: All right Sergeant Major, *sarcastic voice* what do you suggest?

JACK: That's it Warren you're brilliant!

CHORUS OF VOICES: Never!

AMANDA: What do you mean Jack?

JACK: Well what about doing something about the War? You know... Sergeant Major... soldiers. ...World War Two!

WARREN: Oh I see! Yes Jack that's a great Idea... Oh it was mine wasn't it? I AM brilliant aren't I? *General moans and head shaking going on.*

AMANDA: Well actually it is a good idea. I think we'd be best to get into groups and write some sketches about different aspects of the War. We'll meet back here again on Tuesday when we've thought of some ideas. Does everyone agree?
General agreement.

LOLA: It doesn't look like Mrs C. is coming after all and it's nearly dinner time come on lets go over.

SIMON: Yes. O. K. We'll see you later.

LOTS OF VOICES: Bye. *All disassemble. Make their way off stage in two's and threes.*

SCENE TWO

Scene opens with broadcast about Germany invading Poland

Amanda is sitting on a stage block at the front reading the script she has a pencil and appears to be making notes. Lisa comes on stage and they start talking quietly obviously discussing the script. Sarah then walks on..

SARAH: What are you two up to?

LISA: We're waiting for the first scene people to turn up. Today is our dress rehearsal but I think they are taking so long to get dressed up that we won't have time to even start soon.

A group of children arrive all dressed up in their costumes.

AMANDA: At last! Hurry up you lot.

ABBIE: We're coming, keep your hair on. It took ages to tie up this pinny!

AMANDA: Right, first scene people take your places and we'll get started.

Children seat themselves on stage and pretend to be busy doing things: cooking, reading the paper, knitting, doing homework.

AMANDA: And... action!

MOTHER: Get on with your homework Jimmy or you'll be in trouble with your teacher.

JIMMY: I don't care and anyway if I'm evacuated he won't know I haven't done it will he?

MAISIE: What's `he vaccinated` Dad?

DAD: EVACUATED, our MAISIE the word's evacuated. It means that the children who are old enough will all go and live in the countryside with some kind families who will look after them. They'll be safer there if war is declared.

MAISIE: What does war mean Mum?

MOTHER: Oh nothing you need worry your little head about sweetheart. You'll know soon enough if it arrives.

DAD: You're wrong there you know our Jimmy.

JIMMY: What are you talking about? I wasn't saying nowt!

DAD: Less of yer cheek young man. I meant that yer wrong about yer teacher not knowing about yer `omework.

JIMMY: How d'yer make that out then Dad?

DAD: Well yer teacher goes with yer lad. Hadn't yer heard?

JIMMY: Yer kiddin' me Dad. PLEASE say that yer kiddin' me?

MOTHER: Sorry lad but yer Dads right. I know its terrible news but Miss Trust'll be coming along and she'll be teaching you at the new school that your'e going to in the country.

JIMMY: Oh no that's the worst news I've had all year.

DAD: Well there's most likely much worse news to come. Germany invaded Poland on Friday and Mr Chamberlain warned Mr Hitler that if he didn't withdraw his troops we would declare war on HIM. In fact the ultimatum time is almost here we'll put the radio on at 11 o clock for the broadcast.

MOTHER: It's not even a year since when Mr. Chamberlain announced `PEACE FOR OUR TIME` after his little chat with HITLER. Well so much for their promises. Politicians don't change do they?

JIMMY: It must be eleven by now. Can we turn the wireless on Dad?

DAD: Go on then lad, just you be careful because that wireless set is the latest thing. It cost me £ 8, which, as you well know, is nearly three weeks wages.

JIMMY: All right, all right, stop fussing this modern stuff is dead easy to understand. Right there you are it's on. I'll just turn up the volume.

All goes quiet as Lisa turns up the volume and they all sit around the wireless with serious expressions whilst they listen to Neville Chamberlain's declaration of war.

AMANDA: Well done every body that's great so far. Remember to look as if you're busy Mother. Your'e still acting even if you're not speaking!

O. K. Lets carry on. ACTION!

MUM: Well there's no time to waste come on everyone let's get the air raid precautions finished. Jimmy, you get the windows taped and Dad can get some fire buckets ready whilst I finish putting up these blackout curtains.

JIMMY: What are all these things for Dad? Is Mum cracking up with the strain?

DAD: No lad its just preparations in case the Germans send over their bombers. If there's a bomb blast the tape will stop flying glass and in case of incendiary bombs the sand in the buckets will put out the fires. The aeroplanes will likely come over at night so we mustn't show even the smallest chink of light or they'll know that we're here and drop something nasty on top of us. And just be careful to remember that if you go out at night, turn all the lights out first.

JIMMY: That's an awful lot to remember Dad!

DAD: You're telling me, my mum and dad were up all last night with me practising these lines. If I'm in another class assembly I shall ask for a smaller part!

JIMMY: Well it looks like I'll be evacuated after all so I'll go and pack my bags. Lets see what on this list I got from school? *(Takes out a grubby piece of paper from his pocket and wipes something revolting off it, down the front of his jumper. He reads the list out aloud. Everyone else looks aghast at the yucky behaviour)* Well there's something seriously wrong here!

MUM: What ever is the matter son?

JIMMY: Well they've forgotten to mention my teddy bear. If they think that I'm leaving him behind, they've got another thing coming!! *(In a sobby voice)* Come on Ted I wouldn't leave you behind to face that nasty Mr. Hitler!

DAD: Well dear I suppose I'd better be packing my bags too. I expect I'll be getting my call up papers any day now.

MOTHER: Your kit bag is in the hall cupboard Dear.

DAD: Thanks I'll go and fetch my kit too. *(Leaves the set with his kit bag.)*

MOTHER: OH dear this is terrible. I'm losing all my family at once. At least dear little Maisie will have to stop here with me. I'd better check to see that all the gas masks are ready and that the Anderson shelter is bailed out.

MAISIE: Why is every one so worried?

An air raid siren is heard and Mother hurries the children away off stage.

SCENE THREE.

Set in the railway station, the children are nearly all on stage and their teacher is fussing around and keeping them in order. James and Colin are teasing Jimmy about his Teddy. They are throwing it to each other and Jimmy is running to and fro' trying to retrieve it.

TEACHER: Now, now children, do quieten down! Goodness, I can't hear myself think. Children, *louder* Children *louder* CHILDREN! *Huge yell.*

There is a sudden silence.

That is better. Now, please continue to be quiet whilst I call the register.

Lola,

LOLA: Yes Miss.

TEACHER: Catherine,

C: Yes Miss.

TEACHER: Victoria,

V: Yes Miss.

TEACHER: Laura,

L: Yes Miss.

TEACHER: Amanda, Sarah,

LAURA: Please Miss, they haven't arrived yet Miss.

TEACHER: Thank you Dear, Simon,

S: Yes Miss,

TEACHER: Colin *Makes a face surreptitiously at Jimmy.*

C: Yes Miss, *in a sickly voice*

TEACHER: James, *Sucking his thumb to tease Jimmy.*

J: Yes Miss, *Nearly caught out by the teacher, she gives him a look.*

TEACHER: Jimmy, Jimmy, JIMMY! Where is that boy?

SIMON: Please Miss, he's over there, I think he's crying.

TEACHER: Oh no, don't say he's homesick already. We haven't even left the station yet! Jimmy, Jimmy. What ever is the matter? Come along, come along we can't have you snivelling already. What will people think? Surely you aren't missing Mum and Dad already you only said goodbye two minutes ago.

JIMMY: Oh no Miss it's those two *points at James and Colin who are laughing at him.* They keep teasing me about my Teddy Miss.

TEACHER: Well put him away just now dear or you'll lose him then you will be sorry. Where can those other children have got to? They'll miss the train if they don't arrive soon.

Sarah and Amanda arrive with Zara (MUM). Mum is fussing.

MUM: Here we are at last, now Amanda have you got your ticket? Did you pack your toothbrush? You will write Darling won't you? Sarah come back here you've got a smudge on your face. That's better. Give Mummy a big hug. I will miss you both. Do look after each other and don't forget to write will you?

SARAH: MU_UM. Please stop fussing, we'll be fine. Honestly!

MUM: Did I remind you to write?

AMANDA: You did!

In the background James and Colin are hiding Jimmy's teddy.

MUM: Ah Miss Trust, there you are, I wonder if you would be so kind as to tell the billeting officer that my girls must have an apple everyday without fail, an apple a day keeps the doctor away and I want my girls to stay healthy even when I'm not there to keep a careful eye on them.

TEACHER: I will try Mrs Fluster but it won't be easy. Everyone will be very busy and anyway apples don't grow on trees you know! At last everyone is here and just in time too. Come along children lets get you all aboard. Don't forget your gas masks. Sit down, sit still Colin. Stop picking your nose Simon. No James don't pull that cord. There goes the whistle.

MUM: Don't forget to write girls.

The train starts and the children lurch back and then forwards. They then jiggle up and down as if on a train.

JIMMY: *lets out a wail.* **Where's my teddy. I want my teddy!**

He leaps up and pulls the communication cord, all the people on the train lurch forward as it breaks suddenly. Jimmy leaps out of the train and run to look for his teddy.

TEACHER: **Jimmy Smith get back on this train. I expect the inspector will be along in a minute to give you a piece of his mind. You naughty boy!**

JIMMY: **I don't care and anyway I don't have any more room.**

TEACHER: **What are you talking about boy?**

JIMMY: **I'm always getting pieces of Mr. M's mind and now I'm full up!**

TEACHER: **Stop being cheeky boy.**

All is fairly quiet for a while and the train carries on its way.

JIMMY: **Please Miss. He is ignored. Miss?**

TEACHER: **Well?**

JIMMY: **Miss I need the lavvy.**

TEACHER: **You were told to go before we set off Smith and anyway you'll have to wait because there isn't one in this carriage.**

Jimmy wriggles around and eventually is crossing his legs obviously feeling very uncomfortable. The train lurches to a halt.

TEACHER: **Thank goodness we're here at last.**

JIMMY: **I'll second that.**

All the children get out of the train. Some of them look to be desperate for the loo. The billeting officer meets them off the train.

BILLETING OFFICER: **Welcome to Little Drinkwater. You'll find it a lovely place to stay.**

JIMMY: **Please Miss can I go to the lavvy?**

TEACHER: Not now Jimmy!

BILLETING OFFICER: Now would anyone like a drink of water before we set out for the village hall?

All shake heads.

JIMMY: I wish she would stop talking about water.

BILLETING OFFICER: **WHAT-A** (*sounds like water*) **sweet little boy! Oh No!**

Everyone turns to look at Jimmy as he has obviously had an unfortunate accident.

JIMMY: I did say you should stop talking about water!

TEACHER: Never mind Dear. Lets be off before we have any more accidents. Come along. *All leave the stage in twos singing Run Rabbit.*

SCENE 4

Lots of children milling about.

AMANDA: Clear the stage then, clear the stage. I can't start with you all getting under my feet. Remember this is an assembly. You're not here to enjoy yourselves. Now please get into position for scene three. Vicky, I don't believe you're supposed to be on stage now, please wait down there. **AAAND ACTION!**

BILLETING OFFICER: Right, line up children. The hosts will now select you. Please try to look appealing.

MRS CARTER-SMYTHE: Good afternoon Prudence. I have come to collect my wards. Now do make sure that you give me well-behaved, good-looking children without glasses. Oh and I do despise pungent children so do make sure they don't smell.

NATALIE: Bad luck Jimmy. Nobody'll pick you smelling like that.

WARREN: Yeah Jimmy. You stink!

ANTHONY: Yeah, Pooooooh.

BILLETING OFFICER: Come along Dear, this could take some time.

Looks at children and finds fault with each one. Say "no" or "definitely" not and point at some of the children.

AUFUR (THE SPIV): *Sidles over to other soldiers, winks and beckons them to follow. Opens one side of his rain coat and says...* 'Ere lads. I managed to lay me 'ands on some fine pieces this morning, straight off the back of a lorry mind. *Winks and nudges on of the soldiers.* Cop a eye full o' these beauties.

HOME GUARD 1: Mind the air raid warden doesn't see you selling them Arfur.

HOME GUARD 2: Yeah, selling on the Black Market's illegal you know.

ARFUR: Black Market! Whatcha talkin' about. Like I said off the back of a lorry.

HOME GUARD 3: Oh, right. *Taps his nose.* I get you.

HOME GUARD 4: How much do you want for that gold one?

ARFUR: Well normally they retail at nine bob a piece but for you...

HOME GUARD 5: Look out Arfur, Air raid warden!

AIR RAID WARDEN: Hey there Arthur. I do hope you're not trying to sell those Black Market watches again. You're setting a bad example to them there young folk.

ARFUR: Me Guvner? You must be joking!

AIR RAID WARDEN: Well then, you won't mind me having a look under that there coat.

ARFUR: Oh no. It's all gone pear shaped. Excuse me boys!

Arfur runs towards the door with the Air Raid Warden in pursuit. Arfur trips over the teddy, which Jimmy has mistakenly left on the floor near the door. The Air Raid Warden grabs him.

AIR RAID WARDEN: It's off down the station with you me lad. Now come quietly.

Arfur is led off muttering to the station (back stage). All the children cheer. Jimmy picks up his teddy.

MRS CARTER-SMYTHER: Why, is that your teddy young man? What's your name?

JIMMY: *Very quietly and pathetically.* Jimmy.

MRS CARTER SMYTHE: Well Jimmy, you are a little hero aren't you. *To the Billeting officer.* I'll have this one Prudence. *To Jimmy.* Come along now Jimmy. They leave. Jimmy turns and sticks his tongue out at Natalie who does the same.