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Cast of Characters

MISS CLARA MAY ABBOTT, Union nurse re-enactor

MEG BARTON, new Union nurse re-enactor; Clara's trainee

MRS. CECILIA DELAUNAY PETTISON, Confederate refugee re-enactor

LUCYGALE SCRUGGS, new Confederate refugee re-enactor; Cecilia's trainee

WIDOW BECKWITH, concessionaire and newsletter publisher for both sides

RANGER WILSON, U.S. Park Ranger, an African-American woman

Place

Shiloh Battlefield Park, West Tennessee.

Acknowledgments

Shiloh Rules was originally developed in workshop at the Intiman Theatre in Seattle, Washington, and as part of the New Work Festival at the Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles, and was presented by New Century Theatre in Northampton, Massachusetts in July 2001.

Shiloh Rules subsequently received its World Premiere as a part of the Southern Writers' Project at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery, Alabama (Kent Thompson, Artistic Director; Alan Harrison, Managing Director) with the following cast and crew:

LUCYGALE SCRUGGS	Kaitlin O'Neal
CLARA MAY ABBOTT	Dawn Didawick
MEG BARTON	Jen Faith Brown
CECILIA PETTISON	Greta Lambert
OFFICER WILSON	Caroline S. Clay
WIDOW BECKWITH	Sonja Lanzener
Director	John D. Dennis
Scenic Designer	Emily Beck
Costume Designer	Kristine Kearney
Lighting Designer	Liz Lee
Composer	Thom Jenkins
Sound Designer	Scott Robertson
Dramaturg	Gwen Orel
Voice & Dialect Coach	J. Colleen Kelly
Stage Managers	Mark D. Leslie, Cheryl Lynn Bauman
Casting	Elissa Myers, C.S.A.; Paul Fouquest, C.S.A.
Casting Associate	Brette Goldstein

SHILOH RULES

by Doris Baizley

ACT I

(Woods. Night. Two separate areas. Action in each: Down in a clearing, LUCYGALE sits in front of a makeshift tent mostly hidden in the bushes. She lights a candle and carefully unfolds a letter. She wears a man's hat, patched dress and worn boots. She reads softly, slowly, making out the difficult handwriting on stained paper.)

LUCYGALE. *My...darling...wife...*

(Up on high-ground, CLARA holds a lantern to inspect two large wooden carrying cases stamped "U.S." and packed with medicine boxes and bandages. CLARA wears a long dress, apron and cloak. She puts on eyeglasses, looks offstage and calls out:)

CLARA. *(Low but urgent:)* Meg... What is keeping you? It's time to begin.

MEG. *(Offstage:)* Coming, Miss Abbott...

(MEG enters with a mouthful of hairpins, fixing her hair.)

CLARA. You hardly look prepared for Inspection.

MEG. I'm prepared, ma'am. I just need a little help with this bun.

(CLARA takes the hairpins; expertly fixes MEG's hair and straightens her cloak.)

LUCYGALE. *I know how anxious you are to hear of us...and I write every spare time...*

CLARA. Now. You will begin, please, your review of the medicines.

MEG. Yes ma'am. Camphor, Box One. Sulfate of Quinine, Box 2. Chloroform, Box 3.

CLARA. Where is the Black Powder?

MEG. *(Under her breath; searching:)* ...black powder...black powder...

LUCYGALE. *Conditions on the march have been dreadful...but our boys remain in Good Spirit...*

CLARA. Make haste, Meg. You won't have such luxury under fire.

MEG. Black powder! Here it is. Box Five.

CLARA. Now the Surgeon's kit.

LUCYGALE. *(Studying the map:) You will see by this map that we are gradually closing in upon the Yanks...*

(MEG begins taking out surgical instruments. She hands each instrument to CLARA to inspect.)

MEG. Scalpel... Tenaculum...

LUCYGALE. *I do not know of General Sherman's program, but I think if any Yankees sleep on the west side of Snake Creek tonight, it will be their last sleep...*

MEG. Gouging forceps... Amputating knife...

LUCYGALE. *I am so tired and dirty I can hardly keep my eyes open...*

CLARA. And—the Bone Saw...?

MEG. *(Lifting the big saw, with dread:) The Bone Saw.*

LUCYGALE. *I hope never again to witness such suffering as I have seen in this past month...but these are not sweet reflections and I'll not write of them...*

CLARA. *(Takes it and inspects it.) There's a stain on the blade. Wipe it clean, please.*

MEG. *(Backing away from it:) Oh lord. That's real blood...*

LUCYGALE. *I pray that God in his Goodness will soon deliver us from this awful condition...*

CLARA. This is no time to turn squeamish, Meg. If you need smelling salts...

MEG. *(Pause; chagrined:) Can't do that, ma'am... I left them back there in the Subaru.*

CLARA. (*Appalled at the word:*) What did you say???

MEG. I left them in the car.

CLARA. You mean “the wagon.”

MEG. Oh. Yes. Sorry. “The wagon.”

CLARA. Remember where you are, Meg. Spies could be anywhere. Every word must be perfect. And every action.

(CLARA holds out the bone saw again. This time MEG takes it and begins cleaning it with her apron.)

LUCYGALE. *May the Giver of Good shelter you safely until we meet again... Your sincere and loving husband...now and forever—*

CECILIA'S VOICE. Miss Scruggs...?

(CECILIA, a pale, thin woman in frayed lace cap and worn silk dress comes out of the tent. She carries knitting. She regards LUCYGALE with alarm.)

CECILIA. LucyGale Scruggs...? What on earth are you doing with my papers?

LUCYGALE. Huh? Oh— Yes. Mrs. Pettison. I was just reading your letter from John. It's so beautiful... I wish my boyfriend would write me like this.

CECILIA. You are *reading*?

LUCYGALE. Well—yeah. Aren't I supposed to?

CECILIA. Didn't you say you started working your pap's farm at six years of age?

LUCYGALE. (*Fast, by rote:*) Yes ma'am, I sure did. 25 acres just down the road apiece. And raised up five little brothers and sisters to boot.

CECILIA. That doesn't leave much time for schooling, does it?

LUCYGALE. No but—

CECILIA. As I recall, there has never been a schoolhouse in this area. There's no sign of one on Mr. Pettison's map.

LUCYGALE. No but—

CECILIA. Yes...?

LUCYGALE. Hell. You're right. I don't how to read.

(LUCYGALE hands the letter back to CECILIA who folds it, tucks it in her waistband, sits, and begins knitting.)

LUCYGALE. I wish I could smoke.

CECILIA. A pipe would be acceptable. I have one of John's in the tent.

LUCYGALE. No tobacco. I bartered it two days ago for apples.

CECILIA. Goodness. You should have told me. I had no idea we were so low on provisions.

LUCYGALE. You didn't bring playing cards, did you?

CECILIA. LucyGale, you know I don't believe in gaming.

LUCYGALE. We wouldn't play for money.

CECILIA. Even so, the very idea of Chance fills me with dread. My father, the late Mr. DeLaunay, lost his entire fortune at the tables in Charleston. Our family was ruined. If it hadn't been for John...Mr. Pettison, I mean to say...Lieutenant Pettison... Look here. Isn't he handsome?

(She takes out a locket, opens it, and shows LUCYGALE.)

LUCYGALE. That's him?

CECILIA. The pride in those eyes...

LUCYGALE. But I mean, is this—*really* him?

CECILIA. *(A strange look.)* Well of course it is. This is a lock of his hair. And see what he inscribed?

LUCYGALE. Uh... No, ma'am. I'm sure it'd be just fine...*if I knew how to read it.*

CECILIA. I'm not sure I like that tone, LucyGale...

LUCYGALE. Sorry ma'am. It's just—there's not a whole lot for a Female Refugee to *do*, is there? I don't mind the hiking so much, but this waiting is creepy.

CECILIA. Why don't you knit? Our gentlemen have expressed a great need for socks.

LUCYGALE. I'm too jumpy to knit. I can't stop thinking about all the dead men.

CECILIA. Reign in those thoughts, dear. It takes some effort, but you'll learn.

LUCYGALE. I mean it, Mrs. Pettison. I've never slept out before. And this place is all so dark and quiet...

CECILIA. Blessedly so to my mind... If you've studied your Old Testament, you'll remember that "Shiloh" is the old Hebrew word for "place of peace."

LUCYGALE. If you say so... *I just wish this danged war would start!*

CECILIA. For shame LucyGale. That is nothing for a Southern girl to wish for.

LUCYGALE. Anything's better than this. At least those Northern girls have a job to do.

CECILIA. Miss Scruggs, I hope I never hear you say that again. Their work is the lowest kind of labor. You'll find out soon enough—Yankees thrive on bloodiness. There is no limit to their violent ambition. And let me tell you, LucyGale...the women are as heartless and thick-skinned as the men. They pride themselves on their Mannishness—with their raucous voices—their enormous feet and ridiculous eyeglasses— *(Suddenly:)* Hush! Put that out. Be still.

(LUCYGALE puts out the candle, ducks down. An owl hoots.)

LUCYGALE. What's that? Has it started? Is it Federals???

CECILIA. No dear. Just an old hooty owl. That's a very good sign. He's telling us mice are plentiful which means crops in the field. We'll be able to eat without bartering off all our goods.

LUCYGALE. *(In awe, almost out of character:)* You're good at this.

CECILIA. LucyGale my darlin, you are soon to discover that your own Mrs. Cecilia DeLaunay Pettison is the absolute B-E-S-T. That spells BEST. And tomorrow a certain scheming Yankee nurse will learn it too. The “Angel of Antietam,” my Aunt Fanny.

LUCYGALE. Hey, Mrs. Pettison... You want me to shoot her for you? I brought my Colt pistol and I don't mind using it.

CECILIA. Well I declare... Thank you kindly, dear. But that won't stop Clara May Abbott.

LUCYGALE. Why not? She's gotta fall down like everybody else, don't she?

CECILIA. (*Sudden; harsh:*) Do you consider this some sort of *game*, LucyGale?

LUCYGALE. No—well, yes—I mean—it is kinda—isn't it?

(*CECILIA seizes LUCYGALE's hand, puts it on her heart.*)

CECILIA. Is this not a true heart beating? (*Presses LUCYGALE's hand on the ground.*) Can you tell me this ground is *false*? And that moon? And those stars...? What we are living is the truth, LucyGale. And no man or woman on earth can say otherwise. Let those Yankees run themselves ragged with their plots and ploys. Our strength of character will show them for the Pretenders they are, and break them like dry twigs for our campfire.

LUCYGALE. So we get to win this time?

CECILIA. “To the Pure in Heart go the Laurels” as Mr. DeLaunay used to say.

LUCYGALE. And to hell with Yankee bitches! as Granpap used to say. Or is “bitch” time-period incorrect?

CECILIA. (*Lightening up:*) Oh no, dear, that word is quite ancient. I believe you will find it in Homer's Iliad Book 19...in reference to a certain Miss Helen of Troy.

LUCYGALE. You really are good.

CECILIA. Why don't you try to sleep? I'll stay watch.

LUCYGALE. You want my Colt?

CECILIA. That's alright. (*Takes out her revolver.*) I've got my Remington.

LUCYGALE. God almighty! That's a .44.

CECILIA. Don't be frightened. I am quite a true shot. And a remarkably cool one, according to Lieutenant Pettison. Go to sleep now, LucyGale... Put your mind on those lovely old stars up there, shining down forever with the same calm light. That is peace, child. That is precious precious peace...

(*LUCYGALE goes in the tent. CECILIA sits watch, holding her Remington.*)

CLARA'S VOICE. *Look at all this gangrene.*

(*At the medicine cases. MEG sits wrapping bandages as CLARA shows her an old medical journal.*)

CLARA. Do you see this? Not one of these wounds has healed properly because they were given time to fester. Damaged tissue, foreign matter, and bone fragments must be excised immediately and the wounds dressed as quickly as possible. Cotton lint for dry dressings, water-soaked cloth for wet dressings...

MEG. But that's all wrong for infection. The water can't be clean and the moisture would be a breeding ground for bacteria—

CLARA. "Bacteria"—? What a queer word, Meg. Is that foreign?

MEG. Oh. I get it...

CLARA. Where did you study? Your Impression, Meg.

MEG. Oh. Yes. My Background Biography: I attended the Concord Seminary for Young Ladies, class of 1861. I won the special blue ribbon for—Latin Translation and Penmanship.

CLARA. Very good. And your parents?

MEG. They had no education, ma'am. My father was an iron monger in Boston. I was the first girl in my family to be sent away to school. And when the call went out for the Soldiers' Aid Society, I was in the first rank of students to volunteer.

CLARA. Wonderful. I had much the same experience. Only my parents forbad it. I found it necessary to leave home by stealth. (*Loving*

every word:) Dark-of-the-moon August... Midnight by the clock... I packed my few worldly goods in a small brown satchel, crept down the stairs, unlocked the front door, and departed. Imagine the sensation of it. A poor spinster, getting on in years, traveling unescorted by rail—speeding through the dark of night to join an army of thousands fighting for a Cause—a Belief—an Idea of Freedom and Liberation! It was...

MEG. Awesome...

CLARA. The better word might be—Thrilling.

MEG. Yes of course. “Thrilling.”

CLARA. But for the suffering of the men, it was a dream come true.

MEG. Miss Abbott...about that suffering...

CLARA. The curses, the screams, the blood, the stench...

MEG. It’s not really going to be—you know—like that?

CLARA. This is Shiloh, Meg. I told you in training: you must be prepared for anything. Our Southern foe is relentless. The women especially. Cecilia Pettison in particular.

MEG. But they’re just refugees. They’re not even allowed to be nurses.

CLARA. Mrs. Pettison can slaughter and butcher a hog without staining the lace on her gloves. Her authenticity runs deep. But we’re going to show her ours runs deeper. We are fearless in our dedication to the Cause, are we not?

MEG. Yes indeed, Miss Abbott. I know all about the Cause. I believe in it, too.

CLARA. But are you prepared for battle? Will you maintain your Impression under attack? In the face of hostile civilians and leering onlookers? And...if worse comes to worse...under fire on the field... Would you be willing to *cauterize a wound with gunpowder*?

MEG. But you can’t really do that, can you? It’s rule number three on the Medical Re-enactor’s NEVER list.

CLARA. War is a cruel teacher, Meg.

MEG. No. I mean—*really*. Have you *really* done that?

CLARA. War is a *very* cruel teacher.

MEG. Oh Clara, please tell me! I promise I won't tell anyone.

CLARA. (*Looking around: hushed, but eager:*) Remember Joe Krieger? You met him on the way down—with the Second Vermont Volunteers.

MEG. The redhead from Harvard at Wendy's?

CLARA. That's him. He was in the 10th New York Infantry at Antietam last year. I was there when he fell and gashed his ankle on his bayonet. He could see I had the gunpowder in my cart. We waited til the doctors weren't looking, and— You really can't tell this part—

MEG. Don't tell me... You knocked him out with chloroform.

CLARA. Not entirely. Just a few drops on my handkerchief. It still hurt like hell.

MEG. And it worked? The wound healed?

CLARA. It's a beauty. The scar makes a straight black line with a little zigzag. Like a thunderbolt. He only shows it to Hardcores. But if you succeed here, you can ask him.

MEG. Clara... Is that how you won the title "Angel of Antietam"?

CLARA. I wouldn't say that exactly. It was more in the nature of—a medical experiment.

MEG. "Best Female Re-enactor of the Year." I saw that picture of you in the newsletter with a wounded soldier.

CLARA. (*Stern; back in character:*) There was no shortage of wounded soldiers at Antietam.

MEG. It was him, wasn't it? They said your Impression of a Field Nurse in action was so realistic people could actually smell the blood and burning flesh...

CLARA. Well of course. I take that as a compliment.

MEG. But this time we play it fair and square, right?

CLARA. Remember where you are, Meg. This time we play by *Shiloh Rules*.

MEG. I didn't know there was such a thing.

CLARA. *(Ominously:)* There wasn't.

MEG. *(Pause; looking around:)* Clara... Do you ever get the feeling you can see them...?

CLARA. Who Meg?

MEG. The men. You know. The ones who were here—the first time.

CLARA. *(With feeling:)* I would give anything for that.

(Suddenly: the sound of a car approaching. Headlights sweep across the area.)

CLARA. Wagons! Hide.

(Voice on a bullhorn is heard.)

RANGER WILSON'S VOICE. *(Offstage:)* THE PARK IS CLOSED. I repeat: THE PARK IS CLOSED.

(CLARA helps MEG carry off the medicine case. LUCYGALE and CECILIA go into the tent. There's a beam of light from a flashlight as RANGER WILSON enters in Park Service uniform, speaking on the bullhorn.)

RANGER WILSON. Registration and Weapons Inspection for the 144th Battle of Shiloh will begin at eight a.m. at the Visitors' Center. Any Re-enactors or Spectators entering the park prior to that time will have their weekend permits revoked. This property is owned by the US Park Service. Any person in possession of firearms and/or explosives of any type, alcohol and/or illegal substances of any type will be found in violation of FEDERAL law and will be charged before a FEDERAL court.

(She turns off the bullhorn. Looks around the clearing.)

RANGER WILSON. Yanks and Rebs. This means you. Both sides.

(She clips the bullhorn onto her tool belt and scans the clearing with her flashlight; then clicks on her radio phone.)

RANGER WILSON. HQ. Wilson here. Southwest 7's all clear. Quiet anyway...

(She clicks off the radio. Starts to go. Stops as sees the locket on the ground. Picks it up and opens it. A lock of hair comes out on her hand.)

RANGER WILSON. Oh Jeez... Oh man... This is real.

(She wipes hair off her hand; looks closer at the locket; reads:)

“Forget me not.”

(Pause; a touch of venom:)

Don't worry, Johnny Reb. They haven't.

(She tosses the locket aside.)

This is worse than a full moon. Woods full of crazies...

(Clicks on the radio.)

Hey Jamie? Next time there's a Civil War here, schedule me off-duty, ok? I hate this shit.

(Clicks off the radio and gets up, wipes the hair off her hands like it's poison, and exits.)

CECILIA'S VOICE. *(From the tent:)* Where's the locket? Did she take it?

LUCYGALE'S VOICE. I can't tell. I'm going to look—

(LUCYGALE comes out of the tent and looks around.)

It's too dark. I can't see anything—

(Suddenly: a crash, then a voice from the bushes.)

WIDOW BECKWITH'S VOICE. Damn shit HELL...

LUCYGALE. Who goes there?

(LUCYGALE points her Colt at the bushes.)

WIDOW BECKWITH'S VOICE. Are the cops gone?

LUCYGALE. I said WHO GOES THERE???

WIDOW BECKWITH. Who the hell goes THERE?

(WIDOW BECKWITH *peeks, then crawls cautiously out of the bushes: a big woman in Stetson hat, long skirt, tennis shoes and nylon ski parka. She pushes LucyGale's gun away from her face.*)

You must be new at this. (*Stern:*) We don't bring out our firearms until the event starts.

LUCYGALE. Oh. Sorry, ma'am.

WIDOW BECKWITH. And you are?

LUCYGALE. My name is LucyGale Scruggs.

WIDOW BECKWITH. That's kinda heavy-handed, don't you think...?

LUCYGALE. Huh?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Never mind. What unit are you with?

LUCYGALE. I'm a Confederate.

WIDOW BECKWITH. No kidding. And I asked—WHICH OUTFIT. The 8th Alabama—52nd Tennessee—First Louisiana—?

LUCYGALE. I'm a civilian refugee traveling with Mrs. Cecilia Pettison to find shelter. I was born and raised on my pap's farm down the road apiece and raised up seven little brothers and sisters to boot.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Calm down, honey. You can save your Cracker Impression for the Event. Nice hat though. Now tell me, which way did that cop go?

LUCYGALE. I do not know of what you are referring to, ma'am.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh lighten up, the event hasn't started yet. Just tell me if that park ranger's gone. I got a load of contraband to stash here. Hold this.

(*She hands LUCYGALE a bright Coleman Lamp, then takes out a Bowie knife, hacks her way into the bushes and pulls out a heavily loaded luggage carrier strapped together with bungee cords. She unpacks an ice cooler, a laptop computer and aluminum folding chair.*)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Where's Cecilia? I got some great stuff to sell her.

LUCYGALE. Mrs. Pettison does not wish to be disturbed.

WIDOW BECKWITH. She's hiding from the cops too, right? Or is she planning a secret attack on Miss Clara May Abbott...?

CECILIA'S VOICE. LucyGale? LucyGale, come back here this instant.

(LUCYGALE ducks into the camouflaged tent.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Hey Cecilia, the coast is clear! Come on out. I got a great excavated canteen to show you. Late '61. Iron stopper still intact. Forty-two bucks, as is...?

(No answer from the tent.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Ok, how about five bucks for some inside information on Miss Abbott's location?

RANGER WILSON'S VOICE. Ok. Hold it right there.

(BECKWITH freezes, hands up. WILSON enters behind her.)

RANGER WILSON. Do you know what time it is?

WIDOW BECKWITH. *(Turning to look:)* Oh jeez. You scared a lung outta me, officer...

RANGER WILSON. Stay there. Are you aware of the time?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh. You mean like—what year? Well now, that's a very interesting question, see—

RANGER WILSON. IT'S FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING. The park has been closed since sunset and will remain closed until Registration at eight am. Don't tell me you didn't hear the announcement.

(She starts writing a ticket.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh no, that's ok, see, I'm pre-registered. I'm on the Authenticity Committee. And I gotta tell you, we are just so grateful to you folks at the Park Service for letting us use the actual grounds for our Event this year. It means so much—

(Sees the ticket.)

Misdemeanor Trespassing—60 bucks???

RANGER WILSON. That's just your first offense.

(She looks at the buck-knife and writes a new ticket.)

Violation number two is possession of an edged weapon, unsheathed, on Federal Property.

(She looks at the cut branch and writes another ticket.)

Violation number three is Destruction of Federal Property...

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh come on, that's not property, that's weeds.

RANGER WILSON. Resisting the Citation will be violation number four.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Hey now. This is UNFAIR.

RANGER WILSON. Don't make me call out my Doberman.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Ok, ok, but look... Here's my Vendor's Permit all fair and square. And my committee card. See? They can't hold an Event like this without me.

(She gives card to WILSON. WILSON reads it with her flashlight.)

RANGER WILSON. "The Widow Beckwith"—?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Professional name. It's Buckie when I'm off duty. Buckie Beckwith: Living Historian. Cookhouse Provider, Newsletter Publisher, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Authenticity Committee.

RANGER WILSON. Yank or Reb?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh no, ma'am. I'm not playing in this—just profiteering. I run the cookhouse, write the newsletter, sell artifacts. Strictly legal. Nothing dug up or removed from the field.

RANGER WILSON. Better not be. I've arrested my share of yahoos out here trying to dig up all kinds of "The South Shall Rise Again" souvenirs.

WIDOW BECKWITH. The South lost here, ma'am.

RANGER WILSON. You know what I mean.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Both sides. Twenty-three thousand men did not rise again from Shiloh.

RANGER WILSON. Yeah. I've read the markers.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Well, the Widow Beckwith don't take sides, ok? She's just here to make a good ole' US greenback and keep things authentic.

RANGER WILSON. (*Checking out the coolers:*) You call this stuff authentic?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh no. This here's my contraband. I can't keep any of this stuff within sight of the battlefield. It's all Authentic over there—the Cookhouse and all.

RANGER WILSON. So these are your real supplies.

WIDOW BECKWITH. No no no. 1862 is *Real*. The Reenactment Event is *Authentic*. This stuff is *Modern*.

RANGER WILSON. You got any modern beer in that cooler?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Plenty. You want one? (*Opens the cooler.*) Take your pick.

RANGER WILSON. That's Federal Violation number five. Before I permanently revoke your permit I suggest you leave the grounds.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh come on, hon. You know this is all gonna be legal in a few hours.

RANGER WILSON. It's *Ranger* Wilson. And you know the rules.

WIDOW BECKWITH. That's right. I'm a professional. Getting here early is my job. I play by the rules. Hell, I *make* the rules. Anybody in the event can tell you. (*Calling to the tent:*) Cecilia? LucyGale? Help me out here. Come on guys. This'll count for your side...

RANGER WILSON. I thought you didn't take sides.

WIDOW BECKWITH. I'm telling you. They were just here.

RANGER WILSON. Who was just here?

(WILSON flashes light in bushes. The tent is gone.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Damn... She is good...

RANGER WILSON. You better start packing.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Alright. But I'm going to challenge this—

RANGER WILSON. Hold it, Widow Beckwith... What is this?

(WILSON picks up a filthy, corroded carcass of a canteen, encrusted with rust, dirt and strips of rotting fabric.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. That would be a canteen, ma'am. U.S.A. or C.S.A., I can't rightly tell...

RANGER WILSON. You are under arrest, Ms. Beckwith. Removing protected historical artifacts from a national military park is a felony offense. You are coming with me to headquarters.

(BECKWITH starts, then stops. A new idea forming.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Whoa now... Wait up there, officer... This is truly an amazing moment...because that is EXACTLY the impression we intended! What you have right there is a one hundred percent Authentic Civil War Era Reproduction—time-period correct in every detail. You don't want to know half the work that goes into a product like that. It's gotta be chemically treated, hammered, shot at, peed on, and all manner of elaborate hooah. Check out the catalogue on my web site. I got a waiting list for these items.

RANGER WILSON. Disgusting. People pay money for this...

WIDOW BECKWITH. Yes ma'am. Authenticity takes a lot of work.

(Suddenly: commotion in bushes. MEG runs to RANGER WILSON.)

MEG. (Breathless:) Oh my god thank god— I mean goodness—harken—prithree—shit—HELP. You have to help— There's a dog out there! Big head—all these teeth—and he's circling my friend!

RANGER WILSON. Damn. It's Emma. How did she get out?

MEG. PLEASE—she's circling my friend!

RANGER WILSON. She won't bite. As long as your friend doesn't run. But the park is closed.

MEG. We're not in the park. We're across the road—over by that lake.

RANGER WILSON. Bloody Pond?

MEG. I don't know what it's called—!

RANGER WILSON. I'll take care of it. You stay here. *(To BECKWITH:)* And you—START PACKING.

(She hands BECKWITH the last ticket and leaves. MEG is shaking.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. You ok, honey?

MEG. Yes no I don't know. All of a sudden there was this dog. They can't do that, can they? The Park Guards? Just let their dogs run loose? I know this is The South and all...but holy god... I'm still shaking. You know what it's like to run in these clothes?

WIDOW BECKWITH. I try not to. Calm down, honey. Take a load off and loosen up that corset. There's nobody here but us and the boys—and they won't be looking.

MEG. Boys??? WHAT boys?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Dead ones. Don't worry. They won't tell on you.

MEG. What? WHERE?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Just about everywhere you're walking. This here was the original trench area for the Unknowns of both sides. You want something to drink? I've got Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite...

MEG. What?

(Looks longingly at drinks, then stops.)

Oh. No. No Thank You, ma'am.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Well then, let's see... How about an Authentic Infusion of Sasparilly Root in Sody Water? *(Shows an old brown*

bottle.) This here makes a damn fine tonic to settle a young lady's nerves.

MEG. (*Prim:*) Oh. Well. Yes. That's better. Thank you very much.

(*BECKWITH pours drink into a tin cup and gives it to MEG.*)

WIDOW BECKWITH. I take it you're a Yankee.

MEG. Yes ma'am. Margaret Barton in training with Clara May Abbott of the Massachusetts Soldier's Aid Society.

WIDOW BECKWITH. (*Suspicious:*) Clara's out here awful early... Cecilia better watch out...

MEG. Are you—in this?

WIDOW BECKWITH. You might say that. At the moment I seem to be a prisoner of the Federals.

MEG. So you're—a Confederate?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Hey now, The Widow Beckwith is strictly Neutral Territory. But a Yankee gal could be a great help in my current situation...

MEG. Oh my lord—The Widow Beckwith! I know who you are. I've read all your newsletters! How can I help?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Well see, I'm in a little trouble with Ranger Wilson. She's got me on enough charges to get me kicked out of Shiloh for good. And if I get busted here, it'll count for Vicksburg, Gettysburg and the entire summer campaign which is my entire livelihood.

MEG. I don't see what that has to do with me.

WIDOW BECKWITH. You cannot let her remove us from these grounds. If we can be removed from here, we can be removed from our history and cut off from our own past. This is our SACRED GROUND, Miss Barton. Will you stand with me to defend it?

MEG. You may count on me, ma'am.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Good.

(*Takes the cup from MEG.*)

The drink is two bucks fifty. I'll start your tab.

(WILSON comes on, supporting CLARA who limps, stoically.)

CLARA. You may release me, Ranger. I'm quite capable—

RANGER WILSON. It's required by law. As long as you're on Park property—

MEG. CLARA? Oh Clara are you alright? Did that dog bite you?

CLARA. It's nothing. A sprain at the most.

RANGER WILSON. Let's not get excited. Miss Abbott just took a little spill back there. Help me get her in the Jeep. We'll take her up to headquarters and get some ice on that ankle.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Wait up. I've got ice in the cooler...

CLARA. No. No ice.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh come on, Clara. The event hasn't started yet.

CLARA. (*In full character:*) I see no "ice-house" hereabouts, do you Miss Barton?

MEG. No, Miss Abbott. I do not.

(CLARA seats herself firmly on the stone block.)

CLARA. Fetch me a bandage, Meg.

MEG. But they're all in the boxes.

CLARA. We have petticoats, have we not?

MEG. Yes ma'am!

(MEG rips a strip from her petticoat; begins binding CLARA's ankle.)

RANGER WILSON. Very nice. But you can play your little drama up at the Visitors Center.

WIDOW BECKWITH. No they can't. No such thing as a Visitors' Center in 1862. The state of mind they're in right now they can't even *see* that kinda stuff.

RANGER WILSON. They better see me writing them a ticket for Trespassing on Federal Property.

(MEG looks up from bandaging. Rises to show off in full character:)

MEG. Excuse me, Ranger Wilson...but Duty has called us to this stricken land. Not to Trespass, but to Liberate.

RANGER WILSON. Listen here, Miss—

MEG. Meg—

RANGER WILSON. Meg, honey, there are rules.

MEG. *(Looking to BECKWITH for affirmation:)* I know that. And we are here for the flag that made those rules and made this ground, this land, this country *free*.

(To WILSON:)

Surely you must understand that, Office—you as a—uh...

CLARA. That's enough, Meg...

RANGER WILSON. No. Let her go. As a What, Meg? What am I? I can't wait to hear this. What do you see me as?

MEG. A defender of the Union, just like us! The patch on your shoulder says U.S. just like our medicine cases. I understand how you might feel if we were on the *other* side—if we were here to help some band of rebels who wanted this to be their country so we'd need passports to be here and you'd be— *(Stops.)* Well. You know.

RANGER WILSON. I'd be in chains, right. That's what you're saying? If it wasn't for YOU, I'd be in CHAINS...?

WIDOW BECKWITH. No. Hell no! We're not here to get into all this. Rule Number One for all these Events is "LEAVE YOUR POLITICS AT THE DOOR." The slavery part's got nothing to do with this deal.

RANGER WILSON. Oh really...? The Civil War's got nothing to do with slavery? Now that is very interesting—acting out the Civil War, saying the “SLAVERY PART” doesn't matter...?

(To MEG:)

And you're telling me you got every right in the world to come down here and do whatever you want because you “raised me up out of chains” and “made me what I am.” And you're the GOOD GUYS. I don't even want to think about the OTHER side.

(Takes out ticket pad.)

I need your names, addresses, and ID's right now.

MEG. I am Meg Barton, Concord Massachusetts, daughter of Susanna and Ezekiel—

RANGER WILSON. Your MODERN ID's. And I know you've got 'em because one of you has a big blue SUV with Budget rental tags illegally parked in the fire road—and she's going to move it A.S.A.P. Do you read me?

(MEG looks at CLARA who registers nothing.)

CLARA. We should not have left our supplies unattended.

RANGER WILSON. I'm talking about the 2008 SUBARU, ladies. Move it out of the park now or you will lose your weekend permits.

MEG. *(Desperate, torn:)* Clara—?

CLARA. *(Closing her eyes, mortally ashamed:)* My right apron pocket.

(MEG reaches into Clara's pocket and takes out a set of car keys.)

MEG. *(To WILSON, under her breath:)* I'll move it.

(She runs off. WILSON paces, looking out over the battlefield.)

RANGER WILSON. Man, I can't wait til this assignment is over...I thought Valley Forge was weird, but Shiloh takes the cake.

WIDOW BECKWITH. You got that right. I've never seen a Battle of Shiloh that didn't get screwed up one way or another.

RANGER WILSON. So why keep fighting it? We have enough civil war going on without you adding to it.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Yeah, but in this one they only fire blanks.

RANGER WILSON. Doesn't matter if the hate's the same.

CLARA. We're not here for hate. Our duty is to heal.

RANGER WILSON. You think so, Miss Abbott? Come out here on patrol some night and find yourself face to face with a monument to Nathan Bedford Forrest, hero at Shiloh and founder of the KKK. Collect the mementos they leave in his honor—pick up all those little flags—read the graffiti. I'd like to know what you've got to heal that.

(Pause, then suddenly:)

CLARA. *(Ice cold, ramrod stiff:)* I know who set that dog loose.

WIDOW BECKWITH. What Clara?

CLARA. I know who did it.

RANGER WILSON. Robert E. Lee, right? Let me call up my posse to hunt him down.

CLARA. It was Mrs. Pettison. She set that dog loose to scare us away.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Cecilia wouldn't do that—

CLARA. CECILIA PETTISON...? There is nothing she wouldn't do.

RANGER WILSON. Oh great. There's ANOTHER one of you out here?

CLARA. Cecilia Pettison is NOT one of us.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Yeah. She's not one of anybody.

(To WILSON:)

You think we're weird, Cecilia Pettison is a true mystery. Nobody knows who she is. First reports had her as an executive secretary in Atlanta. But the Texas Rifles in Dallas swear she's a sales clerk for Neiman Marcus.

CLARA. I was certain she taught school in Richmond.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Yeah. And I thought she came from here. But nobody's ever gotten hold of her driver's license. Nobody's ever seen her arrive or depart from an Event in a modern vehicle.

CLARA. She's always on foot. With her refugee bundles.

WIDOW BECKWITH. In the chat rooms they're saying she's a ghost.

RANGER WILSON. I'll bet she's homeless. Wandering event to event.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Could be. All I know is Modern doesn't exist for her.

RANGER WILSON. So she's some kind of nut case, thinks she's living in 1862?

CLARA. No. She's been there.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Hell, Clara, you've been there.

CLARA. No I haven't... I can act There. I can believe There. But I can't say I've actually *been* there. Cecilia may not win prizes. But she's—been There.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Jeez, Clara...

CLARA. (*With awe:*) Maybe I'll get There someday...but Cecilia...

(*Suddenly: scuffling in the bushes.*)

LUCYGALE'S VOICE. HEY GIRL, LET ME GO! Get off me. Quit it!

(*MEG enters, dragging on LUCYGALE.*)

MEG. Look, Clara! Ranger Wilson! LOOK WHO I FOUND sneaking up on our supplies!

LUCYGALE. I was not. UNHOLD ME, BITCH!

MEG. "*Unhold me bitch???*"

RANGER WILSON. Hey hey, knock it off...

LUCYGALE. I can say "bitch!" It's ancient.

RANGER WILSON. *(To LUCYGALE:)* Your ID, please.

LUCYGALE. My what???

MEG. *(To CLARA:)* This is her, right Clara? Confederate refugee—patchwork dress—hillbilly hat—

LUCYGALE. “HILLBILLY” —???

CLARA. Meg. That is not Mrs. Pettison.

LUCYGALE. *(To BECKWITH:)* You’re gonna let her get away with “HILLBILLY”? That is totally Modern.

MEG. Oh yeah? How about you being in possession of a pack of Marlboro Lights and a Polaroid 600 *WITHIN SIGHT* of the battlefield? That breaks every rule in the book!

LUCYGALE. I saw you with *CAR KEYS!*

CLARA. Damn it to hell!

(CLARA leaps to her feet, but her ankle gives. She yelps in pain and crumples to the ground.)

(As everyone rushes to CLARA, CECILIA appears from the woods, all quiet dignity. She looks down at CLARA on her hands and knees.)

CECILIA. Miss Abbott.

CLARA. Mrs. Pettison.

(CECILIA extends a hand to CLARA.)

CECILIA. Let me help.

CLARA. I require no assistance.

CECILIA. As you wish.

(Turns and heads directly for WILSON.)

I have a report to make, Officer.

RANGER WILSON. You and me both. I need your name, current address and driver’s license.

CECILIA. My name is Cecilia deLaunay Pettison. I have lost a very precious piece of jewelry. I don't believe there was any foul play—

CLARA. There's been foul play alright. What about THE DOG?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Save it, Clara...

RANGER WILSON. Yeah. You can all save it for court.

(Back to CECILIA:)

Your address, please.

CECILIA. I have no home.

(A dark look at CLARA and MEG.)

...ever since *they* came down here.

RANGER WILSON. *(Writing:)* Uh huh. And your driver's license?

CECILIA. I beg your pardon?

RANGER WILSON. *(Over-enunciating:)* Do you have any form of current IDENTIFICATION?

CECILIA. Officer, I have nothing. The locket I've lost was my last family possession.

CLARA. *(To WILSON:)* Don't believe a word of this.

CECILIA. *(Turning on CLARA:)* Are you saying you know more about my family than I do?

(To WILSON:)

Where is the locket?

WIDOW BECKWITH. She's good huh? I told you.

LUCYGALE. Don't make fun. She's not kidding.

WIDOW BECKWITH. I know. That's what makes her so good!

RANGER WILSON. STOP IT. All of you—

CECILIA. But the locket—

RANGER WILSON. You can come back and look for it *when the park is open*. Right now we are lifting up those hoop skirts...

CECILIA. This is not a hoop skirt.

RANGER WILSON. Whatever they are, you're gonna hike 'em up, and stuff 'em in the Jeep—while I write you up for Trespassing.

CECILIA. Oh they aren't just trespassing, officer. They **INVADED** us.

RANGER WILSON. That will certainly go into my report.

CECILIA. They came down here to seize our land for their profit—to use our boys as target practice for their new war weapons—

(At CLARA:)

—not to mention their “medical experiments.”

MEG. That's not true! She has never—

CLARA. Be quiet, Meg.

(To CECILIA:)

Miss Barton does not know what you are talking about.

CECILIA. Then perhaps Miss Barton doesn't belong here.

RANGER WILSON. That's right. Nobody belongs here til eight.

CECILIA. (*Fixed on MEG;*) She has no idea. “Meg” is it? “Meg”—how perfect. All cosy and tucked in, up there in the North... Reading her Little Women... Weeping with Jo and Beth and Amy about not having good enough Christmas presents cause Papa's down south *kill-ing* the men in my family from Georgia and Virginia and Carolina and Tennessee...

WIDOW BECKWITH. Politics at the door, Ceece...

CECILIA. I don't see any door. Does she know what it's like to have an entire branch of her family **VANISH**? Their houses burned to the ground, and everything they worked for—

RANGER WILSON. “Gone with the wind...”?

LUCYGALE. You think that's funny???

RANGER WILSON. Well—to tell you the truth, when I consider the side your men fought for, I don't really give a—

CECILIA. *I was born here.* I didn't have any choice about that. Does that mean I can't care for them? Love them? Mourn for them? They can laugh all they like up in Massachusetts. We were born here. We belong right here on this spot more than any one of them.

CLARA. What hogwash. You lost the right to this ground when you turned against your own government—a nation based on law and human rights. And it took our blood to defend it. The blood of thousands of men and boys—the 12th Michigan and the 3rd Iowa and the 16th Wisconsin—willing to die here because they believe freedom and liberty and justice for all Americans is more important than their own precious lives.

CECILIA. Pretty words to dress up Northern Aggression and Greed.

LUCYGALE. Sounds more like the pledge of allegiance to me.

CLARA. *And you don't believe in that?*

(To RANGER WILSON:)

They're the ones you should ask to leave. They should be ashamed to be standing on this ground next to you.

RANGER WILSON. I'll decide that for myself, Miss Abbott.

LUCYGALE. Damn straight! They're not here for freedom for anybody, they're just out to win themselves another title.

MEG. And we deserve it. We're not playing some overdone, backwoods, Red State cliché.

LUCYGALE. *Louisa May Alcott and Clara Barton?* You think that's so original???

MEG. It's Clara May Abbott and Meg Barton.

LUCYGALE. Same deal. Little Women meets The Biography Channel. You didn't have to leave *Blockbuster* to do your research.

MEG. In that cheesy patchwork dress?

(Ugly Southern accent:)

You didn't have to leave *K-Mart*!

WIDOW BECKWITH. Ooo. Score one for the Blue Team!

LUCYGALE. Hey girl, I hand pieced and quilted this dress myself, and dyed it outta homemade berry juice and madder root. I'm authentic down to my drawers!

MEG. Bet you didn't leave your crotch seam open.

LUCYGALE. Bet I did. Southern girls gotta pee just the same as Yanks.

CECILIA. LucyGale!

LUCYGALE. (*Lifting her blouse:*) AND I made my corset from a genuine Paris Pattern!

MEG. That's nothing. Mine's real whale bone and sail cloth—Nantucket 1858. And I can prove it. Unlace me, Widow B.!

RANGER WILSON. (*With ticket pad:*) Go ahead. I'll just add Indecent Exposure to the list.

CLARA. MEG, stop this!

(To WILSON:)

Forgive her, Ranger Wilson. We're all a bit excitable tonight.

CECILIA. (*To WILSON:*) When are they ever any different? This is nothing but a GAME for them.

RANGER WILSON. This is a game for all of you and it's gonna stop now. You are all in violation of Federal Law and you're coming with me to headquarters. Let's go!

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh come on, don't you want to see them fight the Civil War naked?

RANGER WILSON. I don't care if they fight it ass-backwards, as long as they remember who won.

LUCYGALE. Oh we haven't started to fight yet, that's the good part. Wait'll you see me with Hardee's Raiders!

CECILIA. LucyGale. I have told you, fighting is not permitted.

LUCYGALE. Yeah, but—

RANGER WILSON. Fighting's not PERMITTED? In the Civil WAR?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Our committee ruled against women in the ranks.

CLARA. Massachusetts didn't. We're open to soldiers of every age, race and gender.

MEG. You should join us, Ranger Wilson. You'd be great in our outfit. You can wear a Real uniform with us.

RANGER WILSON. I've got a real uniform and I'm using it. What you ladies need is a real LIFE.

MEG. No! I mean a *Real* real uniform. Join the 54th Massachusetts, march with the blue troops, and see what it was like to be putting your life on the line with your people—for your people.

RANGER WILSON. Like those guys in Glory...?

MEG. Yes!

RANGER WILSON. Well, you get Denzel on your team, I'm with you.

MEG. No. I mean it.

RANGER WILSON. Listen Meg, I don't play. Being me is no hobby. Maybe you people get a kick out of dressing up and coming down here and freeing the slaves on Saturday afternoons, but I don't.

MEG. But there are African-American re-enactors. There's the First Arkansas Colored Regiment and the African Battalion from New Orleans.

LUCYGALE. (*Impressed:*) No kidding. They came to Shiloh?

WIDOW BECKWITH. They're coming. They reserved Parking Lot Seven. Sun's almost up. They're probably outside the gates right now.

CECILIA. Oh yes...look over there, LucyGale. We are in for a glorious sunrise—

(Suddenly: an explosion of gunfire.)

RANGER WILSON. Holy Hell—???

(Rebel yells and more gunfire from all sides.)

LUCYGALE. They started!

WIDOW BECKWITH. They can't do that!

RANGER WILSON. They can't start til eight.

LUCYGALE. It's coming from the right. It's Cléburn's surprise attack on the Union camps!

RANGER WILSON. It can't be! That's not scheduled til ten.

(Cannons begin blasting.)

LUCYGALE. They started alright! That's the Union artillery answering back!

RANGER WILSON. But they haven't had weapons inspection—

WIDOW BECKWITH. And I haven't got the Cookhouse up—!

RANGER WILSON. Oh man— Emma must be going nuts...

(More cannonfire.)

MEG. Is it all going to be this LOUD??

CLARA. Never mind, Meg. We have work to do!

CECILIA. No—this is dreadful! We haven't had the Prayer Meeting!

LUCYGALE. Prayer Meeting? In the middle of this—???

CECILIA. I've got my reading from Psalms—

RANGER WILSON. *(On radio:)* Jamie? Hey JAMIE! Call the state troopers. See if they can stop it—

CLARA. Get up, Meg. Move!

WIDOW BECKWITH. I haven't got my right boots—my apron—and oh damn—THE OATMEAL!

WILSON. *(On radio:)* I'll get the Jeep and—WHAT???

WIDOW BECKWITH. The OATMEAL!!!!

RANGER WILSON. Not YOU.

(On radio:)

Whatta you mean they closed the road?

CECILIA. Where's my Bible LucyGale—???

LUCYGALE. Hell with that. Where's my gun?

CECILIA. I can't find my Bible—!!!!

CLARA. Take mine, Mrs. Pettison.

(CLARA gives CECILIA a small field Bible.)

RANGER WILSON. *(On radio:)* They can't close the road. That's OUR road!

(Cannon and gun fire continue at a steady roar.)

CECILIA. Here it is... Psalm 78...

(Shouting over the gunfire:)

AND HE LED HIS OWN PEOPLE LIKE SHEEP—
HE GUIDED THEM LIKE A FLOCK IN THE WILDERNESS—
HE LED THEM IN SAFETY AND THEY WERE NOT AFRAID.

CLARA. Come, Meg. We must carry our supplies to the field!

MEG. Out there??? You can't even walk—

CLARA. I can and I will. Keep your head down and move forward—

CECILIA. AND HE BROUGHT THEM TO HIS HOLY MOUNTAIN,
YET THEY TRIED GOD'S PATIENCE AND REBELLED AGAINST
HIM.

RANGER WILSON. QUIET PLEASE. AND YOU TWO, STOP!

MEG. We're legal now. It started.

RANGER WILSON. Nothing's legal til eight!

MEG. Not anymore. It's Shiloh Rules now!

(She starts out.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Wait up—I'm coming with you!

(She goes out with CLARA and MEG.)

RANGER WILSON. NO—HEY—

(Cannon fire—Rifle fire—Rebel yells—Screams—Bugles—Dogs howling. Smoke drifting in.)

(LUCYGALE finds her gun, waves it in the air.)

LUCYGALE. Holy Mo. This is GREAT!!!!

RANGER WILSON. Headquarters! Come in headquarters. *I CAN'T HEAR YOU!*

CECILIA. AND WHEN GOD HEARD OF THIS,
HE PUT THEM OUT OF HIS MIND AND HE REJECTED ISRAEL—

LUCYGALE. I'm going out there! I'm going to fight!

CECILIA. No—!

LUCYGALE. Why not???? I've got my Colt!

RANGER WILSON. *(Seizing the gun:)* No you don't—

LUCYGALE. I don't care. I'm going out there anyway. I'm not gonna miss this!

CECILIA. But we haven't finished the reading! The READING LucyGale—!

(Continuing the Psalm:)

HE FORSOOK HIS HOME AT SHILOH
AND GAVE HIS PEOPLE OVER TO THE SWORD...

(But LUCYGALE's gone. WILSON looks at CECILIA, recites quietly:)

RANGER WILSON. "And fire devoured his young men,
and his maidens could raise no lament for them;

and his widows could not weep.”

(A pause in the gunfire. CECILIA stares at RANGER WILSON.)

CECILIA. I taught you that, didn't I...?

RANGER WILSON. What? What are you talking about?

CECILIA. Don't you remember? Was it that long ago...?

RANGER WILSON. I don't know what you're talking about.

CECILIA. You were there. I taught you that Psalm.

RANGER WILSON. No. You didn't teach me anything.

(CECILIA keeps staring at her.)

Go on. Get out of here. Go do your refugee thing.

(CECILIA doesn't move.)

I SAID GO. GO NOW!

(Shelling starts again. Smoke pours in.)

(CECILIA disappears into it.)

(Blackout.)

End of Act I

ACT II

(Noon. Blazing hot. Sun. Smoke. Screams and gunfire in the distance. WILSON on the radio phone.)

RANGER WILSON. WHAT JAMIE? What? No. I told you. I can't get there. It's CHAOS out here. The Jeep's surrounded. The road's full of cannons. They're fighting in the parking lots—in between cars! WHAT? Yeah—I know they call 'em wagons. JAMIE—?

(Looks out.)

Oh shit—I gotta get outta here. They're getting ready for a charge. A cavalry charge.

Hell YES they're real horses! Later Jamie. I'll try the fire road—

(Bugles sound the charge. WILSON goes off.)

(CLARA enters. Hot, sweaty, limping, she brings on pails of water from a creek as MEG enters from the battlefield with two empty pails.)

CLARA. Get back out there fast! Illinois and Wisconsin need water before the next attack.

MEG. Everybody needs water. I can't go two steps without somebody asking. Aren't they supposed to carry their own canteens?

CLARA. No one thought it would be this hot.

(Handing her 2 full pails of water;)

Take some cloth for compresses too. Pour it on them. Let them dip in their hats and bandannas...

MEG. I can't go back right now.

CLARA. They need water *now*. We'll have to fill the barrel again for the Artillery units. And the reinforcements haven't even arrived. You haven't seen anything yet.

MEG. It can't get worse than this. It's horrible out there.

CLARA. Surely you didn't expect it to be NICE.

MEG. I didn't expect—thousands. There are THOUSANDS of men out there—everywhere!

CLARA. A nurse from Iowa said the dead and dying lay so thick she might have walked a mile with every step on a dead body.

MEG. But out there—right now. You didn't tell me there'd be so many— And they're all shouting at me and grabbing...

CLARA. Remember your training. When a lady of the Union volunteers for service on the battlefield, she is moving forward. She is taking Command. That is Power. One taste of that and your life will never be the same.

(MEG tugs at her corset, uncomfortable and tired of the game.)

MEG. Whatever... I was just hoping for a little extra credit to pass Nursing, Nutrition, and Health Science 101.

CLARA. Don't be Small, Meg. I can forgive anything but that. This is your chance to be part of a Cause that is RIGHT and GOOD.

MEG. But they're all so sweaty and dirty out there, I can't tell which side they're on. Am I supposed to ask them what they BELIEVE IN before I give them a drink of water???

CLARA. You know the procedure.

MEG. *They* don't. Scream and Shoot's the only procedure they've got out there. Scream and Shoot, Run and Shoot, Drink and Shoot...

CLARA. If you haven't got the backbone for this, you'd might as well stay home, spend your Saturdays reading romance novels and give up nursing altogether—not to mention that letter I was going to write your supervisor...

MEG. No. It's just—it wasn't like this in practice.

CLARA. Never mind. I'll go out there. You stay here and guard the supplies.

MEG. You can't do that. You'll kill your ankle.

CLARA. I don't mind. A permanent injury wouldn't be so bad.

MEG. NO. I'll go.

CLARA. Stay close to the back lines. And find out where the Western Sanitary Commission's setting up their field hospital. We don't want to keep the surgeons waiting. And if you hear a call for Medic—

MEG. I'll be there.

CLARA. NO. PLEASE MEG. PAY ATTENTION. We've been over this. A call for "Medic" is Modern. That means they really need first aid.

MEG. But if they really need help...?

CLARA. Get them to the Visitors' Center. Just make sure you maintain your authenticity.

MEG. God. This is so CONFUSING!!!

CLARA. Calm yourself, Meg. You're in danger of losing your mental impression.

MEG. I'm sure real girls got scared...

CLARA. Of course they did. But they found strength by attending to the task at hand. Ann Wallace gave water to a wounded soldier after hearing that her own husband had been killed and left on the battlefield. She said that *action* was her only relief. If you're going to learn anything at all from this...

MEG. I understand, ma'am. I'll go back out there.

CLARA. And be quick about it. We'll need more water before the counter-attack.

(A flash of lightning.)

MEG. What's THAT?

CLARA. I hope it's lightning. Some rain would be a relief.

MEG. You mean we have to stay out here in a thunderstorm?

CLARA. No more questions, Meg. GO!

(MEG goes. CLARA goes back to the creek with the empty buckets.)

(On high ground. Dark sky. Distant thunder. CECILIA enters worried, as she finds LUCYGALE who runs in.)

CECILIA. LucyGale! Where have you been?

LUCYGALE. Watching. Man oh man Cecilia—they're having one yee haw hell of a time out there! The Rebs are pounding Prentiss hard! General Sherman's gonna have his hands full on the right.

CECILIA. How do you know where Prentiss and Sherman are?

LUCYGALE. I was out there. I met a guy from the Carolina Brigade. John's regiment's gonna be in great shape to attack the Yanks. Grant's still back by the river waiting for reinforcements.

CECILIA. (*Suspicious:*) You know a lot about Yankee battle plans for a local girl.

LUCYGALE. Well sure—I read up. I mean before. I know I can't read now and all, but...

CECILIA. THAT'S why you were so interested in John's letters. You're a spy!

LUCYGALE. I am not.

CECILIA. When you left me back there last night, you were taking information over to the Federals, weren't you?

LUCYGALE. No, I swear. I went off for a smoke.

CECILIA. You just made it look like Meg caught you. And rushing out here first thing... You're in cahoots with Meg and Clara...

LUCYGALE. That's not true. I want to play with you. I like you.

CECILIA. —using that awful accent to pretend you're a local...

LUCYGALE. No. Really. I am from here.

CECILIA. —acting like it's all so scary. "Oh Mrs. Pettison, I haven't ever slept out before..."

LUCYGALE. I haven't. Just car camping with my folks in a big RV, but that's not the same.

CECILIA. And your corny name. "Scruggs." Only a Northerner would pick a name like that.

LUCYGALE. It's my real name.

CECILIA. You're probably one of Clara's recruits. She's got agents working for her now, hasn't she. You're another one of her Century 21 girls from Framingham Massachusetts, down here to scout out real estate for summer rentals and time shares. Or bring in the big boys and turn another valley into gated communities and mega-malls. Ye Olde Shiloh Estates—Johnny Reb Town Homes—Yankee Doodle's Topless Bar and Grille...

LUCYGALE. Cecilia, I don't think you should be talking like this.

CECILIA. Like what? Like I can't see the future? Well, unfortunately I can, my dear. I can see many things I don't much like. And when I look at you, I see...

LUCYGALE. I swear I am not a spy!

CECILIA. Who are you then?

LUCYGALE. Just like I told you.

CECILIA. I'm asking Modern. Who are you *Modern*.

LUCYGALE. I didn't think we were supposed to—

CECILIA. (*Taking out her revolver:*) WHO ARE YOU?

LUCYGALE. That's just got blanks right?

(*A dead stare from CECILIA, gun still pointed.*)

LUCYGALE. Ok. I'm a tracker.

CECILIA. Indeed, and I'm Daniel Boone.

LUCYGALE. No. I really am a tracker. I'm a Route Tracker—

CECILIA. That's enough—

LUCYGALE. —*for Fed Ex in Memphis.*

CECILIA. For what?

LUCYGALE. Federal Express. When you lose a package, you know...? I track it down on the computer. You've seen those tracking numbers on the labels haven't you? That's what I do. That's all I do. All day long in a little dark cubicle with a headset on... That's where I was when I found you on the Internet. I saw your picture.

And all your drawings of ladies' gloves and shoes and dress patterns. I down-loaded all those things you wrote about how to cook on an open hearth. How to mix herbs and oils for chapped lips and sunburn. How to make ink out of berries and paper out of wood pulp... You sit all day long in front of a computer and this stuff looks so good, you know... It seems so real.

CECILIA. *It is real.*

LUCYGALE. I know, Mrs. Pettison. This is the most real stuff I've ever done.

(CECILIA lowers the revolver.)

CECILIA. You know we don't belong to any unit.

LUCYGALE. All I know is I'm with you. That's all.

CECILIA. Alright then. Here is our plan. We are going to capture those medical cases and take them to our side. We're going to show those Yankees they aren't the only Angels on this battlefield.

LUCYGALE. Stealing medical supplies? Is that allowed?

CECILIA. Violent times require violent solutions. You'll wait til Meg has gone far enough afield...approach from the creek and take the cases through the woods. Clara won't be able to give chase for long. We'll meet up on the road at Shiloh Church.

LUCYGALE. Roger. Got it. I mean— Yes ma'am.

CECILIA. LucyGale... This is rather unorthodox...but it might be easier for you to move behind the lines—in uniform.

LUCYGALE. I get to wear a uniform? You've got a uniform?

CECILIA. I carry one of John's. Mr. Pettison's. In case. Well. I like to have it with me.

LUCYGALE. YES MA'AM.

CECILIA. This could make it more dangerous—if you get caught.

LUCYGALE. I won't get caught.

CECILIA. A girl discovered in uniform would be disqualified and removed from the field at once. We could lose everything.

LUCYGALE. (*Low, fierce:*) Yeah...but we might have a chance at winning the war.

CECILIA. LucyGale—

LUCYGALE. (*Controlling herself:*) Let me see it, please? Just let me see it.

CECILIA. Here it is.

(*CECILIA gives LUCYGALE an old canvas bag. LUCYGALE takes out a crumpled gray jacket, slouch hat, and trousers.*)

LUCYGALE. Oh Cecilia... This is real.

CECILIA. Yes it is, LucyGale. Lieutenant Pettison wore that uniform in battle at Manassas. He wore it with dignity and pride and no small degree of sorrow. I will not let them take away our love of this land and each other. And there is love here, LucyGale. Do you understand?

LUCYGALE. I'll make you proud, Mrs. Pettison. I promise.

(*LUCYGALE starts undressing.*)

CECILIA. Not here, child. Change out of sight of the battlefield. And LucyGale—?

(*CECILIA offers LUCYGALE the Remington revolver.*)

LUCYGALE. Yes ma'am!

(*She takes the gun and goes into the woods. CECILIA looks out.*)

CECILIA. Quickly LucyGale. Their supplies are unattended!

(*She follows LUCYGALE into the woods.*)

(*Gunfire continues in the distance. WIDOW BECKWITH, muddy and bedraggled, carries on a bundle of stuff she has salvaged from the cookhouse. She falls down, exhausted.*)

(*WILSON comes in, speaking on the radio phone, pacing.*)

RANGER WILSON. Yeah, Jamie. Yeah. No. Well, why can't you MAKE them move? What? SHOUT IT MAN.

(To BECKWITH:)

He says the Rebels are going nuts. There aren't enough Union guys and the Confederates aren't falling down when they're shot. Isn't that a rule—?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Depends on the commanders. Sherman's supposed to win the counter-attack before lunch.

RANGER WILSON. He says the counter-attack isn't working.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh boy. This'll be big points off for Sherman. You want chips or something?

RANGER WILSON. NO! There's no order out there at all. They've closed off all the roads to anyone modern. The restrooms are surrounded. We've got crying kids, screaming parents—

WIDOW BECKWITH. You should see my cookhouse. There's SNIPERS hiding out in there!

RANGER WILSON. They've got no right to do this. This is a PUBLIC park. I'm gonna get that road open if it kills me.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Yeah. The Rebs see that U.S. on your shirt... no telling what they might do.

RANGER WILSON. Not funny.

WIDOW BECKWITH. I'm not kidding.

RANGER WILSON. And that flag they got. I was not prepared for that. I should've known you couldn't do one of these Events without it, but—DAMN. DAMN I hate that. I hate seeing that. "*Politics at the door*" my foot. Where's the door, huh? There's no door out there.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Well... There is one thing you could do... The only way to go out there now is to go in uniform— Time-period correct.

RANGER WILSON. You are nuts you know that. You are dead nuts.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Yeah. And then there's this...

(*She lifts a rifle out of her bundle.*)

WIDOW BECKWITH. 52 caliber, Sharps' Rifle.

RANGER WILSON. Now that is nasty.

WIDOW BECKWITH. You want to know what freed the slaves? You're looking at it. Go ahead. See what it feels like.

(WILSON takes it with reverence, holds it gently, then starts to raise it to firing position. And stops.)

RANGER WILSON. No! You are not getting me into this. The last place I ever want to be is 1862.

WIDOW BECKWITH. But if you *were* there, you'd want this with you.

RANGER WILSON. Yeah. I reckon. But I'm NOT there.

(WILSON hands the rifle back to BECKWITH when suddenly there's a flash. An explosion.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Sweet Jesus of Nazareth! Somebody's on the attack!

RANGER WILSON. That's not cannons, that's thunder.

WIDOW BECKWITH. It can't be. It wasn't predicted.

(Sky darkens. Cannons start blasting.)

Now that is real cannons.

(A flash of lightning.)

RANGER WILSON. And that is real lightning.

(A crack of thunder. WILSON gets on the phone.)

Jamie—did you see that? Yeah. I saw it too. Holy— All of them?

(Turns to BECKWITH.)

The Officials want to cancel for lightning, but the guys won't stop fighting and—

(Back on the phone.)

What—?

WIDOW BECKWITH. This is *Shiloh*, babe. It's bigger than lightning.

RANGER WILSON. Civilians broke through the lines to get to the restrooms and there's a Confederate unit firing on spectators!

(Another blast. An air horn plays "Dixie." WILSON reacts: puts down the radio phone, picks up the rifle, and faces BECKWITH.)

RANGER WILSON. This does NOT go into your report.

(BECKWITH picks up the bundle and offers it to WILSON.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. There is Glory in your cause, soldier.

RANGER WILSON. I'm not fighting for anybody's cause. I'm fighting for the RESTROOMS.

(WILSON takes the bundle and goes out.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. And get those guys out of my Cookhouse! I got a beef stew to get started.

(She runs off, carrying Wilson's radio. More lightning & thunder.)

CLARA'S VOICE. HELP! Meg! Help me!

(CLARA enters, limping and muddy, stumbling as she tries to drag on all the medical cases. Boxes fall out of the cases. Her shawl trails behind her. The hem of her white apron is red with mud and water.)

CLARA. We have to get to higher ground! Everything's flooded and the creek's still rising—

(She loses hold of a case. Some of the boxes fall out.)

MEG WHERE ARE YOU? I can't find my eyeglasses!

(She drops cases, goes to her knees to search for eyeglasses.)

Hell and damnation—

(Lightning and a blast of thunder send her sprawling.)

Dear god make this stop!

(She looks for cover, pulls her shawl around her head, huddling by one of the cases—near tears—as thunder and cannon fire continue.)

CLARA. God forgive me. It wasn't supposed to be like this. Nobody thought it would be like this...

(She tries to wring out her skirts. Horrified to find her hands are red with mud, she tries to wipe her hands on her apron—staining it redder and redder.)

Filthy. It's all filthy... Where are the clean bandages????

(Desperately she crawls around, trying to gather bandages. They unroll and tangle.)

Bloody pond—bloody apron—bloody bandages—

(Trying to untangle the bandages and getting more tangled, more frustrated, enraged, out of her mind.)

STOP!!! Just STOP. Why won't they STOP??? I can't go back down there. They're drowning down there. The pond is full of them. The wounded. The dying. Drowning in filth—in their own blood... They don't want to fight—they just want a drink of water. I know—I know—I have to—but god...

(CLARA rises, looking toward Bloody Pond, seeing the Real battle.)

They're so young. They don't know what they're doing... *(Soft:)* Please god, make them stop.

(The shadowy figure of a CONFEDERATE SOLDIER appears in the woods behind her.)

I know what to do. I know the procedure... Fill out the card. Pin it to the jacket. Place of death. Date of death. Burial number.

(CLARA continues reciting softly as THE SOLDIER moves in closer.)

Place of death... Date of death... Burial number...

(LUCYGALE, in full Confederate uniform and hat, face hidden with a bandanna, sneaks up to the one of the medical cases and stealthily starts to pick it up.)

CLARA. Place of death... Date of death...

(CLARA turns, sees LUCYGALE with the medicine case, pulls herself together, cool, collected, still in the Real moment.)

Have you come to assist me, soldier?

LUCYGALE. *(Freezes.)* Huh...?

CLARA. Follow me please. We are needed at Bloody Pond.

(LUCYGALE thinks a sec, then lifts the cases and starts out in the other direction.)

CLARA. What are you doing? Soldier halt! You can't take those.

(Holding onto the medical cases:)

Medical supplies are protected by law.

LUCYGALE. *(Low voice:)* US law don't count. Get back Yank.

(LUCYGALE draws her Remington, points it at CLARA who lets go of the boxes.)

CLARA. I will not. Kill me if you must, our Cause will only grow stronger!

LUCYGALE. *(Cocking the gun:)* Stronger than THIS??

CLARA. Stronger than all of you. I have Right on my side!

(CLARA grabs the Remington.)

LUCYGALE. Hell with that!

(She takes the one case and runs out, followed by CLARA waving the gun.)

CLARA. Soldier, come back here! Come back I say!

(From offstage:)

SOLDIER, STOP!

(A gunshot. LUCYGALE's scream. CLARA re-enters with the medical case—and the Remington.)

CLARA. Vengeance is MINE. Victory is SWEET! I have seen the mighty power of his terrible swift sword!

(Pause. CLARA looks around, coming out of the trance.)

CLARA. I have seen... What have I seen...? Where are my glasses?

(Looks off stage, then at the gun.)

Soldier? SOLDIER????

(MEG enters fast. CLARA hides the gun in her apron.)

MEG. Come on, Clara. We have to move. They need us at the field hospital!

(CLARA stands there, stunned, as MEG looks around at the scattered medical boxes and bandages.)

MEG. Holy Hell! What happened here ?

CLARA. I don't know...

MEG. What happened, Clara???

CLARA. *(Soft; still out of it:)* I can't find my glasses...

MEG. Confederates did this, didn't they?

CLARA. It wasn't supposed to be like this...

MEG. God DAMN those rebel bastards!

(MEG scrambles around, putting supplies back in the cases.)

CLARA. I didn't mean to...

MEG. What's wrong with you?

CLARA. I shot him. I couldn't see it. But I felt it. Like an animal. I felt like an animal.

MEG. Stay here til you pull yourself together. I've got three surgeons waiting for supplies.

(MEG picks up the medicine cases and starts out.)

CLARA. Didn't you hear what I said???? I SHOT A CONFEDERATE SOLDIER.

MEG. Good! That's one less for their side.

(MEG exits.)

CLARA. No, Meg, I mean it. It was REAL. I was THERE.

(Looks around, scared.)

Meg! Don't leave me alone here. Meg—!

(CLARA hurries out.)

(Thunder fading out. Smoky. Quiet.)

(LUCYGALE enters [still in Confederate uniform] and hides as a Union Soldier [WILSON] appears, rifle raised, in pursuit.)

RANGER WILSON. Come back here. Hey—you—come on out... I know you're there. I hear you breathing. You're breathing hard, aren't you? Or is that crying? You crying for mama?

(No response.)

No point in hiding any more, Johnny reb. We got you surrounded.

LUCYGALE. *(A hoarse whisper:)* Bullshit Yank. This is rebel ground.

RANGER WILSON. No it's not.

LUCYGALE. I got an army behind me.

RANGER WILSON. Not anymore you don't. They're gone now. They're dead and gone.

LUCYGALE. Carolina's still fighting.

RANGER WILSON. Carolina quit. Beauregard retreated. Johnston died. And Nathan Bedford Forrest is on the run.

LUCYGALE. That don't scare me. I'll fight on alone.

RANGER WILSON. For what?

LUCYGALE. Huh?

RANGER WILSON. For what. Fight for what?

LUCYGALE. For ME.

RANGER WILSON. I asked for WHAT. Come out here and tell me to my face. Tell me what you stand for.

LUCYGALE. I don't have to do that.

RANGER WILSON. You put on that uniform. It's gotta stand for something. I know what I stand for.

LUCYGALE. I'm a rebel and I FIGHT!

(LUCYGALE lunges out. WILSON trips her. She falls in pain.)

RANGER WILSON. FREEZE RIGHT THERE. FACE DOWN. ON THE GROUND. HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD.

(LUCYGALE freezes on hands and knees. She's covered with gun powder, one sleeve ripped, her hand and arm bloody.)

RANGER WILSON. What happened to you?

LUCYGALE. Military secret.

RANGER WILSON. I SAID WHAT HAPPENED.

(Looking closer:)

What is this, stage blood?

(She touches LUCYGALE's wounded arm with the bayonet point.)

LUCYGALE. DON'T—!

RANGER WILSON. *(Recognizes her:)* Oh man... You're that girl. That what's-her-name...

LUCYGALE. I'm not a girl, I'm a lieutenant. Gotta get back to my regiment.

(LUCYGALE tries to crawl away.)

RANGER WILSON. Stay like you were. I shot at three rebels already. And every one of 'em fell down.

LUCYGALE. This isn't fair. You aren't playing in this.

RANGER WILSON. You got that right. And neither are you. I'm taking you up to the Visitors' Center. You need first aid.

LUCYGALE. I can't do that. They'll kick me out.

RANGER WILSON. (*Kneeling to assist her:*) Come on. Get up easy now. I'll help...

LUCYGALE. (*Pushing her away:*) DON'T TOUCH ME GODDAM YANK!

(*Reaches for Wilson's rifle.*)

Give me that gun.

RANGER WILSON. You are one stupid reb.

(*WILSON locks LUCYGALE in a hold with the rifle.*)

LUCYGALE. STOP IT! THAT HURTS!

RANGER WILSON. Good. You wanted a war, you got one.

(*CECILIA enters.*)

CECILIA. Officer! LucyGale—what is this?

LUCYGALE. Tell her to LET ME GO!

RANGER WILSON. Not in a million years, Johnny. You fight in that uniform, this is what you get.

CECILIA. Officer PLEASE! This is my fault. I made her wear the uniform. Remove us from the field. You must stop this—

RANGER WILSON. What's wrong? Don't you like this picture of your dear old south?

CECILIA. Please this isn't—

RANGER WILSON. Isn't WHAT? Isn't war? Isn't real? Isn't hate?

(*Keeping her in the hold, WILSON rips off LucyGale's hat with the Confederate flag on it. She throws it down and lowers LUCYGALE to the ground, face down.*)

LUCYGALE. (*Near tears;*) I'm sorry. I swear. I didn't mean it like that. I wanted to fight is all. I was just...

RANGER WILSON. Just what? Recreating history? This is nothing—this is just a taste. You understand what I'm telling you?

(*LUCYGALE nods, sobbing.*)

RANGER WILSON. I CAN'T HEAR YOU.

LUCYGALE. (*Muffled, from the ground:*) Yes, ma'am.

(*CLARA enters, recognizes the wounded soldier.*)

CLARA. Oh dear god... Is he living?

RANGER WILSON. You might call it that. Don't let her move. I'll go get first aid.

(*She picks up her rifle, starts out, and turns back to CLARA with a look at LUCYGALE.*)

RANGER WILSON. Just try healing THAT, Miss Abbott.

(*She exits. CLARA recognizes LUCYGALE, rushes to her.*)

CLARA. LucyGale—that was you???

LUCYGALE. You oughtta know. You're the one who shot me.

CECILIA. Clara—??? Is this true?

CLARA. You sent her to steal our supplies, didn't you? You gave her a LOADED gun.

LUCYGALE. That sum'bitch wasn't loaded. It blew up at me!

CLARA. (*Goes to kneel by LUCYGALE.*) Forgive me, LucyGale. I am so sorry.

CECILIA. We don't need your apologies, Clara.

(*Kneeling by LUCYGALE:*)

I'll take care of you, LucyGale.

LUCYGALE. Go away.

CECILIA. Be calm, dear. It's me—Cecilia. You recognize me, don't you?

LUCYGALE. Yeah. GO AWAY.

CECILIA. But you're hurt—

LUCYGALE. I don't care. I'm not in this. Go find a soldier who cares.

CECILIA. Oh, LucyGale...

LUCYGALE. Quit calling me that.

CLARA. Let me see your arm, dear.

LUCYGALE. (*Swatting them away:*) LEAVE ME ALONE BOTH OF YOU! GO FIGHT EACH OTHER.

(Clutching her hand:)

Oh mamma...this stings.

(MEG enters from hiding. She carries the surgeon's kit, medicine vials and bandages. She goes to LUCYGALE.)

MEG. Ok. Wilson's gone. Let's get to work.

CECILIA. Leave her alone, dear. She's wounded.

MEG. That's why I'm here. (*Inspecting LUCYGALE's arm:*) Shrapnel wounds, right Miss Abbott? Foreign matter needs excision right away. First I'll cut away this cloth...

(She takes out small scissors and cuts open LucyGale's jacket sleeve.)

CLARA. We're not playing, Meg. This is serious.

MEG. I know. She risked her life for your competition.

(To LUCYGALE:)

I think you're the bravest one out here.

(LUCYGALE looks up for the first time.)

LUCYGALE. Thank you, Meg.

MEG. Don't thank me yet.

(Looking closer at the wound:)

Let me see here... This big piece is in deep. But you've got the best nurses on the field. We'll have you fixed up in no time.

LUCYGALE. Hell of a scar though I reckon, huh Meg...?

MEG. We'll see. First we have to cleanse the wounds with lavender oil...

(Opens a bottle and dabs the wounds.)

Wounds of the hand are the most prone to infection...

CLARA. I told you, Meg—we're getting help from the Visitors' Center.

MEG. *(To LUCYGALE:)* I see no "Visitors' Center" hereabouts do you, Lieutenant Scruggs?

LUCYGALE. No Miss Barton, I surely do not.

MEG. Probe and Tenaculum, please, Miss Abbott.

CLARA. Stop playing, both of you. This is real.

MEG. That's right. So are these.

(She holds up the long steel Probe and Tenaculum.)

CECILIA. Oh dear lord—

CLARA. Put them down, Meg.

MEG. I'll remove these fragments myself.

LUCYGALE. Sweet Jesus. You better be good at this.

MEG. It's gonna hurt some LucyGale. If you want we could use a drop or so of chloroform.

CLARA. Absolutely not. There is no chloroform. It all spilled out.

MEG. Don't worry. The surgeons had plenty.

(She opens another bottle, dabs chloroform on her handkerchief.)

CLARA. Meg—no—you can't. We've caused enough pain—

MEG. Stand back, please.

(Holds the handkerchief to LUCYGALE's nose.)

Breathe in—just a little.

LUCYGALE. Whoa Nellie...that's better...

MEG. Good girl. Hold that arm steady. Now. We're going to make two small incisions to excise the fragments.

(To CLARA, holding up two scalpels:)

Which scalpel should I use, Miss Abbott?

CLARA. Stop it. She needs a nurse.

MEG. You're a nurse. You're the best nurse ever.

CLARA. She needs a *real* nurse. She needs antiseptic—antibiotics—penicillin—a tetanus shot...

MEG. What queer words, Clara. What on earth are you talking about?

(To LUCYGALE:)

Don't let Miss Abbott frighten you. I'm a nurse. I know what I'm doing.

CLARA. She does not. She's a second year student—bottom of her class—at Brookline Community College—

MEG. CLARA—!

CLARA. —sent to me to learn something and all she wants to do is dress up and look good for boys on a battlefield—if they're not rude—if they're not too sweaty or dirty—

MEG. I am giving first aid to a girl who needs my help. And you know I've studied harder for this than spinning a centrifuge or reading blips on a monitor and I can do that TOO.

(To LUCYGALE:)

Now, it won't take long. Are you ready?

LUCYGALE. (*Woozy:*) You got the heart to do it, I got the heart to take it.

CLARA. She's not doing anything. Stop this, Meg—

MEG. I will not, Miss Abbott. I am moving forward. I am taking Command. You wanted me to learn something from you, this is it.

(Back to work, chooses a scalpel.)

The small scalpel should do it. I'll need help with the dressings, Mrs. Pettison.

CECILIA. I'll prepare a poultice. There's plenty of fine moss over there.

(CECILIA starts to move. CLARA draws the Remington on them.)

CLARA. STOP IT Cecilia. Stop it all of you. This has gone far enough.

CECILIA. I declare. The Yankee spirit revealed at last! Arms turned against the civilian population and their own kind as well...whoever stands in the way of their ambition.

CLARA. That's not true, Cecilia. I am not—

CECILIA. Afraid to let Miss Barton try for the title...? Afraid to lose...?

CLARA. No! That's ridiculous. I am simply—I am trying—

CECILIA. Of course you are, poor thing... You don't know how to lose. You will never know what it's like to lose over and over again. Your home, your friends, every fine idea you ever had about yourself. Every time I come out here I lose. And every time I come back, I will find more to lose, until...

CLARA. What? Until what, Cecilia?

CECILIA. You don't know one thing about freedom.

WIDOW BECKWITH'S VOICE. Guys! Hey you guys—listen up! We got orders from HQ—

(WIDOW BECKWITH enters, waving Wilson's radio. Stops as she sees MEG with the scalpel and CLARA with the gun.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. What the HELL? Holy Catfish, what is going on here?

CLARA. Widow Beckwith—please—you must stop them.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh I see what you're doing... Dang, I wish I had my camera. This could be prizewinner.

CLARA. You can't let them do this.

WIDOW BECKWITH. I don't see why not. You ladies have produced some real true hardcores. Could be the strongest female reenactment ever seen.

(To MEG and LUCYGALE:)

But tell me—which side wins? North or South? Cutter or cuttee?

MEG. That's not important right now.

LUCYGALE. Yeah. To hell with sides. I'm done with that. Meg and I'll win it together.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Alright then. Go ahead and we'll call it Peace and Reconciliation. Let 'er rip, gals.

LUCYGALE. (To MEG:) Hit me again with that hankie and I'm ready, missie.

CLARA. No. I'm sorry—but no. Margaret Barton, you are no longer a member of the Massachusetts Soldier's Aid Society. And I am not the Angel of Antietam.

MEG. Clara—

WIDOW BECKWITH. Jeez Clara—what are you doing?

CLARA. What do you think I'm doing? I don't like this world anymore. I'm leaving it.

(Drops the Remington.)

I never intended to hurt a young woman. I never intended to hurt ANYBODY.

CECILIA. May I ask what was your intention?

CLARA. I liked it. That's all. I liked wearing the clothes. Teaching and learning. Reading all night at the library. The corsets are stiff. The manners are strict. It's rigorous—but by god it's clear. There's right and wrong, betrayal and heroism. No greasy little white-lies and half-truths to slide in between buyers and sellers. It feels pure and sparkling compared to a real estate deal—a new Lexus every other year—4 bedrooms, 3 baths, and a crummy divorce. Well—there it goes... (*To CECILIA:*) You got what you wanted. I'm out of it now. I've lost my Impression entirely.

CECILIA. Please don't say that. It was my fault. I made her steal those boxes. I confess it. Please, Clara. You mustn't—

CLARA. Clara? What "Clara"—? You're talking to Betty Bayliss, Century 21 Top Selling Agent of the Month. And what does that make you Cecilia? What does that make you but another foolish old woman in a costume...? I don't care. I'd rather lose it than keep this horror show going.

(CLARA starts to take off her apron.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Oh hell. You haven't lost anything Clara. Nobody's won anything either. The Event is over. Called off on account of rain. So you girls can go ahead if you like. Hell go all the way and amputate. But nothing you do counts now.

LUCYGALE. Don't believe her. That's a bullshit excuse.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Call the office if you want. The battle was officially ended about 20 minutes ago by commanding officers from both sides and the Park Service. They saw lightning and got a report that rain was predicted.

MEG. But it's not raining.

WIDOW BECKWITH. That doesn't matter. The Event is officially over.

LUCYGALE. For RAIN? Nobody calls off a battle on account of rain.

MEG. It really did rain that first night, didn't it...?

CECILIA. They said it was a punishment...

CLARA. Or some kind of mercy. To wash the bodies clean.

LUCYGALE. There was lightning too. In the flashes they saw wild pigs coming out of the woods to eat the remains of the fallen—

CECILIA. LucyGale, hush.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Well any-hoo...the Park Service didn't like the way things were going. And the Union reinforcements didn't show up... The guys didn't want to ruin their uniforms and get their guns wet.

MEG. So the South wins?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Nobody wins. But they're still gonna hold the box supper and assembly dance for both sides at the Visitors' Center. They got a pretty good band in from Nashville. So...?

CLARA. Go on, Meg. Take LucyGale up to the first aid station and I'll pack up. We've left things all over the battlefield.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Yeah it's a holy mess out there. They left all their hats, blankets, canteens...

CECILIA. I would dearly love to find that locket.

(CECILIA exits. CLARA turns to gather her things.)

(A quick glance between LUCYGALE and MEG. MEG moves forward, makes two swift moves with the scalpel. LUCYGALE screams. MEG pulls out the fragment and it's done.)

MEG. GOT IT!

LUCYGALE. HOO WEEEE!!!!

(MEG holds up the fragment. LUCYGALE clutches her bloody hand. CLARA hands MEG her apron, back in action again.)

CLARA. Stanch it, Meg! Keep it raised, LucyGale.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Now get up to first aid and get out of here FAST.

LUCYGALE. You did it man!

MEG. Hard to the CORE!

LUCYGALE. Wait'll the guys see this! Hardee's Raiders will DIE!!!!

MEG. Real blood on my apron and all!

(They start running off.)

CLARA. No—! Girls—! Don't tell—!

(CLARA turns to BECKWITH for help.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Don't worry, babe. It won't go in my report. The Angel of Antietam lives on.

(CLARA picks up her cloak and exits.)

(WIDOW BECKWITH cleans off the buck-knife and begins packing up her supplies as RANGER WILSON enters, still in uniform, with her rifle—stands there, dazed.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. Bless my soul. Private Wilson home from the war.

RANGER WILSON. Alright. Where did they run off to this time?

WIDOW BECKWITH. On their way to the Visitors' Center. They're ok. Did you get the road open?

RANGER WILSON. Yes I did.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Jeep's ok?

RANGER WILSON. It's fine.

WIDOW BECKWITH. You alright?

RANGER WILSON. Yeah. I think so. Yeah. I am. Damn fine. Hell, I *won*.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Jeez. You fought??

RANGER WILSON. It wasn't my idea. I ran into an Iowa infantry unit looking for recruits in the parking lot. The commander saw my blue jacket, gave the order to march and that was it. We were good too. We got back our lost ground—cleared the artillery out of the road—secured the whole area from the Visitors' Center to the Peach Orchard. And I held my position the whole time.

WIDOW BECKWITH. I had a feeling you'd make a great soldier.

RANGER WILSON. But you never told me about the last thing.

WIDOW BECKWITH. What last thing?

RANGER WILSON. I never saw anything like it. All those bodies lying there. Thousands of em. Wall to wall dead men. Ok, maybe some jerks moaning and writhing around. But then it gets real quiet. So quiet all you can hear are the birds or something. Then I hear this guy say this word. And it sounds so weird I can't believe he's saying it. But he says it again: "Resurrect." Resurrect, just like that. Like it's something you just do. "Resurrect." And all these dead guys start getting up. The whole field is sort of moving. They're all talking and laughing. But it's different talk. Kind of soft and peaceful. Some of these guys—I don't think they ever talk like that at home. But they're resurrected now, see—so they're different...

(Pause. She shakes off the mood.)

MAN. THIS IS WEIRD. I GOTTA STOP THIS. Get me out of this stuff.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Here you go.

(BECKWITH helps her off with the jacket. WILSON holds onto the jacket a little longer.)

RANGER WILSON. This is real, isn't it? Some boy really fought in this in 1862.

WIDOW BECKWITH. I expect so.

RANGER WILSON. You think he made it back alive?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Hard to tell. That jacket was found in pretty poor condition.

RANGER WILSON. I hope he made it.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Not many did.

RANGER WILSON. Yeah. Well... He made it this time. He made it today...

WIDOW BECKWITH. He sure did.

(BECKWITH takes the jacket, folds it up, puts it on the top of her pile. WILSON sits, deep in thought, watching as BECKWITH packs up.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. It's a real kick, huh? The guys get high on this stuff, no kidding...

RANGER WILSON. I don't see how you do it...

WIDOW BECKWITH. Well, there's an art to it, like anything.

RANGER WILSON. ...not take sides. How can you not take sides?

WIDOW BECKWITH. Like I told you. I'm a pro. I take my side and my side only. Can't afford to let the war stuff get in the way of my work.

RANGER WILSON. So if the South won...you'd be up at the mansion in Richmond, selling beer and pretzels to President Jeff Davis...?

(BECKWITH looks a little perplexed.)

Or maybe down on the farm, selling shackles and leg irons...?

WIDOW BECKWITH. No. Hey look, I told you...

RANGER WILSON. (Looking at the jacket:) That soldier took my side. He couldn't afford it either. Maybe he didn't even want to. But he did it. He put on that blue jacket. He took my side.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Tell you what, Ranger W. No charge for the uniform rental. It's on me today.

(WILSON just stares at her. BECKWITH is nervous, shifty, wiping away sweat.)

These things tend to build up a lotta tension, you know...? I could use a cool one right about now—if you don't mind.

RANGER WILSON. Go ahead.

WIDOW BECKWITH. One for you?

RANGER WILSON. No.

(WILSON gets back into her Park Service jacket, puts on her tool belt, as BECKWITH opens the beer and drinks.)

WIDOW BECKWITH. I guess you're still gonna report me, huh.

RANGER WILSON. You do your job, I do mine.

WIDOW BECKWITH. Well, that's ok. The fact is... I'm getting good and ready to quit this war work anyway.

RANGER WILSON. (*Doesn't buy it:*) Uh huh.

WIDOW BECKWITH. I mean it. This whole Civil War scene's getting kinda played out. So I'm thinking...what I'd really like to do now is move on to 1866...get myself over to St. Joe Missouri and hit the Oregon Trail Re-Enactment. I hear there's tons of Living History opportunities out west. That's where I'm gonna stake my claim.

RANGER WILSON. So now it's Cowboys and Indians.

WIDOW BECKWITH. And Pioneers and Gold Miners... And—hey—you know what? I bet I could start a *Donner Party* Re-enactment!

(*Grabs the luggage carrier and starts out.*)

California here I come!

(*She's gone. WILSON spots the empty beer can on the ground.*)

RANGER WILSON. Hey Widow Beckwith—wait up. You forgot something.

(*Picks up the beer can.*)

Come back here, Beckwith! This is LITTERING! You hear me? THIS IS TWO HUNDRED BUCKS!

(*She exits in pursuit of BECKWITH.*)

MEG'S VOICE. Clara? I've got the van ready! Cart's all packed in and ready to go... Clara?

LUCYGALE'S VOICE. Cecilia—?

(LUCYGALE and MEG enter in Modern Dress: jeans and T-shirts of their favorite bands. They carry duffle bags packed with costumes. LUCYGALE's hand is freshly bandaged.)

MEG. I thought they were here...

LUCYGALE. They're probably up at the box supper and assembly dance. Cecilia's a wonderful dancer. But it's hell in those pointy little boots.

MEG. Tell me about it. I'm just glad to be out of that corset.

(Sits, stretches out.)

How's the hand feel?

LUCYGALE. Fine I guess... I don't know...

(She sits.)

I got a lot of stuff to think about before I come out here again. No more uniforms, that's for damn sure.

MEG. Yeah. I'm sorry about—you know—the war and all.

LUCYGALE. It wasn't just that.

MEG. LucyGale...? Are you ok?

(Pause. LUCYGALE looks at her.)

LUCYGALE. Brittany.

MEG. What—?

LUCYGALE. Brittany Amber if you must know... Brittany Amber Scruggs.

MEG. That's your real name?

LUCYGALE. Horrible isn't it? I like the old one better. How about you?

MEG. Meg Barton. Well, Margaret really. Margaret Barton. No middle name.

LUCYGALE. Hey now, come on. I told you mine.

**THIS PLAY IS
NOT OVER!**

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