



A WAR-TIME ROMANCE

BY

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Extract

A SMITH SCRIPT

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‘A war-time romance’

By john collings

Characters

Peggy (Smith).
Jack (Goldstein).
Dad (Daddy Smith).
Mother (Ma Smith).
Buddy (Bow).

July 1940

Peggy
Jack
Dad

Scene 1.

Dim lighting.

THE AIR RAID SHELTER.
A couple meet in the air raid shelter.

We hear an air raid siren.

SOUND EFFECTS: AIR RAID SIREN.

(After a few moments a young girl runs on stage (carrying a gas mask) from stage left and sits on a chair that is down stage right. She is slowly followed by an old man who stands at back of the stage, stage left. The girl looks around the air raid shelter with some trepidation clutching her hand bag, looking especially at the roof of the air raid shelter).

SOUND EFFECT: ENDS.

SOUND EFFECT: SOUND OF AIRCRAFT.

SOUND EFFECTS: BOMBS EXPLODING IN THE DISTANCE.

(Peggy flinches).

(Shortly afterwards a young man runs on stage (carrying a gas mask) from stage left and sits on a chair that is down stage left opposite the girl. The girl looks across at the boy, and gives a little smile, the boy looks across at the girl, and gives her a half smile back, not a word is spoken. The girl and the boy both flinch as the distant bombs explode. The old man at the rear of the stage remains perfectly calm observing the couple but not distracting the audience from looking at the couple).

SOUND EFFECTS: ENDS (short burst).

(Jack looks around the air raid shelter).

JACK: Strange there is no one else in here...

(Peggy looks around the air raid shelter).

PEGGY: Mm strange, scary.

JACK: Not a soul.

PAUSE

PEGGY: What's your name?

JACK: Jack Goldstein. What's yours?

PEGGY: Peggy Smith. "Do you live local?"

JACK: In that cottage on Moon Road with my Uncle. My father was teaching English in Germany, when he met my Mother. They married and had me. Then when Hitler came to power I was sent to England to live with my Uncle.

PEGGY: Moon Road it's just a few roads along from ours. I've lived in our house all me life.

PAUSE

JACK: They say Hitler is going to cross the channel and invade England.

PEGGY: My mother says that Hitler's going to put people in concentration camps.

JACK: That's right and Hitler's gassing all the Jews.

PEGGY: We are going to be next?

JACK: Not if I can help it. I love this country, this country took me in when I was a refugee and I will defend it with my life.

PEGGY: But we're going to lose this war I just know it.

JACK: No we won't we will win.

PEGGY: We are all going to die.

JACK: Don't think like that.

PEGGY: It's true.

JACK: I just want to fight.

PEGGY: Why?

JACK: Because when I was in Germany, I saw what the Nazi's were doing to the Jews.

Beating up Jewish people and shooting them in the street.

PEGGY: But you'll get killed.

JACK: I don't care.

PEGGY: I'm so frightened. My mother says all sorts of wicked things will happen with them Germans.

JACK: If I get hold of Hitler I'll pull his little moustache off.

(Jack pulls a black comb out of his top pocket and puts it under his nose and marches about the stage doing the goose step while taking off a stereotype German interspersed with words from the English language in a German accent, adlibbing and funny).

JACK as HITLER: Hineter formacle! big bottom! shamts un vimo! One ball no good! Hi titty! Al krap un waco! bomb England! Founder flop! We bomb fish and chip! Under conca! We bomb cockney! Title spit! You vil be shot at dawn, vat is your last meal request!
(guidance only)

JACK as HIMSELF: Oh er, I'll have pie and mash.

JACK as HITLER: Vot is zis pie and mash.

JACK as HIMSELF: Oh yes with licker please.

JACK as HITLER: Vot is vicker?

JACK as HIMSELF: Oh it's...oh never mind just shoot me.

JACK as HITLER: Oh velly well. (Jack holds a pretend rifle up and shoots) Bang!

(Jack falls on the floor and remains perfectly still).

(After a few moments Peggy rushes to where he lays and leans over him).

PEGGY: Are you all right Jack? (laughingly)

(Jack does not answer).

PEGGY (CONT): Jack!

(Peggy goes to help Jack stand up - he pulls her over playfully - they laugh - he helps her up - hold for a few seconds as they look into each other's eyes - a brief connection).

(Peggy and Jack stare passionately at each other - before the siren for the all clear sounds).

SOUND EFFECTS: THE ALL CLEAR SOUND EFFECT.

PEGGY: Oh the all clear.

JACK: Was it? I didn't hear a thing.

PEGGY: That was fun. But thank God we're still alive. (Peggy breaks away).

(Peggy stands up to go and brushes herself down).

JACK: Can I see you home?

(pause)

PEGGY: Er yes but (pause) but mother...No I'll be alright.

JACK: It will be dark out there now, there will be looters.

PEGGY: Looters. Well walk me to end of our street.

JACK: Great. Best to be safe than sorry.

PEGGY: Are you sure you're not a looter? (jokingly)

JACK: I might be.

(Jack grabs Peggy).

JACK (CONT): Err give us your purse.

PEGGY: Oh you are funny Jack. (Peggy playfully slaps him). You remind me of my Dad in many ways.

JACK: Mind you, he is probably a lot more brainer than me.

PEGGY: Yes you're probably right! (they both laugh and giggle as they exit stage left arm in arm, followed by the Old Man).

SOUND EFFECTS: CRACKLING OF BUILDINGS ON FIRE, FIRE ENGINE & ITS BELL.

BLACKOUT.

**Peggy
Jack
Mother
Dad**

Scene 2.

Light like a kitchen from the 1940's (Evening light)

MOTHER'S KITCHEN. TABLE WITH DRAW, ON TOP OF TABLE A TEAPOT AND 2 CUPS AND 2 SAUCERS. 2 CHAIRS.

Jack walks Peggy home and meets Mother and is rejected.

(Peggy enters stage left).

(Peggy moves back towards stage left wing).

PEGGY: You can come in! Mothers not here.

(Jack enters stage left).

JACK: Thanks.

(Peggy place her hand on top of the tea pot).

PEGGY: It's still warm. Can I get you a cup of tea?

JACK: Yes please- I'd love a cup.

(Peggy pours the tea while speaking).

PEGGY: Mothers not back yet. She must of got caught in the air raid.

JACK: I'm sure she'll be alright.

PEGGY: Yes.

JACK: Where does your father work?

PEGGY: Oh. He got killed in the early part of the war. He was a lovely man. I still feel his presence. I was looking into the mirror yesterday and I thought I saw him standing behind me. I quickly turned round but he'd gone. It must of been a trick of the light.

(Pause).

(Peggy has a distant look).

(Mother enters from stage left). (Hold at the entrance).

(Mother clears her throat - hands on hips).

PEGGY (CONT): Mother I was worried about you.

MOTHER: Who's this?!

JACK: (smiling) Jack. It's Jack.

PEGGY: (nervously) We got caught in the air raid.

MOTHER: Do I know you from somewhere? (she goes and scrutinizes Jack).

JACK: I don't think so.

MOTHER: I never forget a face, it will come back to me.

PEGGY: Jack walked me home.

MOTHER: Did he now. Yer you shouldn't be walking home with strangers my girl.

PEGGY: Yes. But Jack's not exactly a stranger now mother!

MOTHER: Now I remember who you are, you're that German spy who lives in Moon Road!

JACK: I'm not a German Spy.

MOTHER: People have heard you talking to the Germans on your radio!

JACK: Never!

MOTHER: And you get letters from Germany! You're a German Spy!

PEGGY: (hesitatingly) Is this true!

JACK: No! Don't be ridiculous. I had a German mother that's all - my father is English and I've lived most of my life since childhood in London with my uncle. I had to flee Germany because I am Jewish.

MOTHER: Get out of my house! Yer got a dam cheek coming here!

(Mother moves towards Jack).

MOTHER (CONT): You're not laying a hand on my daughter! You're a Nazi!

(Mother makes a grab for Jack and pulls at his coat as she speaks).

PEGGY: Mother! Please don't!

MOTHER (CONT): I'll show you! Coming here spying on us!

PEGGY: Mother leave him alone!

MOTHER: I'll teach you!

PEGGY: Oh you better go Jack!

JACK: I'm going!

(Jack exits stage left).

PEGGY: Mother why do you always dislike any men I bring home?

MOTHER: Well what you mixing with a German spy for!

PEGGY: He's not a German spy!

MOTHER: You'll get yourself in trouble my girl! If the people round here catch you going with a German there'll cut your hair off!

PEGGY: My hair! (Peggy holds her own hair)

MOTHER: Yes your hair!

(PAUSE).

MOTHER (CONT): In the next few days the German Army will come and there'll start rounding up all the old people like me and putting them in concentration camps.

PEGGY: Oh Mother you tell me the same thing every night.

MOTHER: Oh you'll be alright, you'll only be forced to have babies with the German soldiers.

PEGGY: I won't let them touch me!

MOTHER: You won't have a choice!

PEGGY: I'll kill myself first!

MOTHER: You'll have the whole of your life ahead of you, go along with what they say.

(PAUSE).

PEGGY: Oh I wish Dad was here, he'd know what to do.

MOTHER: I'm off to bed.

(MOTHER EXITS STAGE LEFT).

(PEGGY STARTS TO CRY).

PEGGY: (Talking to herself). I don't want to be forced to have babies with the German Soldiers...

(Dad enters stage left into the shadows).

DAD: You won't have to darling.

PEGGY: Who's there, is that you Jack?

DAD: No. It's your father.

PEGGY: Dad. But you're dead.

DAD: I know. But they let me come back.

PEGGY: Who let you come back?

DAD: I'm not allowed to say Peggy.

PEGGY: But why have you come back?

DAD: Because you were in so much pain.

PEGGY: I can't believe what I'm seeing.

(PAUSE).

PEGGY (CONT): Why did you leave me I was so happy!

DAD: I had to.

PEGGY: But I needed you!

DAD: But Peggy.

PEGGY: You hurt me!

DAD: I know...I'm sorry.

PEGGY: Everything was perfect in my life! Then you went off and left me!

DAD: Would you prefer if I go, I can see I'm upsetting you.

(Dad turns to go).

(PAUSE).

PEGGY: Of course I don't want you to go I love you Dad.

DAD: Peggy, I have always loved you.

(PAUSE).

(PEGGY MOVES CLOSER TO DAD).

PEGGY: What's going to happen Dad?

DAD: What with the war? I can only say that one day the war will be over and there will be great celebrations.

PEGGY: Why can't I believe you?

DAD: You must.

(Peggy moves near to her Dad and places her head on Dad's shoulder Dad places his arm tightly around her).

(Hold tableau for a few seconds then).

BLACKOUT.