

**Ernie Levine, Dodger Fan**

**by Phillip W. Weiss**

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**Synopsis: During World War Two an American soldier remains true to his team, the Brooklyn Dodgers.**

**Tagline: Loyalty knows no bounds.**

### **Characters**

**Ernest “Ernie” Levine – A guy from Brooklyn**

**Barney Hermachevski – Ernie’s army pal**

**Tillie Levine – Ernie’s mother**

**Sol Levine – Ernie’s father**

**Mister Friedman – Ernie’s boss**

**Molly O’Brien – Ernie’s girlfriend**

**Abner MacKnight – chairman of the local draft board**

**Iris Clarkson – MacKnight’s secretary**

**Drill Sergeant McVoy – Ernie’s sergeant**

**Private Kincaid – an American soldier**

**Lieutenant Otto Hedinger – a German interrogator**

**General Devereau – a US Army general**

**A German soldier**

**A German Guard**

Scene 1

*Time: May 18, 1942*

*Location: Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York, United States of America*

*Place: the apartment of Sol and Tillie Levine. A young man is holding an envelope. His name is Ernie Levine. He is nineteen years old. He lives with his parents Tillie and Sol Levine. Ernie opens up the envelope, removes the letter that is inside and examines it. He is shocked.*

**ERNIE**  
*(anguish)*

Noooooooooooo!

*Tillie enters. She is a middle aged woman.*

**TILLIE**  
*(alarmed)*

What is it?

**ERNIE**

They can't do this to me!

**TILLIE**

What can't they do to you? What are you talking about?

**ERNIE**

No way!

**TILLIE**

Ernie, you're making no sense! What is the matter?

**ERNIE**

Ma, if they think I'm going, they have another thing coming to them!

*Sol enters*

**SOL**

What's all the screaming? I could hear you a block away!

**ERNIE**

Pop, they ain't taking me and I ain't going!

SOL

What are you talking about? (to *Tillie*) What's he talking about?

TILLIE

(to *Sol*)

I don't know. I was in the kitchen making dinner and all of a sudden I hear him screaming like I don't know what.

SOL

(to *Ernie*)

See what you've done! Scaring your mother.

ERNIE

(*distraught*)

Aw, gee, pop, I didn't mean to scare anyone. I just don't know what to do. What am I gonna do?

SOL

About WHAT?

ERNIE

About going into the army, that's what!

SOL

What's that in your hand?

ERNIE

It's the notice from the draft board.

SOL

Well, what does it say?

ERNIE

Here, pop, you read it. I can't. It's too painful. *Ernie gives Sol the letter.*

**SOL**

*(reads the letter aloud)*

Dear Ernest Levine. This is to inform you that you have been reclassified to 1A, effective immediately. You are to report to Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, New York, on June 2, 1942 for induction. Sincerely, Abner MacKnight, chairman, draft board number fifty-three, eastern district of Brooklyn, New York, department of Selective Service, United States Army. *Sol puts down the letter. (to Ernie)* I thought you were exempt because you worked in a war industry.

**ERNIE**

I thought so too. I gave them the letter from Mister Friedman saying that I was an essential worker. Now they're pulling a fast one on me. I'm not gonna take this lying down. I'll write to the mayor, call my congressman. I gotta do something. I can't afford to go. I just can't. Don't you understand?

**TILLIE**

Of course we understand, son. We love you!

**ERNIE**

I know you do, ma. You and pop are the best parents a guy could ever have. But I got to deal with this. If they make me go to the army, I don't know what I'll do.

**SOL**

Don't do anything rash, son. You gotta try to remain calm.

**TILLIE**

Listen to your father, Ernie. He knows best about these things.

**SOL**

I remember when I received my draft notice back in seventeen. Boy, was I shocked. I didn't think they'd ever call me, a kid from the slums of New Jersey, with flat feet no less and a hacking cough, but if you gotta go, you gotta go, as the saying goes.

**ERNIE**

Pop, I'm in no mood for sayings. This is serious. If they take me, my entire life could be ruined!

**TILLIE**

Oh my poor baby! *(to Sol)* He's our only child. Can the government actually draft him?

**SOL**

*(to Tillie)*

Yes, they can, but the law is the law and we have to comply. Otherwise, we'll all be in trouble.

**TILLIE**

Oh my, what are we going to do? I don't want to lose my baby.

**SOL**

I don't want to lose him either, but in times like this we have to be brave.

**ERNIE**

I don't mind being brave either, but there's a time and a place for everything, and right now this ain't the time or the place!

End of scene 1

## Scene 2

*Time: the next day*

*Place: The interior of an office located in Friedman's Department, on Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn. In the office is a middle-aged man, Herbert Friedman, owner of the store, and his secretary/receptionist, a cute-looking teenage girl, Molly O'Brien. Molly is on the phone.*

**MOLLY**

You'll have to speak to Mister Friedman about that.... I'll let him know that you called ... No, you don't need to leave your telephone number ... Hey, there's no need for you to get fresh! (*slams the phone down*) (*to Friedman*) The nerve of that guy!

**FRIEDMAN**

Who was it?

**MOLLY**

Some guy looking for a job.

**FRIEDMAN**

I don't know what to do. They're calling me, trying to get a deferment, but I can't help them. Yet they keep calling. What did he say that got you so worked up?

**MOLLY**

He asked me if I wanted to go "dancing."

**FRIEDMAN**

What's wrong with that?

**MOLLY**

When a boy says he wants to go dancing, he's thinking about doing a lot more than just dancing, if you get my drift, and I'm not that kind of girl.

**FRIEDMAN**

In my day, if a young man asked a young lady to dance, that's what he meant. A boy knew how to treat a girl. There was none of the tom-foolery that goes on today. I blame it on the movies. Kids are watching too many movies today, that's the problem. Somebody really got to do something about Hollywood.

**MOLLY**

Well, I'm a good girl, you can count on that.

**FRIEDMAN**

Of course you are, Molly. That's why I hired you.

**MOLLY**

If my father ever caught a boy getting fresh with me, he'd give him a whupping that he'd never forget.

**FRIEDMAN**

And he would deserve it, too.

**MOLLY**

And my mother would do even worse. We go to church every Sunday.

**FRIEDMAN**

I wonder where Ernie is.

**MOLLY**

Probably hanging out with his pals in the pool hall down the street.

**FRIEDMAN**

He's late, and I need him.

**MOLLY**

You want me to call his home?

**FRIEDMAN**

He don't have a phone.

**MOLLY**

Oh, I forgot.

**FRIEDMAN**

I'll give him ten more minutes, and if he doesn't show by then, then ...



*Ernie enters. He's flustered and out of breath.*

**ERNIE**

Sorry, Mister Friedman, for being late. It won't happen again.

**FRIEDMAN**

I hope not, Ernie. If there's one thing I detest, it's tardiness. I told you that when I hired you.

**ERNIE**

I know, sir. *(to Molly)* Good morning, Molly. You're looking as lovely as ever.

**MOLLY**

*(smiling)*

Thank you, Ernest. And good morning to you.

**FRIEDMAN**

Enough of that small talk, you two love birds. Go make eyes at each other on your own time. Now, Ernie, we received a shipment of model airplanes yesterday. Stock them. After that, I want you to deliver some teddy bear stuffing to Sheinblum's on the Bowery. You got that?

**ERNIE**

Yes, sir. Oh, one other thing: could I speak with you in private?

**FRIEDMAN**

Something serious?

**ERNIE**

Very serious.

**FRIEDMAN**

I was just on my way out to meet a supplier. I'll tell you what: how about later this afternoon?

**ERNIE**

That would be swell, Mr. Friedman.

FRIEDMAN

Good. *(to Molly)* If any more people call about getting a job, just take their names and tell them we'll be in touch. Okay?

MOLLY

Yes, Mister Friedman.

FRIEDMAN

Good. *(Friedman exits)*

MOLLY

Mister Friedman's such a swell guy.

ERNIE  
*(glum)*

Yeah, I guess so.

MOLLY

Hey, why so down?

ERNIE

I don't wanna bother you with my problems.

*Molly gets up from her desk and goes over to Ernie.*

MOLLY

Hey, you big bozo, what are friends for?

ERNIE

Well, since you put it like that, maybe I should tell you.

MOLLY

Yes, maybe you should.

ERNIE

Well ... yesterday I got home from work and I got a letter from the draft board saying that I was now 1A and have to report for induction.

Oh my!

**MOLLY**  
*(shocked)*

Exactly my reaction too.

**ERNIE**

When do you have to leave?

**MOLLY**

In about three weeks.

**ERNIE**

What about us?

**MOLLY**

What about us?

**ERNIE**

You know that, well, that I ... like you.

**MOLLY**

And I like you too, Molly.

**ERNIE**

But now that you'll be leaving, what's gonna happen with us?

**MOLLY**

Nothing's gonna happen to us because the whole thing is one big mistake. Besides, I can't afford to leave, I just can't. It would kill me.

**ERNIE**

Ernie, don't talk that way!

**MOLLY**

**ERNIE**

That's how I feel about it.

**MOLLY**

I never heard you talk that way before, so ... manly.

**ERNIE**

Well, now you've heard it. I ain't gonna take this lying down. I know a war's going on, but I just ain't ready to go. I can't. Not yet.

**MOLLY**

Well, Ernie, you know you can count on me to be on your side.

**ERNIE**

You know, Molly, you're one swell gal.

**MOLLY**

And you're one heck of a guy.

**End of scene 2**

Scene 3

*Place: Same as scene 2*

*Time: 5:00 PM*

*Mr. Friedman is at his desk looking at some papers. Molly is gone for the day. Ernie enters.*

ERNIE

Mister Friedman?

*Friedman puts down his papers and looks at Ernie.*

FRIEDMAN

Ernie! Did you stock the airplanes and make the delivery like I told you?

ERNIE

Took care of everything, sir.

FRIEDMAN

Good. If you keep your nose clean and work hard, you'll go far in this business.

ERNIE

Gee, thanks Mister Friedman. Uh, would it okay if I speak with you now about that serious matter I mentioned to you this morning?

FRIEDMAN

What serious matter? Why, is there something wrong?

ERNIE

Well, yes sir, there is.

FRIEDMAN

Well, what is it?

ERNIE

Well, it's like this ...

**FRIEDMAN**

Stop pussyfooting around and just get to the point! It's been a long day and I want to close the store.

**ERNIE**

Mister Friedman, I received a notice from the draft board informing me that I was now 1A and ordering me to report for induction.

**FRIEDMAN**

Is that all?

**ERNIE**

*(surprised)*

Is that all!? Isn't that enough!?

**FRIEDMAN**

My dear boy, we all go through things like this. I remember back in 1898 when I was about your age, war broke out with Spain, and I answered the call to duty. It was a big step to take, but it made a man out of me. Now we're at war again and now it's your turn to serve. And I forgive you for being late this morning.

**ERNIE**

But sir, what about that letter you gave me saying that I was an essential worker? I gave it to the draft board. Now they're telling me that I'm 1A. I just can't go.

**FRIEDMAN**

You better can that talk right now before I forget that you're like a son to me.

**ERNIE**

But sir, you don't understand!

**FRIEDMAN**

What's there to understand? You have your duty! Now do it! We'll manage while you're away serving your country.

**ERNIE**

I'm glad to know that. But you just don't understand.

**FRIEDMAN**

Ernie, have you gone daffy? Must I call an ambulance and have you taken to Bellevue?

**ERNIE**

Aw, gee, Mr. Friedman, I ain't losing my mind. It's a lot more serious than that.

**FRIEDMAN**

Then what's gnawing at you?

**ERNIE**

I can't leave because, well ...

**FRIEDMAN**

I don't have all day, son, so spit it out!

**ERNIE**

You know that I'm a Dodgers fan.

**FRIEDMAN**

Yes, I do.

**ERNIE**

And last year I saw the Dodgers play thirty times.

**FRIEDMAN**

So, you're a Dodgers fan.

**ERNIE**

That's right. And that's the problem. All I can think about is the Brooklyn Dodgers. I worry about them, even dream about them. They had such a great year last year. That's because I was there for them. I live for the Dodgers. They're more important to me than anything else in the world. Please, Mister Friedman, help me. Write another letter for me. Call the draft board. Do something! Please! (*Ernie starts crying*).

**FRIEDMAN**

Do your parents know about this?

**ERNIE**

You're the first one I've told. I couldn't tell my pop, he wouldn't understand. He thinks following sports is a waste of time.

**FRIEDMAN**

He's right. It's frivolous and ruins the mind.

**ERNIE**

But, sir, you're wrong! It's greatest thing in the world!

**FRIEDMAN**

Baseball players are a bunch of drunks. Why you waste your money idolizing a bunch of drunks is beyond me.

**ERNIE**

Gee, I thought you'd understand.

**FRIEDMAN**

Ernie, it's about time you grow up.

**ERNIE**

I am grown up, grown up enough to get drafted. What should I do?

**FRIEDMAN**

Report for induction as ordered. What else can you to do?



**ERNIE**

Maybe tell the draft board that my parents can't work?

**FRIEDMAN**

But that would be lying, Ernie. Your father has a job working in the butcher store. They would find out.

**ERNIE**

Then help me! Please, Mister Friedman! Write another letter. Please!

**FRIEDMAN**

My, oh my. Pull yourself together, boy! Get all this baseball nonsense out of your head. Do your parents know that you've been drafted?

**ERNIE**

Yes.

**FRIEDMAN**

And what did they say?

**ERNIE**

Nothing much.

**FRIEDMAN**

Nothing much? They must have said **SOMETHING!**

**ERNIE**

I really can't remember.

**FRIEDMAN**

Maybe I should call your father.

**ERNIE**

Oh, please don't. That would make things worse.

**FRIEDMAN**

Make what things worse? You're not making yourself clear. Or are you nothing but a draft dodger?

**ERNIE**

Please, sir, I'm no draft dodger. I just can't go, please believe me! I just can't do it!

**FRIEDMAN**

Well, you better do it! Otherwise you'll be shot for desertion, and that won't look too good on your record. So, you do what you've been ordered to do, and don't give me any more back talk.

**ERNIE**  
*(glum)*

Yes, sir. *(Ernie exits)*

**FRIEDMAN**

*(to himself, scoffing)*

Can't leave the Brooklyn Dodgers. What rubbish!

End of scene 3

Scene 4

*Time: 9 AM, the following day*

*Place: The reception room of Draft Board 53. Sitting at a desk is a secretary, Iris Clarkson. A man enters. He is Abner MacKnight, chairman of the draft board.*

**MacKNIGHT**  
*(to Iris)*

Have all the notices been mailed?

**IRIS**

Yes, they have.

**MacKNIGHT**

Good. We got to keep on top of things.

**IRIS**

Yes, sir. Last week my brother was called up.

**MacKNIGHT**

Oh, was he?

**IRIS**

Yes, he's twenty-five years old and just got a job as a bookkeeper.

**MacKNIGHT**

There's a war on and the army needs men, fast.

**IRIS**

He's willing to do his duty, but my mother is worried out of her head. She don't know how we'll manage financially when he's gone.

**MacKNIGHT**

It's tough, but we all have to make sacrifices. Tell your mother that she should be comforted with the knowledge that her son will be part of something important and necessary.

**IRIS**

I'll tell her that but I don't think that it'll do much good. She's sickly and can't work, and my dad can't hold a job, and ....

**MacKNIGHT**

Yes, Iris, I get the point. Things are rough, but if we all pull together we'll win this war fast and then things will get back to normal.

**IRIS**

I hope so. My brother isn't exactly the fighting type. He's more of a book worm, if you know what I mean.

**MacKNIGHT**

Don't worry about that. The army will put him to good use.

**IRIS**

If you say so, sir.

*MacKnight exits. Ernie enters.*

**ERNIE**

*(to Iris)*

Excuse me, miss. I want to speak to the man in charge.

**IRIS**

And who may you be?

**ERNIE**

My name is Ernie Levine and I want to speak with the man who sent me the notice that I'm now 1A. I thought I had an occupational deferment.

**IRIS**

You can appeal in writing.

**ERNIE**

Forget about that! I want to speak with the man in charge now!

IRIS

Please lower your voice.

ERNIE

I'm sorry for getting a little loud, but it's urgent that I speak with him now. I'm so upset that I feel like I'm gonna burst.

IRIS

Just calm yourself, okay, and I'll see if Mister MacKnight can see you. *Iris picks up a telephone.* Mister MacKnight, there's a young man here who wants to speak with you about his classification to 1A. ... I told him to appeal in writing but he refuses to leave. He says it's urgent that he speak with you. ... Okay, I'll tell him. *(to Ernie)* Mister MacKnight will be right out.

ERNIE

Thank you, miss. You've been very helpful.

IRIS

You're welcome.

*MacKnight enters.*

MacKNIGHT  
*(to Iris)*

Who wants to speak with me?

IRIS  
*(to MacKnight)*

He does *(points to Ernie)*

MacKNIGHT  
*(to Ernie)*

How may I help you?

ERNIE

Well, sir, it's about the notice you sent me reclassifying me to 1A. You gotta reverse that. Please! I can't leave yet.

MacKNIGHT  
What's your name?

ERNIE  
Ernie. Ernest Levine.

MacKNIGHT  
Where do you live?

ERNIE  
In Brownsville.

MacKNIGHT  
Yes, I remember your case. You were granted a 2B employment deferment. However, after further review of your case, it was determined that you were not employed in a war-related industry, so you were reclassified to 1A. I hope that explanation helps you. Good luck. *MacKnight tunes to exit.*

ERNIE  
But, sir, please! I just can't go right now! I'm an only child. My parents need me at home. I'm working to support them. You gotta believe me!

MacKNIGHT  
Look, son, we all have to make sacrifices. We're at war. You know that.

ERNIE  
But ...

*Tillie and Sol enter.*

ERNIE  
Ma, pop! What are you doing here?

TILLIE  
We want to speak to the man who sent you that notice.

SOL  
That's right.

**MacKNIGHT**  
*(to Sol and Tillie)*

Who are you?

**SOL**  
We're Ernie's parents. I'm Sol Levine and this is my wife Tillie.

**MacKNIGHT**  
Glad to meet you. Now, how can I help you?

**TILLIE**  
It's about the letter you sent my son. How can you draft him? He's our only child, our only son.

**MacKNIGHT**  
It's the law.

**SOL**  
What do you mean, it's the law? Don't you have any compassion? Our son is needed at home. He is helping us financially.

**MacKNIGHT**  
Look, my hands are tied. Besides, sometimes you have to do your patriotic duty.

**SOL**  
Please, don't lecture us about patriotic duty. We get up, go to work, keep house, raise our son, go about our business, vote in every election, and pledge allegiance to the flag every Flag Day. We're as patriotic as they come.

**TILLIE**  
That's right. I was born right here in Brooklyn and Sol, he's from Passaic, New Jersey.

**ERNIE**  
*(to MacKnight)*  
That's right, sir, they are. American as apple pie, just like me.

**TILLIE**

You know, Mister MacKnight, that is your name, right? It just ain't right to force someone to go into the army.

**MacKNIGHT**

It's the law. I told you that already. You told me you're patriotic law abiding Americans. Then show it! Answer your country's call.

**SOL**

Just hold on there, mister. During the last war I did answer my country's call. I served overseas with General Pershing. Now my son's being asked to answer his country's call, but we need him at home.

**ERNIE**

That's right. They need me.

**MacKNIGHT**

*(to Sol)*

I sympathize with you, but the law is the law, and there's nothing I can do to change that. Look, I carefully examined your son's file and I can't find any basis for restoring his 2B deferment. Working in a store that sells wind-up toys and stuffed dolls simply does not qualify as a defense related industry. Plus you are gainfully employed. I'm sorry.

**TILLIE**

*(angry)*

That's all you can say? You're sorry? Well, let me tell you, you haven't heard the last of this. We'll contact our congressman. He'll do something. You watch!

**ERNIE**

Now you see what you done? You've upset my parents.

**MacKNIGHT**

*(to Ernie)*

You're beginning to upset me too. Instead of hiding behind your mamma's skirt, why don't you try acting like a man?



**SOL**

There's no need to talk to my son that way.

**MacKNIGHT**

If your son ignores that letter he will be charged with desertion. That's a serious felony and I'll personally see to it that he's prosecuted.

**TILLIE**

My son's a criminal because he doesn't want to be drafted? Are we in the United States or Russia?

**MacKNIGHT**

Look, everyone, I'm busy. I have a lot of work to do, so if you don't mind, I wish you all a good day. *(to Iris)* Get Colonel LaPorte on the phone.

**IRIS**

Yes, Mister MacKnight. *MacKnight exits.*

**TILLIE**

The nerve of him, talking to us like that!

**SOL**

I'll tell you, it wasn't that way in the first war. No sir, it wasn't. We were treated with respect.

**ERNIE**

*(to Iris)*

Look, miss, please tell Mister MacKnight that we appreciate the time he gave us, but that he gotta reconsider his decision.

**IRIS**

I'll tell him, but it won't do any good. There are thousands of cases like yours. Remember that. Have you thought about joining the navy?

**ERNIE**

Army, navy, it's all the same to me. I just can't go in right now.

**IRIS**

Why not? What's really bugging you?

**ERNIE**

*(speaks to Iris aside)*

Miss, if I told you, you wouldn't understand.

**IRIS**

You're probably right.

**TILLIE**

Let's go, Ernie. Let's get out of here. *Ernie, Tillie and Sol exits.*

End of scene 4

## Scene 5

*Time: July 6, 1942*

*Place: interior of a barracks at an army basic training post somewhere in the United States. A group of soldiers enter. They are dressed in fatigues. In the group is Ernie, another soldier named Kincaid, and a drill sergeant, Lester McVoy. McVoy is angry.*

**McVOY**  
(berating Ernie)

You are without a doubt the worst excuse for a soldier I have ever seen in my sixteen years in this man's army.

**ERNIE**

Yes, sir.

**McVOY**

Don't you sir me, you hear? You sir me one more time and I'll knock your block off. I'm onto you, you hear! On ... to ... you!

**ERNIE**

Yes ... sergeant. Whatever you say.

**McVOY**

Quit that snide attitude. What the hell were you trying to do with that rifle on the range?

**ERNIE**

What did I do wrong? All I did was point a rifle up in the air. No big deal!

**McVOY**  
(Mimicking, scoffing)

Pointed a rifle up in the air! No big deal! (angry) Hey, lunkhead! Who are you trying to fool? You were pointing your rifle right at me, and at us! (McVoy makes a sweeping gesture with his hand). Don't try to game me, boy. Or better yet, try it. Please! That'll give me reason to kick your butt from here back to Brooklyn. That is where you're from, right, Levin?

**ERNIE**

Yes, sergeant. And it's LeVEEN not Levin.

**McVOY**  
*(to Ernie)*

Don't you sass me, boy, you hear? I'll say your name any way I want. Levin, Leveen. Who cares? Let me tell you something: I don't like you. From the first moment you set foot in this unit I knew you were up to no good. The army can't afford screw ups like you. But here you are! And I gotta make a soldier outta you. You try to fight me on this and you will lose, big time! Do I make myself clear? Now, if you muck up one more time, you will find yourself in such deep crap that even a pig wouldn't give you the time of day. *(to the unit)* And as for the rest of you boys, anyone thinks they can get over on me, well just test me out and see how far you get. We ain't playing games! There's a war going on and you're all gonna be part of it, sooner than you think. When will that idea sink into your thick skulls? Ugh! It's no use wasting any more of my breadth on you slobs. *(McVoy exits)*

**KINCAID**

See what you've done. The sarge is ragging all of us because of you!

**ERNIE**

I didn't do anything.

**KINCAID**

That's what they all say.

**ERNIE**

Who's they? I just hear you talking.

**KINCAID**

Hey, Levine, nobody likes being here, so quit your griping.

**ERNIE**

You're the one griping. Listen, I'm telling you that I need to be somewhere else. I didn't volunteer for this. I got pulled in, shanghaied.

**KINCAID**

Yeah. You and a million other guys.

**ERNIE**

I don't care about the million other guys. If they're okay with it, that's their business.

KINCAID

What's with you?

ERNIE

Just get off my case already. What are you: pals with the sarge or something?

KINCAID

That's uncalled for. I'm no suck up, okay.

ERNIE

You'd fool me.

KINCAID

Aw, can the attitude already. It's a good thing I'm not the sarge.

ERNIE

And if you were, what would you do, tough guy?

KINCAID

Don't make me show you!

ERNIE

Ah, get outta here! *Kincaid takes a swing at Ernie who ducks. Ernie grabs Kincaid and twists his arm behind his back.* You do that again and I may forget that I'm a nice guy. Get it? Save the rough stuff for overseas. We're just talking, okay?

KINCAID

Yeah, alright. Let go of my arm. *Ernie releases Kincaid.*

ERNIE

It's not that I don't want to serve, it's just that I can't.

KINCAID

You want to serve but you can't? That makes no sense.

**ERNIE**

You just don't understand.

**KINCAID**

You're right, I don't and I think nobody else does either. Like what are you trying to do, get kicked out of the army?

**ERNIE**

Yeah, maybe I am.

**KINCAID**

You know that won't happen. Half the guys in here are trying to get out.

**ERNIE**

So what? Me and the army just don't mix. Let's leave it at that.

**KINCAID**

Awe, quit your acting, will ya? You're as tough as they come.

**ERNIE**

Maybe I am. What of it? I just don't want to be here.

**KINCAID**

You know, I never met a guy like you. You're like ... weird.

**ERNIE**

You lookin' to go another round with me?

*Another soldier enters. His name is Barney Hermachevski. He's holding a newspaper.*

**BARNEY**

Hey guys, what's up?

**ERNIE**

What do you got there?

Today's paper. **BARNEY**

Where'd you get the paper? **KINCAID**

I found it at the rifle range. **BARNEY**

So what's new in the news? **KINCAID**

There's a war going on. **BARNEY**

Very funny, wise guy. **ERNIE**

**BARNEY**  
*(to Ernie)*  
Who's being a wise guy? He asked and I answered. Why you being so touchy? We all saw what you did today at the rifle range.

**ERNIE**  
So you wanna get on my case too?

Ah, you're not worth it. **BARNEY**

**ERNIE**  
Any news about the Dodgers?

**BARNEY**  
I don't know. Lemme see. *(Barney turns to sports section. Soon he is giggling.)* Great news! The Braves beat the Dodgers 12 to 2 at, of all places, Ebbets Field. I wish I were there to see that! I'll sleep good tonight! I can't stand dem Bums!

ERNIE

Oh, yeah?

BARNEY

Yeah. I happen to be from Boston and the Braves are my team. Whoever says anything against the Braves is asking for it.

KINCAID

You know, Ernie here, happens to be from Brooklyn.

ERNIE

And the Dodgers happen to be my team.

BARNEY

Is that so? I didn't know that. (*sarcastic*) Well, please accept my apology, and condolences.

ERNIE

Why don't you kiss my ass?

BARNEY

My team trounces your team and I have to kiss YOUR ass? Bend over and I'll kick it instead.

ERNIE

Listen, you, if you do not disappear in five seconds, I'm gonna make you eat that newspaper.

BARNEY

I'd like to see you try.

ERNIE

Five ... four ... three ... two ... one. You asked for it!

*Ernie and Barney start brawling. Punches are being thrown. Soon both of them are rolling on the floor. Sergeant McVoy enters.*



**McVOY**

What's all the racket? *(to Kincaid)* You, help me break them up. *(to Ernie and Barney)* Okay you two guys, up! *(Kincaid pulls Ernie to his feet while McVoy restrains Barney)* Now, which one of you bozos started this fight?

**ERNIE**

I did.

**BARNEY**

No way, I did.

**McVOY**

Oh, you wanna play it like that? To tell you the truth, I really don't care who started the fight. While you're in this company, you will treat each other as brothers, get it? The Germans and Japs are the enemy, not your fellow American soldier, am I making myself clear? I'm sure this ruckus broke out over something totally idiotic. Right? C'mon guys, ain't I right?

**ERNIE**

Okay, you're right, sarge. Whatever you say.

**McVOY**

What am I gonna do with you, Levin? You think you're such a smart ass. Well, guess what? You don't know shinola! Am I making myself clear? *(to Barney)* And you, big shot, you're the joker with the alphabet name. Right?

**BARNEY**

Yeah.

**McVOY**

Yeah? Where do you think you are, out on the street?

**BARNEY**

Yes, drill sergeant.

**McVOY**

That's better. By the way, smart pants, I saw you steal that newspaper. It happened to be mine. You now owe me a nickel. And if I ever see you steal anything again, you will regret the day that you were born, and it will be even worse if you ever again steal anything that's personally mine. Do I make myself clear?

**BARNEY**

Yes, drill sergeant.

**McVOY**

Well, then, I bid you two screw ups a good evening. *McVoy grabs the newspaper from the floor and exits.*

**BARNEY**

I'm still glad the Braves beat the Dodgers.

**ERNIE**

Up yours too!

End of scene 5

## Scene 6

*Time: October 1942*

*Place: The Levine apartment. Ernie enters. He's wearing his army uniform and carrying his duffle bag.*

ERNIE

Where is everyone?

*Ernie puts his duffle bag on the floor. Tillie enters. She is shocked.*

TILLIE

Ernie! My boy! You're home!

*Tillie hugs Ernie; she is so overwhelmed by emotion that she starts crying.*

ERNIE

C'mon, mom. It's okay. I'm home.

TILLIE

Why didn't you tell us you'd be coming home?

ERNIE

It was a last minute thing and I couldn't get to a phone. I hope I didn't surprise you too much.

TILLIE

Oh, Ernie, I'm just so happy that you are home. Wait till your father gets home. Will he be surprised! *Tillie hugs Ernie again.* My boy is home. My wonderful, beautiful boy!

*Sol enters.*

TILLIE  
(to Sol)

Look who's here!

SOL  
(elated)

Ernie! When did you get in?

ERNIE

Just a few minutes ago, pop.

*Sol and Ernie look at each other and then embrace.*

**SOL**

It's good seeing, boy! We think about you all the time. Your mother's worried sick over whether you're okay. My, I'm glad that you're home.

**ERNIE**

Pop, I'm glad to be back too.

**SOL**

How long you plan to stay?

**ERNIE**

I was granted ten-days' leave, so I guess ten days.

**SOL**

Ten days. That'll give us plenty of time to do lots of things.  
(to *Tillie*) What's cooking tonight?

**TILLIE**

I was gonna make some spaghetti but since Ernie's home, I think I'll make meat loaf. (to *Ernie*) How's that sound?

**ERNIE**

Sounds great, mom. My stomach's already growling.

**SOL**

So, how's the army been treating you?

**ERNIE**

C'mon, pop. You know the answer to that question.

**TILLIE**

Really, Ernie, we want to know. Is everything alright?

**ERNIE**

Of course. Everything's just fine. I get along with everyone. We're all the best of buddies. As for my sarge, he treats me like I'm, well, like I'm his kid brother. He's constantly teaching me all kind of stuff about being a soldier. Wow, it makes me wonder why I made such a fuss about being drafted.

**TILLIE**

Oh, my boy, I'm so glad you like it in the army.

**SOL**

Where are they sending you next?

**ERNIE**

There's been talk about us being sent somewhere overseas. We're not sure yet. It's all just rumors. By the way, how's Mister Friedman?

**SOL**

He misses you. You were the best worker he had. Just last week I ran into him on Pitkin Avenue and the first thing he asked about was you. I tell you, he's one helluva decent guy, even if he did pay you peanuts.

**ERNIE**

What about Molly?

**TILLIE**

Who's Molly?

**ERNIE**

You know, Mister Friedman's office girl.

**TILLIE**

Oh her! Yes, sweet little thing. I guess she's doing good. She came by last week asking about you.

**SOL**

Are you sweet on her?

**ERNIE**

I don't know. We're just friends.

**TILLIE**

She said she'd come by again. Did you happen to write to her?

**ERNIE**

No, I didn't write to nobody. Had nothing to write about.

**TILLIE**

You should write, you know. We're all wondering how you're doing.

**ERNIE**

Like I said, I'm doing great.

*Sound of knocking on the door.*

**SOL**

Who could that be?

**ERNIE**

*I'll get the door. Ernie gets up and opens the door. It's Molly. Ernie and Molly stare intently at each other. Molly!*

**MOLLY**

Ernie!

**ERNIE**

Molly. It's ... good to see you.

**MOLLY**

When did you get in?

**ERNIE**

Just a few minutes ago.

**MOLLY**

I came by last week asking about you. You never write.

**ERNIE**

Yeah, ma told me. By the way, come on in.

*Ernie takes Molly's hand and guides her in. They continue holding hands.*

**TILLIE**

*(to Molly)*

How're your parents, Molly?

**MOLLY**

Just fine, Mrs. Levine. They've been asking about Ernie too.

**TILLIE**

Oh, that's so nice of them.

**SOL**

*(to Molly)*

Would you like to join us for dinner? *(to Tillie)* Ma, make another place at the table.

**MOLLY**

You don't have to go to the trouble. I was just visiting.

**ERNIE**

No. Stay. I want you to stay.

**MOLLY**

If that's the way it has to be, then I'll stay. It's the least I can do for the war effort. *(all laugh)*

**ERNIE**

You know, Molly, it's really swell seeing you again. It really is. I've been thinking a lot about you lately.

**MOLLY**

And I've been thinking a lot about you too. You in an army uniform.  
So handsome! My hero!

**SOL**

Maybe you two kids wanna be alone?

**ERNIE**

*(to Molly)*

Do we?

**MOLLY**

*(to everyone)*

Let's eat!

End of scene 6



## Scene 7

*Time: two hours later. Ernie, Molly, Tillie and Sol are sitting at a dinner table. Dinner is just ending.*

SOL

That was a wonderful dinner, Tillie.

TILLIE

Oh, thank you. I'm glad you liked it. *(to Ernie and Molly)* I hope you liked the dinner.

ERNIE

It was swell, ma, just fine. After all the junk they feed you in the army, this is a welcome change, I'll tell you that.

MOLLY

Thanks for inviting me, Mrs. Levine. *(to Ernie)* Oh, before I forget, Mister Friedman says hello.

ERNIE

Tell him hello for me too, will ya?

MOLLY

I will.

SOL

So Molly, are you still in school?

MOLLY

I'm in my senior year. I'll be graduating next year.

SOL

That's good. I should have stayed in school.

TILLIE

Oh, Sol, now stop. You know you had to go to work to help support your family.

**SOL**

Yes, I know. But still, everyone should get a good education. *(to Molly)*  
So, young lady, stay in school and graduate!

**MOLLY**

Yes sir, I will.

**ERNIE**

That's right, Molly, stay in school. Maybe even go to college.

**TILLIE**

College? Oh, that would be nice.

**MOLLY**

Gee, Mrs. Levine, I don't know if my parents would like that. They want me to go to work, make money.

**TILLIE**

That's important too, sweetheart. You listen to your parents.

**ERNIE**

What's wrong with Molly going to college?

**TILLIE**

Nothing, son. But if her parents are saying no, then they must have their reasons and Molly, being a good girl, should listen to her parents.

**ERNIE**

After I graduated high school, some of the guys at school went to City College while me, like a schnook, went to work in a toy store. Now I'm in the army while those guys got good jobs.

**MOLLY**

Maybe after the war, you'll be able to go to college too.

**ERNIE**

The problem is: who knows when this war will end.

**SOL**

You know, son, we needed you to go to work. You know that. I wasn't making enough to support the three of us and Ma could do just so much laundry work on account of her back.

**ERNIE**

Pop, I didn't mean to pop off. You know I'd do anything for you and mom.

**TILLIE**

(to Sol)

How were we blessed with such a fine boy for a son? It's just too bad that he has to go away again. (*Tillie starts crying*)

**ERNIE**

Aw, mom, please don't cry.

**TILLIE**

I can't help it. You're away, your father is trying his best to earn a living, and I'm just so worried.

*Sol puts his arm around Tillie.*

**SOL**

There, there, mother. There, there.

**TILLIE**

I'm so sorry. Please forgive me.

**MOLLY**

Oh, no, Mrs. Levine. Please don't apologize. We're all worried about Ernie.

**ERNIE**

(to Molly)

You worry about me?

**MOLLY**

Of course I do. All the time.

**ERNIE**

I didn't know you felt that way about me.

**MOLLY**

Now you know.

**SOL**

*(to Tillie)*

Mother, let's go into the living room. Maybe the kids would like to be alone.

**TILLIE**

Yes, Sol, maybe you're right.

*Sol and Tillie get up from the table and exit. Ernie and Molly are now alone.*

**MOLLY**

That was a wonderful dinner.

**ERNIE**

Yeah, dinner was good, real good.

**MOLLY**

When do you have to go back?

**ERNIE**

Ten days from now.

**MOLLY**

Maybe we can do some stuff together while you're here.

**ERNIE**

Like what?

**MOLLY**

Go to the movies, go to Central Park or Coney Island.

**ERNIE**

It's a little too cool for Coney Island. Unless, of course, you like cool weather.

**MOLLY**

I wouldn't mind it at all as long as I was with you.

**ERNIE**

Wow, Molly, I really don't know what to say.

*Molly puts her hand on Ernie's arm.*

**MOLLY**

You know I'll be waiting for you.

**ERNIE**

That's wonderful to hear, Molly. I think you're swell.

**MOLLY**

If it were summer, we could go for a swim at the pool or maybe go to a ball game at the Polo Grounds.

**ERNIE**

*(hostile)*

The Polo Grounds? To go see the Giants? Are you serious?

**MOLLY**

Sure, why not? My uncle is a security guard and could get us great seats, right behind home plate.

**ERNIE**

What makes you think I'd travel all the way to upper Manhattan to see the Giants? I'd rather go back to the army. Next thing you'll be telling me is that you wanna see the Yankees! Well, I'll have none of that, you hear! My team is the Dodgers, the greatest baseball team in the world. If you root for any other team, then you gotta be a dumbbell.

**MOLLY**

You think I'm dumbbell?

**ERNIE**

I don't know what to think. One moment you're making eyes at me and holding my hand and telling me that you'll be waiting for me, and now this! How could you do this to me? To us? C'mon babe, how can you not root for the Dodgers?

**MOLLY**

I never said I don't root for the Dodgers.

**ERNIE**

But you wanna go to the Polo Grounds! No Dodger fan would ever want to go to the Polo Grounds! Ever!

**MOLLY**

Are you serious?

**ERNIE**

I'm serious. The Dodgers have been my team for as long as I can remember. My whole life revolves around the Dodgers. I worry about them the way you worry about me! To love me you gotta love the Dodgers.

**MOLLY**

I don't understand why you're getting so wound up over this. It's only baseball.

**ERNIE**

*(yells)*

Only baseball!? How can you say that? Are you not an American?

*Sol enters.*

**SOL**

What's all the commotion?

**MOLLY**

Mr. Levine, I'll be leaving now.

SOL

Did you two have an argument?

MOLLY

That's okay, Mr. Levine, don't worry. (*frigid, to Ernie*) Good night, Ernie.

ERNIE

(*to Molly*)

Don't you want me to walk you to the train?

MOLLY

Don't bother. *Molly exits.*

SOL

What happened? When we left, the two of you were practically love birds. I return and she's giving you the cold shoulder.

ERNIE

If I told you, pop, you wouldn't understand.

End of scene 7.

## Scene 8

*Time: January, 22, 1944*

*Place: Beachhead at Anzio, Italy. A combined US-British military force is trying to outflank German forces located inland. The goal: gain control of Italy. Ernie is crouching behind an embankment. Sounds of bullets ricocheting all around. Another soldier quickly enters and ducks behind the embankment. The soldier is Barney.*

**BARNEY**

My feet are all wet.

**ERNIE**

Stop you're complaining, pal. We have bigger things to worry about. *(Ernie looks up; he is surprised, and annoyed).* It's you!

**BARNEY**

Holy smokes! I can't believe it. Thousands of GIs crawling all over this place and I wind up being stuck here with you. Great.

**ERNIE**

Listen, jack, I'm not good with this either. Just looking at you gives me the heaves. You and your Boston Braves.

**BARNEY**

Me and my Boston Braves? What about you and your Brooklyn bums? For all I care you and your bums can go take a flying jump in the lake.

**ERNIE**

Watch what you say or else.

**BARNEY**

Or else, what?

**ERNIE**

You're lucky there's a war going on. Otherwise I'd clobber you now.

**BARNEY**

Tough guy, huh? Meanwhile look who's crouching down like a dog.



**ERNIE**

Look who's talkin'.

**BARNEY**

We were told this operation would be a cake walk.

**ERNIE**

Some cake walk.

**BARNEY**

What are we even doin' here?

**ERNIE**

Something to do with trying to outflank the Germans.

**BARNEY**

Outflank the Germans? On this crummy beach?

**ERNIE**

Hey, what do want me to say? You asked me and I told you. We're here, the Jerries are there, they're pissed at us and now I'm pissed.

**BARNEY**

Pissed at what?

**ERNIE**

*(angry)*

At you! The Krauts! The army! At everyone! Okay? You happy now?

**BARNEY**

Hey, pal ...

**ERNIE**

Shut up! I didn't ask to be here. *(More sounds of ricocheting bullets).*  
Where the hell's our air cover?

**BARNEY**

Where's the rest of your squad?

**ERNIE**

I don't know. We all got separated.

**BARNEY**

Mine too.

*Ernie starts checking his rifle and packing up his gear.*

**BARNEY**

What are you doing?

**ERNIE**

Moving out, and the quicker the better so I don't have to be around the likes of you.

**BARNEY**

What the hell did I do to you to get you so steamed up at me?

*Ernie gets up to leave. More sounds of ricocheting bullets. Ernie quickly crouches down.*

**ERNIE**

Damn! They got us pinned down.

**BARNEY**

Holy smokes! You hear that?

**ERNIE**

What? I don't hear nothin' except bullets and you flappin' your mouth. *Pause.* Wait a minute, I hear something too.

*Ernie and Barney pick up their rifles. Suddenly a bunch of men rush onto the stage. They are German soldiers. They are pointing their rifles at Ernie and Barney.*

**GERMAN SOLDIER**

Hands auf! (*Ernie and Barney don't move*) Hands auf!

*The German soldier motions with his hands for Ernie and Barney to drop their rifles and raise their hands. Ernie and Barney comply.*

Now we're cooked. **ERNIE**

Stille! Nicht sprechen! **GERMAN SOLDIER**

Okay, okay! **BARNEY**

Raus! **GERMAN SOLDIER**

We're moving! **ERNIE**  
*(to the German Soldier)*

*German Soldier shoves Ernie.*

Dumkopf! **GERMAN SOLDIER**

Get your mitts off me! **ERNIE**

*The German soldier hits Ernie on the back with the butt of his rifle. Ernie collapses.*

**GERMAN SOLDIER**  
When I tell you to move, move. The next time I won't be so nice. For you the war is over.

End of scene 8

## Scene 9

*Time: March, 2, 1944*

*Place: an interrogation room at Stalag 51, a German prisoner of war camp. Two men are on stage: Ernie and another man, Lieutenant Otto Hedinger of the Wehrmacht. Both men are seated across a table facing each. On the table is telephone and a folder filled with papers.*

HEDINGER

According to our records, you are Private First Class Ernest Levine.

ERNIE

That's correct.

HEDINGER

You are an American.

ERNIE

That is correct too.

HEDINGER

You were taken prisoner at Anzio. Correct?

ERNIE

Right again. So far you're batting a thousand.

HEDINGER

Batting a thousand? That's a baseball term. You like baseball?

ERNIE

Yeah. I follow it some.

HEDINGER

I follow it too.

ERNIE

*(surprised)*

Germans follow baseball? That's news to me.

**HEDINGER**

Of course we do! Who hasn't heard of Babe Ruth?

**ERNIE**

Everyone's heard of Ruth. Too bad he didn't play for the Dodgers.

**HEDINGER**

I agree. The Dodgers happen to be my favorite team.

**ERNIE**

*(astounded)*

They are? They happen to be my favorite team too!

**HEDINGER**

When I lived in Brooklyn I went to Ebbets Field all the time. Saw dozens of games there.

**ERNIE**

*(elated)*

You did!? I can't believe it! Here I am in a POW camp in the middle of nowhere and run across a Dodger fan who happens to be German. What's the odds of that happening?

**HEDINGER**

We Dodgers fans have to stick together.

**ERNIE**

You bet we do.

**HEDINGER**

Do you happen to be Jewish?

**ERNIE**

With a name like Levine, what else would I be?

**HEDINGER**

Good. I like Jews. I had lots of Jewish friends in Brooklyn.

**ERNIE**

How long did you live in Brooklyn?

**HEDINGER**

Eight years. I worked in a warehouse somewhere near the bay.

**ERNIE**

My uncle has a metal shop at Bush Terminal.

**HEDINGER**

Interesting. Did you work in your uncle's shop?

**ERNIE**

For a couple of summers.

**HEDINGER**

Doing what?

**ERNIE**

Shipping clerk, stock boy, stuff like that. Why were you living in Brooklyn?

**HEDINGER**

I was visiting my aunt who lived in, I think they call it Sheepshead Bay.

**ERNIE**

I know Sheepshead Bay. Great place. Fancy restaurants. I once went out with a girl who was from Sheepshead Bay.

**HEDINGER**

Did anything develop?

**ERNIE**

Nah. It didn't work out.

**HEDINGER**

Why?

**ERNIE**

She was too stuck up. Nothing I did was good enough for her. So I dumped her.

**HEDINGER**

Women. The more you think you know about them, the less you really know.

**ERNIE**

You got that right. Answer me straight: do you really believe in that master race crap?

**HEDINGER**

Of course not. It's all rubbish.

**ERNIE**

I'm glad to hear that.

**HEDINGER**

It's too bad we have to meet under such unfortunate circumstances. I think you and I could have become friends.

**ERNIE**

I think you're right.

**HEDINGER**

But just because I'm sitting here and you there doesn't mean we can't swap stories, does it?

Absolutely not.

ERNIE

That's good to know.

HEDINGER

Could you do me a favor?

ERNIE

If I can.

HEDINGER

ERNIE  
Could you find out for me if the Dodgers made any trades during the off season?

I'll be glad to.

HEDINGER

Gee, thanks!

ERNIE

HEDINGER  
Well, Private First Class Levine, I've found our conversation very pleasant. We'll be speaking again soon.

Can I leave now?

ERNIE

HEDINGER  
You may leave. *Ernie exits. Hedinger makes a phone call.* Major von Streithausen. ... Hello, major, Hedinger here. ... I made excellent progress today ... I think we have found our perfect dupe. Even though he's a Jew he seems to be clueless and naïve and easily open to manipulation. Give me a little more time and I'll be able to gain his cooperation ... I told him I lived in Brooklyn. ... He believed me. ... He likes the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team. ...



He made a very strange request. ... He asked me to find out if the Dodgers made any trades during the off season. Frankly, I had no idea what he was talking about. ... I'll make up something. He won't know the difference. ... Yes, major. I realize that we don't have much time. ... I know that Sturmbahnführer Eberhardt is demanding that the prisoner be turned over to the Gestapo. ... He does realize, of course, that Levine is a prisoner of war. ... Yes sir. I'll keep you informed. Good night.

End of scene 9

## Scene 10

*Time: Three days later.*

*Place: same as scene 9.*

HEDINGER

How are you being treated?

ERNIE

Me and the other guys could use a little more food.

HEDINGER

We are doing the best we can to provide adequate rations.

ERNIE

Try to do better.

HEDINGER

I have something for you. *Hedinger gives Ernie an envelope.*

ERNIE

What is this?

HEDINGER

Open it and find out. *(Ernie opens the envelope and removes a sheet a paper.)* Read it. *(Ernie examines the sheet of paper.)*

ERNIE

*(reading aloud)*

Knute Rockne, Sammy Baugh, Benny Leonard, Sid Lookman. *(Ernie tosses the paper aside.)* What IS this?

HEDINGER

What you asked for.

ERNIE

*(angry)*

What are you trying to do? Play me for a sap? The names on that paper aren't even baseball players!

**HEDINGER**

You need to lower your voice and remember where you are.

**ERNIE**

You're using my home town team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, to try to con me. I have nothing more to say to you.

**HEDINGER**

Look, Private Levine, you may not believe this but I am the only person standing in the way of you being sent to a concentration camp.

**ERNIE**

I thought I was a POW.

**HEDINGER**

But you're also a Jew.

**ERNIE**

And you're a Nazi. What's your point?

**HEDINGER**

That you must play ball with us, to use a pun.

**ERNIE**

Screw your pun.

**HEDINGER**

*(placating)*

Look, the names on that paper were an honest error. My clerk knows nothing about baseball. Please accept my apology.

**ERNIE**

Can your apology. You really let me down. I thought you were a Dodger fan. It was all a bunch of malarkey.

HEDINGER

I am a Dodger fan.

ERNIE

No you're not. You're just saying that.

HEDINGER

Does that mean we can't be friends?

ERNIE

Who says we're friends? You called me a Jew and threatened to send me to a concentration camp. Some friend.

HEDINGER

*(drops all pretensions of friendship)*

I have no more time to waste with you. We need someone to keep us informed of what the prisoners are saying in the barracks, and we want you to be that person.

ERNIE

So you want me to be a snitch.

HEDINGER

In return for your cooperation, I will give you my personal assurance that you will not be sent to a concentration camp.

ERNIE

What if I say no?

HEDINGER

I'm afraid that refusing is not an option.

ERNIE

Maybe to you it ain't, but to me it is. You know, when you told me you were a Dodger fan, I actually believed you. I thought we could be pals, real friends. Boy was I wrong. You just wanted to use me. You couldn't care less about the Dodgers and that hurts. Is there anything else you wanna talk to me about?

**HEDINGER**

**You're making a big mistake.**

**ERNIE**

**You Nazis made a big mistake when you started this war. Go find somebody else to be your stoolie. Now lemme outta here. By the way, it's LUCKman, not Lookman.**

**End of scene 10.**

## Scene 11

*Time: The next day.*

*Place: Interior of a prisoners' barracks at Stalag 51. Ernie and Barney are talking. They are alone in a corner of the barracks.*

**ERNIE**

We gotta bust outta here, today.

**BARNEY**

Keep your voice down, will you?

**ERNIE**

Aw, pipe down. Nobody can hear us.

**BARNEY**

The guards outside can hear us.

**ERNIE**

Bunch of flatfoot dopes.

**BARNEY**

Armed with rifles and machine guns.

**ERNIE**

Aw, go on! That's all show. If they were gonna kill us, they woulda done it already.

**BARNEY**

How do you know that?

**ERNIE**

Because we're still alive, that's how I know. I also know that I gotta get outta here. Soon it's gonna be spring training and I gotta find out what's gonna be with the Dodgers. I've been away from them too long.

**BARNEY**

Here we are stuck in this dump, slowly being starved to death, and all you can think about is the Dodgers.

**ERNIE**

Yeah, that's right. What else is there?

**BARNEY**

Surviving. Winning the war.

**ERNIE**

What are you? Whacky? We're alive and we're gonna win the war. So what are you worrying about? That's the difference between a Braves fan and a Dodger fan. When things get rough, you guys bail out while we Brooklyn Dodgers fans never give up.

**BARNEY**

You and your Dodgers. You're nuts.

**ERNIE**

How'd you like a knuckle sandwich?

**BARNEY**

Here we are, prisoners, and you're still wound up about the Dodgers.

**ERNIE**

Yeah. That's right. And if you don't like it, tough on you!

**BARNEY**

Lay off already.

**ERNIE**

Aw, stop ya whining.

**BARNEY**

How come they wanted to talk to you?

**ERNIE**

They wanted me to be a snitch but I told 'em to go jump in the lake.

**BARNEY**

Why you?

**ERNIE**

Ask them. I don't run this place. Haven't they talked to you?

**BARNEY**

No.

**ERNIE**

So why you askin'?

**BARNEY**

Forget it.

**ERNIE**

Well, something must be eatin' you because you brought it up. I bet you think I'm a spy. (*laughs*)

**BARNEY**

I was just talking. (*scoffing*) Nah, you're no spy. You're too goofy.

**ERNIE**

There you go with your name calling again.

**BARNEY**

Why are we even arguing?

**ERNIE**

Because you're team's the Braves while mine's the Dodgers.

**BARNEY**

I can't even begin to imagine what must be going on inside your head.



**ERNIE**

I'll tell ya. Inside my head there's a little birdy telling me to get outta here so I can find out what the heck's goin' on with my Dodgers. Now, are you gonna go with me or do I hafta do this alone?

**BARNEY**

Why me?

**ERNIE**

Two heads are better than one, right? And I don't wanna leave you here so you can bad mouth the Dodgers.

**BARNEY**

What if we get caught? Then our geeses are cooked.

**ERNIE**

Who says we're gonna get caught?

**BARNEY**

I hope you don't think I'm a coward.

**ERNIE**

Who said anything about being a coward? Busting outta here has nothing to do with being a coward or hero. It's about re-connecting with my team, period. Why is that so hard to understand?

**BARNEY**

Because you want to risk your life for a baseball team.

**ERNIE**

Not for A baseball team, THE baseball team. And you should feel the same way about your team.

**BARNEY**

You're insane.

**ERNIE**

You don't get it, do you? I live for baseball. It's my life. Being stuck here is slowly choking me. That's why I gotta get out. Without my Dodgers I'll die.

**BARNEY**

The Dodgers don't even know that you're alive.

**ERNIE**

So what? They don't need to know that I'm alive. It's for me to know that they're alive and doing well.

**BARNEY**

Are all you Dodger fans so wacky?

**ERNIE**

Can the name calling. All I wanna know is if you're going with me.

**BARNEY**

Let me think it over.

**ERNIE**

What's there to think over?

**BARNEY**

What's there to think over? Plenty. Like, you don't even like me.

**ERNIE**

Of course I don't like you. You're a Braves fan. How can I like someone who roots for the Boston Braves?

**BARNEY**

And if I do say yes, then what?

**ERNIE**

Don't worry about that. Leave the planning up to me. Let's take a walk outside.

*Lights go out. When lights go on. Ernie and Barney are standing outside of the barracks. A German guard enters.*

**ERNIE**  
*(to the guard)*

Hey, Heinie!

*The guard stops.*

**GERMAN GUARD**

Was machst du, denn?

**ERNIE**

Guten tag!

**GERMAN GUARD**

Danke.

*Suddenly Ernie punches the guard knocking him out. Ernie grabs the guard's rifle.*

**ERNIE**  
*(to Barney)*

Let's go. And make sure you take his wallet. Brooklyn Dodgers, here I come! *(Lights go out.)*

*(From off stage comes the sounds of men yelling and rifle fire)*

End of scene 11.

## Scene 12

*Time: Six months later*

*Place: a room at an army post in Brooklyn, New York. Standing at a podium is a US Army brigadier general, Arnold Devereau. Behind and at Devereau's right are Ernie and Barney. They are in dress uniform and are standing at attention. On the podium are two small boxes. Tillie, Sol, and Molly are seated in front of the podium.*

**DEVEREAU**

*(to Tillie, Sol, and Molly)*

Dear guests. Today is a special day. Today the United States Army shall honor two of our finest soldiers, Private First Class Barney Hermachevski and Private First Class Ernest Levine. Their story is now well-known but worth repeating. Six months ago both of these men, at great risk to their own lives, successfully and on their own initiative escaped from the notorious German prison of war camp, Stalag 51, located deep inside Germany. Relying entirely on themselves and each other, they managed to evade recapture and finally, after a long and arduous journey through hundreds of miles of enemy territory, reached friendly lines. During their journey to freedom they collected a wealth of information on enemy deployments and dispositions. This information has saved countless American and allied lives. In recognition of their valiant service, we are convened today to award each of them the Distinguished Service Cross. *Devereau opens a box, removes a medal, affixes it on Barney's jacket, salutes Barney and then shakes Barney's hand. Devereau then opens the second box and repeats the same formality with Ernie.* Gentleman, on behalf of the United States Army and the American people I want to congratulate you for your truly exceptional acts of courage. An entire nation is grateful for the service you have rendered. You are hereby dismissed! *Devereau exits. Tillie, Sol, and Molly join Ernie and Barney.*

**TILLIE**

*(to Ernie)*

Thank the Lord! My boy is home! *(Tillie hugs and kisses Ernie).*

**ERNIE**

It's great seeing you again, mom.

**SOL**

*(to Ernie)*

Congratulations, son. We're sure glad you're back. *(Sol and Ernie hug)*  
*(to Barney)* And you too, my boy.

**BARNEY**

Thank you, sir. (*Sol and Barney hug*)

**MOLLY**

Hey, big shot, remember me?

**ERNIE**

(*to Molly*)

Molly! How are you? I hope you're not still sore at me.

**MOLLY**

(*to Ernie*)

I couldn't stay mad at you. What's important is that you're home.

**SOL**

(*to Ernie*)

How long will you be on leave?

**ERNIE**

For a month.

**MOLLY**

A month? That's swell. We can do a lot of catching up. (*to Barney*)  
I have a girl friend who would like to meet you.

**BARNEY**

I'm game if she is.

**MOLLY**

We could go on a double date. Have a lot of fun.

**ERNIE**

That sounds great to me. Where'd you like to go?

**MOLLY**

I'll give you a little hint: batter's up!

**ERNIE**

Those words are like music to my ears!

*(All laugh. Ernie and Molly kiss.)*

The end