

We'll Meet Again

Junior Script

by

Gawen Robinson & Keith
Dawson

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CONTENTS

Cast List.....	2
Speaking Roles By Number Of Lines	3
Cast List In Alphabetical Order (With Line Count)	5
Characters In Each Scene.....	7
List Of Properties.....	9
Production Notes	11
Scene One: A Classroom Somewhere In London	13
Track 1: We'll Meet Again	13
Track 2: SFX Air Raid Siren Into Air Raid	14
Track 3: SFX Air Raid Siren.....	15
Track 4: SFX All Clear Siren	16
Track 5: SFX Air Raid Siren Into Air Raid	17
Track 6: SFX Air Raid Siren.....	18
Scene Two: Evacuation	19
Track 7: SFX Prime Minister's Speech	19
Track 8: Now It's Time To Say Goodbye	20
Track 9: SFX Train Station Background	20
Track 10: Now It's Time To Say Goodbye (Reprise)	23
Scene Three: The Arrival.....	24
Track 11: I'll Take That One.....	27
Track 12: Pastimes And Playtimes	32
Scene Four: Schooldays	33
Track 13: Life Goes On.....	35
Track 14: Dear Mom And Dad	38
Scene Five: Back Home	39
Track 15: Stiff Upper Lip - Adults And Children	41
Track 16: SFX Air Raid Siren.....	42
Track 17: SFX Air Raid Underscore.....	42
Track 18: SFX Loud Bomb Explosion	43
Track 19: SFX All Clear Siren	44
Scene Six: Pied Piper Two (Somewhere In Wales).....	45
Track 20: Bathnight Blues.....	49
Track 21: Pastimes And Playtimes (Reprise)	53
Scene Seven: Mrs Pugh's Kitchen.....	54
Track 22: Knock On Door	57
Scene Eight: Armistice	58
Track 23: We'll Meet Again (Reprise)	61
Photocopiable Lyrics.....	63

CAST LIST

N.B. In the following list, the bracketed number shows the number of spoken lines each role has.

An asterisk (*) before the character's name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.

The Evacuees

Tommy	(16)
Alan	(39)
Terence	(65)
Harry	(46)
Eileen	(39)
*Margaret	(33)
Ronald	(34)
Alice	(5)
Jack	(4)
Lil	(5)
William	(4)
Ray	(12)
Christine	(8)
Sam	(0)
Wendy	(27)
Bert	(10)
Child 1	(2)
Child 2	(2)
Child 3	(2)
Child 4	(1)
Child 5	(1)
Child 6	(2)

Parents of Evacuees

Mr Arnold	(19)
Mr Nunn	(15)
Mrs Fitzgerald	(16)
Mrs Lloyd	(16)
Mrs Davidson	(28)
Mr Roach	(27)

London

Miss Reynolds	(48)
Mr Townsend	(2)
PM Chamberlain	(7)
Minister	(16)
Station Master	(6)
Passer By	(4)
Teacher 1	(2)
ARP Warden	(16)

Country Village

Geoff	(14)
Barfoot	(43)
Mollie	(5)
Jimmy	(8)
*Villager 1	(4)
*Villager 2	(4)
*Villager 3	(1)
*Villager 4	(1)
*Villager 5	(2)
*Villager 6	(1)
Janet Lightly	(3)
Mr Jones	(7)
Mrs Howe	(6)
Mr Glenister	(9)
Teacher 2	(31)
Bus Driver	(4)

Wales

Brian	(26)
Beryl	(17)
Emmie	(9)
Jeannie	(1)
Mrs Pugh	(40)
Kath	(26)
Mrs Evans	(5)
John	(19)
Paul	(7)
Peter	(0)
Mary	(7)
Jean	(8)
Gillian	(6)
Mr Jenkins	(10)
Aunty May	(38)

In addition to the Characters listed above a Chorus of Soldiers, Sailors, Women, Children a Family Group and a Band will be required.

PM Chamberlain is an optional Character and may be replaced with Track 7 SFX Prime Minister's Speech if so wished.

SPEAKING ROLES BY NUMBER OF LINES

N.B. In the following list, the number shows the number of spoken lines each role has.

An asterisk (*) before the character's name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.

Terence.....	65
Miss Reynolds	48
Harry	46
Barfoot	43
Mrs Pugh	40
Alan.....	39
Eileen.....	39
Aunty May.....	38
Ronald	34
*Margaret.....	33
Teacher 2.....	31
Mrs Davidson.....	28
Wendy.....	27
Mr Roach	27
Brian.....	26
Kath	26
Mr Arnold	19
John	19
Beryl.....	17
Tommy.....	16
Mrs Fitzgerald	16
Mrs Lloyd	16
Minister	16
ARP Warden.....	16
Mr Nunn	15
Geoff	14
Ray.....	12
Bert	10
Mr Jenkins.....	10
Mr Glenister	9
Emmie.....	9
Christine.....	8
Jimmy.....	8

Jean	8
PM Chamberlain (Optional)	7
Mr Jones	7
Paul.....	7
Mary.....	7
Station Master.....	6
Mrs Howe.....	6
Gillian.....	6
Alice	5
Lil	5
Mollie.....	5
Mrs Evans	5
Jack.....	4
William	4
Passer By	4
*Villager 1	4
*Villager 2	4
Bus Driver	4
Janet Lightly.....	3
Child 1.....	2
Child 2.....	2
Child 3.....	2
Child 6.....	2
Mr Townsend	2
Teacher 1.....	2
*Villager 5	2
Child 4.....	1
Child 5.....	1
*Villager 3	1
*Villager 4	1
*Villager 6	1
Jeannie	1

CAST LIST IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER (WITH LINE COUNT)

N.B. In the following list, the number shows the number of spoken lines each role has.

An asterisk (*) before the character's name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.

Alan.....	39
Alice	5
ARP Warden.....	16
Aunty May	38
Barfoot	43
Bert	10
Beryl.....	17
Brian.....	26
Bus Driver	4
Child 1	2
Child 2.....	2
Child 3.....	2
Child 4.....	1
Child 5.....	1
Child 6.....	2
Christine.....	8
Eileen.....	39
Emmie.....	9
Geoff	14
Gillian.....	6
Harry	46
Jack.....	4
Janet Lightly.....	3
Jean	8
Jeannie	1
Jimmy.....	8
John	19
Kath	26
Lil	5
*Margaret.....	33
Mary	7
Minister	16
Miss Reynolds	48

Mollie.....	5
Mr Arnold	19
Mr Glenister	9
Mr Jenkins.....	10
Mr Jones	7
Mr Nunn	15
Mr Roach	27
Mr Townsend	2
Mrs Davidson.....	28
Mrs Evans	5
Mrs Fitzgerald.....	16
Mrs Howe.....	6
Mrs Lloyd	16
Mrs Pugh	40
Passer By	4
Paul.....	7
PM Chamberlain (Optional)	7
Ray.....	12
Ronald	34
Station Master.....	6
Teacher 1	2
Teacher 2.....	31
Terence.....	65
Tommy.....	16
*Villager 1	4
*Villager 2	4
*Villager 3	1
*Villager 4	1
*Villager 5	2
*Villager 6	1
Wendy.....	27
William	4

Non-speaking roles: Sam, Peter, Family Group, Band, Chorus of Soldiers, Sailors, Women & Children.

CHARACTERS IN EACH SCENE**Scene One**

Alan
 Chorus of Soldiers, Sailors,
 Women & Children
 Eileen
 Harry
 Margaret
 Miss Reynolds
 Mr Townsend
 Sam
 Terence
 Tommy

Scene Two

Alice
 Bert
 Chorus of Children, Parents,
 Teachers & Family Group
 Christine
 Jack
 Lil
 Minister
 Mr Arnold
 Mr Nunn
 Mr Roach
 Mrs Davidson
 Mrs Fitzgerald
 Mrs Lloyd
 Passer By
 PM Chamberlain (Optional)
 Ray
 Ronald
 Station Master
 Teacher 1
 Wendy

Scene Three

Alan
 Alice
 Barfoot
 Bus Driver
 Child 1-6
 Eileen
 Geoff
 Jack
 Janet
 Jimmy
 Lil
 Mollie
 Mr Glenister
 Mr Jones
 Mrs Howe
 Ronald
 Teacher 2
 Terence
 Tommy
 Villager 1-6
 William

Scene Four

Alan
 Chorus of Local Children
 Eileen
 Geoff
 Jimmy
 Margaret
 Ronald
 Terence
 Tommy
 Wendy

Scene Five

Alan
Bert
Harry
Mr Arnold
Mr Nunn
Mr Roach
Mrs Davidson
Mrs Fitzgerald
Mrs Lloyd
Ray
Terence
Tommy
Warden
Wendy

Scene Six

Alan
Beryl
Brian
Eileen
Emmie
Gillian
Harry
Jean
Jeannie
John
Kath
Margaret
Mary
Mr Jenkins
Mrs Evans
Mrs Pugh
Paul
Peter
Terence

Scene Seven

Alan
Aunty May
Beryl
Brian
Emmie
Mrs Pugh
Terence

Scene Eight

Alan
Alice
Chorus of Soldiers, Sailors,
Women, Children & a Band
Christine
Eileen
Entire Cast for Finale
Harry
Jack
Lil
Margaret
Mr Arnold
Mrs Fitzgerald
Mrs Lloyd
Mrs Roach
Ray
Ronald
Terence
Tommy

LIST OF PROPERTIES**Scene One**

Flags Chorus
 Cardboard boxes containing gas masks..... Evacuees
 Desks Scene Props
 Text Books Evacuees

Scene Two

Radio on a table or dresser Scene Prop
 Cardboard boxes containing gas masks..... Evacuees
 Suitcases Evacuees
 Name Labels..... Evacuees
 Banners with school names written on them Evacuees

Scene Three

Desk..... Scene Prop
 List of Evacuees Janet Lightly
 Barrow containing brown paper food bags Mr Jones
 Chairs..... Scene Props

Scene Four

Balls Local Children & Evacuees
 Marbles Local Children & Evacuees
 Skipping ropes Local Children & Evacuees
 Bag containing notebook and pencil Eileen

Scene Five

Fake stove with a tea pot on it..... Scene Prop
 Tea cups Scene Props

Scene Six

Jam jar on a piece of string.....Emmie
 Zinc bath tub Scene Prop
 Scrubbing brushes..... Children
 Jugs of water Children

Scene Seven

Table and dining chairs..... Scene Prop
 Armchair..... Scene Prop
 Dresser Scene Prop
 Tea cup..... Mrs Pugh
 Plate of scones Mrs Pugh
 Blanket.....Beryl
 Letter..... Mrs Pugh

Scene Eight

Tables Scene Props
 Buntings and balloons Terence, Alan & Tommy
 Table cloths, food, plates etc. Harry, Eileen & Margaret
 Instruments Band

PRODUCTION NOTES

The show has moments of joy and sadness, hilarity and pathos as so many emotions were fired with the situation that the parents and children faced daily during the blitz. Researching the topic will enable the children to understand the emotions and situations faced daily during the blitz and enhance their performance.

COSTUME

Obviously, the show is set in 1939 and all costume should be relevant to that time. Watch out for children wearing socks with designer labels etc. showing. Fancy hair-bands and scrunches etc. didn't exist! Ribbon did. The town kids' clothes should be suitably distressed to look well-worn except for the evacuation scene when some will have been turned out in their Sunday best. In Scene One, at the start, if you are going for live cameo appearances then a selection of army and sailor uniforms are required along with basic items such as kitbags or rucksacks of the period. As well as looking like a headmaster (suit) Mr Jenkins wears horn-rimmed spectacles (remove the glass from frames) to accentuate his formidable appearance. He also should have very bushy eyebrows.

SETTING

No two schools are the same, so you need to adapt the setting of the show to suit your circumstances and resources.

Scene One. The opening scene which sets the feeling at the start of the war can be done using Pathe Newsreel clips from the time or could be done using cameo settings around the stage or even the auditorium, thus engaging the audience in the action. The main scene is set in the classroom. There is no particular time frame set for this scene. It just sets the mood.

Scene Two starts with the PM's speech declaring war and could be a recording of the actual speech or an actor speaking from behind the scenes or even set to one side of the stage. The speech, as well as being fundamental to the story, sets the date for this scene and the start of the story, and allows Scene Two to be set at the same time. When the Government Minister begins his speech, it could be done from in front of the main tabs and to one side whilst the gathered family sit on the opposite side of the stage (again in front of the main tabs) listening intently to the broadcast on the radio. Two focussed spots (one on each scene) are all that is needed to focus attention. At the end of the Minister's speech the lights come up on the (now set) scene at the station. It could depict a few buses lined up outside a station or could be the platform of a large railway station. The children could depart from this scene through the auditorium at the end of the scene allowing crew to set the next scene.

Scene Three is set in a village hall, with a small stage area for the selection to take place on. It is a basic village or church hall, similar to that seen in 'Dad's Army' but with the addition of the stage area if possible. By elevating the evacuees in this way it enhances the humiliation that the children felt when subjected to this degrading scrutiny and 'cattle market' scenario. So as not to get too heavy on this, Track 11 – I'll Take That One, is a light-hearted, glimpse. Track 12 allows scene change time to move to Scene Four.

Scene Four has an impression of the exterior of the school building on the backcloth. The children are in the playground. Track 13 is light-hearted and indicates the fact that the children have already forgotten about the blitz and settled into their prolonged holiday away from home. It is the early days of the evacuation. Track 14 should not leave a dry eye in the house! The first verse is pure bravado as Margaret doesn't know what to write. As she thinks about her circumstances, we see the change in her mood (verse 2) and the true emotion manifests itself overwhelmingly in the last verse – milk it!!

An (optional) interval splits the show at this point as we move forward 12 months to 1940.

Scene Five - Nothing happened during the phoney war so the children began to go home. No sooner had this happened than the blitz began and the children found themselves back home with a severely disrupted life, frightened and very insecure. The purpose of the scene is to highlight the horrors of the blitz and why the children were sent back into the reception areas once more.

Scene Six begins with the children moving in via the auditorium or in front of the tabs whilst the scene is set. The tabs should open to reveal the setting as soon as possible. If resources don't allow for a full scene here, perhaps a few props about could indicate the setting. The 'Bathnight Blues' song (Track 20) should have routine in it with a zinc bath being brought on and jugs of (water), scrubbing brush etc. to highlight the comedy of the song. Track 21 allows for scene changes to:

Scene Seven – Mrs Pugh's Kitchen. It is a small terraced cottage with two downstairs rooms – the living room and the "front room". The living room is homely and where all the events of life take place. The front room (which is never seen) is all but a museum, spotless and utterly out of bounds, it is where revered guests are entertained.

Scene Eight closes the show with the armistice in 1945. Set in a church hall or in the middle of a road, it is the setting for a large street party. It must contrast the previous scenes by the amount of decoration that has been put up and the relief felt now that the war is over. Despite the lack of provisions and the austerity felt, it must be strongly up-beat. The last song- Track 23 (reprise of the opening song) should be a big number and could include the audience by providing a song sheet with the lyrics.

SOUND EFFECTS [SFX]

Track 2 – Air Raid Siren Into Air Raid

Track 3 – Air Raid Siren

Track 4 – All Clear Siren

Track 5 – Air Raid Siren Into Air Raid

Track 6 – Air Raid Siren

Track 7 – Prime Minister's Speech

Track 9 – Train Station Background

Track 16 – Air Raid Siren

Track 17 – Air Raid Underscore

Track 18 – Loud Bomb Explosion

Track 19 – All Clear Siren

Track 22 – Knock On Door

SCENE ONE: A CLASSROOM SOMEWHERE IN LONDON

(As the lights dim the music strikes up to Track 1 and we see a scene at the start of the war. This is a series of cameos showing different partings. It could be done by using Pathe News Reel clips of the time or could be acted out by several groups. One group are clearly at a railway station and we see loved ones saying farewell to their husbands and boyfriends, soldiers and sailors who are boarding a train. In another cameo there is a gangplank going up to rostra in an image of a ship's rails. Sailors are seen going on board, whilst on land women and children are seen waving flags and waving goodbyes. In yet another cameo a group of soldiers are seen assembling and marching off whilst more loved ones wave them off. This should be an emotional scene emphasising the heartbreak of loved ones leaving to go to war. Track 1 is sung during this setting and could be sung by the cast in the on-stage cameos or by an off-stage chorus.)

TRACK 1: WE'LL MEET AGAIN

CHORUS: WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOME DAY
 YOU'LL SOON BE HOME, I PRAY.
 BACK IN THE ARMS OF THOSE WHO LOVE YOU,
 THOUGH YOU'LL BE FAR AWAY
 CLOSE TO MY HEART YOU'LL STAY
 'TIL YOU'RE SAFELY BACK HOME AGAIN.

 IN TIMES OF TROUBLE, IN TIMES OF STRIFE
 WE HOLD ON TO WHAT IS DEAR IN LIFE
 TO WHAT WE CHERISH, TO THOSE WE LOVE
 AND PRAY TO OUR GOD ABOVE:

 WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOME DAY
 YOU'LL SOON BE HOME, I PRAY.
 DARK IS THE NIGHT ALONE WITHOUT YOU,
 AUTUMN SKIES ARE GREY.
 BUT BRIGHT IS THE DAWNING DAY
 WHEN YOU COME SAFELY HOME AGAIN.

 WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOME DAY
 YOU'LL SOON BE HOME, I PRAY
 SAY AU REVOIR, MY DEAR NOT FAREWELL
 WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOME DAY
 THEN IN MY HEART YOU'LL STAY
 PRAY RETURN SAFELY HOME AGAIN
 PRAY RETURN SAFELY HOME AGAIN.

(As the song finishes, the lights fade out on the cameos and we hear Track 2 beginning with SFX siren. As the siren develops its cadence a search light sweeps the stage and we glimpse the setting of a classroom and a few Children scurrying about. The siren resolves into the song as the lights come up and the Children and Teacher sing Track 2.)

TRACK 2: SFX AIR RAID SIREN INTO AIR RAID

**CHILDREN &
TEACHER:**

SIRENS SOUND, WE RUN TO GROUND
HITLER'S ON HIS WAY.
PLANES DRAW NEAR, CAUSING FEAR
TO EV'RYONE AROUND
HELTER SKELTER TO THE SHELTER
LET'S GET UNDERGROUND
SIRENS BLASTING, EVERLASTING
HITLER'S ON HIS WAY

AIR RAID, AIR RAID, ACTION STATIONS PLEASE
MAN THE GUNS, PUT OUT THOSE LIGHTS
OBEY THE ARPS
AIR RAID, AIR RAID, ACTION STATIONS PLEASE.
GRAB YOUR BAG, GET UNDERGROUND
WATCH OUT FOR UXBS!

FEARFUL DRONE, SEARCHLIGHTS COMB
ACK-ACK HITS THE SKY
BOMBS WILL FALL, FEAR FOR ALL
ARE WE GOING TO DIE?
HELTER SKELTER TO THE SHELTER
WE'LL BE SAFE DOWN THERE
SIRENS SCREAMING SEARCHLIGHTS BEAMING.
HITLER BEST BEWARE!

AIR RAID, AIR RAID, ACTION STATIONS PLEASE
MAN THE GUNS, PUT OUT THOSE LIGHTS
OBEY THE ARPS
AIR RAID, AIR RAID, ACTION STATIONS PLEASE.
GRAB YOUR BAG, GET UNDERGROUND
WATCH OUT FOR UXBS!

TRACK 3:**SFX AIR RAID SIREN**

(As the song concludes, a siren is heard setting tension amongst the Children. Some Children hide under their desks, others are hidden about the set – it is a bit too scary for these Children. The Teacher is attempting to instruct the Children in the correct way to don their gasmasks. Most of the Children put theirs on, some of them are on the wrong way round, upside down etc. Some of the Children are having fun with them making rude noises etc. As the siren fades, Miss Reynolds picks up the dialogue.)

MISS REYNOLDS: It's just another practice drill - we aren't at war, despite what you may have heard. I want you all to get your gasmasks out. Quietly.

(They each pick up a cardboard box containing a gasmask.)

MISS REYNOLDS: Now take them carefully out of their boxes - no, no, Isobel, don't drag at it...you show her how to do it, Margaret, will you? Have we all done that? Good. I want you to put them on...and let's see if everyone can get it right this time. Wait a minute. Remember, chin in, right in first, before you begin to pull the straps over your head. No don't rush at it Eileen, take your time. Now, is everybody ready? I'll tell you what I want you to do....

(She is interrupted by the caretaker, Mr Townsend entering the classroom with some good news for the children.)

MR TOWNSEND: Ah, Miss Reynolds. The ARP Warden sends his apologies, but he's just testing the new air-raid siren. Apparently it's all about to.....

MISS REYNOLDS: *(Interrupting him.)* Thank you Mr Townsend.

(He exits.)

MISS REYNOLDS: Right, children. You all heard that – nothing to worry about, but nevertheless, let us use the opportunity to practise our drill. I want you to get your books back out and settle down comfortably at your desks, then I want to see just how long you can sit there with your gasmasks on.

TOMMY: *(Speaking with his mask on – almost inaudible.)* I want to sneeze! Aa.. aaa.. aaa.. *(He suppresses the pretend sneeze.)*

MISS REYNOLDS: Okay children, I think you have the general idea... now Tommy, stop making that rude noise

(Tommy is blowing a loud raspberry in his mask now much to the delight of his friends.)

MISS REYNOLDS: Harry, the filter should be at the front of your face not the back of your head!

(Harry fiddles with his mask and makes it stick on top of his head.)

MISS REYNOLDS: Eileen, give Sam his mask back...

(Eileen has two masks on, one on each side of her head.)

MISS REYNOLDS: Margaret, show Sam how to put his mask on properly.

(Tommy finally sneezes into his mask very loudly.)

TOMMY: Please, Miss. I can't see out of my mask now!

TRACK 4: **SFX ALL CLEAR SIREN**

MISS REYNOLDS: Now remember, that sound is the all clear, that means that the planes have passed over and it is safe to come out of the shelter. The warbling sound that we heard first is the warning siren. You can take your gas-masks off now.

ALAN: I didn't like that sound, Miss, it frightens me.

MISS REYNOLDS: I'm sure that it did, Alan. But we must not panic when we hear it. We must go straight to the shelters. And if you hear the rattle being sounded by the warden we must put our gasmasks on – sensibly Harry and a few others – and then do as we are instructed. Anyway, I am sure it won't come to that as you will all be off to the countryside soon and Mr Hitler won't take his bombs there.

TERENCE: What do you mean, Miss? Are we going on a holiday?

MISS REYNOLDS: Sort of. If the Germans do invade us, Mr Chamberlain has said that all the children will go away from the cities and the ports and docks to what he calls Reception Areas. Some of you will be going to the countryside, others will be going to the seaside.

ALL CHILDREN: Wow!

HARRY: Can I take my bucket and spade, Miss?

MISS REYNOLDS: I'm not sure about that, Harry.

HARRY: But I want to take a bucket and spade if I am going to the seaside. How can I make sandcastles else?

MISS REYNOLDS: Well you may not go to the seaside, you might go into the country.

HARRY: What's in the countryside, Miss?

MISS REYNOLDS: Well, ... er... country – things. Animals and trees and flowers and hills and streams and lots of things.

HARRY: I'd rather have the seaside – with sea and sand and rock pools and things.

TERENCE: I'd rather stay here with my mates.

ALAN: Will my mom and dad be going on holiday with me?

MISS REYNOLDS: Well – no, Alan. Your mother and father will stay here, they have work to do to help us win the war.

ALAN: I don't want to go away, then. I want to stay with my mom and dad.

MISS REYNOLDS: It may not be safe for you to stay here.

ALAN: If it's not safe for me, it's not safe for my mom and dad, is it?

MISS REYNOLDS: *(Skirting the issue.)* You must carry the box and mask all of the time, wherever you go. Now, put your gas masks back in their boxes now and let's carry on with our lesson.

(The Children remove their gasmasks during the ensuing dialogue.)

EILEEN: My dad's in the army – he's already gone away.

TOMMY: Well my dad's in the Navy – he says that it's the best because it is the senior service.

EILEEN: Yeah – but they don't do proper fighting like in the army...

MISS REYNOLDS: That will do now, children. Everybody who is fighting for our country is doing a marvellous job and we must support them all.

TRACK 5: SFX AIR RAID SIREN INTO AIR RAID

(The boys start to move back to their desks when the air-raid warning sounds again. The following dialogue is spoken over the SFX before they sing the remainder of the track.)

MISS REYNOLDS: Okay, children. It's another drill – what do we do?

EILEEN: Form two lines, Miss.

MARGARET: Then we go to the shelter.

TERENCE: And skive off our lessons...

MISS REYNOLDS: Terence...

(They all line up as the Music starts to the refrain of song.)

**CHILDREN &
TEACHER:**

SIRENS SOUND, WE RUN TO GROUND
HITLER'S ON HIS WAY.
PLANES DRAW NEAR, CAUSING FEAR
TO EV'RYONE AROUND
HELTER SKELTER TO THE SHELTER
LET'S GET UNDERGROUND
SIRENS BLASTING, EVERLASTING
HITLER'S ON HIS WAY

AIR RAID, AIR RAID, ACTION STATIONS PLEASE
MAN THE GUNS, PUT OUT THOSE LIGHTS
OBEY THE ARPS
AIR RAID, AIR RAID, ACTION STATIONS PLEASE
GRAB YOUR BAG, GET UNDERGROUND
WATCH OUT FOR UXBS!

FEARFUL DRONE, SEARCHLIGHTS COMB
ACK-ACK HITS THE SKY
BOMBS WILL FALL, FEAR FOR ALL
ARE WE GOING TO DIE?
HELTER SKELTER TO THE SHELTER
WE'LL BE SAFE DOWN THERE
SIRENS SCREAMING SEARCHLIGHTS BEAMING
HITLER BEST BEWARE!

AIR RAID, AIR RAID, ACTION STATIONS PLEASE
MAN THE GUNS, PUT OUT THOSE LIGHTS
OBEY THE ARPS
AIR RAID, AIR RAID, ACTION STATIONS PLEASE
GRAB YOUR BAG, GET UNDERGROUND
WATCH OUT FOR UXBS!

TRACK 6:**SFX AIR RAID SIREN**

(As the refrain finishes, the Children are seen marching out of the classroom as the siren continues to warble. The lights fade to a repeat of searchlights scanning the stage then blackout.)

SCENE TWO: EVACUATION

(The scene is set at the local railway station – 11.15 hrs, September 3rd 1939. If using a backcloth, it could depict a few buses lined up outside the station, having discharged their cargo of children. Before the lights come up, we hear a government announcement.)

TRACK 7: SFX PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH

PM.CHAMBERLAIN: "I am speaking to you from the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street. This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government a final note stating that, unless we hear from them by 11 o'clock that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany."

(A spotlight comes up on a Government Minister making a statement from the Lord Privy Seal's office. Another spotlight picks out a small Family Group gathered around a radio on a table or dresser, listening intently to the speech.)

MINISTER: As you know, the government have made plans for the removal from "evacuable" areas to safer places called "reception" areas, of school children, children below school age if accompanied by their mothers or other responsible persons, and expectant mothers and blind persons. The scheme is entirely a voluntary one, but clearly the children will be much safer and happier away from the big cities where the dangers will be greatest. There is room in the safer areas for these children; householders have volunteered to provide it. They have offered homes where the children will be made welcome. The children will have their school teachers and other helpers with them and their schooling will be continued. A number of mothers in certain areas have shown reluctance to register. Naturally, they are anxious to stay by their men folk. Possibly they are thinking that they might as well wait and see; that it might not be so bad after all. Think this over carefully and think of your child or children in good times. Once air attacks have begun it might be very difficult to arrange to get away.

(The spotlights fade out on the Government Minister and the Family Group as the music strikes up for Track 8. During the song, the Children march on watched by their Parents etc. and finally form their various groups as the song concludes. The Children, carrying their cardboard gas-mask boxes around their necks and a suitcase in their hands, are gathered in tight groups with some Parents and Teachers. There is tension, fear, trepidation and excitement all mingled together. This should be clear in the song as well as the ensuing dialogue. The Children all wear a label on their jackets indicating their names. Some of them carry banners bearing the name of their school.)

MR ARNOLD: Now don't be so silly. It's for your own safety. You'll be back here in a couple of months.

CHRISTINE: How long's a couple of months?

MR ARNOLD: Not long.

RAY: *(At the same time.)* A quarter of a year! – Nearly!

CHRISTINE: *(Tearful.)* I don't want to go.

MR ARNOLD: Now come on, children. Be brave. It's for your own good. You'll be safe in the country.

(The three characters huddle together as the lights fade on them or they move back upstage. Another group move downstage or, if possible, the lights come up on them. They are three parents discussing the latest information, whilst their children Ronald, Alice, Jack and Lil play unconcernedly nearby.)

MR NUNN: Have you heard anymore about where they are going to?

MRS FITZGERALD: *(Tears in her eyes.)* Nothing. I dunno what the big secret is. After all, we ain't gonna tell Hitler where our kids are, now are we?

MRS LLOYD: 'Course not! Have you heard anything at all?

MR NUNN: Nothing. Not a bloomin' thing.

MRS FITZGERALD: *(Still upset.)* Do you think the school knows something they're not telling us?

MRS LLOYD: Could be. I mean, they must know where the kids are going. After all, some of the teachers is going with 'em.

RONALD: Can't wait to get away from here – it's gonna be a great holiday.

ALICE: If it's just a holiday, why are all our mums crying?

JACK: It's what mums do when their kids grow up and leave 'em.

LIL: I don't wanna leave my mum – not when she's crying anyway.

RONALD: Don't be a sissy, Lil. She ain't really cryin'. An' if she is, it's because she isn't comin' on holiday wiv us.

LIL: I don't believe you.

JACK: Come on, let's play hide and seek again.

ALICE: Bag's I'm on!

THE OTHERS: Right! Shut your eyes.

(The three Children run off and Alice stands with the Adults with her hands over her eyes as the lights fade on this cameo scene.)

STATION MASTER: *(To one of the teachers.)* I wish all of our passengers were this easy to manage.

PASSER-BY: They're very well behaved, aren't they?

STATION MASTER: Where's the teacher in charge of this lot, then?

PASSER BY: Over there somewhere?

STATION MASTER: I don't know. At this rate, the war will be over before we get these kids away. I need to get them sorted into groups for each carriage.

PASSER BY: Where are they going to?

STATION MASTER: Can't say. In the country, somewhere.

PASSER BY: But you must know.

STATION MASTER: Don't think the train-driver knows, let alone me. *(He wanders off in search of the teachers.)*

MRS DAVIDSON: *(To Wendy – her daughter.)* Now, just remember to brush your teeth.

WENDY: Yes, mum.

MRS DAVIDSON: And make sure you write as soon as you get there.

WENDY: Yes, mum.

MRS DAVIDSON: Stay close to Miss Johnson and do what she tells you!

WENDY: Yes, mum.

MRS DAVIDSON: And be a good girl and eat all your greens.

WENDY: Yes, mum.

MRS DAVIDSON: And don't suck or eat your label!

WENDY: Yes, mum – er – no, mum.

(Once again, the light fades on this cameo and comes up on another group.)

MR ROACH: Got your comics, Bert?

BERT: Yes, dad.

MR ROACH: Good.

BERT: Dad, Are you going to be in the air force?

MR ROACH: I don't know son. I haven't been called up yet. But I hope so. If that Hitler thinks he can come over here and bomb us, he hasn't reckoned with the likes of me.

BERT: Good on you, dad. I'll be in the fields watching the RAF fly over. Will you wave if you see me?

MR ROACH: Course I will, son. I'll make my bloomin' plane wave to you.

(He extends his arms like the wings of a plane and wobbles them up and down. They both laugh. Then Teacher 1 approaches.)

TEACHER 1: Come on then, Bert. Let's join the others and get on board.

BERT: Okay, Miss *(Sir)*.