

Playstage
Junior

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TheTinderbox



A comedy adaptation with songs from the Hans Christian
Anderson fairy tale



Written by
Stewart Auty

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Sergeant/Captain | Dog 3 |
| Baxter | Landlord |
| Soldier 2 | Friend 1 |
| Soldier 3 | Friend 2 |
| Soldier 4 | Friend 3 |
| Man | Friend 4 |
| Woman | Princess Portia |
| Traffic Warden | King |
| Old Crone | Queen |
| Dog 1 | Maid |
| Dog 2 | |

21 speaking parts. More singing but not speaking parts could be added.

For example: More soldiers could be used for 'marching' in Scene 1. Other non-speaking parts could swell crowd scenes. Palace soldiers could be separate parts and not doubled with Soldiers 2, 3 and 4. Songs suggested for inclusion are optional – the script will stand alone without songs, though they are there to enhance the performance and encourage audience participation. Songs should be edited for length – about 2 minutes is ideal.

Scenery can be positioned/removed by some of the cast as they enter/exit.

MUSIC

Backing tracks can be purchased and downloaded for a modest fee from various sources, as shown below. Or, you could source the original artiste's recording from amongst parents/grandparents and just have the children sing along to it, as many schools do. If you cannot source them from amongst the school community, then Amazon sell very cheap downloadable MP3 tracks for hundreds of thousands of songs. These can be purchased, downloaded on to a computer and then burnt on to a CD for performance. Below we give the song title and source of backing tracks. Where it says "Traditional" or "Disney" this means there is no backing track we know of but it may be in sheet music form in your school or on a children's school music compilation CD.

SUGGESTED SONGS:

| | |
|---|--|
| Marchin' On (One Republic) - | www.ameritz.co.uk |
| Welcome Home (Peters & Lee) - | www.ameritz.co.uk |
| Step by Step (Whitney Houston) - | www.ameritz.co.uk |
| Help! (The Beatles) - | www.ameritz.co.uk |
| Down, Down (Status Quo) - | www.ameritz.co.uk |
| Devil Woman (Cliff Richards) - | www.ameritz.co.uk |
| Somebody to Love (Queen) - | www.ameritz.co.uk |
| Al I Have to Do Is Dream (Everley Brothers) | www.ameritz.co.uk |
| When Will I See You Again (Three Degrees) | www.ameritz.co.uk |
| Who Let The Dogs Out? (Baha Men) - | www.ameritz.co.uk |

THE TINDER BOX

SCENE 1 - Out in the Country

A simple country road, with a signpost, with signs to 'Here', 'There' and 'Everywhere'. A log (SEE PRODUCTION NOTES) is beside the signpost.

Enter a group of soldiers, marching in time to music. They march on the spot, turning a quarter turn every two lines)

SONG : "Marchin On" (OneRepublic)

For those days we felt like a mistake,
Those times when loves what you hate,
Somehow,
We keep marching on.

For those nights when I couldn't be there,
I've made it harder to know that you know,
That somehow,
We'll keep moving on.

There's so many wars we fought,
There's so many things were not,
But with what we have,
I promise you that,
We're marching on,
(We're marching on)
(We're marching on).

For all of the plans we've made,
There isn't a flag I'd wave,
Don't care if we bend,
I'd sink us to swim,
We're marching on,
(We're marching on)
(We're marching on).

For those doubts that swirl all around us,
For those lives that tear at the seams,
We know,
We're not what we've seen,

For this dance we'll move with each other.
There ain't no other step than one foot,
Right in front of the other.

There's so many wars we fought,
There's so many things we're not,
But with what we have,
I promise you that,

We're marching on,
(We're marching on)
(We're marching on).

For all of the plans we've made,
There isn't a flag I'd wave,
Don't care if we bend,
I'd sink us to swim,
We're marching on,
(We're marching on)
(We're marching on).

Right, right, right, right left right,
Right, right, right, right left right,
Right, right,
We're marching on.

We'll have the days we break,
And we'll have the scars to prove it,
We'll have the bonds that we save,
But we'll have the heart not to lose it.

For all of the times we've stopped,
For all of the things I'm not.

We put one foot in front of the other,
We move like we ain't got no other,
We go when we go,
We're marching on.

There's so many wars we fought,
There's so many things we're not,
But with what we have,
I promise you that,
We're marching on,
(We're marching on)
(We're marching on).

Right, right, right, right left right,
Right, right, right, left, right,
Right, right,
We're marching on.

Right, right, right, right left right,
Right, right, right, left, right,
Right, right,
We're marching on.

(Music finishes. Sergeant and soldiers continue to march on the spot.)

SERGEANT

Come on lads! Keep it up! Left, right! Left right!

BAXTER

Can't we stop for a rest, Sarge?

SERGEANT

Stop for a rest, Baxter? Stop for a rest? You're soldiers, not wimps!

SOLDIER 2

But Sarge, we're tired!

SOLDIER 3

It wouldn't do any harm, Sarge. We're nearly done with the army now.

SOLDIER 4

It's our last day. We're on our way home.

SERGEANT

All right, you've talked me into it! Halt! And.... wait for it! Stand at.... ease!

(Soldiers flop down, exhausted)

BAXTER

Thank goodness for that!

SOLDIER 2

Oh, my poor plates!

SOLDIER 3

Your poor plates?

SOLDIER 2

Me plates - plates of meat - feet. It's Cockney rhyming slang. I'm just saying....

SERGEANT

So what makes you any different? Your feet are sore. His feet are sore. My feet are sore. We've all got sore feet.

BAXTER

Must be something to do with all that marching we've done.

SERGEANT *(Sits on log)*

This is our last march together. Soon, you will all go your separate ways.

SOLDIER 4

Our last day in the army! I can't Adam and Eve it!

SOLDIER 2

You're getting the hang of this. Adam and Eve - believe.

SOLDIER 3

We've come through a lot.

SOLDIER 2

I'm looking forward to some Britneys!

SERGEANT

Now you've lost me there son. Britneys?

SOLDIER 2

Britney Spears - beers! I'm looking forward to a drink or two!

BAXTER

We've lost so many friends.

SOLDIER 2

They're all brahn bread - dead!

BAXTER

I suppose we're lucky to be alive!

SERGEANT

Lucky? Luck had nothing to do with it! Remember what you were like when you volunteered?

SOLDIER 2

Who can forget that day? And we didn't volunteer.

SERGEANT

Whatever. A right rag, tag and bobtail of scruffy, undisciplined individuals. But look at you now. The army's finest men! Survivors! Well trained!

SOLDIER 3

That's down to you, Sarge. You trained us.

SERGEANT

Now you're multi-talented! Men of character, with transferable skills ready to become civilians again.

BAXTER

I quite liked being a soldier, as long as there wasn't any fighting.

SERGEANT

Now, hang on a minute! Soldiering is all about fighting. If there wasn't any fighting to do, well, there'd be no need for an army.

BAXTER

And that's why we've been lucky. We're alive! We've survived!

SOLDIER 2

So we go home, and we can hold our heads up high.

SOLDIER 3

We'll be treated like heroes!

SOLDIER 4

There'll be a big party! A civic reception!

SOLDIER 3

People will make speeches, and say how proud they feel.

SOLDIER 2

There'll be a big banner right across the street which says 'Welcome Home!' Just think of it!

(All the soldiers look out to the audience as if dreaming. A group of people come on the side of the stage with a big banner that says "WELCOME HOME".)

SONG 2 - Welcome Home! (Modified lyrics)

You've been alone, my love without me
I'm part of everything you do
When I come back, and you're beside me
These are the words we'll say to you

Welcome home, welcome
Come on in, and close the door
I've been gone, too long
Welcome, I'm home once more

I thought of all the things I'd say to you
When I come back to you someday
When I am here and we're together
With all my heart you'll hear me say

Welcome home, welcome
Come on in, and close the door
I've been gone, too long
Welcome, I'm home once more

There are so many lonely people
Why must they ever be apart
I hope someday you'll be together
Singing these words with all your heart

Welcome home, welcome
Come on in, and close the door
I've been gone, too long
Welcome, I'm home once more

(Group of people disappear and SOLDIERS look at each other.)

SERGEANT

It won't be like that for everyone! Don't expect too much. Yes, you've been gone a long time. Yes people will be pleased to see you. Well, most of them.

BAXTER

What do you mean, most of them?

SERGEANT

You think it's been a hard life in the army? Civvy Street can be just as hard.

SOLDIER 4

But we were civilians before we joined up. So it will be the same.

SERGEANT

Not quite. Your families will be pleased to see you. But what about those who have made a bet that you will never return?

SOLDIER 2

People have made bets about that?

SERGEANT

Yes. They stand to make a lot of money if you never return. But when you turn up, the bet's off. So not everyone will be pleased to see you.

BAXTER

I never realised it could be like that.

SERGEANT

I've looked after you all the time you've been in the army.

SOLDIER 3

And you've been great! A bit of a bully sometimes, but not so bad really.

SERGEANT

You needed discipline! To survive, you had to learn to do as you were told, without question, without a second thought.

BAXTER

And we're living proof that you did a great job in looking after us, so on behalf of all the men, I'd like to say thank you.

SERGEANT

You can all go your separate ways soon. This might be a good place to disband and say our last farewells. We stand at the crossroads of life.

SOLDIER 4

Goodbyes are always so sad. We've been together for such a long time.

SOLDIER 2

My home is not too far away. I should be there soon, so I'm off. Be seeing you!

ALL

Bye!

SERGEANT

Take care!

(Exit SOLDIER 2. If using extra SOLDIERS, then they should perhaps say, individually, "Me too", "I'm off as well", "See You" etc. and leave with SOLDIER 2))

SOLDIER 3

We come from the same village, so we'll leave together.

SOLDIER 4

We've been friends since we were at school.

SOLDIER 3

We joined up together.

SOLDIER 4

And we leave together. Bye! See you!

BAXTER

I hope *(Sings?)* we'll meet again, who knows where, who knows when, but I hope we'll meet again some sunny day!

SOLDIER 3

Funny fellow, that Baxter!

(They all shake hands. Exit SOLDIER 3 and SOLDIER 4)

SERGEANT

Well, that just leaves the two of us. Mind if I give you some advice before I go?

BAXTER

Feel free. I'm in no rush. I'm not sure where I'm going.

SERGEANT

That's what I mean. I know you're a stranger round here.

BAXTER

I've got nothing to go home for. I might as well start in a new place.

SERGEANT

What I want to say is this. Be careful who you talk to. Be careful who you trust. Decide things for yourself. Not everything will be what it seems.

BAXTER

This all sounds a bit serious, as if there's loads of horrible people out there.

SERGEANT

All I'm saying is 'don't judge a book by its cover'.

BAXTER

You sound like my father! Little homilies to guide me on my way.

SERGEANT

He sounds a fine man. Did you take much notice?

BAXTER

Not really. Perhaps I should have listened more.

SERGEANT

I should be going. Now think on! Remember what I said. And don't talk to strangers!

BAXTER

How can I make new friends if I don't speak to anyone?

SERGEANT

You know what I mean. There'll be people out there who will try to trick you. Be careful! I'm off now!

(Exit SERGEANT)

BAXTER

Well now I'm all on my own. I wonder which way I should go? I think I'd better take this one step at a time.

(Full cast enter, marching to the tune of...)

SONG 3 - One more step

Well there's a bridge and there's a river that I still must cross

As I'm going on my journey

Oh, I might be lost

And there's a road I have to follow, a place I have to go

Well no-one told me just how to get there

But when I get there I'll know

'cause I'm taking it

Chorus:

Step By Step, Bit by Bit,

Stone By Stone (Yeah), Brick by Brick (Oh, yeah)

Step By Step, Day By Day, Mile by mile (ooh, ooh, ooh)

And this old road is rough and ruined

So many dangers along the way

So many burdens might fall upon me

So many troubles that I have to face

Oh, but I won't let my spirit fail me

Oh, I won't let my spirit go

Until I get to my destination

I'm gonna take it slowly 'cause I'm making it mine

Chorus:

Step By Step (you know I'm taking it), bit by bit (bit by bit, come move),

stone by stone (yeah), brick by brick (brick by brick by brick by brick mmm...)

Step by step (step by step uh-huh), day by day (day by day-ee),

mile by mile (ooh), go your own way.

Say it, baby, don't give up

You got to hold on to what you got,

Oh, baby, don't give up,

You got to keep on moving on don't stop (yeah yeah).

I know you're hurting, and I know you're blue,

I know you're hurting but don't let the bad things get to you.

Chorus:

I'm taking it step by step (ohohoh), bit by bit (bit by bit come move),

stone by stone (stone by stone yeah), brick by brick (brick by brick by brick by brick),

Step by step (I'm gonna take it now), day by day (day by day-ee),

mile by mile (ooh), go your own way!

(c'mon baby got to keep moving),

I'm taking it step by step), bit by bit,

stone by stone (yeah, stone by stone), brick by brick

c'mon baby,

step by step keep on moving, day by day (day by day-ee),

mile by mile by mile by mile, go your own way,

c'mon baby got to keep moving, bit by bit (bit by bit, bit by bit)...

(Everyone, including BAXTER, exit.)

END OF SCENE 1.