

BLACKOUT OPERATION PIED PIPER

A Musical

by

MARK WHEELER

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

BLACKOUT OPERATION PIED PIPER

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ISBN 978 1 872475 33 2 0

Printed and published by
SchoolPlay Productions Limited,
15 Inglis Road,
Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU

Cast

Rachel Eagle	
Clifford Eagle	<i>Rachel's brother</i>
George Eagle	<i>Rachel's father</i>
Ruby Eagle	<i>Rachel's mother</i>
Major Samuel Johnson	
Phyllis Johnson	<i>Rachel's first billets</i>
Harry Johnson	
Tom Reid	
Anne Reid	<i>Rachel's second billets</i>
Doreen Reid	
Narrators 1 & 2	<i>(To sing)</i>
Newsreader	
Susan Draper	<i>Rachel's best friend in Bethnal</i>
Entertainer	<i>In the shelter [Green</i>
Lenny	<i>A singer in the shelter</i>
Miss McKenzie	<i>A schoolmistress</i>
Jean Wakeman	<i>An evacuee</i>
Mr Grimmer	<i>A schoolmaster</i>
Miss Walker	<i>A schoolmistress</i>
Billeting Officer	
Laura	<i>Doreen's best friend</i>
Pat	<i>Laura's evacuee</i>
Mick	
John	<i>The clean-up gang</i>
Ray	
Area Billeting Officer	
Shelter Troupe	
People in the Underground Station Shelter	
Evacuees	
Schoolchildren	
Partygoers	

BLACKOUT OPERATION PIED PIPER

*Script by Mark Wheeler, with help from the improvisations of
Stantonbury Campus Youth Theatre*

Music by Mark Wheeler

*Lyrics by Mark Wheeler, Rachel Wheeler, Steven Wyatt,
Nick Mason, Leslie Griffiths*

*Goodnight Children Everywhere written by Rogers/Phillips
Published by Cecil Lennox Ltd.*

BLACKOUT OPERATION PIED PIPER

by Mark Wheeler

ACT I

SCENE 1

SONG - ONE EVACUEE IN THOUSANDS

(In a crocodile line)

Evacuees: *Evacuation.... They're sending us away
They say they're going to give us a country holiday.
It will protect us from the blitz,
Sparing us kids from stupid Hitler's antics,
Germans, aeroplanes.... bombs start falling
Operation Pied Piper's calling....
For mass evacuation.... now.... before it's too late
And my mum's in a state 'cos
We have to leave on the next steam train.
But once it's safe we'll all be back again.
Operation Pied Piper.
Operation Pied Piper.
Operation Pied Piper.*

REFRAIN -

Narrators: *(pointing to RACHEL)
One evacuee in thousands,
One evacuee who represents them all
Come closer and see, look how one evacuee
Has no choice about her fate at all.*

VERSE 1.

Narrator 1: *You've heard that war's not lovely
It kills, hurts and maims.
Bombs lives and leaves them lonely
Weighed down with loss and pain.*

Narrator 2: *But it's not only the body that suffers
It's not only the adults who complain.
Think of the fate of the children
Who leave the evacuee train.*

REFRAIN

Narrators: *One evacuee.....*

VERSE 2

Narrator 2: *The Government is God like
It's laws must be obeyed
To question it in war time
Would make it feel betrayed.*

Narrator 1: *But is it right when families are parted?
And did you cheer when that order was displayed
"Children should leave for the country
And board the evacuees' train."*

REFRAIN

Chorus: *One evacuee.....*

VERSE 3

Narrator 1: *So picture now a suburb,
Narrator 2:* *From rows of streets, pick one
Narrator 1:* *Then concentrate on this house
Narrators:* *The Eagle family home.
Narrator 1:* *But it's no game of "Happy Families" wars playing.
Narrator 2:* *No T.V. Ad. of carefree child and smiling mum.
Narrators:* *Rachel their daughter.... only nine years old
Unknowing.... a Pied Piper victim she'll become.*

Rachel: Up until 1939 I had led what I reckon to have been a fairly uneventful, yet very happy, life. I lived in a small terraced house in London with my Mum, Dad and brother, Clifford, who was fifteen years old.

Cliff: I remember being taken to the local school one evening in the Summer Holidays, to be fitted with a gas-mask. We tried them on and played games with them.

Rachel: When you had them on and breathed quickly, funny farting sounds came out of them and we used to see who could make the funniest sound.

Cliff: We were totally unaware of the seriousness of the situation.

Rachel: Then a few weeks later a letter to Mum and Dad arrived from my school. It told them about the evacuation.... Operation Pied Piper as it was called.

Cliff: The practices were over.

Rachel: Our parents were left with an awful decision to make.

Cliff: I can't tell you how relieved I was that I was too old to go.

Dad: (*putting the letter on the table*) Well I don't like it, sending Rachel to a strange family.

Cliff: You mustn't let her go.

Mum: No, we can't let her go.

Dad: She might get a rotten lot in those so called 'safe zones'.

Mum: Maybe other families won't stand for it.

Dad: I reckon anyone who sends their kids away can't have any real feelings for them.

Cliff: Do you think they'll make you send her?

Dad: (*picking the letter up*) She's our daughter, so it's up to us to decide. They can't make us do anything.

Rachel: (*entering excitedly*) Mummy, do you know when I am going to be evacuated?

Mum: No, we don't Rachel.

Rachel: Some people are saying it's going to be the day after tomorrow. I can't wait!

Cliff: Rachel, yesterday you said that you didn't want to go.

Rachel: Well it's different now, 'cos everyone else is going.

Dad: (*becoming very frustrated*) Who's everyone else?

Rachel: Gill, Doreen and Susan.

Mum: Susan!

Dad: I would never have expected that from Susan's parents! Rachel are you sure?

Rachel: They've got to, haven't they? Isn't that what the letter says?

Dad: We haven't 'got to do' anything. No war is going to break our family up. It'd be different if Clifford was going as well, but he isn't.

Cliff: I thought that you'd be pleased Mum and Dad weren't going to make you go. You're treating it as though you're missing out on some kind of holiday. It's not going to be much fun.

Dad: We wouldn't know who you're going to or nothing. We wouldn't even be told where you're going. We can't let you go Rachel.

Rachel: Oh Dad! Why is it always me who's always the odd one out?

Mum: You're not the odd one out. Enid Parker's parents are not letting Enid or Mary go.

Rachel: But I want to go. Everyone's saying that we'll be going by train and that we'll only be gone for a few weeks.

Mum: The truth is that no-one knows quite how long you'd be gone for.

Dad: Ruby, it's no use arguing. We've made our decision. She's not going and that's that. I'll go in and see Miss Whitewell tomorrow morning.

Rachel: (*whining*) Dad!

Dad: We'll hear no more about it until then, eh Rachel?

(*MELOS - ONE EVACUEE IN THOUSANDS*)

SCENE 2

Newsreader: Never before in all history has the British Empire been so well prepared to defend her interest. The world knows that Britain has not sought war, yet because the threat of conflict has been held against us for so long we have spent many months building up our great resources with tremendous organisation. In the simple, moving words of the Prime Minister - "We are ready." The evacuation of children from the danger zones of England and Scotland is beginning. Great credit reflects on teachers and all those who are helping in this work. Though there must be heartbreaks at each parting, it is immeasurably better that they should have a greater chance of safety.

(SUSAN'S Bedroom)

Rachel: So you're ready to go then Susan?

Susan: Yes. Everything is in my little case over there. It feels really strange in here, doesn't it?

Rachel: I do wish that I could come with you. I've only ever seen the countryside in pictures. It looks so lovely.

Susan: Have you seen this week's 'Picture Goer'? It's got a wizard picture of Errol Flynn in it.

Rachel: So what!

Susan: Don't you like him then?

Rachel: No not really.... Oh you're so lucky!

Susan: Why?

Rachel: Being evacuated! It sounds really wizard.

Susan: No I'm not. Clifford told me that they don't have fish and chips in the country and that milk comes out of a cow.

Rachel: Well Clifford's a pig. He's always on Mum and Dad's side. He's just jealous 'cos he's too old to go.

Susan: *(Pause)* Have you heard about Gill?

Rachel: No. What's happened then?

Susan: She's going with her mum, to some relatives but they won't let her take her dog.

Rachel: How mean. Susan, I wonder what'll happen to dogs and cats if there is a war?

Susan: I don't know.... Rachel, you will write, won't you?

Rachel: Of course I will.... Where do I write?

Susan: I don't know. I don't think anyone knows where we're going, but don't worry, you'll be the first one that I'll write to apart from Mum and Dad that is. They're really upset about it you know. I know you keep saying that it's exciting and everything, but to be honest I'd much rather stay at home.

Rachel: Why don't you tell them?

Susan: I can't do that.

Rachel: But they might let you stay. Oh please Susan. Please tell them!

Susan: Rachel I can't. I really can't.

Rachel: It's all so unfair! *(she begins to cry).*

Susan: Don't Rachel, you'll only make me upset.

Rachel: *(Pause)* I said to Mum that I would only be a few minutes. I'm going to have to go Susan.

Susan: Well I'm really glad that you came round.

Rachel: *(getting up)* Did you know that our school is going to be taken over by the Civil Defence?

Susan: What's going to happen? Where will you go?

Rachel: I don't know.

Susan: I suppose it depends on how many of you there are left.

Rachel: We'd better say goodbye then.

Susan: Yes. Don't worry about me. I'll be fine. We won't be gone for long. Dad reckons that it'll all be over in a couple of months and there's bound to be a party when we all come back. *(RACHEL is crying)* Please don't cry. *(They hug)* Come on Rachel you must be getting back or your mum'll be round here worrying.

Rachel: Right. Bye then. *(They kiss).*

Susan: Bye Rachel.

Rachel: Good luck. *(She exits).*

Susan: *(calling after RACHEL who is out of sight)* Rachel, guess what. I've got to have a bath tonight, and it's not even my bath night!

(SUSAN is left alone - She sits on her bed. RACHEL comes to the front of the Stage).

SONG - ALL ON MY OWN

Rachel: *All on my own in the darkness
All on my own afraid.
Just wishing that life could be simple.
Home as it used to be with friends around me
Why do they have to go away?
Why do I have to stay?
All that's left are the dreams of the games we played
And those are bound to fade
All on my own afraid.*

SCENE 3

Newsreader: Up until eight o'clock tonight, 165 German aircraft had been destroyed in a large scale attack attempted by the enemy today on London and the South East. We lost 30 fighters with ten of those fighters safe. Buckingham Palace has been bombed again but no-one was hurt.

(The Air Raid Shelter)

SONG - SWEEPING TO VICTORY

REFRAIN

Troupe: *While they're mopping up the Nazis in the Rhineland
And polishing the eyeties off in Rome
We'll stay here if we must
But you won't see us for dust
We'll be sweeping to victory at home!*

VERSE 1

Troupe: *When they sweep the Jerry back across the border
We'll be mobilised to join them in the hunt
With our housemaids knees drawn up in marching order
We'll launch the mop and bucket second front.*

REFRAIN

Troupe & Chorus: *While they're mopping up.....*

VERSE 2

*If they let us join the clean up operation
The carpets aren't the only things we'd beat
We'd wipe the floor with Hitler's precious nation
And pull the rug from under Hitler's feet.*

REFRAIN

Troupe & Chorus: *While they're mopping up....*

REFRAIN

Troupe & Chorus: *While they're mopping up....*

(RACHEL and MUM in the Shelter)

Rachel: Aren't they going to do any more mum?

Mum: It looks as though that's all for tonight dear, now you'd better get some sleep.

Rachel: Do you think that there's going to be any more bombings tonight Mum?

Mum: I don't know love. Oh I do hope your Dad's all right. He seems to be doing a lot more duties now than bombings come so regular.

Rachel: (*unsympathetically*) Well, he volunteered to be an air raid warden, didn't he?

Mum: If he hadn't have done it someone else would have had to. You can't blame him for trying to help with the war effort now can you Rachel?

Rachel: But he's been so different.... he never thinks about anything else.

Mum: Well he's tired love. We're all tired. His job's important to him, and to the street. You ought to be proud of him. Susan's mother said only the other day what a fine job he is doing.

Rachel: I wish that she was still here. Then there'd be someone at night to talk to in the shelter. (*Pause*) It really frightens me Mum. I hate it in there. When is the war going to end?

Mum: No-one knows love. Why don't you write to Susan?

Rachel: I wrote to her last time. It's her turn!

Mum: You mustn't blame her. Maybe your letters aren't getting through to her. Come on Rachel it's late now and you've got to get some sleep.

Rachel: I'm not really tired.

Mum: You ought to be Rachel.... it's really late.

Rachel: Can't we go back home?

Mum: Rachel settle down. You know as well as I do that until we hear the 'All Clear' we must stay here.

Rachel: All right Mum, I'll try. Let me cuddle up to you.... to keep warm.

SONG - AIR RAID LULLABY

REFRAIN

Mum: *I can see she's frightened, I can't.... can't help her fears
I can feel her sobbing through these air raid years.... Oh...
I can hear the bombs are falling. I must not cry.
If only I could rock her to an air raid lullaby.*

All Mums: *The noise will soon be over.... we're always here....
Go to sleep my darling there's no cause for fear.*

Mum: *Sweet dreams little Rachel and close your little eyes*

All Mums: *If only we had courage to sing these lullabies... but....*

All Mums: *I can see you're frightened, but I can't help your fears
I can sense your sobbing through these air raid years.... Oh..
I can hear the bombs are falling, I must not cry.
If only we could rock you to an air raid lulla....*

Mum: *If only we could rock you to an air raid lulla....*

All Mums: *If only I could rock you to an air raid lullaby.*

SCENE 4

Clifford: The Blitz, as it came to be known, was a very frightening experience for everyone. I don't think that Rachel understood the reality of the danger we were in and, indeed she became very moody and demanded a lot of attention. We were all very worried about the Rachel's sleeping habits. When she did get to sleep she slept with her eyes open, particularly when we were in the Shelter. It was as though she couldn't trust what may happen when we were down there. During the August of 1940 most nights were spent in the Air-Raid Shelters.

(MUM and CLIFFORD huddled together. There is the sound of bombs in the background throughout this scene).

Clifford: Mum, Can you hear the bombs? I think they're getting nearer.

Mum: *(preoccupied)* Your Dad's out there somewhere.

Clifford: *(Pause)* Don't worry Mum. He'll be all right. You know he will.

Mum: Just listen to those bombs.

Clifford: Where is Rachel at the moment?

Mum: She's over there with the Jacksons. She's not very pleased with me at the moment.

Clifford: Why? What's happened?

Mum: She's tired, that's what it all boils down to Cliff. The war is too much for a young girl like her. She can't take it.

Clifford: So what's going to happen then?

Mum: Well your father and I have been talking about sending her to one of those 'safe zones'.

Clifford: Quite a lot of people are doing that now aren't they?

Mum: Well yes. You see we didn't really know what the war was going to be like. We thought we'd done the right thing by keeping her here. We really did Cliff.

Clifford: Yes, I know Mum.

Mum: But now.... Oh I don't know.... If only we could arrange for her to go and stay with someone we knew, there'd be no problem.

Clifford: Couldn't you find out where Susan is staying?

Mum: I can't work out from one minute to the next whether they're still friends. I don't think she's even heard from Susan since that first letter last year.

Clifford: She has, definitely. Mrs. Draper gave her a letter a couple of days ago.

Mum: Well, Rachel hasn't said anything about it to me.... but as I said, I don't think that I'm in favour at the moment.

Clifford: Couldn't you get an address off Mrs. Draper? Who knows she may be able to arrange for Rachel to stay in the same family.

Mum: I'll talk to your father about it. He's coming round to the idea slowly.... but you know how he is.

Clifford: Yes I know.... "We mustn't be seen to give in to them."

Mum: I'll see what I can do.

Susan: *(On a raised platform on a different area of the Stage).* Dear Rachel, I'm sorry that I haven't written for so long but things have not been too good up here. Don't tell anyone but I think that Mum and Dad are going to let me come home. Isn't that Wizard? I'm really excited. My billets ain't too pleased about me coming home but I don't care 'cos they're horrible! They make me do all the work, cleaning the floors and mucking out the stables. They read all my letters and they let the dog carry their bread in it's mouth before they eat it! One time I saw Mr. Peterson bathing one of the boils on his feet in a bowl that Mrs. Peterson uses for cooking rice pudding! I've told Mum and Dad and they've said they'll come up soon and bring me home. They are really disgusted about it all. Clifford was right. They don't have fish and chips here at all! The food is funny. I don't eat much and I've begun to smell of farms. The only good thing about being here is milking the cows. I can't wait to get home. It'll be really wizard. See you soon, lots of love, Susan. P..S. Don't tell anyone until its's all sorted!

Entertainer: Right. Good evening to everyone. We're going to start off tonight with an old favourite 'Blackout Your Windows'. I want to see everyone on their feet joining in with this one and singing those bombs away with our favourite Blackout man.... Lenny and our very own Air Raid Warden who's seen us all safe in the Shelter tonight - George Eagle.

SONG - *BLACKOUT*

REFRAIN

Chorus: *Blackout your windows
One and six a yard.
Cover up them spaces
Be sure you're on your guard.... Oh...
Blackout your windows*

*And Ma draw down that blind.
Make sure the Warden
Has no light to find.*

VERSE 1

Lenny: *Ma had a shock when the Warden looked in
She opened the door in her curlers and pins
Blushed to the roots when the Warden did say*
Dad: *Blackout that light this is night time not day.*

REFRAIN

Chorus: *Blackout your windows....*

VERSE 2

Lenny: *Here comes the spiv wiv his bargains galore
He'll come a knocking at everyone's door.
Don't be deceived Ma. Don't be misled,
His cloth is transparent.... enough said.*

REFRAIN

Chorus: *Blackout your windows....*

VERSE 3

Lenny: *Watch out you people. You'd better beware.
The Warden's on the rampage. He's waiting in his lair*
Dad: *If you don't make your blackouts firm and secure
I'll cover you up with a ton of manure.*

REFRAIN

Chorus: *Blackout your windows....*

SCENE 5

SONG - THE LETTER

Narrator 1: *Rachel didn't understand that her life would soon be changed
There's a letter in the post this morning,
A letter bearing pain.
To tell them that the Jerries have been bombing again.
War has cracked her family. Can it take the strain?
Can happiness remain?*

(A few days later. The EAGLE'S house. DAD enters whistling. MUM enters).

Dad: Mornin' love. Aren't the kids up yet?

Mum: Cliff is. Rachel's just coming.

Dad: *(goes to the stairs. Shouts)* Come on Rachel! *(CLIFFORD enters past DAD)* Where's your sister, she should have been up fifteen minutes ago.

Cliff: She'll be down in a minute.

Mum: Look love, leave her alone and be thankful that she did manage to get some sleep last night. *(She exits).*

Dad: She should be up by now!

Cliff: Dad, she's washing. She'll be down in a minute.

Mum: Toast for you Cliff?

Cliff: Yes ta mum. *(There is a knock at the door).*

Dad: There's the postman. Will you get it Cliff. *(CLIFF exits and re-enters with a letter and a newspaper).*

Cliff: Here you are. *(hands DAD the letter)* Can I read the newspaper dad?

Dad: Yes. *(He looks at the envelope)* Ruby. There's a letter here from your brother. *(no answer)* Ruby, there's a letter here from Ernest. *(He opens the letter).*

Mum: *(offstage)* What's he got to say for himself? *(Silence. DAD reads the letter).*

Dad: I think you'll want to read this yourself.

Mum: What? *(She comes in)*

Dad: I think that you ought to read it yourself, love. It's bad news I'm afraid. *(He hands the letter to her. She reads it sits down very slowly).*

Cliff: What's up Dad?... Mum?

Dad: It's your Aunt. She was killed in the bombings. They've been bombed really badly in Coventry. *(MUM exits hurriedly)*

Cliff: What about Uncle Ernie?

Dad: He's been given leave to arrange the funeral and so on. He said the house was just a pile of rubble when he came back.

Cliff: It could have been one of us. Dad, shall I go and see if Mum's all right?

Dad: No. She's probably better on her own for a while. I'll go up in a minute once Rachel's got herself downstairs. Where is she?

Cliff: Do you want me to go and tell her?

Dad: No. I... Oh Cliff. I think we're going to have to get her evacuated.

Cliff: You can't. Not after the letter she's had from Susan.

Dad: What letter?

Cliff: It's a letter saying how horrible it is where she is.

Dad: You know as well as I do what little girls are like. They exaggerate.

Cliff: Maybe. But she won't want to go will she?

Dad: She may not have any choice! (*RACHEL enters*).

Rachel: (*She asks a succession of quick fire questions*) Where's Mum?

Dad: She's gone upstairs to get something.

Rachel: Oh. Where's breakfast?

Dad: It isn't ready yet.

Rachel: Why did I have to rush so much then?

Dad: (*sternly*) Rachel.

Rachel: Can I have a cup of tea?

Dad: Yes but you'll have to wait a moment I want to have a word with you.

Rachel: But Dad. I've got to be somewhere at ten o'clock.

Dad: Where?

Rachel: It's a secret.

Dad: You're not going out unless I know where you're going to.

Rachel: All right then. I'm going round to Mrs. Draper's house. Does that satisfy you? Mum knows. She said I could.

Dad: Why do you need to go round there at this time in the morning?

Rachel: She wants me to help her make preparations for a party they're holding.

Dad: A party? What for?

Rachel: I'm not allowed to say.

Dad: Rachel! Will you stop being so annoying and tell me what's going on before I have to get really angry!

Rachel: You always spoil everything!

Dad: Clifford do you know?

Cliff: I think Susan's coming home. I didn't even know that Rachel knew anything about it.

Rachel: Now can I have some breakfast?

Dad: No you can't young lady. Not until we have some manners from you. You're getting far too high and mighty. If you don't calm down you won't be allowed to go to the party at all.

Rachel: Mum said I could!

Dad: I don't care what your mother says. If I say you can't go, you can't go and that's that.

Rachel: I hate it here!

Dad: Then you won't be at all upset when I tell you that we have been considering the possibility of evacuating you!

Rachel: No you can't! You can't send me away.

Dad: Staying here isn't doing you much good is it Rachel? You're hardly sleeping at all.

Rachel: That's not my fault. Susan told me of all the awful things they do to you there.

Dad: You don't believe all that do you?

Rachel: Susan doesn't lie, anyway her Mum and Dad are bringing her home. They believe her.

Dad: It's not just us. Your school-teachers agree as well. Surely they know what's best for you.

Rachel: You didn't say that a while ago.

Dad: Well a 'while ago' you wanted to go!

Rachel: I'm telling Mum. I'm not going! I'm not going! *(She exits)*.

Dad: What a mess!

Cliff: Is that it then Dad? Are you really going to get her evacuated?

Dad: It's doing her no good staying here Clifford. It's doing her no good at all.

SCENE 6

(RACHEL is crying in her room. CLIFFORD enters).

Cliff: Rachel.... I'm sorry, I'm really sorry. *(RACHEL does not answer)* Mum told me to come up and tell you that everything's ready. Are you sure that you've got everything? *(Pause)* Come on Rachel. Mum and Dad are waiting downstairs, they've told me to come and hurry you up.

Rachel: It's not fair Clifford. It's really not fair. If I hadn't been rude to him I'm sure that he would never have made me go.

Cliff: That wasn't the reason Rachel.... and you know it.

Rachel: It's clear whose side you're on. Why didn't you tell me that they were planning to make me go? You knew before me. It's not fair.

Cliff: Look they only decided finally yesterday morning when they received that letter from Uncle Ernie. The bombings are getting worse. It's not safe here!

Rachel: Then why don't they come? Why don't they send you away? You're not that much older than me! It's always me!

Cliff: You're being so stupid Rachel and you're making matters so much worse for yourself.

Rachel: I don't care. I don't see why I should be made to go and stay in some strangers house when all of you can stay here. If it was that dangerous everyone would be moved out wouldn't they?... and Susan's parents would not have allowed her to come back home.... I'm going to do everything I can to get sent back here. There's no way that I'm going to be a 'good girl' for anyone!

SONG - ONE EVACUEE IN THOUSANDS (REPRISE)

Narrator 2: *Now sit there like a good girl
We know what's best for you
Your friends have left the city
Now you should follow too.
It's true you will lose all that you're used to
But who knows what may be waiting for you there.
Heads we win
Tails you loose so
We will evacuate you.*

Narrators: *One evacuee in thousands.
One evacuee who represents them all
Come closer and see, look how one evacuee
Has no choice about her fate at all
No choice at all.*

SCENE 7 (A Train Station)

SONG - OPERATION PIED PIPER

Evacuees: *Evacuation.... they're sending us away
They said that they're giving us a country holiday.
They want to protect us from the Blitz
Spare us kids from stupid Hitler's antics.
We couldn't believe it when the bombs started falling
Operation Pied Pipers's calling
For mass evacuation now before it's too late
And my Mum's in a state 'cos ...
We have to leave on the very next steam train
But once it's safe we'll be coming home again.
Operation Pied Piper.
Operation Pied Piper.*

Miss McKenzie: Jean Wakeman! Will you do as you're told. I'll not have any more nonsense from you. Heavens above child, you alone are more trouble than the rest put together. Now sit there and stay put until I come back. (*She exits mumbling. RACHEL enters*)

Rachel: Can I sit here?

Jean: If you want to.

Rachel: Do you want a piece of my chocolate?

Jean: Oh thanks.

Rachel: My mum gave it to me before they left me. *(Pause)*. What's your name?

Jean: Jean Wakeman.

Rachel: Oh mine's Rachel Eagle. I suppose you're being evacuated too.

Jean: Yes do you know where we're going?

Rachel: I think it's Northampton - wherever that is. That's what my dad said. He's an Air Raid Warden.

Jean: I don't hear much from mine. He's out fighting.

Rachel: I don't know why my dad isn't fighting - he won't talk about it... I think he's too old! What do you reckon.... you know about being evacuated?

Jean: I can't wait. I think it's wizard!

Rachel: I don't. I've got a friend whose parents have brought her back because it was so awful. She told me that she had to eat her meals off the dog's plate.... you know left overs like!

Miss Walker: *(entering. Looks at RACHEL'S label then at her list)* You're on the wrong platform child. You should be on No 1. You see that gentleman over there. His name is Mr. Grimmer. He's in charge of your group.

Rachel: Thank you. Bye Jean. *(to MR. GRIMMER)* Sir, that lady told me that I had to come and see you. She said that I was on the wrong Platform.

Mr. Grimmer: Yes you are! Your train leaves in two minutes time. Come on or you'll miss it! *(They exit hurriedly)*.

Miss Walker: They had a big fence round the station and on the other side were all the mothers and fathers. They weren't allowed to come over. They had to say their goodbyes from the other side of the fence. They just waved as they got on the train. It was heartbreaking. Little tiny tots didn't know why they were being taken away from their parents. You just imagine it. Your child on a train and you don't know where they're going.

SONG - OPERATION PIED PIPER

Evacuees: *Evacuation.... they're sending us away
They said that they're giving us a country holiday.
They want to protect us from the blitz
Spare us kids from stupid Hitler's antics.
We couldn't believe it when the bombs started falling
Operation Pied Piper's calling
For mass evacuation now before it's too late*

*And my mum's in a state 'cos..
We have to leave on the very next steam train.
But once it's safe we'll be coming home again.
Operation Pied Piper.
Operation Pied Piper.*

Rachel: Just before we reached our destination, this boy, who was hanging out of the window, suddenly stretched up and pulled the communication cord. The train screeched to a halt! The boy looked very white and the grown up in charge of our carriage made a grab for him. Then it was discovered that another boy just along from us had fallen out of our train and was rescued only seconds before a train came in the opposite direction on the rails where this boy had fallen. It made the national newspapers the next day and the boy was complimented on his quick thinking. When we got off the train we were taken into a hall. People came and picked which children they wanted. It was rather like those team games at school when you dread being the last one to be chosen. Here it was worse. Not only had you been sent away.... but also there was a chance that no-one here wanted you either.

(The SONG continues with the evacuees singing the tune through kazoos. As they sing they are taken to various areas of the stage and are chosen. Gradually there are less and less evacuees until eventually RACHEL is on her own with the Billeting Officer).

Rachel: I was the last to be chosen. Maybe I looked a trouble maker, because all the kids who looked neat, tidy and angelic went first.

Billeting Officer: Come on you. We'll have to go on to the next street. *(They both exit. The BILLETING OFFICER continues the song until he is offstage. RACHEL is obviously far less enthusiastic).*

Newsreader: Somewhere in the country the little ones have arrived safely. As usual the motto is "keep smiling." A dreadful necessity has demanded this separation of loved ones, but remember that in their new homes they will find kindness and sympathy, comfort, understanding and above all safety.

SCENE 8

(At the JOHNSON'S House)

B. Officer: Come on Rachel.... try and keep up with me.... I'm sure someone will take you in soon.... if you looked a bit more cheerful maybe people would be more inclined.

Rachel: I don't want to be evacuated so I don't see why I have to pretend to be cheerful.

B. Officer: No matter what happens they won't send you home. They'll put you on a train and send you further and further up the country until someone is prepared to take you in. *(Pause)*. Right now I want you to smile. Number 53. This is a Mr. Johnson's house. Lets hope that he will take you in. *(He knocks)* Smile!

Samuel: *(from behind the door holding a gun)* Who goes there?

B. Officer: Is that Mr. Johnson?

Samuel: No. Major Johnson. Retired. Identify yourself!

B. Officer: I am the area Billeting Officer. May I have a word with you?

Samuel: Only if you're on the King's business. *(He opens the door and points his gun at the BILLETING OFFICER. Both he and RACHEL stick their hands in the air)*. Have you any identification laddie? *(B. OFFICER shows SAMUEL his identification. SAMUEL is satisfied. RACHEL and B. OFFICER slowly put their hands by their sides)*. Vigilance at all times laddie, that's how we've kept our Empire.

B.Officer: Well Major Johnson you'll obviously be keen to help us then? We have this one evacuee from London and we were wondering whether you could take her in.

Samuel: Out of the question.... quarters much too small. Totally unprepared for this eventuality. *(Begins to close the door)*

B. Officer: She will only require one small room. Surely it's the duty of us all to help these innocent young children.

Samuel: Listen laddie. You don't need to tell me my duty. In my day we faced the enemy square on. We didn't run away to hide in the country.

B. Officer: But sir, this young girl can't go fighting Germans!

Phyllis: *(offstage)* Who is it Samuel?

Samuel: No-one dear.

Phyllis: *(entering)* Who did you say? *(She sees the B. OFFICER and RACHEL)*
Oh hello.

B. Officer: Mrs. Johnson?

Phyllis: Yes that's right.

B. Officer: I'm the Billeting Officer for this area and we were wondering if you would like to give this child a home.

Phyllis: Oh how lovely. *(She looks at RACHEL)* "Women and children come first" isn't that what you say Samuel? So we thought we'd go down to the station to see them arrive, but.... well, isn't that right Samuel.

B. Officer: Well Mrs. Johnson. Its always very nice to meet couples who are prepared to do their bit for their country. Would you like to take her in - ten shillings and ninepence a week for one child Mrs. Johnson, plus her ration card of course.

Phyllis: Yes.... well.... we'd love to.... wouldn't we Samuel?

Samuel: *(resigned)* Yes dear.

B. Officer: Oh good. Have you any children of your own Mrs. Johnson?

Phyllis: Yes, one. A boy. Harold by name.

B. Officer: And you do have.... *(he looks at his documentation)*... Ah.... one spare room.... is that right?

Phyllis: Yes and recently decorated. It'll be just lovely for you child.... what did you say your name was?

Rachel: I didn't. *(Pause)*.

B. Officer: Say your name.

Rachel: Rachel. *(PHYLLIS laughs with embarrassment. The BILLETING OFFICER SMILES reassuringly)*

Phyllis: Well come in Rachel. *(RACHEL walks forward. PHYLLIS indicates to her to remove her shoes before stepping on their carpet. She does so, albeit reluctantly)*. Samuel, you stay with the gentleman and bring in Rachel's belongings. *(PHYLLIS and RACHEL move into the house)*

B. Officer: Major Johnson, could you sign this please. *(He hands SAMUEL a document and a pen. SAMUEL duly signs the document. B. OFFICER hands RACHEL'S luggage to SAMUEL and he returns the document and pen)*. Thank you. I'm sure that Rachel will be very happy here with you. Your patriotism in taking her on does you justice sir.

Samuel: We all have to do our bit.

B. Officer: Good night.

Samuel: Good night. *(PHYLLIS and RACHEL are in the sitting room. SAMUEL enters with RACHEL'S meagre luggage)*. Not much luggage, is there?

Rachel: No.

Phyllis: *(enthusiastically)* I suppose you weren't allowed to bring much luggage. Never mind, we can buy you some more clothes, can't we?

Samuel: We'll have to. She's not going out in those rags.

Rachel: I like "these rags" and you're not going to stop me from wearing them. *(PHYLLIS gives SAMUEL a stern 'look')*

Phyllis: Whereabouts in London do you come from Rachel?

Rachel: Bethnal Green.

Phyllis: Is that North or South of the river.

Rachel: I don't know. What river?

Samuel: *(irritated)* The River Thames child.... don't you even know that?

Rachel: No I don't and I don't care!

Phyllis: *(warning)* Samuel. *(Pause)*. You could close the window now Samuel if you like.

Samuel: Yes dear. *(He does so)*. *(Pause)*.

Phyllis: We have a son. Harry. (*RACHEL is nonplussed*) I expect you heard me say that to the young gentleman.

Rachel: Yes I did.

Phyllis: You'll like our Harry, he's in the bath at the moment. He gets on well with everyone. Isn't that right Samuel?

Samuel: Yes dear. (*Pause*).

Phyllis: I suppose your father's in the forces Rachel?

Rachel: No he's an Air Raid Warden.

Phyllis: A very important job that, isn't it Samuel?

Samuel: Yes dear, all our efforts, however small, help our great nation to win this historic battle.

Phyllis: What does your mother do?

Rachel: Munitions.

Phyllis: Oh! That's very important too. We do our bit of course growing the vegetables and so forth. Have you any brothers or sisters Rachel?

Rachel: Just one. A brother.

Phyllis: What's he called?

Rachel: Clifford.

Phyllis: That's an unusual name.

Samuel: There have been a lot of bombings in the cities by all accounts.

Rachel: Yes. My Auntie was killed. That's what made my parents send me here.

Phyllis: (*to cover the embarrassment*) Would you like a drink Rachel? Do you like Ovaltine?

Rachel: No. (*HARRY enters. His hair is wet. He is wearing a dressing gown loosely*).

Harry: (*not seeing RACHEL. HARRY has a lisp*) Who was that at the door Mummy?

Phyllis: It was the Billeting Officer. We've taken in this evacuee from London. (*HARRY looks at RACHEL and gathers his dressing gown tightly around him so that she cannot see his striped pyjamas*) She'll be living here until the end of the war. Rachel, this is our son, Harold.

Harry: Hello

Rachel: (*ignoring HARRY she rifles through her bag to find a small piece of card*) Could you write your name and address on here, so that my parents know where I've been put.

Phyllis: Of course dear. (*She takes it*) Would you like to take your bag up to your room? I'll bring your card up later. Samuel could you do that for her? (*She hands the card to SAMUEL. As RACHEL gets out of the seat PHYLLIS almost imperceptibly brushes the seat with her hand as if to remove any stray fleas that RACHEL may have*). This way Rachel. Oh there is one other

thing before you go upstairs. Do you still wet the bed child?

Rachel: No I don't. I'm not a bleedin' baby!

Samuel: Now there's no need to speak to Mrs. Johnson like that young lady. We'll have none of that language in this house or we'll report you to the Ministry!

Harry: (*whispered as RACHEL exits*) What did you go and get a girl for dad?

SONG - GOODNIGHT CHILDREN EVERYWHERE

(*An original Vera Lynn song from the war*)

Narrator 2: *Goodnight Children everywhere
Your Daddy thinks of you tonight.
Lay your head upon your pillow
Don't be a kid or a weeping willow.
Close your eyes and say a prayer
And surely you will find a kiss to spare.
Although he's far away
He's with you night and day.
Goodnight Children everywhere.*

(*Alternatively, this song may be played over a loudspeaker.*)

ACT 2
SCENE 1

SONG - RACHEL HATES THE JOHNSON'S HOME

Narrator 1: *Now Rachel's come to the Johnson's house
They offer her care but she won't respond.
Her words are cold and her smiles have gone
Will this change in her character last for long?*

Narrators: *Rachel hates the Johnson's home....
Rachel hates the Johnson's home.... Oh.*

Narrator 2: *When you're torn away from the place you know
And forced on a train to an unknown life
Your spirits droop and you lose all hope.
Can her brand new day dawn in bright sunshine?*

SCHOOL PLAYGROUND.

(DOREEN REID is playing Hopscotch on her own. HARRY enters with RACHEL trailing behind)

Harry: Come on slow coach. Come on. *(To DOREEN)* Doreen, my mummy said that someone has to look after our 'vaccie' and see that she gets to her class all right.

Doreen: O.K. That's fine by me.

Harry: *(to RACHEL)* See you after school.... just here by the gates. You'd better be here or mum'll be rather cross! *(RACHEL does not speak. HARRY exits).*

Doreen: What's your name?

Rachel: Rachel.

Doreen: Oh. I'm Doreen. Doreen Reid.

Rachel: I know. Harry just said.

Doreen: Whereabouts in London do you come from?

Rachel: Bethnal Green.

Doreen: Has there been a lot of bombings there?

Rachel: Yeah. We had to sleep in a shelter most of the time.

Doreen: When did you get here?

Rachel: Saturday night.

Doreen: Oh. Do you like it?

Rachel: No. I'd prefer to have stayed at home with my mum and dad.

Doreen: What does your dad do?

Rachel: He's an Air Raid Warden now, and he has his own market stall.

Doreen: What's he like?

Rachel: He's all right!

Doreen: Do you like the Johnsons?

Rachel: They're all right.

Doreen: I only live round the corner from them.

Rachel: So!

Doreen: Well, I was thinking that, if you wanted to, you could come and call for me on your way to school, if you like.

Rachel: Really. Could I? (*DOREEN hands RACHEL the stone for the Hopscotch. RACHEL plays.*)

Doreen: Cor! You're really wizard.

Rachel: I used to play this at my old school. Doreen, have you got an evacuee staying with you?

Doreen: No, we haven't. Not yet anyway. Mum and Dad said that they might when the next lot come over. (*LAURA and PAT enter.*)

Laura: (*seeing RACHEL playing Hopscotch*) Wow you're really wizard. What's your name?

Doreen: This is Rachel.

Laura: And this is Pat SHE'S my evacuee.

Pat: (*to RACHEL*) Whereabouts are you from?

Rachel: Bethnal Green. And you?

Pat: I don't know. I've forgotten I've been here so long.

Rachel: Really?

Pat: No not really! My mum and dad live in Woodford.... you probably won't know it. It's just outside London.

Rachel: Are you enjoying it here?

Pat: Yeah. It's wizard. Laura's mum is a wizard cook, she even does fish and chips!

Doreen: Rachel's staying with Harry Johnson.

Laura: (*to PAT*) You like Harry Johnson don't you Pat?

Pat: No I don't. He's a wet fish!

Rachel: He's not a wet fish!

Pat, Laura & Doreen: Do you mean you fancy him then?

Rachel: He's a wet fish with a lithp! (*they laugh*)

Laura: Did you get caught up in the bombings?

Rachel: Not exactly, but we had to spend a lot of time in the Air-Raid Shelters.

Doreen: What's it like?

Rachel: Pretty frightening.

Pat: We had a bomb here last week. Some stupid German went and dropped it on

the secondary school.

Laura: My brother was dead pleased 'cos he had an exam the next morning. He sat in the front room laughing himself stupid watching the school burn down.

Rachel: What happened?

Laura: He goes back tomorrow and they have to do the exam on Thursday.

Doreen: We all went to have a look and got some shrapnel.

Rachel: My brother's got loads of shrapnel. *(a Hand Bell is rung)*.

Doreen: You'd better come with us to our class. You'll probably be allowed to stay with us.

Laura: Miss Peters is quite nice really she'll let you stay, if you want to that is.

Rachel: Oh yes. Anything so long as I'm not in the fish with a lithp'th class! *(they all laugh and exit)*.

(CHILDREN sing 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' from offstage)

SCENE 2

(School-Yard. The end of the School day. MICK, RAY and JOHN are waiting for HARRY. The remainder of the SCHOOLCHILDREN should freeze in a playing activity. They will come alive during the song. MICK, JOHN and RAY should be highly stylised as grotesque cartoon characters).

Mick, John & Ray: *(entering)* We're the boys. We're 'ard, we're nasty, we're mean, we're vicious and we're violent.

Mick: Mick the boss.

John: Strong John.

Ray: Stupid Ray.

Mick: The end of another boring day at school. Where's Harry Johnson then John?

John: Walking his new girlfriend home I expect.

Mick: He's what?

John: Oh didn't you see him walking to school this morning holding her little hand, trotting along beside her?

Mick: Holding the hand of a vannie from London. I don't believe it. He'll be covered in fleas from head to foot.

Ray: I don't know why you're so good to him Mick. He don't deserve it. He don't he really don't!

John: Oh look here he comes.

Ray: Mick, he's skipping, I tell you he's skipping! He doesn't deserve you as a friend Mick, he don't, he really don't.

Mick: What's up with you then Harry?

Harry: Miss Doyden wanted to see me and she's made me late. My Mummy's going to be so cross!

Mick: And why's that young 'skippy-me-lad'?

Harry: Because I have to meet up with Rachel.

Mick: Rachel? Who's this then Harry? A girlfriend?

John: You're a sissy, Harold, a proper sissy!

Harry: I'm not.... I'm not. She's an evacuee. We had to take her in. I didn't want her. I honestly didn't!

Ray: He don't deserve you as a friend Mick. He don't, he really don't.

Mick: Well if you didn't want her to stay with you, why are you so keen to go and find her now?

Harry: Because Mummy said so.

All: (*mimicking*) "Mummy said so".

Ray: He don't deserve you as a friend Mick. He don't, he really don't.

Mick: Well I want you to stay here with us.

Harry: I can't.

Mick: Ray. Get him! (*RAY grabs HARRY who struggles feebly*) I don't go around with boys who talk to vaccies, and you live with one.

Harry: It's not my fault.

Mick: Oh yes it is. If you're going to be a flea-head, you can find some new friends.

SONG - SONG OF THE CLEAN-UP GANG

Mick: *You talk to evacuees and entertain their fleas!*

John: *You'll make us itch and everyone will sneeze!*

Ray: *Creepy crawlies in her hair and maggots up her nose.*

All: *Keep out of our way and fleas off our clothes!*

REFRAIN

Mick: *We're the schools clean up gang just trying to stop disease*

Don't talk to evacuees you're sure to spread their fleas.

We're the schools clean up gang doing our best

To clear out the evacuees.... they're children we detest.

(*On a given musical cue the CHORUS comes to life and a fight ensues between HAROLD and MICK. Eventually HARRY runs away but does not collect RACHEL*)

All: *We're the schools clean up gang just trying to stop disease...*

Don't talk to evacuees you're sure to spread their fleas.

We're the schools clean up gang doing our best

To clear out the evacuees.... they're children we detest.

(*ALL exit*)

SCENE 3

(The stage is divided into two sections. In one part is the School Gate and in the other is the JOHNSON'S Front Door and Hallway).

(RACHEL is waiting for HARRY at the School Gate. DOREEN enters).

Doreen: Rachel. *(RACHEL turns to DOREEN)* Rachel, why are you sitting here? Hasn't Harry come to meet you?

Rachel: No. He's trying to avoid me. Anyway I'd rather walk home with you.

Doreen: You don't like it there do you?

Rachel: No I don't, and I never will. Harry's a pest and Major Johnson just sits there with his pipe and newspaper agreeing with everything that snobby Mrs. Johnson says. My dad would never stand for that!

Doreen: What are you going to do?

Rachel: I don't know. I didn't want to be evacuated in the first place, but everyone here is on their side telling me that I have to be grateful that they have taken me in.

Doreen: It's not that bad here Rachel.

Rachel: Not for you maybe.... It's your home.... When will this stupid war end so that I can go home!

(HAROLD is at the Front Door. He knocks. PHYLLIS comes to the door)

Phyllis: What on earth have you been up to Harold Johnson? Put your collar straight. And where is Rachel? *(HARRY does not answer)* Well! I'm waiting!

Harry: I don't know!

Phyllis: *(She hustles him indoors)* What do you mean 'I don't know'?

Harry: Well I couldn't find her.

Phyllis: You should have waited at the gate like I told you to.

Harry: I did.

Phyllis: For how long? *(HAROLD does not answer)* Look Harold, where is she?

Harry: I don't know. She'll find her way back.

Phyllis: I'm not so sure that she will. Did you see her at lunch time?

Harry: No I forgot.... she was with other girls anyway. Mummy I hate her!

Phyllis: I don't know how you can say such things Harold. You will go and find her now and don't come back without her. *(She hustles him out).*

(MELOS - SONG OF THE CLEAN UP GANG)

(Ten minutes later. HAROLD is once again alone at the Door)

Phyllis: I thought I told you not to come back until you'd found her. *(No answer)* Well! Where is she?

Harry: I don't know. I don't know.

Phyllis: Here comes your father. I can't imagine what he's going to have to say about this.

Samuel: (*entering*) Good evening Phyllis. Good evening Harold.

Phyllis: Rachel hasn't come home because Harold 'forgot'.

Harry: It's not my fault!

Phyllis: I told him to wait at the gate for her. He has purposely disobeyed me. He ran home.... and then when I asked him to go and find her he came back without her.

Samuel: She has a tongue Phyllis. If she gets lost she can ask. Harold can't be expected to wait around for her. He's a boy. He has far more important things to do than wait around for little girls.

Phyllis: Samuel I am surprised. Who knows what could have happened to her.... I hold you responsible! (*There is a knock at the door. It is RACHEL. PHYLLIS opens the door and smothers RACHEL in a hug.*) Rachel, where have you been? We've been so worried about you. (*no answer*) Did you wait for Harold? Where have you been?

Rachel: (*walking away from PHYLLIS*) I walked home with Doreen Reid.

Phyllis: Who is Doreen Reid? (*no answer*) Harold.

Harry: I don't know!

Phyllis: Harold!

Harry: She's a girl at school. She lives on Bramble Farm.

Phyllis: Rachel take your shoes off now! And in future if you want to go off to a farm kindly clean yourself up before you come back home. (*PHYLLIS, HARRY, SAMUEL and RACHEL move upstage to address the Audience.*) This was the first of many inconsiderate incidents and gradually Rachel became more and more difficult to manage, yet we continued to try and make her happy with us.

Samuel: I knew from the outset that the situation was unworkable. The girl was nothing but a common street urchin. She never appreciated the lengths we went to to give her a better life.

Harry: I think she's horrid, stupid and smelly and I've lost all of my best friends at school all because of her!

Rachel: I couldn't stand it. It was so bad. Worse than I could ever have imagined, and Major Johnson used to look at my letters from home. I hated him and I hated being evacuated. I secretly wrote a letter and posted it home without the Johnsons knowing.

Phyllis: It was a Sunday. I remember it very well indeed. I don't think I've ever been so humiliated in all my life. The Billeting Officer called round and said that they'd been able to place Rachel in another home which he said would be 'more suitable'. To add insult to injury we were then told that Bramble Farm

was the place they'd chosen.

Rachel: Life with Doreen was really wizard. I wrote to mum and dad to thank them for helping to sort things out. Doreen's parents let me call them Auntie and Uncle. They were both so lovely.

SCENE 4

SONG - NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Narrators: *They say there's no place like your home
Rachel will now disagree with that
She's found a new place she can now call her own
With a friend like the sister she'd never ever known.
So now she need never again feel alone
In Doreen's happy family.*

All: *She's having the time of her life
The Reids are like sun after rain
There's never a row between husband and wife
And Doreen brings Rachel new peace in her life.
At work and at play they ignore the world's strife
Their joy rubs away war's strain.*

*A year passes by in this way
And Rachel's forgotten the war
No thought of her parents disturbs her full day
No letter to plead for an end to her stay*
Narrators: *No tears when her parents can't share her birthday.*
All: *She thinks of her home no more
She thinks of her home no more
She thinks of her home no more.*

(BRAMBLE FARM - ANNE is putting out the washing)

Anne: Where's Rachel?

Doreen: She's upstairs writing a letter.

Anne: How long ago is it since she saw her parents?

Doreen: Well over a year. I don't think they've been able to visit her since she was evacuated.

Anne: Does she talk about them much?

Doreen: A bit, but only if you ask her. I try not to just in case she gets upset.

Anne: I'm so glad we didn't have to evacuate you. I don't think I could have done

it.

Doreen: I do know that Rachel's parents didn't want to. She was one of the last to leave.

Anne: Yes. I think her mother said that in her letter to me when we first had Rachel.

Doreen: Did you know that Harry's mum and dad have been made to take on another 'vaccie'?

Anne: How do you know?

Doreen: Harry brought him into school today. He's all horrible and has got spots.

Anne: Doreen!

Doreen: He's been transferred from Bedford but no-one knows why. I'm surprised that the Billeting Officer has allowed them to take him in after what they did to Rachel.

Anne: Doreen! You shouldn't say things like that. It was all a long time ago.

Doreen: Sorry Mum. *(Pause)*. I know that I shouldn't ask but will we be able to have a party for Rachel's birthday like the one you had for me?

Anne: We've already planned one for Saturday week, but don't say anything to Rachel, we want it to be a surprise.

Doreen: That'll be super. Rachel will be really pleased.

Anne: Well that's settled then. There's something else, but if I tell you, you must promise me that you won't tell Dad.

Doreen: O.K. What is it?

Anne: We've bought her a bike.

Doreen: Wizard!

Anne: We got it from Mr. Beacham across the road.

Doreen: Wizard!

Anne: But it must be kept a secret. We want it to be a real surprise.

Doreen: Yes Mum. You can trust me. Mum's the word.

SCENE 5

(The REID'S House. RACHEL'S Birthday. Tom and Anne are checking a list).

Tom: Elizabeth Windmill?

Anne: Yes.

Tom: William Wigglesworth?

Anne: No ...chicken pox.

Tom: Jean Norman?

Anne: Maybe but she fell down the stairs and broke her leg, her mum wasn't sure.

Tom: Daisy Phinbin.

Anne: Yes.
Tom: Bill Treacher?
Anne: Yes.
Tom: Wendy Richard?
Anne: Yes, they make such a darling couple.
Tom: Victoria Thrumsworthy?
Anne: Yes.
Doreen: (*Entering*) Eugh!
Anne: She's got to come dear, she's the vicar's daughter!
Tom: The McSquiddle twins?
Anne: Yes.
Tom: Enid Churchill?
Anne: Yes.
Tom: Rose Fuhrer-Himler?
Anne: I think they moved.
Doreen: Yeh they did.
Tom: Violet Bladder?
Anne: Yes.
Tom: Harold Johnson?
Doreen: Eugh!!!
Rachel: (*Entering*) Thanks so much for the bike Aunty Anne. It's really wizard!
Anne: It's a really special day love!
Tom: Anyway you deserve a special present!
Anne: Something for you to remember it by.
Rachel: I've always wanted a bike.
Doreen: Come on Mum can't we tell her?
Rachel: What?
Anne: Go on then.
Doreen: We've got a suprise for you ...
Rachel: A suprise?
Anne/Doreen: Yes.
Anne/Doreen/Tom: A party!
Rachel: Wow!!! Thanks so much ... that's ...
All: Wizard!!!

(Children enter as the music strikes up).

SONG - A GREAT DAY

REFRAIN

All: *It's a great day.... a wonderful day*
Rachel: *The best that's happened yet.*
All: *A champagne dinner day.... a competition winners day*
A day we'll never forget.
It's a fine day.... a brilliant day
In a million different ways.
A bright red letter day.... couldn't be better day...
Perfect.... perfect.... perfect day of days.

VERSE 1

Rachel: *What a birthday!.... what a surprise.*
When I saw the bike I couldn't believe my eyes.
How can I thank you? What can I say?
Doreen: *It's a "wizard" day.*
All: *Party frocks and party hats*
A chance to dress in this or that.
Thoughts of war are far away....
It's a great day...

REFRAIN

All: *It's a great day.....*

VERSE 2

Oh she's got friends.... to laugh a lot and play with.
Friends.... she's glad to spend the day with.
Friends to call on.... friends to stay with.
Friends to speak and be O.K. with...
Friends.... to while away the time with...
She's got friends.... so many...
She's got friends.... ten a penny...
She's got friends.

REFRAIN

All: *It's a great day....*

(As the song finishes the B. OFFICER knocks at the door)

Anne: Come on everyone. It's time for tea.

(They exit. The B. OFFICER again knocks at the door)

Rachel: Uncle Tom, there's someone at the door.

Tom: Is there dear? I'll get it. You go on in there and enjoy yourself. *RACHEL*
exits, TOM opens the door).

Area B. Officer: Good evening.

Tom: Good evening, can I help you?

Area B. Officer: Mr. Thomas Reid?

Tom: That's right. How can I help you?

Area B. Officer: I understand that last year you took on an evacuee from Bethnal Green, by name of Rachel Eagle.

Tom: Yes.... yes we did. She's settled in very well thank you.... in fact it's her birthday today and we're holding a party for her. Would you like to see her?

Area B. Officer: Well, in the circumstances Mr. Reid I think that you will be the best judge of that.

Tom: What do you mean? What's happened?

Area B. Officer: I'm sorry Mr. Reid, but it's bad news.

Tom: Would you like to come in? (*The BILLETING OFFICER goes into the house*).

Area B. Officer: I am afraid that Rachel's mother was killed in yesterday's bombings.

Tom: Killed?

Area B. Officer: Yes. I'm afraid so. Her father will be in contact with you as soon as everything is sorted out. I'm very sorry.... er....Would you like me to break it to her?

Tom: No.... no I'll tell her.

Area B. Officer: Yes... right.

Tom: Will her father be coming up to see her?

Area B. Officer: Well I can't say for sure.... but if he does I doubt that it would be before the funeral.

Tom: Of course.

Area B. Officer: I am very sorry. These are difficult times sir.

Tom: They certainly are.

Area B. Officer: Do you think that there's anything that I can do to help?

Tom: (*sighs*) No, we'll be all right. Thank you for calling.

Area B. Officer: (*Exits*) Good-night sir.

Tom: Good-night.

(*TOM closes the door and stands silently for a few moments. ANNE enters*).

Anne: Who was that? (*Pause*). What's happened?

Tom: Anne, it's Rachel's mother.

Anne: What?

Tom: She was killed in yesterday's bombings.

Anne: Oh no. (*Pause*). Poor child.

Tom: We can't tell her tonight. We've both got to be very strong. She must not suspect that anything is wrong.

Anne: When should we tell her?

Tom: Not tonight.

Anne: Tomorrow. I'll tell her. (*DOREEN enters*).

Doreen: Mummy, Daddy, come quickly. Rachel wants to blow out the candles.

Tom: All right dear, we'll be there in a moment.

Doreen: What's wrong?

Tom: (*Pause*). Nothing. It's all right.

(*From offstage the CHILDREN sing "Happy Birthday" to RACHEL*)

Doreen: Well come on then. (*DOREEN runs off. The CHILDREN continue singing to the end of the song. TOM and ANNE follow DOREEN slowly*).

Pat: Three cheers for Rachel. Hip-hip....

All: Hooray!

Doreen: Hip-hip.

All: Hooray!

Doreen: Hip-hip.

All: Hooray!

SCENE 6

Rachel: (*RACHEL'S face in a tight spotlight*) Killed! Why? I don't believe you.

Anne: I'm very, very sorry Rachel.

Rachel: I don't believe you. You're just saying that to keep me here.

Anne: It's true, we do want you here, but I wouldn't say something like that just to keep you here.... now would I? (*Pause*). You ought to write to your father, see how he is Rachel. I'm sorry, I really am.

Rachel: What's going to happen to me now Auntie? What's going to happen to me now?

Anne: You'll be all right here.... with us.

* * * * *

Dad: (*F.X. with Echo*) We ain't got to do anything. No war is going to break our family up!

Mum: (*F.X. with Echo*) It's just as safe here love. I doubt if we'll have any bombings anyway. We've all got to make sacrifices now the war is here.... but I'll be with you Rachel so don't you worry.... I'll be with you.

Anne: (*F.X. with Echo*) You'll be all right here with us.

Rachel: Why did it have to be my Mummy!?

SONG - ONE EVACUEE IN THOUSANDS (REPRISE)

Narrator 2: *You've seen that war's not lovely
It kills and hurts and maims.
Bombs lives and leaves them lonely,
Weighed down with loss and pain.
But it's not only the body that suffers
It's not only the adults who complain.
Think of the fate of all those children
Who left on the evacuee train.*

Narrators: *One evacuee.... in thousands.
One evacuee who represents them all.
Come closer and see...
Look how one evacuee....
Has no choice about her fate at all....
No choice at all.*

Rachel: I remember the next day, Doreen asking me to go to a church bazaar with her. I wouldn't leave my room. Then Auntie Anne came in to talk to me. She was ever so kind, she said that i'd have to cheer up and that she needed to tidy my room. Everyone was nice to me, and in a way I was relieved not to be in London. I made Auntie and Uncle a card, you know, to thank them. They were really thrilled.

SCENE 7

(One Week later. The REIDS' FRONT ROOM)

Anne: What time did he say he'd arrive dear?

Tom: He should be here by now.

Anne: Do you think we've done the right thing by leaving it as a surprise for Rachel?

Tom: You're worried aren't you?

Anne: Of course I am. It just doesn't seem right that's all.

Tom: What do you mean?

Anne: Well because we've never seen him, I...

Tom: Yes?

Anne: Oh Tom it's so awkward.

Tom: What do you mean?

Anne: Well I've just imagined that maybe.... maybe he'd let her stay here permanently.

Tom: We can't afford to think like that Anne. Just think if it were our Doreen.

Anne: I know, but because we haven't ever seen him I haven't had to really think about it.

Tom: Well I suggest that you stop thinking about it straight away.

Anne: Do you know, I'm so proud of what we've done for her. It may be big headed of me to say it but we've really made that girl.... we've really made her.

Tom: Anne you must stop talking like this.

Anne: It's been a funny old war, nothing like my father's account of the 14-18 war. Until this there's been nothing to bring the misery of it all home to me.

Tom: Anne, you must promise me that you will never say any of this to Rachel.... or to Doreen for that matter. It wouldn't be fair. (*He sees a man through the window. It is DAD*) I think this is him.

Anne: You go to the door.... I'll just go and tidy myself up a bit. (*TOM opens the front door*).

Dad: Hello.... Mr Reid?

Tom: Yes. I assume you're Rachel's father.

Dad: That's right.

Tom: Oh do come in. My wife will be down in a minute.

Dad: I'm sorry I'm so late. It's been a very trying journey. (*ANNE enters*).

Tom: Mr. Eagle this is my wife.

Dad: I'm very pleased to meet you Mrs. Reid.

Anne: And we're pleased to meet you. I am so sorry that we have to meet in such difficult circumstances.

Tom: Yes we're both very sorry.

Dad: Thank you, thank you very much.

Anne: I hope my husband's told you.... Rachel's not in at the moment. She's with Doreen, they've got a kind of school sports day.

Dad: Yes he did. Is she well? To be perfectly honest I'm rather nervous about seeing her.

Anne: She doesn't know that you're coming. We thought it would be nice for her to have it as a surprise.

Dad: Oh I see. How is she? How has she taken.... you know.... about her mother.

Anne: Well obviously she's very upset. At first she wouldn't go out at all but I think it was probably for the best Mr. Eagle that she didn't go down for the funeral.

Dad: I did what I thought was right.

Tom: She's doing very well at school. She's a very intelligent girl Mr. Eagle.

Dad: Good. She was a bit mucked up with her schooling in London what with the Civil Defence taking over the school and so many teachers having to leave

and so on.

Anne: She's made a lot of friends here.... she and Doreen are like sisters, aren't they Tom?

Tom: Oh yes. They get along famously!

Dad: Good. It is good of you to take her in like this.

Anne: Oh think nothing of it.... it's been a pleasure.

Tom: It really has it's been a pleasure.

Dad: (*notices the Card on the Sideboard*) That's Rachel's writing isn't it?

Anne: Yes.... er.... we gave her a birthday party and she made this to say thank you. Have a look at it if you like. Wasn't it sweet of her?

Dad: She always was very artistic.... took after her mother in that way she did.

Anne: Oh did she?

Dad: For a birthday party you said?

Anne: Yes.... just a little one.... you know.

Dad: One of her friends at home, Susan....

Anne: Oh yes, she's talked about her....

Dad: Has given me a card to give her, and me and her mother bought her a present before her mother passed on like.... but it's got her signature in it.... it's a book. Do you think that she'll like it?

Anne: Yes of course she will. I think it's important for her to have something to hold on to and remember her by. (*RACHEL and DOREEN enter obviously very excited. Their legs are tied together as though for a three-legged race*). Oh there they are now Mr. Eagle. I'll just go and let them in.

Doreen: Guess what? We lost.

Rachel: Yes, she fell over.

Anne: Oh well never mind.

Rachel: (*seeing DAD who has now stood up*) Dad! (*neither of them move. There is an awkward silence*).

Dad: It's good to see you Rachel. Have you been enjoying yourself?

Rachel: Yes thank you. We've had a sports day.

Dad: Oh good (*Pause*). Have you been getting on well looking after yourself? (*RACHEL moves closer to ANNE*)

Anne: Well Rachel?

Rachel: How's Clifford?

Dad: He's at home. He's fine. He sends his love, Next year an' he'll be off to war.

Rachel: Poor old Clifford.

Dad: He's looking forward to it.

Rachel: He's all right though?

Dad: Yeah, he's fine. (*Pause*). Your mother and I.... we bought this for you.... for your birthday. I couldn't send it.... you know.... what with.... well you know.

(He hands her the GIFT).

Anne: Say thank you, Rachel.

Rachel: Thank you.

Dad: And Susan sent this. *(He gives her the CARD)*

Anne: Is that your friend from London?

Rachel: Yes.

Anne: You were very close weren't you?

Rachel: I don't know really.

SONG - MR. EAGLE'S VISIT

Narrator 1: *Mr Eagle's visiting Rachel
And she doesn't seem to know him.
It's as though the family ties
Have been discarded by the war.
Mr. Eagle was a man who.... once had a family.
Now he's lost without the pieces
Of his wrecked and shattered life.*

(Later that day).

Dad: Ah well.... I'd better be getting back home. We should have come before.... I know that but.... well it really is very expensive and it's not that easy.

Tom: Oh we quite understand Mr. Eagle. I'm sure that Rachel appreciates all your efforts today.

Anne: It's been really nice to meet you. I'm only sorry that you have to go before the girls get back.... I did tell them not to be too long and we didn't realise what time you would be leaving otherwise I'd have stopped them from going out.

Dad: Maybe it's just as well.... you know.... I don't want to upset her. Right.... well I'll be off then. Thank you for the tea.

Anne: Oh, that's been no bother.

Tom: It's been very nice to meet you.

Dad: She's a very lucky girl is our Rachel.... a very lucky girl indeed. *(ANNE opens the door. DAD steps out, turns and shakes TOM'S hands)* It's been hard on my family this war has.... really hard. I can't see my way to thinking what's going to happen when it's all over. I'm sure it'll be worth it but it's really hard for the likes of me.

Tom: It'll be a good job when it's over, there's no doubting that.

Dad: *(shakes ANNE'S hand)* Good bye Mrs. Reid. You will look after her now, on't you?

Anne: Yes of course we will.

Dad: Good bye Mr. Reid, and thank you for showing me round the farm.

Tom: Good bye Mr. Eagle.

Anne: Rachel was pleased to see you, she was, really she was.

Dad: I know she was. You will say good bye to her for me won't you?

Anne: Of course we will.

Dad: I'll be in touch. (*DAD exits*).

Anne: Poor Rachel.... I've never seen her so withdrawn.

Tom: Poor Rachel!.... It's him I feel sorry for.

SONG - MRS. REID'S NEW DAUGHTER

Narrator 2: *Mrs. Reid has found a new daughter
And she really seems to love her.
It's as though Rachel's one of a family
Just like she was before.
Mrs. Reid is a mother whose extended her family.
Now Rachel has become
A part of Anne Reid's life.*

SCENE 8

(The REIDS' House. ANNE is packing RACHEL'S things. She picks up her gas mask and looks at it. TOM enters).

Anne: Why Tom?.... Why now?....

Tom: You knew as well as I did that she would have to go if that's what her father wanted. You've said yourself.... she needs to be with her father.

Anne: She should have stayed until the end of the war. A short visit to London would have been sufficient. Being in London will only remind the poor child of her mother. I know she was getting over it. He doesn't seem to care how Rachel feels, how messed about she feels.

Tom: Yes, but he is her father, we must stand back and let them carry on with their lives.

Anne: "Their lives"!.... She wanted to be part of our life.... she said so to me.... she told me that.... she's part of our lives and always will be.

Tom: We've got to think of our family now.

Anne: She's not safe in London. You must see that, it's not right to take her back, a young girl like that.

Tom: What about Doreen?

Anne: (*not registering*) She needs me.... and I need her... Doreen needs her.... the farm needs her.... it won't seem right without her.

Tom: We have to accept it Anne.

Anne: We've got things that we can offer her here that he can't. It's better for her here.

Tom: (*angrily*) Anne! He needs her now. You seem to forget that she is his daughter. (*More calmly*) Isn't it better that they're together?

Anne: I'm sorry. I'm being silly. If she does go I don't think that I could bear to see her again.

Tom: Oh come on now.

Anne: Would you take her to the train.... I don't think I could manage it. I'll move her bed. Doreen said she wanted it done as soon as possible. *RACHEL enters*)

Rachel: Auntie. Do I have to go?

Anne: I've packed your things. You'd better go and say goodbye to Doreen, and then Uncle Tom will take you to the station.

Rachel: I don't want to. I can't Auntie, I can't.

Anne: You've got to go Rachel. We can't do anything about it. Your father will be at the station to meet you. We don't have any choice.

Rachel: Uncle Tom came to the station with me. After he bought my ticket for me he told me that he was just going to the office to see someone but that he'd be back before the train came in. I never saw him again. The train arrived and a soldier helped on with my luggage. I stayed at the window, but Uncle Tom never appeared.

SONG - EYES OF A CHILD

Children: (*slowly*) *Evacuation they're sending her away
This marks the end of her country holiday.*

Narrator 1: *One evacuee.... in thousands....
If the men who made war took their masks off and smiled
And the children played happy and free.
If the world learned to see through the eyes of a child
What a wonderful world it would be.*

Narrator 2: *If the left and the right hand could be reconciled
If all quarrels could end in a kiss*

Narrator 1: *If they saw the despair in the eyes of this child
There would be no more moments like this.*

*For the eyes of a child can see love at a glance
And seek out the right from the wrong
So the world would do well to give children a chance
For the world will be their's before long.*

Narrator 2: *If the left and the right hand could be reconciled
If all quarrels could end in a kiss.*

Narrator 1: *If they saw the despair in the eyes of this child
There would be no more moments like this.*

Chorus: *Ah....
If the men who made war took their masks off and smiled
And the children played happy and free
If the world learned to see through the eyes of a child
What a wonderful world it would be.
If the left and the right hand could be reconciled
If all quarrels could end in a kiss....*

Narrator 1: *If.... they.... saw the despair (RACHEL'S head tightly spotlit)
In the eyes of this child
There would be no more moments like this....*

Chorus: *There would be no more moments like this.*

THE END