

# **THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE WAR**

**a play in two women**

**by Jennie Webb**

WORKING DRAFT

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# THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE WAR

**Characters:** **Woman 1**, who is substantially older than  
**Woman 2**, who is well into her child-bearing years

**Setting:** **A single playing area without walls where unseen forces are at work.**  
**There are several large windows in the floor.**

The only piece of furniture onstage is a single bed which is not unlike a hospital bed, but not definitively so.

The bed, costume pieces and properties should all have a timeless, almost suspended, feel.

**NOTE: Woven into the action of the play is an accompanying textual score, written for two male voices, live and recorded. The score includes media coverage of wars and "uprisings," reports on police action and military policy, accounts of war crimes, sounds of the battlefield, clinical details from hospital records, violent crime statistics, and psychological diagnostic criteria.**

The score begins with an overture, which is heard at full volume: a montage of news broadcasts. Thereafter, the score is present at various levels—most times only a hum or subliminal undercurrent. The score is arranged so that the timing, content, pacing and tone of the various movements supports and provides a counterpoint to accompany the two women onstage.

It is suggested that this aspect of the play be carefully orchestrated in performance to enhance the audience's visceral experience of the play, not to distract from it. At the same time, the integration of the score seeks to stretch the boundaries of our collective ability to screen out or censor unwanted information. And also to tap into each individual's capacity to single out selected words, phrases or themes which may resonate on a personal level.

—the play is performed without an intermission—

# THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE WAR

*In black we hear the overture to the play's score.*

OVERLAPPING MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENTS (LIVE): TONE IS PRESENTATIONAL, WITH INCREASING EXCITEMENT

VOICE 1, male (political statement to live crowd, 1917):

**Ladies and gentleman, America is at war!!!**

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 2000):

**In the bloodiest moments yet, it looks as if the violence will surely escalate as more clashes between Israelis and Palestinian fighters erupt in the Gaza strip.**

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1974):

**Lasting 11 days and 11 nights, it was the most successful air bombardment ever. With over a hundred thousand bombs dropped over Hanoi, the death toll rises to—**

*In the darkness underneath the score, we hear Woman 1.*

*She begins to wail, a high-pitched scream which might at first be mistaken for falling bombs or rockets, until her sobs settle deep down inside of her chest. Something tells us that although her sorrow is genuine, this woman is genuinely impressed with the sound of her own emotions and wishes to explore the possibilities.*

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1950):

**General MacArthur's Tokyo headquarters has issued an estimate that since June 25th, North Korean losses are close to 200,000 with approximately 40,000 prisoners being—**

*Her low cries build in intensity and volume, becoming lamentations which reach the proportions of a Greek tragedy.*

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1942):

**Through the pea-soup fog that has been aiding the Germans we can see wrecked American equipment, a telling sign of the pounding the U.S. troops took—**

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1995):

**Following the second massacre in Sarajevo by the Bosnian Serbs, NATO systematically bombed strategic points from the air, destroying—**

VOICE 1, male (hearing statement, 1947):

**There is no doubt as to where a real communist's loyalty rests. Their allegiance is to Russia, not the United States!**

*We hear a short, self-satisfied sigh—a signal that the proper dimensions and theatricality have been attained.*

*Lights come up to reveal two women on a single bed, surrounded by several large windows in the floor.*

*Woman 1 rocks back and forth, holding Woman 2 in her arms. Woman 2, in a slip, is not moving. Woman 1 wears a simple dress which buttons down the front over a slip, a sweater, stockings & shoes.*

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):

**We've just heard our man in Jerusalem utter two of the most chilling words in the English language: Nerve Gas.**

*After a moment, Woman 2 softly sighs.*

PACE BEGINS TO ESCALATE AND VOICES OVERLAP TO A GREATER EXTENT.

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1949):

**(gunfire, shouting) We're now seeing scenes like this all over France, the arrest of Reds, forces used to crush—**

*Almost unconsciously, Woman 1 lets out a sympathetic cry in concert with Woman 2, but subtly topping her.*

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):

**(screaming, airplanes) On the streets of Baghdad, people scurrying, screaming, running for cover—**

*Woman 2 sighs again, followed by Woman 1.*

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1975):

**(gunfire, explosions, shouting) There's no way to shoot these people! Five or six hundred troops on this bridge, fighting maybe a dozen or so people, maybe twenty at the most, communists—**

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):

**(explosions, air raid sirens) We have no further details at this time. People have been told to go to their shelters, again, a missile attack on Dehrain—**

*Soon the cries, moans and wailing of the two women together grow louder, their voices comprising what becomes almost a duet.*

VOICE 1, male (political statement, 1918):  
 (crowd noises) **It is agreed that American troops should be brought to France as rapidly as Allied transportation facilities will permit—**

*Almost operatic.*

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):  
 (explosions, air raid sirens) **We still do not have full information—**

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1973):  
 (gunfire, explosions) **—the cobras are going in but it seems that the North Vietnamese have got a 37 millimeter anti-aircraft gun—**

*Almost sexual.*

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):  
 (explosions, air raid sirens) **—but we do have some details: they are fully armed and loaded—**

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1943):  
 (engines) **—and the pilot is inside! We can see him, moving, struggling—**

*Even painful.*

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):  
 (air raid sirens) **It all happened too fast, everyone here is just trying to figure out—**

*Their screams alternate and feed off one another as Woman 2 leaps out of bed. Woman 1 also stands. The two women are apart on either side of the bed.*

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1973):  
 (gunfire, screaming) **—firing air bursts, shrapnel exploding in the air—**

*Screaming as one, the women turn to face one another—Lucy & Ethyl.*

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):

(explosions, air raid sirens) **And stay tuned right here, for THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE WAR!**

*The screams stop.*

*he score shifts to a low level, suggesting perhaps a television in the background.*

WOMAN 1:

You're feeling better.

*Pause.*

WOMAN 2:

Yes.

*Woman 2 crumples onto the bed.*

WOMAN 1:

Are you hungry?

*Pause.*

WOMAN 2:

What is today?

WOMAN 1:

The 7th.

WOMAN 2: Oh.

*Woman 1 straightens the linens on the bed around Woman 2.*

I'm still sore.

VOLUME DECREASES SIGNIFICANTLY.

SCENE FROM A 1930s MOVIE, LIVE ACTORS SHIFTING TO RECORDED VOICES: THEATRICAL, DRAMATIC.

VOICE 1, male (radio announcement):

*After a week-long artillery bombardment, an attack was launched across the river Somme. Officials report that the German losses were heavy, but with a gain of only kilometers, British troops also suffered 57,470 casualties.*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*(feebly) Oooohhh . . . Waaahh . . . Water!*

VOICE 1, female (nurse):

*I'm here soldier. But I can't give you water. You've been shot in the stomach! One drink of water would be the end of you!*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*I thought it was already the end of me . . . Am I the only one who made it out alive?*

VOICE 1, female (nurse):

*Shhh. Rest now. You shouldn't be getting so excited.*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*I am, aren't I? Don't tell me none of them made it, sister . . . Russell? Clarkson? Jonesey? Old Jonesey?*

WOMAN 1:

I would expect so!

WOMAN 2:

Is it Tuesday?

*Silence.*

Is it February?

*Silence.*

Is it raining?

*Silence.*

WOMAN 1:

Did you say you were hungry? Today is chicken. But I don't like how they make it. Too much salt. You would think that they would watch that, be aware of that. Salt in things. And I'm amazed that they serve caffeinated coffee. Coffee with caffeine. I was wondering why I couldn't sleep, because I had just assumed . . .

WOMAN 2:

*(looking down through a window) No.*

WOMAN 1:

No?

WOMAN 2:

It's not raining.

VOICE 1, female (nurse):

*Shhhh. Keep still. You mustn't disturb your dressing.*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*Sister . . .*

VOICE 1, female (nurse):

*Quiet now! Shhh!*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*I'm not going to make it, am I? You might as well tell me.*

VOICE 1, female (nurse):

*Hush! Of course you are! I'll see to it that you do. We all will.*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*We all . . . ?*

*VOLUME DECREASES FURTHER. SCENE SHIFTS TO RECORDED VOICES.*

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):

*Hello, Terry.*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*Jonesey! Am I glad to see you, man. I knew they couldn't get you, Jonesey!*

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):

*Not me and not you, Tiger! And it's Lieutenant, now!*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*You don't say!*

WOMAN 1:

No.

WOMAN 2:

No.

WOMAN 1:

No. Not in August.

WOMAN 2:

Not in August?

*Woman 1 moves away from the bed.*

WOMAN 1:

Sometimes in August, but it's a warm rain, a muggy rain. I'm not sure whether it should even be called rain: it's really like water floating and settling and hitting you—not even in drops; more like splashing against you in globs.

WOMAN 2:

I am hungry.

WOMAN 1:

I am, too. But I'm not hungry for chicken.

WOMAN 2:

I'm not hungry for chicken.

WOMAN 1:

I don't think I've ever been hungry **for** chicken. Chicken isn't one of those things that you crave. You just eat chicken because it's there, or because there isn't anything else, or because you can't think of anything else. So you eat chicken.

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):

*While you've been in here getting your carburetor adjusted, we've had some shaking up in the ranks! Now the way I see it, in a couple of days you'll be ready for more Heinies, and you'll win the war all by yourself!*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*If they'd let me outta' here, I would!*

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):

*They will in no time, I'll bet the Legion of Honor on it.*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*So the whole story: How's the rest of the squadron?*

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):

*Not so good. Nothing's left of the old outfit, and the war's gone completely sour. The Heinies have now got little tri-planes, and these things can go fast! Like performing, flying poodles! We could use you 'cause it's time for the big push, Terry.*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*I don't know, Jonesey—*

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):

*Lieutenant.*

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*Lieutenant! Lying here, I've been doing some thinking . . .*

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):

*Thinking! That doesn't sound like you! Terry the tiger—a man of action. Who liked the taste of blood from the first. Who couldn't get enough after his first kill—*

WOMAN 2:

I'm not hungry for chicken.

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*That's just it.*

WOMAN 1:

Especially not when it's cooked with too much salt. I could never stand salty chicken. Some people can, some people even like it! I suppose the people who cook it like it, but even that's hard for me to comprehend. How can they possibly eat it? **Especially** after cooking it!

*I was thinking of the first time I went up.**I don't mind telling you, it took me awhile to persuade Old Mother Hubbard to spring into action!**I saw him ahead of me, I was on his tail, but I didn't let him have it. I steadied my ship to take aim, but I couldn't shoot. And I know if a flyer hesitates for a moment, he makes himself a perfect target for the chump behind him—*

WOMAN 2:

Now I'm not hungry at all.

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):

*What are you saying to me, Terry?*

WOMAN 1:

But I **love** salty snacks! Chips and pretzels and popcorn and crackers—the saltier the better. Couldn't you just die for a big, crunchy bag of chips right now? Unless they were those salt-free chips. I can't **believe** anyone would actually buy those. Can you imagine? Salt-free chips. What's the point?

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*That's what happened to me, Jonesey! It happened the first time I went up and it happened the last time.**That's why I was hit.*

WOMAN 2:

I'm sure I don't know.

*I looked at his face, the poor guy in front of me, and in a flash there it was—I felt like a butcher. I saw all of those iron crosses hanging over my bunk. All of them, dead soldiers.*

WOMAN 1:

Of course there are salt people and there are sweet people. And maybe the sweet people would buy them because they just don't . . .

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):

*But—*

No. I cannot make that leap, I truly can't. Because I am a salt person and I cannot personally stomach artificial sweeteners. Sugar-free? Honestly! If something is supposed to be sweet, it should be sweet. And if something is supposed to be salty, it should be salty.

VOICE 2, male (patient):

*Since I've been here, that's all see! 47 crosses, 47 dead men, but the first one of them was me!**Flying high over this country that isn't even mine, killing boys I'll never meet. . .*

WOMAN 2:

Like chicken.

WOMAN 1:  
Like chick . . . You **are** feeling better, aren't you?

*VOICE 2, male (patient cont'd):  
. . . how could I not be the one that's dead?*

*Woman 2 sits up on the edge of the bed.*

*REPORTS (RECORDED): FLAT, DRY.*

WOMAN 2:  
Yes.

*VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914):  
The wounded man's left leg had been shot away at its junction with the body, and was a horrible sight. He had lost a tremendous amount of blood, and was almost dead on arrival.*

WOMAN 1:  
Did you say you were hungry?

WOMAN 2:  
I'm sore.

*I sent for the Surgeon Travis, and got the patient's clothes cut away rapidly, and had him placed on the operating table.*

WOMAN 1:  
Of course you are!

WOMAN 2:  
And I don't remember why.

*We then administered one pint of normal saline subcutaneously, and started to trim up the stump—which consisted of a ragged end of skin, fascia, muscles, nerves, and vessels, longer anteriorly than posteriorly. In fact, there was scarcely enough flap left to cover the stump.*

WOMAN 1:  
You don't.

WOMAN 2:  
I don't.

WOMAN 1:  
I guess I'm not surprised.

WOMAN 2:  
Did we . . .

*After having made a few cuts in clearing away the ragged ends, the patient died.*

WOMAN 1:  
Did we . . .?

WOMAN 2:

I remember having a conversation, talking to you.

We were talking about me. And him.

And I was telling you how difficult it's been, but you know that it's been hard, right? Because I've been telling you, but because you can see, too, right? I can't remember things.

Or sometimes I think . . .

WOMAN 1:

What?

WOMAN 2:

I remember us having the conversation, but it was in front of your house, and . . .

WOMAN 1:

My house?

WOMAN 2:

And I know I haven't been there. I mean, not lately.

WOMAN 1:

No.

WOMAN 2:

So I don't know if I got that mixed up . . .

WOMAN 1:

About being in front of my house?

WOMAN 2:

Or if I just made the whole thing up.

*VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):*

*The ward room now contained eleven cases, and most of them were restless and groaning in agony.*

*VOICE 1 (RECORDED) CONTINUES UNINTERRUPTED AS VOICE 2 (LIVE) INTERJECTS, BELOW & ON SUCCESSIVE PAGES AT INDICATED POINTS CORRESPONDING TO WOMEN'S DIALOGUE.*

*ON-AIR BROADCAST (LIVE): INTENSE, HUSHED.*

*VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):*

***What have you heard from the Pentagon or other sources about this attack, John?***

*VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):*

*Fresh doses of, morphia were also administered . . . and iced water, soda water, and brandy, to various cases as thought fit.*

*The next case we took had had a restless night, and it was obvious that there was much blood in his pleural cavity. His color was bad, likewise his pulse.*

*Chloroform was administered.*

WOMAN 1:

The whole what?

VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):

*Examination showed that a fragment the size of small coin had entered his upper chest and had tracked downwards, finally emerging through a large ragged hole just below the heart.*

WOMAN 2:

This has been bugging me. Did you tell me to leave him?

WOMAN 1:

Did I?

WOMAN 2:

Did we have a conversation where you told me to leave him, because I can remember it as clear or even clearer than anything else, than us right here, right now, and I don't know why you would tell me . . .

*In fact, soon after the injury the heart could be seen emerging with each thrust. A piece of the sixth rib had been carried away leaving a gaping wound.*

WOMAN 1:

I didn't. I wouldn't.

*This wound was enlarged, a piece of the rib removed, and a search was made for bleeding points.*

WOMAN 2:

No, I didn't . . .

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):

***Do we have anything else imminent from our lines at the moment?***

Pause.

You didn't tell me to leave him?

WOMAN 1:

*(shaking her head "no")* And you've been here.

VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914):

*This search could not be prolonged owing to the patient's condition, so I swabbed out the blood from the left pleural cavity, and a considerable amount of gauze was inserted therein.*

WOMAN 2:

And **you've** been here.

WOMAN 1:

And I've been here.

WOMAN 2:

And I've been here.

*Silence.*

*Woman 1 sits on the opposite edge of the bed.*

WOMAN 1:

You haven't eaten.

WOMAN 2:

I'm not hungry.

*Silence.*

*Woman 2 stands, and moves over to a window. Woman 1 takes off her shoes and slips under the covers.*

It's . . . *(shaking her head)* I feel like it's been forever.

WOMAN 1:

*(smiling)* Hmnmnmn.

WOMAN 2:

I know it hasn't.

WOMAN 1:

Been forever?

WOMAN 2:

No, I know it hasn't.

WOMAN 1:

No, it has . . .

*VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914):*

*He rallied considerably, but later on hemorrhage occurred, and he died two or three hours after operating.*

*Cease fire sounded at 11:15 a.m. after we had been working two solid hours in a confined atmosphere, and a temperature of 105 degrees Fahrenheit.*

*With our clothes were saturated with blood and perspiration, we began making arrangements for the receipt of about 80 German wounded.*

*The worst sight was a poor fellow who had his face literally blown away.*

*His right eye, nose, and most of both cheeks were missing.*

*His mouth and lips were unrecognizable.*

*VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):*

***Let me ask you, John, if all of our crew there are well? Is everything all right with you aside from what's going on outside?***

WOMAN 2:

What?

*VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):*

*The tongue and nasal cavity were exposed, part of his lower jaw was left and the soft tissues were severed from the neck under his chin, so that the face really consisted of two curtains of soft tissue hanging loosely from the forehead, with a gap in the center.*

WOMAN 1:

Hmmnm?

WOMAN 2:

It **has**?

WOMAN 1:

What?

*The case was so bad that I had no hesitation in giving a large dose of morphia immediately.*

WOMAN 2:

It hasn't. You don't know. It can't have been. *(short pause)* I used to say things like "forever" and not know what they meant.

*The patient lingered from four to six hours afterwards in spite of repeated liberal doses of morphia.*

WOMAN 1:

Oh! No. I'm sorry, I forgot.

WOMAN 2:

"Forever is a long time." Is that from somewhere? Or just something people say?

*Another face injury was almost as bad. Practically the whole right side of the face was completely blown away.*

*Pause.*

I don't really care. It's a stupid thing to say. Forever is forever. It's not a long time. It's forever. People don't know.

*One had not time to examine these cases for minute details . . .*

*Pause.*

I'm hungry! I'm hungry and my teeth hurt!

*Woman 2 begins to walk uneasily. Woman 1 begins to laugh.*

*VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):*

**John, all we can see is darkness. Are you able to see anything out of your hotel window?**

What?

WOMAN 1: "My mouth hurts because it needs food, I'm so hungry!" (*short pause*) He said.

WOMAN 2: Right. Your son.

WOMAN 1: My son. My baby.

*Pause.*

WOMAN 2: Are you cold?

WOMAN 1: My feet are cold.

WOMAN 2: I'll get you an extra blanket.

WOMAN 1: No, this is fine. It's only my feet.

WOMAN 2: I'll get you a blanket.

WOMAN 1: No.

WOMAN 2: For your feet. Didn't you tell me you do that at night? At your house? A special blanket just for your feet.

WOMAN 1: No, but yes! I do! I did!

*VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):*  
*. . . but they were very instructive, and showed how hard it is to kill a man with face injury.*

*Altogether four deaths occurred among the German wounded.*

*MEDIA REPORTS (RECORDED): A WEIGHTED WARNING, HEAVY DISAPPROVAL*

*VOICE 2, male (on-air editorial, 1970):*  
*When the French were here, they used to call the road that runs from Hue northward towards Hanoi "The Street Without Joy."*

*Well, the city of Hue itself has now become the city without joy.*

*Thirty thousand bodies of civilians are dead, the victims of communist occupation buried in mass graves.*

WOMAN 2:

A foot blanket!

*VOICE 2, male (on-air editorial, 1970 cont'd):*

*They were shot, clubbed to death, or buried alive.*

WOMAN 1:

A foot blanket?

WOMAN 2:

A foot blanket!

WOMAN 1:

Is there such a thing?

*Records at the civilian hospital in Ben Tre provide bloody and convincing evidence of how Vietnamese civilians suffered at the hands of the U.S. military.*

WOMAN 2:

If it's a blanket for your feet.

WOMAN 1:

It's just a blanket.

WOMAN 2:

Just for your feet. It's a foot blanket.

WOMAN 1:

It's not **just** for my feet.

*A total of 1,882 civilians with war-connected wounds were treated by the hospital, and of that number only 451 were wounded by Viet Cong fire.*

WOMAN 2:

That's what you said. A blanket just for your feet.

WOMAN 1:

No, it's not just **for** my feet. I just put it on my feet.

WOMAN 2:

So it's a foot blanket.

WOMAN 1:

There's no such thing!

WOMAN 2:

But you have one!

WOMAN 1:

No! It's not a foot blanket. I could use it for other things!

*VOICE 2, male (on-air editorial, 1970 cont'd):*

*The remainder, 1,431 civilians, were wounded by what is called, in the irrational parlance of Vietnam, "friendly fire," or U.S. firepower.*

WOMAN 2:

But do you?

WOMAN 1:

No, it's—

*American soldiers had come to Vietnam to win Uncle Sam's war.*

WOMAN 2:

Just for your feet! A foot blanket.

WOMAN 1:

I—

WOMAN 2:

He said he'd kill me.

*They were prepared to stand up and fight . . .*

*PAUSE .*

WOMAN 1:

What?

WOMAN 2:

He said he'd kill me if I left him.

WOMAN 1:

No, he didn't.

*. . . but they had not come expecting this.*

WOMAN 2:

He did. He said he'd kill me if I ever left him.

WOMAN 1:

No, he didn't. He's not going to kill you. He never said that.

*This was not the kind of war they had come flying thousands of miles to find.*

WOMAN 2:

You think I'm making it up?

*VOICE 2, male (on-air editorial, 1970 cont'd):*

WOMAN 1:

Not making it up.

*What they had been told, by those who they thought  
knew best, was that this was a war of attrition .*

*. . .*

WOMAN 2:

You think I'm imagining it?

WOMAN 1:

Not imagining it, but you said . . .

*. . . the kind of war they fought best, as in  
Korea.*

WOMAN 2:

I know. I know. I mix things up.

WOMAN 1:

You don't remember.

*But they were soon to find out that this was not  
the way of their enemies . . .*

WOMAN 2:

Maybe.

WOMAN 1:

I think maybe.

*. . . the communist guerillas. . .*

*Pause.*

WOMAN 2:

And maybe not.

*. . . the Viet Kong.*

*Silence.*

*SILENCE.*

WOMAN 1:

Are you cold?

WOMAN 2:

No. No, I'm . . .

*Woman 2 collapses into the bed.*

WOMAN 2:

I'm tired. I'm so tired.

*Woman 1 wraps her arms around Woman 2.*

WOMAN 1:

I know.

WOMAN 2:

And I'm so very tired of, all the time, being tired.

*A warm light glows from the windows beneath them. Then, a white light fades up on the bed.*

WOMAN 1:

The light is nice.

WOMAN 2:

It's not.

WOMAN 1:

The way it hits the bed.

WOMAN 2:

It's horrible. Makes me feel like a specimen.

WOMAN 1:

It warms the place up.

WOMAN 2:

I hate it.

*ANNOUNCEMENT (RECORDED): SOMBER, STENTORIAN*

*VOICE 1, male (presidential announcement, 1945):*

*A short time ago, an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima. And destroyed its usefulness to the enemy. That bomb has more power than 20 thousand tons of TNT.*

*This is an atomic bomb. The atom bomb is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold, and the end is not yet.*

*This is an atomic bomb—a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. We are now prepared to destroy, more rapidly and completely, every productive enterprise the Japanese have in any city.*

WOMAN 1:  
Makes it almost cozy.

WOMAN 2:  
No.

WOMAN 1:  
Makes it feel alive.

WOMAN 2:  
I might as well be dead.

WOMAN 1:  
No . . .

WOMAN 2:  
Yes!

*Woman 2 moves away from Woman 1.*

I prayed the most terrible thing.

*Pause.*

I prayed that he would die first. *(short pause)* I really did.

*Pause.*

WOMAN 1:  
Light is so important to me. I can be almost anywhere if there's good light. Lots and lots of light. It opens a space up. Makes a space breathe.

WOMAN 2:  
Out loud.

*VOICE 1, male (presidential announcement, 1945 cont'd):  
This is an atomic bomb. The atom bomb is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications. Let there be no mistake, we shall completely destroy Japan's power to make war.*

*This is an atomic bomb—a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East. If the Japanese do not now accept our terms, they may now expect a rain of ruin from the air.*

*This is an atomic bomb. The atom bomb is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe . . . the like of which has never been seen on this earth.*

*VOICE 1 (RECORDED) CONTINUES UNINTERRUPTED UNTIL TEXT IS EXHAUSTED; VOICE 2 (RECORDED) BEGINS AT INDICATED POINT CORRESPONDING TO WOMEN'S DIALOGUE, OVERLAPPING VOICE 1.*

*MEDIA REPORTS (RECORDED): HISTRIONIC, DEADLY SERIOUS.*

*VOICE 2, male (newsreel, 1945):  
Now the take off, of an atomic missile bound for Nagasaki! A terrifying moment indeed, and from a great altitude we see the atomic explosion.*

WOMAN 1:  
 And different places have different light. Different kinds of light.  
 Different qualities.

WOMAN 2:  
 I don't know who heard me.

WOMAN 1:  
 Almost different personalities.

WOMAN 2:  
 I don't know if he did.

WOMAN 1:  
 Different deities.

WOMAN 2:  
 I don't know if I wanted him to.

*Woman 2 lays her head on Woman 1's shoulder.*

It hurts my eyes, the light.

WOMAN 1:  
 Hmmnm.

WOMAN 2:  
 Everything hurts.

WOMAN 1:  
 I know.

*Woman 2 stands.*

*VOICE 2, male (newsreel, 1945 cont'd):  
 (explosion) Look at that! The phantasmal swirl  
 of atomic energy soars upward in a column capped  
 by a mushroom shape. A whirlpool of elemental  
 fires rising to 60 thousand feet.*

*This is the second atomic bomb to hit Japan.*

*We will remember that the first atomic bomb gave  
 a sudden fighting stroke in this war to  
 completely wipe out Hiroshima. That city, the  
 size of Denver, was ceremoniously annihilated,  
 turned into flattened wreckage in a blinding  
 instant.*

*Now, Japan has no choice but to surrender in the  
 face of atomic obliteration!*

*Our enemy must bow low to that column of  
 doom . . .*

WOMAN 2:

I want to get dressed.

WOMAN 1:

Do you want to eat first?

WOMAN 2:

*(speaking too loudly, as if to someone beyond the playing area)*  
**I want everything first!!**

CUT ABRUPTLY.

VOLUME INCREASES.

*Woman 1 sits upright. The score can be distinctly heard.*

SCENE FROM A MODERN CARTOON (RECORDED): HYPER-DRAMATIC.

*The white light on the women quickly becomes brighter and harsher.*

VOICE 1, male (super-hero):

*I don't trust this silence. Something's definitely not right.*

*Woman 2 looks up and around in the prolonged silence.*

VOICE 2, male (side-kick):

*What is this place, Rex?*

VOICE 1, male (super hero):

*We're under the golden spider's headquarters, Muggo.*

VOICE 2, male (side-kick):

*Whaaaaat?*

VOICE 1, male (super hero):

*Calm down, my friend. We're down so deep their spinning forces can't possibly detect us!*

ELECTRONIC NOISE.

VOICE 2, male (side-kick):

*Whoooa! What was that?!!*

VOICE 1, male (super hero):

*Look out behind you, Muggo!!!!*