

MARY COURAGE & HER CHILDREN

by Terry Dugan

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On the web:
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Other works by Terry Dugan:
The Fog People
The Hick Arrives: A Guide to Midwestern Living
How to Write Email That GETS RESULTS & Other CEObservations
Trudy and Colin: The Relationship Guide

This play is dedicated to the numbers.

Cast of Characters

Mary Courage	A lobbyist for a defense contractor
Sen. Abel Coward	Senior senator from Depression
Catherine Courage	Mary's mute daughter
Neppo Courage	Mary's youngest son
Chorus	Eight women
Sen. Adrastos "Apollo" Irenicopoulos	Junior senator from Depression
Sen. Scarecrow	Senior senator from Shock
Sen. Smiley	Senior senator from Denial
Sen. Crony	Senior senator from Decay
Sen. Gaffe	Senior senator from Confusion
Father Right	Mary's religious associate
CEO	Mary's boss, pronounced "see-oh"
Adme	The conjoined twin broadcasting bigwigs
Dr. Kind	Washington's top medical expert
Sen. Green	Junior senator from Acceptance
Sen. Seasaw	Junior senator from Emergency
Sen. Dove	Junior senator from Mind
Matpa Alejjid	A Middle East refugee
Veggie Courage	Mary's son who lacks brain function
Charles Smith Jr.	A fallen soldier from Hooverville
An Smith	An immigrant from Vietnam, mother of Charles

Song Index

Support the Troops
Will I Ever See Scotland Again
Greasy Palm

Honor is a 4-Letter Word
I Leave Music to Others
God's Empty House Will Always Be a Home

They're All Dead
Hypocritical Oath

If I Had It All to Do Again
Support the Troops (jazz)
If I Only Had Some Balls
I Shall Provide
Take a Picture, It Lasts Longer
The Message
The History of the Senate

I Can't Stop Fighting Battles
Learn How to Live
The Answer
Support the Troops (finale)

Setting

Mary Courage's Washington D.C. office and a veterans' hospital

ACT I:	Mary's office as a preschool
ACT II:	Mary's office as a cabaret
ACT III:	The coma ward of the veterans' hospital

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING:

Morning at the office of MARY COURAGE. The curtain, which represents the outer wall of her office, is closed. The opening of the curtain is representative of the seldom-used front door to her office. Behind the curtain are eight naked women, who are the CHORUS, and MARY COURAGE. Most likely the CHORUS is on some sort of choir platform. The office should resemble a kindergarten classroom, equipped with small chairs, decorations, simple posters that teach learning basics such as letters, directions, Middle East geography and simple sayings used to teach the senators how to better do their jobs, such as “Eat your genetically modified vegetables!” and “How to Vote: 1) Ask ‘What would Jesus do?’ 2) Push button.” At stage right, there is the teacher’s desk and a window with its curtain closed. Behind the CHORUS is a large chair, throne-like, in which MARY COURAGE is sitting. On the back wall is another curtain. Also on the back wall at stage left is the back door.

AT RISE:

As music plays and the CHORUS sings, the spotlight shines on COWARD, peering out toward the audience at stage right. COWARD slithers across the stage like a soldier crawling through an obstacle course. COWARD braces himself against the curtain as if it were a wall. When the song’s last lines are sung, COWARD goes through the curtain, which simultaneously opens.

CHORUS

(Sings.)

FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT,
DEFENDING OUR RELIGIOUS RIGHT.
WITHOUT YOUR VOTE, THEY'LL LOSE THEIR MIGHT.
DO NOT LEAVE THEM DEFENSELESS!

MISSILES FIRED FROM THE SEAS,
ARMOR-PLATED, NEW HUMVEES,
HEAVY SNIPER RIFLES, IF YOU'D PLEASE.
YOU MUST COME TO YOUR SENSES.

CHRISTIANS AWAKE! WINTER IS GONE!
THE SNOWS DEPART! DEAD MEN SLEEP ON!
LET ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE SURVIVED
GET OUT OF YOUR BEDS AND LOOK ALIVE!

MARY COURAGE

Stop, stop, stop, stop! Who's interrupting my rehearsal?

COWARD

It's me, Mary.

MARY COURAGE

Senator Coward!

(The girls part, revealing
MARY COURAGE in her chair.)

Hello dear! Did we have an appointment?

COWARD

I'm sorry. I really needed to talk to you.

MARY COURAGE

Well, obviously, you used the front door, you poor thing. Go get changed, girls.

(CHORUS exits behind the curtain.)

Next we'll practice keeping your dinner in when an old man
French kisses you. Pardon me, Senator -- when he "Freedom"
kisses you.

COWARD

Sounds like a nice song you're preparing for the fundraiser, Mary.

MARY COURAGE

That's sweet of you to say, Abel, but it's basically background noise. Wearing what they're wearing, the girls could just as well be singing:

(Sings a capella.)

I'M GOING TO CUT OFF YOUR BALLS
AND SHOVE THEM DOWN YOUR THROAT!

(COWARD starts crying.)

But not yours, dear . . . Oh sweetheart, what's wrong?

COWARD

I'm afraid.

MARY COURAGE

Of what?

COWARD

I'm afraid we won't get enough votes.

MARY COURAGE

Oh, silly. Of course we're going to get the votes.

COWARD

No we're not.

MARY COURAGE

Abel, come here.

(COWARD walks to MARY COURAGE, who motions for him to sit on her lap. As she starts talking, she undoes her blouse to expose her breast.)

We will get those votes or my name isn't Mary Courage.

(She motions to her breast and COWARD starts feeding.)

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

There isn't a senator in Congress who wants to see those boys come home before the mission's accomplished; some of them just need to be reminded of that. And when they come to their senses, they'll vote "yes," and we'll get the funding we need to give our soldiers more armor for their chests, more ammo for their firefights and more computers for their pornography.

COWARD

Can we get robot soldiers?

(MARY COURAGE pushes
him back into her breast.)

MARY COURAGE

Oh honey. The margin's not high enough on those.

COWARD

(Detaching himself.)

The good people from the state of Depression cannot survive a "no" vote. The only two jobs left in Hooverville are fighting in the war and making things for it. If those go away, Mary, I'm finished. My career, my illustrious career of being a humble public servant, will go to some minority who doesn't know America like I know America! The way it is, I barely survived my last re-election.

MARY COURAGE

It's nonsense to think so negatively. You are a loyal servant of the most patriotic people in the most patriotic state in the union. The people of Depression wouldn't throw away a great American like you over one vote.

COWARD

I'm afraid.

MARY COURAGE

The people will win in the most important vote in history of the Senate.

COWARD

I'm afraid.

MARY COURAGE

Of what?

COWARD

I'm afraid . . . I'll never see Scotland again.

(Sings.)

WILL I EVER SEE SCOTLAND AGAIN?
YOUR GENTLE BENDS, HIGHLANDS TRANSCEND
ALL UNDERSTANDING.
WILL THEY CRY FOR ME IF I'M AWAY?

WILL I EVER SEE SCOTLAND AGAIN?
ABERDEEN, YOU ARE MY QUEEN, BUT
INVERNESS, I LIKE YOU BEST.
DUNDEE, I'D MISS YOUR BANTER.

GLASGOW, OH GLASGOW,
I STOOD BESIDE YOUR RIVER CLYDE
AND SAW MY SOUL
IN THE MORNING GLOW.
YOUR WIND KEPT ME WARM
WHEN MY HEART GREW COLD.

WILL I EVER SEE SCOTLAND AGAIN?
THE HUSKY BREEZE, THE ROLLING GREENS:
ST. ANDREWS IS CALLING,
ROYAL AND ANCIENT LAND OF MY SOUL.
WILL I EVER SEE SCOTLAND AGAIN?
BUNKERS AS DEEP AS THE HOLE IN MY HEART
WHEN I'M AWAY FROM YOU.
HAVE I PLAYED MY FINAL HOLE?

WILL I EVER SEE SCOTLAND AGAIN?
UNDULATION IN YOUR NATION
KEEPS MY HEART SWINGING.
CARNOUSTIE, WILL YOU CALL ME?

WILL I EVER SEE SCOTLAND AGAIN?
ROYAL TROON, YOU MAKE ME SWOON
BUT PRESTWICK, YOU ARE MY PICK.

TURNBERRY, YOU MAKE ME MERRY.

NESSIE, OH NESSIE.
I REGRET WE'VE NEVER MET.
BUT I HAVE 500 REASONS
TO SPEND THE SEASONS
ON THE LINKS AND NOT THE LOCHS.
CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?

(CHORUS re-enters from the curtain,
wearing kilts, tam-o'-shanters and
holding golf clubs. They huddle
behind COWARD. Someone gives
COWARD a putter. CHORUS joins
in the singing.)

WILL I EVER SEE SCOTLAND AGAIN?
THE HUSKY BREEZE, THE ROLLING GREENS,
ST. ANDREWS IS CALLING:
ROYAL AND ANCIENT LAND OF MY SOUL.
WILL I EVER SEE SCOTLAND AGAIN?
BUNKERS AS DEEP AS THE HOLE IN MY HEART
WHEN I'M AWAY FROM YOU.
HAVE I PLAYED MY FINAL HOLE?

(Everyone but COWARD stops
singing. Spotlight on COWARD,
caressing his putter.)

WILL I EVER SEE SCOTLAND -- FOR FREE -- AGAIN?

MARY COURAGE

Poor, frightened Abel. When this vote passes, we'll send you
back to Scotland and Ireland and Dubai and anywhere else your
stroke desires.

COWARD

Mary Courage, I love you!

(MARY COURAGE embraces
COWARD who embraces his putter.)

MARY COURAGE & CHORUS

(Sings.)

AMERICA'S HONOR YOU DEFEND.
AND SO YOU WILL SEE SCOTLAND -- FOR FREE --
AGAIN.

(CATHERINE enters from the
back door and braces herself
against it to keep it closed.)

MARY COURAGE

Catherine dear, what's wrong?

(CATHERINE signs "The
parasites are overwhelming.")

The Senators are outside? Very well. OK, girls, don't forget, this
afternoon: How to kiss old men. Practice makes perfect.

(The CHORUS exits via the
back curtain.)

Catherine, will you buy a bag of prunes at the grocery store by
this afternoon for me?

(CATEHRINE nods.)

Outdated, if that's even possible. You can open the door now.

(CATHERINE opens the door, which
swings open so hard it makes her fly
away from it. Senators SCARECROW,
SMILEY, GAFFE and CRONY storm
in. NEPPO follows behind. He's on
a leash and is lead around by CRONY.
SCARECROW literally looks like
a scarecrow in a suit, minus the hat.
SMILEY always smiles, even talks
with a permanent smile. GAFFE's
wearing two pairs of shoes, one on his
feet and one on his hands. CRONY is
the oldest of the bunch. All senators
are huffing unintelligibly about
votes, boats and box seats. MARY
COURAGE silences them with a
greeting.)

Hello! Good morning, gentlemen! Gentlemen! Do we have an
appointment?

SMILEY

(Aimed at COWARD.)

Did he have an appointment?

SCARECROW

How'd you get in here, Coward? Huh!

MARY COURAGE

He used the front door.

(All senators are beside themselves,
unable to believe how much of a
fool he was to use that door.)

It's a free country. A man can use a front door if he wants to use a front door.

CRONY

Did they see him?

MARY COURAGE

Did who see him?

SMILEY

The media.

SCARECROW

The media!

GAFFE

The Jew-run media.

(GAFFE puts his "hand"
in his mouth.)

NEPPO

I thought they were all killed in the Holocaust.

CRONY

They follow us everywhere!

SCARECROW

Everywhere!

GAFFE

(With hand still in mouth.)

Everywhere.

(CATHERINE signs, “You’re paranoid” to the senators.)

COWARD

What did she say?

MARY COURAGE

She said it must be hard for you to juggle protecting freedom and staying in such great shape.

(All senators nod and say to CATHERINE, yes yes, they agree. MARY COURAGE walks over to the window)

There is no media outside, see?

(She opens the curtain only to get bombarded with camera flashes and shutter sounds. She closes the curtain.)

Nothing. Nothing out there.

SMILEY

That’s a relief.

MARY COURAGE

But they will be there soon, and they’ll be asking you questions. This is a big vote, and that means big ratings for them.

COWARD

At our expense!

(MARY COURAGE hugs him.)

MARY COURAGE

(Still embracing COWARD)

You’re looking at it all wrong. When it’s time, we’re going to use them, and they’ll help us spread our message of protecting America to the people, let them hear the real story of this conflict instead of those propagandist messages that those traitorous anti-war meenies are spreading.

GAFFE

We'll show them. It's not just about freedom, but also about money for us.

(All senators agree.)

MARY COURAGE

No, no. Senator Gaffe, stay away from the microphones, OK? Just wave like Senator Smiley.

(SMILEY smiles and waves;

GAFFE copies him)

Very good. Now, does anyone know the latest word on the vote count?

CRONY

Right down party lines, as usual: 47 votes for indefinitely funding the campaign against the aggressors toward America, 49 against. We only need 50 votes. Four freshmen senators are undecided. One is a Democrat. They're all "moderates."

(The senators start grumbling about moderates.)

SMILEY

I hate moderates. They're a disease on politics.

MARY COURAGE

Moderates, boys, are my specialty -- doesn't matter what party they are. Those other votes set in stone?

SMILEY

Solid as a rock.

MARY COURAGE

Abel, what about your new boy from Depression, the singer?

COWARD

He's with us.

MARY COURAGE

Are you sure?

(He doesn't answer.)

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

Did you ask?

(No answer.)

You were afraid to?

(COWARD nods.)

COWARD

He wouldn't vote against it. Hooverville needs war.

MARY COURAGE

Maybe, but he's an "artist" which makes him as dependable as a global warming report. Catherine, go set up an appointment this afternoon with Senator . . . what's his name?

COWARD

Adrastos Irenicopoulos.

MARY COURAGE

Senator whatever-he-said.

(CATHERINE exits out the
"front door" and stage right.)

I want to see those other three undecideds here tomorrow. I need you all to pay these boys a visit and encourage them to come see your old pal Mary. Is this satisfactory for everyone?

(They reluctantly agree.)

That's not very enthusiastic.

(CRONY clears his throat.)

Oh, silly me. How could I forget?

(She goes to her desk and grabs a pail of "oil." The senators line up in a row to have the oil brushed onto their hands. Then, she places stacks of money in their jackets, like she's dressing them for school. MARY COURAGE sings:)

WE MAKE THE DRILLS
THAT ARE PLACED IN THE OCEAN
SO THE ARABS CAN GIVE US OIL.
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP
AND IT'S FRIENDSHIP THAT

MARY COURAGE (cont.)
DOES MAKE THE WORLD GO 'ROUND.

WE MAKE THE GUNS
THAT WE GIVE TO THE ARABS
TO PROTECT THEIR WELLS OF OIL.
IT'S A NEAT LITTLE SYSTEM,
AND THAT SYSTEM IT
DOES MAKE THE WORLD GO 'ROUND.

WE EARN THE MONEY
THAT WE GIVE TO THE CONGRESS
THAT GAVE IT TO US IN THE FIRST PLACE.
IT'S A PERFECT LITTLE CIRCLE
CALLED PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS
AND IT'S WHAT MAKES THIS WORLD GO 'ROUND.

SENATORS & MARY COURAGE

(Sing.)

WE HELP OTHERS HELP OURSELVES.
OUR FORCES HELP US MAINTAIN CALM.
AIN'T IT NEAT HOW DEMOCRACY EVOLVES?
NOTHING'S QUITE AS LOVELY AS A GREASY PALM.

CRONY

(Sings.)

WE WEAR THE SUITS
THAT DETERMINE SOCIAL STATUS.
CAN YOU TELL THAT IT'S ITALIAN?
DON'T IT LOOK GOOD ON US?
PURSUIT OF BEAUTY
IT DOES MAKE THIS WORLD GO 'ROUND.

SMILEY

(Sings.)

WE SMILE THE SMILES
THAT COVER UP THE SADNESS
OF BETRAYING COMMON SENSE.
THANK THE LORD THERE IS PROZAC
BECAUSE THESE LITTLE PILLS,
THEY MAKE THE WORLD GO 'ROUND

SCARECROW

(Sings.)

WE TELL THE LIES
THAT END UP BEING TRUE SOMETIMES
BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW THESE ARABS.
YET WE KNOW THEY WANT TO KILL US
AND WHEN THAT BOMB EXPLODES
YOUR WORLD NO MORE GOES 'ROUND.

SENATORS & MARY COURAGE

(Sing.)

WE HELP OTHERS HELP OURSELVES.
PLEASE LET US HELP YOU MAINTAIN CALM.
LOOK AWAY OR YOUR FAITH IN US DISSOLVES.
NOTHING'S QUITE AS LOVELY AS A GREASY PALM.

GAFFE

(Sings.)

WE SEND THE SOLDIERS
TO THE LAND OF THE ARABS
FOR THEM TO DIE FOR OIL
BECAUSE THE OIL MAKES US MONEY
AND IT'S MONEY
THAT DOES MAKE THE WORLD GO 'ROUND.

MARY COURAGE

Very good!

SMILEY

(Sings.)

WE FORSAKE THE FUTURE
TO PROSPER IN THE PRESENT
BECAUSE YACHTS DON'T BUILD THEMSELVES.
HOW I DO LOVE MY YACHT
AND I'LL SAIL IT
THROUGH ALL THE WORLD AROUND.

COWARD

(Sings.)

WE FEEL THE PAIN
THAT IS FELT BY THE FAMILIES

COWARD (cont.)

OF MEN WHO DIED FOR OIL.
IT'S A SAD KIND OF SADNESS
BUT IT'S OIL, NOT TEARS,
THAT MAKES THIS WORLD GO 'ROUND.

SENATORS & MARY COURAGE

(Sing.)

WE HELP OTHERS HELP OURSELVES.
OUR FORCES HELP US MAINTAIN CALM.
LOOK AT HOW DEMOCRACY DEVOLVES!
NOTHING'S QUITE AS LOVELY AS A GREASY PALM.

SENATORS

(Sing.)

WE CAST THE VOTES
FOR THE LAND OF THE FREE
TO PROTECT US FROM THE ARABS
AS WE WAIT FOR THE LORD
TO RETURN AND KILL THE ARABS
FOR THEIR PAGAN RELIGION
AND THEIR INTOLERANCE.
THEN HE'LL TAKE US UP TO HEAVEN
AS THE EARTH TURNS TO FIRE
THAT WILL BURN ALL THE HEATHENS
WHO WE OWED ALL OUR DEBTS TO
BECAUSE YOU DON'T NEED THE MONEY
WHEN THE WORLD IS NO MORE.

MARY COURAGE

Oh you boys.

ALL

(Sing.)

THAT'S HOW THE WORLD GOES AROUND!

MARY COURAGE

Playtime is over. Time to go to work.

(The Senators say good-bye and
exit through the back door.)

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

Oh, Senator Crony. Can I see you?

(CRONY and NEPPO stay behind.)

CRONY

What can I do for you, Mary?

MARY COURAGE

Would you mind if I took Neppo off your hands?

CRONY

Giving you your son back is the least I can do for you, Mary.

(CRONY hands the leash to

MARY COURAGE.)

MARY COURAGE

I appreciate you taking him in, especially since he's incredibly stupid.

CRONY

Well, while it's true that that boy is dumb, even by Washington's standards--

NEPPO

Thank you, sir!

CRONY

He is a good worker, very loyal.

(NEPPO, now in MARY COURAGE's possession, tries to hug his mother, who recoils and makes sounds to let him know that the embrace is not welcome)

NEPPO

My mom here always said that's how I would make it through life without being locked in a trunk in some sadomasochist's basement: loyalty, hard work and . . .

MARY COURAGE

Blistered hands.

NEPPO

Yeah, that's it.

MARY COURAGE

Well, at least this one would listen to me.

CRONY

Yes, I was sorry to hear about what happened to Veggie.

MARY COURAGE

No need to be sad. Veggie's back here, safe with us.

NEPPO

I hope to be as brave as my brother someday.

MARY COURAGE

No, you don't. There's a fine line between bravery and stupidity, Neppo. That line is drawn in the sand, and every time the wind picks up, you never know which side you're on. It can make a brave man look awfully stupid. You don't need to be shot for your stupidity; you should get paid for it here in Washington.

NEPPO

Staying stupid makes you smart?

MARY COURAGE

You better believe it.

NEPPO

But it doesn't make you brave.

MARY COURAGE

You talk about it like it has value, but you don't know what it costs.

NEPPO

But I want to defend freedom, like Veggie.

MARY COURAGE

You can't. You're a homosexual.

NEPPO

I am?

MARY COURAGE

You are.

NEPPO

Did I know that?

MARY COURAGE

Probably.

(BLACKOUT.)

Scene 2

SETTING: Later that day at the office of MARY COURAGE.

AT RISE: MARY COURAGE, CATHERINE and NEPPO are sitting around the desk, making decorations for the fundraiser and cutting construction paper.

MARY COURAGE

There! I tell you what, children, this is going to be the best \$100,000-a-plate fundraiser ever. And if not the best, then the best-looking. Neppo, help me with this, will you?

(NEPPO takes one end of the decoration and helps to unfold it, revealing a string of dollar signs.)

Well, what do you think? Won't this look great hanging over the stage?

(CATHERINE makes a face of reluctant approval.)

No? Well, you think what you have will work better?

(CATHERINE lights up and nods yes.)

Let's see it then.

(NEPPO helps CATHERINE unveil hers to reveal a string of skulls.)

Bowling balls?

(CATHERINE shakes no and makes the sign for "skull." NEPPO walks over and gives CATHERINE a hug.)

Neppo, she said "skull" not "hug." Some people just don't have the talent to learn a second language, or a first. Catherine, dear, your bowling skulls are pretty, but it's not Halloween. We'll save your decoration for later.

NEPPO

Want to see my decoration?

MARY COURAGE

I would love to.

MARY COURAGE (cont.)
(NEPPO and CATHERINE unveil a
string of penises and balls, pointing up.)

Uh, what is . . . is that a rocket, Neppo?

NEPPO

You don't know what it is?

MARY COURAGE

A funny guitar?

NEPPO

No. Wait, it's upside-down.

(They flip the cutout so that the
penis is pointing down.)

MARY COURAGE

Florida?

NEPPO (disappointed)

No. They're arrows pointing down to where the buffet line starts.

MARY COURAGE

Of course.

(CATHERINE signs "Looks like a penis.")

NEPPO

Right, it goes on the ceiling.

MARY COURAGE

Neppo. Maybe you should focus your attention on the
centerpieces.

NEPPO

Oh, they're done.

MARY COURAGE

Great. What did you decide on?

(NEPPO grabs from a box at the side of
the desk a cactus that looks like a penis.)

NEPPO

Cactuses!

MARY COURAGE

Why did you choose cacti?

NEPPO

Well, I thought, we're at war in the desert. Cactuses are in the desert. Besides, they kind of look like bombs, don't they?

MARY COURAGE

Has thinking worn you out, Neppo?

NEPPO

You don't like it?

MARY COURAGE

No, I like it very much, Neppo.

NEPPO

I'll bet Veggie would like it, too. I'll bet he saw a lot of cactuses when he was in the desert. I think we should go to the hospital as a family and see how he's doing.

(CATHERINE stops what she's doing and looks intently at MARY COURAGE. They pause.)

MARY COURAGE

How he's doing?

NEPPO

Yeah.

MARY COURAGE

He's alive. That's how he's doing.

(After a pause, CATHERINE signs
"He is brain dead.")

NEPPO

What did she say?

MARY COURAGE

In the desert, he might have come down with a small case of brain dead.

NEPPO

I thought you told Senator Crony that Veggie was back here safe with us.

MARY COURAGE

Yeah, he is. He is safe. His head is attached to his body. He has all his fingers and toes.

(CATHERINE signs, "His vehicle hit a bomb in the road.")

NEPPO

He got blown up?

MARY COURAGE

Yes.

NEPPO

So he's dead?

MARY COURAGE

Hardly. He's technically as alive as you and me.

NEPPO

But his brain is dead?

MARY COURAGE

It's just not working very well right now.

NEPPO

But he can breathe on his own?

MARY COURAGE

With a couple tubes? Absolutely.

NEPPO

My brother is lying somewhere with tubes shoved in him to keep him alive when everyone around him knows he's dead?

MARY COURAGE

You watch your mouth. There's a big difference between being dead and being alive, and he is alive. Maybe you shouldn't be throwing around words like "dead" when they don't apply. He's disabled, thank you very much.

(CATHERINE signs, "Forever.")

Catherine, you don't know what you're talking about.

NEPPO

. . . Are we going to pull the plug?

MARY COURAGE

Pull the . . . ? You ungrateful . . . your brother's been back for less than a week and you're already prepared to kill him because he's too much of a burden on you. What's your hurry?

NEPPO

He said he wanted to die an honorable death.

(To CATHERINE)

You heard him.

(CATHERINE nods yes.)

He didn't want to live like this -- he made us promise.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

PEOPLE SAY A LOT OF THINGS IN THIS WORLD.
THAT'S BECAUSE THEIR THOUGHTS ARE ALL SWIRLED.
DELUDED BY THE CONCEPT OF "RIGHT,"
THEY ONLY END UP QUITTING THE FIGHT.

NEPPO and CATHERINE

(Sings and signs.)

"I WANT TO DIE WITH HONOR," HE SAID.

MARY COURAGE

That's before he knew he'd be dead.

NEPPO and CATHERINE

(Sings and signs.)

"THE BRAVEST SOLDIERS DIE ON THE 'FIELD."

Mary Courage & Her Children

MARY COURAGE

Not if there's a way to be healed.

NEPPO and CATHERINE

(Sings and signs.)

CAN'T BREATHE WITHOUT A MACHINE

MARY COURAGE

So what?

NEPPO and CATHERINE

(Sings and signs.)

WITH ALL THE TUBES WE Demean

MARY COURAGE

Big deal.

NEPPO and CATHERINE

(Sings and signs.)

TO LIVE LIKE THIS IS OBSCENE.

MARY COURAGE

No it's not.

(Sings.)

YOU CAN STAND HERE AND WHINE,
PREACHING TO RATS AND TO SWINE,
BUT SEE WHAT FOOT WEARS THE SHOE.
DON'T LECTURE ME WHAT TO DO.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU HEARD,
BUT HONOR IS A 4-LETTER WORD.

HONOR IS A 4-LETTER WORD
ALONG WITH GLORY AND VIRTUE
AND DIGNITY DOES ALSO FIT.
HONOR IS A 4-LETTER WORD.
CAN'T KNOW THE HURT IT IS TO SAY
BECAUSE ONLY OTHERS FEEL IT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU HEARD,
BUT HONOR IS A 4-LETTER WORD.

NEPPO and CATHERINE

(Sings and signs.)

PROMISES MEAN SOMETHING TO US,
A COMMITMENT THAT WE HOLD AS PIOUS.
HE'S HANGING ON BY ONLY A THREAD,
WOULDN'T HE BE BETTER OFF DEAD?

(The CHORUS, dressed in military
fatigues, marches from the back curtain
onto the stage. Half of them are on MARY
COURAGE's side, the other on NEPPO
and CATHERINE's. One side sings that
honor "is" and the other that it "is not.")

LET'S REMEMBER HIM AS A KING.

MARY COURAGE

Let's not.

NEPPO and CATHERINE

(Sings and signs.)

THIS WAS SOMETHING FORESEEN

MARY COURAGE

Nuh, uh.

NEPPO and CATHERINE

(Sings and signs.)

LET US HONOR OUR LOVED MARINE.

MARY COURAGE

Death is not an honor.

NEPPO and CATHERINE

(Sings and signs.)

YOU CAN STAND THERE AND DENY,
BUT YOU WILL HEAR OUR CRY.
WHEN SOMEONE WANTS A LAST WISH,
WE SHOW OUR LOVE, NOT ANGUISH.

WE DON'T CARE WHAT YOU'VE HEARD,
HONOR'S NOT A 4-LETTER WORD.

ALL

(Sing.)

HONOR IS (NOT) A 4-LETTER WORD.
SO (NEITHER) IS VALOR AND (OR) BRAVE
AND (OR) HEART JUST FOR GOOD MEASURE.
HONOR IS (NOT) A 4-LETTER WORD.
CAN'T KNOW THE HURT (THERE IS NO HURT) IT
GIVES TO SAY
BECAUSE ONLY OTHERS (EVERYONE CAN) FEEL IT.
WE DON'T CARE (KNOW) WHAT YOU'VE HEARD,
HONOR IS (NOT) A 4-LETTER WORD.

MARY COURAGE/CHORUS

Is too

NEPPO/CATHERINE/CHORUS

Is not

MARY COURAGE/CHORUS

Is too

NEPPO/CATHERINE/CHORUS

Is not

MARY COURAGE/CHORUS

Is too

NEPPO/CATHERINE/CHORUS

Is not

MARY COURAGE/CHORUS

Is too

NEPPO/CATHERINE/CHORUS

Is not

MARY COURAGE/CHORUS

Is too

NEPPO/CATHERINE/CHORUS

Is not

MARY COURAGE

Is too!

(MARY COURAGE violently slaps NEPPO and CATHERINE. Sings a capella.)

IF I HAD A BAR OF SOAP,
I'D WASH YOUR MOUTHS OUT,
FOR SAYING HONOR AND VALOR
AND GLORY AND VIRTUE.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU EVEN
LEARNED THOSE WORDS.

NEPPO/CATHERINE/CHORUS

(Sing.)

FROM YOU.

(A buzz sounds. MARY COURAGE goes to her desk to push an intercom.)

MARY COURAGE

Yes?

COWARD

It's me and Senator Irenicopoulus to see you.

MARY COURAGE

Come on in, come on in. Catherine, give the girls their prunes for kissing practice. Now remember, whatever you do, don't eat the prunes. You'll never be regular by the fundraiser.

(APOLLO and COWARD walk to the center of the stage from stage right. COWARD walks directly behind APOLLO, as if he's hiding behind him.)

Catherine, can you get chairs for the senators?

(CATHERINE retrieves two small stools and puts them at the foot of the "throne.")

Senators, welcome! We had an appointment, thank you for seeing me on such short notice, Senator Coward, Senator Irena, Irkina--
(She shakes their hands.)

APOLLO

Irenicopoulos. You can just call me Apollo, everyone else does.

MARY COURAGE

That was your stage name, right?

APOLLO

It was a little tough to find places that had a marquee big enough for my last name, so Apollo it was.

MARY COURAGE

It's just an honor to meet you, Apollo, and I've been meaning to say hello ever since you came to Washington. You probably know by now how busy it gets in this city.

APOLLO

Everyone's really helpful here.

COWARD

If you're looking for someone helpful, there's no one in Washington as generous as Mary Courage.

MARY COURAGE

Oh, he's such a flatterer.

COWARD

In fact, in two days she's holding a very high-dollar, charity fundraiser.

APOLLO

Oh really? For children?

MARY COURAGE

Probably. Hard to say at this point. In a way, I hope not.

NEPPO

It's a fundraiser to help rebuild houses we'll destroy.

APOLLO

For families we've displaced? That does seem like a good cause.

NEPPO

No, families we're going to displace.

APOLLO

What?

MARY COURAGE

What's done up to this point, well, it was done in an act of war. Can you really be apologetic for a few missed targets here, a few stray bombs there during the heat of battle, when our boys' lives were hanging in the balance? Paying to rebuild what's been destroyed is like saying we made a mistake to go in there in the first place. But, when you're fighting to keep the peace, you don't want an innocent family to suffer when someone accidentally blows up their home, now, do you?

APOLLO

Isn't it a little premature to have a fundraiser like this when the military funding bill hasn't passed the Senate yet?

MARY COURAGE

Apollo, I don't know if that bill will pass or it won't pass. It doesn't matter to me; I just like helping people. If that money doesn't go to the future rebuilding of lives overseas, I'm sure it will go to something just as worthy.

COWARD

Mary's a real humanitarian.

MARY COURAGE

Oh, now stop. I don't do it for any kind of reward. Just seeing the looks on the faces of people we helped as I watch the satellite surveillance video is reward enough for me. But I didn't ask you to come here to talk about war and such. I want to hear about you, Apollo. Have a seat.

(MARY COURAGE sits in her throne while COWARD and APOLLO sit on the small stools. CATHERINE and NEPPO continue making decorations for the party.)

So, quite a trip it's been for you -- from sold-out arenas to the

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

halls of Congress. When people in the audience lift their shirts up, it must be much less satisfying these days.

APOLLO

(Trying to get comfortable in his seat.)

It's a nice change for me. I always wanted to give something back to the people of Depression and to the country that gave my family a new start.

MARY COURAGE

But you did, through your music.

APOLLO

Music isn't policy. It's protest.

MARY COURAGE

Oh, goodness. I didn't know "Baby Loves Me Tonight" was a protest song.

APOLLO

Well, of course, it's not.

MARY COURAGE

Sorry, it's the only song of yours I know.

APOLLO

Some would say it's the only one you need to know.

MARY COURAGE

You'll have to forgive me. I've just never been much for music.

(Sings.)

I LEAVE MUSIC TO OTHERS
WHO HAVE RHYTHM
AND HARMONY,
WITH PERFECT PITCH
AND GOOD POSTURE.
WHO LOOK STUNNING UP ON STAGE.

I LEAVE MUSIC TO OTHERS,
WHO CAN SING

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

WHO PLAY THE CHORDS
THAT MAKE YOUR HAIR
STAND UP ON SKIN.
IT'S A WORLD I'LL NEVER KNOW.

BUT IN THE LAND OF THE FREE,
I'VE GOT A CHANCE TO BE ME.
THE PART THAT I PLAY
SAVES LIVES EVERY DAY.
AND I'LL NEVER LET ANYTHING STAND IN THE WAY.

COWARD

And why should you?

MARY COURAGE

That's the thing. It's all about helping people, isn't it? Helping Americans and protecting our way of life. It feels good, being a protector, knowing you're counted on, knowing you've made someone's life a little better. Take, for example, the fine people of Hooverville in your state of Depression, Apollo. Time hasn't really been kind to them, has it?

APOLLO

That's why I'm here.

MARY COURAGE

That's why you're here -- to give back to them, to make your home town, your home state, a better place, a place where the American dream is still alive. You now have the most important job in the country. You're a father. You make decisions.

(After the third line, CATHERINE
and NEPPO pay closer attention to
the song. She sings.)

I DON'T ENVY YOU ONE BIT,
MAN OF POWER,
MAN OF COURAGE,
MAN OF VALOR,
WHO IS BRAVE.
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DO IT.

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

I DON'T ENVY YOU ONE BIT,
MAN OF HONOR,
OF DIGNITY,
WITH A HEART THAT
BLEEDS FOR HOME,
WHOSE VOICE CAN HELP OUR COUNTRY.

AND IN THIS LAND OF THE FREE,
IT SETS MY MIND AT EASE
WE'RE IN THE CAPABLE HANDS
OF SUCH AN HONORABLE MAN,
WHO WILL SERVE US THE BEST THAT HE CAN.

(CATHERINE angrily signs "All you do is lie. Enough! Enough!" and storms out of the room through the back door.)

She always gets so overwhelmed with the spirit of America, you know?

COWARD

She says so much without saying anything at all. What an amazing girl!

APOLLO

I'm sorry. I don't mean to be rude, but why am I here, Ms. Courage?

MARY COURAGE

For a celebrity, you're not much for schmoozing, are you? Fine, fine. I understand, busy man, busy man. I was wondering how your staff was shaping up, and if you could use someone with impeccable credentials and a wealth of experience to help you navigate these rough Potomac waters.

COWARD

Of course, he could! What a wonderful idea!

APOLLO

I guess I could take one more, if you had such a candidate.

MARY COURAGE

He's right here.

(She walks over to NEPPO, grabs his
leash and puts it in APOLLO's hand.)

My son, Neppo, is a true insider. He has great rapport with everyone in this town, and there isn't a thing he wouldn't do for you. He also can teach you all the secrets of the Capitol.

NEPPO

I know 20 places to take a nap without getting caught. I mean, outside the Senate chamber.

MARY COURAGE

What do you say?

NEPPO

Please?

APOLLO

All right. Why not?

(Looks NEPPO over.)

You look like a . . . a . . . sure, why not?

NEPPO

We're going to have fun!

APOLLO

And this is everything you wanted to talk about?

MARY COURAGE

Is there something we're supposed to talk about, Apollo?

APOLLO

You'll have to excuse my cynicism, Ms. Courage, but when the top lobbyist for the biggest defense contractor calls you into her office before a big vote on defense spending, I expect she's going to try to . . . influence me.

MARY COURAGE

I appreciate your honesty, and hopefully, you can appreciate mine. I want what's best for this country. If it's war, it's war.

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

Peace, it's peace. I want what's best for the people, and although my employer does have an interest in the outcome of this vote, life will go on for us regardless of a yea or nay. I'm not going to use some crazy scare tactics or strong-arming just to get my way. That's what a fascist would do, and a fascist I'm not. I believe in America. I believe in places like Hooverville, a place where work can make you free, where the people in an impoverished area can come together, show strength through unity, even though every job they used to have has been outsourced -- even though it probably feels at times like they're living in a different country from the rest of us. It doesn't matter that the military and my employer are the biggest job providers in the state. Because even without work, those people in Hooverville would bundle together, be unbreakable, even as everything they have slips away -- because they believe in America.

APOLLO

Even if it doesn't believe in them?

MARY COURAGE

America never loses its faith in its people, Mr. Apollo. It's people who lose faith in America. You're the man they hire to restore their faith in a future.

(Sings.)

I DON'T ENVY YOU ONE BIT,
MAN OF HONOR
WITH THESE BURDENS
OF A NATION,
HOPING YOU CAN
SING THEM TO THE PROMISED LAND.

I LEAVE MUSIC TO OTHERS
TALENTED ONES
WHO CAN LEAD THEM,
WHO WILL LISTEN,
TAKE REQUESTS AND
PLAY WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO HEAR.

BECAUSE THE LAND OF THE FREE
AND ALL THE PEOPLE YOU MEET

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

NEED TO HOLD ONTO A DREAM
AND FIND A LIFE WORTH LIVING.
WHEN IT COMES TO THAT, I KNOW OF NO SUCH THINGS.

APOLLO

There isn't much of a future for you if you're dead, either.

MARY COURAGE

You and I know the death toll in this war is minimal.

APOLLO

It's getting bigger every day.

MARY COURAGE

It's an unfortunate fact of life that there are acceptable deaths, the casualties of freedom. There's not a person alive who doesn't put a value on life. We do it in the court system all the time when a slimeball says out of the left side of his mouth that we can't put a value on life and then puts the value on it with the other side of his mouth. But numbers, yes, numbers are important. You take a look at the numbers, take a look at your state and then think about those numbers.

APOLLO

I will look into the numbers.

MARY COURAGE

I know you will. And I know you'll do what's best for the country. And please, you're more than welcome to come to the fundraiser. I've even saved a spot for you. It will cost you \$100,000 but it's for a good cause.

APOLLO

Great cause.

MARY COURAGE

Good day, Apollo. Good day, Abel.

COWARD

Bye-bye, Mary.

APOLLO

Thank you for the talk, Ms. Courage.

NEPPO

(Handing APOLLO his leash)

Bye mommy!

(MARY COURAGE rolls her eyes and makes a low throat-clearing sound of disgust. NEPPO leads the trio as they walk out the front door and exit stage right. There is a knock at the back door.)

MARY COURAGE

Father Right! I almost forgot. Hold on. Hold on.

(MARY COURAGE grabs a thin portable confessional booth and begins to set it up, putting a chair on each side, the small chair on the stage left side. As NEPPO, APOLLO and COWARD get to the edge of the stage, APOLLO drops NEPPO's leash. NEPPO is shocked and stops. APOLLO and COWARD bump into him. This conversation should last as long as it takes MARY to set up the booth.)

NEPPO

What's wrong?

APOLLO

Yeah, what's wrong?

NEPPO

You let go of me.

APOLLO

You're not a dog.

NEPPO

I know, but if you don't hold my leash, I won't know where to go.

APOLLO

But, you're the one walking in front of us.

NEPPO

Well, yeah, but it's not like I know where I'm going.

APOLLO

Then why are you walking in front of us?

COWARD

To scare away the media?

NEPPO

To scare away the media.

COWARD

To bite protesters?

NEPPO

To bite protesters.

COWARD

To take a bullet for us?

NEPPO

To take a bullet for you.

APOLLO

What makes you think someone wants to shoot us?

NEPPO

What makes you think they don't?

(APOLLO thinks for a second and then picks up NEPPO's leash, and they walk off-stage. As they get to the side of the stage, flashbulbs go off. NEPPO and APOLLO keep walking, but COWARD immediately runs in the opposite direction and exits stage left. When the booth is set up, MARY COURAGE tells FATHER RIGHT to "Come in!" and he enters through the back door.)

MARY COURAGE

Father Right! So good to see you. I'm so glad you could make our appointment.

FATHER RIGHT

Mary Courage, what kind of man of God would I be if I missed our weekly confessional?

MARY COURAGE

Even God rested on one day -- He would forgive us for missing a week.

FATHER RIGHT

But I wouldn't forgive myself, Mary.
(They embrace.)

MARY COURAGE

You're such a good man, father. Why can't we all be like you?

FATHER RIGHT

Then I wouldn't have a job.

MARY COURAGE

Good, and intelligent. And you smell nice, too.

FATHER RIGHT

It's Holy Water, Mary.

MARY COURAGE

Of course it is. Let's get started.

(MARY COURAGE walks to the stage right side of the booth, FATHER RIGHT to the stage left side. MARY COURAGE slides open the confessional window.)

FATHER RIGHT

Forgive me, mother, for I have sinned.

MARY COURAGE

How long as it been since your last confessional, my child?

FATHER RIGHT

One week, you know that.

MARY COURAGE

Of course, of course. What are your sins, my child?

FATHER RIGHT

In my sermon last week, I prayed to God that He would guide the senators to vote against the extension of the war.

MARY COURAGE

You did.

FATHER RIGHT

As the words came out of my mouth, I felt a pain in my stomach, my hands began to tremble, like, I suppose, a thief's would were he caught in the act of stealing.

MARY COURAGE

Why do you think you felt this way?

FATHER RIGHT

Because I knew what I was saying was wrong.

MARY COURAGE

Then why did you say it?

FATHER RIGHT

The parish, my flock, they're getting nervous about the war. Their opinion has shifted, and their ears are becoming deaf to my voice.

MARY COURAGE

Can you not help if the truth leads to deafness in those without faith, those unworthy of hearing the message? Just because they turn from the Lord doesn't mean you must appease them through your rhetoric.

FATHER RIGHT

It's complicated, mother. Between everybody turning gay, women getting pregnant just so they can have abortions, the born-again snake-oil salesmen and the Internet, we're losing members; we're losing money.

MARY COURAGE

(Handing him a giant stack of money
through the confessional window)

God will provide, my child.

(FATHER RIGHT takes the money.)

FATHER RIGHT

I know, but it's more than that.

MARY COURAGE

What is it?

FATHER RIGHT

I feel as if they're losing their trust -- their trust in me, their trust in faith. They can't separate reality from faith, and it's clouding their judgment. They're losing sight of the fact that we're killing countless heathens unwilling to convert to the one true God, opening a door for them to kill each other in the name of their pagan god. They're losing sight of the fact that their children aren't soldiers -- they're martyrs. They're crusaders, doing God's work. They're not willing to sacrifice for their God anymore, and the church is getting emptier and emptier every Sunday.

MARY COURAGE

So you're saying something you don't believe in to try to fill the church?

FATHER RIGHT

Yes, mother. These times, these times trouble my mind like never before.

(Sings.)

DOES A WORD HAVE MEANING
IF NO EARS WILL LISTEN?
CAN A TEACHER MOLD A MIND
THAT ONLY WANTS TO PLAY?

DO YOU THINK GOD WILL FORGIVE ME
FOR BENDING TO THE FLOCK,
OR WOULD HE RATHER SEE AN EMPTY FIELD
THAN ONE FILLED WITH DIRTY SHEEP?

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

ON YOUR FAITH YOU MUST BE LEANING,
ONLY THEN WILL YOUR SOUL GLISTEN.
GOD'S LOVE IS WHERE YOU'LL FIND
THE ANSWERS FOR WHICH YOU PRAY.

GOD'S PLAN IS ONE WE CANNOT SEE.
YOUR FAITH MUST BE A ROCK
FOR THOSE ALL TOO WILLING TO YIELD
THEIR SOULS FOR WHICH YOU WEEP.

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

I FEEL GOD I AM FAILING.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

REMEMBER YOU ARE STILL A MAN.

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

THE SOULS OF MAN ARE WAILING.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

YOU CAN ONLY DO WHAT YOU CAN.

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

HIS VIRTUE I AM HAILING.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

SOMEONE MUST TAKE A STAND.

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

BUT HIS CHURCH THEY ARE VACATING.

Mary Courage & Her Children

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

LEAD THEM TO THE PROMISED LAND.

MARY COURAGE and FATHER RIGHT

(Sing.)

GOD'S EMPTY HOUSE IS STILL A HOME
BE IT IN WASHINGTON OR ROME.
HIS LOVE DOESN'T LEAVE,
IT ONLY WAITS FOR THEIR RETURN.

AND WHEN THAT DAY DOES COME TO PASS
WHEN THE SOULS RETURN TO MASS,
YOU'LL FEEL A LOVE
YOU'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE.

MAN WILL COME AND MAN WILL GO,
TIMES WON'T ALWAYS BE THIS LOW.
BUT GOD'S EMPTY HOUSE WILL ALWAYS BE THEIR
HOME.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

MAN SAYS HIS WORD IS GOOD AS GOLD,
BUT HE SPENDS IT ON FOOLISH THINGS.
DON'T BE ANOTHER MAN.
YOU NEED TO HELP THEM.

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

I KNOW I AM A LEADER OF MEN,
BUT WHEN I SAW THEIR TEARFUL EYES
I BECAME A FOLLOWER, A FOOL FORSAKEN.
IS THERE TIME FOR REDEMPTION?

HOW COULD EGO GET IN THE WAY?

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

REMEMBER YOU ARE STILL A MAN.

Mary Courage & Her Children

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

MY FATHER IS THE ONE I MUST OBEY.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

YOU CAN ONLY DO WHAT YOU CAN.

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

IF IT'S WAR HE CHOSE I WILL NOT STRAY,

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

SOMEONE MUST TAKE A STAND.

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

FROM PREACHING HIS LOVE TILL MY

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

PREACHING HIS LOVE TILL MY

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

PREACHING HIS LOVE TILL MY

MARY COURAGE and FATHER RIGHT

(Sing.)

PREACHING HIS LOVE TILL MY DYING DAY.

GOD'S EMPTY HOUSE IS STILL A HOME
BE IT IN WASHINGTON OR ROME.
HIS LOVE DOESN'T LEAVE,
IT ONLY WAITS FOR THEIR RETURN.

AND WHEN THAT DAY DOES COME TO PASS
WHEN THE SOULS RETURN TO MASS,
YOU'LL FEEL A LOVE
YOU'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE.

MAN WILL COME AND MAN WILL GO,
TIMES WON'T ALWAYS BE THIS LOW.
BUT GOD'S EMPTY HOUSE WILL ALWAYS BE THEIR
HOME.

(They leave the confessional booth and
come to the front of the stage.)

GOD'S EMPTY HOUSE WILL ALWAYS BE A HOME.
GOD'S EMPTY HOUSE WILL ALWAYS BE A HOME.
GOD'S EMPTY HOUSE WILL ALWAYS BE A HOME.

(After the song, they return to the
confessional booth.)

MARY COURAGE

Do you have any other sins to confess, my child?

FATHER RIGHT

Well, to be honest, I have had some impure thoughts this week.

MARY COURAGE

Do you have any other sins to confess related to me?

FATHER RIGHT

No, that's the only one.

MARY COURAGE

As your penance, I want you to say four Hail Mary's, one Lord's
Prayer and remember that you work for the Man Upstairs as a
supervisor, not a member of the union.

FATHER RIGHT

Yes, mother, thank you.

(They step away from the confessional booth.)

MARY COURAGE

Do I have a big surprise for you, Father Right!

FATHER RIGHT

The war is ending!

MARY COURAGE (laughing.)

Oh, silly, no. Something even better: a weekly television show!

FATHER RIGHT

A television show?

MARY COURAGE

Nationwide, worldwide, syndicated, translated into 50 languages, preaching God's word to millions, no, billions of people too lazy to go to church.

FATHER RIGHT

Billions?

MARY COURAGE

That's right! Billions. Billions who need to hear your message of love, your message of forgiveness and your message that there is only one, true, angry God.

FATHER RIGHT

Bring God's church to them.

MARY COURAGE

It will never be empty.

FATHER RIGHT

What is the show called?

MARY COURAGE

Yes, a name, it's called: The Right Message.

FATHER RIGHT

Oh.

MARY COURAGE

You don't like it?

FATHER RIGHT

It sounds like my ego comes before God, and I can't have that.

MARY COURAGE

A name, it's just a name, we can think of something else. Unlike God's word, the name isn't set in stone.

FATHER RIGHT

What about Breakfast with Jesus?

MARY COURAGE

Maybe, sure.

FATHER RIGHT

Or, or what about Pajama Sermons or God Loves Your Lazy Ass.

MARY COURAGE

We'll test-market it.

FATHER RIGHT

When do I start?

MARY COURAGE

Soon, maybe even tomorrow.

FATHER RIGHT

This is just incredible! Just when my faith was being tested, God came through for me. He really came through!

MARY COURAGE

Always trust in God. Now go, you've got a sermon to prepare.

FATHER RIGHT

Thank you, Mary Courage. And, I want to tell you how sorry I am to hear about Veggie.

MARY COURAGE

Oh, he's fine. Keeps him out of trouble.

FATHER RIGHT

I will pray for him. You are a good friend, Mary.

MARY COURAGE

I know. Bye-bye.

(FATHER RIGHT exits through the back door. MARY COURAGE gives an exasperated sigh, a cross between exhaustion and knowledge that her work is never done. She stands next to the curtain and begins a chant.)

CEO, oh CEO. I'm in a time of need. CEO, oh CEO, my pleading won't you heed. CEO, oh CEO--

(CEO peeks his head out of the back curtain. He has a cigar in his mouth. The sound of a party can be heard when the curtain opens.)

CEO

Hello, Mary Courage.

MARY COURAGE

I'm so sorry to bother you.

CEO

It's important?

MARY COURAGE

Very.

CEO

OK, let me grab my drink.

(CEO ducks back inside, grabs a cocktail and comes through the curtain, saying "I'll be back girls. Don't start without me," and a hearty laugh.)

Mary Courage, my good friend, to what do I owe this visit?

MARY COURAGE

Oh, CEO. You're such a busy man, and here I am, making nothing but trouble for you.

CEO

Nonsense, Mary, nonsense. You're making me money.

MARY COURAGE

I need a favor.

CEO

Name it.

MARY COURAGE

I need you to set up a religious television show that is syndicated in 50 languages around the world.

CEO

That shouldn't be too much of a problem.

(CEO takes a drink.)

MARY COURAGE

And it's Catholic.

(CEO spits out his drink.)

I know it's a lot to ask, but this vote, it's just too close. We're going to need more voices going out to the people as fast as possible; the popular opinion is starting to turn against us.

CEO

I was afraid this day would come: the day when red-blooded Americans become color blind. You're right, Mary, we need to make them see again. Just a minute. Adme! Adme get your ass out here, you old bastard.

(ADME peeks his heads out of the curtain.

AD and ME speak separate lines.)

ME

You worthless son-of-a-bitch.

AD

Oh, hello Mary Courage.

ME

Hello, Mary Courage.

AD

It's good to see you. You look great.

ME

You worthless son-of-a-bitch, what do you want?

CEO

I want you to come out here and negotiate like a man.

AD

I would, but I have a giant erection right now that may last longer than 4 hours.

ME

I tried to tell him how hazardous to our health this was, not to mention our hearts.

AD

But this is one satisfying erection.

CEO

Fair enough. Worldwide, syndicated, translated into 50 languages, religious program, tomorrow. Can you do it?

ME

Born-again, speaking-in-tongues, epileptic action?

CEO

Catholic.

(ME shudders.)

ME

How Catholic?

CEO

End-of-days Catholic.

ME

Actively telling people to kill Muslims?

CEO

Don't know, if he's feeling it.

AD

It's an easier sell if he does.

CEO

I can't put God's words in his mouth for the price I'm willing to pay.

AD

We get four commercial breaks and a close-up of the altar boys each week, maybe a profile for teen magazines.

ME

No way. We stay clear of altar boys.

AD

Why are you always trying to undermine our negotiations?

ME

Why are you always trying to push the sex appeal?

AD

Because that's what sells things! Is the priest at least hunky?

ME

Hunky priest? You want someone to spill holy water on his robe once an episode so that he has to preach shirtless as he's waiting for the holy drier?

AD

Can we?

CEO

Do you two need a room?

ME

I want three weeks of exclusive ride-alongs in the tanks for the news division.

CEO

Done, but we want you to run a “Salute to America” week on Americans Think They Can Sing.

ME

You want country music?

CEO

Country music, pop music, singing chipmunks, I don’t care. America-is-great-and-we’re-great-at-shooting-things songs are what we need.

AD

Done.

ME

Done.

CEO

Fine. Prick.

ME

You’re the prick.

AD

Bye, Ms. Courage.

ME

So long Mary.

(ADME ducks back behind the curtain.)

MARY COURAGE

By Adme. Take care!

CEO

What a fool. No one watches his damn news anyway.

MARY COURAGE

You are a master of negotiation, sir.

CEO

Yes, quite. Is there anything else? I need to go shake Adme down for those pills.

MARY COURAGE

No, sir. Thank you so much. You saved me again!

CEO

That's what I do.

(He walks toward the curtain and turns to
MARY COURAGE before he enters.)

And Mary, I'm sorry to hear about Veggie.

MARY COURAGE

Everyone seems to be, and that's just a bunch of fuss. He's home. He's fine. He's safe. He's just really, really tired.

CEO

I didn't know him, don't remember meeting him even once, to be honest with you, but if he was a son of yours, I can only assume he was an incredible young man.

MARY COURAGE

Well, there's no need to talk about him in the past. He's just in the hospital. Would you like to meet him sometime?

CEO

No.

MARY COURAGE

It's probably for the best. I can't imagine he's much for talking these days, but truth be told, he was never much of a conversationalist so that much hasn't changed.

CEO

You're a special person, Mary Courage.

MARY COURAGE

Just remember that the next time you look at my paycheck.

Mary Courage & Her Children

(CEO and MARY COURAGE have a good laugh about that, CEO more hysterically than her. He laughs even after he exits through his curtain. As soon as he leaves, her laughter turns into the crestfallen variety. BLACKOUT.)

Scene 3

SETTING: The next day at MARY COURAGE's office. Senators GREEN, SEASAW and DOVE are sitting on the small chairs as MARY COURAGE is giving them a mathematics lesson on a whiteboard/chalkboard. CATHERINE is sitting at the teacher's desk, but not in the teacher's chair, preparing some origami table-settings for tomorrow's fundraiser.

AT RISE: MARY COURAGE goes in-depth about the figures on the whiteboard/chalkboard as the three senators intently listen.

MARY COURAGE

So, as you can see Senators, what we end up with is W times zero equals D , where W is war funding and D equals deaths . . . No, wait, hold on. That doesn't look right. I forgot to carry the one. And then to divide by one. Instead of isolating D , we need to subtract W from it and move D to the other side of the equation by--

GREEN

Ms. Courage, this isn't necessary. I believe I can speak for us all when I say that math isn't our strong suit.

(The senators agree.)

We just want to see the final numbers so we can determine if they're too large to support.

MARY COURAGE

I can hardly believe this is your first year in Congress, Senator Green. You speak with the wisdom of a 30-year veteran.

SEASAW

I can speak with wisdom, too.

DOVE

Me too. Me too.

MARY COURAGE

Of course you can, Senator Seasaw, Senator Dove.

(MARY COURAGE always pronounces DOVE's name with a long O, but then pronounces it correctly after DOVE corrects her.)

DOVE

Dove.

(Pronounced like the bird.)

MARY COURAGE

Yes, Dove, of course.

GREEN

Um, how big are the numbers?

SEASAW

How big are they?

DOVE

How big are they?

MARY COURAGE

They're small in terms of the price of safety, human life and freedom.

GREEN

And how much is that?

SEASAW and DOVE

Yeah?

MARY COURAGE

Let me just put it this way: the more money that we spend, the fewer the number of people who die. This doesn't just apply to our boys over there. This is especially true of the citizens.

GREEN

Why should we spend money to save them? They're our enemy.

MARY COURAGE

Senator, we're talking about women and children here. Peace-loving, subservient, innocent bystanders going to the market, going to school, walking their goats, trying to rebuild the country that we destroyed because they made us do it. Without the American presence, these innocent people will surely die savage deaths in the crossfire of sectarian violence. We must spend the money to put more troops on the ground, to buy more protection for these people, to buy more weapons of peace.

GREEN

So if we spend nothing, everyone dies. And if we spend a lot, nobody dies?

MARY COURAGE

You've got it!

(Sings.)

4 - 3 - 2 - 1

READY OR NOT, HERE WE COME!
TAKE YOUR TIME. WALK AROUND.
SOMETHING QUIET 'BOUT THIS TOWN.

THE MOSQUE IS VACANT,
SOULS ARE LATENT.
CAN YOU HEAR THE SILENT SOUND?
WHY'S THERE NO ONE TO BE FOUND?

I'll tell ya why.

THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
WE DIDN'T SPEND THE MONEY.
THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
WE JUST CUT-AND-RUNNY.
THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
DON'T YOU FIND IT FUNNY?

WE'VE GOT THIS BLOOD ON OUR HANDS,
BUT THERE'S NOWHERE TO WASH
BECAUSE THE ARMOR-PLATED SINK IS
SOMETHING THAT YOU ALL QUASHED.

Not really a pretty picture, is it, senators?

GREEN

This sounds like a worse-case scenario to me. I can think of a cheaper solution.

MARY COURAGE

Cheaper? I'm all ears.

GREEN

What if there's another way? What if we empower them to take responsibility for their own nation, their own future? After all, we're not responsible for their security, for their policing of their own people. They have to pull themselves up by their bootstraps so they can stand up for themselves.

(Sings.)

CAN-DO, CAN-DO
I THINK ARABS CAN-DO.
THEY BLOW THEMSELVES UP FOR ALLAH
YET CAN'T EVEN ENFORCE THEIR OWN LAW?

WE DON'T GIVE THEM ENOUGH CREDIT
SO YOUR CHORUS I MUST EDIT.
WE MUST GIVE THEM A CHANCE
TO THEIR OWN LIVES ENHANCE.

Hear me out now.

NO ONE'S DEAD.
THEY'RE ALL JUST FINE AND DANDY.
NO ONE'S DEAD.
TOGETHER THEY DID BANDY.
NO ONE'S DEAD.
THEY TOOK A PAGE FROM GANDHI.

FROM THEIR BOOTSTRAPS THEY PULLED
THEIR LIVES UP FROM BEING LOST.
NOW THE TERROR IS STIFLED,
AND IT CAME AT NO COST.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

NO! BOOM! THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
WE DIDN'T SPEND THE MONEY!
THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
WE JUST CUT-AND-RUNNY!
THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S FUNNY

TO SEE A MAN PULL HIS BOOTSTRAP
WHEN HIS FOOT'S BEEN BLOWN OFF?
NOW A BULLET'S HIS NIGHTCAP,
INSURGENT LEAD HE DOTH QUAFF.

SEASAW

(Sings.)

THE POINT OF THIS WAR
WAS TO PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE,
NOT TO OPEN SOME DOOR
TO HELPING THOSE WE DON'T LIKE.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

THE WAR IS NOT ABOUT US
OR AT LEAST IT'S NOT ANYMORE.
THE SUCCESS OF OUR MISSION
OPENED UP AN OLD SORE.

WE KEPT PICKING THE WOUND
UNTIL IT FINALLY BLED.
WE MUST STOP THE BLEEDING,
OR THEY'LL ALL END UP DEAD.

SEASAW

(Sings.)

IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF COMPASSION.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

THEN TELL ME WHAT IT'S ABOUT.

Mary Courage & Her Children

SEASAW

(Sings.)

I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT FOR SURE.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

UNTIL YOU SEE THE AMOUNT?

DOVE

(Sings.)

EVERYONE'S SINGING
'CEPT FOR LITTLE OLD ME.
I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY
'BOUT THE WAY THINGS SHOULD BE.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

BEFORE YOU SING YOUR CHORUS, DEAR,
I'VE ONE SMALL REQUEST:
SAVE UP YOUR PLACATING VOICE;
IT'S IN PEACE THEY DO REST.

THEY'RE ALL DEAD!

SENATORS

(Sing.)

WE DIDN'T SPEND THE MONEY.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

THEY'RE ALL DEAD!

SENATORS

(Sing.)

WE JUST CUT-AND-RUNNY.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

THEY'RE ALL DEAD!

SENATORS

(Sing.)

DON'T YOU THINK IT'S FUNNY

MARY COURAGE

That we debate about life,
Who should be saved,
Who should be killed,
Like gods passing judgment.

And what's the overriding factor:
How much will we be billed?

It's too late. They're all dead.

Gentlemen, this bill isn't about war. It's about peace. What is the price tag that we put on peace, the price tag that we put on human life -- whether it's American or Arab? I want you to meet someone. Girls!

(In the same manner a prisoner would be brought before a judge, a few members of the CHORUS bring a small Middle Eastern woman, who looks like she's been in a dungeon, to meet the senators. She is a bit jittery.)

Senator Green, Senator Seasaw, Senator Dove: I'd like you to meet Ms. Mathpa Alejid.

(The Senators reach their hands out to her, and she recoils in terror into the CHORUS.)

It appears she's still trying to recover from the atrocities of the insurgents. Oh, you poor thing. You're safe. It's OK. You're in America. You have nothing to fear from anyone, small, brown, Middle Eastern woman wearing Muslim garb. Catherine, come translate for us.

(CATHERINE shakes her head no.)

Oh Catherine. Please?

(CATHERINE sighs and relents.)

Mathpa, do you have anything to say?

(They all stare at ALEJID, who has no idea what's going on. MARY

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

COURAGE makes a motion to indicate “speak.” Finally, ALEJID begins to speak, more of a mumble, in some unintelligible language. CATHERINE begins the translation by signing, “I don’t know what I’m doing here or where I am. One day I was playing with my children and the next thing I know I am in some strange room.”)

Thank you to all the Americans who helped me escape the terrors of my country.

(CATHERINE gives MARY COURAGE a stern look, but continues translating. “It is so cold here and everyone smells of chemicals. Can you tell me when I can go home?”)

Here, I can begin a new life and attempt to put the horrors of crimes committed by my own people behind me.

(CATHERINE is now outraged, although this is a normal occurrence between her and MARY COURAGE. CATHERINE steps in front of ALEJID, who stops speaking, and frantically signs to MARY COURAGE, “How can you just stand there and lie like this?”)

And they tried to chop off our heads!

(“You will burn in hell for this.”)

They cut off our clothes and felt our boobies!

(“I can’t even argue with you anymore!”)

And played drums on our heads!

(CATHERINE raises her hands, makes sort of a muted screaming sound.)

Aaarrghh!!!

(CATHERINE exits out the back door.)

And it’s too traumatic to talk about. She needs to leave. You can take her back girls.

(ALEJID faintly tries to resist being taken back to her dungeon but is escorted away, looking back as she’s walked through the curtain. In the meantime,

DR. KIND and FATHER RIGHT enter
through the back door.)

FATHER RIGHT

Knock-knock, Mary? Are we disturbing anything?

MARY COURAGE

Father Right and Dr. Kind! It's so nice to see you. Did we have an appointment?

FATHER RIGHT

You told us to--

(DR. KIND elbows FATHER
RIGHT in the side.)

We were just in the neighborhood, stopping by. Oh look, you have company.

MARY COURAGE

Aren't you two sweet! Father, Doctor, do you know Senators Green, Seesaw and Dove?

DOVE

Dove.

FATHER RIGHT

Certainly I do not. Pleasure to make your acquaintance.

DR. KIND

Likewise.

MARY COURAGE

Dr. Kind is the preeminent medical expert here on Capitol Hill. He can cure everything, and for what he can't cure, he can prescribe.

DR. KIND

No questions asked.

MARY COURAGE

And Father Right has saved many a wayward soul with his eerily familiar brand of Catholicism.

Mary Courage & Her Children

FATHER RIGHT

Confess to me anytime. No questions asked.

MARY COURAGE

I call them the Lemons. Lips so tight, you'd think they were sewn together.

FATHER RIGHT

Well, I don't know about all of that, but there is one thing that is very important to us.

DR. KIND and FATHER RIGHT

(Sing.)

PRIVILEGE.
WASHINGTON IS ALL ABOUT
PRIVILEGE.
A COUNTRY CANNOT RUN WITHOUT
PRIVILEGE.
HEART.
SOUL.
PRIVILEGE.

DR. KIND

(Sings.)

WHEN YOU NEED A REAL FRIEND,
WE ALWAYS HAVE AN EAR TO LEND.

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

CONSTITUENTS MAY GET YOU DOWN,
YOU SHOULD NOT FEAR TO WEAR A FROWN

DR. KIND and FATHER RIGHT

(Sing.)

WITH US,
YOU
HAVE
PRIVILEGE.
INFORMATION'S ALL ABOUT
PRIVILEGE.
THOUGHTS ARE DANGEROUS WITHOUT

DR. KIND and FATHER RIGHT (cont.)

PRIVILEGE.
DISCRETE.
LAWFUL.
PRIVILEGE.

FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

ARE YOU GAY?
I WON'T SAY.
HAD AN AFFAIR?
I DON'T CARE.
I KEEP WHAT'S SAID
BETWEEN YOU AND THE LORD,
NOT SOME TALKING HEAD
IN THE MEDIA HORDE.

DR. KIND

(Sings.)

IS IT LIMP?
WITH PILLS, I DON'T SKIMP.
IS IT A RASH?
GONE IN A FLASH.
WHEN IT NEEDS HEALED
OR IT'S AN ADDICTION,
MY LIPS ARE SEALED.
I'VE GOT THAT KIND OF CONVICTION

DR. KIND and FATHER RIGHT

(Sing.)

BECAUSE
YOU
HAVE
PRIVILEGE.

GREEN

It's quite a coincidence you showed up here today. Actually, there are a couple of things I've wanted to talk with someone about. Do you have time today, Father?

FATHER RIGHT

Ooo, today. Not a good day. And tomorrow's the fundraiser, you all are going to that, aren't you?

(The senators hesitate.)

Oh you shouldn't miss it. It's a real treat and for a good cause. I have to prepare for my TV show, and oh, then it's actual Mass--

GREEN

Doctor?

DR. KIND

Check with your insurance company if I'm in your HMO as a preferred provider, then of course I'd be happy to see you sometime next month.

MARY COURAGE

Would you do it now as a favor for me?

DR. KIND and FATHER RIGHT

Of course!

FATHER RIGHT

Do you need more than 5 minutes?

GREEN

That's kind of what I want to talk to God about.

FATHER RIGHT

I know a nice, private spot where no one will bother us. We'll be right back.

(FATHER RIGHT grabs GREEN
and exits out the back door. DR.
KIND follows after them.)

DR. KIND

I like to watch.

(He exits.)

MARY COURAGE

I just love those two. It's so hard to find good friends in this town.

(CATHERINE re-enters from the back door and eventually goes back to the desk.)

Some people will just run away from you faster than a camera flash the second they become uncomfortable -- and there's a lot of discomfort to be had in Washington. It's the Hollywood of the east. The truth makes people uncomfortable, which is why it's rarely ever heard here.

SEASAW

Each truth comes with its own price tag.

MARY COURAGE

There's only one source of truth for me, and that's the truth from the people. That's who we're here to serve.

DOVE

We work for the people. You work for the industrial military complex.

MARY COURAGE

With all due respect, senator, I work for the people. Some company's name is on my check, but you're the ones who sign it because the people want you to do it.

DOVE

The people I represent don't want war, Ms. Courage.

MARY COURAGE

They don't want to admit it. No one wants to admit that they feel safer when other people are dead. But I'll admit it; I'll stand up for those whose voices won't be heard. We need bad people to die an awful death and somebody has to stand up for that! That's what the people want, that's what you want -- what we all want. But you're above that responsibility, aren't you? It's easier for you to paint me as something I'm not, some greedy merchant of death and destruction, rather than come to grips with the fact that you now determine when people live and when people die.

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

It's you. It might not be part of the job that you wanted, but it's part of the job you've got. My job is to see to it that the innocent don't suffer from the sins of the wicked. I keep death tolls low so that you can sit in that office for another six years, praising the progress of our soldiers and using that low, low mortality statistic every chance you get -- be credited for approving a modern war, a war without death, a war of the people. That number comes at a price. But it would be much cheaper to simply carpet bomb them all, wouldn't it? Cheaper to act like savages, act like them, with no regard for innocent life. It's not safe there for everyday people trying to live everyday lives.

SEASAW

And that's our fault.

MARY COURAGE

Our inability to change the past should not be a penalty for the present.

DOVE

A past created by your war machine.

MARY COURAGE

Senator Dove--

DOVE

Dove.

MARY COURAGE

Dove. The past was created by four airplanes. Is it so easy to lose sight of that?

(DR. KIND, FATHER RIGHT and
Senator GREEN re-enter through the
back door, laughing.)

GREEN

And it was the horse the whole time. Ha ha ha! That's the funniest joke I think I ever heard.

SEASAW

What's the joke?

DR. KIND

Sorry, we can't tell you without breaching our privilege.
(GREEN, DR. KIND and FATHER
RIGHT laugh.)

DOVE

Well, I want to know the joke.

SEASAW

Me too. Why can't I know jokes?

FATHER RIGHT

All right, come on, you two.

GREEN

He votes "nay!"

FATHER RIGHT

Shhh!

MARY COURAGE

Think about what we talked about, senators, and don't forget
about the fundraiser tomorrow.

(FATHER RIGHT, GREEN, SEASAW
and DOVE exit out the back door.)

GREEN

What did you talk about?

SEASAW

I don't know. Stuff.

MARY COURAGE

Dr. Kind, I know I didn't make an appointment, but I was
wondering if you'd look at something for me. It's Veggie. Because
of Veggie, Catherine here has been all out of sorts lately; she's lost
her mind because she thinks Veggie has no chance to recover.

DR. KIND

I see.

MARY COURAGE

Dr. Kind, I hate to ask this, but would you be willing to look at him and tell us, in your honest opinion, if there's a chance he'll recover, if he's got a chance to walk again, or talk again?

(She walks over to her desk to grab a picture.)

This is Veggie at the hospital right now.

DR. KIND

You want me to tell you this based on this picture of him in a catatonic state?

MARY COURAGE

It's from the insurance company so it's not the best quality photo, but maybe--

DR. KIND

It's not the quality, Mary. It's just that, it's not ethical for me to give a diagnosis without physically examining the patient.

MARY COURAGE

Of course.

DR. KIND

Ah, what the heck. Let me see.

(Examines the photo.)

Yes. Hmm. Yes. Oh. Yes. Whoa. Hmm. No.

(DR. KIND pauses to look at MARY COURAGE and CATHERINE.)

In my professional medical opinion, I think there's a chance he'll improve. Nothing to trouble yourself about.

MARY COURAGE

See Catherine? He's not brain dead. He's soul alive!

(CATHERINE grabs the picture, rips it in half and walks out the front door.)

DR. KIND

I'm sorry Mary if I--

MARY COURAGE

Oh, she's just. She's just . . .

(NEPPO slowly walks through the back door.)

Not him.

NEPPO (stunned)

We have to. We have to. We have to.

MARY COURAGE

What? We have to what?

NEPPO

Cancel the fundraiser.

MARY COURAGE

Oh for Pete's sake. I'm not canceling that fundraiser.

NEPPO

Senator Apollo. Senator Apollo. He said the Arabs aren't our enemy. He said there's nothing to fear from the Arabs.

MARY COURAGE

Of course, there is.

NEPPO (crying)

Why would he say that? Why would he say something like that?
Why would he lie to me?

(NEPPO walks in to MARY
COURAGE for an embrace. She
puts out her arms, grabs NEPPO and
spins him around to hug DR. KIND.)

MARY COURAGE

There, there, sweet, stupid Neppo. He lied to you because he hates America, and he knows you love America. People who hate America want to hurt you.

NEPPO

That's an awful thing to do.

MARY COURAGE

Well, turns out he's an awful man.

NEPPO

He said we're making them our enemy because too many people profit from war and nobody profits from peace. Why would he say that?

MARY COURAGE

Because he doesn't know any Arabs, that's why. He lives in this little rock-star bubble, a world where he is the king and anyone will believe what he says if he'll just sing a few bars of their favorite tune. I'm sure he's never met an Arab in his life, and if he did, he'd know what we know.

NEPPO

What do we know?

MARY COURAGE

They hate freedom.

NEPPO

I hate people who hate freedom.

MARY COURAGE

They all own guns.

NEPPO

Savages.

MARY COURAGE

They'll blow up their own people.

NEPPO

We'd never do that!

MARY COURAGE

They're brown.

NEPPO

Nooooooooooooooooooooo!!!

MARY COURAGE

Dr. Kind, can you sedate Neppo for me?

DR. KIND

Of course, Mary. Come on, Neppo.

(DR. KIND grabs NEPPO's leash and they walk toward the back door.)

NEPPO

He's going to ruin America.

MARY COURAGE

Go rest, Neppo.

NEPPO

I just peed a little in my pants.

DR. KIND

Happens to me all the time.

(They exit. CEO pops his head out of the curtain.)

CEO

Mary.

MARY COURAGE

Oh CEO! Hello! Hello! Did I have an appointment with you?

CEO

No, no. I couldn't help overhearing what was going on out here. Sounds like the singer won't vote for the bill.

MARY COURAGE

Maybe Neppo just misheard.

Mary Courage & Her Children

CEO

Does he not know what party he belongs to?

MARY COURAGE

Singers are very flaky, sir.

CEO

Green, Seasaw, Dove--

MARY COURAGE

I think it's "Dove," sir.

(Mispronounced.)

CEO

Yes. Quite. All three Mary. We need all three of their votes.

MARY COURAGE

Count on it, CEO. And the singer, I have a feeling he'll see the light.

CEO

See to it.

(CEO exits through the curtain. MARY COURAGE sits on a chair behind her desk, puts her face in her hands and elbows on the table, pauses and snores. CURTAIN. INTERMISSION.)

ACT II

Scene 1

SETTING: The night of the fundraiser. Behind the curtain, a cabaret-style party is going on with all the senators (minus APOLLO), DR. KIND and FATHER RIGHT in attendance. In place of a desk in a small stage/platform. Cacti plants should be at each table, and the decorations NEPPO made should be visible somewhere. CATHERINE serves as the cigar/cigarette girl. NEPPO is absent.

AT RISE: MARY COURAGE stands in front of the curtain. She's lighting herself with some sort of penlight, as she has sneaked out of the fundraiser to sing her song.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

IF I HAD IT ALL TO DO AGAIN,
WOULD I CHOOSE THIS LIFE I'M LEADING?
WOULD I BE A DOCTOR OR A TEACHER,
PERHAPS A SCIENTIST OR A PHARMACIST,
SPREADING OUNCES OF PREVENTION
INSTEAD OF SELLING TONS OF CURE?

IF I HAD IT ALL TO DO AGAIN,
WOULD I BE A BETTER MOTHER?
WOULD VEGGIE BE HERE BY MY SIDE,
CATHERINE AND I ALWAYS COLLIDE?
WOULD NEPPO BE A DENTIST, A LAWYER,
OR WORSE, A DEMOCRAT?

HINDSIGHT'S ALWAYS SHIFTING,
YET FORESIGHT STAYS THE COURSE.
HISTORY'S DOOMED TO BE REPEATED
BECAUSE EVERYTHING CHANGES.

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

EVERYTHING CHANGES.

EVERYTHING CHANGES AND WE ARE FOOLS
TO THINK WE CAN CARRY LEARNING WITH US,
WRAP IT IN A BUNDLE
AND WAIT FOR HISTORY'S RETURN
WITH OUR MEMORIES ONCE KNOWN.

WHEN HISTORY COMES AGAIN,
WE'RE NO BETTER PREPARED.
CIRCUMSTANCES ARE DIFFERENT
BECAUSE EVERYTHING CHANGES.
EVERYTHING CHANGES.

EVERYTHING CHANGES, AND STILL WE WASTE
OUR TIME REFLECTING ON THE PAST,
KNOWING THERE NO SUCH THING
AS A SECOND CHANCE.
ENTERTAINING THOUGHTS IS JUST ROMANCE.

BUT TO ENTERTAIN THAT THOUGHT:
IF I HAD IT ALL TO DO AGAIN,
WHAT WOULD I DO?

IF I HAD IT ALL TO DO AGAIN,
I WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING!

(On the last line, spotlights hit MARY COURAGE. As the song ends, the curtain opens to reveal a party, Senators COWARD, SCARECROW and GAFFE are absent, but the rest of the principles are enjoying themselves. The CHORUS is spread out among the tables, singing a more jazzed-up, sultry version of the opening song while also caressing the patrons.)

CHORUS

(Sings.)

FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT,
DEFENDING OUR RELIGIOUS RIGHT.

Mary Courage & Her Children

MARY COURAGE

Freedom of religion.
Freedom of speech.
Even freedom of the press, I guess.

CHORUS

(Sings.)

WITHOUT YOUR VOTE, THEY'LL LOSE THEIR MIGHT.
DO NOT LEAVE THEM DEFENSELESS!

MARY COURAGE

Dog tags in body bags,
Sitting ducks on a sandy pond.

CHORUS

(Sings.)

MISSILES FIRED FROM THE SEAS,
ARMOR-PLATED, NEW HUMVEES,

MARY COURAGE

Just because it's made in China, that doesn't mean it's not
American

CHORUS

(Sings.)

HEAVY SNIPER RIFLES, IF YOU'D PLEASE.
YOU MUST COME TO YOUR SENSES.

MARY COURAGE

Not to imply that you have . . .
No sense. Everybody needs a little something.
Don't they boys?

(Senators COWARD, SCARECROW
and GAFFE emerge from the curtain to
perform. Six CHORUS members sit on
the laps of the men. Two fall back and
slip into the curtain when the attention is
on the trio of senators.)

COWARD

(Sings.)

I COULD STAND AND GIVE GREAT SPEECHES,
COMPARING DEMOCRATS WITH LEECHES,
THEN SHOVE REPORTERS IN THE HALLS.
I'D SAVE MYSELF SOME SWEATIN'
AS THE VOTES I'D BE COLLECTIN'
IF I ONLY HAD SOME BALLS.

SCARECROW

(Sings.)

MY NAME WOULD BE IN FASHION,
'CAUSE OF MY OVERFLOWING COMPASSION.
MY INAUGURATION THEY WOULD START.
FOR MY CANDIDACY THEY'D BE PLEADIN'
AND THE FREE WORLD I'D BE LEADIN'
IF I ONLY HAD SOME HEART.

GAFFE

(Sings.)

MY TONGUE GETS ME INTO TROUBLE,
MY CAREER SHOULD BE IN RUBBLE.
I THINK I'VE PAID MY DUES.
LET ME BAG SIX OR SEVEN,
I WOULD FINALLY BE IN HEAVEN.
IF I COULD ONLY KILL SOME JEWS.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

BUT IT SAYS THERE IN THE BIBLE
THAT GOD DOESN'T MAKE A RIVAL
OUT OF HE WHO SIDES WITH JEWS.

GAFFE

It says that?

MARY COURAGE

I'm paraphrasing.

GAFFE

I don't see what makes them so special? They're heathens with
big noses and lots of money -- it's the money, isn't it?

(MARY COURAGE makes a motion
of acknowledgement that that could be
the reason. He sings.)

WITH THIS SECOND-THOUGHT I'M HAVIN'
I DON'T NEED TO KILL ALL SEVEN,
A SINGLE ONE WILL DO.

MARY COURAGE

Next verse!

COWARD

(Sings.)

MY MOUTH WOULD FOAM WITH RABIES.

SCARECROW

(Sings.)

I'D BE KISSING BABIES.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

YOUR VOTE COULD EVEN HELP YOU WITH THE
LADIES.

COWARD

(Sings.)

THEN I'M SURE TO GET SOME BALLS.

SCARECROW

(Sings.)

SOME HEART.

SENATORS, DR. KIND, FATHER RIGHT

(Sings.)

A YACHT!

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

A RAISE.

GAFFE

(Sings.)

A JEW.

COWARD, SCARECROW and GAFFE

(Sing.)

MORE MONEY IS FINE, TOO.

(Blackout. A spotlight shines on the curtain.
CEO, wearing a white suit, emerges.)

CEO

(Sings.)

LIFE IS A STRUGGLE AGAINST EMPTINESS.
THE MORE WE SEE, THE MORE VACANT WE ARE.
YET WE KEEP MARCHING ON TOWARD NOTHINGNESS,
ALWAYS REACHING FOR A NONEXISTENT STAR.

WHO WILL PROVIDE?

WHO WILL PROVIDE?

THESE GIFTS I GIVE ARE LITTLE MORE THAN SYMBOLIC,
BALLS FOR YOU, A HEART, AND EVEN A JEW.
THE REAL REWARD WILL COME FROM A DUTY CIVIC,
PROTECTING FREEDOM IS WHAT YOU'RE HERE TO DO.

(With their gifts, the senators take
their seats.)

GOD WILL PROVIDE.

GOD WILL PROVIDE.

CAN YOU BLAME A MAN FOR GIVING IN TO FEED
HIS SOUL,

TRADING HOLLOWNESS FOR A SMALL ETHICAL
SCAR?

CONSCIENCE NEVER SPEAKS UP WHEN YOU'RE IN
CONTROL.

GOOD DEEDS ARE GOOD BUT CANNOT BUY A CAR.

I SHALL PROVIDE.

I SHALL PROVIDE.

(As CEO ends his song, the CHORUS circles him, kneels to worship him. The tune changes as a woman wearing an overcoat and a hat walks through the curtain. She will tease the senators during MARY COURAGE's speech. CEO and the CHORUS leave through the curtain.)

MARY COURAGE

Who's this? Is she an informant? Would you rendezvous with her in a parking garage? Does she intimidate you with her abnormally deep throat? Does she work for the government or does the government work for her?

(Sings.)

WHO'S THAT GIRL WITH THE MAN OVER THERE?
I'D LIKE TO MEET HER,
RUN MY FINGERS THROUGH HER HAIR.
ONE LOOK AIN'T ENOUGH
TO PUT HER IN MY FUTURE.
BETTER TAKE A PICTURE.

(Lights strobe like a flash as the woman takes off her overcoat to reveal she's wearing a g-string stuffed with dollar bills. She will begin to stuff dollar bills in the pockets of the men she teases. At the end of each verse, CATHERINE will take a "picture" of the stripper sitting on the laps of Senators GREEN, SEASAW and DOVE.)

IS SHE SWEET OR IS SHE WILD?
GET A LITTLE CLOSER,
SHE LOOKS LIKE A CHILD.
THAT TURNS YOU ON,
YOU AIN'T NO PREACHER.
BETTER TAKE A PICTURE.

WHAT DOES SHE WANT -- A FLING OR A RING?
TO LIVE THE LIFE
OF THE QUEEN OF A KING?

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

YOU'LL GIVE HER IT ALL,
THIS DELICATE CREATURE.

AFTER WHILE, IT COMES TO AN END.
NO STAYING FRIENDS,
NO FLOWERS TO SEND.
THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEONE ELSE
READY FOR RAPTURE.
BUT YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE THAT PICTURE.

(She caresses GREEN,
SEASAW and DOVE once more.
CATHERINE continues to shoot.)

I SEE YOU.
I SEE YOU.
I SEE EVERYTHING YOU DO.
I'VE GOT THAT PICTURE.
YOU DON'T WANNA SEE THAT PICTURE.

(The girl leaves through the curtain
to applause. GREEN, SEASAW and
DOVE are oblivious to how they
were just set up. ADME peeps his
heads through the curtain.)

ADME

Did we hear something about pictures?

MARY COURAGE

Look everybody, it's ADME!

(The senior senators groan.)

Tough room.

ME

We deserve that.

AD

No we don't. You deserve that. How many exposés or investigative
news special have I ever been a part of? Zip. Zero. Zilch.

ME

But you've had no problem making money off of mine with your advertising, have you?

(ADME comes out from the curtain, wearing tails and holding canes. One of them has an oversized top hat that he puts on his head.)

AD

(Sings.)

SENATORS,
PLEASE FORGIVE MY BROTHER
FOR HE KNOWS NOT WHAT HE DOES,
HE JUST DRAGS YOU THROUGH THE MUD.
AND FOR WHAT?
LOW RATINGS?

ME

(Sings.)

SENATORS,
PLEASE FORGIVE MY BROTHER
FOR THE UNBALANCE HE BRINGS,
LETTING THE MOST MONEY MUDSLING.
MAKING VOTERS
APATHETIC.

AD

You act like they care.

ME

They care. Don't you care?
(The senior senators moan.)

AD

There you have it.
(Sings.)

PAY ME.

ME

(Sings.)

DON'T FORSAKE ME.

AD

(Sings.)

THE MESSAGE CAN BE ANYTHING YOU LIKE.
JUST PAY ME.

ME

(Sings.)

DON'T BETRAY ME.
DON'T LET AMERICA BECOME THE FOURTH REICH.

AD

What does that even mean?

ME

(Sings.)

YOU'RE ALL ABOUT MONEY'S MANIPULATION.

AD

(Sings.)

INSTEAD OF YOUR STRAIGHT-FORWARD OPINION?

ME

(Sings.)

THERE'D BE NO YOU WITHOUT ME.

AD

(Sings.)

AND WITHOUT ME, WHAT WOULD YOU BE?

ADME

(Sing.)

IT'S CALLED PBS.
(They shudder.)

ME

(Sings.)

MAYBE YOU'RE NOT SO BAD.

AD

(Sings.)

I THINK I'M WRONG ABOUT YOU, TOO.

ADME

(Sing.)

BECAUSE WE CONTROL THE MESSAGE.

AD

(Sings.)

MONEY CONTROLS THE MESSAGE.

ME

(Sings.)

THE PEOPLE CONTROL THE MESSAGE.

ADME

(Sings.)

AND THAT MESSAGE IS . . .
YOU!

(The senators boo ADME off the stage.)

ME

I'll get you, my pretties.

AD

I'll get your money, too.

(ADME exits.)

FATHER RIGHT

Gentlemen, gentlemen. This is not an occasion for hate or bad tidings. This is an occasion for togetherness, for brotherhood. I'd like us to join in a musical prayer to all the lost souls. To give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ and the beautiful gifts he gives us every day.

(As music plays, the CHORUS comes out in altar boy robes, a couple have thuribles, although they need not be emitting incense. Half of the girls go to either side

of him. FATHER RIGHT is taken aback about how good they look. He misses the first chorus as he wipes his brow.)

MARY COURAGE

Father?

FATHER RIGHT

Yes?

MARY COURAGE

Were you going to sing?

FATHER COURAGE

Sing? Yes! Sing. Sorry, I . . . wanted the girls to get set.

MARY COURAGE

They're set. You set girls?

CHORUS

Yes, Father.

MARY COURAGE

Need them to do anything, Father?

CHORUS

We'll do anything you ask, Father.

FATHER RIGHT

(With nervous laughter.)

Ah, no. Let's just . . . sing, shall we.

(FATHER RIGHT begins a short Gregorian chant made of no real words. The girls join him toward the end of the chant. As they make a short pause to begin a verse, NEPPO sneaks in from CEO's curtain. NEPPO is dressed in blackface, wearing a Sikh turban, wrapped in explosives and holding two rifles, stands behind FATHER RIGHT and

screams something in a false Arabic. The screams force the CHORUS and FATHER RIGHT to split to either side of NEPPO. A blackout occurs and a couple of shots ring out. When MARY COURAGE screams "Stop!" the lights come back up. MARY COURAGE runs to the terrorist. The senior senators, minus COWARD, have pistols pulled. COWARD's pants are wet. Senator GAFFE's shoe is smoking from its gunfire -- as he is the only one who shot.)

MARY COURAGE

A terrorist has been shot!

(The senators smile at GAFFE and congratulate him.)

What the . . . Neppo! Is that you?

NEPPO

Ow!

(The senators quickly put their guns away, but GAFFE's shoe won't stop smoking. In fact, the smoke intensifies. He tries to put it out, but can't. He sits on it, trying to act nonchalant.)

MARY COURAGE

What in the hell are you doing?

(MARY COURAGE and a couple CHORUS members help NEPPO sit up. She takes off his turban.)

NEPPO

I wanted to show Senator Apollo. I wanted to show him that the threat of terror was real.

MARY COURAGE

He's not here.

NEPPO

What?

MARY COURAGE

He's not here. Did he say he was going to be here?

NEPPO

He said he wasn't coming. Oh! That means not coming.

(DR. KIND and CATHERINE
come toward NEPPO.)

DR. KIND

Where does it hurt?

NEPPO

Where I was shot.

MARY COURAGE

What do you think? We can't take him to the hospital. There's no way we'd be able to cover for Senator Gaffe.

(GAFFE seems surprised at the
insinuation that he was responsible.
Shakes his head and points to
himself that it wasn't him. When he
points to himself, he does so with
the smoking shoe.)

It would be easier to deal with this if Neppo just died.

(CATHERINE embraces NEPPO
to protect him.)

Oh, Catherine, I'm sure I'm kidding.

DR. KIND

I think I can take the bullet out. I'm an old pro at things like this, but I'm going to need a coat hanger and a fifth of tequila.

SMILEY

I got that for you, Doctor.

DR. KIND

Oh good. Come on, Neppo. Let's get you fixed up and me drunk.

(NEPPO is helped up by a CHORUS member and DR. KIND, and they go out the back door. CATHERINE grabs the tequila and hanger from SMILEY and follows. FATHER RIGHT joins them.)

FATHER RIGHT

Just in case.

(He exits.)

GAFFE

Mary. I'm so sorry I shot your son.

MARY COURAGE

That's OK. You didn't know.

GAFFE

I mean, he looked exactly like a terrorist--

MARY COURAGE

No need to apologize. It's OK, I'm just, just sad that the show had to end like this.

CRONY

But what about my big finish?

MARY COURAGE

I think the mood is shot.

SEASAW

I agree. This is all a bit much.

CRONY

A bit much? Kids today. No wonder it's so hard to get a bill passed in Congress anymore. You're all a bunch of pussies. Let me tell you something, kid. This is one of the tamest fundraisers I've ever been to. No offense, Mary.

MARY COURAGE

None taken.

CRONY

There's no donkey, no midget, no Betsy Ross transvestite. Do you know how hard it is to get it up at a Washington party when those three things are missing?

SEASAW

What is that, a joke?

CRONY

I don't joke, boy. You've entered a different world. This is a world of power and privilege, everyone wants a piece of it -- which means anything goes. If you think this is too much, then you don't know anything about the Senate and what it takes to make a nation run. Being a senator means much more than not reading documents, smiling at some camera or pretending to care about some kid with cancer. Our votes shape who we are as a nation and who we will become. It's time you and you and you were given a lesson on how the Senate works.

(Sings.)

IN 1776, WE BECAME A NATION
FIGHTING OFF THE BRITISH OCCUPATION.
OUR PEOPLE WERE HELD TOGETHER BY ONE CALL:
KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL!

(More and more people shout the chorus
with CRONY until everyone, including the
freshman senators, chants at the end.)

IN 1846, WE FACED EXPANSION.
THE U.S. WANTED TEXAS WITH A PASSION.
THE MEXICANS HEARD FROM OUR NORTHERN
DRAWL:
KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL!

IN 1861, THE SOUTH DISMAYED US.
FOR SLAVERY THEY STARTED QUITE A RUCKUS.
FIGHTING THEIR OWN PEOPLE TOOK SOME GALL.
STILL
KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL!

SETTLING THE WEST WAS OUR GOD-GIVEN RIGHT.

CRONY (cont.)

THOSE INDIANS THEY DID PUT UP A FIGHT.
WHAT WAS THAT CRY TO LEAD OUR URBAN
SPRAWL?

KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL!

JAPS, GERMANS, AND THE VIETCONG,
KOREANS AND ITALIANS: THEY WERE WRONG.
HOW'D WE TREAT THEIR THREATS, IF I RECALL?
KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL!

NOW IT IS THE ARABS' TIME TO PLAY
THESE WARGAMES IN WHICH THEY'LL GREATLY PAY.
WHAT'S THE SOUND THAT THEY'LL HEAR AS THEY
FALL?

KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL!

IF YOU WANT TO HAVE THE POWER,
YOU CAN'T RELENT AND COWER.
YOUR ONLY CHOICE IS STAND UP BIG AND TALL!
KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL!
KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL! KILL THEM ALL!

MARY COURAGE

Wow, you really are a sophisticated audience. Now let's go fuck
everybody!

(Slight pause between "fuck" and
"everybody," like a half-comma.
BLACKOUT.)

Scene 2

SETTING: MARY COURAGE's office the day after the big fundraiser. The place has yet to be picked up and is in the same state as it was at the end of the last scene. MARY COURAGE is disheveled, still wearing the same clothes from the night before.

AT RISE: MARY COURAGE is sitting at a table, head in her hands, elbows on the table. She's snoring. COWARD, who is wearing a yellow-plaid kilt to go with his suit top, is attempting to sneak in the back door. He does so and goes to the curtain to enter it. However, he walks into a door concealed by the curtain, and the sound wakes up MARY COURAGE.

MARY COURAGE

Abel, dear, what are you doing? Did we have an appointment?

COWARD

Oh Mary. Oh Mary, it's happened.

MARY COURAGE

Sweet Abel, what's wrong?

COWARD

They've come after me.

MARY COURAGE

They have?

COWARD

They have!

MARY COURAGE

Who have?

COWARD

The media. And, and parents, those awful, awful parents, carrying those pictures of dead children. Have they no respect for the living? Troublemakers, all of them. I can't breathe!

MARY COURAGE

Now, Abel, calm down.

COWARD

The funding will never pass now. I failed you, Mary Courage. When you needed me, my one real chance to give back to you for all you've done for me in my career, to deliver one little yes vote, and here I am running away again instead of standing up for you, for what's right. This is the end of my career, Mary, isn't it? That Apollo's got the people of Depression so worked up that if I vote for the bill, they'll vote me out of office. If I vote against it, the party will take my seat away from me. Where is my hole? Where is my hole? Can a man not hide?

MARY COURAGE

A man can always hide, Abel. It takes a wise man to run away from his problems instead of fall victim to them.

COWARD

What good am I to you anymore? I've lost my people; he's ruined it all for me. I can't talk like him. No one hangs on my every word. I'm not exciting or inspiring or interesting. I don't have a glamorous past or just one name. My life, I'm nothing but a boring, old bureaucrat. What kind of existence is that?

MARY COURAGE

I'm not going to let anyone talk about my Abel like that. You're exactly what people want, what they really need, dear. Sometimes, it's true, people do get riled up by a charmer who express thoughts, stimulates with new ideas. The people open a crack in their small minds to let those ideas sneak in, but what they find out is those ideas make them think, with one thought leading to another. These thoughts provoke inner conflict because these new ideas aren't what they know. As their minds twist and turn, trying to grapple with what's new, what's really right, they get tired, tired of fighting themselves, tired of having to find

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

the strength to embrace these new ideas and stand behind them with conviction, the strength to battle for the hearts and minds of their neighbors who haven't spent the energy to wrestle with these things, these ideas. And then they look at you and realize, "Old Abel, he never made me think. He's just a doer." In fact, you've probably run into many conversations where people were practically falling asleep when you talked to them. That's how at-ease people feel when you're in charge; that's why they trust you and will stand behind your vote.

COWARD

It's different this time. It's never been like this.

MARY COURAGE

Sweet, sweet Abel. It's always been like this. Your votes have always had the same impact on the same people who cast the same ballots for you term after term after term. You have to have the strength to know that nothing is different. You are the shepherd that must protect them from themselves, no matter how loud they bleat.

COWARD

Like Jesus?

MARY COURAGE

Yes, you're exactly like Jesus. And was he popular? No, but he stood by his convictions. He had to tell the people what was right, what they didn't want to hear, because he wanted to save them.

COWARD

I have to save my people from themselves.

MARY COURAGE

And because of him, any man can now go to heaven, any man can be redeemed, and all it cost Jesus was a few holes in his hands and an immense amount of pain and suff. . . Abel, do you want to change your vote? Do you want to let the terrorists win?

COWARD

No.

MARY COURAGE

Would it be good for the people of Depression if you changed your vote, if you stopped supporting our troops?

COWARD

No.

MARY COURAGE

Then rest your head, dear. Don't change your vote. You haven't failed anyone yet, not me, certainly not the people of Depression. Maybe we haven't yet made Apollo realize how important a yes vote is to the people he's supposed to serve, a people he's supposed to protect and provide for instead of hopping in his fancy foreign-built car and stranding his people in the desert. But that's not your cross to bear.

COWARD

There's always some cross to bear.

MARY COURAGE

And thank goodness there is. Without it, you can't transform yourself into something great.

COWARD

What's my cross, then?

MARY COURAGE

You are burdened by the hereditary weakness of the heart. You have to find strength. You have to be brave. You have to vote "yes."

(MARY COURAGE hugs COWARD.)

MARY COURAGE

Yes.

COWARD

Yes!

MARY COURAGE

Yes!

COWARD

Yes!

(CATHERINE and NEPPO enter through the back door. NEPPO still has a little of his blackface on.)

MARY COURAGE

No. Neppo, you're alive?

NEPPO (disappointedly)

Yeah . . .

(CATHERINE signs "Nice to see you, too.")

MARY COURAGE

Can you believe it, Abel? Look at Neppo, just look at him, here, in the flesh. You want to know what it is to be brave to be strong, to have the courage to persevere? Look at Neppo. This boy was rightfully shot last night, and here he is standing before us, somehow breathing, just a few short hours later.

(CATHERINE signs "Tell her.")

Tell me what?

(CATHERINE signs "Gaffe didn't shoot him.")

[For GAFFE, CATHERINE signs "shoes."]

MARY COURAGE steps away from COWARD and pulls CATHERINE aside.)

What do you mean Senator Gaffe didn't shoot him?

NEPPO

I had an accident.

(CATHERINE signs "He shit himself.")

MARY COURAGE

Abel, can you excuse us for a moment?

COWARD

You mean go outside?

(MARY COURAGE helps him out the door.)

MARY COURAGE

Yes, Abel, you'll be fine. We'll only be a minute.

COWARD

Oh Mary, I can't--

(MARY COURAGE shuts the door.)

MARY COURAGE

You shit yourself!

NEPPO

It was an accident.

MARY COURAGE

You shit yourself?

NEPPO

You make it sound like it's a bad thing.

MARY COURAGE

I'm sure I was worried for countless minutes for my son's well-being, he having been shot right in front of me, but instead of calling to say you were fine, but soiled, you let me worry that you might be dead somewhere?

NEPPO

I was embarrassed that I pooped myself.

MARY COURAGE

Oh, that was the embarrassing part of last night?

NEPPO

It looked like everyone wanted me to be shot, and I didn't want to disappoint them.

MARY COURAGE

What about Dr. Kind and the coat hanger and the tequila?

NEPPO

Dr. Kind used the coat hanger to break into someone's car and drove off with Father Right and a girl.

MARY COURAGE

And where were you during all of this?

(CATHERINE signs “Somebody had to wipe his ass and get him ready for bed.”)

That’s just great. Neppo the brave. I should have known better than to use you as an example to promote anything but birth control.

NEPPO

I was brave as an Arab terrorist last night. I was brave enough to act black in a room full of very white people.

MARY COURAGE

What a racist thing to say! Arabs aren’t black.

NEPPO

What? Aw, I get so confused about who I’m supposed to hate sometimes.

MARY COURAGE

Never mind that. We have to make up a story for Senator Coward so that he thinks you were brave last night so that he’ll be brave during tomorrow’s vote.

NEPPO

I know. I know what will make me sound brave. I’ll say I was practicing dressing up like a terrorist so that I could infiltrate the enemy.

MARY COURAGE

Good.

NEPPO

And kill Al Gore.

MARY COURAGE

Oh Christ. Al-Qaeda?

NEPPO

Yeah, I want to kill Aunt Qaeda!

MARY COURAGE

How about we just say that you were hurt and now you feel better?

NEPPO

I can do that.

(MARY COURAGE signals to
CATHERINE to open the door.
COWARD re-enters.)

COWARD

I never thought you'd let me back in, Mary.

MARY COURAGE

We wouldn't forget about you, Senator. Now look, here's brave, brave Neppo, standing before you today. What happened to you last night, Neppo?

NEPPO

I killed Al Gore.

(SCARECROW, SMILEY and
CRONY rush through the back door.)

MARY COURAGE

Good morning, Senators. Did we have an appointment?

SCARECROW

It's almost afternoon, Mary. We came to practice our talking points. What's he doing here already?

MARY COURAGE

Where's Senator Gaffe?

SMILEY

He's outside, still a little embarrassed about shooting Neppo last night.

COWARD

Not to worry. This brave lad killed Al Gore last night. Not bad for someone who had just been shot.

SCARECROW

Time to focus, gentlemen.

(A knock is heard at the back door.)

MARY COURAGE

Come in.

(The CHORUS, wearing the uniforms of movers, come through the back door.)

Hello. Oh is it time already? Well, come in, come in. Don't mind us. Sorry senators, it's that time of the week to move to a new office.

(As the senators speak, the CHORUS will clear the set of everything but the curtain. GAFFE sneaks in with the CHORUS and stands with the senators. MARY COURAGE waves and he waves his shoe back.)

SCARECROW

Gentlemen, I have no doubt this will be the biggest battle we've faced in our long, illustrious senatorial careers. These are confusing, fast-changing times in our country. For years, we've been able to control a third of the Senate by appealing to the sensibilities of just 10 percent of the population of this great nation, the proud 10 percent who still subscribe to the American Dream, who hold on to the memories of their fathers' America, the struggles of working on the land, of rising up from nothing to have something they can call their own. But even they have started to wonder if we're providing the leadership needed to make this proud nation great again. The liberal media is planting the seeds of dissent into the fertile soil of the minds of good, honest people. People trying to earn a living, trying to raise their kids right. This adulterous media is doing everything it can with its pictures of coffins draped in American flags and live reporting from the front lines to make it look like we're losing the battle, like we would be better served if we just cut and run. The media is trying to hijack the Senate, trying to make us all look bad so that our people will vote us out and vote in vermin who will scratch the media's back. We'll this cat don't scratch; he claws, he tears. You need to sharpen your claws, too. The most important thing to know, the one piece of advice I can give you that will stop the

SCARECROW (cont.)

media in its tracks, is--

(As SCARECROW speaks, a vacuum cleaner is turned on to tidy up the floor.)

We're about to head into enemy territory. Everything you say can and will be taken out of context, turned around, manipulated, abused, reused and bruised. We have to both choose our words very carefully and stay the course. Do not get fooled by their so-called "questions." Disrespectful questions. Distasteful questions. Immoral questions. Questions asked just so that the reporters can hear the sounds of their own voices. When you get confused, then you get pressed, when you get ambushed, fall back on the one thing that matters: 3,000. That's how many of our boys have died during this entire conflict: a measly 3,000. When we spend the money to fight with technology, we wave goodbye to casualties. Man doesn't toil on tough terrain. He looks at a screen and uses his brain. That's a modern military, 3,000 casualties and not a one more.

CRONY

When I fought in Normandy, I knew war was hell, standing there exposed on some beach, waiting to get shot. Now most of our boys never see a minute of battle because we spend the money to make our boys safe. Three thousand of our boys dead in the entire war? I walked over 3,000 dead bodies on that beach in France just to get out of the sand and onto dry land.

SMILEY

I appreciate the concerns of casualties, and in some ways, one casualty is one too many. But when you're talking about the blood being spilled for our freedom, we need to put it in perspective: 58,000 died in Vietnam, 53,000 in Korea, 116,000 in The Great War, 400,000 in World War II. Many, many brave men gave their lives so that we can live in peace and prosperity. If we only had the luxury of having the money to spend back then, well, I think you need to put it in perspective. Three thousand, that's thanks to us opening our pocketbook and supporting our troops.

COWARD

The people of Depression support the troops.

GAFFE

The people of Confusion support the troops.

SCARECROW

The good people of Shock support the troops.

SMILEY

The people of Denial support the troops.

CRONY

The people of Decay support the troops.

ALL

The people of our states support the troops. Why don't you?

SCARECROW

Very good. Very good. Remember, it's a conflict, not a war. We never voted to declare war. If they still think 3,000 dead soldiers in four years is a big number, tell them to remember how almost 3,000 people died in one morning, just because they went to work that day. Remind them that they don't have all the facts, which are classified. And last, but not least, smile. America loves to see you smile. Now, let's get them!

(The senators scream a war cry and raise an arm in the air like a sword.

COWARD, SMILEY, CRONY and GAFFE rush to the back door.)

No, no! Through the front door!

(They pause, start their cry again and rush down the front of the stage, then off to stage right. CEO enters from behind the curtain.)

CEO

Mary Courage!

(CEO surprises them.)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to surprise you all.

MARY COURAGE

Not at all. It's an honor to be surprised by you. Did I miss an appointment?

CEO

No, oh no. Just dropping in for a social chat. To see how our little hero here is getting along. You know, Mary, I was thinking all night about Neppo's little . . . skit.

MARY COURAGE

I promise he'll never--

CEO

No no, I think Neppo's really onto something.

NEPPO

I am?

MARY COURAGE

He is?

CEO

I've been trying to put my finger on it, why there's been this waning support for our military operations against the Arabs, why people have taken pause against an enemy that attacked us, on our own soil. In the old days, we would use the American spirit to pulverize you and anyone who's ever known you into nothingness -- unless you're American, of course. People have lost their sense of nation. Instead of one great country, we have 300 million municipalities in the United States of Me. It's a seismic shift that has troubled me to no end. Then, after seeing Neppo's display last night on my closed-circuit television, it occurred to me: People are not afraid. The strongest glue known to man is fear. It's what brought people together after the attack on America. It's what makes us accept the things we normally would abhor. Fear, Mary. Fear. Our sense of fear has been numbed, by success, by technology, by exposure to a constant barrage of horrific images that do not shock us, that do not put fear in our thoughts. People used to be afraid -- we told them they should be afraid, and they were afraid. That they should fight, and they fought. The smaller the world becomes, the less we are afraid of it. At some point, it will get so small that there will no longer be room to fight in it. Fear, Mary. We have to bring the fear back to the people.

MARY COURAGE

Maybe Adme--

CEO

Adme is a self-serving prick. He's part of the problem, Mary. He makes his money on the loop of history, no need to innovate or think outside of his box. He just waits for it all to come to him, generation after generation, so he can resell it. We can't wait, Mary. I demand action . . . Neppo, last night, scared the hell out of me. I thought we were all going to die. It was real, Mary.

(CATHERINE has heard enough and leads NEPPO out the back door.)

My life, everything that I had worked for, was about to be gone in one flash, in one half of one second that it would have taken that boy to detonate his bomb. Never mind the fact that he didn't have a bomb. I didn't know that, and by the time I realized it, I was already dead in my mind. That's what we need to bring to the people: Fear. Real fear. Not words, not Scarecrow's spin. Real, honest fear.

MARY COURAGE

So we should just recruit a stable of suicide bombers and gunmen to walk around the country and blow everyone up.

CEO

No. That's good. I was thinking just suicide bombers, but gunmen open up a much wider pool. Yes. Gunmen.

MARY COURAGE

With all due respect, CEO, do realize what you're asking for?

CEO

I'm asking for 50 votes. Have you lost sight of that, Mary Courage?

MARY COURAGE

We're almost there.

CEO

Are we? We're at 47, maybe 48, and that musician is grinding hard to get one vote. A musician outmaneuvering career

CEO (cont.)

politicians? Don't make me out to be a fool, Mary. If you can't deliver three votes, deliver fear.

MARY COURAGE

Please don't ask me to do that.

CEO

(grabbing Mary)

The path that we follow is not straight! There are no signs.

(Slowly releasing her.)

It is not paved in gold. It is paved with the blood of boys like yours. I'm not asking you to do anything. I'm giving you options. I'm giving you a chance to finish the job your boy started. He loved America. He felt pride, pride of country, pride of defending the things we hold dear, those things you instilled in him as important. He fought to protect this great institution, this imperfect ideal, and we cannot let his sacrifice go to waste.

MARY COURAGE

I'll ask you kindly not to refer to my son in the past tense.

CEO

(Toward Mary, but really to the audience.)

Just think about it, won't you?

(CEO exits through his curtain. MARY COURAGE stands silent in the empty room. CURTAIN.)

ACT III

SETTING:

A very dark veteran's hospital ward. There are at least two rows of beds with headboards that look like headstones. More rows of beds would be optimal, depending on stage depth. There's a slight glow to the headboards that makes the whole place look like a graveyard late at night. A faint chorus of respirators and electrocardiograms is heard, even though those devices aren't seen on stage. VEGGIE lies in the bed that is front and center. There is an oversized plug that leads from his bed to the ground -- it has a glow to it similar to the headboards. Next to VEGGIE on his stage-right side lays CHARLES SMITH JR. Occasionally, CHORUS members wearing nurse's uniforms will walk through the ward. Voiceover of the senators will be heard throughout the act. However, through the act the stage should be quite dark, and the sounds of the respirators and cardiographs should be heard at different volumes of intensity, starting as soon as the curtain closes from ACT II.

AT RISE:

AN, mother of CHARLES SMITH JR., and APOLLO are visiting the soldier's bed. The curtain rises.

AN

(Sings.)

I COULD HAVE SAVED HIM.
HE DIDN'T HAVE TO GO.
I COULD HAVE SAVED HIM.
HE THOUGHT HE HAD NOWHERE TO TURN.
I COULD HAVE SAVED HIM.

AN (cont.)

HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE A BURDEN,
BUT THAT'S BACKFIRED IN A MOST
STAGGERING WAY.

NOW THE WAR FOR ME IS OVER,
BUT I CAN'T STOP FIGHTING BATTLES
BECAUSE THAT MEANS THAT I'D
BE LETTING GO OF HIM.

COULD I HAVE SAVED HIM
IF I HAD MOVED US ALL AWAY
OUT OF DEPRESSION?
GONE OUT WEST TO START AGAIN.
COULD I HAVE SAVED HIM
WITH A CHANCE TO MAKE
AN HONEST LIVING IN EXCHANGE
FOR HONEST PAY?

INSTEAD THE WAR FOR ME IS OVER,
BUT I CAN'T STOP FIGHTING BATTLES
BECAUSE THAT MEANS THAT I'D
BE LETTING GO OF HIM.

I COULDN'T SAVE YOU
NO MATTER WHAT I TRIED.
I COULDN'T SAVE YOU.
I CAN BARELY FEED MYSELF.
I COULDN'T SAVE YOU.
FOR THAT I WILL NEVER
FORGIVE MYSELF, EVEN ON
MY DYING DAY.

THE WAR FOR ME IS OVER
BUT I CAN'T STOP FIGHTING BATTLES
BECAUSE THAT MEANS THAT I'D
BE LETTING GO OF YOU.

I CAN'T LET GO OF YOU.

Mary Courage & Her Children

(AN cries. APOLLO goes to comfort her. His back is to VEGGIE's bed.)

SCARECROW (v.o.)

This conflict is not about one event. It's about protecting our children, protecting our future, from the ever-present threat of terror.

(MARY COURAGE enters with DR. KIND from stage left and he leads her to VEGGIE's bed. She's trying to focus on VEGGIE, but she is distracted by the grief one bed over. She makes voice-clearing noises. APOLLO turns his head.)

MARY COURAGE

Oh, it's you. You know, most people in this town get a hotel room to indulge their kinky Asian fantasies.

APOLLO

You disgust me.

MARY COURAGE

Me? I'm not the one bringing a date to the hospital.

APOLLO

This is not a date. This is An Smith, from Hooverville, one of my constituents. This is her son, Charles.

MARY COURAGE

You always escort your constituents to army hospitals?

APOLLO

When I want to feel the pulse of the people, yes.

MARY COURAGE

A hospital is a great place to check a pulse.

APOLLO

What are you doing here?

MARY COURAGE

I'm here to see my son, not that it's any of your business.

APOLLO

This is your son?

MARY COURAGE

He would get up to shake your hand, but he knows I would just slap it away.

APOLLO

You're fighting so hard to get those last few votes to extend a war that has claimed your son. Unbelievable.

MARY COURAGE

There is nothing unbelievable about it. Unlike you, the rest of us live in a world that is not black and white. Sometimes, it's even Chinese like your girl there.

APOLLO

She's Vietnamese.

MARY COURAGE

She's Vietnamese, and she named her kid Charlie?

AN

It's my dead husband's name.

MARY COURAGE

Look, I'm sorry about your grief, but I'm trying to grieve here, too, so if you can turn your grieving down a couple of notches, I would really appreciate it, OK?

DR. KIND

Mrs. Smith, let me show you our coffee vending machine. It has both coffee and coffee with sugar, I think.

(They exit stage right.)

SMILEY (v.o.)

Any loss of life is unfortunate, but you have to look at the numbers that show us a mere 3,000 have died, a fraction of deaths compared to other conflicts America has engaged in.

MARY COURAGE

You think you've got it all figured out, don't you? We just stop fighting and then start making love. But you haven't really thought this out, this mess we're in. Maybe you don't have the mental capacity to think things out, considering you're from Depression, which if I recall has the worst education system of any state in the nation.

APOLLO

You've convinced those in the hallowed halls to take that money for our minds and spend it on your bombs, keep us comfortably dumb so you'll always have soldiers to send to their deaths.

MARY COURAGE

They're willingly going. They're going for you so you can live in a country where you can become a millionaire rock star. Meanwhile, your people toil; they scrape by, collecting trash and building roads and making sure the water flows from your toilet. And what are you going to do for all these people who support you, who look after you, who look up to you? You're going to put them out of work, take the food off their table, let their kids starve so that you can take a moral stand. "War is bad. People die in war." Why can't people like you focus on how many people don't die in war?

APOLLO

Oh yes, the numbers. I took your advice, and I looked into those numbers. What's strange to me is this 3,000 number that keeps popping up, in newspapers, on TV, radio, the Internet. These silly Washington talking points loop over and over like a broken record: 3,000 . . . 3,000. Then I look around this place, and I can't help but think that that 3,000 is more like 13,000. Yet for some reason, the number of clinically dead is nowhere to be found, lumped into "wounded." When your hit squad talks about numbers, why don't they talk about the brain dead, the paraplegics, the maimed for life? The number of those people is

APOLLO (cont.)

small compared to other wars, too. But you can't sell 13,000 or 30,000 the way you can sell 3,000, can you? My guess is, you'll let that boy live off tubes for 20 years just so he won't be 3,001.

MARY COURAGE

The public only cares about the soldiers who are dead. No one's hiding any numbers from anyone. They ask, "How many have died," and we tell them. They don't care about the rest because they believe in hope and faith. They see the fine boys in this room and they hold out hope that they will walk again.

APOLLO

These people are dead.

MARY COURAGE

Says you. Says you because it fits your agenda. Wounded means you're wounded. It means you're not dead, and you're not fine. You're wounded. Your girl there, she was wounded, and she should be. It's a terrible thing, this war, but it's a necessary thing.

APOLLO

It's easy to send people off to war when you're not the one pulling the trigger, when you're the one collecting the money.

MARY COURAGE

If you vote "no," the people of Depression will have nothing. Hooverville will dry up. No jobs. Only anarchy. If that bill doesn't pass, your people will suffer.

APOLLO

People should struggle. It's what makes them real, makes them whole.

MARY COURAGE

People don't want to be real. They want to be whatever they think they are. They want to be loved by everyone and left alone at the same time. They want to be gods of the worlds they've created, and they think they're entitled to it. Can I tell you what happened to America -- this land you thought you knew -- while you were running around the world strumming some strings for

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

15 or 20 years? It became anonymous. We are anonymous. Life is numbers. Images are real. Yet, you think you're going to dance into their lives and tell them what is real, what is moral, that they should sacrifice and suffer for some greater good that they don't want to feel? Americans willingly became anonymous, but you're trying to tell them what their names are, trying to hold onto a way of life that no longer exists.

APOLLO

You couldn't be more wrong about people.

MARY COURAGE

That so?

APOLLO

People care. They care about their communities; they care about the things no one reports. They care that they follow a path that is right.

MARY COURAGE

There is no future in the right thing. Your people care about their next paycheck. They don't care about whether someone halfway around the world lives or dies. They care that they have a job, they have food, and that they have a tomorrow, regardless of how cloudy the forecast is.

APOLLO

You really are a snake.

MARY COURAGE

I think you're pretty mousey for such a famous man.

APOLLO

I know how to deal with snakes. I was in the music industry.

MARY COURAGE

Someday we'll be friends, little mouse.

APOLLO

I don't want to be your friend.

MARY COURAGE

In Washington, people grow up fast. They learn to compromise.

APOLLO

Learn to compromise their values.

MARY COURAGE

Learn to compromise.

COWARD (v.o.)

This bill would ensure that we keep Americans working.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

THE DISEASE.
AN EPIDEMIC OF EGO.
NO ONE IS SPARED
IN ALL 50 STATES.
WE DEMAND SATISFACTION.
SERVICE IS KING.

THE CURE.
RAISE YOUR VOICE
AS LOUD AS YOU CAN
AND WAIT TO BE HEARD.
DEMAND SATISFACTION,
WHAT YOU KNOW IS BEST.

THE SIDE-EFFECT.
DEATH. SLOW, SOMETIMES FAST.
CAUSE OF DEATH.
EXPOSURE. SO SAD.
SCREAMS FOR SATISFACTION
FALL ON DEAF EARS.

WHAT WENT WRONG?
WHAT COULD HAVE SAVED THEM
FROM THIS HORRIBLE FATE?
A LITTLE BIRDIE TOLD ME
ONE SMALL BIT OF ADVICE:
LEARN HOW TO LIVE

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

THE PROBLEM.

DEMOCRACY, ALL BUSTED,
ALL FRAYED.

GIVE THE PEOPLE THEIR POWER.
DOWN WITH THE DEMONS
WHO'VE KEPT THEM AT BAY.

THE SOLUTION.

A KNIGHT, ALL SHINING
ALL ARMORED.
RIDES INTO TOWN TO SLAY
THE DRAGON OPPRESSIVE.
A KILL BRINGS ONE HONOR.

THE HAZARD.

THE DRAGON, ALL SCALED,
ALL WISE,
IS NOT ONE, BUT IS MANY.
THE KNIGHT DID NOT SCOUT,
ONLY TRUSTED HIS EYES.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

WHAT COULD HAVE SAVED THEM
FROM THIS HORRIBLE FATE?
LEARN HOW TO LIVE.
IT'S EASIER TO BREATHE,
WHEN YOU'RE NOT UNDERGROUND.

A MOUSE.

STANDING TALL, LIKE HE JUST
SAVED A LION,
DIDN'T SEE THE SNAKES,
WHO SLITHER ALL AROUND.
THEY KNOW HOW TO LIVE.

(MARY COURAGE takes a moment
to look down at VEGGIE before
addressing APOLLO.)

You will vote with your people. You will vote with your party.

APOLLO

If I have to bow to snakes like you, I guess I'm in the wrong party.

MARY COURAGE

Little mouse, every party has its snakes. Your little legs can't run fast enough to avoid them all. Speed is strength, little mouse.

APOLLO

If I were you, I wouldn't underestimate my quickness.

MARY COURAGE

So you're fast, are you?

APOLLO

That's what people like you tell us to do in Hooverville. Work faster, work harder.

MARY COURAGE

Even the fastest man can't outrun his past.

APOLLO

My past, huh?

MARY COURAGE

A funny thing it is, a man's past. Some people would say it's their past that makes them who they are in the future.

APOLLO

I wonder how people would find out about my past.

MARY COURAGE

Yeah, I wonder. Hard to say, isn't it, how people find things out about each other, about the men they've had . . .

APOLLO

I'll get that vote.

MARY COURAGE

For your sake, I hope you don't.

APOLLO

I'll see you at the finish line.

MARY COURAGE

I know.

(APOLLO exits stage right.)

GAFFE (v.o)

I feel I was taken out of context when I was quoted as saying we should bomb the Jews. The context was in the scope of a discussion about what would happen if the Jews could be bombed, and the media has completely twisted my words, as they always do.

(MARY COURAGE is alone with VEGGIE and the other bodies in beds. For at least 30 seconds, the only sounds that are heard are those of the electrocardiograms and the respirators.)

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

WHY DON'T I FEEL ANYTHING?
AM I THE ONE WHO'S DEAD?
DID I EVER REALLY LOVE YOU?
MAYBE YOU WERE NEVER BORN.

DOES LIFE PREPARE US FOR DEATH
BY BEING FULL OF EMPTINESS,
FILLING UP OUR EMPTY DAYS WITH
EMPTY THOUGHTS AND EMPTY WORDS?

PEOPLE TALK A LOT,
BUT NO ONE HAS AN ANSWER.
WE JUST SAY WORDS
TO MAKE US FEEL ALIVE.

WAS IT RIGHT TO GO TO WAR?
IS IT WRONG TO BE AFRAID?
CAN MAN EVER LIVE TOGETHER?
MAYBE WE WERE BORN TO KILL EACH OTHER.

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

DOES MONEY BUY US ANYTHING
WHEN WE ONLY BUY USELESS THINGS
TO FILL OUR USELESS LIVES
AND PRETEND THERE'S NO EMPTINESS?

PEOPLE BUY A LOT,
BUT NO ONE BUYS AN ANSWER.
WE JUST BUY THINGS
TO MAKE US FEEL ALIVE.

WHY DON'T I FEEL ANYTHING?
HOW ARE THEY FORCED TO STAY ALIVE?
HOW DOES A BODY KNOW NOT TO DIE?
MAYBE THERE REALLY IS A SOUL INSIDE.

WHY DON'T I CARE ABOUT THESE MEN
WHO ARE HERE BECAUSE THEY CARED
BECAUSE THEY WERE TOLD TO CARE
BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU DO?

PEOPLE CLAIM TO CARE A LOT,
BUT NO ONE CARES ABOUT AN ANSWER.
WE JUST SAY WE CARE
TO MAKE US FEEL ALIVE.

DO WE KNOW HOW TO BE ALIVE
WHEN WHAT WE WORRY ABOUT IS DEATH
BECAUSE LIFE ON EARTH IS FLEETING
AND DEATH IS NEVER PRESSED FOR TIME?

PEOPLE CLAIM TO BE ALIVE
BUT NO ONE HAS THE ANSWER
WHEN WE ASK HOW WE KNOW
IF WE REALLY ARE ALIVE.

(CATHERINE and NEPPO peer in
from stage right and enter after the
song has concluded.)

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

WHEN DEATH IS ALL AROUND US
CAN WE REALLY BE ALIVE?
NO ONE HAS THE ANSWER.
WE JUST GO ON LIVING.

(MARY COURAGE notices
CATHERINE and NEPPO.)

Children. What are you doing here?

NEPPO

You drove us here.

MARY COURAGE

I did, didn't I? Didn't I tell you to wait in the car?

NEPPO

It was hot. I couldn't breathe.

MARY COURAGE

Why didn't you roll down the window?

NEPPO

They roll down?

MARY COURAGE

Well, you're here now. You might as well say hi to your brother.

(CATHERINE and NEPPO
walk over to VEGGIE. MARY
COURAGE takes VEGGIE's hand
and makes a puppet out of it.)

"Hi, Catherine and Neppo. How are you today?"

NEPPO

Fine Veg--

(CATHERINE hits him. She signs,
"What are you doing?")

MARY COURAGE

I'm just having a chat with your brother. Isn't that what you wanted? To come see him? Well, look at him. He's at peace. He's resting comfortably.

(CATHERINE signs, "He's dead!")

He is not dead! Look how his chest goes up and down. Feel the warmth of his hand. These nails, this hair, they are growing.

NEPPO

He doesn't look very alive.

MARY COURAGE

Then look closer.

(NEPPO puts his face on VEGGIE's face.)

NEPPO

He still looks dead.

(MARY COURAGE pulls him away.)

MARY COURAGE

You need to get your eyes checked.

NEPPO

It's hard to let go, mamma.

(They pause. MARY COURAGE puts her head in her hands. Her body spasms a couple times as if she were crying inside, fighting to keep everything in.)

MARY COURAGE (angrily)

What do you know about what is hard in this world? My entire life has been dedicated to making things easy for you so you wouldn't have to carry the burdens, the worry, that comes with being a part of this world. You've never had to deal with anything hard, but you lecture me, you lecture me about what's hard, about making decisions. You lecture me about things that matter in this world, things that are irreversible, that are final? You have no right--

(CATHERINE pulls the plug on VEGGIE.)

Catherine! What are you doing!

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

(MARY COURAGE and CATHERINE flight over the plug. MARY COURAGE wins the battle and throws CATHERINE down. She then plugs VEGGIE back in.)

Have you lost your mind? Have you both lost your minds? This is your brother! This is your flesh and blood.

NEPPO

All he is is flesh and blood. We want him to at least die with dignity. Die with honor.

MARY COURAGE

I warned you about that word, Neppo. You don't know what it means.

NEPPO

I know what it means.

MARY COURAGE

You don't know how to use it. There is no honor in letting him die.

NEPPO

There is no honor in letting him live.

MARY COURAGE

So honor doesn't apply here! It's a word you throw around in the theater of your mind. You don't get awards for playing a part in a murder.

(CATHERINE unplugs VEGGIE again.)

Catherine! Help! Help! Help me someone!

(The CHORUS enters.)

These two are trying to murder my son! Take them away!

(The CHORUS apprehend CATHERINE and NEPPO and drag them offstage. MARY COURAGE plugs VEGGIE back in.)

There there, sweet Veggie.

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

(MARY COURAGE composes herself by his bedside for a few seconds. Then decides to leave.)

No one can hurt you anymore. Sweet dreams, my son.

(MARY COURAGE starts to walk away, but then snaps back.)

What's that? It was good to see you too, dear. Will I come visit you again? Of course, of course I will. No. No Veggie, I won't. Veggie, dear, how can I explain this? You and I live in different worlds. In my world, I'm constantly struggling to fulfill my duty to serve the people of this great nation, and in yours . . . you've already done your duty; you deserve your rest. You deserve your dreams.

(MARY COURAGE starts to walk away again.)

Of course. Of course we'll see each other again. Me, you, Catherine, Neppo, your father . . . that damn Mr. Bojangles that always used to crap on my favorite rug. It's my fault for having a favorite rug, I understand that, but that dog could have crapped anywhere else in that house. He did his duty on my rug out of spite. But I've forgiven him, you see, for completely ruining my completely irreplaceable, favorite rug in the entire world. I've made peace with it so that when we all meet again, we can be a family. Yes, grandma and grandpa will be there too. Great-grandma and grandpa? I don't think so. Maybe. They were Nazis. I don't know where God stands on that issue. I wouldn't make any plans for that.

(MARY COURAGE pats VEGGIE's hand and begins to leave again. She stops half way.)

Yes. I am tired. The weight of a nation is on my shoulders; the future of our country is in the hands of three men who have no idea what they're doing, no idea what the consequences are of their actions. I'm trying to show them, Veggie, trying to tell them how important this is, but I just don't think they understand. They don't know what you know. They don't know real life -- none of them do. Can anyone who comes from money know what real life is? . . . I suppose you're right. We all live every day on a hunch. Baby, I'm so tired right now, I really don't care if they vote no or yes. I'm already defeated. Maybe Catherine was right.

MARY COURAGE (cont.)

Maybe we should make you 3,001. In the end, we're all numbers, aren't we? Is that what you want, Veggie? Do you want to be with your father up there or with us down here? I know, one shouldn't have to choose such things. We're always playing God because we just don't understand him. But it's what we have.

(MARY COURAGE stands over the plug, then squats down over it. She places her hand on the plug. The CHORUS, off-stage, sings.)

CHORUS

(Sings.)

FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT.
FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT.
DEFENDING OUR RELIGIOUS RIGHT.
FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE THEY FIGHT,
DEFENDING OUR RELIGIOUS RIGHT.
DO NOT LEAVE THEM DEFENSELESS.
FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT.
YOU MUST COME TO YOUR SENSES.
DO NOT LEAVE THEM DEFENSELESS.

(MARY COURAGE lets go of the plug and stands up.)

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT.

(CHORUS enters.)

CHORUS

(Sings.)

FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT.

CHORUS

(Sings.)

FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT.

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

DEFENDING OUR RELIGIOUS RIGHT.

CHORUS

(Sings.)

CHRISTIANS AWAKE! WINTER IS GONE!
THE SNOWS DEPART! DEAD MEN SLEEP ON!

MARY COURAGE

(Sings.)

LET ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE SURVIVED
GET OUT OF YOUR BEDS AND LOOK ALIVE!

MARY COURAGE and CHORUS

(Sings.)

FOR OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY FIGHT,
DEFENDING OUR RELIGIOUS RIGHT.
WITHOUT YOUR VOTE, THEY'LL LOSE THEIR MIGHT.
DO NOT LEAVE THEM DEFENSELESS!

(The CHORUS gets three of the men
and VEGGIE out of their beds.)

MISSILES FIRED FROM THE SEAS,
ARMOR-PLATED, NEW HUMVEES,
HEAVY SNIPER RIFLES, IF YOU'D PLEASE.
YOU MUST COME TO YOUR SENSES.

(The CHORUS and the patients create
a line in front of the stage. For the first
three lines, the CHORUS alternate kicking
their legs in the air. The patients stand
limp. For the last line, the CHORUS
stands still and use their legs to kick the
legs of the patients -- in an attempt to
mimic the CHORUS' actions.)

MARY COURAGE and CHORUS (cont.)

CHRISTIANS AWAKE! WINTER IS GONE!
THE SNOWS DEPART! DEAD MEN SLEEP ON!
LET ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE SURVIVED
GET OUT OF YOUR BEDS AND LOOK ALIVE!
ALIVE!
ALIVE!
ALIVE!
ALIVE!
ALIVE!
ALIVE!
ALIVE!
A-LIVE!!!!

(On the final word, the CHORUS holds the patients' hands fully extended into the air as MARY COURAGE takes one knee at the front of the stage. After the singing ends and the action stops, the sound of electrocardiograms and respirators is loudly heard. As the curtain closes, those sounds fade away. CURTAIN.)