

# Characters

## WOMEN

BEATRICE, a farmer's daughter who also narrates much of the action through her diary entries

SISSY, her younger sister, a doomsday prophet

MARY, a debutante, Beatrice's best friend

ROSE, a telephone operator, older, knows everything going on in Unity

DORIS, a telegraph operator, Rose's sidekick and gossip of Unity

SUNNA, a mortician, a rebel and an outcast

## MEN

STAN, an incompetent farmer and widower

HART, a blinded war hero

MICHAEL, a farm hand, young, cocky

GLEN, a returning war veteran

MAN 1/ CHAPERONE

MAN 2/DANCER (ALAN)

SCENE FOR TWO FEMALES

## **Act 1, Scene 8: The War Effort**

Eight

The War Effort

*BEA is still knitting socks. A large pile rests beside her. SISSY bursts in singing.*

**BEATRICE WILDE** You shouldn't waste Michael's time when there's so much to be done.

**SISSY WILDE** Who says I'm wasting his time?

**BEATRICE WILDE** You'll get him sent back home. He's supposed to be working. Something you wouldn't know.

**SISSY WILDE** There's more important things right now.

**BEATRICE WILDE** The end of the world?

**SISSY WILDE** The end of the world.

**BEATRICE WILDE** Oh, well, if I were you, I'd try to straighten up a little for the big day. I don't think they'll let someone into heaven who can't do the washing.

**SISSY WILDE** There's no washing in heaven.

**BEATRICE WILDE** That's because everyone there doesn't let it pile up all week.

**SISSY WILDE** Maybe there's no heaven either.

**BEATRICE WILDE** Not for you.

**SISSY WILDE** Well then yay for me if you're going to be there, annoying the whole afterlife with your depressing hobbies.

**BEATRICE WILDE** You know a woman can be a slacker too.

**SISSY WILDE** Slacker?

**BEATRICE WILDE** Just because we can't fight doesn't mean we aren't part of the battle.

*SISSY suddenly flies at BEATRICE and hits her.*

**BEATRICE WILDE** Ow!

*SISSY hits her again.*

**BEATRICE WILDE** Ow! Sissy! Don't!

**SISSY WILDE** I can fight. I could be that woman in the painting, / leading the

**BEATRICE WILDE** What painting?

**SISSY WILDE** army, you know, where everybody's following her and she's carrying the flag over the hill, boobies hanging out of her dress and she doesn't even care.

**BEATRICE WILDE** Sissy!

**SISSY WILDE** The enemy takes one look--"Gott in Hummel! I can see her boobies!"-- and then it's, "arghh," right through the eye socket with the flagpole! / Keep your looks

**BEATRICE WILDE** Sissy!

**SISSY WILDE** to yourself Fritz!  
(*pause*) I wish I was over there!

**BEATRICE WILDE** You're not right in the head.

**SISSY WILDE** And you are? What are you doing to win the war? /Crochet?

**BEATRICE WILDE** Lot's. Yes! It's important. It helps.

**SISSY WILDE** Helps you.

**BEATRICE WILDE** How? No.

**SISSY WILDE** Helps you think you're doing something. Helps you forget./ Stops you

**BEATRICE WILDE** No.

**SISSY WILDE** from thinking. / You're like

**BEATRICE WILDE** No.

**SISSY WILDE** the ol' topper with the bottle. / Your brains are

**BEATRICE WILDE** I am not.

**SISSY WILDE** softened by the click, click, click of your knitting needles./Do you

**BEATRICE WILDE** No!

**SISSY WILDE** think any boy over there wants to find your ugly socks in the mail? Look at the things! Makes me sad ... think about the poor boy opening his package in middle of a fight, "Oh, god, I hope it's not more ugly socks ... / Oh ... no! No! My country

**BEATRICE WILDE** He would not!

**SISSY WILDE** hates me!" He'll turn the gun on himself right there!

**BEATRICE WILDE** You're wicked!

**SISSY WILDE** And you're boring!  
*Silence.*

**BEATRICE WILDE** I'd rather be boring than ... than ...

**SISSY WILDE** I know, and that's what's so horrible.  
*(tosses BEA a bau of yarn)* Have another drink! Toast the war.  
*The phone rings two short rings and then a long one.*

**SISSY WILDE** Brambly's.

**BEATRICE WILDE**  
*(throws the yarn at the phone)* God! I want it to be over! I want it to be over! I can't think! I want things back to normal.

**SISSY WILDE** This is normal now.

**BEATRICE WILDE** No!  
*The phone sounds with two short rings repeated. The girls look at each other.*

**SISSY WILDE** Stone's!  
*When the phone stops ringing SISSY shoves a cloth into the mouthpiece and picks up the earpiece to listen.*

**SISSY WILDE** There's a soldier on the next train. He's got a ticket for Unity.

**BEATRICE WILDE** Glen?

**SISSY WILDE**  
*(shrugging her shoulders)* Let's go.

SCENE FOR TWO MALES

## Act 2, Scene 4: In Town

Four

In Town

*On the street two men wearing masks approach and pass each other.*

**MAN 1**

*(turning back)* Fred?

**MAN 2** Who's that?

**MAN 1** Is that you Fred?

**MAN 2** Ted?

**MAN 1** Fred!

**MAN 2** Ted! Geez, how are you?

*They shake hands then wipe their palms on their trousers.*

**MAN 1** Oh, real good.

**MAN 2** You done threshing then?

**MAN 1** Oh yeah, you?

**MAN 2** Oh, nearly, though.

**MAN 1** Well, that'll be good then. It's like a ghost town down here.

**MAN 2** Yup.

*A woman wearing a mask passes by. They tip their hats.*

**MAN 1** Afternoon.

**MAN 2** Who was that?

**MAN 1** Wasn't that Gadfly's wife?

**MAN 2** Was it?

**MAN 1** I thought it was. Yep, it's quiet down here.

**MAN 2** I read that this flu is uh ... might be the Germans.

**MAN 1** Is that right. I thought it might be the germs.  
*A little laugh.*

**MAN 2** No really, though, some secret weapon they planted on the coast.

**MAN 1** Hmm. Now how did they manage to figure that out?

**MAN 2** Well if they can get it going in one place on the coast with maybe one of those U-boats, then the rest sort of takes care of itself. / It's contagious.

**MAN 1** I mean, but how did they figure out how to make a disease like that?

**MAN 2** Oh, yeah, yeah, I don't know. They can do all sorts of things these days.

**MAN 1** I guess that's true.

**MAN 2** That poison, uh, gas.

**MAN 1** Sure. Electricity and such.

**MAN 2** Hmm?

**MAN 1** It's amazing what can be done.

**MAN 2** Oh, it sure is.  
*SISSY enters and as she passes gives them a handmade flyer.*

**MAN 2** What's that say?

**MAN 1**  
*(reading)* "End of the world to come. Date set for late November. Sissy Wilde speaks on the Apocalypse."

**MAN 2** That's another epidemic.

**MAN 1** What is?

**MAN 2** Women speaking publicly.

**MAN 1** Oh, yeah. There's that one ... What's that they say about a dog walking on its hind legs?

**MAN 2** I don't know.

**MAN 1** Oh, it's something about that a woman talking is like a dog on it's hind legs, or ... You know that one?

**MAN 2** No. You know Gadfly's got a smart little dog there.

**MAN 1** Gadfly does? Oh, yeah.

**MAN 2** Yeah, a little Collie or something.

**MAN 1** Is that what it is?

**MAN 2** A little Collie I think. Smart little devil. Herds like a son of a gun.  
*SUNNA walks by reading one of SISSY'S pamphlets. The men nod to her.*

**MAN 2** Who was that?

**MAN 1** That was that Thorson girl.

**MAN 2** Oh, yeah. Well I guess she's got her work cut out for her now.

**MAN 1** Yep. I suppose she's in the right business now.

**MAN 2** If the world don't end.

**MAN 1** Right. Well, better head for home.

**MAN 2** Sure, then. Getting cold.

**MAN 1** Oh, yeah. Yeah, could be a cold one.  
*They exit.*