

LETTER IN MY POCKET

by Shawn Deal

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A Dramatic Monologue of a WWII Soldier

by Shawn Deal

SYNOPSIS: During World War II, a lot of soldiers carried a letter with them, to only be read once, and only under the grimmest of circumstances.

TIME: 1942-1945.

SET: Bare Stage.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 male)

NARRATOR (m)..... A WWII soldier.

SETTING: Any location during World War II.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: This can be done very simply: bare stage, no costuming and no props. However, it would certainly make sense to have the character dressed as a WWII soldier, this can be from any branch. The set can be any wartime set you can devise.

NARRATOR: There's a letter in my pocket that I keep on me at all times. It's wrapped in cellophane. When I say it's wrapped in cellophane, I mean there is not one centimeter of the envelope that is exposed to air. This way the letter will survive getting wet by... whatever liquid that may land on it. It's going to take a sharp knife to get it open. Be careful, don't cut yourself. Go slowly with the knife.

Most of the soldiers I know carry a letter similar to mine. Not always in a pocket, a lot carry them in their boots, some have stuffed it away in their helmets, but most have them somewhere on their body, hidden in their uniform somewhere.

Mine is tucked away in a pocket in my army coat. The letter is addressed to you, Mom, but is intended for both you and Molly. So, if you do ever read it, read it with her present. It is my intention that you never read it. It's my intention to burn it. I want to start a fire in the great room of our farm house, to be regaling you and Molly in some sort of silly story, about me doing something stupid, and when all three of us are laughing to the point of crying, I will make a toast to being home and throw the letter, unopened, into the fire and watch it burn.

And then I want to forget all about that letter.

I can't believe how much my life has suddenly changed. How much more meaning and purpose has come to my simple existence. There can be no greater cause than this war—facing off with Hitler and pushing back the Germans. They have to pay for what they are doing.

It's just....

I am saving lives every day. I'm protecting you and Molly and everyone else at home. I am making the world safe from that fascist, Hitler, and his evil, deadly way of thinking. We all feel this way. All of us soldiers know why we are here and why we need to be here.

We're committed. We're United. We will get the job done.

I would never have changed my decision to come here. Hitler needs to be put down, and the world needs to be saved. I'm glad I came. I'm proud I came. I do wish I never had to, though. For the peace we seek, it comes at such a high price. Sometimes when I'm alone in my thoughts, I do wonder if the price is too high and couldn't there have been a different way to stop the Germans without all the death. I know there wasn't. This was the only way. I just wish there had been another. All the death seems like the most incredible waste.

There are two conditions and two conditions only that will enable the two of you to read my letter. One—the letter has to survive, and there may be a low chance of this. That's hard to say, exactly. And two, I have to have died. That's right mother, in order for you to read the letter, I have to be dead.

The letter broadcasts my final thoughts to both you and Molly.

No offense, I hope it will be decades yet before I share my final thoughts. I also hope that it will be in person, and not words I wrote.

When all this killing is said and done, I have a million and one things I want to do: go to college, travel, work the farm, sing, dance with a pretty girl, or a lot of pretty girls, think, ruminate, enjoy the peace that has been so costly to win, marry one of those pretty girls I danced with and have children, and raise them into good people, like you did with Molly and me.

I want to take every opportunity there is, I want to live life and get away from all this death, killing, and grief that surrounds me on a daily basis.

I know that the cause I fight for could not be more just... I know that... I just now can't understand why I was so excited to be where I am now. Even though I've only been here a few months, it seems like a million years and I've missed you and Molly for every second

of that time. I seem so much older, I don't recognize the kid I was when I was back on the farm, hopping mad, rushing to stand in line in the rain, waiting for my turn to enlist.

I was just a kid then, and I'm so much different now. I don't recognize myself. I don't know how you and Molly will be able to, either.

You can't see the things I've seen and not change.

I was trapped in a foxhole for hours, bullets flying above us. There were five of us that were there trapped, and only two of us came out of that hole.

They carried me out. I was covered in blood. My ears rang and my head was light, so light I thought it would float away.

When I got to the medical tent, I felt better and tried to get up and go back. A medic stopped me and said "You're hurt. We need to attend you."

"I'm not hurt", I responded.

"You're covered in blood". He said.

"It's not my blood, it's my friends." I replied. And Mom that's the last thing I'll say about that or anything else about what really happens here. Just know I was not hurt and was lucky to have not been.

Mom, I miss you greatly, more than I ever have, and I'm sorry if I ever took you for granted. You have been a fantastic mother and I can't wait to tell you that in person, while giving you a huge bear hug.

For all that I miss you, Mom, I may miss Molly more than any one person or thing in this entire world.

I know Molly is there thinking or saying, I must have really have gotten hurt, because what I'm saying is crazy talk.

To be honest, I find it crazy myself. My little sister, who I have teased unmercifully her entire life, who has been a pestering, pain in my behind, constantly following me around, spying on me, asking a thousand questions, is the person I think the most about and have since I arrived here.

I know, Mom, I can hear your astonishment from here. I know you thought Molly and I hated each other.

In fact, I think I thought we did too. But it took me traveling 7,000 miles away from home and enduring unimaginable terror and horrors, which no one should have to endure, for me to realize how much I truly love my little sister.

So from here, let me direct some words to my sister.

Molly, I love you and I'm sorry for causing you pain and failing to be the good older brother I should have been.

I'm sorry for every time I've called you ugly. You're very far from that. You're a beautiful young lady who's going to grow up to be as gorgeous as Mom. The boys will soon be flocking to the farm in an attempt to win your hand.

I may have to try and scare the bad ones away.

Don't trust every boy who shows up.

Give some of the quiet, shy ones a chance. I have found that it is those men who are the ones I can trust the most here and are the best fighters.

Molly, when you're ready, give them a chance. One may go a long ways to prove what a good, strong and trustworthy man he is.

Molly, I'm sorry I never let you just spend time with me. I understand now that's all you wanted to do, and to be honest, if I was home now, after hugging Mom, of course, I would want nothing more than to just sit next to you and let you talk about anything. I promise you I would be patient. We could sit by a fire and drink hot cocoa, and I would let you ask me a thousand consecutive questions. I would spend the whole night trying to answer every single one of them, as honestly as I could, because that's what you deserve.

You deserve my honesty and my love. I didn't give you enough of either when I was home. If I was home now, I would try to make up for that shortfall. I would be the older brother you would barely recognize, but the one you deserved and should have had all your life.

You've shown nothing but love for me, and it is my turn to return as much of my love back to you as I can muster.

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