

EDITH'S WARTIME SCRAPBOOK

SCRIPT SAMPLE #1

Scene 1

(As the **intro music** plays (**track 11**), the cast enters and all stand for the opening song.)

Song	Wartime Memories	Track 1 - vocal demo Track 12 - backing track Lyrics p20
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(As the **continuity music** plays (**track 13**), the cast exits the performance area. On a smaller stage, to one side of the main stage, is Edith Coleman's modern-day living room. She sits quietly in her rocking chair with her old teddy, Toffee, surrounded by boxes. A removal man/woman enters.)

Removal 1 That's all the big stuff in the removal van. Just these few boxes left and the furniture in this room. You've collected a lot of things over the years, Miss Coleman. How long have you lived here?

Edith Call me Edith, Dear. It's ninety-odd years! I was born and grew up in this house you know, and it seems I've collected enough things to fill a museum!

Removal 1 (*pointing at Toffee*) You seem pretty fond of that old fella.

Edith Who, Toffee? Yes, we've been through so much together.

(*The other removal person enters carrying an old, dusty scrapbook.*)

Removal 2 Miss Coleman, there's an old wooden box out there with some bits in it. This book fell out...(*blowing the dust off and reading*)...'Edith's Wartime Scrapbook.'

Note - Edith will have a lot of dialogue throughout the script. Her lines should be written as cues on the pages of the scrapbook.

Edith Oh, I say! Bring it here. (*taking the book*) I was in the Girl Guides during the war and we had to keep a scrapbook – this is it! (*excitedly turning the pages*) Oh look, here's a photo of my family, taken in this very room.

(*The removal people sit on the arms of Edith's chair to look at the book.*)

Removal 1 Who's that girl with the smiling face, Edith?

Edith *(laughing)* That's me! And there's my Granny. Deaf as a post, she was. Just as well, since she couldn't hear what we used to say about her homemade soup! And my dear mum and dad. They lived through two world wars! Ah, Fred and Alice, my little brother and sister. Fred was a right scallywag!

Removal 2 And who's this handsome young man?

Edith Sidney, my older brother. He went to fight in the war.

Removal 1 Do you remember the day when war broke out, Edith?

Edith I certainly do. That was the day I started this scrapbook. It was a Sunday and we'd just got back from church. Dad put the wireless on...

*(The lights dim and we hear **Chamberlain's speech (track 14)** about the declaration of war.)*

But for a long time, in Britain, nothing happened at all, so we called it the 'Phoney War'...

(The action moves to the main stage. The lights come up and we see Edith as a girl, holding Toffee. She sits with Mum, Dad, Sidney, Alice and Fred, around the dinner table. Granny is sitting to one side in a rocking chair, by the fire, sewing or knitting.)

Fred This soup's 'orrible.

Mr Coleman You watch your manners! Granny made that!

Mrs Coleman You'll be glad of it when the rations come in!

Granny *(startled)* Russians?! Where?

Young Edith Not Russians, Granny – RATIONS!

Alice *(giggling sneakily)* Hey everyone, guess what? Fred got the cane today, for making rude noises with his gas mask!

Fred Shut up, Alice!

Mr Coleman You should be ashamed of yourself, Fred! Quite right you got the cane!

Sidney Don't be too hard on him, Dad. It's not as if there's been any real use for those gas masks yet, so he might as well have fun with his!

Mrs Coleman Sidney's got a point. We've seen no sign of any trouble on these shores. I mean, are we even *at* war with Germany? I wish they'd just get on with it. Soonest started, soonest finished!

(The next song is led by the Coleman family on stage, but all should stand and sing.)

Song This Phoney War

Track 2 - vocal demo
Track 15 - backing track
Lyrics p21

*(As the continuity music plays (track 16) all exit the stage, which is cleared for the next scene.
Fade the music when ready.)*

Scene 2

(Back in Edith's modern-day living room.)

Edith Oh look! It's the first postcard Alice and Fred sent home after they'd been evacuated! Bless them. That experience must have been terrifying for them. Mum and Dad were devastated.

Removal 1 You mean Alice and Fred were sent to live in the country?

Edith That's right. In the months after war was declared, our government expected the Germans to start bombing our towns and cities, so thousands of young children were sent to safer parts of the country. Fred and Alice ended up on a farm in Wales. Look, Alice has written that sometimes the farmer talked in a 'strange' language!

Removal 2 She must mean Welsh! That would have seemed strange to a little girl who'd never been out of London.

Edith I guess so. Listen, she says *(reading)* 'We can't understand him but the cows seem to!' *(chuckling, then sighing)* You know, I'll never forget that day at the train station when they left...

(The action moves to the floor in front of the main stage. Mothers, fathers and children, who carry small bags and gas masks in boxes, are saying emotional goodbyes at the station. A billeting officer moves amongst the families taking notes.)

Evacuee 1 Please don't make me go, Mum!

Mother 1 You have to, it's for your own safety. Don't cry now.

Mother 2 I've packed some extra socks and there's a treat in there too. You'll be fine. I bet you the people you're staying with have got a garden with a swing in it!

Evacuee 2 But what if they don't like me? What if they're horrible to me?

Father I know it's scary, but you need to be brave. We all do.

(The Colemans enter. Alice and Fred carry bags and gas masks. Sidney is in a soldier's uniform. Young Edith carries Toffee.)

Mrs Coleman I'll be thinking of you every moment, children.

Alice Mummy, I don't want to go!

Young Edith It won't be for long, Alice. You're not that far away, you know. Wales is only...over there somewhere.

Mr Coleman And you'll get to see real sheep and cows! Now that's exciting!

Fred Will the farmer let us play with them?

Sidney I'm sure he will, as long as he's not in a baaaad mooood!

Alice Why is it just us two going? Why can't we all go?

Mr Coleman Well, Sid's off to France tomorrow, to fight for king and country. I'm joining the ARP, Edith's collecting for the war effort and mum's going to work in the weapons factory. You're our two little soldiers. You're our future, and we need to keep you safe.

*(We hear the **train arrive (track 17)**, and the billeting officer steps up on to the stage.)*

Billeting Off. Right children, it's time to go. Let's have you now. One suitcase only please. Come on mums and dads, say your goodbyes.

Mrs Coleman Come here you! *(She grabs Fred)* You've got a dirty face!

(Mum spits on a hanky and wipes Fred's face! He struggles and protests!)

Mrs Coleman *(to billeting officer)* Please see that they get their cod liver oil!

Billeting Off. Madam, I am rather busy!

Mrs Coleman But...I...*(to the children)* Oh just give me a hug!

(All the families embrace their loved ones, and with much weeping the children are led up onto the stage, as if onto the train. The families remain on the floor, looking up at the evacuees.)

Mr Coleman *(to Sid)* It's your turn tomorrow, son.

Mrs Coleman I hate all these goodbyes. Are you all packed and ready?

Sidney Yes mum! *(saluting her in mock-military fashion)* And don't worry – I'll not forget to do the most important thing in the morning before I go...wash my face! I've seen what you can do with that hanky of yours!

Young Edith *(smiling)* Come on, let's wave them off...

(The next song is led by the evacuees on stage, supported by the whole cast.)

Song Journey On A Train

Track 3 - vocal demo
Track 18 - backing track
Lyrics p22

*(We hear the train pull away at the end of the song and the evacuees exit in a line, waving to their families. As the **continuity music** plays (track 19), all resume their seats and the stage is made ready for the next scene. Fade the music when ready.)*

.....**END OF SCRIPT SAMPLE**.....