



Scripts.com

Sergeant York

By Abem Finkel

"And he spake this parable
unto them saying,
"What man of you having a hundred sheep,
"if you lose one of them,
doth not leave the ninety-nine, and..."
"Doth not leave the ninety-nine
in the wilderness,
"and go after that which was lost, until..."
"Until he find it."
"And when he hath found it, he layeth it,
"on his shoulder and rejoiceth.
"And when he cometh..."
All right, Zeke, sit yourself down.
"And when he cometh home
he calleth together his friends
"and neighbors saying..."
"He calleth to his friends and neighbors,
"saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me,
"'for I have found my sheep
which were lost.'"'
I recollect the time Sam Harkness
lost his old sow.
He come out one morning,
the pen be busted down,
the sow was gone.
Sam lit out after it to find it.
He had six or seven other pigs
that didn't run off.
But did Sam get down
on his marrowbones,
and thank the good Lord for that?
No, siree, not Sam.
He hunted high and low for that old...
As I was saying,
he hunted high and low for that old sow.
About all he...
About all he done that summer
was hunt for that sow.
Wouldn't even stop...
Wouldn't even stop hunting
when winter come.
And sure enough, one night,
when he was plowing home...
One night, when he was plowing home

through the snow,
he seen something move in the shadows.
Sam... Sam's right scared.
Figures maybe it's a bear.
Then the...
Then the...
Then the bear grunts
and it ain't no bear at all.
It's the sow!
Well, Sam was fitting to be tied.
The rejoicingest man you ever seen.
Ten times as rejoiceful for the lost one
as for 'em that stayed in the fold.
Now this here...
Now this here...
Now this here is the point!
It appears to me that
the devil be a-knocking at the
door of the house of worship.
If there's any of you
want to go get him, you're...
You'll be free to go.
'Cause the meeting's over.
Looke here, Pastor Pile.
Alvin York done shot his initials
in this tree.
"A-Y," plain as day.
It was Alvin York, lke Botkin
and Buck Lipscomb in their liquor.
Who was you saying it was?
Who was you saying it was?
- It was Alvin, Mrs. York.
- How be you know it?
It wasn't Alvin, Mother York,
it was the liquor.
Mighty good shooting
for a man in his liquor.
Ain't it?
Say, let's do it again.
- Howdy, boys!
- Howdy!
- Howdy, Pastor.
- Howdy, Luke.
- We were looking for you Saturday.

- Couldn't get here no more than fly.
Roads are getting soggy and soggy
between here and Rugby.

- Is that so?

- Water is so deep
in some of 'em creek beds,
had to use old Betsy's belly for a boat.
How are you, Zeke?
I reckon you could have got here quicker
if you had carried Betsy.
Yeah, wished I could get me another mule
like old Flora.
They ain't turning out mules
like they used to.
No, sir!
Hey, what you got there, young fellow?
The very latest thing in ladies' hats,
the cloche model.
Women folks around here
wear split bonnets.
The young ones goes bareheaded.
Maybe so, but in modern merchandising,
the storekeeper endeavors
to create a demand.
Now in this line of ladies' bloomers,
very moderately priced,
has the finest elastic in the waistband,
also in the knees.
No amount of washing
will make it lose its snap.

- Your first trip in these parts, ain't it?

- Yes.

And we have them in three lovely colors.
Which we absolutely guarantee
will not fade or shrink.
Plenty of room in the seat, too.
I can tell you these garments
are mighty popular with the ladies.

- You can, huh?

- Yes.

Well, folks hereabouts wouldn't know
what 'em things is for.

- Lem?

- Yeah.

- Lem, here's your Nashville paper.

- Well, thank you, Pastor.

I got letters here for Tom Carver
and Ed Watson.

Both back tax bills, I reckon.

- What does it say, Lem?

- Well...

They're a-telling, Cordell Hull
are speechmaking over in Jimtown.

Appears he's out running
for Congress again.

- It says...

- I mind when Cord Hull
wasn't knee high to a toad frog,
and running around in his shirttail.
Just goes to show you what
a fellow can do if he gets book learning.

That paper is four days old,
I read it over at Nashville.

Yep. It took Luke three days
of mule-paddling
to bring the mail from Rugby.

I can believe that,
after driving over here from Jamestown.
Jimtown.

- I thought it was Jamestown.

- It are.

Well, anyway, since driving over here,
what I'd like to know is,
how do you fellows get into this valley?
We were born here.

Now look, Mr. Pile,
I'd like to sell you some of these garments
before the price goes up
on account of the war.

What war?

Why, the... The war in Europe.

Oh, that war.

Yes, certainly.

Look likes the Germans
might get into Paris, don't you think?

Well, we ain't done
much thinking on it, mister.

It ain't in our corner, nohow.

If you're hankering for trouble,
it ain't scarce
right here in these mountains.
Oh, I ain't looking for any trouble.
Yep, fighting could have been
mighty plentiful
down at the meeting house last night.
Did you hear?
Alvin York and two other fellows
done busted up the meeting.
That ain't a smithereen
to what he done in Jimtown.
- Nigh split the jail, he did.
- No...
Raised such a rumpus
they had to turn him loose.
Do tell.
Old man Jarvis up Bear Creek way
told me he seen the three of 'em
riding their mules,
hell-bent for election,
toward the Kentucky border.
I reckon their liquor was getting low
and they wanted to get there
before they sobered up.
Howdy, Mrs. York.
- Howdy, Luke.
- Howdy, Mother York.
- Tolerable, Pastor.
- What can I do for you today?
Could I be getting a can of baking powder
and a...
- Poke of salt?
- Sure thing.
I ain't having but five eggs
and they're kind of puny.
Oh, eggs are eggs, I reckon.
I was plumb out of salt.
Don't be taking it hard, Mother York,
what you just heard.
I ain't taking nothing hard, Pastor.
And I ain't making excuses
for Alvin to nobody.
Of course you ain't,

and I ain't asking you to.
- I'm right proud of Alvin.
- Got a right to be.
Works hard, Alvin does.
Patching and scratching that poor land.
It's mighty hard work,
getting corn out of rocks.
- Indeed it is.
- Who's to blame him
if he busts loose now and again?
Nobody, Mother York, nary a soul.
Of course, I ain't for Alvin
doing like he does.
A little religion wouldn't do him no hurt.
No, it wouldn't.
Pastor, I wouldn't be against
your talking to Alvin.
You reckon it'd do any good?
Well, it wouldn't do no harm.
I'd be riding up and having a talk with him.
I'm thanking you, Pastor.
- George.
- Yes, Ma?
I reckon I know where your brother's at.
He's up at the Kentucky border.
- Go fetch him.
- Yessum.
Better be taking a piece of corn
for your supper, Son.
Yessum.
- Hiya, Marter.
- Hiya, Alvin.
- Mart, we wants to get us a bottle.
- Now look here, Alvin.
You know, I know and so do the Sheriff.
You're from over here in Tennessee.
And I can't sell you no liquor
less you gets over yonder in Kentucky.
Marter, you are the legalest fellow in
these here parts, if you ain't nothing else.
You gotta be, in this business.
Maybe our credit ain't no good
in Tennessee.
Bet it ain't no better in Kentuck.

What you be having, Alvin?
You got any corn without no lye in it?
No poison oak leaves in it, either.
Ain't no lye in this liquor.
Plumb hollow I am,
like an old, burnt-out stump.
Me, too.
What are we drinking to, Alvin?
What'll we drink to, lke?
Why, I reckon we drunk
to pretty near everything there is.
- I can't think of nothing new.
- Me neither.
Reckon we better begin all over?
If we can't drink to something,
why don't we drink against something?
Against something? Against what?
Oh, against something
or somebody we're against.
I ain't against nobody or nothing.
Except getting sober.
We'll drink against that.
You... You'll be a-killing
two birds with one stone.
- Come on. Sure.
- Ain't never gonna get sober.
Never gonna get...
Well, I'll be blowed.
What are you doing here, George?
Young'uns like you ain't got no business
in a place like this here, nohow.
- Now just you skedaddle.
- Ma wants you home.
- Now look here, George...
- Ma wants you.
- Shucks, son of a gun...
- Well,
reckon I better go. I'll be seeing you.
His ma wants him.
Get up.
Here, here. Quit that.
Hold your horses, Marter.
Here we go.
Here we go again.

I'm still a-coming.
Say when you got enough.
Say it.
Enough, enough.
Ma wants you, Alvin.
Ma wants you.
Coming, George.
- I'll be seeing you.
- So long, Al.
Here he is, Ma.
It took a heap of looking,
but he come easy.
- Fetch me a pail of water, George.
- Yessum.
Breakfast's ready, now it is.
Better be getting at it.
South field needs a-plowing.
The Lord bless these victuals we done got
and help us to be
beholding to nobody. Amen.
I reckon you'll want some salt
on your pone.
Whoa, Fred.
Giddap, Noah.
Whoa.
- Howdy, Pastor.
- Howdy, Alvin.
I've been kind of expecting you.
I'm right sorry about the other night, I...
I reckon I done the wrong thing.
See that rock, Alvin?
You've been plowing around that rock
a heap of years.
Sure have.
Did you ever think when you start plowing
your furrows crooked,
it's mighty hard to get 'em straight again.
- I never thought on it much.
- It's that a-way, I reckon,
with other things besides plowing.
Satan's got you by the shirttail, Alvin.
Sure has. Giddap, Noah.
He's gonna yank you straight down to hell.
You are plum right, Pastor.

You gotta make him let loose of you
before it's too late.
I sure wish I know'd how.
Wrestle him, Alvin,
wrestle him like you would a bear.
I done wrestled him, Pastor, but...
Whoa, whoa there, Noah.
Whoa, whoa. Whoa, Noah.
But old Satan, he hangs on tight.
You and the Lord could throw him, Alvin.
Why, twixt the two of you,
you'd have old Satan down in a jiffy.
Why, I sure wish the Lord would throw in.
He will, if you ask him.
Oh, I done prayed, Pastor,
till I was black in the face.
- But it wasn't no use.
- It ain't only praying, Alvin, it's believing.
Now, you see here.
Take a look at the old oak yonder.
Looks mighty strong.
Been standing there since your pa
was a boy a-plowing in the same field.
Looks like it could go right on standing
all by itself, don't it?
Yep.
Just a-resting itself
and feeding on the earth.
Well, it can't. It can't stand there
without there's a lot of deep roots
a-holding it up.
Can't see the roots,
but they're there just the same.
It appears to me it's been planned
a fellow's got to have his roots
in something outside his own self.
I reckon I ain't found no roots
what'll hold me up, when...
When I'm hell-bent to fall.
And then take the animals in the woods.
Squirrels'd go mighty hungry
if nothing made 'em store up nuts
for the wintertime.
- Sure would.

- How do you reckon
birds get to fly north in the summer
if there ain't something a-guiding 'em?
A bird ain't got no way of telling
north from south.
And then there's the bees.
Bees'd sure be in a fix
if they wasn't beholding to something
to show 'em how to get back to the hives.
Well, I ain't no bird and I ain't no squirrel.
- And I sure ain't no bee.
- Well, that's right, Alvin.
The way I figure, there ain't no use for a
fellow going out looking for religion. It's...
Well, it's just gotta come to a fellow.
It'll come, my boy. You'll see.
Maybe slow, like the way daylight comes.
And maybe in a flash,
like a bolt of lightning.
- When?
- When you ain't even expecting it.
Well, I hope so.
Giddap, Noah. I'll be seeing you.
Get after him, now.
Tracks are mighty fresh.
Less than an hour old.
- Reckon it's a red fox?
- Might be red and might be gray.
It's making a big circle.
Can't tell about his course
till he gets out on the flat.
They took to the hill there.
Yeah, that-a-way.
What's the matter, Alvin?
Howdy.
- You're Alvin York, ain't you?
- Yes.
Let's get going, Alvin.
I ain't seen you in a coon's age.
Where you been keeping yourself?
- Hereabouts.
- What's ailing you?
Are you coming or ain't you?
You better go get that fox, George.

You're just tetched.
How's your ma?
I asked you how your ma was.
Tolerable.
I figured it was you out a-hunting.
No mistaking the voices
of 'em hound dogs.
One's a-having a hook to the end of its bay
you could be hanging a bucket on.
The other's a croak, just like a frog,
about moonrise.
- What...
- You ain't Gracie Williams, are you?
Well, I ain't nobody but.
Why, you was only just...
You sure grewed up all of a sudden like...
Reckon I have.
Sounds as if they've run that fox
to ground.
I said 'em hound dogs
run the fox to ground.
You better be getting along.
Reckon I had.
- I'll be seeing you.
- Hoping.
Ma.
Yeah?
When you and Pa got hitched,
what did Pa have to set up with?
Well, your pa had this here farm
and a mule and \$5, no \$6.
What did Grandpa have?
Your grandpa had this here farm,
a pair of horses.
The mare was in foal.
I reckon I wouldn't, George.
Ma.
It's sure ripped down here.
You reckon you can fix it?
I reckon. Come over here, Alvin.
Bend over.
You're a-figuring on setting up,
ain't you, Son?
- Yessum.

- Getting married?
- Who's it gonna be?
- Gracie Williams.
Gracie Williams?
Asked her yet?
No, I ain't.
What's the matter?
I ain't said nothing.
Reckon that'll hold.
Reckon it better.
Hold it thataway, Zeb.
Thinking on going to that there shindig
next Saturday night, Miss Gracie?
- I ain't been asked.
- Well...
You've been asked now.
- I can't say, Zeb. I have to think it over.
- Well, I don't...
Joshua, 14, verse 9...
You'd be a-coming if you wanted to,
Miss Gracie.
Maybe I could and maybe I couldn't.
Why, it's Alvin York.
- Howdy, Miss Gracie.
- Howdy, Alvin.
- You know Zeb Andrews, ain't you?
- Howdy.
Knitting, Zeb?
He was just a-helping me.
I wasn't expecting you
to be a-calling so soon.
Well, I said I'd be seeing you.
Last time I seen Alvin
he was chasing a fox.
He stopped here for a spell to
kind of catch his breath.
- Did you kill that fox, Alvin?
- I sure did.
- We run over there...
- Was that a gray fox or a red?
Red. Just to the side of that...
Why, a red fox skin ain't worth nothing
this time of the year.
That little hollow...

This one was.

"Asa begat Joshiat

and Joshiat begat Joshua."

It's just Uncle Lige talking to himself.

Zeb here was telling me there's gonna be
a dance over to Thomson's Mill.

Yeah, I hear that...

Ed Morgan's gonna do the fiddling.

I was figuring that...

Just about the best fiddler
in these here parts, he is.

- He ain't.

- If he ain't, who'd be?

- Tod Haskins.

- He can't hold a candle to Ed.

- You're a-thinking.

- I'm a-knowing.

- Oh, you are, are you?

- Now, now, now. Hush up, you two.

There ain't no call

for fussing over a fiddler.

- We weren't a-fussing. I was telling him...

- Well, I'm a-telling you...

The way I figure, Ed's better at the jigging
and Tod can sure fiddle a square.

"It biteth like a serpent,
and stingeth like an adder."

Uncle Lige there was a-telling me
that corn's right good this harvest.

How's the crops up your way, Alvin?

We figure to get about
20 bushel to the acre.

We're gonna get about 60.

Well, there's a heap of difference
twixt farming the bottomland and the top.

- Well, there sure is.

- I reckon...

You know, I don't see how you get
five bushels off of that there land of yours.

Now look here, Zeb Andrews...

Miss... Miss Gracie,

I'd sure be much obliged
if I could have a cup of water.
I got some nipping cider.

- Well, that'd go mighty good.
- I'll be getting it.
"And the lion shall lie down
with the lamb."
Here's your cider. It's coming from the...
Where's Zeb?
- What's he...
- I reckon he lit out.
Well, isn't he be coming back?
No, ma'am, he ain't.
- That strikes me mighty queer.
- Yessum.
"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,
"do it with thy might."
Alvin, you...
You was fighting.
- It weren't much.
- Alvin York...
You ain't a-fitting to come a-visiting a girl.
He ain't got no business
around here anyhow.
As much business as you have, Alvin York.
- No, he ain't.
- Well, why ain't he?
- Well, he ain't because...
- Because, why?
Because...
Because I'm a-going to marry you.
- You what?
- I'm a-going to marry you.
Now, now, now, Alvin, you stop that.
Don't you be saying things like that.
- Don't you be saying 'em.
- Well, I have.
It ain't...
- Oh, you are, are you?
- Yessum.
Well, you can't...
- Well, your mother told me about it.
- That's what I'm a-doing.
Well, I never... Lookee here...
I wouldn't have you on a Christmas tree,
Alvin York.
Fine husband you'd make.

I allow Zeb Andrews would make
a better one?
Oh, how should I know? Maybe he would.
Zeb Andrews got a piece of bottomland,
that's it, ain't it?
You thinking that's it, aren't you?
Folks say you're no good
except for fighting and hell raising
and I'm thinking they're plumb right.
If I had a piece of bottomland,
I'd guess it'd make a heap of difference,
wouldn't it?
- A piece of bottomland!
- Well, I can get some.
Well, go and get it. I ain't a-caring.
There ain't nothing I can't get
if I set my mind to it.
You don't think much of yourself, do you?
Yes, I do.
Amen.
That there's bottomland soil, ain't it?
Queer how the folks
that lives on the bottom
looks down on the folks on top.
It was always that way.
Ain't no changing it.
Well, I'm a-gonna change it.
I'm a-gonna get us a piece of bottomland.
Your pa set out to get hisself
a piece of bottomland once.
Nary a man ever tried harder.
Liked to kill hisself trying.
It was a long time before he gave up,
but he had to in the end.
Well, I ain't a-setting myself up
as a better man than Pa.
I reckon I ain't half as good,
but I'm a-knowing where there's
a piece of bottomland to be had
and I'm a-gonna get it.
Maybe you will.
How old you say this here mule be?
- Nine year, but Abraham's sound.
- Yes, he are.

He's kind of pussle-gutted,
it appears to me.
Nary a bit.
He's just mighty well fed, that's all.
Well...
I reckon I might allow you \$30 on him.
- \$30?
- Yeah.
- You say \$30?
- Yeah.
Well, he's worth \$40 if he's worth a cent.
Then he ain't worth a cent.
- What's all this here you got?
- Well, there's two dozen pullets.
\$6.
Why, that's 25 cents apiece.
They're worth twice that much.
Not to me, they ain't.
- What are these?
- Them's prime winter pelts, Mr. Tomkins.
Mighty poor. They won't fetch that much.
I might allow you \$1.50 apiece for 'em.
Well, I can get \$3 apiece for 'em
in Jimtown.
It's quite a-ways to Jimtown.
Let's see now. That's \$40.50.
- What else you got?
- Well, there's
two sacks of rabbit skins,
this here clock
and a sack of goose feathers.
I tell you, Alvin,
I'll give you 50 United States dollars
for the whole caboodle.
- \$50 for everything?
- That's the best I can do.
- Sounds like an awful little.
- Take it or leave it.
Can you... Can you do any better
on the price of the land?
Not a cent. \$120.
- How much time I got to pay for the rest?
- Sixty days.
Well, it's a bargain. I'll take it.

Well, then I reckon
we can put it in writing.
You understand now, don't you, Alvin?
If I don't get my money afore the 60 days,
you lose the whole caboodle
and you don't get the land.
Now, \$70 is a lot of money
for a fellow like you to get his hands on.
It's more than a dollar a day.
Now then, 60 days is all you got.
Sixty days and sixty nights.
What?
Well, the way I figure,
if I count the nights, too, I got
nigh onto four months to pay you off.
Well, that's one way of figuring it.
Well, I'll tell you.
I was figuring on taking
'em rocks out myself, Alvin.
But if you're willing to take on the job
at 75 cents a day,
- well, I...
- I'll take it.
- All right.
- Yes, sir.
Well, I tell you. I was thinking
maybe I could shoe your mules for you.
Sorry, Alvin. Had 'em shod
just yesterday over to Possum Trot.
Might give you two, three days
work though, splitting rails.
That's good.
Oh, I reckon it's worth about...
- \$3.
- \$3?
Why, that's a right fair price, Pastor.
I only worked two days to get it.
It's worth it
to me.
All right, George, let him go.
Giddap, Noah, giddap. Come on.
- Giddap, Noah.
- Giddap, Noah.
Come on, Noah.

Come on.
Whoa, Noah.
What... Why, Miss Gracie,
I was thinking you was to the dance.
No. I ain't at the dance.
No. No, I can see that.
Alvin, I...
Yeah?
- Alvin, I just...
- Yeah?
I...
Alvin...
That's what I was wanting to tell you.
Giddap, Noah.
Lord...
Lord, if you can,
help him to be getting his land.
Amen.
All right, George.
Again.
Again.
Gotta get under there.
It ain't no use, George.
I can't do it.
- Yes, you can.
- I tell you, I can't do it!
My time's up tomorrow night!
There ain't enough money
for the bottomland.
I can't get the rest!
How?
How am I gonna do it?
- Howdy, Alvin.
- Mr. Tomkins, I've got to talk to you.
Well, I reckon it's money
what talks the loudest.
You got the rest of your payment?
- Well, no, I ain't got it all.
- That's bad.
- But I can get it for you by Saturday.
- Saturday ain't Tuesday.
All I'm asking is, is for four extra days.
How can I be sure
you'll get it by Saturday?

Well, there's a beef and turkey shoot coming up. You must've heard about it.

- Yeah.

- I'm aiming to cut five targets and win the beef critter and then put him up for cash money.

- It ain't likely.

- Oh, yes, it is.

- That'll take some shooting, Alvin.

- But I could do it.

Well, I'd like to do you a favor, Alvin, but... Will you?

There's another fellow asking for that land.

- You ain't letting him have it.

- I don't know.

I was telling him your option was up Tuesday and...

But I got to have 'em extra days, Mr. Tomkins. I just got to.

Well, I oughtn't to do it, but I reckon he can wait till Saturday.

Oh, thank you, Mr. Tomkins.

I'll sure get it for you.

Yes, I sure will.

You plumb missed him but you cut wood.

It ain't the log you're supposed to shoot, Zeke, it's the critter behind it.

You better get yourself a pair of 'em specs, Zeke.

He won't stick his head up so I can get a shot at him.

Jim Corey, next shooter.

Reckon he's laying an egg back there, Jim?

Yeah, he might be.

You missed!

Doggone it, that turkey can sure hide.

Maybe he wants to keep his head.

Alvin York, next shooter.

Bust him in the eye, Alvin, if he winks at you.

Shoot him when he ain't looking.

You better sight him mighty fine, Alvin.

That there is the last turkey.

You can't hit him
if you can't see him, Alvin.
Better wait till he goes to roost, Alvin.
You got meat!
He sure busted him wide open.
I reckon
you just got to talk their language, Alvin.
I reckon you do.
You sure got him, Alvin. Ought to be
eating good if he ain't too tough.
This here bird ain't for eating.
Come on, fellows.
Get your targets ready for the beef shoot.
Rules same as all as were.
Shots are \$1 apiece.
The two best shooters
get the hindquarters.
The next two get the forequarters.
Fifth man gets the hide and the tallow.
The sixth man gets to dig the lead
out of the tree.
All right, pay your dollar
and draw your number.
Load her up careful, George.
We got a long ways to paddle.
- Here you be, Alvin.
- Thankee.
Hey, Zeke, you ain't paid your dollar yet.
Why, sure enough.
I reckon it just slipped my mind.
How much for this here bird?
Well, I can't give you
any more than one shot, I reckon.
I'll be taking it and give me four more.
Five shots? Am I hearing you right, Alvin?
I'm a wanting five shots, Lem.
You figuring to get that whole critter?
My mind's sort of running that a-way.
Where'd you get 'em ideas, Alvin?
You sure got some shooters against you.
They'll get a chance
when I put the critter up again.
I'm a-needing cash money
and I'm gonna get it.

Ain't nobody ever cut five centers
unless it were Daniel Boone.
And you ain't wearing no coonskin hat.
I ain't a-needing one.
Number eight next.
Number nine.
How do they stand so far, Luke?
Ain't nobody cut center but Alvin York.
Alvin cut dead center all four times.
Two more shooters.
Tom Carver, you're first.
Alvin's got one more coming.
Get going, Tom.
You better draw down, Alvin.
You got to beat Tom's shot
if you want to get the whole beef, Alvin.
What do it look like?
It looks like plumb middle to me.
Well, Tom ain't more than a hair off,
but Alvin's done cut dead center,
fair and square.

- Howdy, Daniel Boone.
- There's your beef, Alvin. All yours.
- Five centers is right smart shooting.
- I ain't seen it like since the big one.

Well, any of you fellows
want another chance at that critter,
why, just drop a dollar apiece
in this here hat.
Are you shooting against us, Alvin?

- No, hey, not this time.
- I ain't got a dollar.
- Lend me a dollar, Lem.
- Here's my dollar, Alvin.

You... You lend me a couple of...

- Howdy, Miss Miranda.
- Howdy.
- Hello, boys.
- Hello, there.
- You all come over to see the shooting?
- Yeah.

It's all over now.
Alvin York cut center five times
and won Lem's beef critter on the hoof.

- Alvin won Lem's beef critter?
- Sure did.
- Well, I'll be danged.
- And he's putting him up again.
Well, boys, get your targets ready.
Oh, Mr. Tomkins,
I was just coming over to see you.
Here you be, \$26. And I've got
the rest of it right here in my pocket.
I'm right sorry, Alvin, but I just sold that
bottomland to Zeb here.
- You're telling me you...
- Now, don't go raring off, Alvin.
I never figured you'd get that money.
Anyway, your time was rightly up
last Tuesday.
- Why, you allowed I could have more...
- But it wasn't in writing.
But I was a-taking your word for it...
And Zeb here paid me cash money
all down.
- He did, did he?
- It ain't my fault. He sold it to me.
Now look here...
Alvin!
Business is business.
- Wait a minute!
- Get out of here!
You better get, both of you!
It ain't no use, Alvin. You'd only be
fixing yourself for trouble.
I was... I was aiming to get that
piece of land.
Well, it weren't to be.
Mind you, Alvin, we can't always
figure the ways of Providence.
Alvin...
- Alvin, it don't make no difference.
- It do to me.
Come on, Buck.
Swing her, Buck, swing her!
I sure do admire big women. She's about
that biggest that I ever did see.
Three women in one she is, Alvin.

A whole passel of women.
Hey, a fellow who'd marry her'd
be a bigamist.
See? Big-muss. Yes, sir, bigamist.
Told me I could have 'em extra days.
- Oh, come on, Alvin.
- His word weren't no count.
Forget about Nate Tomkins, will you?
Quit pestering yourself. It ain't no use.
Look at that there big woman.
Why don't you have a turn with her, Alvin?
Take you back to your log rolling days.
"Business is business."
Well, once around her
is twice around Bear Mountain.
Look at Buck here, Alvin.
He's plumb tuckered out.
- I sure am.
- Well, he might be,
dancing around a whole passel of women
that-a-way.
- Another bottle, Marter.
- Sure.
That land were mine.
Ain't nobody gonna get it away from me.
I'd sure like to see you
toad-hop her about, Alvin.
I'm a-drinking against Nate Tomkins.
Now, how about that there big woman?
Alvin, you better be a-staying here.
- Let go of me.
- We'll go along with you.
What I got to do is my own.
It sure ain't a good night for a killing.
There's no stopping him now, I reckon.
Give me that old time religion.
- Howdy, Mr. Tomkins.
- Look here. Stand where you are.
Don't you come any closer.
- Mr. Tomkins, I just want to...
- Come closer and I'll hit you.
No need of getting riled, Mr. Tomkins.
- I ain't a-looking for no trouble with you.
- What you doing around here?

- Well, I want to talk to you about...
- What about?
About Abraham.
That mule's legally mine.
You ain't got no claim on him.
Well, I ain't denying he's yours...
Stay where you are if you don't want to be
laid out in two pieces.
Well, I was a-figuring
on a-buying Abraham back.
- Buying him back?
- Yes, sir.
My mule's kind of poorly,
and something done happened to him
and I sure need a mule.
- Are you meaning it?
- Yes, sir.
No hard feelings?
- Shucks, no, Mr. Tomkins.
- Well, I'll be damned.
And... And there's one more thing.
I'm asking your forgiveness
for a-flaring up at you the way I done.
It were Satan a-speaking out of me.
Zeke was a-telling me, but I...
I couldn't believe him.
- About what?
- That you got religion.
- Well, that's a fact, Mr. Tomkins.
- Well, I'll be damned.
Well, I sure would like to be a-buying
that there mule back.
- You would, huh?
- Yeah.
- How much would you be asking for him?
- Well, let's see.
You said he was worth \$40
and I allowed you \$30.
That's right.
Well, you can have him back for \$20.
Mr. Tomkins, Abraham's worth
a sight more than that.
Maybe he is,
but seeing as how I'm trying to do

the fair and square thing, Alvin, \$20.
I reckon I know what you're thinking.
It's more blessed to give than to receive.
Maybe. Come on, get your mule.
And another thing, I'm gonna
give you back the clock you sold me.
- Yeah?
- Yeah, it don't run nohow.
- Howdy, Mr. Andrews.
- Howdy.
I'd kind of like to see Zeb,
are he hereabout?
Maybe he is.
I sure would like to have words with him.
You coming peaceful?
Yes, sir, Mr. Andrews.
I ain't looking for no trouble.
Zeb. Come out of there.
There he be.
Howdy.
What you'd be wanting with me,
Alvin York?
I want to talk to you, Zeb, about...
About that there piece of land.
I bought it, it's mine.
I know it, but...
Sure it's yours, Zeb, but...
But Nate Tomkins was...
Was a-figuring that...
I ain't caring
what Nate Tomkins was a-figuring.
- Well, Nate was just thinking...
- It's mine and I'm gonna keep it.
Well, sure it's yours, Zeb,
but if you'll only allow me to talk...
Ain't nobody a-holding you.
Oh, yes, they are.
Well, anyway, Nate was a-thinking
that your being so busy here,
maybe you need some extra help
on the other piece of land.
- Well, what's that got to do with you?
- Well, I'm asking you for the job.
- You mean you're aiming to work for me?

- I'd be if you allow me.
Well, shucks. That sure got me stumped.
I was a-buying that land just to spite you.
Well, I sure don't blame you none.
Well, maybe we can figure it
so you can sharecrop the piece.
Then you kind of be a-working for yourself.
No, I ain't asking for anything extra, Zeb.
Well, if you can farm that bottomland
like you've been doing the top,
I reckon that land will be yours
in a couple of seasons.
Well, with the help of the Lord,
I'll make you a good crop.
Like I'm saying, Miss Gracie,
I ain't ever seen a prettier piece of land
than that there Andrews farm.
Corn is thicker than fur on a squirrel.
And I seen eight beef critters
a-grazing in the pasture there.
That are a lot of critters.
And that Zeb Andrews
sure are a forgiving man.
- Is he?
- Yes, sir.
Be sitting, Alvin.
- And a Christian man, if I ever seen one.
- Reckon so.
What I done to him that night
we were visiting you weren't right.
The devil was a-pushing me from behind.
It were too dark. I couldn't see.
I didn't have no call
to come twixt you and him.
What are you getting at, Alvin York?
All I'm aiming to say, Miss Gracie, is,
a upstanding man like Zeb Andrews
would make a girl a right smart husband.
- What's that?
- And...
And if you change your mind about Zeb,
well, I reckon I could...
- You could what?
- I could rightly understand.

Oh, you could, could you?
Lookee here, Alvin York,
if I wanted Zeb Andrews for a husband,
I reckon I could get him
without your acting so noble.
- I done kissed you, didn't I?
- Yes.
Well, I don't go around kissing men
I ain't gonna be a-marrying.
Now you be a-listening to me.
- Am I marrying a piece of land?
- Yes. No.
- Or a beef critter?
- No.
Or a field of corn?
No, it's you I'm marrying,
ain't nobody else in this here world.
- Are you hearing me?
- Yes.
Well, then don't you talk that way
to me again, Alvin!
- No.
- Don't you ever!
Oh!
The Lord sure do move
in mysterious ways.
So that's what the Lord done said to Cain
when he done killed Abel.
It was a way of telling him
that he wouldn't get no crops no more.
And anybody that's a farmer
knows what that means.
Alvin, how do you know that it happened
just that-a-way?
A-seeing how you weren't there.
Well, the Book says so.
And there ain't nothing written
in the Book that ain't the truth.
So, a long time after that
when the Lord was a-giving Moses
the Ten Commandments,
he was a-saying, "Thou shalt not kill."
Now... Now go ahead with the reading.
Hey! Hey! War! Hey!

Hey! Pastor Pile!

- What's happened, Luke?

- It's war.

President Wilson done declared war
against Germany.

- You don't say?

- Yes, sir.

It says so right here in this here paper.

Here you are, Jim.

I reckon I won't wait to be drafted.

- I'm joining up as soon as the corn's in.

- Me, too.

Attaboy, Tom. I heard my daddy talk
about fighting Yankees.

And my granddaddy

done fought in the Revolution.

Sure wish I was a young fellow.

Well, come along, Zeke.

You load 'em and I'll shoot 'em.

- Hi, Alvin.

- Hi, Alvin.

Hey, Alvin, what about you?

You joining up now

or you waiting to be called?

I reckon I'm a-waiting.

- Howdy, lke.

- Hi, Alvin.

Howdy, Alvin.

Good morning, Pastor.

Reckon I need some coal oil.

I'm glad you come in, Alvin.

I was gonna send for you.

You was?

- You ain't registered yet, have you, Alvin?

- Of course I ain't.

Is that the new seed

you was gonna send for?

It's Tuesday, Alvin. You only got till 6:00.

I ain't a-gonna register.

Come here.

- You gotta register, Alvin.

- I ain't a-going to. I ain't a-going to war.

War is killing

and the Book's against killing.

So war is against the Book.
You're plumb right, Alvin.
You got the using kind of religion,
not the meetinghouse kind, but you...
- The kind I got's the kind you teached me.
- I know that.
And I hate to be telling you, but
I don't want to see you get in no trouble.
Now, you got to register
and there ain't no way
you can get out of it.
You mean they can make you go to war
even if it's against what you think is right?
No, no, no, they won't make you do that.
It's what I want to tell you.
Come here.
It's right here.
Let me see.
Now, wait a minute. Here.
There it is right there, see?
"Members of well-recognized
religious sects
"whose existent creed
forbids its members to participate in war
"are entitled to request exemption
from military service."
What... What's that there exemption?
Well, that, it means,
if you're exempted, you don't have to go.
Well, how do I get this exemption?
Well, you got to write a letter
to the draft board.
- Is that all there is to it?
- Yep.
Well. Well, sure I'll register.
Will you write the letter for me?
Why, I'd be glad to, Alvin.
Come on over here.
"Therefore, we find
that we can't consider your church
"a well-recognized religious sect,
"organized and existing, May 18, 1917.
"We find further, that it has
no special creed except the Bible,

"which can be interpreted
by its members as they choose.
"And finally, there's nothing
in the creed of the church,
"expressly forbidding its members
to participate in war.
"Therefore your application for exemption
is denied."
Is this here the last word
or has he got some place to appeal?
He can appeal to
the District Board at Nashville
and finally to the General Board
in Washington.
- Thank you, sir.
- Thank you.
You're welcome.
I'll be a-writing 'em appeals for you,
Alvin, so don't you be worrying.
Oh, I ain't a-worrying.
We'll be a-fixing this here bridge.
There it is.
So, we'll be a-building the house
right over there by that tree.
And the big room is gonna be...
The big room is gonna be right...
Right here in front, just like this.
And it's gonna have three windows.
And the kitchen will be here,
and it's gonna be good and big, too.
- And there'll be a stove.
- Where?
Well, right about there.
And I'm gonna build you one of 'em sinks.
And I'm gonna give you a pump,
so you won't have to carry
no water from the springs.
- A pump, Alvin?
- Sure.
Alvin, pumps costs a heap of money.
Well, we're gonna have curtains in the
windows and carpets on the floors.
And it ain't gonna take very long either
if the Lord keeps a-showering

his blessings on me.
Won't take more than two, three years,
I reckon.
Just to think, in two, three years,
a house right there where we're looking.
And it will be our house.
- Alvin.
- What do you want?
Pastor Pile wants to see you, Alvin.
Well, Gracie and me
is kind of busy right now.
Well, tell him I'll stop by the store
on the way home.
He said he wants to see you right off.
He said you best be a-coming.
Well, tell him I'll be there.
Shucks, just when we was having fun.
Would you be
a-telling me again sometime?
I sure will.
- Howdy, Pastor.
- Howdy, Alvin.
I got right bad news for you.
Word just come.
They're a-taking you for the army.
Well, that can't be.
That letter we done sent to Washington,
says that I was against fighting and...
They ain't going to exempt you, Alvin.
You got to report to Nashville
tomorrow night.
I ain't a-going.
You ain't got no choice.
This was the last appeal.
I don't care about that. I ain't a-going.
You've got to go, Alvin. It's the law.
What?
What kind of law is it
that says a man's got to go
against the Book and its teachings?
Well, I reckon there ain't no answer, but,
if you don't go,
they'll be a-coming after you.
Well, they won't get me.

I'll go back in 'em hills.
Yeah, and they'll put hounds on your trail,
and they'll follow you
no matter how far back you go.
Then they'd better not catch up with me,
'cause they'll be a-wishing they hadn't. I...
Sorry, Pastor, I... Them's sinful words.
I wasn't thinking of what I was saying.
I'll go.
War's away to the other side
of the ocean, Alvin.
Lots of things can happen
before you get there.
You put your trust in the Lord
and he'll look out for you.
I done forgot the Lord.
I ain't never gonna forget him again.
Goodbye, Alvin.
Well...
I reckon these'll do till I get fixed up
in government clothes.
The corn's doing right good
on the south hill.
It might need a little extra hoeing.
Mule's at the gate.
You got a long ways to go.
Well, you'll be taking care of things
from now on, George.
Sure will.
I guess you'll be needing a man-sized gun.
- You can have my rifle.
- I'm a-thanking you.
Well...
I'm going.
I had to see you again, Alvin. I just had to.
Now, now...
No, no, don't you be looking at me, please.
Don't want you to be
remembering me like this.
Close your eyes, please?
Yessum.
- Are they closed?
- Yes.
Bye, Alvin.

I'll be a-coming back.
Bye, Alvin.
I'll be a-coming back.
Ma.
What are they a-fighting for?
I don't rightly know, child.
I don't rightly know.
Come on, you guys.
Hit the dirt and hit it hard.
Okay, Sarge.
Now look, Ross. That's not a teaspoon
you got there, it's a shovel.
- Lay into it.
- Okay, General.
Dig, soldiers, dig.
Dig your way straight down to China.
- Okay, Sarge.
- China?
What's the idea of going to China?
I thought this war was in Europe.
Parsons, Sergeant Early.
Yes, sir.
Which one of your men is York?
He is the big, lanky fellow,
fourth from the end, sir.
- Having any trouble with him?
- No, sir. Why?
He's down here
as a conscientious objector.
Keep your eye on him.
I want a weekly report.
Yes, sir.
That'll be a big help.
Dig. Dig. Dig.
I've been working in a subway all my life,
never thought about the guys that dug it.
But since I'm in the army,
I sure take my hat off to them.
- Subway you say?
- Yeah.
What's this here subway
you're talking about?
You mean to say you don't know
what a subway is? That guy kidding?

No, they don't have subways
where he comes from, I guess.
They haven't? Ain't they civilized?
Where you from?
Pall Mall.
Valley of the Three Forks of the Wolf.
- Where is that?
- Tennessee.
Ain't you ever even seen a subway?
- Ain't never even heard of one.
- You never... What? Heard?
Heard? What kind of talk is that?
Do they all talk that kind of English
where you come from?
Well, there ain't any English people
down our way, just Americans.
Well, look, a subway is a big hole
in the ground, see?
It goes for miles.
- Straight down?
- Yeah... No.
It doesn't go straight down,
it goes this way.
- Oh, this a-way?
- Yeah.
- Under the ground?
- Under the ground.
- And trains run through it.
- They run through it?
- Yeah.
- Steam cars?
Steam... No. Steam cars.
- They're electric, Alvin.
- I sure would like to see one of 'em.
You see, they have to run trains
under the ground in New York,
- because it's so crowded.
- Crowded? I'll say.
Look, it's the rush hour,
the Bronx Express is just pulling in.
I'm standing on the platform,
holding back the mob.
The doors open up and I...
You know what I'm talking about?

Just a word now and then.
Well, you see, the people are just coming
from work and they wanna get home, see,
and they wanna get into the cars
all together.
They start pushing,
I'm trying to hold 'em back.
Well, anyway, the doors open up and
now, buddy, this is where the fun begins.
"Move back in the cars," I yell.
Ain't no room in there, but I yell,
"Move back in the cars."
Boy, how I used to push 'em in. I used
to pack them in like sardines in a can.
That's why they call me "Pusher."
All right, Pusher, that's mess call.
- Get a move on.
- Yes, sir.
This is the one bugle call
I ain't got no arguments with.
- 2-4-1-8-0-0.
- Zaranopolis Nick.
2-4-1-8-0-1.
- 2-4-1-8-0-1.
- Ross, Michael T.
Hey, this one's full of grease.
Ain't you got a clean one?
- Clean it, buddy. And keep it clean.
- Sure.
- 2-1-8-1-0-2.
- 2-1-8-1-0-2.
York, Alvin C.
Anything wrong with it?
Well, it sure is a fine rifle gun.
I thought maybe you might have
some conscientious objections to it.
No, sir, I ain't.
Careful you don't kill anybody with it
till we get to France.
- Next man.
- There you are, York.
- 2-1-4-8-0-3.
- 2-1-4-8-0-3.
Thomas, Bert E.

Boy, look at that shine,
is that clean or is that clean?
Look, Sarge, you can eat
right off the trigger.
Not bad.
You call that clean?
- What's the matter with it?
- Look.
- I don't see nothing.
- It's full of grease.
Won't that make the bullet
come out faster?
Clean it.
That's a good job, York.
Did you ever clean a rifle before?
Ain't never cleaned one like that before.
I done clean my own, though.
So you've got a gun of your own,
have you?
- Yes, sir.
- I wouldn't think you'd have one.
Well, the next time get your sling
a little higher on your arm.
Okay.
Pull in your necks, soldiers.
Those rookies are gonna start shooting.
Now, remember, you guys,
you're using real, live ammunition.
A bullet hasn't got any brains.
It'll hit whatever you aim it at.
So don't start murdering each other.
All right, let's go. Ready on number 30.
Ready, number 30.
Not yet, we'll try it first.
Relax, Ross, loosen up. Yeah, that's better.
Take a deep breath.
Blow, let a little of it out.
Hold it.
Remember, keep your sights
on the center of the bull's-eye.
Take up the slack in the trigger gradually.
Don't pull it. Squeeze it slowly.
Just like you were squeezing a lemon.
Ready? Aim.

I can't hold it no more.
All right, Ross, take another one.
Aim.
Fire.
Look, Ross, you had your thumb
sticking straight up in the air.
Just like that.
Oh, yeah. That gives me balance.
Oh, it does? It gives you balance, does it?
- Yeah.
- Here.
Load.
Aim.
- Fire.
- Oh, my eye.
Maybe that will teach you
to keep your thumb down.
That's something
for the rest of you men to remember.
- A miss.
- Miss.
Ready on number 29.
Ready on 29.
Ready, 29.
All right, York. Let's see what you can do.
Aim. Fire.
I ain't much good at this here practicing,
Sergeant.
All right, next time get that sling
a little higher on your arm.
Press your cheek
a little closer to the stock.
Yes, sir.
Make sure that front sight
divides the rear sight in half.
I reckon I know about that, Sergeant.
You reckon you know about that, do you?
We'll see. Here.
Load. Aim.
Fire.
- A miss!
- Miss.
So you know about sighting, do you?
I sure thought I cut plumb center

that time.
You did, huh?
I can't no ways see how I can miss
that whole great big target.
Sharpshooter York requests a re-mark.
Re-mark for 29.
Re-mark, 29.
Oh, I didn't see that one.
- A bull's-eye, 4:00.
- Bull's-eye.
I can't figure out how I got
way down there on the edge.
Well, I reckon I can do a little better
when I get used to this here rifle gun.
Here's five chances to do better.
Fire when ready.
Hey, what are you wetting
that front sight for?
Why, it kind of cuts down the haze.
I always wet my sights
when I'm fixing to do some shooting.
Okay, do some shooting.
- Bull's-eye, dead center.
- Bull's-eye.
Okay, York. You're on your own.
- Bull's-eye.
- Bull's-eye.
- Bull's-eye.
- Bull's-eye.
- Bull's-eye.
- Bull's-eye.
Hey, look at this.
Right through the marker.
That ain't no rookie, that's Buffalo Bill.
Let's see that target, Sergeant.
Bring 29 to the firing line.
There's the first shot,
and here's the other five here.
I reckon that there gun
shoots a might to the right.
Where did you learn to shoot, York?
Well, I ain't never learnt, Sergeant.
Folks back home used to say
I could shoot a rifle before I was weaned.

But they was exaggerating some.
Now, supposing these here cartridges
is a flock of wild turkeys,
a-flying across the ridge
coming this a-way, see, right at me.
Now, which one of them
would you shoot first?
I'd take a crack at all of 'em
and trust to luck.
Well, you wouldn't have no luck
that way, Pusher.
No? Well, then I'd pick the motorman.
- The what?
- The motorman. The guy out in front.
Well, that ain't right either,
if you wanna get more than one turkey.
Now, which one of them's
got the most meat on him?
Yeah, what's the answer?
Well, now, if you shoot this one here,
the leader,
the rest of 'em will see him drop
and fly off, see?
So, you draw down
on the last turkey here,
and then the next one, see?
Kind of coming from back to front.
Then the rest of 'em won't know
they're being hit.
And, if...
Of course, they might flare off some
when the shooting starts,
but if a fellow's got himself
a repeating rifle,
he's got a good chance
of getting the whole flock.
- Sounds all right.
- Turkeys sure is dumb animals.
Seems you picked up a good bit
down in the hills, Alvin.
Oh, anybody that's done any hunting
knows that.
Alvin C. York!
Report to Major Buxton immediately.

- Yes, sir.
- What have you been up to now?
I don't know.
I've been aiming not to make no trouble.
It's your move.
- Private York reporting, sir.
- Yes, York. At ease.
York, Captain Danforth has just
handed me a report concerning you,
made by your company sergeant.
Yes, sir?
You have a very excellent camp record.
Well, I'm mighty glad to hear that, sir.
You applied for exemption, I believe,
as a conscientious objector.
Yes, sir.
Well, I think we can disregard that.
York, Sergeant Parsons
recommends your promotion
to the rank of corporal with special detail
as instructor in target practice.
Captain Danforth and I heartily approve.
I congratulate you, York.
Well, I'm much obliged to you,
Major Buxton and Captain Danforth.
Well, I'll learn 'em fellows to shoot
the best I can,
like I already done Pusher and Bert.
I mean, Privates Ross and Thomas, sir,
but,
well, I don't want to be no corporal.
- What's that?
- I said I don't want to be no corporal.
- Why not?
- Wait a minute, Captain. Let him talk.
Well, you see, I...
Is it because of your
religious convictions, York?
Yes, sir. That's it.
You see, I believe in the Bible,
and I'm a-believing
that this here life we're living
is something the Lord done give us.
And we got to be a-living it

the best we can.
And I'm figuring that a-killing other folks
ain't no part of what he was intending
for us to be a-doing here.
Well, yes. In a way I agree with you.
York, with your permission, Major?
Certainly, Captain. Sit down, York.
You... You say you believe in the Bible?
Yes, sir.
Well, I do, too.
But do you believe that the Bible means
that a man shouldn't fight
for what he believes to be right?
Well, it done said,
"Blessed are the peacemakers."
Yes, I know, but...
You remember that verse,
I think it's in Luke,
where he says, "He that hath no sword,
let him sell his garment, and buy one"?
He said that to Peter.
But he doesn't stop Peter
from using his sword.
He said, "Them that lives by the sword
will be a-perishing by the sword."
That were further on.
- Yes, I remember, but...
- No, go ahead, Captain, go ahead.
But according to St. John,
he said, "My kingdom is not of this world.
"If my kingdom were of this world,
then would my servant fight."
Well, that's just the point, Captain.
He done said
his kingdom were not of this world.
And that... That is different.
- Yes, but...
- Just a moment, Captain.
York, have you ever read this?
"History of the United States."
It sure is a lot of writing.
- Daniel Boone?
- Yeah.
You know about him?

Well, everybody down our way
knows about Daniel Boone.
First man into
the Valley of the Three Forks.
Yes, he was quite a man,
one of the greatest.
And that book's full of great men.
York, what do you suppose that
Boone was looking for
when he went out alone
into the wilderness?
Well, I never thought much on it.
Was he looking for new lands?
- Might be.
- Maybe.
Maybe for something more.
Something that a man just can't see
with his eyes or hold in his hands.
Something that some men don't even
know they have until they've lost it.
- Yes, sir.
- To be free.
Now, that's quite a word, freedom.
I think that's what he wanted.
I think that's what sent Boone
into your Tennessee country.
Is that what...
That what this here book's about?
Yep.
That's the story of a whole people's
struggle for freedom
from the very beginning until now.
For we're still struggling.
It's quite a story, York.
How they all got together
and set up a government,
whereby all men were pledged
to defend the rights of each man,
and each man
to defend the rights of all men.
We call it a government of the people,
by the people and for the people.
Why, I never knowed
it was all written down.

- You're a religious man, York.

- Yes, sir.

You want to worship God
in your own way.

Yes, sir.

- You're a farmer?

- Yes, sir.

You want to plow your fields
as you see fit,
and raise your family
according to your own likes?
And that's your heritage and mine,
every American's.

But the cost of that heritage is high.

Sometimes it takes all we have
to preserve it, even our lives.

How you gonna answer that, York?

Well...

You done given me a powerful lot
to be a-thinking about.

Well, take your time.

Well, if I could only get home,
back in 'em there hills, I...

- What would you do?

- Well, I could...

I could figure something out.

I've done a heap of thinking
up yonder there once.

All right, take 10 days' furlough.

You mean I can go home?

And when you get back,
if you still can't see it our way,
I'll recommend your exemption.

- You will?

- Report to me as soon as you get back.

I'll arrange your furlough, York,
starting tomorrow.

- Thank you.

- Good luck.

I sure would like to read this here book.

Go ahead. Take it with you if you want to.

You can borrow it.

Thank you, Major Buxton.

Thank you, Captain Danforth.

Come on, boy.
 Want me to be a-setting four places, Ma,
 or just three?
 Can't say, child.
 Ma, ain't Alvin ever gonna eat again?
 The Book says
 man don't live by bread alone.
 Well, what about that there hound dog
 he's got with him?
 He can't read the Book.
 Get the table set.
 He's up at the point. Been up there all day.
 Want George to go get him, Ma?
 Let him be.
 Put your trust in the Book, Alvin.
 But here's another book, York.
 The History of the United States.
 Them that lived by the sword,
 will be a-perishing by the sword.
 The government of all men
 to defend the rights of each man.
 And each man
 to defend the rights of all men.
 Remember, the Lord done said,
 "Thou shalt not kill."
 But the cost of that heritage is high.
 Sometimes all we have to preserve it,
 even our lives.
 - Obey your God.
 - Defend your country.
 - Your God.
 - Your country.
 - Your God.
 - Your country.
 - God.
 - Country.
 - God.
 - Country.
 - God.
 - Country...
 "Render therefore unto Caesar
 "the things which were Caesar's,
 "and unto God
 the things that were God's."

Caesar... The things which were Caesar's.

And unto God, God's.

- Private York reporting, sir.

- Have him come in.

Yes, sir. Go in, Sergeant.

I'm a-bringing your book back, Major.

And I'm a-thanking you.

Well, you're welcome, York.

I done what you told me,

I thought things over.

- Well?

- I'd like to stay in this here army.

I rather hoped that you would, York.

But there's just one thing, sir,

that I ought to tell you.

There's lots of things...

There's lots of things

I ain't figured out yet.

Lots of things still a-going on in my mind.

But it's...

Well, it's just like Pastor Pile done told me.

I reckon I can just be a-trusting in

something that's a heap bigger than I be.

York, as your superior officer, I don't feel

called upon to look into your conscience.

It's enough for me that I trust you.

And I believe that when the time comes,

you'll conduct yourself as a soldier should.

Thank you, sir.

And I'm going to approve your promotion

to the rank of corporal.

Well, I'll sure take care of my men

the best I can, sir.

I know you will, York.

- That's all.

- Thank you, Major.

Aren't you...

Aren't you taking quite a chance, Major?

You mean as to whether he'll fight or not?

No, I don't think so, Captain.

I don't think I'm taking any chances at all.

"Dear Mom,

"am feeling just fine

and have taken in all the sights.

"And Bert took me to a church
called Notre Dame Cathedral.

"It's big enough inside for a fellow
to plant a crop of corn.

"Pusher just come in.

"He's saying our outfit is moving up
to front pretty soon.

"I reckon that's so

'cause we got all our training

"and they ain't brought us here
for no sight-seeing tour..."

"Tour, nohow.

"Gracie wrote in her letter
she was a-worrying.

"Tell her, don't."

I was feared. I'm a-feared for Alvin.

It ain't right for us to be a-feared, Gracie.

Alvin's in good hands.

The Lord takes care of 'em
that's a-believing in Him.

- Any of you blokes got a cigarette?

- Yeah.

- Here you are.

- Thanks.

You know, you Yanks just got here
in the nick of time.

We're running shy of these.

Besides, we can do with some help.

Look out.

It takes a while, but you'll learn
when to flop and when not to.

They say you never hear
the one that's hit you.

That's only half the truth.

No, the whole truth is,

if you hears it, you've got a chance.

Duck.

See what I mean?

- Heinie's got the range good.

- Yeah. A guy can get killed around here.

- Look out.

- Don't be afraid. This one'll pass over.

See?

Takes time, it do.

But you'll get the hang of it.
Duck again.
If that was shrapnel, now,
we wouldn't be flopping at all.
You know, you only flop for...
Okay, Bert. The Express has gone through.
Hey, Bert!
If one's got your name on it,
there's nothing you can do.
So you see, gentlemen,
the grave responsibility rests upon us.
This entire German salient,
holding up the Argonne advance
depends for ammunition and supplies
on the Decauville Railroad,
which as you know,
lies just beyond these hills.
It must be taken.
This is all open country ahead,
but you can expect heavy machinegun fire
from these wooded ridges
on the right and the left flanks.
But we've got to get through.
Use as a mark, 4:32.
It is now minus 10, eight, six,
four, two, mark.
Any questions?
What about artillery support,
Captain Tillman?
Artillery will lay down a rolling barrage

at 6:

Zero hour will be 6:10.
I'd like to know where that barrage is
that we're supposed to have.
Runners, notify the platoon commanders
that we go over, barrage or no barrage.
First platoon at 6:10,
second and third platoons to follow
in waves of 100 meters.
Yes, sir.

- 6:

- 6:

Come on, men!

Halt and take cover!

We'll never get through.

We gotta wipe out those nests.

Early, take what's left of your section
and work your way back around that hill.

Maybe you can jump 'em from behind.

All right. Savage, York, Cutting.

Bring your men. Come with me.

Take cover.

Listen.

Heinie!

Listen.

We're not far enough back.

Savage, keep the men quiet.

Cutting, come up here with that bayonet.

We're right behind their lines.

We'll skirt this ridge and flank 'em.

Look! Heinies!

Come on, get 'em.

Hold your fire!

Fall on down and keep 'em covered.

Spread out, men! Spread out!

Line 'em up and disarm 'em!

- Get back there.

- Get 'em up there.

Go on.

- I'm hit bad, Cutting.

- Me, too.

Savage.

Savage?

Where's Savage?

I seen him go down.

They like to cut him in two.

You're the only noncom left.

York, take over.

- Did you hear what I said?

- I heard you.

Watch this fellow.

The rest of you keep under cover.

Come back here.

- Where are you going?

- You done give me command.

Hey, Alvin!
Well, he cleaned out
that machine gun nest.
Zeekenny, Donahue! The rest of you guys,
keep your eye on them Heinies
so they don't try any rough stuff.
Don't try anything funny.
Belly to the ground, you babies.
We better get up there.
No, we better keep an eye
on these prisoners.
Five will get you 10 that guy knocks off
your whole sauerkraut army.
There are 25 machine guns on that ridge.
- Tell him it's useless.
- What did you say?
I said tell him it's useless.
You tell him.
You talk better English than I do.
Just like a flock of turkeys.
All right. Come on out of there! All of you!
Come this a-way.
Tell the rest of them fellows
to quit shooting and come on out of there.
Keep 'em hands up
and start a-going down the hill there.
Keep a-coming.
Go on. Move out of there, down the hill.
All right. Keep a-coming.
Hey, down there. Don't do no shooting.
All right, get on down!
Come on out and keep your hands up.
Boy, I told you.
Look at that mob.
Hey, we can't handle all that gang.
Sure we can. That's my mate.
Come on, step lively. Move forward.
Get going.
- Move forward.
- Move it, now.
Move forward, there.
Come on, step up. Step lively there.
Come on.
- All right.

- Get those hands up. Get in there.

- Come on.

- Come on, get going.

Nice going, York.

- Come on there. Come on.

- Come on, get in there.

Get those hands up.

Come on, move fast. Move.

- Hiya, Pusher.

- That was a good job, pal.

- Where's the Sergeant?

- Over there. Hurt pretty bad.

- How many men we got left?

- Eight, besides you.

Watch them fellows.

Get in there, you guys.

Move forward. Move...

Pusher.

Pusher.

This is where we change cars, Alvin.

The end of the line.

Who done that?

Who throwed that grenade?

Come on, you, put your hands up
and keep 'em up.

You know what I'm a-saying?

- You understand?

- Yeah.

Tell 'em men of yours
if any more of that happens
you and a lot more of 'em's
going to be mighty sorry.

Go ahead.

Tell 'em to drop their belts.

Look them fellows over good.

- You ready back there?

- Okay here.

- Okay. Ready here.

- Watch 'em.

Now, get going.

Tell 'em to halt.

If you wanted to get back
to the American lines,
which way would you be a-going?

Up there.
We'll go this a-way. Go on.
Hey, tell 'em to halt.
What's up?
Sounds like them Heinies
is making a heap of trouble.
- What are we gonna do about it?
- Get 'em.
We got enough to take care of already.
And a few more won't make no difference.
Hey, you.
Signal up there
and tell 'em they're surrounded.
Tell 'em to drop their guns
and come down with their hands up.
Hey, this gun touches off kind of easy.
They sure are trained good, Major.
Hey, Sarge, look.
- Looks like Heinies.
- Stand ready.
Hello, there!
- A Yank.
- It may be some kind of a trick.
- There's something funny here.
- Let 'em get a little closer.
- Hello there!
- Who are you?
Detail of the 328th.
We got some prisoners.
- Halt where you are.
- Halt!
That's a Yank, all right.
- Come out, let's have a look at you.
- Watch 'em, fellows!
Keep 'em covered.
Where you going?
Can you tell me where the 328th be?
It's up that way someplace.
- Where did you pick up all this bunch?
- Back up the line a ways.
You couldn't be taking 'em off our hands,
could you?
What would we do with them?
Well, I don't rightly know.

- Can we be going?
- Sure. Go ahead.
Thank you.
Come on.
Forward!
All right. Halt!
Prisoners, hold right there!
Be a-watching 'em, Joe.
Beg your pardon, sir.
Yeah?
We all got some prisoners,
can we be a-leaving 'em here?
Put 'em right over there.
Wait a minute.
How many have you got?
Well, I done counted 132 heads, sir.
We haven't room for that many here.
Take them back up the line.
- Yes, sir, but...
- But what?
Well, sir, we can't find our outfit and we
tried to drop 'em off two other places.
And they ain't but only eight of us
to handle them.
- You should've brought more men.
- But that's all there were of us, sir.
You mean to say that you
and seven others captured all that bunch?
Yes, sir.
And we'd kind of like to get rid of 'em.
Well, good Lord.
I guess we can give you some help.
- Come on, Sergeant.
- Thank you.
Hey, Sarge! York by himself
captured 132 Germans.
Guy named York got 132 Heinies
all by his lonesome.
- How did he do it?
- Must have surrounded him.
- Guy named York.
- That's what they say.
Gee, he captured
hundreds of Boche and machine guns.

Guy named York! All by his lonesome!
Hey, what's that? How many?
A whole division and a lot of high officers.
- I'm telling you, York?
- Who's they?
Yeah, about half the German army
and a general.
- I don't know.
- One guy.
How could one guy...
- Guy named York.
- What's that?
They say he captured Hindenburg.
And the Crown Prince.
And brought them all back. They say...
Say, Sarge, did you hear?
York captured the Kaiser.
Now, as I understand it, York,
your detail came over that ridge there
and captured about 30 men,
right down in here.
Yes, sir.
Then you were forced to cover
by a machine gun
that was right up on this other ridge.
Yes, sir. Right up there.
Where were you?
Well, I was...
I was a-laying behind that log there.
They was machine-gunning us
pretty heavy, so I worked my way across
up behind that log there under the hill.
Rather incredible, wasn't it, York,
your being able to cross so much
open ground without being hit?
I reckon the good Lord
was a-protecting me, sir.
What did you wanna go over there for?
Well, I figured that was a good place to be
because they had to rear up
and show themselves
in order to shoot at me
and the rest of the boys back here.
And whenever they did,

I could touch 'em off.

I see.

So, I went up the hill,
up around that a-way,
then worked my way down the ridge
to a place where they was flanked
and couldn't show themselves
without being hit.

So, they... Well, they finally gave up.

How many did you kill?

I don't rightly know, sir.

I think Captain Danforth
is familiar with that, sir.

We counted about 20 bodies altogether
up around there.

What were your men doing
all this time, Corporal?

Well, I couldn't just answer that, sir.

I was pretty busy
and I reckon they was, too.

According to the statements of the others,
they were guarding the prisoners
and couldn't expose themselves
to the fire from the ridge.

All right, gentlemen. That's all, Corporal.
Corporal.

- There's something that I'd like to know.

- Yes, sir?

That night that you reported back to me
at Camp Gordon,
you as much as told me that you were
quite prepared to die for your country,
but not to kill.

What made you
decide to change your mind?

Well, sir...

Of course, if you'd rather not tell me,
why, it's quite all right.

Well, I'm as much against killing as ever,
sir.

But it was this way, Colonel.

When I started out I felt just like you said.

But when I hear them
machine guns a-going

and all them fellows
are dropping around me,
I figured that them guns
was killing hundreds, maybe thousands,
and there weren't nothing anybody
could do, but to stop them guns.
And that's what I done.
You mean to tell me
that you did it to save lives?
Yes, sir. That was why.
Well, York, what you've just told me
is the most extraordinary thing of all.
Sergeant York!
Thank you, sir.
And for conspicuous gallantry
beyond the call of duty,
you have been awarded
the Distinguished Service Cross.
Sergeant York, I am proud that
you are of the All-American Division.
It's a privilege to command
such men as you.
Sergeant York,
as Commander-in-Chief
of the American Expeditionary Forces,
it is my pleasure to confer upon you
the United States
Congressional Medal of Honor
for heroism beyond the call of duty.
Thank you, sir.
I'm Cordell Hull, Sergeant York,
representative from
your district of Tennessee.
I'm mighty glad to meet you, Mr. Hull.
And this is Mr. Harrison
from the Tennessee Society.
Tennessee is indeed proud, Sergeant.
- Thank you.
- This way, Sergeant.
Well, Sergeant, what do you think of it?
Appears like everybody's
having a mighty good time.
So, Sergeant,
in the name of the people of New York,

may I present you with this key to our city
as a token of our very great esteem.
And may God bless you.
Thank you for what you said,
and I'm sure grateful to you
for this here key.
Well, thank you. And thank you all.
Now, Sergeant, the people of New York
would like to show their appreciation.
Is there anything we can do for you?
Well, there's just one thing
I'd like to ask you.
And that is?
Well, if it's all the same to everybody,
I sure would like to ride on the subway
on the Bronx Express.
I think we can arrange that.
Well, here we are.
I hope you will be comfortable here,
Sergeant York.
Well, if it ain't, I'd be pretty hard to please.
If there's anything you require,
all you will have to do is ask for it.
Thank you. Thank you, sir.
An awful lot of room
for just one fellow here.
This here is mighty thoughtful of you,
gentlemen.
I reckon you know I ain't seen my ma
for quite a spell.
So we understand.
Representative Hull.
Oh, yes, yes. Are they ready?
Put them on.
- Somebody for you, Sergeant.
- Me?
Thank you.
Hello. Hello there.
What?
Who is it?
I... I can't hear you.
- Who is it?
- What's that you're saying?
I can't hear you.

Put it up to your ear, Mother York.
Stand closer, Ma.
When are you coming home, Alvin?
I said, when are you coming home?
Oh, I'm glad, Son.
I'll tell her.
She's right here.
He wants to talk to you, Gracie.
It's me, Alvin. It's me, Gracie!
We're all in here in Pastor Pile's store.
He's got this here phone in here now.
Oh, I just can't wait to see you again,
Alvin.
I can't wait to see you.
Yeah, yeah. I'll be coming home, Gracie,
right away.
Yeah.
- Goodbye. Goodbye, Gracie.
- Goodbye, Alvin.
Bye.
Sure was nice to talk to the folks.
- I'm a-thanking you.
- You're welcome, Sergeant.
Just like the electric signs
down the street.
How do you like New York, Alvin,
as much as you've seen of it?
- Mr. Hull?
- Yes, Alvin?
I wanna be a-going home.
When do you think I can go?
- You're pretty anxious, I reckon.
- Yes, sir, I am.
I've got to get to work.
Well, as far as that goes,
there's plenty to do right here, Alvin.
What do you mean?
I've been wanting
to talk to you about this.
You're a pretty famous man now.
And judging by all these offers
you've been getting,
it seems a lot of people realize it.
For instance,

two companies want you
in motion pictures,
Ziegfeld wants you in an act
in his new Follies.
And here's an offer to appear
at the Winter Garden, that's a theater.
And here's a breakfast food manufacturer
who wants you to endorse his product.
What does that mean?
Well, you've to tell him how much
you like it, how much good it's done you.
I ain't never ate
any of that there breakfast food.
Doesn't seem to make any difference.
Anyway, I've totaled the offers so far
and they amount to around
a quarter of million dollars.
They're offering me all that money?
It's just a plain business proposition.
I sure could do a powerful sight
with that money.
There was a piece of bottomland
I was a-trying to get...
Here's your chance to get it.
Are they offering that money
because of what happened over there?
- Well...
- That's it, ain't it?
That's it.
What... What would you do, Mr. Hull?
Well, I think that's up to you, Alvin.
I reckon it is.
Take all the time you want to think it over.
I've done thought it over, Mr. Hull.
I ain't proud of what happened over there.
What we done in France
was something we had to do.
Some fellows done it ain't a-coming back.
So, the way I figure,
things like that ain't for buying and selling.
So I reckon I'll have to refuse 'em.
Would you be a-telling them that
for me, please?
And tell 'em I'm a-going home?

- I'll be more than glad to, Alvin.
- Thank you, Mr. Hull.
Here she comes, Zeke. Right on time.
Oh, there he is!
Alvin!
Oh, Alvin!
How are you?
Ma, I'm back.
I'm right glad, Son.
Hey, Alvin. How about your medals?
- What about 'em, George?
- I thought you'd be wearing 'em.
You'll be a-seeing 'em.
They better be a-something big.
As I was saying, Alvin,
of course, I always figured
on marrying you and Gracie myself,
but I ain't one to take the job away
from the Governor of the State.
Why, you're the dang-swangest hero
raised in these parts
since Daniel Boone and Andy Jackson.
Sure are, Alvin.
Hang on, Rosie.
Hey,
what about that there piece of land
I was aiming to get in Tomkins holler?
- It's still there, I reckon?
- Yep, it's still there.
Somebody else has got it by now,
I suppose.
Well, I couldn't rightly expect Zeb
to hold it for me all this time.
I sure would like to see that there
piece of land, though.
I reckon ain't no harm you seeing it, Alvin.
I'd like to be a-seeing it, too.
I'll let you off at the fork and
you and Gracie can walk over to the holler.
Hang on, everyone.
Hey, look here.
- Somebody's done fixed up this old bridge.
- Yeah, they have.
Gracie, I... I gotta talk to you.

It wasn't just the land
I was a-wanting to see.
There's something we got to talk about.
- Miss Gracie, I'm plumb worried.
- What about, Alvin?
Well, what with the governor fixing
to marry us
and all them people coming here
from all over...
Sure takes a body's breath away,
but I reckon we'll get through it all right.
- Well, it ain't just that I'm worried about.
- Well, what then?
Well, it sure looks like I ain't got nothing
to offer you excepting a big wedding.
Why, some girls don't even get that.
Well, I reckon you'd like a place to sleep,
wouldn't you?
Oh, I don't know.
I done a heap of sleeping
while you was away.
You sure ain't expecting
too much of a husband.
I'm expecting my husband to love me.
I reckon the good Lord
will take care of the rest.
Well, looks like he's done a heap already,
just a-having you. But...
Well, I was expecting to take over
from here myself.
I reckon you'll get to do your share.
No, Gracie, it can't be that a-way.
We got to wait.
Maybe in another two or three years,
if you're willing to wait...
Oh, but I ain't, that's the point.
- You mean you won't wait?
- There ain't no need of waiting.
Now, Alvin, you keep looking down
and don't you be looking up till I tell you.
Come on.
There! Now you can look.
What do you see, Alvin? Tell me.
It's yours, Alvin. It's all yours.

They give it to you.

The people of the state of Tennessee
for what you done.

- You mean...

- Only, it's 200 acres
and the house is bigger, with more
windows, and the kitchen's got a pump.

And it's for us.

The Lord sure does move
in mysterious ways.

Come on.