

FOR JIM

A Dramatic Monolog

by

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It was late afternoon at the Army Recruiting Station. The tired eyed Officer-in-charge leaned back in his swivel chair. It was then that he saw the boy. He was standing just inside the door, his trembling body, and dusty, tear-streaked face mute evidence of the sorrow in his little heart. As the officer started to speak, the boy, his great need overcoming his timidity, cried out:

Oh—oh please, sir,—I know what you're gonna say even before you say it. You're gonna tell me to go home. Please don't! Let me tell you first about Jim; maybe that will make things dif'fernt. Won't you listen to me—please?

Gee—thank you, sir—I—I won't take much of yer time—I—I—WANT TO JOIN THE ARMY! I tried to join the Navy, first, but they said I'd have to wait about ten more years. That's what they said at the Marines too; so you see I've just GOTTA join the army! I guess it is against the rules to take a fellow that's only nine, goin' on ten, but if he's big fer his age an' stronger than a ox—just feel my muscle! Cou—couldn't you just kinda make a mistake an' slip me in?—Huh?—Why, it's for Jim that I want to join up. He's my brother an' he's twenty-one. There was just me an, Pop an' Jim livin' together on the old farm—Jim remembers Mom but I don't—he's the one that always took care of me an' he made up fer not havin' her.

Gee, he was sure one swell guy to me! That is he was 'til he joined up—about a year ago. Pop didn't want him to go at first. He said, "Ain't it enough fer you to give yerself to raisin' food right here on the farm?" An' Jim said, "No, Pop, that ain't enough—I got to give myself, too." Pop didn't try to stop him after that; but I did! That night when he was milkin' ol' Star, I said, "Who's gonna take care of me if you go 'way? Who's gonna fight my battles? I'm fer changin' yer mind an' makin' you stay at home!" Jim just kinda laughed an' squirted a stream of milk at me an' said, "I'm goin' away to fight one of yer battles, Skeeter, an' if you change my mind for me, I might not love you afterward."

When he was through choring, Jim took me down to the big rock by the apple tree an' we ate apples an' Jim 'splained it all to me. He said he had to go an' so did a lot of others so that some day people all over the world could quit fightin' an' be happy again. It sounded swell when Jim said it that way. The next mornin' he left. I walked as far as the end of the lane with him. He wouldn't let us go to the station, --said somp'n about it bein' bad luck to see a sailor off to sea--. When he said good-bye to me, he leaned down an' squeezed me tight—I was bawlin' an' sayin' I was goin' with him—an' I can't ever forget what he said to me. He said, "Little boys can't go to war, an' I'm glad. Big boys go fer the sake of little tykes like you.

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