

THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

A Drama in One Act

by
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CHARACTERS:

PHILIP NOLAN: In Episode One, a man of twenty-five, handsome, dashing with a devil-may-care manner. He wears the uniform of a Lieutenant in the United States Army. In Episode Two, his hair has begun to turn gray at the temples. The buttons of his uniform are supposed to be changed for those without the U.S. insignia. In Episode Three, Philip is an old man. His hair is snow white and there are deep lines about his eyes and mouth. His body is bowed, although he now and then makes a pitiful attempt to regain his old uprightness. In Episode Four, all the marks of age are accentuated. He walk very feebly, with a shambling gait, and speaks in a trembling voice. (Note: there is such a marked change in the appearance of Philip Nolan from Episodes One and Two to Episodes Three and Four that the parts may be taken by different actors.)

HOWARD GRAFF: Around Nolan's age, fairly good-looking, but rather surly in manner. In Episode One, he is a Lieutenant. In Episode Two, he wears the shoulder straps of a major.

CAPTAIN SHAW: Middle-aged, gray-haired, with a short, gray beard. He has a deep voice and speaks with an air of authority.

ROSALIE RUTLEDGE: On her first appearance, a charming girl of seventeen. She wears her hair in curls, a tiny hat, and the tight-waisted trailing gown in the accepted style of that period. In Episode Two, seven years later, she has put up her hair and her hat and dress are slightly more matronly.

ROSALIE GRAFF: Her hair is also in ringlets but her hat is a broadbrimmed leghorn. Her tight-fitting dress is of the period of the Civil War days. For Episode Four, there need be no changes in makeup or hairdo but the hat should be different. The same dress may be worn with the addition of a short, black mantilla to give variety.

DR. HAMMOND: The conventional physician, age immaterial. This part may be doubled with Howard Graff, in which case Dr. Hammond should wear sideburns.

WILLIAM BROOKS: A good-looking young chap of around twenty-three in sailor's uniform. May wear a small mustache, if desired. In Episode Four, he is Captain of the ship, indicated by the shoulder straps.

SCENE: A stateroom which has been prepared for Nolan's occupancy on the S. S. Levant. Door up L. opens into a room containing his bunk. Door R. leads to other parts of the ship. In wall at back are two small portholes, concealed by drawn curtains. Between these is a wide, padded seat which extends across the back wall. Against wall down L. is a built-in bookcase containing a number of volumes, among which is the Presbyterian Book of Public Prayer. Against wall down R. is a desk with writing materials and a small chair in front of it. Down L.C. is a round table with a coal oil lamp on it. A large sleepy-hollow chair is at R. of this table. The furniture, though luxurious for a ship of that time, would be plain as judged by modern standards.

TIME: In four episodes.

Episode One: 1807

Episode Two: 1814

Episode Three: 1861

Episode Four: 1862

(Note: The success of this play depends in large measure upon the speed with which one episode follows another. It will be noted that none of the actors who are on the stage at the close of one scene appear

immediately in the scene following, and this time should be utilized for the necessary changes for makeup and costumes. An ideal presentation is one in which the interlude between the episodes is only long enough to play the patriotic music indicated in the text.)

PROPERTIES: Two cigars, handful of brass buttons, two swords, legal paper, newspaper, two messages, flag with thirteen stars, doctor's bag, telegram, box with stars with pins.

EPISODE ONE: 1807

At rise: Philip Nolan and Rosalie enter from R. followed by Graff and Captain Shaw.

- GRAFF: (In half-laughing, half-defiant voice to Rosalie, as they enter) I'll admit I did pay more attention to old Aaron Burr's plans to overthrow this government than I should, but at that they couldn't prove I was a traitor. (Showing he does like Philip) You might have gone Scott free, if you had kept a civil tongue in your head.
- NOLAN: All I said was "Damn the United States! I wish I may never hear its name again."
- GRAFF: Which roused the ire of old Colonel Morgan.
- NOLAN: So as a punishment he's made me a prisoner on this ship under sealed orders. (To the Captain, as he crosses L.) Is this my stateroom, Captain?
- CAPTAIN SHAW: Yes, sir. (Crosses L. and opens door) The bunk is in here.
- NOLAN: A suite, eh? Why, I'm to live in luxury!
- CAPT. S.: Our instructions are that you shall have the best of everything.
- NOLAN: (Comes down to table) I hope I don't have to get up at four bells to take my turn at the wheel?
- CAPT. S.: (Remains standing up L.) No, sir. You are to be treated as a prisoner of war, not as a criminal.
- NOLAN: (Carelessly seats himself on edge of table) Then I must say I feel I am in luck. Like a cat. I always land on my feet.
- CAPT. S.: (With a slight note of irony in his voice, as he crosses R.) I'm glad that you feel so well satisfied. (Looks at his watch) Visitors will be ordered ashore in five minutes. Good afternoon. (Salutes and exits R.)
- ROSALIE: (Rises from bench where she has been sitting, and crosses to Graff) I'd like a few words with Philip alone. Howard, will you go and come back for me later?
- GRAFF: (Stiffly) Yes. Since you ask it, I must necessarily grant your requests. (Exits R., holding himself very erect)
- NOLAN: (Speaks laughingly, as he rises and moves to Rosalie) Poor old Graff! He can't get over it that we were both suitors for your hand and now I'm the winner. Shall we ask him to be an usher at our wedding to mitigate his grief?
- ROSALIE: (Places hand on Philip's arm and speaks earnestly) Oh, Philip, don't speak so lightly! I'm frightened. Perhaps there never will be a wedding for you and me.
- NOLAN: (Piqued) Do you mean to break our engagement because temporarily I'm in some slight disgrace?
- ROSALIE: It's not that. But none of us know how long your imprisonment may last.
- NOLAN: (Reassuringly) Don't be anxious, sweetheart. What if I did say "My Country be damned! I wish never to hear its name again?" That's not murder. It's not even treason.
- ROSALIE: But those who heard you had fought to the death to secure America's independence. I'll never forget their faces as they listened.

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---