

Plot Summary

Whilst moving out of the house in which she has lived for 80 years, Edith Coleman discovers an old scrapbook from her childhood. The turn of every page rekindles memories of a time when war affected every aspect of her daily life, and these memories are eagerly recounted to the removal people helping her, and to us the audience. **(song – Wartime Memories)**

Firstly, we find ourselves in the front room of the same house, but at the outbreak of the Second World War. The Coleman family discusses the fact that, although war has been declared, nothing much seems to be actually happening! The only real use that Fred (Edith's scamp of a younger brother) can find for his gas mask is to make rude noises with it! **(song – This Phoney War)** However, as the days and weeks progress, Fred and Alice (Edith's younger sister) find themselves at the train station, bidding an emotional farewell to their family as, along with lots of other children, they are evacuated. **(song – Journey On A Train)** Edith's older brother, Sidney, will also be catching a train. He, however, will be travelling abroad to fight for his country, much to the worry of his parents.

The Blitz has ended the phoney war with a bang! As ARP wardens patrol **(song – Put That Light Out)**, local residents gather in the air-raid shelters. We hear of how rationing and those dreaded powdered eggs are the blight of their lives, but also how everyone is pulling together and literally digging for victory! **(song – Keep Our Spirits Flying)** Women are flocking to the factories and onto the land to keep the nation armed and fed **(song – Women At War)**, and the 'old boys' of the Home Guard are doing their bit too, if rather comically, to aid the war effort! **(song – We Are The Home Guard)**

As the USA enters the war, the young ladies are very excited at the arrival of American soldiers in Britain. At the dancehall we learn that, although popular with the female population, these charming visitors are seen as more of a threat to the local lads than Hitler himself! **(song – Hollywood Girls)** However, the harsher realities of the war are made apparent as we witness Sidney caught up in the fighting at Arnhem. He and his comrades, fearful for their lives, take a moment to write what could be their last ever letters home. **(song – Will You Be There?)** Will Sidney make it back, and will the Coleman family be reunited?

With the end of the war and VE celebrations in full swing, we understand that victory has come at a cost. Yet the overwhelming feeling is one of hope, and an appreciation of the enduring spirit that enabled families like Edith's to triumph over adversity. It is this spirit which is celebrated in a truly uplifting final song, **A Land Fit For Heroes.**