

Wartime Romance -
Cast of Characters

TOMMY: A determined no nonsense young man who coaches athletics at the local high school. He has enlisted in WWII so that he can fly planes. He wants to marry Margaret.

MARGARET: A young, whimsical girl getting by in a small town. She is looking for adventure. But, Tommy just might be all the adventure she can handle.

SELMER: Tommy's fun-loving best friend. He feels an obligation to enter WWII. He wants to settle down and have a family with Sarah.

SARAH: Tommy's sister and best friend to Margaret. She is strong willed and compassionate. She wants to marry Selmer.

FRED: The local elderly mailman. He wants the town operating smoothly. He is also the local preacher delivering sermons and the mail.

CHARLIE: A Chief Engineer Officer. He looks after Tommy's plane. He is an unhappy young, lonely soldier who wants his first kiss from a girl.

MAC: A timid, bright eyed, mail officer for the squadron. He wants to avoid conflict and please others.

DAUGHTER: A woman in her forties. She wants to read her parents love letters but is conflicted about doing so.

PEGGY: A quirky, high spirited girl that works behind the soda shop counter. She is smitten by Dave.

DAVE: Dave is crazy about Margaret and works his farm.

WARTIME ROMANCE SYNOPSIS: A daughter finds her parent's love letters in the attic. She knows she shouldn't read them, but she can't resist. She reads the first one and we are transported back to 1941. Prompted by a kiss before saying good-bye, Tommy, a WWII dive bomber pilot keeps hope alive by writing to a girl from his home town in Kansas. He fights to keep her love over a four year separation while fighting the war. The letters chronicle his sacrifice and longing. Margaret is constantly fighting her own emotions because of the uncertainty of Tommy's life, other suitors, the war and her new emerging identity in the work force. In the end the couple is reunited. Through the letters, the daughter learns valuable lessons about life.

TOMMY AND MARGARET

SETTING: **DAY 1942** Kansas. SL
MARGARET'S HOUSE is small, with a porch and swing, white gate and white fence. A mailbox out front is surrounded by red roses. The afternoon skies are bright blue. Sunflowers are projected on the scrim.

AT RISE: MARGARET comes out the front door scribbling a note. She goes through the gate to the mailbox. TOMMY enters SL.

MARGARET

Tommy! I didn't think you'd have the time to stop by. I was just on my way to the grocery store.

TOMMY

I can help you with the bags. I have a few hours before I leave.

MARGARET

Well, goodness. Groceries can wait.
(pause)

I guess everything is pretty exciting for you. I'm going to stay here and do accounting for the hardware store. They need women to fill the vacancies in town. If I were more adventurous, like you, I guess I'd enlist.

TOMMY

Maybe you'll write to me? Give me the local gossip.

MARGARET

Sure. But it won't be all that interesting.

TOMMY

They are moving us along. They tell us the ships are praying for help from flyers. I hope I never have to bail out... I'd hate to have a swimming contest with a shark.

MARGARET

That's not very funny.

(pause)

I had fun last night. It's been a long time since I've been to the Maple Leaf for a steak.

TOMMY

You did? I wasn't sure.

MARGARET

Are you accusing me of being cold again?

TOMMY

No, not at all. You were very... pleasant.

MARGARET

Well, the rumors are you still have a girlfriend in Iowa.

TOMMY

Oh, that! No, she bailed on me. But, it's looking like things are going to work out just fine. Listen, I know where I'm scheduled to go and what my chances are. But, I'll be back someday. I'm here now to grab a few good memories before I shove off. Good memories help a guy fight they say.

MARGARET

(searching her pocket)

Here, I found this picture of me. I thought if I saw you today, I'd give it to you. I'm not sure IF you want it or WHY you'd want it.

TOMMY

(nervous)

This is a real pretty picture. Won't the guys at the base be jealous. I'll get a picture of me to you, too. If you want it.

MARGARET

Yes. I'd like one.

MARGARET kisses him.

MARGARET

(embarrassed)

Someone told me a soldier shouldn't
leave home without a kiss.

TOMMY

That's not all bad.

MARGARET

Watch over Selmer, will you? Sarah
wanted to marry him before he left.

TOMMY

I know.

MARGARET

I'll walk you to the station. We can
grab a hamburger and a malt at the soda
shop. I'll just leave this note for
Fred.

TOMMY

Great. Do you think they will have malts
where I'm going?

MARGARET puts the note in the mailbox. THEY
exit behind the house SL. FRED, the pastor,
is also the mailman. HE enters in front of
the house SL carrying his mailbag and
singing..._

END SCENE

MAC & CHARLIE

SETTING: Lights go off on SL and up on SR revealing a tent (open sided with a desk inside) wooden crates and a cot that make up the **BARRACKS**. Palm trees shade the tent. On the back scrim is projected the date: **1942 Pacific Islands**.

SOUND EFX of planes taking off.
TOMMY and SELMER study maps.
CHARLIE, Chief Engineer, strums on his guitar. FOUR OTHER PILOTS sit in the background.

MAC, a young warrant officer, enters through the audience.

MAC

Smith. SGT. Smith... Ya got a letter.
(to AUDIENCE MEMBER.)
Sorry, nothing for you. Mail Call!

HE walks on stage to TOMMY.

MAC

This is for you Lt. Johnson. Mail from home for everyone. Sorry nothing for you, Charlie.

CHARLIE

(singing.)

No mail for me, nobody loves me, nobody cares. My mother has run off and my sister can't stand me, there's no mail for me again.

MAC

You have to WRITE a letter to get a letter.
(to SELMER.)
Here's a package for you, Sir.

CHARLIE

I would if I could write. My buddy back home runs a newspaper. He wanted me to write an article about what it's like being a soldier. But, I don't write good.

MAC

You don't write WELL.

CHARLIE

I KNOW!

MAC

What if I write this article for you and you put your name on it. Maybe someone will take pity on you and send you a letter.

CHARLIE

That would be great!

SELMER

Win this war and girls will be all over you, Charlie.

CHARLIE

You think so?

END SCENE

MARGARET & SARAH

SETTING: MARGARET'S HOUSE. On screen is a picture of a wheat field below a bright blue sky.

AT RISE: MARGARET and SARAH sit on the front porch looking at Life Magazines.

MARGARET

This letter was over a month ago!

(pause)

Oh, dear! A combat attack group.

Sarah, listen to this.

(pause)

"It's been awhile since I've seen you. When I came home on leave I wasn't sure about you. I was just gonna shake your hand and you kissed me and that just sort of settled things."

SARAH

Oh, Margaret, YOU KISSED HIM! You didn't tell me that!

MARGARET

I'm very patriotic. Where was I? Oh, yes.

(pause)

"I'm sending you a ring. It's a promise that I'll come back."

(pause)

Sarah, I can't accept a ring! I've only gone out with him a few times!

SARAH

He can send it, Margaret. You don't have to wear it.

MARGARET

"There's talk of pretty girls where I'm going. But I want nothing to do with that."

(exasperated)

Now, why did he have to tell me that?!

SARAH

Men! He's just teasing you. He's in the jungle! Do you think there's hula girls dancing in the middle of an air strip?

MARGARET

"Take care of that pretty figure. Not that I know what it looks like, but I did see you in shorts once." Has he always been like this?

SARAH

I'm afraid so. Now listen to mine.

(pause)

"When we first got here, I had a disagreement with some fella's. I socked one guy pretty hard. The guy was so stunned he started laughing. Now people call me Socs." Oh! Isn't that adorable? "Been watching movies. Saw THE KANSAN. There was so much shooting in it, I probably won't sleep tonight. Ha, Ha. Guess I'll be seeing you. Love, Selmer."

MARGARET PICKS UP THE MAGAZINE AGAIN

MARGARET

Sounds like they are getting into all kinds of trouble.

(pause)

You would look great in this new hairstyle. I wanted a new pair of suede shoes. But I already have three pair. That's all the government allows.

SARAH

Let's get some material to make a new dress. Soon everything will be rationed; material, coffee, gasoline, food. Let's join the WAACS.

MARGARET

Auxiliary is fun. Or we could join the WAVES and be in life and death emergencies or be a WASP and fly planes. Or we could stay here and keep ourselves out of trouble.

SARAH

We raise money for war bonds and work with the canteen. And we're planting a Victory Garden to feed the town. How is your job at Montgomery Ward?

MARGARET

Working is so much fun. Why get married?

SARAH

You can be married and work. Tommy wouldn't mind.

(pause)

Can you wash and style my hair?

MARGARET

Come on in and stick your head in the sink.

SARAH

Give me a manicure too?

MARGARET

I'll paint 'em red!

(pause)

What if they get hurt and fall in love with the nurses?

SARAH

What? That's nonsense? Besides you're the flirt!

MARGARET

I am not!

SARAH

You are too!

MARGARET

Oh, hi Dave!

(Dave walks by and stops at the fence)

END SCENE

MAJOR & TOMMY

PHILIPPINES FOXHOLE: 1943

MAJOR (OS)

Captain Johnson!

TOMMY

(TO THE OTHER GUYS)

It's the Major. Scat!

Tommy climbs out of the foxhole. THE MAJOR ENTERS.

MAJOR

Captain Johnson we have a problem.

TOMMY

We were just anxious to get back to duty, sir.

MAJOR

We?

TOMMY

Uh... What can I do for you, Sir?

MAJOR

What I'm about to ask you is top secret. This mission is off the radar.

TOMMY

We can be off the radar, Sir.

MAJOR

We?

TOMMY

You and I sir!

MAJOR

Yes. Good. This mission is volunteer. Just you and the target. You have a 50/50 chance. You'll be taking out a bridge near Baguio so that our guys on the ground and the people of Baugio will be safe.

TOMMY

Sir, I've been relieved of my squadron. I just got back from Bougainville. I had some leave at Pearl and I'm here to pack up my stuff to go home. I'm not suppose to be flying.

MAJOR

Sorry son, we are in the thick of it. One more year. Just one more.

TOMMY

I want to come in low. I'll need a three second delay on the drop so I can get out of there.

MAJOR

You'll have it. Good luck. God be with you. Your plane is ready. Get your affairs in order. Write your will. Write a letter home. Do it now.

TOMMY

Yes, Sir.

(Tommy goes upstage to his tent. He pours himself a drink.)

END SCENE

TOMMY & HOSTESS

SETTING: 1944 SR HAWAII OFFICERS
BAR (with phonograph).

The bar is a simple counter with a
tin roof and a few stools. There is
a table and two chairs. Tommy sits
writing a letter.

A USO Hostess enters.

"You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To" -
Instrumental played softly

TOMMY (VO)

"Well now, I didn't like your last
letter. How would you feel if I wrote
to you that you felt like a stranger to
me? That I was all mixed up? That I
wondered if I was still in love with
you? Oh well, at least you're truthful.
The thought of you is what's keeping me
alive and it's the only reason in the
world I'll make it back. Sorry for
balling you out but you need it. I have
to go up and play in the darkness a
little. Up there a guy thinks plenty."

HOSTESS

Hey there handsome. Happy July 4th!

TOMMY

Looks like we still have our
independence.

HOSTESS

Writing home? Everyone OK?

TOMMY

Yeah, they're doing just fine without
me.

HOSTESS

What's the matter with you? Don't be so
glum.

TOMMY

I have a lot on my mind. I'm not good
company tonight.

HOSTESS

So, come and dance your troubles away.

TOMMY

No. Not tonight. You're a fine girl.
But...

HOSTESS

But there's still someone at home?

TOMMY

No, not anymore. At least, I don't think
so.

HOSTESS

Fine, be a sour puss. I'll dance with
some of the other fly birds. If you
change your mind just let me know.

TOMMY

I will. Hey wait... let's just take
a walk.

END SCENE

TOMMY & SELMER

SETTING: 1945 NEW YEARS IN HAWAII.

SELMER HAS BEEN ASKED TO TAKE A TEST
FLIGHT

SELMER

I have to go, T. Watch Champ for me.
He's getting his picture taken for Life
Magazine.

(to CHAMP.)

Smile pretty. See you when I get back.

TOMMY

I'll get on the radio and keep you
company for take off.

SELMER exits. TOMMY takes Champ and goes
upstage to a radio desk.

TOMMY

Hey, Soc's. You there?

SELMER (OS)

Yeah. This plane has a bad case of the
hiccups.

TOMMY

Bring her back in. No reason to take
any chances. These maneuvers can wait.

SELMER (OS)

No, it stopped. I should ring her out a
little more. I think I'll just keep
going all the way to Kansas. Land it in
an open field. Sarah will run towards
me with open arms. We'll get married.
I'll become a commercial pilot. You
know they are starting to fly people
around the country?

TOMMY

Yeah, I heard that.

SELMER (OS)

Maybe someday I can fly Sarah around the
world.

TOMMY

Sounds like a great idea.

SELMER (OS)

You know, it's going to be O.K. with Margaret. She's just so in love with you she can't think straight.

TOMMY

Oh, I know.

SELMER (OS)

Hey, remember that Halloween when we took apart Old Man Larsen's hay cart and then put it back together on his roof?

TOMMY

Yeah. How about when...

SELMER (OS)

Where's that smoke coming from? Did I get hit?

TOMMY

Socs, what's going on?

SELMER (OS)

The plane is smoking.

TOMMY

Selmer, bail out! I'll come get you. Give me your coordinates.

SELMER (OS)

It's not that much smoke. It just started coughing and then... this plane is coming apart. I'm going down, T.

TOMMY

I'm on my way. Where are you?

SELMER (OS)

Not far from base. The co-ordinates are...

SFX - There are strident sounds from the engine, radio static and then silence.

TOMMY

Socs! Do you read me? Selmer!

Tommy runs off stage

END SCENE

SARAH & MARGARET

SETTING: 1944

On SL screen is a picture of a prairie dirt road covered in snow. On the scrim is a hazy blue and pink sky. FRED, the TOWNSFOLK, and MARGARET filter in to the memorial service for Socs. SARAH and her MOM enter and sit on a bench in the front.

The Townsfolk listen to the Barbershop Quartet sing at Selmers memorial service.

**COMING' IN ON A WING AND A PRAYER -
BARBER SHOP QUARTET**

The people begin to slowly exit the service. Margaret sits on a bench alone.

Margaret gets up to leave just as Sarah enters.

SARAH

Oh. I thought I'd come back and be alone here for awhile.

MARGARET

Sarah, are you going to be all right?

SARAH

Leave me alone, Margaret. I knew this could happen. We could lose Tommy too! Just, go away.

MARGARET

Sarah!.. you don't want to be alone, now. I'M SO SORRY.

(pause)

I just know Tommy is going to be all right.

SARAH

I don't want to hear you mention Tommy again. Loving is a very brave thing to do. You've been a coward, Margaret. My brother is better off without you. I don't know why I wanted you in our family in the first place.

MARGARET

Sarah! That's not fair! Tommy knows I broke it off with Dave. At least he should if he got my letter. You don't mean that.

SARAH

Just leave me be. Go out with whoever you want. Join the WAC'S and leave us alone. Quit mixing everybody up!

SARAH exits. Margaret sits back on the bench alone.

(END OF SCENE)

CHARLIE, MAC & TOMMY

SETTING: **The OFFICERS BAR HAWAII**
1945. TOMMY and MAC play cards.

CHARLIE enters and slams a letter
on the bar in front of MAC.

CHARLIE
Would you like to explain this!

MAC
I don't have to explain anything to you!

They fight.

TOMMY
Hey, what's going on!

CHARLIE
He stole my letter!

MAC
I took one out of 100! You hoarded the
rest. You didn't even thank me. Do you
know where you'd be if I hadn't written
that letter for you? You'd still be
singing silly sad songs on your stupid
old guitar.

TOMMY
Hey, are you talking about that bag of
letters you got?

CHARLIE
Yeah! He's been writing to a girl that
wrote to me, first! He stole that
letter.

THEY fight again.

TOMMY
HEY HOLD ON! There's enough fighting
going on around here. You guys are good
friends.
(to CHARLIE.)
So, he wrote you a letter and then he
took one. A letter for a letter.
Sounds fair. What happened to the other
99 girls? Haven't you corresponded to
any of them?

CHARLIE

I did! None of them wrote back.

MAC

That's cause you can't write in the first place.

They fight again. TOMMY splits them apart.

CHARLIE

He took the best letter of the bunch!
Now, he's going home to marry her!

TOMMY

Really? Nice work, son.

MAC

(happily.)

Thank you, sir.

CHARLIE

(angry.)

It's not right!

TOMMY

O.K., listen you two. I woke up this morning in a rare good mood. You are not spoiling that for me. We have to fix this, right here, right now.

(to CHARLIE.)

You should have given him a letter for helping you out in the first place.

MAC

I asked him real nice for just ONE!

CHARLIE

And I said NO!

TOMMY

Charlie! Don't be an idiot. Now, Mac is going to help you write one more letter to a girl in your home town. Someone you can date when you get back. Isn't that right, Mac?

(to CHARLIE.)

Then YOU are on your own.

(to BOTH.)

Agreed?

MAC

Well, O.K. Sir.

TOMMY

All right. Shake on it. Guys, we're almost home.

MAC

Come on, Charlie. I'll write you the best letter you never wrote.

CHARLIE

Can you teach me how to write a good one?

MAC

Sure! I should have done that in the first place.

CHARLIE

Do you know poetry?

MAC

Let's not get carried away.

MAC and CHARLIE exit. Tommy sits back down at the bar and writes a letter

TOMMY

"Dearest, I just got your letter dated months ago. So, you didn't have much in common with your boyfriend? I never doubted you. Forget about you mixing me up or being all mixed up. I'm almost home. We will start where we left off: holding you in my arms, kissing you hello and not good-bye this time. You'll meet me in Kansas City and run into my arms. I'd like to get a Buick convertible. I still have a rough bit ahead, but I'm almost through out here. My mom says she thinks we'll work things out and that you are a swell girl. I may need to get my nerves settled down, but once I see you everything will be heaven. Love, Tommy.

END SCENE

PEGGY & DAVE

VIC THEATER. PEGGY AND DAVE ARE
WAITING FOR THE MOVIE.

PEGGY

I thought we were seeing "It's a
Wonderful Life" with Jimmy Stewart.

DAVE

That's the evening movie. Today it's
"The Beast with Five Fingers".

PEGGY

Can I hang on to you if I get scared?

DAVE

Sure. I've missed this old movie house.

PEGGY

Is that ALL you miss?

DAVE

You mean Margaret?

PEGGY

NO! I MEAN ME! HONESTLY. WHAT'S THE
MATTER WITH ME?

DAVE

Nothing, Peggy. I thought about asking
you to come visit me in Washington.

Peggy stares at him in disbelief.

PEGGY

You did?

DAVE

I thought we were just friends.
(pause)
I'm sort of seeing someone now who works
at the Capitol.

PEGGY

Of course you are.

DAVE

But, it's not serious.

PEGGY
(excitedly)

It's not?

(pause)

Well then... what is Washington like
this time of year?

THEY GO INTO THE THEATER

END SCENE

TOMMY & MARGARET

SETTING: 1945 A TRAIN STATION in Kansas. It is a Winter afternoon. Margaret is sitting at a bench. Welcome home Band is visible on stage welcoming home the soldiers. The TOWNSFOLK enter and wait for their loved ones. The soldiers get off the train, greet the crowd and then exit. At the end of the song Margaret is left alone. She checks the arrival board.

Tommy slowly goes to her.

MARGARET

You made it. I was here earlier and didn't see you. I thought I had the wrong train. I came back to check the schedule one more time.

TOMMY

Sorry, I was talking to somebody on the train until it pulled out. I wasn't thinking anyone would be here.

MARGARET

Of course we'd be here!
(pause)
You look no worse for wear.

TOMMY

You haven't changed a bit. That's not true. You are more beautiful than ever.

MARGARET

(nervous)

Oh, listen to you!
(pause)
The kids at the high school are ready for you to start coaching them again.

TOMMY

Would you go out with me? You know, a proper first date. All planned out. We can get dolled up and go into Kansas city.

MARGARET

Sounds like fun. You can take me out in
your new Buick convertible.

TOMMY

Yeah. I need to look around for one.
They are hard to get.

MARGARET

Sarah and I found one. We bought it with
the money you sent her. It's waiting out
front for you.

TOMMY

Really! Let's drive all over Brown
County! And I don't care WHO sees us!

SHE rushes into HIS arms. The MUSIC
SWELLS...

END SCENE