

Assignment Home
The Face

MUSIC. [Program theme full, then segue to backing for following.]

NARRATOR. Stop now and think of them. Stop this minute and think of these husbands, sons, brothers, lovers ... this soldier of yours who has gone away. Think of him and what do you see? His face. A face that you've known and loved and held close. ... All right now. Think of this.

MUSIC. [Here, takes on an agitated quality. Just a suggestion.]

NARRATOR. It's going to hurt, but think of this. Think of that face -- burned, scorched, almost destroyed [Quickly, as though to alleviate the pain.] All right; it hurts. But, you think; plastic surgery. With plastic surgery, the army can restore that face, can make it as good as new.

MUSIC. [Out.]

NARRATOR. Well ... can it? And even if it can't, does that matter so much? Do you love a man for his face?

MUSIC. [Brief. Plaintive. Then back.]

NARRATOR. We are still at war, still every bit as much at war now as we were in November 1942. Remember those days? Remember Casablanca? No. Not Ingrid Bergman; not Humphrey Bogart. Casablanca -- the town where boys from 48 states died to secure the invasion of North Africa. There were some who didn't die but who wished they had. Like T/5 Harold Ingalls. He was in the Transportation Corps ... unloading gasoline from supply ships.

MUSIC. [Out.]

NARRATOR. They strafed him while he was unloading that gasoline and a ten gallon can he was holding burst into flame.

INGALLS. [A horrible scream.]

[Pause.]

NARRATOR. No; T/5 Harold Ingalls didn't die. But he lost his ears, his nose, and the upper part of his face. Casablanca.

MUSIC. [Punctuation. Plaintive backing again for following.]

NARRATOR. Casablanca was the beginning. We went on to Gafsa and

Kasserine

Pass. Harold Ingalls stayed behind and had three operations on what used to

be his face. We went on to Hill 609 and Tunis and Bizerte ... and Harold

Ingalls had four more operations on his face. Seven operations by the time

we were preparing for Sicily. Seven operations by the time he was sent back

to this country. Seven operations and T/5 Harold Ingalls from East Roxbury,

Connecticut, still didn't have a face.

MUSIC. [Punctuation. Then back first two lines of following. Under music, in

B.G., bring in sound of Virginia, laughing and kidding with a couple of boys.

Keep in B.G.]

NARRATOR. In Valley Forge General Hospital, they bring him into a ward filled

with other men with bandaged faces. He just lies there; he doesn't talk to

anyone. He can hear some of them kidding, one even laughing over some joke

with a pleasant, tired-faced WAC Lieutenant. He just lies there. Once or

twice, the Lieutenant smiles at him. But he just lies there ... wonders how

she can look at them, wants to be sick, wants to die.

VIRGINIA. [Off... laughingly.] All right, all right. I'll get it.

Don't

rush me.

[Footsteps coming on. They start to go fast, stop, come back.]

VIRGINIA. Would you like some, too? [No answer. Pause.] Would you like

some beer, too?

INGALLS. No.

VIRGINIA. You're allowed to have it in this ward and I'm on my way to get

some. It wouldn't be any trouble.

INGALLS. No.

VIRGINIA. O.K. If you change your mind, just sing out. [Pause.] I ...

think I owe you an apology.

INGALLS. For what?

VIRGINIA. For sort of picking you up, trying to start a conversation. You

see, when they brought you in this morning, Major Biddle -- he's your surgeon
-- told me you'd been at Casablanca.

INGALLS. So what.

VIRGINIA. Well, I had a cousin there. In transportation, too. I was wondering
if you -- his name's Turner. Dick Turner.

INGALLS. A lieutenant.

VIRGINIA. Yes!

INGALLS. He's all right.

VIRGINIA. Were you in the same company?

INGALLS. No.

VIRGINIA. But you knew him?

INGALLS. He's all right.

VIRGINIA. I--

INGALLS. [Tightly.] Go away, will you?

VIRGINIA. I'm sorry. I should have realized you'd be sleepy after that trip.

INGALLS. I'm not sleepy. Just go away. Go away!

MUSIC. [Sting. Then hold under.]

NARRATOR. First Lieutenant Virginia Turner heard from her cousin yesterday
and knows he is all right. But 1st Lieutenant Turner has a job, a job that
must begin by striking up conversations with men who fear they will
always be
alone now. First Lieutenant Turner, you see, is an Army psychiatrist.

MUSIC. [Punctuation. Then back following.]

NARRATOR. When T/5 Harold Ingalls lost his face, he lost something else: his
heart. That, too, must be restored. That, too, is a problem for the three
people who sit now in a conference room in the hospital a few days after
Ingalls' arrival: Lt. Turner, his psychiatrist; Major Biddle, his plastic
surgeon; and Col. Trasker, chief surgeon.

MUSIC. [Out.]

COLONEL. His mental condition is that bad.

VIRGINIA. I'm afraid so, Colonel.

COLONEL. And medically?

MAJOR. Seven operations already. Before he's through -- at least twenty more, sir.

COLONEL. Conservatively, two years then.

MAJOR. If there are no major setbacks.

VIRGINIA. Two years.

MAJOR. At least.

VIRGINIA. Are you a pessimist, Major?

MAJOR. I'm a surgeon. Two years.

[Pause.]

COLONEL. Well ... let's get down to work. What happens when you've given him a face, Major?

MAJOR. Lieutenant?

VIRGINIA. Discharge, I'm afraid. The shock was much too much for him.

MAJOR. How much do you think he knows now?

VIRGINIA. Of what his face will be like when you're through?

MAJOR. Yes.

VIRGINIA. A little now. But when he begins talking to the others, when you begin telling him what you're going to do...

MAJOR. He'll realize.

VIRGINIA. Yes. Sooner or later, they all realize the truth.

COLONEL. What about his seeing his family, Lieutenant?

VIRGINIA. I don't think he's ready for them yet, sir.

COLONEL. What about operations?

VIRGINIA. They're our only hope. If he begins to see, to understand what Major Biddle can do--

MAJOR. Two years, Lieutenant. Two years to build a man inside and out.

VIRGINIA. I know.

MAJOR. Think you can last two years, Lt. Turner?

VIRGINIA. Major, every night, I pray more psychiatric workers will suddenly join up in droves. Then every morning, I look at those boys and I just pray the day will last long enough for me to get to all of them.

MAJOR. Better pray you'll last long enough. Ingalls is going to be a tough one.

MUSIC. [Transition and back following.]

NARRATOR. Harold Ingalls' mother used to joke about his eyelashes. They were so long, she said, it wasn't fair. Now, T/5 Ingalls has no eyelashes at all. No eyebrows ... and the lids over his harsh blue-grey eyes are so burned it is hard to shut them. He'd like to shut them, though. He'd like to shut out the world of mirrors and of other people's eyes which might flinch looking at him. Across the ocean, the remainder of his buddies are unloading ships in Sicily now. He doesn't care. He doesn't care to listen to Major Biddle and Lt. Turner as they sit by his bed on this rain-soaked morning. He doesn't care about anything.

MAJOR. I'm going to like working on you, Ingalls.

VIRGINIA. The Major always likes a tough job. Makes him outdo himself.

MAJOR. And I'm going to play fair with you. I'm going to tell you exactly what I'm doing and exactly how I think you're coming along.

INGALLS. I can see.

MAJOR. Sometimes, you can't see improvement. Even so far, you've come a long way.

INGALLS. Yeah. Across an ocean.

MAJOR. No. You have... Want a cigarette?

INGALLS. I've got some.

MAJOR. There was a boy we discharged last week whose face had been burned. Light?

INGALLS. Thanks.

MAJOR. He couldn't do that for a year.

INGALLS. Do what?

MAJOR. Look at a match without flinching. You've come a long way.

[Slight pause.]

INGALLS. I can still see.

VIRGINIA. The Major showed me this picture of you. What eyelashes!

INGALLS. My mother-- [Cuts himself.]

VIRGINIA. What?

INGALLS. Nothing.

MAJOR. I thought that would be a good place to start. With your eyelids.

Eyelashes; eyebrows. What do you think? [Pause.] What do you think of starting there?

INGALLS. [Slowly.] I don't care where you start. I don't care if you start at all, I don't-- [His voice falters. He stops.]

VIRGINIA. Maybe you don't care now, but you will when you see what the Major can do, Harold.

MAJOR. You thought your eyelashes were long? You can have the longest eyelashes in the world. You see, the hair I use is going to come from the back of your neck. It'll look like lashes but it'll grow. You'll have to give your lashes and brows a haircut.

INGALLS. Like a freak.

MAJOR. Son, I'm only doing what I said. Playing fair: telling you the truth.

But you'll have fine looking eyelashes and eyebrows.

VIRGINIA. It's not so tough to cut them, Harold.

INGALLS. Do what you want.

MAJOR. Well... we'll start this afternoon. Coming, Lieutenant?

VIRGINIA. Not just yet, Major.

MAJOR. All right. I'll surprise you yet, Ingalls.

[Pause.]

VIRGINIA. You've got the best plastic surgeon in the hospital.

INGALLS. Will you go away, please?

VIRGINIA. No. I'm sorry, but I've got to tell you what I'm playing on this team.

INGALLS. I heard. You're a psychiatrist.

VIRGINIA. Frightening word, isn't it?

INGALLS. Go away, will you?

VIRGINIA. No. Now don't roll over to the other side because I'll just come around there. I don't know what you think a psychiatrist is, Harold, but it doesn't matter. I know what I am. I'm the Human Gripe Box. Anytime you want to blow your top, come into my office.

INGALLS. And have a heart to heart talk.

VIRGINIA. No. Slam the door in my face when you're finished if you feel like it. If you want to talk, O.K. If you don't -- also O.K.

INGALLS. I don't want to talk now.

VIRGINIA. No, you want me to go away. Because you think I'm sorry for you and you hate that. I'm not sorry for you, Harold. You see, I know what the Major can do. I know what you're going to look like when he's finished. I'm just sorry for myself.

INGALLS. Why?

VIRGINIA. Giving you a new face is comparatively easy. That's cold medical science. Skin grafting, cartilage grafting, hair grafting. It's not really easy, but the Major can do it whether you help or not. The point is, though, that right now, if you went to sleep right now and woke up with the beginnings of a Hollywood face, you wouldn't care. And that's where I come in, Harold -- or did they call you Hal?

INGALLS. Hal.

VIRGINIA. You don't care. You won't give an inch. You're a stubborn

obstinate
cuss. [Pause.] Well ... it's my problem. You're certainly a tough
character.
So long.

INGALLS. So long.

[Footsteps.]

INGALLS. Lieutenant...

VIRGINIA. [Coming on with footsteps.] Yes?

INGALLS. I--

VIRGINIA. Now don't tell me you're going to break down and apologize?

INGALLS. I-I was just wondering. Could... could you get me some beer,
please?

[Slight pause.]

VIRGINIA. Coming up!

MUSIC. [Only a slight note of triumph ... then back again to the
plaintive,
wistful strain for the following.]

NARRATOR. Across the sea, the supply ships are being bombed now at
Salerno.
Here, Harold Ingalls is still without ears, without a nose, without a
face,
really. But eyelashes are starting to grow. And eyebrows. He talks to
the boy
in the next bed now; he talks to the Major about building a nose; he
gets
beer each day from Lt. Turner. But although he is allowed to walk
around the
hospital, he will not leave the area about his bed; he will not leave
the
ward to go to Lt. Turner's office; he will not leave his world to go
into
that other one; that world where men have faces, where men have eyes,
where
men might look and turn away.

VIRGINIA. [Coming on.] Well! Good afternoon!

INGALLS. [He must not be too cheerful.] Hello, Lieutenant.

VIRGINIA. So you finally decided to do some work around here.

INGALLS. Getting exercise.

VIRGINIA. Pushing a broom?

INGALLS. It's something to do.

VIRGINIA. Said he, coyly lowering his eyelashes.

INGALLS. They feel funny.

VIRGINIA. They don't look funny.

INGALLS. Honest?

VIRGINIA. Yes. Honest ... Well, I'll be seeing you.

INGALLS. Do you have to go?

VIRGINIA. Hal, I missed lunch today and if I don't get to the P.X. for a cup of coffee, there'll be one lieutenant less in this world.

INGALLS. You coming back?

VIRGINIA. No. Not this afternoon.

INGALLS. Oh.

VIRGINIA. [Going off with footsteps.] I'll see you tomorrow.

INGALLS. I--

[Footsteps stop.]

INGALLS. I'll walk you to the door.

VIRGINIA. O.K.

[Footsteps.]

VIRGINIA. You know that hospital zoot suit of yours is the best fit I've seen.

INGALLS. Yeah. It's pretty good.

VIRGINIA. You'd be the envy of the P.X.

INGALLS. Yeah.

VIRGINIA. You don't know those boys there. They're worse than a pack of females. If they're not comparing operations, they're arguing over who has the zoot suit. Well ... this is where I leave you.

INGALLS. For a cup of coffee.

VIRGINIA. And a ham sandwich.

INGALLS. I-- [She waits. A pause.] I-- [Another good pause.]

VIRGINIA. [Softly.] Why don't you try, Hal?

INGALLS. I--

VIRGINIA. Try.

[Pause.]

INGALLS. I -- guess it's about time I bought you a beer, isn't it?

MUSIC. [A short soaring sweep ... then a throbbing motif under -- like the heavy, rapid beat of a heart.]

NARRATOR. They walk along the corridors now, this Lieutenant who is as frightened as the boy with her, but who talks, easily, lightly, pleasantly. This Lieutenant and this boy without a face, this boy whose knees are beginning to tremble, this boy who wants to run back to his own, safe world.

MUSIC. [Out sharply.]

VIRGINIA. Shall we go in?

[Pause.]

INGALLS. Sure.

[His hand takes the doorknob, rattles it for a second, and then he pulls open the door violently. Immediately, a blast of juke box music and loud babble of bright male voices.]

VIRGINIA. It's always jammed at this hour. You can trust me to -- there's a table. Quick!

JOHNNY. [Off.] Hi, Lieutenant!

VIRGINIA. Hi Johnny. How're the legs?

JOHNNY. I'm trying 'em on tomorrow.

VIRGINIA. Good! Come on, Hal.

INGALLS. O.K

VIRGINIA. Got it! I'll hold on for dear life while you get the beers.

INGALLS. What?

VIRGINIA. You're not going to back down on that offer, are you?

INGALLS. No, but --

VIRGINIA. You get them at that counter over there.

[Slight pause.]

INGALLS. I can't.

VIRGINIA. Don't you have any money?

INGALLS. Yes.

VIRGINIA. That's all you need, then. Go on.

[Slight pause.]

INGALLS. O.K.

NARRATOR. He gets up and walks through the crowd of boys in maroon hospital robes ... boys with one arm or one leg, boys in wheel chairs, boys bound in bandages. He doesn't look at them; he's afraid to look at them; he's afraid to give his order. And then, at last, he says:

INGALLS. [Falteringly.] Two beers, please.

GIRL. [Neither too pleasant nor too curt.] You'll have to wait turn, soldier.

NARRATOR. She doesn't look up -- this girl behind the counter, this girl, who is not in army clothes, this rather pretty dark girl who is a civilian. She hasn't seen him yet. His heart is a stone in his throat; his hands burn around the coins he holds; his knees shake against the counter. And then the girl looks at him.

GIRL. [Pleasantly.] Sorry to keep you waiting. We're awful busy this time of day. What'll it be?

INGALLS. [With a great surge of happiness.] Two of the biggest beers you got!

MUSIC. [Joyous, triumphant. Then hold down as backing for:]

NARRATOR. Now Harold Ingalls is being rebuilt inside and out. Across the ocean, supply ships are blown to bits off Anzio beachhead. Here, for three weeks, Harold Ingalls' right arm is bound to the side of his face so that the living flesh from inside his arm can be grafted as skin for a new cheek. It's uncomfortable, it's painful ... But Harold Ingalls' eyes are bright and

if he could laugh, he would... Across the ocean, they struggle to clear Naples harbor for supply ships and then they struggle harder to get supplies through to Cassino Abbey. Here, in Valley Forge General, Harold Ingalls has tissue taken from his abdomen to make a lining for his new nose, has cartilage for that nose taken from between his ribs. Painful, tiring, and it [By this point, the music has taken on a slightly monotonous quality: This is a long, hard job.] takes so long. He goes out now, past the P.X. world, past the hospital world, into the civilian world on an overnight pass. But what does he do there?

MUSIC. [Out sharp.]

NARRATOR. He goes to a dark movie and then to a dim bar where he sits in the last booth and orders double bourbons until he is quietly tight. Then he goes back to the hospital. You see, even now, Harold Ingalls still does not have a face. Even now, he is a very frightened boy.

MUSIC. [Plaintive, again.]

NARRATOR. As the supply line advances with our army past Rome, towards Florence, Harold Ingalls' nose begins to take shape. His face begins to look like a face. His heart begins to feel like a heart, not like a wound... There is something that must be told him, though, something that Major Biddle must tell him. And he does one morning as Harold Ingalls drives golf balls on the range behind the hospital.

[Sound of golf ball being smacked.]

MAJOR. Pretty good.

INGALLS. What is it, sir? You're a busy guy. You didn't come out here to watch my stance.

MAJOR. No. Can I try a couple?

INGALLS. Sure.

MAJOR. Thanks ... Hal, a long time ago, I told you I'd play fair with you. [Smack of golf ball.] Not bad. For a surgeon. Well ... I've given you eyelashes and eyebrows. But the hair is from the back of your neck; it grows;

it's not the hair other people have for lashes and eyebrows.

INGALLS. Another ball, sir?

MAJOR. Please ... Thanks. I've taken skin from your abdomen, your neck, your arms for cheeks, for your nose, for the beginnings of an ear. [Smack of golf ball.] Well, take that cheek. The skin is smooth, it's neat. But, it comes from your abdomen. Abdominal tissue wasn't meant for smiling. When you smile ... son, when you smile, it's not like when other people smile. [Smack of golf ball.] When you leave here, you'll have features. You'll have a face. But it'll be a plastic face. Ten years from now, it'll look a lot better. But -- well, the truth is -- I'm not perfect, plastic surgery isn't perfect. Not yet. You'll always have a plastic face, son.

INGALLS. [Quietly.] Could I shoot a couple, sir?

MAJOR. Sure.

INGALLS. Thanks. [Smack of golf ball.] Hooked that one.

MAJOR. Not too bad.

INGALLS. I knew it, sir.

MAJOR. You did?

INGALLS. Yeah, I've watched what you've done. I -- talked to other fellows, I've seen them. I know. [Smack of golf ball.] I guess I kind of hoped that... well, I guess all of us -- like this -- hope that ... Well, anyway, I knew.

MAJOR. Son, I know it's a tough thing to take. But if you can remember, if you can understand that a face--

INGALLS. Sir ... please don't. I -- I think I know what you're going to say and ... maybe I'm a jerk. It's -- like my not letting the folks come to see me. You see, I know what I look like. I know my face -- well, I guess you're supposed to be able to get used to anything. But having a-- it's kind of hard, sir, it's kind of awful hard.

MUSIC. [Wistful, poignant, brief.]

[Door opens and shuts slowly.]

INGALLS. [Very down.] Hello, Lieutenant.

VIRGINIA. [Pitching herself to his mood.] Hello. Sit down.

INGALLS. Thanks.

VIRGINIA. Just see the Major?

INGALLS. Yeah.

VIRGINIA. Pretty low?

INGALLS. Kind of crawling around the bottom, I guess.

VIRGINIA. Me, too.... I've had a bad morning.

INGALLS. Huh?

VIRGINIA. Remember how you were when you first got here? Well, they brought in a kid named Mac Goldstein, a few days ago. Nineteen years old.

INGALLS. Oh yeah.

VIRGINIA. Pretty bad case.

INGALLS. Bad as I was?

VIRGINIA. No. That's just it. You wouldn't talk at all. This boy's bitter. And that's the kind you can usually bring around pretty fast. I've just gotten no place, though.

INGALLS. That's too bad.

VIRGINIA. He's so unhappy, it gets me down. If I could only-- Hal, I've got an idea that might work. Would you do me a favor?

INGALLS. What?

VIRGINIA. Would you do me a favor?

INGALLS. If I can.

VIRGINIA. You can do this. Hal -- will you talk to Goldstein?

INGALLS. Me?

VIRGINIA. Yes. Your face used to be much worse than his is now even when you first went to the P.X. And you go into town now. O.K. It isn't so wonderful, but it isn't so bad. You do it. And if you could tell him that ...

INGALLS. Can I also tell him he'll never have a real face?

VIRGINIA. You know more about that than I do. You know how it feels.
If you
think he can take it now -- tell him. But talk to him ... please.

INGALLS. Lieutenant, I'd do anything for you but ...

VIRGINIA. I know I picked a bad time, but I'd appreciate it so much,
Harold.

INGALLS. I don't know. I don't think I could -- talk to anyone now ...
I'd
better go.

VIRGINIA. All right. Sure.

INGALLS. So long.

[Door opens.]

VIRGINIA. [Slightly off.] So long.

[Door shuts. Footsteps slow. Ingalls starts to whistle softly, sadly,
"I
Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby," cuts right after the beginning
of
the next line.]

GOLDSTEIN. [Low ... bitterly.] You're not kidding, bud. [Footsteps
continuing
under this. Now they stop, hesitate, then go back a few steps.]

INGALLS. Your name's Goldstein, isn't it?

GOLDSTEIN. Yeah.

INGALLS. Mine's Ingalls. Mind if I sit down for a smoke?

GOLDSTEIN. I don't care if you burn.

INGALLS. I have. Cigarette?

GOLDSTEIN. No, thanks.

INGALLS. Where'd you get your facial?

GOLDSTEIN. New Guinea.

INGALLS. North Africa for me. You're not so bad. You've got both ears
and
most of your nose.

GOLDSTEIN. [Sarcastically] Yeah. Every night when I say my prayers, I
thank
God I've got most of my nose.

INGALLS. When I got here, the upper part of my face was gone as well as my ears.

GOLDSTEIN. No kidding?

INGALLS. Sure. This is all phony and the nose, too.

GOLDSTEIN. It looks pretty good.

INGALLS. It looks-- [He catches himself.] Yeah ... It looks pretty good. The other day, I was in a bar in town and I ran into a fellow who--

GOLDSTEIN. You go into town?

INGALLS. Sure. I'd go crazy sitting around here.

GOLDSTEIN. I'd rather go crazy.

INGALLS. Than what?

GOLDSTEIN. Than be a walking freak to scare people.

INGALLS. Thanks.

GOLDSTEIN. I didn't mean you--

INGALLS. I know what I look like. Judas, the first time I went into town, I didn't even have a nose.

GOLDSTEIN. What happened?

INGALLS. Oh -- some of 'em stared; some of 'em didn't. I went in a bar and got plastered.

GOLDSTEIN. I'd like to get plastered. I'd like to get good and plastered. Every time I think of what I look like, I want to get plastered. Every time I think of what I'm going to look like--

INGALLS. Like me.

GOLDSTEIN. No.

INGALLS. Yeah. I know, kid.

GOLDSTEIN. No.

INGALLS. Kid -- I know. When I get tight enough, I look in a mirror, I know.

GOLDSTEIN. Well ... I'm not going to be momma's little beauty.

INGALLS. Beauty's only skin deep.

GOLDSTEIN. Tell it to the world.

INGALLS. No. I figure! I got a bum face. O.K. But it isn't a guy's face that counts in the long run, it's the guy himself. It's what he is.

GOLDSTEIN. It says here.

INGALLS. It's what we've gotta figure, kid. I've got a long life ahead of me. You've got a longer one. We're sunk if we don't figure that way!

[Slight pause.]

GOLDSTEIN. You don't figure that way yet ... do you?

INGALLS. Well ... anyway I'm trying to.

[Pause.]

GOLDSTEIN. When you get plastered ... who do you go with?

INGALLS. There used to be a fellow but -- he was discharged last week.

GOLDSTEIN. Was he -- like us?

INGALLS. Yeah. So now I go alone.

GOLDSTEIN. If -- if I can get a pass ... can -- I go with you?

INGALLS. Sure! You know it makes it good, when there are two of you.

MUSIC. [Plaintive. Brief.]

GOLDSTEIN. Hey, Hal, where you been?

INGALLS. Over with Lt. Turner.

GOLDSTEIN. Well, come on. We'll miss the bus--

INGALLS. I'm not going into town, Goldy.

GOLDSTEIN. This is a fine time to welch on me, you one eared buzzard. Two weeks ago, when I didn't feel like going, I went just the-- what's the matter?

INGALLS. The family's coming.

GOLDSTEIN. Here?

INGALLS. Yeah. Remember last week I told you the Loot talked me into it?

GOLDSTEIN. She can talk anybody into anything.

INGALLS. Well ... they're at the gate now.

GOLDSTEIN. Where they coming?

INGALLS. Here.

GOLDSTEIN. You want me to stick around?

INGALLS. Would you?

GOLDSTEIN. Sure.

INGALLS. She's going to talk to them first.

GOLDSTEIN. Who came?

INGALLS. My mother and my brother, she said. Bill's O.K. He's pretty tough.

He's been around. But my mother....

GOLDSTEIN. Yeah. Remember mine?

INGALLS. I told you not to let her come.

GOLDSTEIN. Try and stop her. Then all that crying. Gets me the way she keeps coming back and keeps crying. And she wants me to come home for a weekend.

INGALLS. You'll have to go sometime.

GOLDSTEIN. You haven't.

INGALLS. I'm a lot worse than you. I don't want to go till.... Goldie, how do I look? Straight out now. No oil. How do I look?

GOLDSTEIN. You don't look bad, Hal. Honest you don't.

INGALLS. Phony, though.

GOLDSTEIN. Well -- a little. You can tell something's a little wrong. But you can't tell what. I think you look pretty good.

INGALLS. No oil now.

GOLDSTEIN. No oil. You do.

INGALLS. Well ... I hope my mother....

GOLDSTEIN. Turner'll give her a good talk.

INGALLS. Remember that mother we saw -- when was it? -- about two months ago

in that restaurant?

[Begin to fade in footsteps coming on.]

GOLDSTEIN. Which one?

INGALLS. Oh the one that looked at us and got all weepy and started yapping:
"And I've got a boy overseas, too." You know I could have given her a--

BILL. [Middle thirties.] Excuse me. I'm looking for--

INGALLS. Hi, Bill!

BILL. Hal???

[Pause.]

INGALLS. [Very low.] Yeah. Hal.

BILL. [Rattling on now nervously.] Well, it's good to see you, fellow.
Great
little hospital you have here. I was noticing it when Ma and I came
through.
Really a great little place. Pretty nurses, too.

INGALLS. Bill, this is my buddy -- Mac Goldstein.

BILL. Hiya, fellow.

GOLDSTEIN. Hi.

BILL. Yeah. This sure is a great place. I'll bet they take fine care of
you
here. I can see why you wouldn't want to come home. Pretty nurses,
great
hospital--

INGALLS. How's Susie, Bill?

BILL. Oh fine, fine. Everybody's been O.K.

INGALLS. How's Mother?

BILL. She came out with me, you know. Do you-- look, Hal, do you--

INGALLS. Do I what?

BILL. Well ... do you think you want to see her?

INGALLS. Yeah.... Let her come.

BILL. O.K. O.K. Well, nice meeting you, fellow.

GOLDSTEIN. Thanks.

BILL. I'll tell Mother to come in, Hal. I'll see you again.

INGALLS. Sure. Thanks for coming.

[Footsteps off.] [Pause.]

INGALLS. Well -- how'd you like my tough big brother?

GOLDSTEIN. Oh ... he just doesn't know.

INGALLS. Yeah, but your own brother.

GOLDSTEIN. You saw my mother in action.

INGALLS. He's got a head on his shoulders, he has. Full of sawdust, the jerk.

Did you see? He didn't even know me!

GOLDSTEIN. Forget him!

INGALLS. You're more of a brother than he is.

GOLDSTEIN. Now that's a real compliment.

INGALLS. Oh you know what I mean.

GOLDSTEIN. Sure.

INGALLS. Well, I'll get my mother over with quick and then we'll beat it into town and really tie one on. You and me.

GOLDSTEIN. Right!

INGALLS. That's the best way. [Fade in Mother's footsteps approaching slowly.] You and me. That's the--

[He cuts as he hears the footsteps. They are still off but coming closer, closer.]

INGALLS. [Very low.] Goldy ... Goldy, I hope she isn't like he was.

[The footsteps keep coming. Then they stop. A slight pause.]

MOTHER. [A shade tentatively and slightly off.] Harold ...

INGALLS. [Quietly.] Hello, mother.

[Slight pause.]

MOTHER. [Now right on mike ... There is a tear but there is tremendous warmth in her voice.] Oh Harold. I guess my little boy's a little bit hurt.

INGALLS. [Crying but happily.] Oh momma! Momma, I'm so glad to see you!

MUSIC. [Full of tender warmth. Then down for narration.]

NARRATOR. Now Harold Ingalls goes home to Connecticut for a short furlough. Now, when he and Mac Goldstein go into town, he doesn't hide in bars, he doesn't get drunk. Now he has had 21 operations... Across the sea, the supply ships finally unload at Normandy on the French Coast. Here, in Valley Forge General Hospital, Harold Ingalls has his 22nd, his 23rd operation. Skin grafted, cartilage grafted for a right ear. Mac Goldstein is discharged and goes home, and the first time Harold Ingalls goes into town alone after that, he gets tight. But only that first time ... Across the sea, the supply line pushes on to Paris. Harold Ingalls has his 24th operation. The supply line edges over the German border and Harold Ingalls has his last operation: his 25th.

MUSIC. [Out.]

NARRATOR. Twenty-five operations. Twenty-five operations since Casablanca, since November 1942. Twenty-five operations to give Harold Ingalls a face. And even so, it only takes one quick look in the mirror for him to see what everyone else can see: Harold Ingalls has a plastic face.

MUSIC. [Punctuation. Then backing for following.]

NARRATOR. He knows this, he knows this today, the day he is discharged from the hospital, from the army. He knows the army has given him the best face any human being could, but it has given him something else, too: strength to face the civilian world. He is at a railroad station in that civilian world now with the person who has done most to give him that strength: 1st Lieutenant Virginia Turner. She has come to see him off, come to make sure that at the last minute Harold Ingalls isn't frightened.

INGALLS. I've still got 15 minutes before my train.

VIRGINIA. Good.

INGALLS. There's a bar right over here. How about a beer?

VIRGINIA. No, thanks.

INGALLS. You can go out with me. I'm a civilian.

VIRGINIA. No.

INGALLS. Look, you got me so many beers and ... well, this is kind of like that first day in the P.X.

VIRGINIA. Oh ... All right, Harold.

INGALLS. Thanks ... Boy, that seems a long time ago!

VIRGINIA. It was.

INGALLS. I was some case then.

VIRGINIA. I agree 100 per cent.

INGALLS. You'll never give me an inch.

VIRGINIA. Why should I?

INGALLS. After you.

[Door opens. Barroom babble up. Male voices a little drunkenly harmonizing "Auld Lang Syne" with tinny piano.]

VIRGINIA. Those gents have started celebrating a little early.

INGALLS. Yeah. Two beers, bartender.

VIRGINIA. It's going to be a good year, though.

INGALLS. I hope so.

VIRGINIA. You worried?

INGALLS. Well...

VIRGINIA. I'm not. You'll do all right.

BARTENDER. Two beers.

INGALLS. Well -- here's to--

DRUNK. [Coming on.] A lady soldier. As I live and breathe, a lady soldier.

VIRGINIA. Happy New Year.

DRUNK. Happy New Year to you. Happy New Year to a lady soldier with a civilian boy friend.

VIRGINIA. He was in the army until this morning.

DRUNK. He was?

VIRGINIA. Look at his pin. He was just discharged.

DRUNK. Well -- you were in the army?

INGALLS. Yes, sir.

DRUNK. You were in the army. My my. How'd you ever get in the army with a face like that?

[Glass breaks.]

DRUNK. [Fading.] Happy New Year.

VIRGINIA. Let's sit down, Harold.

INGALLS. No. Bartender. BARTENDER!

BARTENDER. Yes, sir?

INGALLS. Double bourbon.

VIRGINIA. You're going to miss your train.

INGALLS. Then I'll miss my train.

VIRGINIA. You going to get drunk?

INGALLS. I think so.

VIRGINIA. Then what?

INGALLS. I don't care.

BARTENDER. Here you are, sir.

INGALLS. I'll have another.

BARTENDER. Double?

INGALLS. Yes. Double.

VIRGINIA. All right, Harold. It happened. Are you going to get drunk every time it happens? Because it'll happen again, in a different way.

INGALLS. I guess so.

VIRGINIA. Just because there are one or two stupid people in this world--

INGALLS. One or two what? Thousand? Million?

VIRGINIA. I don't know, but I hope, I think by the end of this war, there won't be many. They'll change. But your face -- that won't change now. And

you can't change the fact that you've got to live with them.

INGALLS. I'll live with them. I'll live with my big brother.

VIRGINIA. Harold, drinking isn't living. It's running away. And you're just going to keep coming back to the same place.

BARTENDER. Here you are, bud.

VIRGINIA. Don't drink it.

INGALLS. Look, Lieutenant--

VIRGINIA. Wait. Give me two minutes, Harold. Listen to me for two minutes. Please.

INGALLS. One hundred and twenty seconds. Shoot.

VIRGINIA. Harold, every single day, people get slapped because of ignorance. They get slapped for religion, for color, for how they talk or what they look like. You were slapped for what you look like.

INGALLS. I know. Now I turn the other phony cheek.

VIRGINIA. No. Harold, a man's face doesn't matter any more than his religion, his color, his clothes. It's what he is that counts. You know that. You told me you said it yourself to Mac Goldstein.

INGALLS. I was giving him a pitch.

VIRGINIA. You were telling him the truth. It's what you are that counts. Sure; there'll be people who will stare, who will flinch, who will make darn fool cracks. Ignorant people. Well, you're not. You're Harold Ingalls. Your face is changed because you were fighting for your country. And you've changed too; you know plenty. Don't let anyone slap you. Tell them they're wrong. Don't run away. They'll just do it again. Stand up to them, Harold, stand up to them and tell them they're wrong!

[Pause.]

INGALLS. What time is it?

VIRGINIA. You've got seven minutes yet.

INGALLS. Well ... it hurts, you know. It hurts pretty hard.

VIRGINIA. It'll hurt less.

INGALLS. Till the next time.

VIRGINIA. And less after that till finally it doesn't hurt at all.

INGALLS. When'll that be?

VIRGINIA. When you really believe that a face doesn't matter.

[Piano starts "Auld Lang Syne" again].

INGALLS. Lieutenant ... how long do you think that'll take?

VIRGINIA. For you? Not very long, Harold.

INGALLS. Bartender ... this cover what I owe you?

BARTENDER. You didn't drink this one.

INGALLS. No.

BARTENDER. Well, take back a buck. Happy New Year.

INGALLS. Happy New Year.

VIRGINIA. Are you ready?

INGALLS. Yeah ... Lieutenant -- thanks.

VIRGINIA. Well ... a very Happy New Year, Harold.

INGALLS. A very Happy New Year to you.

MUSIC. [Up full ... Then down for:]

NARRATOR. A soldier, a soldier with a face very much like Harold
Ingalls once
made a wish. He wished that in every public place in this country there
would
be a sign that said: Please Don't Stare ... Well -- let's wish we never
need
those signs. Let's wish that the whole world will realize that what a
man
looks like doesn't matter. Let's wish that this will be the beginning,
the
beginning of a world where the only thing that does matter is each man
himself for what he is himself.

MUSIC. [Up strong.]

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