

Shivaree

By Emmeline McCabe

Cast of Characters:

MAYBELL

SOLDIER

Time: Present**Setting:** A battlefield.

A chapel, filled with pots, pans and metal things.

Somewhere in between these two

A note on the set: I have described the set to contain hanging pots, pans, wind chimes, and a gong. I use these specifics to make the reading easier, but those objects don't have to be used. Whoever chooses to perform this play can replace these objects with whatever they think best, so long as they are metal and make noise. If the budget is low all of this can simply be accomplished with cheap pans from thrift stores or sheets of scrap metal

A note on the marriage: This play deals with a proxy marriage, also called an absent marriage, in which a couple gets married but one or both of them cannot attend the wedding. This is usually done when military personnel want to get married.

A note on the slingshot: There are several points at which Maybell fires a slingshot and pans. There are many ways to accomplish this safely, but one of the simpler ways would be that she shoots without a rock and someone hits a pan. The shot of the sound sort of tricks the audience. This simply the easiest way I thought to accomplish this.

MAYBELL

(in dark)

There's noise even when ya don't hear nothing. Ya know?

Lights up on SOLDIER, sitting on the ground, among several pots, pans, windchimes, and other metal things. There is a gong UC, a rope hanging from the ceiling USR, and wooden staffs scattered on the floor.

All around him lights flash like bombs, but there is no sound.

He is lost, mentally and physically.

Upstage MAYBELL lies down, wearing a slightly tattered sundress. It is white with small flowers.

MAYBELL

I ain't talking actual sounds neither. I'm talking noise tha's always there. And sometimes I think, I do, there ain't nothing that can get rid of it absolutely nothin'.

Blackout.

MAYBELL

Jus nothin' at all.

Sound of bomb.

Lights up. Maybell is gone, Soldier lies where she was.

He is smiling.

Around him lights flash. No sound.

He starts to laugh. A genuine, happy laugh.

Quick, he grabs a rifle hidden at his side, flips to his stomach and shoots.

Blackout.

Lights up on Maybell aiming a slingshot at the audience.

MAYBELL

As ya can see I'm ready to get married. (Pause) Don't worry...I'm..not...going to hit ya...so long as...ya don't...move.

She watches her target for a moment more then fires. It hits a cast iron skillet somewhere in the audience.

MAYBELL

Mazeltov! Everyone's happy, they're throwing rice, the bride and groom hop in their new car and ride off with all those tin cans and, ya know. (Pause) Tha's the dream isn't it? (Beat) This is the most important part of the wedding this right here. Don't get me wrong there's walking down the aisle, and UGH the look on his face, the whole exchangin' of the rings sure, and VOWS! Makes me weep. (Breath) But THIS, this right here the good ole shivaree!

She grabs a long wooden shaft and runs across the stage hitting all the pans and things hanging from the ceiling as she goes. She runs to the gong UC and makes like she'll hit it, but stops. She holds until the pots are nearly quiet.

MAYBELL

Not yet. (Beat) Fooled ya didn't I? See it's the shivaree, a wholesome American tradition. Mark Twain wrote about it ya know that means it's official.

She drops the wooden shaft and pulls her slingshot from her pocket. She aims and shoots as she speaks