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BY  
MERAB EBERLE.



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DENVER, COLO.

# BOBBY IN BELGIUM

A Junior Red Cross Play

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By MERAB EBERLE

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—Published by—

**ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE,**  
FRANKLIN, OHIO - DENVER, COLO.

## CHARACTERS

PS 635  
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BOBBIE—An American boy who likes to spend his money for marbles.

BETTY—An American girl who likes to buy dolls.

FIRST and SECOND BOY SCOUTS—Who are very patriotic.

SUZANNE—A Belgian girl who wants her mother.

PAUL—A Belgian boy who has seen his mother die.

KARLCHEN—A dwarf and a German spy.

FIRST and SECOND RED CROSS NURSES—Who are willing to give all they have.

This play is written so that boys and girls may learn through its production something of what the children overseas are enduring and so have their tendency to self-sacrifice, along the line of giving, stimulated.

Three different stage settings are needed. At the beginning of Act I, and at the end of Act II, an American lawn is shown. A cellar scene and a Red Cross canteen and supply house are the other scenes employed. In the cellar scene, steps leading from the floor above may be used effectively.

As for the number of characters in the play almost any number of children can be introduced. A grouping of boys and girls, the latter preferably Camp Fire girls or Girl Scouts, may be used instead of Boy Scouts alone.

The publishers of this play have always discouraged the use of firearms in the amateur drama. In this particular play the use of pistols seems essential, but do not use real firearms under any circumstances. Use toy pistols, or, better still, pistols carved out of wood and painted with silver paint. Never trust anyone to point an *empty* revolver at someone else.

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# Bobbie in Belgium.

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## ACT I.

*(Lawn of a prosperous looking home situated somewhere in America. Bobbie is engaged in playing marbles. Bettie stands by him munching an apple. Both children are dressed in the height of fashion so that their finery may contrast more effectively with the ragged Belgian children who appear later.)*

*Bobbie*—And it is always something. It makes me tired. What do you suppose I care for this old war anyway? What do you suppose it means to me? “Will you buy thrift stamps?” they keep asking me and insist that I join the Junior Red Cross. I should say not. An agate costs a quarter. *(Picks up marble and gazes at it admiringly.)*

*Betty*—I guess you and I think alike.

*Bobbie*—Sometimes I think just like anybody else, but mostly I think different. It looks better in a man.

*Betty*—In a man? You a man! *(Laughs derisively)*

*Bobbie*—*(Springing to his feet threateningly.)* You quit that, do you hear me? Quit that!

*Betty*—*(Her mirth subsiding)* I didn't mean anything. Anyhow if I wasn't patriotic enough to buy a Thrift Stamp to help Uncle Sam fight, I guess I wouldn't fight myself.

*Bobbie*—So you are going to turn into a preacher are you? *(Starts to play with his marbles again when a crowd of Boy Scouts enter laughing and shouting.)*

*First Boy Scout*—We've come to get your names.

*Second B. Scout*—We've come to arrest you, Betty, so don't you hide.

*Betty*—I guess you won't arrest me. So there. No one could arrest me if I didn't want to be.

*Second B. S.*—Oh, couldn't anybody? Well, we'll see. *(Runs after Betty who commences crying.)*

*First B. S.*—Say there, fellow. Ease up a little on that line of stuff and let's get down to business.

*Bobbie*—Oh, you're on business, are you?

*First B. S.*—To get you to join the Junior Red Cross.

*Bobbie*—What's that?

*Second B. S.*—You know all about the Red Cross, don't you?

*Betty*—I guess so. It's what sister makes bandages for and Aunt Jane drives an auto for and mother knits for.

*Bobbie*—And what makes the hospitals and the nurses in them for the soldiers who are hurt in the war.

*First B. S.*—You've got the idea, kids. Now for the Junior Red Cross. It's what the youngsters belong to. They help make comfort kits for the soldiers and property bags for them to keep tobacco and letters and things like that in when they are ill and confined to the hospital. You know they wouldn't have any handy place to keep their things if somebody didn't give them things like that.

*Betty*—I think it would be fun to make property bags. Sister made one out of pink silk for her fellow. Such a pretty thing she said to cheer him in those dirty trenches and that he could carry it with him to the hospital when he went. (*Clasps hands enthusiastically.*) I should love to make one for a fellow when I grow up. Maybe I'll make one for you, Bobbie, when you go to war.

*Bobbie*—(*Addressing Boy Scouts.*) What else do you have to do?

*First B. S.*—Oh, there's a quarter for dues.

*Bobbie*—You mean that if I'd be a member of the Junior Red Cross that I would have to pay a quarter for dues? (*Picks up marble and looks at it lovingly.*)

*Second B. S.*—Yep.

*Bobbie*—I don't think I can today. I haven't the money.

*Second B. S.*—And you, Betty?

*Betty*—I haven't any either. Not for that.

*First B. S.*—You mean you have a quarter and don't

want to spend it for the good of the soldiers. I bet you'll spend it for some doll or other.

*Second B. S.*—And I bet that Bobbie has more than one quarter. Let's search him, boys. (*Whereupon the Boy Scouts search him and find money.*)

*First B. S.*—(*Waves money in air.*) Look here. Enough to make a person ill. Too selfish to help his country in the time of war. Here, take your money. Let's get, boys. (*They file out.*)

*Bobbie*—(*Indignantly.*) I guess I have a right to do what I please with my own money. It's mine and I will buy marbles when I want to.

*Betty*—How do you suppose that he knew that I was going to buy a doll?

*Bobbie*—Do you know, sometimes I think that all this stuff about the children in Belgium and their suffering is just a lot of bluff to get your money.

*Betty*—They say that the Germans cut the children's hands off and put bombs in their bread and kill them.

*Bobbie*—Just a lot of trash, I tell you. Who ever heard of anyone being mean enough to do such tricks? Why I know right here that the Germans would never do any thing so mean.

*Betty*—And our teacher wants us to buy Thrift Stamps and help the Red Cross. She says that all such things will help our little brothers and sisters across the waters.

*Bobbie*—Well, I wish I was there right now so that I could learn what the straight of it all is.

*Betty*—I'm sleepy. I'm going to lie right down and take a nap.

*Bobbie*—I'm drowsy too. (*They lie on the ground.*)

(*Roaring of cannon is heard. The effect may be procured by tapping a drum.*)

*Betty*—Listen!

(*Roaring continues. Stage becomes suddenly darkened. Roaring of cannon grows louder. Meanwhile the scene is shifted showing a cellar scene in Belgium when the lights come on after an instant of total darkness. If impossible to make change, draw curtain.*)

*Bobbie and Betty—(Looking about in astonishment and drawing close to one another.)* Where are we?

*Betty*—It looks like a cellar.

*Bobbie*—But it is not our cellar.

*Betty*—Nor ours.

*Bobbie*—Nor any cellar which I have ever seen. How do you suppose we got here?

*Betty*—And that noise. It sounds like cannons. I am afraid. *(Door opens and children cringe against the wall while Paul and Suzanne enter.)*

*Paul*—It killed my mother; I saw it kill her. It was terrible. It burst and went everywhere—that bomb—and it killed my mother. She was holding my hand. I shook and shook her while she bled, but she wouldn't answer—just kind of smiled a moment at me and then moaned and then didn't moan any more.

*Suzanne*—I want my mother. Where is she?

*Betty*—Do you know where you are?

*(Suzanne and Paul show astonishment in seeing other children)*

*Betty*—Do you know where you are?

*Paul*—We know that we are in a cellar. Is it your cellar?

*Betty*—We have never seen it before—not till now.

*Bobbie*—What are those awful sounds and what killed your mother?

*Paul*—Has it frightened you so that you cannot remember? Think hard as you can and you will remember that it is the Germans.

*Bobbie*—In America?

*Suzanne*—This is Belgium.

*Bobbie and Betty*—What?

*Paul*—It's Belgium.

*Betty*—And we're Americans and lived in the United States five minutes ago.

*Bobbie*—I'm not so sure about five minutes. I feel as though it were five years ago.

*Paul*—One time I would have thought it quite queer that you were here. But nothing seems queer now.



Everything is terrible. First it was home gone. Then they shot father. I saw that. They held me so I would see it and laughed because I shrieked. Then it was my brothers and sisters and now it is mother.

*Suzanne*—Where is my mother?

*Bobbie*—This is awful. What shall we do? Shan't we get out of this gloomy cellar?

*Suzanne*—No, no! They'll kill you. Don't do that. I saw them kill big people and little children and they will kill you.

*Paul*—If there was just something we could do. The minute that the English and the Belgians get this city back from the enemy, it is recaptured. And when we do hold it, the bombing of the buildings where the relief work is going on looks suspicious. No matter where the Red Cross is stationed it is not long until it is bombed. Put it in the east of the city and it is bombed. Move it to the west and it is bombed. Those aircraft found it when headquarters were put in the cathedral. They blew it up when it was stationed at the Renaud school house. I suppose they will find it now in the old court house.

*Suzanne*—Can't anybody find out who is doing it? If there is a spy it seems to me that we could find him.

*Paul*—It doesn't seem that anybody can do it.

*Betty*—Why can't the children try?

*Bobbie*—Why not? We'd like to help. (*Stone with note wrapped about it is thrown through cellar window.*)

*Paul*—Things have got on our nerves. Did you see us jump? (*Picks up stone and reads note.*) What is this? Say this is something, fellows.

*Bobbie*—Let us in on it.

*Paul*—Listen. It says, "Let the beacon mark the cross tonight."

*Betty*—What does that mean? You other children?

*Bobbie*—(*To Betty*) I suppose they don't know any more than we do.

*Paul*—It means some mischief. Notes aren't thrown about in this manner for fun. It looks like spy work to me.

*Suzanne*—Really!

*Betty*—How exciting!

*Bobbie*—Maybe this cellar is the meeting place of German spies.

*(Karlchen descends cellar steps.)*

*Suzanne*—Here's Karlchen. Aren't you afraid to be out now? Come here with the rest of us.

*Karlchen*—What are you doing here?

*Paul*—We are getting away from the little balls which the air craft are throwing. Isn't that the reason why you are here?

*Karlchen*—*(Evidently troubled.)* Yes. *(Looks about on the floor as if hunting something.)*

*Bobbie*—Lost something?

*Karlchen*—Er—no. Din't any of you see a paper here, did you? Lost one earlier in the day.

*Paul*—Must have been an important one to take you out when the skies are as bad as they are now.

*Suzanne*—Was it wrapped about a stone?

*Karlchen*—*(Abruptly)* What's that?

*Bobbie*—Nothin. Betty, it seems to me that Suzanne looks pale. Can't you rub her head or something?

*Karlchen*—What was that about a stone and paper?

*Bobbie*—Nothing. She's been kind of off in her head ever since I met her. Rather foolish, you know. Don't dare pay any attention to her.

*Paul*—Say, Karlchen, what's the matter with you? Was it a love letter?

*Karlchen*—Nothing. Nothing at all.

*Paul*—*(Whistling as if sudden idea had struck him)* Say, is it you that's been doing this dirty work?

*Karlchen*—What are you talking about?

*Paul*—Playing spy.

*Karlchen*—You have that note. Give it to me. *(Betty mounts stairs and leaves cellar unnoticed.)*

*Paul*—Why should I give it to you?

*Karlchen*—This is why. *(Shows revolver.)* Now, give it to me.

*Paul*—Not on the honor of Belgium.

*Karlchen*—If it's to be a question of our country, then for the honor of Germany, I'll shoot you.

*Suzanne*—Oh, don't, don't. Give him the note, Paul. Give him the note.

*Bobbie*—I think you had better.

*Paul*—Never.

*Suzanne*—I'll tell. It says—

*Paul*—*Suzanne!*

*Suzanne*—It says place the beacon on the Red Cross tonight or something like that.

*Paul*—(*Handing the note over*) Take it then. But how could a child of Belgian blood be so base as you?

*Karlchen*—(*Laughing derisively*) Ah—Do you know what this means? I do not mind telling you for you will be quite harmless. Tonight your beloved Red Cross will be bombed. A red light shall burn high on the old court house tower and the planes will see it. When a bomb at last falls on the red light and extinguishes it your place of mercy will be done for.

*Paul*—Why do they bomb the Red Cross? It is cruel. It is the most terrible thing which an enemy could do.

*Karlchen*—Because it is cruel. We are a cruel people. We shall conquer the earth with our cruelty.

*Paul*—We? Who are you? A Belgian child turned traitor. Dirt.

*Karlchen*—I do not mind telling you that either. I am Karl, the dwarf. No, I do not look older than you Belgian children but I am three times your age. Your faces have grown old and drawn to match mine during the last few months. We are clever. Who, but a German would have thought of making a dwarf a spy?

*Paul*—You will not live to see the end of this.

*Bobbie*—Let's down him.

*Suzanne*—Oh, mother, mother. (*Boys spring at dwarf only to be met with his revolver.*)

*Karlchen*—Stand back. Stand back. I'll lock you in here and then what damage can you do? You will be in a deserted cellar in a deserted part of the city. I would kill you but it would be more fun to have you starve to death. When you hear the bombs roaring tonight you

will know that it is eight o'clock. You will starve to death and I—I will go on spying. (*He has been backing up the cellar stairs as he has been talking. He laughs derisively as the grating of the lock is heard.*)

*Paul*—(*Springs up the stairs and shakes the door.*)  
It's locked.

*Bobbie*—Why did you tell him about that note? We might have worked it so that he would have been captured.

*Suzanne*—I didn't think.

*Bobbie*—Talk about boys having all the sense. Why, Betty has more than you two put— (*looks about him*)  
Why, where is Betty?

*Suzanne*—She went a long time ago. (*A grating of the lock is heard.*)

*Paul*—Some one is there. (*Betty enters.*)

*Bobbie*—Hello, there.

*Betty*—Isn't it a good thing that I thought to leave and also that I had a hairpin? He'd of had us in forever.

*Bobbie*—I say, you've got more sense than all of us.

*Paul*—A clever girl, I'm sure. Maybe she can think of some way to save the Red Cross.

*Bobbie*—Let's save it ourselves. Just we four.

*Betty*—I second the motion.

*Paul*—I third it.

*Suzanne*—And I fourth it.

*Bobbie*—Then let's go. It is growing late now. See how dark it is getting.

## CURTAIN

### ACT II.

(SCENE—A Red Cross store room glorified into all the offices of the Red Cross. An effective backdrop in this case would be a white background centered by a huge red cross. Everything should be immaculate. Bandages and neatly folded garments should be conspicuous. Since it is to be a general source of comfort there should be food to give out. Two cots stand well to the side front. Two Red

*Cross nurses are ministering to the people's wants. Bobbie, Suzanne, Betty and Paul enter, breathless.*

*Bobbie*—Now we must watch for him.

*First Nurse*—What do you want, children?

*Betty*—We want to rest; we are tired.

*First Nurse*—Take all the rest you need. Come, here are cots for two of you. We can throw blankets on the floor for the others.

*Paul*—Oh, no. Please, no. We aren't tired. You know, Suzanne, that you aren't tired.

*First Nurse*—(*Takes Suzanne by the arm.*) Come, child, and rest.

*Suzanne*—(*Escapes from her.*) Oh, no, I am not tired. I do not wish to rest.

*Betty*—I do not feel at all tired. There is something about this place which rests me.

*First Nurse*—(*Brings forth basket.*) Here are sandwiches. Perhaps you will eat if you will not sleep.

*Suzanne*—(*Devouring sandwich*) I wish he'd come.

*Paul*—I tell you what let's do. Suppose we go on the outside and watch for him. We can each stand on a side of the building.

*Bobbie*—Pretty good plan, I say. Come on. (*They exit.*)

*First Nurse*—The poor children. I suppose they have no homes. Perhaps they were well cared for once. They are nice looking children.

(*Karchen enters. He is disguised in a girl's dress and wears a sunbonnet.*)

*Karlchen*—Quick! A tottering wall has fallen on my parents. I can hear my mother scream. But I can't hear my father. They are digging them out. Go, dear nurses, go and help them, please.

*First Nurse*—Then together with some bandages we must hurry. Come show us, child, where you live.

*Karlchen*—I have twisted my ankle and it hurts me so to walk.

*Second Nurse*—I suppose that we must find our own way.

*Karlchen*—It is easy. It is the street where the old fountain was and is next to the church of St. Mary.

*Second Nurse*—(Leading *Karlchen* to cot.) Lie there, child, until we return. Perhaps things are not so bad. Watch that no harm comes to this place. (*Nurses exit.*)

*Karlchen*—(Springing from cot and laying aside sunbonnet.) Yes, *Karlchen* the dwarf will protect the Red Cross. He will see that no harm comes to it. (*Takes off dress, showing same costume as in Act I.*) He will put a red beacon on the housetop and in one hour there will be no Red Cross. If I could have thought of a way in which to have blown those nurses up it would have been better sport, but they were in the way here. For the honor of Germany I will work tonight. I but name her name and I have courage to commit any crime. Outrages become glorious deeds. (*Looks about*) I hear footsteps. (*Exit.*)

*Paul*—It is almost eight o'clock and as yet no one has entered.

*Betty*—No one but the little girl. She was hurrying so that she did not see me. Poor thing. I crept up to the door and heard her tell the nurses that a ruined wall had fallen on her parents.

*Bobbie*—Did she leave with the nurses?

*Betty*—No.

*Bobbie*—Where is she?

*Betty*—Here's her bonnet.

*Suzanne*—Is this her dress?

*Bobbie*—This looks bad to me. Why has she gone? And why did she leave her clothes here?

*Paul*—Why?

*Bobbie*—That girl was *Karlchen*.

*Betty*—Really?

*Bobbie*—Beyond any doubt. Now for him. He slipped us cleverly.

*Betty*—Is there nothing we can do?

*Bobbie*—Paul, you go watch on the outside. Suzanne, you go with him. Betty, you stay with me. Take this revolver, Paul. I have two. I stole them on my way. It is for the honor of America.

Paul—It is for the honor of Belgium. (*Strokes revolver.*) Little firearm, you must do your work well, since it is for the honor of Belgium. (*Suzanne and Paul exit.*)

Bobbie—Now we must watch here. We must hide. You stand behind this screen and I will stay back of this curtain. We must get him if he comes this way. (*They hide.*)

Betty—I am afraid.

Bobbie—Hold tight to your little flag pin. That will help. (*Pause*) Quiet, I hear some one coming.

(*Enter Karlchen.*)

Karlchen—(*Gleefully*) Brighter and brighter will the beacon grow and the bombs of our airplanes will hurl destruction on this accursed place. We shall bring death and again death until the world is ours. (*Laughs derisively.*) The children will cry over the destruction of the Red Cross—the whining wretches. Some have no eyes, some have no feet, some have no hands and four will starve to death in a cellar. Bitterly shall Germany pay Belgium for her stubbornness.

Bobbie—(*Stepping from hiding place*) Not if America has anything to say about it. Germany is going to be licked to a finish. Hold up your hands for one of the brats you locked in a cellar.

Karlchen—You! What do you mean, you wretch?

Bobbie—I mean to save the Red Cross. Where is that beacon light?

Karlchen—It stands burning on the tower. Are you not afraid to stand here? Look from the window, you can see the planes coming now. (*Bobbie instinctively turns head and Karlchen draws his revolver. Laughs.*)

Karlchen—Now, are you going to fire? (*They stand aiming at one another.*)

Bobbie—I can hold mine as steadily as you can yours and believe me, I know how to shoot even if I am a boy. I'm an American.

Karlchen—Aren't you afraid of getting hurt? The planes are coming.

*Bobbie*—I can stand it if you can. If a bomb kills me, it will kill you. It's tit for tat.

*Karlchen*—I'll kill you. (*Betty, who has been creeping from her hiding place knocks revolver from his hand*)  
Two of you!

*Bobbie*—Yes, two of us. And we're going to stick this out. Either you climb to that roof and take down that beacon or you stay here to die with us. (*Bombing is heard in the distance.*)

*Karlchen*—(*Cringing*) But the planes are coming. They will be on us in a minute.

*Bobbie*—You can kill others, but you are afraid yourself. You are as stunted in your courage as you are in your body. Little children you can see perish by the score, but you are afraid of your precious self. Get that beacon.

*Karlchen*—(*Beside himself with terror.*) But the planes are coming. (*Bombing grows louder.*)

(*Enter Paul and Suzanne.*)

*Paul*—You must get out of here and to some cellar the planes are coming this way. (*Sees the dwarf.*)  
*Karlchen!* Did you get him?

*Bobbie*—Yes, and because he is afraid to get the beacon which he has placed on the tower so that the Red Cross might be blown to pieces, he is going to stay here and get blown to pieces too. Betty, you and the others get out. I'll finish this job.

*Betty*—I guess that I am as brave as you are.

*Paul*—I'll stay.

*Suzanne*—And so will I. This is the affair of all of us.

*Paul*—I will go after the beacon.

*Bobbie*—Good, I will hold him cornered here in the meantime.

*Karlchen*—He is too late. I can hear the purring of the motors now. (*Springs to window. Terrific bombing. Shrieks and darkness. For one minute the stage remains black while the noise of bombing grows less distinct. Lights at length come on and the scene is again that of an American lawn. Bobbie and Betty are lying there.*)



Bobbie—(Waking) Oh! (Sits up.)

Betty—Oh, I have been dreaming. (Sits up.)

Bobbie—And so have I, terribly. I was in Belgium.

Betty—What?

Bobbie—At the point of my revolver I held Karlchen the dwarf.

Betty—(Excitedly) Go on.

Bobbie—He was about to jump through the window—

Betty—When the airplane followed the beacon light and hurled a bomb upon us.

Bobbie—(Whirling upon her) Then it was really so.

Betty—We went together and we have returned.

(They rise. Shouts are heard near at hand and the children cling to one another.)

Betty—Germans! (Boy Scouts enter.) Oh, how you frightened us.

Bobbie—Almost to death.

First B. S.—What's the matter with you two? Been dreaming things? What if we had been Germans?

Bobbie—I'd have killed you.

(Laughter on the part of the Scouts and cries of "You.")

Bobbie—Say, cut out that stuff. I want to be a member of the Junior Red Cross. Here's my quarter. And this dollar (Displays one) goes for thrift stamps. Uncle Sam and I are partners from now on.

First B. S.—That's the way to talk. Let's cheer him boys. (Cheers.)

Boy Scouts—What's the matter with Bobbie?

He's all right;

He's going to help his country

Win the fight.

Betty—Cheer me too. I'm sure I need it. I'm going to belong to the Junior Red Cross, too. Here's my money, and I'm going to learn to knit.

Second B. S.—She's worth cheering, too, boys.

Boy Scouts—Hooray, hooray for this little girl;

She'll join the Red Cross and knit and purl.

Hooray for Betty.

*Second B. S.*—Out with the flag, flag bearer. Let's wave it here, in honor of the occasion. We got two members all at once and they came across better than any of the others. (*They unfurl flag*)

*Bobbie*—There's another banner that ought to be flown along with this one, boys, and that's the Red Cross, the symbol of mercy over the entire world. When I'm a man, I'm going to do great things by the Red Cross. But I'm not going to wait until I'm a man to try to help.

### CURTAIN



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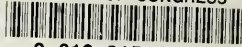
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

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