
The Tinder Box

SET: The stage is divided into three distinct playing areas:

- 1) At stage right is the Forest Scene, which consists of one large, dead tree flat with a shrubby flat behind it. A blue sky drop follows behind and off from right to stage left.
- 2) At center stage is the Inn/House Scene, which is a flat showing the interior of an inn on the right side of the flat and the interior of a house on the left side of the flat. A small table with two chairs on either side sits down from the flat.
- 3) At stage left is the Palace Scene, which can be a half flat from the floor to three or four feet in height. A bench or throne and a small decorative accessory table sit downstage from the palace flat. Between the Inn/House Scene and the Palace Scene downstage is a box large enough and strong enough for a person to stand on.

AT RISE:

Afternoon, September 7, 1815. A pleasant day in the Prussian countryside. The stage is empty, and normal lighting is up on all three playing areas.

NARRATOR:

One calm and pleasant fall afternoon, a tired and hungry Prussian soldier walked down a dirt road. The Napoleonic Wars that had lasted for years were finally over, and the roads and byways found many a soldier on his way home to his family. But the Prussian soldier on this road—the one called Gunner—had no family to go home to. He was headed somewhere; he just didn't know where.

(GUNNER enters stage left and crosses to center stage while the NARRATOR speaks. GUNNER is a brave soldier with a good heart. A typical hero, GUNNER is straightforward and mannerly to all.)

NARRATOR: *(Continued.)*

Trees lined both sides of the path, providing nice shade, and a gentle breeze swept past with a hint of gunpowder in the air—or that's what Gunner thought he could smell. Having been a member of the mounted artillery and having been around the cannon for so long during battle, the handsome soldier could smell nothing but gunpowder thereafter. So dedicated had he been to his post, everyone called him Gunner, and so long had he been called Gunner, he could scarcely remember his own name. When a farmer met him on the edge of an apple orchard, the soldier readily answered when the man called out to him.