

The Army

Scene: An army parade ground

Characters: Captain
Private Large
Private Small
Private Potter (should be a woman)

Enter Captain, Large and Small, marching

Captain: Left, right, left, right, attention! Private Large!

Large: Sir!

Captain: Private Small!

Small: Sir!

Captain: Private Potter! **(Silence)** Private Potter!!! Where is
Private Potter???

Large: I don't know, sir!

Small: I haven't seen her, sir!

Captain: **(Shouting)** Private Potter!!!!

Enter Private Potter

Potter: Here I am. Sorry I'm a bit late, I couldn't find my cap.

Captain: Private Potter! Get in line! Left, right, left, right,
attention!

Private Potter gets in line next to Private Small

Captain: Private Potter?

Potter: Yes?

Captain: Yes, SIR!!!!!!!

Potter: Captain, you don't have to call me sir. I'm a woman!

Captain: Private Potter! When *you* talk to *me*, *you* call *me* sir!

Potter: Oh yes. Sorry, I forgot. What do you want ... sir?

Captain: I want you to shut up and listen. Now ... you're in the army, right?

L/S/P: Right!

Captain: And in the army, there are some things you must do and some things you mustn't do. Isn't that right, Private Large?

Large: Pardon, sir?

Captain: In the army, there are some things you must do and some things you mustn't do.

Large: Yes, sir.

Captain: Give me an example!

Large: I don't know, sir!

Captain: Private Large?

Large: Yes, sir!

Captain: You're an idiot!

Large: Thank you, sir!

Captain: Private Small!

Small: Yes, sir?

Captain: Give me an example!

Small: An example of what, sir?

Captain: An example of something you must do in the army.

Small: Oh right, sir. Er ...

Captain: Come on!

Small: You must get up in the morning, sir.

Captain: What?

Small: You must get up in the morning, sir.

Captain: No , that's wrong. Correct him/her, Private Potter!

Potter: You *mustn't* get up in the morning?

Captain: No!!! Private Large!!!

Large: Yes, sir?

Captain: Did you hear Private Small's example?

Large: Yes, sir!

Captain: It was wrong, wasn't it?

Large: Yes, sir!

Captain: Why was it wrong?

Large: I don't know, sir.

Captain: Private Large?

Large: Yes, sir?

Captain: You're still an idiot!

Large: Thank you, sir.

Captain: ***(Quietly – trying to make them understand)*** Listen ... getting up in the morning isn't just an army rule. It's a rule for everyone. Everyone has to get up in the morning.

Potter: No, they don't.

Captain: What?

Potter: Some people don't have to get up in the morning.

Captain: Which people, Potter?

Potter: People who work in the afternoon.

Small: Or in the evening, sir.

Large: Or at night, sir!

Captain: Shut up! The rule in the army is this: you must get up at five o'clock in the morning. Isn't that right, Private Large?

Large: Yes, sir!

Captain: Isn't that right, Private Small?

Small: Yes, sir!

Captain: Isn't that right, Private Potter.

Potter: Yes, sir. But it's stupid.

Captain: It's what?!?

Potter: It's stupid getting up at five o'clock in the morning. It's too early.

Large: I agree, sir!

Small: So do I, sir!

Potter: Why can't we stay in bed until seven o'clock?

Small: Or eight o'clock?

Large: Or lunchtime!

The privates discuss this animatedly

Captain: Stop! You have to get up at five o'clock in the morning because ...

L/S/P: Yes?

Captain: Because we may be attacked by the enemy.

Large/Small: ***(Understanding)*** Ooooh!

Potter: But that's also stupid.

Captain: Also stupid?

Potter: Yes! If the enemy knows we get up at five o'clock ...

Large/Small: Yes?

Potter: They'll attack us at four o'clock!

Large/Small: Oh yes!

Potter: So, if we stay in bed until midday ...

Large/Small: Yes?

Potter: The enemy will attack us at eleven o'clock.

Large/Small: Oh yes!

Potter: And that's a much more sensible time to be attacked!

Large: I agree, sir!

Small: So do I, sir!

Captain: Stop! You have to get up at five o'clock in the morning.

Potter: But why?

Captain: Because it's an army rule! Now ... can anyone tell me something you mustn't do in the army?

Small: Yes, sir!

Captain: **(Pleased)** Very good, Private Small. Give us your example. What mustn't you do in the army?

Small: You mustn't cross the road, sir!

Captain: Eh?

Small: When the little man is red, sir!

Captain: What?

Small: You mustn't cross the road when the little man is red, sir!

Captain: What little man, Private Small?

Small: The little man on the crossing, sir. Like this.

Small demonstrates the little red man on the crossing

Large: He/she's right, sir! You must wait until the little man is green, sir. Like this:

Large demonstrates the little green man on the crossing

Captain: ***(Quietly)*** Private Large ...

Large: Yes, sir?

Captain: You know I said you were an idiot?

Large: Yes, sir?

Captain: I was wrong.

Large: Thank you, sir.

Captain: You and Private Small are BOTH idiots!

Large/Small: Thank you, sir!

Captain: ***(Disbelieving)*** You mustn't cross the road when the little man is red?? Do you *really* think that's something you mustn't do in the army?

Small: Yes, sir.

Captain: But that's ridiculous! It's like saying: You mustn't eat your food quickly.

Small: Yes, sir. That's another one, sir.

Captain: Look. You've got to understand the difference between army rules and general rules.

Large: General rules, sir?

Captain: Yes, Large.

Large: Do you mean 'rules for generals'?

Captain: No! There are some rules just for the army.

Potter: Can you give us an example, sir?

Captain: Yes, Potter. An example. You must never give information to enemy agents.

L/M/S: You must never give information to enemy agents!

Captain: Now, what have we learnt about the difference between army rules and general rules?

Large: Army rule — you must get up at five o'clock!

Potter: General rule — you can stay in bed all day.

Small: Army rule — you must never give information to enemy agents.

Potter: General rule — you can tell them what you like.

Captain: Right! It's time for lunch.

L/S/P: Lunch! Hurray!

Captain: You can all go to the café.

L/S/P: The café! Hurray!

Captain: And don't forget the most important rule of all.

Potter: What's that?

Captain: You must all buy the captain a drink! Left! Right! Left!
Right!

They all march off