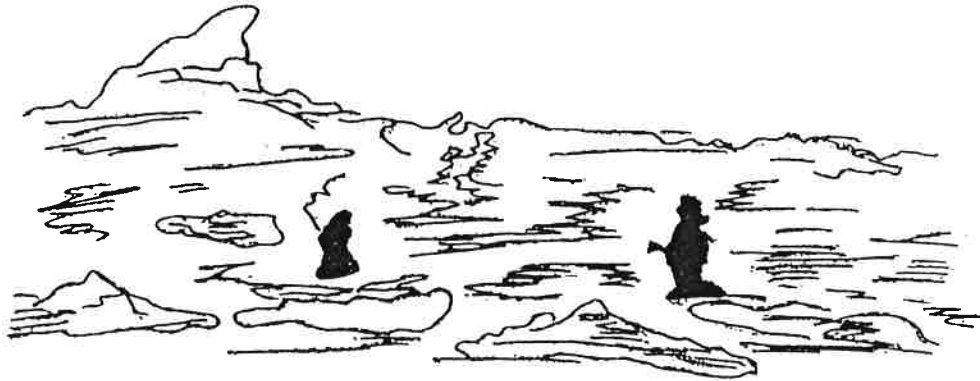


OUR LADY OF LABRADOR SCHOOL

WEST ST. MODESTE

presents

# An Act of Will



in order of appearance

Mrs. Wade .....	Mary Jane Hudson
Liz Wade .....	Kimberly Fowler
Sarah Wade .....	Ruby Glynn
Lucy Costello .....	Ena O'Dell
Johnny Wade .....	Malcolm Bolger
Billy Croft .....	Rodolfo Pike

The sea, an ever-present element in our lives,  
is a fickle lady - usually generous but often cruelly  
demanding.

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SCENE 1

An isolated community. The Wade family kitchen with a rocking chair, wooden table, chairs, etc. The set is spare. Mrs. Wade, a widow of about sixty, is cleaning out the boiler after supper. Liz, her daughter, is sweeping the floor.

MOTHER: Liz, did you put the salt fish on to soak for tomorrow?

LIZ: Yes, Mom, but it's gettin' pretty scarce. We don't have much left to get us trough de rest of de winter.

MOTHER: That's all right, maid. We still got some of them partridges that Johnny got before he went. That'll tide us over.

LIZ: Well, wit any luck George'll give us anader one or two when he gets back from de country. Or maybe we'll get a meal of trout.

MOTHER: When is George gettin' back from the country?

LIZ: I spects he'll be back before Sunday, cause dats when they're de Paddy's Day concert.

MOTHER: Are yea still plannin' on gettin' married this fall?

LIZ: I 'spose, Mom, but there's lotsa time for gettin' married. Sure, most people don't even get married not 'til they're twenty or more.

MOTHER: Yes, I guess it's lots of time for marriage.  
(SITTING IN ROCKING CHAIR) Ah, when I was your age I was married after startin' a family. I was sick with poor Jimmy when I was your age. Now things are changin' so fast, you don't have to get married to survive like we had to.

SARAH (ENTERING THROUGH THE KITCHEN DOOR): Liz! Liz! Guess wha I just seen goin' up de path? (LIZ TO DOOR) George is back from de country. You better hurry up or you're gonna lose him to Alice Whelan.

MOTHER: You better, Liz, or knowin' George he might be goin'

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back in the country in no time.

LIZ: Nah, Mom, he won't go back in without seein' me.

SARAH: Wit all that warm weather we had, he's got some colour to 'm'. Alice'll be all over 'm'.

LIZ (GRABBING HER COAT AS SHE RUNS OUT THE DOOR): Mom, I'll see you later...I...I got to go down to Mary's for concert practice.

LUCY (ENTERING AS LIZ LEAVES): Where's she tearin' off to this time of the night?

MOTHER: George is back from the country and Alice Whelan is out talkin' to 'm' and Liz is afraid she's gonna lose 'm'.

SARAH (LAUGHING): Oh, Mom, you don't believe dat do you?

LUCY: What are you up to now, Sarah?

SARAH: Well, I sorta played a trick on 'er. George is not really back from de country.

MOTHER: Well, don't come bawlin' to me when she gets back.

SARAH: Ah, she's all talk anyway. Want me to light de lamp, Mom?

MOTHER: Yes, maid, and take the boiler to the pantry.

(SARAH LIGHTS THE LAMP AS MRS. WADE GETS HER KNITTING AND SITS IN THE ROCKING CHAIR.)

MOTHER: Well, Lucy, I guess Johnny will be home in a coupla weeks or so.

LUCY: I hope so. I really misses 'm'.

MOTHER: Got your knittin' or what, maid?

LUCY: Yes I do. I had to get you to show me how to turn de heel. Mom's gone off for practice again.

MOTHER: What's she singing?

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- LUCY: Dat song John Wesley wrote 'bout de "GREENLAND" disaster. Her and Aunt Mag are doin' it. It's got a nice tune to it. I got the vamp as far as that. Now what do I do?
- MOTHER: Well, maid, first get half the stitches on one needle to make de heel. You knits back and forth 'till you gets the lengt dere for de heel.
- LUCY: Oh, O.K. (SHE STARTS TO COUNT THE STITCHES)
- MOTHER: Did they talk Uncle Harvey into playin' de fiddle?
- LUCY: Yes, and Ruth is playin' de accordien for anader song, too.
- MOTHER: Very good! Is the church group doin' a play?
- LUCY: Yes! Aunt Stella wrote another, and you knows how funny she is. Sure that could be about anyting knowin' her. I can't wait to see it.
- MOTHER: Yes, girl. So, how are you gettin' on since Johnny left you for de front?
- LUCY: I'm gettin' on O.K., I guess, but I'm sorta worried about him bein' out on de ice.
- MOTHER: Nothing to worry about maid. (SHE CHECKS LUCY'S KNITTING) Yes, maid, that's grand. I felt the same way when my Bill went to de front when I was sick with Liz. We just lost poor Jimmy dat summer, too. But, I prayed dat tings would turn out fer de better.
- LUCY: Did dey?
- MOTHER (STOPS KNITTING): He was suppose to be back in early April, but then, three weeks passes and no sign of 'm'. No telegram, no news. I was worried sick, just like you are now.
- LUCY: Did he come back?
- MOTHER: Yes, maid. He came back that time and things were good again when Liz was barn (KNITS AGAIN).

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LUCY: I hopes everyting turns out good for me and Johnny.

MOTHER: Sometimes, maid, tings don't wark out that way you tink they will.

LUCY: What do you mean?

MOTHER: A coupla years after, de year I lost the little one, Bill went in the country wit his buddy. De weather struck so fast they didn't make it to their shack. A few days later dey were found. Both of them..... buried in the snow....froze to death.

LIZ (BURSTING IN THROUGH THE DOOR): Sarah! Sarah! You get out here right now!

MOTHER: What's wrong, Liz, maid?

LIZ: Dat little brat played a joke on me again. She's always tellin' lies. George ain't back! It's a lucky ting I run into his mudder and found out de difference. (AS SHE STALKS OFF) I'm gettin' her fer dis one.

MOTHER (LAUGHING): Don't believe 'em, maid, when dey say it's easier havin' girls. Mine are always fightin' and arguin' over someting.

LUCY: To tell you de trute, I don't care what I has so long as dey're healthy. (PAUSE) Well, I 'spose I'll head on home. I'll finish this off before I drops by tomorrow so you can show me what to do next.

MOTHER: Yes, maid. You'll catch on to it in no time.

LUCY (LAUGHING): I hope so. I won't be much use if I can't knit.

MOTHER: Oh, Lucy! Ask your Mom if I can borrow her fancy cookie cutters tomorrow. What wit Paddy's Day comin' there'll be all sortsa people droppin' by.

LUCY (OPENING DOOR): O.K. then. Well, goodnight.

MOTHER: Lotsa time, maid.

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LUCY (JUST OFFSTAGE): There's a bit of snow and wind from the northwest tonight. I 'spose they're alright.

SCENE 2

On the ice, Johnny Wade and Bill Croft have been sitting for two hours. There are two other men on the ice also. One is dead. Bill and Johnny are walking around in a circle on the ice pan, talking.

JOHNNY: I hope I live through this nightmare to see Lucy again.

BILLY: Who's Lucy?

JOHNNY: She's my girlfriend back home. We're getting married when I get back home.

BILLY: I wish I had someone to go back to.

JOHNNY: Don't you have a girlfriend or an eye on one?

BILLY: Yah, I got an eye on one but how do I get ahold of her?

JOHNNY: When you go back home, how about buying her a gift?

BILLY: Yah, but what should I buy for her? I don't even know her size.

JOHNNY: Buy her anything. Don't have to be personal. Maybe something like a broach that would suit her.

BILLY: Yah, I think I will. Way the weather's goin' now we might never live to see the girls again.

(HEARS HYMNS FROM OTHER PAN)

BILLY: There must be alot of men caught on that pan. God knows singing keeps the spirits up.

JOHNNY: All we have to do is move, keep on moving, so the blood won't freeze in our veins. Come on bye, just

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think of the girls.

BILLY: I know we gonna die.

JOHNNY: I wouldn't die if I were you and give it to the people to say back home that you died out on this old ice, 'specially if someone is after your girl.

BILLY: But the weather must be getting worse, if it wasn't help would've come from Harry and Joe. They headed off for skipper Bob's ship before dark.

JOHNNY: Yah, they been gone a long time. Something must have happened. There's only one thing to do now, though, and that's wait.

(THEY BEGIN TO WANDER AROUND SMACKING THEIR HANDS AND SHOULDERS WHERE THE MOST SNOW WAS. BILLY TRIES TO GET ONE OF THE RESTING MEN UP.)

BILLY: Get up, Sam, get up!

JOHNNY: It's no use, Billy. He's gone too far to hear you.

(THEY BOTH BEGIN TO MOVE AGAIN. BILLY LOOKS AT JOHNNY WITH LOST HOPE IN HIS EYES.)

BILLY: What do you think of it now, Johnny? Do you think we'll make it back to dry land?

JOHNNY: What do you think?

BILLY: I don't think there'll be a man left to tell the tale.

JOHNNY: I don't know about you, but I'm not gonna die.

BILLY (LOOKING AMAZED): But I don't know how you can say that. I'm so cold!

JOHNNY (GOES OVER TO CECIL, TAKES HIS COAT): Bill, he don't need it. Boy, you do.

BILLY: No, it's not right to take clothes from the dead.

JOHNNY (LOOKS AT DEAD MAN THEN AT BILLY): Billy, if we spend

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the night out here we'll all be dead.

BILLY: Whatta ya mean?

JOHNNY: Sam's already gone and Cecil's close to it and if the truth be known (SITS DOWN), I can't go on any further. Boy, me feet is froze!

BILLY: But you didn't fall in the water!?

JOHNNY: No, but when I pulled Cecil out before dark, I slipped and fell in. I caught myself but my feet got soaked.

BILLY: God, Johnny! What are you gonna do?

JOHNNY: There's not much I can do. You're gonna have to go for help or by morning all four of us will be dead.

BILLY: But, I'm liable to freeze to death out there!

JOHNNY: Here, take my coat.

BILLY: No, sure you'll freeze then.

JOHNNY: I'm older than you and I'm ordering you to take my coat. If you don't we'll all freeze before the night's gone. I can cuddle into Cecil and Sam for warmth, but you're on your own.

BILLY: Gee, boy. I don't know.

JOHNNY: Come on, boy. We all needs you now. You can do it.

BILLY: What way will I go?

JOHNNY: Before the sun went down I sighted the ship in the northeast.

BILLY: That should be three miles from the second pan. (LOOKS AROUND) I'll make it. (JOHNNY TAKES OFF CAST)

JOHNNY: You sure will. Be careful, the ice is loose and if you fall in there'll be nobody to get you out.

BILLY: I'll send back help as soon as I get to the ship. I



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won't waste time now. (FINISHES BUTTONING UP COAT)

JOHNNY: Well, boy, you can't do any good stood up there, so go on, son, and tell skipper Bob to send out a kettle of tea when you get on board.

(BILLY EXITS. JOHNNY LOOKS SLOWLY AROUND THE PAN AND WALKS TO CECIL AND SAM CROUCHES DOWN FOR WARMTH.)

JOHNNY (PRAYER): St. Jude, pray for us.

(CURTAIN FALLS AS JOHNNY CROUCHES DOWN TO SAM AND BEGINS TO REMOVE HIS COAT.)

SCENE 3

Back at the Wade kitchen the next morning, Mrs. Wade and Sarah are folding clothes at the kitchen table.

MOTHER: Did you check the mail yet this morning?

SARAH: No, Liz is gone to get it.

MOTHER: What became of it last night after she found out about the trick you pulled on her?

SARAH: Oh, she's all talk. She said she was goin' to tell Fr. Kelly on me. But he don't listen to her. She's just a busybody anyway.

MOTHER: You watch your tongue, young lady. She's your sister and I won't have that talk in my house.

(SARAH CONTINUES TO MEEKLY FOLD CLOTHES)

MOTHER: When you're finished foldin' the clothes, go up int the cellar to get some potatoes for dinner.

SARAH: Will I bring down a turnip, too?

MOTHER: Yes, maid. It's just as well. We'll make up a pot of soup for tomorrow. The cat was washin' her face this morning. This is a sign of company comin'.

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LIZ: Oh, Mom! Mom! He's gone! (ENTERED CRYING)

MOTHER: Good heavens, maid! What are you carrying on 'bout?  
(TO SARAH) She's just upset dat Alice Whelan might  
get George.

LIZ: No, Mom! It's Johnny!

MOTHER: Liz, tell me.

LIZ: A telegram...a telegram came...Mr. Pittman just told  
me down to the store...Johnny's gone!

MOTHER: What!?

LIZ: They got caught out on de ice! Johnny's dead!

SARAH: No! (SHE RUNS OUT OF DOOR)

LIZ: Oh, Mom, what're we gonna do?

(MOM SITS DOWN HEAVILY IN ROCKING CHAIR. SHE IS DAZED BY THE  
NEWS.)

LUCY (AS SHE ENTERS): Good heavens, Liz! What did you do to  
Sarah to get her back? She's gone tearin' down the  
hill!

LIZ: Oh, Lucy!

MOTHER: Liz, leave her alone. You go find Sarah. No, go on  
wit ya! (LIZ LEAVES CRYING)

MOTHER: Sit down, Lucy, maid. It's bad news.

LUCY: What?

MOTHER: You got to be strong, girl. It's Johnny. He's gone.  
He froze to death on the ice. (MOTHER OFFERS HANKIE.)  
Here, maid, take this. (MOTHER GENTLY PATS LUCY'S  
HAIR.) It's God's way it had to happen like this.

LUCY: But we had everything planned out. It's not fair.

MOTHER: No, maid, it's not. When I lost Bill I knew then  
there was nothin' to do to stop it.

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LUCY: If only he'd stayed home! If only he'd listened to me none of this would have happened!

MOTHER: No, maid. God's will had to be done. So, no matter where Johnny was to, it would have happened.

LUCY: What am I gonna do?

MOTHER: There's not much we can do. We just got to carry on. Now, dry your eyes and help me get some fixin' done. There'll be plenty comin' to see us when they hears the news.

LUCY: I can't face anyone. Not today. Not now.

MOTHER: Now, Lucy, maid. I'm not trying to hurt you but I don't think Johnny would marry a weak little girl. You got to be strong for his sake.

LUCY: But I'm not.....

MOTHER (AS SARAH AND LIZ ENTERS): Yes, you are. Now's the time to prove it. Liz, take Lucy home and get her straightened away. People will be here in no time.

LIZ: Sure, Mom. Come on gir. Everything will be alright. He's at rest now. (LIZ AND LUCY LEAVES)

MOTHER (TAKING A DEEP SIGH): Sarah, child, don't take it so hard.

SARAH: But why Johnny!? First Daddy and now Johnny! It isn't fair!

MOTHER: Life isn't often fair, child. But we cant' bring him back and we can't die with him.

SARAH: But we got to do something.

MOTHER: Right now, I want you to dry your eyes and go over to Aunt Milly's and ask her if she'll come up.

SARAH: Alright, Mom. (SHE GIVES HER MOTHER A HUG AND THEN LEAVES)

(MOTHER LOOKS AROUND THE EMPTY KITCHEN, THEN WALKS OVER TO HER

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ROCKING CHAIR. SHE IS A LITTLE SHAKY AS SHE SITS DOWN. SHE SLOWLY TAKES OUT HER BEADS. SHE SEES THE CLOTHES BASKET AND PUTS AWAY THE BEADS. SHE TAKES ANOTHER LOOK AROUND THE ROOM SHE STANDS AND BEGINS TO FOLD CLOTHES. ALL IS QUIET AS..... THE CURTAIN FALLS.)