

RISER READS

(For both reads he is addressing Grace formally.)

#1

RISER

Do you see this? This... could have landed on you! (sees the helmets up on the wall, and grabs one) These are not for decoration! These are for protecting your heads! When you go outside, you always wear your helmet. When you go anywhere, you keep your gas mask nearby. And when you come back here at night, you pull down every last one of these blackout curtains, and don't so much as peek out until it's broad daylight again — understand? Now get these helmets off the damn wall, onto your noggins, and report to the office! (turning on his heel to go) Oh, and, ladies... welcome to the front.

#2

RISER

That's not what I mean. Listen...

Last week five hundred of our bravest boys were sent to take a hill. After they took it, they found out that neither flank had advanced to support them. They were cut off. No food or water, under never-ending fire they held on. Still, sometimes under fire from our own artillery, because no one knew where they were. For six long days, the Germans pummeled them but never broke their will. A lost battalion, fighting to survive alone and lost, and less than half of them would make it out alive. What would you have done, Grace? How could you bear it, as a leader? To lose even one of your girls: Suzanne... Louise... Bertha... Helen... I think women are reasonable, and war is unreasonable. I think women are civilized, and war is barbaric. It is single-minded. It is relentless. Just like men. Because war is our invention.