



## We Will Not Be Strangers: Korean War Letters between a M.A.S.H Surgeon and His Wife

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In the first war Americans didn't care to understand, a young M.A.S.H. surgeon finds himself in a dusty hospital tent on the Korean front. He and his new wife back in Manhattan exchange daily letters in which they express the timeless urgency of young love and a mutual contempt for war. Even though their day-today lives offer stark contrast, his spent in a blood-smeared apron and gloves, hers teaching high school Spanish and taking dance classes with Martha Graham, Mel and Dorothy are determined to chronicle these disparate experiences for one another so that, in their words, 'we will not be strangers.' By examining the minutiae, they avoid exploring the emptiness; by framing their lives in the normalcy of the 1950s, they avoid confronting the reality that their lives are not theirs alone to control. Attending separate Rosh Hashanah services, his in a mess tent and hers in a Park Avenue synagogue, they are reminded of the pain of their separation. In Mel's hands, Dorothy's letters comment on Sid Caesar, Edward R. Murrow, Joseph McCarthy, and Adlai Stevenson, while Dorothy holds anguished accounts of the carnage and uselessness of war. Now, more than 45 years later, we are just beginning to understand Korea as a kind of dress rehearsal for another lengthy and unpopular conflict -- Vietnam. And Dorothy and Mel are just beginning to understand how their youthful experiences -- together, even if only by mail -- laid the groundwork for a mature and enduring union.

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