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Opening extract from
One Boy's War

Written by
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Illustrated by
Ian Benfold Hayward

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Frances Lincoln Children's Books

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For Sydney Dobson, sent from Barnsley
in County Durham to fight and die on the fields of Belgium.
And for my dad, Dave Huggins, sent off to the Middle East
to do his military service. Unlike Sydney, Dad came home. - L.H.C

For all young men like Sydney - J.B.H.

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FRANCES LINCOLN
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

WAR HAS BEEN DECLARED!

The papers are full of the news that the Germans have attacked France.

Fa is restless. His pals are rushing off in droves to join up. He says, "It's every man's duty to fight for King and Country." Ma scowls and clashes the pots together in the kitchen whenever he says that.

I wish I was older. I'll be sixteen just before Christmas. But Pa says the war will be over by then — hope not, not before I get a crack at the Kaiser!





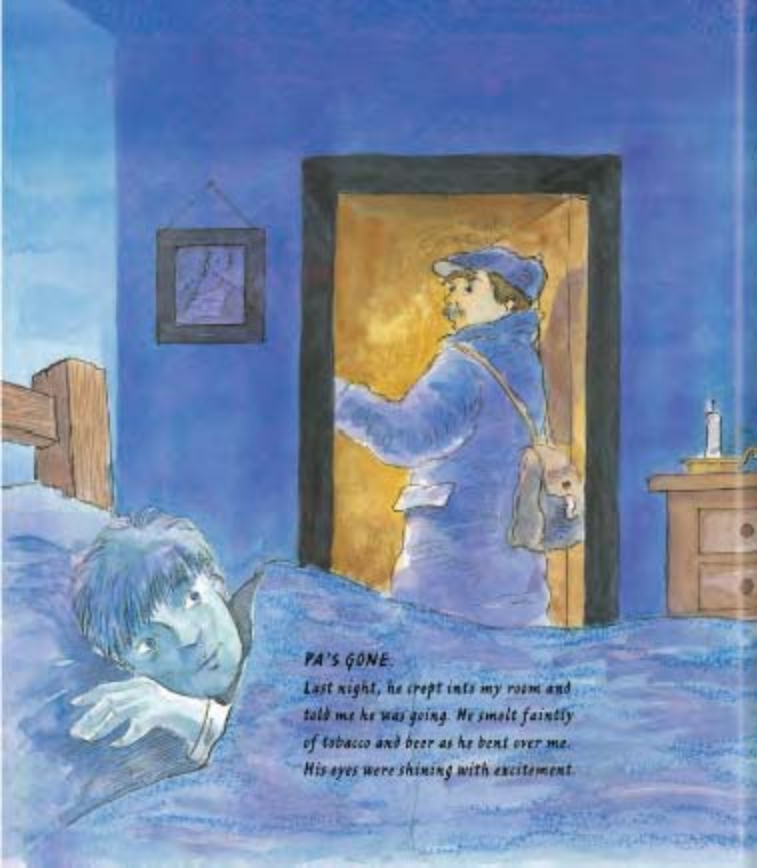
*I've made up my mind. I'm joining up.
Ma's smothering me.
From the moment I get in, her eyes are on me.*

*Everywhere I go I see flags and recruiting stations.
It's like they're calling to me. Pa always said
we should stand up against bullies - and what else
is the Kaiser, marching into France like that?*

*I'll lie about my age.
I'm tall, so there shouldn't be a problem.*

*I wonder where Pa is now?
I bet he'll be proud of me.*





PA'S GONE.

Last night, he crept into my room and told me he was going. He smelt faintly of tobacco and beer as he bent over me. His eyes were shining with excitement.

*Ma didn't say a word this morning.
Her eyes were puffy and red-rimmed, though.
She grabbed my hand and hugged me close
as I left for work. I was glad none of the lads
could see. I'm not a bairn!*
God, if only I was older!

