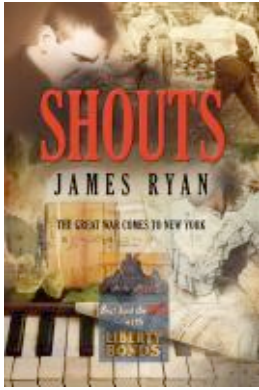


# SHOUTS

JAMES RYAN

THE GREAT WAR COMES TO NEW YORK

Beat back the **HUN**  
with  
**LIBERTY  
BONDS**



*It is 1915. The Great War comes to New York. The American melting pot is a seething crucible. Spies and saboteurs roam the city. Paranoia and politics rage the streets. Firebrand Irish denounce the "British" war and German-Americans are under grave suspicion. In the Bronx, young Tommy Muldoon sets out to save his German-Irish-American family, by day on the junk wagon, by night in the boxing ring. SHOUTS tells his, New York's and America's story.*

# SHOUTS

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“In this big-hearted novel of New York there is the portrait of the great city that was, and the stirring people from whose lives our own have sprung.”

—**James Salter**, PEN/Faulkner Award winner and author of *A Sport and A Pastime*, *Dusk and other stories*, *Burning the Days* and other works.

“James Ryan’s book is a historical thriller written with great intelligence and urgency for our times.”

—**Maureen Howard**, National Book Critics Circle Award winner and author of *Facts of Life*, *Natural History*, *Big As Life*, and others.

“An evocative and richly descriptive novel about The Bronx almost a century ago, when it was on New York City’s northern frontier. James Ryan’s book is accurate in virtually every detail and provides a wonderful way to recapture a time and a place that are now lost to most of us.”

—**Kenneth T. Jackson, Ph.D.**, Barzun Professor of History, Columbia University, and Editor of *The Encyclopedia of New York City*.

“At first glance, there may be nothing natural about The Bronx, long a byword for urban deprivation, crime and misery. But some know better, not least James Ryan, a professor of literature, West Point graduate, and child of The Bronx. In this needle-point-fine historical novel, Irish and German immigrants throng The Bronx in 1915, a time of war when loyalties are stretched to the breaking point. German spies are believed everywhere, Irish firebrands denounce the war and as April and springtime unfold in The Bronx, the Lusitania is sunk with explosive consequences. What of those intermarried families with both Irish and German running in their blood? That’s where young Tommy Muldoon comes in.”

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“In a departure from our policy of not reviewing or recommending works of fiction or novels, I am obligated to direct our reader’s attention to a sumptuous literary tapestry, an intricate weaving of history and fiction, *SHOUTS* by James Ryan. This is a story of a world long ago that most in America have never known or long forgotten. Ryan leaves the reader with an uneasy feeling that the acts of hatred and vindictiveness that characterized this particular era in American history are amazingly reflective

of life within many of today's metropolitan areas. The author has produced a classical narrative, rich in detail and interlaced with just the right amount of history to keep the reader impatiently turning pages until the very last word."

—**Robert H. Taylor**, Editor, *PARAMETERS: The US Army War College Quarterly* (The United States Army's Senior Professional Journal).

# **SHOUTS**

**THE GREAT WAR COMES TO NEW YORK**

**JAMES RYAN**

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This book is set in a specific time and place under the general conditions that existed as described. Historical figures in the book behaved and spoke as described. For the most part, history happened as described. All other characters—even if their names are borrowed from actual “Bronx” names of that time—and their specific involvement in historical acts, are products of the author’s imagination.

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## Chapter 4

### Truthtalker

Thursday Evening

May 6, 1915

148<sup>th</sup> Street and Willis Avenue

The Bronx

AH, THEY'LL TRY TO HAVE us singing like larks about patriotism. "America" is the song, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty," the line. But think more on these words, ladies and gentlemen: "land of the Pilgrim's pride...let freedom ring." But are we just of Pilgrim stock? Why so robustly sing just of Pilgrims? How many of us are of Pilgrim blood? Show hands! All you...PILGRIMS!

As I thought...exactly none of you! This is another example of how the British have infiltrated our blessed shore with their brand of patriotism.

And think on the tune. Why, it's not an American tune at all now, is it?

Yes, that's right. It's a tune of servitude. It's the music of the bent neck and servility. For it's the melody based upon a premise that our forebears reviled and later died for. For the tune is a British one: "God Save the King." Or queen. While the gender is reversible, the intent is not. Our politicians make so much of our historical connections with England. It is most unhealthy to do so.

Such is the dangerous nature of the British influence, that Anglo-Saxon influence which clouds our thoughts, makes us oblivious to our health, as a nation, as individuals. We know from the Bible that pride and a haughty spirit goeth before destruction. Yet in one of our loftiest patriotic hymns we are summoned to call up the haughtiest of all prides, the "Pilgrims' pride." But wait!

Why not our...Spaniard's Pride?

St. Augustine, the oldest city in America, was founded over a half-century before the Mayflower hove to at the barbed end of Cape Cod.

Why not our...Frenchman's Pride?

Years before the Pilgrims sailed from Southampton, Cartier and Champlain sailed the St. Lawrence to found Montreal and Quebec and settle the upper regions of America.

*JAMES RYAN*

Why not include the Swedes of Delaware, the Germans of Pennsylvania, and the Dutch of New York?

And include the Irish from everywhere in this holy land!

What have the Anglo-Saxons over there got to do with us here, in the United States of America? Why, our very name, AMERICA, is Italian!

Can you not see the incipient evil of the Anglo-Saxon propaganda? Its message preaches exclusivity. And being exclusive, it is un-American. And it is unjust. And it is insulting!

Yes, yes, there are commonalties. As alley cats resemble tigers. It is true our system of jurisprudence is based on English common law. It is true we speak English. But America is so much more than this, so much more than mere common language. But even if that were so, even if one would define our nation according to its language, why stop with English? For our English language is made up of many other languages, mostly Latin and Greek. And its more recent source is...German! America is made up of many people from many lands. And America's true stock is in its people, not in its language. For one can be deceitful in any language. We, the people are more important to our nation's welfare and its future than any language.

We are sadly shortsighted if we only look back to England for our language. For history compels us to gaze well beyond. We must look all the way back! To Rome. To Athens. To Mesopotamia, where, so the Bible tells us, first we trod and feared the Lord. But why go blind looking back? Let us move forward! And fear ONLY the Lord!

To say we MUST support the English war, as the mayor of New York City proclaims because we have grand historical affinities with them, is to say that we must no longer listen to a Strauss waltz or trim a Christmas tree or own a dachshund or quaff an Ehret's lager.

Mark my words, this will be next. Our patriotism will be impugned for the slimmest, most ridiculous of reasons.

And mark this! There is no repression like an English repression. If you doubt that, cast your thoughts to Ireland, whose neck is now in its eight-hundredth year of subjugation under the prideful British foot. *EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS!* And what does this say about us?

And mark this too. That same British foot will soon yoke us Americans, the foot of the prideful, haughty English master.



## Chapter 73

### Wits Matched

Gretchen was not the type to have events sneak up on her. She organized her life. Nor was she the type to be swayed easily if she had already come to a conclusion. She was a careful young lady, in all respects of that word, and particularly in her judgments. She had already determined that her old friend, the long-lost Tommy Muldoon, held great appeal. From the first time she spied him, after all these years, standing so tall on top of the sliding rock, she knew that some things were inevitable. Seeing each other, for one, and not just in a passing meeting. Of course, she didn't know a bit about his opinion on the matter. But she knew about the recent events in his life that caused him to leave school. Just friends, is all she wanted to be, just friends.

The other inevitable item was telling her father. She needed his blessing. Not permission, for while talking with young men was not unusual, if one were seen in prolonged conversation, or company, with the same fellow, well, tongues would wiggle. A young woman off to college was not the usual path. Marriage was. She wanted everything to be clear. She was off to college in the fall. She had an interesting young man friend of whom she was fond. She would talk to her father. So she was happy when her father asked to speak with her this evening.

"Is it wise to get so serious, Gretchen? You'll be at university in a few months."

"Papa, I am not so serious that such a friendship will change my life. Rather, it will expand it. I am merely telling you of my friend, and an old friend at that. He happens to be a man. I would like to be friends with him despite this."

"Yes, well I understand this. But how will this be? Is this what's called 'keeping company' and seeing each other, and only each other?"

"No, Papa."

"No? To what?"

"To all, Papa."

"I see...so just what arrangement do you seek?"

"Arrangement? Only to know that you are aware of what I am doing. That you trust my judgment, and that when people mention to you

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that they have seen me with Tommy Muldoon, you will say, yes, he's a fine young man, and that he and my daughter have been friends for a long time."

"Hmmm...let us continue this discussion. What I will now say may seem harsh and arrogant. I mean no such thing. But from what I have heard, he seems to come from a troubled family. Particularly his father. This, and these times we live in, are not being kind to your friend. There are many differences between the two of you. Let me be blunt, my dear...his hands are dirty and yours are not. And I am sorry if I hurt you with this remark. But now more than ever you must be careful with whom you are involved."

"Involved? Dirty hands? We will be just going for walks and having ice cream, Papa. And as far as dirty hands, you are not fair. Didn't you begin with dirty hands, Papa? You told me so."

"Ah, yes my dear, I did. But that was then, and times were easier, less complicated. One could experiment with life more then."

"Oh, Papa! Why is now so different?"

"Because, my dear, young daughter, these times are perilous. Surely you can see that? Now there are many eyes turned to us. And we must be careful about with whom we are seen."

"I am seen by many people. I have friends, Papa. What matters another?"

"Why, with all the young men in the neighborhood, both in your school and at the *Turn Verein*, why do you narrow yourself so with this young man of yours?"

"He's not 'of mine' Papa."

"Granted, but he is not in school, and works in a business that can only be described as 'difficult'."

"Narrow? I haven't thought I was doing that a bit. These other 'neighborhood young men', as you call them, interest me not a bit?"

"You are very demanding, my dear."

"No Papa! Yes Papa! I may be demanding, like you, I might add, but they are a dull lot, these neighborhood boys. And the very reasons you cite, being out in the world, and working in his own business, are the reasons why this other 'young man' is so interesting to me."

"Listen, Gretchen, this is how it is..."

"Oh Papa..."

"Ssssh, my dear. Please listen. I only want for you to be safe and happy. Can you not see that? Here, have a slice of this pear."

"No thank you, Papa."

JAMES RYAN

“Very well. Now, when I said before that things were dangerous, you smiled.”

“I meant...”

“Sssh, let me finish, dear. It is a dangerous time. This is in plain sight. And you can see what already has happened to this young man and his grandfather. Surely, you have heard the talk and rumors about his father’s activities. A saboteur! My God, Gretchen!”

“This ‘young man’ as you call him is Thomas Muldoon. He is an honest, hardworking young man. He is also what you would call a ‘gentlemen’, Papa.”

“Yes, I am sure. And he is also becoming what is called a ‘prizefighter’. And from what I have heard, he is already a street fighter.”

“Yes, he is learning that. As are many other boys, Papa. Girls learn to dance and play piano. Boys in the Bronx learn to box.”

“I see, yes, I see.”

“He also speaks German as well as I do. No better, because he knows some *Plattdeutsch*, too. He has an Irish name, and an American mother who is very ill. His grandfather is German, his grandmother, Irish, and he is American-born. Circumstances, Papa! Those are his. And those are now. And circumstances change.”

“Change? The family lives off the streets, Gretchen. They deal in junk. They are like the Indians that chased after buffalo, the nomads seeking arable lands. He wishes to become a prizefighter. What will change? He will suddenly decide to become a medical doctor?”

“Junk, Papa? Is junk what the hullabaloo is about? Junk, dirty hands, and fighting?”

“There! You have it!”

“Yes, there I have it!”

“Please, Gretchen, do not be upset.”

“All I want, Papa...is to just...oh!...to...to just have you and Mama meet him. That’s all. I understand what you are saying, I do. But...well...never mind.”

“Please tell me, Gretchen.”

“Do you think that I would be so foolish as to throw away college to become a *hausfrau*? I will not stay at home for a husband, no matter how much money is in the house, or how little.”

“I see.”

*SHOUTS*

“Ah, Papa. Sometimes I think that you see little. Perhaps only what is pressed up close to you, like the dials and thermometers on the precious mash tuns in your brewery.”

“Gretchen, do not disparage what you do not know. These mash tuns, as you refer to my profession, have provided everything for us. We are talking about complicated issues here. Not just strolling and eating ice cream sundaes. You have heard of temperance, I presume?”

“Yes, papa, who has not? And I ask this to you, too—do not disparage what, or whom, you do not know. And I want you to meet Tommy Muldoon, like I met his family.”

“Ah, my Gretchen, at last count, almost one-half of the states in the United States have gone dry, that is, no alcohol for drinking. Already because of the war, grain cannot be used to make hard liquor. Beer is next. The breweries will fall. I am sure of it! Why? Because we are German, and they will kill this beautiful business. And that will be the end of the orchestras and hospitals and gymnasiums and beer gardens and cafés. Rubble, all will go to rubble without the profits and contributions of the breweries. They are enormous financial institutions, these breweries, more even than banks...ah, but I am drifting in our little discussion.”

“Papa—”

“I am sorry my darling. These are the bigger issues—matters of survival. It is unimaginable how this place, the Bronx, would ever be without these businesses. Pianos and beer—but I fear it will happen.”

“But not tonight, Papa.”

“No, not tonight, my Gretchen.”

“Or next week?”

“Ha, ha—I see where you are heading. Yes, next week we can sit with your new, or old, young man friend. See how confusing this life is?”

“I love you, Papa.”

“And I, you, my Gretchen.”

## Chapter 84

### Pins and Buttons

American flags flew all over everywhere. From front yards and backyards, from porch railings, at firehouses and police stations, from the fenders of motorcars, from the cowcatchers of trolleys, from lampposts and on the tops of billboards. And from office buildings more flags, larger flags, flags that covered rows of windows. At the Polo Grounds, every day was World Series day. Flags hung down from the roofs of banks. It was one grand, long holiday. Buy bonds! Wars cost money. We got a war to win!

“In this the hour of trial by fire, only a malignant few will be disloyal,” Theodore Roosevelt said at a War Bond Rally at Times Square. Adding, “Every immigrant who comes here should be required within five years to learn English or leave the country.”

Then he shouted, “One flag! One language! One America!”

Still clamoring for a division of his own, still lost in his own fiction about San Juan Hill, “Render them visible,” said Theodore Roosevelt to the *New York Times* reporter

“The Hun within our gates masquerades in many disguises; he is our dangerous enemy; and he should be hunted down without mercy.”

One lesser luminary warned, “Watch out for the gloaters who smile and smirk at the Hun’s victories. Reckon each enemy alien as a pound of dynamite.”

And another said, “Undiluted loyalty is what we need! Full-blown Americans – there is no hyphen in patriotism!”

And from the truly blue patriots, the sign:

**LEND THE WAY THEY FIGHT  
BUY BONDS TO YOUR UTMOST**

And the folks hearthside could fight the war too! Red, white and blue nosegays sprouted on previously innocent bodices. And more flags, different flags, from the windows of apartment houses and private homes,

*SHOUTS*

flags, red-bordered flags, and in its white field, blue stars. One per boy. Blue star mothers. And the patriotic economy continued to spin. Enameled brooches, lapel pins, buttons—how many lads do you have in France? Buy more pins. Give them as gifts to remember your boy—all our boys.

Hearts were high!

Bands played on street corners. And then the speeches. Everywhere the speeches! And by the stars of stage and screen, Fairbanks and Pickford and everybody in between.

And then there were the coffins, the lids transparent with wooden frames necklaced with preset nails ready to hammer home. And a mallet, the handle trailing grosgrain streamers of red, white, and blue.

And the sign on the box:

**HAMMER A NAIL INTO KAISER BILL— \$1**

Inside the casket, an effigy, Wilhelm himself, spiked-helmet of papier-mâché, braided chest, pillow-stuffed paunch. True to life.

There was such a catafalque at The Hub on the sidewalk in front of Metzger's Ice Cream Parlor, and the trade was brisk.

"A bill for a Bill," mumbled a young man driving past in a junk wagon. Tommy Muldoon had never replaced the American flag on his wagon. If I can't fly what I want, I'll fly nothing at all.

And then the air turned bad. Cheese, he thought, or maybe America had farted.

April in Cincinnati, Ohio, and a pastor spoke German bedside to a dying parishioner, a woman who spoke only German. Upon leaving the house, he was accosted by a mob, beaten, then summarily tarred and feathered for it was forbidden to speak German. No exceptions. "There's a war on for Christ's sake!" a man in the crowd had yelled.

April in Yonkers, New York, and Helmut Munsenmayer, a baker, was arrested in his shop. He had made cakes and pastries in the shape of German helmets and Iron Crosses. And they were selling very well, so reported the *New York Times*.

April in Florida, and from out of the sunshine Congressional Representative Walter Kehoe got an idea. Aware that Germans are not immediately recognizable on our streets, he surmised that perhaps they should wear distinctive yellow armbands thus rendering themselves visible.

*JAMES RYAN*

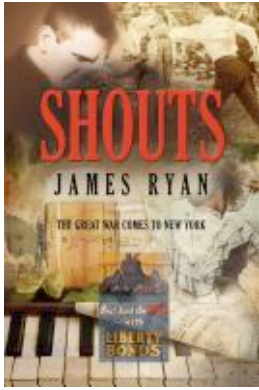
England was considering it. So why not here in the United States of America?

But upon further reflection perhaps buttons would be better?

And so he submitted to the Congress of the United States of America suggested legislation entitled, "A BILL REQUIRING ALL REGISTERED ALIEN ENEMIES TO WEAR AN IDENTIFICATION BUTTON."

In the abstract, the bill read, "That every person who is required to register by law as an enemy alien, shall wear conspicuously upon his or her person at all times when in a public place, a button with the words, "Registered Alien Enemy," plainly printed, or stamped, thereon."

It had begun in spades.



*It is 1915. The Great War comes to New York. The American melting pot is a seething crucible. Spies and saboteurs roam the city. Paranoia and politics rage the streets. Firebrand Irish denounce the "British" war and German-Americans are under grave suspicion. In the Bronx, young Tommy Muldoon sets out to save his German-Irish-American family, by day on the junk wagon, by night in the boxing ring. SHOUTS tells his, New York's and America's story.*

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