

PERUSAL SCRIPT



Enchanted April *a musical*

Book and Lyrics

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Music and Lyrics

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HP

HANSEN PERRY PRODUCTIONS

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AN ENCHANTED APRIL A MUSICAL

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ACT I

SCENE 1

LONDON: FEBRUARY, 1922

A projection of a page out of the CLASSIFIEDS of the London Times: "To Those who Appreciate Wisteria and Sunshine. Small medieval Italian castle on the shores of the Mediterranean to be let furnished for the month of April. Necessary servants remain. Z, Box 1000, The Times."

(The insistent SOUND of rain.)

(The LIGHTS RISE on: the SMOKING ROOM of a WOMEN'S CLUB where LOTTY WILKINS, a dowdy, though becoming woman, and ROSE ARBUTHNOT, a rigid, reserved and sad woman sit at tables on opposite sides of the room reading the Times; the luxurious bedroom of LADY CAROLINE DESTER, a stunning, yet pensive woman, who reads the Times; and on a Victorian sitting room where MRS. FISHER, a forthright and solid woman, reads the Times.)

(Simultaneously, they lower their papers:)

#1 - OVERTURE/ALONE ON A HILL

LOTTY, ROSE, LADY CAROLINE MRS. FISHER SING:
ALONE ON A HILL AND A MONTH BY THE SEA...

(A HUGE clap of THUNDER.)

#2 - ENDLESS RAIN

ALL WOMEN SING:
RAIN, IT'S ALWAYS RAIN.
NO SUN AT ALL.
NO EMPTY DRAIN.

LOTTY SINGS:
WITH FIVE MORE CHORES MY LIST IS DONE.

ROSE SINGS:
TOO MANY DUTIES JUST BEGUN.

MRS. FISHER SINGS:
I'LL HAVE TO STAY INSIDE AGAIN.

LADY CAROLINE SINGS:
WHEN DID I EVER LIKE THE RAIN?

ALL WOMEN:
AS IT INVADES MY HOME
I STAY INSIDE AND CLOSE THE DOOR.

LADY CAROLINE SINGS:
THE RAIN IS SEEPING;

LOTTY AND MRS. FISHER SING:
JUST WEEPING ON THE FLOOR.

(They all sigh audibly.)

LOTTY SINGS:
I CANNOT BREATHE.

LOTTY AND ROSE SING:
I'M THUNDERSTRUCK.

LOTTY, ROSE AND LADY CAROLINE:
I SCREAM INSIDE.

LOTTY, ROSE, LADY CAROLINE AND MRS. FISHER:
I'M ALWAYS STUCK HERE WITH THIS RAIN...

LOTTY, MRS. FISHER AND ROSE SING:
THIS STIFLING RAIN...

LOTTY AND ROSE SING:
THIS ENDLESS RAIN.

(The LIGHTS on MRS. FISHER and LADY CAROLINE
fade. ROSE sighs. LOTTY crosses behind her
and gazes the page ROSE reads.)

LOTTY
Are you reading about the medieval castle and the wisteria?

ROSE
Are you speaking to me?

LOTTY
Yes. Are you reading about the medieval castle and the wisteria ?
I see that we're on the same page, so I just wondered.

ROSE
There are many things on this page.

LOTTY
Yes, but this is the only thing worth reading.
(Realizing.)
You're Mrs. Arbuthnot.

ROSE
Have we met?

LOTTY
No, not officially. I've seen you...on Sunday. In church every Sunday. You march in the poor and the needy.

ROSE
I don't think I "march" them in.

LOTTY
Oh, yes you do. Every Sunday, efficiently like clockwork. I don't know how you do it, all those children, it's quite remarkable, but you do.
(They both go back to their papers.)
"Wisteria and sunshine." Just reading it makes me feel better.
And...it's such a miserable day...

#3 - JUST THINK/WISTERIA & SUNSHINE

ROSE
It's February. It always rains in February.

LOTTY
And March and April...

LOTTY SINGS:
JUST THINK...

ROSE SINGS:
RAIN!

LOTTY SINGS:
MY DREAM...

ROSE SINGS:
RAIN!

LOTTY SINGS:
I WANT...

ROSE SINGS:
WISH...

LOTTY AND ROSE SING:
TO SEE SUN AND FLOWERS!

LOTTY SINGS:
TO FLY...

ROSE SINGS:
FLEE...

LOTTY SINGS:
TAKE WING...

ROSE SINGS:
WING!

LOTTY SINGS:
AND SOAR...
OVER BRIDGE AND TOWERS.
A MEDIEVAL CASTLE,

ROSE SINGS:
IT'S NOT FOR ME!

LOTTY SINGS:
NEAR VIEWS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA,

ROSE SINGS:
IT'S JUST FOR THE RICH,
AND THE BOURGEOISIE,

LOTTY SINGS:
AN INCREDIBLE DABBLE IN LUXURY.

ROSE SINGS:
TO GET AWAY EVERYDAY
IS AN INDULGENCE I FEEL I MUST DECLINE.

LOTTY SINGS:
A RUNAWAY HOLIDAY GIFT TO OURSELVES
WHERE THERE'S MORE THAN SUN THAT'S SHINING!

(ROSE allows herself the indulgence of
wishing about it.)

LOTTY SINGS:
AFTERNOON NAPS WITH A DIP IN THE SEA
JUST BEFORE SUNSET HOVERS AND LINGERS!

ROSE SINGS:
MORNINGS WITH FLOWERS?

(LOTTY nods.)

LOTTY SINGS:
AND WALKS ON THE BEACH
AS THE SAND RUNS THROUGH OUR FINGERS!

(Talking to ROSE.)

LOTTY SING:
IMAGINE THE LIGHT AND THE FRAGRANCE, TOO,
FOR CASTLE GUESTS LOOKING FOR ROMANCE: WHO
ABIDE NEAR THE SEA: AN ENTRANCING VIEW,
SO ENCHANTED BY RIPPLES OF DANCING BLUE.

LOTTY (cont.)

It's such a wonderful thought? An Italian castle full of flowers and—

ROSE

Yes, but it's no use wasting one's time thinking of such things.

LOTTY

Oh, but it is! And just the considering of "such things" is worthwhile in itself and sometimes I believe—I really do believe—if one considers hard enough one gets things.

ROSE

Who are you?

LOTTY

Oh, yes, how stupid of me. I'm Mrs. Wilkins. Mrs. "Mellersh"-Wilkins. Mellersh is my husband. I work for Mellersh which is why "wisteria and sunshine" seems so wonderful.

ROSE

You work for your husband?

LOTTY

Yes.

(She pulls out a long memorandum.)

Pick up Mellersh's shirts, pick up Mellersh's collars, pick up Mellersh's boots, pick up Mellersh's books, I pick up Mellersh's everything.

(She stuffs the paper back in her pocket.)

Cook his dinner, wash his clothes, clean his house.

(She sighs.)

It's never ending.

ROSE

But that's not work. Those are loving duties a wife performs for her husband.

LOTTY

It feels like work. Mellersh is a solicitor and very handsome.

ROSE

That must be a great pleasure to you.

LOTTY

Well, I don't look at him that much, but I suppose. Mellersh has seen you at church as well.

ROSE

Really?

LOTTY

He calls you the "Field Marshal."

ROSE

Does he.

LOTTY

But I just think you're splendid.

ROSE

What?

LOTTY

You're splendid. Look at all the good you do. All that hard, good work.

ROSE

It's not that hard and it's not that good.

(Pause. She's back in her paper.)

LOTTY

What does your husband do?

ROSE

My husband? Writes.

LOTTY

Really? What?

ROSE

Books.

LOTTY

Honestly?! Have I read him?

ROSE

Mrs. Wilkins, I don't wish to be rude, but I—

(LOTTY gasps.)

ROSE (cont.)

What is it?

LOTTY SINGS: [PROMINENT]
**IF WE ARRANGE THINGS,
 CAREFULLY PLAN,
 LIE TO OUR HUSBANDS...
 I SEE US THERE!**

ROSE SINGS: [SUBDUED]
**WHY WAS SHE LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?
 WHAT IS SHE THINKING?
 WHY DOESN'T SHE
 LEAVE ME ALONE?**

ROSE
 Really, Mrs. Wilkins, I understand that it's a dreary day,
 believe me these days wear on me as well, and that you want—

LOTTY
 Let's get it?!

MUSIC STOPS ABRUPTLY.

ROSE
 Get it?

LOTTY
 Yes!

ROSE
 But how do you mean "get it?"

LOTTY
 Rent it! Hire it! Have it! Not just sit here and say how
 beautiful and then go home to Hampstead without lifting a finger—go
 home just as usual and see about the dinner and the fish just as
 we've been doing for years and years...

(Working herself into a frenzy.)
 And will go on doing for years and years! In fact, I see no end to
 it!

ROSE
 Shh!

LOTTY
 (In a yelling whisper.)
 There is no end to it! Why, we would really be unselfish to go away
 and be happy for a little because we would come back so much nicer!

ROSE
 Do you mean you...and I?

LOTTY
 Yes!

IT'S TRUE, ITALY, WOULD BE BEAUTIFUL.
 YES, TRUE, ITALY, SOUNDS SO BEAUTIFUL.
 IT'S SELFISH, TO SPEND SUCH TIME IN COMFORT.
 IT'S SINFUL, THOUGH SURE A TRUE DELIGHT.

ROSE (cont.)

But there are many delightful things in life one would like to do, but why is strength given to one, except to help one not to do them?

LOTTY

When was the last time you did something just for the fun of it? For me it was 1912, the year the Titanic sank, and mine was just about as much fun. When was the last time you were really, really happy.

(ROSE turns away.)

Mrs. Arbuthnot...

(She puts her hand on ROSE'S)

Don't you think it's time to be happy. I can see us there. Sipping tea, the breeze ruffling our skirts. Even if you don't see us there, wouldn't you like to?

(Beat.)

And Mellersh is simply insufferable in February...and all the other months. I can never do anything right around him and he's cross and short tempered and I don't want to go to prison for killing him. And I long for something else! I'm at my wits end!

(LOTTY tries not to cry.)

I'm sorry. I don't know what's come over me.

ROSE

It's the advertisement.

LOTTY

Yes... And both of us being so miserable.

(Pause.)

ROSE

I'm wondering...

LOTTY

What?

ROSE

I don't think it would do any harm to answer the advertisement.

(LOTTY brightens.)

Just an inquiry.

LOTTY

Yes, yes, yes!

ROSE

And it isn't as if it committed us to anything.

LOTTY

No, no, no! Oh, Mrs. Arbuthnot, you can see us there can't you?

LOTTY SINGS:

A VILLA ITALIAN, NOT
TOO FAR FROM ROME, WITH
SERVANTS AND SEACOAST:
A SHRINE!
WITH HILLTOP AND CASTLE, AND
ACRES TO ROAM.
LACED WITH WISTERIA AND
SUNSHINE.

ROSE SINGS:

PICTURE ME, BY THE SEA
BASKING IN LUXURY
SERVANTS AT MY CALL.
COULD I BE, ON A SPREE?
WANDERING ON AN ESTATE
WOULD BE ENTHRALLING.

LOTTY SINGS:

AFTERNOON NAPS WITH A
DIP IN THE SEA,
JUST BEFORE SUNSET
HOVERS AND LINGERS.
MORNINGS WITH FLOWERS
AND WALKS ON THE BEACH,
AS THE SAND RUNS THROUGH
OUR FINGERS!

ROSE SINGS:

STAYING ON A,
SEACOAST
WE MOSTLY WOULD
LOUNGE IN THE LIGHT.
COULD I, OR WOULD I?
THE PERFUME IN MY ROOM IN A
CASTLE COULD BE A DELIGHT.

(They move to a writing table.)

LOTTY AND ROSE SING:

JUST THINK OF THE TIME I WILL HAVE TO INHALE
ALL THE SCENTS, AS MY SENSES START REELING!
THE FEELING IT GIVES ME I CAN'T QUITE CONVEY;
OF FRAGRANT WISTERIA AND SUNSHINE.

(ROSE writes.)

ROSE

To Mr. "Z" Box one thousand. The Times. Please
send..."particulars."

LOTTY AND ROSE SING:

LET'S HOPE FOR
WISTERIA AND SUNSHINE!

(LOTTY exits. The lights around ROSE dim
as a CLAP of THUNDER is heard. ROSE dons
her raincoat and opens her umbrella as
the LIGHTS CROSS-FADE.)

ACT I

SCENE 2

The SOUND of rain intensifies.
 VICTORIA STATION. PLATFORM 6.
 HAMPSTEAD HEATH. ROSE moves from the
 women's club.

#4 - WISTERIA AND...**ROSE SINGS:**

**WISTERIA...MIGHT BE DISTRACTING
 HOW WONDERFUL IF I COULD FLY AWAY
 FROM DUTY
 THERE'S TOO MUCH DUTY
 AND LITTLE BEAUTY...
 OH, TO GET AWAY.
 FROM DUTY; THE POOR.
 AND DUTY; THE SICK. NO BEAUTY
 IN MEM'RIES THAT I CANNOT CHANGE.**

(ROSE crosses into her home, hangs up her
 coat, puts away her umbrella, and sits.
 The SOUND of a door opening and closing.)

ROSE

Frederick?

(FREDERICK ARBUTHNOT, an attractive man
 dressed in evening clothes, peeks in.)

FREDERICK (O.S.)

Hello? Rose? What are you doing up? Is everything all right?

ROSE

Yes.

FREDERICK

Were you waiting up for me? You haven't done that for years.

ROSE

Well, I wanted to—

(Seeing his fancy dress.)

Were you at a party?

FREDERICK

Yes, at Lord and Lady Dester's? I left you a note.

(He retrieves a note from the table and
 hands it to her. She reads.)

ROSE

"Rose, a reminder that I will be home later than usual." A

(MORE)

ROSE (Continued)
 reminder? When did you tell me?

FREDERICK
 Over a month ago I should think.

ROSE
 I'm sorry. I'd forgotten.

FREDERICK
 That's why the note.

ROSE
 Dester? Are they friends of yours?

FREDERICK
 On the fringe. They find me remotely amusing, I think. Certainly you've heard of the Desters? They're in all the papers. Oh, right, you don't read the papers. Anyway, it was their daughter's engagement party to Lord Darlington.

ROSE
The Lord Darlington?

FREDERICK
 The very same. Quite a bash, I must say. Everybody was there.
 (ROSE looks to him.)
 Not to worry, I went as my "nom de plume," so they only know me as B.D. Baxter. Your reputation is quite safe.

ROSE
 How reassuring. Have they all read your books?

FREDERICK
 Yes, I believe they have.

ROSE
 And they still invited you?
 (FREDERICK turns away, hurt.)
 And how did B.D. Baxter do? Was he charming? Cavalier? Debonair?

FREDERICK
 Me, debonair? No, but I'm flattered you think I could be. Made a good joke or two at dinner, though. Lady Dester laughed. The daughter, Caroline, didn't seem too keen on the whole affair. Kept slipping away. A looker that one is.
 (ROSE looks at him.)
 Not that I've looked! Well, I've looked, but not like with anything in mind. Lord, no. She thinks I'm old and boring.

ROSE
 How do you know she thinks that?

FREDERICK

Because she said, "Baxter, you're old and boring."

(An awkward pause.)

ROSE

I wanted to—

FREDERICK

I started a new—

FREDERICK (cont.)

Pardon me.

ROSE

You go first.

FREDERICK

I was just going to say that I started a new book.

ROSE

Really? Does it contain the word "lurid" or "titillating" in the title?

FREDERICK

Neither, actually. I thought you might like it if I tried something different. Something about...us. Something you might want to read.

ROSE

I shan't want to read that.

(He is stung.)

FREDERICK

What did you want to tell me?

ROSE

I was at the club today and I met a woman. A Mrs. Wilkins. We started talking about... Oh, never mind. It's foolish. I did meet with the Vicar.

FREDERICK

Ah, the Vicar.

ROSE

We are to buy boots for the poor. In Cheapside.

FREDERICK

How fortunate for the poor.

ROSE

Frederick, I'm thinking of, well, I'm entertaining the idea of going to Italy for the month of April.

FREDERICK

Are you?

ROSE

Yes.

FREDERICK

Really? You? On holiday?

ROSE

Unless you need me—

FREDERICK

That's splendid!

ROSE

But if you need me—

FREDERICK

No, no. Do it. You should. Enjoy yourself for a change. How much will you need?

(He moves to the desk and writes a check.)

ROSE

Oh, no, no, no, I shall use my nest egg.

FREDERICK

Nonsense. I have plenty. You may need your nest egg. Would two hundred pounds be enough?

ROSE

Please, nothing so extravagant. One hundred. One hundred would be more than plenty.

FREDERICK

One hundred it is then.

ROSE

You could write the other hundred to the Parish Charities.

(Hands her the check.)

FREDERICK

One hundred pounds. I shall let the Vicar fend for himself.

ROSE

Thank you. It's...very generous. But if you need me to stay, you need only say the word.

FREDERICK

Really?

(He turns from her.)

#5 - EVERYTHING WAS CHANGED**FREDERICK SINGS:**

**YOU MEAN THERE'S JUST A WORD?
JUST ONE WORD TO CHANGE YOUR TACK?**

**I'VE TRIED EVERY WORD I KNOW,
BUT I ALWAYS SEE YOUR BACK AND NOT YOUR
EYES LIKE ROSIE...
HAIR LIKE ROSIE...**

FREDERICK (cont.)

You should go. I have to start that wretched book tour, anyway.
Otherwise you'd be here all alone.

ROSE SINGS:

**I'M ALWAYS HERE ALONE
FROM DAY TO MONTH TO YEAR
AND EVEN WHEN YOU'RE HERE
WE SEEM TO BE ALONE TOGETHER.
AND I LET THAT HAPPEN.**

FREDERICK SINGS:

**WE SIT NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.
WE SMILE BUT NEVER SPEAK,
A TEAR SLIPS DOWN YOUR CHEEK.
WE SEEM TO BE JUST THROWN TOGETHER.
AND I LET THAT HAPPEN?**

FREDERICK (cont.)

You'll enjoy Italy.

ROSE

Yes, I thought as much.

ROSE (cont.)

I used to love to travel...

FREDERICK

You used to love to travel...

FREDERICK AND ROSE

Until...

ROSE AND FREDERICK SING:

**EVERYTHING WAS CHANGED IN A SECOND.
THIS WAS NOT THE LIFE THAT HAD BECKONED.**

ROSE SINGS:

I LOOK AT YOU AND BY DEGREE
 THAT AWFUL DAY COMES BACK TO ME.
 OH, FRED'RICK...I CAN'T...BEAR IT.

FREDERICK SINGS:

IN FRANCE MY WOUNDS KEPT ME ALONE
 YOU BORE OUR SORROWS ON YOUR OWN.
 I WAS NOT THERE TO SHARE IT.

ROSE AND FREDERICK SING:

ONCE YOU LEFT...THEN I LEFT...
 AND HERE WE ARE GONE TOGETHER.

FREDERICK

(He touches her arm. She pulls away.)

At least you'll get some sun. Miserable weather here. Always is.

ROSE

Yes...

ROSE SINGS:

AND WE'RE MISERABLE IN IT.
 I CAN'T DO THIS TO YOU
 I'M LOST AND YOU'RE LOST, TOO
 I'VE RUINED WHAT WE KNEW.
 SO HOW DO WE HOLD ON TOGETHER?
 YES, I LET THAT HAPPEN!

ROSE AND FREDERICK SING:

EVERYTHING WAS CHANGED IN A SECOND.
 THIS WAS NOT THE LIFE THAT HAD BECKONED.

ROSE SINGS:

WILL LEAVING HELP ME WORK IT THROUGH?
 IS BEING HERE THE THING TO DO?
 I CAN NO...LONGER...BEAR IT...
 OH, FRED'RICK

ROSE SINGS:

I NEED TO GO...
 IF I DON'T GO...
 I'M SURE I'D NEED TO LEAVE.

I LOVE YOU SO,
 IF I DON'T GO
 THERE WILL BE NO REPRIEVE.

FREDERICK SINGS:

YOU WANDER TO AND FRO
 I LONG TO LOVE YOU SO
 BUT YOU LEFT YEARS AGO.
 AND WE LIVE HERE ALONE
 TOGETHER.
 DID I LET THAT HAPPEN?

WE SIT NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.
 WE SMILE BUT NEVER SPEAK,
 A TEAR SLIPS DOWN YOUR CHEEK.
 WE SEEM TO BE JUST THROWN
 TOGETHER.
 DID I LET THAT HAPPEN?

ROSE AND FREDERICK SING:
EVERYTHING WAS CHANGED IN A SECOND.
THIS IS NOT THE LIFE THAT HAD BECKONED.

ROSE SINGS:
YOU WROTE THE BOOKS I DREAD,
I HELPED THE POOR INSTEAD
I CAN NO...LONGER...BEAR IT.

FREDERICK SINGS:
HOW CAN I GET IT THROUGH TO YOU
THAT IT WAS NEVER DUE TO YOU

ROSE SINGS:
ONCE I LEFT

FREDERICK SINGS:
THEN I LEFT

ROSE AND FREDERICK SING:
AND HERE WE ARE GONE TOGETHER.

SO YOU/I MIGHT AS WELL LEAVE,
LEAVING'S BETTER THAN TO GRIEVE.
AND IT WON'T BE MISERABLE IN IT'LY
MISERABLE AS LONDON IS...

FREDERICK SING:
EYES LIKE ROSIE...
HAIR LIKE ROSIE...

ROSE AND FREDERICK SING:
WE WERE SUCH A PAIR! WHO KNOWS, WE...
IF WE PART RIGHT NOW,
IF WE HEART RIGHT NOW

ROSE (cont.)
 Will you be here when I get back?

FREDERICK
 Yes. Of course.

ROSE
 Good-night, then.

FREDERICK
 Yes... Good-night.

(ROSE leaves the room, leaving FREDERICK
 alone. She stops.)

ROSE AND FREDERICK SING:
EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED.

(The lights BLACKOUT.)

ACT I

SCENE 3

Lights up on the WOMEN'S CLUB.
 LOTTY enters, a letter in hand. ROSE
 enters from the opposite direction.

LOTTY

It's called San Salvatore and it's owned by a Mr. Briggs of London. It has beds enough for eight, exclusive of servants, three sitting-rooms, battlements, dungeons—we might not need a dungeon but one is always nice to have—and electric light. And it's only...

(LOTTY stands stunned.)

ROSE

What? It's only what?

(ROSE takes the letter and reads.)

Sixty pounds!?

(Back to the letter.)

And the servants' wages are extra! Then there will be food and the rail out and home!

LOTTY

Don't you have your half in your nest egg?

ROSE

That's not the point! It's a small fortune!

(Reading.)

And the man wants references!

(LOTTY snatches the letter, dismayed.)

LOTTY

References!? The only reference I have is the man who sells me fish. Whatever shall we do?

ROSE

We shall do without!

LOTTY

Without reverences?

ROSE

Without San Salvatore.

LOTTY

But we can't!

ROSE

We can and we shall.

LOTTY

But Rose...I can just see you there? In linen...smiling.

ROSE
Smiling? You see me smiling?

(LOTTY nods.)

I don't understand why I'm doing this, but...we shall find two others to share!

LOTTY
Brilliant! But what about the references?

(ROSE thinks a moment.)

ROSE
I'll take care of the references! You take care of the others!

(ROSE exits. LOTTY moves to the desk,
pulls out a piece of paper and writes.
The ad appears on the scrim.)

LOTTY
Needed: Women to share just a slice of heaven in April...

(Lights up on LADY CAROLINE in her
bedroom and MRS. FISHER in her parlor
reading their newspapers.)

MRS. FISHER
Heaven...

LADY CAROLINE
In April...

MRS. FISHER & LADY CAROLINE
Fifteen pounds!

MRS. FISHER
Overpriced.

LADY CAROLINE
Perfect.

(LIGHTS CROSS-FADE to:)

SCENE 4

ACT I

The room of MR. BRIGGS, a respectable-looking dapper man. ROSE enters and hands him the envelope.

BRIGGS

A pleasure to meet you, Mrs. Arbuthnot. Thomas Briggs.

ROSE

A pleasure. I've come to complete our transaction.

(She hands him an envelope.)

Sixty pounds is your asking price, I believe.

(He looks in the envelope.)

It's all there.

BRIGGS

All of it?

ROSE

Yes. Is that all right?

BRIGGS

Of course.

ROSE

You can count it if you like.

BRIGGS

No, no, that won't be necessary. It just wasn't expected. To whom should I make the receipt?

ROSE

To me. Mrs. Rose Arbuthnot. About the references...

BRIGGS

(He moves to his desk and writes.)

You can send them 'round.

ROSE

But you see, my intention was to pay in advance so that we would have no need of references.

BRIGGS

Really?

(He looks to her.)

Is your husband going?

(Pause. Takes her by surprise.)

ROSE

Ah, no. I'm afraid that would be impossible. You see...

(Pause. It dawns on BRIGGS.)

BRIGGS

Oh. Oh, yes, of course, yes, I understand. Forgive me. I didn't mean to pry. The war took so many young men, didn't it?

ROSE

Yes...it did. There were a great many tragedies because of it.

BRIGGS

I am so sorry. Of course references will not be needed.

ROSE

Thank you. You're very kind.

BRIGGS

It's the least I can do. To be honest, I haven't been to San Salvatore in years, myself. Don't seem to have the time, what with the war and business and all. I'm in Italy often, too, leaving in just a few days. I'm an importer. Fine leather goods. So you must tell me if it's not up to snuff.

ROSE

Of course.

BRIGGS

(He hands her a receipt.)

There you are.

ROSE

Thank you, Mr. Briggs.

(She starts to leave.)

Oh, and our plan is to have four of us ladies.

BRIGGS

Four?!

ROSE

They will need no references, I can assure you.

BRIGGS

If they are your friends, I'm sure that goes without saying.

ROSE

Thank you, again.

(She offers her hand. He takes it.)

BRIGGS

My pleasure. If my memory serves, you shall enjoy San Salvatore. In April it's simply a mass of flowers.

(She tries to go, but he holds her fast.
They gaze at one another a moment.)

ROSE

Ah...

(She looks at her hand.)

BRIGGS

Oh, I am sorry, yes. I suppose you'll need that.

(They smile. ROSE exits.)

Enjoy the old castle.

(ROSE stops looks back to BRIGGS, smiles,
then continues off.)

Rose Arbuthnot. Rose...pretty name.

#6 - GLANCE AT ME**BRIGGS SINGS:**

SO MANY THINGS TO ATTEND TO.
BEFORE I AM GONE FOR AWHILE.
THE STAFF WILL HAVE SOMEONE TO TEND TO...
AND YOU KNOW, SHE MADE ME SMILE.

SO MANY THINGS TO ARRANGE FOR...
THE WAY THAT THE LIGHT CAUGHT HER HAIR...
DON'T BE A HALF-WIT NOW, OLD MAN, DON'T YOU DARE!

CAN'T LIVE A FANCY! IT COULD NEVER BE!
THERE ISN'T A CHANCE...
DID I SEE HER GLANCE AT ME?

(The lights...)

BLACKOUT.

ACT I

SCENE 5

The lights rise on the WOMEN'S CLUB.
LOTTY enters, waving two envelopes.

LOTTY

We have two responses!

ROSE

Only two?

LOTTY

We only need two. The first is...Lady Caroline Dester!

(The lights rise on a fashionable parlor.)

ROSE

Dester? Why does that name sound familiar?

LOTTY

Because she's Lady Caroline Dester! She's the most beautiful, the most elegant, the most...everything! She's going to marry Lord Darlington, the most decorated war hero in England!

ROSE

(It hits her.)

Oh, good lord!

LOTTY

It's in all the papers—

ROSE

I know who she is. No, Lotty, we cannot have her.

(They move into the Dester's parlor.)

LOTTY

Why?

ROSE

Because...we can't, is all! We can't possibly have her!

LOTTY

Why not! She's the most beautiful, the most elegant the most—

(LADY CAROLINE walks in, a note in her hand.)

ROSE

She'll ruin everything!

(LOTTY and ROSE turn. ROSE is mortified.)

(Pause.)

LADY CAROLINE

Am I interrupting?

LOTTY

No, of course not.

(LADY CAROLINE regards the note.)

LADY CAROLINE

One of you must be Mrs. Wilkins.

(LOTTY curtsies.)

And you are Mrs. Ar-BUTH-not.

ROSE

AR-buthnot. Mrs. Frederick Arbuthnot.

LADY CAROLINE

I'm Lady Caroline Dester. Would you like some tea?

(LOTTY nods.)

ROSE

No, thank you.

(LOTTY shakes her head.)

We just came round to speak with you about our holiday.

LADY CAROLINE

Yes, it sounds just what I'm looking for.

ROSE

But, we have some reservations.

LADY CAROLINE

About?

ROSE

You and us.

LADY CAROLINE

You? Have reservations about me? Shouldn't it be the other way 'round?

ROSE

Perhaps, but it is our holiday.

LOTTY

What she means is, why do you want to go with us?

ROSE

One can only imagine the friends and the excursions one of your station can afford. So why, on earth, would you want to come to so quaint, so remote, so antiquated, a place as San Salvatore?

LADY CAROLINE

Because remote is exactly what I wish.

ROSE

Are you sure? There will be no room for Lady's Maids.

LADY CAROLINE

Mrs. Arbuthnot. I have no intention of bringing a ladies maid. My intention is to be alone.

LOTTY

Then a holiday sounds just what you need!

ROSE

(Pointedly to LOTTY.)

Perhaps she might be more comfortable elsewhere.

LOTTY

But Rose...I can see her there, can't you?

ROSE

No, I cannot.

LADY CAROLINE

What did you say?

ROSE

I said—

(LOTTY steps in front of ROSE.)

LOTTY

I can see you there. In the quiet...lounging in the sun... sorting things out.

LADY CAROLINE

Do you.

ROSE

But perhaps it's not quite what you're looking for.

(Pause.)

LADY CAROLINE

You will receive my share by the morning post.

(LADY CAROLINE moves off. ROSE throws a look at LOTTY.)

ROSE

Lotty! Why can't you keep what you see to yourself.

LOTTY

I don't know. M-Mellersh wonders that as well.

ROSE

Who is the other one?

(LOTTY opens the other envelope and reads
as they move to MRS. FISHER'S place.)

LOTTY

It's a Mrs. Fisher.

MRS. FISHER

This Lady Caroline person won't be disruptive, will she?

ROSE

I couldn't say.

MRS. FISHER

For I shall not tolerate disruptions of—

(LOTTY points to a photograph.)

LOTTY

Did you really know Tennyson?

MRS. FISHER

What? What did you say?

LOTTY

I said, "Did you really know Tennyson."

MRS. FISHER

Yes, I did. Do you doubt the personal, hand-written signature on my
photograph?

LOTTY

No, of course not. Did you know Keats?

MRS. FISHER

No. And I didn't know Shakespeare either.

(LOTTY moves closer staring at MRS.
FISHER.)

MRS. FISHER (cont.)

What is it? What are you doing?

LOTTY

...I can see you there.

ROSE

Do you see everybody there?

LOTTY

Mrs. Fisher. You must come.

ROSE

She's not feeling well.

(She grabs LOTTY and pulls her to the door.)

MRS. FISHER

What do you mean, you "see" me there?

(LOTTY plants herself.)

LOTTY

At the castle, in Italy. I can see you there. In a room overlooking the sea where one can sit and reflect. It will be just what you need.

MRS. FISHER

How could you possibly presume to know what I need?

LOTTY

We all need little peace and quiet every now and again to remember the happier times.

(Pause.)

MRS. FISHER

Very well, I shall come. I shall send round my share of the rent..

(MRS. FISHER goes off. ROSE and LOTTY move CENTER.)

ROSE

Well, I suppose there's no getting out of it now. The only thing left is...

LOTTY AND ROSE

Mellersh.

(ROSE exits.)

#7 - "A SOLICITOR'S WIFE" MUSIC STARTS

(LOTTY takes a deep breath, girds her loins, turns and enters the FLAT. LIGHTS CROSS-FADE to...)

ACT I

SCENE 6

The WILKINS' FLAT. MELLERSH, a handsome, distinguished and overbearing man, enters, a napkin in his collar, carrying a plate of apricot tart. LOTTY hangs up her hat and coat, then joins him. He sits and takes a final, satisfying bite.

MELLERSH

My dear...

#7 - "A SOLICITOR'S WIFE" (CONT.)MELLERSH SINGS:

YOU HAVE OUTDONE YOURSELF,
SIMPLY OUTDONE YOURSELF.
YOU'RE TURNING OUT QUITE NICELY,
QUITE NICELY, FOR ME.

I WAS WORRIED FOR A TIME,
IT WAS QUITE AN UPHILL CLIMB.
IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE,
YOU MIGHT, JUST QUITE, TURN OUT TO BE
A HALF-WAY DECENT SOLICITOR'S WIFE FOR ME.

LOTTY

I'm...I'm, I'm pleased you're pleased.

MELLERSH

Oh, I am. Well, getting there.

(LOTTY begins to clear the table.
MELLERSH takes out a pipe fills it.)

MELLERSH SINGS:

I HAVE AN ADVANTAGE...
YES, AN ADVANTAGE.
A WIFE LIKE YOU IS HELPFUL
AND JUST WHAT I NEED.

NOT TOO PRETTY, NOT TOO PLAIN,
RATHER BRIGHT, AND NOT INSANE!
RATHER CLEVER, NOT A FOOL,
YOU'RE NOTHING TOO OUTSTANDING! YOU'LL
BE A HALF-WAY DECENT SOLICITOR'S WIFE FOR ME.

THINGS AT THE OFFICE ARE GOING WELL.
AND APRIL IN LONDON'S A LOT LIKE HELL!
NORWAY IS COLD. GERMANY'S OLD.

FRANCE HAS THE FROGS AND HOLLAND'S ALL BOGS.
 RUSSIA'S NOT THERE. THE IRISH JUST GLARE.
 AUSTRIA, PORTUGAL, SWITZERLAND, HUNGARY ALL TO PLAIN!
 THERE'S SPAIN...NO!
 THAT'S WHY I'M THINKING OF TAKING YOU
 TO ITALY...FOR EASTER.

(A deafening CRASH from the kitchen.)

MELLERSH (cont.)

Lotty?

LOTTY (O.S.)

Yes...

MELLERSH

Are you all right?

LOTTY (O.S.)

Yes...

MELLERSH

Did you hear me? About taking you to Italy for Easter?

LOTTY (O.S.)

Yes...

MELLERSH

Well, I couldn't very well go without you. Besides a second person is always useful for holding things, for waiting with the luggage. Lottie, did you hear me? I'm going to take you to Italy.

LOTTY

(Peeking out.)

Yes, I heard and it's, it's, it's, it's, it's extraordinary, really, quite extraordinary, I was just standing in there marveling at the extraordinary coincidence of it all.

MELLERSH

What?

LOTTY

(Easing into the room.)

You see I was just, you really will never believe it, I was just going to tell you how, how, how I have been invited, a friend has invited me, for Easter as well, Easter is in April, isn't it?

MELLERSH

Yes...

LOTTY

A friend, a good friend of mine has a house there.

Where?
MELLERSH

LOTTY
In Italy. A h-house in Italy.

MELLERSH
As usual, Lotty, I'm not following.

LOTTY
She has invited me to her h-house in Italy for April.

MELLERSH
What part of April?

LOTTY
All the p-parts. Every b-bit of April.

MELLERSH
Well, tell her you can't go!

LOTTY
Why not?

MELLERSH
Because you're going to Italy with me!

LOTTY
How can I go to Italy with you when I'm already there?

MELLERSH
But you're not there!

LOTTY
But I will be!

MELLERSH
Yes, you will be! With me!

#8 - THE JOURNEY

MELLERSH SINGS:
I'LL GO GET THE TICKETS
STOP THE POST AND PAPER.
WE'RE LEAVING NEXT WEEK.

LOTTY
No!

MELLERSH SINGS:
IT'LL TAKE ME THAT LONG TO
FINISH UP AT WORK.

(As he sings LOTTY exits and returns with)

(her suitcase. Then affixes her hat,
puts on her coat.)

Mellersh, I said, "No!" LOTTY (cont.)

MELLERSH SINGS:
WE'LL LEAVE SUNDAY MORNING
SPEND THE DAY IN BRIGHTON.

You're not listening. LOTTY (cont.)

MELLERSH SINGS:
WE'LL SIT ON THE BEACH!

You never listen! LOTTY (cont.)

MELLERSH SINGS:
THERE'S NOTHING TO SAY, LOTTY,
YOU SHALL GO WITH ME!

(She strides up to him and speaks
directly to his face.)

I-don't-want-to-go-with-you! LOTTY (cont.)

(LOTTY exits.)

Well...damn. MELLERSH

(The LIGHTS:)

BLACKOUT.

ACT I

SCENE 7

An impressionist painting of a busy VICTORIA STATION appears on the backdrop. LOTTY and ROSE enter from opposite sides of the stage, coats on and carrying their luggage.

#8 - THE JOURNEY (CONT.)

LOTTY AND ROSE SING:
HE WON'T EVEN MISS ME

LOTTY SINGS:
HE CAN READ HIS PAPERS!

ROSE SINGS:
AND GO TO HIS CLUB!

LOTTY AND ROSE SING:
IF HE HAD CARED AT ALL

(They see each other and come together
CENTER.)

LOTTY SINGS:
HE'D TELL ME, "GO!"

ROSE SINGS:
HE'D TELL ME, "STAY!"

LOTTY

He is the most infuriating man! I wanted to box his ears! He treats me like, well, he treats me like one of his assistants! No, like one of his secretaries! No, no, even worse! What's worse than a secretary?

ROSE

A maid?

LOTTY

Yes! Or a wife!

(They arrange their luggage into a train's bench seat. The SOUND of STEAM then the SOUND of a TRAIN chugging out of a station is HEARD. THE MUSIC CHANGES as LOTTY and ROSE sit in their "seats" and jostle with the imaginary train. The "Victoria Station" is replaced by images sign slides off as a painting of the dreary and foggy English landscape)

(appears on the backdrop and continues to change periodically throughout the scene.)

ROSE SINGS:
I LEFT A NOTE.

LOTTY SINGS:
I JUST WALKED OUT.
I COULDN'T STAY ANOTHER MINUTE
WITH THAT LOUT!

ROSE SINGS:
YES, I HAVE NO DOUBT.

LOTTY SINGS:
YOU DIDN'T EVEN SAY GOODBYE?

ROSE SINGS:
HE'S AT HIS CLUB AND I KNOW WHY.

LOTTY SINGS:
OH, ROSE....

ROSE SINGS:
IT'S ALL AWRY.

(THE MUSIC CHANGES as a BOAT HORN sounds, deep and low. The women rearrange their luggage into "deck chairs.")

LOTTY (cont.)

But Rose, why didn't you just go round to his club. I'm sure he would have wanted to see you.

ROSE

I'm not so sure about it. You didn't say goodbye to Mellersh.

LOTTY

Yes, but you like Frederick.

(Dawning on her.)

Don't you? I mean, you do don't you?

(ROSE glares at LOTTY, shutting her up.)

I know. Why can't I just keep things to myself.

(LIGHTS RISE on FREDERICK at home reading Rose's note.)

FREDERICK SINGS:
"DEAR FRED'RICK, I'M HOME IN A MONTH AND THOUGH THERE'S
A DOUBT,
TIME IS A FRIEND WE CAN USE TO SORT ALL OF THIS OUT.
IT SEEM THAT I'M STUCK AND I CAN'T MOVE FROM HERE
AND IF I CAN'T MOVE IT BECOMES VERY CLEAR
THERE IS NOTHING TO SAVE."

ROSE SINGS:
OH, THAT WAVE!

(FREDERICK stands stunned by the note as the BOAT HORN SOUNDS as ROSE doubles over seasick...or is she heartsick? LOTTY helps her to a deck chair.)

LOTTY SINGS:
EASY NOW, BREATHE.

ROSE SINGS:
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT ONCE "I FIND MY LEGS."

(LOTTY looks at her confused.)

ROSE SINGS:
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND...

LOTTY SINGS:
UNDERSTAND WHAT?

ROSE SINGS:
WHAT I CAN DO—

LOTTY SING:
HE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU!

ROSE SINGS:
THIS IS NOT ABOUT FRED'RICK!

LOTTY SINGS:
I SEE THAT IT'S FRED'RICK, FOR YOU!

ROSE SINGS:
**THEN YOUR SIGHT IS COMPLETELY DEFECTIVE.
 AND WHAT ABOUT MELLERSH AND YOU?
 IS YOUR "SEEING" COMPLETELY SELECTIVE?**

LOTTY SINGS:
**ROSE, YOU ARE CERTAINLY RIGHT.
 THERE'S A FLAW IN MY SIGHT.
 I NEEDED A MAN NEEDING ME FOR A WIFE
 AND I NEEDED A LIFE THAT WAS NEVER THIS LIFE
 AND I NEEDED SOME KINDNESS,
 I NEED TO BE LOVED WHERE I'M NEEDED!**

(With every "need" she gets angrier.)

LOTTY SINGS:
**IS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK?
 IS THAT TOO MUCH TO WANT?**

ROSE SINGS:
IF YOU WANTED ALL THESE THINGS,
AND YOU NEEDED ALL THESE THINGS,
THEN WHY DID YOU MARRY HIM?

LOTTY SINGS:
BECAUSE HE ASKED.
NO ONE HAD ASKED.
AT LEAST HE ASKED.

LOTTY (cont.)

We both worked for the home office. He was a nice enough chap. We'd talk every now and then and we got on well enough. Then one day a year or so after the war ended, he took me to tea and said that his new firm told him that there wouldn't be a place for him unless he was married. So...he proposed. And before I could stop myself...I said, "Yes." And that was that.

(The two of them sit a moment. THE MUSIC CHANGES as a light rises on MELLERSH, a button missing on his jacket.)

MELLERSH SINGS:
A BUTTON IS MISSING. I CAN'T DO WITHOUT!
A DAMNED INCONVENIENCE—WIVES GADDING ABOUT.

(He rips off his vest and puts on a different one.)

MELLERSH SINGS: (CONT)
WHILE SHE IS AWAY,
I'LL GET WORK DONE TODAY.
I CAN'T DENY IT, I FEAR,
IT'S AWFULLY QUIET IN HERE.

(The lights rise on MRS. FISHER and LADY CAROLINE, on a different train, crammed together; their luggage arranged as train seats. LADY CAROLINE is surrounded by trunks, a cigarette in her fingers and a glass of wine close at hand.)

MRS. FISHER

Where are we now?

LADY CAROLINE

(Under her breath.)

In hell.

MRS. FISHER SINGS:
HOW LUCKY WE ARE TO HAVE MET ON THE TRAIN.

(She drops her book.)

MRS. FISHER SINGS:

PLEASE FETCH THAT, I CAN'T QUITE, BECAUSE OF MY CANE.

(LADY CAROLINE hands it to her rises and paces and takes a drag on her cigarette.)

MRS. FISHER SINGS:

OH, DO PUT THAT OUT!
AND STOP PACING ABOUT!

LADY CAROLINE SINGS:

IF SHE COMPLAINED ONE MORE TIME;
WOULD MURDER BE SUCH A CRIME.

MRS. FISHER

Where are we now?

LADY CAROLINE

Still in hell.

ROSE SINGS:

WE'RE JUST LEAVING PARIS AND NIGHTTIME IS HERE.

MRS. FISHER

What?!

LADY CAROLINE SINGS:

TORINO! JUST PASSED IT?

MRS. FISHER SINGS:

GOOD LORD, THE FRONTIER!

LADY CAROLINE SINGS:

I'LL KILL HER I SWEAR
TIE HER DOWN TO HER CHAIR
AND DISAPPEAR!

WOMEN SING:

WISTERIA AND SUNSHINE...
PLEASE SAY YOU'RE NEAR!

(Lights rise on MR. BRIGGS' office. He sits at his desk and checks his watch.)

BRIGGS SINGS:

PAST GENOA TO PISA, WILL THEY SEE THE SIGN?
CAN ROSE READ DIRECTIONS, I'M SURE SHE'LL BE FINE.
SHE'S CLEARLY GOT GRIT,
LIKE THE GIRL WHO'S GOT "IT"
SHE'LL FIND HER WAY THERE!

BRIGGS AND FREDERICK SING:
I'M SUDDENLY SEEING HER EVERYWHERE!

MRS. FISHER (cont.)

Where are we now?

LADY CAROLINE

On a bloody train for bloody ever!

WOMEN SING:
THIS VILLA, ITALIAN IS TOO FAR AWAY.
MUST GET THERE BEFORE I GO MAD!
THOUGH I'VE NEVER DONE IT—I THINK I SHOULD PRAY
BEFORE THIS EXPERIENCE ENDS BADLY.

MEN SING:
ITALY, WITTILY,
SPELLBOUND A WOMAN AND SHE COULD NOT DECLINE!
ADMITTING HERE, SITTING HERE,
WISH SHE HADN'T LEFT FOR THAT DAMNED ITALIAN SUNSHINE!

(LOTTY and ROSE move off the train and
 move DOWN CENTER.)

WOMAN SING:
A VILLA, ITALIAN, NOT TOO
FAR FROM ROME.
A PLACE TO REPOSE AND
RECLINE!
SO WE CAN RETURN SO MUCH
NICER TO HOME.
WE'LL BASK IN WISTERIA AND
SUNSHINE!

MEN SING:
ITALY, WITTILY
SPELLBOUND A WOMAN AND SHE
COULD NOT DECLINE!

ADMITTING HERE, SITTING HERE,
WISH SHE HADN'T LEFT FOR THAT
DAMNED ITALIAN SUNSHINE!

(A HUGE CLAP of THUNDER resounds.
 Everyone looks up. ROSE AND LOTTOMY look
 at each other.)

ALL THE WOMEN

Damn!

BLACKOUT.

ACT II

*

SCENE 1

The MUSIC continues into the scene as the gray and blue light of dawn rises, the stage and levels are the same as in ACT I. The stage transforms into San Salvatore.

(As the stage "transforms" LOTTY enters in a loose robe, her hair down.)

#9 - IN DREAMSLOTTY SINGS:

ALONE ON A HILL, AND A MONTH BY THE SEA...
IN DREAMS...
I HAVE SEEN THIS...
FELT THIS...
THIS APPEAL.

NO DREAM COULD COMPARE, NOW...
SWEAR NOW
THIS IS REAL.

HERE I WILL EMBRACE,
ALL THE BEAUTY AND THE GRACE.
FIND THE COURAGE I NEED.

GARDEN'S MUST BEGIN
WITH A GERM FROM DEEP WITHIN.
PLANT A SEED.

WHEN YOU HELP IT GROW
FEED AND NURTURE EVERY ROW
THEN A FLOURISHING VINE!

(She spots a WISTERIA vine beside her.)

LIKE, WISTERIA...

(As she picks the blossom, the lights rise.)

AND SUNSHINE.

FROM DREAMS
I CAN LIVE THIS...
GIVE THIS
TO MY FRIENDS.

**MY DREAM COULD BE THEIR DREAM.
DARE DREAM
AND THE WORLD INSIDE YOU
CHANGES AND STRIVES
AS IT LIVES AND BREATHES AND THRIVES.**

(ROSE enters, wearing a robe, her hair also down. LOTTY looks to her.)

LOTTY

Good morning.

ROSE

Morning. I have a headache.

LOTTY

I'm sorry.

ROSE

(Brushes it off.)

I had a headache in London. I just brought it with me.

LOTTY

(Holds up the wisteria.)

Look. Wisteria. Just imagine.

(LOTTY moves to her side.)

I think the first thing to happen in this house should be a kiss.

(She kisses ROSE warmly on the cheek.

ROSE turns away, touched, trying not to cry.)

Just look at this day. Have you ever seen anything like it?

(Taking it all in.)

There isn't one thing here that Mellersh isn't allergic to.

(Chuckles to herself.)

He would hate everything here. He's happiest at his club with a good pipe and a tawny port. But...I think he would love this view. Hmmm...I wonder...he might like it here. In this place.

ROSE

Yes...Frederick, too.

LOTTY

(LADY CAROLINE ambles on.)

Look. There's Lady Caroline.

ROSE

I thought she wasn't to arrive until this afternoon.

LOTTY

Hello!

ROSE

Lotty, no. I don't want to see her. Not like this. Let's go

(MORE)