One Touch of Venus

Music by
Kurt Weill

Lyrics by
Ogden Nash

Book by
S. J. Perelman and Ogden Nash

Based on "The Tinted Venus" by F. J. Anstey
ONE TOUCH OF VENUS was first presented by Cheryl Crawford, in association with John Wildberg, at the Imperial Theatre in New York City on October 7, 1943 where it ran for 567 performances. The production was directed by Elia Kazan; choreography by Agnes de Mille; settings by Howard Bay; costumers by Paul du Pont, Kermit Love and Mainbocher; musical direction by Maurice Abravanel; with the following cast:

Whitelaw Savory ................................................................. John Boles
Molly Grant ................................................................. Paula Laurence
Taxi Black ................................................................. Teddy Hart
Stanley ................................................................. Harry Clark
Rodney Hatch ................................................................. Kenny Baker
Venus ................................................................. Mary Martin
Mrs. Moats ................................................................. Florence Dunlap
Store Manager ................................................................. Sam Bonnell
Bus Starter ................................................................. Lou Wills, Jr.
Sam ................................................................. Zachary A. Charles
Mrs. Kramer ................................................................. Helen Raymond
Gloria Kramer ................................................................. Rith Bond
Police Lieutenant ................................................................. Bert Freed
Rose ................................................................. Jane Hoffman
Zuvetti ................................................................. Harold J. Stone
Dr. Rook ................................................................. Johnny Stearns
Anatolians ................................................................. Sam Bonnell, Matthew Farrar
Premiere Dancuse ................................................................. Sono Osato

Singers: Lynn Alden, Arthur Davies, Jane Davies, Rose Marie Elliot, Matthew Farrar, Beatrice Hudson, Julie Jeffreyson, Wilia Rollins, Betty Spain, Jeffrey Warren

MUSICAL SYNOPIS

- ACT I -

Scene 1: Main Gallery of the Whirlaw Savory Foundation of Modern Art
NEW ART IS TRUE ART ................................................... Savory and the Students
ONE TOUCH OF VENUS .............................................. Molly and the Girls

Scene 2: Rodney's Room
HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU ............................................. Rodney

Scene 3: Radio City Plaza
I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF ..................................... Venus

Scene 4: Arcade of the NBC Building in Radio City
FORTY MINUTES FOR LUNCH - BALLET ............................ Venus and the Chorus
WEST WIND ............................................................... Savory

Scene 5: Waiting Room of Mid-City Bus Terminal
WAY OUT WEST IN JERSEY ........................................... Mrs. Kramer, Gloria and Rodney
THAT'S HOW I AM SICK OF LOVE .................................. Rodney

Scene 6: The Roof Garden of the Foundation
Reprise: ONE TOUCH OF VENUS ..................................... The Students
FOOLISH HEART .......................................................... Venus

Scene 7: Rodney's Barbershop
THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN ....................................... Rodney, Savory, Taxi and Stanley
SPEAK LOW ............................................................... Venus and Rodney

Scene 8: The Roof Garden of the Foundation
ARTIST'S BALL ............................................................. The Students
DOCTOR CRIPPLEN ....................................................... Savory and the Chorus

- ACT II -

Scene 1: Savory's Bedroom
VERY, VERY, VERY ....................................................... Molly

Scene 2: The Tombs
Reprise: SPEAK LOW ..................................................... Rodney and Venus
CATCH HATCH ............................................................. The Company

Scene 3: The Sitting Room of a De Luxe Suite
THAT'S HIM ................................................................. Venus
WOODEN WEDDING ..................................................... Rodney
VENUS IN OZONE HEIGHTS - BALLET ............................. Venus, Rodney and the Chorus

Scene 4: The Main Gallery of the Foundation
FINALETTO ................................................................. Rodney and Venus
ACT I

MUSICAL OVERture

Scene 1: The Main Gallery of the Whitelaw Savory Foundation of Modern Art

(Five o'clock of a spring afternoon. A spacious, beautifully lit room designed to display at their best an impressive group of the modern masters — Cezanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso, Matisse, etc. At rear center, a semicircular alcove containing a pedestal. Arched openings rear left and right lead to adjoining exhibition rooms.)

MUSICAL: NEW ART IS TRUE ART

(The STUDENTS of the Foundation, girls and boys, are variously seated and standing about, chatting. WHITELAW SAVORY enters and the STUDENTS rise. In his late thirties, decidedly an original, SAVORY is dynamic, egotistic, dogmatic. Rich enough to ignore the opinion of others, he devotes his time and fortune to the dissemination of his own unorthodox theories. He is followed on by an ATTENDANT, to whom he hands his hat, gloves and briefcase.)

STUDENTS
WE PROCLAIM ARTISTIC BRAVERY,
WE'RE DISCIPLES OF WHITELAW SAVORY.

ATTENDANT
The Modern Art Class will kindly come to order. Mr. Savory is ready.
(Exit)

SAVORY
NEW ART IS TRUE ART,
THE OLD MASTERS SLEW ART.

STUDENTS
THEY ALL LEARNED HOW TO DRAW,
BUT THEY PAINTED WHAT THEY THOUGHT THEY SAW,
INSTEAD OF WHAT THEY SAW THEY THOUGHT
AS THE LIBERATED ARTIST OUGHT.

SAVORY
HOW ARE THEY TO BE TRUSTED?

STUDENTS
THEY MUST HAVE BEEN MALADJUSTED.

SAVORY
THEIR TASTE WAS TOO FORMAL.

STUDENTS
THEIR PEOPLE LOOKED COMPLETELY NORMAL.

OLD ART IS COLD ART,
THE NEW ART IS BOLD ART;
THE BEST OF ANCIENT GREECE.

THEY WERE CENTURIES BEHIND MATISSE.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU MUST FORGET?

THE STATUARY IN THE MET.

THE CLASSICAL MUSEUMS ...

ARE FUDDY-DUDDY MAUSOLEUMS.

THE ART IN THE LOUVRE ...

WENT OUT WITH HERBERT HOOVER.

DA VINCI WAS GARRISH.

GIVE ME THE WORK OF MAXFIELD PARRISH!

ARTISTS OF AN ERA PREVIOUS

SANK TO METHODS DULL AND DEVIous.
THEY EMPLOYED A CHIAROSCURO

HAZY AS A WEATHER BUREAU.

ALL

SHAME ON THEM, THE OLD IMPOSTERS.
WE SALUTE THE MODERN MASTERS!

LASTLY BUT VASTLY, TRADITION IS GHASTLY!

WE PROCLAIM ARTISTIC BRAVERY.
WE'RE DISCIPLES OF WHITELAW SAVORY!

NEW ART IS TRUE ART.
OLD ART IS COLD ART.

NEW ART. BOYS
TRUE ART. GIRLS
OLD ART. BOYS
COLD ART. GIRLS
NEW ART. BOYS
TRUE ART. GIRLS
OLD ART. GIRLS
COLD ART. STUDENTS

AH-H-H!

SAVORY

(With deceptive sweetness.)
Now, you all understand what I've been saying?

STUDENTS

(Dutifully)
Yes, Mr. Savory.

SAVORY

You comprehend it fully? You've digested it? You realize its implications?

STUDENTS

Yes, Mr. Savory.

SAVORY

A-ha. Well, you're a pack of mealy-mouthed, pusillanimous toadies. In the nine years since I had the sublime misfortune to endow the Whitelaw Savory Foundation of Modern Art, I can't recall one student who had the faintest inkling of what I was saying. And don't think you're any better than the rest!
STUDENTS

(Chanting)
No, Mr. Savory.

SAVORY

(Hollowly)
"No, Mr. Savory!" "Yes, Mr. Savory!" That's right; mock me, deride me, beat me, stone me! What am I? A mumbling, toothless old crackpot, a prophet without people, a visionary windbag begging you to take Art out of your museums and put it into your lives.

(Quickly)
But don't think I've surrendered! I still fight on, gallant Don Quixote that I am, though my buckler be dented and my blade shattered —

(Fencing spiritedly.)
En garde! Thrust! Parry! Riposte! Nor shall I cry enough until the hydrated monster of bad taste lies dead on the doily of every tea shoppe in the land!

(MOLLY GRANT, SAVORY'S secretary, enters hurriedly at left. She is a girl in her late twenties, knowing, uninhibited, attractive in a cynical and disillusioned way.)

MOLLY

(Signaling to SAVORY over heads of STUDENTS.)
P-s-s-t! P-s-s-t! Hey, Mahatma!

SAVORY

(Roaring)
Well, what is it, what is it?

MOLLY

He's here!

SAVORY

Who?

MOLLY

That shabby bloodhound you sent to Asia Minor for the statue.

SAVORY

(Joyfully)
Not Taxi Black!

MOLLY

Yep! Came through the customs without a mark on him.

SAVORY

Capital!

(Indicating STUDENTS.)
Clear them out! Clear them out!

MOLLY

Okay, squabs - I'll call you when the oracle's in the mood.
(She shoos STUDENTS off.)

Get out your pencil.

MOLLY

(Opening notebook.)
What's this? Another blast at the Metropolitan Museum?

SAVORY

The Memoirs.

MOLLY

Here we are - *The Life and Times of Whitelaw Savory*.

(Thumbing through notebook.)
I was born in the cloakroom during the Bachelor's Cotillion ... My brain, which is now in the Harvard Medical School -

SAVORY

 Enough of that, you trollop! Where'd we leave off?

MOLLY

End of Chapter Eight. You'd just been thrown out of Oxford.

SAVORY

Right!

(Dictating)
"It was in 1926 that Whitelaw Savory first heard the legend of the famous Venus of Anatolia. This exquisite statue, which had passed from hand to hand during the course of three thousand years, was described to him by one Kristakos, a shady importer in Istanbul."

MOLLY

Who was found murdered in his bed the following day.

SAVORY

No, somebody else's bed.

MOLLY

Oh, that's why he was murdered.

SAVORY

"From then on, the great collector never rested. Tirelessly, courageously, regardless of personal risk -"

MOLLY

Look, puss, that's okay for posterity, but tell me something. What's this statue got that any other Venus hasn't got?

SAVORY

Well, if you must know, it reminds me of a girl - the girl who got away.
(Thoughtfully)
That's quite a tragedy for a collector, Molly. I lost the girl but at least I've got the statue -
(Brusquely)
that is, if those web-footed truckmen of yours ever get it here in one piece!
(TAXI BLACK enters right, followed by STANLEY, his assistant. TAXI is small, nervous, romantic; a private dick who sees a Fu Manchu in every laundryman. He affects rainbow-colored shirts and ties, wears a black hat raked over one eye. STANLEY is a luberry, wooden-faced lout, a man of few but slow reactions.)

Greetings all!

(SAVORY)
( Delightedly)
Taxi, mon brave! Where's the statue?

(TAXI)
Coming up!

(SAVORY)
Is it safe?

(TAXI)
Lock, stock and buttock, Mr. Savory. Hiya, Miss Grant?

(MOLLY)
(With a glance at STANLEY, who has relapsed into coma.)
Land sakes alive! Is this the statue?

(TAXI)
(With disgust.)
Nah, that's Stanley, my wife's brother. Ain't he brutal?

(SAVORY)
The statue! Where's the statue?

(TAXI)
They're loadin' her on the elevator. And brother, am I glad to get rid of her! I never closed an eye after that snake-charmer handed her over in Smyrna.

(SAVORY)
What happened?

(TAXI)
Everything. We ain't on the boat ten minutes when a big box of dates falls on Stanley's knob. Show 'em, Stanley.

(STANLEY solidly removes his derby, exhibits a plaster on crest of skull.)
We lay over in Alexandria, a hit-and-run camel knocked him down.

(STANLEY daintily lifts his trouser leg to reveal a bandaged shinbone.)
We’re standin’ on the wharf at Algeciras when these two Arabs start to slug it out. Next thing you know, Stanley’s got a dagger in the behind!

(Quickly)
Never mind, Stanley.

SAVORY

(Eyes glistening.)
You think these accidents were deliberate?

TAXI
Listen, Mr. Savory, I’ve been a private dick twenty-five years. Somebody ain’t happy about that statue.
(There is a spectacular jarring crash off. mingled with the screech of nails being yanked from wood. All except STANLEY react.)

SAVORY
Oh, my God! The statue!

You better get a dustpan!

MOLLY

TAXI
(Smiting his forehead.)
Jeez, the minute I turn my back.
(SAVORY runs out, followed by TAXI and STANLEY. The GIRL STUDENTS, chattering, come on, attracted by the noise. They gather about MOLLY.)

FIRST STUDENT
Is that the Venus he was telling you about?

MOLLY

SECOND STUDENT
A classical statue’s going to look pretty wacky against this modern stuff!

MOLLY
Look, kids – forget that routine Savory’s been dishing out. If you’ve got what Venus had, you’re all set!

MUSIC 3: ONE TOUCH OF VENUS

GIRLS
OOH! AH!

MOLLY
TA-RA, TA-RA, TA-RA, TA-RA,
TA-RA, TA-RA, TA-RA, TA-...
SOME GIRLS HAVE A TOUCH OF VENUS, 
WHICH CAN HELP A GIRL A LOT. 
WHY DESCRIBE A TOUCH OF VENUS? 
YOU EITHER HAVE IT OR NOT. 
IF YOU HAVE A TOUCH OF VENUS, 
MEN WILL ALL REACT THE SAME. 
WITH A LITTLE TOUCH OF VENUS - 
ONE LITTLE TOUCH OF VENUS, 
A LADY CAN BEAT THE GAME.

GIRLS

WITH A LITTLE TOUCH OF VENUS - 
ONE LITTLE TOUCH OF VENUS, 
A LADY CAN BEAT THE GAME.

MOLLY

TA-RA, TA-RA, TA-RA, TA-RA.
TA-RA, TA-RA, TA-RA ...

THE WORLD BELONGS TO MEN AND WOMEN 
BUT THE BANKS BELONG TO MEN. 
THE WORLD IS JUST A GREEN PERSIMMON 
IF YOU'RE AN AVERAGE HEN. 
VENUS FOUND SHE WAS A GODDESS 
IN A WORLD CONTROLLED BY GODS, 
SO SHE OPENED UP HER BODICE - 
SHE OPENED UP HER BODICE 
AND EQUALIZED THE ODDS.

GIRLS

SO SHE OPENED UP HER BODICE - 
SHE OPENED UP HER BODICE 
AND EQUALIZED THE ODDS.

MOLLY

IF YOU HAVE A TOUCH OF VENUS, 
MEN OF IRON TURN TO CLAY. 
CONFIDENTIALLY, BETWEEN US, 
THEY ARE SUCKERS IN THE HAY. 
LOOK WHAT BEATRICE DID TO DANTE, 
WHAT DU BARRY DID TO FRANCE. 
VENUS TAUGHT THEM THAT THE PANTIE 
IS MIGHTIER THAN THE PANTS.

SOME GIRLS HAVE A TOUCH OF VENUS, 
THEY GET DIAMONDS EVERY NIGHT. 
IF SHE HAS A TOUCH OF VENUS, 
WHEN A GIRL DOES WRONG, SHE DOES IT RIGHT. 
I COULD USE A TOUCH OF VENUS - 
IT COMES IN HANDY IN A PINCH. 
MIX A LITTLE TOUCH OF GODDESS, 
A LITTLE TOUCH OF DAMSEL.
AND LIFE IS JUST A GODDESS DAMSEL CINCH.
(The GIRLS and MOLLY exit. A TRUCKMAN enters.)

TRUCKMAN
Take it easy through the door, boys!
(TWO OTHER TRUCKMEN maneuver a dolly on stage, on which rests a burlap-covered box.)

SAVORY
(Following them.)
Doucement - doucement - you're not handling coal!!

TAXI
(Entering)
Well, Mr. Savory - she's your responsibility from here in.
(To MOLLY, who has entered.)
Say, Miss G. - can I use your phone?

MOLLY
In the office, right through here.

TAXI
(Exiting)
The wife don't even know I'm home yet.

FIRST TRUCKMAN
(Examining the Picasso nudes at rear.)
Hey, boys, get a load of the red-hot mommas!

SECOND TRUCKMAN
Ah - I seen them in Esquire.

SAVORY
Come on - get that statue up and out of there!

SECOND TRUCKMAN
'Keep your girdle on, pal.

THIRD TRUCKMAN
'We're taxpayers, too!

SAVORY
(As they lift statue onto pedestal.)
Easy, you blockhead, she's not your wife!

FIRST TRUCKMAN
He's right, Frankie - her mouth is shut.

SECOND TRUCKMAN
That okay now, mister?
Clear this stuff out of here.

SAVORY

FIRST TRUCKMAN

(Exing with dolly.)
Yes, sir – we'll pick up every itsy-bitsy wisp.

THIRD TRUCKMAN

Maybe he'd like us to wax the floor.
(TRUCKMEN exit.)

MOLLY

(As SAVORY regards the statue.)
Satisfied?

SAVORY

She's come back to me forever.

MOLLY

She's very beautiful.

SAVORY

I told you so, didn't I?

MOLLY

You're a tyrant, Savory, but you've got flair.

SAVORY

I had it when I knew that girl.

MOLLY

(Briskly)
Well, two's company – I'll get back to my knitting ...

(RODNEY HATCH enters. He is diffident, undistinguished, likable. His manner is that of a
small tradesman. He carries a black satchel, wears a barber's white jacket. MOLLY stops as
she sees him.)

MOLLY

Hello, where'd you come from?

RODNEY

I'm Rodney Hatch.

MOLLY

Is that good?

RODNEY

(Helpfully)
You don't understand. Tony's in bed with sciatica.
Why tell me? Tell Mr. Sciatica.

MOLLY

(Harassed)

RODNEY

No, no, I'm here to shave Savory instead of Mr. Tony. I mean I -

MOLLY

Oh, you're the barber. You'll have to wait.

MOLLY

I have to get back to my shop!

RODNEY

(Indicating bench.)

There, there - just relax.

(With a bright smile.)

You're next!

(Exit MOLLY. RODNEY sits for a moment, then, overcome by curiosity, approaches alcove and peers past SAVORY'S shoulder at statue.)

RODNEY

(Tentatively)

Pretty, isn't it? ... It's real lifelike.

(SAVORY ignores him.)

Sort of classical - but it's tasty ...

SAVORY

(Automatically)

They haven't equaled it in three thousand years.

RODNEY

Oh. Is that so?

(Encouraged)

What's it supposed to represent, Venus or something?

SAVORY

(Suddenly aware of him.)

What are you yammering about?

RODNEY

I just said it was a nice statue.

SAVORY

(Snarling)

Nice? Why, you chowderhead earwig, do you realize you're standing before the most beautiful woman ever conceived by the mind of man?

RODNEY

Oh, I don't know ...
SAVORY

Where would you find a girl today with such proportions? Look at the delicacy and grace of those fingers!

RODNEY

(With dignity.)
I happen to be engaged to a certain party's fingers would make 'em look like Bill Dickey.

SAVORY

(Dangerously)
Oho! So we're an expert on feminine beauty, are we?

RODNEY

(Stoutly)
Well, I know the size of Gloria's fingers, and I'll show you the ring to prove it.
(He fumbles in pocket, produces ring.)

MOLLY

(From doorway.)
Customs House calling, Mr. Savory. Something about the duty.

SAVORY

Oh, those nitwits -
(Starts out, suddenly turns on RODNEY.)
Say, who are you anyhow? What the hell are you doing here?

RODNEY

I'm the barber, I'm pinch-hitting for Tony.

SAVORY

Oh. Well, I'll be with you in a minute ...
(SAVORY exits. RODNEY eyes the statue, tosses the ring speculatively in the air. He approaches the statue and eyes it disparagingly. Then, with a quick look to make sure he is unobserved, he slips the ring on its outstretched finger.)

VENUS-AWAKENING

(The lights flicker sharply; there is sudden restless stirring of wind in the room, followed by a low, ominous roll of thunder. RODNEY takes an involuntary step backward and, blinking, stares up at the statue as the lights restore. The statue's hands have changed position, its eyes are open and gaze on him with grave interest. Breaking the silence of thirty centuries, VENUS addresses RODNEY HATCH.)

VENUS

(Softly)
Who are you?

RODNEY

Wh-wh-what?
VENUS

What have you done to me?

RODNEY

(In terror.)
I didn’t do anything to you, lady. I’m only the barber.

VENUS

Come closer.

(He advances, hypnotized.)
Let me look at you.

RODNEY

Please – er-lady, that ring is mine – I mean I need it!

VENUS

The ring...

(With sudden joyful understanding.)
Of course! This is what they said would make me a woman again!

RODNEY

(Desperately)
You can’t have it! I’m saving it for someone!

VENUS

(Coldly)
Do not deny me, barber. I have been waiting three thousand years!

RODNEY

Look here, I’m not joking! Give me back that ring!

VENUS

And turn this flesh to stone again? Ah, no!

RODNEY

What kind of a woman are you, anyway?

VENUS

One you have awakened with your ring. Why do you evade me? You are my lover.

RODNEY

I’m not your lover, Madam, honest I’m not!

(Suddenly brightening.)
Maybe you have be confused with the regular barber – with Tony.

VENUS

No, no, it’s you. Here – release me.
RODNEY

(Backing off.)
What do you think I am? I'm in enough trouble already!

VENUS

Ah, barber, release me!

RODNEY

(Panting)
I - I've got to get out of here!
(He runs out.)

VENUS

(Calling after him.)
Come back, barber! Come back!
(There is no answer; she stares at the door incredulously for a moment; then, outraged, draws herself up, makes an imperious gesture. A blinding flash of lightning and a terrific thunderclap. Blackout. A pause, then a mounting hubbub of voices offstage. Figures swarm on, some with electric torches.)

VOICES

(Ad lib.)
What happened? ... The generator blew out ... No, it was lighting ... Must have struck the main fuse ... Find the janitor!

SAVORY'S VOICE

Molly - Molly - Where are you?

MOLLY'S VOICE

Here I am!

SAVORY'S VOICE

Where's Taxi?

MOLLY'S VOICE

Taxi! Taxi!

TAXI'S VOICE

Here I am! Stanley - Stanley - where are you?

STANLEY

(As the lights come on, revealed on the pedestal.)
I'm up here!

MOLLY

Where's the statue?

STANLEY

It's gone!
(To TAXI.)
Find the statue!

Where's the barber?

He's gone!

Find the barber!

(To MOLLY.)
Sound the alarm!
(As burglar alarms mingle with shouting voices:)

CURTAIN

Scene 2: Rodney's Room

(A small room containing a Morris chair; a bureau dominated by a large framed picture of GLORIA; a table holding a bottle of milk and a box of crackers. Seven o'clock the same evening. RODNEY in trousers and undershirt, discovered on telephone, obviously agitated.)

RODNEY
Fifty dollars down? Gee, Mr. Adler, I can't afford that much for a new ring - I made thirty-nine payments on the other one ... Huh? I don't know what happened to it, I tell you - it disappeared ... A statue stole it from me ... A statue stole it from me! ... Oh, skip it!
(Hangs up.)
Fifty dollars down! Darn old skinflint! Why, that's over one hundred haircuts!
(He picks up Gloria's picture and admires it.)
Yes, Mr. Knows-it-all Savory!

WE ARE AN EXPERT ON FEMININE BEAUTY, AND YOU CAN PUT THAT IN YOUR PIPE AND SMOKE IT!

MORE THAN A CATBIRD HATES A CAT,
OR A CRIMINAL HATES A CLUE,
OR THE AXIS HATES THE UNITED STATES,
THAT'S HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU.
AS A SAILOR'S SWEETHEART HATES THE SEA,
OR A JUGGLER HATES A SHOVE,
AS A WIFE DETESTS UNEXPECTED GUESTS,
THAT'S HOW MUCH YOU I LOVE.
I love you more than a wasp can sting,
and more than a hangnail hurts,
I love you more than commercials are a bore,
and more than a grapefruit squirts.
I swear to you by the stars above,
and below, if such there be,
As a bride would resent a blessed event,
that's how much you are loved by me.

More than a waiter hates to wait,
or a lioness hates the zoo,
or a batter dislikes those called third strikes,
that's how much I love you.
As much as a lifeguard hates to swim
or a writer hates to read,
or the Hays Office frowns on low-cut gowns,
that's how much I need:

I love you more than a wasp can sting,
and more than a hangnail hurts,
I love you more than commercials are a bore
and more than a grapefruit squirts.
I swear to you, by the earth below,
and above, if such there be,
As a dachshund abhors revolving doors,
that's how you are loved by me.

(Ending the number, Rodney goes to wall mirror, tests the straight razor on a hair from his head; then, placing the straight razor on the shelf, he brings forth an electric razor from the drawer and proceeds to shave himself. The lights dim and roses appear in the washbasin. Venus slowly enters.

Roden: Venus Entrance

(Rodney turns and sees her.)

Oh my God! What are you doing here?

Did you think I wouldn't find you?

Take off that nightgown!

(Rodney starts to do so.)

I mean, put something over it!

I've come to stay with you.
You can’t do that – it’s against the law!

What law?

The – the law against men and women rooming together.

You mean to say they’ve got around to regulating that?

Have you been running around the streets in nothing but this – this petticoat?

Certainly, why not?

*(Closing the door hurriedly.)*

Did anyone see you come in?

Tell me, barber – where do you sleep?

Sleep? I never sleep – I never get a chance to sleep – I mean my landlady won’t let me!

She must be very lively – your landlady.

Listen, Miss, you’ve got to get out of here!

*(Picking up Gloria’s picture.)*

Who is this?

*(She rests a hand on bureau, inadvertently presses button. A Murphy bed swings into view.)*

Oh, there it is! Aren’t you going to ask me to lie down?

*(RODNEY gasps. She sits on bed, then swings her feet up on it.)*

Thank you.

Please, Madam, I was going along minding my own business –

*(Indicating picture in her hands.)*

Is that your landlady?
Of course not!

What's she angry about?

That's my girl friend.

Does she sleep here?

I tell you nobody sleeps here! I sleep all alone - by myself!

Poor boy - no wonder you're so nervous.

(Ejecting her from the bed.)
You leave me alone now!
(Pushing bed back into bureau.)
I'll have you know that I'm an engaged man!

Then why did you give me this ring?

I didn't give it to you - you ran away with it.

But we're pledged to each other. I'm your bride. You can't escape your destiny!
(She draws him very close.)
Am I such a frightful destiny?

Don't do that. You're practically naked! I can see your - form!

Don't you like my - form?

(Taking a step back from her.)
You shouldn't bring up questions like that!
(Querulously)
Why can't you dress like other girls? People will think you're some kind of strip-tease.

Oh, then it isn't my body you object it - simply my clothes!
RODNEY
That's it! That's it! They give me the heebie-jeebies!
(Picks up military brushes on end table and brushes his hair.)

VENUS
(Repeats thoughtfully.)
The heebie-jeebies...

RODNEY
(Still brushing his hair.)
Why don't you get yourself something decent to wear?
(The telephone rings.)

VENUS
What's the matter? What's that sound?

RODNEY
(Agitated)
The telephone!

VENUS
I don't like it.

RODNEY
(Taking up telephone.)
Hello? ... Yes, this is Rodney Hatch.

VENUS
(Thoughtfully testing the words.)
Rodney - Hatch ... VENUS Hatch.
(She loves the sound of it.)

RODNEY
Hello, Gloria - how's Spring Lake? ... Sure I was thinking about you ...

VENUS
(Peering over RODNEY'S shoulder.)
There's somebody inside! Who is it?

RODNEY
(To VENUS.)
Get away - get away!
(In phone.)
Are you having a good ti - ? ... What? ... There's nobody here ... How's your mother? ...

VENUS
Is someone punishing you?
(Suddenly comprehending.)
Oh! It's an instrument of torture!
RODNEY

Oh, the ring...
(VENUS admires it on her finger.)
Yes, dear – I've got it, but there's going to be a little Hatch – I mean, a little hitch!
(He looks imploringly at VENUS.)
The bus station – three-thirty tomorrow.
(There is a knock on the door.)
Yes, dear – I'll be there.

VOICE OFFSTAGE

Mr. Hatch!
(Another knock.)
Mr. Hatch!

(Brightly)
Somebody wants to come in.

VENUS

RODNEY

(To VENUS, frantically.)
Don't open it!

VOICE

Mr. Hatch – Open this door!

RODNEY

(In phone.)
Good-bye, dear!
(He hangs up, just too late to prevent VENUS from opening door. MRS. MOATS, the landlady, enters.)

MRS. MOATS

(Looks VENUS up and down, arms folded.)
Mr. Hatch – did I hear a woman's voice?

RODNEY

(Agonized)
Mrs. Moats – listen to me – it's not what you think!

VENUS

Is this your girl friend?

MRS. MOATS

(To VENUS, furiously.)
Get out of this house – you ... you common creature!

MRS. MOATS

(VENUS eyes her impassively.)
I said get ...
RODNEY

(Shrilly)

Mrs. Moats!

(VENUS raises her arm and MRS. MOATS falls like a column to the floor.)

VENUS

(Smiles sweetly at RODNEY, steps over MRS. MOATS.)

There, you see? Don't meddle with destiny, darling!

(As she exits:)

CURTAIN

Scene 3: Radio City Plaza

(Before the curtain. VENUS, still in classic costume, enters.)

(MUSIC COMING TO STRANGER HERE MYSELF)

VENUS

TELL ME, IS LOVE STILL A POPULAR SUGGESTION,
OR MERELY AN OBSOLETE ART?
FORGIVE ME FOR ASKING THIS SIMPLE QUESTION,
I'M UNFAMILIAR WITH HIS HEART,
I AM A STRANGER HERE MYSELF.
WHY IS IT WRONG TO MURMUR I ADORE HIM
WHEN IT'S SHAMEFULLY OBVIOUS I DO?
DOES LOVE EMBARRASS HIM OR DOES IT BORE HIM?
I'M ONLY WAITING FOR MY CUE,
I AM A STRANGER HERE MYSELF.
I DREAM OF A DAY, OF A GAY WARM DAY,
WITH MY FACE BETWEEN HIS HANDS;
HAVE I MISSED THE PATH, HAVE I GONE ASTRAY?
I ASK, AND NO ONE UNDERSTANDS.
LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME, THAT SEEMS TO BE THE QUESTION,
I DON'T KNOW THE TACTICS TO USE,
BUT IF HE SHOULD OFFER A PERSONAL SUGGESTION,
HOW COULD I POSSIBLY REFUSE,
WHEN I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF?
PLEASE TELL ME, TELL A STRANGER,
BY CURiosity GOADED,
IS THERE REALLY ANY DANGER
THAT LOVE IS NOW OUTMODOED?
I'M INTERESTED ESPECIALLY
IN KNOWING WHY YOU WASTE IT,
TRUE ROMANCE IS SO FLESHLY -
WITH WHAT HAVE YOU REPLACED IT?
WHAT IS YOUR LATEST FOIBLE?
IS GIN RUMMY MORE EXQUISITE?
IS SKIING MORE ENJOY'BLE?
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, WHAT IS IT?  
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT LOVE HAS LOST ITS GLAMOR,  
THAT PASSION IS REALLY PASSE;  
IF GENDER IS JUST A TERM IN GRAMMAR  
HOW CAN I EVER FIND MY WAY,  
WHEN I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF?  
HOW CAN HE IGNORE MY AVAILABLE CONDITION?  
WHY THESE VICTORIAN VIEWS?  
YOU SEE HERE BEFORE YOU A WOMAN WITH A MISSION,  
THIS IS A CASE FOR A WOMAN'S INTUITION,  
I MUST DISCOVER THE KEY TO HIS IGNITION,  
THEN IF HE SHOULD MAKE A DIPLOMATIC PROPOSITION,  
HOW COULD I POSSIBLY REFUSE,  
WHEN I AM A STRANGER HERE MYSELF?

(As she finishes the song, the curtain rises behind VENUS. She turns in wonder.)

Scene 4: The Arcade of the N.B.C. Building in Radio City

(Its most prominent feature is a couturier's shop window at rear, featuring a wax mannequin  
and a folding screen. Two dozen office workers have erupted from the building and swirl  
mechanically about, their faces strained and abstracted. VENUS joins them, is swept into their  
midst as their nervous pressure mounts into a series of formalized dance patterns parrying the  
tension of metropolitan life.)

Music 10: FORTY MINUTES FOR LUNCH - FANTASIA

(As the ballet develops, VENUS summons forth one of their number, a GIRL, and projects her  
into a romantic interlude with a free FRENCH SAILOR. The TWO share a moment's happiness,  
and though forced to part, their gratitude to VENUS is unmistakable. The DANCERS leave.)

Music 11: INCIDENTAL - AFTER FORTY MINUTES FOR LUNCH

(A moment later, a SALES GIRL enters the couturier's window carrying a lady's suit, which she  
drapes over the screen. As she exits, VENUS, interested, snaps her fingers. The facade moves  
down to her; with a gesture, she brusquely dissolves the glass, enters the window, and proceeds  
to clothe herself. Suddenly the manager of the shop plummet's out of the door, followed by the  
salesgirl.)

MANAGER

I heard some kind of noise -  
(Sees VENUS in window.)
Hey, you! What are you up to? Come out of there!

SALES GIRL

She's an exhibitionist!

MANAGER

Get a guard - find a policeman!
(TWO MEN enter.)

FIRST MAN

Maybe it's "Truth or Consequences."

SECOND MAN

Nah, it's a plug for brassieres!
(A CROWD begins to gather. POLICEMAN enters.)

SALESgirl

(To POLICEMAN.)
It's a drunk!

MANAGER

She broke my window; who's going to pay for my window?
(SAVORY and MOLLY, his secretary, enter from the elevators at right.)

SAVORY

What are you defending Taxi for? If he can't uncover something in twenty-four hours I -
(POLICEMAN blows whistle. SAVORY turns and sees VENUS in the window.)

Good God!

What is it?

SAVORY

Where'd that girl come from?

That's what I want to know!

MANAGER

Shut up, you!
(To POLICEMAN.)
Officer, clear these people out of here.

POLICEMAN

Oh yeah? Who do you think you are, Mr. Big?

MOLLY

This is Mr. Whitelaw Savory, officer.

POLICEMAN

Oh, pleased to meet you, Mr. Savory. Lady a friend of yours?

SAVORY

(Roaring)
Of course she is, you bottlenosed idiot! What do you suppose I'm doing here?
POLICEMAN

Yessir...

(Turning to crowd.)
Come on now, break it up, break it up!

MANAGER

(Shrilly, as crowd disperses.)
Just a minute, Mr. Savory, who's going to pay -

SAVORY

(Curtly)
Molly.

(He turns toward window.)

MOLLY

(Drawing MANAGER away and exiting with him.)
Wipe the oatmeal off your bib, honey. You've hit the jackpot.

SAVORY

(To VENUS.)
Will you come out - or shall I come in?

(VENUS, smiling her thanks, extends a hand to his, steps down gracefully. SAVORY studies her incredulously.)
You're so much like her ...

VENUS

Who?

SAVORY

A girl I knew years ago - a girl I thought I'd never see again... Who are you?

A stranger.

SAVORY

Not to me. I feel as if we were meeting again ... after a long journey.

VENUS

(Dryly)
In love with a memory? You're not very practical, are you?

SAVORY

Why? What do you mean?

VENUS

You can't play beanbag with a memory on a rainy afternoon!

SAVORY

Well, I must say you're a bit prosaic.
VENUS

No, simply realistic. Is there anything more tiresome than languishing sighs and moon-drenched partings and broken hearts? Love isn’t the dying moan of a distant violin – it’s the triumphant twang of a bedspring.

SAVORY

(Approaching her.)
My word, we’re getting along famously, aren’t we?

VENUS

Don’t misunderstand me. That was an opinion, not an invitation.

SAVORY

It’s an opinion I’d like to discuss with you in a more secluded setting. Why don’t we slip into something comfortable

(Offering her his arm.)
like my den?

VENUS

No, no – you’re already too much at home right here. But thank you anyway. I’d wondered of late whether my so-called charm hadn’t deserted me.

SAVORY

God forgive me for feeding a woman’s vanity, but you’ve no reason to worry. You’re ravishing.

VENUS

I don’t give you the ... er ... heebie-jeebies, do I?

SAVORY

May I tell you what you do to me?

VENUS

No, my friend – I am not a policeman to be bullied or a shopkeeper to be bought.

SAVORY

All right, but I warn you – I’ll get you when you least expect it. I’ll use any weapon – I’ll lie, cheat, steal, blackmail! When can I see you again?

VENUS

(Moving away.)
I don’t know – perhaps very soon ...

SAVORY

Until that day, if I can do anything – if you want a rival poisoned, or a magic carpet woven – you will call on me, won’t you?

VENUS

Instantly.
(Giving him her hand.)

Good-by.

SAVORY

Wait a moment — you haven’t even told me your name!

VENUS

(Provocatively)

I haven’t, have I?

SAVORY

(Calling after her.)

You don’t even know where to find me!

VENUS

I’ll find you —

(She goes out.)

SAVORY

I HAD A LOVE, AND MY LOVE WAS FAIR,
FAIR AS A SUMMER’S DAWN.
I LOST MY LOVE, I NEVER KNEW WHERE,
SUDDENLY SHE WAS GONE.
THE WEST WIND STIRRED THE MEADOW
THE NIGHT SHE SLIPPED AWAY,
AND I SEEM TO OGLIMPSE HER SHADOW
WHEN THE WEST WIND BRUSHES THE DAY.

WEST WIND, CAN YOU WAKEN MY TRUE LOVE?
WEST WIND, CAN YOU WHISPER RENEW LOVE?
SPEAK TO HER SOFTLY OF THE DREAM WE LOST
THE THEME WE LOST,
THE GLEAM WE LOST.

WEST WIND, CAN YOU CALL BACK AN OLD LOVE?
WEST WIND, CAN YOU KINDLE A COLD LOVE?
WEST WIND, CAN THE MAGIC OF THEN
BECOME OURS ONCE AGAIN?
BREATHE ON THE EMBERS,
IF BY CHANCE SHE REMEMBERS,
THEN SOME DAY AT LAST,
WE CAN RECAPTURE THE PAST.

CHORUS

WEST WIND, CAN YOU CALL BACK AN OLD LOVE?
WEST WIND, CAN YOU KINDLE A COLD LOVE?

SAVORY

WEST WIND, CAN THE MAGIC OF THEN
BECOME OURS ONCE AGAIN?
BREATHE ON THE EMBERS,
IF BY CHANCE SHE REMEMBERS,
THEN SOME DAY AT LAST,
WE CAN RECAPTURE THE PAST.

CURTAIN

Scene 5: The Waiting Room of Mid-City Bus Terminal

(At right is a row of lockers; behind them, swinging doors to the bus platform. At center is a lunch counter - five revolving stools without backs are below the counter. Near by is a small round table with a chair. TAXI BLACK stands by the lockers. STANLEY, in soda dispenser’s hat and white coat, is behind counter. A bus starter is seated on high stool in front of swinging doors. Two girls and a soldier exchange embraces, pressing against RODNEY, who is seated at the table. He betrays annoyance.)

BUS STARTER

SOLDIER

(Giving girl last kiss.)

Good-by, darling - look up my wife, won't you?

(SOLDIER goes out through the swinging doors. STANLEY comes from behind the counter, wipes table with a cloth as he picks up a Coca-Cola glass from table.)

STANLEY

(To RODNEY.)

You've been waiting a long time, bud - expecting somebody?

RODNEY

Yes - my girl.

STANLEY

(Places glass on counter - quickly crosses to TAXI.)

Did you hear that Taxi? He's waiting for a dame.

TAXI

(Galvanized)

What's he up to?

STANLEY

He's jumpy - he's had five cokes already!

TAXI

Now write everything down! Mr. Savory expects a full report!

(A WOMAN WELDER, dressed in rough work clothes, heavy gloves and a welder's helmet tipped back on her head, enters, goes to lockers.)
WOMAN WELDER

One side, gentlemen.  
(She opens a locker, takes out a baby, and dandles it in her arms.)
There, there, darling. Mamma will feed you right away.  
(She carries baby out.)

RODNEY

(Rising - to Bus Starter.)
Oh, er ... pardon me - is the Spring Lake bus on time?

BUS STARTER

(Wearily)
Listen, Jack - I told you three times already - it's due any minute!
(RODNEY starts back toward the table, almost bumps into VENUS, who has just entered. He reacts violently.)

RODNEY

(To VENUS.)
Oh ... I didn't recognize you with your clothes on.

VENUS

Do you like me better with my clothes on?

RODNEY

Yes, I do. It's a big improvement!

VENUS

That's refreshing - most men are so vice versa.  
(Sits at table.)
Have we long to wait?

RODNEY

For what?

VENUS

Your girl friend - we must tell her.

RODNEY

(Pallidly)
Tell her what?

VENUS

That she's - out.

RODNEY

Well, I like your nerve! I've been engaged to Gloria Kramer for five years. This is a free country - and if I want to marry a hyena nobody's going to stop me!

VENUS

I know - but if you ever get tired of the hyena, it would be nice to have a good-looking woman around.
TAXI
Hey, droopy, here's your Spring Lake bus!

RODNEY
(Starts out - stops quickly.)
Oh, it's them! They're here - look, please - give me a break - just for five minutes!

VENUS
(Relenting)
Well, if you two are still vertical after five years, five minutes more won't make any difference.
(She exits to street as SAM backs in from bus platform, laden with bags. He is sleek, sharp, and unctuous, a Flatbush version of George Raft.)

SAM
(With oily deference.)
Careful of the door, Mrs. Kramer!
(MRS. KRAMER and GLORIA follow him on. MRS. KRAMER is large, noisy, vindictive. GLORIA is young, aggressive, attractive in a tasteless way. Her clothes just miss being chic. Her skirt is too short, her hat too extravagant.)

MRS. KRAMER
I've never sat through such torture in my whole life!
(Seeing RODNEY.)
And you - I thought you were going to help us with the bags!

RODNEY
(Making an abortive lunge toward the bags.)
I got tied up - er -

SAM
(Sweeping the bags away from RODNEY'S reach.)
Save your strength, Buster - let a man handle 'em.

GLORIA
Well, I must say, Rodney, this is a fine time to show up! For all you care, Mother and I could have broken our backs!
(MRS. KRAMER flops into a chair, breathing hard. SAM stands over her attentively.)

RODNEY
(Placatingly)
Gee, Gloria, it's good to see you again.

GLORIA
I don't know what we'd have done without Sam!
(To Sam.)
Sam, you were simply marvelous!

SAM
Well, when your boy friend is otherwise occupied, someone has to take over, eh, Mrs. Kramer?
(He pats MRS. KRAMER'S hand.)

GLORIA

(Chanting)
Sam was a perfect gentleman. Sam just couldn't do enough for us. Sam made all the arrangements for the bus and procured the sandwiches. This is Sam.

RODNEY

Pleased to meet you.
(Extends his hand to SAM.)

SAM

Hm. I must say I got a more romantic picture from Glory.
(Shaking hands.)
Hiya, sport—what's new in the shampoo division?

RODNEY

I'm doing all right.

SAM

(After a glance at GLORIA.)
That what you think. Well, if there's nothing more I can do for you ladies, I better run along. Business before business, you know.

MRS. KRAMER

Don't forget. I'm going to come in and try on a pair of those Eezi-Tred Oxfords.

SAM

You do that little thing.
(Turning to RODNEY.)
And it wouldn't hurt you to stop in for a foot consultation, brother. We got an elevator model that'll build you up two inches.

RODNEY

Oh, is that so?

SAM

(Flicks RODNEY'S nose with his finger.)
Abadaba!
(To GLORIA with a meaning leer.)
You'll be hearing from me any minute, little lady. Goom-by!
(He goes out.)

MRS. KRAMER

Now, that's what I call a gentleman of the old school.

RODNEY

(Eager to ingratiate himself.)
Well, Mother-Kramer, I see you developed a real nice tan.
MRS. KRAMER

Tan? It's probably jaundice. I never slept a wink in the whole time I was gone. I am positively exhausted!

GLORIA

And the hoi polloi at the hotel were simply a scream, my dear. When Sam came in with his tuxedo, they thought he was a watter.

MRS. KRAMER

Well, what can you expect from New Jersey? I always say the minute you cross the Hudson River you're in the Wild West!

RODNEY

You're right, Mother Kramer!

MRS. KRAMER

(Rising, brushing RODNEY aside.)

Yahoo!

MRS. KRAMER

YIPPI-YI, A-WAY OUT WEST IN JERSEY
I DECLARE, THESE ARE THE THOUGHTS I THUNK - YIPPI-YI, IF JERSEY LOOKS LIKE THIS TO ME, EITHER JERSEY OR ME IS DRUNK.
BY THE TIME I REACHED WEEHAWKEN WITH MY BANJO ON MY KNEE,
YIPPI-YI, I HEARD THE NATIVES TALKIN'
AND I KNOWED THAT IT WASN'T ME.

MRS. KRAMER, RODNEY & GLORIA

OH, NEW JERSEY - OH, NEW JERSEY -
IT'S A LAND WE PROUDLY HAIL - ALL HAIL!
NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER'S
YOU'LL ENJOY THE TAR AND FEATHERS
WHEN YOU'RE RIDING THROUGH NEW JERSEY ON A RAIL.

GLORIA

YIPPI-YI, THE COWBOYS IN HO-HO-KUS
HAVEN'T SEEN A WOMAN IN A YEAR.
YIPPI-YI, WHEN THEIR MINDS BEGIN TO FOCUS,
THEY HAVE GOT ONLY ONE IDEA.
OH, I MET WITH ONE IN RAHWAY -
HE SAID COURTIN' WAS SUBLIME,
BUT I FOUND THAT HIS WAY WASN'T MAH WAY,
YIPPI-YI, AND I SHOT HIM JUST IN TIME.

GLORIA, MRS. KRAMER & RODNEY

OH, NEW JERSEY - OH, NEW JERSEY -
IT'S A LAND WE PROUDLY HAIL - ALL HAIL!
YOU'LL ENJOY THE FRIENDLY TUSSLE
WITH THE CACTUS IN YOUR BUSTLE
WHEN YOU'RE RIDING THROUGH NEW JERSEY ON A RAIL.

RODNEY

YIPPI-YI, ACROSS THE JERSEY BORDER
AT THE BAR, POLITICIANS ARE A PLAGUE.
YIPPI-YI, WHATEVER DRINK YOU ORDER,
IT TURNS OUT TO BE HAGUE AND HAGUE.
OH, A BUCKAROO FROM TEXAS
RAN FOR MARSHAL OF PASSAIC,
SO MUCH LEAD LANDED IN HIS SOLAR PLEXUS,
NOW HE RATTLES JUST LIKE A SNAIC.

RODNEY, GLORIA & MRS. KRAMER

OH, NEW JERSEY - OH, NEW JERSEY -
IT'S A LAND WE PROUDLY HAIL!
YOU WILL BELLOW LIKE AN OXEN
FOR A SHOT OF ANTITOXIN
WHEN YOU'RE RIDING ...
WHEN YOU'RE RIDING ...
WHEN YOU'RE RIDING THROUGH NEW JERSEY ON A RAIL.

RODNEY

YIPPI-YI, FROM NEPTUNE UP TO NUTLEY,
FROM CAPE MAY TO DEAL AND HACKENSACK.
YIPPI-YI, THE JERSEY COWGIRLS WOO YOU SUBTLY,
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING THEY SEEM TO LACK.
OH, THE SHERIFF, HE WENT A-SWIMMIN'
ONE FINE EVENING AFTER DARK.
YIPPI-YI, BEFORE HE GOT ONE LIMB IN,
HE' D BEEN CHOSEN MISS ASBURY PARK.

RODNEY, GLORIA & MRS. KRAMER

OH, NEW JERSEY - OH, NEW JERSEY -
IT'S A LAND WE PROUDLY HAIL!
FIRE YOUR FLIT GUN AT THE VARMINTS
THAT INVESTIGATE YOU GARMINTS.
YOU WILL BELLOW LIKE AN OXEN
FOR A SHOT OF ANTITOXIN
WHEN YOU'RE RIDING ...
WHEN YOU'RE RIDING ...
WHEN YOU'RE RIDING THROUGH NEW JERSEY ON A RAIL.

(Boogie Woogie Dance.)

BUS STARTER

(As number ends.)

MRS. KRAMER

Gloria, I just know I'm coming down with something. I ought to be home in bed right this minute.
GLORIA

Well, Rodney - at least you could get Mother a cab!

RODENEY

Oh, sure - sure.

(He goes out, followed by the bus starter. MRS. KRAMER is bending down - fixing the lock on one of the handbags.)

TAXI

(Crosses to MRS. KRAMER, bends down, looking directly at her rear.)

I beg your pardon, Madam, but I am addressing Mrs. T. Blessington Kramer?

MRS. KRAMER

(Slowly rising to a standing position, very much the grande dame.)

Why no - I'm Mrs. Florabelle Kramer.

TAXI

I knew I was right!

(Presenting card.)

Black. Julius E. Black.

(Sotto voice.)

I have some information that may interest you strangely.

MRS. KRAMER

Really?

TAXI

I'd rather not discuss it here. Allow me.

(He picks up handbags.)

MRS. KRAMER

Thank you.

(To GLORIA.)

Now, Gloria - remember what I told you about Rodney. Be firm!

(She exits after TAXI.)

RODENEY

(Entering room through swinging doors.)

There's nothing but busses out there - where's your mother?

GLORIA

She got tired of waiting.

(Seating herself, motions him to her.)

Come here, dear!

(RODENEY sits beside her. STANLEY, behind counter, eavesdrops on their conversation and makes notes in little black book.)

RODENEY

I sure missed you, honey.
GLORIA
Like fun you did! Who was that in your room when I phoned you?

RODNEY
Oh – oh that must have been the landlady. She – er ... she was doing a little housecleaning.

GLORIA
Well, let me tell you, Mr. Rodney, I'm not in the habit of people hanging up on me! If I didn't have such an easygoing disposition, I'd never speak to you again!

RODNEY
Aw, honey – that's no way for us to be talking!
(Brightly)
I tell you what – let's go out someplace tonight and have a quick bite and take in a good show.

GLORIA
Well – I half-promised Sam ...
(VENUS enters, approaches RODNEY.)
... I'd drop in at the Twenty-One Club with him.

RODNEY
Hey! Who are you engaged to, anyhow?
(VENUS lightly taps RODNEY on the left shoulder; he stares at her in panic.)

GLORIA
That's just what I was going to ask you! It seems to me I remember something about a ring.
(She suddenly sees VENUS.)

(VENUS)
(Smiling)
Hrm, nice ...
(She sits beside GLORIA.)

GLORIA
Well, of all the nerve!
(Deliberately turning her shoulder on VENUS.)
Go on, I'm listening.

RODNEY
(Perspiring)
Gloria – I don't know how to tell you this–

GLORIA
You haven't got the ring?

RODNEY
I have, too – I mean I know where it is –
GLORIA

(Grimly)
All right, where is it?

RODNEY

I'm trying to tell you! Did you ever hear of a statue that turned into a real person?

GLORIA

Rodney Hatch, what have you done with my ring?

RODNEY

I'm trying to tell you what -

GLORIA

Mother was right, she said even if you did manage to pay for it you'd probably lose it before -

RODNEY

(Rising)
All right, I lost it!
(Wildly)
I hoocked it! I threw it away!
(Frenziedly)
I don't know what happened to the God-damn thing!

GLORIA

(Gasping)
Oh! - What did you say?

RODNEY

You heard me! You understand English!

GLORIA

(Rising)
Swearing at me! So that's the kind of a husband you're going to be!

RODNEY

(Uncomfortably)
You started it!
(To VENUS, automatically.)
Didn't she?

VENUS

(Emphatically)
She certainly did!

(RODNEY)

(Triumphant to GLORIA.)
You see?
GLORIA

(Wallowing in self-pity.)
When I think of the offers I've had -
(She stops abruptly, conscious of VENUS.)
What did she say? Who is this woman?

VENUS

(Simply)
I'm Venus.

GLORIA

Rodney! Do you know her? Answer me!

RODNEY

(Shouting)
Of course I know her. Didn't I give her the ring?

GLORIA

Now you listen to me, Mr. Smarty-pants, you're not going to get away with it! I'll give you twenty-four hours to come through with my ring, or the engagement is off!
(Shakes her fist)

VENUS

Approvingly
I love those little green apples.

RODNEY

She's got a crust, bawling me out! Who does she think she is - the Queen of Sheba?

VENUS

Oh now, aren't you being a bit ungenerous?

RODNEY

That tongue of hers'll get her into real trouble some day!

VENUS

It's a physical thing. I shouldn't wonder if you opened her up you'd find a spleen as big as a summer squash.

RODNEY

Nothing I do satisfies her. If we go to a cheap restaurant, I'm stingy; if we go to an expensive one, I throwing our money away.

VENUS

She's a perfectionist; you can tell that from her prim little mouth.
I've been pushed around long enough!

Too long!

She can take her Sam and her Twenty-One Club -

- And her mother -

- And jump in the lake! See if I care!

That's the kind of language a woman understands. What a pity she can't hear you!

(Shouting after GLORIA.)
You're not going to wipe your feet on me!

Spoken like a man.

You can't lead me around by the nose!

A man's nose is his castle.

I'll show you who's going to wear the pants in this family!

With a figure like hers, I hope it's you.

Why, I ought to...

(He turns in indignation.)
Say, who gave you the right to talk that way about my intended?

Why, the girl's as mean as a horsefly and we both know it. Don't we?

I consider that a dirty dig!
VENUS
Well, speaking purely as your future roommate, I'd say you were well out of it.

RODNEY
I'm not out of anything! If I make up my mind to marry Gloria, I'll marry her, and if I don't, I won't! No woman's going to tell me what to do - you, or Gloria, or anybody else! Women, women, women - I'm sick of 'em!
(With low intensity.)
And that goes for you, too!
(He stalks out.)

STANLEY
(Sidling up to VENUS, his pencil poised over his notebook.)
What were those last few words he said?
VENUS
I don't know, my friend - but whatever they were, he'll eat them.

CURTAIN

Musio 14: THAT'S HOW I AM SICK OF LOVE

(THREE COUPLES, evidently very much in love, enter in front of the curtain, dress the stage and embrace. RODNEY enters, looks at the COUPLES, and turns away in disgust.)

RODNEY
MORE THAN A MACKEREL HATES A HOOK
OR A PICKPOCKET HATES A GLOVE,
OR A SULTAN HATES HIS AMOUROUS MATES.
THAT'S HOW I'M SICK OF LOVE.
MORE THAN A HOUND IS SICK OF FLEAS
OR "LIFE" IS SICK OF "PIC,"
OR A WATCHMAN YAWNS AT BEAUTIFUL DAWNS,
THAT'S HOW OF LOVE I'M SICK.
I'M SICK OF LOVE WHEN THE WORLD GOES RIGHT,
OF LOVE WHEN THE WORLD GOES WRONG.
(The COUPLE shift position within their embraces with a sonorous sigh.)

THE SILVER SCREENS AND THE BOOKS AND MAGAZINES -
THEY DRIIP WITH LOVE'S OLD SWEET SONG.
I SWEAR TO YOU BY THE EARTH BELOW
AND THE BACHELOR SAINTS ABOVE -
AS A SECRETARY CHOKES AT THE BOSSES JOKES,
THAT'S HOW I AM SICK ...
(He crosses to exit but is blocked by a COUPLE kissing.)

THAT'S HOW I AM SICK ...
(Again his path is blocked by a COUPLE kissing.)

THAT'S HOW I AM SICK: OF LOVE.
(He starts off; a GIRL enters and eyes him. He races off in the other direction; the GIRL follows as:)

BLACKOUT

Scene 6: The Roof Garden of the Foundation

(Several Etruscan statues contrast strongly with the functional architecture of the building. At rear a parapet; the distant sky beyond. An art class is in session. The STUDENTS sketch from a living MODEL, whose head and bare shoulders are visible above an antique screen.)

Musio 5: REPEATED TOUCH OF VENUS

(The STUDENTS hum the melody as SAVORY wends his way through examining their work.)
SAVORY

(Taking sketch from STUDENT.)
Look here, that's no abstraction. It makes me want to pinch it.

MOLLY

(Entering, notebook in hand.)
Hail, moon of my delight! What's the matter? Why the puss vinaigrette?

SAVORY

Bah!

MOLLY

Oh, snap out of it. Grab yourself one of these goslings. A girl on the couch is worth two on the mind!

SAVORY

I'm sulking on my own time, aren't I?

ANOTHER STUDENT

(Displaying drawing.)
Excuse me, Mr. Savory -- would you look at this?

SAVORY

That's a very interesting fixation you have, my boy. I'd like to meet your mother.

(To MOLLY -- indicating notebook in her hand.)
Anything important?

MOLLY

Well, 20th Century Fox would like two dozen Gauguins for a fashion short --

SAVORY

Telegram 39A, collect, the one that begins "You can take the motion picture business" --

MOLLY

Some babe from PM called up -- they want to take pictures tonight of the Student's Ball.

SAVORY

Out. No photographers.

MOLLY

They're willing to co-feature us next Sunday with a big poultry expose.

SAVORY

No!

MOLLY

Oh, the kids only have one big binge a year!

SAVORY

Who's running this foundation -- you or me?
MOLLY

Sorry. If anyone wants me, I’ll be around the corner having my tongue torn out.

(TAXI dashes in excitedly.)

TAXI

I’ve got it! I’ve got the statue!

SAVORY

(Rising)

You haven’t!

TAXI

No, I haven’t – but I know where it is!

SAVORY

You don’t!

TAXI

No, I don’t – but wait’ll I tell you!

(MRS. KRAMER enters, carrying two suitcases.)

MRS. KRAMER

How do you do? How do you do?

SAVORY

Who the hell is that?

TAXI

Allow me. Madam Kramer, may I present Whitelaw Savory, the connoisseur?

MRS. KRAMER

(Very elegant.)

Likewise.

(Looks about.)

What a charming old-world atmosphere!

TAXI

Never mind the chicken fat! Tell your story!

SAVORY

(Explosively)

I’ve suspected him from the first. There’s something sneaky about him!

Who, for Pete’s sake?

TAXI

The barber!
Oh.

(To MRS. KRAMER.)
What do you know about him?

MRS. KRAMER
Plenty! He may tell you he's a barber - but there's more goes on inside that shop than hair-cutting!

SAVORY
Aha! You WERE right, Taxi.

MRS. KRAMER
He's one of those quiet ones. You never know what he's thinking. And he's always puttering around the cellar. If you ask me, he's some kind of a radical.

SAVORY
By God, Taxi, that clinches it! That damned barber stole my statue!

TAXI
I'll call Headquarters.
(He starts out.)

SAVORY
No, you won't! This is a private matter. I'm going to search that barbershop in person!

TAXI
Wait a minute, Mr. Savory - we can't do that!

SAVORY
Why not?

TAXI
We got no warrant! He can have us up for mayhem, disorderly conduct, and God knows all!

SAVORY
I've dealt with rascals of his kidney before
(Indicating MRS. KRAMER.)
Here, take this good lady down to the kitchen and give her a cool glass of beer. I want to think.

TAXI
(Picking up two suitcases.)
I gotcha.

MRS. KRAMER
(Graciously to SAVORY.)
I just adore your little nook. It's a veritable Shangri-La.
(She follows TAXI out.)

MOLLY
Are you going down to that barbershop?
SAVORY

Why not?

MOLLY

Listen, lad – you’re an eccentric millionaire, not Huckleberry Finn!

MOLLY

What are you talking about? It’s my statue, isn’t it?

SAVORY

(He breaks off suddenly as VENUS enters.)

SAVORY

Well, here’s a quick return on your investment!

VENUS

My dear – I can’t believe it!

VENUS

(Smiling)

I told you I’d find you.

MOLLY

(Meaningly)

So did I!

(To STUDENTS.)

Okay, fellow workers – back to the salt mines.

(The STUDENTS and the MODEL collect their paraphernalia and exit.)

SAVORY

Look at her, Molly! She’s like a hawthorn in flower!

MOLLY

(Dead pan.)

How do you do, Miss Hawthorn?

SAVORY

This ill-favored shrew is Molly Grant, my secretary.

VENUS

She seems a faithful little thing.

MOLLY

Oh, I’d put my arm in the fire up to there for Mr. Savory.

VENUS

That’s rather specialized work, isn’t it?
MOLLY

(A duelist who has met her equal.)
She'll do, Savory.

SAVORY

Er ... Molly, I think your cake is burning.

MOLLY

That's not my cake, brother. That's your cookie.
(She exits.)

MUSIC: FOOLISH HEART

VENUS

You told me if I ever needed help, I could come to you.

SAVORY

I'm delighted you did. We can take up just where we left off.

VENUS

WILL YOU TELL ME HOW THESE THINGS HAPPEN?
HAVE I TRUSTED IN LOVE TOO MUCH?
WHEN DID THE MAGIC VANISH?
HAVE I SOMEHOW LOST MY TOUCH?
HOW CAN THE WORLD BE
COULD I LOVE YOU. COULD HE LOVE ME.
LOVE SHOULDN'T BE SERIOUS, SHOULD IT?
YOU MEET, PERHAPS YOU KISS, YOU START.
I FANCIED THAT I UNDERSTOOD IT;
I FORGOT MY FOOLISH HEART.
LOVE CAN'T BE ILLLOGICAL, CAN IT?
YOU KISS, PERHAPS YOU SMILE, YOU PART.
IT HAPPENS THE WAY THAT YOU PLAN IT,
IF YOU HUSH YOUR FOOLISH HEART.
Poor foolish heart,
crying for one who ignores you!
Poor foolish heart,
Fflying from one who adores you!
Ah, love used to touch me so lightly,
Why will my heart betray me so?
I could dance with a new lover nightly,
But my foolish heart says no.
(Music continues under the scene.)

SAVORY

You're in love with someone. Who is he?

VENUS

I don't think you'd know him. He's not powerful like you. He's just an obscure little barber.
What's his name?

Rodney Hatch.

Oh.

Do you know him?

No ... No.

I'm sure he's in love with me - but he's afraid to say so.

POOR FOOLISH HEART,
CRYING FOR ONE WHO ...

Then he's in love with another girl?

He's been tied to her apron-strings for years.

(Taking her in his arms.)
I could help you forget him.

(Breaks away.)

No.

LOVE SHOULDN'T BE SERIOUS, SHOULD IT?
YOU MEET, PERHAPS YOU KISS, YOU START ...

I've always gone on the principle that direct action is least painful. Isn't it better to have two people happy than three miserable?

You're right.

I'd say the thing to do ... is to eliminate the rival.
(Looking at him.)
Eliminate the rival?

(Returning her look.)
And quickly.

You don’t think that’s a bit too drastic?

Do you – under the circumstances?

I don’t know how to thank you.

Oh, yes you do.

You’re far too generous.

Don’t overrate my generosity.

POOR FOOLISH HEART,
CRYING FOR ONE WHO IGNORES YOU,
POOR FOOLISH HEART,
FLYING FROM ONE WHO ADORES YOU!
Ah, LOVE USED TO TOUCH ME SO LIGHTLY,
WHY WILL MY HEART BETRAY ME SO?
I COULD DANCE WITH A NEW LOVER NIGHTLY,
BUT MY FOOLISH HEART SAYS NO.

(The dance concludes and VENUS goes out swiftly.)

CURTAIN
Scene 7: Rodney’s Barbershop

(It is a small, one-chair shop definitely old-fashioned in feeling. The street door has a bell that tinkle to announce customers. Two other doors lead respectively to Rodney’s room and the cellar. Stanley is brandishing a prospectus at Rodney.)

Stanley
What do you mean, you don’t need the Book of Knowledge?

Rodney
Well, I haven’t got room -

Stanley
Do you think you know everything already?

Rodney
I didn’t say that, I-

Stanley
Don’t you want the true facts about spontaneous combustion? Don’t you want to learn how to stuff a buffalo?

Rodney
I haven’t got time to read.

Stanley
(Cunningly)
Ah, what do you do in your spare time – hang out in art galleries?

(Savory enters warily.)

Savory
(As he passes his hat to Rodney.)
Shave – not too close.

Rodney
Yes, sir.

(As he hangs up the hat and coat, Taxi enters. He and Savory exchange a furtive nod.
Rodney turns.)

Have a chair – I’ll be with you in a minute.

(Savory sits in barber chair, Taxi and Stanley sit by the table.)

Taxi
What’s that sign you got outside – “Four Barbers. No Waiting?”

Rodney
(Draping a towel about Savory.)
Some fellow sold it to me; he said it would boost business. I guess he meant his business.

Taxi
Very funny.
STANLEY

(Picking up a Police Gazette.)
Boy, get a load of this pair of elbows!

TAXI

(Glancing at magazine.)
You sure pick 'em, barber!

RODNEY

Oh, I never look at those things.

TAXI

(Rising)
What's the matter – afraid of damsels?

RODNEY

They're nothing but a great big headache, if you ask me.

TAXI

They've been a lot of trouble to me, too!

Music: THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN

I ONCE LOVED A GIRL OUT IN FLATBUSH,
SHE WAS A PICTURE OF BEAUTY AND GRACE;
BUT SHE THOUGHT KITTENS CAME FROM A CATBUSH,
AND SHE NEVER HAD HEARD OF FIRST BASE.
I TRAVEL NO LONGER TO FLATBUSH,
THOUGH THE GIRL IS BOTH WEALTHY AND PURE,
FOR WHENEVER I TRIED MY DESIRES TO CONFIDE
HER MIND WAS UPON HER COIFFURE.

TAXI, STANLEY, SAVORY & RODNEY

OH, THE TROUBLE, THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN,
THEY SOFTEN YOUR HEART TIL IT MELTS,
AND THEN AT THE CRITICAL MOMENT
THEY ARE THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE.

SAVORY

AS A STUDENT MY LIFE WAS PARISIAN,
I LANGUISHED, A CAPTIVE OF SEX,
WHEN SPECKS INTERFERED WITH MY VISION
THEY WERE LOVELY, VOLUMTUOUS SPECKS.
THEN I TOILED ON A FARM TILLING SOYBEANS,
IN A STRUGGLE TO CHASTEN MY BRAIN,
BUT THE GIRL BEANS GOT IN WITH THE BOY BEANS,
AND I NEVER STRUGGLED AGAIN.

TAXI, STANLEY, SAVORY & RODNEY

OH, THE TROUBLE, THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN,
YOU THINK YOU HAVE LEFT THEM BEHIND,
YOU FROLIC IN PHYSICAL FREEDOM,
AND THEN THEY TURN UP ON YOUR MIND.

STANLEY

THE REASON EACH DAY I GROW FRAILER,
IS THAT I'M TRAPPED IN A ONE-WAY ROMANCE
WITH A LADY WHO LIVES IN A TRAILER,
WITH SOME DEVIL-MAY-CARE DEBUTANES.
HER LOVE FOR HER KIN IS EXQUISITE,
SHE ENTERTAINS UNCLE'S GALORE;
BUT WHenever I PAY HER A VISIT
THEM UNCLE'S WOULDN'T OPEN THE DOOR.

TAXI, STANLEY, SAVORY & RODNEY

OH, THE TROUBLE, THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN
I FEAR THAT THEIR LIFE IS A LIE,
WHILE THEY STALL YOU WITH MAIDENLY MURMURS
THEY ARE ROMPING WITH SOMM OTHER GUY.

RODNEY

WHEN I DROVE IN MY GLAMOROUS CHEVY
I WOULD PARK IN A SUITABLE SPOT,
THEN I'D TURN TO THE GIRLS LIKE A HEAVY,
AND INQUIRE IF THEY WOULD, OR WOULD NOT.
I ALWAYS IMPLIED THAT THEY HAD TO,
BUT, JIMMINIES, WAS I PERPLEXED,
THE NIGHT THAT ONE SAID SHE'D BE GLAD TO -
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT.

TAXI, STANLEY, SAVORY & RODNEY

OH, THE TROUBLE, THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN
THEY ARE EITHER TOO COLD OR TOO WARM.
YES, THEY'RE EITHER IN FLIGHT OR INSATIABLE.
OH, GOD GIVE ME STRENGTH TO IGNOR'M.

RODNEY

ONE WEEKEND I RENTED A PACKARD
FOR A MAIDEN OF WHOM I WAS FOND.
HER LIPS AND HER TOENAILS WERE LACQUERED
AND I THINK SHE WAS TECHNICALLY BLOND.
HER DEFENSES HAD STARTED TO CRUMBLE,
I WAS BURSTING WITH MASCULINE PRIDE,
WHEN UP SPOKE A VOICE FROM THE RUMBLE —
HER MOTHER HAD STOLEN A RIDE.

SAVORY

OH, THE TROUBLE, THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN,
THEY ARE CONSTANTLY ONE JUMP AHEAD.
YOU TOUCH WHAT YOU THINK IS A BOSSOM,
AND YOU FIND IT'S AN EIGHT-BALL INSTEAD.
STANLEY

THE REASON I MOAN IN MY SLUMBER
IS THAT I'M SUBJECT TO FEMALE REBUFFS,
OR IF I MAKE A NOTE OF A NUMBER,
THE LAUNDRY ERASES MY CUFFS.
IF I DROOP LIKE A LILY IN SADNESS,
THE DIAGNOSIS IS EASY TO SEE,
EVERY WOMAN HAS MOMENTS OF MADNESS,
BUT NEVER, NO NEVER WITH ME.

TAXI, STANLEY, SAVORY & RODNEY

OH, THE TROUBLE, THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN,
REPEAT IT AGAIN AND AGAIN,
FROM KALAMAZOO TO KAMCHATKA
THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN IS MEN.

(As song ends, TAXI quickly unscrews the handle of the valve under the washbasin, tosses it to STANLEY.)

SAVORY

See here, this lather's too cold!

RODNEY

I'll get some fresh.

(He crosses to washbasin. STANLEY shows the handle of the valve to SAVORY and then places it in his pocket. RODNEY turns the faucets vainly.)

TAXI

What's the matter, bud? Pipe busted?

RODNEY

(Puzzled)

It was all right a minute ago.

(Bends down to look underneath the basin.)

TAXI

Your trouble's in the cellar! Your Bemis valve is clogged, brother. The frogging is scored on your lynch-pin and that handles the bushing!

SAVORY

Hey, are you a plumber?

TAXI

Been working with drips all my life!

(Looks at STANLEY and pushes RODNEY to the cellar door.)

Here, stupid, go down the cellar with the man.

RODNEY

Oh, I don't need any help!
No trouble at all.

(Standing)

STANLEY

Glad to help you!

(EXIT RODNEY.)

RODNEY

(Offstage)

I hate to impose on you –

(TAXI)

(TAXI)

(TAXI)

SAVORY

How’s that, Mr. Savory?

(Rising)

Great, Taxi! Now look, that statue might be anywhere.

You go through the closets –

You search his room upstairs!

We gotta move fast!

(He runs out. The doorbell tinkles and GLORIA enters.)

GLORIA

(Hesitatingly)

Oh – isn’t Mr. Hatch here?

Who?

Mr. Hatch – the proprietor.

Oh, is he a close friend of yours?

(GLORIA sitting in barber chair.)

We have an understanding.

SAVORY

That’s nice. He’ll be back in a few minutes. Great fellow, Hatch. Got an amazing mind.
Are you kidding?

GLORIA

(Savory)
I understand he’s quite a connoisseur of art. Statues and things like that?

GLORIA

That’s the first I heard of it.

SAVORY

(Suddenly a Humphrey Bogart.)
Listen, puss, cut the act. Let’s you and I work together.

GLORIA

(Bewildered)
Come again?

SAVORY
I’m Flashy John from Cicero. I specialize in hot statuary.

GLORIA

(Starts to rise.)
I forgot something – I’ll be back later.

SAVORY

(Holding her in barber chair.)
Stick with me, Feathers, and I’ll cover you with diamonds!

GLORIA

(Terrified)
I don’t want to be covered with diamonds!

What do you want?

SAVORY
I want to get out of here!

GLORIA

Where’s the statue?

SAVORY

You let me go!

SAVORY
Shut up, you little fool!

(She screams – SAVORY whips a towel around her head. TAXI enters.)
TAXI

Tie her up! Make a loop knot ... sailor knot, any kind of knot!
(They knot an apron around her middle.)

SAVORY

(Exultant)
We've got her!

TAXI

We've got her!
(They crow and shake hands across GLORIA.)
Who is she?

SAVORY

(Crestfallen)
I don't know.
(STANLEY enters from cellar.)

STANLEY

(Pleased with himself.)
He got tough. I had to slug him.

TAXI

(In horror.)
We'll lay in jail for ninety-nine years! That's what I get for working with amateurs!
(The doorbell sounds.)
Someone's coming - we've got to lam outta here and fix up an alibi! Out the back - out the back!
(He rushes off, followed by STANLEY and SAVORY. As the back door closes behind them, VENUS enters from the street.)

VENUS

(Sees GLORIA tied in barber chair.)
Oh! What happened?
(Untying GLORIA.)
What have they done to you? Are you alright?

GLORIA

(Gasping)
That gangster! He tried to kill me!

VENUS

Where's Rodney? Ain't he here?

GLORIA

Oh - I think I'm going to faint!

VENUS

(Sweetly)
You do that. You'll feel much better.
GLORIA

(Recognizing her.)
You! Why, you brazen thing! The gall of you marching in here as if you owned the place! I knew he was two-timing me!

VENUS
You know, I can hear you as plainly as though you were in the next room.

GLORIA
You led Rodney on! He never had any nerve until you showed up!

VENUS
Why, that's the nicest thing anyone ever said to me.

GLORIA
I'm going to sue that little weasel for breach of promise - and name you!

VENUS
Be careful, dear. You're not appealing to my better nature!

GLORIA
(Advancing on VENUS.)
I'll scratch your eyes out!

VENUS
(Almost maternally.)
Now, lambie, you're overtired.

Gloria disappears

You're just a bundle of nerves. I'm going to send you on a nice long trip to the moon, or would you prefer something closer, like the North Pole?

GLORIA
You're a cheap, no-good, gold-digging tart!

VENUS
Have a nice trip, dear - and be careful of drafts!

(She extends her arm. There is a crash of music, and the lights black out. When they come on again, VENUS is alone. The barber chair is spinning slowly, and on the seat is GLORIA'S compact. VENUS picks it up.)

VENUS
Why, she forgot her compact.

(Opening it and looking at herself.)
Oh, she's going to arrive there with a shiny nose!

(RODNEY stumbles groggily through the cellar door.)
(Anxiously)
Darling, what's the matter? Are you hurt?

(Trotting to barber chair.)
No - I'm all right ... I'm all right.

You look pale!

Something hit me.

Where does it hurt? Show me.

(Crapping his jaw.)
Right here.
(Faintly)
I can't remember. I was in the cellar -

Don't try to talk. Just let yourself go.
(She leans over and strokes his face.)
There ...

Oh, this is wonderful. It's just what I needed.

It's doing me a world of good, too.

You're so nice to touch.

(Music) SPEAK LOW

Does it make you happy?

I - I never felt like this before.

It's been a long time since anyone has.

SPEAK LOW WHEN YOU SPEAK LOVE,
OUR SUMMER DAY
WITHERS AWAY
TOO SOON, TOO SOON.
SPEAK LOW WHEN YOU SPEAK LOVE;
OUR MOMENT IS SWIFT,
LIKE SHIPS ADRIFT,
WE'RE SWEEPED APART TOO SOON.

SPEAK LOW, DARLING, SPEAK LOW,
LOVE IS A SPARK,
LOST IN THE DARK,
TOO SOON, TOO SOON.
I FEEL, WHEREVER I GO,
THAT TOMORROW IS NEAR,
TOMORROW IS HERE,
AND ALWAYS TOO SOON.
TIME IS SO OLD, AND LOVE SO BRIEF,
LOVE IS PURE GOLD, AND TIME A THIEF.

WE'RE LATE, DARLING, WE'RE LATE,
THE CURTAIN DESCENDS,
EVERYTHING ENDS,
TOO SOON, TOO SOON.
I WAIT, DARLING, I WAIT -
WILL YOU SPEAK LOW TO ME.
SPEAK LOVE TO ME,
AND SOON?

RODNEY

SPEAK LOW WHEN YOU SPEAK LOVE,
OUR SUMMER DAY
WITHERS AWAY
TOO SOON, TOO SOON.
SPEAK LOW WHEN YOU SPEAK LOVE;
OUR MOMENT IS SWIFT,
LIKE SHIPS ADRIFT,
WE'RE SWEEPED APART TOO SOON.

SPEAK LOW, DARLING, SPEAK LOW,
LOVE IS A SPARK,
LOST IN THE DARK,
TOO SOON, TOO SOON.
I FEEL, WHEREVER I GO,
THAT TOMORROW IS NEAR,
TOMORROW IS HERE,
AND ALWAYS TOO SOON.
TIME IS SO OLD, AND LOVE SO BRIEF,
LOVE IS PURE GOLD, AND TIME A THIEF.

VENUS & RODNEY

IT'S LATE, DARLING, IT'S LATE,
THE CURTAIN DESCENDS,
EVERYTHING ENDS.
TOO SOON ...

RODNEY

TOO SOON.

VENUS & RODNEY

I WAIT, DARLING, I WAIT -

RODNEY

WILL YOU SPEAK LOW?

VENUS

WILL YOU SPEAK LOVE ...

VENUS & RODNEY

TO ME?

(They end in each other's arms.)

RODNEY

(Exuberantly)
Well, the shop'Il have to take care of itself today! You and I are going to celebrate!

VENUS

(Smiling)
Have you anything special in mind?

RODNEY

Yes, I tell you what let's do!

(With a deep breath.)
Let's go down to Sheepshead Bay and have a big shore dinner!

(He automatically reaches for the coat hanging on the wall hook to put it on.)

Hey! Whose coat is this?

(Extracting letter from coat pocket.)

Why, it's Mr. Savory's! Look at this! It's from a detective! It says I stole a statue. They say I'm a criminal - they've been following me!

VENUS

(Thoughtfully)
Following you! We can't have that! You know, I think it's about time we had a few words with Mr. Savory.

RODNEY

Nobody's going to push me around!

VENUS

Spoken like a man!

RODNEY

He's not going to call me a thief!
What a pity he can't hear you!

I'll show him who stole his old statue!

With a statue like me, I'm glad it's you!
(As they kiss:)

CURTAIN

Scene 8: The Roof Garden of the Foundation

Music: ARTIST'S BALL

(Midnight of the same day. The STUDENTS, dressed in the period of 1910, are dancing a variation of the Can can. SAVORY and MOLLY stand watching the dancers. The music stops and VENUS enters with RODNEY.)

SAVORY

(Sotto voice, to MOLLY.)
Molly, we've got them here. Now watch me.
(To RODNEY.)
Oh, hello! I got your telephone call. Delighted you could come.

VENUS

What a charming party!

SAVORY

My students like to kick up their heels once in a while.

RODNEY

Mr. Savory, I found this letter in your coat quite by accident. It says here that I stole your statue!

SAVORY

Not a word, old man, till we've all had a drink. Let's sit down. We all know each other, don't we?

MOLLY

Sure. How are you, Miss Hawthorn?

RODNEY

Hello.

(SAVORY conducts VENUS to a table; anxiously.)
Oh, Mr. Savory - about the statue -

SAVORY

Plenty of time to discuss that later, old man. Our entertainment is just about to begin.

(A small portable stage is rolled on, its curtain down.)
Now, I what you all to watch this closely; it's pretty special. You in particular, Hatch - I'll be interested in your reaction.

RODNEY

(Persisting)
But the statue -

SAVORY

After you've seen this, the statue'll be the least of your troubles ... Ladies and gentlemen - everybody loves a good murder. The one you are about to witness is a classic - the dark and horrid crime that led Dr. Crippen to the scaffold. Here you will see reenacted the sinister events that petrified London in 1910. Let me recall the central figures of the tragedy. Dr. Hawley Harvey Crippen - Belle Elmore, the wife of whom he wearied - and Ethel Le Neve, his pretty little typist.

(Turning toward RODNEY.)
Before we begin, Hatch, I have just received a piece of startling news - or is it news to you? Gloria Kramer, your fiancée, has disappeared, and the police ... suspect ... foul ... play.

(MUSICAL)

(RODNEY rises in alarm. During the song, the curtain of the small stage rises to reveal a series of tableaux in which the actors portray the drama of Dr. Crippen, Belle Elmore, and Ethel Le Neve.)

PASSION IS NOT A LAUGHING MATTER,
AND IN LOVE YOU MUST NOT FAIL,
UNLESS FOR THE SAKE OF A WOMAN
YOU ARE READY TO GIVE YOUR ALL,
LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT A LOVER
WHO MADE THE SACRIFICE,
LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT A LOVER
WHO NEVER LOVED BUT TWICE.

HERE'S TO DOCTOR CRIPPEH.
HAWLEY HARVEY CRIPPEH,
LYING IN A FELON'S GRAVE.
WHEN THEY TRIED HIM IN COURT
HE HAD ONE RETORT,
IT WAS ALL FOR ETHEL LE NEVE.

CHORUS

YES, IT WAS ABSOLUTELY ALL FOR ETHEL LE NEVE.

SAVORY

HARVEY CRIPPEH WAS A DOCTOR,
WHO'D BEEN UNKNOWN TO FAME
IF HE HADN'T MET AN ACTRESS,
BELLE ELMORE WAS HER NAME,
SHE HAD PROMISED IF HE'D WED HER
SHE'D BE THE BEST OF WIVES -
AN UNFORTUNATE PROPOSAL,
SINCE IT COST THEM BOTH THEIR LIVES.
HERE'S TO DOCTOR CRIPKEN.

HERE'S TO DOCTOR CRIPKEN.

HAWLEY HARVEY CRIPKEN.

SAVORY

HAWLEY HARVEY CRIPKEN.

CHORUS

LYING IN A FELON'S GRAVE.

SAVORY

HE'S LYING IN A FELON'S GRAVE.

CHORUS

BUT HE TOLD THE GUARD
IN THE PRISON YARD.
IT WAS ALL FOR ETHEL LE NEVE.

SAVORY

BUT HE TOLD THE GUARD
IN THE PRISON YARD.
THAT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY ALL FOR ETHEL LE NEVE.

CHORUS

BELLE ELMORE WAS A VIXEN,
BELLE ELMORE WAS A SHREW,
NOBODY KNOWS THE EMBARRASSMENT
SHE SUBJECTED DOCTOR CRIPKEN TO.
HE HIRED A SECRETARY,
ETHEL LE NEVE BY NAME.
IF SHE HAD GONE TO WORK FOR SOMEBODY ELSE
SHE'D BE UNKNOWN TO FAME.

HERE'S TO DOCTOR CRIPKEN,
HAWLEY HARVEY CRIPKEN,
LYING IN A FELON'S GRAVE.

CHORUS

THE FELON'S GRAVE.

SAVORY

BUT AS HE SWUNG
HE PROUDLY SUNG
IT WAS ALL FOR ETHEL LE NEVE.
CHORUS

BUT AS HE SWUNG
HE PROUDLY SUNG
THAT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY ALL FOR ETHEL LE NEVE.

SAVORY

DOCTOR CRIPPEN LIKED HER TYPING,
HER LADYLIKE SELF-CONTROL,
SHE HAD AN UNDERSTANDABLE FIGURE,
AND AN UNDERSTANDING SOUL.
HE PRESCRIBED FOR BELLE A TONIC,
DUG A HOLE IN THE CELLAR FLOOR,
AND THEN HE PACKED IN QUICKLIME
WHAT WAS LEFT OF BELLE ELMORE.

HERE'S TO DOCTOR CRIPPEN,
HAWLEY HARVEY CRIPPEN,
LYING IN A FELON'S GRAVE.

CHORUS

HE'S LYING IN A FELON'S GRAVE.

SAVORY

BUT HE DIDN'T MOPE
WHEN THEY CUT THE ROPE,
IT WAS ALL FOR ETHEL LE NEVE.

CHORUS

HE DIDN'T MOPE
WHEN THEY CUT THE ROPE,
AND HE GAVE ABSOLUTELY ALL FOR ETHEL LE NEVE.

{MRS. KRAMER has entered. RODNEY rises in puzzled alarm. A POLICE LIEUTENANT and
a DETECTIVE emerge from the crowd, start toward him.)

SAVORY

HE PUT BOY'S CLOTHES ON HIS SWEETHEART,
THEY FLED TO A COUNTRY FAR,
BUT THE LAW IDENTIFIED BELLE ELMORE
THROUGH AN OLD ABDOMINAL SCAR,
HE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN SUSPECTED,
OF THE POLICE HE WOULD HAVE MADE FOOLS,
BUT ETHEL WAS OBSERVED AT A PARTY
WEARING BELLE ELMORE'S JEWELS ... 

{VENUS has drawn out the compact she took from GLORIA in the barbershop, begins to powder
her nose.)

MRS. KRAMER

(Snatches compact from VENUS' hand.)
That's my daughter's compact! He did it! He killed her!
POLICE LIEUTENANT

(Grasping RODNEY.)
You're under arrest!

RODNEY

(Thunderstruck)
Wha – what for?

LIEUTENANT

The murder of Gloria Kramer.

RODNEY

You're crazy! I don't know what you're talking about!

MRS. KRAMER

(Hysterically)
What have you done with my baby, you fiend, you?

RODNEY

I haven't seen GLORIA since she got off the bus!

TAXI

(Appearing from among the guests.)
We happen to know different!

VENUS

(Rising, to MRS. KRAMER.)
This is fantastic. Rodney never touched your daughter.

MRS. KRAMER

(Viciously)
She's back of the whole thing! Gloria told me how they were carrying on! They're like two bugs in a rug!

SAVORY

This lady has no connection with the matter.

LIEUTENANT

(Dubiously)
Maybe the D.A. ought to decide that, Mr. Savory.

SAVORY

(Flatly)
She's a friend of mine. I'll vouch for her personally. Take him away.

VENUS

(To LIEUTENANT.)
Just a moment. Where are you taking him?
SAVORY

(With grim satisfaction.)
To a snug little room where he won't be disturbed for a long, long time.

VENUS

(Moving to RODNEY'S side.)
In that case I'm going with him.

SAVORY

That's absurd. You've not involved in this.

VENUS

(Blandly)
Oh, but I am. I managed the whole thing.

RODNEY

Don't listen to her, she's only trying to take the blame for me!

VENUS

No, really I did. The girl was becoming impossible. I dissolved her.

MRS. KRAMER

You what?

VENUS

I dissolved her.

LIEUTENANT

(Perplexed)
Well, I don't know whether it's Haig and Haig or nose-candy, but you're coming downtown, too.

SAVORY

(Angrily)
Over my dead body she is!

VENUS

(Dangerously)
Don't tempt me - I'm just in the mood to oblige you.

(To RODNEY.)
Cheer up, darling, don't look so glum! This is our honeymoon!

(The police lead VENUS and RODNEY out.)

MOLLY

(In SAVORY's ear.)
Well, Cupid, you certainly loused that up!

Music 23A: ACT I ENDING

HERE'S TO DOCTOR CRIPPEN,
HAWLEY HARVEY CRIPPPEN,
LYING IN A FELON'S GRAVE.
(The curtain on small stage opens to reveal DR. CRIPPPEN hanging by the neck.)

DR. CRIPPPEN

I GAVE NOT ONLY MY LIFE
BUT THAT OF MY WIFE
FOR THE LOVE OF ETHEL LE NEVE!

CHORUS

HE GAVE NOT ONLY HIS LIFE
BUT THAT OF HIS WIFE
FOR THE LOVE OF ETHEL LE NEVE!

CURTAIN
ACT II

Scene 1: Savory's Bedroom

(An elaborately paneled room containing a canopy bed. Beside the bed is a table with a telephone; on the wall, a bellpull. Savory lies in bed, asleep, an ice-pack on his head. MOLLY enters, straightens up. ROSE, the maid, enters. She carries an easel, which she set up at the foot of the bed, facing Savory.)

MOLLY

Morning, Rose.

ROSE

Mornin', Miss Molly. Faith, an' yez puts me in mood of a darlint shamrock, indade yez do.

MOLLY

Listen, Rose, that brogue of yours is a pain in the ... macushla. Where are you from, anyway?

ROSE

Council Bluffs, Iowa, but the employment agency recommends a touch of dialect.

(She goes out.)

MOLLY

Well, we'll stick to the local patois, if you don't mind. What's today's special?

ROSE

(Re-entering with framed painting.)

It's a young girl leaning on some watermelons - that is, I think they're watermelons.

MOLLY

O.K. Give us the sound effects.

(ROSE exits, returns striking a melodious Chinese gong, backs out.)

SAVORY

(Stirs, opens his eyes, and stares incredulously at painting.)

Did I pay twelve thousand dollars for those?

MOLLY

And we've got the stubs to prove it.

SAVORY

No wonder they call me the shrewdest collector in America. I could sell 'em tomorrow for twenty-five.

MOLLY

(Picking up SAVORY'S dressing gown.)

That hiss you hear is the sound of escaping esteem.
(SAVORY swigs his feet over edge of bed into his slippers.)

SAVORY

(Groaning)
What was I drinking last night – fine or Mickey Fine?

MOLLY
When I went to bed you had just invented the Shostakovich Special – malted mare’s milk and vodka.

SAVORY

Where’s my breakfast?
(Pulling bell cord.)
Hathaway!

MOLLY
Hathaway’s losing his grip. I told him half an hour ago.

SAVORY
Any word from George Dreamy? What about that bail?

MOLLY
He’s been out of his office all morning. I’ll try him again.
(She picks up phone, and dials.)

SAVORY

(Sitting at dressing table, gazes into mirror.)
God, I feel awful! All my teeth have little sweaters on them.

MOLLY

(In phone.)
Hello, Drexel, Van Wagonen, Langorous and Dreamy? Mr. Dreamy, please ... Oh, hello, Miss Conquest – Mr. Savory calling Mr. Dreamy ...
(Not to be outsmarted.)
Oh, no – you put Mr. Dreamy on first ... Oh, no, I won’t! Mr. Savory got on first the last time! ...
(Sweetly)
Is that you, Mr. Dreamy?
(SAVORY rises.)
Here’s Mr. Savory.

SAVORY

(In phone.)
Well, George, did you get her out? ... What? She won’t leave jail? ... But she’s got to! ... How should I know? That’s what I’m paying you for!
(Stumps on bed.)
Damndest thing I ever heard!

MOLLY

Complications?
SAVORY

She's locked her cell from the inside and won't come out!

MOLLY

She's no fool. God knows there are times when I could do with a short stretch in solitary.

SAVORY

I'm beginning to feel like a scrambled egg!

(Impatiently)
What the Sam Hill's holding up my breakfast?

MOLLY

I'll tiptoe down and light a fire under Hathaway.

(A man enters; his back to them. He carries a breakfast tray.)

Oh, here he is now. . .

(Starting out.)

By the way, there was a note there from Clare Luce. I swallowed it.

(She exits.)

SAVORY

Don't stand there, Hathaway!

(The man sets down the breakfast tray and turns. He wears a vaguely Oriental costume - jeweled tunic, baggy trousers, and slippers that curl at the toes. This is ZUVELLI, a thoroughly unreconstructed Anatolian. He whips out an Oriental dagger and kneel across the bed, the dagger at SAVORY'S throat.)

ZUVELLI

Do not move, Effendi. I would not wish to harm you.

(SAVORY yanks at bellpull; it comes away in his hand. ZUVELLI laughs; SAVORY reaches in panic for the phone.)

Equally useless, my dear sir. The service has been discontinued.

SAVORY

Damned your eyes, what romantic nonsense is this?

ZUVELLI

(Rapidly)

Be good enough to hear me out - my time is limited. The Cytherean brotherhood has marked you down. In thirty centuries none has ever profaned our goddess and lived. You know your crime and you know the penalty. The statue returns to us before the old moon wanes, or by the beard of my father, you will never greet the new one!

(SAVORY

(Cringing)

I haven't got the statue! Hatch stole it!

ZUVELLI

Hatch? What is this Hatch?
SAVORY

Rodney Hatch, the barber! Present address, Cell 39, the Tombs.

ZUVEU![
(Slowly withdrawing dagger, across SAVORY’S throat.)

Oh – pardon the intrusion.
(He picks up breakfast tray, places it on SAVORY’S lap.)
Your breakfast, Effendi –
(Picks up napkin – snaps it open and tosses it on SAVORY’S stomach.)
– and good appetite to you!
(He vanishes through a panel in the wall beside bed.)

MOLLY

(Entering, breathless.)
Hey, what do you think? Hathaway’s down in the coalbin with a black eye!

SAVORY

Tell him to move over. I’ll be down as soon as I find my strait jacket.
(Pulls covers over his head.)

MOLLY

Oh, you and your Taj Mahal, your town house, your country house – your fabulous collection of modern paintings – and your thirty-nine million dollars in the Corn Exchange Bank!

I should have your troubles!

ONE WAY TO BE VERY WEALTHY
IS TO BE VERY, VERY, VERY RICH.
YOU CAN PILE UP MINK AND ERMINE
LIKE A HERMIT ACCUMULATES VERMIN
IF YOU OCCupy THE PROPER FINANCIAL NICHE.
ONE WAY TO BE VERY HAPPY
IS TO BE VERY, VERY, VERY RICH.
THERE ARE KINDS OF HUMAN PLEASURES
 THAT ARE NOT TO BE PURCHASED WITH TREASURES,
BUT I CAN’T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHICH.
I’VE HEARD MY GILDED FRIENDS COMPLAIN
THERE ARE TROUBLES MONEY CANNOT CURE,
BUT A TROUBLE IS A TROUBLE IS A TROUBLE, AND IT’S TWICE
THE TROUBLE WHEN A PERSON IS POOR.
IN THE CAREFREE KINGDOM OF THE WEALTHY
YOU WILL NEVER SEE AN EYEBROW TWITCH.
IT’S A MINOR PECCADILLO
TO PATRONIZE THE WRONG PILLOW,
WHEN YOU’RE VERY, VERY, VERY RICH.

SIT DOWN, MY DEAR. I’LL HAVE THE SOUP ON
AS SOON AS I CLIP THE COUPON,
LAST YEAR I PAID FOR THE MAID’S APPENDIX.
NOW SHE’S TAKEN A JOB WITH BENDIX.
IT’S WEEKS SINCE I HEARD A WORD OF GOSSIP,
WHAT’S THE LATEST FROM JANE AND OSSIP?
SHE’S A GIRL THAT DOZENS ARE THE BEAU OF
SHE’S BEEN FAITHFUL TO HIM TWICE THAT I KNOW OF.
DAMN UNCLE PIERPONT!
HE LEFT ME A PACKET,
AND MOVED ME INTO A HIGHER BRACKET.
SINCE SALLY RAN OFF WITH HER OBSTETRICIAN,
HER HAIR'S TURNED RED AND SHE LOOKS LIKE A TITIAN;
OF COURSE, I'D HATE TO SWEAR IN COURT
WHAT KIND OF TITIAN: BEAUT -- OR MORT --
HAVE YOU PAID YOUR PLATINA FUR TAX?
I AM UP TO MY NECK IN SURTAX!
ONE WAY TO NEVER SPEND A PENNY
IS TO BE VERY, VERY, VERY RICH.
IF YOU LIVE ALONG PARK AVENUE
YOU'VE DANDY CREDIT HAVENUE?
SO WHY PAY YOUR GROCERY BILLS AND SUCH?
IN THE DREAMY NIGHT LIFE OF THE WEALTHY,
TRUE LOVE UNWINDS WITHOUT A HITCH.
YOU JUST ENGAGE MENUHIN
TO FIDDLE HER TO HER RUIN
WHEN YOU'RE VERY, VERY, VERY, VERY RICH.

ONE WAY TO BE VERY WEDDED
IS TO BE VERY, VERY, VERY PROSPEROUS.
YOU CAN SUBLIMATE YOUR PASSION ON A BALKAN OR CIRCASSIAN,
AND THEN TOSS THEM LEGALLY IN THE BOSPORUS.
IN THE COSTLY DOTAGE OF THE WEALTHY
YOU RESURRECT THAT BYGONE ITCH,
YOU HUDDLE WITH YOUR MEMOIRS, AND BOY!
WHAT MEMOIRS THEM WAS!
WHEN YOU'RE VERY, VERY, VERY RICH.

CURTAIN

Scene 2: The Tombs

(Two cells, separated by the width of the stage. The doors of the cells face each other. In each
is a small stool, and in front of each, a bench. VENUS, in one cell extends her hand longingly to
RODNEY, in the other. The Police Lieutenant, followed by DR. ROOK, the prison psychiatrist,
and a matron, enters, stops outside RODNEY’S cell.)

LIEUTENANT
Come on, Hatch, stop moping over that beetle. Dr. Rook wants to talk to you.

(He unlocks the door and RODNEY emerges.)
DR. ROOK
(Sits down: motions RODNEY to sit beside him.)
Now, Rodney, nobody's going to hurt you. I'm only here to help you.

LIEUTENANT
That's right. You answer polite or I'll beat your brains out.

DR. ROOK
No, no, Lieutenant - that's the wrong approach.
(To RODNEY.)
Now, this statement of yours. You say you brought a statue of Venus to life and she followed you home?
(Suddenly hits RODNEY'S crossed knee with a small hammer. RODNEY twitches.)
Aha. Typical Gauss-Honeywell reaction.
(Reflectively)
I wonder what that means.
(Shrugging his shoulders.)
Oh, well ... Now tell me, Rodney - you frequently hear voices when nobody's around, don't you?

RODNEY
Why, no, I -

DR. ROOK
(Rises and jabs a pencil flashlight at RODNEY'S eyes. RODNEY flinches.)
Aha! Adolescent reflex!

RODNEY
Yes, sir ...

DR. ROOK
How often do you get the sensation of frying - I mean, of flying?
(Laughs deprecatingly.)
I'm getting ahead of myself.

RODNEY
I never said that.

LIEUTENANT
Don't contradict the doctor, you little squirt!

DR. ROOK
No, no - give him enough rope, Lieutenant! Now, Rodney, you read a great many fairy tales, don't you?

RODNEY
You must have got the wrong statement, Doctor!

(DR. ROOK)
(Tolerantly)
Aha - obvious desire to shift responsibility.
LIEUTENANT

(Starting for RODNEY.)
Aarh!

DR. ROOK

(Rising)
No - no - I don't think this poor fellow's in your department - clear psychiatric case.

LIEUTENANT

(Taking RODNEY'S arm.)
Come on, Hatch - back in the incubator.
(He locks RODNEY in the cell.)

(To DR. ROOK.)
I'm not the loony one - you are!

RODNEY

(Crossing to VENUS' cell.)
That's what they all say.
(To MATRON.)
Bring her out, please.

Well?
(Emerging from cell.)

DR. ROOK

Won't you sit down?
(He joins her on the bench.)
I'd like to ask you a few questions.
(Notebook and pencil in hand.)
Who are your parents?

VENUS

The Mediterranean.

(With pencil poised.)
I beg your pardon?

VENUS

I was born of the sea-foam.

DR. ROOK

Ah, yes, yes. Your occupation?

VENUS

Delightful.
DR. ROOK

"Delightful." You have no previous record, I suppose?

VENUS

Indeed I have! As a matter of fact, it makes fascinating reading.

DR. ROOK

How old are you?

VENUS

Well, there's some doubt. Homer says one thing - Vergil says another.

DR. ROOK

How can I contact these people?

VENUS

(After a thoughtful pause - answering him with sweet helpfulness.)

Go to hell.

DR. ROOK

(Rising indignantly.)

This is impossible

(As he exits.)

I wash my hands of the entire case.

MATRON

(Calling)

All right, miss, you can have your five minutes now.

(MOLLY enters, smiles at VENUS.)

MOLLY

Hiya, Hawthorn.

VENUS

How nice of you to come down.

MOLLY

(Sitting beside her on bench.)

Oh well, things have been pretty dull around the Foundation since you left. Savory's eating his heart out. I don't get it - why do you mooch around this place when there's a bubble bath and a dry Martini waiting for you up at the house?

VENUS

I like it here.

MOLLY

You realize, of course, that when your bail's posted, you're supposed to get out.
VENUS

No – I won’t leave until Rodney does.

MOLLY

You’d better straighten it out with the Warden, because come noon he’s going to have you out on that beautiful can of yours. Say, you haven’t anything against Savory, have you?

VENUS

Oh, don’t misunderstand me – I find him extremely attractive at times.

MOLLY

Of course, he’s got the ethics of a burglar and the temper of a short-order cook, but why boggle? Whatever he is, he’s not dull. Say, let me be your diary for a minute.

(Indicating RODNEY.)

What’s the bit attraction about that little citizen?

VENUS

I don’t know. Maybe it’s something that’s happened to me. All my other men have been such heroic figures. I want somebody nobody’s ever heard of.

MOLLY

Well, that certainly is a reasonable facsimile of Rodney Hatch.

VENUS

I’m in a very bad way. I want to choose his neckties for him, part his hair on the opposite side –

MOLLY

In other words, having found exactly what you want, you can’t wait to change it.

VENUS

Naturally. I’m in love with him.

MOLLY

I hope he can take it.

VENUS

Why?

MOLLY

(Glancing at VENUS’ figure.)

Hmmm. Because ... Look, I never said this to anyone before, but you’re Venus, aren’t you?

VENUS

Of course.

MOLLY

That’s what I figured – it didn’t make sense any other way. I mean the statue and the barber and the statue and –

(Rising)

Oh, do you mind if I go home and lie down for a week or two?
VENUS

You're a very thoughtful person.

MOLLY

And you're a very nice one. In fact, you're the nicest goddess I've ever met.

Thank you.

MOLLY

Keep 'em guessing!
(She goes out. The matron locks VENUS in cell, and follows MOLLY off. ZUVETLI appears from the shadows.)

ZUVETLI

(Abasing himself outside cell.)
Majesty ... Gracious Deity, grant me one moment's audience.

VENUS

Oh ... What do you want?

ZUVETLI

(Rising)
Why hast thou deserted us, O radiant one? The virtue has gone out of us. The earth in your homeland is parched; the grain withers on the stalk - the lizard and the locust invade your sacred temple. Your people are stricken. Return to us, we entreat you.

VENUS

(Rising)
No. There is one who has greater need of me than you.

ZUVETLI

(Turning menacingly toward RODNEY.)
Is it this infidel whose ring you wear?

VENUS

Wait!
(ZUVETLI stops.)
I have given him my pledge. I will not leave him.

Think well, O Goddess!

ZUVETLI

Do you dare threaten me?

VENUS

ZUVETLI

We are sworn to destroy all who profane thee!
Go - before I lose patience with you!

(Anxiously)

Rodney - can you hear me?

RODNEY

Are you all right?

VENUS

They want to take me away from you.

RODNEY

I won't let 'em. We're getting out of here!

(In a low, rapid voice.)

I've got it all figured out! When the man brings my dinner I'm going to tie him up with my belt and take away his keys.

VENUS

(Worried)

No, no, he'll hurt you - he's bigger than you.

RODNEY

I don't care how big he is! If he gets between you and me I'll kill him!

VENUS

Then they'd never let you go!

RODNEY

SPEAK LOW WHEN YOU SPEAK LOVE,
OUR SUMMER DAY
WITHERS AWAY
TOO SOON, TOO SOON,
I FEEL, WHEREVER I GO,
THAT TOMORROW IS NEAR,
TOMORROW IS HERE,
AND ALWAYS TOO SOON.

(VENUS makes a sudden joyful gesture, and the cell doors swing open. VENUS and RODNEY hasten toward each other.)

VENUS & RODNEY

WE'VE LATE, DARLING, WE'VE LATE
THE CURTAIN DESCENDS
EVERYTHING ENDS
TOO SOON, TOO SOON.
I WAIT, DARLING, I WAIT.
WILL YOU SPEAK LOW,
WHEN YOU SPEAK LOVE ...?
(RODNEY takes her hand and they go off. The stage is empty for a moment, then SAVORY and MOLLY rush on, followed by the rest of the CAST, brandishing weapons.)

CATCH HATCH!

SAVORY

CATCH HATCH!

MOLLY

CATCH HATCH!

SAVORY

CATCH HATCH!

MOLLY

BRING THE BLOODHOUNDS FOR THE BARBER!

SAVORY

THE KILLER RUNS AMUCK!

MOLLY

BLOCKADE THE LOWER HARBOR!

SAVORY

SEARCH EVERY MACY TRUCK!

MOLLY
OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!

BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!

TAXI

CATCH HATCH!

SAVORY

OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!

STANLEY

CATCH HATCH!

MOLLY

BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!

TAXI

CATCH HATCH!

MOLLY

OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
STANLEY

CATCH HATCH!

SAVORY

BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!
(The following two sections are sung simultaneously.)

TAXI & STANLEY

THE BARBER TOOK A POWDER!
WE’LL GRAB HIM WHILE HE SCRAMS!
WE’LL CHOP HIM INTO CHOWDER!
AND FEED HIM TO THE CLAMS!
UPON HIS TRACK WE’LL PARCH US!
BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!

SAVORY & MOLLY

BRING THE BLOODHOUNDS FOR THE BARBER!
THE KILLER RUNS AMUCK!
BLOCKADE THE HARBOR!
BLOCKADE THE HARBOR!
(The following three sections are sung simultaneously.)

ANATOLIANS

CATCH HATCH!
CATCH HATCH!
CATCH HATCH!
CATCH HATCH!
OUR SECRET SHRINE IS POMPESS,
UNBEARABLE OUR LOSS!
THE BARBER’S THE ACCOMPICE
AND SAVORY’S THE BOSS!
AND LYNCH LAW IS THE RIGHT LAW
FOR RODNEY AND FOR WHITEHAW!

TAXI & STANLEY

UPON HIS TRACK WE’LL PARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!
UPON HIS TRACK WE’LL PARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!
THE BARBER TOOK A POWDER!
WE’LL GRAB HIM WHILE HE SCRAMS!
HE TOOK A POWDER!
HE TOOK A POWDER!

SAVORY & MOLLY

OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!
OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!
BLOCKADE THE LOWER HARBOUR!
SEARCH EVERY MACY TRUCK!
BRING THE BLOODHOUNDS, FIND THE BARBER!
THE KILLER RUNS AMUCK!
(The four following sections are sung simultaneously.)

MRS. KRAMER, LIEUTENANT & CHORUS

CATCH HATCH!
CATCH HATCH!
CATCH HATCH!
CATCH HATCH!
ROLL OUT THE TORTURE ENGINES!
THE BARBER FLEW THE COOP!
THE VICTIM SHRIEKS FOR VENGEANCE!
AVENGERS, ALLEZ-OOP!
A MOTHER'S CRIES ARE RAUCOUS!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
A MOTHER'S CRIES ARE RAUCOUS!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!

ANATOLIANS

THE LYNCH LAW IS THE RIGHT LAW
FOR RODNEY AND FOR WHITELAW!
THE LYNCH LAW IS THE RIGHT LAW
FOR RODNEY AND FOR WHITELAW!
THE BARBER'S THE ACCOMPLICE
AND SAVORY'S THE BOSS!
OUR SHRINE IS POMPLESS!
OUR SHRINE IS POMPLESS!
THE LYNCH LAW IS THE RIGHT LAW
FOR RODNEY AND FOR WHITELAW!

TAXI & STANLEY

UPON HIS TRACK WE'LL PARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
UPON HIS TRACK WE'LL PARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
THE BARBER TOOK A POWDER!
WE'LL GRAB HIM WHILE HE SCRAMS!
UPON HIS TRACK WE'LL PARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
THE CARCASS!
THE CARCASS!
THE CARCASS!

SAVORY & MOLLY

BLOCKADE THE HARBOUR!
CATCH THE BARBER!
BLOCKADE THE HARBOUR!
CATCH THE BARBER!
CATCH HATCH THE BARBER!
CATCH HATCH THE BARBER!
CATCH HATCH THE BARBER!
WHO RUNS AMUCK!
OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!

ALL

UNMASK THAT BLUEBEARD!

TAXI

HE PROBABLY WEARS A FALSE BEARD
OVER HIS TRUE BEARD!

ALL

HUNT DOWN THAT DRACULA!

MOLLY

WHEN HE GETS THE CHAIR,
THE SIZZLE WILL BE SPECTACULAR!

BASSES

BRING BLOODHOUNDS FOR THE BARBER!
The killer runs amuck!
Blockade the lower harbour!
Search every Macy truck!
(The following two sections are sung simultaneously.)

BARITONES & ALTOS

ROLL OUT THE TORTURE ENGINES
FOR THE VICTIM CRIES FOR VENGEANCE!

BASSES

BRING BLOODHOUNDS FOR THE BARBER!
The killer runs amuck!
Blockade the lower harbour!
Search every Macy truck!
(The following three sections are sung simultaneously.)

2ND SOPRANOS & 2ND TENORS

OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!
UPON HIS TRACK WE’LL PARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!

BARITONES & ALTOS

OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER’S CARCASS!

BASSES

BRING BLOODHOUNDS FOR THE BARBER!
The killer runs amuck!
BLOCKADE THE LOWER HARBOUR!
SEARCH EVERY MACY TRUCK!
(The following four sections are sung simultaneously.)

1ST SOPRANOS & 1ST TENORS
AH - AH -
AH - AH -
AH - AH -
AH - AH -

2ND SOPRANOS & 2ND TENORS
OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
UPON HIS TRACK WE'LL PARK US!
AH - AH -
LET'S GO AND GET THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
HIS CARCASS!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
HIS CARCASS!
HIS CARCASS!

BARITONES & ALTOS
OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
OUR BATTLE CRY WILL SPARK US!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
HIS CARCASS!
BRING ON THE BARBER'S CARCASS!
HIS CARCASS!
HIS CARCASS!

BASSES
BRING BLOODHOUNDS FOR THE BARBER!
The KILLER RUNS AMUCK!
BLOCKADE THE LOWER HARBOUR!
SEARCH EVERY MACY TRUCK!
BRING BLOODHOUNDS FOR THE BARBER!
The KILLER RUNS AMUCK!
BLOCKADE THE LOWER HARBOUR
FOR THE BARBER, THE BARBER!
BRING BLOODHOUNDS FOR THE BARBER!
The BARBER, THE BARBER!

ALL
THE BARBER FLEW THE COOP!
AVENGERS! AVENGERS!
AVENGERS ALLEZ-OOP!
ALLEZ-OOP! ALLEZ-OOP!
ALLEZ-OOP! ALLEZ-OOP!

CURTAIN
Scene 3: The Sitting Room of a De Luxe Suite

(One door leads to the bedroom, another opens into a clothes closet. Against the wall, a chaise lounge. VENUS, clad in negligee, reclines on the chaise lounge. RODNEY stands before a mirror, arranging his necktie.)

RODNEY

Do you like this one better?

VENUS

Come here.

(RODNEY crosses to her.)

Love me?

RODNEY

Uh-huh.

(He kisses her on the forehead.)

VENUS

Rodney – come here!

(She kisses him – a lingering embrace.)

RODNEY

(Rising ecstatically.)

Oh God! Is it all right for anybody to feel as good as I do?

VENUS

Don’t be so humble, darling.

RODNEY

(Sitting by her.)

I can’t help it. I keep wondering why anyone as wonderful as you would waste their time on me.

VENUS

If you ever change, I’ll leave your bed and board.

(Her arm goes around his shoulder.)

Rodney, may I confess something? ... This ring only brought us together. It had no power to make me love you.

(RODNEY kisses her fingertips.)

Oh, that tie’s not nearly gay enough. You look so somber. Like – like a notary public whose term is about to expire.

RODNEY

(Rising)

How about the yellow one – with the little horses’ heads? That’s pretty keen! It’s in the bedroom.

VENUS

And while you’re away, remember I love you.

(She throws him a kiss as he goes out.)

And Rodney – part your hair on the other side.
VENUS
YOU KNOW THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN THERE IS AUTUMN IN THE AIR?
THAT'S HIM ... THAT'S HIM ...
THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN ANTOINE HAS FINISHED WITH YOUR HAIR?
THAT'S HIM ... THAT'S HIM ...
YOU KNOW THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SMELL BREAD BAKING,
The way you feel when suddenly a tooth stops aching?
WONDERFUL WORLD, WONDERFUL YOU,
THAT'S HIM ... THAT'S HIM ...
HE IS SIMPLE AS A SWIM IN SUMMER,
NOT ARTY, NOT ACTORY,
HE'S LIKE A PLUMBER WHEN YOU NEED A PLUMBER,
HE'S SATISFACTORY.
YOU KNOW THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN YOU WANT TO KNOCK ON WOOD,
THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN YOUR HEART IS GONE FOR GOOD?
WONDERFUL WORLD, WONDERFUL YOU,
THAT'S HIM.

YOU COULD SHUFFLE HIM WITH MILLIONS,
SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS,
I'D PICK HIM OUT.
IN THE DARKEST CAVES AND HALLWAYS
I WOULD KNOW HIM ALWAYS
BEYOND A DOUBT.
IDENTIFICATION COMES EASILY TO ME
BECAUSE - THAT'S HE.

YOU KNOW THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT THE RHAPSODY IN BLUE?
THAT'S HIM ... THAT'S HIM ...
THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT A HAT CREATED JUST FOR YOU?
THAT'S HIM ... THAT'S HIM ...
YOU KNOW THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN THE FIREFLIES GLIMMER,
THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN OVERNIGHT YOUR HIPS GROW SLIMMER?
WONDERFUL WORLD, WONDERFUL YOU,
THAT'S HIM ... THAT'S HIM ...
HE'S LIKE A BOOK DIRECTLY FROM THE PRINTER:
YOU LOOK AT HIM - HE'S SO COMMENCEABLE,
HE'S COMFORTING AS WOOLENS IN THE WINTER,
HE'S INispensABLE.
YOU KNOW THE WAY YOU FEEL THAT YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD CONCEAL,
THE WAY YOU FEEL THAT YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T FEEL?
WONDERFUL WORLD, WONDERFUL YOU,
THAT'S HIM.

(As the song ends, RODNEY emerges from the bedroom. His face is worried.)

VENUS

What's the matter?
RODNEY

Uh ... Nothing ...

(With bright effort.)

You know, I was just thinking - this time every morning I'm just about halfway down Mr. Frishie's chin.

(Grinning)

Oh, Ish-ka-bibble - let him grow a beard.

VENUS

(Rising)

What would you like me to wear today, darling?

RODNEY

Oh, I don't know - Have you got anything kind of summery? With dots. I like dots.

VENUS

Wouldn't it be fun to take a walk in the woods? We could even have a picnic!

(Noting his hesitation.)

Don't you like picnics?

RODNEY

Oh, sure - I guess we could go to Central Park ...

(Driven to facing facts.)

Look, it's no good. I can't go anywhere. I can't even leave this room!

VENUS

What's the matter? Are you ill?

RODNEY

They're still after me for Gloria! We'd never get by the first policeman!

VENUS

Oh, bother the first policeman!

RODNEY

I'm not joking! We're in a heck of a spot until Gloria turns up!

VENUS

Well, that's all that's worrying you, step back a little.

(She raises her arm. The closet door flies open and GLORIA ricochets out, wild-eyed and disheveled, just as we last saw her in the barbershop.)

RODNEY

My God - has she been in there all night!

GLORIA

(Babbling to empty air.)

You give me back my ring! I'll show that little stinker he can't two-time me!
That's Gloria, all right!
_(Tentatively)_
Honey, are you okay?

VENUS

_(Sitting back on sofa.)_
Honey's fit as a fiddle. She'll live to bury us both!

RODNEY

Gloria! Snap out of it!

GLORIA

_(Emerging from the fog.)_
Where am I?
_(Staring around.)_
Where's the barbershop?
_(Sees VENUS.)_
Oooh!
_(Confronts RODNEY.)_
What are you doing with that woman in here?

VENUS

_(Nodding toward other room.)_
We got tired of it in there.

GLORIA

Rodney Hatch! You -- in a hotel room -- with an actress!

RODNEY

I know it looks bad ... but it's good!

GLORIA

Don't come near me ... I never want to see you again! Wait till I tell my mother! You utter, utter cad!
_(Turning to VENUS.)_
And you ... you libido!
_(She stalks out.)_

VENUS

_(Sic transit Gloria.)_

RODNEY

_(Slowly staring after GLORIA.)_
To think I've been taking that for five years, and if it wasn't for you, I'd be taking it for the rest of my life.
_(Sitting beside VENUS.)_
I'm so afraid of losing you.
VENUS

(Arms around him.)
You’ll never be alone again. Rodney, I promise you.

RODNEY
Just think of the fun we’re going to have! Did you ever hear of Ozone Heights?

VENUS
No, what are they?

RODNEY
It’s a great big new real estate development over on Staten Island. Every bungalow’s just the same. They got an electric incinerator and a radio that looks like a fireplace –

VENUS
And a fireplace that looks like a radio?

RODNEY
Yes. And when you sign the lease, you get a year’s subscription to the Reader’s Digest! And I almost forgot the most important thing of all – a dandy big yard for the kiddies when they start to come along.

VENUS

(Wryly)
You’d better look for something with a lake. With me, you might get swans.

RODNEY
Jeepers Creepers, if I love you this much now, just think how I’ll love you in five years!

WAITING FOR OUR WOODEN WEDDING

WAITING FOR OUR WOODEN WEDDING, GOLLY, HOW THE TIME WILL FLY!
STEALING KISSES IN THE KITCHEN,
HOLDING HANDS WHILE THE DISHES DRY.
WAITING FOR OUR WOODEN WEDDING,
GOLLY, HOW THE SUN WILL SHINE!
WE WILL LINGER O’ER THE LAUNDRY,
I’LL WASH YOURS AND YOU’LL WASH MINE.
PAYDAY WILL BE A MAGIC CASEMENT
OPENING ON, SOMETHING PEACHY,
MAYBE A TRIP TO GIMBEL’S BASEMENT,
OR A DOUBLE FEATURE WITH DON AMECHE.
WAITING FOR OUR WOODEN WEDDING,
GOLLY, WHAT A TRAIL WE’LL LEAVE!
SIPPING COCA-COLA AT THE PIANOLA
ON OUR WOODEN WEDDING EVE.

WAITING FOR OUR WOODEN WEDDING,
GOLLY, HOW THE BIRDS WILL SING!
WHILE WE WHISTLE IN THE GARDEN,
PLANTING ONIONS IN THE SPRING.
WAITING FOR OUR WOODEN WEDDING,
GOLLY, HOW THE BEES WILL BUZZ!
SPREADING POLLEN O'ER THE FLOWERS -
WE CAN DO WHAT A BEE CAN DOES.
YOU SHALL HAVE ON EVERY ANNIVERSARY
A PRESENT WE CAN PAY FOR LATER;
MAYBE A TENANT FOR THE NURSERY,
OR A SELF-ADJUSTING INCINERATOR.
WAITING FOR OUR WOODEN WEDDING,
GOLLY, WHAT A SPELL WE'LL WEAVE;
YOU CAN COOK A BISCUIT, MAYBE I CAN RISK IT
ON OUR WOODEN WEDDING EVE.

VENUS

(Her face troubled.)
Rodney, I hope I'll be the right kind of wife for you.

RODNEY

Why shouldn't you be?

VENUS

I can't sew, or weave, or milk a goat.

RODNEY

When I get through with you, you'll be an A Number One homebody!

(Pushing her gently to bedroom door.)
Hurry up and dress now - I want to walk down Fifth Avenue and show you off to everybody!

VENUS

(As she exits.)
Darling!

RODNEY

Yes?

VENUS

(From bedroom.)
What will it be like - you and I - in five years?

RODNEY

(Taking his jacket out of closet.)
Why, we'll be an old married couple - like Blondie and Dagwood in the funny papers. Say, that
reminds me - I missed reading them for two whole days now.

VENUS

We'll know what to expect every minute, won't we?
(Surveying himself in mirror.)

Sure, you won’t have to worry about a thing. You won’t have time – before you know, it’ll be seven o’clock and hubby’ll be coming up the stoop ...

Won’t you ever be late, or early?

(Taking his hat from closet.)

No siree! I’m as punctual as clockwork! I like everything on the dot.

I’m nervous. I might get restless.

Oh, you’ll settle down, after the second set of twins arrive

How do you know you won’t take me for granted?

I know Rodney Hatch.

Do you think I’ll be able to compete with the evening paper?

After Dick Tracy – you’ll come first.

I keep wondering, darling – if you see me every day, will you want to see me every night?

Sure, married people are all the same, aren’t they?

I’ve never been able to be like everybody else.

Don’t worry. Ozone Heights will change all that.

*(The lights fade, the hotel room disappears. As the lights come on again, we see three identical suburban doorways. VENUS, in housewifely garments, is seated in front of the center doorway, caught in her own conception of domesticity. The life of Ozone Heights closes in on her – the neighbors, the children; RODNEY dividing his attention between the lawnmower and the comics.)*
(Stealthily, the creatures of her magic world invade the scene. She resists them, but they will not be resisted; now Ancient Greece is real, and Ozone Heights the myth. RODNEY vanishes, the humdrum houses vanish, only the vast open sky remains. VENUS, once again the goddess, returns to her people.)

CURTAIN

Scene 4: The Main Gallery of the Foundation

(The same as Act One, Scene 1, except that the pedestal in the niche is empty. SAVORY is seated, his hands bound behind his back. ZUVE TLI stands over him, eyeing him impatiently.)

ZUVE TLI
Come, come, Mr. Savory. Must I spatter you all over this charming museum of yours? I had supposed you a civilized person, a man of the world. Either you will tell me the whereabouts of the goddess —

(Indicating silk scarf in his hands.)

— or I shall be forced to cut off your supply of oxygen.

SAVORY
I tell you again, I don’t know!

ZUVE TLI
Oh dear, oh dear, why must you make it so difficult for both of us? Surely you don’t think I look forward to seeing your face turn black and your eyeballs leap from your head!

(Two Anatoitians force RODNEY on and thrust him down beside SAVORY.)

Well, where did you find him?

FIRST ANATOITIAN
At the hotel — he was alone.

ZUVE TLI
(To RODNEY.)
Where is she?

RODNEY
If I knew, do you think I’d tell you?

ZUVE TLI
Hold your tongue, you dog! Your master merely stole our goddess — you have sullied her! Your punishment is long overdue! Pin his arms, Zorab!

(As the man grips RODNEY’S arms and ZUVE TLI raises his dagger to strike, there is a clap of thunder and the lights black out. A moment of darkness and the lights return. ZUVE TLI and his followers are gone — and standing on the pedestal is the statue of VENUS. RODNEY and SAVORY stagger to their feet, look about in bewilderment.)
Where are they?

RODNEY

They're gone!

*(He turns, stands transfixed as he sees the statue. SAVORY'S eyes follow his.)*

SAVORY

*(Regarding the statue reverently.)*

It's a masterpiece, Hatch - but it doesn't do her justice.

RODNEY

*(Bitterly)*

She never even said good-bye to me.

SAVORY

Don't feel badly. We were both very lucky that she stayed as long as she did.

RODNEY

Thanks for saying it, Mr. Savory - but - but - that's a lot of applesauce.

*(MOLLY, clad in bathrobe and slippers, appears in doorway, dabbing her eyes with a towel.)*

MOLLY

Mercy me! Can't a girl even take a bath in this foolish place without being struck in the tub by lightning?

SAVORY

Take a firm grip on the floor. We've got a surprise for you.

MOLLY

After five years with you, Butch, nothing could surprise me.

*(SAVORY points to statue.)*

Oh! -

*(To RODNEY with genuine sympathy.)*

She was the nicest goddess I ever met.

SAVORY

*(Drops a friendly arm about RODNEY'S shoulder.)*

Come along, old man. You're going to drink a bottle of brandy while I eat crow.

RODNEY

I... I'll be along in a minute ...

*(SAVORY and MOLLY exit.)*

Why did you leave? You said I'd never be alone again ...

SPEAK LOW, DARLING, SPEAK LOW,

LOVE IS A SPARK,
LOST IN THE DARK,
TOO SOON, TOO SOON.
I'LL WAIT, DARLING, I'LL WAIT.
WILL YOU SPEAK LOW ...?

(A GIRL enters. Her clothes are simple, and she has an attractive, awkward grace; she might be VENUS' country cousin. [She is played by the same actress who plays Venus.] She carries a straw suitcase.)

GIRL
Oh - excuse me. Can you tell me where I register for the Art Course?

(RODNEY)

RODNEY
(Looks at statue - then at girl.)
Why - sure ... Where do you come from?

GIRL
Ozone Heights.

RODNEY
Do you like it there?

GIRL
I wouldn't think of living any place else.

RODNEY
My name is Rodney Hatch.

GIRL
Mine is -

(RODNEY)

(Going quickly to her.)
You don't have to tell me. I know.

(He takes suitcase from her and offers her his arm. She takes his arm, their eyes never leaving each other, and as they start off:)

CURTAIN