

# LAST CALL

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS BY KEIRAN KING  
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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

In order of appearance

CLARENCE, about 50. The bartender at the Myrtle Bank Hotel bar and lounge. Used to be the entertainment in the 1920s, until a drinking habit and an accident intervened. Feels as if the world has passed him by.

CECIL, about 30. A branch manager at the Bank of Nova Scotia. A playboy. Drives a 1949 Jaguar XK120. Women flock to him. Snazzy dresser.

ROSE, about 30. An air stewardess for British Overseas Airways Corporation. Traveled. Projects joie de'vivre but still looking for happiness.

JOSEPH, about 30. Works two jobs—by day, clerk at Telephone Company; by night, gas attendant at a petrol station. The everyman. Harbours unrequited love for Daphne.

DAPHNE, about 30. The lounge singer at the Myrtle Bank. A hard woman. Used to be the 'it' girl in school. Fell from grace into night work and a drug habit before landing her current gig. Struggles to make ends meet.

## SETTING

The action takes place in the bar and lounge of the Myrtle Bank Hotel in Kingston, Jamaica in June 1949.

For Grandpa

# ACT ONE

*The bar and lounge of the Myrtle Bank Hotel,  
downtown Kingston, June 1949.*

*Through “Good While it Lasted”, light and  
sound indicate that this place was once the  
haunt of a group of happy teenagers.* \*

ALL (OFF) \*

MY FRIENDS WERE FOREVER \*  
AS EVER AS FRIENDS COULD BE \*  
AS EVER AS THE PALM TREE LEAVES THAT DROP OFF THE TREE \*

WE MADE A SOLEMN VOW \*  
AVOWING OUR FRATERNITY \*  
A VOW, WHICH NOW HAS PASSED THE TEST OF INSINCERITY \*

BUT IT WAS GOOD WHILE IT LASTED \*  
SO GOOD WHILE IT LASTED \*  
IT’S NEVER BEEN SO BLASTED GOOD \*  
AS WHEN I MET THOSE THREE \*

THEY GAVE THEIR WORD \*  
THEIR WORD WAS GOSPEL, GOSPEL HOMILY \*  
THEIR WORDS INFERRED THE SCRIPTURE, YES—ABOUT FORSAKING ME \*

NOW SO MUCH TIME HAS PASSED \*  
THE PAST BECOMES BUT MEMORY \*  
MY PAST, AT LAST, FORGOTTEN, GONE—TEMPORARILY \*

COZ IT WAS GOOD WHILE IT LASTED \*  
SO GOOD WHILE IT LASTED \*  
IT’S NEVER BEEN SO BLASTED GOOD \*  
AS WHEN I MET THOSE THREE \*

YES, IT WAS GOOD WHILE IT LASTED \*  
SO GOOD WHILE IT LASTED \*  
IT’S NEVER BEEN SO BLASTED GOOD \*  
AS WHEN I MET THOSE THREE \*

*The song morphs into a rendition on the radio as the lights come up. It is just after five o'clock, and the setting sun sends long shadows into the lounge. The sound of light traffic filters inside.*

\*

*A semi-circular bar is stage left, beside the arched entrance. Four stools. To stage right, a grand piano and a few other instruments flank a small stepped performance area. A smaller arch leads to the hotel proper. Three round tables with upturned chairs dominate downstage. Another table sits in the back, by an arch leading to the restrooms. A fan spins lazily.*

*CLARENCE, 50, enters from the hotel and crosses to the bar, humming with the radio. He slips behind the counter, switches it to cricket ("...class and beauty. An innings by Frank Worrell knows no dawn. It began auspiciously with...") and prepares for the evening ahead.*

*CECIL, 28, enters through the main arch. He is sharply dressed. Suit. Hat. Two-tone shoes. Big watch. He is disappointed by the quiet room, and leans on the bar.*

CLARENCE

Evening.

Good evening. CECIL

What can I get you? CLARENCE

I'm waiting on my date. CECIL

*Cecil takes down a chair and sits at one of the tables. Looks around.*

Kind of slow, wouldn't you say? CECIL

*Clarence switches off the radio.*

What's that? CLARENCE

I said, it's kind of slow, wouldn't you say? CECIL

Not really. CLARENCE

*Cecil looks around the room.*

What kind of people come here? CECIL

CLARENCE  
People with a high salary and a higher complexion. The hotel guests—mostly Brits. Some Americans—they come for the music.

Any young people? CECIL

What's that? CLARENCE

Anybody like me? My age? CECIL

Sure, sure. CLARENCE

*Cecil rises and walks around.*

I haven't been here in ten years. CECIL

*He perches on the performance area.*

You say there's music? CECIL

What's that? CLARENCE

Music. Where's the music? CECIL

Oh. She'll be here. CLARENCE

Right. CECIL

Where's everyone else? (then)

At work. You do that? CLARENCE

Do what? CECIL

Work. CLARENCE

I manage the BNS on Duke Street. CECIL

Lucky you. CLARENCE

I sleep late, leave early, get paid and get laid. What more can a man want? CECIL

So what's the problem? CLARENCE

What you mean? CECIL

A man like you should look happy. CLARENCE

Life's not about happiness, Pops. It's about getting stuff. And I've got lots of stuff. Happiness is for painters and priests—people who can't afford to buy a drink on a Thursday night. You have Johnny Walker? CECIL

Sure, sure. CLARENCE

I'll have it straight. CECIL

Neat? CLARENCE

Rocks. CECIL

Johnny on the rocks, coming up. CLARENCE

*Cecil watches Clarence make the drink.*

CECIL  
Last time I was happy was ten years ago. I was sitting right there—with Joe, and Rose, and Daphne. We were really something, the four of us.

CLARENCE  
(presenting the glass)  
Here you go.

CECIL  
Were you here then?

CLARENCE  
Son, I've been here since 1919. Used to do a bit of baritone. You weren't even born.

CECIL  
I just wanted to know if you remembered my friends.

CLARENCE  
There's only two people I can't forget. And you're neither.

CECIL  
Well, they were special to me.

CLARENCE  
What's so unforgettable about them, Nat?

CECIL  
It's Cecil.

CLARENCE  
Clarence.

*They shake.*



CECIL

We made a promise that night—the kind of promise children make. You know, when you think you’ll be friends forever. We said we would meet each other in the same spot in exactly ten years. It was a Friday night. June 23, 1939.

CLARENCE

So you’re meeting your friends?

CECIL

I told you. I’m waiting on my date. And then I’m leaving.

CLARENCE

But it’s the 23rd.

CECIL

What?

CLARENCE

Today is June 23rd.

CECIL

You’re kidding.

*Clarence points to a calendar behind the bar.*

CECIL

Of all the days and all the places, how did I end up here today?

CLARENCE

Providence.

CECIL

Coincidence.

CLARENCE

No such thing.

CECIL

Exactly.

CLARENCE

Two bits says one of them shows.

*He swigs his drink.*

\*

CECIL

You’re wasting your money. That was a lifetime ago. I wouldn’t even recognize them if they walked in. Well, maybe I would.

CECIL

Joe was always shy. He and I used to climb over the wall into the girls school next door. And he’d never talk to anybody. So I introduced him to Daphne. What a figure that girl had. Everything in the right place. She took pity on him, I think.

\*

Anyway, before long, they were together. Rose was Daphne's best friend—always smiling. Loved to dress up. She always wanted to go out, and Joe and Daph always wanted to stay in. They were in love. Me, I had a lot of girls. Still do. Love's not my thing. Say, where's that music that was supposed to walk in?

CLARENCE

What's that?

CECIL

Never mind. Got a light?

*Clarence gives him one of the hotel matchbooks and Cecil lights up. Clarence produces an ashtray.*

CECIL

Mind if I use the piano?

CLARENCE

Please yourself.

CECIL

(taking the ashtray to the piano)

We all loved music. When Joe and Daph hooked up, Rose and I sang this one. \*

*He sings "But Not for Me". During the song, Clarence takes the upturned chairs off the tables.*

CECIL

THEY'RE WRITING SONGS OF LOVE  
BUT NOT FOR ME  
A LUCKY STAR'S ABOVE  
BUT NOT FOR ME  
ALTHOUGH THEY SAY LOVE'S GRAND  
I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND  
FOR ME, IT'S HAND-IN-HAND WITH MISERY

I'D BE A FOOL TO FALL  
AND GET THAT WAY  
HIGH HOPE, DASHED  
AND ALL SO LACK-A-DAY  
ALTHOUGH I CAN'T DISMISS  
THE THOUGHT OF WEDDED BLISS  
I GUESS IT'S NOT FOR ME

CLARENCE

Young man, you sing like someone with a broken heart.

I told you, love's not my thing. CECIL

You know, my son was named Cecil. CLARENCE

Was? What happened to him? CECIL

High fever. Killed him. CLARENCE

Any other children? CECIL

No. CLARENCE

Married? CECIL

Widowed. The boy's death killed her. Poor girl. CLARENCE

*The phone at the bar RINGS. Clarence picks up  
as Cecil fiddles by the piano.*

Myrtle Bank Hotel. A pleasant good evening. CLARENCE  
(then)

Girl, you are walking down the path of damnation. May God have mercy on your soul.

*He hangs up.*

Tough luck, Cecil. The music isn't coming. Called in sick. It's a right pity. She's the prettiest disease you'd ever lay eyes on. I'd better tell Mr Winston. \*

Where can I tidy up? CECIL \*

Through there. CLARENCE  
(indicates upstage arch)

*Cecil exits to the restroom, and Clarence to the hotel, as ROSE, 28, enters through the main arch. She radiates charm. Hair coiffed. Cute handbag. Small leather suitcase. Matching knee-length skirt and jacket.*

*She walks to the middle of the empty room, and drops her facade.*

*She perks up as Clarence returns with the band, who slide behind their instruments only to recline and disappear behind their fedoras and cigarettes.*

CLARENCE  
(approaching)

Evening, miss.

ROSE  
Hello. I'm looking for someone. Someones, actually. Is anyone else here?

CLARENCE \*  
Oh, you must be the date of that young gentleman. He'll be a minute. \*

ROSE \*  
No, no. I'm not anyone's date. I was hoping to see... well, it doesn't matter now. \*

CLARENCE \*  
Would you like some soda? \*

ROSE \*  
Mother always said I was a happy-go-lucky fool. \*

CLARENCE \*  
What's that? \*

ROSE \*  
No, thanks. Good night. \*

CLARENCE \*  
Good evening, miss. \*

*She exits as Cecil returns. He drifts towards the inert musicians. Silence fills the room.* \*  
\*

CECIL \*  
Well, Christ, doesn't anything ever happen around here? \*

CLARENCE

Sure, sure. Why just last week, they put in a second line.

CECIL

You're kidding.

CLARENCE

(tapping the phone)

Ran it right here. If I wanted to, I could place a call to the next room. Damned if I know why any place needs more than one phone number. But the whole world mystifies me now.

*Rose enters, hastily. Sees Clarence.*

ROSE

I might as well pay for a room for the night. I don't leave until tomorrow morning.

*Across the room, Cecil's face transforms.*

CECIL

Rose?

*She turns.*

ROSE

Cecil?

*They close the space between them and embrace heartily.*

CECIL

I can't believe it.

ROSE

You look so good!

CECIL

Your hair!

ROSE

Your clothes!

CECIL

Imagine running into you like this.

ROSE

What do you mean?

CECIL

I mean, it's a hell of a coincidence.

ROSE

Coincidence?

You mean you remembered? CECIL

You mean you forgot?! ROSE

From ten years ago? CECIL

ROSE  
(using her handbag as a weapon)  
Cecil B Dixon, I can't believe you would play such a horrible practical joke. If you really forgot, then what are you doing here?

CECIL  
(fending off the attack)  
Waiting for a date.

ROSE  
Me too! I've been waiting for this date for ten years.

CECIL  
Time passed. I didn't hear from you. From anyone. I... forgot.

ROSE  
(hugging him)  
I'm so angry at you.

CECIL  
I can see that. Let's sit down.

ROSE  
What about your date?

CECIL  
She'll understand.

*They sit.*

ROSE  
Whatever you do, there's money in it.

CECIL  
Usually. I work in a bank.

ROSE  
I should open an account.

CECIL  
I'll have to do a background check.

ROSE  
Unearth my secrets?

Spread them on my desk. CECIL

You're incorrigible. ROSE  
(blushing)

That's a long word. CECIL

I've learnt a few. ROSE

Who taught you? CECIL

*Her face clouds.*

Nobody. ROSE

So what about you? CECIL

I'm a stewardess. ROSE  
(recovering)

Which boat? CECIL

The kind that flies. ROSE

You're kidding. CECIL

I work for BOAC. ROSE

Where've you been? CECIL

Everywhere. ROSE

Miami? CECIL

Dozens of times. ROSE

New York? CECIL

ROSE  
All the time.

CECIL  
London?

ROSE  
Every month I fly from London to the Azores to Hamilton to Kingston to Caracas.

CECIL  
What's it like? To fly?

ROSE  
It's hard to describe. It's very loud. Sometimes you feel like you're in a can of beans that somebody's shaking up. Other times, it's magic.

CECIL  
You always wanted to go to new places.

ROSE  
We both did.

CECIL  
I let my clothes do the travelling.  
(his hat)  
Panama.  
(his tie)  
Italy.  
(his shoes)  
Mexico.

ROSE  
(Panama)  
Been there.  
(Italy)  
Done that.  
(Mexico)  
Got sick.

CECIL  
That's why I love this city.

ROSE  
This city is boring.

CECIL  
It has lots of girls.

ROSE  
Exactly.

CECIL  
The whole world comes to Kingston.



ROSE  
Wrong. The whole world goes to London.

*She creeps into a version of "I Love Paris".*

I LOVE LONDON IN THE SPRINGTIME  
I LOVE LONDON IN THE FALL  
I LOVE LONDON IN THE WINTER WHEN IT DRIZZLES  
I LOVE LONDON IN THE SUMMER WHEN IT SIZZLES

I LOVE LONDON EVERY MOMENT  
EVERY MOMENT OF THE YEAR  
I LOVE LONDON  
WHY OH WHY DO I LOVE LONDON  
BECAUSE THE WORLD GOES THERE

CECIL

I LOVE KINGSTON IN THE EVENINGTIME  
I LOVE KINGSTON IN THE DAWN  
I LOVE KINGSTON IN DECEMBER  
RAINING SHEETS OUTSIDE  
I LOVE KINGSTON IN SEPTEMBER  
WHEN THE HEAT'S OUTSIDE

I LOVE KINGSTON EVERY MOMENT  
EVERY MOMENT OF THE YEAR  
I LOVE KINGSTON  
WHY OH WHY DO I LOVE KINGSTON  
BECAUSE MY HOME IS HERE

BOTH

I LOVE LONDON (KINGSTON) IN THE SPRINGTIME  
(IN THE EVENING TIME)  
I LOVE LONDON (KINGSTON) IN THE FALL  
(IN THE DAWN)

I LOVE LONDON IN THE WINTER WHEN IT DRIZZLES  
(I LOVE KINGSTON—RAINING SHEETS OUTSIDE)  
I LOVE LONDON IN THE SUMMER WHEN IT SIZZLES  
(I LOVE KINGSTON—WHEN THE HEAT'S OUTSIDE)

I LOVE LONDON (KINGSTON) EVERY MOMENT  
EVERY MOMENT OF THE YEAR  
I LOVE LONDON (KINGSTON)  
WHY OH WHY DO I LOVE LONDON (KINGSTON)  
BECAUSE THE WORLD IS THERE (HOME IS HERE)

ROSE  
Kingston doesn't feel like home anymore.

CECIL  
Everyone needs a home.

ROSE  
Mine is the big blue sky.

CECIL  
Want a drink?

ROSE  
Okay.

CECIL  
(calling over)  
Clarence. Soda for the lady.

CLARENCE  
What's that?

CECIL  
(gesturing)  
Soda!

CLARENCE  
One soda, coming up.

*Cecil and Rose, seated across the stage, do not notice as JOSEPH, 28, enters quietly. A folded newspaper sits under the arm of his cheap suit. He pushes his hat back as he sits at the bar. He's tired.*

CECIL  
Smoke?

ROSE  
Okay.

*He produces a cigarette. Over at the bar, another conversation begins. Neither pair can hear the other.*

CLARENCE  
How are you, Joe?

JOSEPH

Same as yesterday.

*Clarence carries the soda across to Rose.*

CECIL  
(to Clarence)

Thanks.

CLARENCE

Sure, sure.

ROSE

You heard from Joseph?

CECIL

No. Daphne?

ROSE

I figured those two to get married.

CECIL

Really?

ROSE

They were so in love.

*At the bar, Joseph and Clarence converse.*

CLARENCE

What'll it be?

JOSEPH

The usual.

CECIL

Daphne always seemed more sophisticated.

CLARENCE  
(making Joseph's drink)

Off tonight?

JOSEPH

No.

CECIL

Remember that pearl necklace?

ROSE  
Yes. She never let me borrow it.

JOSEPH  
How's the new line? Any calls?

CECIL  
Joe never could relate to women.

CLARENCE  
Quiet as a baby.

CECIL  
Didn't even know what a pearl was.

CLARENCE  
Waste of money, if you ask me.

ROSE  
He related to me.

CECIL  
Everyone relates to you, Rose.

CLARENCE  
(hands Joseph the drink)  
Any luck?

JOSEPH  
I haven't called yet.

CECIL  
He sure fell for her, though.

ROSE  
They both did.

CLARENCE  
Why?

ROSE  
Real love. I've never had that.

JOSEPH  
Because it's the last one.

CECIL  
Love's not my thing.

CLARENCE

(loudly)

Wait, what?

*Cecil and Rose look over to the bar, then turn away. Joseph hunches over the counter.*

JOSEPH

Clarence.

*He pulls a small piece of paper from his inside pocket.*

JOSEPH

I've carried it around the whole day. I just can't bring myself to do it.

ROSE

Where's your hot date?

CLARENCE

I'll dial it for you.

JOSEPH

(pocketing it again)

Not a chance.

CECIL

I'll check outside.

CLARENCE

I hope it's her.

JOSEPH

(drains the glass)

Thanks. I'll pay you tomorrow.

*Cecil and Joseph rise and walk to the exit in synchrony. Joseph exits. Cecil, as an afterthought, pauses.*

CECIL

(indicating Joseph)

What was that about?

CLARENCE

What's that?

CECIL  
You looked upset.

CLARENCE  
(chuckling)  
No. That's a friend of mine. Comes in every day for a drink between jobs. Nice guy. Got a broken heart like you.

CECIL  
My heart isn't broken, Clarence.

CLARENCE  
Sure, sure. Oh, damn. He left his Gleaner. Think you can catch him?

CECIL  
I'm not running anywhere in this suit.

CLARENCE  
Joseph loves his paper. I'll keep it for him.

*He reaches for the paper. Cecil grabs his hand.*

CECIL  
What's that?

CLARENCE  
What's what?

CECIL  
That name.

CLARENCE  
What name?

CECIL  
The name you just said!

CLARENCE  
Who? Joseph?

*Cecil grabs the paper and runs outside.*

CLARENCE  
(shakes his head)  
Young people. Always in a rush.

*He exits behind the bar. Rose wanders around the room. Begins a reprise of "But Not For Me."*

ROSE

THEY'RE WRITING SONGS OF LOVE  
 BUT NOT FOR ME  
 A LUCKY STAR'S ABOVE  
 BUT NOT FOR ME  
 WITH LOVE TO LEAD THE WAY  
 I'VE FOUND MORE CLOUDS OF GRAY  
 THAN ANY RUSSIAN PLAY COULD GUARANTEE

I WAS A FOOL TO FALL  
 AND GET THAT WAY  
 HIGH HOPE, ALAS  
 AND ALL SO LACK-A-DAY  
 ALTHOUGH I CAN'T DISMISS  
 THE MEMORY OF HIS KISS  
 I GUESS HE'S NOT FOR ME

*Cecil bursts in, dragging Joseph behind him.*

Look who I found. CECIL

Joseph! ROSE

Hello, Rosebud. JOSEPH

*Rose hugs Joseph.*

Sit down, Joe. CECIL

*They sit as Clarence returns. The pause goes on a bit too long. Rose laughs.*

Well, say something. CECIL

Like what? JOSEPH

Anything. ROSE

There's nothing to say, Rosebud. JOSEPH

CECIL

There's lots to talk about.



Like what? JOSEPH

Like what you're going to drink. CECIL

What's in your glass? JOSEPH

Johnny Walker. CECIL

Bit steep. JOSEPH

Nonsense. Clarence. Bring the bottle and another glass. CECIL

What's that? CLARENCE

Oh, for the love of Mary, Jesus and-- CECIL  
(moving to the bar)

Joseph. Did you remember? ROSE

Remember what? JOSEPH

Ten years ago. We were here. We promised to meet each other. Today. ROSE

No. JOSEPH

*Rose lets this sink in.*

Where do you work? ROSE

Telephone Company. JOSEPH

I work for BOAC. ROSE

I know. JOSEPH

You know? ROSE

I saw your picture in the Gleaner last year. You were smiling. JOSEPH  
*Cecil returns with the bottle and a glass.*

Here you go. I bought the bottle. CECIL  
*Cecil pours Joe a glass.*

You don't seem happy to see us, Joe. CECIL  
*Joseph sips his drink.*

What is it, Joseph? ROSE

I'm late. JOSEPH

You just got here. ROSE

Finish your drink. CECIL

Nothing's changed. JOSEPH

Nonsense. Everything's changed. Rose works for BOAC. CECIL

He knows. ROSE

I work over on Duke Street. CECIL

You're a lawyer. JOSEPH

Banker. CECIL

Joseph's coming from Telephone Company. ROSE

Can we stop talking about where everybody works, please? JOSEPH

Okay. ROSE

We're just catching up. CECIL

Sounds like I'm the one with catching up to do. JOSEPH

Is that what's bothering you? CECIL

Money doesn't make you happy. ROSE

Speak for yourself. CECIL

Cecil. ROSE

Sorry. CECIL

It's not just that. You're doing what you want. I'm not. JOSEPH

Then quit. ROSE

I can't. It's complicated. JOSEPH

A girl at work. CECIL

Something like that. JOSEPH

Tell us. ROSE

You wouldn't understand, Rosebud. You're happy. JOSEPH

She's always happy. CECIL

I'm miserable. ROSE

*This warrants attention.*

But you fly. CECIL

Yes, I fly. I fly around and around and around and I never get to talk to anybody for more than five hours. The moment I meet somebody nice, they have to leave. The only people who stay in the air are the pilots. And I already made that mistake. In a hotel. ROSE

*The phone RINGS. Clarence picks up.*

Myrtle Bank Hotel, a pleasant good evening. CLARENCE  
(then)  
Cecil.

What? CECIL  
(brusque)

Phone call. CLARENCE

*Cecil goes to the phone by the bar.*

I have to go to work. JOSEPH

I thought you just came from work. ROSE

Cecil speaking. CECIL  
(on phone)

Yes. JOSEPH

Oh. ROSE

*Cecil holds the receiver away from his ear. The person on the other end is evidently shouting.*

ROSE  
Have you kept in touch with Daphne?

JOSEPH  
No. Know where she is?

ROSE  
I don't even know where I am, half the time.

*Cecil replaces the receiver, having been hung up on. He speaks to the other two across the room.*

CECIL  
That was my date.

ROSE  
And?

CECIL  
She's been waiting for an hour. In the lounge of the Flamingo Hotel. I forgot.

JOSEPH  
Nothing's changed.

ROSE  
(drifting over)  
How'd she know to call here?

CECIL  
She guessed.

ROSE  
Is she mad?

CECIL  
No, she just said she never wants to see me again. And she called me a lot of long words.

Like what?

ROSE

*He jumps into "Call Me Irresponsible." Initially referring to his date, by the end he is singing to Rose. Joseph remains at the periphery.*

CECIL

CALL ME IRRESPONSIBLE  
 CALL ME UNRELIABLE  
 THROW IN UNDEPENDABLE TOO

DO MY FOOLISH ALIBIS BORE YOU  
 WELL, I'M NOT TOO CLEVER, I  
 I JUST ADORE YOU

SO CALL ME UNPREDICTABLE  
 TELL ME I'M IMPRACTICAL  
 RAINBOWS I'M INCLINED TO PURSUE

CALL ME IRRESPONSIBLE  
 YES, I'M UNRELIABLE  
 BUT IF UNDENIABLY TRUE  
 I'M IRRESPONSIBLY MAD FOR YOU

DO MY FOOLISH ALIBIS BORE YOU  
 WELL, I'M NOT TOO CLEVER, I  
 I JUST ADORE YOU

SO CALL ME--

ROSE

UNPREDICTABLE

CECIL

TELL ME THAT I'M--

ROSE

SO IMPRACTICAL

BOTH

RAINBOWS I'M/YOU'RE INCLINED TO PURSUE

CECIL

GO AHEAD, CALL ME--

ROSE

IRRESPONSIBLE

CECIL

YES, I'M--

ROSE

UNRELIABLE

CECIL

BUT IF UNDENIABLY TRUE

BOTH

I'M IRRESPONSIBLY MAD FOR YOU

*They return to Joseph, laughing.*

CECIL

Joe, I need a mile of telephone wire. Then I could carry my phone with me and I wouldn't leave girls at the Flamingo Hotel.

ROSE

You'd have to retrace your steps every evening, or you'd tie the whole city in knots.

CECIL

I'm not tying any knots anytime soon.

ROSE

You have to get married eventually.

CECIL

Says who?

ROSE

I don't know. You just have to.

CECIL

That's your mother talking. Joe, what do you think?

JOSEPH

I think if you meet the right person, that one person you know you can't live without, then you have to get married, like Rosebud says.

I can live without everybody.

CECIL



Everybody has somebody. JOSEPH

Like how you had Daphne? CECIL

I'm going to be late for work. JOSEPH

*He stands to leave.*

You still love her, don't you? ROSE

Of course he still loves her. Don't you, Joe? CECIL

*Joseph dons his hat.*

Thanks for the drink. Bye, Rosebud. JOSEPH

*He goes for the door. Rose goes after him.*

Remember we used to tease them? CECIL

Tomorrow, Clarence. JOSEPH

Aren't you going to make the call? CLARENCE

Joe and Daph in Half Way Tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G— CECIL

Joseph, wait. ROSE  
(spinning)

What call? (to Clarence)

Stop it. (to Cecil)

What the heck is going on? (back to Joseph)

*Silence.*

ROSE  
What happened? With you and Daphne?

JOSEPH  
(quiet)  
She disappeared. Okay? She just... disappeared.

CECIL  
(coming over)  
What do you mean, she disappeared?

JOSEPH  
I mean, one day we were in here, all four of us, talking about how we'd all be friends forever, planning ten-year reunions, and the next day she was gone.

CECIL  
Where?

ROSE  
He doesn't know, Cess. Why?

CECIL  
He doesn't know, Rose. What did you do?

JOSEPH  
I went to her house. Her parents didn't know where she was either. You were on a boat for England. I didn't know what to do. The way she vanished was almost Jewish.

CECIL  
I didn't leave on that boat. I changed my mind.

ROSE  
Why didn't you come to me?

JOSEPH  
I knew you wouldn't know. Daphne never told you her real secrets.

*This hurts her.*

CECIL  
I've never left Kingston.

JOSEPH  
After a few weeks, I gave up.

CECIL  
Took the best job I could find.

What else could I do?  
JOSEPH

CLARENCE  
Enough! I can't take another minute of this. You young people talk forever without saying anything. The boy has been trying to find her nonstop. That's what the call is about.

Clarence.  
JOSEPH

CLARENCE  
Keep quiet, you don't know what's good for you. These people obviously care about you.

Obviously.  
CECIL

I don't understand.  
ROSE

CLARENCE  
The boy loses his girl in the city. He doesn't know where to find her. He can't search the whole city by himself, right?

Right.  
ROSE

CLARENCE  
Wrong. He gets a job at the Telephone Company.

I don't understand.  
CECIL

CLARENCE  
He gets the list of all the phone numbers in the island. What do you call it again?

The directory.  
JOSEPH

Every number?  
CECIL

ROSE  
There must be hundreds of phone lines.

JOSEPH  
Three thousand, six hundred and twenty-nine.

CECIL

You're kidding.

CLARENCE

He begins. Every day, when he gets to work, he calls one number. One day, one number. A year passes. Another. And another. He crosses a thousand numbers off the list.

JOSEPH

I almost gave up when we went on strike last year. Took me a month to begin again.

CLARENCE

And now, after ten years, he's at the end of the list.

ROSE

The last number.

JOSEPH

(produces the paper)

Number three thousand, six hundred and twenty-nine.

*He sits on one of the tables. The others gather around him.*

JOSEPH

I can still see her clear as day. Her starched dress. Her hair, pinned back on one side. The way she kicked back her head to laugh. The way she moved her hips, so that you had to watch her. She was a thing of beauty. Unspoiled. Indifferent. And yet, tender.

*He sings "Not a Fool".*

\*

JOSEPH

I'M NOT A FOOL

\*

BUT IT WAS FOOLISH TO LOVE HER

\*

I'M NOT THAT COOL

\*

THAT'S WHY I'M HOT THINKING OF HER

\*

AND YET

\*

NO SWEAT

\*

I'M LOUIS, SHE'S MARIE ANTOINETTE

\*

I'M NOT THAT SMART

\*

I WAS DUMBSTRUCK TO SEE HER

\*

SHE WAS LIKE ART

\*

OH, WHAT PLUM LUCK TO BE HER

\*

BUT STILL

\*

UNTIL

THIS JACK WILL LOOK BACK FOR HIS JILL \*

IF I COME UPON \*

THE MAN, WHOEVER SHOULD GET HER \*

I'LL KNOW SHE'S GONE \*

THOUGH I'LL NEVER FORGET HER \*

AND SO \*

I KNOW \*

SHE'S JULES TO THIS FOOL'S ROMEO \*

LIFE IS CRUEL \*

I'M A FOOL \*

HEAD TO TOE \*

*Clarence shakes his head.*

CLARENCE

Three young, broken hearts.

CECIL

My heart is not broken!

CLARENCE

There's no need to shout. I'm not deaf.

*He returns to the bar.*

CECIL

Make the call.

JOSEPH

I can't.

*Cecil goes to the phone by the bar.*

CECIL

What's the number?

JOSEPH

I can't.

*Rose grabs the paper from his hand. Joseph tries to get it back, but she skips free. As she evades him, she calls out the numbers.*

Seven. ROSE  
*Cecil rotates the dial.*

Three. ROSE  
*Three.*

Four. ROSE  
*Four.*

Four. ROSE  
*Four. Joseph stops chasing her.*

Eight. ROSE  
*Eight. Joseph runs to Cecil and terminates the call.*

What if it's not her? JOSEPH

It probably is. ROSE

It's probably not. CECIL

He's called every other number. ROSE

This is one number out of thousands. CECIL

It's her. ROSE

She might not even have a phone. CECIL

It doesn't matter. JOSEPH  
*They stop squabbling.*

JOSEPH

I'm not stupid. It's probably not her. But do you understand what that means? It means it would be over. I wouldn't have found her. And I'm not ever going to. I'm not ever going to hold her hand, hear her laugh or see her cry.

ROSE

And if it is her?

JOSEPH

It's almost worse. I've imagined it a thousand times, the moment her voice comes on the line, what she'd sound like, what I'd say. But it won't be like that. I've never known how to talk to women. And she could never live up to my expectations. In my head, she's perfect. In reality, she's only a person.

CECIL

So what do you want to do?

*Joseph takes the paper from Rose. Tears it up.*

JOSEPH

I want to forget about her for tonight.

CECIL

You know we all know the number now.

ROSE

Cess.

CECIL

Sorry.

JOSEPH

Let's enjoy tonight like we did ten years ago, when life was simpler.

CECIL

Safer.

ROSE

Smaller.

*Cecil fills their glasses.*

ROSE

We're going to need more soda.

CECIL

Clarence. More soda.

CLARENCE

What's that?

ALL

Soda!

Soda, coming up. CLARENCE

What should we drink to? CECIL

To good friends. ROSE

Good times. CECIL

Good memories. JOSEPH

To broken hearts. CLARENCE  
(arriving with soda)

*Cecil glowers at him.*

CECIL  
You know something, Pops? You're a good bartender, but you're a lousy shrink. You have the diagnosis exactly backwards. My heart's not broken. It's never been broken. It might sound strange, but there's a small part of me that envies Joe. At least he tried. He took a risk. Here's to you, Joe.

*They hold up their glasses.*

ROSE  
Wait! What about your job?

JOSEPH  
I pump gas on Princess Street. They'll get along without me.

*Cecil begins "Life is More than Romance". The performance starts at the table and takes them all around the stage.*

\*

CECIL

\*

LIFE IS A LAUGH  
A STATE OF MIND  
THE AUTOGRAPH  
MCKINLEY SIGNED  
LIFE IS THE DAY YOU GET YOUR PAY  
A MONTH IN ADVANCE  
I TELL YOU SO  
LIFE IS MORE THAN ROMANCE

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*



LIFE IS A FLIGHT	*
WITH SKY SO BLUE	*
AND CLOUDS OF WHITE	*
TO BURST RIGHT THROUGH	*
LIFE IS THE WINE YOU TAKE A SHINE TO	
WHILE YOU'RE IN FRANCE	*
THAT'S HOW I KNOW	*
LIFE IS MORE THAN ROMANCE	*
THE SONGS ON THE RADIO	*
ARE ALL ABOUT HIM AND HER	*
ALWAYS THE SAME DUMB SHOW	*
WE'LL DO WITHOUT THEM, YES SIR	
LIFE IS A RACE	*
A BRAND-NEW CAR	*
A FAR-OFF PLACE	*
THAT'S NOT SO FAR	*
LIFE IS THE MUSIC THAT YOU CHOOSE	
IF YOU WANNA DANCE	*
READY, SET, GO	*
LIFE IS MORE THAN ROMANCE	
THE PICTURES ON THE SCREEN	*
ARE ALL ABOUT LOVE AND WAR	*
ALWAYS THE SAME OLD ROUTINE	*
WE'LL DO WITHOUT THEM, FOR SURE	
LIFE IS A LARK / A FEAST, IT'S THE BEST	*
IT'S EASY STREET / A PRAYER ON A WING	*
WALK IN THE PARK / IT'S THE EAST, IT'S THE WEST	*
SPRING IN YOUR FEET / EVERYWHERE, EVERYTHING	*
LIFE IS THE FEAR THAT DISAPPEARS	
WHEN YOU TAKE A CHANCE	*
ON WITH THE SHOW	*
LIFE IS MORE THAN ROMANCE	*



END OF ACT ONE

\*

## ACT TWO

*Later that night. The lounge is lit by overhead lamps. Joseph is stretched across two or three chairs, motionless. Rose has her hands under her head on the table. She's asleep. Cecil, feet on the table, hat over his face, leans back in his chair. Assorted glasses and bottles testify.*

*Clarence collects a few and takes them to the bar.*

CLARENCE

(to Cecil)

You don't look so good, son.

CECIL

You don't look so good yourself, Pops.

CLARENCE

Maybe you should call it a night.

CECIL

I'll call it a night in the morning.

CLARENCE

Please yourself.

*Cecil gets up, a tad unsteady. He exits to the restrooms.*

*An attractive woman of about 30 saunters in through the main arch, her hair askance, handbag in hand. Her dress, split high on her thigh, has seen better days. So has she. Her makeup has been hastily applied, and not in the best of taste. Life has done a number on her face. On her neck sits a large pearl. This is DAPHNE.*

*She stops a few feet inside, with a look of disdain and boredom.*

CLARENCE

Where have you been? You know what, don't even tell me. I don't want to know. Listening to you is going to send me to an early grave.

I love you too.

DAPHNE

Deedee, you're in the same dress I saw you in yesterday.

CLARENCE

You're in the same bar I saw you in, too.

DAPHNE

Did you go home?

CLARENCE

Home is where the heart is.

DAPHNE

And where did your heart go when you left here last night?

CLARENCE

Not worried about your grave anymore?

DAPHNE

I'm worried about you, Deedee.

CLARENCE

I always walk through the door.

DAPHNE

Sure, sure.

CLARENCE

Good thing. I almost missed performing for this crowd.

DAPHNE

*Joseph and Rose slumber away, faces hidden.*

CLARENCE  
(referring to Cecil)

There's another one in the restroom. Drank too much.

DAPHNE

Everybody's got to survive somehow. That fool has his bottle. You have your memories. And I have my midnight oil to burn.

CLARENCE

The only opium you need is God.

DAPHNE

Sixth form history class. Sister MacMillan. "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." Well, I *am* an oppressed creature, it *is* a heartless world, and my condition *is* completely soulless. But I don't need religion. I'll take the opium straight.

CLARENCE

You smell like smoke.

DAPHNE

But I taste like chocolate. My mouth is dry.

CLARENCE

I'm not giving you a drink.

DAPHNE

Water.

*He pours a glass of water. She dips her fingers and then uses them to wipe her cleavage. Clarence stays her hand.*

CLARENCE

(fatherly)

If I relied on the memory of my dead son and wife, I'd have killed myself long ago. Sins don't go away. They wrap around you like chains and cut into your skin. You can ignore the pain for a month, a year, ten years maybe. But not forever. Now go and sing some music.

*Momentarily chastened, she looks at the older man.*

CLARENCE

Go and sing something, Dee-dee. That's what you're paid to do.

DAPHNE

I'm paid to entertain people. This audience wouldn't know a good show if it hit them in the face.

CLARENCE

Insulting the patrons isn't going to get you very far.

DAPHNE

I don't need to go very far.

*She pokes her way past the sleeping pair, and steps unceremoniously onto the performing area. Gives her handbag to one of the musicians. Adjusts her dress to reveal more, not less.*

DAPHNE

I'll sing this one for you, Clarence.

*The musicians slip into "Love for Sale." Daphne's rendition is full of smoldering appeal.*

DAPHNE

GOT A LITTLE RHYTHM	*
A RHYTHM, A RHYTHM	*
THAT PITTER-PATS THROUGH MY BRAIN	*
SO DARN CONSISTENT	*
THE DAY ISN'T DISTANT	*
WHEN IT'LL DRIVE ME INSANE	*
COMES IN THE MORNING	*
WITHOUT ANY WARNING	*
AND HANGS AROUND ME ALL DAY	*
I'LL HAVE TO SNEAK UP TO IT	*
SOME DAY AND SPEAK UP TO IT	*
I HOPE IT LISTEN WHEN I SAY	*
FASCINATING RHYTHM	*
YOU'VE GOT ME ON THE GO	*
FASCINATING RHYTHM, I'M ALL AQUIVER	*
WHAT A MESS YOU'RE MAKING	*
THE NEIGHBOURS WANT TO KNOW	*
WHY I'M ALWAYS SHAKING, LIVE A FLIVVER	*
EACH MORNING I GET UP WITH THE SUN	*
START A-HOPPING, NEVER STOPPING	*
TO FIND AT NIGHT NO WORK HAS BEEN DONE	*
I KNOW THAT	*
ONCE IT DIDN'T MATTER	*
BUT NOW YOU'RE DOING WRONG	*
WHEN YOU START TO PATTTER, I'M SO UNHAPPY	*
WON'T YOU TAKE A DAY OFF	*
DECIDE TO RUN ALONG	*
SOMEWHERE FARAWAY OFF, AND MAKE IT SNAPPY	*
OH HOW I LONG TO BE THE GAL I USED TO BE	*
FASCINATING RHYTHM	*
WON'T YOU STOP PICKING ON ME	*

*Cecil appears in the downstage arch, but feels ill  
and retreats again.*

\*

CLARENCE

The voice of an angel in the clothes of the devil.

DAPHNE

Shh. If you listen hard enough, you can hear the crickets applauding.

*She sits on the stage, legs askew. Clarence comes  
over with her glass of water.*

DAPHNE

Thank you.

CLARENCE

You're welcome. Your turn.

DAPHNE

To do what?

CLARENCE

Make something of yourself. This isn't for you. The junk. The late nights. The liquor.

DAPHNE

You don't know where I've been. You don't know what I'm running away from. You don't know anything.

CLARENCE

If I had money, I'd give it to you. If I had land, I'd build on it for you. All I have are my words. Listen to me.

DAPHNE

I'm listening.

CLARENCE

You want to work in here forever? Like me?

DAPHNE

That's not so bad.



CLARENCE  
 (re: Joseph and Rose)  
 Singing to half-drunk fools for the rest of your life?

DAPHNE  
 You were a half-drunk fool once.

CLARENCE  
 Don't you want something out of life?

DAPHNE  
 I want you to leave me alone.

CLARENCE  
 Deedee, look at me. What do you see?

DAPHNE  
 Someone who cares too much.

CLARENCE  
 I see an old man. But I was young once. In a town called Harewood. I hated the place. Everything was too small—the church, my shirts, my girlfriend's breasts, everything. I was meant for somewhere busy. Like Kingston. But the only thing I knew how to do was sing.

So I left. Took me two days to get to Kingston. I arrived looking like a lost country boy and smelling like horse manure. But everyone looked busy. I took a tramcar down to Harbour Street, walked to the corner outside and started singing.

Every hour, the hotel manager would come out and shoo me away, and then I'd come back, like a stray dog, singing. Finally he came out and said if I was going to sing anyway, I might as well do it inside the hotel. That's when he hired me.

I've made so many mistakes since then. Lost my voice. My wife. My son. They even took away the tramcars last year. I was so busy being busy I've got nothing.

But I'll be damned if the only person who's going to remember me is some two-bit, double-timing second-rate cabaret girl. You're going to be somebody. You're going to live right if it kills me.

*Cecil returns, but neither Clarence nor Daphne look up. He props his feet on the table, slides his hat onto his face, and joins Joseph and Rose in dreamland.*

DAPHNE  
 I'll try, Clar. But we all get forgotten.

*She kisses him on the cheek.*

Your turn.	DAPHNE	*
To do what.	CLARENCE	*
Sing.	DAPHNE	*
I don't sing anymore.	CLARENCE	*
Not even for me?	DAPHNE	*
My music is old, like me.	CLARENCE	*
I don't care.	DAPHNE	*

*He sings "My Poor Old Soul".* \*

CLARENCE

THE WORLD WILL KEEP ON TURNING,	*
SO SAY THE SONGS	*
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO	
TO SLOW THE MARCH OF TIME	*
SO I'VE SAID MY PRAYERS, I'VE MADE MY PEACE,	
I'VE RIGHTED MY WRONGS	*
COZ IT'S TOO MUCH FOR	
A POOR OLD SOUL LIKE MINE	

I'VE LIVED A LIFE OF SIN,	*
DEBAUCH AND WICKEDNESS	*
CHASING THINGS OF EARTH,	
DISCARDING THE DIVINE	*
YES I'VE MADE MISTAKES, I'VE PAID THE PRICE	
FOR MY WEAKNESS	*
BUT IT'S TOO LATE FOR	
A POOR OLD SOUL LIKE MINE	*

GIVE ME BACK  
 THE FOOTHILLS AND THE FIELD  
 WHERE I WALKED WITH GOD, NOT WITH MEN  
 OR TAKE ME HOME  
 WHERE LIFE'S MYSTERIES ARE REVEALED  
 AND I'LL SEE MY LOVED ONES AGAIN

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

LISTEN TO MY STORY,  
 LISTEN TO MY PLEA  
 TURN AWAY FROM VICE,  
 WALK THE HOLY LINE  
 OR YOU'LL END ALL ALONE  
 WITH A TALE LIKE ME  
 AND A BITTER, BATTERED,  
 POOR OLD SOUL LIKE MINE

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

I need some money. DAPHNE

\*

What's that? CLARENCE

I'm going to ask Mr Winston for an advance. DAPHNE

It's after midnight. He's asleep. CLARENCE

I can be very convincing at this hour. DAPHNE

Sell your pearl instead. CLARENCE

Already did. It's fake. DAPHNE

CLARENCE

The day I can borrow sixpence from you, I'll know you're all right.

*She exits to the hotel. Clarence shakes Cecil, who jerks awake, almost falling off his chair.*

CECIL

You crazy, Pops?

CLARENCE

Closing time.

*He clears the table of the remaining glasses. Cecil stretches and nudges Rose, who then wakes Joseph.*

JOSEPH

What time is it?

CECIL

Late.

ROSE

Thank God I'm staying here. I'm too tired to walk.

CECIL

(Joseph)

You drove?

JOSEPH

No car.

CECIL

I'll drop you.

*They slowly, sleepily make their way towards the exit.*

JOSEPH

I'll walk.

CECIL

At this hour?

JOSEPH

It'll wake me up.

ROSE

I'll walk with you to the car. What kind is it?

CECIL

Jaguar XK120. Got it last year. It's the fastest thing without propellers.

*They reach the arch.*

JOSEPH  
Bye, Clarence.

CLARENCE  
You know, this is the first time I've seen you in here after six o'clock.

JOSEPH  
And the last.

ROSE  
What you going to tell them at work tomorrow?

JOSEPH  
Not the truth. They'd never believe me.

CECIL  
Joe. The suspense is killing me. We've got to call that number. Give it to me.

JOSEPH  
It's the middle of the night.

CECIL  
I'll apologize. What you think, Rose?

ROSE  
I want to know, too.

*Clarence produces another phone from behind the bar.*

CLARENCE  
Use the second line.

*They all look at Joseph.*

JOSEPH  
I'll do it. What's the number.

ALL  
Seven three four four eight.

*He dials. A moment of silence, and then the OTHER PHONE RINGS! They all turn and stare at the instrument. It rings and rings and eventually Joseph hangs up.*

ROSE  
Of all the numbers.

CECIL  
Hell of a coincidence.

No such thing. CLARENCE

I'm sorry, Joseph. ROSE

Rough on you, Joe. CECIL

I suppose it's poetic, in a way. JOSEPH

*He walks through the arch without another word. Rose looks as if she might cry. She turns to Cecil and then runs out after Joseph. Cecil sits on the nearest bar stool.*

CECIL  
I know I said it wasn't going to be her, but I guess that part of me was hoping I was wrong. If this was one of those Fred-and-Ginger movies, it would have been her. Too bad we're stuck in real life. You sure he dialed it correctly?

Goodnight, son. CLARENCE

*Clarence turns off the lamps and exits to the hotel. The moon and the downstage arch throw a little light into the room. Cecil dons his hat. On an impulse, he takes the phone over to the nearest table, lays the receiver gently on its side and dials.*

*The other phone RINGS, loud in the darkness.*

*Daphne walks in, en route to the restroom. She sees the phone. Looks around.*

DAPHNE  
Clar? The phone. Clarence? Are you back here?

*She exits behind the bar. Silence. Then Cecil races out the main arch as fast as his legs can take him.*

*Daphne reappears. She exits to an instrumental reprise of "Fascinating Rhythm" in the dark, empty room.*

\*  
\*

*Cecil and Rose burst in, pushing Joseph ahead of them. He and Daphne stare at each other, ten feet apart. Joseph couldn't speak if he tried.*

\*

Hello, Joe.

DAPHNE

*She waits.*

You look older. DAPHNE

*She waits.*

Hey, Rose. DAPHNE

Did you remember? ROSE

I don't know, but I doubt it. I spend most days trying to forget. DAPHNE

We were supposed to meet here. Tonight. ROSE

*Daphne laughs, a cold, ugly laugh.*

Oh, Rose, you're still the same sweet, stupid girl you were in school. You look married. DAPHNE

I'm not. ROSE

Long time to be a virgin. DAPHNE

I'm not. ROSE

Rose, I'm proud of you. I didn't think you'd let a boy peel back your petals. Don't be offended. DAPHNE

I'm not. ROSE

Cecil. DAPHNE

Daphne. You've lost your laugh. I used to like your laugh. CECIL

Ran out of things to laugh about. I started crying to give my face something to do. Still sleeping around? DAPHNE



CECIL

I'm surviving.

DAPHNE

In that suit? I should've slept with you when I had the chance. What's the problem with Johnny B Goode here?

CECIL

He's a little tongue-tied.

ROSE

He's been looking for you. For a while.

DAPHNE

I'm not too hard to find. I'm here three nights a week.

ROSE

You work here?

DAPHNE

Why? Not special enough for you, Rose? Expected old Daph to be in the spotlight? Sorry to disappoint you, m'love.

CECIL

I think we caught you in a bad mood.

*Daphne laughs again.*

DAPHNE

Bad mood? This is a good mood for me. I showed up to work. I got an advance on my pay. That means I don't need to have a dirty, sweaty man push his belly into my ribs tonight. I don't need to hold my breath when he groans. I don't need to scrub my skin clean when he leaves. Cess, baby, I'm on cloud friggin' nine right now.

JOSEPH

(quiet)

Daphne.

*They turn to him.*

DAPHNE

Said something, sweetie-pie?

JOSEPH

Daphne.

Yes. DAPHNE

Daphne. JOSEPH

Move the needle, baby. You're stuck. DAPHNE

You've changed. JOSEPH

I grew a cup size. DAPHNE

Why did you have to change? JOSEPH

Don't get sentimental, Joe. DAPHNE

Nothing else changed. Cecil's the same. Rosebud's the same. God knows I'm the same. Why did you have to change, Daphne? JOSEPH

Daphne's the same. She still likes boys, and there's this one boy she likes more than the others. She wears her hair pinned back to one side, and she dreams of being a nurse. Daphne the nurse. I left that girl in school. Nobody calls me Daphne anymore. I tell them to call me Deedee, like my initials. It's nice and anonymous. Deedee can do anything she wants, even if Daphne wouldn't have approved. DAPHNE

What about us? JOSEPH

For God's sake, Joe, grow up. You think because we necked on your parents' back verandah we're supposed to get married or something? What's wrong with all of you, anyway? Meeting up. For what? So we can see who has the most money? Congratulations, Cecil. You win. Who has the best career? That's my Rose. Who went from nursing school to licking wounds for one teeny-tiny three-inch couldn't-even-keep-it-up-for-five-minutes mistake and ended up on the streets, selling the only thing she had left? Guess that's me. DAPHNE

Daph, we don't care about that. CECIL

Don't lie to me, you insufferable playboy. Of course you care. I'm the sort of woman your mother pointed out with a little cluck in her throat. DAPHNE

I can see the pity in your eyes, Cecil. The shame in yours, Rose. Not to mention this disappointed puppy.

JOSEPH

I still love you. I've always loved you.

DAPHNE

Joe. I'm going to say this slowly. Go home. Give up. It's not going to happen.

IT WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS  
JUST ONE OF THOSE CRAZY FLINGS  
ONE OF THOSE BELLS THAT NOW AND THEN RINGS  
JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS

BOTH

IT WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS  
(MY FUNNY VALENTINE)  
JUST ONE OF THOSE FABUOUS FLIGHTS  
(SWEET, COMIC VALENTINE)  
A TRIP TO THE MOON ON GOSSAMER WINGS  
(YOU MAKE ME SMILE IN MY HEART)  
JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS

JOSEPH

YOUR LOOKS ARE LAUGHABLE  
UNPHOTOGRAPHABLE  
YET YOU'RE MY FAVOURITE WORK OF ART

DAPHNE

IF WE THOUGHT A BIT OF THE END OF IT  
WHEN WE STARTED PAINTING THE TOWN  
WE'D'VE BEEN AWARE THAT OUR LOVE AFFAIR  
WAS TOO HOT NOT TO COOL DOWN

BOTH

SO GOODBYE AND AMEN  
(DON'T CHANGE A HAIR FOR ME)  
HERE'S HOPING WE MEET NOW AND THEN  
(NOT IF YOU CARE FOR ME)  
IT WAS GREAT FUN, BUT IT WAS  
JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS  
(STAY LITTLE VALENTINE, STAY)  
(EACH DAY IS VALENTINE'S DAY)

DAPHNE

Sorry to have spoiled your little reunion. But it could never work. We're strangers now.

*She exits, leaving Joseph in shock.*

CECIL

That went well.

ROSE

Cecil.

CECIL

Sorry.

*Clarence appears in the arch leading to the hotel.  
He turns on the lights. The other three squint and squirm in protest.*

CLARENCE

What are you three still doing here?

CECIL

He found Daphne.

CLARENCE

What's that?

BOTH

Daphne!

CLARENCE

Where?

ROSE

Right here.

CLARENCE

She walked in?

CECIL

She walked out.

CLARENCE

Talk sense, son.

ROSE

She works here.

CLARENCE

You mean Deedee?

CECIL

They're initials, Clarence. Daphne Davies.

*Clarence is dumbstruck by this information.*

CLARENCE

You mean to tell me the whole time this boy has been searching hill and gully the girl has been right here? And they never ran into each other?

JOSEPH

You said it yourself. I've never been here after six o'clock.

CLARENCE

And sweet Saviour divine, she never walks in before eight. Well, I see why you couldn't give up. She's quite a girl, isn't she?

CECIL

Bitter.

ROSE

Battered.

JOSEPH

Broken.

CECIL

You don't need her, Joe. I know lots of girls without a dance partner.

ROSE

Like me.

CECIL

Come on. I'll drop you home.

JOSEPH

No. I just want to be by myself.

*The other three share a look.*

CLARENCE

That's how I felt after the accident.

ROSE

After Paris.

CECIL

After I got off the boat.

*They move into their own spaces.*

CLARENCE

This lady came to watch me sing.

ROSE

The man looked good in uniform.

CECIL

The ship glistened in the Harbour.

CLARENCE

She gave me the key to her room upstairs.

ROSE

He walked me from the cockpit to his hotel room.

CECIL

Like a magician's box—it turned ordinary men into Englishmen.

CLARENCE

Temptation.

ROSE

Heaven.

CECIL

The motherland.

CLARENCE

I knew she was married, but I wanted her.

ROSE

The other girls all wanted him.

CECIL

Where everyone wants to go.

CLARENCE

And so I put the key in the door.

ROSE

He lay me down on the bed.

I walked up the bridge. CECIL

She barely had anything on. CLARENCE

He took off my clothes. ROSE

I was leaving everything behind. CECIL

We went at each other like animals. CLARENCE

He climbed on top. ROSE

I could see the whole city on one side, and the water stretching forever on the other. It was breathtaking. That's when they sounded the last call. CECIL

That's when the door flew open. CLARENCE

That's when I felt him. ROSE

The horn was like an earthquake. CECIL

Her husband. CLARENCE

I didn't expect it to hurt. ROSE

It vibrated through my body. CECIL

With a pistol in his hand. CLARENCE

The pain shot right up my spine. ROSE

I had an instant headache. CECIL

I froze. CLARENCE

I couldn't speak.	ROSE
My head was swimming.	CECIL
I saw him lift his arm.	CLARENCE
I saw the blood.	ROSE
I panicked.	CECIL
I closed my eyes.	CLARENCE
I closed my eyes.	ROSE
I closed my eyes.	CECIL
And I went for the gun.	CLARENCE
And I thought of my mother.	ROSE
And I tore up the ticket.	CECIL
It went off right beside my ear.	CLARENCE
I listened to my breathing.	ROSE
Then I grabbed my bags and ran.	CECIL
I just kept going until I was outside.	CLARENCE
In and out, in and out, until it was over.	ROSE
Until my feet touched the street.	CECIL



CLARENCE

I couldn't hear anything. My wife, poor girl, was at home, still mourning our son, and I was half-deaf in one ear because I couldn't keep my pants up. How was I going to sing? I didn't know how to do anything except sing and drink.

ROSE

Mother always said I was a happy-go-lucky fool. And she was right. Only a child expects her first time to be magical. Only a little girl pretends her pillow is her partner. And only a fool needs other people to make her happy.

CECIL

Sometimes at lunch, I walk down and watch the ships load and unload. Passenger ships, cargo ships, doesn't matter. And I picture a younger, braver version of myself on the deck, waving goodbye, taking a risk. I've never been able to take risks.

CLARENCE

Now I was truly alone.

ROSE

Now I know I'm alone.

CECIL

That's why I'm alone.

JOSEPH

Alone.

*They come back to Joseph.*

CLARENCE

And whenever I feel alone, I pretend I'm holding my son.

ROSE

I put on my best airline smile.

CECIL

I dream I'm on the boat, pulling into London.

\*

## JOSEPH

That's all I've ever done. Smile. "Good morning." Pretend. "How are you today?"  
And dream of her. My whole life has been smiling, and pretending and dreaming.  
And I'm tired of doing it. I want to be me, and I want to be happy. I want to walk  
down the street with my head high because she's on my arm.

\*

I can't believe I've wasted the last ten years. There must have been a reason. Life can't be that wicked.

CLARENCE

Yes, it can.

JOSEPH

I'm not a remarkable man. I remember watching Arthur Wint win last year at Rialto. I watched him as he ran. He looked perfect. Big. Powerful. I'm not like that. I take the bus to work and pay taxes and try to stay out of people's way. But I did have one thing that made me better than Arthur Wint. I had her.

ROSE

It doesn't always work out the way you imagined.

JOSEPH

No. I refuse to believe it. I love her. Doesn't that count for anything in this pointless, godforsaken world?

CECIL

Love's not my thing.

JOSEPH

(shouting)

Do you hear me? I. LOVE. HER.

*He continues shouting as Clarence, Cecil and Rose turn away. He stands there, alone.*

DAPHNE

I hear you.

*Daphne is standing in the main arch.*

DAPHNE

Clarence keeps telling me I need God in my life. If there is a God, he's doing a piss-poor job. I don't know why life is the way it is, why it's so unfair, so hard. Ten years is a long time. I have lived and died a thousand deaths. And one day I gave up. I stopped thinking it would be okay, that if I waited long enough it would all work out. Not having anywhere to sleep will do that to you.

JOSEPH

Why did you leave?

DAPHNE

I wanted more.

JOSEPH

I gave you everything.

DAPHNE

It wasn't enough. I wanted my life to be big. Really big. I thought if I became a nurse maybe they'd let me treat the RAF boys who came back. And maybe one of them would like me. And maybe he'd ask me to marry him.

A girl has to think like that. Love doesn't buy cocktail dresses.

JOSEPH

And now?

DAPHNE

Now there's nothing left to say. So I'll say goodbye.

*She turns to leave. Cecil steps forward.*

CECIL

Don't you dare. I'll admit it. You had me fooled for a while. But if I know one thing, it's when a woman tries to lie. In a way, you're right. There is nothing left to say, because you're too proud. You're too proud to crawl on your knees and beg Joe to take you back. But that's what you want. You want it so bad you'd walk out of here and let a car hit you down. You'd kill yourself. I can see that in your eyes. Now step away from that door.

*She stands there, rooted, on the edge of madness.*

CLARENCE

Move, girl.

*She turns.*

DAPHNE

Why should I?

JOSEPH

Three thousand, six hundred and twenty-nine reasons. But the only one that matters is the one that brought you back.

*HE KISSES HER, and her resistance crumbles.*

DAPHNE

Joe.

*They kiss again. They part to see Cecil watching, and Rose with her arms at her hips.*

CLARENCE

I guess you're going to call in sick tomorrow.

DAPHNE

I guess so. Right, Joe?

*Joseph grins.*

ROSE  
Cecil B Dixon, are you really going to let me stand here a moment longer without kissing me?

CECIL  
What are you talk—

ROSE  
Don't you know I've had a crush on you since we were in school?

CECIL  
Well, I kind of guessed—

ROSE  
Weren't you listening when I poured my heart out?

CECIL  
You mean with the—

ROSE  
And didn't you feel me push my chest into you when I saw you this evening?

CECIL  
Yes, but I wasn't sure if—

*He doesn't get any further, because she throws her arms around him and pulls him in for a long kiss.*

CLARENCE  
For God's sake, let the boy breathe.

CECIL  
She knows how to kiss.

ROSE  
He knows how to flatter.

CLARENCE  
And I know when to leave.

*He makes for the exit.*

DAPHNE  
Clarence. Catch!

*She tosses him a coin. He catches it.*

CLARENCE  
What's this?

DAPHNE  
Sixpence.

CLARENCE  
(clutching it)

Bye, Deedee.

*He exits.*

JOSEPH  
This might be the last time we're all in the same place.

ROSE  
I don't know. I might stick around.

CECIL  
Not a chance. We're going to London.

*Daphne stretches out her hand.*

DAPHNE  
Ten years?

*Cecil stretches his on hers.*

CECIL  
Same time?

*Joseph adds his.*

JOSEPH  
Same place.

*Rose joins.*

ROSE  
It's a date.

*They sing "Last Call".*

\*

\*

GOT A THOUSAND DOLLARS TO EARN \*  
 GOT A THOUSAND PLACES TO SEE \*  
 GOT A THOUSAND LESSONS TO LEARN \*  
 IT'S NOT THE LAST CALL FOR ME \*

GOT A THOUSAND LAUGHS TO LAUGH \*  
 GOT A THOUSAND TEARS TO CRY \*  
 GOT A THOUSAND KISSES FOR MY BETTER HALF \*  
 IT'S NOT THE LAST CALL FOR MY \*  
 BABY AND ME \*  
 WE'RE SIMPLY TWO OF A KIND \*  
 SHE'S THE MOST UNSENSIBLE \*  
 REPREHENSIBLE \*  
 HE'S/SHE'S THE ONE I HAD IN MIND \*

GOT A THOUSAND FAILURES TO FORGET \*  
 GOT A THOUSAND IDEAS TO TRY \*  
 BUT IF A THOUSAND PEOPLE SAY QUIT, NOT YET! \*  
 IT'S NOT THE LAST CALL FOR MY \*  
 SHY GUY AND I \*  
 WE'RE AN OPPOSITE ATTRACTION \*  
 IT'S BIOLOGICAL \*  
 PHYSIOLOGICAL \*  
 BUT IT'S A CHEMICAL REACTION \*

GOT A THOUSAND THANKS TO GIVE \*  
 FOR A THOUSAND TRICKS WITH THESE THREE \*  
 GOT A THOUSAND REASONS TO LIVE \*  
 IT'S NOT THE LAST CALL— \*  
 NO, IT'S THE START, AFTER ALL \*  
 IT'S NOT THE LAST CALL \*  
 FOR ME! \*





*The lights dim as they coo the last notes.*

\*

END OF ACT TWO