

The Holly Tree
A holiday romance
by David Jacklin
from stories by Charles Dickens

Final
With additional changes for 2024

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THE STORY OF THE HOLLY TREE

Harry Walmers, Jr., a bashful man, has had but one love in his life. When he determines that **Angela** prefers his best friend to himself, he decides to quietly leave his life in England and go to America, rather than confront her with it. Instead of America, Harry finds himself snowed up over Christmas in Yorkshire, at The Holly Tree Inn.

Over several days, Harry tries to sleep, tries to think and is assailed by thoughts and nightmares of peculiar varieties. Many of these incidents are sparked by conversations with **Cobbs**, the “Boots” at the Inn, whose gentle wisdom puts Harry’s life into sharp focus. Cobbs reminds Harry of past incidents from his life: his “elopement” with Angela when they were eight, their play-“marriage” at ten and its consequences; his relationship with Angela as he grows. Through the course of this, Harry gradually rediscovers his worth.

Meanwhile, resident at the Inn, are **Mrs. Lirriper** and **The Major**, an older couple who run the Inn and share a gentle understanding; **Jemmy**, their remarkable godson; **Sophie**, a troubled and troublesome maid who loves **Tom**, the “Lamps”, a young man whose fate is about to come upon him.

In all, it’s an eventful Christmas holiday at the Holly Tree. In the end, of course, lovers are united and all ends happily. Harry and Angela are married; Tom and Sophie go to America; Jemmy goes to school; The Major and Mrs. Lirriper continue with their lives; and Cobbs – no one is quite sure what happens to Cobbs – no one is quite sure whether he was ever there at all.

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If you look hard enough, you will indeed find a story called **The Holly Tree**, by Charles Dickens. It bears little resemblance to this musical. The plot of this show is a combination of several of Dickens’ tales and a healthy dose of my own imagination. *Harry*, *Angela* and *Cobbs* are from **The Holly Tree**, but *Mrs. Lirriper*, *The Major* and *Jemmie* have their own story (two, in fact); *Tom Grig* comes from another; and *Sophie* is a combination of a half-dozen sources. The secondary characters come from still more. The dialogue in this script is nearly 100% Dickens, but absolutely 100% me. It has been pieced together from something like two-dozen works by Dickens, sometimes a word at a time. In the lyrics, I have tried to keep the flow and imagery of Dickens’ prose while moulding it into singable form. The music is, originally, inspired by English folk music of the time, but it has, like a fine English toffee, been stretched and pulled to meet the needs of the stage.

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THE CHARACTERS

The Lovers

Harry Walmers, Junior, at age 8, at age 10, and as a young man (a legal clerk)
Edwin Redforth, at age 9, at age 11, and as a young man (similar occupation to Harry)
Angela Leath, at age 8, at age 10, and as a young woman
Emmeline Ashford, at age 7, at age 9, and as a young woman

At The Holly Tree Inn

Cobbs, the Boots at the Holly Tree, but formerly the gardener at the Walmers' estate
Tom Grig, the Lamps, a young man with a fate
Mrs. Lirriper, the Landlady at the Holly Tree, widow of her dear departed Lirriper
Major Jemmie Jackman, (ret.), a longtime guest at the Holly Tree, but acting as the Landlord in *most* ways
Sophie, the Chambers, sometimes known as Willin' Sophie
Jemmie Jackman Lirriper, Mrs. L's adopted grandson and the Major's godson

On the Road

Bob, the stage coach driver

George, the guard

Newsboys and Market People

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In Harry's Dreams

Harry Walmers, Senior

Mrs. Leath, Angela's Mother

The Redoubtable Miss Drowvey, the governess

Mr. Ashford, Angela's guardian and Emmeline's father

In Tom's Tale

The Old Gentleman

The Gifted Mooney

The Beauteous Miss Crumpton

Others

Mrs. Wozenham, who runs a rival inn to Mrs. Lirriper's

Neighbours, Townspeople

THE TIME AND PLACE

The Holly-Tree Inn, somewhere in Yorkshire, England in the mid-1840s. A coach on the road to Yorkshire; the streets of London; reminiscences of various places in England at that time.

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MUSIC CUES

*Numbers in **bold** are included in Vocal Score*

Act One

1 Overture	<i>Instrumental</i>
2 The Morning	<i>HARRY / COMPANY</i>
3 The Morning, Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
4 A Boy's Story	<i>HARRY / EDWIN / ANGELA / EMMELINE</i>
5 The Morning, 2 nd Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
6 Sophie, The Housemaid	<i>SOPHIE</i>
7 Sophie, Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
8 Better Than A Picter	<i>COBBS / HARRY / WALMERS SR.</i>
9 Picter, Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
10 My Poor Lirriper	<i>MRS LIRRIPER / THE MAJOR</i>
11 My Poor Lirriper, Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
12 Party Music	<i>Instrumental (Sir Roger de Coverly)</i>
13 Wait For The Giants	<i>ANGELA / EMMELINE / EDWIN / HARRY</i>
14 Think of Us, Tom	<i>SOPHIE</i>
15 Tom's Fate	<i>TOM / SOPHIE / THE GENT / MOONEY / MISS CRUMPTON</i>
16 Tom's Fate, Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
17 I Saw A Man	<i>HARRY</i>

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Act Two

18 Entr'acte	<i>Instrumental</i>
19 Your First Christmas Tree	<i>MRS. LIRRIPER / THE MAJOR / COMPANY</i>
20 Picter, 2 nd Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
21 The Attack, Intro	<i>Instrumental</i>
22 The Attack	<i>YOUNG HARRY / YOUNG EDWIN</i>
23 The Attack, reprise	<i>YOUNG HARRY / YOUNG EDWIN / YOUNG ANGELA / YOUNG EMMELINE</i>
24 I Married A Mermaid	<i>TOM</i>
25 Annie Laurie, Part One	<i>HARRY</i>
26 Annie Laurie, Part Two	<i>HARRY / TOM</i>
27 Tom's Fate, Reprise	<i>TOM / SOPHIE</i>
28 The Attack, 2 nd Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
29 Nobody's Enemy	<i>COBBS / ANGELA / EMMELINE / EDWIN / COMPANY</i>
30 The Holly and The Ivy, Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
31 The Holly and The Ivy, 2 nd Transition	<i>Instrumental</i>
32 Finale - The Morning, Reprise	<i>HARRY / COMPANY</i>
33 Bows	<i>Instrumental</i>
34 Audience Payout	<i>Instrumental</i>

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The Holly Tree
a holiday romance

Act One
Scene One

(Music Cue 1: Overture; Act curtain opens to reveal a drop of a foggy, street scene, London circa 1840. Throughout overture, THE COMPANY enter, HARRY last, and form a tableau; HARRY is in spotlight under a street-lamp.)

HARRY: I remember most the forlorn aspect of Fleet Street on the morning I parted for ever from Angela Leath, determined to go, by way of Birmingham, either to America or to the Devil. I told Angela nothing for I could not bear to repeat the bitter scene of our parting. You see, I am, by nature, a bashful man.

The dead winter was in full dreariness that day and I woke in the December darkness with that same sensation that I am sure one feels when getting up early to be hanged.

(Music Cue 2: The Morning)

STREET-LAMPS FLARE IN THE BLUSTERING WIND,
COLDLY SHINE ON THE PAVEMENT.

HARD, DRY FROST, DRIVEN ON BY THE WIND,
LAYS HIS CLOAK ON THE CASEMENT.

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HERE AND THERE, A MILK-WOMAN MOVES,
FEET WRAPPED IN RAGS 'GAINST THE MORNING.
BOYS BEAT FOR ENTRY AT FROZEN SHOP DOORS,
AND CRY WITH COLD IN THE MORNING.

COLD SLEET DRIZZLES AND LASHES THE AIR,
HANGS ITS RIME ON THE LAMP-POSTS.
LOW'RING SKY FILLS THE HEART WITH DESPAIR,
FOOT-FALLS ECHOING, PALE GHOSTS.

FIVE O-CLOCK, A BELL-TOWER PEALS,
CITY AWAKES IN THE MORNING.
SOLITUDE, QUIET, THE TASTE OF DESPAIR:
ALL FLOWN AWAY IN THE MORNING.

(THE COMPANY burst into street noise and activity.)

NEWSBOY1: | TIMES, GEN'L'MEN TIMES!
| TIMES, GEN'LMEN, TIMES!
| TIMES, GEN'L'MEN TIMES!
| TIMES, GEN'L'MEN TIMES!
| TIMES, GEN'LMEN, TIMES!

| TIMES, GEN'L'MEN TIMES!
| TIMES!

| 'IGHLY INT'RESTIN' MURDER, GEN'EL'MEN!
| 'IGHLY INT'RESTIN' MURDER, TIMES!

NEWSBOY2: | CHRONICLE!
| HERE'S CHRON-CHRON-CHRON-CHRON-CHRONICLE!
| CHRONICLE! HERE'S CHRON-CHRON-CHRON-CHRON-CHRONICLE!
| CHRONICLE! CHRONICLE! CHRON-CHRON-CHRONICLE!

NEWSBOY3: | 'ERALD, LADIES, 'ERALD, MA'AM!
| 'ERALD, LADIES, 'ERALD, MA'AM!

| CURIOUS CASE O' BREACH O' PROMISE, LADIES!
| CURIOUS CASE YOU SHOULD BE READING, LADIES!
| 'ERALD, LADIES, 'ERALD, MA'AM!

HARRY: STROKE OF SIX FROM ST. MARTIN'S BELLS
MARKET SOULS IN THEIR PLACES.
SLEET AND FROST CHANGING NOW INTO SNOW,
POWD'RING SHOULDERS AND FACES.

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ICE AND SNOW LAY BLANKETS OF WHITE,
COVERING ALL IN THE MORNING.
ALL OF THE PAIN AND THE HEARTACHE YOU FEEL
ARE FROZEN COLD IN THE MORNING.

*(OTHERS gather to a make coach; that is, the actors
themselves are the coach and horses, wheels and so on.)*

DRIVER: ALL SOULS ABOARD THE BIRMINGHAM HIGH FLIER!
MUSTN'T WASTE TIME, THIS BLACK AND FROZEN DAY.
ALL SOULS ABOARD THE BIRMINGHAM HIGH FLIER.
THE HORSES CATCH THE WEATHER
AND WE'LL UP AND FLY AWAY.
THE HORSES CATCH THE WEATHER
AND WE'LL UP AND FLY . . . FLY AWAY!

GUARD: | ALL SOULS ABOARD THE BIRMINGHAM HIGH FLIER!
| MUSTN'T WASTE TIME, THIS BLACK AND FROZEN DAY.

DRIVER: | ABOARD! ABOARD! TAKE THE BLANKETS OFF THEM, GEORGE,
| LET THEM RUN, LET THEM GO!

GUARD: | ALL SOULS ABOARD THE BIRMINGHAM HIGH FLIER.

| THE HORSES CATCH THE WEATHER
| AND WE'LL UP AND FLY AWAY.

DRIVER: | NOT STARTED AND WE'RE RUNNING BEHIND. WHEN . . .

BOTH: | THE HORSES CATCH THE WEATHER
| AND WE'LL UP AND FLY (WE'LL FLY AWAY) . . . FLY AWAY!

(London drop lifts to reveal a snow-covered country-side drop.)

COMPANY: THE DAYLIGHT HESITATES, HOLDS ITS BREATH, SEEMS AFRAID TO WAKE
AS PALE AND TIMID GHOSTS OF HOUSES PASS ALONG THE WAY.
THE SMOKE OF MORNING FIRES MOUNTING HIGH IN THE ATMOSPHERE
AS IRON HOOV-BEATS ECHO IN THE BLACK AND FROZEN DAY.

THE SUN RISING NOW SEEMS TO SHOW A WORLD GROWN OLD
EVERY ROOF, TREE AND FARMYARD IS WITHERED, COLD AND GRAY.
DOORS ARE SHUT; HORSE-TROUGHS FROZEN HARD, NO STRAGGLERS ON
THE ROAD;
EVERY WINDOW FILLED WITH LIGHT; BRIGHT-EYED CHILDREN WATCH
OUR HORSES FLY BY.

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HARRY: *(As soon as the snow began to set in and white flakes fell fast and thick, the riders and horses seemed to sing Auld Lang Syne, and my thoughts must stray to auld acquaintance and no cup, however kind, could stop me from bringing them to mind. Angela . . .*

(Music pauses; Lights up on ANGELA; HARRY crosses to her.)

ANGELA: Harry! *(She runs up to him; he draws back)* Why, what's the matter?

HARRY: Not much. Miss Leath, in view of the changed state of your affections, I have come to make my farewells.

ANGELA: But why, Harry? Why?

HARRY: I have seen the proofs only too well with my own eyes.

ANGELA: Proofs?

HARRY: It is the natural result of the distance that has grown between us.

ANGELA: If there has grown a distance between us, Harry . . .

HARRY: Such distance, Angela, as seems to me incapable of bridging.

ANGELA: . . . such distance, Harry, has been of your making.

HARRY: As circumstances change, so we have changed . . .

ANGELA: If I am half as much changed as you, you have no recollection of me.

HARRY: I know your preference to be natural, and I do forgive you.

ANGELA: Forgive *me*! Very well! Go! Heaven may forgive *you*, but Angela Leath's lips shall never address another word to you on this earth!

(Music Cue 2a; HARRY crosses back to the coach; the COMPANY, one by one, move to the back of the stage, leaving HARRY alone in the coach.)

HARRY &

COMPANY: | THE DAY-LIGHT HESITATES, HOLDS ITS BREATHE, SEEMS AFRAID TO WAKE
| AS PALE AND TIMID GHOSTS OF HOUSES PASS ALONG THE WAY.
| THE SMOKE OF MORNING FIRES MOUNTING HIGH IN THE ATMOSPHERE
| AS IRON HOOF-BEATS ECHO IN THE BLACK AND FROZEN DAY.
| THE HORSES CATCH THE WEATHER AND WE'LL UP AND FLY – FLY AWAY!

DRIVER: | ALL SOULS A-BOARD THE BIRMINGHAM HIGH FLIER.
| MUSTN'T WASTE TIME, THIS BLACK AND FROZEN DAY!

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| THE HORSES CATCH THE WEATHER AND WE'LL UP AND FLY AWAY!
| THE HORSES CATCH THE WEATHER AND WE'LL UP AND FLY – FLY AWAY.

GUARD: | ABOARD! ABOARD!
| TAKE THE BLANKETS OFF THEM, GEORGE, LET THEM RUN, LET THEM GO!
| NOT STARTED AND WE'RE RUNNING BEHIND.
| WHEN THE HORSES CATCH THE WEATHER AND WE'LL UP AND FLY
| WE'LL FLY A- | WAY, AWAY!

ALL: | FLY AWAY!

(HARRY, the last passenger, asleep; music ends; the coach comes to a stop, CENTRE; the GUARD blows his horn.)

DRIVER: *(calling OFF)* Post! Post!

(HARRY wakes up.)

All sleepin', like as not. Post!

HARRY: Guard! What place is this?

GUARD: The 'olly Tree Inn, sir.

HARRY: A windy place!

GUARD: Yes, it mostly is, sir.

HARRY: And looks comfortless indeed!

GUARD: Yes, it mostly does, sir.

HARRY: Open the door. I'll get out – *(He musters his courage.)* – for I am not going on.

DRIVER: Thought you had a through ticket, sir?

HARRY: I've been talked at, hawked at, beaten blue and frozen through. I can take no more. I want my luggage.

(MRS. LIRRIPER, THE MAJOR and TOM GRIG arrive from OFF and begin to change the "horses".)

Those two large black portmanteaux.

GUARD: *(Mounting to the roof of the coach)* Name upon 'em, sir?

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GUARD: Stand clear, sir, if you please. *(He tosses them down from the roof.)* One. Two. Right!

DRIVER: The gennelmun'll want a room.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Oh, we've a room, right enough. The gennelmun can go forrard by the mail to-morrow, whereas to-night he would only be froze, and where is the good of a gentleman being froze – ah, let alone buried alive, like enough!

(There is general laughter at this, which HARRY shrinks from.)

No doubt you're in an 'urry to reach Gretna Green, sir? Young lady waiting, is she, sir?

HARRY: Certainly not. Guard, if you would accept this, for yourself and the coachman.

GUARD: Well, that's an 'andsome thing, sir. Thank you, very much.

DRIVER: All right, George!

(The GUARD climbs up on the coach and blows his horn.)

GUARD: Let 'em go, Bob, give 'em their heads.

(Music Cue 3; GUARD and DRIVER exit with the “coach”.)

THE MAJOR: Welcome to the Holly Tree Inn, sir. Lamps will fetch your portmanteaux.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Come along, sir. We’ll soon have you warm enough.

(THE MAJOR and MRS. LIRRIPER exit; HARRY holds back a moment, looking at the weather and the surroundings.)

HARRY: The Holly Tree Inn! At past three o’clock of a tempestuous morning! So! Very well, it signifies nothing to me to what quarter I turn my face.

(Music Cue 3: The Morning, 1st Transition. HARRY follows the others OFF. The country-side drop lifts, revealing the interior of the Holly Tree Inn.)

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Act One
Scene Two

(Lights up on interior of the Holly Tree Inn; JEMMIE runs through, whooping.)

JEMMIE: Sophie! It's the post-chaise, here at last.

(SOPHIE, very sleepy, in a nightgown and robe, carrying an oil-lamp; she leans on a counter, head on hand and yawns.)

It's snowing ever so hard!

(MRS. LIRRIPER enters, followed shortly by THE MAJOR.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: Hurroo dear open up the back room the poor man's froze through you've lamp-black on your face dear.

SOPHIE: *(Half asleep, still.)* The back room? *(She opens her eyes.)* Poor man . . . ?

MRS. LIRRIPER: There's not a room we've got but is chilled and thorough frosted Major.

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MRS. LIRRIPER: I'm sure it does Major yet I can see no good in a gentlemen being froze through Sophie lay on a fire quick as you please – you've black on your nose Sophie

SOPHIE: Yes, ma'am. But the back room . . . ?

MRS. LIRRIPER: Yes Sophie and such a night! you can hardly see the way posts let alone the way hurry along Sophie make up the bed and the fire and do wipe your face dear!

(SOPHIE exits, still gazing toward the door.)

Oh Major girls are your first trial after furnishings being like your teeth you don't want to part with them but we must all succumb or buy artificial and the wind howling so I was lying awake thinking "There goes the wood-house roof, Mrs. Lirriper; there goes the convenience" she is willin' Major I've never seen a girl more willin' Willin' Sophie is what I calls her nevertheless Major . . . *(She breathes at last.)* . . . that girl is a trial.

(HARRY enters from outside, rather diffidently.)

Here's the young man now looking like nothing so much as what I calls the Wandering Christian, lost and bewildered and Jesus his only friend.

THE MAJOR: You had better walk into the parlour, sir.

MRS. LIRRIPER: You had better step into the parlour, sir. Sophie'll open up your room for you and Tom won't be a minute with your bags. Excuse me, sir, I'll just follow Sophie up.

(She exits.)

HARRY: I wonder . . .

THE MAJOR: Yes, sir?

HARRY: Nothing. It's no matter. I'm sorry.

THE MAJOR: Very well.

(TOM GRIG enters with luggage.)

And, here's your baggage. Back-room, Tom. I'll get in some coal for you, sir.

TOM: Yours, sir?

HARRY: Oh! Yes. Yes. Two portmanteaux, that's correct. Are you the Porter?

TOM: I should like to be a Porter's mate, sir. Buy an oil lamp.

HARRY: Who did you say you are?

TOM: Lamps, sir. *(He points to the oil lamp.)* In the meantime, if the gentleman would follow me . . .

HARRY: Surely. It's quite some way off, is it?

TOM: It's the back room, sir. End of the gallery, sir.

(They walk as the wagons turn and HARRY's bedroom is set up.)

HARRY: Is this a good inn, then?

TOM: Not exactly, sir.

HARRY: Oh, do you suppose I can put up elsewhere for the night?

TOM: Well, sir, you're best to stop here – but only just, as it were. In the morning, you can take the mail coach on to Gretna Green.

HARRY: I'm not going to Gretna Green.

TOM: Beg pardon, sir. I'd thought there would be a young lady 'waitin' your arrival.

HARRY: There is no young lady . . . and I have no intention of going to Gretna Green.

TOM: Very well, sir.

HARRY: I'm going to America.

TOM: Really, sir?

HARRY: Or to the Devil.

TOM: I'd recommend America, sir. I'm told the climate is better, or parts of it, at least. 'Ere we are now, sir. This is it. What do you think, sir?

HARRY: I think it the grimmest room I'll ever have the nightmare in.

TOM: The back room, sir. They do say that whosoever sleeps in this room –

HARRY: What?

TOM: Noffink, sir. Is there anyfink else, sir?

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HARRY: No. Thank you.

TOM: Very well, sir. Wish you good night, sir. That is . . . well, good night.

(He exits: HARRY is alone.)

HARRY: What a bustle. The mail coach will most probably be here in but four hours, and I have no intention of missing it. It seems I never arrive at a place but I immediately want to go away from it. So! Breakfast and bill at eight. Coach at nine. Two horses, or, if needful, even four.

(COBBS has moved in behind him, unseen.)

COBBS: Certainly, Master Walmers.

(HARRY turns, startled.)

HARRY: I'm so sorry. I didn't see . . . I mean I didn't hear . . .

COBBS: Not at all, sir.

(A pause.)

HARRY: Are you the Porter?

COBBS: No, sir. I am t'Boots.

HARRY: The Boots?

COBBS: Yes, sir. *(A pause)* Valet, sir?

HARRY: Oh, yes. *(A pause)* I should like something to eat. Do you think I might get . . . ?

COBBS: I don't know, sir. I am t' Boots. You've not changed, Master Walmers.

HARRY: Changed? Not in ten minutes, I hope.

(HARRY turns to look in the mirror; COBBS moves OFF.)

COBBS: Not in ten years and more. T'same young man, just a little way behind, just a little . . .

(Lights come up on ANGELA, EDWIN and EMMELINE; HARRY joins them; laughter and happy times.)

EDWIN: Forfeit of a kiss!

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(He holds up a sprig of mistletoe.)

EMMELINE: No!

EDWIN: She who cannot guess the end of the story must pay the forfeit! Here's the mistletoe.

EMMELINE: No!

EDWIN: A kiss or a tickle. *(He tickles her.)*

EMMELINE: Oh! Edwin, stop! You know I cannot abide being tickled!

(She kisses him; he continues to tickle her.)

Have done, then, Edwin – Oh, do tickle him for me, Angela – Well, I never!

ANGELA: Harry's turn!

EMMELINE: Yes! Harry's turn! Oh, do have done, Edwin!

EDWIN: Come, Harry. A story!

HARRY: I have no stories to tell.

EDWIN: No stories for a Christmas Eve?

EMMELINE: Christmas Eve? More than that! No stories for Angela's birthday!

ANGELA: No stories for the eve of your departure, Mr. Walmers? Three long years!

HARRY: It shan't be long, Miss Leath.

EDWIN: Lord, he'll forget us in six months!

HARRY: You know better, Miss Leath.

EDWIN: She doesn't know anything of the sort.

ANGELA: He is welcome to forget, if he can.

EMMELINE: Oh, enough of that! A story, Harry. Story or forfeit.

HARRY: But, I have no stories!

ANGELA: No story at all, Harry?

HARRY: Well, you'd like to hear a boy's story, then, wouldn't you?
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EMMELINE: Of all things.

HARRY: Edwin?

EDWIN: Of all things.

HARRY: Miss Leath?

ANGELA: Of all things.

(Music Cue 4: A Boy's Story.)

HARRY: Well, then, I'll tell you one.

EMMELINE: Is it long?

HARRY: Very.

ONCE UPON A TIME BACK WHEN PIGS DRANK WINE,
AND MONKEYS CHEWED TERBACKER.

EMMELINE: *(Spoken.)* Bless the man! what's amiss with his brain?

HARRY: *(Spoken.)* It's poetry.

EMMELINE: *(Spoken.)* Thought he was light-headed!

HARRY: IN THOSE WOND'ROUS TIMES, THERE WAS ONCE A BOY
NOT ME YOU UNDERSTAND.

EDWIN: NOT HARRY.

ANGELA: NO, NO.

HARRY: WELL, HE WAS IN LOVE WITH THE MOST ANGELIC CREATURE
HE THOUGHT OF HER DAYS AND HE DREAMED OF HER AT NIGHT;
SHE HAD ANGELIC EYES; ANGELIC HAIR; ANGELIC VOICE.
SHE WAS ANGELIC ALTOGETHER, AND HER NAME WAS . . . SERAPHINA.

EDWIN: *(Spoken.)* Not Angela?

HARRY: *(Spoken.)* What made you think that? Caught you! Ha, ha!

SO, HE DREAMED OF HER. SO, HE BROUGHT HER GIFTS OF
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EMMELINE: *(Spoken.)* Orange and apples?

EDWIN: *(Spoken.)* Not even candied apples!

HARRY: WOULD HAVE BROUGHT HER PEARLS, DIAMONDS, SILK OR GOLD,
BUT ALL HE HAD WAS FOUR PENCE . . .

EMMELINE: *(Spoken.)* Four pence!

HARRY: . . . A WEEK.

EMMELINE: *(Spoken.)* Poor boy!

HARRY: THIS BOY HAD A FRIEND AND HIS NAME, IT SEEMS, WAS BOBBO,
WHO TOO WAS IN LOVE WITH A MOST EM – PHATIC VISION
NAMED EM – PHERIA.

EMMELINE: EMPHERIA?

HARRY & EDWIN: EMPHERIA!

HARRY: AND SO EACH ONE WOULD LOVE THE OTHER,

AND THEY ALL WERE FRIENDS TOGETHER . . .

ANGELA: *(Spoken.)* And then what happened?

HARRY: THEN THEY ALL GREW UP.

EMMELINE: *(Spoken.)* They were very sudden about it!

HARRY: *(Spoken.)* It happens like that.

IT'S A SMALL KIND OF TALE AS A YOUNG BOY MIGHT TELL;
I COULDN'T IMPROVE IF I TRIED.
BUT A TALE TOLD IN LOVE IS A TALE TOLD RIGHT WELL:
A TALE OF A BOY AND HIS BRIDE.
A TALE OF A BOY AND HIS BRIDE.

SO BOBBO AND THIS BOY EACH CLIMBED UPON HIS HORSE,
AND WENT TO SEEK HIS FORTUNE.

EMMELINE: *(Spoken.)* Where did they get the horses?

HARRY: *(Spoken.)* They'd saved seven and fourpence between them.

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BACK THEY CAME ONCE MORE, BOBBO AND THIS BOY –
NOT ME, YOU UNDERSTAND.

EDWIN & EMMELINE: NOT HARRY.

ANGELA: NO, NO.

HARRY: WELL, SO THEY RETURNED,

EDWIN & EMMELINE: HURRAH!

HARRY: THEIR POCKETS FILLED WITH GOLD

EDWIN & EMMELINE: OH!

HARRY: AND THEY EACH KISSED THEIR LOVE

EMMELINE & ANGELA: AH!

HARRY: AND THEY MARRIED THEM THAT DAY;
AND THEN THEY RODE AWAY, EACH HAPPY PAIR, INTO THE NIGHT.
AND SO THEY CANTERED ON TOGETHER,
'TIL THEY FOUND A MAGIC CASTLE

EMMELINE: (*Sarcasatically.*) THIS IS SO EXCITING!

HARRY: WHERE SOME GIANTS LIVED.

ANGELA: Had this boy any name?

HARRY: He hadn't, you know! Ha, ha!

IT'S A SMALL KIND OF TALE AS A YOUNG BOY MIGHT TELL;
I COULDN'T IMPROVE IF I TRIED.

+ OTHERS: BUT A TALE TOLD IN LOVE IS A TALE TOLD RIGHT WELL:
A TALE OF A BOY AND HIS BRIDE.
A TALE OF A BOY AND HIS BRIDE.

HARRY: AND SO THE FEARSOME GIANTS ALL STOMPED & STAMPED & ROARED,

EDWIN & EMMELINE: OOOH!

HARRY: BUT OUR INTREPID HERO KILLED THEM WITH HIS MAGIC SWORD.

EMMELINE: (*Spoken.*) Where did he get a magic sword?

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EDWIN: (*Spoken.*) It came with the horses.

AND THERE WAS GREAT REJOICING. THE FOLK ALL SAID:

ALL: "HURRAH!"

HARRY: AND SO THEY LIVED FOREVER IN THEIR MAGIC CASTLE TALL.

WELL, THERE YOU WILL FIND THEM LIVING OUT THEIR LIVES TOGETHER,
THIS BOY, SERAPHINA, AND EMPHERIA AND BOBBO.

EMMELINE: AND DID THEY NEVER QUARR'L?

HARRY: (*Spoken.*) No!

EDWIN: GROW EVER POOR?

HARRY: (*Spoken.*) No!

EMMELINE: OR EVER DIE?

HARRY: (*Spoken.*) No-one ever died.

ANGELA: AND DID THIS BOY WHO IS NOT HARRY ALWAYS LOVE HIS SERAPHINA?

HARRY: TO THE END OF TIME.

ANGELA: *(Spoken.)* I guessed as much.

ALL: IT'S A SMALL KIND OF TALE AS A YOUNG BOY MIGHT TELL;
I COULDN'T IMPROVE IF I TRIED.
BUT A TALE TOLD IN LOVE IS A TALE TOLD RIGHT WELL:
A TALE OF A BOY AND HIS BRIDE. A TALE OF A BOY AND HIS BRIDE.

(HARRY, at the end of the story, has sat upon the bed and lays back as the lights go down on EDWIN, EMMELINE and ANGELA.)

(Music Cue 5: THE MORNING, 2nd Transition; HARRY comes awake with a start, looks around and sees nothing; lights down; music covers scene change.)

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Act One
Scene Three

(Lights up on THE MAJOR, who is blacking his boots with a small sponge and some boot-lacquer; he whistles softly through his teeth, very intent on his boots.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: *(Off.)* SO-PHEE! *(She enters.)* Oh, good morning, Major.

THE MAJOR: A pleasant morning, dear Madam.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Not very, I'm afraid. Still snowing and no sign of Sophie.

THE MAJOR: Neither h'event h'at all surprisin'.

MRS LIRRIPER: Sophie's had some contra-tet-a-tet with her Tom last night.

THE MAJOR: H'indeed.

MRS. LIRRIPER: "Mrs. Lirriper," she says, "that man has aggravated me past bearing." I says "Sophie, keep your temper." "Keep my temper?" she screams. "Capital D him! I'll give him a touch of the temper that I keep!", and Mrs. Wozenham's windows
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down the street throwin' and Mr. Wozenham callin' out "M. Lirriper overcharging somebody to madness – I knew it would happen one day!"

THE MAJOR: My h'advice to you, Madam, is that you board and lodge that girl in a Powder Mill, with an 'andsome gratui'y to the proprie'or when h'exploded.

MRS. LIRRIPER: La, Major, you are a very passionate man for your size.

MAJOR: Never seen such people, never did in my life.

JEMMIE: *(Runs in.)* Major! Oh, do hurry! It's off the track and there are ever so many killed!

MRS. LIRRIPER: Killed! Mercy on us, who's killed?

JEMMIE: All of the passengers! Oh, it was dreadful with wheels and cars flying.

MRS. LIRRIPER: A train's flown off the track?

JEMMIE: Yes, Gran. In the parlour!

MRS. LIRRIPER: The parlour?

THE MAJOR: I believe, madam, 'e refers to the 7:19 leaving London of the United Grand

Junction Lirriper and Jackman Parlour Line.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Oh, you gave me a turn.

THE MAJOR: The 7:19, I'm afraid, 'as a tendency to leave the line at least h'opportunity. H'it's due to the lack of communication between h'engine and guard.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Major, can't you by *any* means give us communication with the guard?

THE MAJOR: No, madam, h'it's not to be done.

JEMMIE: If we had no trains leaving the track, Gran, it wouldn't be at all like the real thing!

(JEMMIE and THE MAJOR exit; SOPHIE enters from outside.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: Sophie!

SOPHIE: I'm so sorry, Ma'am, but I just had to see. Miss Gladys Fielding is going to be married to Mr. Harvey, this morning. Miss Gldays looked the sweetest picter . . .

MRS. LIRRIPER: O Sophie, for goodness' goodness' sake, girl, can you not simply attend to your duties and let be? You've black on your chin, dear. Where does it come from?

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SOPHIE: I took a deal of coal dust into me when I was a small child, ma'am, being much neglected and it must be that it works its way out.

MRS. LIRRIPER: I've not another fault to find with you apart from neglecting of your duties and being all constant soot from head to toe. Seriously now, what do you think of my helping you away to Australia where such things might not be noticed?

SOPHIE: Couldn't nothing persuade me to leave my England.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Oh, sweep off the doorstep, Sophie.

SOPHIE: Yes, ma'am.

(MRS. LIRRIPER passes SOPHIE a broom; SOPHIE goes toward the door, but soon gets lost in thought and stands.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: Heaven alone can tell what goes on in your head, Sophie, for I know I can't.

(MRS. LIRRIPER exits; Music Cue 6: Sophie, The Housemaid.)

SOPHIE: HEAVEN ALONE CAN TELL WHAT THOUGHTS SHE HAS HAD
OF HOW SHE WOULD DRESS ON SUCH AN OCCASION,
IF SHE WERE A LADY.

HOW SHE WOULD DRESS ON SUCH AN OCCASION,
IF SHE WERE ONLY A BRIDE . . .

HEAVEN ALONE CAN DIVINE WHAT THOUGHTS
OF THE BAKER, THE GREEN-GROCER,
OR THE SMART AND MOST INSINUATING BUTTERMAN,
OR TOM, TOM, THE LAMPS AT THE INN,
ARE FLITTING ACROSS HER MIND —

OH, WHAT BRIGHT COLOURS ARE PAINTED THERE.
OH, WHAT BRIGHT COLOURS ARE PAINTED THERE
IN THE MIND OF SOPHIE, THE HOUSEMAID, WHO WORKS
AT THE HOLLY TREE INN,

DAY DREAMS OF HOPE AND OF HAPPINESS
OF JOY AND OF PURE FREEDOM
AS TO CURLS AND TO RINGLETTS
AND NO OBLIGATION TO HIDE HER HAIR BENEATH A CAP.
EVERY DAY WILL BE A HOLIDAY WHEN SHE'S WED.

OH, WHAT BRIGHT COLOURS ARE PAINTED THERE.
OH, WHAT BRIGHT COLOURS ARE PAINTED THERE
IN THE MIND OF SOPHIE, THE HOUSEMAID, WHO WORKS
AT THE HOLLY TREE INN,

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THESE THOUGHTS ARE VAST AND IMMENSE TO HER,
RIDICULOUS, I'M SURE,
BUT THESE ARE THE THOUGHTS THAT LIFE PRESENTS TO HER
SUCH SMALL AND SIMPLE DREAMS.

SOPHIE AWAKES FROM HER REVERIE,
AND SHE LAUGHS AT HER FOOLISH LITTLE DREAMS
OF HER TOM, OH, HER TOM, WHO IS SURE TO BREAK HER HEART
AND WHO NEVER SEES WHAT SOPHIE SEES
NEVER DREAMS OF WHEN THEY ARE FINALLY WED.

OH, WHAT BRIGHT COLOURS WERE WAITING THERE;
BUT, ALL THE COLOURS HAVE DISAPPEARED
AND ALL THAT'S LEFT ARE THE
WONDROUS, DELICIOUS, EXCITING AND DANGEROUS THOUGHTS
IN THE BRAIN OF SOPHIE THE HOUSEMAID WHO LIVES AND
WORKS AND DREAMS AND LOVES AT THE HOLLY TREE INN.

(Lights down as SOPHIE exits.)

Act One
Scene Four

(Music Cue 7; Lights on HARRY; he moves from the bed to the door, back to the bed, back to the door; opens it; looks out; shuts it; starts for the bed; back to the door; opens it; looks out.)

HARRY: Hello? *(Pause.)* Hello?

(He sighs and closes the door; goes back to the bed; lights on COBBS, at the door.)

COBBS: Sir, your pleasure?

HARRY: I believe I saw you, yesterday.

COBBS: I cannot say for certain.

HARRY: I think you saw me?

COBBS: Oh yes, I saw *you*. But, I see many who never see me.

~~HARRY: *(As if.)* I thought, perhaps, I might persuade you to take a chair—~~ **PERUSAL COPY ONLY CONTACT AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS**

COBBS: Oh, I've time to talk, sir.

(COBBS takes a chair; they sit.)

HARRY: It's Cobbs, isn't it? Where have you been in your time, Cobbs?

COBBS: Where have I been in my time? Lord, I've been everywhere!

HARRY: Seen a good deal?

COBBS: Why, of course I have.

HARRY: What was the curiouesest thing you have seen?

COBBS: I can't momentarily name the curiouesest thing I seen – but supposin' a young gentleman but eight year old was to elope wi' a young lady of the same age, be that a queer start?

HARRY: Certainly.

COBBS: T' young gentleman's father, you see, were a gentleman of spirit, and he were uncommon proud of his only child; but he didn't spoil him neither.

HARRY: How do you happen to know all this?

COBBS: Why, through being t' under-gardener, and always about.

(Music Cue 8: Better Than a Picter.)

COBBS: BETTER THAN A PICTER, EQUAL TO A PLAY,
TO SEE THEM BAB-BIES, WI' THEIR SPARKLIN' EYES,
RAMBLIN' 'BOUT T' GARDEN, DEEP IN LOVE.

NEVER NOTICED CHILDREN MUCH BEFORE THAT TIME
BUT IT WERE PRETTY JUST TO SEE THEM MITES
WAND'RIN' 'BOUT TOGETHER, DEEP IN LOVE.

HARRY: But wait a moment! Cobbs!

COBBS: I'M SPEAKIN' OF YOU, MASTER 'ARRY, WI' A CERTAINTY,
I'M SPEAKIN' OF YOU, MASTER 'ARRY. YOU REMEMBER ME?
NOW DO YOU REMEMBER ME?

*(COBBS crosses down as YOUNG HARRY comes on, with
YOUNG ANGELA; Music continues under.)*

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HARRY Jr.: Cobbs, I like you.

COBBS: Do you, sir? I'm proud to hear it.

HARRY Jr.: Angela likes you, Cobbs.

COBBS: That's very gratifying, sir.

HARRY Jr.: It's better than millions of the brightest diamonds to be liked by Angela.

COBBS: Certainly, sir.

HARRY Jr.: Would you like another situation, Cobbs?

COBBS: Well, sir, I shouldn't object, if it were a good'un.

HARRY Jr.: Then, Cobbs, you shall be our Head Gardener when we are married.

(YOUNG HARRY takes YOUNG ANGELA's arm and they exit.)

COBBS: BETTER THAN A PICTER, EQUAL TO A PLAY,
TO SEE THEM BAB-BIES, WI' THEIR SPARKLIN' EYES,
WAND'RIN' 'BOUT T' GARDEN, DEEP IN LOVE.

BIRDS BELIEVED THEY WAS BIRDS LIKE THEM, SINGIN' TO PLEASE 'EM.
THEY'D CREEP UNDER T' TULIP-TREE, AND SIT THERE A-PLANNIN'

'BOUT AN 'OUSE IN A FOREST, KEEPIN' BEES AND A COW,
AND LIVIN' ENTIRE ON MILK AND ON HONEY.
WI' THEIR ARMS ROUND T' OTHER,
AND THEIR SOFT CHEEKS A-TOUCHIN',

MADE ME FEEL LIKE I WAS IN LOVE BUT I WASN'T SURE WHO WITH.

HARRY Jr.: *(Spoken.)* Cobbs, I am going on a visit, this Christmas, to my grandmamma's at York.

COBBS: *(Etc.)* Are you, sir? I'm going into Yorkshire, myself, when I leave here.

HARRY Jr.: Angela's going.

COBBS: You'll be all right then, sir, wi' your sweetheart by your side.

HARRY Jr.: Cobbs, at Angela's house, they laugh at our being engaged – make a game of it, Cobbs!

COBBS: Such, sir, is t'depravity of human natur'.

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HARRY Jr.: Good-night, Cobbs. I'm going in.

(He exits.)

HARRY: Cobbs, how did it happen that you were leaving that place just at that time?

COBBS: I CAN'T RIGHTLY SAY. I SUPPOSE THAT I MIGHT HAVE STAYED.
AH, BUT, I WAS YOUNG, THEN, AND I SUPPOSE I WANTED CHANGE.
THAT'S T' THING I WANTED – CHANGE.

(Spoken.) Mr. Walmers, your father, said:

WALMERS Sr.: COBBS,

COBBS: SAYS HE,

WALMERS Sr.: HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO COMPLAIN OF?
IF YOU'VE ANYTHING TO COMPLAIN OF,
I'LL MAKE IT RIGHT IF I CAN.

COBBS: "NO, SIR, THANKIN' YOU, SIR," I SAYS
"T' TRUTH IS I'M GOIN' FOR TO SEEK FOR MY FORTUN'."

WALMERS Sr.: O, COBBS!

WALMERS: SAYS HE,

WALMERS Sr.: I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT YOU FIND IT
AND I WISH YOU THE BEST.

COBBS: I ASSURE YOU, MASTER HARRY, I'VE NOT FOUND IT YET.

(Spoken.) Well, sir, by many and warios means, I come to t' 'Olly Tree Inn, and it were at this wery Inn, one win'er a'ternoon, the coach drives up, and out gets two children.

*(GUARD enters with YOUNG HARRY and YOUNG ANGELA;
MRS LIRRIPER meets him.)*

GUARD: I don't quite make it out but the young gentleman says they was going on to Gretna Green.

HARRY Jr.: Guard, if you would accept this, for yourself and the coachman.

(YOUNG HARRY gives the GUARD a coin.)

~~GUARD: Well that's an awsome thing, sir, thank you very much, sir~~ **PERUSA COPY ONLY CONTACT AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS**

(The GUARD exits.)

HARRY Jr.: Sitting-room and two bedrooms will be required. Chops and cherry-pudding for two!

(He takes YOUNG ANGELA's arm, and walks into the inn.)

HARRY: As bold as brass!

COBBS: Much bolder than that, sir. I made known my opinions on t' matter.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Cobbs, if this is so, I must set off myself to York. But I should wish you to find from themselves what they intend.

COBBS; Directly, ma'am.

(COBBS goes to the bedroom; HARRY JR is drying YOUNG ANGELA's eyes with his pocket-handkerchief.)

HARRY JR. & YOUNG ANGELA: It's Cobbs! It's Cobbs!

(The children each catch hold of one of his hands.)

COBBS: I seed you a-getting out t' coach, sir. What's t' object of your journey, sir? – Ma'rimonial, is it?

HARRY JR.: We have run away to be married, Cobbs, at Gretna Green.

YOUNG ANGELA: We shall go on in the morning, and be married to-morrow.

COBBS: Just so, miss. Would it meet wi' your views if I was to accompany you?

HARRY JR.: Oh, yes, yes, Cobbs! Yes!

ANGELA: Oh, yes, Cobbs! Please do!

COBBS: Well, sir, I'm acquainted wi' a pony which, wi' a cart I could borrow, would take you and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior to t' end of your journey in a right short space of time. You'd have to wait over tomorrow for t' pony but it might be worth your while.

HARRY JR.: Good Cobbs!

ANGELA: Dear Cobbs!

COBBS: I shall make t' arrangements at once, sir.

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(COBBS crosses below and meets MRS. LIRRIPER.)

Ma'am, I'd sooner have it out a 'alf-dozen rounds wi' you than deceive them so.

MRS. LIRRIPER: I wish with all my heart there was any impossible place where those two babies could live impossibly happy ever afterwards. However . . .

COBBS: . . . as it can never be . . .

MRS. LIRRIPER: . . . I shall send word to their people, at once.

COBBS: Which were done.

BETTER THAN A PICTER, EQUAL TO A PLAY,
TO SEE THEM BAB- BIES, WI' THEIR SPARKLIN' EYES,
A-SITTIN' THERE T'GETHER, DEEP IN LOVE.

READIN' 'BOUT T'
PRINCE AND T' DRAGON, BREATHIN' HIS FIRE
ALL OF T' STORIES OF T' GOOD AND BAD ENCHANTERS,
FAIRIES AND GIANTS.

I HEARD MASTER 'ARRY SAYIN',

"ANGELIC ANG'LA, KISS ME, AND 'UG ME;
SAY YOU LOVE ME TO DISTRACTION,
OR I'LL LEAP IN T' FIRE – YES, I'LL LEAP IN T' FIRE."
I MAKE NO DOUBT 'E'D HAVE DONE IT
IF T' LADY 'AD NOT COMPLIED.

I DON'T KNOW – PER'APS I DO,
BUT NEVER MIND, IT MAKES NO MATTER –
WHY A MAN SHOULD FEEL A FOOL
TO SEE THEM BAB-BIES THERE T'GETHER,
NOT DREAMIN' 'ALF SO 'ARD WHEN THEY WAS ASLEEP
AS THEY DONE WHEN THEY WAS AWAKE.

BUT, LORD! THINK ON YOURSELF,
AND WHAT A GAME YOU 'AVE BEEN UP TO
EVER SINCE YOU LEFT YOUR CRADLE,
AND WHAT SOR' O' POOR OLD FOOL
YOU 'AVE BECOME NOW,
IT'S ALWAYS EITHER YESTERDAY WI' YOU, OR ELSE TO-MORROW,
AND NEVER TO-DAY. THAT'S WHERE IT IS.

(MRS. LIRRIPER, WALMERS SR. and MRS. LEATH enter.)

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WALMERS, SR.: *(Spoken.)* We are much indebted to you, ma'am, for your kind care of our little children. Pray, ma'am, where is my boy?

MRS. LIRRIPER: *(Etc.)* Cobbs has the child in charge, sir. Cobbs, show Four!

WALMERS, SR.: Ah, Cobbs, I am glad to see you! I understood you was here!

COBBS: I hope you are not angry. Master 'arry is a fine boy, sir, and will do you honour.

WALMERS, SR.: No, Cobbs. No! My good fellow, thank you!

(WALMERS bends over HARRY JR, clears his throat emotionally.)

COBBS: He does look wonderful like you, sir.

WALMERS, SR.: Indeed.

COBBS: It might be a room like this where you brought t' late Mrs. Walmers, I think, sir.

WALMERS, SR.: Very like, Cobbs. And we were not much older than these two, when I look back.

(He gently shakes YOUNG HARRY.)

Harry, my dear boy! Harry!

(YOUNG HARRY starts up and looks at him.)

HARRY, JR.: Father! *(He realizes the situation.)* Please, pa, may I – kiss Angela before I go?

WALMERS, SR.: You may, son.

(he leads HARRY, JR, by the hand to where MRS. LEATH is seated by YOUNG ANGELA; HARRY, JR. kisses YOUNG ANGELA's cheek and exits.)

MRS. LEATH: It's a shame to part 'em!

WALMERS, SR.: You have a soft heart, Mrs. Leath.

MRS. LEATH: There's no harm in them.

WALMERS, SR.: Far from it. No harm in the world.

(Lights fade on that group and up on HARRY & COBBS.)

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 But if you, sir, here're no'naly couples on t' way to be married, no ke' a-iso innocent o' guile; and further, it would be a jolly good thing for a great many couples on t' way to be married, if they could be stopped in time, and brought back separately.

BETTER THAN A | PICTER.

HARRY: | BETTER THAN A PICTURE,

COBBS: EQUAL TO A | PLAY

HARRY: | EQUAL TO A PLAY,

BOTH: TO SEE THEM (THOSE.) BAB-BIES (BABIES.), WI' THEIR SPARKLIN' EYES,
 SITTIN' (SITTING.) THERE TOGETHER, DEEP IN LOVE.
 TO SEE THEM SITTIN' THERE TOGETHER –

COBBS: BETTER THAN A PICTER.

HARRY: EQUAL TO A PLAY –

BOTH: DEEP IN LOVE.

(Lights down.)

Act One
Scene Five

(Music Cue 9; MRS. LIRRIPER enters and crosses to the door.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: *(Calling off.)* Soph-ee! Oh, gracious.

(From the other side, we hear train sounds; JEMMIE enters as a locomotive, followed by THE MAJOR as the caboose.)

That can't be the 7:19 already?

JEMMIE: Gran, when I'm grown, I'm going to be a h'engineer.

MRS. LIRRIPER: A which, dear?

JEMMIE: A h'engineer, Gran. And drive on the railroads at ever such a great speed!

(JEMMIE exits, still imitating a steam locomotive.)

THE MAJOR: "A h'engineer", madam, "a h'engineer." You need not let 'im know it, madam, but 'e *is* a boy!

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MRS. LIRRIPER: That baby was sent by heaven to a childless old woman. I love him as dearly as if he had drunk from my breast.

THE MAJOR: *(Clearing his throat.)* H'indeed, madam.

MRS. LIRRIPER: *(Broaching a difficult subject.)* You know that we have kept from him the cruel story of his poor mother dying in my arms, being deserted in the second floor . . .

THE MAJOR: I shall never forgive myself that I, Jemmie Jackman, didn't go straight up-stairs when my boot-sponge was in my hand that terrible morning Jemmie's father walked out – and choke 'im dead with it.

MRS. LIRRIPER: You didn't do it which is a blessing. *(A beat.)* I am mindful of the day you first set foot in the Holly Tree Inn. Thirteen years ago, it was.

(Music Cue 10: My Poor Lirriper.)

Thir-teen years. Where have the years flown?

MAJOR: H'indeed, Madam.

MRS. LIRRIPER: IT'S FORTY YEARS NOW HAVE COME AND GONE
SINCE ME AND MY POOR LIRRIPER
WERE WEDDED AT ST. GILES'S KEW.

WHERE NOW I HAVE A PLEASANT PEW.

BUT HE WAS EVER LIVIN' FREE
BEIN' IN THE TRAV'LLIN' LINE,
AND TRAV'LLIN' WAS, HE SAID TO ME,
"A VERY DRY ROAD, EMMA DEAR;
A DUSTY HIGH ROAD, EMMA DEAR."

MY LIRRIPER, HE WAS A HANDSOME MAN,
A VOICE HE HAD OF HONEYED STEEL;
HE HAD A BEAMING EYE, A PLEASANT MANNER.
HE WAS THE SWEETEST TEMPERED MAN:
BUT HE COULD NOT HOLD TO THE TEMPERANCE BANNER.

MY LIRRIPER WAS A HANDSOME MAN,
BUT I FEAR ME HE HAD A WEAKNESS.

THE MAJOR: I COULDN'T SAY, MA'AM.

MRS. LIRRIPER: I KNOW IT'S TRUE. HE TOOK A DROP . . . IN THE AFTERNOON.

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SO, MY POOR LIRRIPER RAN THROUGH A DEAL,
AND NOT THE GIG NOR LIRRIPER
WERE EVER AFTER WHAT THEY WERE.

WELL, I WAS YOUNG BUT I HAD MY PRIDE,
THOUGH I HAD OFFERS WHEN LIRRIPER DIED,
IT'S THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS SINCE I LAID
MY RING UPON POOR LIRRIPER'S GRAVE.

MY LIRRIPER, HE WAS A HANDSOME MAN,
A VOICE HE HAD OF HONEYED STEEL;
HE HAD A BEAMING EYE, A JOVIAL BEARING.
HE WAS THE SWEETEST TEMPERED MAN:
BUT HE LEFT THIS WORLD WITHOUT A FARTHING.

MY LIRRIPER WAS A HANDSOME MAN,
BUT I FEAR ME HE HAD A WEAKNESS.

THE MAJOR: I COULDN'T SAY, MA'AM.

MRS. LIRRIPER: I KNOW IT'S TRUE. HE SPENT EACH PENNY THAT HE CAME TO.

I MIND THE DAY, MAJOR, YOU APPEARED
FROM WOZENHAM'S THERE ACROSS THE WAY.
AND EVER SUCH A GENTLEMAN:

YOU SEEMED SO MUCH A TALLER MAN.

(Spoken.) And Mrs. Wozenham putting it about, as she did, that you are no Major!

THE MAJOR: *(Etc.)* At any rate, I am not a minor, and sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Still, her detaining the trunks and umbrella was not in a liberal spirit.

THE MAJOR: Mrs. Wozenham has the principles and manners of a female coal heaver.

MRS. LIRRIPER: THAT YOU WOULD THINK SO IS NO SURPRISE;
YOU'VE SUCH A PASSION FOR YOUR SIZE.

THE MAJOR: | MISSUS LIRRIPER, I WAS A WANDERING MAN,
| A WANDERING CHRISTIAN, IN YOUR PHRASE.
| I WAS A WILDER MAN, IN SALAD DAYS.
| I'VE LEARNED THE WAYS OF THIS OLD GLOBE.
| I'VE SEEN THE BAD AND I'VE KNOWN THE GOOD.
| MISSUS LIRRIPER, I WAS A WANDERING MAN,
| BUT I KNOW NOW THAT I'LL NEVER MORE WANDER.

MRS. LIRRIPER: | MY LIRRIPER, HE WAS A HANDSOME MAN,
| HE HAD A BEAMING EYE, A CATCHING LAUGHTER.
| HE WAS THE SWEETEST TEMPERED MAN:
| BUT HE GAVE NO THOUGHT TO WHAT COMES AFTER.
| MY LIRRIPER WAS A HANDSOME MAN,
| BUT GRASS HAS GROWN WITH EACH YEAR'S PASSING.

THE MAJOR: IT'S THIRTEEN YEARS, NOW.

MRS. LIRRIPER: MOST HAPPY YEARS

BOTH: WE'VE SHARED OUR LAUGHTER AND SHARED OUR TEARS.

MRS. LIRRIPER: THE WORLD MAY CHANGE

THE MAJOR: BUT THAT'S AS MAY BE.

BOTH: WE'VE MADE A LIFE AT THE HOLLY TREE.

(Music ends.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: Major, your presence has been a blessing. Your presence and Jemmie's, but life is made of partings, Major.

THE MAJOR: H'indeed, Madam.

MRS. LIRRIPER: You know what I am going to break to you. Our boy must go away to school.

(There is a pause.)

THE MAJOR: Madam, you strike a pain h'into my 'eart.

MRS. LIRRIPER: I speak boldly, Major, but I am as dreadfully cut up as you. But, he has had such a tutor in you, Major! He will soon make his way to the front rank.

THE MAJOR: 'E is a boy that 'as not 'is like on the face of the earth.

MRS. LIRRIPER: And it is not for us to do anything to keep him from rising to be a great man, is it?

THE MAJOR: Madam, Jemmie Jackman is an older file than he was aware of. You put him to shame. You are simply and undeniably right. If you'll excuse me, I'll take a walk.

(THE MAJOR exits.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: *(Musing to herself.)* It's his indisgestion, poor dear, that sours his temper so aggravatin' – and indisgestion is a wearin' thing to the best of us.

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(Lights dim as she exits. Music: "The Holly Tree" by U. Kirilov. Transition; music covers scene change.)

Act One
Scene Six

(Lights up; HARRY lies on his bed and tosses back and forth; he rises and crosses to the window, looks out; makes a frustrated sound; moves back to the bed, lies down, tosses back and forth.)

HARRY: I am stifling! Drowning! Smothering in snow!

(Lights up on COBBS.)

COBBS: Why do you not read sum'at, sir?

HARRY: I believe I have read everything readable in the Inn. A Book of Roads, a little Song-Book, a little Jest-Book, an old volume of Peregrine Pickle, and The Sentimental Journey.

COBBS: Such as you are on, sir.

HARRY: Such as I am on?

COBBS: A sentimental journey.

HARRY: I don't think I should stay here. I've been snowed up in the Kingdom of Snow. How easy it would be to slide quietly from here toward nothing.

COBBS: It's very easy to go from 'ere to nothin', sir. There's nowt else from 'ere – but t'road to Gretna Green.

HARRY: I am not going that way to the Devil, but by the American route.

COBBS: They do say absence makes t' 'eart grow fonder.

HARRY: Do they say that? Out of sight, out of mind, I should think.

COBBS: You were more fond, I think, of your Angela after your return from abroad than ever you were before.

HARRY: Cobbs, if I had not been over head and ears in love before I went away – and there is not the faintest doubt about it – the sight of her on my return plunged me ten thousand fathoms deep.

(Lights up as COMPANY enter, dancing; Music Cue 12, Party Music; at end of verse, they freeze in position; music continues; ANGELA and EMMELINE enter and run to "window".)

ASHFORD: *(Entering.)* I heard the bell, I think?

(EMMELINE looks out “window”.)

EMMELINE: It’s Harry! It’s Harry returned from France, father.

ASHFORD: How’s that? And, come here at once?

ANGELA: And, why should he not?

ASHFORD: Why not, indeed? Show him to the back door, Emmeline. He’s come to hawk his wares.

ANGELA: Uncle!

ASHFORD: Do you not know, Miss? Has he not written you? Your Harry is now naught but a shopkeeper. He, of so fine a family, and so proudly bred, has condescended to trade. To trade! Like us poor peasants who have risen from ditches!

ANGELA: Why, then, it is good for trade! It ennobles trade! Harry will bring respect to it. I am of that opinion and I am sure he is, too.

ASHFORD: Ay, ay, he always takes your opinion.

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EMMELINE: Ah, what a bafoe! For I looers of no good. At least, An in I nigh o Kris, an Kei Her Angela
I shall dance with Harry till we are out of breath.

(ASHFORD moves away; Music Cue 12 has finished by now.)

Shan’t we, dear Angela?

ANGELA: Oh, how you tease me about Harry.

EMMELINE: Tease you by mentioning your lover?

ANGELA: I am sure I don’t much care to have him mentioned. I am almost tired of hearing of him; and as to his being my lover –

EMMELINE: Don’t speak lightly of it, Angela. There is not a truer heart than Harry’s in the world!

ANGELA: I don’t know there’s any great merit in it.

EMMELINE: I think, I know, that Harry’s heart has been true since . . . ever. Since we were children.

(Music Cue 13: Wait for the Giants.)

ANGELA: I – I never asked him to be so very true, and, we are none of us children any longer.

WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN WE ALWAYS KNEW
THAT FAIRY STORIES DID COME TRUE.
WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN WE COULD BE SURE
THAT LOVE AND MAGIC WOULD ENDURE.
WE KNEW THAT GIANTS WERE ALIVE AND REAL
THAT DRAGONS GUARDED GOLD TO STEAL
AND ALL THE THINGS WE DREAMED WERE TRUE.

WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN, WE KNEW JUST WHY
ENCHANTED CASTLES FILLED THE SKY.
WE KNEW THAT PIRATES SAILED WITH FLAGS TO WAVE
AND PRINCES ALWAYS WOULD BE BRAVE.
WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR FAIRY TALE?

THERE WERE GIANTS IN OUR DREAMS BACK THEN
THERE WERE GIANTS EVERYWHERE.
BUT AS WE GREW IT SEEMS THAT THEN
THEY WERE LOST, MISLAID,
THEY'VE GONE SOMEWHERE
THERE WERE GIANTS THEN
THERE WERE GIANTS THEN
WAIT FOR THE GIANTS AGAIN.

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(Music continues under; EMMELINE enters, pulling HARRY.)

ASHFORD: *(Spoken.)* So, it's himself, then. Ye're back, are ye?

EMMELINE: *(Etc.)* Angela and I hoped he would come. Did we not, Angela?

ANGELA: Did we? The world is so small a place that people cannot long escape one another.

HARRY: I have found it much too large a place for me since I last saw . . . all of you.

ASHFORD: You find us at length, Mr. Walmers. Perhaps you may lose us again.

HARRY: I trust not. I've returned to set up trade with Edwin. We shall hang out our shingle.

ASHFORD: So I understand. What a pair! What a pair of pairs! A pair of great gawps treading about the house; you like you've eaten a canary – and Angela like a thundercloud about to burst.

EMMELINE: Make some allowance, father. It's somebody's birthday, tomorrow.

ASHFORD: Don't you know it's always somebody's birthday? Do you know how many enter this ridiculous business called Life, every minute? *(He turns to ANGELA.)* By-the-by, I suppose it's *your* birthday? Another act begun in the great farce of a hundred acts?

ANGELA: Would you cut the great farce cut short for me, uncle?

ASHFORD: No, God forbid! May you live to laugh at it, as long as you *can* laugh.

EMMELINE: Come, Harry, you shan't stand about. You must dance with *one* of us.

(She takes Harry's arm and pulls him into the dance.)

ANGELA: WE ARE NOT CHILDREN; OR SO NAÏVE
TO WISH FOR DREAMS WE CAN'T BELIEVE.
WE ARE NOT CHILDREN; IT WILL NOT DO
TO HOLD TO THINGS THAT WE OUTGREW.

WE KNOW THE TIME IS PAST FOR CHILDHOOD THINGS
FROM CHILDHOOD'S END, THE FUTURE SPRINGS,
FLIES FASTER WITH EACH DAWNING DAY.

(EMMELINE joins in the background.)

ANGELA & WHAT HAPPENED THAT WE LOST OUR WAY?

EMMELINE:

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AT THE CLOSE OF THE NIGHT IN CHILDHOOD DAYS
THERE WERE GIANTS EVERYWHERE.
BUT AS WE GREW IT SEEMS THAT THEN
THEY WERE LOST, MISLAID,
THEY'VE GONE SOMEWHERE
THERE WERE GIANTS THEN
THERE WERE GIANTS THEN
WAIT FOR THE GIANTS AGAIN.

*(EMMELINE pulls ANGELA into the dance group; Lights up
on HARRY and EDWIN; music continues under.)*

EDWIN: *(Spoken.)* Harry, listen. You want to get married.

HARRY: Why – I –

EDWIN: I shouldn't wonder if you are. Have you spoken to her?

HARRY: May I entreat to know of whom are we speaking?

EDWIN: Harry, I have reached an understanding with the young lady of my choice. Parental approval may not be forthcoming, but our affections are genuine. We plighted our troth upon the kitchen dresser last evening, the ogre in the parlour snoring.

HARRY: Upon the kitchen dresser!

EDWIN: Over head-and-ears in love, and no other place, you'd be devilish glad of the opportunity – where was I?

HARRY: On the kitchen dresser.

EDWIN: Oh - ah! Of course. Now, Harry, it's no good you fading up against the wallpaper. Speak up – stand up first, then speak up. You understand me?

(EDWIN and HARRY move upstage together; they sing counterpoint to ANGELA and EMMELINE, who come in downstage.)

ALL FOUR: WAIT FOR THE GIANTS TO COME ONE DAY
WAIT FOR THE FAIRIES TO SHOW OUR WAY
WAIT FOR THE CHILDREN LAUGHING IN THE LIGHT OF
CHRISTMAS CANDLES IN THE NIGHT
THERE WILL BE TIME.
TIME AGAIN FOR FAIRIES, TIME FOR GIANTS CASTLE TALL
THERE WILL BE TIME.
TIME AGAIN FOR CHILDREN WHEN WE'VE STRUGGLED THROUGH IT ALL.

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(Lights on HARRY as he paces nervously; ANGELA sits quietly and waits; music continues under.)

ANGELA: *(Spoken.)* Hem!

HARRY: *(Etc.)* I beg your pardon?

ANGELA: Eh?

HARRY: I thought you spoke.

ANGELA: No.

HARRY: Oh!

(A long pause.)

ANGELA: There are some books on the sofa, Mr. Walmers, if you would like to look at them.

HARRY: No, thank you.*(another pause.)* Madam, that is Miss Leith, I wish to speak to you.

ANGELA: To me! Speak – to me!

HARRY: Miss Leath, to be again permitted to – to – not to gaze, but – I don't exactly know what I was going to say.

ANGELA: Then, pray, continue, by all means.

HARRY: Do not suppose that I address you by any feeling of my own merits –

ANGELA: Then, what? How can I promote your happiness, Mr. Walmers?

HARRY: By promoting your *own* happiness – by allowing me to be forever your servant.

ANGELA: To put my happiness first in such a manner!

HARRY: I shall always put your happiness first, Miss Leath.

ANGELA: *(Relenting of her teasing for a moment.)* Of that, I am sure.

(ASHFORD enters behind HARRY and ANGELA registers his presence.)

HARRY: May I believe that you return my respects, Miss Leath?

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ANGELA: Mr. Walmers . . . I cannot.

HARRY: Angela!

ANGELA: Harry. I'm sorry. I'm so very sorry.

*(ASHFORD exits; HARRY and ANGELA separate and come down;
EDWIN and EMMELINE enter separately upstage.)*

ALL FOUR: WAIT FOR THE GIANTS TO COME ONE DAY
WAIT FOR THE FAIRIES TO SHOW OUR WAY
WAIT FOR THE CHILDREN LAUGHING IN THE LIGHT OF
CHRISTMAS CANDLES IN THE NIGHT
THERE WILL BE TIME.
TIME AGAIN FOR FAIRIES, TIME FOR GIANTS CASTLE TALL
THERE WILL BE TIME.
TIME AGAIN FOR CHILDREN WHEN WE'VE STRUGGLED THROUGH IT ALL.
THERE WILL BE TIME. THERE WILL BE TIME
THERE WILL BE GIANTS EV'RYWHERE AGAIN.

(Lights down.)

Act One
Scene Seven

(Music Cue 14, Think Of Us Tom; lights up on TOM, tinkering with a lamp; SOPHIE comes through with sheets; TOM does not look up; SOPHIE stares at his back, goes out; TOM lifts the lamp and stares into it, checking the wick; SOPHIE re-enters without the sheets, stops behind TOM and stares, goes back out; TOM looks up as if dimly aware that someone had been there; sees nothing; he goes back to the lamp; after a moment, SOPHIE re-enters and stops behind him.)

SOPHIE: *(Screams.)* AAAAAH!

(The lamp chimney TOM is cleaning flies into the air; he catches it.)

TOM: *(Carefully placing the chimney down.)* Sophie!

SOPHIE: I have been as patient and as quiet and as calm as ever I can be. I can't be no more.

THINK OF US, TOM, WHAT LIFE WOULD BE LIKE IF
WE SHOULD EVER BE MARRIED.

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SOPHIE: THINK OF US, TOM, HOW HAPPY WE'D BE IF
WE SHOULD EVER BE MARRIED.

TOM: Sophie!

SOPHIE: I CAN SEE US WALKING ARM IN ARM, AFFECTIONATELY STROLLING.
YOU ALL DECKED OUT IN YOUR SUNDAY CLOTHES . . .

TOM: YOU WITH A SMUDGE ON YOUR NOSE.

(SOPHIE sits on TOM's lap.)

SOPHIE: THINK OF US, TOM, WHAT LIFE WOULD BE LIKE IF WE SHOULD
EVER, EVER, EVER-AFTER MARRY.

TOM: *(He gets up, dumping Sophie.)* You're a regular good creature in your way, Sophie, so
shake hands. Whatever happens – remember that Tom Grig was always a friend to you.

SOPHIE: What do you mean?

TOM: A mystery hangs over me, Sophe.

SOPHIE: What sort of a mystery? Here, you don't have twelve toes, do you?

TOM: Not that sort of mystery.

SOPHIE: What is it?

TOM: That hangs over me?

SOPHIE: Yes!

TOM: *(With great dignity.)* It is fate, Sophie.

SOPHIE: Oh, well, if it's only fate. What, a sort of a cankerworm gnawing away at your vitals?

TOM: If we come to particulars, a cankerworm gnawing at away at, as you say, my vitals.

SOPHIE: Well, if I was you, I'd shake it off.

TOM: But if you was me, you wouldn't. It's inexcusable. I've had my what-you-may-call-it cast.

SOPHIE: Your head?

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SOPHIE: Your face, perhaps?

TOM: No, not my face. Nor my arms, nor my hands, nor my feet.

SOPHIE: *(pause.)* Your horror-scope, perhaps?

TOM: That's it, my horror-scopes. My nativity. That's what I had cast.

(Music Cue 15: Tom's Fate; music continuous to end of song.)

SOPHIE: In plaster?

TOM: I don't rightly know how it's done, but I suppose it was. I've had my horror-scopes cast. And, Sophie, they say there's a doom over me. An inexcusable doom hanging over me.

SOPHIE: Don't talk like that, Tom!

TOM: I was passing the gate of that old 'aunted 'ouse. An old gentleman throws the windows wide open, plants his eye upon me, and then my fate and my doom came all over me.

(Music changes; faster, brighter.)

GENT: HALLOA!

TOM: HE CRIES. HALLOA, SAYS I,
AND HALLOA AGAIN. AND I TIPPED MY HAT.

GENT: YOUNG MAN,

TOM: SAYS HE,

GENT: YOU DON'T KNOW ME,
BUT I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU AT THAT.
I READ,

TOM: HE CRIES.

GENT: I READ THE SKIES
AND THE PORTENTS THERE
WHERE THE STARS HOLD SWAY.

TOM: I THANK YOU FOR THAT; 'T WAS A LOVELY CHAT
I WISH YOU THE BEST. GOOD DAY!

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THE MAN WILL WAKE TO FIND THAT HE HAS COME TO
FORTUNE BEYOND SPENDING.
COME IN, DON'T HESITATE.

FOR THE STARS NO DOUBT ARE ALL CORRECT
IN EVERY TINY, SMALL RESPECT
OUR LIVES ARE RULED BY THEIR EFFECT
WHEN HEAVENLY MOTIONS INTERSECT,

A MAN CANNOT ESCAPE HIS FATE.
THE STARS WILL NOT BE SWAYED
ALL THE PLANETS CALCULATE IT,
AND THE STARS MUST BE OBEYED.

TOM: *(Spoken.)* Well, Sophie, there *was* a mystery about my birth. I never knew who my father was. Some say even my mother was in doubt.

SOPHIE: *(Spoken.)* What about this niece?

TOM: IS THE LADY AT ALL GOOD-LOOKING, SIR?
FAILING THAT, HAS SHE ANY CASH?

GENT: SHE'S BEAUTIFUL! EXQUISITE SHAPE, MELODIOUS VOICE.

TOM: I SUPPOSE THEN SHE MUST KNOW FRENCH?

GENT: SHE HAS FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS A YEAR, MY BOY,
BUT WHAT OF THAT? WHAT OF THAT, MY BOY?
SHE'S A COUNTENANCE BRIGHT
AND THE EYE, THE EYE, AH, THE EYE OF A STARTLED FAWN.

SOPHIE: *(Spoken.)* What, you mean she has a game eye?

GENT: THE STARS TELL ME THIS STRANGER THIS VERY DAY AT FIVE
WOULD STAND JUST SO OUTSIDE THE GATE
AND THAT THIS STRANGER
MUST PREPARE TO MEET HIS FATE.

BOTH: FOR THE STARS NO DOUBT ARE ALL CORRECT
IN EVERY TINY, SMALL RESPECT
OUR LIVES ARE RULED BY THEIR EFFECT
WHEN HEAVENLY MOTIONS INTERSECT,

A MAN CANNOT ESCAPE HIS FATE.

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ALL THE STARS WILL BE SWORN
ALL THE PLANETS CALCULATE IT,
AND THE STARS MUST BE OBEYED.

TOM: *(Spoken.)* He led me into a dark, gloomy room, filled with all manner of bottles, books, telescopes, crocodiles, alligators, and other scientific instruments.

GENT: *(Etc.)* The laboratory. It's here, in this silent place, that I must cast your nativity.

TOM: How is that done, exactly? Great heavens! What's that?

(TOM points to a bundle of rags which is the Gifted Mooney, in fact.)

GENT: Oh, here's a mind, sir. This is my friend and colleague, Mister Mooney.

TOM: Are you sure?

GENT: Don't disturb him, sir. This is amazing!

TOM: I agree.

GENT: The gifted Mooney's mind, sir, is now fixed upon your fate.

And you know . . . THE STARS . . . !

TOM: *(Clamping his hand over the GENT's mouth.)* Too well.

(The Gent pulls on rubber gloves and dark goggles, attaches two wires to Mooney and shocks him; Mooney revives with a roar.)

GENT: My dear Mister Mooney, prepare Mister Grig.

TOM: 'Ere, none of that, now! There'll be no preparin' Mr. Grig!

GENT: I mean: "Inform him of his fate."

TOM: Much obliged, I'm sure.

MOONEY: MISTER GRIG, MISTER GRIG,
BASED ON OUR OBSERVATIONS,
WE NOW FIRMLY BELIEVE, THAT IF
YOU AND HIS NIECE HAVE NOT SET FORTH THE DATE,
BY THE NEXT CHRISTMAS EVE,
JUST AT TWELVE, THE MIDNIGHT HOUR
YOU ARE DOOMED TO MEET YOUR FATE

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TOM: *(Spoken.)* Here now, you never said nothing about no doom! *(To Sophie.)* But he showed me the page, where, sure enough, were these words:

MOONEY & GENT: A CERTAIN NEARBY PERSONAGE, MYSTERIOUS AND GREAT,
ON CHRISTMAS EVE, THE MIDNIGHT HOUR,
IS DOOMED TO MEET HIS FATE.

SOPHIE: *(Spoken.)* Which is clearly you, Tom.

TOM: *(Spoken.)* Too clearly. The orb of day has set on Thomas Grig for ever!

ALL: THE STARS NO DOUBT ARE ALL CORRECT
IN EVERY, TINY, SMALL RESPECT
OUR LIVES ARE RULED BY THEIR EFFECT
WHEN HEAVENLY MOTIONS INTERSECT,

A MAN CANNOT ESCAPE HIS FATE.
THE STARS WILL NOT BE SWAYED
ALL THE PLANETS CALCULATE IT,
AND THE STARS MUST BE OBEYED.

SOPHIE: *(Spoken.)* I should like to know where this beautiful and charming niece enters the story.

TOM: *(Spoken.)* Just now, in fact.

(MISS CRUMPTON enters, melodramatically throwing herself at TOM's feet and wrapping her arms around his leg.)

MISS CRUMPTON: OH, THOMAS, I AM EVER THINE!
NO FATE COULD EVER
HARM US IF OUR HEARTS ENTWINE.

OH, HEAR ME! PASSION MOST SUBLIME
CONSUMES ME WHEN YOU'RE
NEAR ME! AND EVER GROWS WITH TIME!

THOMAS, THOMAS, I AM THINE!
THOMAS, THOMAS, THOU ART MINE!
MINE FOR EVER; THINE FOR EVER.
LET OUR HEARTS COMBINE!

TOM: *(A pause; spoken.)* I'm afraid that it's no go, sir.

THE OTHERS: WHAT!

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MISS CRUMPTON: OH HEAVEN ABOVE, NOT ONE LOOK OF LOVE?
THOMAS, SPEAK TO ME! THOMAS, SPEAK TO ME!

GENT: WON'T YOU MARRY MY NIECE, MISTER GRIG, PLEASE, SIR?

TOM: IF YOU'LL GIVE ME MY HAT, I SHOULD GO.

MOONEY: *(Spoken.)* Wait! Unless you marry this girl, you'll meet your fate on Christmas Eve!

TOM: | AND LEAVE MY SOPHE TO CRY ALONE
| NEVER KNOWING WHY I'VE GONE?
| LEAVE MY SOPHE TO PINE AND MOAN?
| AND SIGH, AND CRY ALL ON HER OWN?
| I'D SOONER WED A MERMAID
| WITH A GLASS AND FINE-TOOTHED COMB.
| WE MAY NOT BE WEDDED LONG
| BUT, IT'S WITH SOPHIE I BELONG.

THE MEN & SOPHIE: | THE STARS NO DOUBT ARE ALL CORRECT
| IN EVERY, TINY, SMALL RESPECT
| OUR LIVES ARE RULED BY THEIR EFFECT

| WHEN HEAVENLY MOTIONS INTERSECT,
| A MAN CANNOT ESCAPE HIS FATE.
| THE STARS WILL NOT BE SWAYED
| ALL THE PLANETS CALCULATE IT,
| AND THE STARS MUST BE OBEYED.
| THE PLANETS CALCULATE IT,
| AND THE STARS MUST BE OBEYED.

MISS CRUMPTON: | OH, CRUEL, CRUEL MAN, I ABJURE THEE; I RENOUNCE THEE.
(*Counterpoint to* | OH, CRUEL CRUEL MAN, IS A MAIDEN'S LOVE SO LITTLE?
the others.) | SPURNED, I NOW DESPAIR.
| I CAST AWAY THIS AIR.
| I'VE LEARNED THE LESSON THERE.
| OH, CRUEL, CRUEL MAN!
| THERE WILL COME A RECK'NING
| FOR THE STARS MUST BE OBEYED.

(*Music ends.*)

SOPHIE: Tom Grig, you'll say anything except your prayers.

(*She and the others exit; Music button.*)

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TOM: That's the Sunday truth.

(*Music button; HARRY enters.*)

HARRY: Good evening.

TOM: Good Christmas evening, sir. (*HARRY looks blank.*) It's Christmas Eve, sir.

HARRY: Oh, so it is. I'm sorry, but I've run out of coal.

TOM: It that so, sir? Won't you step into the parlour? There's a bit of a fire in the grate.

(*They move into the parlour; HARRY sits in front of the fire.*)

HARRY: That is better. You look troubled.

TOM: Noffink at all, sir. Or ravver: everyffink dere is, sir. It's my fate what hangs over me. Goodbye, sir. I think you shall never see Tom Grig alive again.

(*Music Cue 16, Tom's Fate, Transition; Tom exits, leaving the oil-cans and rags behind; as he goes off, SOPHIE re-enters from opposite.*)

SOPHIE: Tom Grig! Don't you ...! *(She sees HARRY, wipes her eyes.)* Wish you good evening, sir.

HARRY: I didn't wish to disturb anyone, but I've run out of coal.

SOPHIE: Chilly, ain't it, sir? Uncommon chilly and a person's flesh don't hardly cover a person's bones. You hardly know where you are, do you, sir? You hardly know where you are ...

(SOPHIE cries; HARRY awkwardly tries to comfort her.)

HARRY: There, there, my girl. There. There. You've a smudge on your nose. *(SOPHIE wipes her eyes and nose.)* We all have our troubles, but we must cope with them.

SOPHIE: Or run from them.

HARRY: *(beat.)* Yes.

SOPHIE: Well, he shan't make me cry no more. I'll . . . I'll . . . do . . . something.

HARRY: That's it.

SOPHIE: Quite a game, that business, ain't it, sir?

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SOPHIE: Love, sir. Give-and-take, that's what I calls it – give-and-take! *(Pause. She looks at HARRY intently.)* You say you're going to America, sir?

HARRY: If it should come first in my way. I've two portmanteaux, my shaving kit in one and. . .

SOPHIE: Your passage to America in the other. You said. Well, you have to do something, sir, don't you? Well, sir. In half a minute, sir, if you don't mind waiting, I'll fetch some coals.

HARRY: Very well.

SOPHIE: Give-and-take, sir. Give-and-take, ain't it?

(She picks up a can of oil and some rags and exits and HARRY is left puzzled, sits in the chair and regards the fire.)

HARRY: So, she left me roasting whole before an immense fire. Outside, the wind rushed like a mad bull; inside, the vault of darkness stretched above me and the draperies went twisting and creeping about. The night appeared about a week long.

(Music Cue 17: I SAW A MAN.)

I SAW A MAN ONE SUMMER DAY IN ST. JAMES'S PARK,
HE WAS A TALL, THIN, PALE MAN DRESSED IN GRAY.
PINCHED UP GAITERS, BEAVER GLOVES.
HIS MEASURED TREAD UPON THE GRASS
SOMEHOW SAID THAT HE WAS LOST,
SO HE WALKED ON HIS ONLY HOLIDAY.
ON HIS ONLY HOLIDAY.

THERE WERE CHILDREN PLAYING ON THE GRASS;
PEOPLE LAUGHING ALL AROUND,
BUT UNHEEDED AND UNHEEDING,
HE WALKED, WITH HIS PALE EYES FIXED AND GRAY.

THE DAY WAS CLEAR, THE SUN WAS HOT:
NONE OF THAT SEEMED TO TOUCH HIS THOUGHT
AND HE WALKED, NEVER GLANCING FROM HIS WAY,
ON HIS SOLEMN HOLIDAY.

I ALMOST SAW HIM AT THE SAME CRAMPED DESK,
WHERE HE SITS PEN IN HAND ALL YEAR.
THE HAT IS HANGING ON THE SAME SMALL PEG,
OUR COAT HUNG NEATLY NEAR.

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WHILE LOUDLY ON THE MANTLEPIECE OUR SECONDS TICK AWAY

FROM FRIENDS THAT WE HAVE LEFT,
SCENES WE KNOW TOO WELL.
HOPE WE THAT ONCE CLUNG TO,
THOUGHTS WE'D DARE NOT TELL
BUT WHICH WE LEFT BEHIND
AND SWORE WE'D HOLD NO MORE.

(Music continues; ASHFORD has entered; HARRY crosses to him.)

HARRY: *(Spoken.)* Mr. Ashford, you may have noticed my admiration for your charming niece has grown deeper into – ?

ASHFORD: *(Etc.)* Shall we say friendship, Mr. Walmers?

HARRY: Say love – on both our parts.

(ASHFORD starts out of his chair.)

ASHFORD: Mr. Walmers, you imply that she returns the sentiment?

HARRY: I do believe that she loves me.

ASHFORD: And how much of Angela's fortune do you think you'll get? You cunning schemer –

HARRY: These are hard words, sir!

ASHFORD: Feathers, to pelt such a wretch as you!

HARRY: Your suspicions –

ASHFORD: You contemptible cur! I know he's dead!

HARRY: Who's dead?

ASHFORD: Your father, man! He's dead these three days and the creditors beating down the doors!
Do you mean to stand in my house another minute?

HARRY: I would I had never come near it!

(HARRY turns away from ASHFORD who exits.)

HARRY: IN THE CROWD AND TURMOIL OF SOME BUSY CITY;
OLD FRIENDS ARE QUICKLY LOST, LIKE OURSELVES,
AND WE ALL GENTLY FADE IN THE MISTS OF THE CITY:
WE KNOW WE EXIST – CONTACT WITH THEM
BUT CAN IT REALLY BE SAID THAT WE'RE ALIVE?

I SAW A MAN THE OTHER DAY,
ALL ALONE UPON THE GRASS.
HE NODDED ONCE AND THEN HE PASSED.
I KNEW HIS FACE, FOR HE WAS ME!

IT'S HARD, I KNOW, TO BREAK THE TIES WHICH HOLD US TO OUR PAST,
IT'S HARDER STILL TO RUB AWAY THE IMAGES THAT LAST,
AND SLUMBER IN THE HEART, THEN RUSH UPON THE MIND,
BRINGING WITH THEM ALL THE THINGS
WE THOUGHT HAD STAYED BEHIND.

FRIENDS THAT WE HAVE LEFT,
SCENES WE KNOW TOO WELL.
HOPE WE THAT ONCE CLUNG TO,
THOUGHTS WE'D DARE NOT TELL
BUT WHICH WE LEFT BEHIND
AND SWORE WE'D HOLD NO MORE. NO MORE!
NEVER, NEVER AGAIN. NO MORE . . .

(Lights down.)

END OF ACT ONE

The Holly Tree
a holiday romance

Act Two
Scene One

(Music Cue 18: Entr'acte; at end, a sound of pounding on doors; lights up; the Major is hammering at the room doors and calling out loudly.)

THE MAJOR: Fire! – Fire! Don't be frightened! – Fire! Collect your presence of mind! – Fire!

(MRS. LIRRIPER opens the door; the Major catches her in his arms.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: Major, where is it?

THE MAJOR: Fire! Fear not, Emma. Jemmie Jackman will defend you – Fire! I am so gratified our dear boy is still at home, what a treat this must be for him – Fire!

MRS. LIRRIPER: Oh, Major, you are so very collected and bold . . .

THE MAJOR: H'it's h'expected of a h'officer, madam – Fire!

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THE MAJOR: H'indeed, madam – Fire!

MRS. LIRRIPER: . . . what with ending every sentence by roaring . . .

THE MAJOR & MRS. LIRRIPER: FIRE!

(They put their heads out of window.)

THE MAJOR: There is our remarkable boy, now! Hullo, there, Jemmie! Where is it? – Fire!

JEMMIE: O here's a lark! Sophie's set the private house alight! Hurrah! Fire!

THE MAJOR: Fire! Here's a boy, Madam! Fire!

(TOM runs in with a bucket.)

TOM: It's Sophie! She's set herself alight in the privy! Major, hurry now!

MRS. LIRRIPER: Oh, blessed Heaven! Sophie!

JEMMIE: Sophie's not in there! I seen her, running up the street! Fire!

MRS. LIRRIPER: Oh, Major, the whole town's turned out! Look at them. Trampin' over all!

(TOM runs out; OTHERS run through, shouting; a WOMAN in nightdress and cap, a shawl around her, runs on.)

WOMAN: Oh, pleeseman! It's Mrs. Lirriper charging people to madness – they've set her afire! Oh, put her out! Fire!

MAN: You're in the way, Mrs. Wozenham! Fire!

THE MAJOR: *(To MRS. LIRRIPER.)* I shall attend to this. Pray remain here.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Very well sir. I am obedient, I am sure.

THE MAJOR: H'indeed, Madam. Fire!

MRS. LIRRIPER: Oh, mercy on us! Save the privy! *(A thought.)* Oh, goodness me! The young gentleman in the back room! Save the young gentleman in the back room!

(Two men run on, with HARRY, half-awake, head-foremost; the men tumble him down in front of MRS. LIRRIPER and run out again.)

Oh, bless us, he's safe! Save the privy!

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HARRY: My luggage! It's still in the back room! My . . .

(The two men run on with HARRY's portmanteax, and fling them down.)

THE MAJOR: *(Returning.)* All is well. The fire is out. The privy – we shall have to make do with less sophisticated conveniences for a time. But no one is hurt.

MRS. LIRRIPER: The young gentleman's head is a bit light, he having been brought downstairs head-foremost, which accounts, but I'm sure he'll recover.

(TOM enters, followed after a bit by JEMMIE.)

THE MAJOR: What's this?

TOM: Sophie is gone!

MRS. LIRRIPER: Gone?

TOM: Sophie is reduced to cinders! Burned up with the privy! Gone!

JEMMIE: She's gone, but not with the privy. I saw her running up the lane with her bags.

HARRY: *(Searching through his portmanteaux.)* My passage to America! It's gone!

MRS. LIRRIPER: Did it fall out when you and they came down head-foremost?

HARRY: The bag was latched securely until I opened it just now! It's gone!

TOM, THE MAJOR & MRS. LIRRIPER: Sophie!

MRS. LIRRIPER: Oh, goodness, goodness, now what has she done?

HARRY: She's stolen my passage to America, that's what she's done.

THE MAJOR: We must inform the police. They shall bring her back – in manacles, no doubt.

HARRY: Oh, no! How far can she get on Christmas Eve?

THE MAJOR: We shall organize a search party! Line up, now: alphabetical order, by height!

HARRY: Major, please. I've had trouble enough. I've no wish to see more.

JEMMIE: Well, you'll see no more of your passage, that's for sure.

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THE MAJOR: What a remarkable boy, madam.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Major, I terrify myself that learning may do the pet an injury I would never forgive myself, and if his calculations mount to his head or lead to anything approaching flabbiness in his legs, I shall stop them at two minutes' notice.

THE MAJOR: Spo'en, Madam, like H'emma Lirriper.

(MRS. LIRRIPER looks at the people still gathered from the fire.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: O blessed Heaven! Major, it would appear that we have guests for Christmas.

(Music Cue 19: Your First Christmas Tree.)

THE MAJOR: So, it would, madam.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Come along, now, everyone. Punch and cake for all – Oh, I hope no one needs to use the conveniences – for we haven't any!

(Drinks and cakes are brought out and the mood becomes festive.)

THE MAJOR: The young ones, madam. Look at their eyes, watching of the Christmas tree.

What a joy is there, madam. What remembrances.

FANCIES OF CHILDHOOD, THEIR WILD ADORNMENTS
RISE AS A MIST IN THE ROOM,
CRAMPED IN ITS FREEDOM BY WALLS AND BY CEILING,
CIRCLED, BUT REACHING THE HIGH-VAULTED GLOOM
AND, LOOKING UP FROM THE LOW, DREAMY BRIGHTNESS,
UP TO THE DARK SHADOWED HEIGHT OF ITS TOP –
I SEE IT NOW, AN UNFADED MEM'RY,
THE BRIGHT CHRISTMAS TREE OF MY DREAMS.

MRS. LIRRIPER: IT IS BRILLIANTLY LIGHTED BY BRIGHT LITTLE TAPERS;
AND EVERYWHERE SPARKLES AND GLITTERS WITH STARS.
ALL OF THE BRANCHES ARE WOND'ROUSLY LADEN WITH
FANTASIES GREATER THAN EVER THEY ARE.
AND, FLASHING BACK ALL THE BRIGHT LOOKS UPON IT,
ADMIRING THE MAGICAL FRUIT OF ITS BOUGHS –

BOTH: I SEE IT NOW, AN UNFADED MEMORY,
THE BRIGHT CHRISTMAS TREE OF MY DREAMS.

MEN: THERE ARE JOLLY FACED, HUGE GRINNING, BROAD LITTLE MEN
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BEHIND AN OAKEN CROWNED MEN
FOR, LOOK! WHEN YOU LIFT OFF HIS TOPPER,
INSIDE HE'S FILLED WITH SUGAR-PLUMS.
ALL OF THE DREAMS THAT YOU'VE HELD CLOSE SO LONG
ARE THERE WAITING FOR YOU.

WOMEN: HIDING IN THE BOUGHS, THERE ARE ROSY-CHEEKED DOLLS,
BRIGHT EYES PEEPING AT THE BRIGHT EYES BELOW.
THIS WOND'ROUS COLLECTION OF MARVELS,
THE MAGICAL FRUIT OF YOUR FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE,
SMILES IN THE LIGHT OF THE GAZE FALLING ON IT
FROM ALL GATHERED 'ROUND.

ALL: THERE ARE FIDDLES AND DRUMS; TAMBOURINES, TRUMPETS,
XYLOPHONES, WHISTLES FOR MAKING OF MUSIC;
WORKBOXES, PAINTBOXES, SWEETBOXES, PEEPBOXES,
LETTERBOXES, COINBOXES; ALL KINDS OF BOXES;

WOMEN: THERE ARE TRINKETS FOR GIRLS, FAR BRIGHTER THAN GOLD;

MEN: BASKETS AND PINCUSHIONS; GUNS, SWORDS, AND BANNERS;

ALL: AND WITCHES WHO STAND IN ENCHANTED RINGS
OF PASTEBOARD, AND FAIRIES WITH WAX-PAPER WINGS.

MEN: | THERE ARE IMITATION APPLES, AND CANDIED PEARS AND WALNUTS,
| SO CLEVERLY BE-RIBBONED AND BRIGHT WITH GOLD LEAF.

WOMEN: |
| THERE ARE TEETOTUMS, HUMMING-TOPS, NEEDLE-CASES, PEN-WIPERS,
| SMELLING-BOTTLES, REAL FRUIT MADE BRIGHT WITH GOLD LEAF.

ALL: AND THE CHILD WITHIN ME DELIGHTEDLY WHISPERS

CHILD: THERE'S ALL THAT I WANTED –

COMPANY: ALL THAT I WANTED.

CHILD: – AND MORE!

COMPANY: IF I SHOULD NO MORE COME HOME, CHRISTMAS TIME,
THERE WILL BE BOYS AND GIRLS EVER AT PLAY.
UP YONDER THEY DANCE ON THE BRANCHES
OF THE BRIGHT CHRISTMAS TREE OF MY FANCY.
MAY THE STAR ON THE TOP OF OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE,
SPREAD ITS LIGHT THROUGH THE WORLD!

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THEY ARE INDIAN AND CHINA: CAMEL AND RUMOR
XYLOPHONES, WHISTLES FOR MAKING OF MUSIC;
WORKBOXES, PAINTBOXES, SWEETBOXES, PEEPBOXES,
LETTERBOXES, COINBOXES; ALL KINDS OF BOXES;

WOMEN: THERE ARE TRINKETS FOR GIRLS, FAR BRIGHTER THAN GOLD;

MEN: BASKETS AND PINCUSHIONS; GUNS, SWORDS, AND BANNERS;

ALL: AND WITCHES WHO STAND IN ENCHANTED RINGS
OF PASTEBOARD, AND FAIRIES WITH WAX-PAPER WINGS.

MEN: | THERE ARE IMITATION APPLES, AND CANDIED PEARS AND WALNUTS,
| SO CLEVERLY BE-RIBBONED AND BRIGHT WITH GOLD LEAF.

WOMEN: |
| THERE ARE TEETOTUMS, HUMMING-TOPS, NEEDLE-CASES, PEN-WIPERS,
| SMELLING-BOTTLES, REAL FRUIT MADE BRIGHT WITH GOLD LEAF.

ALL: AND I HEAR A SOFT WHISPER SPREAD THROUGH THE GREEN LEAVES.
"THIS, DO IN KINDNESS, IN MERCY, COMPASSION
THIS, DO IN LOVE – THIS, DO IN LOVE! IN LOVE!
THIS, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME!

(They sit quietly and watch the fire; lights down.)

Act Two
Scene Two

(Music Cue 20: Picter 2nd Transition; HARRY paces back and forth in his room.)

HARRY: I shall not sleep again under this roof. That's the sum of my ambition for this day. I shall not sleep while I am under this roof.

(Lights up on COBBS.)

COBBS: Do you remember when first you married, Harry?

HARRY: When first I . . . ?

COBBS: You were eight. It were Christmas time. You were eight and . . .

HARRY: Angela and I! ... were married in the right-hand closet in the corner of the dancing-school with a ring from Wilkingwater's toy-shop.

COBBS: It turned her finger green.

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HARRY: At last! I have my freedom . . . I mean, Lieutenant-Colonel Picter was summarily married to little Emmeline Ashford.

COBBS: And you all embarked on a period of blissful married life . . .

HARRY: We did not. *(Music Cue 21: The Attack, Intro.)* Our brides were held in captivity at Miss Drowvey's Academy, a prison masquerading as a school for girls. The Colonel and I were in an agony over how we were to free them from durance vile.

(Music Cue 22: The Attack, Song.)

EDWIN: A VOW WE ENTER NOW, ME AND YOU –

HARRY: ME AND YOU.

EDWIN: WE'LL FREE OUR LOVELY BRIDES, JUST WE TWO.

HARRY: JUST WE TWO.

EDWIN: EVERY WEDNESDAY, NOON 'TIL ONE,
THEIR CAPTORS LET THEM TAKE THE SUN
SO, WE'LL CUT THEM OUT WHEN WALKING TWO AND TWO.

HARRY: TWO AND TWO.

EDWIN: IN THE DESPERATE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE –

HARRY: OF THE CASE.

EDWIN: EACH DETAIL OF OUR PLAN MUST BE IN PLACE.

HARRY: IN ITS PLACE.

EDWIN: OUR ATTACK MUST BE COMPLETE: EITHER VICTORY OR DEFEAT;
EITHER HONOUR OR A LIFETIME OF DISGRACE.

BOTH: FOR OUR OATH IS OWED TO THE PIRATE'S CODE
AND WE SWEAR BY THE BLACK PIRATE FLAG,
THAT OUR HEARTS WILL BE BRIGHT AND OUR CAUSES EVER RIGHT
AND OUR FERVOUR FOR THE FIGHT WILL NEVER LAG. NEVER LAG.

COBBS: *(Spoken.)* I thought he were a Lieutenant-Colonel?

HARRY: *(Spoken.)* Also a pirate.

EDWIN: I'VE DRAWN A MAP TO OUTLINE OUR CAMPAIGN

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EDWIN: ON WEDNESDAY, WE'LL ATTACK IF IT DON'T RAIN.

HARRY: IT DON'T RAIN.

EDWIN: FROM BEHIND THE LAMPPOST WAIT, WHILE I GO TO FACE MY FATE,
AND I STRIVE TO END THE HATED DROWVEY'S REIGN.

HARRY: DROWVEY'S REIGN.

BOTH: AND THEN CALL YOUR (MY) BRIDE TO YOUR (MY) PIRATE'S SIDE
AND THEN STAND LIKE A MAN WHEN DUTY CALLS,
FOR YOUR (MY) ORDERS ARE: "ATTACK!
FORWARD! COURAGE! DON'T HOLD BACK,
AT THE MOMENT WHEN THE HATED DROWVEY FALLS."

HARRY: DROWVEY FALLS.

BOTH: AT THE MOMENT WHEN . . . THE MOMENT WHEN . . .
THE MOMENT WHEN THE HATED DROWVEY FALLS!

HARRY: PERMISSION TO SPEAK . . . SIR.

EDWIN: PERMISSION GRANTED.

HARRY: THERE'S A PROBLEM THAT'S INHERENT IN YOUR PLAN.

IT'S ALL VERY NEAT, SIR, AND NICELY COLOURED,
THOUGH MY REAL EARS DON'T STICK OUT SO VERY FAR.
IT SHOWS CLEARLY I'M TO WAIT BY THE LAMP-POST AT THE GATE,
BUT SUPPOSING THAT MISS DROWVEY WILL NOT FALL? WILL NOT FALL?

EDWIN: *(Pause; spoken.)* But, she must fall. All tyrants fall. It says so in all the books.

HARRY: *(Spoken.)* It would not be very sporting of her not to fall.

EDWIN: *(Thinks; spoken.)* We need more firepower.

HARRY: *(Spoken.)* Firepower?

EDWIN: *(Spoken.)* The artillery, Harry!

(He produces a gigantic firecracker.)

HARRY: *(Saluting; spoken.)* Yes, sir!

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BOTH: FOR OUR OATH IS OWED TO THE PIRATE'S CODE
AND WE SWEAR BY THE BLACK PIRATE FLAG,
THAT OUR HEARTS WILL BE BRIGHT AND OUR CAUSES EVER RIGHT
AND OUR FERVOUR FOR THE FIGHT WILL NEVER LAG.

EDWIN: *(Spoken.)* The enemy approaches! Remember your signal!

(EDWIN unfurls a black pirate flag.)

(Spoken.) Die, tyrant!

(EDWIN rushes offstage to the attack; noises off.)

YOUNG

HARRY: THE COLONEL RUSHES FORTH TO THE ATTACK. *(BOOM! From firecracker.)*
THE ENEMY MUST SURELY SOON FALL BACK. *(SCREAM from MISS DROWVEY.)*
WEAPON BARED, I WAIT IN VAIN,
BUT THE SIGNAL NEVER CAME,
FOR FAR FROM FALLING, DROWVEY FOUGHT BACK! *(EDWIN yells: "OW!".)*

(The music slows.)

HARRY: THEN ON THE GROUND I SAW POOR EDWIN LIE,
THE FIEND HAD SPLIT HIS TROUSERS, BLACKED HIS EYE.

THEN I FOUGHT MY DESPERATE WAY
THROUGH THE BACK ROAD TO THE LANE
SEEING, FOR THE MOMENT, ALL WAS LOST. ALL WAS LOST

*(DROWVEY ,hat askew and parasol broken, marches EDWIN through
by the ear; music stops; THE GIRLS approach HARRY, noses
scornfully in the air.)*

ANGELA: How can I look upon you? Not coming to your friend's aid? Is my husband . . . can I say the word? Is my husband a cow . . . ?

(The girls run off; EDWIN re-enters and approaches HARRY.)

HARRY: It was a failure.

EDWIN: It was a disaster.

HARRY: A catastrophe.

EDWIN: A debacle.

HARRY: A what?

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EDWIN: A failure. All because Miss Drowvey would not fall. I told her as much. I said, "Look here, you really must fall."

HARRY: What did she say?

EDWIN: Nothing. She struck me across the head with her parasol.

HARRY: Look here, Edwin. Angela said the strangest thing. She said, "Is my husband a cow?"

EDWIN: She said that?

HARRY: Yes. She said, "Can I say the word? Is my husband a cow?"

EDWIN: *(Thinks.)* There's a syllable wanting. She asked, can she say the word? And no; you see she couldn't.

HARRY: And the word was?

EDWIN: "Is my husband a cow - cow - coward?"

HARRY: But I'm not!

EDWIN: Certainly not.

HARRY: We must clear my name!

(The two girls appear, walking arm in arm.)

EDWIN: Certainly.

(The girls come up to EDWIN.)

ANGELA: Colonel, we wish to thank you for acting so bravely on our behalf.

EMMELINE: But neither of us wish to speak to . . . a certain person.

ANGELA: Neither of us.

EDWIN: *(Like a barrister.)* Miss Leath, what do you consider the first duty of a soldier?

ANGELA: Bravery.

EDWIN: But, sometimes, a soldier, no matter how brave, must put his orders first, mustn't he?

ANGELA: Yes, I suppose.

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ANGELA: It is.

EDWIN: Captain Walmers, show her the paper in your hand.

(HARRY shows ANGELA the map.)

I put it to you, Miss Leath, that this sketch shows clearly that Captain Walmers followed his orders to the letter.

THE GIRLS: Hurrah! No coward and not guilty!

EDWIN: Hurrah!

(Music Cue 23: The Attack, reprise.)

EMMELINE: Edwin, Angela and I have been considering. It's no use pretending.

EDWIN: Pretending? Hah!

EMMELINE: If grown-up people *won't* go along, what comes of it?

ANGELA: We only get into scrapes.

(Silence ensues.)

EMMELINE: Nothing ever seems to happen the way it's written in the books. It must be the grown-ups who have changed all this.

EMMELINE: *We* would never want to.

HARRY: Well, what are we going to do?

ANGELA: WE'LL HAVE TO PRETEND, THEN, BUT IN A NEW MANNER.
WE'LL PRETEND THAT WE ARE CHILDREN AS THEY THINK.

EMMELINE: WE'LL WAIT FOR THE FAIRIES; WAIT FOR THE GIANTS.
WE WILL WAIT 'TIL THINGS HAVE CHANGED AROUND AGAIN.

THE GIRLS: IF WE WAIT UNTIL WE'RE EIGHTY, NINETY, AND WE'RE EVER TRUE,
THEN THE FAIRIES WILL COME BACK FOR ME AND YOU. ME AND YOU.

ALL FOUR: AND THEN CALL YOUR BRIDE TO YOUR PIRATE'S SIDE THEN THE
GROWN-UPS WILL HAVE TO UNDERSTAND.

AND WE SWEAR A SOLEMN VOW

THAT WE'LL UNDERSTAND SOMEHOW

WHEN OUR DEAR CHILDREN SUFFER AS WE DO.

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AND WE SWEAR A VOW WE'LL KNOW SOMEHOW

WHEN OUR DEAR CHILDREN SUFFER AS WE DO.

(Music ends; HARRY wakes.)

HARRY: By Heaven! I am in the Lunatic Asylum, and those here are all as mad as I!

*(He exits; lights down; Music Cue 24, The Attack, Transition/
I Married A Mermaid.)*

Act Two
Scene Three

(TOM enters walking very carefully and slowly; he carries a bottle; he appears very nervous and turns suddenly about, searching.)

TOM: ‘T’WAS ON THE DEEP ATLANTIC, MIDST EQUINOCTIAL GALES;
THE YOUNG SAILOR FELL OVERBOARD AMONG THE SHARKS AND WHALES;
HE DISAPPEARED SO QUICKLY, SO HEADLONG DOWN WENT HE,
THAT HE WENT OUT OF SIGHT LIKE A STREAK OF SH – LIGHT
TO THE BOTTOM OF THE DEEP BLUE SEA.

SINGING RULE BRITANNIA, BRITANNIA RULE THE WAVES
BRITONS NEVER, NEVER, NEVER SHALL BE . . . *(he burps.)*

WE LOWERED A BOAT TO FIND HIM, WE THOUGHT TO SEE HIS CORSE,
WHEN UP TO THE TOP HE CAME WITH A POP, AND SANG IN A VOICE
SO HOARSE,
‘MY COMRADES AND MY MESSMATES,
OH, DO NOT WEEP FOR ME, FOR I’M MARRIED TO A MERMAID,
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DEEP BLUE SEA.’

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BRITONS NEVER, NEVER, NEVER SHALL BE . . . *(he hiccoughs.)*

HE SAID THAT AS HE WENT DOWN GREAT FISHES HE DID SEE;
THEY SEEMED TO THINK AS HE DID WINK THAT HE WAS RATHER FREE.
BUT DOWN HE WENT SO QUICKLY
SAYING, ‘TIS ALL UP WITH ME,’ WHEN HE MET A LOVELY MERMAID
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DEEP BLUE SEA.

SINGING RULE BRITANNIA, BRITANNIA RULE THE WAVES
BRITONS NEVER, NEVER, NEVER SHALL BE . . .

(HARRY enters, very upset and sees TOM, taps him on the shoulder.)

. . . AH! *(Music ends; he turns to see HARRY.)* It’s you, sir.

HARRY: And it’s you. I was afraid it might be another inmate from my private asylum.

TOM: Which private asylum is that, sir?

HARRY: The one in the back room.

TOM: I see. You’ve spent most of your time up in the back room since you come, sir.

HARRY: I have.

TOM: An't it solitary, then, sir?

HARRY: It's a little dull sometimes. And you? Have you no bed?

TOM: I am contemplating my fate. It has been foretold that I shall meet my fate at the stroke of midnight.

HARRY: I have never seen anyone meet their Fate.

TOM: I am of a mind that it is not pleasant – to watch or to experience.

HARRY: I am fleeing mine – I am on my way to America or to the Devil.

TOM: So you say, sir. *(Pause.)* You've not got far on the road to either, have you, sir?

HARRY: No, I am becalmed in the Holly Tree. And, by the by – *(he takes a paper from his pocket and lays it on the table.)* – if you should see Sophie again, tell her she forgot to take this.

TOM: And that is?

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HARRY: *(He shows her a receipt for his heavy luggage.)* She'll need the receipt to be able to take it to her.

TOM: I'll not be able to, will I, sir, with my fate about to come upon me.

HARRY: Well, please yourself. As Sophie has stolen my passage to American, my sole option would seem to be the Devil.

TOM: You take things to extremes, don't you? If you were to go up in a balloon, you would make for Heaven; and if you were to dive into the depths of the earth, nothing short of the other place would content you.

HARRY: Yes, Tom, I can do nothing by halves, and be nothing by halves. You must take me as a whole. Let us be sociable.

TOM: What brings you down at this time of a Christmas Eve, sir?

HARRY: If you must know, I find, from what reason I cannot reason, that I am haunted.

TOM: How haunted?

HARRY: By a face in a dream.

TOM: A terrible face?

HARRY: No. A homely, unremarkable-looking man. But if I see that face tonight, I do not know how I could ever bear it.

TOM: I shouldn't think you had anything to be afraid of, sir.

HARRY: Not quite, Tom; if I am afraid of nothing else, I am afraid of myself. So much so that I would, on no account, have undertaken to pass the night alone.

TOM: (*Yawning.*) It lacks a few minutes of Twelve.

HARRY: Keep awake, Tom! The small hours are the worst. We must keep each other awake.

(Music Cue 25: Annie Laurie, Part One.)

TOM: And, how do we do that?

HARRY: I'm not sure. I believe *I* shall sing.

HER BROW IS LIKE THE SNOWDRIFT, HER THROAT IS LIKE THE SWAN,
HER FACE IT IS THE FAIREST, THAT 'ERE THE SUN SHONE ON.
THAT 'ERE THE SUN SHONE ON, AND DARK BLUE IS HER E'E,
AND FOR BONNIE ANNIE LAURIE, I'D LAY ME DOON AND DEE.

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TOM: What an ass that fellow was! What a sniveller! If I fell into that state, do you think I'd lay me doon and dee? No, sir, I'd get me oop and peetch in'ae somebody. Wouldn't you?

HARRY: Why take the trouble?

TOM: It's no trouble, sir, to fall in love. The trouble comes in falling out of it.

HARRY: So, I shall keep out of it altogether. But, do as you like. Be what you like.

TOM: Some people, sir, are sometimes what they don't like.

HARRY: I have been what I don't like, all my life.

(Music Cue 26: Annie Laurie, Part Two.)

LIKE A DEW ON THE GOWAN LYING, IS THE FA' O' HER FAIRY FEET,
AND LIKE WINDS IN SUMMER SIGHING, HER VOICE IS LOW AND SWEET.

HARRY &

TOM: HER VOICE IS LOW AND SWEET, AND SHE'S A' THE WORLD TO ME,
AND FOR BONNIE ANNIE LAURIE, I'D LAY ME DOON AND DEE.

TOM: What o'clock is it?

HARRY: Very nearly midnight, I should believe.

TOM: I can't stay here!

HARRY: Whereas, I have no intent to move from here.

TOM: Up, and let us go. Forward!

HARRY: I have not done with Annie Laurie yet.

AND FOR BONNIE ANNIE LAURIE, I'D LAY ME DOON . . .

(A clock begins to chime.)

TOM: Hush!

HARRY: What?

TOM: There!

HARRY: What?

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HARRY: AND FOR BONNIE ANNIE LAURIE, I'D LAY ME DOON . . .

TOM: Hush!

HARRY: What?

TOM: There!

HARRY: What?

TOM: Nothing again.

HARRY: I'D LAY ME DOON AND DEE.

(The music ends; silence.)

TOM: Midnight. Now here's a thing. I've worked myself up into a state of, as you might say, intense anticipation. The time has come – the time has passed – and I don't know whether my fate has come upon me or not! I don't know what to do next.

HARRY: But, I do. *(He rises with determination.)* I'm going back up there.

TOM: Sir?

HARRY: I'm not going to wait for my fate – it does no good. I'm going back up to face it down.

TOM: You're leaving me, sir? Alone?

HARRY: So it would appear. Goodnight to you, Master Thomas Grig.

TOM: Goodnight to you, sir. May you make peace with your haunt this night.

HARRY: One way or another, Tom, I shall. May you do the same.

(HARRY exits; TOM is alone; Music Cue 27: Tom's Fate, reprise.)

TOM: A CERTAIN NEARBY PERSONAGE, MYSTERIOUS AND GREAT,
ON CHRISTMAS EVE, THE MIDNIGHT HOUR, IS DOOMED TO MEET HIS FATE.

(Spoken.) Come on, then! Let's be having you!

THE STARS NO DOUBT ARE ALL CORRECT
IN EVERY, TINY, SMALL RESPECT
OUR LIVES ARE RULED BY THEIR EFFECT

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A MAN CANNOT ESCAPE HIS FATE. THE STARS WILL NOT BE SWAYED
ALL THE PLANETS CALCULATE IT, AND THE STARS MUST BE OBEYED.

(TOM waits; nothing; he looks around; nothing; he gets up and searches in corners; nothing; he opens the door and calls out.)

TOM: Here! If you're out there, come in! No sense my fate befalling some other poor fellow.

(Nothing; he sits at the table once again.)

Well, that's that, then. I knew it all along – I have no fate. Destiny? Hogwash.

(He picks up his bottle; as he does he sees the travel ticket that HARRY left behind; he holds it up and his eyes widen with surprise.)

SOPHIE: *(OFF.)* THINK OF US, TOM, WHAT LIFE WOULD BE LIKE IF
WE SHOULD EVER BE MARRIED.

TOM: What?

SOPHIE: *(OFF.)* THINK OF US, TOM, HOW HAPPY WE'D BE IF
WE SHOULD EVER BE MARRIED.

TOM: Sophie?

SOPHIE: *(OFF.)* I CAN SEE US WALKING ARM IN ARM, AFFECTIONATELY STROLLING.
YOU ALL DECKED OUT IN YOUR SUNDAY CLOTHES . . .

TOM: YOU WITH A SMUDGE ON YOUR NOSE.

*(SOPHIE enters behind TOM, wet and bedraggled with a carpet bag;
she stands at the door, very miserable.)*

SOPHIE: THINK OF US, TOM, WHAT LIFE WOULD BE LIKE IF WE SHOULD

BOTH: EVER, EVER, EVER-AFTER MARRY.

TOM: *(In realization of his fate.)* Well, I never. Sophie . . . !

*(He turns and sees her; lights down; segue directly to: Music
Cue 28, The Attack 2nd Transition .)*

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Act Two
Scene Four

(Lights up; HARRY runs into his bedroom – calling. There is no one there; he searches the room.)

HARRY: Cobbs! Where have you got to, now? Cobbs!

COBBS: *(Entering.)* I'm 'ere, sir.

HARRY: Cobbs, I accuse you of trying to raise me from my misery, release me from my solitude.

COBBS: *(Confessing to the charge.)* Well, I 'ave done.

HARRY: Why, Cobbs? Life is full of misery; full of folly. Bah! It's a game to play. Oh! it's a very interesting game. There are deep moves upon the board.

COBBS: You mustn't laugh at life, sir.

HARRY: Only when you win, Cobbs – and then not much. Hee, hee, hee! And that's about all.

COBBS: And what is it you laugh at, sir?

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HARRY: Humanity. That's the joke!

COBBS: Sir, I'm as muddled a man as ever lived, yet I can't come close to equalling your molloncolly nor your distrust of your fellow man.

HARRY: Can you blame me, Cobbs, knowing what I have lost?

(Music Cue 29: Nobody's Enemy.)

COBBS: Do you think you're the only one who's lost? It's 'appenin' all over – everywhere – now – this second. We all lose some'at, someone, everything in t' end. It's what you make of the times in between that counts.

'OW MANY SHADOWS OF OLD DISAPPOINTMENTS LIE
COLDLY JUST OUT OF REACH?

WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN 'OO LAUGHED AT THE CANDLES
THAT LIGHTED YOUR FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE?

(Lights come up slowly on ANGELA.)

ANGELA: WHAT KIND OF FAILURES – IMPOSSIBLE DAYDREAMS HAVE
TAUGHT YOU TO KEEP OUT THE WORLD?

WHEN WAS THE MOMENT THAT YOU FIRST ACKNOWLEDGED THE
EDGE OF THE KNIFE WAS TOO KEEN?

ANGELA &

COBBS: YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ALL THE JOY IN OUR LIVING.
YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ALL THE JOY IN THE GIVING OF OURSELVES.

YOU'RE NOBODY'S ENEMY BUT YOUR OWN.
GOING THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT SEEING HOW

COBBS: WE FAIL IN LIFE BECAUSE WE TRUST TOO MUCH –

ANGELA: WE FAIL IN LOVE, BECAUSE WE NEED TOO MUCH–

ANGELA &

COBBS: BUT THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES THIS LIFE WORTHWHILE.

*(ASHFORD comes on, pulling ANGELA by the arm; HARRY
crosses to join them; music continues under.)*

ANGELA: Uncle, I didn't expect you to be so angry.

PERUSA OF COURSE YOU DIDN'T WHEN DID YOU EVER EXPECT WHEN YOU OF HAD TO MAN GRITTING

HARRY: Sir, you wrong us cruelly if you suppose there is anything in this but pure, faithful love.

ASHFORD: Miss, I understand there is a world of pure, faithful love cooped here. I am happy to
make it complete. I bring you your husband, miss. A perfect stranger to me and you
shall likewise be a perfect stranger!

ANGELA: Uncle, you have the disposal of my fortune but are my feelings not to be considered?

ASHFORD: You may marry this penniless stranger, but you will do so without a penny of your own.

ANGELA: Uncle, no!

ASHFORD: I've seen climbers before, and I'll not have *that* one climb to the roof of *my* house. Tell
him your contract is broken. Do it, miss, or leave this house.

ANGELA: *(after a struggle.)* Mr. Walmers, I release you from our contract.

*(HARRY runs off; ANGELA runs the other way; lights down on
ASHFORD; EDWIN and EMMELINE enter in dim light.)*

COBBS: 'OW MANY PIECES OF OLD SHATTERED WISHES LIE
SPARKLING NOW AT OUR FEET?

EDWIN: WHERE ARE THE SCARS OF THE BATTLES WE'VE YIELDED
AND WHY ARE WE LEFT INCOMPLETE?

EMMELINE: WHAT KIND OF TERRORS – WHAT NIGHTMARES – WHAT HORRORS
COULD FORCE US TO SHUT UP OUR HEARTS?

(ANGELA enters in dim light.)

COBBS: WHEN DID THE 'EROS OF YOUTH, OF OUR SPRINGTIME
BECOME THE POOR FOOLS THAT WE ARE?

ANGELA: YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ALL THE JOY IN OUR LIVING.
YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ALL THE JOY IN THE GIVING OF OURSELVES.

ALL FOUR: YOU'RE NOBODY'S ENEMY BUT YOUR OWN.
GOING THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT SEEING HOW
WE FAIL IN LIFE BECAUSE WE TRUST TOO MUCH –
WE FAIL IN LOVE, BECAUSE WE NEED TOO MUCH–
BUT THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES THIS LIFE WORTHWHILE.

(Music continues; EMMELINE exits; EDWIN knocks quietly at a door and ANGELA crosses to it; HARRY, who has been about to cross to EMMELINE, stands back, turned and silent.)

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ANGELA: Oh, Edwin, think! This should not be. Think of what you do!

EDWIN: I have thought of it many times.

ANGELA: Think on it till to-morrow. For the sake of him that I used to love so dearly, once!

EDWIN: We shall steal away. Yes! Steal away and be married at once at Gretna Green!

ANGELA: Heavens, Edwin, to dare!

EDWIN: We shall do it, Angela! Your uncle has forbidden you to marry Harry. Now, is the time for us! There's not a moment for us to lose.

ANGELA: Let me speak with him, first.

EDWIN: Don't cross the door-step to-night. No good will come of it. I will speak with him.

ANGELA: You are the best and truest friend in all the world. Goodbye.

(She kisses EDWIN and he exits; HARRY steps forward.)

HARRY: Angela . . .

ANGELA: Harry! *(She runs up to him; he draws back.)* Why, what's the matter?

HARRY: Not much. Miss Leath, I have tried to do my duty toward you.

ANGELA: Your duty?

HARRY: In view of the changed state of your affections, I shall make my farewells.

ANGELA: But why, Harry? Why?

HARRY: It is the natural result of the distance that has grown between us. Such distance, Angela, as seems to me incapable of bridging.

ANGELA: . . . such distance, Harry, has been of your making.

HARRY: Circumstances change, so we have changed . . .

ANGELA: I am not half so changed as you, Harry.

HARRY: Your preference is natural, and I forgive you.

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ANGELA: Forgive me, Harry! I can never address another word to you on this earth!

(HARRY crosses back to COBBS; ANGELA watches; after a pause. THE COMPANY gather behind in dim light.)

COMPANY: YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ALL THE JOY IN OUR LIVING.
YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ALL THE JOY IN THE GIVING
OF OURSELVES.
YOU'RE NOBODY'S ENEMY BUT YOUR OWN.
GOING THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT SEEING HOW

ANGEA/EMMELINE: WE FAIL IN LIFE BECAUSE WE TRUST TOO MUCH –

COBBS/EDWIN: WE FAIL IN LOVE, BECAUSE WE NEED TOO MUCH–

ANGELA: OR IS IT THAT IT'S NOT ENOUGH?

ALL: YOU'RE NOBODY'S ENEMY BUT YOUR OWN.
GOING THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT SEEING HOW
WE ALL FAIL SOMETIMES – BECAUSE WE NEED SO MUCH –
BUT THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES THIS LIFE WORTHWHILE.
NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE IN THIS WILD, BEWILDERING WORLD.

SLY, DECEIT OR TREACHERY OR LOVE THAT FREELY GROWS.
EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE, BUT YOU'LL NEVER KNOW 'TIL YOU TRY.

HARRY: *(Spoken.)* Why bother? It's a joke – nothing more or less.

COBBS: *(Spoken.)* Then, it's a very difficult joke to crack. And it ought to be; it ought to be as 'ard a struggle, sir, as possible. It's the struggle what counts, sir – and 'ow we goes about it.

ANGELA: YOU'LL NEVER KNOW IF YOU NEVER EVEN TRY.

(Lights down; Music Cue 30, The Holly & The Ivy 1st Transition.)

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Act Two
Scene Five

(Lights up on THE MAJOR looking out the window; snow; he sighs loudly; MRS. LIRRIPER enters.)

MRS. LIRRIPER: A Merry Christmas to you, Major.

THE MAJOR: Merry Christmas, Madam. *(He sighs again.)*

MRS. LIRRIPER: Major, you've fallen into a regular moping state.

THE MAJOR: 'Ave I, h'indeed, Madam?

MRS. LIRRIPER: You have, Major. You've not even the same air of being rather tall you used to have.

THE MAJOR: H'indeed, madam.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Moping is not the way to grow younger, Major.

THE MAJOR: My dear Madam, h'is there *any* way of growin' younger?

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MRS. LIRRIPER: Thirteen years! Thir-*teen* years! *(THE MAJOR remains silent.)* I am sure this old inn – our dear boy's home – might write a story or two, if only it could. I wish our boy could hear them.

(THE MAJOR's head comes up in his shirt-collar.)

THE MAJOR: Are you serious, Madam?

MRS. LIRRIPER: Why not, Major?

THE MAJOR: *(Turning up one of his cuffs.)* Madam, they shall be written for him!

MRS. LIRRIPER: *(Clapping her hands.)* Ah! Now, Major, you look as tall as you ever did!

(HARRY comes into the main lobby of the inn.)

THE MAJOR: *(Exiting.)* A Merry Christmas to you, sir!

HARRY: And, to you, Major. A Merry Christmas, indeed!

(HARRY stands for a moment, then, with decision.)

Mrs. Lirriper!

MRS. LIRRIPER: You're looking well this Christmas morning and a fine morning it is, too, so why shouldn't you be well? Why shouldn't we all be well, but what with old age and youth creeping up on us daily . . .

HARRY: (*firmly.*) Mrs. Lirriper, I should like my bill. I have been snowed up a whole week.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Is it a week, sir? Your bill should be here; the Major likes to keep on top of these things and . . . here's the bill, sir – all the same, we shall be sorry to say goodbye to you, sir.

HARRY: I shall be sorry to say goodbye, myself, especially to Cobbs. Heavens, I mustn't leave without saying goodbye to Cobbs!

THE MAJOR: (*Re-entering with his coat.*) Who is this Cobbs? I 'aven't the slightest notion to 'oom you refer.

HARRY: Cobbs! The Boots, of course!

THE MAJOR: We 'ave no Boots at the Holly Tree. Not so long as I've been 'ere.

HARRY: Cobbs and I have spent the last week engaged in the most happy reminiscences.

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MRS. LIRRIPER: Where, sir? In the back room, sir?

HARRY: In the . . . in my room, wherever that is.

THE MAJOR: Never believed in that story. Besides, we burned that bed, hangings and all.

HARRY: Burned the bed, hangings and all? In heaven's name why?

MRS. LIRRIPER: For the very sound reason that *that* was the bed where someone died.

HARRY: Who died in that bed?

MRS. LIRRIPER: Cobbs, the Boots.

THE MAJOR: My God! if you talk of ghosts –

HARRY: But I DON'T talk of ghosts.

THE MAJOR: Of what then?

HARRY: If I knew of what then, I should probably know a great deal more than I do. However, now, this morning, I shall need my bill upon the table, and a chaise to be at the door.

MRS. LIRRIPER: You'll be going on, then, to America?

HARRY: Indeed. A post-chaise, post-haste, Mrs. Lirriper. Merry Christmas!

MRS. LIRRIPER: Merry Christmas, sir! Sophie! Oh, dear me – Tom!

(The MAJOR opens the door as TOM enters, SOPHIE trying to hide behind him; TOM carries a small carpet bag.)

TOM: 'Ere, now, Ma'am. Give me a moment and I'll get the coach.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Tom!

ALL: Sophie!

TOM: That's right – the both of us – returned, as it were, from meetin' with our fate.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Sophie, Sophie, for goodness' goodness' sake, what shall we do with you?

SOPHIE: Mrs. Lirriper, I'm sorry as ever I can be. And, I'm sorry, too, Mr. Harry, for making off with your passage to America. It was that angry, I was. I suppose I must go to jail.

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HARRY: On that morning? No, Sir. I forgive you. It's fate. It must be fate.

(He stares meaningfully at TOM until TOM gets it.)

MRS LIRRIPER: Sophie, along to the kitchen where it's retired and eat a little to do you good.

SOPHIE: *(In tears.)* Oh, why were you not my mother when there are such mothers as there are!

TOM: Don't take on, Sophe! To think I should be brought round to myself through you, Sophie. Through you! Why, you haven't so much as half an idea in your head.

SOPHIE: No, I don't suppose I have.

TOM: I'm pretty sure of it.

SOPHIE: Oh! I dare say you're right. I don't pretend to none. I don't want none.

TOM: That being the case, why should we should not light our lamps from the same taper?

(TOM holds out a wedding ring.)

SOPHIE: Oh dear! You never mean it?

TOM: I ever mean it and I am ever yours. It's fate, Sophe – and a man cannot escape his fate.

(THE MAJOR re-enters from outside with JEMMIE.)

MAJOR: There are lamps coming down towards the Holly-Tree, dearest madam.

JEMMIE: The road is so padded with snow we can hear no wheels, but we see lamps coming on.

THE MAJOR: . . . and at a lively rate too.

MRS. LIRRIPER: On Christmas Day? Major, this is a Gretna job! Tom! Tom!

MAJOR: *(TOM being intent on SOPHIE, as a sergeant-major.)* Grig! Next four out! Left! Right! Left! Right! *(He quick steps TOM out.)*

MRS. LIRRIPER: We shall call for your chaise shortly, sir.

HARRY: No matter. I have a morbid interest in seeing the happy man who loves and whose love prefers him and not his friend.

(A man, in hat, wrap and muffler, stamps in briskly from outside, nearly knocking over HARRY.)

EDWIN: My dear sir, I do apologise, and – by heaven, it's Harry!

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HARRY: By heaven, it's Edwin!

EDWIN: Harry!

HARRY: Edwin!

EDWIN: | Gracious powers, what do you do here?

HARRY: | Gracious powers, what do you do here?

EDWIN: Good heavens, man, what we've been through! Harry, forgive me!

HARRY: Edwin! When I loved her so dearly! – I can say no more.

EDWIN: Harry, I had not thought you would take it so much to heart.

HARRY: That's cruel.

EDWIN: Harry, you had a right to know but I and my dear girl kept our secret for your sake.

HARRY: You and your dear girl!

EDWIN: Yes.

HARRY: Kept your secret for my sake?

EDWIN: Yes! – and Angela's.

(HARRY grasps for some support; leans on a chair.)

HARRY: Explain yourself, sir.

EDWIN: Dear old Harry! Consider! Surely it was better that you should be able honourably to say, 'He never took counsel with me, never breathed a word.' Neither I nor Emmeline ever told Angela any more than we told you, but she knew – God bless her for a precious creature! – and in the end, it was Angela prevailed upon her uncle for us.

HARRY: Emmeline.

EDWIN: Yes, of course.

HARRY: Emmeline?

EDWIN: Yes, of course.

HARRY: Emmeline!

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EDWIN: Harry!

HARRY: My dear Edwin! My dear fellow! *Emmeline* is in the chaise.

EDWIN: Emmeline, of course! Do you suppose I'd be going to Gretna Green without her?

HARRY: No! No! Of course not! Who else? Who else, indeed?

EDWIN: I'll tell you who else, indeed, if you'll listen a moment.

(EMMELINE enters from outside.)

HARRY: Emmeline!

EMMELINE: Harry! Gracious, what do you do here?

HARRY: Never mind. This for you (*kisses her cheek.*); and this for Edwin (*kisses her other cheek.*) and this for Angela (*kisses her forehead.*) and this, with Edwin's permission, for myself (*kisses her on the mouth.*) – Merry Christmas!

EMMELINE: Merry Christmas, Harry.

EDWIN: Merry Christmas, Harry. Harry . . .

HARRY: (*Hugging them both.*) I must get back to London! Mrs. Lirriper! Major! Tom! Cobbs!

(*MRS. LIRRIPER, SOPHIE enter.*)

MAJOR: Heavens, man, what's the row?

HARRY: I must get back to London! Now! Today!

MRS. LIRRIPER: London? I thought you were going to America!

HARRY: Whatever put that nonsense into your head? Sophie! Where are you, my girl?

SOPHIE: Here, sir.

HARRY: A present, my dear – a bridal present. My passage to America – I wish you joy of it.

SOPHIE: Oh, sir! How will you get to America, then?

HARRY: Why would I be going to America when Angela is in London?

EMMELINE: Oh, but she's not.

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HARRY: *He's not! I was trying to tell you.*

(*ANGELA enters from outside.*)

ANGELA: I'm here, Harry. I'm not breaking my vow! These are not Angela Leath's lips that speak for, when you will, I have – I *will* have – another name.

HARRY: When *I* will? *When* I will? Today! At once! Now! This moment! Mrs. Lirriper! Major!

THE MAJOR: (*Entering.*) Yes, yes, the coach for Birmingham.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Not Birmingham, Major. Back to London!

HARRY: London! What nonsense! We're all going to Gretna Green!

MRS. LIRRIPER & THE MAJOR: Gretna Green! You told me . . . You said . . .

(*Music Cue 31, The Holly & The Ivy, 2nd Transition.*)

HARRY: Never mind! Tom, Sophie, we're off to Gretna Green! Merry Christmas to you both! (*He hugs TOM and SOPHIE warmly.*) Mrs. Lirriper! We're off to Gretna Green! Merry Christmas to you!

(*He hugs MRS. LIRRIPER then kisses her on the cheek.*)

Major! We're off to Gretna Green! Merry Christmas to you!

(He hugs the MAJOR, then kisses his cheek.)

Edwin! Emmeline! Not a moment to lose!

(EDWIN and EMMELINE exit.)

Angela . . . not one more moment to be lost.

(HARRY and ANGELA exit; the MAJOR & MRS. LIRRIPER stare.)

THE MAJOR: Never saw such people.

MRS. LIRRIPER: Never did in my life.

(Foreground drop descends; lights to forestage.)

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**Act Two
Epilogue**

(HARRY comes out in front of drop and is joined by the COMPANY through the following.)

HARRY: I never went to America but straightway married Angela Leath. I have never, to this day, disclosed the secret of my bashful nature but when she, and they, and our eight children and their seven – I mean Edwin and Emmeline's – come to hear this, I shall be found out at last. Never mind! I can bear it.

At the Holly-Tree, I first associated Christmas time with care for those around me. I know I am none the worse for it, and that no one near me is. And so I say, May the Holly-Tree flourish and its seed be carried by the birds of Heaven all over the world!

(Music Cue 32: Finale; the COMPANY have entered and move downstage as the snow-covered-country-side drop comes down behind them.)

HARRY: WELCOME, FANCY, ALL FORTUNE, ALL DREAMS,
HOPE THAT TO OTHERS ARE FOLLY.

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ANGELA: WELCOME, ALL THAT IS REAL TO OUR HEARTS;
SHELTER IN PEACE 'NEATH THE HOLLY!

MRS. LIRRIPER &
THE MAJOR: STILL IT THRIVES AND EVER SURVIVES
FOLDING ITS WALLS TO SURROUND US

TOM &
SOPHIE: THERE IN THE TWILIGHT, ITS COMFORTING GLOW –

COMPANY: A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS AROUND US.

DRIVER: ALL SOULS ABOARD THE BIRMINGHAM HIGH FLIER!(GUARD: ABOARD!)
MUSTN'T WASTE TIME, GLORIOUS CHRISTMAS DAY. (GUARD: ABOARD!)

DRIVER: | ALL SOULS ABOARD THE BIRMINGHAM HIGH FLIER.
| WE'LL JOURNEY FORTH TOGETHER
| AND OUR HEARTS WILL FLY AWAY.

GUARD: | SING OUT LOUD, IT'S CHRISTMAS DAY!
| SING ALOUD, CHRISTMAS DAY!
| WE'LL SING ALOUD THIS GLORIOUS DAY . . .

BOTH: (GUARD: AND) WE'LL JOURNEY FORTH TOGETHER
AND OUR HEARTS WILL FLY! FLY AWAY! (WE'LL FLY AWAY! AWAY!)

COMPANY: THE SUN IS RISING NOW OVER TOWN, OVER VILLAGE;
ON THE NEWLY FALLEN SNOW-DRIFTS, IT PAINTS A CRIMSON CROWN.
A BREATHLESS MOMENT MORE AND THE DAWN BREAKS UPON US
AND EVES AND WINDOWS GLITTER IN THE BRILLIANCE OF THE DAY.

THOUGH DOORS AND WINDOWS BE CLOSED AGAINST THE COLD,
THERE ARE VOICES RAISED HIGH IN A JOYFUL MORNING SONG.
THOUGHTS ARE BRIGHT, HEARTS ARE OPEN
AND NO HOPES ARE SHUT AWAY.
EVERY STRANGER IS A FRIEND
'NEATH THE HOLLY TREE ON CHRISTMAS DAY!

| THE SUN IS RISING NOW OVER TOWN, OVER VILLAGE;
| ON THE NEWLY FALLEN SNOW-DRIFTS, IT PAINTS A CRIMSON CROWN.
| A BREATHLESS MOMENT MORE AND THE DAWN BREAKS UPON US
| AND EVES AND WINDOWS GLITTER IN THE BRILLIANCE OF THE DAY.

DRIVER & | ALL SOULS ABOARD THE BIRMINGHAM HIGH FLIER! (ABOARD!)
GUARD | MUSTN'T WASTE TIME, THIS GLORIOUS CHRISTMAS DAY. (ABOARD!)
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| (SING ALOUD, CHRISTMAS DAY!)
| ALL SOULS ABOARD THE BIRMINGHAM HIGH FLIER. (AND . . .)

ALL: WE'LL JOURNEY FORTH TOGETHER
AND OUR HEARTS WILL FLY!

GUARD: WE'LL FLY A- |WAY, AWAY!

ALL: | FLY AWAY!

(Curtain; Music Cues 33/34: Bows/Audience Playout.)

END OF MUSICAL