

# **Boeing-Boeing**

A Comedy

Marc Camoletti  
and Beverley Cross

Revised 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2007

## ACT I

*BERNARD and GLORIA (in skirt and blouse) are breakfasting at the stage left table. GLORIA has an American accent.*

GLORIA        Bernard darling, do you think I've time to eat another pancake?

BERNARD        *(looking at his watch)* I should think so- if you hurry. *(goes to door up right and calls)* Bertha!

GLORIA        I adore pancakes for breakfast, don't you?

BERNARD        Not especially.

GLORIA        But back home, all our dieticians agree that a big breakfast prevents day-long neurosis.

BERTHA        *(entering)* Did you call, Monsieur?

BERNARD        Another pancake, Bertha.

BERTHA        For Mademoiselle?

GLORIA        Please, Bertie.

BERTHA        And more of that black stuff to pour over it?

GLORIA        Yes, please. But it's not 'black stuff', it's molasses- very good for the complexion.

BERTHA        Well, I don't know what it's for, but I suppose it's all right. I don't like the look of it myself, but then I'm not here to reform the world.

BERNARD        Well, that's a relief. So, just get busy on the pancake.

BERTHA        Right. But don't blame me if it makes her ill.

BERNARD        Are you going to eat it?

BERTHA        No.

BERNARD        So, there's no need to argue about it. Just hurry up- Mlle Gloria hasn't got much time.

GLORIA        Please Bertie, do hurry. I shall miss my plane.

BERTHA All right. I'm going. But it isn't easy, you know.

BERNARD What? What? What is it now?

BERTHA Nothing...nothing...(she exits to the kitchen)

GLORIA That woman's always in such a bad mood.

BERNARD Is she?

GLORIA It's getting annoying.

BERNARD No. It's just her way. Don't worry about it.

GLORIA I *do* worry. If it goes on like this we'll just have to get rid of her, honey.

BERNARD Whatever for?

GLORIA I don't think she likes me.

BERNARD Now, darling, of course she likes you. It's just all this food you eat. It seems to upset her. It gives her a kind of indirect indigestion.

GLORIA What time is it, darling?

BERNARD Between twenty and a quarter to ten.

GLORIA I don't know- when I'm with you it just whistles by.

BERNARD It's sweet of you to say so.

GLORIA It's true. Is it the same for you?

BERNARD Of course

GLORIA And does it drag when I'm away?

BERNARD Terribly. Never-ending.

BERTHA (*BERTHA entering*) Mademoiselle's pancake and black stuff.

GLORIA How marvellous. Thank you, Bertie.

BERTHA And is that the lot?

BERNARD No. Some more coffee for me, please, Bertha, and another orange juice for you, darling?

GLORIA No, darling. Truly. I've had enough.

BERTHA Well, thank the Lord for that! (*She exits.*)

GLORIA You see – she doesn't like me.

BERNARD Darling!

GLORIA She doesn't. Whenever I get home she's always on edge. While I'm here, she's kind of okay. But when it's time to go, she's downright hostile.

BERNARD Well, she's sad you're going?

GLORIA Because I'm your fiancée?

BERNARD Of course.

GLORIA Oh. And if I was here all the time, she'd be all right?

BERNARD Absolutely! Then we'd all be happy.

GLORIA I'd better get dressed quickly, or I'll miss the plane.

BERNARD That would never do.

GLORIA No, it would be terrible.

BERNARD Terrible. Tell me, darling, when do you get back?

GLORIA Well- it's Saturday today. I'll be in New York at 17.08, then San Francisco- but straight there and straight back.

BERNARD And when will you be back here in Paris?

GLORIA We arrive back in Paris Monday evening. And off again on Wednesday.

BERNARD Monday. Monday. Monday. (*taking out notebook*) What time on Monday, darling?

GLORIA 18.30 local time.

BERNARD Excellent. So whatever happens in San Francisco, you'll be back in Paris on Monday?

GLORIA That's right.

BERNARD Good. Good. Good. Good. Good.

GLORIA It's so sweet how you always have to write it down.

BERNARD So, I don't get it mixed up.

GLORIA Get what mixed up?

BERNARD My arrangements. My business arrangements. I'm a busy man. I've got work to do. I want to make sure that it's all done by the time you get back here so I can spend Monday to Wednesday with you.

GLORIA        You're a genius.

BERNARD      I know- it's lovely, isn't it? Now hadn't you better rush?

GLORIA        You want to get rid of me?

BERNARD      Darling, of course I hate to see you go. But time passes. Planes take off.

BERTHA        (*Entering*) Here's your coffee.

BERNARD      Thank you, Bertha.

GLORIA        Bertie, dear? Will you do me a favour?

BERTHA        Depends.

GLORIA        It's Mr. Bernard. Will you take good care of him till I get back on Monday?

BERTHA        I'll do my best. But he's a big boy now, you know.

GLORIA        Yes, but they're all just kids at heart.

BERTHA        I don't know about that. There aren't too many like Monsieur. He's in a class of his own.

BERNARD      Yes. Yes. Very good. That'll do, Bertha.

GLORIA        See how much she appreciates you, darling?

BERTHA        Oh, I spend my life appreciating Monsieur.

BERNARD      Well, could you appreciate me somewhere else?

BERTHA        She asked me a question and I answered it.

BERNARD      And we're all very grateful.

GLORIA        Well, don't appreciate him too much. You could end up falling in love with him, and I'll be very jealous.

BERTHA        I doubt it'll come to that.

BERNARD      Mercifully. And you'd better hurry, darling.

GLORIA        I'll go and get dressed. (*She exits stage right.*)

BERNARD      What's for lunch?

BERTHA        The American's flying out?

BERNARD      Yes. Well?

BERTHA I'm waiting for my orders. Monsieur has his timetables. And the menus change according to the timetables. All the time! They change. They change round all the time.

BERNARD All right. Take it easy. Now then, Mlle Gabriella will be here for lunch.

BERTHA Ah! Well, that's all right then. Think I can cope with that one. But it isn't easy you know. I find it very difficult to keep track of them all. I don't know how you manage it. It isn't easy.

BERNARD I know it isn't easy. You don't have to keep reminding me.

BERTHA Well, as long as you appreciate me. That's all I ask, just a little appreciation. So what do you want for lunch?

BERNARD You're the cook. You please yourself.

BERTHA Mlle Gabriella? What about saltimbocca alla romana?

BERNARD We had a saltimbocca last Saturday.

BERTHA Of course we did. Mlle Gabriella was here last Saturday. She liked it. She told me so.

BERNARD All right, you win. Saltimbocca alla romana.

BERTHA And what about dinner? A nice roast? Lamb, perhaps?

BERNARD Roast Lamb? Yes, excellent.

BERTHA With olives?

BERNARD (*gets his notebook out*) Yes- er, no, no, wait a minute. Can't be done.

BERTHA No olives?

BERNARD No. No roast lamb either. Near thing that, Bertha. You see it's Mlle Gabriella for lunch, but it's Mlle Gretchen for dinner. She arrives at 19.06.

BERTHA I see. No need to say any more. No roast lamb. Back to sauerkraut and frankfurters.

BERNARD I'm afraid so. Sorry about that.

BERTHA Just one thing after another. I don't know. (*BERTHA exits*)  
(*GLORIA enters in her TWA uniform.*)

GLORIA Darling, is the clock in our room right?

BERNARD I don't know, darling- but it's nearly ten o'clock.

GLORIA Then I've just time to do my nails.

BERNARD Do your nails! But you have to be at the airport by eleven, darling.

GLORIA I can spare two minutes.

BERNARD Don't blame me if the traffic's thick and the lift gets stuck. I really think you ought to hurry.

*(GLORIA takes out some nail file from her shoulder-bag.)*

GLORIA Oh, stop fussing. Darling, I can't tell you how happy I am right now.

BERNARD Why, because you're going?

GLORIA No. Don't be silly. No, I'm happy because they're going to transfer me to a new aircraft.

BERNARD Really.

GLORIA Brand new. The Super-Boeing. It's just fantastic. Delta wings and four Rolls-Royce turbo-jets. And do you know, darling, each jet has a thrust of nineteen thousand pounds.

BERNARD Oh, that's interesting.

GLORIA You bet it's interesting, and especially for us.

BERNARD Darling, I know you take your work seriously, but I can't see what a thrust of nineteen thousand pounds has to do with me.

GLORIA But it'll make the journey so much faster, darling. So, I'll be here more often and we can spend more time together.

BERNARD I see.

GLORIA You don't seem very pleased.

BERNARD Oh! But of course I'm pleased, darling. Very pleased. No point in getting too excited. I mean, you're not transferring tomorrow, are you?

GLORIA Not tomorrow. But soon, very soon.

BERNARD Good

*(A ring at the front door. BERTHA enters from kitchen.)*

BERNARD Good. Excellent, and if I wanted to be sure of that transfer, I'd make certain of catching this plane. And if you want to get to Orly by eleven, you'll have to go now.

BERTHA He's quite right you know. Better safe than sorry, eh, Monsieur ?

BERNARD Absolutely.

GLORIA I'm off across the world. Leaving my little French home behind me. All ready to welcome me when I come back.

BERNARD You'll find nothing changed, darling.

GLORIA I hope not.

BERTHA There's a Monsieur Castin to see you, Monsieur.

BERNARD Castin? Castin? I don't know anyone called Castin. Oh! Robert. But of course! Robert Castin. Show him in! Why, we are old friends!

We were at school together. Dear old Robert. Haven't seen him for ages.

*(BERTHA enters with ROBERT.)*

Robert, my dear fellow!

ROBERT *(laughs)*

BERNARD You! Here in Paris. I can hardly believe it. How are you?

ROBERT I'm fine, how are you?

BERNARD I'm fine. How are you?

ROBERT I'm fine. How are you?

BERNARD Bloody Robert!

ROBERT Bloody Bernard!

BERTHA Bloody Marvellous! *(BERTHA exits)*

ROBERT I say, I'm not interrupting anything, am I?

BERNARD Of course not. An old friend like you. And it must be ten years or more since we met.

ROBERT Eleven years, eight months.

BERNARD Whatever it was, it was much too long. It's good to see you.

ROBERT Me too. Much too long.

GLORIA Bernard!

BERNARD Oh, sorry. An old friend of mine. Robert Castin.

GLORIA How do you do?

ROBERT Delighted.

BERNARD Gloria Hawkins. American by birth, and air hostess by profession.

ROBERT My congratulations, Miss Hawkins.

BERNARD T.W.A, as you can see.

ROBERT And to T.W.A

GLORIA But Bernard, darling, you've forgotten the most important bit.

BERNARD Oh really. What bit?

GLORIA That we're engaged, honey.

BERNARD Of course. Robert- this is my fiancée.

ROBERT Congratulations all round then. Especially you, Bernard. You're a lucky fellow.

BERNARD Isn't she gorgeous?

ROBERT Gorgeous.

GLORIA And your friend Bernard is sweet. So we're all lovely. Are you engaged, Robert?

ROBERT No. No, not yet. I come from Aix, you see; and in the provinces things are much quieter, much quieter.

BERNARD Quite.

GLORIA But there are a lot of pretty girls in the south.

ROBERT Oh yes. Of course. But I haven't found one yet. So, I will have to fall back on a Parisian. But, anyway, you can't be interested in the story of my life. I'm in the way. I'll come back another time.

GLORIA Not at all. Besides, I'm just off.

BERNARD And about time too, darling.

ROBERT Are you sure? You're not going just because of me?

GLORIA Of course not.

GLORIA But it's such a pity. You're the first friend of Bernard's I've ever met. He's such a secretive man. He hides them all away somewhere.

BERNARD Not at all. The fellow lives in Aix. It's not next door you know.

GLORIA Are you going to stay in Paris?

ROBERT I have to. I'm up here on business, you see.

GLORIA Wonderful! Then we're bound to meet again.

ROBERT I shall look forward to that.

GLORIA And you can look after Bernard for me while I'm away.

ROBERT If you say so.

BERNARD Darling, if you don't go soon you won't get back anywhere!

GLORIA Don't rush me. Besides, I've got to give you just one more kiss.

BERNARD *(to ROBERT)* Excuse us.

ROBERT Please. Go ahead. Don't mind me.  
*(He turns to the mirror. GLORIA and BERNARD embrace.)*

GLORIA I adore you.

BERNARD Me too.

GLORIA Goodbye, Mr. Castin.

ROBERT Goodbye.

GLORIA You're a darling. An absolute darling.

BERNARD You too.

GLORIA See you Monday.

BERNARD 18.30- local time.

GLORIA 'Bye now.  
*(She blows him a kiss, and exits.)*

ROBERT You rascal! I must say you've done yourself very well. That's a marvellous girl- lovely!

BERNARD Yes. She's pretty good, isn't she?

ROBERT Much better than that. If I can find myself something half as good, I'll be a happy man.

BERNARD Well, let's have a quick drink shall we? Whisky?

ROBERT           Anything you like. What a lovely girl. And what a fantastic view you've got from up here Bernard. You can see all Paris.

*(approaches forestage and surveys auditorium.)*

BERNARD        It's all right.

ROBERT         Are you still in the architect business?

BERNARD        Still at it- you know. It's good to see you again, Robert, it really is. So what brings you to Paris?

ROBERT         Well, you always said 'Come and see me when I'm fixed up in Paris' and here you are, all fixed up. And here am I.

BERNARD        Dear old Robert.

ROBERT         And if you give me the address of your estate agent, I'm going to fix myself up too Bernard - I want a flat just like this. Same layout, same wonderful view, I need a flat because I'm going to get married.

BERNARD        You're not!

ROBERT         I am.

BERNARD        Who are you engaged to?

ROBERT         No one, not yet. But I know a girl, well, we're vaguely acquainted, you see. A charming girl. I haven't actually asked her yet but I should think it'll be all right. I'd like to get married, I can't go on living alone much longer.

BERNARD        You look perfectly all right to me.

ROBERT         Of course I'm all right. So are you for that matter.

BERNARD        You're still a young.

ROBERT         Well, so are you. You're in good shape, you're young, and you're going to get married.

BERNARD        I certainly am not.

ROBERT         Not? But I thought- well, this charming American girl, just now she said you were engaged. Wait a minute, you agreed with her. I heard you.

BERNARD Well, if you want to be technical I suppose you could say we were engaged. Yes.

ROBERT Then you're going to get married.

BERNARD No.

ROBERT Bernard, you're always doing this to me. Look. If you're engaged, you're going to get married. It's not only technical, it's logical! Isn't it?

BERNARD It is not. And anyway, why do you want to get married? Do you love this girl?

ROBERT I don't know. I'm not raving mad about her. I don't write poems or refuse to eat or any of that sort of thing. But it would be nice. I mean, think of the social advantages. They're not to be sneezed at, are they?

BERNARD I can't think of *one*. Still if you must get married, get married my way.

ROBERT Your way?

BERNARD Polygamy.

ROBERT Polygamy?

BERNARD It's the ideal life- pleasure, variety...it's fabulous. You ought to try it.

ROBERT Polygamy? You mean lots of wives?

BERNARD Not wives, fiancées. You have all the advantages of married life with none of the drawbacks. Fiancées are much more friendly than wives. And you don't need all that many. I do very well with three.

ROBERT Three?

BERNARD Three is the ideal number. Less than three would be monotonous. More than three would be terribly tiring. Three is the dream.

ROBERT But it's immoral.

BERNARD Immoral? But my dear Robert, they all think they're the only one. *They* don't think it's immoral, so why should I? You've all the pleasures of the harem, but right here in the middle of Paris.

ROBERT They say you have your hands full with one woman, but three!

BERNARD Not me.

ROBERT Three fiancées?

BERNARD The whole secret is order. I am organised- beautifully organised.

ROBERT But Bernard- isn't it incredibly complicated?

BERNARD Not in the least. All you need is a timetable.

ROBERT A timetable?

BERNARD A special kind of timetable. An airline timetable.

ROBERT What, to get out in a hurry?

BERNARD Not at all. Look- here it is. The timetables of all the major routes- all in one volume.

ROBERT One volume.

BERNARD You understand?

ROBERT Yes.

BERNARD You don't really, do you?

ROBERT No.

BERNARD But it's so simple, a child could see it. Someone just had to think of it. My three fiancées are all air hostesses.

ROBERT All three?

BERNARD Yes.

ROBERT Air hostesses?

BERNARD All three.

ROBERT Don't be barmy! Three air hostesses.

BERNARD That's the trick. And they're all fantastic girls.

ROBERT Fantastic. If T.W.A was anything to go by, they're devastating.

BERNARD And the other two are just as good. Of course they are. You see, they're all tried and tested.

ROBERT They've been what?

BERNARD They're hand-picked through the admissions procedures of the different companies. In every respect! Physical, moral, intellectual. So, all the work's done for me. I'm choosing from a pool which has already been super-sifted. Not bad, is it?

ROBERT Yes. Yes. Not bad.

BERNARD The only thing is that I have to pick them from different airlines and with different routes – so they don't meet, you see.

ROBERT Ah, yes. Alright. It all seems very well in theory, but I'd be curious to see how it works out in practice.

BERNARD And you will, couldn't be simpler. Gloria, my American, the one you've seen... Well, she takes off in ten minutes... and in a quarter of an hour Gabriella lands.

ROBERT Gabriella?

BERNARD My Italian. A beautiful kitten - she'll be here for lunch.

ROBERT Lunch? That's cutting it a bit close, isn't it? I mean the other one was only just here for breakfast.

BERNARD Yes, it is a bit touch and go today. But today's an exception. Gabriella is in transit. Normally it's perfectly straightforward. Two days Gloria, two days Gabriella, and two days Gretchen.

ROBERT Gretchen?

BERNARD That's my German.

ROBERT That's your German. It's an international harem.

BERNARD Exactly. Look. (*indicating globe.*) Gretchen gets in from Stuttgart this evening; at the same time, Gabriella will be on her way to Caracas, and Gloria will be in San Francisco- you see the beauty of it?

ROBERT Perpetual motion.

BERNARD Pure mathematics. Everything designed, organised, regulated and working to the precise second. The earth revolves on its axis and my fiancées wheel above the earth. One this way. One that. One towards the sun. One towards the moon. And eventually they all,

in turn, come home to me. It's geometrical, my dear Robert. So precise as to be almost poetic. And here I live in the middle of a perfect example of polygamous family life. I don't just change women, I change my diet as well. It's like living in a restaurant. So there's no chance of ever getting bored. Either in the dining room or the bedroom. It's perfect.

ROBERT Remarkable! Quite remarkable.

BERNARD Things are going a bit awry with Gloria. She does eat the most extraordinary things. Apart from that, though, flawless. I tell you, it's a dream.

ROBERT But Bernard, how do you find them?

BERNARD I've a friend who works in the travel agency at Orly Airport and he knows all the air hostesses. They talk to him. They tell him their secrets- and if he thinks they might be lonely, well, he introduces them to me.

ROBERT Does he really?

BERNARD He might help you. After all he's a friend of mine, I'm a friend of yours. I'll give him a ring.

ROBERT Oh no! This sort of thing's not for me. No. I'm not the type. It's all right for you. You've got the talent, the flair.

BERNARD That's got nothing to do with it. The timetables are the timetables. You just have to follow them.

ROBERT No! No! Not now – I'll have to think about it for a couple of years. But what happens if they get switched to a different route?

BERNARD Impossible. It's all been worked out. It's all on a schedule. Mathematical – marvellous!

BERTHA (*entering and indicating ROBERT*) Will your friend be here for lunch?

ROBERT No. No.

BERNARD Yes.

ROBERT I don't want to upset your arrangements.

BERNARD You're going to eat with us, and you are going to stay – till you've found yourself a flat in Paris.

BERTHA He's going to stay?

ROBERT I'm going to stay.

BERNARD He is.

BERTHA And where?

BERNARD Where do you think? Here of course.

BERTHA Which room?

BERNARD Whichever he likes.

BERTHA Oh, great, whichever he likes. (*She exits.*)

BERNARD Where's your luggage?

ROBERT I left it at the station.

BERNARD Well, you can trot along and fetch it later.

BERTHA What time do you want to eat?

BERNARD As soon as Gabriella gets here.

BERTHA That's a lot of help!

BERNARD What difference does it make to you?

BERTHA You don't just rub two sticks together, you know.

BERNARD I'll let you know.

BERTHA Mind you do. We can't all make it up as we go along.

BERNARD All right, Bertha. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

BERTHA (*turns at door and takes a letter from her pocket*) Yes. And there's a letter for the American. From America.

BERNARD Oh really, give it to me.  
(*BERTHA gives him the letter.*)

BERTHA She won't be able to read it 'til she gets back, obviously.

BERNARD Obviously.

BERTHA So you'll let me know.

BERNARD What?

BERTHA What time you want to eat?

- BERNARD Yes of course I'll tell you, but I'm sure Gabriella won't be long. She must be touching down about now, especially if she had the wind behind her.
- BERTHA Right, let's hope Mlle Gabriella has the wind behind her, then. Lunch is on its way. (*She exits.*)
- BERNARD That woman!
- ROBERT Is she always like this?
- BERNARD Yes, she is, yes, to be honest, when I took the flat she was already here so I kept her on, she's fine. It's all this coming and going. She has to keep changing her style of cooking, and I think it upsets her.
- ROBERT Well, I can understand that. It's enough to rattle anybody. All this traffic. One taking off, one landing, one already airborne. Isn't it at all possible that two of your fiancées might find themselves wanting to spend the night in Paris at the same time?
- BERNARD No, impossible – because of the timetables. And even if it did happen that one girl landed when another who was supposed to be taking off didn't take off, well I'd stay with the one who wasn't taking off and spend the night in Saint-Germain-en-Laye or somewhere like that.
- ROBERT Yes, right, but meanwhile, what would be happening with the one who'd landed?
- BERNARD She'd come here.
- ROBERT She'd come back here.
- BERNARD Yes, even if Bertha is out, she has her own key.
- ROBERT She has her own key?
- BERNARD Yes. They all have their own keys.
- ROBERT They all have their own keys.
- BERNARD Oh yes, and Bertha would tell her I've had to go out of town on business. Next morning, I take Saint-Germain to the airport, see

her aboard a plane, wave my handkerchief, and hurry back here into the arms of the other. No panic. No problem.

ROBERT No panic, no problem. But the whole thing's a bit – well. Don't you love any of them?

BERNARD But I adore them. I can't be without any of them! I love them so much that if one asks me for something – a tiny present say – well, I go out and buy three tiny presents! I can't bear to spoil one without spoiling the other two!

ROBERT Yes, that's very kind of you but I'm not convinced. I'll settle for a quiet little marriage with just one woman. Everything ordinary but everything calm, with all the social advantages.

BERNARD You're wrong, you know. It's the perfect life. Oh! Just one detail – my three fiancés have the same initial for their Christian names. 'G' for Gabriella, Gretchen, Gloria. It's not essential, but it does help. Initials on presents, slips of the tongue – all that sort of thing.

(BERTHA *enters.*)

What do you want now?

BERTHA I don't want anything. I'm just doing my job, that's all. But now America's gone, I've got to change the room for Italy.

ROBERT She thinks of everything!

BERTHA That's why I'm here, Monsieur. That's my function, you see. Without me, I don't know what would happen to Monsieur Bernard – with all his complications. If Mlle Gabriella is only in transit monsieur; I mean, perhaps I needn't clear up too thoroughly.

BERNARD No. Just tidy up and change the photographs.

BERTHA And I'll make up the room properly after she's gone, before Germany gets here.

BERNARD Fine, thank you, Bertha. Perfect.

BERTHA If you say so. It's just one chore after another, if you ask me. (*She exits.*)

ROBERT Change the photographs. She must be invaluable.

BERNARD Yes she's always complaining but she does know the routine.

BERTHA (*enters*) Done.

BERNARD Thank you. And you haven't forgotten anything?

BERTHA I don't think so.

BERNARD She'll be here in a matter of seconds.

ROBERT That's cutting it a bit fine.

BERTHA Yes, today's a bit touch and go.

BERNARD Precision is the key.

BERTHA Precisely. All I know, Monsieur is that every time one of the ladies is in transit, then everything gets faster.  
(*GABRIELLA enters wearing the Alitalia uniform.*)

BERTHA See what I mean?

GABRIELLA Darling!

BERNARD Gabriella! Darling!

BERNARD Darling, an old friend, Robert. Castin.

GABRIELLA Oh ciao.

ROBERT From Aix.

BERNARD We were at school together.

GABRIELLA How do you do, Robert?

ROBERT How do you do?

BERNARD He's just got in.

ROBERT I just dropped in to see Bernard's photographs. I mean, we're old friends and we haven't met at the same time for ages. He told me you were next, you were coming, that he was waiting for you – you're sure I'm not in the way?

GABRIELLA Of course not. I'm delighted – really I am. You're the first friend of Bernard's I've ever met. He never introduces me to anybody. He's such an old hermit.

ROBERT A hermit. Yes. I suppose he is.

GABRIELLA Bernard, darling, fix me a drink, will you?

BERNARD Yes, of course.

GABRIELLA I'm worn out. You've no idea how good it is to see the sun – it was ghastly over there. You know we were held up in Helsinki?

BERNARD Really?

GABRIELLA The Met. people forecast a storm, but it was more like a hurricane! Miserable visibility, wind all over the place, and the cloud ceiling was right down to four hundred feet. Imagine it!

And fog, and so cold! It only cleared over the Channel – but anyway, I'm back and that's the main thing. Have you behaved yourself, darling?

BERNARD Me? What do you think?

GABRIELLA There's a good boy. Has he told you that we're going to be married?

ROBERT No. Yes. He did say you were engaged.

BERNARD And I also told him you were beautiful. Isn't that what I told you, Robert?

ROBERT Yes, you did. Perpetual motion, pure mathematics. Like a beautiful German! A beautiful kitten! He said so many complimentary things...

GABRIELLA And are you disappointed?

ROBERT Yes. No. On the contrary. He wasn't anywhere near the truth.

GABRIELLA I like your friend, Bernard darling. He must join us for lunch.

BERNARD I've already invited him.

GABRIELLA Wonderful.

ROBERT I couldn't do that.

GABRIELLA Now, not a word. You must do as you're told.

BERNARD And I've also asked him to stay here till he finds himself a flat in Paris.

GABRIELLA Well done. You'll be company for him. He's always telling me he's so lonely and complaining that I abandon him for too long.

BERNARD You're so right, darling. I'm absolutely lost! When you're not here, I'm all alone.

ROBERT You poor chap!

BERNARD That's love for you.

GABRIELLA You're marvellous. I'll just clean up and then we'll eat. I've just three hours before we take off for Caracas! And that reminds me. It's on.

BERNARD What is?

GABRIELLA They're putting the Super-Caravelli on our route. She's so fast, I'll be able to see you more often.

BERNARD Oh good. That's great. Really great. You must remember to let me have the new timetables.

GABRIELLA Of course, darling. Uno minuto. *(She goes into the bathroom)*

ROBERT If these planes are going to go faster and faster, your mathematics aren't going to add up.

BERNARD Oh! These things take time. They won't all happen at once.

ROBERT I must congratulate you, Bernard. I was trying to work out which is the prettier, but I can't decide.

BERNARD Fortunately, it doesn't concern you. They're both engaged.

ROBERT They're both engaged!  
*(The telephone rings. BERNARD picks it up.)*

BERNARD Hello – yes? Yes, I'll hold. It's Gretchen – my German  
*(He whispers to ROBERT.)*

ROBERT But you've got one in there.

BERNARD Hello darling! You are going to be back at 23.00 instead of 19.00. What a shame. Yes, I've got that. You'll do what? And you'll eat on the plane. Yes, of course, darling. That's great...23.00 hours then.  
*(BERTHA enters)*

BERTHA Monsieur Bernard.

BERNARD *(on telephone)* Yes, darling. Love you...yes.*(He replaces the telephone.)* Ah, Bertha. Cancel the frankfurters.

BERTHA Germany's delayed?

BERNARD Stuck in Stuttgart.

BERTHA But, I've bought the sauerkraut.

BERNARD Too bad.

BERTHA Oh, good God! This is no life for a maid. *(She starts to go out – comes back.)* And another thing –

BERNARD Well?

BERTHA There's something I have to tell you.

BERNARD Out with it then.

BERTHA I've forgotten what it is now. It's all this coming and going.

BERNARD It'll come back to you.

BERTHA Then I'll come back.

BERNARD Yes. That's right.  
*(GABRIELLA enters from the bathroom.)*

GABRIELLA Was that the telephone?

BERNARD Yes, darling.

GABRIELLA It wasn't for me?

BERNARD No – why? Were you expecting someone?

GABRIELLA They may make a change in the flights – because of the weather.

ROBERT Change in the flight?

GABRIELLA Yes, they've already cancelled the V.C.10 to Beirut.

ROBERT It's fascinating to hear how all this aeronautics works.

BERNARD Yes. They won't alter your flight, will they darling?

GABRIELLA No. Instead of leaving at 15.00, we'll take off at 16.00.

BERNARD Oh good.

GABRIELLA Why do you say 'oh good'?

BERNARD Did I say 'oh good'?

ROBERT Yes, you definitely said "oh good".

BERNARD Well, I said 'oh good' – because I instantly realised it would mean an extra hour with you.

GABRIELLA Oh! Sei bello! So who was it, then?

BERNARD Who was who?

GABRIELLA On the telephone. It wasn't another woman?

BERNARD How on earth could it be another woman! You know I adore you. Don't I, Robert?

ROBERT Of course you do.

GABRIELLA Cross your heart?

BERNARD But Gabriella! No, really, you mustn't be so silly. It upsets me.

GABRIELLA Alright. So you can tell me.

BERNARD Tell you what?

GABRIELLA Who it was.

BERNARD Who was what?

GABRIELLA On the telephone.

BERNARD Oh. On the telephone! It was a wrong number.

ROBERT Yes, that's it. A wrong number.

(GABRIELLA *sees the letter.*)

GABRIELLA And what's this?

BERNARD What's what?

GABRIELLA This letter. It's addressed to Miss Gloria Hawkins.

BERNARD Letter? I don't know anything about a letter.

GABRIELLA It's here. On your desk.

BERNARD Nothing to do with me, darling. I've been talking to Robert.

ROBERT I only just got here. I only just arrived.

BERNARD All the time.

GABRIELLA And it just appeared from nowhere?

(BERTHA *enters*)

BERTHA I've just remembered what it was.

GABRIELLA Morning, Bertha, how are you?

BERTHA Much the same, Mademoiselle.

BERNARD     What is it you've just remembered, Bertha?

BERTHA       Lunch is ready

GABRIELLA   Grazie. Oh, Bertha! What's this? (*holds up the letter*)

BERTHA       A letter.

GABRIELLA   I can see that. But it's addressed to a Miss Gloria Hawkins. Do you know her?

BERTHA       Never heard of her.

GABRIELLA   Well, what's it doing here?

BERNARD     Well, Bertha?

BERTHA       Ah! Yes! I've just remembered. The old fool downstairs – the concierge – he muttered something about me taking a letter belonging to someone else in the block. By mistake, you see.

BERNARD     There. Quite simple, really. Everything sorted out.

ROBERT       Yes. Everything explained – really well, too.

BERTHA       My mistake all along. I'm sorry about that Mademoiselle. Sorry Monsieur.

BERNARD     We all make mistakes, Bertha.

BERTHA       If you'd like to give it to back to me, Mlle, I'll slip it downstairs after lunch. Well, it's all ready when you want it. Lunch, that is.

GABRIELLA   Grazie, Bertha. You're a marvel. You run the flat as if it were your own.

BERTHA       That's exactly right Mlle. But it isn't easy. (*She exits.*)

BERNARD     It isn't easy my darling, but we do our best. You arrive, you wash your hands, have a drink, and – hey presto! – lunch is ready. All you have to do is to sit down and enjoy it.

ROBERT       Family life. It's a wonderful thing.

GABRIELLA   You're right, Robert dear. You ought to try it. Copy Bernard. Find yourself a fiancée.

ROBERT       Yes, as a matter of fact – I've been thinking about it – quite seriously.

GABRIELLA Mio dio. It's already twenty-five to. We must hurry. Let's have lunch. (*She exits.*)

BERNARD So, you see how it's done?

ROBERT Yes, yes wonderful.

BERNARD Yes, right, come and eat, Italian cuisine today.

ROBERT Bernard, these air hostess uniforms. You know, they're so beautifully cut. They're really very handsome.

BERNARD Handsome? They're dazzling! Irresistible!

ROBERT Bloody Bernard!

BERNARD Bloody Robert!

*They exit laughing after GABRIELLA.*

**CURTAIN**

## ACT II

*Afternoon. There is no one on stage. The telephone rings. BERTHA enters and answers phone.*

BERTHA        Hello. Yes, that's right. No, he isn't here at the moment. It's Bertha. Oh! It's you, Mlle Gretchen! You're in Paris? Already! Oh you are early. Yes oh I see, right, right. Well, then, see you later. *(She hangs up. Doorbell rings)* Oh good God alive, who can that be? All this coming and going. It's no life for a maid, no life for anyone. *(She answers door)*

ROBERT        *(off)* It's only me.

BERTHA        *(off)* Oh. It's you, Monsieur. *(She enters.)*  
*(ROBERT enters with cases)*

ROBERT        Could you?

BERTHA        No, I couldn't.

ROBERT        There was a queue a mile long at the station. You do wonder why there are so many people in Paris. It's much more peaceful back at home in Aix.

BERTHA        It wouldn't be so crowded in Paris if the people from the provinces didn't keep piling in.

ROBERT        No, I suppose not.

BERTHA        And what do you want with all these bags? I thought you were only here on business.

ROBERT        I always believe in being prepared.

BERTHA        I hope you're not going to stay too long.

ROBERT        Goodness me! You're not very welcoming to your master's friends, are you?

BERTHA I'm only telling you for your own good. Just you wait and see, people coming and going all the time. You'd have been better off at the station and there'd have been more room for your bags!

ROBERT I'm a guest. I have been invited, you know.

BERTHA It's not a hotel.

ROBERT Everything seems beautifully organised.

BERTHA Organised. That's just it. It's too organised. Shall I tell you what I think?

ROBERT Well – I don't know.

BERTHA It's not human! That's what I think.

BERTHA It's all very well for Monsieur Bernard giving out invitations, left, right and centre, but I have to do all the work. What with you and your luggage and now Germany.

ROBERT What about Germany?

BERTHA She's just rung to say she's on her way.

ROBERT Well, that's all right, isn't it? Mademoiselle Gabriella has just taken off.

BERTHA I know, but Germany wants to stay for three days. She just said it to me, thinking it'll be a nice surprise for Monsieur.

ROBERT For me?

BERTHA No. For Monsieur. My Monsieur.

ROBERT You have a Monsieur?

BERTHA Of course I have a Monsieur.

ROBERT Oh, I see.

BERTHA My boss, I mean.

ROBERT Oh. Right. So, what does it matter if she stays three days?

BERTHA There may be friction... Well, it's nothing to do with me, of course. But Mlle Gloria – that's the American -

ROBERT Yes, I know. I've seen that one.

BERTHA Well, she's due back on Monday.

- ROBERT Yes. Well, not to worry. It's only Saturday. Bernard will have plenty of time to work something out. Where shall I put my bags?
- BERTHA You put them where you like. (*ROBERT crosses to Door 7.*) Not there, there won't be enough room there. (*ROBERT crosses to Door 1*) No, not that one. That's Monsieur and his wives' bedroom. So, not that one. Over there if you like. (*indicates Door 5*) It's quieter there on the courtyard. Oh just make yourself at home.
- ROBERT Thank you very much indeed Bertha. That's very kind of you. (*Crosses to go out Door 5.*)
- BERTHA No, it's not. I'm just doing what I'm told. I've got enough to do, thank you very much, without being kind to all Monsieur's guests.
- ROBERT If you don't like it here, why don't you change your job?
- BERTHA No! New Job. New problems. What's the point?
- ROBERT Well that's an optimistic view.
- BERTHA Look Monsieur, I'm a cheerful soul at heart. I like a bit of fun, but this place goes too far. But what can you expect if you're in domestic service? I mean there's no dignity in being a maid.
- ROBERT (*carrying a case to Door 5*) Right. Well, if you'll excuse me, I'll get settled in.
- BERTHA Stick your bags in there. They're in the way here. I'd help you with them myself but when I was a little girl the doctor told my mother – 'She's a great trier, your daughter, but not very strong, she must be very careful not to lift anything.'
- ROBERT Not to lift anything. (*takes cases offstage*)
- BERTHA So I try to be careful. And when you think about it, the body's not much of a thing, is it? Very feeble. It gets tired. It wears out.
- ROBERT (*re enters*) That's absolutely true Bertha.
- BERTHA So I let other people wear themselves out.
- ROBERT I see what you mean. You are quite a cheerful person at heart, aren't you Bertha?

BERTHA Thank you. You don't often meet people who appreciate a maid's personality, do you?

ROBERT Quite, quite! Right, well, see you later.

BERTHA Oh, has sir had enough of me?

ROBERT No, no. Not at all!

BERTHA Oh yes. You've had enough of me. When people say, "See you later." especially to a maid, it always means they've had enough.

ROBERT No, I assure you.

BERTHA I'm getting on your nerves.

ROBERT Nonsense.

BERTHA Yes. I'm getting on your nerves.

ROBERT You are not getting on my nerves, look...

BERTHA Oh yes. Oh yes. Monsieur Bernard's exactly the same. Always brushing me off. Never wants to talk. But, you know monsieur, conversation is the only thing that separates humans from beasts. If human beings didn't speak they'd be beasts.

ROBERT Uh, yes. Yes, that's right. Beasts.

BERTHA It must be awful to be a beast.

ROBERT Huh!

BERTHA Don't you think?

ROBERT Yes yes, I suppose. I don't know anything about it.

BERTHA Well, I don't know anything about it, but I'm guessing...I sense it! A beast! What is a beast? Even less than a maid. That just about says it all! It's lucky I'm an optimist. That's what keeps me going.

ROBERT Could I have a bit of ice?

BERTHA No!

ROBERT Why?

BERTHA I'm defrosting the fridge.

ROBERT Oh. Right

BERTHA So, there's no ice.

ROBERT I'll do without.

BERTHA Well, you'll have to. Is Monsieur in business?

ROBERT Yes.

BERTHA Same business as Monsieur Bernard?

ROBERT No.

BERTHA Ah. There are so many different businesses but its all business, isn't it?

ROBERT That's right.

BERTHA Are you married?

ROBERT No.

BERTHA Perhaps you should be.

ROBERT Why?

BERTHA You're still quite nice.

ROBERT Thank you.

BERTHA But old age is fast approaching.

ROBERT I've got a few good years ahead of me!

BERTHA That's what they all say. You take my advice. You get married while you're still worth it.

ROBERT I intend to, but now I've seen Bernard's setup. I think I'll wait a bit.

BERTHA That's a mistake. This isn't the life for you, you're not the type. You have to have your wits about you. You have to be in your physical prime.

ROBERT Who says I'm not?

BERTHA Oh no, sir. Oh no! It's obvious, Sir, if I may say so, it's obvious to the naked eye.

ROBERT For God's sake! Give me some peace!

BERTHA Very good, Monsieur.

ROBERT Honestly! It's too much!

BERTHA Very good, Monsieur.

ROBERT Goodbye Bertha.

BERTHA Goodbye Monsieur.

ROBERT Goodbye!

BERTHA Goodbye.

ROBERT Well. I think I'd better go into the other room.

BERTHA You do what you want.

ROBERT I think I'll have a little rest. (*Going exits*)

BERTHA They pitch up from the provinces, totally out of their depth.  
(*GRETCHEN enters. She is in her Lufthansa uniform.*)

GRETCHEN Bernard *liebling!* Berta!  
(*BERTHA enters.*)

BERTHA Ah, Hello Mlle Gretchen. You're here already.

GRETCHEN Ja. I came as fast as I could. If you only knew how happy I am to be home.

BERTHA I can see that.

GRETCHEN Herr Bernard isn't in?

BERHTA No, no. He's gone out – on business.

GRETCHEN Oh!

BERTHA But he'll be back in a minute.

GRETCHEN Are you sure?

BERTHA Oh yes. It's nothing very serious. He went out just before you telephoned.

GRETCHEN And is he happy?

BERTHA He's marvellously happy. You know how he looks forward to seeing you.

GRETCHEN Do you think he loves me as much as I love him?

BERTHA Well, now, that I don't know. I mean, how could I know a thing like that?

GRETCHEN Doesn't he talk about me when I'm not here?

BERTHA Oh, yes, he never stops talking about you, but I can't tell you if he loves you as much as you love him, if I don't know how much you love him.

GRETCHEN But Berta, darling, you know I adore him.

BERTHA Well that's all right, then. He adores you too.

GRETCHEN And I've got three whole days this time. Isn't that wunderbar?

BERTHA Wunderbar.

GRETCHEN Herr Bernard will be pleased.

BERTHA I can't wait to see his face.

GRETCHEN You can't realise how marvellous it is to be back. It seems ages since I've seen him. Though I think of him all the time. In Melbourne. In Ankara, in Colombo. I am always dreaming of our little flat, and my little Bernard sitting here all alone thinking of me.

BERTHA It's beautiful.

GRETCHEN And when we're up about nineteen or twenty thousand feet, roaring away at six hundred miles an hour, and if I've nothing special to do, do you know I creep back into the luggage hold.

BERTHA Good heavens above.

GRETCHEN I'm all alone there, you see. And I look out of the porthole and stare at the stars dancing and the moon out there in the sky. And I say to myself that my Bernard is looking at them too. And I feel as though we are looking into each other's eyes across the layers of planets and meteorites and the nebulae. I'm madly romantic, you see.

BERTHA I can see you are. Madly.

GRETCHEN And does he do that too?

BERTHA Do what?

GRETCHEN Stare at the moon while I'm away.

BERTHA Oh, I'm sure he gives it a glance now and then. Mind you I'm not always there when he's doing it.

GRETCHEN No. I suppose he prefers to keep it a secret.

BERTHA And I should hope so. I mean life's complicated enough without dragging in the nebulae.

GRETCHEN But you understand these things, don't you, Berta? I always like talking to you. You know about life. You're a woman.

BERTHA Well thank you very much Mlle. I'm more than that I'm a domestic servant. And believe me, Mlle Gretchen, we domestic servants get to know a great deal. And what we know we keep to ourselves – we never say anything. Mind you, very few people ever ask us.

GRETCHEN Oh, but you're something very special, Berta.

BERTHA Do you think so?

GRETCHEN I am certain. You're the virgin in the legend of the Grail in the story of the Nibelungen.

BERTHA Well, I've been called worse.

GRETCHEN You're a guardian. You keep me alive in Bernard's thoughts. You keep the flame of love burning in his heart!

BERTHA I do?

GRETCHEN You're like me – capable of great passion.

BERTHA It's very nice of you to say so.

GRETCHEN I love him so much! Every time I come home, I seem to love him more, and every time I go it just tears me to pieces.

BERTHA You're very intense, aren't you?

GRETCHEN I'm worse than that – I'm passion itself.

BERTHA Don't get yourself into a state. Save your passions for Monsieur Bernard. He'll be back soon.

GRETCHEN Ja. Ja. You're right. Oh, I have forgotten to buy cigarettes. Would you, could you, would you?

BERTHA Straight away. I'll be back in five minutes.

GRETCHEN You're a darling, Berta. I'll get settled in while I'm waiting. I'm mad with happiness, Berta, mad with happiness!

BERTHA And so am I, Mlle, so am I!

*(GRETCHEN goes out Door 1, taking her bag, and closes the door as BERTHA goes out Door 4. Enter ROBERT Door 5. He*

*goes to the bathroom and washes his face. With a towel round his shoulders he impersonates Bernard. He tries some of Bernard's aftershave which he accidentally sprays in his eyes. He sits down with the towel over his head to remove the aftershave.*

GRETCHEN *comes out of Door 1 and not recognising ROBERT throws herself at him.)*

GRETCHEN My love! My darling lover!

ROBERT Oh God!

GRETCHEN Excuse me. Sorry, sorry.

ROBERT No, really. Don't mention it.

GRETCHEN But, oh Monsieur, I'm so sorry.

ROBERT No harm done Mademoiselle, on the contrary.

GRETCHEN What are you doing in my flat?

ROBERT Your flat? Don't you mean Bernard's flat?

GRETCHEN If you like. But it's still mine – mine or Bernard's, it's the same thing.

ROBERT I'm an old friend of Bernard's. An old school friend.

GRETCHEN Oh?

ROBERT My name's Robert – I've forgotten my own name. Robert Castin.

GRETCHEN How do you do?

ROBERT How do you do? And you must be Gretchen?

GRETCHEN He's told you about me?

ROBERT Told me! My dear girl, it's Gretchen this, Gretchen that; here a Gretchen, there a Gretchen. It's Gretchen – Gretchen – everywhere.

GRETCHEN How divine!

ROBERT He hardly mentions anybody else.

GRETCHEN But how come you are here when he's not?

ROBERT Well – Bernard's just gone out.

GRETCHEN On business.

ROBERT That's it! Yes – on business. And he told me to wait for him. I just arrived – this morning – you see – from Aix.

GRETCHEN From Aix!

ROBERT Yes.

GRETCHEN It's not true!

ROBERT Oh! Yes, it's true – this morning on a train – from Aix.

GRETCHEN But that's marvellous.

ROBERT Yes, I like trains

GRETCHEN My mother lives in Aix.

ROBERT Not really.

GRETCHEN She's lived there for years. Whereabouts do you live in Aix?

ROBERT Near the station. Number 27.

GRETCHEN It's not true! The Bahnhofstrasse!

ROBERT The Bahnhof what?

GRETCHEN The Bahnhofstrasse.

ROBERT Oh! You mean the station.

GRETCHEN You must know my mother's house. It's on the corner of the Friedenstrasse.

ROBERT The Frieden – what?

GRETCHEN The Friedenstrasse.

ROBERT I don't think I know that one.

GRETCHEN But you must. It's the next street down from the Bahnhofstrasse.

ROBERT Is it?

GRETCHEN Come on! You know it.

ROBERT Know it! I can't even pronounce it.

GRETCHEN Well, you know the corner? Where Napoleon is?

ROBERT The grocer?

GRETCHEN You're not trying. No – Napoleon, the chap on a horse. A statue.

ROBERT A large statue?

GRETCHEN Enormous.

ROBERT I don't know it. No, I assure you. I've lived in Aix all my life. I can show you my papers, I can show you my credentials. My grandfather made olive and sunflower oil, my father did almond oil and I do walnut. Walnut oil I mean. In short, my family have oiled the whole of Provence!

GRETCHEN Provence?

ROBERT Yes. Aix is in Provence, isn't it?

GRETCHEN But I was talking about Aix-la-Chapelle?

ROBERT I was talking about Aix-en-Provence.

GRETCHEN Obviously.

ROBERT So we are both from Aix, but not the same Aix.

GRETCHEN I suppose so. I really am very sorry.

ROBERT It's too disappointing. You would have made a marvellous neighbour.

GRETCHEN You're very kind.

ROBERT Not at all, Mademoiselle –

GRETCHEN Gretchen. You may call me Gretchen, since you're a friend of Bernard's.

ROBERT And I'm Robert Castin.

GRETCHEN I shall call you Robert.

ROBERT Good Gretchen. How do you do.

GRETCHEN How do you do. You won't say anything to Bernard about me kissing you, will you?

ROBERT Only by mistake, unfortunately.

GRETCHEN A mistake yes...but a kiss all the same.

ROBERT Don't worry. I won't say a word. But even if it hadn't been a mistake, I wouldn't have told him anything.

GRETCHEN Thank you, you're a gentleman...But if there hadn't been a mistake I wouldn't have kissed you, so...

ROBERT Yes, and anyway, a mistake like that, well, it doesn't really count, you know. It was so sudden. I've forgotten about it already.

GRETCHEN Didn't it mean anything then?

ROBERT You didn't give me much time. And there was no anticipation and I think that's very important, don't you? So –

GRETCHEN So – ?

ROBERT So to ensure my complete silence and my absolute discretion, perhaps you'd better give me another one.

GRETCHEN Another one?

ROBERT Another kiss. I quite liked the first one.

GRETCHEN Because you weren't expecting it...It's the element of surprise.

ROBERT Hmm...Yes...but it could have been a nasty surprise...whereas it was a nice one and I wasn't able to get the full benefit, you see, completely...That's why, if you wouldn't mind doing it again...

GRETCHEN Again?

ROBERT Just once.

GRETCHEN But it would be awful of me to do it again! I'd have no excuse for my mistake this time and I'd regret it for the rest of my life.

ROBERT Let's not exaggerate.

GRETCHEN I see you don't know the German soul.

ROBERT Uh, no...not very well.

GRETCHEN That's why you don't know what the knowledge of good and evil is like.

ROBERT Evil? But when you get married you'll have to kiss all of Bernard's friends.

GRETCHEN Not on the mouth! And anyway, when the bride kisses the friends of the groom, it's in front of her husband. He's there watching.

ROBERT I've never thought that quite fair, have you? There are particular circumstances. Ours for example.

GRETCHEN I don't see that our case is so special. In fact, I think we should both feel very guilty. We are all alone in my fiancé's flat –

ROBERT Please don't make a tragedy out of it. It's not enormously important.

GRETCHEN Then why are you insisting?

ROBERT Because we 're from Aix.

GRETCHEN But not the same Aix. Not the same Aix at all! Aix-la-Chapelle.

ROBERT Aix – Aix – Aix. All you can talk about is Aix. Can't you allow yourself one innocent kiss?

GRETCHEN It would be the second.

ROBERT I didn't count the first. That was just my way of saying hello.

GRETCHEN You really are very incorrigible.

ROBERT You really are very beautiful.

GRETCHEN But I am engaged to Bernard.

ROBERT Exactly. You won't get another chance. And nor will I. If we lived in America we could kiss each other at the drop of a hat, and if it wouldn't be wrong in America, why should it be wrong here? After all America's a great country.

GRETCHEN So is Germany. (*She kisses him abruptly and breaks off.*) You see? We're a great country too.

ROBERT You crept up on me again. I was n't expecting it. Where are you going?

GRETCHEN I'm just leaving you; otherwise you'll end up persuading me that American fiancées always kiss their fiancé's best friends twenty-five times on the mouth, and I'm sure that's not true!

ROBERT Well, now I've heard cases where...

GRETCHEN No! Shut up! What you're doing isn't right!

ROBERT You're just afraid that I'll manage to convince you...

GRETCHEN No...but you do have advantages. You're charming and quite funny so I need to be careful...And I love Bernard....There...Auf Wiedersehen.

ROBERT Gretchen.  
*(She goes into the stage right room and shuts the door just as BERTHA comes in with cigarettes)*

BERTHA Here we are.

ROBERT Who? Who?

BERTHA No. The cigarettes for Mlle Gretchen. She's arrived, you know. The German.

ROBERT I know. I've seen her.

BERTHA Oh really? Is she in the bedroom, then?

ROBERT Yes. She is.

BERTHA Fine. (*She goes towards Door 1.*)

ROBERT No, it's all right. I'll give them to her, Bertha.

BERTHA You?

ROBERT Yes me?

BERTHA You've introduced yourselves then, have you?

ROBERT Yes. We have.

BERTHA Then I suppose it's all right if you give her the cigarettes. (*She gives him the cigarettes.*)

ROBERT Of course it's all right, Bertha. (*BERTHA does not move.*) Thanks Bertha, I can manage. Bertha, haven't you got anything to do?

BERTHA Well, as a matter of fact, at this particular minute, I haven't.

ROBERT Well, off you go.

BERTHA Does Monsieur wish me out of the way.

ROBERT No. No. You see-

BERTHA I see very well. I see you want me to go away.

ROBERT No. I don't care what you do. But there's nothing to do here.

BERTHA No. Nor anywhere else.

ROBERT Well, find something. What are you waiting for, Bertha?

BERTHA Nothing.

ROBERT Nothing

BERTHA Nothing.  
(*ROBERT crosses to Door 1 and knocks.*)

GRETCHEN (*off*) What is it?

ROBERT It's me, Robert.

GRETCHEN (*off*) NO...I'm resting...Leave me alone!

ROBERT I've got cigarettes for you.

GRETCHEN *(off)* Oh, good...come in.

ROBERT Here we are, here we are, here we are! *(He goes into the bedroom)*  
*A short pause, then:*

GRETCHEN *(off)* Oh no...no! You're not starting that again!

ROBERT *(off)* But really...

GRETCHEN *(off)* You should die of shame!

ROBERT *(shoved back onto stage)* But...  
*(The door slams behind him, just as BERNARD appears with GABRIELLA.)*

GABRIELLA Ciao!

BERNARD We've come back...

GABRIELLA Yes, here I am again!

ROBERT You?

GABRIELLA Si. They've transferred me to the Super-Caravelli, and she's so fast now, with the new engines, we can fly non-stop. So, I don't need to leave until tomorrow.

ROBERT Oh, good.

GABRIELLA Fab, eh?

ROBERT Fab, yes. Really fab.

BERNARD So, we've come back.

ROBERT Yes. So, I see.

BERNARD So what's the matter?

ROBERT The matter?

BERNARD Yes, you look worried.

ROBERT Worried? I'm not worried. Are you worried?

BERNARD No.

GABRIELLA Aren't you pleased to see me again?

ROBERT Yes. Of course I am. I am delighted to see you.

GABRIELLA We can spend the evening together. And I'll have the whole night with my darling Bernard.

BERNARD As a matter of fact, I've been thinking. I thought it might be fun to go away for the night- to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, or somewhere.

ROBERT That's a splendid idea. An absolutely marvellous idea. Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

GABRIELLA But why Saint-Germain?

BERNARD Well, Saint-Germain, or somewhere else. It would make a nice change for you.

GABRIELLA But I'm perfectly happy here at home.

ROBERT Yes. Yes, of course you are. But think of the country. The air's so good at Saint-Germain- you can really breathe there, into your lungs.

GABRIELLA No! It would be awfully mean to leave you here all alone on your first day in Paris.

ROBERT Oh, don't worry about me. You go. I'm used to being on my own. I'm used to it. So, why don't you go straight off into the country right now?

BERNARD Right now? No, we'll go later, after dinner at about 23:00hrs, eleven o'clock.

ROBERT Oh no!

BERNARD Oh no? What do you mean, "Oh no"? There's no hurry.

ROBERT Oh, yes!

GABRIELLA What do you mean, "Oh Yes"?

ROBERT Oh yes! Oh yes! I mean, dinner in the country, oh yes, under a tree, surrounded by flowers, little rabbits, at this time of year...it'll be idyllic! Absolutely not to missed!

GABRIELLA Yes- but I really would prefer to stay here. I'm not home so often.

BERNARD I'll tell you what, my darling. We'll have dinner here, and then have the night in the country. It will do us good. We'll get there at about eleven.

ROBERT You MUST go there for dinner! NOW! Bernard, don't be like that. That'll do you even more good. An amazing amount of good!

More good than you can possibly imagine! And frankly, you're looking a bit pale.

GABRIELLA Me?

ROBERT Yes, you. You are definitely looking pale.

GABRIELLA It's nothing. I'll go redo my makeup. *(She goes towards Door 1.)*

ROBERT *(rush across to fling himself in front of Door 1)* No! No!

BERNARD What? What is it?

ROBERT There's no need for her to redo her make up. She was just sitting in a bad light...Now I can see you properly and you're looking really good.

GABRIELLA Even so- perhaps a little touch of powder. *(She starts towards the door again.)*

ROBERT *(defending the door)* No, no. I assure you. Don't touch a thing. I forbid it. You are perfect as you are. Lovely!

GABRIELLA Isn't he a darling?

BERNARD Well, he's a good bloke, aren't you?

ROBERT More than you think.

GABRIELLA But don't you know, Roberto, it's a woman's right to make up her face before dinner?

ROBERT Yes. Other women perhaps, but not you. You're superb, sensational. An absolute miracle.

GABRIELLA Whoa! What's this? A declaration of love?

BERNARD Yes. You're getting in a bit of a state. Calm down.

ROBERT I'm extremely calm. I'm just saying you both look as if you should have dinner and spend the night in the country.

BERNARD He's right you know.

ROBERT Thank you, thank you.

BERNARD ...about the night, anyway...we'll go around eleven...

GABRIELLA I don't know what's got into you all of a sudden; you can't stand the countryside.

BERNARD Yes. That's true. Usually I hate it there, but...

ROBERT But you're so wrong.

BERNARD Yes, it is wrong of me. That's why every now and again when there's an opportunity...

ROBERT A perfect opportunity...

GABRIELLA You know what? You're making me think you don't want me to sleep here tonight.

ROBERT No. No. What on earth do you mean?

BERNARD Yes. What on earth do you mean? He's only thinking of you.

ROBERT That's right. I'm only thinking of you. And you.

BERNARD Come to that I suppose it might do us both good- sleeping with the window open, listening to the wind in the chestnut trees...

ROBERT Oh, dear me, yes! So good!

BERNARD Yes. Yes. We'll leave at about eleven o'clock.

ROBERT Now! Now! Go now! Don't waste a second. Every second of greenery does you good and a single second missed could be fatal...for your health, you could die!

BERNARD You can tell you've just come up from the provinces, you know. You're so enthusiastic!

ROBERT I'm saying all this for you. It's nothing to do with me.

GABRIELLA Right! Anyway, I'm going to redo my make up. (*She goes towards door again.*)

ROBERT No!

GABRIELLA What?

BERNARD Let her if she wants to. You should never contradict a woman.

ROBERT Yes! You should.

BERNARD Why?

GABRIELLA Yes, why?

ROBERT You're making this difficult. You should really try and understand.

BERNARD Understand what?

GABRIELLA Yes, I don't understand.

ROBERT        Look, when I arrived, you said to me ‘How are you? It’s nice to see you’. Now you said that didn’t you?

BERNARD        Yes, I did, I did and it’s true.

ROBERT        Good. Then you said ‘Go to the station, get your bags and when you get back, Robert, you can have that room.’ (*He points to Door 1.*)

GABRIELLA     Our bedroom?

BERNARD        Did I say that?

ROBERT        You did. You said, ‘it’s really my room’.

BERNARD        No, but wait a minute, what I said was-

ROBERT        Bernard!

BERNARD        What I said was-

ROBERT        Bernard! Would I lie to you, Bernard! Sorry, sorry.

BERNARD        No, you must be confused. That’s our room, Gabriella’s and mine.

ROBERT        But that was the whole point. You said, ‘You can have our room so you’ll feel perfectly at home. Settle in.

BERNARD        I don’t remember.

ROBERT        Then you’ve got a short memory.

BERNARD        Right. Well, possibly, but it’s different now. Gabriella has come back. So you’ll have to give us back our room.

ROBERT        No.

BERNARD        What?

GABRIELLA     Why not?

ROBERT        I’m just getting settled in...I’ve unpacked one of my bags...all my little personal things are all over the place. It’s embarrassing-

GABRIELLA     I wouldn’t look at them.

ROBERT        Maybe, but I’m embarrassed. Put yourself in my position. I’ve unpacked one of my bags. Actually, I’ve opened all my cases. Everything’s all over the place- shoe trees, dental floss, sister’s photograph...and to see you so ravishing, coming into my

bedroom like that...you see? I'm a young man. I was brought up by the Holy Fathers.

GABRIELLA All right, all right, if that's how you feel. I'll go into the guestroom. Really Bernard, you have the most extraordinary friends.

*(She takes her Alitalia shoulder bag and goes out Door 7.)*

BERNARD Are you out of your mind? What's wrong with you?

ROBERT And Gretchen? Your German? Have you forgotten her?

BERNARD Of course not. But she won't be here until after eleven.

ROBERT Oh, that's what you think, is it?

BERNARD Don't you remember? She rang to say she was going to be late?

ROBERT Yes. And while you were out she rang back to say she was going to be early.

BERNARD Really? How early?

ROBERT How early? She's here! *(He points to Door 1)* In there.

BERNARD Oh my god! Why didn't you say so, you cretin?

ROBERT Cretin? Where? When? How? In front of the other one? I've spent ten minutes, trying, struggling to get you to go out for dinner. But you, oh no, you had to economise. You had to eat here!

BERNARD Well, how was I supposed to know?

ROBERT You could start by listening to me when I'm talking!  
Really it's too much, this!

BERNARD Yes. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay.

ROBERT Nevermind 'okay, okay, okay'. You might be grateful for my efforts to save you. But instead you shout at me.

BERNARD No. No.

ROBERT Oh yes. It's too much. You turned on me.

BERNARD Never, never.

ROBERT You did. You turned on me.

BERNARD Well, I didn't understand.

ROBERT No, really. I've had enough. You're on your own. I'm off. I'm finished. I'm going to a hotel, I'll send for my trunk and you can fend for yourself, with your international harem.

BERNARD Calm down. Calm down. We mustn't get so worked up.

ROBERT I'm not getting worked up. I'm perfectly calm and I know what I'm doing. I'm going.

BERNARD You wouldn't do that.

ROBERT Yes, I would.

BERNARD You wouldn't be such a bastard.

ROBERT So I'm a bastard, am I?

BERNARD No, I didn't mean that.

ROBERT You did.

BERNARD Well, I'm sorry. Robert. Robbie. Bobby. Bob. Forgive me.

ROBERT You apologise?

BERNARD I apologise.

ROBERT Sincerely?

BERNARD Sincerely.

ROBERT All right, then, I'll stay.

BERNARD Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

ROBERT Don't mention it. (*they shake hands*)

BERNARD What do we do? What do we do? Nothing like this has ever happened before. Never. Never.

ROBERT Well, I'm amazed. But keep calm, Bernard. Let's try to sort it out. Right, I know! You get out of here with Gabriella, before Gretchen comes out of there. I'll tell Gretchen you've been called away on business.

BERNARD That's it! You look after her, and I'll take Gabriella to Saint Germain. Tomorrow morning she'll fly off and everything will be back to normal.

ROBERT As long as she really does fly off this time, because Gretchen's staying for three days.

(GRETCHEN *comes out of the bedroom.*)

GRETCHEN Bernard *liebling!* You've come back.

BERNARD Well yes- I have- just now.

GRETCHEN I am so happy.

BERNARD So am I. But now, I'm afraid, I have got to go out again.

GRETCHEN No.

BERNARD Afraid so.

GRETCHEN Then I'll come with you.

BERNARD Can't be done.

ROBERT Can't be done.

GRETCHEN What?

ROBERT Can't be done.

GRETCHEN Look, do you mind?

BERNARD You two have met, then?

GRETCHEN Yes...yes...So I can't come with you?

BERNARD No, it's business.

ROBERT You know what it's like...

GRETCHEN Leave us alone, can't you?

ROBERT Me?

GRETCHEN Yes. Go to your room.

ROBERT My room?

GRETCHEN Yes.

ROBERT Certainly.

BERNARD Oh, he can stay- he won't be in the way.

GRETCHEN He will.

BERNARD But he's a friend, and I've got to go out.

(BERTHA *enters.*)

BERTHA Ah. You've come back, Monsieur.

BERNARD Apparently.

BERTHA Mlle Gretchen gave you quite a surprise, I expect.

BERNARD Yes. Yes.

BERTHA Will you be eating at home, sir?

BERNARD No, no. I can't make it. But my friend will be eating with Mlle Gretchen, if that's all right, darling?

GRETCHEN Without you?

BERNARD But I'll be back straight away...well, as soon as I can.

GRETCHEN Then I don't want any dinner. I'll just have a bath and wait for you in bed.

BERNARD If you like.

GRETCHEN I adore you. And did you know that I've got three whole days this time?

BERNARD That is good news.

ROBERT Oh yes, indeed. It is very good news.

GRETCHEN What's it got to do with you?

ROBERT I'm so happy for everybody.

BERNARD Isn't that's nice of him. He's participating.

BERTHA He certainly is.

BERNARD Now you go and have your bath, darling...I'll give you a kiss before I go.

GRETCHEN I'll have a little one on account now, please.

ROBERT Quick, quick!

GRETCHEN Quick, quick? What do you mean, quick?

BERNARD He's right. Got to get on. There. Have a nice bath! (*he semi-pushes her toward the bathroom*) Have a nice bath!

GRETCHEN I won't be long.  
(*She goes into bathroom and the door shuts at the moment GABRIELLA comes in from the bedroom.*)

GABRIELLA I knew I was right- I looked an absolute fright.

BERTHA Oh! Oh! Mademoiselle is still here.

GABRIELLA Yes, Bertha...As you see...I don't take off until tomorrow.

BERTHA Tomorrow? Oh! Monsieur...Mademoiselle is here too? (*She turns and gestures towards the bathroom.*)

BERNARD Well spotted.

GABRIELLA Too? Why "too"?

BERTHA I mean...with Monsieur and Monsieur...you know...too...Oh, Monsieur...

BERNARD Yes, what? What is it? Is something wrong?

BERTHA Oh no! I'm not well, monsieur.

ROBERT Give her a cognac!

GABRIELLA She looks as though she's had a shock.

BERNARD No. No. No.

ROBERT Here. Drink this. (*Gives her a glass. She drinks*)

BERTHA Thank you, monsieur.

ROBERT (*to BERNARD, taking charge*) Go on, get going! Go on!

BERNARD Eh? Oh, yes! Let's go!

GABRIELLA Go where?

BERNARD To dinner, al fresco.

ROBERT Yes...under a tree.

GABRIELLA No, I'd rather stay here. I've told you.

BERNARD But what for? I'd like to take you out. I need the fresh air.

GABRIELLA Then you go and get it. Your friend can keep me company.

ROBERT What me and you? Out of the question.

GABRIELLA What do you mean me and you? Out of the question?

ROBERT I've got to go out too! And I've got a terrible headache.

GABRIELLA Well, you'd better go and get some fresh air with Bernard. I'm staying here.

BERNARD Darling, don't you ever want to do anything else but sit at home and slop around in slippers?

GABRIELLA Look, I cover three hundred thousand miles a year. It's a change to slip around in sloppers. I like it. You-

BERNARD This is no time-

GABRIELLA Don't muddle me.

ROBERT Think of all that lovely fresh air.

GABRIELLA We fly at twenty thousand feet. I get enough fresh air. For once I've got a night at home and this is where I'm going to stay.

BERNARD But, darling-

GABRIELLA No, I won't listen to another word. I've made up my mind. Feeling better, Bertha?

BERTHA A little better. It's all this coming and going. I'm overworked, probably.

GABRIELLA Do you feel strong enough to cook dinner?

BERTHA You want to eat here?

ROBERT No, no.

GABRIELLA Yes, yes!

BERNARD We're going out.

ROBERT I'm going out too! We're going out. Everyone's going out!

BERTHA But Monsieur just told me you'd be dining here.

ROBERT I've changed my mind. I'm allowed, aren't I?

BERNARD Yes. He's changed his mind. He's allowed isn't he?

BERTHA Fine, right!

GABRIELLA So, what's for dinner?

BERTHA Frankfurters.

GABRIELLA What!

BERTHA It's nothing to do with me. I don't make up the menus. I just carry out orders.

GABRIELLA Did you ask for frankfurters?

BERNARD Yes- no- it was Robert.

ROBERT Me?

BERNARD Yes. Don't you remember, after you went there- you said you'd never eat anything else?

ROBERT Went where?

BERNARD Frankfurt!

ROBERT Oh yes. Frankfurters.

GABRIELLA But haven't you got anything else, Bertha?

BERTHA Sauerkraut.

GABRIELLA But I detest sauerkraut.

ROBERT So off you go to Saint Germain.

BERNARD Yes, come on...

ROBERT Ah, the countryside...there's nothing like it....

GABRIELLA All right, no need to go into all that- you win. We'll go out to Saint-Germain and come back here after dinner.

BERNARD We'll see...we'll see...Come on then...Let's get going...I'm starving hungry and by the time we get there...

GABRIELLA Are you coming with us?

ROBERT Yes!

BERNARD No! He's staying here.

ROBERT I am?

BERNARD Yes you are!

GABRIELLA So, you're not going out now?

ROBERT Well, no...no...I'm not going out now... I'm feeling much better, I'm staying here, I am!

BERNARD You see? Right, let's go!

GABRIELLA Oh, my bag! (*she goes into Door 7 and shuts the door*)

BERNARD Oh, my god!

GRETCHEN (*coming out of the bathroom*) I can't find my loofah!

ROBERT Shh!

GRETCHEN What?

ROBERT Keep you voice down. He's got a headache.

BERNARD What?

ROBERT You've got a headache.

BERNARD I've got a headache.

GRETCHEN My poor darling- I know what you need...I'll get you an aspirin.  
(*goes towards door 7*)

BERTHA Get me a couple, too.  
 GRETCHEN I think there's some in the spare room.  
 BERNARD No. No.  
 ROBERT No. No. I know, what about a bath.  
 BERNARD She's only just had one, you fool.  
 ROBERT Have another one.  
 GRETCHEN I've not had one yet. The water's too hot.  
 ROBERT Get back quickly- before it gets too cold.  
 BERNARD Yes, it gets cold very quickly in this flat.  
 GRETCHEN You won't go away?  
 BERNARD No, no- later- later-  
*(He pushes her towards the bathroom and she goes in at the moment GABRIELLA comes back with her bag BERNARD continues, but in song.)*  
 Later- we're going to the country.  
 BERTHA Monsieur, do you mind if I help myself? *(helping herself from the cognac bottle)*  
 BERNARD No. Go ahead.  
 ROBERT I'll have one as well, Bertha.  
 GABRIELLA Are you feeling ill again?  
 ROBERT I'm a bit dizzy.  
 BERTHA *(hands ROBERT a drink)* Probably a storm coming.  
 ROBERT Any minute now.  
 GABRIELLA Well, if there's going to be a storm, we're not going out.  
 BERNARD Oh, yes we are. A storm in the countryside. You don't want to miss that.  
 GABRIELLA Mio dio. Alright. See you later. *(GABRIELLA exits.)*  
 ROBERT That's right. That's right.  
 BERNARD I'm right behind you.  
 ROBERT And for heaven's sake keep her at Saint-Germain.

BERNARD Don't worry. She gets back here over my dead body. What a mess. I think I'm having a panic attack.

ROBERT Whatever you do, don't panic. Bon appetit.

BERNARD Thanks. Same to you.

GABRIELLA *(enters)* Bernard. Come now- or I won't go.  
*(She goes out again as GRETCHEN enters from the bathroom.)*

GRETCHEN It's still too hot.

BERNARD What is?

GRETCHEN My bath.

BERNARD Well, blow on it!

GRETCHEN You're going now?

BERNARD I'll be back. But he's staying here. He's charming.

GRETCHEN } See you soon.  
BERNARD }

*(BERNARD exits upstage and GRETCHEN goes back into the bathroom)*

BERTHA Well done, sir. I'd go a long way to see something like that again. Congratulations! Cheers.

ROBERT Cheers.

BERTHA We've earned this.

ROBERT We certainly have.  
*(The telephone rings. BERTHA answers it.)*

BERTHA Hello. Yes, I'll take it. A message from a Mlle Gloria Hawkins? Storm over the North Atlantic. Stop. Turning back stop. Will be in Paris at twenty-two hundred hours...Do you mean tonight? Anything else?...Love and kisses, Gloria. *(She hangs up)* Did you hear that?

ROBERT Every word.

BERTHA Drink up. We're in for a stormy night.

ROBERT        Could be.

BERTHA        Now, you must admit monsieur, it's no life for a maid here.

ROBERT        Not for a maid no, but for a man. A real one. It seems pretty  
sensational.

**CURTAIN**

### ACT III

*GRETCHEN comes out of the dining room followed by ROBERT.*

- ROBERT        Yes, yes...well, say what you like. It's just my opinion.  
                   Sauerkraut has to be heavy on the digestion.
- GRETCHEN     Absolutely not!  
                   *(BERTHA entering behind them.)*
- BERTHA        Don't suppose you'll be requiring coffee will you?
- GRETCHEN     No, Bertha. You know very well, not for me..., never in the evening.
- BERTHA        Very well, mademoiselle.
- ROBERT        Yes, I'll have some, Bertha. Otherwise that sauerkraut will give me nightmares.
- BERTHA        It's nearly 22:00hrs
- ROBERT        Yes, yes, hurry up, hurry up. *(BERTHA exits)*
- GRETCHEN     If you're trying to annoy me by denigrating German food, I might as well tell you that it's pointless. You're wasting you're time.
- ROBERT        I'm not denigrating anything. It's just that pickled cabbage weighs me down a bit.
- GRETCHEN     Nobody seems to get nightmares in Germany.
- ROBERT        I expect you're used to it. But me, not having any German origins, I think I'll have some trouble.
- GRETCHEN     You don't know what you're talking about. Sauerkraut is an outstanding dish. In fact we eat it throughout the country. That proves people like it...
- ROBERT        But I'm not saying people don't like it. I'm saying, "It's heavy."  
                   That's all.
- GRETCHEN     When it's nicely prepared and served with chilled wine, it's delicious.

ROBERT        It is delicious, but heavy! It sends all the blood to my head, don't you find?

GRETCHEN     No.

                  (*BERTHA enters with a cup of coffee on a tray.*)

BERTHA        Here we are, Monsieur. And if you want my advice, you'll drink it while it's hot because sauerkraut (*she mimes physical heaviness*).

ROBERT        Thanks, Bertha.

GRETCHEN     Berta?

BERTHA        Mademoiselle?

GRETCHEN     When did Bernard say he'd be back?

BERTHA        Uhh...

ROBERT        He had things to do and he...

GRETCHEN     I wasn't asking you! I was speaking to Berta. Well?

BERTHA        Well, I know when Monsieur Bernard went out. But I won't know when he'll be back until he's back.

GRETCHEN     Thank you, Berta.

BERTHA        I mean, he doesn't tell me everything.

GRETCHEN     Well, he might have told me.

BERTHA        Well, yes...but it all happened so suddenly- something unforeseen. Isn't that so, Monsieur?

ROBERT        Yes. That's right Bertha. That's how the unforeseen happens- it's something you just don't foresee.

BERTHA        Of course not, as it's unforeseen- you see.

ROBERT        Because if we'd been able to foresee it, it wouldn't have been unforeseen. It would have been – What would it have been Bertha?

BERTHA        Different.

ROBERT        That's it- different.

BERTHA        You see.

GRETCHEN     Yes. Thank you, Berta. I do see. Thank you.

BERTHA Don't mention it, Mlle. Don't mention it. (*She does a physical reminder of Gloria's immanent arrival and goes out- Door 3.*)

ROBERT If it hadn't been for that sauerkraut, do you know I would have enjoyed myself very much tonight.

GRETCHEN Why?

ROBERT Well, Bernard wasn't here, and it was very nice- just the two of us.

GRETCHEN Oh please don't waste your efforts.

ROBERT Oh, don't get angry. Come on, give me a little smile. You know you're really very pretty for a...

GRETCHEN For a German girl? Is that it? Is that what you were going to say?

ROBERT No, no, not at all! You've misinterpreted me.

GRETCHEN Do you really think I can't see what you're up to? All through dinner you never stopped winking at me...and those bizarre and cryptic little smiles...

ROBERT Not at all!

GRETCHEN Don't deny it! You're wooing me scandalously! You're hanging round me like... a caveman round his fire...

ROBERT I can't help it if I like you so much.

GRETCHEN That's no reason. And even if you do like me so much, I don't like you... so goodnight.

ROBERT Wait! Wait...Let's be sensible. Let's be really grown up about this. I know what we should do.

GRETCHEN Oh, really? What?

ROBERT We should go out together.

GRETCHEN At this time?

ROBERT It's not late.

GRETCHEN It's dark. You can't see a thing.

ROBERT Who needs to see...It's just for a breather...Everything absolutely above board, of course...

GRETCHEN Of course!

ROBERT        There's no risk. You're big enough. I mean, capable enough- to look after yourself, if you really think I'll make a pass at you.

GRETCHEN     I forbid you to make a pass at me!

ROBERT        But it's only a bit of fun...

GRETCHEN     Yes, but I know all about French fun. It's a dangerous kind of fun.

ROBERT        Dangerous? Not for you. You have Bernard.

GRETCHEN     Right! I have Bernard. But even if it's not dangerous, in the first place it doesn't appeal to me, and in the second, I think it's dishonest.

ROBERT        When you kissed me-

GRETCHEN     By mistake!

ROBERT        You kissed me twice.

GRETCHEN     The first time by mistake and the second because of your despicable, insufferable, detestable, deplorable blackmail! But I won't be blackmailed anymore! (*ROBERT doubling up with pain*)

GRETCHEN     Are you in some sort of grip of an obsession?

ROBERT        No, I think it's that sauerkraut. But, yes yes, I am obsessed with you romantically obsessed.

GRETCHEN     Romantic! I must say you look romantic- lying there all red and congested!

ROBERT        That's just why I'd like to go out. To get some fresh air.

GRETCHEN     I'm not stopping you

ROBERT        But not without you...Oh go on. Be an angel.

GRETCHEN     You won't make a pass?

ROBERT        I promise. I swear. How could I with this wind? Word of honour.

GRETCHEN     Alright, we'll just pop out for an hour then straight back.

ROBERT        Oh! Thank you!...Thank you! (*he flings himself on her*)

GRETCHEN     Put me down- word of honour indeed! My mother warned me about men like you!

ROBERT        Please. I got carried away. Forgive me. I was just thrilled you agreed with me for once.

GRETCHEN Yes. When we were out in the country, in the dark, in your car, I suppose you'd get carried away again. You'd pounce on me.

ROBERT Pounce on you in my car? Impossible!

GRETCHEN I don't believe you anymore!

ROBERT I haven't got a car. We'll take a taxi and there will be a driver. I could say to him 'This lady's rather nervous so would you mind coming and sitting in the back with us.'

GRETCHEN I'm not going. I've had enough. You come in here like some dreadful-. Think up all sorts of devilish plots, try and get me away from my fiancé and up some pitch black country lane- well, you want me to go out!

ROBERT Yes.

GRETCHEN Right! I'll go fetch my jacket and go...On my own!

ROBERT Listen! *Liebchen!*

GRETCHEN Don't you *Liebchen* me.

ROBERT Let me *Liebchen* you.

GRETCHEN How dare you be so familiar!

ROBERT *Liebchen. Liebchen (sung)*  
(*BERTHA enters*)

BERTHA Can I take the coffee away?

ROBERT Yes. Gretchen. Gretchen. Listen, listen to me.

GRETCHEN I will not listen to you. I shall never listen to you again- you vandal! (*She goes out, slamming the door and leaving her bag.*)

BERTHA A bit upset, is she?

ROBERT Yes, a bit. She's a lovely person, though.

BERTHA Oh yes...she is nice, I suppose. Is she going out or not?

ROBERT Yes.

BERTHA Oh, good. Are you going with her?

ROBERT No. She won't let me.

BERTHA Oh dear. My poor Monsieur. It looks like you'll have to deal with the American then.

ROBERT Me? Oh no!

BERTHA What else can you do, Monsieur?

ROBERT Yes that's right I can desert Bernard.  
*(GLORIA enters in uniform.)*

GLORIA Hi!

ROBERT Hi!

BERTHA Good evening, Mademoiselle.

GLORIA Good evening, my dear little Bertie. Oh, it's so nice to be home again!

BERTHA So what happened with the flight, mademoiselle?

GLORIA There was a terrible storm over the North Atlantic and we had to turn back. Isn't that marvellous! Another whole night at home! Where's Bernard?

ROBERT He had to go out.

BERTHA On business.

GLORIA Not for long, I hope.

BERTHA Oh no, not for long.

GLORIA *(Puts bag on chair)* And how have you got on since I left this morning?

ROBERT It's been quite dull really.

GLORIA Cosy here, isn't it? Home sweet home. Everything's so calm.

ROBERT Calm isn't it? Really calm Bertha.

BERTHA Calm as calm can be.  
*(GLORIA goes towards Door 1. ROBERT dashes and stops her.)*

GLORIA I'm famished.

ROBERT Where are you going?

GLORIA I want to get out of this uniform.

ROBERT Opposite! Opposite!

GLORIA What do you mean, "opposite"?

ROBERT Go in the room, opposite.

GLORIA Me?

ROBERT Yes.

GLORIA What for?

ROBERT To get out of your uniform.

GLORIA But my room- Bernard's and mine- is this one.

ROBERT Yes, I know, I know...But he's given it to me.

GLORIA What?

ROBERT Yes, he said...

BERTHA Yes, that's true.

ROBERT He said, "Since Gloria's in America, and you're my best friend, you can have my room."

GLORIA Oh!

BERTHA Yes, he's right. That's what he said.

ROBERT So I've moved in there, you see?

GLORIA Well move out again because I'm back!

ROBERT Can't be done.

BERTHA That's right. Can't be done.

GLORIA What a way to behave! Listen! I'm back. Give me back my room!

ROBERT I have to wait till Bernard gets back!

BERTHA Yes. Monsieur Bernard gave orders. It wouldn't do to cross him.

ROBERT No. It wouldn't.

GLORIA This is unbelievable! Is it the man or the woman who gives orders in the home?

BERTHA} It's the man.

ROBERT} It's the man.

GLORIA No it's not! It's the woman!

ROBERT Oh, come on!

GLORIA And I happen to be the mistress of this house.

ROBERT No comment.

GLORIA In America, the woman of the house gives the orders. And the man keeps his mouth shut. He obeys with no argument.

ROBERT No argument?

GLORIA No argument! The man makes the money and the woman is the brains. That's how it is in America, so let me go into my bedroom and you go in the one opposite!

ROBERT Yes. Yes, But we happen to be in France here, aren't we, Bertha?

BERTHA Yes. We most certainly are.

ROBERT Well, in France, it's the man who gives the orders. Sorry about that.

GLORIA You're wrong. Look, I'm starving. But as soon as I've had a coffee and something to eat you and I are going to have a little talk, and I'll bet you fifty dollars to a franc that you're going to agree with me before you're very much older.

ROBERT We'll see. We'll see.

GLORIA What have you got to eat, Bertie?

BERTHA Frankfurters. Prime Quality.

ROBERT And sauerkraut.

GLORIA Any whipped cream?

BERTHA Yes. For pudding.

GLORIA No, to eat with the frankfurters and sauerkraut.

BERTHA Oh you eat want you want.

GLORIA Lay a place in here.

ROBERT No! No! Can't be done. Can it, Bertha.

BERTHA No. It can't. Come into the kitchen with me mademselle and we'll sort it out together.

GLORIA Okay. You stay right there, we're going to have a little talk.  
*(She goes out just as GRETCHEN enters- Door 1- in uniform.)*

BERTHA Sauerkraut and whipped cream coming up.

ROBERT Oh yes please Bertha. I'd love some more sauerkraut and whipped cream.  
*(BERTHA exits)*

GRETCHEN Right. I'm off.

ROBERT Me too.

GRETCHEN Oh no. Leave me alone. I don't trust you at all any more.

ROBERT Where are you going?

GRETCHEN Out. Is that clear?

ROBERT What shall I tell Bernard?

GRETCHEN Tell him I've gone out.

ROBERT But he told me to look after you...

GRETCHEN Yes! You've a curious way of looking after me, and a curious look in your wicked chestnut eyes...

ROBERT Hazel! They're hazel! It says so on my passport. Come and look at them and you'll see they're hazel.

GRETCHEN No thank you. I can see you well enough from here.  
*(GRETCHEN crosses to the front door she sees the T.W.A bag on the desk chair.)*  
 What's this T.W.A bag doing here?

ROBERT *(seizing it)* It's mine.

GRETCHEN Yours? Funny sort of bag for a man to have.

ROBERT I keep little things in it-

GRETCHEN If you were patriotic, you'd keep your little things in an Air France bag.

ROBERT I never thought of that.

GRETCHEN You're all the same. Insensitive, unthinking and unpatriotic!  
*(she exits just as GLORIA returns.)*

GLORIA Is it normal in France for men to go through ladies handbags?

ROBERT What?

GLORIA Why are you going through my bag?

ROBERT Me?

GLORIA Yes, you.

ROBERT Why on earth would you ask me that?

GLORIA Because I see you clutching it.

ROBERT Me? So I am. I'm clutching it.

GLORIA           There's no money in it. I pay everything by cheque. There's a Parker pen, a lipstick and a few little personal things for the night, that's all. You can believe me.

ROBERT           But of course I believe you.

GLORIA           Well, the, let it go.

ROBERT           What? Oh of course. I'm still clutching it. You'd left it on the chair and I just came along and picked it up as I sat down. I mean, I didn't want to sit on top of it. Here I was clutching it- it's stupid, really. You don't really think I was going through your bag, do you?

GLORIA           No. Just kidding. Drink?

ROBERT           Ok.

GLORIA           Scotch?

ROBERT           Thanks.

GLORIA           Have you thought about it?

ROBERT           About what?

GLORIA           What I was just saying...about American women...giving the orders.

ROBERT           Oh yes, yes...I agree.

GLORIA           So you've changed your mind?

ROBERT           Have I?

GLORIA           For things to go smoothly, the woman has to give the orders...and Bernard agrees.

ROBERT           Well, there we are then...everything's perfect.

GLORIA           And so, if I wanted to make myself at home in my bedroom, I would make myself at home.

ROBERT           Yes, yes...right away...why not?

GLORIA           And without waiting for Bernard to get back.

ROBERT           No. Make yourself at home.

*(She goes out, slamming the door .GLORIA returns almost at once- holding the Lufthansa handbag.)*

What's this Lufthansa bag doing here?

ROBERT

That bag? It's mine! It's mine!

GLORIA

Oh?

ROBERT

I keep my little things for the night in it- my pyjamas- my toothbrush- spare pair of socks, toothpaste, shaving brush, you know...

GLORIA

Whose are these?

ROBERT

Those are mine.

GLORIA

Yours?

ROBERT

Yes, those are mine.

GLORIA

Oh, oh I see. You're a very interesting kinda guy. I can see you're all settled in my room, and Bernard did give it to you, so I'll let you stay there.

ROBERT

Oh, that's not necessary.

GLORIA

You know, I'll even give you a T.W.A bag to put your things in.

ROBERT

That's very kind of you Gloria, but mine will do me for a while yet.

GLORIA

There's no way you're having a bag from a German company! Look at ours, there's a little pocket inside with a zipper. It's really handy.

ROBERT

I see. I see.

GLORIA

What's yours like inside? (*she tries to open the bag that ROBERT is holding*)

ROBERT

Oh mine's got some pockets...this sort of pocket...that sort of pocket...and those sorts of pockets...it's full of pockets...stuffed with pockets...it's made of pockets! It's a pocket bag.

GLORIA

My dear Robert. It would make me very happy if you accept my bag as a gift.

ROBERT

Well, if it'll make you happy.

GLORIA

That's right. A man mustn't refuse a present from an American woman!

ROBERT Oh really? Why's that?

GLORIA It's very rare for an American woman to give presents! But you said, "No!" when I wanted to go into my own bedroom! So you're not a baby. It takes a man to say, "No!".

ROBERT Oh. I see. I understand. Yes, well...a man...yes, I think...

GLORIA You know, people wonder why America is such a great country.

ROBERT Yes, people do wonder.

GLORIA Well, it's quite simply because American men stay babies all their lives.

ROBERT As long as that?

GLORIA The Kinsey report proved it.

ROBERT Did it?

GLORIA In my country the woman is stronger than the man because he always says yes to her. And so by demanding more everyday, she can make the man work his way to total exhaustion.

ROBERT They don't mind?

GLORIA Oh, they mind. But one little mutiny and we're off to Reno. You can get a divorce in six weeks- for mental cruelty. And that means alimony.

ROBERT What happens if they don't pay it?

GLORIA Jail.

ROBERT Jail?

GLORIA So to avoid going to jail, they pay up and to pay up, they have to work. They have to produce. This ensures a stable economy. And that's why America is such a great country.

ROBERT Although he could produce, while in jail, baskets, espadrilles, little rubber like things..... Poor Bernard.

GLORIA Why?

ROBERT You're going to marry him.

GLORIA Never.

ROBERT Why not?

GLORIA He's a Frenchman. He's grown up. He might argue with me, and I couldn't take that. I shall just have to find an American, But I shall always love Bernard.

ROBERT So you'll marry an American but you won't necessarily love him?

GLORIA How could I? How can you love a man who spends his whole time working?

ROBERT It's not impossible.

GLORIA Oh! Say that again.

ROBERT What?

GLORIA 'It's not impossible.'

ROBERT Why?

GLORIA Your lips are just so cute when you say that.

ROBERT Really?

GLORIA Truly... Say it again.

ROBERT What was it again?

GLORIA It's not impossible.

ROBERT It's not impossible.

GLORIA Oh, your mouth really is a gorgeous shape. (*she comes closer*)

ROBERT Really?

GLORIA Yes...say it again!

ROBERT Again?

GLORIA Yes, please. For me.

ROBERT It's not impossible.

GLORIA There they go again. It's like a tiny flower opening.

ROBERT You're embarrassing me.

GLORIA No, no, honestly... Say have you ever kissed an American woman?

ROBERT No! No, in Aix the chance never really came up.

GLORIA That's a great shame. We Americans are like the French, really. Very rational about love.

ROBERT Really?

GLORIA Oh yes. (*She kisses him.*) Well?

ROBERT Well what?

GLORIA What do you think?

ROBERT Um, it's hard to say.

GLORIA Staggered by my astonishing technique?

ROBERT No. No. I wouldn't go that far. It's difficult to say when you're not expecting it.

GLORIA Oh right. So, you're expecting it now?

ROBERT Why? Are you going to do it again?

GLORIA I want you to tell me what you think of my technique.

ROBERT Oh, well. You know, I'm no expert.

GLORIA That's why it's interesting.

ROBERT But we're not going to kiss just like that, are we? For no reason?

GLORIA Are you crazy?

ROBERT Why?

GLORIA Well, I don't love you...

ROBERT I see.

GLORIA I just love your mouth.

ROBERT Oh, right.

GLORIA And there's nothing between the two of us, is there?

ROBERT Well, no. Nothing at all.

GLORIA No emotion.

ROBERT Not one!

GLORIA So we can kiss technically...to formulate an opinion...a technical opinion. Right are you ready?

ROBERT Yes...yes...Go for it!

GLORIA Right...(she kisses him. Doorbell rings.) Well?

ROBERT Oh, definitely better than the first time.

GLORIA You think?

ROBERT Yes...and I was expecting it too! I didn't even have the benefit of the element of surprise!

GLORIA           And how did you find it technically?

ROBERT           Was that the classic American technique?

GLORIA           Yes.

ROBERT           It's really very impressive. It actually made my ears ring a bit.

GLORIA           Really? How about this? *(she kisses him again; he doorbell rings again and BERTHA enters and crosses to answer it.)*

BERTHA           That's a very depressing sight...*(exits upstage)*

GLORIA           Well?

ROBERT           Oh now that, that was really good!...congratulations...That made my ears ring even louder, I even heard voices!

GLORIA           Well, I'm so glad you liked it, so glad! Say it again.

ROBERT           It's NOT impossible.

GLORIA           I can't resist it. *(She kisses him again.)*

ROBERT           Gloria, can't you see all this technique will end up by giving me ideas.

GLORIA           Oh but you mustn't get any ideas.

ROBERT           No ideas.

GLORIA           No. The technique of the kiss is based on not having any ideas.

ROBERT           Not having any ideas.

GLORIA           No.

ROBERT           But what's the point of it then?

GLORIA           It helps to pass the time.

ROBERT           It helps to pass the time.

GLORIA           When you're with people you don't much care for- you can't always be playing gin-rummy.

ROBERT           I can't play gin-rummy at all.

GLORIA           So when you come across someone with such a cute little mouth like yours- well, it's a good chance to get in some practice- right are you ready?

ROBERT           Ready. *(She kisses him, just as BERNARD enters.)*

BERNARD I forgot my keys. (*He sees GLORIA.*) You! You... you hoo shouldn't be here.

GLORIA You hoo. Yes, here I am. Hello Bernard, darling.

BERNARD Bertha didn't tell me you were back.

GLORIA But I rang and you'd gone out...There was a snowstorm. We had to turn back.

BERNARD Yes, right.

BERTHA Yes, stroke of luck, wasn't it- a snowstorm.

BERNARD Thank you, Bertha. (*Bertha exits*)

GLORIA Where were you?

BERNARD Out...held up by business.

GLORIA You seem on edge.

BERNARD No. No. Everything alright?

ROBERT Splendid!

BERNARD Ah, good, so no slip ups...from a business point of view?

ROBERT Not for the moment.

GLORIA In fact, your friend and I were just having a fascinating chat.

ROBERT Chat. Yes, just having a chat while we waited for you to get back.

BERNARD Well, I'm back now.

ROBERT Lovely to see you.

BERNARD And I'm going to interrupt your little chat so you can come out with me and spend the night at Saint-Germain.

ROBERT Me?

BERNARD No, you fool, Gloria.

GLORIA Why?

BERNARD A sudden inspiration.

ROBERT A very good idea.

BERNARD Yes. It'll be fun. It'll make a change.

GLORIA It's awfully sweet of you, darling, but I'm much too tired. Let's stay here. I'll have a bath and then we can go to bed. And we'll have enough change of scene as it is, and as you've given our

room to your friend, we could try this room over here. (*crosses to Door 7*)

- ROBERT No! No! I remember something. You can't use that room.
- GLORIA Why not?
- BERNARD Yes, why not?
- ROBERT You told Bertha she could sleep in there.
- BERNARD I did?
- ROBERT Yes. Don't you remember?
- GLORIA Instead of sleeping in her own room? Why?
- BERNARD Why?
- ROBERT Why? It's perfectly reasonable.
- BERNARD Yes...yes...that's it...You're right, I remember now. Bertha fancied a bit of a change too.
- ROBERT That's right. It's natural.
- BERNARD You're travelling all the time. You don't realise!
- ROBERT That's right. And she gets jealous.
- BERNARD So she decided she wanted to travel too...across the flat.
- GLORIA Where would you have slept if I hadn't come back?
- BERNARD Me? Over there- (*indicating Door 5*) in that one.
- GLORIA That little courtyard room?
- BERNARD Yes, that's right. There's less noise in there...and since I find noise stressful, I was very glad to have a change as well. So, let's go to Saint-Germain!
- GLORIA Oh no, darling, it's late. Let's stay here. I'll have a bath and we'll go to bed...in the little courtyard room. It's so exciting, don't you think?
- BERNARD No. It's not.
- ROBERT Oh no. Absolutely not.
- BERTHA (*Bertha enters*) Will that be all, Monsieur?
- BERNARD Yes, that's fine. Thank you.
- GLORIA Is the bed made up in the little courtyard room?

BERTHA No, Mademoiselle.  
 GLORIA Well, if Bernard's friend is having our room, where are we going to sleep?  
 BERTHA Oh, yes? Monsieur's given...Right. Well! Over there, I suppose.  
 BERNARD } No!  
 ROBERT } No!  
 GLORIA You don't imagine we're all going to tuck in with you, Bertha?  
 BERTHA With me?  
 ROBERT Well, you are sleeping in there.  
 BERTHA Me?  
 BERNARD Of course, you! You asked me yourself!  
 BERTHA Did I?  
 BERNARD Yes! For a change of scenery.  
 BERTHA Me?  
 ROBERT Yes, you! Because you were jealous.  
 BERNARD Yes! Clear?  
 BERTHA No.  
 BERNARD Yes!  
 BERTHA Right!  
 BERNARD So go and makeup the courtyard room.  
 BERTHA Very good, monsieur.  
 GLORIA Come on. I'll help you, Bertie.  
 BERTHA That's very kind, I'm a bit bewildered at the moment...  
 GLORIA Oh, I know...if I were here all the time things would be different!  
*(They exit- Door 5.)*  
 BERNARD Where is she?  
 ROBERT Who?  
 BERNARD Gabriella.  
 ROBERT How should I know? Didn't you take her to Saint-Germain?

- BERNARD I tried, but it just couldn't be done...She made a scene in the restaurant!...right in the middle of the meal she upped and walked out on me... By the time I got into the street she'd vanished.
- ROBERT Oh. Right.
- BERNARD Where's Gretchen?
- ROBERT Gone out for a walk.
- BERNARD Well, that's all right then. Now all I've got to do is get Gloria out to the country, trees, chestnut, the birds, until tomorrow.
- ROBERT You want to watch that, Bernard. People will think you're a rural maniac.
- BERNARD What else can I do? Now, if Gabriella comes back, I can't be here! And you know nothing about it.
- ROBERT What happens if Gretchen comes back too? What do I say?
- BERNARD You say...you say...you say...whatever you like?
- ROBERT Easy for you to say. I'm the one who'll have to do all the talking.
- BERNARD I'm sorry- but I'm having a nervous breakdown. How about you?
- ROBERT No, no. I'm fine. It's a bit of a change from Aix, obviously. But it's quite interesting. Sometimes thrilling, always varied and exciting! I've met lots of interesting new people. Of course there are risks, but if there's no risk there's no pleasure- and you wanted pleasure.
- (*GLORIA returns with BERTHA.*)
- GLORIA It's a sweet little room! So calm and tranquil. Much better than the country.
- BERNARD No darling- the chestnut trees- the wind-
- (*A door slams off stage.*)
- What was that?
- ROBERT The wind.
- BERTHA The front door. (*she exits*)
- ROBERT The front door.

BERNARD The front door- I've just realised, darling. I've never seen inside this little room.

*(He pushes her ahead of him into the room and shuts the door behind them at the moment that GABRIELLA bursts onto the stage.)*

GABRIELLA Where is he?

ROBERT Who?

GABRIELLA Where is Bernard?

ROBERT I thought he was with you. At Saint-Germain.

GABRIELLA What is it with this countryside craze? All through the journey, all through the meal, all Bernard would do was babble about fresh air and chestnut trees. He went on and on just as if he was trying to hide something.

ROBERT Really? What could he have to hide, do you think?

GABRIELLA That's just it! I know he has nothing to hide. I know him...But this insistence is infuriating. The more people tell me to do something the less I want to do it. That's how I am. It's my nature!

ROBERT Yes, of course. *(She wanders towards Door 1.)* That's my room.

GABRIELLA What?

ROBERT My room.

GABRIELLA Oh, of course, I'm sorry. I don't know where I am anymore. I'm so annoyed.

ROBERT Now, you musn't be...

GABRIELLA He got on my nerves so much, I didn't even finish dinner! I went out for some air and when I went back into the restaurant he'd gone! Don't you think that's outrageous?

ROBERT Yes, yes, absolutely! Well, perhaps he fancied some air too. And perhaps after you left he went back. Perhaps he's upset too. He loves you...

GABRIELLA But I love him too! Anyway, we wouldn't have these problems if we were together all the time. I know he's here, all alone, when I'm at the other end of the world...I wonder what he's doing, I worry...

ROBERT But he worries too. I'm sure that's why...why he was so keen to take you off to the country, to sort out all the worrying!

GABRIELLA It would all be so simple if only he'd marry me!

ROBERT Simple, yes, absolutely!

GABRIELLA I mean it's really too stupid to spend all that time apart.

ROBERT Stupid.

GABRIELLA Never mind, when we're married it'll all change. Right, well, goodnight, little Robert... *(She finds the Lufthansa handbag.)*  
What's that Lufthansa bag doing there?

ROBERT It's mine. It's MINE. *(clutching bag)*

GABRIELLA Yours?

ROBERT Yes, I use it to keep my little things for the night in- my pyjamas, socks- spare pair of toothbrushes-

GABRIELLA How weird!

ROBERT It's not illegal, is it?

GABRIELLA No, no, of course not, but it's a woman's bag; so seeing you holding it like that, it looks funny! Look. I hope you don't mind but I'm going to bed.

ROBERT Off you go.

GABRIELLA And when Bernard gets here, tell him to come and say sorry...and tell him he's made me very unhappy.

ROBERT I'll tell him...if I see him.

GABRIELLA Thanks...goodnight, little Robert. *(she exits)*

ROBERT Goodnight. *(Hearing GLORIA coming back he puts GRETCHEN'S bag back in the stage right bedroom. GLORIA, coming out of the bedroom with BERNARD. She's in a flimsy robe with her shower cap in her hand)*

- GLORIA Let me go! No, darling, I see absolutely no point in taking off to the countryside when we're so cosy here. Robert, don't you think it's ridiculous?
- ROBERT Oh, me, you know...I don't have a view.
- GLORIA He agrees with me, of course!
- BERNARD But it would be so much nicer...
- GLORIA No! I adore that sweet little bedroom. And now I'm going to have a bath. (*She goes off- Door 5.*)
- BERNARD Sheer stubbornness...Honestly, you can't make them do anything!
- ROBERT Gabriella.
- BERNARD Gabriella?
- ROBERT At the front door. We had a choice between Gretchen or Gabriella. It was Gabriella. (*Pointing to Door 7.*)
- BERNARD Oh my God! What are we going to do? It can't go on like this! It's going to fall apart at any moment!
- ROBERT You must take hold of yourself, Bernard. This is no time for panic. This is the time for resource, resilience, aggression. You must put on a strong aggressive front. Just remember, Gloria and Gabriella are just behind these doors (*indicating Doors*) and any minute now Gretchen will return. It's Gabriella.  
(*GABRIELLA enters in her night clothes.*)
- GABRIELLA So you've come back, have you? How dare you?
- BERNARD Come back?
- GABRIELLA After leaving me in the middle of dinner.
- BERNARD But you left me.
- GABRIELLA I went back into the restaurant and you'd gone.
- BERNARD Now darling, just because we all got a little hysterical-
- GABRIELLA We got hysterical? You got hysterical! Really it's not enough to have a place of our own, a flat like this. We have to go tramping off into the country to sleep, just as though we were hiding away to make love.

BERNARD Shush! Don't get so worked up.

GABRIELLA Never mind "Shh"! I don't want to hide away to make love.

ROBERT } Shush!

BERNARD } Shush!

GABRIELLA You do, I suppose. Because you're ashamed of not marrying me!

BERNARD Look, it's very embarrassing having this scene in front of Robert.

GABRIELLA I'm sure he agrees with me, don't you?

ROBERT Oh you know me....I keep out of love stories...

GABRIELLA There! He said the word! Love! We ought to be proud of it. Tell everybody about it! Tell the whole world.

BERNARD I agree. I absolutely agree, but not so loud.

GLORIA Bernard.

ROBERT Bernard. Not so loud.

BERNARD Yes, all right, all right. Please calm down.

GABRIELLA *(to bathroom Door)* Okay. Fine. I'm going to calm down, by having a bath.

BERNARD *(blocking bathroom door)* No, no! You can't!

GABRIELLA Why not?

BERNARD Because he's going to have one.

ROBERT Am I?

*(BERNARD pushes ROBERT to door.)*

BERNARD Yes.

GABRIELLA Surely he can have one after me.

ROBERT No.

GABRIELLA What?

ROBERT I said no!

GABRIELLA Well, really.

BERNARD He's our guest. He said "No!"

GABRIELLA But surely you can let me go first.

ROBERT No. Everybody must take their turn in the queue.

GABRIELLA Well, I must say your friend is terribly considerate. A gentleman, quite overpoweringly polite-

BERNARD Gabriella, darling-

GABRIELLA And you stand there and let him insult me!

ROBERT } SHUSH!

BERNARD } SHUSH!

*(GABRIELLA marches into her bedroom and slams the door behind her, just as GLORIA enters from the bathroom.)*

GLORIA I really feel much better. Coming, darling?

BERNARD In a minute, darling...

ROBERT Yes. In a minute, darling-

GLORIA Don't keep me waiting too long, or I'll fall asleep.

BERNARD No, no!

GLORIA I've had a very tiring day, you know.

BERNARD Me too.

ROBERT And it's not over yet.

GLORIA Do you have much more to do?

BERNARD No. No. A few little things with Robert.

GLORIA Not for too long, I hope.

BERNARD No, no!

GLORIA Goodnight, Robert dear.

BERNARD } Goodnight.

ROBERT } Goodnight.

GLORIA I'll be waiting for you.

BERNARD Hmm mm....

*(GLORIA goes out- Door 6.)*

ROBERT You know-I've never seen a girl freshly bathed before- it's quite something.

BERNARD Gloria's very special.

ROBERT Yes, but Gretchen's not bad either.

BERNARD Yes. Personally, I prefer Gabriella.

ROBERT She's irresistible too. It's a difficult choice. But you know, Bernard, I don't think we've got the time to grade them right now. In fact, hang on. Now I think of it... the coast is clear now... Gabriella can have her bath... Go on. Tell her. I'd hate for her to think that I wouldn't let her have her bath before mine.

BERNARD No, you tell her. I'll check there's nothing left lying about.  
(*BERNARD goes into the bathroom. ROBERT knocks on Door 7.*)

GABRIELLA (*off*) What is it?

ROBERT It's me, Robert.

GABRIELLA (*off*) What do you want?

ROBERT You can have my turn in the bathroom.

GABRIELLA (*off*) Forget it!

BERNARD Okay. All clear.

ROBERT Okay. All clear. (*catching himself*) Come on, Gabriella.

GABRIELLA (*entering dressed for bed*) You are a very rude, unpleasant man!

ROBERT Me?

BERNARD No, no. Listen, it was a joke. I got him to say he wanted a bath to see how you'd react.

GABRIELLA Well. You saw!

BERNARD I did... I adore you... there, happy now?

ROBERT I mean, if you can't have a laugh anymore...

GABRIELLA You should have told me it was a joke, then I'd have understood...

ROBERT Yes... yes... But that wouldn't have been funny for us, you see, because you wouldn't have got really, really really annoyed!

GABRIELLA It amuses you, does it? To see me getting really really really annoyed?

BERNARD Yes- no. It amuses me to see Robert being amused because-

GABRIELLA Because I'm annoyed.

BERNARD No. That can't be right.

ROBERT I really am terribly sorry.

BERNARD And so am I. Please Gabriella. (*He kisses her.*)

GABRIELLA Well, all right, darling. Bernard, you really should marry me, you know.

BERNARD But of course I will marry you. Of course I will....sooner or later.

GABRIELLA Don't you think he ought to?

ROBERT Oh yes, absolutely! You're marvellous and he doesn't deserve you.

GABRIELLA If you were in his place, wouldn't you marry me at once?

ROBERT At once, I wouldn't have waited this long.

GABRIELLA There, you see? Your friend would have already married me!

BERNARD Would you keep out of this?

ROBERT What? She asked my opinion; I answered. I'm entitled to an opinion, aren't I?

GABRIELLA Because, I'm telling you Bernard, you're made for marriage.

BERNARD Me?

GABRIELLA Yes! You're an old fashioned stay-at-home. You like things to be nice and smooth. You hate complications. You're too nervy for them!

ROBERT It's true...that's you to a T.

BERNARD You think?

ROBERT Don't you?

BERNARD Yes, yes...maybe...

GABRIELLA You see! You admit it to yourself! Oh I know you so well! You're a classic one-woman man! You're the prototype perfect husband!

ROBERT Let's not get carried away.

BERNARD Yes, that's perhaps a little strong.

GABRIELLA Not at all! And I'll tell you why you hesitate to marry me.

BERNARD Oh really?

GABRIELLA Yes! Because you're honest and scrupulous! You want to be absolutely sure you can make me happy. There! Isn't that it?

BERNARD Ah!...that's spot on...psychologically speaking.

ROBERT Yes, I'd say you've hit the nail on the head.

GABRIELLA I'm not an Italian woman for nothing. So when then?

BERNARD When what?

GABRIELLA When are we getting married?

BERNARD Er, well, soon, soon! Let's just wait a little longer...

GABRIELLA You see? What did I say? *(she kisses him)* Adorably scrupulous!  
You see how happy we'll be...

BERNARD But we already are!

GABRIELLA Once we're married, it'll be completely different, you'll see! *(she exits to bathroom)*

ROBERT Completely different.

BERNARD Another day like this will kill me. How do you keep so calm about it all... it's unnatural.

ROBERT No. It's the sign of a good nervous system, that's all. But of course in your case Bernard, to get you out of this situation you're in now you need more than nerves boyo, you'd probably need a miracle or some kind of divine intervention.  
*(Enter GRETCHEN- Door 4)*

BERNARD Who are you? I mean, how are you? Darling, it's so lovely so see you.

GRETCHEN Bernard, I want to talk to you.

BERNARD Of course. But what's the matter? You don't look yourself.

ROBERT Are you alright?

GRETCHEN As a matter of fact, I'm not.

BERNARD Darling, what is it?

ROBERT She's probably tired. Why don't you go and lie down?

BERNARD Good idea. In here?

ROBERT No.

BERNARD In here?

ROBERT No.

BERNARD In here?

ROBERT Yes.

GRETCHEN No. Leave me be. I'm dishonest!

BERNARD You? Dishonest? What on earth do you mean? No one's more honest than you.

ROBERT That's true.

GRETCHEN You keep out of it!

ROBERT Me?

GRETCHEN Yes, you! It's because of you I'm dishonest!

ROBERT Because of me?

BERNARD Because of him?

GRETCHEN Yes. I like your friend.

ROBERT Me?

BERNARD Him?

GRETCHEN Yes, you!

BERNARD Well, that's great! I like him too! He's a really good friend.

GRETCHEN Yes, but I like him in a different way from the way you do...

BERNARD A different way? What do you mean?

GRETCHEN I like him more than I like you... now.

ROBERT But I'm absolutely...

GRETCHEN Shut up!...You know nothing!

BERNARD Yes, shut up! Keep out of this!

ROBERT Well it seems to concern me rather....

GRETCHEN Yes! I kissed him!

BERNARD (*to ROBERT*) You kissed her?

ROBERT Well, that's to say...

GRETCHEN Because I thought it was you!

BERNARD Me?

GRETCHEN Yes, from behind.

BERNARD I see?! From behind.

GRETCHEN And then he wanted to...And I liked it. And I love him, Bernard.

ROBERT Me? You love me?

GRETCHEN Yes!...So now I can't be your little fiancée *from beyond the Rhine* any more... You understand don't you?

BERNARD Well, it's a bit sudden! (*To ROBERT*) Pushing it a bit, aren't you?

ROBERT It's not my fault!

BERNARD What about you? Do you love her?

ROBERT Well, I really, really, really like her...

BERNARD Given the circumstances...I won't stand in your way!  
(*both falling on BERNARD's neck*)

ROBERT } Oh, thank you, Bernard! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

GRETCHEN } Oh, thank you, Bernard! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

BERNARD Don't mention it.

GRETCHEN You're not too upset?

BERNARD Yes, of course...But what can you do? Please, kiss! It'll make me feel better...

GRETCHEN Robert, darling.

ROBERT Liebchen.  
(*enter GABRIELLA from bathroom.*)

GABRIELLA There!...Oh, excuse me!...Who's this?

BERNARD Uh oh!

GRETCHEN (*to ROBERT*) Who's this?

ROBERT Who's this?

GABRIELLA (*to BERNARD*) Who's this?

BERNARD Who's this? Who's this? Who's this? Well now...I...I...Let me introduce Robert's fiancée...this is Roberts fiancée...isn't it?

ROBERT Yes. Yes, Robert's fiancée. Who's Robert?

GRETCHEN Robert! Darling!

GABRIELLA Congratulations.

GRETCHEN If only you knew how happy I am-

GABRIELLA Yes. I'm sure you are- and I see you fly as well.

GRETCHEN Ja. Lufthansa.

GABRIELLA Si. Alitalia.

ROBERT       What a coincidence.

GABRIELLA   Yes! We're sisters of a kind...

BERNARD      Yes...of a kind.

ROBERT       Of a kind...

GRETCHEN     I'm delighted to meet you.

GABRIELLA    Me too. You're on stopover?

GRETCHEN     Yes, stopover. You too?

GABRIELLA    Yes, me too. So what brings you here at this time of night?

GRETCHEN     Well, you see- I came to see-  
                   (*ROBERT kisses her to silence her.*)  
                   I came here-  
                   (*ROBERT kisses her again.*)  
                   I came-  
                   (*ROBERT kisses her.*)

ROBERT       That's what she came for.

BERNARD      That's exactly right!

GRETCHEN     Well no, not exactly...

BERNARD      Yes, yes...well...apart from a couple of details...not important!

GABRIELLA    But why didn't you tell me you were engaged?

ROBERT       Hmm...me?

GABRIELLA    You're a sly one!

GRETCHEN     Because it's only just happened.

ROBERT       That's right...just this second!

GABRIELLA    You were quick. I go into the bathroom, have a bath, and whoosh!  
                   There you are, engaged.

BERNARD      That's it, you see?...Whoosh!

ROBERT       Whoosh! Yes...that's right.

BERNARD      He's a seducer.

GABRIELLA    (*to GRETCHEN*) And where did you meet this seducer?

GRETCHEN     Here.

GABRIELLA Here? So to sum up, you came here to see your fiancé, in the middle of the night, not knowing he'd be here because you didn't actually know him; is that right?

GRETCHEN Not exactly right! It's because of a mistaken kiss.

BERNARD Yes, right, well, you can tell us your life story another time! The way I see it one thing is clear: these two love each other. Let's not go trying to explain it! There'd be no end to it!

GABRIELLA Very well. My best wishes once more.

GRETCHEN Thank you. I hope *you* will find someone so-

GABRIELLA Easily?

GRETCHEN No- so sweet as my Robert.

GABRIELLA Oh! But I have, haven't I, Bernard darling?

BERNARD Er yes, yes.

GRETCHEN What?

BERNARD Well, it's rather difficult to explain.

ROBERT Yes, and it's already late!

GRETCHEN Are you engaged to Bernard?

GABRIELLA Of course I am.

ROBERT Oh dear oh dear, we don't want to be bothered talking about that...

BERNARD No! Because...actually...I was going to tell you, as soon as I saw you two together...I said to myself, those two are together. They're made for each other.

GRETCHEN But you couldn't have known!

GABRIELLA Anyway what's it got to do with you, whether they liked each other or not?

ROBERT He's always interfering!

GRETCHEN I'm very sorry but that's not quite accurate. I was Bernard's fiancée before...

GABRIELLA What?

BERNARD Wait! Let me explain. I was engaged to her before I was engaged to you.

GABRIELLA Oh really? And?

BERNARD And?...And?...And?...And? Then I had a feeling she was really in love with Robert.

ROBERT You see?

GRETCHEN But I didn't know him before. It's only *after* that I...

BERNARD There's no such thing as "before" and "after"...the past is the past!...There's one fact...just one...You love him!...And I saw that, you see?...*(to GABRIELLA)* So I got engaged to her...*(to GRETCHEN)* to Gabriella, I mean...*(to GABRIELLA)* I mean, to you...*(to GRETCHEN)* so as not to be ditched by you...*(to GABRIELLA)* I mean, by her!

GABRIELLA I don't understand.

BERNARD Even so, it is clear.

ROBERT Crystal clear.

GRETCHEN And to think I felt guilty. And here you are, engaged all the time!

GABRIELLA But of course he is. We've been engaged for ages...Or are you a liar?

BERNARD Me? Me? A liar? *(To ROBERT)* Alright. Robert, you tell her.

ROBERT Tell her what?

BERNARD *(Ha!)* There you are, you see? My dearest and oldest friend speaking up for me. And he knows me. He really knows -

GABRIELLA I don't understand any of this!

BERNARD But it's so simple.

GRETCHEN Then explain it.

BERNARD But there's nothing really to explain. Just answer 'yes' or 'no'. *(To GRETCHEN)* Are you engaged to Robert?

GRETCHEN Yes.

BERNARD Good. *(To ROBERT)* Robert, are you engaged to Gretchen?

ROBERT Well- I suppose- the point is-

BERNARD Yes or no?

ROBERT Yes.

BERNARD Great! So, who's left? *(to GABRIELLA)* Oh yes, are you engaged to me?

GABRIELLA Yes!...No?

BERNARD Yes! Of course! So what more do you want? *(indicates himself)* I'm engaged. *(to GABRIELLA)* You're engaged. We're engaged. *(Indicating ROBERT and GRETCHEN)* They're engaged. And that's all there is to it.  
*(Enter BERTHA from kitchen.)*

BERTHA I have to speak to you.

BERNARD I'm engaged speak to me tomorrow.

BERTHA No! Right now!

BERNARD Tomorrow!

BERTHA Oh! *(Realising the situation, looks from GABRIELLA to GRETCHEN and from GRETCHEN to GABRIELLA)* Do these young ladies know each other?

BERNARD As you see, they're getting to know each other. *(Indicating GRETCHEN)* Let me introduce my friend Robert's fiancée. That's HIS fiancée.

ROBERT Yes, she's MY fiancée!

BERTHA Oh really? Congratulations monsieur.

ROBERT Thank you.

BERNARD *(indicating GABRIELLA)* And now, let me introduce-

BERTHA I know- I know *(She exits in disgust.)*

GABRIELLA *(to Door 7)* Now do come along. Bernard- I'm exhausted.

GRETCHEN Me too, I'm pooped.

BERNARD Yes, right away.

GRETCHEN You'll come and say goodnight, won't you, my fiancé?

ROBERT Yes. Yes, I certainly will.

GABRIELLA See you in the morning.

GRETCHEN Ya, see you in the morning.  
*(GABRIELLA exits stage left. GRETCHEN stage right. ROBERT and BERNARD sit and look at each other.)*

ROBERT I thought we'd never get out of that alive !

BERNARD But we did get out of it quite well!  
*(BERTHA enters with her coat, a suitcase and a tartan bag.)*

BERNARD You again?

BERTHA Yes, I have something to tell you.

BERNARD What?

ROBERT What kind of bag is that?

BERTHA It's mine. A left over from Monsieur's past.

ROBERT Oh what airlines that....!

BERNARD Yes. Let's move on. So, what do you want?

BERTHA I want to settle up.

BERNARD At this time of night? Why?

BERTHA Because I'm giving in my notice.

BERNARD What do you mean?

BERTHA Ask your friend he'll tell you, I'm losing my mind here.

ROBERT Oh no, don't start with all your doom and gloom woman.

BERNARD You heard him, go away.

BERTHA That's just what I'm doing.

ROBERT Go on go back to your room and go back to sleep.

BERTHA No, I will not I only have the one life and I want to hang on to it.  
 My nerves can't take it here.

BERNARD You can't leave, Bertha. I'll do anything. I'll give you a raise.

BERTHA How much?

BERNARD We'll talk about it later.

BERTHA Twenty per cent at least.

BERNARD Yes, alright...Anything you like...but you cannot leave me. I need you, Bertha.

ROBERT We all need you, Bertha. What a very charming hat you've got on.

BERTHA Well, it still won't be easy- not even with a thirty percent raise, it's still no life for a maid here!

ROBERT But that's all over and done with now, isn't it, Bernard? Life is changing.

BERTHA Three women in one household is too many, Monsieur.

BERNARD But that's all done with now. He's taking one off my hands.

BERTHA Well, two's still too many.

BERNARD Bertha, I've reformed.  
*(Enter GLORIA- Door 6)*

GLORIA Darling, aren't you ever coming to bed?

BERNARD Just coming, darling.

BERTHA Reformed? Well, prove it. Come on. People are waiting, Monsieur...*(vague gesture towards stage left door)* Here. And elsewhere.

BERNARD Alright. Alright. I'll sort it out.

GLORIA I'm waiting for you...Let your friend go to bed...Cute little hat Bertie.

BERTHA Thank you mademoiselle, that reminds me. There's a letter come for you this morning - from America.

GLORIA For me? Thank you, Bertie.

BERNARD So, why don't you read it in bed?

GLORIA I'll read it here.

BERNARD Do read it in bed.

ROBERT Oh yes. Fabulous to read in bed.

GLORIA Oh my gosh!

BERNARD What is it?

GLORIA I can't tell you.

BERNARD Why not? I'm your fiancé.

BERTHA Here we go again! I'm off.

BERNARD } Wait!

ROBERT } Wait!

GLORIA This is marvellous!

BERNARD What is?

GLORIA Bernard! I'm in love?

BERNARD I know.

GLORIA No...not with you anymore. I love you...lots...but we can't go on and on like this...I'm leaving!

BERTHA You're leaving?

GLORIA Yes.

BERTHA For good?

GLORIA Yes. It's this guy I met on the Mexico run. He wanted to make his first million before he married me. He's done it and he's waiting for me at the Acapulco Hilton.

BERTHA That's nice.

ROBERT Yes. Congratulations, Gloria! A Mexican!

BERNARD Look here. Do you mean to tell me you had two men in your life at the same time?

GLORIA No, honey, no.

BERNARD Thank goodness for that.

GLORIA Three.

BERNARD Three?

GLORIA Yes, I was engaged to another guy in Los Angeles- I suppose I'll have to drop him now.

BERTHA Yes. Good idea, don't you think Monsieur?

GLORIA I'm with the guy who marries me first.

BERNARD But you can't just go off like this. It's not as simple as that.

GLORIA Yes, it's quite simple. There's a super-boeing leaving at midnight. I'll ask if I can take a friend's place and when I get home I'll resign my job. A married life is what I want. I'm sorry, honey.  
*(She goes off.)*

BERNARD Blimey.

ROBERT That's it then.

- BERTHA Right. Now let's get this straight. (*To BERNARD*) You've just got the one fiancée now- Mlle Gabriella, right?
- BERNARD Right.
- BERTHA And you'll take the German off his hands? Right?
- ROBERT Right.
- BERTHA Right, then I'll stay. With that forty raise, who knows...a maids life might get a bit easier round here. Air Caledonia monsieur.  
*(She goes out- Door 3.)*  
*(ROBERT laughs)*
- BERNARD Do you think this is funny?
- ROBERT This morning when you arrived you were going on and on about the perfect three-woman life, and here you are, forced to make do with only one.
- BERNARD Yes, I suppose so. Do you know, to be honest, it's quite a relief.
- GABRIELLA (*At Door 7.*) Bernard, I'm waiting for you to come and say goodnight.
- BERNARD I'm just coming. Just coming.
- GABRIELLA It's so late, darling.  
*(GABRIELLA shuts the door.)*
- ROBERT She really is a marvellous girl.
- BERNARD Yes, she is, isn't she? I loved the other two, very much of course, but Gabriella I adore.  
*(GLORIA enters in uniform carrying her bag.)*
- GLORIA All set. (*Kisses BERNARD*) I'll think of you from time to time. Goodbye Robert.
- ROBERT Goodbye, Gloria.
- GLORIA Say it again.
- ROBERT Goodbye, Gloria.
- GLORIA No, not that, the other thing.
- ROBERT It's not impossible.
- GLORIA Oh! It's just too kooky. (*kisses ROBERT on the mouth*)

BERNARD Hang on, why are you kissing him?

GLORIA We've kissed each other lots...all evening.

BERNARD That really is the limit. The moment my back's turned!

GLORIA It was purely technical!

ROBERT Yes we were just exercising!

GLORIA Right! Goodbye then, my little pair of Frenchmen! (*she exits*)

ROBERT It must affect you quite a bit to see all your women taking off like that one after another.

(*The telephone rings. BERNARD looks at ROBERT and shrugs. ROBERT shakes his head as BERNARD answers the telephone.*)

BERNARD Excuse me...(*answers phone*) Hello...yes, it's me...oh it's you? (*to ROBERT*) It's my friend from Orly.

ROBERT Then hang up! Hang up!

BERNARD (*At telephone*) No...no...Thanks...It's kind of you to think of me...but I'm not interested anymore. I'm getting married...Yes, yes!...What? She does Paris-Guadalupe-Rio?...No, thank you...No, I assure you...Even if she is a former Rio de Janeiro Samba queen...No really, it makes no difference...even if her legs are as long...No. I want nothing to do with it...I don't care...

ROBERT Get her details!

BERNARD What?

ROBERT Get her details...I'm telling you...

BERNARD (*speaking on the telephone*) Hello...hang on...(to ROBERT) Are you crazy? You don't want start doing all this?

ROBERT Why not? A former Rio De Janeiro samba Queen? We can't let an opportunity like that go by! Go on, take the details.

BERNARD Just think about it!

ROBERT Right. I have! Go on!

BERNARD This is insane! (*on phone*) Hello...are you there? Good...this is for a friend...is that possible?...Okay, I'll put him on...(he hands

*the phone to ROBERT*) There! *(He picks up the book of time zone tables and passes it to him)* the “Time Tables” *(exits to kitchen)*

ROBERT Thanks...*(on phone)* Hello, hello there, monsieur, I’m the friend! So...where can I meet this Brazilian girl?...Really?...You have a Japanese girl as well?...and one from Sweden? ...Good ... good ... Hang on, I’ll take down the addresses...*(GRETCHEN enters in night clothes)* Just hang on!

GRETCHEN Robert, you know I’m waiting for you.

ROBERT Oh, right!

GRETCHEN Yes! Because I want to tell you that now that I’ve met you I shall never again be able to fall asleep without you wishing me goodnight.

ROBERT Oh, right!

GRETCHEN Yes. Just as I shall never again wake up happy unless your hazel eyes are there to say good morning!

ROBERT Oh, right!

GRETCHEN So from tonight, I’m waiting for you before I fall asleep! *(She goes out Door 1.)*

ROBERT *(looking at the door)* Oh, right? Oh, right? *(realises he’s still holding phone)* Hello, are you still there?...Yes, the addresses... Oh, no, no...I’ve changed my mind...I’ve got somebody else...A girl from all the countries of the world rolled into one. Yes, isn’t that fantastic?...thank you...tell me...Could you do me a favour?... Can you get me two seats tomorrow to Aix? No, Aix-la-Chapelle? You can? Wonderful. On a Boeing? What’s that? Oh right, it’s an aeroplane, yes...Ten o’clock! Perfect...We’ll be there. *(He hangs up as BERNARD comes back in with a bottle of champagne in each hand)*

BERNARD Well, all fixed up?

ROBERT All fixed up. Ha! All fixed up. Are you kidding? It’s amazing!

BERNARD No, I tell you what's really amazing- just one woman. Now that's perfection!

ROBERT Each to his own!

BERNARD Whatever you say. Here. Robert, champagne? (*gives him the bottle*) I'm going to toast my betrothal to Gabriella! Cheers!

ROBERT Cheers Bernard! (*They each head for a door. The wrong ones. They knock on the doors looking at each other. Both doors open. They both realise their mistake, turn, say "Oh, sorry!", and re-cross towards the correct doors and kiss their respective partners. The men make to go into their rooms.* )

GRETCHEN Wait! (*pressing pillow into Robert's arms*) We take marriage very seriously in Germany.

GABRIELLA (*pressing pillow into BERNARD's arms*) Uh uh, love is not to be treated flippantly.

GRETCHEN Wake me with your hazel eyes in the morning, my darling

GABRIELLA We should think about these things, now that we're going to be married.

GRETCHEN } Good night.

GABRIELLA } Good night.

(*GRETCHEN and GABRIELLA exit to their rooms*)

BERNARD You too?

ROBERT Me too.

BERNARD Champagne?

ROBERT Why not? Bernard, do you think they'll still love us in the morning when they know the whole truth?

BERNARD It's not impossible.

ROBERT Say that again?

BERNARD Say what?

ROBERT        It's not impossible.  
BERNARD      It's not impossible.  
ROBERT        Say it again.  
BERNARD      It's not impossible.  
ROBERT        No. It doesn't look like a tiny flower to me.

**CURTAIN**