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Her Latest Flame

An Australian adult romantic comedy stage musical

Libretto and lyrics

by

Rose Ferrell



Musical score by Jacqueline Verhaar

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## LOG LINE

Hot to foxtrot.

## ONE SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

A young woman working in a dating agency considers straying from her secretive man until she discovers his twin passions.

## CAST

8 Female

5 Male

Dancers, chorus

15 musical numbers (including 1 instrumental, 1 reprise)

## CHARACTERS

LAURA FLETCHER	Behind her hard-bitten, worldly exterior Laura is a one-of-a-kind woman. Though she would fit right in as a Madam in a brothel, she isn't as cynical as she likes to make out. She is very good at judging true character and often matches people well in her role as a consultant in a dating agency. As a friend and mentor, she hopes to see Carol and Nigel happily matched.
CAROL MEEKS	Carol likes her work as a dating consultant, and dreams of the day she herself will tie the knot. However, she is wondering if she is dating the right man, since he seems to be dragging his feet when it comes to seducing her. A small town girl, she would not consider seducing him, but she has been wondering whether she needs to DO something, to force him to declare his intentions.
NIGEL HARRIGAN	Nigel's physique suggests his heroic profession as a fire fighter. However, he is not always so heroic in matters of love. He adores Carol and is building courage to propose ... The one complication is that Carol may require him to give up dance.
JEFF HICKS	As barman at the Tinderbox, Jeff is well-meaning and enthusiastic but is sometimes overly attentive to his customers' business and private affairs. He tends to be overly familiar and treat his customers as though they were good friends. He is secretly in love with Nigel.
TOM STARR	Tom is very good-looking and knows it. He is SO good-looking that he has got away with being an arsehole his whole life. He is also incredibly thick-skinned. So is he for real, or is this just a front?
JUSTINE CALLAGHAN	Justine is a talented dancer with ruthless ambition. She has plans to go professional, and has Nigel in her sights as the appropriate partner.
WENDY HORROCKS	Wendy is a good dancer and great friend to Nigel. She enjoys the social aspects of dancing.
HAYLEY PRICE	Young hairdresser obsessed with beauty and hair.
BRUCE PICKLE	Bruce is an ex-military man whose dancing reflects discipline and perfection. He likes to be in control.
IRENE PICKLE	Irene is Bruce's long-suffering wife. At least in social dancing he turns his critical gaze to others in the room.
ELIZABETH CROFTER	Client of Flame Dating Agency, Elizabeth is seeking a hot date.
REG BARNETT	Owner of an Adult shop who lives his fantasies through his work.
SADIE McBRODIE	Older alcoholic woman often at Tinderbox.
OTHER DANCERS / CHORUS	As desired (Minimum 3 couples)

## SETTINGS

### Lovelock's Hair Salon

Hairdressing Salon in Yokamine, a large town in 1980s Australia.

Indicated by small table, stool with mirror, roll on trolley with hairdresser's equipment

### Flame Dating Agency

The office is intended to look chic, however the luxurious velvet curtains and plush seating also suggest a high class brothel. This impression is enhanced by the large banner declaring the name. Its male and female figures, silhouetted in front of a huge flame, appear to be naked. The office contains two desks with chairs. Other items include old fashioned dial phones. Stationary items include tin boxes of client cards.

### The Tinderbox Bar and Brasserie

The Tinderbox Bar and Brasserie is a small, pleasant room. The decor is home-y and unsophisticated (suited to the time and characters).

### Nigel's bedroom (split stage)

Mirror, bed/bedside table all in one, phone, framed photo of Carol

### Carol's bedroom (split stage)

Bed/bedside table all in one, phone, bedside lamp, Teddybear

### Dance Studio

Plain large space, no distinguishing features.

### Street

Red brick walls and corners, a phone box

### Adult Shop (Sex Shop)

A door frame, inside of which are shelves cluttered with products

### Cinema

Cinema seats, a cone of popcorn (with sound & lighting effects)

## COSTUME

Carol's transformation is reflected in her costume. In the first scene she wears modest, loose-fitting and comfortable clothes better suited to her mother's generation. This may include a knitted cardigan and blouse (twinsset) with a brown skirt hanging past her knees and flat shoes. This contrasts with Laura's vibrant colour and style. By the last scene Carol's costume is tight-fitting, colourful and shows off her womanly shape and legs.

In Scene 12 where Laura gets her hair caught in Nigel's clothing he is wearing a fashionable 'safari suit' outfit, which has epaulettes with buttons on his shoulders.

## SCENE LIST

Scene 1	Lovelock's Hair Salon	Song / Dance	First Day	1
Scene 2	Flame Dating Agency	Song / Dance	Same day	3
Scene 3 (Split stage)	Nigel's	Song / Dance	First evening	14
Scene 4	Carol's Bedroom	Song	Same evening	15
Scene 5	Dance Studio	Song / Dance	Same evening	19
Scene 6	Tinderbox Bar & Brasserie	Song	Same evening	22
Scene 7	Flame Dating Agency		Second Day	32
Scene 8	Adult (Sex Accessories) Shop		Same day	35
Scene 9	Flame Dating Agency	Song / Dance	Same day	36
Scene 10	Flame Dating Agency		Same day (continuous)	43
Scene 11	Carol's Bedroom		Second evening	44
Scene 12	Tinderbox Bar & Brasserie	Song	Same evening	45
Scene 13	Tinderbox Bar & Brasserie		Same evening (conts)	49
Scene 14	Street	Song	Second evening	55
Scene 15	Tinderbox Bar & Brasserie		Same evening	57
Scene 16	Tinderbox Bar & Brasserie	Song / Dance	Same evening (conts)	61
Scene 17	Street	Song	Same evening (conts)	62
Scene 18	Tinderbox Bar and Brasserie		Same evening conts)	63
Scene 19	Flame Dating Agency		Third Day	65
Scene 20	Cinema		Third evening	68
Scene 21	Street		Same evening	68
Scene 22	Dance Studio	Instrumental / Dance	Same evening	69
Scene 23	Street	Song	Same evening	70
Scene 24	Tinderbox Bar & Brasserie		Same evening	71
Scene 25	Tinderbox Bar & Brasserie		Same evening (conts)	75
Scene 26	Tinderbox Bar & Brasserie	Song / Dance	Same evening (conts)	79
Finale		Song / Dance		90

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

Sc	Song	Title	Vocals	Page
Sc 1	#1	Love is in the Hair	Laura and Hayley, chorus	p. 1
Sc 2	#2	Born to be Hot	Laura and Carol	p. 11
Sc 3	#3	I'm a Live Wire	Nigel	p. 14
Sc 4	#4	A Man to Hold	Carol	p. 18
Sc 5	#5	(I want some) Man-flesh Tonight	Justine	p. 19
Sc 6	#6	Star Signs	Jeff	p. 25
Sc 9	#7	Girl, I'm Going Down	Tom	p. 37
Sc 12	#8	(The Ring to) Seal the Deal	Nigel and Jeff	p. 47
Sc 14	#9	China Doll	Carol	p. 55
Sc 16	#10	The Forever of my Life	Jeff	p. 61
Sc 17	#11	Why Can't it be Me?	Laura	P. 62
Sc 22	#12	Dance Instrumental	----	p. 69
Sc 23	#13	The Darkness of my Despair	Nigel	p. 70
Sc 26	#14	Dance of Life	Carol and Nigel, chorus	p. 81
Finale	#15	Love is in the Hair	Ensemble	p. 86

## DANCE ROUTINES

Sc	Song	Title	Dancers	Page
Sc 1	#1	Love is in the Hair	Laura, Hayley, Tom, chorus	p. 1
Sc 2	#2	Born to be Hot	Laura, Carol	p. 11
Sc 3	#3	I'm a Live Wire	Nigel	p. 14
Sc 5	#5	(I want some) Man-flesh Tonight	Justine, Tom, Nigel, Chorus	p. 19
Sc 9	#7	Girl, I'm Going Down	Tom (Carol, Laura)	p. 37
Sc 12	#8	(The Ring to) Seal the Deal	Jeff, Nigel	p. 47
Sc 26	#14	Dance of Life	Carol, Nigel, Laura, Tom, Jeff, Sadie, Elizabeth, Justine, chorus	p. 81
Finale	#15	Love is in the Hair	Ensemble	p. 86

## GESTURAL NUMBERS

Sc	Song	Title	Cast	Page
Sc 4	#4	A Man to Hold	Carol	p. 18
Sc 6	#6	Star Signs	Jeff (Nigel)	p. 25
Sc 14	#9	China Doll	Carol	p. 55
Sc 16	#10	The Forever of my Life	Jeff	p. 61
Sc 17	#11	Why Can't it be Me?	Laura	P. 62
Sc 22	#12	Dance Instrumental	----	p. 69
Sc 23	#13	The Darkness of my Despair	Nigel	p. 70

ACT I

Scene 1

Lovelock's Hair Salon

*LAURA FLETCHER is in a hairdresser's chair, draped in a protective poncho. Her hair is wrapped in a towel which sits like a meringue on her head. A hairdresser, HAYLEY, returns to carefully unwrap and reveal the 'do'. Several people are waiting on a couch.*

HAYLEY

There you go. Oh, it's just lovely! Really you.. Let's see if this doesn't get you noticed.

LAURA

Ironic, isn't it, that a professional matchmaker has to turn to a hairdresser to attract attention of the masculine kind.

HAYLEY

Oh, .. don't you like it?

LAURA

Let's say I'm reserving judgement. Still, there's an ocean of possibilities out there. Let's see if I can reel one in!

*Hayley grabs Laura's arm as she moves to go and spins her to face Hayley as she sings.*

HAYLEY

Where there's hair, there's hope. Remember..

#### **#14. LOVE IS IN THE HAIR**

*The chorus joins in this big dance routine, dressed as clients or apprentice hairdressers.*

HAYLEY, LAURA, ENSEMBLE

H: LOVE IS IN THE HAIR

ENS.: LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT

H: LOVE IS IN THE HAIR

ENS.: AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT

H & ENS.: LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!

L: WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT

ALL: LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!

WE LOVE OUR LOCKS

WE LOVE OUR GROOVE

GET OUT THERE, GIRL

CHORUS MEMBER #1

AND TRY THIS MOVE



HAYLEY, LAURA, ENSEMBLE

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!

HAIR IS CROWNING GLORY  
WHETHER BLOND, BROWN OR BLACK  
COMPLIMENTS OUR STUNNING DANCE MOVES  
CHORUS MEMBER #2  
BUT JUST WATCH YOUR BACK!

HAYLEY, LAURA, ENSEMBLE

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!

WE COMB AND FLUFF AND TEASE  
GOTTA LOVE THE SCENT OF MUSK  
GOTTA GET IT DONE REAL QUICK  
CHORUS MEMBER #3  
WILL BE ON THE STREETS BY DUSK

HAYLEY, LAURA, ENSEMBLE

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
HAIR!

Scene 2

Flame Dating Agency

*CAROL, dressed in an overly modest and old-fashioned way, is seated at her desk when LAURA, who is dressed with style and colour, breezes in with a package under her arm. All Carol notices is her hairstyle, which is permed and 'bouffant' on top.*

CAROL

A new hairstyle!

LAURA

Hey, it's working already. My hairdresser said I'd get attention.

CAROL

Well, it certainly stands up.. *(Laura sends a look)* .. out.

LAURA

Yeah. She also said love is in the hair. I'm not sure I believe her on that one.

CAROL

Hmmm.

LAURA

But look at this. .. Ta-da!.. We're moving into the fast lane.

*Laura pulls a phone headset out of the package.*

CAROL

What's that?

LAURA

It's a phone.

CAROL

It doesn't look like a phone.

LAURA

Well.. it works with a phone. Let's you speak hands-free. No more kiss-y neck.

CAROL

Kiss-y neck?

LAURA

Yeah. That thing where you .. *(demonstrates slow passionate kissing which could be mistaken for holding a phone under a chin while speaking on it)*

CAROL

Hmm. I don't think I've ever had that problem.

LAURA

*(looks askance)..*

You obviously went a different high school. .. Let me demonstrate.

*Laura awkwardly fits the headset over her '80s 'do'. It springs up again, so that the mouth piece is sitting under her nose.*

CAROL

She didn't say 'Spring is in the hair,' did she?

*Laura glares, and pushes the headset down more firmly though it springs up again. She adjusts it as best she can, then picks up the cord. She looks at the male connector jack.*

LAURA

*(inspects jack)*

This reminds me of something .. It's all coming back! You place this end into the hole here..  
*(plugs connector into phone) ..eh voila!*

*The phone rings. Laura makes a show of answering it.*

LAURA

You answer the phone like this.

*Pushes a button while also wrangling the mouth piece which is pushing up towards her nose*

LAURA CONT'D

Flame Dating Agency.. Let us light yours. *(winks at Carol)*.. Laura speaking..

*(Pause)*

Let me get this straight, you want a refund because you met the love of your life on your first introduction?

*(Pause)*

I know you paid for 8 introductions.

*Pause*

Well call me again when you break up with her!

*Laura rips the headset off her head, but is at a loss as to what to do with it. Instead she picks up the receiver of an old-fashioned phone also on her desk and slams it down.*

LAURA CONT'D

Some people change dates like they change underwear!

CAROL

I guess that's what living in the fast lane is all about.

*Carol sighs disconsolately. Laura notices.*

LAURA

Carol.. What's wrong? Did you have a bad weekend?

CAROL

No.. Well, it's just that .. nothing *happened*. Nothing ever happens to me!

LAURA

What sort of thing do you want to happen?

CAROL

Love, romance, .. passion.

LAURA

You didn't see Nigel?

CAROL

Oh, I saw him. I even got to touch a little bit of him.

LAURA

Oh, that is disappointing.

CAROL

It wasn't that! What must you think of me!??

LAURA

Well, it is the 80s. It's not a crime for consenting adults to...

CAROL

Nigel and I aren't like that!

LAURA

Hmm. So what are you like?

CAROL

(*small voice*)

I'm not sure.

LAURA

Okay. Just to clarify.. Have you felt that hot-under-the-collar, ants-in-your-pants, jitterbug-leg, roll-me-over-and-do-it-again, set-my-hair-on-fire, bounce me like a ball, TAKE MY CLOTHES OFF sort of .. indescribable feeling?

CAROL

I .. think so. It's just that ... it goes nowhere.

LAURA

So Nigel hasn't ..

CAROL

No. He's so careful of me, so respectful.. So old-fashioned!

LAURA

It's refreshing you know. A guy who still holds to the time honoured values of love, marriage and sex – in that order..

CAROL

But why hasn't he made a move on me? Doesn't he find me attractive!?

LAURA

What would you do if he did?

CAROL

Slap him hard.

LAURA

Well, some people like it that way, I guess.

CAROL

I turn twenty six next week. I'm scared of being left on the shelf.

LAURA

Believe me, there are a lot of worse places you could be left.. on a doorstep, at the altar, up shit creek without a paddle..

CAROL

I've got the picture.

LAURA

Have you talked to Nigel about it?

CAROL

I couldn't do that!

LAURA

Honey, if you're not happy he needs to know.

CAROL

But I still don't know if he's the One!

LAURA

The One? I'm not sure there is just one. You know that fairytale about the princess and the toad?

CAROL

Where the princess kisses him and he turns into a prince?

LAURA

Yeah. From my experience they start off as princes then turn into toads.

CAROL

But we spend all this time matching people with their soul mates!

LAURA

And they get walked all over!

*Carol looks distressed. Laura relents.*

LAURA

Look, some people do find their perfect match. And if you don't kiss 'em, you'll never find your prince. ...

(Pause)

You know what you two need? A good old-fashioned ...

CAROL

Not before our wedding night!

LAURA

... dose of jealousy. Then you'll find out if Nigel's blood is red.

CAROL

But using jealousy is .. underhand, manipulative.

LAURA

Yeah, well scruples are all very well, but they don't warm your bed at night. .. I'm not suggesting you cheat on Nigel. Just make it clear that there might be some competition. Get him to show his cards.

CAROL

It's .. dishonest.

LAURA

All's fair in love and war.

CAROL

I won't do it.

LAURA

Okay. But somebody may have to do *something*. Or your relationship's cactus and someone else gets the prick.

CAROL

Laura!

LAURA

Did I say that?



*The phone rings.*

LAURA

Flame Dating Agency.. Hot to trot. Laura speaking.

*(Pause)*

Well, we're not a counselling service ..

*(Pause)*

Really!?

*(Pause)*

He WHAT?

*(Winces)*

Oh. That's unusual. Maybe surgery.. ?

*(Pause)*

A vet! ... Hmm, I'm not sure ...

*(Pause)*

Look, don't cry!

*(Pause)*

Sex toy! OH MY GOD! Book into the nearest clinic IMMEDIATELY. Seriously. .. And ring me back..

*(to self)*

Poor thing..

*Laura puts the phone down, distracted.*

CAROL

The thing with Nigel is he seems so .. secretive sometimes. I wonder if I know him at all.

LAURA

Well, start with what you do know. He's tall, handsome.. He's old-fashioned like you...

CAROL

He's a fireman..

LAURA

Born to be hot!

CAROL

And I'm so ordinary in comparison.

LAURA

Maybe you're his idea of hot.

## #2. BORN TO BE HOT

*(with dance routine. As the dance unfolds Laura uses a magazine and items of her own clothing (eg. scarf, shoes) to draw Carol into the dance.)*

LAURA

BORN TO BE HOT LIKE THE FLAMING SUN  
BORN TO BE HOT LIKE A POP CHART NUMBER ONE  
BORN TO BE HOT FROM A MARATHON RUN  
BORN TO BE HOT ... AND SEXY!

CAROL

BORN LUKEWARM LIKE A PLEASANT BATH  
BORN LUKEWARM WITH A FACIAL MASK  
BORN LUKEWARM LIKE HOT CHOCOLATE FROM A FLASK  
LUKEWARM, AND ORDINARY

LAURA

ORDINARY CAN BE GOOD

CAROL

WHEN IT'S BLOND AND SHAPELY

LAURA

ORDINARY CAN BE GOOD

CAROL

WHEN IT'S RICH LIKE MARKLE

LAURA

ORDINARY CAN BE GOOD

CAROL

WHEN IT'S TOUCH IS TIMELY

LAURA  
ORDINARY CAN BE GOOD

CAROL  
WHEN IT'S DRESSED TO SPARKLE

LAURA  
YOU'VE GOT THE LOOKS, YOU CAN BORROW THE STYLE  
*(shows magazine)*

CAROL  
CAN'T LOOK LIKE THAT IN A COUNTRY MILE!

LAURA  
BEAUTY'S JUDGED BY HIM, IT'S NOT YOUR CALL

CAROL  
NEED A FAIRY GODMOTHER TO MAKE THIS BALL

*(Dressing Carol up)*

LAURA  
RED, RED LIPS

CAROL  
LOOK ALARMING

LAURA  
SWING THOSE HIPS

CAROL  
HARDLY CHARMING

LAURA  
SHORTEN THAT SKIRT

CAROL  
YOU MUST BE BARMY

LAURA  
AND YOU'LL BE THE BELLE OF THE BALL!

LAURA, CAROL

BORN TO BE HOT, DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT  
BORN TO BE HOT, ALL IT NEEDS IS SOME THOUGHT  
BORN TO BE HOT WITH SOME HEELS AND A WRAP AND I/YOU'LL  
CLINCH THE DEAL WITH MY/YOUR OLD-FASHIONED CHAP!

LAURA

You're a good dancer.

CAROL

Thanks. .. You know, maybe you're right. It's time one of us DID something! Tonight I'm gonna call him and invite him out.

LAURA

Take him dancing. That's pretty hands-on.

CAROL

Nigel doesn't dance.

LAURA

There's a first time for everyone.

Scene 3 / Scene 4

Nigel's Bedroom / Carol's bedroom (Split stage, lit independently)

[Nigel's Bedroom]

*It is night. NIGEL hums to himself as he dances in, only a towel around his waist. He continues to dance and hums as he dresses, showing his rippling chest. He puts on a clean white singlet and abandons the towel . . . to reveal that he is wearing y-fronts. He sits on the bed to put his socks on. He stands to put his trousers on and checks out his moves in the mirror approvingly.*

*He grabs Carol's framed photo from the bedhead.*

NIGEL

Would you care to dance, Miss Meeks? .. It's easy. Just follow me.

**#3. I'M A LIVE WIRE**  
(with dance routine)

NIGEL

SHE'S SO PERFECT, LIKE A ROSE ..  
FROM HER HEAD DOWN TO HER TOES  
I COULD NEVER TREAT HER MEAN

*(Abrupt change in tempo. He discards the photo on the bed...)*

URNS ME ON,URNS ME ON,URNS ME ON,I'M A LIVE WIRE!

GOT THE SHIVERS DOWN MY SPINE  
WANT TO SHIMMY ALL THE TIME  
SHE'S HIGH VOLTAGE, SHE'S SO FINE  
URNS ME ON,URNS ME ON,I'M A LIVE WIRE

THOUGH DEMURE SHE GIVES A SPARK  
BRINGS ME TREMORS IN THE DARK  
SHE COMES NEAR TO ME, I ARC  
SHE'S HIGH VOLTAGE, VOLTAGE, VOLTAGE, I'M A LIVE WIRE

GOT THE SHIVERS DOWN MY SPINE  
WANT TO SHIMMY ALL THE TIME  
SHE'S HIGH VOLTAGE, SHE'S SO FINE  
URNS ME ON,URNS ME ON,I'M A LIVE WIRE

UNDRESS HER WITH MY GAZE  
WON'T CONVINC ME ITS A PHASE  
SO PUMPED UP I'M IN A DAZE  
HIGH VOLTAGE BODY, BODY, AAAH!, I'M A LIVE WIRE

GOT THE SHIVERS DOWN MY SPINE  
WANT TO SHIMMY ALL THE TIME  
SHE'S HIGH VOLTAGE, SHE'S SO FINE  
URNS ME ON,URNS ME ON,I'M A LIVE WIRE

(Dance interlude Bars 53 - 77)

THERE ARE THINGS I WANT TO DO WITH HER  
BLUSH WITH EMBARRASSMENT, CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF HER  
HEART EXPLODES AT A SINGLE CUE FROM HER  
SO HIGH VOLTAGE, VOLTAGE, VOLTAGE, I'M A LIVE WIRE

GOT THE SHIVERS DOWN MY SPINE  
WANT TO SHIMMY ALL THE TIME  
SHE'S HIGH VOLTAGE, SHE'S SO FINE  
TURNS ME ON, TURNS ME ON, I'M A LIVE WIRE

*Nigel retrieves the photo, and speaks to it.*

NIGEL

*(clears throat)*

Sorry about that. .. Some day soon Carol, I'd like to waltz you down the aisle!. ... No, it's not really an unusual hobby.. But don't tell the guys. They'd crucify me! You know how guys are.. You want me to stop!!?

[ Scene 4 - Carol's Bedroom]

*Carol has wet hair and wears an overly large, fluffy dressing gown and grandmotherly slippers. She sits on the bed near the phone. She is nervous.*

CAROL

Here goes nothing.

*She dials.*

*Nigel gets one leg into his trousers and, distracted when the phone on the bedhead rings, he puts the other into the same leg. He falls onto the bed as he struggles to get to the phone.*

CAROL

Nigel, oh.. hi. This is Carol.

NIGEL

Oh. Carol (*awkward, grabs the photo to hide his Y-fronts*)

CAROL

Er ... Did you have a nice day?

NIGEL

Actually, it was hell! A major fire in Wuthering Street Apartments.

CAROL

Oh, no. Was anyone injured?

NIGEL

Five residents. The caretaker had fourth degree burns to twenty percent of his body.

CAROL

God. How awful!! . . . Well, I guess that's the thing about being a handsome hero type.. They have to get roasted so that you can get toasted.

*(weak laughter, silence on the other end of the line)*

With champagne I mean.

*(Pause)*

No.. bad taste. Sorry about that. Oh well...

*(hesitates)*

NIGEL

Er . . . nice to hear your voice. Why did you call?

*There is a knock on Nigel's door.*

JUSTINE (O.S.)

Nigel. We'll be late!

*Nigel reacts, guiltily putting Carol's photo down as he looks furtively at the door. He dresses hurriedly with one hand while lying on the bed. His exertions cause him to huff and puff.*

CAROL

Nigel? Are you alright? You seem to be breathing heavily..

NIGEL

Er.. smoke inhalation. All sorts of particles in my lungs. ..

CAROL

Actually, I ..

NIGEL

*(fake yawn)*

I'm really bushed.. Can hardly keep my eyes open. I'd better go. See you on the weekend!

CAROL

*(big sigh)*

Alright then. I'll wait for your call. Sleep well.

*She puts the phone down and looks at it, sad.*

CAROL

I guess I won't be seeing you tonight.

#### **#4. A MAN TO HOLD**

CAROL

ENFOLD ME IN YOUR ARMS  
LET ME FEEL YOUR SILKEN FLESH  
WANT TO BURY YOU WITHIN  
WANT TO FEEL YOUR WARM CARESS  
I'M SO SCARED AND INSECURE  
BUT I KNOW A TIME MAY COME  
WHEN I HAVE A MAN TO HOLD  
I HOPE YOU CAN BE THE ONE



A MAN TO HOLD  
TO GIVE MY HEART TO  
AND MY SECRETS TOO  
A MAN TO HOLD  
WHO HOLDS ME DEAR  
A MAN TO HOLD  
I HOPE THAT MAN IS YOU

TAKE ME INTO YOUR WORLD  
LET ME TRAVEL BY YOUR SIDE  
WANT TO SHARE YOUR DEEPEST SECRETS  
WANT TO BE YOUR STEADFAST GUIDE  
I'M SO SCARED AND INSECURE  
BUT I KNOW A TIME MAY COME  
WHEN I HAVE A MAN TO HOLD  
I HOPE YOU CAN BE THE ONE

A MAN TO HOLD  
TO GIVE MY HEART TO  
AND MY SECRETS TOO  
A MAN TO HOLD  
WHO HOLDS ME DEAR  
A MAN TO HOLD  
I HOPE THAT MAN IS YOU

LOVE IS NOT A GIVEN  
CAN BE CRUEL AND CAN BE KIND  
LET ME OFFER YOU ITS COMFORT  
THOUGH I NEVER WANT TO BIND  
I'M SO SCARED AND INSECURE  
BUT I KNOW A TIME MAY COME  
WHEN I HAVE A MAN TO HOLD  
I HOPE YOU CAN BE THE ONE

A MAN TO HOLD  
TO GIVE MY HEART TO  
AND MY SECRETS TOO  
A MAN TO HOLD  
WHO HOLDS ME DEAR  
A MAN TO HOLD  
I HOPE THAT MAN IS YOU

Scene 5

Dance studio

*JUSTINE and NIGEL walk into the studio which is already full of other men and women including BRUCE and IRENE PICKLE. They both greet various others. As the music starts JUSTINE pulls attractive men to her, while she pushes their partners away.*

#### **#5. I WANT SOME MAN-FLESH TONIGHT**

(with dancers, routine)

JUSTINE

I NEED SOME ACTION AND I'M NOT TALKING NICE  
YOU DON'T LIKE MY CHANCES? JUST GIVE ME THE DICE  
I MAY SEEM MONOCHROME, BUT I CAN DO SPICE  
I WANT SOME MAN-FLESH TONIGHT  
I NEED SOME ACTION AND I'M NOT AFRAID TO GET IT  
YOU WANT ME TO WAIT AT HOME? YOU'D BETTER FORGET IT  
GONNA LOSE SOME SLEEP, BUT I WON'T FRET IT  
I WANT SOME MAN-FLESH TONIGHT

I NEED SOME ACTION AND I'M NOT TALKING NICE  
YOU DON'T LIKE MY CHANCES? JUST GIVE ME THE DICE  
I MAY SEEM MONOCHROME, BUT I CAN DO SPICE  
I WANT SOME MAN-FLESH TONIGHT

THERE'S A WORLD OF EXCITEMENT AND I WANT TO TASTE IT  
ALL SHAPES AND SIZES, NOT GONNA WASTE IT  
IF LIFE'S A MARATHON, I WANT TO RACE IT  
WANT MY FILL OF MAN-FLESH TONIGHT!

*Nigel looks as if he is moving towards another group of people. Justine pulls him back.*

JUSTINE

Not so fast, Nige. I want a little talk with you.

*Nigel isn't very happy, but remains with Justine.*

JUSTINE CONT'D

We've been partners now for six months, haven't we?

NIGEL

Er, .. I'm not sure.

JUSTINE

So, I'm thinking it's about time you made a decision.

NIGEL

*(shocked)*

A decision?

JUSTINE

Yeah. You and I, we could go places. The regional championships, the nationals.. maybe even compete internationally. It's time to get serious, Nigel. Dump those other chicks and be my regular partner.

*Nigel's mouth is hanging open. Justine pushes it closed.*

JUSTINE CONT'D

I like your teeth. Your tonsils not so much. So, whaddya reckon?

NIGEL

I.. I .. ah...

JUSTINE

Yeah. Articulate. Luckily that's not why I like you.

*(leans in)*

It's your body I want.

NIGEL

Actually, I'm not available. I like you Justine, but I am on the brink of getting engaged to a very nice girl, and I think that may mean that I ..

JUSTINE

You've got to be kidding! Dump me for another dance-slut?

NIGEL

My partners are not . . . that word! And neither is the girl I plan to marry!

JUSTINE

You mean she doesn't even dance? Nigel, who are you kidding? It'll never last!

NIGEL

My .. relationships are none of your business.

*Justine aggressively pulls Nigel close, and speaks softly.*

JUSTINE

You're lying to yourself, Nigel. She'll never make you happy. You'll be climbing up the walls. You'll beg me to let you come back.

*Nigel turns and walks out. Justine calls after him so that others can hear.*

JUSTINE CONT'D

Okay, Darling.. So thoughtful of you to let me stay on. Leave the light on. I'll be home later!

*(under her breath)*

You don't walk out on me that easily.

*She makes a bee-line for another very handsome man in the crowd, and pulls him onto the floor as another music track begins.*

Scene 6

Tinderbox Bar and Brasserie

*JEFF the barman is polishing glasses behind the bar when NIGEL walks in and sits at the bar, troubled.*

JEFF

Nigel. .. Are you sick? I thought you go dancing on Mondays.

NIGEL

I've got things on my mind. (hesitates) Jeff, I feel terrible. I've been living a double life, keeping secrets from the one person I can truly love. I can't do it anymore.

*A beatific smile spreads across Jeff's whole face as he comes out from behind the bar, arms open wide.*

JEFF

Nigel, I'm so happy..!

NIGEL

I can't risk losing her. I'm going to ask Carol to be Mrs Harrigan.

*Jeff's face slumps. He disguises the embrace he was about to bestow by leaning past Nigel to grab a glass,.*

JEFF

*(devastated)*

Gee, that's great mate. ..

*(smothers his feelings)*

Aw, good luck. .. Where are you going to have the reception? You could have it here.

NIGEL

I don't know if she'll agree yet.

JEFF

'Course she'll say yes. I mean.. you're everything a man could want.  
.. er.. woman. Woman.

*Nigel stares at Jeff, puzzled.*

JEFF CONT'D

Well, she could say no

*(awkward grin).*

*Nigel is taken aback.*

JEFF CONT'D

*(hurriedly)*

I mean, you haven't been going out for that long. How serious can you be in ... two months?

NIGEL

It's longer than that.

JEFF

Well, you'd know.

*(laugh)*

She's your girlfriend.

NIGEL

We began dating in December, because I bought her flippers for Christmas ..

JEFF

Flippers?

NIGEL

To take on our honeymoon.

JEFF

You're married already?

NIGEL

Huh?

*(puzzled)*

Hang on.. it might have been her birthday .. in June?

JEFF

What's her star sign? If you tell me some of her habits, I can tell you her star sign. Then we'll know when her birthday is .. roughly.

NIGEL

Star sign?

JEFF

Yeah, Aries the ram, Scorpio the scorpion.

NIGEL

Why would anyone marry one of those?

JEFF

You're not marrying the actual animal. It's the traits. Here's an example. My mother was that stubborn. She always wanted her own way. "Jeff! Eat your breakfast! EAT YOUR BREAKFAST or I'll disinherit you!" – that sort of thing.

NIGEL

Oh.

JEFF

She was a bull – y. Get it? A bull. You couldn't get around her. And she always went for things head on. No dilly dallying. No, she was decisive. Taurus the Bull. I learnt a song about it once:

## **#6. STAR SIGNS**

JEFF

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOME WISDOM  
OF THE PURELY POPULAR KIND  
TAKE YOUR GUIDANCE FROM THE STAR SIGNS.  
- IT'LL REALLY BLOW YOUR MIND.

KNOW YOUR FELLOWS BY THEIR TOTEM  
SUCH AN EASY WAY TO GO!  
WITH THE STAR SIGNS IN YOUR REPERTOIRE  
YOU'LL FIND YOUR PERFECT FLO

WHILE THERE CAN BE SOME EXCEPTIONS,  
AND DISCREPANCIES ARE RIFE,  
I RECOMMEND THE STAR SIGNS  
TO HELP YOU CHOOSE A WIFE  
CHOOSE A WIFE

NOW TAKE YOUR GIRLFRIEND, CAROL  
ASK IF LEO IS HER RISING?  
SHE WILL WANT TO WEAR THE PANTS  
AND BITE YOUR HEAD OFF – NOT SURPRISING.

IF SHE'S TAURUS SHE'LL BE HEADSTRONG,  
AND BOSSY LIKE MY MOTHER.  
IF GEMINI, JUST PLAIN BONKERS  
LIKE MY SCHIZOPHRENIC BROTHER

SO WHATEVER TRAIT YOU LOOK FOR  
YOU CAN FIND A STAR FOR YOU  
THERE IS NO BETTER WAY  
TO KNOW A PERSON THROUGH AND THROUGH

WHILE THERE CAN BE SOME EXCEPTIONS,  
AND DISCREPANCIES ARE RIFE,  
I RECOMMEND THE STAR SIGNS  
TO HELP YOU CHOOSE YOUR WIFE  
CHOOSE YOUR WIFE.

NIGEL

Was your mother really called Taurus?



*Jeff looks askance.*

JEFF

No. Her name was Mavis. Taurus is the bull.

NIGEL

Why did you have a bull?

JEFF

Look, forget it. Just tell me about Carol.

NIGEL

Well, she's.. sweet.

JEFF

Yes..?

NIGEL

Aahh .. and beautiful.

JEFF

What else?

NIGEL

It's hard to describe..

JEFF

Is she impatient? .. passionate? Does she like pina coladas? getting caught in the rain?

NIGEL

I don't know.

JEFF

Well, what does she do when she's not with you?

NIGEL

She works at a dating agency.

JEFF

Oh, so she's good with people. Intuitive?

NIGEL

I guess so.

JEFF

Well, what does she cook for you?

NIGEL

She hasn't cooked me anything yet.

JEFF

*(alarmed)*

She hasn't invited you for dinner!?

NIGEL

*(worried)*

Is that bad?

JEFF

*(changes direction)*

Well anyway, you must know each other quite well by now. .. I'll ask you an easy one. What colour are her eyes?

*Nigel looks blank.*

JEFF

*(nods)*

Tricky. .. Forget the eyes. How tall is she?

NIGEL

About.. ?

*Nigel brings his hand to a height, then another height. Then another one. He stands to act out a stance he may have taken with her. He unconsciously ends with a dance flourish.*

JEFF

Oh, that's good. So she's involved in dancing too.

NIGEL  
*(panics)*

Don't tell her that I dance!

JEFF

Nigel. You haven't told her about your dancing!?

NIGEL

Not yet. I'm waiting for the right moment.

JEFF  
*(exasperated)*

What is the right moment to share your passion with the girl you're considering marrying?

NIGEL

I don't want her to.. feel insecure.

JEFF

Insecure?

NIGEL

The.. other women.

*Jeff is shocked.*

JEFF

You're two-timing her.. already!?

NIGEL

No! My dance partners.

JEFF

How many of them are there?

NIGEL

Well,

*(uncertain)*

Justine on Monday; Wendy on Thursday; Narelle on Friday.. er.. Stacy..

JEFF

Nigel! I'm shocked! .. You expect Carol to take last place after your .. **harem** of other girls! Do they know about each other??

NIGEL

They're just **dance partners!** We only see each other at the dance studio.

JEFF

Well, I think it's a pretty big secret. You gotta tell Carol. A marriage is built on mutual respect. That means being honest.

NIGEL

But I don't want to lose her!

JEFF

Being honest with her is the beginning of a lifetime of commitment.

NIGEL

But what if she wants me to stop!?

JEFF

If she loves you she'll support you in your interests.

*Nigel looks uncertain.*

JEFF

She'd be a dope not to have you. Look at you. You're sensitive, intelligent. You're a fireman! I'd go for you . . . if I were a chick.

*There is an awkward moment between them as Nigel takes this in, then moves on quickly.*

NIGEL

Carol's an angel. I just don't think I could bear if it she refuses me. ..

*(pause)*

Do you think she's too clever for me?

*Jeff sidesteps the question.*

JEFF

You do all that rescue stuff.. damsels in distress.

NIGEL

I rescued someone in pyjamas once.

*It is Jeff's turn to look askance at Nigel.*

JEFF

No. Dis-tress, helpless, needing rescue.

NIGEL

*(blank)*

Mmmm.

JEFF

You're a real live hero. And you've got a beaut uniform. Girls really go for that.

NIGEL

You think so?

JEFF

Sure! How could she resist your muscular physique! .. Let's have a look.

NIGEL  
(*offended*)

Pardon..

JEFF

The ring, a look at the ring.

NIGEL

I haven't bought it yet. ..

JEFF

You haven't bought the ring! You can't declare your love without it.

NIGEL

Really?

JEFF

Then you'll just look cheap. Buying her a ring is a sign that you're serious. ..

NIGEL

Oh.

(*stands to go*)

Gee, thanks Jeff. You've been a great mate. I couldn't have done it without you.

JEFF

Well, that's what mates are for..

NIGEL

So.. I'll get a ring first thing tomorrow.

*Nigel walks out.*

JEFF

(*Calls after him*)

You're not rushing things are you? You haven't told her about your dancing..!

Scene 7

Flame Dating Agency

*Carol's clothing is a little more flattering than the previous day. She is sitting at her desk, and looks morose. Laura enters.*

LAURA

How'd it go? ..

*(reacts to Carol's body language)*

Oh. ..

CAROL

I don't want to talk about it.

LAURA

Fair enough.

CAROL

How can I show him I'm a passionate person when he doesn't spend any time with me!

LAURA

He said no?

CAROL

I didn't ask. He was tired from rescuing multiple people from a burning building.

LAURA

Lucky he's old-fashioned .. He won't be lured away by the hundreds of women who throw themselves at him in gratitude!

CAROL

That doesn't make me feel any better.

LAURA

That's jealousy for you. The question is, what are you going to do about it?

CAROL

Why are you so interested?

LAURA

I care about you, Honey. I want to see you happy. .. Plus it's my profession. I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't see my co-worker happily matched. ..

*(the phone rings) ..*

Flame Dating Agency, .. hot and heavy..

*(Pause)*

I'm sorry, we don't keep a breakdown on your date's previous sexual history!

*(Pause)*

They don't come with guarantees, and we don't offer a refund if you break something!

*(slams the phone down and looks to Carol)*

What a creep. .. That body builder, Martin. He's off our books. .. So where were we?

CAROL

You were about to give me a lecture on how jealousy is a great motivator - ?

LAURA

I'm sorry honey. But you know, he is what he is... HOT! You may have to take the bull by the proverbial. He's a fireman. Ask to see his pole.

*Carol is shocked when Laura's meaning finally occurs to her.*

CAROL

I.. I couldn't! It would feel so.. awkward.

LAURA

Honey, you need some practise. Better it's him than..

CAROL

I could never do that to Nigel!

LAURA

What? Get his rocks off?

CAROL

Why am I even in this conversation?



LAURA

We're trying to get you past the little hurdle of physical intimacy.

CAROL

Well, you can butt out. It's early in the relationship. I'll just let things unfold naturally.

LAURA

As long as they don't peter out... *(flips through her box of client cards)*.. Oh look. Here's a good Peter..

CAROL

I'm not going with anyone else! It would be so.. disloyal!

LAURA

Disloyal hey? Can you really know Nigel's the one you want if you haven't had any experience with anyone else? Think of it as market research.

CAROL

Market research?

LAURA

Yeah. Who's in the market, and who's not. . . .

Scene 8

Sex Shop

*Carol pushes the door to the sex shop open tentatively. She starts when the door closes with the loud peal of a bell. The space is like a cupboard. Carol is surrounded by adult appliances of every description. She steps around them, trying to avoid coming into contact with any. A man steps out of the dark.*

REG

*(vampire-esque)*

Good evening .. Can I [help you]?

*Carol starts and hurries out, terrified.*

Scene 9

Flame Dating Agency

*Laura enters, settles at the desk then looks up as Carol enters. She is dressed in a flirty way. She trips as she walks in stilettos, recovers, and leans self-consciously against the desk, showing her legs.*

LAURA

What are you doing?

CAROL

You told me to practise.

*Laura comes round to the front of her desk.*

LAURA

Hand over your weapons.

*Carol pauses, then sheepishly hands Laura her stilettos.*

LAURA

You know, the most exciting sex organ is the brain. Let 'em imagine.

CAROL

You mean like...

*Carol bares her shoulder and tosses her hair. A handsome young man, TOM STARR, enters behind her.*

CAROL CONT'D

"Get ready boys! I'm on the proowwwwl!"

LAURA

NO! You'll attract every apex predator from here to kingdom come!

TOM

I like it!

*Laura moves to protect Carol, who adjusts her clothes, highly embarrassed. Tom looks at both women, and immediately moves towards Carol, but Laura steps in and leads him to her desk.*

LAURA

Hi, I'm Laura. What can I do for you?

TOM

*(does an 'I'm too cool' facial expression as he says)*

Tom Starr's my name. Don't wear it out. It's what I can do for you.

### **#7. GIRL, I'M GOING DOWN**

*(dance routine, pulls Carol into it)*

TOM

I'M HOT AS HELL

SEE MY PECS, BICEPS, CHIN

GOT PHEROMONES YOU CAN SMELL

*(leans in to Carol and winks)*

SMELLS LIKE SIN!

NEED A MAN, NEED SOME MUSCLE?

I'M THE BEST THERE IS IN TOWN

WHEN YOU TOUCH ME I'LL RESPOND,

GIRL, I'M GOING DOWN

ENSEMBLE

AAH

TOM

I'M HOT AS HELL

GOT THE TOUCH, THE MOVES, THE LOOK

EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME WHAT YOU LIKE

DON'T NEED NO BOOK

NEED A MAN, NEED SOME MUSCLE?  
I'M THE BEST THERE IS IN TOWN  
WHEN YOU TOUCH ME I'LL RESPOND,  
GIRL, I'M GOING DOWN

ENSEMBLE

AAH

TOM

NEED A LOVER, NEED SOME HUSTLE?  
I'M THE BEST THERE IS IN TOWN  
GOT AN ITCH THAT NEEDS SOME SCRATCHING  
GIRL, I'M GOING DOWN

NEED A MAN, NEED SOME MUSCLE?  
I'M THE BEST THERE IS IN TOWN  
WHEN YOU TOUCH ME I'LL RESPOND,  
GIRL, I'M GOING DOWN

ENSEMBLE

AAH

TOM

WANT SOME LIGHT DISTRACTION  
STROKING, COAXING, STIMULATION?  
I'M YOUR COACH, YOUR MAIN ATTRACTION  
GUARANTEED SATISFACTION

I'M HOT AS HELL  
YOU'VE GOT MY NUMBER  
WHEN THERE'S NO ONE ELSE AROUND  
I'LL CAUTERISE YOUR LONESOME  
HOT AS HELL, I'M GOING DOWN

NEED A MAN, NEED SOME MUSCLE?  
I'M THE BEST THERE IS IN TOWN  
WHEN YOU TOUCH ME I'LL RESPOND,  
GIRL, I'M GOING DOWN

ENSEMBLE

AAH

TOM

I'm a catch, I know.. tall, handsome, I work out...

*(Shows a bicep)*

I'm looking for some babes to share some time with... Nothing serious, just a fun time, you know what I mean?

LAURA

Hallelujah! Have I died and gone to heaven or what?

*Tom looks past Laura, to Carol.*

TOM

Ah.. I said babes.. Kinda looking for 18 to 20 year olds..

*Tom is watching Carol, who looks up. Tom flashes her a smile. Laura notices as Carol blushes.*

TOM

'Course, I'll extend that for the right chick.

LAURA

Carol, would you mind popping out to the shops for some milk... now.

*Carol leaves reluctantly. Tom watches her go appreciatively. Laura turns to Tom*

LAURA

Who are you!?

TOM

Just arrived in town, thought I should give some of the local ladies a chance.

LAURA

Are you for real?

TOM

You wanna touch??

LAURA

This is a classy dating agency.

TOM

Then I'm your man.

LAURA

I'm speechless..

TOM

I tell you what. I'll give you three dates before I charge.. just to get the word out. The chicks'll come flocking.

LAURA

You're in the wrong ballpark.

TOM

But I've got the right equipment. Want to try for first base?

LAURA

You're unbelievable!

*Laura walks to the door and puts her hand on the knob.*

TOM

You wanna start now?

LAURA

No. I want to clear the view. This agency doesn't need mountin' men.

TOM

You'll regret it. I'll double your clientele!

LAURA

Surest method of birth control – abstain. Goodbye Tom Starr.

*Tom takes a scrap of paper from his pocket and leaves it on a desk*

TOM

Here's my number... in case you reconsider.

*Laura pushes him out the door.*

TOM

You can't resist touching me, can you?

*(from out of view)*

I'll be 'round!

Scene 10 (Continuous)

*Carol returns with the milk, looking back after Tom.*

CAROL

*(excited)*

Have you signed him up?

LAURA

That man is..

*(she is at a loss for words) ..*

unbelievable.

CAROL

Too good to be true?

LAURA

What a cheek! Acting as though we'd be glad to have him on our books – for free!

CAROL

I don't know.. Maybe some of our women deserve a more.. appealing type of person.

LAURA

Appealing to who! He's an arrogant.. Hang on. Do I sense some interest?

CAROL

NO! That would be ...

LAURA

Disloyal? . . . Delightful..? Delicious.. ?

*Carol turns away and plugs her ears.*

CAROL

NO! I won't listen!

LAURA

Honey, you're not engaged to Nigel. You'll never get what you want if you don't take control. That market research ... you owe it to yourself.

CAROL

A date.. with Tom?

LAURA

I'm not suggesting you marry him. Just a night out.

CAROL

But Nigel ..

LAURA

Better to find out who's playing before you commit to a team.

CAROL

Market research?



LAURA

Market research.

*The phone rings, and Laura answers it.*

LAURA

Flame dating agency, get it while its hot..

*(Carol looks alarmed. Laura grins like a naughty child.)*

We just signed up a new man this morning, Tom Starr, who has all those credentials. If you sign up today, you may be the first to meet him.

*Carol makes her decision, and waves her arms to stop Laura. Laura sees this, stands and acts out appropriate moves as she says..*

LAURA cont'd

Oh.. My co-worker has just spilt coffee all over the paperwork. Would you mind ringing again later? Gotta go!

*Laura puts the phone down, picks up Tom's phone number and holds it out to Carol, who hesitates.*

LAURA cont'd

What about the other women who deserve an appealing man?

*Carol takes the number.*

CAROL

Market research. I'm doing it for them.

Scene 11

Carol's Bedroom

*Carol's bed is strewn with clothes, including a sparkly dance costume. She is sitting on her bed dressed for going out. She stares at the phone, picks up the receiver, and then puts it down as if it were a hot potato.*

CAROL

I can't do it!

*(looks appealingly at her teddy)*

What do you think, Ted. Should I call? Will Nigel mind? I mean... I'm not really being disloyal, am I? Nigel hasn't promised me anything. It's not as if we are engaged..

*Carol falls onto her pillow in misery. Then sits up.*

CAROL CONT'D

Pull yourself together girl! You're a professional. You send people on dates all the time.

*(breaks down again)*

You just don't get invited on any yourself

*(sobs)*

This is ridiculous! I don't feel good about it, so I'm just not going to do it! How dare Laura suggest it? It's as if she was trying to get me to break up with Nigel! Well, I'll show her! Loyal till the day I die. Good night!

*She snuggles down with Ted and pulls the covers over her head. A hand reaches out to the lamp. The light goes out. ... And then goes on.*

CAROL CONT'D

I went to all this bother to get dressed. I'm a modern woman. I'll just take myself out.

*She gets off the bed and exits.*

Scene 12

Tinderbox Bar & Brasserie

*Nigel enters. Jeff looks up from mopping the floor.*

JEFF

Mind the wet patch!

*Nigel steps carefully around the wet on the floor.*

NIGEL

I did it. Do you want to see it?

*He gets a small box from his pocket and opens it for Jeff.*

JEFF

Wow. What's she worth?

NIGEL

You can't put a price on a person!

*(realises)*

Oh, you mean the ring.

*Jeff marvels as Nigel's mind, before he turns his attention back to the ring.*

JEFF

So?

NIGEL

I spent everything I had.

JEFF

Was that wise?

*Nigel looks unhappy. Jeff relents.*

JEFF CONT'D

'Course, Carol's worth it. So how're you gonna do it?

NIGEL

Do what?

JEFF

Propose?

NIGEL

Er... ?

JEFF

Nigel! You haven't thought about the moment!?

NIGEL

The moment?

JEFF

Yes. The moment you ask a woman to join her life with yours. It's a momentous occasion for her. She'll remember it for the rest of her life. She'll replay it and replay it in her mind. She'll describe it to your children...

NIGEL

She will?

JEFF

Yes.

NIGEL

I'm not sure I can do this.

*Nigel starts To walk out. Jeff grabs his arm to stop him.*

JEFF

Sure you can, Nige. This is what you've got to understand..

### **#8. SEAL THE DEAL**

*(NIGEL acts out the lyrics with JEFF at certain places, joining the dance.)*

JEFF

A CIRCLET OF GOLD  
IS NOT JUST A RING  
IT'S A PROMISE TO BE FAITHFUL,  
TRUE AND LOVING, THAT'S THE THING.

SO A RING FOR YOUR BRIDE  
IS A NECESSARY TOKEN  
WITHOUT A RING TO BIND IT  
YOUR PROMISE MAY BE BROKEN

A RING SHOWS YOU'RE SINCERE  
IN YOUR PERMANENT DEVOTION  
SIGNIFIES YOUR SECRET HOPES  
AND THE DEPTH OF YOUR EMOTION  
SHOWS YOUR CHOSEN ONE THE HONOUR  
YOU BELIEVE THAT SHE DESERVES  
GIVES HER SOMETHING TO SHOW HER FAMILY  
WINS THEM OVER (NOW HOLD YOUR NERVE!)

JEFF, NIGEL

GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEE  
HEART POUNDING IN YOUR CHEST  
SHOW YOUR PRECIOUS LOVED ONE  
YOU'RE PREPARED TO DO YOUR BEST  
TAKE THE RING OUT OF YOUR POCKET  
TAKE HER HAND AND SLIP IT ON  
YOU NEED THE RING TO DO THE THING TO SEAL THE DEAL  
YOU NEED THE RING TO DO THE THING TO SEAL THE DEAL

JEFF

THE RING IS A PROMISE  
THAT YOU'RE ALWAYS GONNA KEEP  
IT'S NOT GOOD TO SKIMP ON IT  
THAT'LL SHOW YOU TO BE CHEAP  
THE RING BINDS TOGETHER YOUR HEARTS  
IN LIFE AND DEATH  
IT SIGNIFIES YOU'LL LIVE OR DIE

NIGEL

YOU'LL LIVE OR DIE

JEFF

DEPENDENT ON HER BREATH

A LITTLE BIT OF GOLD  
IS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY  
FOR THE FAITHFUL WORK  
SHE'LL DO FOR YOU  
FOR YEARS, BOTH NIGHT AND DAY  
A WIFE'S A GREAT COMPANION  
HELPMATE, COMFORT WHEN YOU'RE DOWN  
ANY BLOKE CAN FEEL CONTENTED  
WHEN A WOMAN IS AROUND

JEFF, NIGEL

SO GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEE  
HEART POUNDING IN YOUR CHEST  
SHOW YOUR PRECIOUS LOVED ONE  
YOU'RE PREPARED TO DO YOUR BEST.  
TAKE THE RING OUT OF YOUR POCKET  
TAKE HER HAND AND SLIP IT ON.  
YOU NEED THE RING TO DO THE THING TO SEAL THE DEAL.  
YOU NEED THE RING TO DO THE THING AND THEN THE DEAL IS DONE!

NIGEL

Thanks, mate. You're a real friend.

JEFF

No probs. .. Let's have a proper look.

*(takes the ring from the box) ..*

Oh, she'll love it.

*(Admires the ring)*

Look how it sparkles... Oops.

*Jeff loses his balance as he steps back to get the best light. Nigel lunges, but the ring drops behind the bar. They both stare down in horror as the sound of a distinct 'chink' echoes from below. Nigel has difficulty breathing..*

NIGEL  
(hoarse)

The ring!

JEFF

Er.. don't worry mate. It's just fallen into the keg cellar. .. Sit tight, I'll get it in a jiffy.

*He rushes to exit, but turns back.*

JEFF

Ah, would you mind watching the bar for me?

Scene 13 (Continuous)

*Nigel is stammering in shock as Jeff exits. He leans over the bar to look into the cellar. Laura enters. She sees the manly behind, and admires it.*

LAURA

No ifs about this butt!

*Nigel turns quickly, embarrassed and uncomfortable.*

NIGEL

Pardon?

LAURA

Nigel. Even more good looking than the photos.

*Nigel is taken aback.*

NIGEL

You've seen photos of my .. butt?

LAURA

Not unless you've modelled for Cleo.

*Nigel looks perturbed.*

NIGEL

Cleo?

LAURA

The magazine. .. Forget it. I'm Laura. I work with Carol.

NIGEL

Oh, yes. She's told me about you. ... Actually, you're the person I need to speak to.

LAURA

Well how about that. Because I want to speak to you too.

NIGEL

*(simultaneous)*

I wanted to..

LAURA

*(simultaneous)*

What did ..

NIGEL

*(simultaneous)*

You first.

LAURA

*(simultaneous)*

You first.

*They laugh.*

NIGEL

No, honestly, ladies first.

LAURA

You really are an old-fashioned guy.



*Laura comes closer. Nigel warns her off.*

NIGEL

Mind the wet patch.

LAURA

You started without me!?

NIGEL

Sorry?

LAURA

*(sighs)*

Don't mind me. Sometimes I just can't help myself.

*Laura carefully steps around the wet and sits.*

LAURA

Well, it's just about Carol's birthday next week. I was thinking of throwing a little surprise for her, and I need your help.

NIGEL

Of course. What can I do?

*Laura steps forward to touch his arm conspiratorially, however ...*

LAURA

Do you know who Carol is close with, because I ...

*its too late. Laura has slipped on the wet floor. Nigel grabs her, catching her before she falls, however her hair becomes caught in the button on his epaulette. Laura is awkwardly positioned with her face close to his neck. He tries to right her, but she yelps.*

LAURA

Youch! I've heard of **femme** fatale, but you take the biscuit.

*Nigel tries to get some distance on her, to talk into her face, but Laura screeches more loudly.*

LAURA

Keep still! My hair's caught.

*Nigel freezes.*

NIGEL

What can I do?

LAURA

Look. If you sit down over there maybe I can disentangle my hair without losing my scalp.

*They take a step or two, but Laura falls backward, and Nigel is forced to catch her.*

NIGEL

I think we need to dance ...

LAURA

Dance?

NIGEL

To get there, .. If you don't mind. I'll just..

*Nigel, at first unwilling, finds a way to wrap his arms around her in a dance pose. This brings them even closer together, so they appear to be cuddling. Laura snuggles into him more, obviously enjoying the embrace.*

LAURA

Please – not the barn dance. What other dances do you know?

NIGEL

The hucklebuck - ?

LAURA

What the hell's the hucklebuck?!

NIGEL

You go like...

LAURA

*(shrieks)*

Stop! .. Look, what about the rumba?

NIGEL

Of course, the rumba..

*At this point Jeff rushes back in, stops abruptly, and stares at the couple in their warm embrace.*

JEFF

Nigel! How could you! And I thought you were a genuine guy!

*Jeff throws the ring at Nigel's feet. It bounces and rolls away. At this moment Carol hurries in.*

CAROL

Hi Jeff. Gosh it's quiet. I thought everyone except me went out..

*She stops abruptly when she notices Nigel and Laura.*

NIGEL

Carol!

CAROL

Nigel! You two-timing...!

*Carol dissolves into tears and rushes out. Nigel pulls away from Laura, yanking her hair free. Laura gasps and holds her head in pain, while Nigel races out the door. Jeff hurries to Laura's side.*

JEFF

Are you alright? What was he doing to you!?

LAURA

Believe it or not, we were dancing.

*(sighs)*

*Jeff fusses.*

LAURA

Go and find Carol!

*Stage blacks out. INTERVAL*

ACT II

Scene 14

Street

*Carol runs onto the street. We hear Nigel call out. Carol hides behind the phone box and watches as Nigel runs past.*

NIGEL

*(Off-stage)*

Carol. It wasn't how it looked!

*His footsteps fade into the distance. Carol paces.*

CAROL

What has my life come to!?

*(screeches)*

### **#9. CHINA DOLL**

*(frenetic, with a wild animal quality)*

CAROL

I'M A CHINA DOLL,  
CHINA DOLL, CHINA DOLL  
AND YOU'VE SMASHED ME TO THE GROUND,  
TO THE GROUND TO THE GROUND  
SHARDS OF MY HEART,  
OF MY HEART, OF MY HEART  
ENDANGER AND SURROUND,  
AND SURROUND, AND SURROUND.

MIRROR ON MY LIFE HAS ENDED  
DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO  
PRINCE AND PRINCESS CHARMING FABLE  
FAIRYTALE UNTRUE! *(screech)*

PROMISED GIRLHOOD DREAMS,  
GIRLHOOD DREAMS, GIRLHOOD DREAMS  
ALL WERE COMING TRUE,  
COMING TRUE, COMING TRUE  
NOW I FIND THEM SHATTERED,  
SHATTERED, SHATTERED,  
ALL BECAUSE OF YOU!

MIRROR ON MY LIFE HAS ENDED  
DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO  
PRINCE AND PRINCESS CHARMING FABLE  
FAIRYTALE UNTRUE! (screech)

SHOWN TO BE A TOAD  
BE A TOAD, BE A TOAD  
SLIMY AND DISEASED,  
AND DISEASED, AND DISEASED  
NIGHTMARE'S COME ALIVE,  
COME ALIVE, COME ALIVE,  
ALL 'COS YOU DECEIVED!

(Manic screech)

CAROL

Nigel Harrigan, you CHEAT!

*Carol begins to weep. She brings her hand out of her pocket and moves to blow her nose on the paper clutched there. When she notices it isn't a handkerchief, she opens it. She looks to the phone box, hurries in, adds coins and dials.*

CAROL CONT'D

Tom. Tom Starr? This is Carol, from Flame dating agency.

Scene 15

Tinderbox Bar and Brasserie

*Laura is seated at the bar with a line of glasses in front of her when Jeff re-enters. Some of the glasses are empty, and some are full. They are all the colours of the rainbow.*

JEFF

I couldn't find her. What do you think she'll do!?

LAURA

Cry a bit, sigh a bit. .. Then tomorrow at work I will explain the whole shamozzle and she and Nigel will be hunky-dory again. .. If she still wants him.

JEFF

Laura! .. You could have ruined the futures of two wonderful young people with your careless ... dancing.

LAURA

Jeff. I just got my hair caught in his epaulette. I couldn't help it. We were thrown together in a difficult situation, and to dance was the only reasonable response.

JEFF

But you may have ruined his happiness forever!

LAURA

How so young Grasshopper?

JEFF

He was going to ask her to marry him!

LAURA

*(becomes serious)*

Really? He feels that strongly about her?

JEFF

Yes. He was showing me the ring he bought.

LAURA

Well, whaddya know. In that case we should have one more of these to celebrate  
*(holds up glass).*

JEFF

Don't you think we need to do something .. to make sure they find each other and make up?

LAURA

Believe me, enough has been done in the cause of true love. Not exactly as I planned, but still...

*Jeff looks uneasy.*

LAURA CONT'D

Here, Sit down. Join me in a drink.

*She hands him one of her full glasses*

JEFF

Punch. Good idea.

*(chokes) ..*

What're these?

LAURA

Testing out some recipes. Some are pretty good, if I do say so myself.

JEFF

If you're into rocket fuel. ..

*(sips again, cautiously)*

So what's this I'm drinking?

*Laura looks down the line-up of glasses..*



LAURA

I'm not sure. I lost track at the Big Ba-two-zy.

JEFF

And which one was that?

*Laura points to the second empty glass..*

LAURA

That one.

JEFF

So this is the Big Ba-six-zy

*Laura laughs. Jeff takes a huge swig of the drink and flinches.*

LAURA

Something like that. .. You're a funny guy. So what's your story? Is there a Mrs Right?

JEFF

Actually, I bat for the other team.

*Laura is surprised. Jeff smiles ruefully into his glass.*

JEFF

I've never told anyone that before. .. Not even my parents. .. Must be something in these.

LAURA

You're gay??

JEFF

Yep. Queer, a queen. Bent like spaghetti. Camp as a row of tents. ..

LAURA

How'd you end up here?

JEFF

Needed some time out. Stuck a pin in a map. Now I'm sort of stuck in out. .. Or in. Depends how you look at it.

LAURA

Gosh, I never thought of that. There are lonely people everywhere. I spend my time helping normal couples find love. It never occurred to me that not everyone wants a partner of the opposite sex.

JEFF

You could run that as a sideline. ... if you want to go broke.

LAURA

Hmm, that's a point. Can't see a lot of call for it in Yokamine.

*(stands)*

Thanks for confiding.

*Laura squeezes his shoulder and moves to leave.*

JEFF

Don't tell anyone. I'm not ready to be run out of town – yet.

LAURA

Sure thing. Goodnight.

*Laura exits.*

Scene 16 (Continuous)

**#10. THE FOREVER OF MY LIFE**

JEFF

*(stares into his drink).*

I DIDN'T CHOOSE WHO I AM,  
TO PLAY THIS ROLE  
SURE, WOMEN ARE GREAT  
THEY JUST DON'T RAISE MY POLE  
I COULD GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS,  
HELL, THERE ARE MANY WHO DO  
IT'S JUST NOT RIGHT FOR ME,  
ITS' NOT BEING TRUE

ALONE IN THE DARK  
THE THING THAT I DREAD  
ARE THE ENDLESS EMPTY NIGHTS  
THAT STRETCH INTO THE FOREVER OF MY LIFE.

A PARTNER TO HOLD  
TO OFFER AFFECTION  
WHEN MUTUAL ATTRACTION  
CONFIRMS THE CONNECTION  
NOT A BIG THING TO ASK  
IF YOU'RE HETERO AND MALE  
BEING DIFFERENT'S JUST CONSIDERED  
A FAIL

ALONE IN THE DARK  
THE THING THAT I DREAD  
ARE THE ENDLESS EMPTY NIGHTS  
THAT STRETCH INTO THE FOREVER OF MY LIFE.

DON'T WANT TO BE PATRONISED  
NOT MISUNDERSTOOD  
WON'T TURN ALL YOUR KIDS,  
EVEN IF I COULD  
BEING QUEER CAN BE A PROBLEM  
BUT IT CAN BE A JOY  
LET KIDS BE WHO THEY ARE  
WHETHER GIRL, GAY OR BOY

ALONE IN THE DARK  
THE THING THAT I DREAD  
ARE THE ENDLESS EMPTY NIGHTS  
THAT STRETCH INTO THE FOREVER OF MY LIFE.

Scene 17

Street

*The door from the bar opens, and Laura steps onto the empty street. She pulls her coat closer against the cold night air. A couple walk by hand in hand so absorbed in each other they don't see her.*

### **#11. WHY CAN'T IT BE ME?**

LAURA

AS THE DARKNESS CLOSES IN  
THE WARM GLOW OF LIGHT  
REMINDS ME THAT WITHIN  
IS A HAPPY WIFE  
WHY CAN'T IT BE ME?

I TOOK MY CHANCES  
I SAVOURED LIFE  
NOW WILL I NEVER BE  
SOMEBODY'S WIFE?  
WHY CAN'T IT BE ME?

I HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE  
BUT A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME  
HAVE SO MUCH LOVE TO GIVE  
BUT I'M ALL ALONE  
WHY CAN'T IT BE ME?

I TOOK MY CHANCES  
I SAVOURED LIFE  
DIDN'T THINK I'D MISS  
BEING SOMEBODY'S WIFE  
WHY CAN'T IT BE ME?

Scene 18  
Tinderbox Bar and Brasserie

*Jeff is still sitting at the bar when Nigel walks in.*

JEFF

Nigel! Did you find her?

NIGEL

I looked everywhere. She just disappeared.

JEFF

Let me fix you a drink.

NIGEL

I just came for the ring.

JEFF

Oh um... Nigel, I feel so terrible..

NIGEL

You've lost the ring!?

JEFF

I'll find it..

NIGEL

But you said I couldn't ask her to marry me without it!

*Nigel looks like he will go into hyperventilation.*

NIGEL CONT'D

My life savings!

JEFF

Breathe. Just breathe. .. I'll find it! ..

*(looks to empty floor).*

.Look mate. Just come back tomorrow. I'll have it for you then. Scout's honour.

*Nigel stares uncomprehendingly.*

JEFF

*(cautious)*

I don't s'pose you had time to insure it?

*Nigel's hands go to his head in despair as he makes an animal-like anguished growl.*

NIGEL

Gaaaaahhh..

*Jeff comes to his side.*

JEFF

Look mate, it'll be alright. Just leave it with me.

*A strange mood comes over Nigel. He moves forward in a threatening manner to stand over Jeff.*

NIGEL  
(Quietly)

It had better be. ... I'll be back.

He turns and exits, leaving Jeff staring after him.

JEFF

Gee, you think you know someone.

Scene 19

Flame Dating Agency

*Laura is behind her desk when Carol enters. Her dress is revealing and feminine.*

LAURA

Did Nigel find you?

CAROL

No. Are you covering for him?

LAURA

Look, Carol. I would never do anything to get between you and Ni[ge]l.

CAROL

La-la-la-la-di-da! Not interested!!

*Carol grabs the telephone headset.*

LAURA

Oh Carol. Don't be so childish! We were only dancing...

CAROL

Nigel doesn't dance ...

LAURA

He seemed quite familiar with various ...

*Carol puts the phone headset on.*

CAROL

Not listening!

*Laura exhales in exasperation.*

LAURA

Have it your own way.

*The phone rings and Carol answers it.*

CAROL

Flame Dating Agency. Fire-damaged goods. Closing down sale.

*Laura gasps. Carol looks to Laura.*

CAROL

They hung up.

*Laura is about to explode when an elegant woman enters the office. She looks furtively over her shoulder before she makes sure the door is closed.*

LAURA

Can I help you?

ELIZABETH

Ah, yes. You said that you had a man who .. ah.. showed all my credentials?

LAURA

Oh.. you're the one who rang up wanting a more appealing sort of man  
*(directed at Carol).*



LAURA CONT'D

I'm so sorry I couldn't help you at the time. I'm Laura.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth.

*(holds out her hand to shake Laura's) . .*

And this must be..?

LAURA

My co-worker who radiates disaster.

*Carol steps forward.*

CAROL

I'm Carol. So sorry I interrupted your call yesterday. Sadly that particular male client has now withdrawn from our service..

*Laura looks on aghast.*

ELIZABETH

Oh, that's disappointing. I guess I'll leave it then.

CAROL

That might be best

*(smiles serenely).*

LAURA

We have others..

*Elizabeth, already heading for the door, exits quickly. Laura almost explodes..*

LAURA

Carol. How dare you! What are you doing??

CAROL

I'm taking control of my own life, thanks Laura. Footloose and fancy free. I'm going to take the rest of the day off to prepare for my **date**. My work here is done!

*Carol grabs her coat and walks out. Laura is, for once, without words.*

Scene 20

Cinema

*Carol is sitting alone in a row of seats. She has a cone of popcorn. Sound effects of a sexy film can be heard, and we can see that she sits forward in the flickering light. She stiffens. ... She sits straighter, eyes glued to the screen. ... She turns her face away in distaste. ... She gingerly brings her face back to the screen. ... She sits even further forward on the edge of her seat (holding tension) She squeals and jolts, and popcorn shoots into the air and falls around her. She stands and staggers out, her eyes averted.*

Scene 21

Street

*Carol is hard to recognise with make-up and hair styled differently. She is dressed in a rather large overcoat, bare legs showing underneath. She hears voices, and hides behind the phone box guiltily. Nigel and Wendy walk past on their way to a dance lesson.*

NIGEL

She isn't answering her phone..

WENDY

Oh Nigel, that's terrible!..

*Wendy touches Nigel sympathetically. Carol gasps.*

WENDY

She'll get over it [and come around in time]..

*Shocked at seeing Nigel with yet another woman Carol makes a decision and follows them.*

Scene 22

Dance Studio

Instrumental dance music (#12) is playing as *Wendy and Nigel enter. They join the crowd, which includes Bruce and Irene Pickle. Carol slips inside the door, and watches. Justine approaches Wendy and Nigel, who are preparing to begin the dance.*

WENDY

Justine. What are [you doing here ...]

JUSTINE

Nigel darling, ..

*(coldly)*

Wendy. Did Nigel not tell you? He's partnering me permanently from now on.

*Justine grabs Wendy's wrist and pulls it from Nigel's shoulder. She pushes Wendy, who spins away, but is held by Nigel and so spins back to bump into Justine as she inserts herself next to Nigel. The neighbouring dancers, Bruce and Irene, are disturbed when Nigel bumps into them due to Wendy's force. Bruce moves to punch Nigel. Nigel ducks and Bruce punches Justine instead.*

*Carol watches in amazement and horror as this unfolds before her.*

CAROL

Nigel??

*Nigel crawls out of the scrum while Wendy struggles to extricate herself from Irene's grip. He sees Carol turn and leave.*

NIGEL

Carol!

*He rushes out after her.*

Scene 23

Street

*Nigel rushes in to the street, but it is empty. Thunder sounds, and it begins to rain. He picks up an old newspaper abandoned in the phone box and holds it over his head.*

### #13. DARKNESS OF MY DESPAIR

NIGEL

THE BLACKNESS OF THE SKY  
CAN'T BEGIN TO COMPARE  
TO THE BLACKNESS OF MY LIFE  
IF YOU ARE NOT THERE

WITH THE DARKNESS MY DESPAIR  
IS PAINTED 'CROSS THE SKY  
I TOOK YOUR LOVE FOR GRANTED  
NOW I CRY

I THOUGHT DANCE WAS MY ALL  
THAT YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND  
NOW I REALISE MY MISTAKE  
JUST AS FATE HAS DEALT THIS HAND

FREEDOM IS A FANTASY  
THE DANCE I THOUGHT I'D CHOOSE  
THEN YOU SLIPPED AWAY SO QUIETLY  
I HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE

WITH THE DARKNESS MY DESPAIR  
IS PAINTED 'CROSS THE SKY  
I TOOK YOUR LOVE FOR GRANTED  
NOW I CRY

THE BLACKNESS OF THE SKY  
CAN'T BEGIN TO COMPARE  
TO THE BLACKNESS OF MY LIFE  
IF YOU ARE NOT THERE

*Nigel sits in a crumpled heap in the phone box.*

Scene 24

Tinderbox Bar and Brasserie

*An older woman, SADIE (58) has her head down on the bar and is snoring. Jeff is setting tables when Laura enters.*

LAURA

Jeff, have you seen a new man in town? Name's Tom Starr. He's a real jockstrap – if you'll pardon the expression... Some kind of a sleazy womaniser.

JEFF

I don't think anyone like that has been in.

LAURA

The thing is, we've got to stop Carol making the mistake of her life...

*Carol enters.*

JEFF

Carol!?

*Laura turns, and approaches her immediately, but Carol's lip trembles ...*

CAROL

Don't speak! Just fix me a drink.

LAURA

Are you sure that a drink is a good idea? You may need all your faculties..

CAROL

What use are my faculties when they show me the cold, hard truth. I want to go to the devil!

LAURA

Carol! .. That's not like you.

CAROL

Jeff, give me a drink. The one with the most alcohol in it.

LAURA

But you don't drink!

*Carol glares. Jeff looks to Laura.*

LAURA

I'll do it.

*Laura goes behind the bar and makes a drink which she places down on the counter. Carol comes closer to take it.*

LAURA

Friends again?

*Carol ignores the question but takes a gulp of the drink. She takes it to a table and sits.  
Jeff hurries over to her.*

JEFF

Carol, yesterday. .. It wasn't how ...

CAROL

I don't want to talk about it.

JEFF

You've got to know..

CAROL

Jeff. Leave it!

JEFF

I'll go get Nigel!

CAROL

DON'T!

*Jeff and Laura are both taken aback by Carol's assertiveness. When Carol's attention goes to her drink Jeff shakes Sadie..*

JEFF

*(whisper)*

Sadie! Go find Nigel Harrigan! ..

SADIE

*(brogue; grabs Jeff's arm)*

Whatsh init f'r me?

JEFF

Look. Just go!

*(turns, guilty)*

CAROL

*(to Jeff)*

What am I drinking?

*Jeff, guilty, looks to Laura. Sadie moves slowly to the door.*

LAURA

I hoped you wouldn't ask. . . . An orgasm.

*Jeff is completely taken aback.*

CAROL

*(chokes)*

Oh. .. An or[g]..

*(she can't quite bring herself to say the word)*

.. er, another one, please.

JEFF

Er...

*(looks to Laura)*

LAURA

Don't worry. I'll get it.

*Laura puts the second drink in front of Carol, who immediately finishes the first. Laura is alarmed.*

LAURA

I'm not sure drinking is going to help.

CAROL

I'm of age. I can make my own decisions.

LAURA

Just saying..

*Carol looks at Laura as she gulps the second drink.*

CAROL

Oh look. My glass is empty. Jeff, may I have another or..[gasm].

LAURA

*(hurriedly interrupts)*

Don't! .. It just doesn't sound right you saying that.

CAROL

Maybe you'll have to change your idea of who I am.



Scene 25 (Continuous)

*Carol sits awkwardly at the table, with an empty glass in front of her. She fumbles in her bag and pulls out a small mirror and lipstick. She has to concentrate quite hard to put the lipstick on, because by now she is quite drunk. She becomes fascinated with the way the lipstick moves up and down.*

*She narrowly misses her cheek, her forehead, her ear, before she finally gets it on her lips. She puts it away and fingers a rather obvious red carnation in her hair.*

*Tom appears at the door. Carol gulps it while Tom checks out the room, then moves to her.*

LAURA

That's Tom!

*Jeff and Laura watch, alarmed. Laura goes to intercept him, but Jeff grabs her.*

JEFF

*(to Laura)*

Nigel. He's on his way!

LAURA

We've got to stop him!

JEFF

I'll go.

LAURA

*(grabs Jeff)*

No! I may need back-up.

TOM

*(reaching Carol)*

Who's the lucky girl then?

*Carol drunkenly stands and allows her coat to drop. Laura and Jeff gasp to see the seductive outfit she is wearing. She kisses Tom on the lips.*

CAROL

Hello Tom. What's a handsome guy like you doing in a place like this?

TOM

You invited me. You know, I could have gone with any number of chicks, but I chose you. ...  
Bartender! Some drinks!

*Jeff pushes Laura back, and moves to Tom and Carol's table himself.*

TOM

*(to Carol)*

What can I get you?

CAROL

I'll have an .. [orgasm]

*Laura shrieks to drown out Carol's reply. All look at her.*

LAURA

My stocking. There's a hole in my stocking.

TOM

Hmm.

*(to Carol)*

What's that you're drinking?

CAROL

An [org..]

LAURA

*(interrupts)*

Her usual. She'll have her usual.

TOM

Well I'll have a blue.. no, make it an orgasm.

LAURA

*(under her breath)*

No one's going there, mate.

TOM

*(leans in to Carol)*

It's my favourite. ...

*(suggestive)*

What would you like?

CAROL

**Me** too. Thank you Jeff.

*Jeff returns to the bar.*

TOM

My kinda girl. I knew you'd ring. You know, Laura gave me a choice of fun babes, but I chose you. On the prowl.. *(he winks at her)*.

CAROL

*(confused with embarrassment)*

I didn't mean..

TOM

Hey, don't sweat it! We're all consenting adults.

*Laura moves towards them, but is stopped when Jeff lassoes her with an apron.*

TOM

And you blushed baby. When I saw you at that office and I smiled at you, you blushed... I could tell that you felt my animal magnetism.

LAURA

*(to Jeff)*

Yeah, baboon.

CAROL

Well, er.. Tom, what brings you here?

TOM

Got tired of all the chicks up north. You know.. bikini babes with nothing up top! I mean, literally, nothing up top. Lucky to meet a B-cup! You, now you.. well, you're at least a C.

CAROL

*(shocked into sobriety)*

Ah.. you choose your dates by their bra size?

TOM

*(laughs at her)*

Well, you wouldn't try to get a conversation out of one, would you? ... How about we finish these drinks and blow this joint. I'm guessing you're the sort who likes to get up close and personal. I'm right, aren't I.

*Carol looks at him aghast. Jeff moves towards their table with the drinks and an extra large glass of water.*

CAROL

Excuse me, but I think this date has just officially ended.

*She stands, grabs the water glass from the tray, and throws it over Tom.*

CAROL

Try this on for size. I'd call it a triple E!

*Tom is left gasping. He looks to Laura and Jeff and hurries to exit.*

JEFF

*(gasps)*

He didn't pay for the drinks!

LAURA

They're on me. That was totally worth it!

Scene 26 (Continuous)

*Carol sobs as she hurries to the door, and comes face to face with Nigel.*

NIGEL

Carol! I've found you!

*They step to the same side, then to the same other side, before Nigel grabs her arm to turn them both around. They swirl, and stop.*

CAROL

Nigel.. I'm so sorry. I don't know what I was thinking..

NIGEL

No, Carol. Let me.

*They look into each other's eyes.*

NIGEL

Miss Meeks, I owe you an apology. I've been so secretive, not paying you enough attention, and not letting you into my life. I want you to know... I love dance, and I can't give it up. But I want you in my life – as my life's partner. I can't give up dance, but I can give up my regular partners..

CAROL

Partners?

NIGEL

Wendy, Narelle, Justine, ..

*Carol becomes wide-eyed.*

NIGEL cont'd

Stacey, Rachel... Sharlene..

*(Carol brings up her handbag to hit him. Nigel grins widely) ..*

Just joking!!

CAROL

But you need a partner to dance with.

NIGEL

No I don't. I can just choose someone on the night. Dance with strangers.

CAROL

Maybe they won't have to be total strangers.

*Carol rips her skirt off, to show a show girl's sequined ruffle and stockinged legs.*

NIGEL

Carol!

*SFX Music*

CAROL

You better shape up, man. I don't intend to be a wall-flower.

NIGEL

I didn't know you could dance!

CAROL

Ditto! ... As a kid I was quite good.

NIGEL

Carol, will you marry me?

CAROL

I thought you'd never ask!

*JEFF runs over holding up the ring, but CAROL has already thrown herself at NIGEL. JEFF shrugs and puts the ring away. NIGEL and CAROL dance.*

## #14. DANCE OF LIFE

NIGEL, CAROL

WE'LL SASHAY IN THE MORNING

FEMALE ENSEMBLE

THE MORNING

NIGEL, CAROL

PIROUETTE THE WHOLE DAY THROUGH

FEM. ENS.

THE WHOLE DAY THROUGH

NIGEL

WITH YOU AS MY DANCE PARTNER

FEM. ENS.

PARTNER

CAROL

WHO LOVES YOU THROUGH AND THROUGH!

FEM. ENS.

THROUGH AND THROUGH

NIGEL

YOU'RE A GIRL

FEM. ENS.

AH AH AH

CAROL

WHO LIKES TO RHUMBA

FEM. ENS.

AH AH AH

CAROL

AND YOU'RE A GUY

FEM. ENS

AH AH AH

NIGEL

WHO LIKES THAT TOO

FEM. ENS

AH AH AH

NIGEL, CAROL

SO LET'S DANCE THE DANCE OF LIFE  
'TIL WE REACH

FEM. ENS

AH AH AH

NIGEL, CAROL

A HUNDRED AND TWO

FEM. ENS

AH AH AH.

NIGEL, CAROL, FEMALE ENSEMBLE

WE'RE IN THE DANCE OF LIFE  
FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES  
FOR THAT STOMPING ROMPING RHYTHM  
OUR THIRST FOR DANCE TO SLAKE!  
WE'RE IN THE DANCE OF LIFE  
FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES  
FOR THAT STOMPING ROMPING RHYTHM  
OUR THIRST FOR DANCE TO SLAKE!

NIGEL, CAROL, FULL ENSEMBLE

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE!  
FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE!  
FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE!  
FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE

**NIGEL, CAROL**

DANCE OF LIFE

**FULL ENSEMBLE**

AH AH

NIGEL

I SWOON AT YOUR HALF MOON

ENSEMBLE

YOUR HALF MOON

CAROL

YOUR SHIMMY SHAKES ME TO THE CORE

ENSEMBLE

TO THE CORE



NIGEL

BE *EN GARDE* AS I PROMENADE

ENSEMBLE

AH AH

CAROL

LATIN RHYTHM LEAVES ME CRYING FOR MORE

ENSEMBLE

AH AH AH

**NIGEL, CAROL**

**ENSEMBLE**

YOU CAN LEAD ME

AH AH AH

IN A MERRY-GO-ROUND

AH AH AH

THAT'S NEVER

AH AH AH

GONNA END

AH AH AH

'COS THE DANCE OF LIFE IS SOMETHING

THAT WE BOTH

AH

CAN COMPREHEND

AH AH

NIGEL, CAROL, FEMALE ENSEMBLE

WE'RE IN THE DANCE OF LIFE

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES

FOR THAT STOMPING ROMPING RHYTHM

OUR THIRST FOR DANCE TO SLAKE!

WE'RE IN THE DANCE OF LIFE

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES

FOR THAT STOMPING ROMPING RHYTHM

OUR THIRST FOR DANCE TO SLAKE!

NIGEL, CAROL, FULL ENSEMBLE

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE!

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE!

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE!

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE

**NIGEL, CAROL**

**FULL ENSEMBLE**

DANCE OF LIFE

AH AH

NIGEL, CAROL  
 THOUGH LIFE HAS MANY UPS AND DOWNS  
 ENSEMBLE  
 AND DOWNS  
 NIGEL, CAROL  
 WE'LL TREAT IT LIKE A DANCE  
 ENSEMBLE  
 JUST LIKE A DANCE  
 NIGEL, CAROL  
 FACING EVERY SITUATION  
 ENSEMBLE  
 AH AH  
 NIGEL, CAROL  
 AS A CHALLENGE AND A CHANCE.  
 ENSEMBLE  
 AH AH AH  
 NIGEL, CAROL ENSEMBLE  
 WE'LL RISE AH AH AH  
 TO THE OCCASION AH AH AH  
 OUR TECHNIQUE AH AH AH  
 THE BEST *BALLON* AH AH AH  
 YOU BET WE'LL CHA-CHA-ZUMBA-POLKA  
 AND DO IT AH  
 WITH APLOMB! AH AH

NIGEL, CAROL, FEMALE ENSEMBLE  
 WE'RE IN THE DANCE OF LIFE  
 FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES  
 FOR THAT STOMPING ROMPING RHYTHM  
 OUR THIRST FOR DANCE TO SLAKE!  
 WE'RE IN THE DANCE OF LIFE  
 FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES  
 FOR THAT STOMPING ROMPING RHYTHM  
 OUR THIRST FOR DANCE TO SLAKE!

NIGEL, CAROL, FULL ENSEMBLE

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE!

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE!

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE!

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, DANCE OF LIFE

NIGEL, CAROL

FULL ENSEMBLE

DANCE OF LIFE

AH AH

*They dance out together.*

*Jeff and Laura clap as they go. Tom joins them from a side entrance. Jeff throws him a small towel.*

TOM

The things we do for love. Did you organise ALL this?

LAURA

Clearly, I'm in the right profession. One thing didn't work out though. As usual, I'm left high and dry. I've found tall and dark

*(indicates Jeff and Tom),...*

but where's my handsome?

*Jeff and Tom both throw towels at her. As they walk back to the bar, Tom checks Jeff out lustfully. Black out.*

FINALE (Curtain Call)

**#15. LOVE IS IN THE HAIR**

*The whole cast joins in with this big number dance routine.*

NIGEL, CAROL, LAURA, JEFF, TOM, ENSEMBLE

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!

WE LOVE OUR LOCKS  
WE LOVE OUR GROOVE  
WE SWING AND SHOUT

NIGEL

JUST WATCH ME MOVE

NIGEL, CAROL, LAURA, JEFF, TOM, ENSEMBLE

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!

HAIR IS CROWNING GLORY  
WHETHER BLOND, BROWN OR BLACK  
COMPLEMENTS OUR STUNNING DANCE MOVES

LAURA

BUT HEY, JUST WATCH YOUR BACK

NIGEL, CAROL, LAURA, JEFF, TOM, ENSEMBLE

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!

WE COMB AND FLUFF AND TEASE  
GOTTA LOVE THE SCENT OF MUSK  
GOTTA GET IT DONE REAL QUICK

TOM

WILL BE ON THE STREETS BY DUSK

NIGEL, CAROL, LAURA, JEFF, TOM, ENSEMBLE

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!

WHETHER BLOKE, SHEILA OR OTHER  
HAIR IS WHAT WE ALL ADMIRE  
SO LOVE IS IN THE HAIR

JEFF

IT'LL SET YOUR HEART ON FIRE!

NIGEL, CAROL, LAURA, JEFF, TOM, ENSEMBLE

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
LET US TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR  
AND WE INTEND TO SHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
WOULDN'T BE A DATE WITHOUT IT  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
LOVE IS IN THE HAIR!  
HAIR!

END