

St Tabitha's

A Play with Songs

By David Barrett

Script

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St Tabitha's Dramatis Personae

Lower Fifth:

Kate Haggerty	A bully and racketeer
Clarissa Yardley-Fairbank	Her lieutenant

Upper Third:

Trixie Pilkington-Witherspoon	An orphan and victim
Mollie Aherne	Leader of the gang
Ella Butterworth	Bit of a joker
Daisy Potherington-Twaddle	A humanitarian
Lily Braithwaite	
Maisie Rochester	

Henrietta Trumpington-Trumpington Headmistress

Frank Yardley	Caretaker
Tom Jefferies	Gardener/Ghost
Ivy Nutthall	Matron
Miss Broome	Cookery Mistress and Head of
Upper Third	
Mr Pinney	Boys' Master
Tristan Potherington-Twaddle	Daisy's brother
Peter Jones	Tristan's best friend
Patrick	Baker's Errand Boy
Juliet, Nicole and Harry	Spectators at hockey match

Two Firemen

Other girls

Boys

ACT 1 SCENE 1 The Upper Third Dormitory

THERE IS ONE ENTRANCE/EXIT FROM THE DORM TO THE CORRIDOR AND ONE LONG WINDOW, DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL SASHES OF THE OLD-FASHIONED TYPE, PAINTED WHITE. ALONG THE UPSTAGE WALL IS A ROW OF BEDS WITH IRON FRAMES AND BEDSTEADS. BESIDE EACH ONE IS A SMALL CUPBOARD, EACH WITH PHOTOS OF SIBLINGS AND PARENTS ON THE TOP. ON EACH BED IS ONE STUFFED TOY. AT ONE END IS A FIREPLACE, STANDING NEXT TO WHICH IS A VERY OLD-LOOKING GRECIAN-STYLE VASE.

SONG 1 ST TABITHA'S

Chorus:

Saint Tabitha's, Saint Tabitha's your buildings stand so bold,
Saint Tabitha's, Saint Tabitha's your story must be told.
Saint Tabitha's, Saint Tabitha's you weave a powerful spell,
For stranger far than fiction is the truth these walls could tell.

Our bathroom was a dairy and our dormitory a gunnery,
The pantry was a hospital, the refectory a nunnery.
Established by Dominicans then blown up by the Puritans,
Ransacked by the Cavaliers who walked off with the chandeliers.

The priest holes in the chimney and the trapdoors in the captain's chest,
And hidden doors and secret drawers and tunnels leading under floors.
Now doorways in the panelling and bricked up chambers were the thing,
Tapestries with secret flaps concealing ancient treasure maps.

Then came along the great war and secondment to the flying corps,
The lawn was flattened in a day and turned into a runaway.
The kitchen garden saw a change when it became a firing range,
Radishes and greens and beans quite soon were shot to smithereens.

The final chapter plays out as the hordes of females shriek and shout,
Exploring every stair and tower, teasing secrets from its bowels.
The building shudders in defeat, when pounded by a hundred feet,
Assaulted by these brats hostile, it may not pass this final trial.

ENTER MATRON, CLAPPING HER HANDS IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESTORE
ORDER. GIRLS STAND IN SILENCE BY THEIR BEDS AND FACE HER.

MATRON: Now, now, girls, there is far too much frivolity in
this dormitory. You are supposed to be tidying your areas are
you not?

TRIXIE: Please Miss, what's frivolity?

GIRLS SNIGGER.

MATRON: Frivolity, my dear Trixie, is what is being exhibited by your dorm-mates as I speak, and it is most unseemly for young ladies of your class.

TRIXIE: Please Miss, what's exhibitibed?

MORE SNIGGERS FROM THE GIRLS.

MATRON: To exhibit, my dear Trixie is to show or display publicly. And this public display of ill manners is quite intolerable.

TRIXIE: Please Miss, what's.....

MATRON: Trixie! I have not come here to give you an English lesson. That is the privilege of Miss Sprout, the English mistress.

ELLA: Brussel Sprout!

MATRON: Enough! I shall return in ten minutes - and if this dormitory is not scrupulously tidy - there will be no supper.

SILENCE ENSUES. DAISY PUTS HER HAND OVER TRIXIE'S MOUTH, WHO IS ABOUT TO ASK FOR A DEFINITION OF SCRUPULOUSLY.

MATRON: Do you understand?

GIRLS: Yes, Miss Nutthall!

EXIT MATRON, STRUTTING WITH HER NOSE IN THE AIR. THE GIRLS IMMEDIATELY SLOUCH AND LOUNGE AROUND, SIGHING AND TUTTING.

TRIXIE: What's scrupulously?

ELLA: Oh, do be quiet, Trixie. It's one thing being ignorant but quite another to advertise it.

TRIXIE POUTS AND SITS DOWN HEAVILY WITH HER BACK TO THE OTHERS.

DAISY: Go easy on her, Ella. She is new here and you know what it's like to be a new girl. It's not easy.

MOLLIE: Don't be so soft, Daisy. We were all new once and we survived.

DAISY: It's alright for you, Mollie. You've always been the tallest. No-one would dare pick on you.

MOLLIE: Physical height alone does not make great leaders. Look at Napoleon. He was five feet nothing in his socks.

ELLA: When did you ever see Napoleon in his socks?

MOLLIE: And did you know that Joan of Arc was only four feet eleven.

ELLA: No wonder she always had her photograph taken sitting on her horse.

DAISY: Don't be daft, Ella, they didn't have cameras in Noah's day.

MOLLIE: Saint Francis of Assisi was five feet one inch.

ELLA: He only had his photograph taken with animals.

DAISY: How tall are you anyway, Trixie?

TRIXIE: Four feet six - but I'm still growing. One day I'll overtake you all - you'll see.

LILY: Mollie, what about the cookery lesson? You said you had a great idea. Please tell us about it, do.

GIRLS GATHER AROUND MOLLIE.

MOLLIE: Well, Lily, it's a sort of scientific experiment, you see. It's to do with states of matter: solid, liquid, gas, that sort of thing.

LILY: Give us another clue, Mollie.

MOLLIE: Miss Broome let it slip that we would be making meringues this week.

MAISIE: Sounds like a recipe for disaster!

THE GIRLS HUSH MAISIE.

MOLLIE: What's the main ingredient of meringues?

LILY: Sugar?

MOLLIE: No, Lily, eggs.

ELLA: She's never going to let us crack eggs again after what happened last time.

MOLLIE: Apparently, she is. And when she demonstrates the method, she will get such a surprise.

ELLA: What are we going to do, Mollie? Blow the eggs?

MOLLIE: She's not daft - she'll realise they're too light. No, we shall hard boil them.

REACTION FROM GIRLS, LAUGHTER AND CHEERS.

MOLLIE: But not the ones we shall use ourselves. I have better plans for those.

THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN AND THE BULLY KATE ENTERS, FOLLOWED BY HER SIDE-KICK, CLARISSA. THE LAUGHTER EVAPORATES AND THE GIRLS FREEZE IN ALARM. EVEN MOLLIE APPEARS AFRAID.

KATE: Oh look, Clarissa, the babies are having a little meeting. Can we join in?

MAISIE: Certainly not, go back to your own dorm.

REALISING THE FOLLY OF SPEAKING OUT, MAISIE RUNS ROUND AND HIDES BEHIND MOLLIE FOR PROTECTION.

KATE: *(In a sweet and menacing tone)* But this is our dorm, Maisie. You see, as Lower Fifth we own the school. Do you understand? We can go where we wish, do what we wish, *(pulling Trixie's hair)* treat anyone how we wish.

TRIXIE: We can tell Miss Broome of you. She's head of Upper Third. She told us we could go to her with our problems.

THE OTHER GIRLS PUT THEIR HEADS IN THEIR HANDS IN UTTER RESIGNATION AT TRIXIE'S OUTBURST.

KATE: Your problems are just beginning, you snivelling little creature. Clarissa, note this brat's name. She will pay extra tax.

CLARISSA: Name?

TRIXIE: You know my name. Why do you pretend you don't?

CLARISSA: Now look here, if Kate says note your name, I shall note your name. Do you understand?

MOLLIE: Do everything she says do you? Don't you have a mind of your own?

CLARISSA: Shut up, Mollie! Stay out of this. (*Turning to Trixie, who is now crying*) I said, I wanted your name, you snotty-nosed brat.

DAISY: Trixie is her name and you know it. Trixie Pilkington-Witherspoon.

KATE: (*Grabbing Trixie by the ear and making her stand*) I want to hear it from her.

DAISY: Go on Trixie, say it, please!

KATE TWISTS TRIXIE'S EAR AND SHE CRIES OUT IN PAIN.

TRIXIE: Trixie... (*she sobs*)

KATE: (Shouts) Trixie who?

TRIXIE: (Whispering) Pilkington-Witherspoon...

KATE: I can't hear you, Trixie.

TRIXIE: (Shouts) Pilkington-Witherspoon.

KATE THROWS HER TO THE FLOOR AND SHE SINKS TO HER KNEES, WEEPING.

KATE: Now we have noted that you will pay double tax.

DAISY: Don't be harsh on her, Kate. She is a new girl.

KATE: Do you want to pay extra taxes as well?

DAISY: No!

KATE: Then shut up! Now, I almost forgot the reason for my - courtesy visit! Clarissa, remind them.

KATE STEPS TO ONE SIDE AND FOLDS HER ARMS, SMIRKING.

CLARISSA: Each girl in the Upper Third shall give half of their weekly tuck ration to Kate, as their dormitory prefect. Any girl who refuses to comply shall pay the forfeit of an ounce of hair. The hair shall be presented in a formal ceremony and shall be torn out by the roots - not severed.

TRIXIE: (*Whispered*) What does severed mean?

THE GIRLS BEG TRIXIE TO HUSH.

KATE: Come Clarissa, we have other dorms to visit. We don't have time to make polite conversation with these slimy toads.

TRIXIE GETS UP AND IS ABOUT TO SPEAK WHEN DAISY CLAMPS HER HAND OVER HER MOUTH AND PULLS HER DOWN. KATE PROMPTS CLARISSA TO SPEAK.

CLARISSA: Don't forget! You've been warned!

KATE AND CLARISSA MAKE A SWEEPING EXIT. SILENCE ENSUES, EVENTUALLY BROKEN BY TRIXIE.

TRIXIE: I can't believe you put up with this stuff. Why don't you stand up to her?

MOLLIE: This is what happens if we do.

MOLLIE PARTS HER HAIR TO SHOW TRIXIE A MISSING CLUMP.

TRIXIE: My God! But Mollie, why don't you tell one of the mistresses?

DAISY: They won't get involved in boarding discipline. Kate is our dorm prefect and we have to do what she says.

TRIXIE: But this is not discipline - it's bullying.

DAISY: It's part of the fagging system, Trixie. It happens in all boarding schools. Younger girls do chores for the older ones.

ELLA: Father says it's character building but I think it creates a hierarchy of bullies and victims.

TRIXIE: What's a hierarchy?

ELLA: Never mind. It's a boarding school tradition. It's always happened here and probably always will.

TRIXIE: Not if I can help it. I don't have a father or mother so I have to stand up for myself.

DAISY: Oh, poor Trixie.

TRIXIE: It's alright, Daisy, I'm well cared for by family friends.

MATRON: (*Off*) Are you girls ready for inspection yet?

GIRLS GROAN

MOLLIE: Come on, we'd better tidy our beds. Don't want to be grounded - again!

GIRLS BUSY THEMSELVES WITH TIDYING THEIR BEDS AND CUPBOARDS. MAISIE IDLY PLAYS WITH A SKIPPING ROPE, TWISTING IT AROUND HER FINGERS. SHE IS THE ONLY ONE LOOKING FOH AND SHE GASPS AND FREEZES IN SHOCK WHEN SHE SEES A FIGURE DRESSED IN C17TH COSTUME CROSS FOH.

MAISIE: (*Standing and shaking with fear*) Mollie, Mollie.

MOLLIE: Maisie, what on earth is the matter? You look as if you've seen a ghost.

MAISIE: I have! It ... it it was him. I saw him. I did.

LILY: Who? Who did you see, Maisie?

MAISIE: S... S Sir Toby.

TRIXIE: Who's Sir Toby?

DAISY: Sir Tobias de Witt, a former owner of the house.

TRIXIE: Does he come back to visit?

DAISY: You could say that, Trixie.

LILY: The only thing is, he died in sixteen forty-nine.

TRIXIE GASPS.

DAISY: Lily, there's no need to frighten her!

TRIXIE: You mean he's a g ... g g

LILY: A ghost! That's right, Trixie. Quite harmless though. Most of us have seen him around the school.

TRIXIE: That's horrible!

DAISY: It's alright, Trixie, he doesn't bother us. He seems quite friendly - so far.

TRIXIE: Sixteen forty-nine, you say. I had no idea the house was so old.

DAISY: It's even older than that. The main house dates back to the fifteenth century - that is the chapel and the dorms. Other parts were added later.

MOLLIE: Sir Toby was a royalist and was imprisoned by the round-heads in the civil war. The house was confiscated and the poor man never recovered from the humiliation.

DAISY: This is where the story gets exciting. You see, Sir Toby was a very wealthy man and he knew his days were numbered. Before the round-heads captured the house he hid all his treasure in a very safe place.

TRIXIE: Wow, that's brill!

MOLLIE: The treasure was never found.

TRIXIE: Why didn't someone ask him where it was?

MOLLIE: His health deteriorated and he died in jail.

TRIXIE: What's deteriorated?

DAISY: Never mind that. When the monarchy was restored the house was returned to his family.....

MOLLIE: The only thing left belonging to Sir Toby is this ugly old vase.

SHE PICKS UP A LARGE, UGLY VASE AND HANDS IT TO TRIXIE.

MOLLIE: Be careful, the head will be furious if this gets broken.

DAISY: There used to be a pair but one was destroyed by a fire in a wartime bombing raid.

TRIXIE: That's a great story.

MAISIE: A true story, Trixie.

TRIXIE: But how did the house become a school?

DAISY: The de Witt family died out before 1900 and the building was bought by the school founders, relatives of our present headmistress, Henrietta Trumpington-Trumpington.

MOLLIE: The house has belonged to the Trumpington-Trumpingtons ever since.

TRIXIE: Why are there two Trumpingtons? Why can't she just be Trumpington - singular.

MOLLIE: Because her father was a Hogsworthy-Trumpington and her mother was a distant relative, a Trevelian-Trumpington. They were both proud of their ancestry and wanted to preserve their own family names.

DAISY: Thank goodness it's not Hogsworthy-Trevelian-Trumpington-Trumpington.

ALL LAUGH.

TRIXIE: Well I think this is a really exciting old house and I feel very at home here.

EYEBROWS ARE RAISED AND GLANCES EXCHANGED AT THIS.

TRIXIE: Every old house should have legends and a good ghost story. I want to meet this Sir Toby. I have a few questions I would like to ask him.

SONG 2 HOW DO YOU DO, SIR TOBY. Trixie and Upper Third

Chorus: (first chorus sung by Trixie)

How do you do, Sir Toby, pleased to meet you, Sir Toby,
We would love to come to tea and shake you by the hand.
We're thrilled to meet your ladyship and all the little Tobyships,
How kind to let us visit in your house so grand.

I wonder how you come to live in stately homes so grand,
And how do you get rich and be the highest in the land.
With windows by the hundred and stairways by the score,

You surely need a guide to find the way to your front door.
Just turn left at the drawing room then straight on past the library then
take the staircase on your left and climb two flights then have a rest.
The east wing's down the corridor, the west wing's through the oaken door,
The guest suite's in the north wing if you're lost just give the bell a
ring.

I bet you have a servant's help for every menial chore.
A maid to clean the window panes and one to mop the floor,
The footman cleans your shoes while the butler serves your wine,
The household staff are bustling while you sit in state and dine.
The bed's made by the chamber maid, the supper by the kitchen maid, the
plates cleared by the parlour maid, the washing by the laundry maid.
The butler and the footman and the chauffer and the gardener,
Each does their best to keep you in a life of luxury.

The portraits of your ancestors are hung in every space,
And history is written very clear on every face.
Your pedigree and ancestry are there for all to see,
This shows you are a pillar of the aristocracy.
A bishop and a general, a scholar and an admiral, a surgeon and a scientist
and even a prime minister.
A statesman and an engineer, a cardinal, a buccaneer,
Indeed you are a gentleman, the finest in the land.

ENTER MATRON, IN A FURIOUS MOOD.

MATRON: INSPECTION!

BLACKOUT

ACT 1 SCENE 2, The School Chapel

THE PUPILS ARE FILING IN FOR ASSEMBLY. AN ELDERLY
MISTRESS PLAYS QUIET MUSIC ON THE ORGAN AS THEY ENTER. ON
A RAISED PLATFORM STAND THE TEACHERS AND THE HEAD,
DRESSED IN GOWNS AND MORTAR BOARDS AND GLARING AT THE
PUPILS AS THEY ENTER. MOST ARE BEING WELL-BEHAVED BUT A
FEW NAUGHTY GIRLS ARE TRIPPING ONE-ANOTHER UP AND
GENERALLY CAUSING A FUSS. A GLARE FROM THE HEAD
TEMPORARILY PUTS A STOP TO THIS.

HEAD: Good evening St Tabitha's.

ALL: (*Chanting*) Good evening Miss Trumpington-Trumpington...

ELLA: Trumpington....

MOLLIE: Trumpington...

HEAD: Two Trumpingtons will suffice, thank you, girls....

TRIXIE: (*Whispered, to Lily*) What does suffice mean?

HEAD: Silence!

TRIXIE VISIBLY STARTS!

HEAD: We will now sing the school hymn. Mrs Rustington, the introduction if you please.

SONG 3 THE SCHOOL HYMN, AD ASTRA PER LABOREM

Through many dangers, toil and woe,
We struggle on against the foe,
Our heads held high, with heart and soul
Marching onward to our goal.
Never flinching never wav'ring, moving mountains on our way
Lend us courage as we go *ad astra per laborem*.

If e'er our hearts grow faint with strife,
As we struggle 'gainst the tide of life,
We'll persevere with jaw set firm,
Marching on 'til end of term,
Never flinching never wav'ring, moving mountains on our way
Lend us courage as we go *ad astra per laborem*.

St Tabitha's march with flag unfurled
To light a beacon in the world,
On every map you'll find our name
Far and wide will spread our fame.
Never flinching never wav'ring, moving mountains on our way
Lend us courage as we go *ad astra per laborem*.

HEAD: Be seated, school.

ALL SIT, RATHER NOISILY.

HEAD: *(Clearing her throat)* Now girls, it has come to my attention that some of you are spreading silly stories about a school ghost.

THERE IS A MURMER OF ASTONISHMENT.

HEAD: Well this nonsense must stop NOW! As you very well know, there are no such things as ghosts - and as you also know some of the new Lower Third girls are of a somewhat nervous disposition.

TRIXIE: *(Whispered)* What's disposition?

MOLLIE: Shush, Trixie.

HEAD: Silence in the Upper Third, or you will all be punished.

UPPER THIRDS ALL TURN AND GLARE AT TRIXIE.

HEAD: I have no wish to be in receipt of letters from anxious parents complaining that their off-spring have been frightened out of their wits. Any girl found propagating this rumour will be suspended. Now, are there any questions?

THERE IS A SLIGHT BUZZ OF SOUND.

HEAD: Good. Now, Miss Broome has an exciting announcement.

THERE IS A MURMUR OF INTEREST.

MISS BROOME STANDS AND THE HEAD SITS.

MISS BROOME: As some of you may know, the boys' school, Trinity Towers, has been severely damaged by the recent violent storms. I believe some of you have siblings studying there.

TRIXIE GOES TO SPEAK BUT MOLLIE ANTICIPATES THIS AND TURNS TO TRIXIE.

MOLLIE: Brothers, Trixie.

MISS BROOME: Regrettably, Trinity Towers has had to close for the rest of the term in order that repairs be carried out.

STIFLED LAUGHTER FROM SOME OF THE GIRLS.

MISS BROOME: However, in the true spirit of St Tabitha's we

have come to the rescue.

A BURST OF NOISE.

MISS BROOME: QUIETEN DOWN girls, if you please.

CALM DESCENDS

MISS BROOME: Our most generous head, Miss Trumpington-Trumpington.....

MAISIE: Trumpington

LILY: Trumpington

MISS BROOME GLARES AT THE UPPER THIRD.

MISS BROOME: has invited the boys and their teacher, Mr Pinney, to share our premises.

UPROAR. THE STAFF ATTEMPT TO QUIETEN THE GIRLS BUT CANNOT MAKE THEMSELVES HEARD ABOVE THE DIN AND GESTURES ARE NOT SUFFICIENT. SUDDENLY, THE HEAD PICKS UP A CANE AND RAPS ON THE LECTERN. THE NOISE SUBSIDES.

HEAD: I have no wish to use this cane on anything softer than this wood but if you persevere with this display of bad manners I shall have no choice but to make an example of one of you.

TRIXIE: She wouldn't, would she?

DAISY: She certainly would.

SEVERAL GIRLS MUTTER UNDER THEIR BREATH.

HEAD: Miss Broome, continue, if you please.

MISS BROOME: The boys shall sleep in the old stable block and shall take their lessons in the games room. For the time being, games will be suspended.

UPROAR FOLLOWS. SHOUTS OF OUTRAGE. THE HEAD LIFTS THE CANE AND BRINGS IT SWIFTLY DOWN ONTO THE LECTERN WITH A SWISH.

TRIXIE: It's not fair!

THE HEAD'S GAZE FOCUSES ON TRIXIE.

HEAD: Trixie Pilkington-Witherspoon, how dare you disrupt my assembly. You shall report to me in my study after supper. *(Brandishing the cane and tapping the palm of her hand with it)* And don't say you were not warned.

DAISY: Please, Miss, it wasn't Trixie, it was me.

HEAD: You mean it was *I*, Daisy Potherington-Twaddle. Has Miss Widdecombe not yet made a breakthrough in her attempts to teach you the niceties of English Grammar?

DAISY: It was I, Miss Trumpington-Trumpington...

LILY IS ABOUT TO ADD ANOTHER TRUMPINGTON BUT MOLLIE YANKS HER PONY-TAIL AS A PREVENTATIVE MEASURE. LILY HOLDS HER HEAD IN PAIN AND GLARES AT MOLLIE.

HEAD: Well, Daisy, I am pleased that there is still some honour in the Upper Third. You shall both report to me after supper. Two examples are better than one.

THERE IS A VERY SLIGHT MURMUR. MR PINNEY APPEARS AT THE DOOR.

HEAD: Ah, Mr Pinney, we are ready for you now. The girls are delighted to hear we shall be welcoming you and the boys this term.

MR PINNEY: Thank you, Miss Trumpington.

HEAD: Trumpington.

MR PINNEY: *(Looking confused)* Mrs Trumpington.

HEAD: No, it's Miss Trumpington-Trumpington

MR PINNEY: I beg your pardon, Miss Trumpington-Trumpington

MOLLIE: Trumpington

ENTER THE BOYS IN A LONG DISCIPLINED LINE AND TAKE THEIR PLACES DOWNSTAGE OF THE GIRLS. AS THEY ENTER, THE GHOST OF SIR TOBY GLIDES ACROSS UPSTAGE AND IS SEEN BY ALL THE PUPILS BUT NONE OF THE TEACHERS. THERE IS A BURST OF ACTIVITY AND A NUMBER OF GIRLS POINT AT THE APPARITION. ELLA JUMPS UP AND PUTS UP HER HAND.

ELLA: Miss, Miss, look there, it's...

MOLLIE PUNCHES ELLA IN THE STOMACH AND EFFECTIVELY
SILENCES HER. ELLA DOUBLES UP IN PAIN.

MOLLIE: *(Between her teeth)* Don't be stupid, Ella, you'll
get yourself suspended.

HEAD: Ella Butterworth, you have something to say?
Though I doubt it will be of any consequence.

TRIXIE: What's consequence?

MOLLIE: Sh, Trixie!

ELLA: I, I, *(struggling with the pain, which has made her
double up)* I, I,

HEAD: Hurry up, young lady, we haven't all day.

ELLA: I, I need the toilet.

HEAD: Then you shall practice self-control and wait until
assembly has finished.

ELLA GROANS AND SINKS TO THE FLOOR. SHE IS HELPED TO HER
FEET BY DAISY AND MAISIE.

HEAD: Now girls, we expect you to give the boys a good St
Tabitha's welcome. Make them feel at home here. Do I make
myself understood.

GIRLS: Yes, Miss Trumpington-Trumpington...

A FLURRY OF DIMINUENDOING TRUMPINGTONS FOLLOWS AND IS MET
BY GLARES FROM ALL THE TEACHERS.

HEAD: And don't forget our little chat about the ridiculous
rumours, girls. And I am looking at the Upper Third in
particular. All stand! Good Evening St Tabitha's.

SHE SWEEPS OUT FOLLOWED BY THE OTHER TEACHERS WITH MR
PINNEY FOLLOWING, LOOKING BEMUSED.

ALL: Good evening Miss Trumpington-Trumpington.

A FEW EXTRA TRUMPINGTONS FOLLOW. THE OLDER GIRLS FILE OUT FIRST. AS KATE PASSES THE UPPER THIRD SHE KICKS EACH ONE IN THE SHINS. CLARISSA FOLLOWS SUIT, ALBEIT WITH RATHER APOLOGETIC KICKS. THE BOYS FILE OUT NEXT, ALTHOUGH TWO OF THEM HAVE HIDDEN IN THE PULPIT. THE UPPER THIRD JEER AS THEY PASS AND THE BOYS NERVOUSLY QUICKEN THEIR PACE TO AVOID CAPTURE.

LILY: What strange creatures. Do you think they speak English?

MAISIE: They look as if they only wash once a year.

MOLLIE: You're acting as if you've never seen a boy before.

MAISIE: We've never seen one this small. Only the bigger ones, the sort that bully us.

TRIXIE: Daisy, why did you own up to something you didn't do?

DAISY: I was sticking up for you, Trixie. That's what friends are for, you know.

TRIXIE: That's jolly decent of you, Daisy. I... I.... I've never had a real friend before.

LILY: Well that idea backfired! Now you'll both be whacked.

DAISY: Do you think she really will cane us, Mollie?

MOLLIE: I have no doubt, Daisy. She has no scruples. Just make sure she records it in the punishment book - otherwise it's not legal.

MAISIE: But she writes it in Greek. How are we supposed to know what it says?

LILY: Learn Greek - and put a copy of the school mag down your knickers. It'll soften the blow.

ELLA: I think we got the old trumpet really flustered. She actually forgot to make us sing another hymn at the end as we always do.

MOLLIE: Well never mind, we'll sing one now.

TRIXIE: Oh no, Molly....

MOLLIE: The Upper Third's own version of the school hymn.
Ella, you play the organ.

ELLA: I'd be honoured Miss Aherne.

LILY: (*Spoken like a cough*) Aherne-Aherne.

REPRISE SONG 3 THE SCHOOL HYMN AS REVISED BY THE UPPER THIRD.

We hope and pray with fingers crossed
Our teachers will catch a deadly pox.
We'll tuck them up into their beds,
Hold their hands until they're dead.
Prayers we'll shout and hymns we'll shriek to speed them on their
way to hell,
Running riot round the school, the Upper Third will rule.

UPPER THIRDS EXIT RAUCOUSLY, MIMING THE WHACKING WHICH IS
ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE. TRISTAN AND PETER CREEP OUT OF THEIR
HIDING PLACE AND LOOK TO SEE THAT THE COAST IS CLEAR.

PETER: I say Tristan, these girls are awfully rude. I heard
one say knickers.

TRISTAN: That's nothing, Peter, you should hear my sister at
home talking to her friends. That one with the sippy hair was
my sister, Daisy. Sippy name and sippy hair. They talk about
kissing boys - and.... and....cuddling them.

PETER: That's gross. How can you listen to that stuff?

TRISTAN: I suppose we have to get accustomed to them sometime.
After all, we might marry one someday.

PETER: Marry a girl? Not on your life. I would rather marry
one of my father's prize sows.

TRISTAN: Not that different really.

PETER: My big sister is dating a boy.

TRISTAN: No!

PETER: Yes, really! Father would be furious if he found out.
He's a dairy-man on the next farm.

TRISTAN: A dairy-man. What a disgrace!

PETER: Hey, can you keep a secret?

TRISTAN: Of course I can. I'm your best friend, aren't I?

PETER: I actually saw them kissing one day in the barn.

TRISTAN: Yuk, that's awfully unhygienic! They might catch germs.

PETER: I say, we'd better catch up with the others. Old Pinney will be furious if he does a head-count and finds us missing.

TRISTAN: Pinney will be furious anyway. He just loves being furious - it's how he passes the time of day.

PETER: *(As he exits)* Even so, there are degrees of furiousness. I don't want to risk the third degree.

TRISTAN: Perhaps you're right. But after supper we can spy on the girls in their dorm. *(Exits)*

PETER: *(Off)* Not if they start talking about boys. Positively puerile!

End of Scene