

# Down Stepney Way

A Musical Play

by David Barrett

Additional lyrics by Mac Brown

### **The Eastenders:**

Tommy Duckett	
Alfie Tapp	
Bill Garnett	landlord of the bull
Harry Wilmot	Jessie's boyfriend
Ted Duckett	Tommy and Alice's dad
Ethel Duckett	his wife
Jessica	Harry's girl
Annie	
Alice Duckett	Tommy's sister
Molly	A friend of Alice and Mary
Sidney	Molly's little brother
Mary Penny	Alice's best friend
Frank	regular soldier, Alice's boyfriend
Dick Robinson	A spiv
Arthur Robinson	A spiv, Dick's brother
Mrs Riley	runs day centre, a former market trader
Old Mother Brown	cockney matron
George Witherspoon	A cockney rogue

### **The Westenders:**

Earl of Gresham	William's father
Lady Gresham	William's mother
Lord William	Heir to the title
The Hon. Edward	His brother
Charles Rotherfield	A rich banker's son
Percival Molyneux	William's naive cousin
Horatio Clarendon	A friend of the family
Lady Sofia	William's sister
Emma Copperfield	Sofia's friend
Maria Sackville	Ugly, snooty cow. engaged to William
Antoinette, Genevieve, Elizabeth, Charity Sykes Roberts	Sofia and Emma's friends Manservant at the Carlton Club Butler

Policeman  
Producer  
2 Talent Scouts  
3 Comedians  
Member in the club  
Major Potter  
Voice in the Street  
Maurice  
Pierre  
Maitre D

## Act I, Scene 1 In the market in Stepney Way

### SONG 1 Down Stepney Way CD1 Track 1

Down the East End on a Friday night with all me mates,  
We love East London, we have so much fun it drives us crazy.  
Standing on the corner, eyeing the girls,  
Bowling down the high street without a care, 'cos  
Dear old Stepney, that's the place I love to be.

Second part:

Boom, boom, boom, boom etc (for 8 bars) Strolling down the streets of Stepney.  
Boom, boom, boom, boom etc (for 8 bars) Strolling down the streets of Stepney.

First part:

Walking the beat, down Stepney way,  
Life is a treat, down Stepney Way,  
Whistling a tune, under the moon as I go strolling down the streets of Stepney.

See an old dame across the street,  
See an old flame I'd like to meet,  
Waltzing along, singing a song as I go strolling down the streets of Stepney.

And if you're down, when life gets tough,  
You're luck's run out, you've had enough,  
With all your woes, you're not alone when you go strolling down the streets of Stepney.

And when the bailiffs come around,  
Don't hide your face and go to ground,  
Just bowl along and join our song as we go strolling down the streets of Stepney.

Down the arches cuddling with a luvverly gal by moonlight,  
Down our local, you can 'ear us sing from Clapham Common,  
We're the sort of folks you'd trust with your life,  
If you've got some nouse you'll lock up your wife. Oi!  
Dear old Stepney, that's the place I love to be.

*During the song a small boy repeatedly steals vegetables from the market stalls. At the end of the song he is spotted by a stallholder who calls for the policeman, who was in the song.*

MRS RILEY (*Blowing a whistle*) Oi, stop, thief! Stop that boy, won't you!

OTHERS Thief, stop thief! (*and other exclamations.*)  
(*Tommy leaps up athletically from a squatting position and apprehends the offender by his braces. The boy struggles wildly.*)

SIDNEY Get off me you brute, I'll have the law on yer, yer bully.  
(*Much laughter from the crowd. Mrs Riley catches up, out of breath.*)

MRS RILEY Yer little hooligan, what do you think you're doing, pinchin' them veggies.  
(*Pulls Sidney's ear*)

SIDNEY What veggies? (*The vegetables fall to the ground from under his shirt*)  
I'm sorry, Misses, yer see, we ain't got nuffink to eat in our 'ouse, we're that

skint. I ain't 'ad no meat since nineteen thirty-eight. Me an' me sister Molly an' me Gran an' me Mam. Me dad's gawn an' joined the blinkin' army ain't he, me mum says just to spite 'er an' all .....

*(All this is becoming more and more breathless.)*

TOMMY All right little man, we're not gonna 'urt yer...we're yer friends 'ere.

SIDNEY She ain't no friend of mine, she ain't.

*(Points at Mrs Riley and scowls.)*

TOMMY She ain't gonna call a copper. 'Ave no fear.

MRS RILEY No? Says who?

TOMMY Says I, Tommy Ducket, and y'ain't gonna argue with me are yer, Mrs Riley?

*(Turning to Sidney.)*

Yer see, she's a good sort Mrs Riley - got an 'eart of gold - 'er bark's worse'n 'er bite - really.

*(Sidney looks unconvinced. Mrs Riley barks and makes as if to bite him. He runs around behind Tommy for cover.)*

The truth is sunshine, she's known yer muvver since she was in nappies and she's known me since I cut me first tooth....

ALFIE Fact is mate, she knows every living soul in this part of London, there ain't nuffink goes on 'ere without Mrs Riley knowing. Ain't that right Mrs R?

MRS RILEY Too right Alfie me boy, too right. I see me reputation goes before me.

*(She shrugs and goes back to her shopping at the stall.)*

SIDNEY But Tommy, if you ain't stepped in she'd 'ave called a copper, I know she would've.

TOMMY *(Putting his arm around Sidney.)*

No chance... she just wanted to teach you a lesson that's all.

ALFIE That one'll go down in the cockney hall of fame, she will, yer can bet yer life on it.

*(Molly, Alice and Mary come out of the crowd)*

MOLLY 'Ere, what's this? Getting yourself into trouble again. *(Grabs Sidney's ear.)*

SIDNEY Aah, let go of me you stupid cow!

ALFIE Lay off of 'im Molly 'e ain't done no 'arm.

MOLLY Nah? Well, we'll see what our old man 'as to say about this. He's comin' 'ome on leave today.

*(Molly drags Sidney off moaning.)*

TOMMY Go with her Alice, make her see sense, won't yer.

ALICE Sure, Tommy, I'll do me best. *(She follows Molly off.)*

TOMMY That's my little sister, always lookin' out for others is Alice.

ALFIE Hold on a mo' look who's 'ere, them fly be nights Dick and Arthur Robinson. You can bet them spivs're up to no good, They can smell trouble ten mile off.

*(Enter Arthur and Dick Robinson, the local spivs. They put a suitcase they are carrying onto an empty stall, open it and begin to make a display of their merchandise. The girls gasp as they see perfume, stockings etc.)*

DICK Top of the morning to you ladies and gents. Say, what're you all so miserable about. Look, you'll cheer up when you see what we've got to offer.

MARY We ain't gonna buy your hot property, we don't wanna get done for 'andling.  
ARTHUR *(Acting la-di-da.)* My goodness me did you hear that Richard? I believe this lady's accusing us of impropriety.

DICK Accusing? Two honest fellows such as ourselves? *(Changes his tone.)*

You've got a cheek you 'ave. Mary, Mary quite contrary. You hypocrite!

ARTHUR *(Closing in.)* Little Miss Righteous! *(Lifts her skirt slightly.)* Well what have we here? Nylons? Get these at Woolworths did we? These look just like the

ones we recently ....acquired from the States. (*They circle around her.*)

DICK And what a lovely ring. Is it new? These things are 'ard to come by in wartime yer know. And, well I never, I recognise that scent; definitely from across the channel. (*Arthur mockingly takes a long sniff. Pretends to faint.*)

ARTHUR From gaie Paris, if I'm not mistaken.  
(*Mary is becoming more and more upset and is, by now, close to tears.*)

MARY So what! A girl's gotta make herself respectable ain't she? Even in times like these. I don't wanna be left on the shelf like me Aunt Florence. Proper old spinster she is and she's only thirty-five. (*Starts to cry.*)  
(*Alfie puts his arm around her but she shrugs him off and retreats, snuffling.*)

ALFIE Just leave the girl alone you rogues; stop pickin' on 'er.

DICK We was just makin' a point, me old china. We provide a service and you folks benefit. That way everyone's happy.

ALFIE And I ain't your old china, so don't call me that. I'm careful how I choose me friends.

DICK Have it your way, suits me fine. Come on Arthur, business calls.  
(*Goes to his stall and starts his sales talk to some girls, who crowd around. Holds up ear-rings, negligees etc.*  
*Enter Harry with Jessie on his arm and Frank following with Alice in tow. Frank is dressed in the uniform of a private*)

TOMMY Watcher me old tin plates. Harry, how yer been doin', Ain't seen yer for yonks.

HARRY Oh, I ain't doin' so bad. Been workin' the night shift at the East India docks. Been a whole lot of containers in for unloading this last week  
(*Looking at Robinson's stall.*) Well can you believe it?

JESSIE Believe what 'Arry? What is it?

HARRY There ain't no market stall in the whole of the East End wiv' nylons on offer. In fact there's been only one shipment of 'em in the last two months.

JESSIE Well, what of it?

HARRY Well, 'ow comes them Robinson boys 'as got nylons on their stall.

ALICE P'raps they bought 'em, legit like.

HARRY P'raps Jessie here is the next queen of England. (*Jessie looks smug.*)  
You of yer rocker, Alice? They're alf inched ain't they. Ain't you lot twigged that yet. (*They stare in silence like naughty school children.*)  
That's the trouble with war.....it brings out the worst in people. Look at you lot: East Enders, the most kindest-'eartedest, most generous peoples in the 'ole world. Do anyfink for anybody yer would. (*Alice starts to sniffle.*  
*The market quietens as people listen to Harry.*)  
But war changes people ... brings out the worst in 'em. Take them Robinsons for example; why ain't they fighting for England like our Frank 'ere?  
I'll tell yer why not, 'cos there ain't no money in it that's why. What's 'appened to yer cockney spirit ..... you've lost it, all of you. You're Jack Frost.  
(*Silence.*)

TOMMY Yer know somefink 'Arry? I fink you're right. We all need to lighten up and loosen up. So there's a war on. So what? We Londoners ain't never let little things like wars get us down before. We saw off old Boney at Waterloo and Kaiser Bill was no match for us. And why not? We 'ad cockney spirit! That's why not! We gotta rediscover the old cockney spirit.

ANNIE Me old man says Cockney spirit can be found in a clear round bottle.

ALFIE Wrong sort of spirit, Annie. We mean that esoteric, abstract, ephemeral state-an aura of camaraderie and bonhomie!

JESSIE Don't know about an ephemeral state, sounds like an inebriated state to me.

FRANK Elephant's trunk, yer mean!

TOMMY *(Emphatically)* Got it!

ANNIE What've yer got, Tommy.

TOMMY The Bull, of course. The Bull Tavern. Where's old Bill, Bill Garnet, the landlord.

ALICE He's over there at Mrs Riley's stall, repairing her canvas awning, but what's up Tommy, won't yer tell us?  
*(They all call Bill over.)*

BILL Well, well you are excitable, you kids. What can I do for you: an engagement party, a stag night, candlelit dinner for two, a wedding reception?

MARY Ooh yes, can I have all four please, but not necessarily in that order!

ALICE Shut up Mary, this is serious.

TOMMY 'Ow long 'ave you been landlord, at the Bull Tavern?

BILL Let me see now: I left Mile End in nineteen, spent four years in the army so twenty-three, I think. Yes, that'd be right. I came 'ere in nineteen twenty-three.

TOMMY And Thursday nights, Bill, tell us about Thursday nights.

BILL Thursdays was always the night for a sing-a-long. All the local folk would meet for a knees up and a ding-dong at the Bull.

ALFIE I got yer, Tommy. You think we should revive the old tradition, for the sake of morale. Brilliant idea, I think we should.  
*(All chip in with comments of approval.)*

TOMMY Well that's it settled then. Thursday night it is....if that's alright with you Mr Garnett.

BILL Young man, it will be my pleasure... *(aside)* and very good for business.  
*(All cheer then slowly drift back to their business in the market.)*

ALICE But Tommy, you've forgotten the A.F.S. training; that's on Thursdays isn't it?  
*(Tommy doesn't hear.)*

FRANK Don't worry Alice; Tommy's training finishes at eight, we'll start the ding-dong at eight-thirty.  
*(Mary has been listening in and interrupts.)*

MARY What's all this, training? A.F.S.?

ANNIE Sounds like Tommy's training to be a secret agent.

FRANK Don't be melodramatic, Annie. A.F.S. stands for Auxiliary Fire Service. Alfie and Tommy have been training for months now as volunteer firemen. Soon they'll be allowed out on calls.

ANNIE Cor, Frank, that sounds exciting. Do they get to wear a uniform?

FRANK Well, yes, I suppose they do.

TOMMY What's this, Frank, are you broadcasting our war effort to the world?

ALFIE Well, just you remember, young Annie, that this job may not turn out to be as glamorous as you think. We've been used to a quiet life in this 'phoney war' ain't we. Well, I have a hunch things are about to change around here.

TOMMY Those idiots in bomber command really screwed things up for us in August.

ANNIE What happened? Was it someone's birthday?

ALICE Don't be daft, Annie. You're not stupid, surely you remember them Gerry bombs, they made enough noise.

ANNIE Oh my Gawd, you mean....

ALICE That's right, August 25th, the British bombing raid on Berlin, in retaliation for a accidental Nazi raid on the East End. Nothin' like stirring up a hornets' nest.

ALFIE The men from the ministry say that was just the beginning. Here in Stepney we are so close to the docks that we are bound to have a rough ride.

ANNIE        Oh, Tommy, I don't ever want anything to happen to you.  
TOMMY        Don't you worry your silly head, princess, we'll be just fine.  
                  (*Gives her a hug. Slight embarrassed pause.*)  
                  Well come on then, we've got plans to make if we are to be ready for the  
                  Thursday ding-dong. We can't stand around rabbiting all day.  
ALFIE        Come on girls and boys, let's get this market place cleared up.

**Reprise Song 1, Verse 4**

CD1 Track 14

Down the arches cuddling with a louverly gal by moonlight,  
Down our local, you can 'ear us sing from Clapham Common,  
We're the sort of folks you'd trust with your life,  
If you've got some nouse you'll lock up your wife. Oi!  
Dear old Stepney, that's the place I love to be.

*End of scene*

## Scene 2, 157 Cable Street, Stepney, Wed Sept 4th. The Duckets' Parlour

*Alice is pacing up and down the room nervously. She continually goes to look out of the window. Enter Mrs Ducket.*

MRS D Don't you worry ducks, Frank'll be here soon, he said he'd come to tea didn't he? And he ain't one to break his word.

ALICE I know Mum, but he's been acting kind of strange lately, not himself at all. I keep thinking he's about to tell me something but then he just goes all quiet and stares.

MRS D That's just wartime for you love, it affects some men that way. Nothing seems permanent, you know. You just have to take each day as it comes and enjoy peoples' company while it lasts.

ALICE Oh Mum, don't talk like that, it sounds like we're all going to die.  
*(Door-bell rings.)*

MRS D That'll be Frank now, you'll see. And cheer up luvvy, you mustn't be all melancholy the first time a boy comes to tea, you know.  
*(Mrs Ducket goes to answer the door and Alice wipes away her tears. Enter Frank and Mrs Ducket.)*

MRS D Ooh Alice, don't he look smart in his uniform. I do like a handsome young man in uniform you know.

*(Alice shifts uncomfortably in her chair.)*

*(Sugary)* Do sit down Frank you know you're very welcome in the Ducket house.  
*(She gives a cheesy grin.)*

*(Frank sits in the chair he is offered. Mrs D sits down next to him.)*

ALICE *(Coyly and softly)* We were worried, Frank. We thought you might not come.

FRANK Look, I'm really sorry I'm late but we were called back to barracks for a special briefing.

MRS D *(Butting in)* Ooh, how exciting! Are you going to be seeing action again soon?

ALICE **Mother!** Please don't talk like that. Haven't you got any sewing you should be getting on with .....**or anything like that!**

MRS D Well, as a matter of fact.... oh, I see...how silly of me. I suppose you two would like to be alone for a while.

ALICE Yes, Mother, **PLEASE!**

MRS D Well, I'll just go and get on with some sewing or something.

ALICE Thank you Mother. *(Frank stands as she leaves the room.)*

MRS D *(Lingering)* I'll just be in the scullery dear, if you need me.

ALICE MOTHER, he's not going to molest me, you know, and I am a big girl now!  
*(Mrs D exits with her nose in the air.)*

FRANK Oh Alice, I can't tell you how much I miss you when I'm confined to barracks.

ALICE You do, Frank? Well I miss you too. I hardly ever get the chance to speak to you without the others being around.

FRANK Yes, I know how you feel. Much as I appreciate their company, a fella likes to be alone with his gal once in a while.

ALICE Oh, Frank. Is that how you think of me, as your gal?

FRANK Why, yes, you're not offended are you? I mean, I meant it as a compliment.

ALICE How could I be offended, Frank. I'm really flattered.  
*(Frank takes Alice's hands across the table.)*

FRANK Alice...

ALICE Yes, Frank.

FRANK There's something rather important I've been trying to say to you.

(*Silence!*)

ALICE Well go on then. You can be frank with me. Oh, how silly of me; you are Frank. (*She giggles.*)  
(*The door opens slowly and they freeze as Mrs Duckett enters.*)

MRS D Pardon my intrusion, children, but would you like some tea.

FRANK (*Half standing*) Why thank you, Mrs Duckett, that would be lovely.  
(*Mrs Duckett exits very slowly hoping to catch the conversation.*)

MRS D Right then, there's some in the pot.....I'll go and pour it now shall I? (*Exits slowly. Alice stares at Frank expectantly.*)

FRANK The thing is Alice, and I'm not supposed to tell anyone this, that my battalion is being recalled to barracks and we're obviously being prepared to fight again.  
(*Alice looks crestfallen as she was expecting a proposal.*)  
It's tomorrow, Alice, tomorrow. And once recalled we are not allowed to communicate with anyone outside our unit.  
(*Alice starts to cry.*)  
Try not to take it so hard, sweetheart, I may not be away so long.

ALICE But you might get yourself killed. I might never see you again!

FRANK I'll write to you, Alice, every day. I promise I will. And I'll try to look out for the bullet with my name on.

ALICE Frank! Before you go. There's something that I've been meaning to say to you, but finding the right words is not easy.

FRANK You don't need words to say it, Alice. I know how you feel about me.

ALICE But I want to say it. I want to tell you myself. Now, while I have the chance. I, I mean...while we are alone.....(*Their eyes meet.*)  
*Across the table Frank sees the door begin to open and Alice senses this and turns to look. As Mrs D enters, Alice, with her back to her mother, silently mouths the words, "I love you".*)

MRS D (*Seeing that her entrance has been noticed*) Tea's up Duckies.

FRANK (*Jumping up.*) Thank you Mrs Duckett. Thank you very much. (*She pours.*)

MRS D (*Sees Alice wiping away tears.*) What's the matter sweetheart, he ain't proposed to you 'as 'e?  
(*Alice storms off, crying loudly.*)  
Ooh Gawd, what's wrong wiv 'er? Was it something I said?

FRANK You could say that Mrs Duckett. You see, the thing is that I will be seeing action very soon and Alice fears for my safety.

MRS D Don't you worry yerself about her luvvy, she'll soon get over it. There's plenty of other pebbles on the beach (*realising what she has said*) not that I think you'll get killed or nothing!

FRANK Look, it's getting late; it's time I got back to barracks.

MRS D But, but... (*tries to speak but cannot find the right words.*)

FRANK Thanks for the tea, Mrs Duckett, I'll let myself out.  
*Mrs D sinks into a chair and bangs her head with her fist. She freezes as light dims on the parlour and picks out Alice who re-enters for the song.*)

1 Why should life be a tangled web;  
A paradox of fate?  
I've lived this moment in many a dream  
It never should have turned out quite this way.

My happiest hour has become my worst  
It passed in the twinkling of an eye.  
Could he perceive my unspoken words?  
Please let this pain grow less as time goes by.

2 *(more animated)*  
We'd walk at night through moonlit groves  
And gaze at bubbling streams.  
He'd hold my hand as time stood still,  
He'd share the magic moments of my dreams.

He'd share my laughter and dry my tears  
And know the secrets of my heart.  
We'd both grow old in company  
Till death drew nigh and tore us both apart.

3 War spoils the best laid plans of men  
In cruel twists of fate.  
And no-one dares say what might have been  
In a world that's full of so much love and hate.

No-one can steal all my hopes and dreams  
I'll wait and love another day.  
If Frank could just know the way that I feel  
He'd not let war or distance keep him away.

MRS D     *(Light x-fades to parlour. There is loud knocking at the door)*  
Alright, alright, keep yer 'air on I'm comin', give an old woman a chance, won't yer.  
*(She exits and noises are heard off of Tommy, Ted, his father, and Alfie entering. All four enter the parlour.)*

MR D     Right now boys, give us the tape and we'll start with this window 'ere.

MRS D     Oi, what d'yer fink you're doin' Ted Ducket, I've just cleaned them winders. I ain't gonna stand 'ere and watch you dirty them again.

ALFIE     Steady on Mrs Ducket, Ted knows what he's doin', he **is** an A.R.P. warden, after all.

MRS D     ARP, my armpit! What does the ARP ever do for me. 'Put that light out, Mrs Ducket, check your blackout, Mrs Ducket, three bags full, Mrs Ducket.' Forget the blackout, a black-eye's what they'll be getting from me.

TOMMY     You mustn't get yourself so stewed up Mum, it's bad for your blood pressure,

You'll have one of your funny turns again.

MRS D Funny turns, my elbow!

MR D Let's put it this way, Ethel: If a bomb falls in the street, would you rather be maimed by flying glass or keep your windows intact with tape, eh?

MRS D Have it your way, Ted Ducket.  
*(Stomps over to pick up her knitting and begins to knit furiously. Ted and Alfie tape the window.)*

TOMMY Mother! *(in a childish sort of tone)*

MRS D Oh 'ere we go... 'e's got that mother *(mimics his tone)* voice on. What's 'e want now?

TOMMY It's just that Alfie and I had this little idea.

MRS D Oh no! Not another of your mad schemes. Look what happened the last time. You and Alfie had this bright idea of setting up a winder cleaning business. Winder cleaners, my knee-cap! Window breakers more like it.

TOMMY Mum, that's unfair. How were we to know Mrs Grimes had polished her patio. The ladder swept clean out from under me feet.

ALFIE It'll be different this time Mrs D, we promise. *(She snorts.)*

MRS D You remember my old man, don't you; he was quite big in the music hall.

MRS D Ah, the music hall. Now you're speaking my lingo. Them was the good old days and no mistaking. I remember seeing your father at the Empire, Hackney. 'E was good 'e was. DARN good. Second on the bill once, behind Tommy Trinder.  
*(She goes all starry-eyed and stares into space.)*

ALFIE Well, you see, we want to revive the old tradition and start a Thursday ding-dong at the Bull. That's how me old man started in music hall.  
*(Mrs Ducket still stares into space.)*

Mrs D! MRS DUCKET!  
*(She comes down to earth.)*

MRS D What's that love?

ALFIE I said we want to revive the old ding-dong.

MRS D *(Looking at Ted)* How dare you? Oh, I see what you mean. Well, I think it's a wonderful idea, don't you, Ted?

MR D Yes, dear, if you say so. When do you start lads?

TOMMY As soon as possible, maybe next week.

MRS D Well the best of British to you.

TOMMY We thought we'd start with the old ventriloquist dummy routine.

MR D Which one's that then?

ALFIE You remember it surely, it starts like this....  
Ladies and Gentlemen, an undertaker's lot is truly not an 'appy one. Meet our friends, Bert and Archie Brown, the finest undertakers this side of the ... the...  
Come on Tommy, help me can you, I can't remember the lines.

TOMMY Oh all right, Alfie. Let's go straight into the song. Here, put the jacket on.

*In this song Tommy plays the part of a music hall ventriloquist and Alfie plays the dummy, dressed in top hat and tails. Others enter to join in chorus and act out the story, dressed as undertakers.*

**SONG 3      Tours of London Town, Alfie and Tommy    CD1 Track 3**

Verse 1:

If you would like a lightning tour of dear old London town,  
You could do worse than go by hearse with Bert and Archie Brown.  
By day we do a roaring trade in silk-lined wooden box,  
At night our famous guided tour starts by St Cath'rine's docks.

Chorus:

So, squeaky clean, chrome's bright sheen, black upholstery, the best in town.  
One in front, two behind, one in the back lying down.  
Our comment'ry's performed with dignity just like the bishop's finest eulogy.  
You won't see much but pigeons and the tower,  
'Cos we only do five miles an hour.

Verse 2:

The chimney sweeps in Camden Town doff hats as we drive by,  
They're black as soot from head to foot their faces to the sky.  
The brewer's horse and cart pass by and he applies the brake,  
A fallen barrel won't be missed to toast the yeoman's wake.

Verse 3:

The buskers down at Seven Dials have nothing in their hat,  
Their double bass is out of tune, their trombone's sounding flat.  
The pickpockets down Petticoat Lane are getting rich quite quick.  
So sew your wallet in your coat before you take the trip.

Verse 4:

So, come and treat your grandma to the sights of London town  
Just tuck her nicely in the back; she's better lying down.  
And if before the tour returns the old girl should pass away.  
The funeral will be half price, we'll do it the next day.

- MR D            Bravo boys! well done! With a bit of practice, that'll bring the house down.  
MRS D        Well, don't just stand there gawping, go and get rehearsing. You certainly need  
                  the practice!  
TOMMY        You're right, Mum, we've got a lot of work to do. Come on Alfie, we can  
                  try the whole routine in the hall.  
                  *(Pushes Alfie off in front of him. Silence except for the clicking of needles!)*  
MRS D        Well I never, Ted Ducket. Who'd have ever thought our Tommy would turn  
                  our 'ouse into a music hall?

**BLACKOUT**

Incidental Music CD2 Track 1

### Scene 3, The Smoking Room of the Carlton Club, Belgravia, that same evening.

*Several gentlemen are sitting quietly reading their papers and two are playing cards sedately. Enter William, Edward and Percival, rather noisily, in evening dress.*

- WILLIAM *(Hushed)* Do hurry along now chaps, we are late for the pre-prandials. A hanging offence, I'll be bound.
- EDWARD *(In a rather loud voice which causes some tutting and peering over newspapers.)* Don't be so stuffy, William, sometimes you are positively Victorian.  
*(Percival goes to sit in a particular chair.)*
- WILLIAM No, no, no, old boy! You can't sit there you know, that's old Potter's place.
- PERCY Oh, goodness, I'm so sorry chaps, I was quite unaware.
- EDWARD Mad as a hatter, is old Major Potter. Quite likely to come at you with a twelve bore if you take his place.
- WILLIAM Always dresses in his shooting gear. Thinks every day is the glorious Twelfth.
- EDWARD Over here, old boy. This is our jolly old spot. *(They sit.)*
- WILLIAM *(Calling to the barman.)* The usual if you please, Sykes, oh and some of your best caviar toasts.
- SYKES Coming right up, Sir. And what may I get your honourable friend?
- EDWARD Honourable friend? Oh no, I'm afraid you're mistaken there, Sykes! This is Lord Molyneux, son of his lordship the Earl of Havering. He's very dishonourable.  
*(All three guffaw with laughter.)*
- MEMBERS Shhhh!
- PERCY I'll have a gin and lemon if you please, thank you, Sykes.
- WILLIAM Where is that Charles? He's always late.
- EDWARD He'd be late for his own funeral. *(More laughter.)*
- MEMBERS Shhhhh!
- PERCY I think we should keep our voices down, William. We don't want to upset the membership.
- WILLIAM Membership, my hat. These old stuffed-shirts are only here because they've got nothing better to do with their lives.
- EDWARD It keeps them off the streets, I suppose.
- MEMBER Oh really, this is quite intolerable.
- PERCY Edward, you'll get yourself thrown out if you carry on like that. *(More laughter.)*
- EDWARD Oh Percival. you're such a wheeze. They can't throw us out; father is the club president. That's why we get our drinks free and gratis.
- PERCY Really? I had no idea.. *(Sykes serves the drinks.)*
- EDWARD Sykes, the lemon! There's no lemon in Percy's gin!
- PERCY It's alright, Edward, really.
- SYKES I'm very sorry your lordship but lemons are not available at the moment, it's the war, you know.
- EDWARD Oh really, this is outrageous! Gin without lemon. What is the world coming to?
- WILLIAM First the pigs and now this!
- PERCY Whatever do you mean, William, the pigs?
- WILLIAM Haven't you heard, Percy. They've drained the swimming pool at the Ladies club and they're using it as a pigsty.
- PERCY How positively disgusting! The smell must be intolerable.

WILLIAM Just think of it: hoards of obese snorting creatures wallowing around in a sunken pit! Not at all different from the swimming pool at the Carlton Ladies Club on a normal day. *(Guffaws of laughter again.)*  
*(Enter Charles Rotherfield.)*

WILLIAM Charles, how are you? *(All jump up and shake hands.)*  
 Charles, I would like you to meet Percival, our cousin; you know my brother Edward of course.

EDWARD And this is Charles Rotherfield, son of Sir Eustace.

PERCY Not THE Sir Eustace, on the board of directors of the Bank of England.

EDWARD One and the same.

PERCY Delighted to make your acquaintance, Charles.

CHARLES A pint of the usual, please Sykes. *(Percy stares, open mouthed.)*

WILLIAM What on earth is the matter with you, Percy old boy?

PERCY A pint! How can anyone drink a pint of gin in one sitting.  
*(Guffaws of laughter.)*

EDWARD Percy, you old nutcase! There are more drinks in this world than gin and port, you know. You clearly need to spend more time in the city.

WILLIAM Sorry about our cousin, Charles, he's a bit of a country bumpkin you know. Brought up on his father's estate in Essex since the age of three.  
*(Enter Major Potter in his tweeds and deerstalker.)*

EDWARD Good evening Major, and how are you today?

MAJOR Good evening it is not. Haven't caught a damn thing all day, except darn pigeons. Wretched things kept on getting in my sights. Couldn't see a single dashed pheasant for the pigeons. *(All duck as he does a sweep with his twelve bore)*

WILLIAM But where was the shoot today, Major? I saw nothing in the Times.

MAJOR Same as usual. I only ever shoot on the one estate nowadays.  
*(He goes to sit in his usual chair and practices shooting the stuffed birds around the walls.)*

EDWARD And there are rather a lot of pigeons in Trafalgar Square, eh Major?  
*(More laughter)*

PERCY We were just complaining about the hardships of war when you came in, Charles. Do you know most of the railings have been taken down from the forecourts in Eton Square - to be melted down in the munitions factories.  
*(Charles' drink is served, together with the caviar toasts.)*

EDWARD Disgraceful! And we all have to tighten our belts now that rationing is in force.

SYKES Your caviar toasts, Gentlemen.

PERCY Mmm, they look delicious. Thank you Sykes.

WILLIAM I went for a walk through Hyde park yesterday and they were actually digging up the grass.

CHARLES Good Lord, what on earth for?

WILLIAM To plant vegetables! "Dig for Victory" is the slogan. Can you believe it?  
*(Potter has been taking aim and shoots a stuffed bird above the bar.)*

PERCY Yow! What was that?

EDWARD Don't worry, Percy, you'll soon get used to old Potter.

WILLIAM I blame the government. They're quite out of touch with ordinary common folk like us.

MAJOR Huh!

CHARLES Well, what do you expect? Do you remember the bye-election in Stepney: they actually elected a communist! *(Spoken with distaste.)*

EDWARD Excuse me, Charles, we don't have that sort of language in here!

PERCY Yes, I've heard of Stepney. It's in Scotland isn't it?

ED/WILL PERCY!  
WILLIAM Well there's one great British Institution they will never bring down - The Carlton Club, Belgravia! (*Jumps to his feet.*)  
Gentlemen, I propose a toast.... to THE CLUB! May her comforts and traditions never die.  
(*All rise and raise glasses.*)  
ALL THE CLUB!

**Song 4 The Club** CD1 Track 4

Chorus:

The club, the club, the club, a gentleman's utopia  
Dinner at eight and port by the fire with knight and lord and peer.  
The club, the club, the club, paradise in Belgravia.  
With silver service and servants by the score and a telephone in every room.

Verse 1:

A Gentleman's home is his castle his second home is his club,  
Where privilege lurks at ev'ry turn his shoulders with dukedom will rub.  
Oxford brogue, in dulcit tones echo round her marbled walls.  
Stiff upper lips and lashings of r.p. in the ruling classes sacred, hallowed halls.

Verse 2:

You'll not even get past the porter, unless your father's a lord.  
Your vote must be of the bluest kind and your father must be chair of the board.  
Oxford blue, best you can do, don't bother to apply.  
At least you need a seat on the back bench or you need the necessary old school tie.

Verse 3:

The rules of the club are the gospel, you'll learn each one off by heart.  
Thy jacket shall be the tailored kind, thou shalt wear it when thou tak'st a bath.  
Never shalt thou give a tip unless it's for the valet.  
Thou shalt be in before the hour of ten when we raise the drawbridge for the end of day.

EDWARD I say, what dashed good fun. There is nothing like a good song to raise morale, what?  
PERCY I've had a spiffing idea, you chaps. Why don't we all go for a spin in William's motor car tomorrow - out to Father's estate in Havering. Charles could meet my family and we could all go for a picnic by the river.  
EDWARD Top hole! And why don't we invite Horatio, he's always jolly good fun, don't you know.  
WILLIAM Certainly, if you like.  
CHARLES But what about petrol? Cars don't run on orange juice, you know!  
EDWARD It's just as well they don't. Orange juice is even scarcer than petrol.  
WILLIAM Don't you worry about a thing. I have connections you know. A little word in the right ears should take care of the fuel.  
PERCY Come on then chaps, let's get it all sorted out. There's no time to lose.  
WILLIAM Cheerio, Sykes. See you tomorrow.  
SYKES Goodnight Sirs, and safe journey.

(*Singing the end of Song 3 as they exit as they exit*) End of Scene Incidental: CD1 Track 15

### Scene 3B, En Route From Essex to Belgravia

*This scene takes place off-stage. It can be pre-recorded.*

*Sounds of singing - the Eton Boating Song or similar – and a car engine cruising. Suddenly there is a loud bang and a squeal of brakes followed by curses!*

- PERCY Oh, my golly gawsh, what on earth was that sound?  
HORATIO What Fwightfully bad luck, I do believe we have a flat!  
WILLIAM Edward, you ARE careless, old boy. You just ran over some tin-tacks in the road!  
EDWARD Gosh, I AM dreadfully sorry, William.  
CHARLES Thank the Lord we are nearly home. We can walk the rest.  
EDWARD Don't be ridiculous, Charles, it's five or six miles from here to Belgravia, and anyway, we can't just walk orf and leave Father's Bentley here. By tomorrow only a shell would be left.  
WILLIAM We have a spare tyre! Why don't we just change it?  
CHARLES First-rate idea, William, I'll just get it....  
Hells bells, it's not here, it must have dropped orf!  
PERCY Dash it all, now we're stranded!  
WILLIAM It can't have just fallen orf, we would have noticed it.  
HORATIO I'm Fwightfully sorry chaps...I'm afraid I took it orf!  
WILLIAM Horatio, you great buffoon, you mean it's back at home?  
HORATIO I'm afwaid so chaps. You see, I counted four wheels and thought we didn't need the fifth one.  
EDWARD Horatio, you're a complete idiot!  
WILLIAM Edward! It's no use arguing about it now. Look! There is a light on in that old building there. Let's go and ask for help. Maybe someone in there knows how to fix a tyre.  
EDWARD Oh. alright then, but I feel we will be wasting our time.  
*(Trailing off....)*  
CHARLES Oh do hurry, Horatio, we have a cocktail party at eight. We'll never make it.

*End of Scene*

## Scene 4, The Bull Tavern, Cable Street, Stepney, Thursday September 5th

*The Bull is crowded with youngsters who are rehearsing for the sing-along. Some sit on tables and watch while others sing the song. All join in the chorus. Some wave union jacks. Bill is leaning on the bar.*

**Song 5 Good Old England** CD1 Track 5 (Verse 1 is sung first as a solo, then repeated by the chorus)

Everyone loves good old England and there's no-one that I know  
Who would leave that good old England for any other place to go.  
As we stroll along the promenade hand in hand each moonlit night,  
We will talk about old England for good old England we will fight.

Give me a village square, children play on the green;  
Country folk, full of good cheer, stand around and spend their day gossiping.  
Bright lights shine in the town as folk rush by.  
This is why I am so glad that old England she is mine.

From the glorious parks and gardens of our green and pleasant isle  
To the frozen lakes and snowy mountains of Cumbria's rural style;  
And the coves and sandy beaches of that ancient Cornish shore;  
There's a place for every Englishman and it's our pride for evermore.

- BILL Bravo, bravo boys and girls. That's just the tonic we need around here.  
Have you got an encore?
- TOMMY You bet we have Bill. What would you like: "Let's all go down the Strand"?
- HARRY Let's have a break Tommy, I'm parched, I need a pint.
- ALFIE Yea, me an' all, let's have a jar first.
- TOMMY Alright then, we'll have an interval now and continue the rehearsal later.  
*(Hubbub as they rush to the bar.)*
- BILL Alright me old tin plates, just slow down, won't yer. I ain't a hooptopus, I've only got the one pair of 'ands.  
*(Tommy approaches a corner where Alice is sitting alone, dejected. She has not been joining in the singing.)*
- TOMMY Come on little sis'. Things ain't that bad.
- ALICE *(Snaps)* How would you know, you can't know what it's like. None of yer know. *(Silent pause.)*  
*(Softening)* I'm sorry, Tommy, I didn't mean to get snappy with you. It's just that things ain't gonna be the same around here with Frank gone away, an all.
- TOMMY I know, Alice, things must be hard for you right now.
- ALICE The thing is Tommy, that I never really got to tell Frank how I feel about him. And now 'e's gone off to fight and all ...and..and he might get killed ....  
*(She starts to cry. He gives her a hanky.)*
- TOMMY Come on now, sis', you can't carry on like this, you know. I expect he'll be back on leave before you know it.  
*(She gives her nose an almighty blow, then offers him the hanky back.)*

That's alright, sis', you keep it.

*(Meanwhile, Alfie, Harry and some of the girls have been looking at the evening paper.)*

JESSIE 'Ere, Tommy come an 'ave a butchers at this, won't yer. There's something here that'll interest you.

HARRY There's an advert here: 'talented persons required to entertain the boys in France.' They want young people with professional OR AMATEUR experience in the theatre to entertain the forces.

ALFIE What, sort of raise their morale, yer mean?

MOLLY Says it's called E.N.S.A., whatever that might be.

ANNIE Tommy can't join E.N.S.A., 'e ain't bright enough.

TOMMY Ain't got nothing to do with bright, little Annie. It's to do with talent.

ALFIE 'Ere, music hall's theatre, ain't it?

MOLLY Yea, suppose so.

ALFIE We've got experience of music hall, ain't we.

TOMMY Yea, too right we 'ave.

JESSIE Then you should go for the audition.

ALFIE Where is it, Jessica? And, more to the point, when?

*(She reads the small print...)*

JESSIE Right, here it is.....*(quotes)*... says 'ere: The Savoj Hotel, The Strand, WC....

ANNIE WC? It's in a toilet. The audition's in a toilet?

ALFIE Don't be stupid, Annie. WC means it's in the West End. That's where all the theatres are, innit?

TOMMY It's at an 'otel, Annie. 'S'funny name for an 'otel though, The Savoj.

HARRY 'Ere give me that. Friday, September 6th, The SAVOY Hotel in the Strand.

ALFIE Crikey, that's tomorrow ain't it. we can't do it, we ain't ready. We ain't got nothing rehearsed.

MARY Piffle!

TOMMY Come again?

MARY Piffle! You're performing 'ere tonight for us. If it's good enough for us it's good enough for them nobs at the Savoj.

OTHERS SAVOY!

TOMMY Right then, that's settled. We go for the audition. And you girls can come too. We need a chorus.

GIRLS *(Sounds of approval.)*

*(Enter Mrs Riley)*

HARRY Mrs Riley, how nice to see you. Come and join the party.

MRS R Watcher, one and all. I won't stay long - I have me duties to attend to. I just dropped by to hear yer rehearse for the ding-dong

ALFIE Well that's right sportin' of yer Mrs Riley, but what duties yer got.

MRS R Oh, this an' that, you know.

ALICE She's a real modest lady. Don't you know she runs a day centre in Limehouse. Voluntary and all.

ALFIE Oh, really?

ANNIE No, O'Reilly. *(She giggles.)*

MARY Yea, she looks after all them old folk and mothers with little kids.

ALICE The government don't do nothing about it do they.

MRS R That's quite enough about me thank you, young lady. I ain't come 'ere to 'ear me life history.

BILL 'Ere, Mavis, talk about life 'istries. You 'eard about Old Muvver Brown? She's really lost the plot this time, ain't she!

MRS R Too right I heard about her - you don't think you're gonna hear nothing I ain't

heard already.

ANNIE Well? What about old Muvver Brown then?

BILL She's heard all them warnings on the wireless about air raids, ain't she, and she's got her own answer to the problem.

ALFIE What's that then?

BILL She's moved all her goods and chattels into one of them railway arches in Salmon Lane.

MRS R Even got her pitchers up on the walls she 'as.

ALFIE Cor, strike a light!

ALICE Yea, well that's alright in September, but what about when winter comes, eh?

BILL She reckons the war'll be over by then, love, and I hope she's right.

MRS R Some chance, I don't think.  
*(Enter William, Edward, Charles, Percy and Horatio. Pub goes silent.)*

HORATIO O, Charles, what a quaint little inn, I think we must have stwayed into a museum.

BILL Cor strewth, will yer cop a load of that plummy speech. Where in hell's name did he learn to talk that lingo?

MRS R That ain't no lingo you silly ass. That's the kings blinkin' Henglish, that is.

ALFIE And this ain't no museum, me old china, this is the Bull, our local.

PERCY Oh, Horatio, I do believe the gentleman is foreign! He probably doesn't understand.

HORATIO I suppose one finds a good many foreigners in this locality on account of its pwoximity to the docks. *(The girls begin to giggle.)*

EDWARD They've probably just come orf the boat from China.

TOMMY *(Pushing his way forward.)* Now you just cop this me old 'arry tate: unless you want me Oliver Twist in yer boat race I should shut your trap or clear off down the frog and toad and find another flamin' rub a dub dub for yer daily mail. *(A brief silence for a reaction and then Horatio starts to hoot with laughter with sharp intakes of breath. Tommy grabs him by the collar and starts to shake him.)*

TOMMY You don't seem to get the message, me old cocker spaniel. You're not welcome here!

CHARLES Steady now, my good man. I believe there's been a slight misunderstanding here. Let me clear this up for you.

ALFIE I think you'd better, Sunny Jim, or you'll be clearing your friend up off the dockside. *(Tommy unhands Horatio, who brushes himself down.)*

CHARLES Look here! I can only apologise for my friend Horatio here. He is a little.... naive, to say the least. *(William moves to sit at a table where Mary is now sitting alone. He goes to the bar and returns with a drink for her and one for himself.)* You see, we were motoring along the commercial road after a trip into the country...

ANNIE Blimey, they've got a car

CHARLES .....when bang! one of the tyres blew out. *(Gestures accompany this.)*

EDWARD And Horatio, the silly ass, had left the spare behind at Father's house.

CHARLES Consequentially, by a rather circuitous route, we came in search of a mechanic who could assist us in this dilemma. *(The others listen open-mouthed.)*

BILL Well why don't you geezers have a pint of daily on the 'ouse while we put our loaves together on this one.

EDWARD I beg your pardon? I do believe you've lost me there.

CHARLES Just hang fire, Edward, I believe I can translate. Unless I'm greatly mistaken this is cockney rhyming slang, I read a book on this once but I had no idea it was still spoken.

ALFIE Well you are in Stepney mate, in the 'eart of the East End. What do you expect?

PERCY Good Lord! I thought Stepney was in Scotland.

CHARLES Let me see; a pint of daily... daily mail must be pint of ale. 'On the 'ouse' means free and gratis, and, 'put our loaves together', loaf of bread, head - put our heads together.

HORATIO Oh my golly gosh! Charles you are fwightfully clever, you know.  
*(Girls giggle.)*

ALFIE You're learning fast mate.

CHARLIE You mean... CHINA PLATE.

ALFIE Just china'll do.  
*(Bill delivers five pints on a tray.)*

PERCY I say, old fruit. Would you mind if I just had a scotch. I've never tried this..... light ale.

HORATIO Don't be a wet blanket, Percy. When in Rome drink like a Roman.  
*(Percy holds his nose and takes a quick drink. Takes his hanky out and coughs into it. William gets closer to Mary.)*

TOMMY Ladies and gentlemen, now that we have cleared up our earlier misunderstanding, I propose that we show our honourable visitors the true cockney revels and continue with the rehearsal. And after that, we'll see about their motor.

OTHER Hear, hear!

TOMMY Gentlemen, we offer you one of our favourite ditties, By the Old Town Square.  
*(He announces the title of the song to hoots from the crowd.)*

### Song 6 By the Old Town Square CD1 Track 6

#### *Verse 1*

As I was walking home last night with pretty little Susie Brown,  
I saw a p'liceman standing there and on his face he had a frown.  
Now, the boys in blue are all straight and true but something told me to beware,  
So without delay we made our way to the back of the old town square.  
Yes, without delay we made our way to the back of the old town square,

#### *Chorus*

Oh, it's such bliss just to steal a kiss when I'm with a girl so dear,  
The lights are low so why not go and stroll down to the pier?  
And, there we'll whisper in the moonlight as we gaze into the silver sea,  
We'll be side by side 'til morning comes, just my little girl and me.

#### *Verse 2*

Now, once I was in Brighton town with nothing very much to do  
When up to me quite suddenly there came a little girl in blue.  
She was, oh, so sweet from head to feet that I could only stand and stare,  
Then she smiled and asked me how to get to the back of the old town square,  
Yes, she smiled and asked me how to get to the back of the old town square.

#### *Chorus*

Oh, it's such bliss just to steal a kiss when I'm with a girl so dear,  
The lights are low so why not go and stroll down to the pier?  
And, there we'll whisper in the moonlight as we gaze into the silver sea,  
We'll be side by side 'til morning comes, just my little girl and me.

*(During the song Bill and Mrs Riley have a tete a tete. Charles and Horatio join in the last chorus.)*

TOFFS *(Applauding)* Bravo, jolly good show! *(etc)*

MRS R Well young man, *(addressing Edward)* I believe we are able to help you. Our friend Harry here understands what makes a motor tick. He'll come with you and help you get yer back on the frog.

EDWARD Why, thank you very much.

BILL That's right, Guv, and you can have some of Mrs Garnett's best chicken sarnis to help you on your way.

PERCY I say, that's awfully decent of you, old fruits.

ANNIE *(Mimicking Percy.)* I say, that's awfully decent of you, old fruits!  
*(One of the others gives her a clip around the head in rebuke.)*

CHARLES William, do tear yourself away from that young lady. We have to get back to base camp.

WILLIAM Coming, Charles. *(Muttering a few farewells to Mary as she writes down her address for him.)*

BILL *(Bringing the sandwiches from behind the bar, loosely wrapped in brown paper.)*  
And down forget your travellers fare, courtesy of the old lady.  
*(He looks around for something to put them in and, snatching the newspaper to use as extra wrapping, ties string around them, and hands them to William.)*

WILLIAM Thank you, Bill. You are most generous. *(Shaking Bill's hand.)*

TOFFS Cheerio all, etc. *(exit)*

ANNIE Well, ain't this exciting.

JESSIE What's that then?

ANNIE You know, meeting them toffs. I ain't never met no real nobs before.

TOMMY They're nothing but a bunch of spoilt brats. Rich by an accident of birth.

ALFIE Yea, big inheritance, small intelligence.

MARY They're real people, Alfie, just like you an' me, and don't you ever forget it.

MOLLY Just 'cos they talk funny it don't mean they ain't normal underneath.

TOMMY Well we won't ever meet 'em again, so what's it matter anyway.  
*(The bell rings.)*

BILL Come on then, time for last orders, me old regulars.

ALFIE We'd best be off, Bill, if we have to prepare for an audition tomorrow.

BILL Cheers then mate....and the best of Donald Duck to yer!

TOMMY *(Goes to take the newspaper.)* 'Ere, what've you done wiv 'Arry's paper, Bill?

BILL Gor Blimey, mate, I gave it to them toffs for their sarnis. I'm sorry, mate.

ALFIE It don't matter, Tom, we know the place and time.  
Well, what're yer waiting for? Let's get goin'.

TOMMY Savoy Hotel, here we come!  
*(Tommy runs off and Alfie and some of the girls exit after him.)*

## BLACKOUT

Incidental Music: CD2 Track 2

## Scene 5, No 14 Hanover Square, The Same Evening

*The Earl and Lady Gresham are throwing a cocktail party and the house is swarming with guests, most of whom are quite tanked up. Opens with a Cha Cha.*

**Dance 1 Cha Cha Cha**                      CD1 Track 21

*Enter William, Edward, Charles and Percy and Horatio.*

LADY G        Darlings, where on earth have you been? It's so late...we were worried about you.

WILLIAM      I'm sorry, Mummy, we had a spot of bother with the transport.

EDWARD      Dashed motor-car packed it in. Tyre blew out just as we were driving through the slums.

EARL          Now just you look here! If you've wrecked my Bentley I'll stop your allowance until the damage is paid for! Do you hear?

HORATIO      There's no need to be so dramatic, My Lord! The problem's fixed now.

WILLIAM      We bumped into some jolly useful fellows in the East End and they put the problem right for us.

LADY G        Never mind about that now there are more important things in life than motor-cars. You must have a drink. Roberts....Roberts!

ROBERTS     Yes, My Lady?

LADY G        A drink, Roberts, for our young friends. They must be parched.  
*(They all help themselves from the tray Roberts offers.  
Lady Sofia and Emma push their way through the crowd and throw themselves at the boys.)*

SOFIA         Darlings, so you're home at last. Where on earth have you been?

EDWARD      Charles, I believe you have already made acquaintance with my baby sister, Sofia.

CHARLES      Charmed, I'm sure. *(Kisses her hand.)*

EDWARD      And Emma Copperfield, a good friend of the family.

CHARLES      Delighted. *(Kissing her hand. Maria presses forward out of the crowd. She is plain, plump and coarse.)*

MARIA        And I'm Maria, *(Pronounced Mar-eye-a.)* William's fiancée. *(Holds out her hand to be kissed and Charles gives her a quick and curt handshake.)*

CHARLES      Pleased to meet you Maria. *(Pronounced in the usual way.)*

MARIA        Maria actually. *(Pronounced Mar-eye-a.)*

EARL          Do have something to eat: ham and cucumber sandwiches, cheese dips or we have some fresh caviar. *(He motions towards the food table.)*

PERCY         Well actually, Uncle, we already had something to eat.

CHARLES      *(Reprimanding)* PERCY!

EARL          Oh, really? Did you stop awf at a restaurant.

PERCY         Oh no, we got some sandwiches in a pub in Stepney.

MARIA        Oooh, how positively disgusting - a PUBLIC HOUSE!  
*(Spoken with extreme distaste.)*

WILLIAM      Maria, you must not be so snobbish in your outlook.

MARIA        Do be quiet, William, I was addressing Percy.  
*(Sofia exaggeratedly mimics Maria's last line in mime behind her back.)*

PERCY         In fact, I do believe I have some left over. Would you like to try one.  
*(Unwraps and offers a sandwich to Maria. Horatio takes the wrapping.)*

MARIA Yuk! Percy, how could you? You'll get food poisoning. Those people know nothing about hygiene...they live in squalor.

EMMA But not from choice, Maria. They have no control over their personal circumstances.

WILLIAM They weren't born into money like us, you know.

MARIA But they have no breeding.

EDWARD They seem to breed alright - there are quite enough of them!

WILLIAM You're just a snob, Maria! There is no other way of looking at it.

MARIA Oh William, how could you? My own fiancé insulting me in public.

WILLIAM Fiancé..hmm..Well, perhaps I made a mistake, Maria. A big mistake!

MARIA Ooooh! You beast! *(She slaps William. A high pitched wail ensues followed by a dramatic exit, nose in the air. Applause from onlookers. Genevieve, Antoinette, Charity and Elizabeth appear in the throng all with arms linked. William rubs his face.)*

ELIZABETH Oh William. I just don't know how you put up with Maria, she is so la-di-da!

SOFIA You know how things are, Elizabeth. Her parents are very old friends of Mummy's and Daddy's and, wow, are they loaded!

CHARITY So, he's after her money - and I thought he was after her body!

EMMA Charity, behave yourself!

HORATIO I say.... *(Horatio has been reading the newspaper the sandwiches were wrapped in.)*

WILLIAM What is it, Horatio?

HORATIO I say...

GENEV Yes, but what do you say, Horatio? (... *Silence.*)

EMMA HORATIO! What is it.

HORATIO Oh, do look. It says here that actors are needed to join an entertainment organisation to boost the morale of the troops. It's called E.N.S.A.

SOFIA What a simply spiffing wheeze. Do let me see. *(Snatching paper.)*  
Auditions will be held on Friday September 6<sup>th</sup>, at the ....Savoy Hotel in the Strand.

CHARLES Jeepers, that's tomorrow!

EMMA Oh, William, do go along. You simply must!

CHARITY Yes, William, you must. And Edward and Charles you must go too.

SOFIA And Percy. *(Giggles of laughter from the girls.)*

WILLIAM I think we just might go. It sounds like fun. After all we were the mainstay of the theatrical society during our days at Eton.

CHARLES Apart from Percy, that is. He went to Harrow. *(Making a turned up nose gesture at this. The girls laugh.)*

PERCY Pah, you only ever played Shakespeare. We were much more versatile: restoration comedy, Marlowe, medieval miracle plays.. we did anything going!

ELIZAB You even did a music hall entertainment on founder's day, didn't you?

PERCY Absolutely correct..and what a riot it was too, to see the look on old Jenkinson's face. He was our housemaster, you know.

WILLIAM Well that's settled then. Tomorrow, the West End, next week.....the world!

CHARLES We'll do an extract from Twelfth Night; that will go down well.

EDWARD And in the meantime....the night is yet young. Madam, may I have the pleasure of the next dance with you? *(Music starts.)*  
A tango, I believe.

EMMA Why, certainly, Sir. It will be my delight.  
*(William pairs up with Charity and Charles with Sofia. Other couples pair up to dance.)*

**Dance 2 Tango** CD1 Track 22 *End of Scene* Incidental: CD2 Track 3

## Scene 6, The Strand, Near the Savoy Hotel

*Enter the Stepney characters, looking nervous about the audition. Various others going about their business in the street stop to look as the song begins.*

### Song 7 Never Mind Your Language CD1 Track 7

1 Professor Spooner minced his words and made them sound like Dutch. His students liked to doze in class and didn't notice much.  
Brave King Canute turned back the waves, he was a Danish bloke. He knew the tide would turn at noon whatever tongue he spoke.  
Lawyers speaking legal Latin leave their clients over-awed. Rhetoric and precedent is sure to make you bored.  
William Wordsworth was content to read his lines aloud but he fell head-first into a lake while wandering lonely as a cloud.

*Chorus:* So never mind your language strolling down the Old Kent Road,  
Feel free to use your rhyming slang as you bowl down the frog and toad.  
But should you chance to meet a Peer on Vauxhall Garden's benches,  
Just roll your R's and round your vowels and do not drop your haitches.

2 Now James the first had garbled speech, he had a Scottish lilt. It's no surprise he spoke like that with the wind right up his kilt.  
The Upper House is very posh and full of well-bred lords but when the peroration's long the halls resound with snores.  
Henry Higgins was intrigued by poor Eliza's Cockney drawl. He took her in and coached her up then took her to the ball.  
Chaucer's eloquence was quite profound he always spoke his mind until the Miller flatulently spoke from his behind.

*Chorus*

3 Now Raffles spoke impeccably, he always cut a dash. But when he caught folks off their guard, he relieved them of their cash.  
Will Shakespeare wrote in hybrid tongues and passed it off as English. The audience did not get a word but lapped it up with relish.  
See the speaker at the house who's looking very grave, for when the members shout abuse he tells them to behave.  
William, Conqueror, Norman gent became the English king. But he was a Viking who spoke French; now there's a silly thing.

*Chorus*

*West End characters enter part way through. The Eastenders look astonished as the Westenders take up the song and sing chorus 2. All join in the chorus. Verse 3 is sung, one half-line each alternately by two soloists from each group, starting with the Westenders. This gives a contrast of accents on alternate lines.*

WILLIAM Goodness gracious me, it is a small world, is it not?  
ALFIE Yea, what the blinkin' 'ell are you lot doin' here.  
CHARLES We could ask the same of you. After all, we live nearby.

ANNIE Well, you can mind yer own business ‘cos we won’t tell yer.  
TOMMY Now then, Annie, there ain’t no need to be aggressive, they don’t mean no ‘arm. They don’t know no better.  
HARRY Nah, they ain’t got the refined upbringing what we’ve got, ‘ave they?  
*(He wipes his nose on the back of his hand.)*  
JESSICA Stop taking the shovel, Harry. It ain’t fair.  
HORATIO Yes, do stop taking the shovel and pick.  
WILLIAM Well, as a matter of fact the reason we’re here is no secret, is it gents? We’ve come to audition for E.N.S.A.  
MARY Gawd strike me down with a feather if that ain’t spooky.  
CHARLES I beg your pardon?  
MARY Well, what I mean is, how this surely is a co-incidence. You see, that’s why we’re here an’ all....to audition.  
ALFIE But how the Dickens did you know.... Well, strike me dumb, I just twigged!  
PERCY Goodness, was it painful.  
ALFIE No, you don’t understand, I just fell in.  
*(They look around for a hole.)*  
It was the sandwiches, wannit?  
EDWARD You’re absolutely right old boy. Got it in one.  
MARY What’s he on about sandwiches? What’s that got to do with it?  
HARRY Gordon Bennett - the advert! It was in me paper. And you remember how we couldn’t find me paper, on account of old Bill wrappin’ them sandwiches in it.  
ANNIE So that’s how they know about it. It ain’t nuffink to do with telephony after all.  
MARY I fink you mean telepathy, Annie.  
ANNIE Sounds like a disease to me.  
HORATIO Excuse me ev’wybody, but are you intending to stand here all day arguing about it? We’ll miss our place in the audition if we don’t go in soon.  
TOMMY Yea, Howatio is wight mates, let’s bowl on down and sock it to ‘em!  
PERCY Right on, chappies. Right on!

**Reprise of the chorus of Song 7**

CD1 Track 17

## Scene 7, The Audition

*The play begins as the curtain opens. A panel of two talent scouts and a producer sit to one side. Other acts sit on a row of chairs downstage. For this scene, it is effective if the cast waiting to audition are front of house, amongst the audience. Likewise with the producer and scouts.*

ACT 13      EXTRACT FROM MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM *by the Westenders.*  
*(See appendix for the script.)*

SCOUT 1     Thanks very much indeed, act 13. A captivating performance. Say, don't we know that little sketch from somewhere?

PRODUCER   Give your names to the stage manager on the way out, please.

SCOUT 2     Act 14 be ready now please. *(Westenders exit into wings and dancers enter from wings.)*

ACT 14      COMEDY AND TRAGEDY DANCE *(or similar)* CD 1 Track 24

PRODUCER   Thank you very much act 14, that'll be all.

DANCER      But don't you want to see the other dance we have prepared?

PRODUCER   No thanks, we've seen enough. Give your names to the stage manager on the way out. *(They linger. Forcefully)* Thank you! *((Exit front of house.))*

SCOUT 1     Act 15 now, please.  
*(A new group take the stage.)*

PRODUCER   When you're ready, act 15.  
*(Act 15 is a comedy trio, rather like Laurel and Hardy and friend. They do a comic routine.)*

ACT 15      COMEDY ROUTINE *(See appendix for optional comic script)*

*(Part way through the producer jumps up and claps his hands to get their attention.)*

PRODUCER   Thank you, act 15, we've seen enough.

COMED'N 1   But there's more; we've hardly started.

SCOUT 2     We've seen enough, thank you very much!

COMED'N 2   But how can you judge our performance when you've only seen the first....

PRODUCER   Enough of this; we have a busy schedule. One hundred and fourteen acts to audition in two days. We can't hang about you know! Give your names to the stage manager on your way out. *(Exit front of house.)*

SCOUT 1     Act 16, please.

PRODUCER   Last act before we take a break. Let's get on with it, shall we?  
*(Westenders stay in wings to see the Eastenders.)*

ACT 16      MUSIC HALL ROUTINE AND SONG *by the Eastenders with chairman, and vocal ensemble, complete with spoons.)*

**Song 8     The Sights and Sounds of London Town     CD1 Track 8**

*One or more characters play the spoons in the introduction to each verse and, if possible, the washboard. The boys and girls are divided into two groups. One group sings the Londoner song. In verse 4 they swap parts.*

EASTENDER     Ladies and gentlemen, in the true spirit of music hall, we entreat you to prepare your palates for our pleasurable performance as we perambulate the perimeter of our very own mighty metropolis, London Town.

Verse 1:

Let us take you down and show all the sights of town, (you'll need a fortnight)  
Bust'ling markets and busy thoroughfares,  
Better watch your step, you'll end up in the river,  
Ev'ry corner has a secret, you'll never quite believe what you'll hear, (you'd better believe it)  
King Charles once stayed here with his mistress,  
This is Churchill's favourite pub.

Verse 2:

Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner that I love London so.  
Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner that I think of her wherever I go.  
I get a funny feeling inside of me, just walking up and down,  
Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner that I love London town.

Verse 3 (with verse 2):

Old town crier rings his bell and gives the time of day, (so set your watches)  
Market sellers are calling out their wares;  
Apples by the dozen, strawberries ripe and juicy.  
Bargemen take you up the river and drop you off at Hampton Court, (at afternoon tea time)  
You'll rub your shoulders with the queen,  
They're changing guard at half past three.

Verse 4 (with verse 2):

Here's the Roman wall and there's the place where Cromwell died (so keep your head on)  
Down these steps to the famous underground,  
Platform 1 for Romford, platform 2 for Richmond,  
You will get a better view from the top deck of a red London bus ( standing room only)  
At night a visit to the theatre,  
Rear stalls only one-and-six.

PRODUCER Thank you, act 16. Take 15 minutes everybody. Oh, and...give your names to the stage manager on the way out, will you!

SCOUT 2 Refreshments available in the canteen..... threepence a head.  
*(The panel exit together with some of the extras.)*

CHARLES Well done chaps, that really was top hole!

TOMMY You really think so?

ALFIE Thanks chum, your little sketch was pretty grand, an' all. Not quite our style though.  
*(William and Mary drift towards one another and talk quietly in the corner. Annie tries to eavesdrop.)*

TOMMY Tell me, Guv, what was it all about? I didn't quite cop the posh lingo.

HORATIO That was not ‘posh lingo’ Tommy, it was Shakespearean English - a kind of Elizabethan theatrical style.

PERCY Here, Tommy, have the book, it’s all in here. *(gives it to him)*

TOMMY Oh, cheers mate, I’ll have a butchers at this later.

HORATIO Do hurry along now chaps, we have an appointment for lunch, don’t you know, at the Ritz?

ALFIE *(Turning nasty)*  
Lunch at the Ritz? Is that all you geezers ever do.... endless rounds of lunch parties, dinner parties, cocktail parties? Why don’t yer do something useful with your lives?

PERCY How dare you pass judgement on our class? There was a time when fellows like you would have been flogged for talking out of turn like that.

ALFIE Fellows like us? And exactly what are “fellows like us”? We’re every bit as brainy as you. Just because we weren’t born with silver spoons in our mouths don’t mean we ain’t entitled to a bit of respect.

PERCY Respect must be earned, not demanded as a right.

JESSIE Yea, well what did you ever do to earn our respect?

PERCY Well, I...I...I. Oh honestly, this is outrageous!

EDWARD Now then, gentlemen, there is no need for this unpleasantness, we should part company amicably.

ANNIE Here, what’s he mean by that?

ALFIE He means we should kiss and make up!

EDWARD Well, perhaps a handshake will do. Percy.....PERCY?

PERCY Dash it all...I apologise if I spoke rashly.  
*(Extends his hand.)*

ALFIE Yea, well maybe as how I spoke out ‘a turn meself, *(quickly adds)* even though I meant what I said.  
*(Shakes hands very quickly, without eye contact, and withdraws.)*

CHARLES Well, good luck you fellows, I hope you get the job.

PERCY William, do come along, if you can tear yourself away.  
*(William and Mary whisper parting words.)*

EDWARD See you anon.

HORATIO Cheerio. *(They exit.)*

HARRY Well, have you ever in your life met such a crowd of spoilt brats?

JESSIE Thank heavens we won’t ever meet up with them again.

ANNIE They can go home to mummy and daddy!

ALICE Let’s get out of this place...it gives me the creeps. Anyway, if I don’t get back to work soon, I’ll be getting the tin tack.

HARRY Yea, she’s right, the gates of Rome beckon.

**Reprise of Song 8, verse 4, in two parts.** CD1 Track 18  
*(Singing as they exit)*

Here's the Roman wall and there's the place where Cromwell died (so keep your head on)  
Down these steps to the famous underground,  
Platform 1 for Romford, platform 2 for Richmond,  
You will get a better view from the top deck of a red London bus ( standing room only)  
At night a visit to the theatre,  
Rear stalls only one-and-six.

*Blackout*  
Incidental Music: CD2 Track 4

## Scene 8, Under the railway arch in Salmon Lane, Stepney.

*Old Mother Brown sits knitting on her bed in the far arch. Traffic noise is audible, together with the occasional drone of a plane and ship's horn. Over the bed hang photos of a Victorian childhood, a bedwarmer and some bedsocks. Mother Brown sings softly to herself. Enter William. He stands for a while looking around nervously and pacing up and down, clearly waiting for someone. George Witherspoon approaches.*

WILLIAM Er, excuse me, Sir, but could you tell me please, is this Salmon Lane? You see I have to meet someone and I don't know the area.

GEORGE W I can tell you're not from these parts mate. Your accent and your clothes are a real give away.

WILLIAM Yes, I know, I'm sorry.

GEORGE W Don't be sorry, me old cocker spaniel. Don't never apologise for being what you are. You are the person you are and there ain't no-one can change that.

WILLIAM But do tell me, I have to meet someone under the railway arch in Salmon Lane. Am I in the right place?

GEORGE W Oh, I get it mate. *(Winking furiously.)* Got yourself a girl, 'ave yer. Well, good for you, that's what I say. What's her name mate? She might be someone I know if she lives around 'ere? There ain't many souls as I don't know hereabouts.....

MOTHER B This is Salmon Lane alright, luvvy. You're in the right place, ducks.

WILLIAM Why, thank you Mrs....

MOTHER B Brown, Mrs Brown's the name, though folks call me Mother Brown, on account of me advanced years. And what's yours?

WILLIAM William, Madam. William...er, Gresham.  
*(William goes over to shake hands with Mother Brown.)*

GEORGE W Where yer from Bill? You from the BBC?

WILLIAM Well no, actually I'm from Hanover Square. It's in the West End.

GEORGE W I knew you was a blinkin' foreigner! But it don't matter mate - everyone's welcome here in Stepney.

WILLIAM Why, thank you. You know, you're all very warm-hearted people in this part of town. Some of my acquaintances could learn a great deal from your generosity.

GEORGE W Ta Mate! Now I'd best be off. *(Puts his arm around William and pickpockets his watch.)* I'm late for a date meself, only not with a girl, it's with his majesty's constabulary. Cheers mate! Nice talkin' t'yer. See yer again.

WILLIAM Yes, goodbye and thank you very much for....  
*(Passer by has already gone. William kicks his heels again, goes to look at his watch and realises it has gone. He is about to leave when Mary enters looking distressed.)*

Mary, oh Mary, I thought you would never come. I'm so glad you could make it.

MARY Oh William, I'm sorry I'm late, but it weren't that easy getting off of work early. Before the war all the factories used to shut early on Fridays but things are all different now. We have to make things for the war ministry and we have to work so blinkin' hard. Look at me hands. Them ain't girls hands no more - they're bleedin' navvies hands they are. *(Holds hands out)*  
*(William takes Mary's hands in his and begins to caress them.)*

WILLIAM Look Mary, I can't stay long....I told Mother and Father I was going to the club for a few hours. They would be furious if they knew I was down here. We're told it's dangerous to be near the docks with the threat of air-raids.

(*She tears her hands away from him in temper.*)

MARY Thanks a bleedin' million, Mate. We have to live here yer know!

WILLIAM I'm sorry, Mary. That was so insensitive of me. You can see I have a great deal to learn. Before that chance meeting the other night in the Bull Tavern, and again at the audition, I'd never met anyone from the East End, let alone from Stepney.

MARY (*Incredulously*) No! You're kiddin' me!

WILLIAM No, really, Mary. (*She ponders*)

MARY Well, come to think of it I ain't never met no-one from West of Liverpool Street meself. I ain't used to your plummy talk neither.  
(*Will gets closer to Mary.*)

WILLIAM If one good thing comes out of this war, if anything good **can** come out of war, it'll be that people like you and me can meet and get on together without saying (put on accent) "ooh, don't he talk posh", or "they don't speak the Kings English".

MARY Yea, too right, mush. After all what is language but a way of expressing yourself....The actual words don't matter...it's the sentiments what count!

WILLIAM That's absolutely correct, Mary, it's the sentiments what count!  
(*He moves closer.*)

MARY Ere, what's your sentiments now, then?

WILLIAM Oh, Mary, can't you guess. I thank the twist of fate that brought you and me together. When I first saw you I was captivated by your aura; the force of your personality reached out to me and said, "this is the one, don't let her go"  
(*Brief Silence*)

MARY I ain't got a blinkin' clue what you're saying but it don't 'alf sound nice. Carry on.

WILLIAM You are worth a million pounds Mary. I wouldn't swap you for a hundred of those spoilt little heiresses just out of finishing school. You're a real woman, Mary. I'm captivated by you, and I think I'm falling in love with you.

MARY (*Slow drawl*) Blinkin' 'ell!

WILLIAM Kiss me, Mary, and I'll know that I at least have a chance to be yours. Even if there is just a the slimmest chance that we can be friends, I'll not give up.

MARY You don't have to give up mate, I'll give you the one chance. (*She grabs hold of William and gives him an almighty great kiss. William reels and sinks to his knees*)

**Song 9 As Happy as a Skylark William and Mary CD1 Track 9**

*Verse 1:*

WILLIAM I've found that life's surprises grow with each passing day.  
Little by little I've come to see the world spins fast when I'm with you.  
Strange how time flies when we're together, each passing hour is but a moment,  
On borrowed time, frozen in your embrace.

MARY Grant us one more hour, even just one minute.  
We can't buy time, we must make the most of each moment.

TOGETHER Let's live the dream and shape our own future,  
Tread our own path and just let the world go by.

*Verse 2*

MARY I can't see what you fancy in me,  
I'm just a poor girl with no pedigree.  
You must not stoop this low,  
I know your fam'ly won't wish it so.

WILLIAM Deep down inside I know it shall be,  
You know that you mean the whole world to me.  
Love knows no boundaries,  
You must believe in our destiny.

*Verse 3*

MARY How can you like the way I speak?  
WILLIAM Your cockney accent's just so sweet.  
MARY My tongue is sharp and my hands are rough,  
WILLIAM Your kindly nature's quite soft enough.

MARY Have you not heard that love is blind?  
WILLIAM More of an angel I'll not find.  
MARY Even my walk is so working class.  
WILLIAM I'll walk behind you and watch your -  
MARY Oi!

*Verse 4:*

MARY *(to herself):*  
As happy as a skylark, as carefree as a cloud,  
Free as a hawk circling high above, the world will fall into our hands.  
God made us free to choose our future, no-one can tell us how to love.  
High born or low, love really does not care.

WILLIAM *(to Mary):*  
I'll give you the world, you'll give me my happiness,  
Just say you'll love me and I'll be yours for ever. (I'll stay by your side)

TOGETHER In this cruel world nothing's ever certain,  
We'll bide our time and no-one can make us part.

*(At the end of the song, they embrace.)*

MARY William!  
WILLIAM Yes, Mary.  
MARY Just answer me this one question.  
WILLIAM Of course, Mary, what is it?  
MARY Well, you agreed that language don't matter and it's the sentiments what count.  
WILLIAM Yea! I mean..... yes! *(He stands)*  
MARY *(Crossly)* Well then, tell me why them stuffy, hoity-toity, namby-pamby,  
plummy-mouthed producers chose your lot to join E.N.S.A. and not Tommy  
and Alfie!  
WILL Well..I..I..I.....  
MARY What's the matter..lost for words? Or d'yer fink I might not like to hear the real

reason.

WILLIAM I...I.don't know Mary. But I thought they were good...dashed good.

MARY You don't believe that clap-trap they were given about being too useful to the war effort as auxiliary firemen do you?

WILLIAM One thing I will tell you, Mary Penny. You and your friends have opened my eyes to what the real world is like. I have no wish to stay in some protected Peter Pan world with no cares, where every day is a party. And so I have made a decision.

MARY Oh yea, What's that then?

WILLIAM I have enrolled in the Civil Defence and they suggested that I join the fire service. Edward and Charles are going to join me.

MARY Oh William, I think that's a very brave thing to do. To volunteer to get your hands dirty and do a man's job like.  
*(Sounds of bombs falling very nearby. They look bewildered.)*

WILLIAM Goodness, did you hear that thunder. Who would believe it, with such a clear sky?

MARY That ain't no thunder, mate, that's bombs that is. And can you 'ear the ack-ack fire? Our brave lads are giving Gerry what for.

WILLIAM Oh God, no! I've got to get you out of here. Quick... *(He pulls her out of the shelter of the railway arch.)*

MARY Don't be a fool...this is the safest place this side of the tower of London with bombs falling.  
*(There is an enormous explosion and the stage becomes dark with bomb dust and debris. When the dust clears Mother Brown is carrying on with her knitting; her pictures are blown off the wall. William staggers to his feet and looks for Mary.)*

WILLIAM Mary....Mary....Oh God, Mary, where are you?  
*(He spots her lying twisted twenty feet away...blown by the blast.)*  
MARY! Mary don't leave me now.  
*(He shakes her, turns her over, feels first her wrist for a pulse, then listens for breathing and finally puts his hand on her chest.....)*

MARY Oh God, this is all my fault. Mary, hang on, don't leave me!  
*(Raising her head and speaking weakly)* I ain't going nowhere, yet, matie.  
*(Angrily)* Here, get your hands off me - you don't waste no time do you?  
*(She looks towards Stepney Way.)*  
Oh my Gawd, just look at that smoke. There's been a direct hit, and it looks like it's Stepney Way. Quick come and help me. I've got to get home and see me folks are alright. *(She staggers off.)*

WILLIAM Mary, take it easy now, you're hurt. I'll come with you.. ....Mary, wait for me.....  
*(Mother Brown looks up from her knitting, watches Will cross the stage and exit, She shakes her head and tuts.... then straightens her pictures! More bombs fall.)*

*End of Scene*

## Act II, Scene 1, The Good Half Of The Bull Tavern

*A small crowd of the Eastenders are sitting in the tavern looking thoroughly miserable. Bill is leaning on the bar idly wiping the same glass continually.*

*(Enter Harry, Jessie, Molly and Annie. Alice is reading the newspaper.)*

JESSIE

How yer doing Bill, Alice.

BILL

Hi, Jessie, you're later than usual today.

JESSIE

Yea, well we've just been down Cable street helping to shift the rubble. I can't believe how many houses can be wrecked by one H.E. bomb: half the street's gone.

MOLLY

Thank heaven so many people were out doing their Saturday shopping or more poor devils would have bought it.

ANNIE

I think it's quite fun...we've got Maisy and Ben living with us permanent now. I always wanted someone to play with.

MOLLY

War ain't never gonna be fun, Annie. You wanna grow up a bit and see the reality.

HARRY

It ain't fun for Arthur's auntie is it. She copped it in Nelson Street and it weren't no quick end either. It rained down incendiaries and them houses all caught before the A.F.S. could do nothing about it. Her house went up like a bonfire, it did. Poor old woman didn't have a chance.

MOLLY

Hey, talking of the A.F.S., where's Alfie and Tommy?

JESSIE

Still on duty. They ain't slept for 48 hours.

ALICE

Them poor boys. Where are they working?

JESSIE

Last we saw of them they was down in Bromley Street helpin' to dig some poor folk out of a bomb crater.

BILL

Annie, do us a favour love. Take some of Mrs Garnett's best sarnies out to them will you, with my compliments, oh and a couple of bottles of me best bitter. *(Bill wraps the sandwiches in brown paper and puts them and two bottles in a bag.)*

ANNIE

*(Whining)* Oh no, Mr Garnett, can't someone else go, I'm too little.

BILL

If you're too small to do a job like that you're certainly too young to be in a public house. Perhaps you'd better go on home.

ANNIE

Oh all right then, I'll do it. *(She stamps her foot in frustration.)*

BILL

Thank you Annie, I knew you'd help.

*(She grabs the bag and exits, running excitedly. Alice looks up from her paper.)*

ALICE

Oh bloomin' heck! This is terrible.

MOLLY

What's up Alice.

ALICE

These blinkin' papers are just full of bad news about the number of planes shot down over the channel and aircrews lost over Kent. When's this ever going to end. *(She starts to cry.)*

HARRY

Now, now, Alice don't upset yourself. I expect you're just worried about Frank, aren't you.

MOLLY

*(Aggressively)* Course she's worried about Frank, so would Jessie be if it was you seeing action.

JESSIE

Don't upset yourself now girl, you've got to keep your pecker up. Frank will be home on leave soon and you'll see he's alright.

ALICE

Yes, Jessie, I suppose you're right. Thank You. *(Enter Mrs Riley)*

BILL

Hello Mavis, how's things going with you. Let me get you a drink...the usual?

MRS RILEY

Yes please, Bill. Well, we're coping. The day centre has turned into a refuge for the homeless. You wouldn't believe the hundreds without shelter after three

night's bombing. Some folks are too scared to sleep in their own homes now. There is a massive shelter in Exmouth Street where hundreds of people sleep.

MOLLY I heard that many folk are trekking out of Town every evening to escape the bombing. Is that right?

MRS RILEY That's right love, but many more are staying behind. The railway board are opening the gates off Commercial Road every evening so that folk can use the railway yards as a shelter. Thousands of them pour in every night...it's a sorry sight...all jostling for a place to sleep under the railway arches.

BILL Don't you think it's important, Mavis, that people shouldn't let this get to them...they must keep their spirits up.

JESSIE That's easier said than done with all this suffering and hardship.

ALICE Then we must do what we can to help.

MOLLY Yea, what about the Ding Dong - we should be opening this week but how can we...in here. (*Gesturing to the bomb damage.*)

BILL Look on the bright side...we still have the public bar. I never did like the saloon bar much.

MOLLY Yea, but the public bar's only got three walls now and even this ain't big enough.

HARRY Then we'll have to find another venue. Someone must be willing to let us use a space.

JESSIE Let's all put our heads together ....we'll think of something. We gotta show Adolph we can't be beaten that easily.

MOLLY Well said, Jessie!  
(*Others join in with words of approval.*)

BILL Right then, we all seem to be in agreement.  
(*Enter Tommy, distraught, followed by little Annie.*)

HARRY Tommy, there you are. We were only just talking about you.

TOMMY Where's Alice? I must talk to Alice.

JESSIE She's here, Tommy. Why? What's happened? (*He waves a telegram.*)

TOMMY Alice, oh Alice, I'm really sorry...

ALICE What? what is it Tommy? Not Frank...please not Frank. (*Sees Tommy's face and begins to get hysterical*)

TOMMY Frank's parents have just got this telegram. It seems Frank is missing in action....his plane was shot down over...

ALICE Oh God, no! (*She stands abruptly.*) And I never ever had a chance to tell him.. (*Alice wails hysterically and runs out followed by Jessie and Molly. The pub sits in stunned silence.*)

TOMMY I'm sorry everyone...I...I'd better go after Alice. (*Silence. Exit Tommy*)

HARRY How much worse can it get?

ANNIE Missing in action ain't so bad is it.

MRS RILEY **Annie!** (*Reprimanding*)

ANNIE I mean it's better than dead, ain't it. At least there's some hope he might come back alive.

MRS RILEY Yes, you're right Annie...at least there is some hope.

BILL And we did decide that we should look on the bright side. We must never give up hope.

HARRY Then we should continue with the ding dong. Frank would have wanted that.

BILL You're right son, and we should all play our part in the ding dong. Every one of us can do something to help.

HARRY What're we waiting for then? Let's go and find a hall. We won't find one sitting around 'ere all day. Let's get on with it. (*Exits*)

ALL Hear, hear! (*All begin to exit.*) *End of Scene.* Incidental: CD2 Track 5

## Act II, Scene 2, 157 Cable Street, Later That Evening

*Mary and Alice sit at the kitchen table. Alice knits while Mary darns socks. Alice suddenly bursts into tears.*

- MARY Keep yer pecker up old girl, it may not be as bad as all that.  
ALICE How can it be any worse? Frank's dead, what have I got to live for now.  
MARY Well, how's about yer family for a start... and yer friends? Anyhow, yer don't know that Frank's dead, do yer. Blokes have been missing in action before and turned up right as rain.  
ALICE Do yer really think so, Mary? Do yer think there's a chance that Frank may still be alive somewhere.  
MARY Course he might be, even being a prisoner of war is better than being dead ain't it? At least he'll be home in a few weeks when this wretched war is over.  
ALICE Oh, thank you Mary. You've given me something to hope for.  
MARY Well we have to keep our hopes alive, don't we.

### Song 10 Life's Like That Alice and Mary CD1 Track 10

Alice:

War lifts its brutal head, turns our neat world upside down,  
What is there left for us but prayers and hopes and dreams.  
Loved ones who won't return, young hearts with torment burn.  
Wounds which mere time will never heal.

Mary:

You must never let go of your hopes nor lose sight of your dreams,  
For the grip of winter's icy fingers slacken with the dawn of spring.  
Life's like that!  
And though ev'ry molehill seems a mountain surely when you reach the top  
Your troubles melt away.  
Life's like that.

Alice:

Oh, that these bitter hours would more swiftly pass away,  
Would that the future be unveiled before its time.  
Though this can never be, words sent to comfort me,  
Give fleeting respite from my pain.

Mary:

If at times you feel it's so unfair that life should treat you so,  
And some days you feel you can't go on remember you are not alone.  
Life's like that.  
For together we will face the future, you'll see when tomorrow comes,  
Your grey sky will turn blue.  
Life's like that.

MARY Alice.

ALICE Yes, Mary.

MARY I got something to tell yer.

ALICE Yes Mary, what is it?

MARY Well, yer know them Toffs don't yer?

ALICE Yes, Mary.

MARY And you know, the quiet one, William?

ALICE Do go on Mary, the suspense is killing me.

MARY *(She blurts this out)* Well, William and me have been seeing one another, I can't get him out of my mind, I think about him all the time and I think ....I'm falling in love with him.

ALICE *(Slowly)* Oh....my.....Gawd! Mary, what 'ave you gawn and done girl?

MARY Well, I don't see anything wrong with it. He's a nice bloke and I don't care 'ow 'e talks.. so there!

ALICE Well, I suppose if you're in love with him, you got no choice but to follow yer 'eart.

MARY Thank you, Alice. I knew you'd be on my side.

ALICE But he's gonna be a blinkin' earl some day.

MARY Is he? Why's that then?

ALICE Oh Mary, you poor naive little girl?  
*(Enter Tommy and Alfie.)*

ALFIE Well, I suppose we could have it in the church. Why not?

TOMMY Don't be daft, Tommy, yer can't have a ding dong in the church.

ALFIE Why not? The church bells go ding dong don't they? *(The girls laugh.)*  
Watcher girls. 'Bout time Tommy had that hole fixed. I'm fed up with seeing his big toe. *(The girls giggle.)*

TOMMY Hey, how about under the railway arches at the Tilbury shelter? They say about ten thousand people spent the night there last night. Or maybe even down the tube station?

ALFIE Now you're being ridiculous. Who ever heard of music hall entertainment down a tube station.  
*(Door-bell rings, Tommy pulls back the blackout curtain.)*

TOMMY Hey, what do yer know, it's a bell-boy with a telegram. *(Exits)*  
*(Alice starts to cry and is comforted by Mary.)*

MARY Not more bad news, please God. *(Tommy enters tearing open envelope.)*

TOMMY Well, would yer believe it, it's from them Toffs.

MARY Well they've got no business to be sending telegrams like that. Don't they know its upsetting for folks like us.

TOMMY Just belt up and listen won't you. It's an invite:  
HAVING A DINNER PARTY: STOP: AT CAFE DE PARIS: STOP:BE PLEASED IF YOU WOULD BE OUR GUESTS: STOP: WEDNESDAY AT EIGHT: STOP: SIGNED: WILLIAM ET AL.

MARY Who the 'ells Al? We don't know him do we?

ALICE *(Blowing her nose)* It just means and the rest, silly.

ALFIE Who's it addressed to, Tom?

TOMMY All of us: Tommy, Alfie, Jessie, Harry, Alice, Molly.. and, of course, you Mary.

ALFIE Well, I don't think we should go...on principal. I mean, there is a war on. Why should people like that have dinner parties in wartime? Shouldn't be allowed.

MARY We know what you mean, Alfie, but it would get us out of this hell-hole for a few hours.

TOMMY Yea, we need a break. I think we should go! And if Alfie wants to stick to his principals... Well he can stop behind on his own!  
*(Noises off of Mr and Mrs Ducket returning.)*  
 Cop a lot o' that.. its the old man and girl 'ome, and who's with 'em?  
*(Enter Mr Ducket, dressed in ARP uniform with Mrs Ducket, Molly and Sidney.)*

MRS D My, my, aren't we a crowd.

ALICE Hello Mum, Dad. Hey, Molly, Sidney, what're you doing here?

MRS D They're staying with us for a while, ducks while their mother is in hospital. She was caught in a bomb blast this afternoon...one of those wretched devices with a delay fuse dropped by Gerry last night. Went off unexpectedly.

ALICE Oh, Molly I'm real sorry. *(She puts her arm around Molly who shakes her off.)*

MOLLY Yea, but the stupid woman ignored the warning signs and went through a barrier, didn't she. She asked for it!

MR D Now, now Molly, we know you're upset.

MOLLY She couldn't just go down the next street instead, could she!

MRS D Anyway, she's going to be alright, but she has a broken leg and will be in hospital for a few weeks.

SIDNEY A few weeks?

MRS D Don't you worry your little head Sidney, you can stay here with us till she comes home.

SIDNEY *(Aside)* That's what worries me.

MRS D What's that? What d'yer say, Sidney?

SIDNEY I said thank you very much, Mrs Ducket!  
*(He slinks off and sinks into a chair.)*

MR D Look here, Ethel, why don't you just make us all a nice cup of tea?

SIDNEY I hate tea!  
*(Others ignore him. Mrs D Puts kettle on. Air-raid warning sounds.)*

MR D Oh hell, that's torn it! I've gotta go. I'm on duty tonight...  
*(Groans of disappointment from the others.)*  
 Look, Ethel, you see that these youngsters get out the back into the shelter.

ALICE There ain't room for all of us lot in that little tin box!.

MR D *(Crossly.)* Just do as you're told girl.

MRS D You be careful now, and don't you go getting yourself killed.

MR D Don't you worry about me, Ethel, I'm just like those wild cats on the dock-side; I got nine lives. *(Exit MrDucket)*

ALFIE Come on, Tommy, we've got work to do an' all. We ain't got time to get to our sector so let's report to the local HQ.

MARY I thought you was off-duty, tonight.

TOMMY No-one's ever off-duty in wartime, Mary.  
 See yer later - just get into that shelter, and quick.. *(They exit.)*

MRS D Come on then, look sharp, you heard him. Get yer shoes and coats on quick.  
*(The bombs start to fall.)*  
 On second thoughts, forget about the shoes and coats. Let's just go! Just grab yer gas-masks, quickly!  
*(She opens the door to a flash of flame from an incendiary.)*  
 Oh my God, we ain't got time. Quick, here, under the table. It's the safest place in the 'ouse.  
*(The girls and Sidney squeeze under the table. The bombing gets closer.)*

MOLLY Ere Sidney you little tyke, get yer mask on.  
*(Alice starts to weep and Sidney cries when there is a large explosion nearby and the lights go dim. Mrs Ducket takes off her mask and starts to sing 'Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner', softly at first, then louder in defiance of the bombs.)*

*Sidney continues to cry, periodically. Suddenly the house takes a direct hit. The room is now full of brick-dust and smoke but Mrs Duckett, invisible through the smoke, continues to sing, falteringly. Suddenly, all goes quiet except for a few moans and the sound of people coughing from the smoke.)*

SIDNEY I can't move..something's on my legs.

ALICE Just stay quiet, Sidney. Someone'll come and get us out in a moment, you'll see.

MOLLY Mary, Mary, you alright, I ain't 'eard your voice.

ALICE It's alright Molly, she's beside me, I've got 'er 'and. She's conscious but I guess she just can't speak on account of the shock.

MOLLY Thank God for that. I can't believe we could all have survived that blast.

*(Noises off: Shouts)*

WILLIAM The shelter's empty, they must be in the house.

EDWARD Poor devils, they've taken a direct hit.

WILLIAM Hey, is anyone, in there?

MRS D Yes, of course we're in here. Don't just stand there, get in here and help.

WILLIAM Try to stay calm, we're firemen, we'll get you out.

ALICE Thank God for that, we'll be out soon.

*(The door bursts open and William enters in the dark.)*

WILLIAM Hello! Are you there?

MRS D Course we're here you silly ass, just get the children out of here.

WILLIAM RIGHT! I say, Edward, Charles, there are some people in here, trapped under a table. Come and help.

CHARLES We're right with you, Will.

*(Enter Charles and Edward. William gently lifts Sidney and carries him outside. His clothes are torn and his face is blackened)*

WILLIAM Come on little fellow you need to get to hospital. *(Sidney groans as he is lifted.)*

SIDNEY *(Off-stage)* Hey, cop a load of that, they've come by taxi.

WILLIAM *(Off-stage)* It's our fire engine now. It's been converted.

SIDNEY Wow!

CHARLES You're next young lady, let's get you out of here.

MOLLY 'Ere, I know that voice...it's you, Charlie, ain't it?

CHARLES Good Lord, if it isn't young Molly from the Bull.

MOLLY 'Ere, what d'yer fink you're doin', pretending to be firemen?

EDWARD We ain't, I mean, we're not pretending; we **are** firemen.

CHARLES We're in training for the A.F.S. and, as they are so short-handed we were sent out to assist in the docklands area. The whole district is ablaze tonight.

*(They pull chunks of masonry away from the table.)*

MRS D And thank goodness you were or we'd all be goners, I'm sure.

EDWARD How do you do, Madam. The A.F.S. at your service.

*(Reaches under the table to shake hands.)*

ALICE Never mind all that. Just get us out.

*(Groans as she is lifted out by Edward. Charles tries to help Mrs Duckett out.)*

MRS D I can manage meself, thank you very much!

*(Charles then leads Molly out by the hand.)*

MRS D Right then, now we'll just go and find Mrs Jones at number 97 and she'll make us a nice cup of tea. We'll come back in the morning to tidy up this mess.

ALICE *(As they exit)* Hey, what about my friend? She's still under the table.

EDWARD *(Now offstage.)* Will, there's another lass still trapped in there.

WILLIAM I'll take care of this, chaps... Hello.....Hello

*(Mary groans.)*

Hold on there, miss, I'll get you out of there in a jiffy.

*(He lifts Mary out and sits her on the table.)*

MARY WILLIAM!  
WILLIAM My goodness, Mary, it's you! Are...are you alright?  
MARY I guess so, just a few bruises, that's all.  
WILLIAM But.. you could so easily have been killed.  
MARY Well I ain't dead, am I, so there!  
WILLIAM Oh Mary, you do look pretty when you are angry.....  
*(They embrace and kiss amidst the dust and debris in the gloom.  
Enter Mrs Ducket)*  
MRS D Bloody 'ell, she's kissing the blinkin' fireman now.....

*Blackout*

Incidental Music: CD2 Track 6

## Act II, Scene 3, The Cafe de Paris, Coventry Street

*Opens to a dance by the West-Enders, accompanied by an on-stage band. Two French waiters move around tables serving customers. The restaurant is clearly in a basement. Throughout the scene sounds of sirens and bombs are heard in the distance. Over the backs of some of the chairs are gas-masks. A few customers are dressed in military uniforms. The Maitre-D greets guests at the door and checks his reservation list.*

### Dance 4 French Waltz      CD1 Track 23

*At the end of the dance deep, chivalrous Gallic bows are given by the gents and curtsies by the ladies.*

- EDWARD      Well, Percy, what do you think of our little hide-away, The Cafe de Paris?  
Excellent spot for a little night-clubbing, even in wartime, what?
- PERCY        Absolutely top-class, Edward, and how clever of you to find a basement  
restaurant where life can go on without fear of the bombing.
- SOFIA        Don't you just love the French flavour, Percy? The French have such style. They  
are so gallant.
- HORATIO     Well, they can certainly cook better than they can fight!
- ED/CHAR    HORATIO!
- WILLIAM    You promised to cut out the anti-French jokes.
- CHARITY    He's a devil, is Horatio - full of wit.
- CHARLES    I wonder where our new friends from Stepney are. Do you think they will come  
tonight?
- WILLIAM    Oh, I do hope so. After the trauma of the bombs on Cable Street yesterday they  
may not feel like an evening out.
- HORATIO    Well we all know your motives, William. Do you think we haven't seen you with  
your little girl, Mawy?
- ELIZAB     Mary had a little lamb...
- CHARITY    And it's name was WILLIAM....*(Guffaws of laughter from the girls.)*
- EMMA        Aren't the waiters cute? They are **so** charming. Pierre, another G and T if you  
please, on the rocks.
- PIERRE     Certainly Madam, it will be wiz you immediately.
- EMMA        See what I mean, full of Gallic charm.
- SOFIA        This really puts one in a romantic frame of mind: the subdued lighting, the soft  
music, the atmosphere of a real French cafe at night. Can you not just feel the  
romance in the air. All we need is a French minstrel to serenade us through the  
night with songs of unrequited love and the evening would be just perfect.
- CHARLES    Well, there is a band, and they'll play whatever you like. You only have to ask  
them. And tip them a few shillings.
- EDWARD    I say, Maurice, will you play one of your smoochy numbers for the ladies,  
please?
- MAURICE    C'est mon plaisir, Monsieur. Un moment s'il vous plait.  
*(The musicians fluff around with their music and quickly communicate in  
hushed tones and with big gestures.)*
- EDWARD    Just you wait...you'll like this, you'll see.

**Song 11 Bien Venu Dans Notre Cafe**

Incidental Music: CD1 Track 11  
(Long version: Track 25)

*One of the boys starts the vocals and eventually it becomes a chorus number. Near the end the Eastenders enter looking surprised and confused. While others are on their feet, the Maitre D leads them to the tables. Their arrival is not noticed until immediately at the end of the song.*

*(Some characters grab white cloths from small tables and act out the part of French waiters and cafe owner.)*

Verse 1 Solo

Bien venu dans notre cafe, come inside with us today.  
Mangez tout ce que vous voulez, stay and while the hours away.  
This surely is your lucky day, you have found the perfect cafe.  
Take a glass and try our finest wine, your taste buds will blossom ev'ry time.

Verse 2 Ensemble or Chorus

Buvez notre meilleur vin et venez chanter avec nous,  
Finest waiters just a click away here to serenade you.  
Tout est au frais de la maison, finest menu in the city.  
Venez boire dans notre cafe, dans notre cafe de Paris.

Verse 3 Solo

- *(held note)* My friends, I'd love to stay but shortly must be on my way.  
If some day I chance to pass this way I will make the time to stay.  
Je reviendrai chez vous encore should I ever pass your door.  
Je n'ai plus de temps a boire du vin, Je doit m'en aller.

Chorus 1 and 2

Paris in the spring time, choicest food and finest wine.  
Find perfect company, open arms and bonhommie  
Candle-lit for romance with real gipsy fiddle folk song.  
Nous vous regalerons toute la nuit du vin et des chanson.

Chorus 3

Bon voyage a tous, our good wishes go with you.  
Un autre jour revenez chez nous.  
When you're next in Paris, return for our little soirree.  
Bonne chance mon amis, good wishes from Paris.

(Short version ends here. Long version: one verse of a dance (waltz) then repeat verse 1 and chorus 3)

*Other diners applaud at the end of the song.*

EDWARD Ah, our friends have arrived. Welcome to our treasured haunt - the Cafe de Paris.  
*(Big sweeping gesture, taking in the whole room.)*

ALFIE Watcher mates...and ladies.. and we're pleased to be here with yer, although I reckon that you should be our guests after your heroic deeds down Stepney yesterday, mate.

WILLIAM Don't mention it, old boy, all in the course of duty, I'm sure.

CHARLES Come and meet the girls, won't you...there's Sofia, Emma, Antoinette, Genevieve, Elizabeth and Charity. *(Each curtsies in turn.)*

MOLLY *(Aside)* Strewth, they're so refined. Makes me feel common as muck!

MARY You ARE common as muck! *(They all sit.)*

ALFIE Say, Chas, you must give us the lyrics for that little number you did back there; it would go down a treat in our music hall.

CHARLES Certainly old boy, it'd be a pleasure.

JESSIE Now just 'ang on a minute mate! Unless we find a theatre pretty quick, there ain't gonna be no ding dong.

CHARITY Oh, isn't she quaint, girls? I could just listen to her talk all night.

HORATIO Yes, you see ding dong is rhyming slang and it actually means ..sing-song

EMMA What's the problem then, Darling, have you nowhere to perform your .... ding dong?

HORATIO Well you see, it's like this: they were going to perform in the local inn, which is called the Bull Tavern. However, by some totally unforeseen set of circumstances - that is the dashed Nazi air raids...

ALL Horatio - do SHUT UP! *(He retires looking hurt.)*

MOLLY In a word miss.. we have no venue...we're 'omeless.

ELIZAB And when is this performance?

MOLLY Just as soon as we find a stage, Miss.

SOFIA Well, that's easily solved. You can have the Carlton club, can they not William?  
*(Gasps of surprise from the Westenders. William has by now engineered a place, by swapping with others, next to Mary. His jaw drops open at the suggestion. He looks at Mary, who is looking pleadingly at him)*

WILLIAM Well, I..I..I..I

SOFIA Right then, that's settled. The Carlton Club it is. *(Cheers go up.)*

ALFIE Shall we say...next Saturday? That should give plenty of time to rehearse.

ALFIE Lady, I'd like to thank you from the bottom of me 'eart. That's a real generous gesture that is. You're quite a lady. *(He kisses her hand and bows.)*

SOFIA Why, thank you, Alfred...

ALFIE Alfie!

HARRY I vote that we use the opportunity of a real French band to 'ave a go at that number what you was singing when we come in. We thought it was 'absolutely spiffing, what chaps?'

OTHERS Yea, let's do it *(and other rejoinders)*

TOMMY Music Maestro, the introduction, if you please.... and be sharp about it!

HORATIO *(Guffaws with laughter like a horse gulping in breath.)*  
Yes, I get it B Sharp, very musical pun, what!  
*(Laughs again. Others laugh with him.)*

**Reprise of Song 11**, last chorus: *(This time by Eastenders, mispronouncing the French)* CD1 Track 19

*(Applause and cheers from other diners at end of song and curtain)*

Incidental Music: CD 2 Track 7

## Act II, Scene 4, En Route to The East End

*The curtain opens onto an empty street scene in the blackout. The sky is lit with the red glow of distant fires. We hear the noisy East End characters well before they enter as they are clearly intoxicated.*

*Drunken reprise, a capella of chorus 3, Song 11, (Some of the words are mispronounced!)*

ALFIE *(Off-stage)* Oi! Who left that damn hole there?  
MOLLY It's a bomb-crater, you fool! Gerry left it there.  
ALFIE Well, I'm going to return it to him! He had no business leaving it there.  
POSH-VOICE Oi you, shut up won't you, it's past midnight, decent folks are trying to sleep here, you know!  
TOMMY Sorry, mate, it's my friend here, I'll take him home.  
*(Alfie backs onto the stage.)*  
ALFIE Shhhh! *(Whispered)* We mustn't wake up the decent folks.  
*(Others enter shhhing likewise. Several of them fall over.)*  
TOMMY Entschuldigung, mein Herr aber I have lost a hole around here somevere. Have you seen ze lost hole anyvere?  
ALFIE Ich bin very sorry, Adolf, but your hole has been confiscated by the war ministry for inspection.  
*(The girls have spotted a policeman entering and are resigned to their fate.)*  
TOMMY Vot is zis? Vot do zey vont viz ziz hole? *(Turns and sees officer.)*  
Oh, good evening, ociffer, oceffice, o-ffi-cer.  
POLI Ah, quite a little crowd, aren't we? And where might we be going at this time of night?  
MARY Well, you see ociffer, we're not actually going anywhere!  
*(Others nod in agreement. Tommy falls over.)*  
MOLLY That's right, we're not.  
POLI *(Deliberately)* You're not --going--anywhere--are you?  
ALICE No, you see, we've already been there.  
POLI And where might this be, this place that that you've already been?  
ALFIE Gaie Paris. *(Does a little dance.)*  
POLI I see! So let me get this straight: It's gone midnight, we're in a blackout, and you are on your way back from Paris..... on foot.  
TOMMY No, no, no, ociffer....you've got this all wrong. You see, we've just been out to dinner at the Cafe de Paris with Lord Gresham, Lord Molyneux and the honourable Edward Gresham.  
POLI Of course you have, young man, and my mother was Queen Victoria! Now I think you'd better take a walk with me down to the station and my sergeant'll find out what you've really been up to. Looting, I don't doubt.  
ALICE No, please Mister, they're telling the truth. They ain't no looters. Why won't you believe them?  
POLI Well, I'll tell you why, shall I? I know you're from the East End and I reckon you have been up to mischief with about a hundred of your East End friends at the Savoy Hotel.  
MOLLY The Savoy? How did you know we'd been there? The audition was ages ago anyway. We never got in. *(She sobs.)*  
ALFIE 'Ang about, what sort of mischief are you talking about?  
POLI Taking over the basement banqueting hall as a protest over the lack of air-raid shelters in the East End!

MOLLY Would yer Adam and Eve it. They actually did that?

POLI Too right they did, and His Majesty's Constabulary, that is me and other lads from the station, had to waste our valuable time this evening ejecting the said offenders from the site of their occupation.

ALICE Will yer cop a load a' that! But we ain't nothing to do with that lot.

MARY Hey, why don't you get your sergeant to telephone William, I mean, Lord Gresham, and ask him? He'll give us an alimony.

TOMMY You mean alibi, Mary.

MARY Whatever!

POLI And may I ask you, Miss, how you came about that lovely silk blouse yer wearing there?

MARY Yea, you can ask, but I won't tell yer 'cos you're just pickin' on me, in't yer.

TOMMY Mary, there is no need to be difficult with the ociffer. Tell him!

MARY I made it meself.. out of a parachute!

HARRY Most people when they see a parachute mine falling run the other way. Not our Mary, she runs towards it.

MARY That's right and if it don't explode then I cut away a bit of the silk to make meself a new blouse.

ALFIE Or a pair of silky knickers!

GIRLS Shut up, Alfie!

MARY And there ain't no law against it neither.

POLI No, I suppose you're right, Miss.

ALICE We tried to get a bus home and the only bus what came along was for Blackpool Tower. I ask you, why in heaven's name is a bus going from Coventry street to Blackpool at this hour?

POLI That's just one of the hired fleet brought in to replace the bombed out London buses. They obviously forgot to change the sign.

TOMMY Yer kiddin' us!  
*(Sounds of whistling off)*

MOLLY 'Ere, ain't yer got that telegram on yer, Alfie?

ALFIE I fink I got it 'ere somewhere - just a mo'. Yea, 'ere it is.  
*(He gives it to the policeman. Who inspects it with difficulty under the pink glow of the bomb-sites.)*

ALICE Oi, look, who's this coming now? Could be one of your demonstrators.  
*(They all look to see Frank enter, in full uniform, carrying his kit-bag.)*

MOLLY My Gawd, it's never Frank, surely?

HARRY By heck it is, mate! Frank, we thought you was a gonner.  
*(Frank looks surprised and then delighted. Alice freezes, stunned into silence.)*

FRANK Well what d'yer know...a welcoming committee.. and how d'yer know I was coming home tonight?

ALICE *(Screams)* Frank, Frank, Frank...*(Throws herself at him)*

FRANK Well at least yer remember me name after all this time.

ALICE I never gave up hope, Frank, I knew you'd come back to me.

ALFIE Where yer been then, mate? Did Gerry get yer?

FRANK I was shot down on a night recce over the French coast. Luckily a fishing boat spotted me in the drink and picked me up. The resistance fellas hid me until I could be smuggled across in a fishing vessel...and ....well, here I am!

TOMMY Well at least that explains the awful fishy hum around here, and I thought it was just Alfie's feet again.  
*(Alfie takes a swipe at him, misses and falls over. Frank and Alice are still locked together.)*

POLI Well, well, well!

ALFIE Well?

POLI I suppose under the circumstances I should let you get on your way. (*Handing back the telegram.*)

FRANK “What’s he mean, “under the circumstances”?”

MARY Never mind that now, it’s not important any more.

TOMMY It is getting light, officer...Hey....I said it right!  
(*Quick burst of applause from others.*)  
And we have to work in the morning.

POLI That’s not the light of dawn yer see there, it’s the fires in the docklands lighting up the sky.

MARY My God, you could read a book by that light and we’re still four miles from the docks.

MOLLY Look, we have to go quick...our families may be in danger!

POLI Alright then, my young friends. You go carefully now – and don’t cross any ARP tape; you might fall into a bomb-hole.  
Be sure to put in a good word with Lord Gresham, his father is a high court judge, you know. And put that fag out, it’s against the blackout regulations.  
(*Policeman is already exiting.*)

TOMMY Alright mate, see yer again sometime.

POLI (*Off-stage*) I sincerely hope not.

MOLLY (*Begins to exit*) Come on you lot, we’ve got four miles to walk before dawn.  
(*As they exit*)

MARY It’s so flamin’ light.

MOLLY That’s why the Krauts drop them incendiary things .. they’re like flares to light the way for HE bombers.

ALFIE Crafty beggars..they know how to hurt us!

ALICE Frank, oh Frank, I can’t believe you’ve come back! These last few weeks have been awful. (*They are now alone on stage.*)

FRANK I know, love, I know.

ALICE You see, the thing is Frank...that before you went away I kept trying to tell you something, but I just couldn’t pluck up the courage.

FRANK I know, darling, me too.

ALICE I thought I’d never see you again and never be able to tell you....

FRANK Well, go on then; now’s your chance, girl.....

ALICE Frank, I, I .....(*The sound of an air-raid siren drowns Alice’s words.*)

(*Searchlights play on the sky. Noise of air-raid siren drowns the dialogue.*)

### BLACKOUT

Incidental Music: CD2 Track 8

## Act II, Scene 5, The Carlton Club, Belgravia

*Tables are arranged on one side of the stage, leaving a small dance area on the other side. Sykes and Roberts wait at the tables. The West End characters are all seated and enjoying the song. During the song, Mr and Mrs Duckett, Bill and Mrs Riley appear as pearly kings and queens. Old Mother Brown appears in her nightdress and bed-socks to give a solo on the spoons, accompanied by Bill on the washboard. A short tango is danced by some East End couples in the instrumental section. During the second instrumental section, the West End girls join in the dance and steal the East End boys from their girls. Annie and Sidney sip wine under the table during this song.*

ALFIE        My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to The Carlton Club. For your entertainment, and to keep yer peckers up, – we give you 'In a Little Cafe in Vienna'.

### **Song 12 In a Little cafe in Vienna** (Performed by a group of the Eastenders) CD1 Track 12

Verse 1:

In a little café in Vienna,  
At my table close beside the street.  
It's there I'd go each day just to while the hours away,  
The air with wine and roses' scent was sweet.  
Every Friday night the Spanish dancers  
Serenaded true flamenco style,  
Guitar's percussive strum and the gently beaten drum,  
Blended with the music all the while.

Chorus:

For it takes two to tango, two is company but three's a crowd,  
Raven hair and Spanish eyes that shine,  
Beneath that youthful smile there lurks a magic to beguile,  
One day I hope your path will cross with mine.

Verse 2:

Little dancing girl, a dark-haired beauty;  
Smiling eyes and fiery Spanish face.  
Across the crowded room just a glance would kindle soon  
A romance without words or close embrace.  
By the light of many glowing candles  
She would dance to me and take my hand.  
Above the noisy crowd how my heart would beat aloud;  
Clashing with the rhythm of the band.

Verse 3:

Many years have passed by in Vienna,  
Gone are names and faces I would trust.  
Through ravages of war now our cafe is no more.  
Bombs and shells have turned its bricks to dust.  
Searching vainly for my secret loved one;  
Dark Hispanic beauty of Seville.  
And still the waiters cries seem to fill the leaden skies  
Scent of wine and roses linger still.

ALFIE *(Stepping forward and delivering this speech in a music hall chairman's style.)*  
My lords ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the strolling cockney players I would like to thank you from the bottom of me 'eart for coming along tonight to support our bash.

BILL Concert, Alfie – concert.

ALFIE Oh, I beg yer pardon, Guvs, I meant concert.  
*(Cheers from the East End crowd, others join in belatedly.)*  
Yer see, after Gerry dropped that untimely bomb on the Bull Tavern, that's our local, yer know, we thought it was curtains for the revival of the old ding dong.

ALL Ahh!

ALFIE But thanks to them toffs, er, I mean, thanks to our new-found friends from Belgravia, we have a venue and the show goes on.  
*(Hearty cheers from all)*  
Gentlemen, I propose a toast to our friends William, Edward, Charles, Percy and Horatio, on two counts:  
Firstly, for generously providing a venue. *(Cheers.)*  
Secondly, for rescuing our Mrs Ducket, Molly, Alice, Mary and Sidney after Gerry dropped a blinkin' bomb on 'em. *(Cheers.)*  
Thirdly...

TOMMY You said on two counts, Alfie, use yer fingers if yer can't keep track. *(Laughter)*

ALFIE Yea, well I just thought of another one, ain't I! Thirdly, to the Earl of Gresham for the use of his pub.

BILL Club, Alfie!

ALFIE Er, I mean club. In fact, we was rather 'oping he would be in tonight to catch the show. *(Cheers go up again.)*  
*(William and Edward look embarrassed.)*

MRS D William, yer old man does know about this, don't he?

WILLIAM Well, I...I...I....

ALFIE Well, does he or not?

WILLIAM *(Blurting it out)* Not!

SOFIA Oh, William, you said you'd tell papa yourself.

WILLIAM I did try.... I, I just couldn't find the right moment.

ALFIE Cripes! Supposing he don't approve.

HORATIO Don't worry, he'll approve alright. He's pretty forward looking in his politics.  
Sykes, please fetch a crate of the best champers. That'll help the singing.

SYKES Certainly, Sir. Right away, Sir.

CHARLES Besides, the club must contribute to the war effort. If an evening like tonight goes a little way towards raising the morale of you good people who are in the front line of Hitler's assault on civilians, then it is surely worth the sacrifice.

HORATIO Wules are there to be bent or bwocken especially in war-time. Even old twaditions are no longer welevant.

PERCY Well, in that case we should alter the words of the song, eh boys? Especially if we are letting working class and ladies in for concerts.

EDWARD I say, that would be jolly good sport. Why don't we try it now chaps?

**Reprise Song 3**, last verse and chorus, The Club (The Pub) CD1 Track 15

The rules of the pub are the gospel, you'll learn each one off pat,  
You may come in in your working boots, if you scrape the mud on the mat.  
Often shalt thou buy the round, especially when it's pay day,  
Thou shalt not put thy feet upon the bar and thou shalt stay sober 'til the end of day.

The pub, the pub, the pub, a working class utopia,  
Ale on the 'ouse and free fish and chips with pearly king and queen.  
The pub, the pub, the pub, home-brewed beer in Belgravia,  
With rhyming slang and a good old sing-a-long and a swear box in ev'ry room.

*(William, Edward, Charles, Percy and Horatio begin the song with altered lyrics. For the chorus the East End boys join them. The girls are now seated and intermingled. At the end of the song there is enthusiastic applause. Enter the Earl and Lady Gresham and there is silence. All rise. The Earl crosses downstage and surveys every detail of the scene. He picks up an empty bottle of brown ale and sniffs it in disgust.)*

WILLIAM Good evening, Father, Mother.

LADY G William, I believe you owe your father an explanation.

WILLIAM I...I...I...

LADY Now, William – and stop that spluttering.

WILLIAM Sorry, Mother. Well, you see, we ...we...

EDWARD Oh, do sit down, William, I'll explain.

EARL Yes, please do sit down - all of you. *(All sit.)*

EDWARD We decided, Father, that it was about time that this club *(sweeping gesture)* contributed to the war effort.

HORATIO Other institutions have made their own contribution.

EDWARD We don't propose to melt down the silver or even to allow troops to be billeted here. No, we feel that we should throw open our doors, every once in a while, to the populace – to boost morale.

LADY G Edward, don't be preposterous, this is not a theatre.

EARL And do you propose to start a soup kitchen or will you be more selective about whom you let in.

*(The following is an aside, unheard by the earl.)*

ALFIE Hear that: 'Whom you let in', he said.... Who does he think we are? A load of tramps or somethink.

TOMMY You mean 'whom' does he think we are!

EDWARD Well, William will be the chairman of the club one day. He should be able to have some say about its administration.

*(William hides his face in his hands in recognition that the conversation is not going his way.)*

EARL I think we have heard quite enough from you, young Edward. Now I feel that it's my turn.

ANNIE Please Sir, Your Honour. If I might be allowed to speak.

*(All turn to look at Annie, who crosses downstage.)*

EARL Why certainly, young lady. If you have something to say on the subject – then we shall listen to you. I expect you will make more sense than either of my sons is able to. Pray, what do we call you, child.

ANNIE Annie! Annie's me name, Your 'Ighness. Annie of Stepney.  
 EARL Pleased to meet you, Annie. *(He offers his hand and Annie curtsies.)*  
 Now, what would you like to say?  
 ANNIE Well. You see, when we first met your William, Edward and the others, we thought they was just toffee-nosed aristocrats what'd never done an 'ard days work in their lives.  
*(Lady Gresham rapidly inhales in disgust. The Earl holds up a hand to silence her.)*  
 But we was wrong. We couldn't have been much wronger. You see, we'd 'eard that they had joined the AFS and, to our shame, we was cynical about it.  
 MRS D Cynical dear!  
 EARL Sh, sh! *(Gesturing for silence)*  
 ANNIE But then our street was 'it by one of Gerry's bombs – *(indignantly)* landed right outside Mrs Duckett's front door it did - and if it weren't for William, Edward and Charles they'd 'ave been goners by now. They charged right into the 'ouse, just when it could 'ave collapsed at any moment and carried them out, one by one.  
 MRS D Too true!  
 ANNIE They saved their lives they did, and no mistake.  
*(A murmur of approval resounds around the room.)*  
 And if that weren't enough, Your Earlship, they 'eard our pub was bombed out and there was nowhere for us to hold the ding dong, so they showed us their 'ospitality and invited us 'ere. That was real generous and in the good old tradition of Cockney spirit. This country needs people like your boys. Instead of cursing them about it you should be proud of them.  
*(For a moment all is silent, then Sofia stands and begins to applaud Annie's speech. To everyone's surprise, the Earl joins in. Annie looks bewildered as one by one the others stand and join in the applause.)*  
 EARL Young lady, you make one heck of a speech!  
 ANNIE Thank you, Your Grace.  
*(Enter Sykes with the champagne. When he sees the Earl, he stops dead and looks from one to the other of the aristocrats, waiting for his next order.)*  
 EARL Jolly good show, Sykes. You read my mind. We have a toast to drink to our young friends here. And their **weekly** concert at the Carlton Club. Long may it continue.  
 ALFIE Three cheers for the Earl. Hip, hip...etc. *(All respond.)*  
 EARL Well, at least we have not had to turn the swimming pool into a farmyard, as they have at the ladies' club.  
 CHARLES Hey chaps, I've a monster of an idea. Why don't we sing a verse of that song we heard at the Café Paris? All of us, I mean. Regardless of our heritage; east meets west!  
 EDWARD Excellent. Music please.  
*(The Earl and Countess are led to front seats to enjoy the entertainment. As the music starts they are introduced to Mr and Mrs Duckett, Bill, Mrs Riley and Old Mother Brown.)*

**REPRISE Song 11**, *One verse and chorus (Some of the boys and girls dance a waltz)*  
 CD1 Track 20

Buvez notre meilleur vin et venez chanter avec nous,  
 Finest waiters just a click away here to serenade you.  
 Tout est au frais de la maison, finest menu in the city.  
 Venez boire dans notre cafe, dans notre cafe de Paris.

Paris in the spring time, choicest food and finest wine.  
Find perfect company, open arms and bonhommie  
Candle-lit for romance with real gipsy fiddle folk song.  
Nous vous regalerons toute la nuit du vin et des chanson.

- (Ted Duckett steps forward and gestures for the applause to stop)*  
MR D By your leave, My Lord, I would like to propose a toast myself.  
EARL By all means, Mr Duckett.  
MR D On the safe return of young Frank ... and on the occasion of his engagement to our daughter Alice. *(Reactions of approval)* To Frank and Alice!  
*(Frank and Alice both stand to receive the toast and Frank gives Alice an embarrassed peck. Cheers at this. All sit down, including Ted.)*  
CHARLES Come on Will, it's your turn now.  
*(William reluctantly stands to sounds of encouragement from the boys.)*  
WILLIAM Father, Mother, I have been looking for an opportunity to tell you this ... and now seems as good a time as any. You see...I...I...  
CHARLES Go on Will.  
WILLIAM Fate works in very strange ways. If we had not had a burst tyre we would never have had to stop in Stepney. We would never have met this smashing crowd of people you see before you....  
PERCY Hear, hear!  
WILLIAM And I never would have met Mary! That is ... Mary and I would never have fallen in love. You see chaps – I've gone and asked her to marry me and she said yes!  
*(All look at the Earl in anticipation of a rebuke! The Earl does not even look surprised.)*  
EARL *(Standing)* Ladies and Gentlemen, it is clear to me that we all have much to learn. War, although a terrifying and horrific experience for those who live through it, may change peoples' perspectives. Some will learn to cope with the loss of loved ones and others, who may be lucky enough to survive, will view the world in a different light.  
CHARLES Quite so!  
EARL Things which appear important in peace time, such as class differences and different modes of speech, can be seen to be unimportant in the light of war. It takes such a catastrophe to break down the artificial barriers of class and race. William, your mother and I are not entirely insensitive to your feelings. We have known for a while now about your romantic attachment to young Mary. Gone are the days when aristocrats could only intermarry. Surely it is better to marry for love than to further the ambitions of aristocratic empire-builders. It is with pleasure, therefore, that I give my blessing to your engagement and forthcoming marriage to Miss Mary Penny.  
*(A great cheer goes up. The Earl gestures for silence.)*  
I do hope that Lady Mary Gresham, as she will be known, will still be accepted in Stepney.  
MRS D Your too right, Mister, she'll be welcome to drop in for a cuppa any time she's down Stepney way.  
EARL Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you a toast; to Lord William and Lady Mary.  
ALL *(All stand)* Lord William and Lady Mary.

WILLIAM And I sincerely hope that, as Mary and I get to know each other even better, some of your Cockney spirit will rub off on me.

ALFIE Free cheers for the 'appy couple. Hip, hip etc.

*(All the East Enders' hats are thrown into the air on the last hooray and the song begins immediately.)*

**Song 13 Cockney Spirit** CD1 Track 13

CHORUS 1:

In England's glorious history this is our darkest hour,  
With the freedom of our people threatened by a foreign power.  
But our brave and gallant soldiers, just lads like you and me,  
Must leave their friends and loved ones and must fight to keep us free.

VERSE 1:

They may destroy our reservoirs and bomb us in the dark.  
We huddle cowed in the candlelight as the bombers leave their mark.  
But of one thing we're quite certain, though they strike us when we're down,  
That they can't destroy our spirit and our will to keep England's crown.

CHORUS 2:

Who puts the Great in Britain, who keeps this country free?  
Could it be him in the bowler hat with a briefcase on each knee;  
Or Whitehall's paper-pushing army or Westminster's finest brains,  
Or maybe the Cockney sparrow on the number three in the rain.

VERSE 2:

Through bomb blast, fire and rationing, we will march with heads held high.  
We'll play our part on the home front to protect our liberty.  
For children, women and elderly all have a role to play;  
And we'll show that wicked Adolph that we all can save the day.

CHORUS 3:

To find that magic ingredient in dark and troubled times,  
Just listen for the hallowed tones of dear old Bow Bell's chimes.  
Their peal will keep your peckers up, your sky will turn bright blue,  
And that good old Cockney spirit will help to see you through.

*Blackout*

*Curtain Calls*

**Song 5, Reprise Good Old England** CD1 Track 16

Everyone loves good old England and there's no-one that I know  
Who would leave that good old England for any other place to go.  
As we stroll along the promenade hand in hand each moonlit night,  
We will talk about old England for good old England we will fight.

Give me a village square, children play on the green;  
Country folk, full of good cheer, stand around and spend their day gossiping.  
Bright lights shine in the town as folk rush by.  
This is why I am so glad that old England she is mine.

From the glorious parks and gardens of our green and pleasant isle  
To the frozen lakes and snowy mountains of Cumbria's rural style;  
And the coves and sandy beaches of that ancient Cornish shore;  
There's a place for every Englishman and it's our pride for evermore.

CD2 Tracks 9 and 10 if required

## Down Stepney Way – Comic Sketch

Comedian 1 (*Gesturing to others*)

Well go on then, get offstage! I start this on my own. You know that.

Comedian 2 Alright, alright, keep your hair on, Sam.

Comedian 1 Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I won't keep you long. I know you're all very busy doing your bit for the war effort. Speaking of which, what about this rationing lark; isn't it a pain. I went into the butcher's yesterday – 'Jack', I said, 'what sort of meat have you got for me today, Jack?'. 'Well', he said, 'I've got mutton and venison - that's all. 'Is the mutton dear?', I said. 'Oh no', he said, 'the mutton's sheep and the venison's deer'.

(*Enter Comedian 2 and 3*)

Comedian 2 I say, I say.

Comedian 1 Not you again. You're not supposed to be on yet.

Comedian 2 I couldn't help overhearing you talking about the butcher.

Comedian 1 What of it?

Comedian 2 I went to the butcher myself yesterday. There was quite a queue, you know.

Comedian 3 Why's that, because of the rationing?

Comedian 2 No, Jack said his assistant had backed into the meat slicer and he got a little behind in his orders.

Comedian 1 Oh, shut up, wont you! That's disgusting.

Comedian 3 Well I went to the pet shop down the high street yesterday. Old Wrigley was there with that old cat of his. He said some little brat had been throwing stones at it over the garden fence. Wrigley said he'd teach him to throw stones at his cat. Thank you', said the boy, 'I've been trying for half an hour and haven't hit it once yet'.

Comedian 2 Don't remind me about pets. I reversed over Mrs Peacock's dog last week. Killed it outright.

Comedian 3 You never did! What on earth did you tell Mrs Peacock?

Comedian 2 Well, I told her I would replace the dog.

Comedian 3 What did she say?

Comedian 2 She said I could never replace her dog. I can't bark

Comedian 1 Last time I went to that pet shop there was a boy there pulling faces at this bulldog. I asked him why he was doing it and he said, 'well he started it'.

Comedian 2 Look you should have some respect for Captain Wrigley. He fought in the great war, you know. In fact, he's got a wooden leg to prove it. Says it hurts like hell.

Comedian 3 How can a wooden leg hurt like hell.

Comedian 2 It does when his Mrs hits him over the head with it.

Comedian 3 My old man was in the war too. A hero he was. He saved the lives of 500 men in his unit.

Comedian 2 Really? What did he do?

Comedian 3 He shot the cook.

Comedian 1 Hey, speaking of soldiers, did you hear about the two cockney soldiers who were writing home.

Comedian 3 What of it?

Comedian 1 One said to the other, 'here, how d'ya spell fought. The other one said, 'which fought d'ya mean? Would that be the fight ya fought in or the fort you fight in?' 'Neither', said the other, 'I mean the fought yer fink.'

Comedian 2 What did the nurse say to the wounded soldier she was wheeling to the operating theatre?

Comedian 1 I dunno. What did she say?

Comedian 2 She said, 'this is your lucky night, son. You're going to the theatre to attend an opening.

Comedian 3 Do you think she was good looking.

Comedian 1 How would I know?  
Comedian 3 I knew a good looking nurse once. I said, if I were sick I'd love to be nursed by you. She said that what be a miracle.  
Comedian 1 Why's that then?  
Comedian 3 She worked on the maternity ward.  
Comedian 2 Well I must be off now. I'm going to the pictures tonight.  
Comedian 3 Last time I went to the pictures there was a party of school-kids in my row.  
Comedian 2 So what?  
Comedian 3 The teacher was a fierce old dragon. After the interval all these kids trooped back in in a long line. 'Excuse me, sir,' she said to me, but did these children trample on your toes on the way out.' Yes, I said, they certainly did. I thought she was going to apologise. Not a bit of it. 'Right kids,' she said, 'this is our row.'

*(Producer interrupts sketch)*

## A Midsummer Night's Dream – Act Three, Scene 2

(An adaptation)

### Dramatis Personae:

Oberon  
Puck  
Mustard Seed  
Cobweb  
Moth  
Lysander  
Demetrius  
Helena  
Hermia

PUCK            My fairy lord, this must be done in haste,  
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,  
And yonder shines aurora's harbinger,  
At whose approach ghosts wand'ring here and there  
Troop home to churchyards. Damned spirits all  
That in crossways and floods have burial  
Already to their wormy beds are gone.  
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,  
They wilfully themselves exile from light,  
And must for aye consort with black-browed night.

OBERON        But we are spirits of another sort.  
I with the morning's love have oft made sport,  
And like a forester the groves may tread  
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery red,  
Opening on Neptune, with fair blessed beams  
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.  
But notwithstanding, haste: make no delay.  
We may effect this business yet ere today.

COBWEB}            Up and down, up and down,  
MUSTARD}           We will lead them up and down.  
MOTH}                We are feared in field and town.  
(Together)            Goblins, lead them up and down.

COBWEB        Here comes one.

(Enter Lysander)

LYSANDER      Where art thou, proud Demetrius? Speak thou now.

MUSTARD      (in Demetrius's voice)  
Here, villain, drawn and ready. Where art thou?

LYSANDER      I will be with thee straight.

MUSTARD (in Demetrius's voice)  
Follow me then, to plainer ground.

(Enter Demetrius)

DEMETRIUS Lysander, speak again! Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled? Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

MOTH (in Lysander's voice)  
Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars?  
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars

DEMETRIUS Yea, art thou there?

MOTH (in Lysander's voice)  
Follow my voice, we'll try no manhood here.

(They exit)

(Enter Lysander)

LYSANDER He goes before me and still dares me on;  
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.  
The villain is much lighter-heeled than I.  
I followed fast but faster he did fly.  
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,  
And here will rest me, come thou gentle day,  
For if but once thou show me thy grey light,  
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite.

(He lies down and sleeps)

(Enter Demetrius and Cobweb)

COBWEB (in Lysander's voice)  
Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

DEMETRIUS Where art thou now?

COBWEB (In Lysander's voice)  
Come hither, I am here.

DEMETRIUS Nay then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear  
If ever I thy face by daylight see.  
Now go thy way. Faintness constraineth me  
To measure out my length on this cold bed.  
By day's approach look to be visited.

(He lies down and sleeps)

(Enter Helena)

HELENA     O weary night! O long and tedious night,  
Abate thy hours. Shine comforts from the east,  
That I may back to Athens by daylight  
From these that my poor company detest;  
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,  
Steal me awhile from my own company.

(She lies down and sleeps)

(Enter Mustard and Moth)

MUSTARD    Yet but three? Come one more.  
Two of both kinds makes up four.

MOTH        Here she comes, curst and sad.  
Cupid is a knavish lad  
Thus to make poor females mad.

(Enter Hermia)

HERMIA     Never so weary, never so in woe,  
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briars -  
I can no further crawl, no further go;  
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.  
Here will I rest me till the break of day.  
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray.

(She lies down and sleeps)

(Enter all sprites)

PUCK        On the ground  
Sleep sound.  
I'll apply  
To your eye,  
Gentle lover, remedy.

(He squeezes juice on Lysander's eyelids)

COBWEB     When thou wak'st,  
Thou tak'st  
True delight  
In the sight  
Of thy former lady's eye.

MOTH        And the country proverb known,  
That every man should take his own,  
In your waking shall be shown.

MUSTARD    Jack shall have Jill,  
Nought shall go ill,  
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.