

The Sea is Red

by

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First Edition

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Synopsis

This is a story of four young women and the effects of the 1939/45 war on their romantic liaisons.

After a “vocal overture” on the theme of war and peace, we meet first in February 1945 KWANITA HERMANN 28 years old, a young Spanish widow from Barcelona, whose German husband has been killed in an air raid, but who continues to work for his company and also acts as an interpreter for the German military. She offers to conceal ALAN APPLEBY 26 years old, an RAF man who has escaped from a POW camp until the anticipated allied advance brings the war in Europe to an end. Their friendship blossoms into love, but circumstances contrive to frustrate their plans.

By VE Day, back in England, Alan’s sister, LOUISE APPLEBY 23 years old, whose fiancé, RICHARD HALLETT 25 years old, is serving in the army in Germany, is worrying whether, when he eventually comes home, she should admit to a brief affair she has had in his absence with an army captain, SAM BEAUMONT 26 years old, she met at a dance.

Louise (apprentice hairdresser) confides in her best friend, HAZEL EMERSON (library assistant) 24 years old, who is embarrassed by the fact that she herself was attracted to Sam but stifled her feelings because she thought that Sam preferred Louise. Hazel pretends that she did not previously know about the affair.

LORRAINE EMERSON 21 years old, unlike her level-headed sister, Hazel, is a live-for-the-day featherbrain who falls head over heels in love with PETER CONNER 23 years old, Sam’s fellow officer.

(in front of closed curtain looking stage right)

(Song 1) **We Need Peace**

1st Verse FULL CAST

They have seen some dreadful things in their time,
They were serving together in the First World War.
They were all there fighting on the front line,
Hopeful they would come home in one piece - as before.

Chorus

They have seen all the shocking things,
That war always brings.
When there's war; who can say anyone wins?
They have seen all the lovely things,
That peace always brings.
We need peace, peace, peace; that's when life begins.

2nd Verse

They all had to go back to fight again,
A sad returning to the dreadful battlefield
Once again living in some filthy den,
Fighting to stay alive, what's gone wrong with this world?

Chorus

They have seen all the shocking things,
That war always brings.
When there's war; who can say anyone wins?
They have seen all the love
That peace always brings.
We need peace, peace, peace; that's when life begins.

(waving off towards the soldiers, and slowly exit)

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A house in Hanover, Germany- Friday 2nd February 1945. When the curtain rises the stage is in darkness, but sounds can be heard of someone walking around and then climbing stairs. A door is opened, and a (RAF POW camp escapee) 19-year-old-Alan Appleby enters a 28-year-Mrs Kwanita Hermann's bedroom (a widow from Barcelona) and is shocked to see that she's wearing a fluffy, light-purple dressing gown and is standing by the bed with a stick in her hand. (Kwanita's German husband had been killed in an air raid, but she continues to work for his company and also acts as an interpreter for the German military)

ALAN

(holding his hand out in front of him)

Don't worry. I'm not going to hurt you.... Oh, you won't understand ...

KWANITA

Who are you? What do you want?

ALAN

(relieved)

So, you speak English! That's good.

KWANITA

Obviously! What are you doing in my house?

ALAN

I have just escaped from a prisoner-of-war camp, and I plan to get as far away from here as possible as soon as possible. I'm sorry to have given you a shock, but I thought nobody was at home and I needed food and drink and a change of clothes.....

(pause)

Wait a minute. I've seen you before, but how...?

KWANITA

(in recognition)

Of course, the interrogation.

ALAN

(confused)

Ye-es ... how embarrassing. If I'd known, I would've looked elsewhere. Something tells me you made sure they wouldn't use any unpleasant ways of getting information out of me.

KWANITA

I was quite certain you didn't know anything that would've been of any use to them. I wasn't keen on their methods and by the way, I'm not German. I'm Spanish.

ALAN

Oh, I see... or, rather, I don't. What are you doing in Hanover?

KWANITA

Well, before the war my late husband - Helmut - and I worked for a German engineering company he was in sales and me a Spanish interpreter. But in 1939 we had to come back to Germany. Then, three years later his offices were bombed in an air raid.

ALAN

I'm so sorry. What did you do then?

KWANITA

Somehow the military found out I was an interpreter and persuaded me if that's the right word! to work for them. The rest you know. What's your story?

ALAN

I was a sales manager with an electrical firm before I joined the RAF.

KWANITA

Married?

ALAN

No, I never seemed to have the time. So, there has been no one fretting about me – except by my lovely sister.

KWANITA

Why am I still gripping this stick? (Putting it down) Let me get you a drink.

ALAN

You're very kind...

KWANITA

But not very hospitable.

ALAN

I'm so glad of the opportunity of thanking you for everything. Yet here I'm putting you at risk of goodness know what. No, I can't do it.

(turning towards the door)
It's dark now so I'm going to leave you in peace and get on my way.

KWANITA
(shouting)
No! Wait! You won't be safe out there. How long have you been in the camp?

ALAN
Since I bailed out when my plane was shot down back in November. Why?

KWANITA
Did you know that the allied forces are already across the Rhine? The Germans can't hold out much longer.

ALAN
(surprised)
Ah, perhaps that's why I found it so easy to get away. Even so I'm not staying here to get you into trouble.

KWANITA
Listen to me. I have very few callers and there's a room upstairs I never use these days. You can stay here as long as you need to. Indeed, I'll welcome the company. Everybody round here is so pessimistic now. I usually manage to get extra food when I need it. The Germans want to keep me on side I expect. You're about Helmut's size. With any luck some of his clothes will fit you.

ALAN
The gods were smiling on me when I chose this of all houses to burgle. If you're sure about it.

KWANITA
Completely. In fact, I'm quite warming to the idea.

ALAN
One day I'll find a way of repaying you.

KWANITA
Don't worry about that now. I expect you could do with a bath and something to eat.

ALAN
Oh dear! I'm afraid I've already raided your larder.

KWANITA
(laughing)
Go on. Let's get you settled in and then I'll see what's in the wardrobe.
(exit)

Scene 2

An empty hairdressing salon in Tunbridge Wells - Monday 7th May - 9. a.m. - Claudine Smith (manageress) and Alan's sister 23-year-old Lena (assistant) - Lena is tidying up the magazines while Claudine is looking at her appointment book. (people passing by on the street)

CLAUDINE
We're going to be very busy today, again.

LENA
One thing I like about this job – you do hear what's going on in our little corner of the world.

CLAUDINE

Huh! I could write a book.

(Song 2) **Gossip, Gossip, (Have You Heard?)**

Intro FULL CAST

Gossip, gossip, gossip, gossip.....

1st Verse LENA

Have you heard? Carol Smith - finally - getting hitched,

CLAUDINE

You don't say! Can't believe - I was sure she'd been ditched.

What's he like? Do you know?

LENA

She says he's her perfect Joe.

FULL CAST

Gossip, gossip, gossip, gossip.....

2nd Verse CLAUDINE

Have you heard? Mrs Brown - feels that she has been let down.

She found out her son Ted - wound up in the wrong girl's bed,

Poor old Mrs Brown, she'll be vexed LENA

Wonder what will happen next.

How did she learn the truth? CLAUDINE

At the pub - from barmaid Ruth. LENA

Gossip, gossip, gossip, gossip..... FULL CAST

3rd Verse LENA

Have you heard?

How Ben Jakes left his wife to cope alone.

Bet it was that girl, Laura - CLAUDINE
she'll soon find he's much poorer.

Trixie Blunt walks the streets - LENA
And her skirts are getting shorter.

Out of work - makes her dough - CLAUDINE
Doing things - she didn't oughter.

How about Mrs. R - LENA
She thinks she's a movie star.

Gossip, gossip, gossip, gossip..... FULL CAST

Coda CLAUDINE

Careful now - she's due soon –
s'pose it's time to change our tune.

Whoops! Here she comes..... LENA

(as the song ends Mrs. Lesley Roberts enters)

CLAUDINE

Good morning, Mrs. Roberts. How are you today? We were just talking about you, saying how lovely your garden is looking now.

LESLEY

Thank you... but have you heard? Right, so hopefully it looks like peace could be here once again very soon.

(all three dance around the salon)

Scene 3

At Lena's flat - same day - 10. 30 p.m. Lena and best friend, 23- year-old Miss Hazel Mansfield, (library assistant), they are talking about Lena's fiancé 25- year-old Richard Hallett, (he is serving in the army in Germany, Lena is worrying whether, when he does eventually come home, she should admit to a brief affair she has had in his absence with an army captain, 26-year-old Sam Beaumont, she met at a dance)

LENA

So, we won't have long to wait now, after nearly six years; I thought it would never end.

HAZEL

At least your Richard is OK. Three people I know have lost brothers, husbands and cousins in the past few months alone. Have you heard from Alan, recently?

LENA

No, but they do say no news is good news and I doubt whether the Germans would give the prisoners a hard time when they knew the game was up. We may still have to wait quite a while before Alan, Richard, and the lads we know are back in civvies. They could still be posted to the Far East, but Richard is expecting home leave first and Alan will almost certainly get a home posting after the trauma of the POW camp.

HAZEL

From what you've told me about Richard, he's worth waiting for. I've been looking forward to meeting him.

LENA

Hmm, yes.

HAZEL

You seem pensive, Lena.

LENA

With good reason I should be jumping for joy, but I can't unscramble my emotions. Can you keep a secret?

(Song 3) Can You Keep A Secret?

1st Verse

LENA

Can you keep a secret?
Never speak a word to anyone,
Of the dreadful things that I have done.
Along a lonely road.
Can you keep a secret?
I need a good friend who I can trust,
I can't keep this to myself, I must.
Confess or I'll explode.

Bridge HAZEL
I'm your best friend, you can confide in me,
A secret shared I'll always hide in me.

2nd Verse LENA
I just feel so guilty.
It happened when I was feeling low,
Time had passed since I saw Richard go.
The hours seemed like years.
It is on my conscience.
A while after Richard left for France,
I went reluctantly to that dance.
When you found me in tears.

2nd Bridge HAZEL
There was no sin in seeking company,
He wouldn't want you drowned in misery.

3rd Verse LENA
Then we met that captain.
He consoled me when he saw me cry,
He was such a sympathetic guy.
And realised I was lonely.
For weeks we went dancing.
I still went after you broke your wrist,
I should have had the sense to resist.
But I needed him ... if only

3rd Bridge HAZEL
I feel quite certain I know what comes next,
To be with him you used every pretext.

4th Verse LENA
Yes, we soon drew closer.
He became my anchor and my guide,
I felt calm when he was at my side.
I couldn't say "No, sir." HAZEL
I understand you know,
But please put the past out of your mind.
Forgive yourself and then you will find.
Your confidence will grow.

Coda HAZEL
We are not saints. They wisely stay on high!
My lips are sealed – the time may come when I,
Will say to you: "Can you keep a secret?"

LENA
I feel such a fool.

HAZEL
Why? Absence can bring frustration as well as the proverbial fondness.

LENA
I was living a lie.

HAZEL

That happens to all of us sometimes. How long were you together?

LENA

Nearly two months. You were away on that course after your wrist mended.

HAZEL

When I came back, I was surprised to hear that you'd stopped dancing. How's your mother by the way?

LENA

Much better thank you.

(pause)

But that's another thing I'm not proud of. I used her illness as an excuse to explain why I didn't go to the hops.

HAZEL

I think I can forgive you for that. So, who ended it?

LENA

I did. I was very grateful to Sam, but - and this is an unforgivable thing to say - I tried to pretend he was Richard. They look rather alike. I was fairly sure, he loved me, but I couldn't pretend I fully returned his feelings. I took unfair advantage of him.

HAZEL

Well, it wasn't all one way. Yet it must have been hard to part.

LENA

In a way, yes, but it had begun to look as if the war would soon be over and I needed time to readjust before Richard came home.

HAZEL

So, this wasn't long ago?

LENA

No. I believe Sam is still at the same camp. As I remember you seemed to get on well with him. Come think of it, you could do with a new man in your life since you and Daniel split up. You're fit enough to dance again, and he may still go there. If not, there're plenty of pebbles on the beach.

HAZEL

(looking discomfited)

Oh, I don't know about that.

LENA

I'm sorry I've unburdened myself on you. I shouldn't have put you on the spot. Perhaps I shall have to tell Richard one day about Sam - but not the whole story and not mentioning names. What would you do?

HAZEL

Honestly, I don't know. You could always write to that woman in your paper who advises the lovelorn.

LENA

That's an idea.

(pause)

I'm sorry, Hazel.

HAZEL

Oh, forget it. You'll sort things out in your own mind. In fact, let's both forget the past - including mine. The war's over - in Europe at least. Come on, let's have a drink.

LENA

(walking over to a cabinet and picking out a bottle, before pouring out two glasses)
OK. Here's to Richard and me and to you and some lucky fellow.

UNISON

Cheers! To the future.

Scene 4

In a local newspaper office - Thursday 17th May - at 9 .30 a.m. - 45-year-old Mrs Auntie Aggie is seated at her desk reading her mail.

AGGIE

(opening first letter)

Tut! Tut! What a silly girl.

(opening second letter)

Ha! She ought to kick him out.

(opening third letter)

Ah, Lena - you do need pointing in the right direction. It really depends on if you want to get back with Dicky boy. Sam sounds like the cat's whiskers.

(Song 4) Auntie Aggie

1st Verse

If you are in agony, you can call on me,
I'll give you sound advice.
Tell me what your problem is, I can guarantee,
I've been there once or twice.

Chorus

I'm Auntie Aggie have you read my book
I get my lady readers off the
My reputation was soon built,
I specialised in transferred guilt.

2nd Verse

Have you been a naughty girl? Did he walk away?
I'll show him he's to blame.
Could it be he's played around? Did he go astray?
Did he chase his old flame?

2nd Chorus

I'm Auntie Aggie ev'ry girl's best friend,
I'll stick up for their rights until the end.
Is double love a real offence?
No! It's just generous innocence.

3rd Verse

They say men are always men: that is no excuse,
Why can't girls misbehave?
Why are they supposed to shun fellows on the loose?
Some queens just love a knave!

Coda

I'm Auntie Aggie ev'ry girls best friend,

I'll stick up for their rights until the end.

Scene 5

In Hazel's bedroom - Saturday 19th May - at 7 15 p.m. - 21-year-old Hazel is surrounded by clothes, while her twin sister, Lorraine, looks on with some amusement.

LORRAINE

It's not as if this is the first time you've seen this guy.

HAZEL

No, but this is the first time he's come to pick me up and it's a special dance to celebrate peace in Europe. Oh, dear, I wish I could make up my mind. It's a wonder the cupboard isn't bare. My clothing coupons are running out.

(Song 5) Oh, What Shall I Wear?

Intro

HAZEL

sister please can you help me?
I'm in two minds on what to do.

1st Verse

I'm going out, yes, going out tonight.
I'm excited and I can't wait,
I'm going to be with my date.
But I'm still in my underwear (spoken) what a sight!

Chorus

Oh, what shall I wear?
Now do I wear this for a dare?
A slinky black dress,
Or will it make me look a mess?

2nd Verse

Or do I wear this purple top and skirt?
And which shoes do I to put on?
My hair and make-up are done.
Soon he'll be here wearing that (spoken) snazzy shirt.

2nd Chorus

Oh, what shall I wear?
Now do I wear this for a dare?
My slack beige trouser suit,
Na, I will look like a parachute.

(instrumental)

Coda

I've got to look swell for my date,
I must decide, I can't make (spoken) us late....

(end of song)

LORRAINE

Can I come with you tonight?

HAZEL

Eh? You usually prefer to go man hunting on your own.

LORRAINE

Well, I rather want to meet your Sam to make sure he's good enough for you.

HAZEL

He's not my Sam - not yet anyway.

LORRAINE

I'm not going to steal him from you.

HAZEL

You'd better not try.

LORRAINE

You have got it bad.

HAZEL

All right. You can come, but you're nothing like ready.

LORRAINE

Won't take long, but....

(starts singing the second part of 'Oh, What Shall I Wear?' mimicking her sister)

(Song 5) **Oh, What Shall I Wear?** (continued)

Intro

Oh, sister, please can you help me?

I'm also confused on what to do.

5th Chorus

Oh, what shall I wear?

I need something to make them stare.

My lacy whalebone?

Hmm, not without a chaperone!

3rd Verse

If this had been a dance in fancy dress.

I could have gone as Eve - in the nude,

But that would have been rather rude.

And revealed too much of my (spoken) loveliness!

6th Chorus

Oh, what shall we wear?

Hmm, so something to show we care.

Ah! Of course! Yes!

So, it's our best sparkly blue dress!

Coda

HAZEL

Perfect! So, just let's get a move on,

Or this evening will truly (spoken) be gone.

(the doorbell rings)

HAZEL

You've got three minutes!

(both exit separately)

Scene 6

Outside a dance hall - midnight - the same evening - people are leaving. Hazel and Sam are the last to appear.

HAZEL

I wonder where those two have got to. They were so close together I thought for a moment they were going to dance to “God Save The King”.

SAM

Footloose - literally - and fancy free.

HAZEL

(looking up at Sam)

Tell me I’m not dreaming, and what you told me in the last waltz.

SAM

Every word - but the way I behaved with Lena can’t have made it sound very convincing. I thought she was heading for a nervous breakdown, and I genuinely wanted to help her snap out of it, but that didn’t give me the right to seduce her.

HAZEL

Hardly seduction. She was willing too.

SAM

Perhaps, but

HAZEL

(interrupting)

No “buts” Sam. What matters is how you feel about me now.

SAM

After last night I think you know.

(Song 6) I’ve Never Felt Like This

1st Verse

I can hardly believe,
It was me you wanted all along.
Now my heart’s on my sleeve,
And my life’s one beautiful love song.
I was so sure at first,
You couldn’t take your eyes off my friend.
My heart was fit to burst,
I feared it would break and never mend.

Chorus

I’ve never felt like this till now,
The way we love is thrilling.
I needed you to show me how,
Though I was always willing.
Before I couldn’t bear to speak,
And break the spell that bound you.
I knew my secret I must keep,
When she was all around you.

2 Verse

I simply couldn’t stay,
To witness my dreams being shattered.
So, then I went away,

Without you it seemed nothing mattered.
With no one I could tell,
I spent my nights tossing and turning.
Between heaven and hell,
I dreaded the thought of returning.

Chorus

I've never felt like this till now,
The way we love is thrilling.
I needed you to show me how,
Though I was always willing.
Before I couldn't bear to speak,
And break the spell that bound you.
I knew my secret I must keep,
When she was all around you.

(instrumental)

3rd Verse

It came as a surprise,
To learn she'd stopped going to dances.
Though it opened my eyes,
I still thought I'd missed my chances.
But when I heard her news,
And my opportunity beckoned.
Out came my dancing shoes,
Since then, I've enjoyed every second.

2nd Chorus

I've never felt like this till now,
The way we love is thrilling.
I needed you to show me how,
Though I was always willing.
Your tender touch, the way we kiss,
Just everything about you.
My heart will always feel like this,
I'll never be without you.

SAM

Oh, here they come. It's a wonder they didn't get locked in.
(Lorraine and Peter Conner (Rocky) emerge from the hall)

LORRAINE

Good Heavens! Are you still waiting for us?

HAZEL

We thought we'd have to send out a search party.

LORRAINE

(shouting)

You shouldn't have bothered.

(turning towards Hazel)

Yeah, I do approve of Sam. I'm taking Rocky to see my palatial apartment. Mum's gone to Cardiff to see Auntie Grace.

HAZEL
OK. Don't do anything.....
LORRAINE
(interrupting)
.... You wouldn't do. By the way, I don't actually know what you wouldn't do.

HAZEL
Keep an eye on her, Rocky. She's as mad as a March hare.

ROCKY
I'd never have guessed. She'll be fine with me.

SAM
Good. We'll make a move then. Goodnight.

LORRAINE
Goodbye.

ROCKY
Cheerio.

HAZEL
Goodnight.
(whispers to Sam)
Are you coming back with me?

SAM
Where else would I go?
(Hazel and Sam exit)

ROCKY
It took me all of fifteen minutes to figure out that Hazel's right about you. You're mad, but you're my kind of madness. Lead me on to my destiny.

LORRAINE
(mockingly)
What a fate you have in store!

(Song 7) **Where Have You Been All My Days?**

1st Verse
At twenty-one and unattached,
I should be having fun.
I'd like to leave my door unlatched,
But not for anyone.

Chorus
Where have you been all my days?
What have I been missing?
Through my alcoholic haze,
You're so prepossessing.

2nd Verse
Most men round here are old enough,
To be my uncle's dad.
They treat me like a bit of fluff,
It really is quite sad.

2nd Chorus

Where have you been all my days?
You're like a breath of spring.
Surely there are many ways,
That we could have a fling.

3rd Verse

My best years will be gone too fast,
And I'll become a frump.
Yet can't you see the spell you cast,
Gives me an ego jump.

3rd Chorus

Where have you been all my days?
Why are we wasting time?
Please set my heart and soul ablaze.
While I'm still in my prime.

4th Verse

My inhibitions show no sign,
That they'll get in the way.
Whatever happens will be fine,
Let's live it up today.

Coda

I know where you've been all my days,
In all my fantasies.
So now you're here no more delays,
It's time to love me Please!

(Lorraine seizes Rocky's arm and conducts him out)

Scene 7

The house in Hanover - Monday 21st May - at 7 p.m. - Alan and Kwanita are sitting together on a sofa, not looking particularly happy.

ALAN

I should be feeling on top of the world. No more fighting. No more bombs - and I look forward to seeing Lena again after all this time. But I don't want to go. I don't want to leave you.

KWANITA

I know, I know.

(she pulls him towards her)

These last few weeks have been wonderful. I feel as though we've been together for years. There can't be a thing we don't know about each other. Look at me, Alan.

(Song 8) **Let Me Into Your Arms**

1st Verse

As I look into your eyes,
I see you and I.
Not only as good friends,
But as lovers till we die.

Chorus

I want to fly to the stars,

Dive to the bottom of the sea.
Change my life, but only...
If you let me into your arms.

2nd Verse

My nights are so lonely,
When you're not with me.
How I wish you could be,
So, I can sleep peacefully.

Chorus

I want to fly to the stars,
Dive to the bottom of the sea.
Change my life, but only...
If you let me into your arms.

3rd Verse

My days are so empty,
But full of laughter.
Whenever you're with me,
Be my love ever after.

Chorus

I want to fly to the stars,
Dive to the bottom of the sea.
Change my life, but only...
If you let me into your arms.

Coda

I can't give up, you'll see, one day you'll be mine,
So just let me into your arms.

ALAN

How have I managed to keep my hands off you, Kwanita?

KWANITA

I wondered why. You don't have to.

(kissing passionately)

ALAN

I love you, darling, but soon we'll be hundreds of miles apart. If I give you my home address, will you promise to write to me when you get back to Spain? My sister will post any letters on to me.

KWANITA

Do you need to ask?

(smiling)

Shall I write in Spanish? You 're becoming quite fluent.

(standing up)

What about one last dance?

ALAN

(also getting to his feet)

Have I been a good pupil at that?

KWANITA

Full marks.

(they start to dance the flamenco).

ALAN

I suppose I'd better start getting my belongings together. I can't put off the inevitable any more.

KWANITA

I'll give you a hand.

(pause)

There's just one more thing.

ALAN

What's that?

KWANITA

Do you really want to keep your hands to yourself?

ALAN

(grabbing her arm and sweeping her towards the door)

Not a moment longer!

(both exit)

Scene 8

Lena is alone at home in her flat - Sunday 16th September - 10 a.m.

LENA

(talking to herself)

I'm glad Alan's home OK. He looked rather tired and a bit restless. I think he's still got that Spanish girl on his mind. Funny, he's never seemed very interested in women before. Ah, well..... she hears the mail arrive and goes out to collect it, her face lights up when she opens one letter and starts to read it restfully.

(Song 9) He's Coming Home

Into

He's coming home!

He's coming home.

1st Verse

Ooh, I want so much to see him,

But I'm afraid.

'Cos he might want me to free him.

Will his love fade?

He has seen so many strange things,

In those dark days.

Yes, the life he's led may change things,

In many ways.

Chorus

My love, he's coming home,

We were like brush and comb.

Yes, inseparable, we two,

My love, he'll soon be here.

Why do I have this fear,

That my dreams will not come true?

2nd Verse

What could I do, I wouldn't know?

He's my baby

Who can I turn to? Where shall I go?
If he leaves me.
I love him I can see that now,
Can't change the past.
I will make good somewhere somehow,
If we don't last.

2nd Chorus
I hope our love doesn't taper,
We were like pen and paper.
Yes, inseparable, back then,
Is there still love between us?
Only time will tell, I guess,
I can't wait to see him again.

Coda
My baby, I love him, and him alone,
My baby's coming home, he's coming home.

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Scene 1

Lena's flat - Sunday 6th October - 2 p.m. - Lena is seated next to Richard, who is on leave.
They both appear to be nervous and uncomfortable

LENA

Are you all right, Richard? You seem rather distant. Something on your mind?

RICHARD
(blurting it out)

Do you still want me, Lena?

LENA
(startled)

What sort of question is that? Of course, I do, darling.

RICHARD
(hesitatingly)

I hate listening to gossip, but you can't help it sometimes.

LENA

What do you mean?

RICHARD
(getting to his feet)

(Song 1) What Lies

1st Verse
What lies behind your smile?
Your power to beguile is wonderful but full of mystery,
What lies behind those eyes?
You're trying to disguise? Is what you are the same as what I see?

Chorus

What lies have you been telling?
Can I believe your word?
I find it hard dispelling,
The rumours I have heard.

2nd Verse

As you lay by my side,
Let conscience be your guide and tell me straight if you've found someone new.
We cannot live a lie,
I'd rather say goodbye than close my mind to knowing you're untrue.

2nd Chorus

What lies have I been hearing?
From lips that mine have known,
So, is the moment nearing?
When I shall be alone?

Coda

If you no longer care about the life we share,
Then there is nothing else that can be said.
Although when you have gone, we both must carry on,
And neither of us knows what lies ahead.

(end of song)

LENA

Have you any idea how many rumours I hear in the course of a day at the salon?
Most of them are ten percent fact and ninety percent fiction. Some are downright malicious.
Goodness knows what you've been told.

RICHARD
(grumpily)

Nothing I wanted to believe.

LENA

Most of it you shouldn't have.

RICHARD

Most of it?

LENA
(speaking slowly and deliberately)

There's - only - one - thing - I - have - any - reason - to - regret.

RICHARD

Go on.

LENA

You can't imagine how lonely and frightened I was when you had to go away. For months I hardly went anywhere. Then one day a friend found me crying my eyes out. She almost ragged me off to a dance - to cheer me up, she said. At first, I only felt worse alone in a crowd.

RICHARD

You could have gone home.

LENA

To what?

(pause)

I managed to dance two or three times, but my heart wasn't in it. Then a soldier asked me if anything was wrong and I poured everything out to him. He was very kind and didn't try to take advantage.

RICHARD

Where's this leading?

LENA

I saw him a few times after that. Oddly enough he reminded me of you.

(long pause)

Then one night it went too far.

RICHARD

(angrily)

So, they weren't all lying!

LENA

That depends on what picture they painted - whoever they were. I couldn't blame him, but I knew I'd let you - and myself - down.

RICHARD

You can say that again.

LENA

For weeks I hardly set foot outside the door - except to go to work. I tried to put it behind me.

RICHARD

Pretend it didn't happen you mean.

LENA

My conscience wouldn't let me. All I cared about was whether you'd ever forgive me.

RICHARD

Why should I?

LENA

Because I love you and always will. Haven't I shown you that ever since you came home?

RICHARD

I don't think I want to hear any more.

(getting up to exit)

I can't take it in.

LENA

Don't go yet.

(Song 2) **The Sea is Red**

1st Verse

It seems to me you're certain I don't love you any more,
If that is true, there are a few more facts you can't ignore.

Chorus

The sea is red, the sky is green,
Methuselah died at seventeen.
The planet Earth's a medicine ball,
The seven dwarfs were ten feet tall.

2nd Verse

I cannot understand it when I've given you my word,
My love is never ending, so isn't this absurd?

2nd Chorus

The sea is red, the snow is black,

Ducklings miaow and kittens quack.
Henry the Eighth was a bachelor gay,
And Christmas falls on the first of May.

3rd Verse

It's me who's getting worried – am I the one who's fooled?
Are you trying to tell me it is your love that's cooled?

3rd Chorus

Can you not see I'm here to stay?
When have you known a single day.
That I have not been by your side,
With love I've never tried to hide.

4th Verse

Everyone who knows us thinks we are the perfect pair,
It's time to start believing, so please tell me that you care.

Coda

If I'm wrong, it must be said,
The sky is green; the sea is red.....

(end of song)

RICHARD

I need time to think. I'll be back.

(exit)

(Lena sinks down holding her head in her hands)

Scene 2

A nearby park bench an hour later. Richard is seated in deep thought.

(Song 3) **Who's to Blame?**

1st Verse

We've been writing to each other for so long,
Pouring out our hearts with love and kisses.
How could she have been so weak when I was strong?
I thought she was mine. (spoken) A fine mess this is!

Chorus

Who's to blame? Who's to blame?
I wonder why she did it?
I'm no old flame,
It seems I have been stupid.

2nd Verse

How could she have let herself be led astray?
It never crossed my mind she was untrue (pause)
Though she must have found it hard with me away
What a flimsy excuse! It just won't do

2nd Chorus

Who's to blame? She's to blame.

I wonder why she did it,
I'm no old flame,
It's her fault - she was stupid.

3rd Verse

Yet she's told me all about this brief affair,
She could have kept the story under wraps.
Now, would I have had the courage to declare,
My guilt? Of course! But then again perhaps.

3rd Chorus

Who's to blame? I'm to blame.
It's obvious why she did it.
I'd have done the same,
It's my fault, I'm so stupid.

4th Verse

Oh, my darling, I've been such a hypocrite,
That Fraulein gave her all for cigarettes.
I took full advantage of her, I admit,
I was lonely too, too late for regrets.

4th Chorus

Who's to blame? War's to blame.
That's why we all do it,
It's a bonkers game,
We all live to rue it.

Coda

Now I'll crawl back to her,
My tail between my legs.
Tell her that I'm sorry, (puzzled pause)
A foolish man who begs.
How did that happen?

(the scene shifts back to Lena's flat. Lena is still sitting, head in hands.
Richard enters slowly)

LENA

You'll never forgive me. I don't deserve your love. I wish I'd kept quiet.

RICHARD

I'm glad you didn't, my love. I would have always suspected something. As it is I've had a chance to reflect. I'm sorry, but I was angry because my ego had been damaged. To think you could be attracted to another man when you had wonderful me. That was pathetic.

LENA

You mean ... you're not going to leave me?

RICHARD

Not unless you kick me out.

(Lena jumps up and leaps into his arms)

LENA

War is hell.

RICHARD

So is conceit. So is jealousy. And I haven't even bought you an engagement ring.
(Gets down on one knee)

LENA

Before you ask, the answer's YES!

Scene 3

The newspaper office Tuesday 8th October - 9.15 a.m. - Auntie Aggie is seated at her desk reading her mail.

AGGIE

(opening a letter)

Oh, I'd nearly forgotten Lena. Well, how about that.

(Song 4) The Full Proof System

1st Verse

So, I have chalked up another success,
And she's got her man in safekeeping.
She's written to say she's out of her mess,
Together again – no more weeping.

Chorus

I always show them how to turn the tables,
When they come to me in their hour of need.
No blatant lies, girls, better stick to fables,
This is my foolproof system - guaranteed.

2nd Verse

I promised her that she would score a bull,
With a bold throw of old Cupid's dart.
He's told her that she's still adorable,
So, it must have gone straight to his heart.

2nd Chorus

When they flood with tears, hell-bent for disaster,
Girls with their love lives wildly off the rails.
I'm convincing them - demonstrate who's master!
I show my foolproof system never fails.

3rd Verse

Some regret but no lack of abandon,
Persuading him she was the victim.
So, he was left with no leg to stand on,
And she knew just why she had picked him.

3rd Chorus

My advice is free to all girls in trouble,
Nearly every time transferred guilt's the key.
All they have to do is prick the massive bubble,
Of outdated male superiority.

Coda

If you've discovered love is blind,
Can't get some fellow off your mind.

You still sleep in a single bed,
Darby's Joan or just newlywed.
Young, old, blonde, or brunette,
You will never regret.
The day you heard about my foolproof system.

(end of song)

Scene 4

Hazel's and Lorraine's flat - Saturday 26th January 1946 - 11 a.m. - Hazel is very quiet as she is pouring two cups of coffee.

HAZEL

I've never known you to be so lost in thought. It's noisier than this in the library reading room.

LORRAINE

Talking of which, I've been meaning to ask you – now you've achieved good results from that library course, will you be getting a leg up?

HAZEL

Only to reach the top shelves.

LORRAINE

Oh, dear!

(pause)

I was thinking about Rocky. He's not liked any other man I've ever met.....

HAZEL

(interrupting)

.... And you've met a few.

LORRAINE

There's something about him that fascinates me. He's fun to be with, but so are a lot of other chaps. I just can't get him out of my mind.

HAZEL

This is the first time I've ever seen you take any man seriously, except for faithful Freddie Manning, but you've always treated him more like the favourite brother you haven't got.

LORRAINE

He's never even made a pass at me.

HAZEL

I think he'd have liked to, but he's unusually shy for a man. A rebuff would probably shatter his rather frail confidence.

LORRAINE

You may be right, but....

HAZEL

Well, Rocky's certainly made his mark on you. I don't want to put a damper on your mood, but he never talks much about himself. Be careful dear, before you plunge in too deep.

(Song 5) And Don't You Forget It

1st Verse

What do you know about the man?

What does he want from you?

Is it your body? Is it your mind?

Is he one of the caring kind?

You never know what you may find.

By asking around.

Chorus

You may have a physical need,
If your body wants to rule your head don't let it.
You only have one life to lead,
Remember that, darling, and don't you forget it.

2nd Verse

What do you know about the man?
Is he sincere and true?
I do not want to see you get hurt,
You usually go for the introvert.
Maybe he's just an outrageous flirt,
You could ask around.

2nd Chorus

It's easy to turn a blind eye,
Disillusion brings pain and time to regret it.
Make certain that he's the right guy,
I'll be rooting for you, so don't you forget it.

3rd Verse

If you are sure that he's the man,
Then I'm happy for you.
But promise me you will find out more,
And if he's not what you're waiting for.
Now is the time to show him the door,
And start looking around.

Repeat 1st Chorus

You may have a physical need,
If your body wants to rule your head don't let it.
You only have one life to lead,
Remember that, darling, and don't you forget it.

Coda

Yes, we only have one life to live,
Remember that, darling, and don't you forget it.

LORRAINE

I think I love him, but I won't do anything stupid.

HAZEL

It's time you were on your way to see him. Have a lovely evening.

LORRAINE

Thank you, Hazel.

(the doorbell rings)

I'll get that, then I'll be off.

(exit, return with Lena before leaving)

HAZEL

Hello, Lena.

LENA

Hi!

HAZEL

I'm so glad I took your advice about Sam. We spent a wonderful Christmas together. We are very happy, but he still feels guilty about you.

LENA

Tell him he shouldn't. He rescued me from the depths of despair. I have no regrets.

(stops short)

Oh! Sorry, that must have sounded thoughtless.

HAZEL

(smiling)

I know what you meant.

LENA

Richard never asked me who he was. We are all bound to meet sometime, and I don't believe anyone will be embarrassed.

HAZEL

Sam is tact personified.

LENA

And you're still my best friend – I hope?

HAZEL

Of course.

LENA

It's Alan who worries me these days. He doesn't seem to be able to settle down since he came home.

HAZEL

More problems on the romantic front, I suppose.

LENA

Yes. As you know, he was demobbed early on health grounds, although he says he feels fit enough. Luckily his firm was compelled by law to offer him his job back and he is happy about that. Otherwise, however, he just can't seem to settle down.

HAZEL

This is all about the famous Kwanita?

LENA

Yes. He hasn't heard from her. So, he has wangled a week's holiday and is off to Spain to try and track her down. He knows she used to be a flamenco dancer at a club in Barcelona, but he has forgotten the name. Sounds like a case of needles and haystacks to me.

HAZEL

Alan's not the type to give up easily. I wish him luck.

LENA

(brightening up)

Now, take a deep breath. I've kept the best news to the last - Richard and I are getting married in September.

HAZEL

(enthusiastically)

Oh, congratulations. I couldn't be happier for you.

LENA

Thank you for everything, Hazel. How do you fancy being my bridesmaid?

HAZEL

It would be a privilege and a pleasure.

LENA

Put it in your diary!

Scene 5

A dance club in Barcelona - Monday 28th January - 7.45 p.m. - Kwanita is dancing for the audience when Alan appears at the door. He watches her intently until she suddenly notices him and stops dancing abruptly. She smiles at him and then finishes her dance. Then she rushes across the floor and throws herself into his arms.

KWANITA

How did you find me, Alan?

ALAN

I couldn't remember the name of this place, so I've spent five days traipsing around Barcelona's hot spots and here I am. Your Spanish lessons came in handy at times.

KWANITA

It's so wonderful to see you. Are you still in the RAF?

ALAN

No. I was demobbed recently, and I've gone back to my old job. When did you leave Hanover?

KWANITA

Not long after you left. I've been frantic because I mislaid your home address and had no way of getting in touch with you.

ALAN

I thought for a while you might have forgotten me and yet I found that hard to believe after that last day we spent together.

KWANITA

I'm never likely to forget the way you loved me. I was miserable and angry at myself for being so stupid. Then my father died suddenly.

ALAN

Oh, I'm so sorry. I know you were very close.

KWANITA

He left me quite a lot of money in his will and I was able to buy Santino's from Carlos, the owner, who wanted to retire. I live on the premises now. Where have you been staying?

ALAN

In a rather dreary little hotel.

KWANITA

Well, you can stay here with me.

ALAN

(sadly)

Unfortunately, I'm only on a week's holiday and I'm due back at work on Monday.

KWANITA

(obviously disappointed)

We're always saying goodbye. Well, you're going to stay with me for the next two nights. We've got a lot to talk about.

ALAN

It isn't talk I have in mind.

KWANITA

Ha! OK - that too.

(Song 6) **Tomorrow**

1st Verse

Tomorrow never comes they say,
That's music to my ears.
For if tomorrow stays away,
It banishes my fears.
Tomorrow I can do without,
Today's too good to end.
For now, I know beyond a doubt,
You're much more than a friend.
Your eyes met mine and I was hooked,
And filled with ecstasy.
'Cause I knew by the way you looked,
Our love was meant to be.

Chorus

If there should be tomorrow,
I'll need some time to borrow.
To spend alone with you,
So, stop the clock at midnight.
And tell me that it's all right,
Tonight, we'll live life through.

2nd Verse

A worry tugged at my heartstrings,
When night was left behind.
Would doubts that morning sometimes brings,
'Cause you to change your mind?
But when I felt your tender touch,
It reassured my heart.
I must believe you care so much,
We'll never drift apart.
Tonight is never ending,
So, kiss me, hold me tight.
Our hearts forever blending,
Tonight is every night.

Chorus

If there should be tomorrow
I'll need some time to borrow
To spend alone with you
So, stop the clock at midnight
And tell me that it's all right
Tonight, we'll live life through

Coda
Let's forget tomorrow
Tonight, we'll live life through

(end of song)

Scene 6

Hazel's and Lorraine's flat - Saturday 3rd February- 10 a.m. Lorraine is looking very despondent. Hazel has one arm round her sister.

HAZEL

Sam had no idea Rocky was married. He is as shocked as you are, Lorraine.

LORRAINE

It would be easier to bear if I thought he was just treating me as a bit on the side. Then I could hate him and get on with my life.

HAZEL

Wasn't he?

LORRAINE

No. He left me in no doubt that he loved me, and he was desperately unhappy when he caught the train.

HAZEL

Why did he deceive you?

LORRAINE

I believed him when he told me that his marriage had not been all that happy, but after his wife became ill, he couldn't bring himself to walk out on her.

HAZEL

When he learned he was being posted to Lincolnshire, at the least he had the courage and decency to face you with the truth. He could've simply disappeared. I'll give him credit for that.

LORRAINE

His last words are a real consolation for me.

HAZEL

What did he say?

LORRAINE

He said: "I only wish I'd met you first".

HAZEL

You'll bounce back. There'll be other times, other loves.

LORRAINE

I know.

HAZEL

By the way, this morning when you were out Freddie dropped in.

(handing over a box)

He asked me to give you these chocolates – your favourites I notice - and er... his love.

LORRAINE

He's a nice guy.

HAZEL

He's intelligent, good looking and holds down a good job. All he needs is a squib up his bottom.

LORRAINE

Ha! A rocket, more likely.

HAZEL

Who better to provide the fireworks?

LORRAINE

Point taken.

HAZEL

One day, Lorraine, I hope you'll be as happy as I am.
(they embrace)

Interlude (off stage)

(FULL CAST)

(Song 7) **Love or War**

1st Verse

Not long-ago people were happy with no cause for tears,
The first Great War had been over for nearly twenty years.
And we all hoped that peace had come to stay for evermore,
None of us knew that we would soon be going back to war.

Chorus

Love is wonderful bringing people together,
War is horrifying 'cos it tears us apart.
Sadly, sometimes separation is forever,
So many broken promises and broken hearts.

2nd Verse

Now we are once again at peace, what lessons have we learned?
Our future happiness is surely something we have earned.
Whatever else there may be on which we are not agreed,
The time must come when the whole world will see it's love we need.

2nd Chorus

Love is wonderful bringing people together,
War's horrifying because it tears us apart.
Love or war, love or war - all know what we'd choose,
In love we feel at peace, in war we always lose.

Coda

Love or war, love or war, love or war, love or war,
Oh, yes, we all know which one we'd rather choose.

(end of song)

Scene 7

All the cast (excluding Rocky and Kwanita) are gathered together in Lena's flat -Wednesday 8th May 1946 - Lena is talking to Hazel, Richard and Sam are deep in conversation. Alan is sitting alone with his thoughts. (Lorraine is arm in arm with the previously unseen Freddie, who bestows a brotherly kiss on her)

LENA

You do all know this is the first anniversary of VE Day? Is everyone happy?
(cheers are heard except for Alan)

RICHARD

(walks over to Alan)

That includes you, Alan.

ALAN

Sorry, my mind was elsewhere.

RICHARD

Barcelona?

ALAN

I haven't heard recently.

RICHARD

It's only been a couple of months.

ALAN

Yes, I know, but

(stands up)

(Song 8) **At Santino's**

Intro

ALAN

(spoken) O, hago dano mucho y me deseo que podria quedarse para siempre a Santinos. (*Oh, how much I'm hurting and how I wish that I could stay forever at Santino's*)

1st Verse

Oh, how we clicked those castanets,
She always flowed in that red dress.
Her hair long and black,
Yes, I want to be back.
How we made love in the sun,
But now all the fun has gone.

Chorus

At Santino's,
It's the way sweet Kwanita danced the flamenco.
At Santino's she really turned me on,
Oh, why did I come back home?

2nd Verse

She won't be alone for long,
She'll be dancing with another.
Quite sure I'm not wrong,
There'll be a new lover.
How we made love in the sun,
But now all the fun has gone.

Chorus
At Santino's,
It's the way sweet Kwanita danced the flamenco.
At Santino's she really turned me on,
Oh, why did I come back home?

Bridge
Y seria e turno de una otra persona hacer dano y el deseara que podria
quedarse para siempre a Santinos para siempre a Santinos para
siempre a Santinos (*So it'll be somebody else's turn to get hurt and he'll
be wishing that he could stay forever at Santino's forever at Santino's*)

Chorus
At Santino's,
It's the way sweet Kwanita danced the flamenco.
At Santino's she really turned me on,
Oh, why did I come back?

Coda FULL CAST
At Santino's,
It's the way sweet Kwanita dances the flamenco.
At Santino's she'll really turn him on,
And he won't want to go back home.
He won't want to go back home,
He won't want to go back home,
He won't want to go back home.

LENA
(turns to Hazel)

Lorraine's her old self, I see

HAZEL
Young self, you mean. She's learned from that experience, with Rocky but she always comes
up smiling. She'll never lack male company and I've got high hopes for fantastic Freddie.

LENA
Sam and Richard seem to have hit it off. I'm so relieved that one chapter in my life hasn't
come back to haunt me.

HAZEL
M'm. Can YOU keep a secret?

LENA
You did.

SAM
(coming over to them)

Have you told her?
HAZEL

I was just about to.
(turning to Lena)

We're tying the knot two weeks after you and Richard.

LENA
Congratulations. That news makes my day. If only Alan wasn't so fed up, everything in the
garden would be lovely.

(the doorbell rings)

RICHARD
I'll go.

(exit, then voices are heard from the hall)

Is he expecting you?

FEMALE

No, but he'll be damned pleased to see me.

RICHARD

I believe he will.

(Richard reappears with Kwanita)

ALAN

(leaping to his feet)

Kwanita! I must be dreaming!

KWANITA

I called at your home. A neighbour told me you had gone to your sister's and, luckily, she knew the address.

ALAN

I'm speechless. Sorry, everybody. I want to introduce you to ...

LENA

(interrupting)

...I think we all know who you are, Kwanita. Alan's never stopped talking about you. Now I can see why.

KWANITA

You must be Lena.

LENA

Guilty.

KWANITA

I've looked forward to meeting you so much.

ALAN

(introducing the others)

I think you've got some explaining to do.

KWANITA

I didn't want any more goodbyes. So, I sold Santino's and I've landed a position at the Spanish Embassy in London.

(pause)

I'm here to stay if you still want me.

ALAN

I want you for ever, my darling.

KWANITA

In that case you can come to my very private apartment as soon as the party's over. Then you can work your magic on me.

(Song 9) **The Only Magic**

1st Verse

I don't need to work my magic on you tonight,
'Cause I believe we've got the chemistry just right.
No, I don't need to cast an evil spell on you,
To make you do anything you don't want to do.

Chorus

The only true magic that I possess,

Is when I hold you, girl, in my caress.
Yes, there's some magic inside all of us,
But the only magic in my success is love.
Yes, the only magic that I possess is love.

2nd Verse

I'm not a wizard with some artful bag of tricks,
And I don't need the devious stuff to get my kicks.
So, I'll just let my power do its thing with you,
Yes, girl, I've got all that I want right here with you.

Chorus

The only true magic that I possess,
Is when I hold you, girl, in my caress.
Yes, there's some magic inside all of us,
But the only magic in my success is love.
Yes, the only magic that I possess is love.

Bridge

I won't make you disappear and then bring you back!

Chorus

The only true magic that I possess,
Is when I hold you, girl, in my caress.
Yes, there's some magic inside all of us,
But the only magic in my success is love.
Yes, the only magic that I possess is love.

Coda

No, I won't ever make you disappear, girl.

(end of song)

LORRAINE

Isn't love grand, Freddie?

FREDDIE

It's when you're not afraid to declare it. Damn it, Lorraine. I've been in love with you for as long as I can remember. Why haven't I told you.

LORRAINE

Are you telling me now?

FREDDIE
(enthusiastically)

Oh, yes. I love you. I love you.

LORRAINE

There you are. That wasn't too difficult, was it?

FREDDIE
(ruefully)

No.

LORRAINE

We've got a lot of catching up to do.

(Song 10) **Oh Baby (I'm Your Menu)**

1st Verse FREDDIE

Hot chicken salad,
Penne pasta with roasted peppers,
Tuna steaks with butter sauce.

Chorus FULL CAST

He can be any sav'ury,
You would like him to be.
Oh, baby he's your plate,
Oh, baby he's your plate.

2nd Verse_ FREDDIE

Hot jam steam pudding,
Chocolate cheesecake with strawberries,
Or fresh fruit salad with cream.

2nd Chorus FULL CAST

He can be any dessert
You would like him to be
Oh, baby he's your bowl
Oh, baby he's your bowl

3rd Verse FREDDIE

Dry red wine, strong beer,
A medium white wine, Guinness, gin,
Water, tea or black coffee.

3rd Chorus FULL CAST

Yes, he can be any drink,
You would like him to be.
Oh, baby he's your glass,
Or baby he's your cup.

Coda

Yes, so he's your menu,
Now all that's left is he only hopes.
That his menu has got what it takes,
What it takes - to get you!

Oh, baby I'm your menu. (spoken) FREDDIE
And I thought food was still rationed. (spoken) LORRAINE

(end of song)

FULL CAST

Yes, it is of course but he's given you food for thought girl.
(everybody is pointing to Lorraine) (Lorraine embraces Freddie and gives him a long
passionate kiss)

CURTAIN

The End of the Show!

CURTAIN CALLS

Based on an idea by Zoe Hunter

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Written by Zoe Hunter

We Need Peace

Love or War

Let Me Into Your Arms

Oh, What Shall I Wear?

I've Never Felt Like This

At Santino's

Oh Baby (I'm Your Menu)

Written by Zoe Hunter and Leslie Roberts

Gossip, Gossip, Have You Heard?

Can You Keep A Secret?

He's Coming Home

Who's To Blame?

Written by Leslie Roberts

Auntie Aggie

What Lies

Where Have You Been All My Days?

The Fool Proof System

Tomorrow

Witten by Jack Donachie

The Only Magic