

DAY DREAMS

by Honoria Mary Robertson Dick

A MELODRAMA

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CAST
in Order of Appearance

A. LYRE	Archibald Lyre
POPPY	Poppy Avebury
MIRANDA	Miranda Avebury
HALLUCINATION/ROBERTO	
PEPITA	
LOLITA	
CARLOS	Don Carlos
PEDRO	
ALONZO	
JUANITA	
CHIQUITA	
ESTRELLITA	Donna Estrellita
FERNANDO	
ROBIN	
JOSE	

Dedicated to Terpsichore and “The Bicton St Cats and Kittens”

With Love



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Honoriamary Robertson Dick was born in Yorkshire, England but lived much of her adult life in Perth, Western Australia. Honoriamary read English Literature and Classics at the University of Western Australia and wrote a series of 13 original melodramas in the 1970s-early 2000s. They were performed exclusively by an amateur cast at St Michael's Anglican Church Mt Pleasant and St Christopher's Anglican Church Bicton-Attadale for church fundraising purposes.

It was Honoriamary's wish that her melodramas be made available for other theatre groups to adapt and perform as required.



A. LYRE

Allow me to introduce myself: I am A. Lyre – No! No! Not a liar but Archibald Lyre – L-Y-R-E representative of Wheedle, Swindle and Prendergast, Solicitors of Lincolns Inn, London. I am hereabouts to visit Mrs Poppy Avebury, widow, who dwells with her orphaned sister-in-law, Miss Miranda Avebury in a teensy weensy cottage of their joint ownership. The poor dear innocents are penniless of course but for many years have managed to eke out an existence and maintain Rose Cottage by the simple expedient of selling home grown produce.

Ah me! It touched one's heart to observe such bravery in two lovely, delicately nurtured, unprotected females continually exposed to the lustful unscrupulous villains who ensnare and betray such innocent maidens, one gets carried away by the thought of such – such – oh! Dear I must hasten for I have news for Poppy Avebury that could change her life.

Exit right

POPPY

Miranda! Miranda! Oh do stop daydreaming. What are we to do? The roof is leaking, there isn't any oil for the lamps and very little money left.

MIRANDA

Oh dear, with winter approaching we must have thatch to protect us from the icy blasts. Have we nothing that we can sell?

POPPY

Alas! Everything of value has long since been disposed of except – except my bridal veil which as you know is a family heirloom and of considerable value.

MIRANDA

Not the bridal veil Poppy – oh what is to become of us?

POPPY

After all it is ten long years since my widowhood and after only a short time of married bliss so what use is a bridal veil if one is starving?

MIRANDA

Do you not think our life rather unnatural? You, dear Poppy, have known love and marriage but I am a spinster and likely to remain so as without dowry or beauty I have nothing with which to tempt a gentleman.

POPPY

I fear that we must go looking for employment of some kind but for now, the

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bridal veil; we must be prepared to sacrifice our all in a crisis. Put on your thinking cap Miranda, consider our situation and don't start daydreaming again.

Exit left

MIRANDA

We both work so hard and Poppy is so brave and organised but we haven't much to look forward to – except our dreams.

SCREAMS

Who – who – who are you? How did you get into this garden? Where did you come from?

ROBERTO

Don't you recognise a fairy when you see one? And you brought me here.

MIRANDA

A fairy! I don't believe in fairies, they are just figments of imagination.

ROBERTO

Of course I am.

MIRANDA

Am – are – what?

ROBERTO

A figment of your imagination.

MIRANDA

You don't even look like the fairies in my picture books, where are your wings? What's more, you haven't even got a wand!

ROBERTO

Alas! I am exactly as you imagined me, I can't be blamed if you didn't supply me with all the necessary accoutrements. In fact I'm not exactly mad about this outfit you dreamed up – definitely not Savile Row.

MIRANDA

I shall close my eyes – I do not believe I am seeing what I am seeing.

Closes eyes

Opens eyes

You are still here! How did you get into this garden?

ROBERTO

You brought me here.

MIRANDA

Don't be ridiculous, I don't know you.

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ROBERTO

Well I must say you have a cheek creating me and then pretending not to recognise me. Your imagination has been working overtime for years, changing me around, sometimes tall, then small, sometimes dark, then fair and once, so help me, as a red-head. I have been every shape, shade and size in your imagination, it is positively mind-boggling and now when you summon me up you can't even recognise me.

POPPY

Miranda – who is with you dear?

MIRANDA

Will you go away – please go away, I can never explain this to Poppy. I know you don't exist, you don't, you don't.

ROBERTO

If you want me to disappear all you have to do is put me out of your mind – but remember, I am exactly as you wanted me to be.

Bow, lift top hat, and exit right

POPPY

I thought I heard you talking to someone? There's no one here. Dear Miranda, you mustn't start talking to yourself or people will begin to suspect that you are, are, mentally ill.

MIRANDA

I was talking to a – a – peculiar flying thing, I was shooing it away, it was quite horrible, but it has disappeared entirely.

POPPY

I have let it be known that the bridal veil is for sale – I can't see any alternative.

MIRANDA

I have always dreamed of someday wearing that veil myself.

POPPY

Is that not our door knocker banging so urgently? I will answer it.

Exit left

A. LYRE

Enter left

As I was saying my dear Mrs Avebury, I am the harbinger of good tidings. Good morning, Miss Avebury. Dear Madam, do you recall your Papa's twin brother, Alexander?

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POPPY

Indeed I do, he gambled away the family fortune and decamped to parts unknown leaving Papa to honour his debts and so ruined Papa.

A. LYRE

Well, he has bobbed up again in most unusual circumstances – briefly in a whiskey bottle up on Brighton Beach.

MIRANDA

I am becoming demented, seeing fairies and now people in bottles!

A. LYRE

Not Alexander himself, but his last will and testament duly signed and addressed to Wheedle, Swindle and Prendergast who have always attended to your family's affairs.

MIRANDA

What an odd way to post a will!

POPPY

Why not bring it himself?

A. LYRE

Alas! Alas! He was lost at sea for the vessel on which he was travelling from Buenos Aires sank without trace. These facts we have ascertained from the ship's letterhead on which the will was written, concluding with a South American address.

POPPY

But what has this to do with me?

A. LYRE

Because the will names your Papa, or his heirs, as beneficiaries to a considerable fortune provided the terms outlined are agreed to.

MIRANDA

Poppy don't faint, at least not until I've found the smelling salts.

POPPY

Who wouldn't faint if one was transported from poverty to a fortune?

MIRANDA

Isn't Buenos Aires in South America, thousands of miles away?

A. LYRE

It is, but Argentina is the location of Buenos Aires.

POPPY

What exactly are the terms of this will, Mr Lyre?

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A. LYRE

Alexander apparently married a Spanish lady who died and left a child, Evelyn by name, with whom you share the fortune provided that you undertake the care of the little one who was left with his wife's sister, a Donna Estrellita.

MIRANDA

Oh the poor little girl.

POPPY

Of course I will care for his little daughter, we must send for her immediately.

A. LYRE

No! No! By the terms of the will you must establish your identity to the satisfaction of Donna Estrellita in Argentina.

POPPY

Argentina – but, but – you can't mean that I have to travel there, to Argentina? I must have time to collect my thoughts.

MIRANDA

Buenos Aires – Argentina!

CHORUS: Down Argentina Way

MIRANDA

Go away, go away, I will not have you here.

POPPY

Miranda! You must stop this daydreaming, I really fear for your sanity now that you are also talking to yourself. Mr Lyre, all we have in the world is our teensy weensy cottage, no money, no prospects of any money until we can find employment so we couldn't raise the fare to Argentina! Could you raise it for us?

MIRANDA

Oh yes, we can – sell the cottage, and take me with you.

POPPY

Sell the cottage?

MIRANDA

Yes!

POPPY

And of course I would take you with me, you are far too innocent and helpless to be left alone and you were put into my care by my dear departed husband, Captain Lovelace Avebury.

A. LYRE

I strongly advise you sell and go – and you would not be alone in a strange land

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because young Mr Robin Prendergast, a relation of our Mr Prendergast, is at present in Argentina visiting an old school friend so we shall write and ask his protection for you.

POPPY

We will go – even if the fortune is not a large one it is far more than we have and it will be such an adventure, but Miranda I must have your promise not to daydream nor converse with yourself.

MIRANDA

I promise, I promise.

POPPY

You did say a fortune, Mr Lyre?

A. LYRE

Would I lie to you dear lady?

POPPY

Then write to this Donna Estrellita and inform her that we will attend her at the earliest possible time and that we will appraise her of our sailing and arrival dates as soon as available. Good day Mr Lyre. Come along Miranda, from now to departure it will be all go-go-go!

Exit left

ROBERTO

Ah my lovely ones, my little flowers ready to bloom and – where is my aunt, the Marquesa?

PEPITA

Donna Estrellita is out riding.

LOLITA

But here comes your Uncle Fernando – ow – naughty one.

ROBERTO

Fernando – go away – find your own flower garden – these are my lovelies.

CARLOS

Buenos días señoritas, Fernando, Roberto. Donna Estrellita is expecting me and these are my gauchos Pedro and Alonzo.

JUANITA

Two bean poles.

CHIQUITA

Sh! The Donna.

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All girls curtsey, men bow

ESTRELLITA

Don Carlos my dear friend. Roberto, you and Fernando should have come riding with me, it is a glorious morning.

ROBERTO

The dawn becomes brighter when you are near, my dear Aunt.

ESTRELLITA

Naughty one, flattery trips of your tongue too fast to be true.

CARLOS

I would that my tongue was able to flatter so.

FERNANDO

The day will be half gone while we are chatting.

CARLOS

Then let us greet the morning in appropriate fashion.

SONG: Cielito Lindo

Exit - Girls and caballeros

CARLOS

I have news – Jose is coming home to stay for Mardi Gras.

FERNANDO

Trouble! Trouble! Trouble! Whenever Jose is around look for trouble.

ROBERTO

This news can't wait – I must spread a warning and protect my interests.

ESTRELLITA

Ah Jose, dear Jose, he is so bright, so enthusiastic in all he does – but he is not a good companion for Roberto. Fernando, you will keep an eye on Roberto.

ROBERTO

And who will be watching Fernando?

ESTRELLITA

Behave yourself Roberto – go now, I want to speak to Don Carlos.

Exit right - Roberto

Carlos, this is the day that the young señor Robin Prend – Prend – oh! I cannot pronounce these impossible names – will bring this Poppy who is supposed to be Alexander's niece, and her sister-in-law, to our estación. I am worried, Carlos.

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CARLOS

I must say that for a bottle to bob around for twenty years or so is rather incredible.

FERNANDO

Incredible indeed, I believe she is a fortune hunter and has made up this story.

ESTRELLITA

No! No! Señor Robin produced the will, it was written by Alexander but this woman believes that Evelyn is a very little girl – so obviously she does not know the date of the will nor about Evelyn – so much we gleaned from our meeting with señor Robin.

FERNANDO

This Poppy person appears to think Evelyn is a little tot.

CARLOS

And you intend to let her continue to think so?

ESTRELLITA

Yes! Until I am sure that she is not a mere fortune hunter.

CARLOS

I think you are being very devious Estrellita but you have my silence until Mardi Gras – no longer than that.

FERNANDO

Ah! Mardi Gras – what a night we shall have.

CARLOS

When will you choose a wife and settle in to wedlock?

FERNANDO

Wed I may be someday, it is the “lock” that frightens me.

ESTRELLITA

At present you can choose but the years are gathering, Fernando, and then choice will be restricted.

FERNANDO

Then I say I will choose a wife when Carlos does the same.

ESTRELLITA

Nonsense – Carlos must never marry – what would I do without you querido? I go to change my riding habit so for now adios!

Exit left

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CARLOS

Some day you will meet “the” woman you want then you will not be so flippant.

FERNANDO

You are a fool Carlos! Come see my new horse, in training for the bull fight at Mardi Gras.

Exit right

ROBIN

Enter centre

Poppy and Miranda? [*Enter left*] Am I addressing Mrs Poppy Avebury and Miss Miranda Avebury?

POPPY

And, you, I presume are Mr Robin Prendergast? You appear to be somewhat flustered young man! The heat no doubt?

ROBIN

Yes! Yes! The heat. It will be my pleasure to take care of you, your interests, during your sojourn in Argentina and as we have quite a long journey to Donna Estrellita’s estación. we should start immediately. You and I will be staying at the estación until Mardi Gras.

MIRANDA

What is Mardi Gras?

ROBIN

The annual festival prior to Lent when everyone masquerades and is en fête for a day and night of jollity and entertainment.

MIRANDA

It sounds wonderful, doesn’t it Poppy?!

POPPY

It sounds like a time of unbridled licentiousness. What can you tell me of my little cousin Evelyn?

ROBIN

Actually Donna Estrellita has been rather evasive about her niece who is at present away from home but returns for Mardi Gras.

POPPY

Miranda! You’re at it again. Remember, we are English ladies, not hot blooded Latin señoritas!

ROBIN

(What a load of fun she’s going to be). I think we had better be on our way ladies.

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Exit left

ROBERTO

Enter centre

Where are my little flowers? CHIQUITA, PEPITA, JUANITA – LOLITA!

Enter right - Chiquita, Pepita, Juanita & Lolita

ALL

OLÉ.

ROBERTO

I have news for you – terrible news.

LOLITA

Ooh! Señor Roberto you are very naughty.

ROBERTO

Naughty but nice my little flowers.

ALONZO

May we join you señor, señoritas!

Enter right

PEDRO

I am Pedro and this is Alonzo. Señor, you cannot keep the whole bouquet to yourself, I beg you spare one blossom for me?

CHIQUITA

The news señor Roberto.

JUANITA

Tell us the news –

PEPITA

The news naughty one.

ROBERTO

Naughty but not as naughty as Jose.

CARLOS

Enter centre

Si Jose. He is coming to stay with me. Alas one can choose one's friends but not one's relations, for him life is one long Mardi Gras.

LOLITA

Don Carlos, will you be here for Mardi Gras?

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FERNANDO

No more peace when Jose comes!

JOSE

Enter left

And here I am.

SONG: South American Joe

GIRLS

JOSE JOSE JOSE OLÉ

JOSE

Señoritas control yourselves. Carlos, my brother, here I am, home to stay – until Mardi Gras.

ROBERTO

Then go to your own estación – go! Cultivate your own flowers.

ESTRELLITA

Jose – dear Jose, how happy we are to greet you.

ROBERTO

Speak for yourself my Aunt.

JOSE

Estrellita! Still a widow? What is wrong with our caballeros that you are still alone?! Come, a kiss for an old friend.

CARLOS

Enough Jose – your levity is unbecoming and an insult to the Donna.

ESTRELLITA

You are too severe Carlos querido, what harm is there in a kiss between amigos?

FERNANDO

To audience – stage right

Si! I ask you señors – señoritas – what harm is there in a kiss?

Send the kisses out

Stay there and listen

ROBERTO

It depends on who does the kissing! Come my lovelies, away from temptation.

Exit stage right - Girls, Roberto, Alonzo, Pedros & Jose

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Enter centre - Robin, Poppy & Miranda

ROBIN

Buenos días Donna Estrellita, here are Mrs Poppy Avebury, cousin to Evelyn, and Miss Miranda Avebury.

ESTRELLITA

You are Alexander's niece?

POPPY

Yes, I mean si, Mrs – Donna.

ESTRELLITA

You must call me Estrellita. I am delighted to welcome you, and your sister-in-law to my home. This is my amigo – my friend Don Carlos, my brother Fernando and - - where is Roberto?

ROBERTO

Bow and acknowledge girls

You call me and I appear like a conjurer's rabbit.

MIRANDA

Screams

You! You! I told you to go away, you said you would go if I put you out of my mind – you are a cheat and a liar – go away you – you – fairy thing – you've changed your clothes – ah!

CARLOS

The señorita is going crazy.

ESTRELLITA

The poor girl – does she often have these turns Poppy? Is she –

POPPY

Miranda – control yourself, what is the matter with you that you should so insult our hostess? I've never seen her act like that.

MIRANDA

You don't understand because you can't see a hallucination but he's here, he was in our garden, he's not real, he's haunting me and he's only a figment of my imagination.

ROBERTO

A figment of imagination! Me! Believe me señorita I am a real man – touch me and reassure yourself.

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MIRANDA

I wouldn't touch you with a barge-pole, you can't fool me.

ESTRELLITA

Miranda – believe me this man is very real, he is my nephew Roberto.

POPPY

I think I am going to faint.

FERNANDO

I will support you señora – please do not be distressed, it is all some foolish mistake, rest your head against my shoulder.

CARLOS

Pinch him – see, he is solid flesh.

MIRANDA

Oh dear, what have I done – I thought, I was sure he was part of my daydream.

ROBERTO

I would be very, very happy to be part of your dreams señorita.

ESTRELLITA

Roberto in your dreams? Well, that is not unusual, he is the dream of every señorita in Argentina. And where is Jose? Ah! Need I ask – where are the girls?

ROBERTO

Up to his tricks already and poaching on my preserves. Well if you can't beat them, join them.

Exit right

CARLOS

Estrellita, I am sure that the ladies would like to refresh themselves after such a long, hot journey.

ESTRELLITA

Of course – you are exhausted, and I think we must find you clothes more suitable for this heat. Come Poppy and Miranda.

Exit left

FERNANDO

We shall look forward to your return.

CARLOS

Be careful my friend – the rules of flirtation are not the same in England as here. They are very attractive women. You Robin will stay with us for an aperitif si?

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ROBIN

Delighted Don Carlos. She – Miranda – is such a helpless little thing, depends on Poppy who is a most capable woman but not, I think, of a romantic nature.

FERNANDO

She is not?

ROBERTO

Enter right

Amigo – never, never try to put a woman into a category, what they seem are rarely what they are!

Enter right - Girls, Jose, Alonzo & Pedro

JOSE

We have been discussing the Mardi Gras parade Carlos and why not join our estación with Estrellita's?

ROBERTO

And we can look after the ladies so well.

ALL

Si, si, si.

CARLOS

An excellent idea for the parade but I am giving a masked ball so I need Jose, Roberto and Fernando to attend after the parade. Ah! Estrellita, we are discussing Mardi Gras celebrations and as I intend to hold a ball, will you and your guests honour me by your presence?

ESTRELLITA

Gracias Carlos, we will give our guests a night to remember. Señor Robin, you may be assured that we shall take good care of you and your ladies.

ROBIN

Your charm is only exceeded by your loveliness Donna Estrellita.

JOSE

We have a fast learner here Roberto – we must look to our reputation!

ROBERTO

But can he serenade, amigo?! Can he melt the heart of a señorita?

JOSE

Can he tempt her to a kiss, like this?

SONG: Besame Mucho

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POPPY

Well! Well!

CARLOS

Do not be offended señora, it is just a little game.

ESTRELLITA

A game that you play rather well Carlos, you surprise me. Come my dear, let us leave these caballeros to their childish games. Girls, you have work to do.

Exit - Poppy, Miranda, Pedro, Estrellita, Girls & Alonzo

CARLOS

Surely Estrellita cannot think that I make a habit of kissing girls?!

ROBERTO

If you will take my advice you will continue to let her think so. I have always wanted you as my Uncle Carlos.

FERNANDO

And I as your brother-in-law. Why don't you ask her to marry you?

JOSE

You have been in love with her since childhood and yet you let her marry Rodriguez who was an utter rotter and fortunately killed in a duel, which all but Estrellita know was over another man's wife. You shield her from all unhappiness without any right to do and certainly without any reward.

FERNANDO

You don't court her Carlos so how is she to know how much you care for her?

CARLOS

The question is if and how much she cares for me.

ROBERTO

There are two ways to find out, one is to ask her, the other to discover her feelings for you by devious stratagems.

CARLOS

I will neither ask, nor deceive Estrellita, such ideas I will never entertain.

Exit right

JOSE

There are times when I wonder if the same blood flows in our veins! Yet, I have seen Carlos playing the gallant and flirting with other women.

ROBERTO

Other women! That's what is needed, a little jealousy. We insinuate, in Estrellita's

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hearing, that Carlos is interested in some woman.

FERNANDO

And better still, we also make Carlos jealous by getting some man to make a play for her.

FERNANDO & ROBERTO

Someone like you Jose.

JOSE

Diabolical! But it could work.

ROBERTO

You would have to be very convincing to fool both parties.

FERNANDO

Intimate to Carlos that you have been suffering a grand passion for years – Amigos, let us away to the Bodega and plan our strategy.

Exit right - Jose, Roberto & Fernando

ROBIN

How can two sweet innocent females deal with men who conjure up such obvious diversions? It makes one very suspicious as to what traps have been set for my ladies. I must warn Poppy to be very careful in case they are intending to deprive her of her inheritance. Well! I admit their friendliness and charm, but if they intend dealing in monkey business they have me to contend with.

POPPY

Is this not a delightful place and everyone so charming and...

ROBIN

Circumbendibus!

POPPY

How can you be so prejudiced after the welcome we received?

ROBIN

Mrs Avebury, I beg you, most earnestly, not to be seduced by...

POPPY

Do you really think I could be seduced?

ROBIN

Madam, the tropics, the moonlit nights, the soft guitars, the love songs are all notorious seducers, without adding handsome, dashing caballeros to the brew, so I beg you beware!

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MIRANDA

I was looking for – oh Poppy.

Enter left and right

ROBERTO

Here I am, the man of your dreams Miranda!

ROBIN

(Puffed up playboy puppy). I was about to escort the ladies.

ROBERTO

No! No! Robin, you cannot take Miranda away when I have come especially to serenade her.

ESTRELLITA

Enter right

But how charming of you Roberto – I am relying on you to make sure that our guests will long remember their stay with us.

SONG: Frenesi

POPPY

What a charming custom it is to have a gentleman serenade one.

MIRANDA

Especially such a handsome caballero.

ROBIN

(She's falling for his twaddle – his silly poppycock).

ESTRELLITA

You are suffering from the heat Robin; you must dress like our caballeros.

ROBERTO

Come Robin, and ladies, see our señoritas and gauchos practising their routine dances for the Mardi Gras. Ah Fernando -

Enter left - Fernando

- join us?

FERNANDO

Later.

Exit stage left - Robin, Roberto, Poppy & Miranda

What do you make of Carlos and his latest occupation?

ESTRELLITA

If you mean kissing the girls it diminishes his dignity.

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FERNANDO

A man labouring under a strong emotion doesn't think of his dignity.

ESTRELLITA

Don't be so foolish – it was not one woman he was flirting with.

FERNANDO

I was referring to the very determined play that Carlos is making for the affection of the new Flamenco dancer from Spain, a true Spanish Rose.

ESTRELLITA

Carlos and a public performer – no!

FERNANDO

After all, my dear sister, he is the most eligible bachelor in Argentina, possessed of impeccable lineage, exquisite manners and extremely wealthy.

ESTRELLITA

Forget Carlos. I want you to become very friendly with Poppy, I want you to learn all about her and Miranda. These weird dreams about Roberto – is Miranda hoping to entrap him into matrimony? I must be positive that they are not fortune hunters.

FERNANDO

I think not but I will certainly become more friendly with Poppy.

ESTRELLITA

This new dancer – you have seen her?

ROBERTO

Enter right

Did I hear dancer?! Could it be Rose you speak of – ah what a woman!

FERNANDO

So haughty, so exciting, so cruel.

ROBERTO

Ice and fire, oh the very air throbs with excitement when she glides into a room. Which reminds me, Carlos is awaiting you both on the South Patio.

ESTRELLITA

Indeed, then let us not keep him waiting – Fernando come.

ROBERTO

I need a rest after all that cavorting but I will rejoin you in a short time.

Exit right - Estrellita and Fernando

SONG: Hawaiian Hula

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ROBERTO

Oh you gorgeous creature, don't run away from me – you are a siren sent to seduce me – oh how beautiful you are... come to...

JOSE

Roberto, you oaf, why don't you watch where you are going, you must be half asleep.

Collide centre

Exit centre - Lolita

ROBERTO

Asleep – I was not asleep – where is where is –

JOSE

Roberto, cease babbling and listen to me. Tonight I will entice Estrellita out onto the patio and you must ensure that Carlos is there also, somewhere near the rose arbor, so that he is screened from view. Vamoose someone approaches.

Exit stage right

POPPY

Enter stage left with Miranda

I am positively vibrating with excitement and being part of the Mardi Gras celebration and to have Fernando as my escort. No! Don't remonstrate with me.

MIRANDA

I wasn't going to – why not enjoy a flirtation; a discreet little rendezvous. Romance has been sadly lacking in our lives.

POPPY

I must admit that attention from a gentleman is – well, I am not averse to it and Miranda, do I shock you?

MIRANDA

No! We are both starved of male attention and I say that we accept whatever fate has in store for us.

POPPY

And have a jolly good time whilst we have the opportunity.

MIRANDA

But keeping always within the bounds of decorum.

POPPY

Naturally! Nevertheless I have been thirsty for male company and conversation and, to coin a phrase, it has been a long time between drinks.

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MIRANDA

Poppy, this masquerade ball, it is a costume ball so can we attend?

POPPY

Well, you have your velvet gown, it smells rather heavily of moth balls, but with some trimmings would suffice, and I have an undershirt that could be turned in to a Pierrette costume. Estrellita has been most generous in giving us these clothes.

CARLOS

Enter right

Ah! Poppy and Miranda it is time for an aperitif, I will join you when I have smoked my cigarillo.

Exit left - Girls

ESTRELLITA

Enter centre with Jose

Now what is so important and private that we must alone –

Sniffs

- and Jose to be alone with you is such a pleasure to me, life is so dull when you are not here querido.

JOSE

Ah my Estrellita, I have long laboured under an impossible passion for you but until tonight have not dared to tell you. When you look at me:

SONG: Green Eyes

ESTRELLITA

Jose, Jose. Why have we wasted so much time?! We must keep secret our love then make an announcement of our betrothal at Carlos' masquerade ball.

Exit left - Carlos

JOSE

Betrothal – Estrellita, I have taken you by surprise, so perhaps we should, you should, have more time to consider a betrothal!

ESTRELLITA

You underestimate your charm my caballero – how can I resist you? Here come Fernando and Roberto, we must keep secret from them our mad passion for each other.

Exit centre

Enter right - Fernando, Roberto & Robin

□ □ □

FERNANDO

Was he here Jose, Roberto?

ROBERTO

Of course he was here, you know that I said I would make sure he was in the rose arbor and he must have overheard you Jose.

JOSE

What am I to do?! Estrellita has fallen into my arms like a ripe peach ready to be eaten, she talks of a betrothal.

FERNANDO

Betrothal to you – oh no, Jose.

ROBERTO

You mean she responded?

ROBIN

And are congratulations in order Jose?

JOSE

Congratulations, no – commiserations si! How do I extricate myself from this betrothal with honour?

FERNANDO

We have to keep this fiasco of a betrothal from Carlos.

JOSE

If he finds out, he will make me honour my proposal.

ROBERTO

You – marry my aunt? I won't have you for an uncle, you would lead me astray.

FERNANDO

This is not a matter for levity Roberto.

ROBIN

I was in the rose arbor when you were plotting this stratagem and I think you are well served with the tables turned on you.

ROBERTO

Have you never been in love or infatuated by a woman?

ROBIN

I have had my moments of passion.

JOSE

Not passion Robin – a deep abiding love for one special woman.

□ □ □

FERNANDO

The woman you want in marriage.

ROBERTO

Carlos has waited a lifetime and is afraid to ask in case of a refusal, all we tried to do was to help Don Carlos to happiness. For myself, I believe Estrellita to care more than she knows but she takes Carlos so much for granted.

JOSE

To Robin

Surely if you were in love, you would not be averse to a little duplicity to attain your desire?

ROBIN

Well, no, I suppose I would do something...

ROBERTO

I say we cease to panic. Estrellita has named Mardi Gras as the time of the betrothal so we have a month in which to plan.

JOSE

So we all think – think – think and something will emerge I am sure.

Exit - Jose, Roberto, Fernando & Robin

Exit 2 centre, 2 right

Enter left - Alonzo & Pedro

ALONZO

Who do you intend to partner at the festivities Pedro?

PEDRO

I am happy to be with all or anyone of the señoritas. And you?

ALONZO

I say we each take two of them and where are they?

PEPITA

Here we are.

Enter left - Girls

CHIQUITA

Chiquita.

□ □□ □

Pepita. **PEPITA**

Juanita. **JUANITA**

Lolita. **LOLITA**

OLÉ. **ALL**

ALONZO
Sweet señoritas, Pedro and I wish to escort you at the Mardi Gras festivities.

PEDRO
It would give us great pleasure to have your company.

CHIQUITA
How can we refuse such handsome gauchos?!

PEPITA
We will dance you off your feet amigos.

ALONZO
You do not answer, Lolita?

LOLITA
I thank you Alonzo and you Pedro, but I have already accepted as my caballero, for the entire festival... señor Robin.

PEDRO
But you have known him for only a month.

ALONZO
And he is a foreigner. It is not right that he has your company for the Mardi Gras.

LOLITA
Enough! He is my escort I say so.

JUANITA
Lolita is not telling all – she can be very secretive.

PEPITA
Why all the fuss? No doubt Donna Estrellita has chosen her to partner the gringo.

CHIQUITA
Si! Si!

□ □ □

PEPITA

After all, she is closely related to the Marquesa, not employed like us.

PEDRO

Of course! It is a duty appointment.

JUANITA

Hush! Here come Don Jose and Roberto!

Enter right - Roberto, Jose & Robin

JOSE

I see we are ready for our final rehearsal.

ROBERTO

No! We wait for Don Carlos and señora Poppy and Miranda – and Lolita.

LOLITA

I am here.

Enter right - Don Carlos

Enter left - Miranda

FERNANDO

Now we are all here! No! Where is Poppy?

CARLOS

Where is the Marquesa?

ESTRELLITA

Enter centre

I am here.

POPPY

Enter right

I heard the drums, I heard you sing:

SONG: Come To The Mardi Gras

ROBIN

Sings

Oh I say, this is fun. I heard about the conga.

POPPY

Sings

The fascinating conga.

□ □ □

MIRANDA

Sings

And so I bid the rhumba goodbye.

SONG: I Came I Saw I Conga'd

Exit - Poppy, Estrellita & Fernando

JOSE

Wine! Wine! My throat is so parched I can sing no more until my thirst is quenched.

ROBERTO

Go! Prepare wine for us –

Exit - Gauchos, Pedro & Alonzo

- you stay Lolita.

LOLITA

I stay at no-one's bidding.

Exit - all except Carlos, Miranda, Roberto, Jose & Lolita

JOSE

I beg you – on my knees – stay Lolita.

ROBERTO

Ignore him – Lolita will you be my partner at the Mardi Gras?

JOSE

Villain – Lolita will come with me.

LOLITA

Señors, I thank you but I am already promised to señor Robin.

Exit left

ROBERTO & JOSE

Robin – caramba!

CARLOS

Roberto! Jose – your language! There are ladies present. Miranda, señoritas, let me escort you to the wine.

Exit right - Miranda, Carlos, Lolita, Pepita, Juanita & Chiquita

JOSE

So! With Robin escorting Lolita, who will be your partner?

□ □□ □

ROBERTO

I have asked Miranda, and you?

JOSE

Me! I always play the field, I, my dear Roberto, am a confirmed bachelor and intend to stay that way.

ROBERTO

But Lolita! I thought...!

JOSE

It amused me to see you trying to hide your jealousy – and I'm not free to make play for any woman until we find a means to end this fiasco of a betrothal.

ROBERTO

What is your secret?

JOSE

Secret?

ROBERTO

You seem to be able to coax any woman into your arms.

JOSE

Ah! So you are in love with our little Lolita! If you want her, you must play very hard to get.

ROBERTO

I thought she cared for me, but she goes to the masquerade with a man she hardly knows.

JOSE

And who permitted her to do so? Your aunt, who would be well pleased to see you married and to a distant relation.

ROBERTO

You think Estrellita has plotted this?

JOSE

I do. Estrellita permits Lolita a little harmless flirtation in a crowd, but she is a very strict duenna.

ROBERTO

She certainly is, even I am not permitted to be alone with Lolita. But Lolita did not have to accept Robin as her escort.

JOSE

Nevertheless, Lolita will expect you to partner her in the kiss of fire.

□ □□ □

ROBERTO

Naturally, it has to be one of us for such an intimate dance.

JOSE

Then she will be disappointed – you will not be available. I have a plan.

ROBERTO

I hope it is a better plan than what you had for Carlos.

JOSE

I spend my time avoiding Estrellita – but whenever I get near to her she tells me to avoid her altogether in case Carlos should suspect a liaison – and not even a kiss on the cheek do I get – but she is determined to announce our betrothal.

ROBERTO

And Carlos notices nothing – no comment, no sign of jealousy?

JOSE

I shall have to tell him the truth at the ball before she can make an announcement – but I dread the consequences – Carlos can be very formidable especially if angered. Don't worry about Lolita – Robin will return to his cold little island and she will be all yours – believe me she is yours for the taking.

Yawns

ROBERTO

Tell me the plan.

JOSE

Later – right now I need a siesta – adios Roberto.

Exit right

Exit left - Roberto

Enter centre – Fernando and Poppy

FERNANDO

How lovely you look as Pierrette and how happy I am that you have accepted my escort for the Mardi Gras. Are you enjoying your visit with us Poppy?

POPPY

Oh Fernando I could stay here forever. I am so happy but the time is fast approaching when we must return to England. As soon as we meet little Evelyn and Estrellita gives her approval of my guardianship we must settle our affairs and leave.

FERNANDO

Does the inheritance mean a great deal to you – querida?

□ □□ □

POPPY

The money? No! Miranda and I are used to, not poverty – but to managing on very slender income but I am glad that we shall be able to take care of Evelyn in the manner to which she is accustomed. Estrellita has promised that Evelyn will be here tomorrow night and I am so looking forward to meeting the little dear.

FERNANDO

(Confound Evelyn and Estrellita. Poppy! There is something I must tell you).

SONG: Amapola

I have waited so long for love to come to me, stay here, marry me Poppy.

POPPY

Oh! Fernando I too have thought I would never love again, but oh the wonderful joy of love after you think all hope has gone. It is true that love is even better the second time around.

FERNANDO

I loved you from our first meeting querida.

POPPY

Miranda! I can't desert her, I promised Lovelace I would always take care of her.

FERNANDO

She must stay with us and share our happiness.

POPPY

But will she?

FERNANDO

We will persuade her, but for now forget Miranda and for the next twenty four hours enjoy the festivities and our new found love.

Exit centre

CARLOS

You are looking very lovely Estrellita, the caballero who is to escort you to the festivities is most fortunate, and I look forward with great pleasure to dancing with you at my masquerade ball tonight.

ESTRELLITA

But I...

CARLOS

I also have the pleasure of escorting a charming lady, a true Spanish Rose, to the parade but unfortunately she cannot be present at the ball as she has other duties to perform.

□ □ □

ESTRELLITA

Do not concern yourself with me Carlos, I have the most handsome hidalgo in Argentina as my escort.

CARLOS

Who is?

ESTRELLITA

Jose of course.

CARLOS

Then we are both perfectly matched with our partners. And now may I escort you to the wine gallery?

ESTRELLITA

I think not – I have affairs to attend to. Adios Carlos.

Exit right - Carlos

Escorting a charming lady? Oh if I could but get my hands on her! Carlos is mine, mine. A true Spanish Rose indeed. I'll teach him a lesson he won't forget when we meet at the masquerade tonight.

Exit left

SONG: Spanish Rose

MIRANDA

Enter left

Oh it's you Roberto, I thought everyone was indoors.

ROBERTO

I come here often – when I want to be alone.

MIRANDA

Then I won't disturb you.

ROBERTO

No, don't go; sit here with me, Miranda. I'm sorry I mocked your daydreams – I sometimes have them myself.

MIRANDA

The trouble with daydreams is that they are delusions and have no connection with reality as I have discovered.

Enter right - Robin

Enter left - Lolita

SONG: Jealousy

□ □□ □

Exit as entry

MIRANDA & ROBERTO

Do you see what I see? I don't believe it – I won't have it. He/She is my love.

MIRANDA

What have I done?

ROBERTO

What haven't I done? Have I lost her to that man?

MIRANDA

That man is mine – I will not give him up without a struggle, I will fight her on the Pampas, I will fight her on the dance floor and anywhere else but I will never surrender my Robin.

ROBERTO

Oh, bravo Miranda – some Spaniard in the Armada must have mated with one of your ancestors – only a Spaniard could display such fire. Fire! The hiss of fire, a very passionate dance which Carlos will include in the masquerade ball and...

MIRANDA

We are all wearing masks so –

ROBERTO

We change partners and then it's everyone for oneself. Come my lovely conspirator, we need Jose's help and finesse for this plan.

Exit right

CARLOS

Enter centre with Jose

Little brother I owe you a debt of gratitude for confirming a plan I suspected when I overheard your scene with Estrellita, a scene Jose that was straight out of Commedia Dell'arte –

JOSE

Nevertheless it convinced Estrellita and now how can I refute my proposal?

CARLOS

Proposal! Do you think for one moment that Estrellita intends to marry you? Come Jose! The devious Donna would never let another woman trespass on what she has always regarded as her property. I think you can leave "Madam Rosa" to me.

JOSE

Madam Rosa!

□ □ □

CARLOS

Yes Jose, you have forgotten my skill at chess – my move now. Here come our guests – follow my lead, you will not be disappointed.

Enter left - Roberto & Miranda

Enter right - Robin & Lolita

Enter centre - Fernando & Poppy

JOSE

Masked or not, we all know who's who – so here goes. What loveliness lurks behind this mask?

FERNANDO

Loveliness that belongs to me you snaky hipped serenader.

JOSE

I am cut to the quick – I am devastated señorita.

POPPY

Jose, I know your voice – has little Evelyn arrived?

FERNANDO

Move left

No – not yet, come Poppy!

CARLOS

I see you are dressed in mourning señor.

ROBERTO

Mourning?

CARLOS

All the young caballeros are dressed en fête so I presume you have recently lost a loved one!

ROBERTO

I'm not in the mood for black humour Carlos.

CARLOS

Welcome to my hacienda señorita Miranda, I hope to know my fortune before the night is done little gypsy.

MIRANDA

I must endeavour to see my own fortune señor Carlos.

JOSE

Ah! The Marquesa –

□ □□ □

CARLOS

Lovely, as always – welcome Estrellita.

ESTRELLITA

Carlos! Ah my Jose my handsome hidalgo, how I long for your arms around me in the kiss of fire.

To Jose

(You will make an announcement of our betrothal before supper).

FERNANDO

Before all the guests arrive I want you my sister and our dear friends to congratulate me on my forthcoming marriage to Poppy Lovelace – give me your blessing Estrellita.

POPPY

I love him so much and I want you to love me as your sister.

ESTRELLITA

My Fernando – Poppy –

CARLOS

My Spanish Rose, my querida you have come at last!

JOSE

Caramba – it is Lolita he has been wooing and throwing the dust in our eyes with Spanish Rose.

ESTRELLITA

No! No! Lolita no! She is meant for Roberto, a betrothal to him has always been intended. Carlos is too old for her, how could he deceive me so – oh Carlos!

JOSE

Deceive you! But surely you have no intimate feelings for Carlos?

ESTRELLITA

Of course I have you silly songster, but he has never shown me anything but the utmost respect and I want him as my lover, my husband, I want his kiss of fire!

ROBERTO

Lolita – señorita you have been playing with me, using me as your pawn, playing fast and loose with my affections and have broken my heart. I wish you joy with your old man. Girl! Bring me my cloak, I am leaving.

MIRANDA

And I am going with you. You sir are well served by this perfidious female – you who warned us about hot-blooded Latins have made a fool of yourself over her! I'm sorry to spoil your wedding announcement Poppy, but I am going home with

□ □□ □

Roberto.

Screams

He's at it again – Roberto! – that morning in the garden, we were discussing the bridal veil – the heirloom worn by your great grandmama in the wedding portrait with your great grandpapa who was wearing a cloak and who looks exactly like Roberto. Wasn't the eldest son in your family always named...

MIRANDA & POPPY

EVELYN!

POPPY

You knew! You all knew. You have been laughing at us just because we are poor and honest and strangers in this place.

ROBIN

Oh! You cads, you utter rotters to treat these innocents in such a cavalier fashion – and you Marquesa – but I cannot revile a female! Come my dearest Miranda, and you Poppy.

CARLOS

Stop! This silliness has gone far enough. Donna Estrellita was not wise but her motive was to protect Roberto from possible fortune hunters.

POPPY

Fortune hunters!

ESTRELLITA

Obviously you had not noted the date on the will otherwise you would not have kept referring to Evelyn as a little child, also it seemed incredible that you would not have known that Alexander, your father's older twin brother had Evelyn as his first name according to family tradition.

FERNANDO

Poppy my love, we did not then know how good and true you are.

JOSE

It was always intended to reveal the truth by this night.

MIRANDA

And if I hadn't been daydreaming about the bridal veil I wouldn't have got all mixed up with Roberto and your ancestor.

ROBIN

And speaking of bridal veils – Poppy can wear a mantilla and you shall wear her bridal veil when you marry me Miranda.

□ □ □

MIRANDA

I like the reality much more than any daydream.

LOLITA

Evelyn – I did not know Roberto. Is it not a name for a señorita?

ROBERTO

In England it is also a man's name and I am all man Lolita. Come here.

LOLITA

You said I had broken your heart – let me mend it for you querido.

ESTRELLITA

Roberto – what are you thinking of – Lolita is now the concern of Carlos and you señorita will henceforth have your freedom curtailed until your marriage.

CARLOS

Not to me Estrellita – I too can be devious and with the help of Lolita I wished to punish you for your masquerade with Jose. I think it is time for your estancia and mine to be joined together.

ESTRELLITA

And we owe it all to Jose, and where is Jose?

JOSE

I am here waiting to serenade all true lovers.

ROBIN

Why did you not tell us sooner and avoid all this heartache?

JOSE

Why? Because without a plot there would be no play, without a play there would be no fun and without a beginning who can guess the ending? Love is a game of chess and all the principal players are now checked and mated, heart to heart.

SONG: You Belong To My Heart

CARLOS

Jose I think we have all had enough excitement for this Mardi Gras, now it is time to return to your own estancia.

JOSE

Not before I say adios to the little flowers.

ROBERTO

You can have the whole bouquet except my Lolita.

JOSE

CHIQUITA – PEPITA – JUANITA – PEDRO – ALONZO

□ □□ □

OLÉ

ALL

SONG: South American Joe

