

OPAL

A Musical Adventure

Book, Music, and Lyrics by
Robert Lindsey-Nassif

Based on the Mysterious and Magical
Childhood Diary of
Opal Whiteley (aka Françoise D'Orleans)

Winner of the Richard Rodgers Award

SYNOPSIS

OPAL is based on the mysterious and magical childhood diary of Opal Whiteley – an eight-year-old aristocratic French girl who is orphaned in a shipwreck and placed in an Oregon lumber-camp in 1904. In this brutal setting Opal creates a world of fantasy and enchantment that transforms the lives of those around her – the shy lumberjack, the repressed blind girl, the eccentric old scrub woman, and the cold, embittered woman with whom Opal lives. Finally, amid the ashes of a devastating forest fire, Opal discovers hope and home.

CAST

(10 or more)

THE PRINCIPALS

(The principals remain in character throughout the show, while the Narrators assume various roles.)

OPAL (FRANÇOISE). An eight-year-old aristocratic girl; enchanting but with spunk. Speaks in a cultured manner, perhaps with a slight British accent. Should be cast as young and small as possible. A girl who is actually eight-years-old is ideal. Legitimate head voice, not a belt voice. Low soprano. (Bb to E)

THE MAMMA (MRS. POTTER). A rugged, work-worn woman, with humor and warmth buried inside. 20s to 30s. Mixed voice with some chest tones. Mezzo-soprano. (G to C and octave above middle C)

THE MAN THAT WEARS GRAY NECKTIES (ANDREW GIVENS). A shy lumberjack. Very likable. 30s. Legitimate voice. Baritone/tenor. (Bb to E)

SADIE McKIBBEN. A scrub woman; an earth mother. A sage. Speaks with a Scottish brogue. 50s to 70s. Legit mezzo-soprano with some mixed tones. (G to Eb with an optional high G)

THE GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING (SELENA). A young woman who is blind. Waifish. Early 20s. Mixed voice. Mezzo-soprano. (G to C and octave above middle C)

THE THOUGHT-GIRL WITH THE FAR-A WAY LOOK IN HER EYES. The daughter of the lumber mill owner. Lovely, modest. 20s to 30s. Legitimate head voice. Soprano. (B to G)

THE NARRATORS

2 or 3 men. 2 women. (Or more.)

(OPAL can be performed with 4 Narrators, but the show also accommodates a larger ensemble.)

The Narrators tell the story to the audience, bring on scenery and props, and assume various roles. Their basic costume is lumber camp garb. They don coats, hats, scarves, etc. to portray other characters.

20s to 40s. Strong legitimate voices. Soprano, alto, tenor, baritone/bass.

The Narrators portray the following characters:

Ship Passengers

Sailor/s

Angel Mother and Father (in a small cast, they may be portrayed by the actors who play Neckties and the thought-girl)

Felix Mendelssohn and Peter Paul Rubens (mouse and pig sounds)

Lumberjacks and lumber camp women

The Gossip Sisters

The General Store Owner

Selena's Father

School Children

Square Dance Caller

Michael Angelo the Fir Tree

Man 1 & 2 (who take away the pig)

Rough Lumberjack

Woman

Elsie's Husband

Buddy

Barber

Time: Autumn 1904 to Summer 1905

Place: An Oregon Lumber Camp

OPAL is performed without an intermission.

REVIEWS

"A splendid musical. It is a rare achievement. Mr. Lindsey-Nassif's lovely music draws one into a place of magical transformations."

The New York Times

"OPAL is a resounding success. An extraordinary achievement. A gem of a musical. It is an irresistible and utterly universal story of a girl trying to fit into a world foreign to her. A musical

that deserves to be produced by theaters across the country."
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

"A mesmerizing musical gem. OPAL is brimming with ideas and overflowing with heart."
Forbes' Weekend Plus

"Bravo! A musical gem!"
New York Voice

"The show is a charmer and a wonderful production for adults, children, and grandchildren."
The Jewish Forward

"An enchanting musical. A show that will beguile kids and grown-ups alike and -- even more important -- keep them coming back for more."
Orlando Sentinel

"OPAL treads the boards unforgettably."
Dallas Morning News

ROBERT LINDSEY-NASSIF composed the score for Carol Burnett's Broadway play, HOLLYWOOD ARMS and the dance and instrumental arrangements for Stephen Sondheim's musical BOUNCE which premiered at the Kennedy Center and the Goodman Theatre, both directed by Harold Prince. Rob's Off-Broadway musicals are FLIGHT OF THE LAWNCHAIR MAN, OPAL, and HONKY-TONK HIGHWAY. Regionally, his musicals include ELIOT NESS IN CLEVELAND and FLIGHT OF THE LAWNCHAIR MAN (3HREE), also directed by Harold Prince, which played in Denver, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. He is the recipient of the Richard Rodgers Award, the AT&T Award, and the Gilman Gonzalez-Falla Award given at Lincoln Center. He has also collaborated with Arthur Miller, Joss Whedon and Disney Feature Animation.

www.RobertLindseyNassif.com

PROLOGUE: A PASSENGER SHIP - Early 1904

(SETTING: A playing space floored with rough-hewn planks. Some ramps and levels. Tall poles represent a forest. Other locations are suggested by props and imagination. The action should flow cinematically.)

A group of Narrators tells us the story -- playing various roles by donning hats and costume pieces, changing the settings, and perhaps playing various folk instruments.)

1 - Just Beyond the Horizon

(Lights up on the Narrators.)

NARRATORS

(Separate lines are assigned to individual narrators; To the audience.)

In 1904,
a small girl
wrote a diary.

(all in unison)

This is her adventure!

(The Narrators become sailors and passengers on a grand sailing ship. Perhaps a ship's sail descends, tended to by one or more sailors.)

An elegantly-dressed, seven-year-old girl runs on deck, followed by her aristocratic parents.)

FRANÇOISE

(Pointing out front.)

Mama! Papa! Look! Look!

FATHER

WE ARE ON
THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME!

MOTHER

SOMEWHERE WHERE
WE'VE NEVER BEEN BEFORE!

FATHER

SAILING TO A COUNTRY
CALLED

FRANÇOISE

AMERICA!

MOTHER AND FATHER

WHO CAN SAY
WHAT WONDERS OR
WHAT STORIES ARE IN STORE?

ALL (FULL CAST)

JUST BEYOND THE HORIZON,
THERE'S AN ANCIENT LAND
FULL OF NEW THINGS TO LEARN
AND UNDERSTAND.

JUST BEYOND THE HORIZON,
THROUGH THE MIST AND FOAM,
THERE'S A PLACE
WE'VE NEVER BEEN BEFORE,
CALLED HOME.

PASSENGER 1

SOMEWHERE THERE'S A
STATUE WITH A BEACON.

PASSENGER 2

EVERYONE IS ALWAYS HAPPY.

PASSENGER 3

MOTOR CARS!

PASSENGER 4

AND ROOSEVELT IS KING.

PASSENGER 5

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA!

PASSENGER 1

PHONOGRAPHS.

PASSENGER 2

AND ICE.

FRANÇOISE

(To her parents.)

THE LAST MOHICAN!

ALL (BUT THE CHILD)

HOPE AND CHANGE,
AND RAGTIME MUSIC.
PEACE AND PROMISE.
STEEL AND BASEBALL.

ALL

HAPPY ENDINGS.

NEW BEGINNINGS,
WAITING TO BEGIN...

ALL
JUST BEYOND THE HORIZON,
JUST BEYOND OUR VIEW,
THERE'S A LAND
ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

JUST BEYOND THE HORIZON,
THROUGH THAT LINE OF SKY,
THERE'S A WORLD WHERE
TOMORROWS NEVER DIE.

JUST BEYOND THE HORIZON,
THROUGH THE MIST AND FOAM,
THERE'S A PLACE WE'VE
NEVER BEEN BEFORE,
CALLED HOME!
THERE'S A PLACE
CALLED HOME!

(We jump forward in time. Suddenly, thunder and lighting. The sky darkens.)

1a - Underscoring

(The passengers are rocked by the wind and waves. General commotion.)

SAILOR
We've been hit!

(Thunder and lighting.)

A PASSENGER
We're taking in water!

SAILOR
Man the lifeboats!

(Turmoil. Frenzy. Screams. Fighting for life.)

ALL
(Ad lib commotion.)
Oh, my God! The ship's been struck! Help! We're going to drown! Get in the lifeboats! Somebody save me! I can't swim! Women and children first! (Etc.)

(Suddenly the music changes and the action becomes slow motion. Passengers lurch silently and slowly, flailing and falling. In the slow confusion, the girl is torn from her parents, who are vanish in the churning crowd. The girl looks about helplessly.)

Suddenly, motion returns to normal speed. Shouting and chaos resume. A sailor grabs the girl and hoists her over his shoulder.)

SAILOR

Get in the lifeboat!

THE GIRL

No!

SAILOR

Get in, or you'll drown, too!

THE GIRL

Mama! Papa! Where are you?!

(The music builds to a climax as the passengers disappear with the storm. The sailor carries the girl away to:

SEQUENCE ONE: SUMMER OF 1904 - OPAL'S FIRST NIGHT

MRS. POTTER'S LUMBER SHANTY

(Night. Rain and distant thunder. The sailor sets down the girl and mimes pounding on a door.)

SAILOR

Mrs. Potter! Open up! Mrs. Potter!

MRS. POTTER

(offstage)

Who's out there?

SAILOR

I work the dock in Portland with a fella that knows ya. Said ya got a farm ta run and need help.

(Mrs. Potter enters carrying a lantern and a shotgun.)

MRS. POTTER

I can't hire nobody. Go away.

MAN

Ya won't last the winter up here alone.

MRS. POTTER

(A threat.)

I ain't alone, I got a shotgun.

MAN

And I got a little girl that'll catch her death if she don't find shelter.

(A beat. Mrs. Potter opens the door. The Sailor enters with the girl.)

[This and other such stage directions are accomplished through mime. There is no actual door.]

MRS. POTTER

Who's she?

MAN

Nobody knows. A foreign ship sank last night. After the lifeboats come in, they found her alone on the pier. They said her folks drowned. She don't know her last name, where she's from or where she was goin'.

MRS. POTTER

Yeah? What's that got ta do with me?

MAN

You're the one with five bucks.

MRS. POTTER

Git out!

MAN

Okay, four bucks.

MRS. POTTER

I don't buy children! Now, get out!

MAN

You can't run a farm with no help!

MRS. POTTER

Ya call this help?! I'd be a fool ta take 'er!

MAN

You'd be a fool *not* too, 'cause your husband ain't comin' back! Not after what happened!

MRS. POTTER

(Aiming the gun.)

Shut up and get out while ya still got innards!

MAN

Wait, wait!

(Beat.)

Truth is, I got no where else ta take 'er!

MRS. POTTER

That ain't my problem!

(Beat.)

MAN

It is now!

(He runs out. Mrs. Potter chases after him.)

MRS. POTTER

Hey! Come back here, you snake!

(Thunder. Beat. Mrs. Potter realizes it's hopeless. She turns and regards the girl with confusion.)

MRS. POTTER (cont'd)

(Exasperated.)

Now what?

FRANÇOISE

Ou sont ma mere et mon pere?

MRS. POTTER

What?

FRANÇOISE

Where are my mother and father?

MRS. POTTER

They're gone.

FRANCOISE

A lady on the boat said they was gone with the angels.

MRS. POTTER

Guess so.

FRANÇOISE

When will they be back?

MRS. POTTER

They won't be back. They're gone fer good. Don't you know what that means?

FRANÇOISE

No.

MRS. POTTER

(Noting the fancy dress.)

I suspect you had a soft life somewhere. But the good life is over now. Yer in Oregon.

FRANÇOISE

(Defiantly.)

Je ne vous aime pas!

MRS. POTTER

I don't know what you just said, but I didn't like it!

FRANCOISE

I don't like it here! And I'm going to find Mother and Father!

(The girl marches out the door.)

MRS. POTTER

(Calling after.)

Go ahead. If the timber wolves don't git cha, the bears will.

(A wolf howls in the distance. After a moment, she runs back in.)

OPAL

I'll find them! You'll see!

MRS. POTTER

Good, 'cause you're only stayin' here till I figger out what ta do with you.

(Throughout the following, Mrs. Potter towels off the girl.)

MRS. POTTER (cont'd)
What's yer name?

FRANÇOISE
Françoise.

MRS. POTTER
Fran- what?

FRANÇOISE
Françoise.

MRS. POTTER
Well, I can't remember no foreign sissy name. I'll call you...Opal.

FRANÇOISE
Why?

MRS. POTTER
No reason.

FRANÇOISE
What do I call you?

MRS. POTTER
Me?...You can call me...mamma.

FRANÇOISE
But that's the name I call my mother.

MRS. POTTER
Well, I'll just borrow it a while.
(Pointing.)
You can sleep over there. There's a blanket in the chest. Good night...Opal.

(Mrs. Potter [hereafter called "The Mamma"] exits with the lantern and shotgun, leaving the girl alone in the dark.)

FRANÇOISE
(Calling after.)
But my name is Françoise!

(Françoise [hereafter called "Opal"] looks about the strange room, alone for the first time in her life. Moonlight streams in through the windows.)

The Narrators appear and observe the scene from the periphery.)

NARRATORS

(To the audience.)

Just then, a small brown mouse scampered across the floor and underneath a cupboard.

Underscoring

(Opal chases after the mouse as a Narrator provides the mouse's "squeaks.")

[Throughout the show, all the animals "mimed" as the Narrators provide appropriate animal noises.]

OPAL

Come back!

(Opal reaches underneath an imagined "cupboard" to fetch the mouse. Kneeling, she strokes the mouse gently.)

OPAL (cont'd)

You have beautiful eyes. And your squeakings are very musical.

(A thought.)

I shall call you...Felix Mendelssohn.

(Opal releases the mouse back under the cupboard, and makes a discovery.)

The Narrators hand her the following items:)

NARRATORS

There, Opal discovered a dusty satchel, filled with old school paper, and three colored wax pencils.

(Opal picks up a crayon.)

NARRATORS (cont'd)

Suddenly – an idea. Remembering the diary her parents taught her to keep, she began to write.

2 - Mother, Father

(Opal crouches on the floor and writes.)

OPAL

MOTHER, FATHER,
OUT THERE IN THE NIGHT,
CAN YOU SEE ME
AND THE WORDS I WRITE?

OPAL AND FEMALE NARRATORS

ARE YOU WITH SAINT PETER
IN A CATACOMB?
MOTHER, FATHER,
COME AND TAKE ME HOME.

(A Male Narrator lifts Opal to his shoulders.)

OPAL AND NARRATORS

RIDING YOUR SHOULDERS,
GOING EXPLORES.
LEARNING OF CHOPIN
AND LOUIS-QUATORZE.

(A Female Narrator waltzes with her.)

OPAL AND NARRATORS

WALTZING WITH MOTHER,
SINGING OUR SONG.

OPAL AND FEMALE NARRATORS

WHY DID YOU LEAVE ME?
DID I DO

OPAL

SOMETHING WRONG?

OPAL AND FEMALE NARRATORS

MOTHER, FATHER,
NOW WHERE CAN YOU BE?
ARE YOU SEARCHING,
CALLING OUT FOR ME?

OPAL AND NARRATORS

IF YOU'RE WITH THE ANGELS,
DOING ANGEL THINGS,
MOTHER, FATHER,
HOW CAN I GROW WINGS?

(The child's aristocratic parents appear in a
distant dream-vision.)

OPAL

(Out front; to the sky.)

Mama! Papa! I want to be with you again! I want to go home!

FATHER

(French accent.)

Françoise, do you remember the music box we gave you on your birthday?

(We hear the music box playing its simple tune.)

OPAL

Yes. But it was lost in the sea with you.

MOTHER

(Accent of indeterminate origin.)

What was the song the music box played?

OPAL

"Make Earth Glad."

(Singing along.)

FIND THE WAY TO MAKE EARTH GLAD,
AND EARTH WILL LEAD YOU HOME.

FATHER

And that is what you must do.

FATHER & NARRATORS

You must *make earth glad*.

MOTHER

Then we shall be with you always and you shall be home again.

OPAL

But what does that mean? *How* do I make earth glad?

MOTHER

That, only you can discover.

OPAL

How?

MOTHER, FATHER & NARRATORS

Search, Françoise. Search for the way!

FRANÇOISE & NARRATORS

MOTHER, FATHER,
THOUGH THE EARTH IS SAD,
SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY,

I SHALL MAKE IT GLAD,
IF YOU'RE IN THE CLOUD SHIPS,
IF YOU'RE ON A STAR,

(Mother and Father exit.)

NEVER FEAR,
FATHER & MOTHER

MOTHER,
FRANÇOISE & NARRATORS

BE NOT SAD.
FATHER & MOTHER

FATHER,
FRANÇOISE & NARRATORS

FIND THE WAY,
FATHER & MOTHER

FATHER,
FRANÇOISE & NARRATORS

TO MAKE EARTH GLAD.
FATHER & MOTHER

I'LL FIND THE WAY
BACK HOME,
ALL

(The Narrators exit quickly, leaving the girl
alone.)

TO WHERE
YOU ARE.
OPAL

(Lights fade out.

Suddenly, energetic music.)

SEQUENCE TWO: THE FOLLOWING WEEKS

THE LUMBER CAMP AND VARIOUS LOCATIONS

3 - To Conquer the Land

(A musically underscored montage of lumber camp life and Opal's first weeks with the mamma. The Narrators become the lumber camp folks and assume various roles throughout the following.

Dawn. Lumberjacks enter with axes and saws.)

LUMBERJACK 1

AND WE RISE,
AND WE WORK,
IN THE BITTER COLD AND DAMP.

LUMBERJACKS 1 & 2

AND WE CHOP,
AND WE CLEAR,

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS (ALL)

AND WE HAUL FROM CAMP TO CAMP.

(Work begins. The other lumber camp people enter, all with various implements of labor -- a scrub bucket, a trunk, a rope, a barrel, a broom, a shovel, etc.

As they sing, the lumberjacks chop and saw with a two-man cross-cut saw. The women, including the mamma, scrub, churn, grind, wash, and do various chores.)

[Objects of labor are actual props; activities are mimed.]

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS

AND WE CAME TO TAME THE LAST FRONTIER,
LEAVING ALL THAT'S NEAR AND DEAR,
CAME THIS WAY TO PIONEER,
AND CONQUER THE LAND.

MEN

AND WE HACK,

WOMEN

AND WE SCRUB,

MEN

AND WE HEW,

WOMEN

AND WE SCRAPE,
AND TIE, AND SAW.

LUMBERCAMP FOLKS
AND WE TETHER, TIE, AND SAW.

MEN
AND WE GRIND,

WOMEN
AND WE STRAIN,

MEN
AND WE CLAMP,

WOMEN
AND WE POUND,
OUR FINGERS RAW.

MEN
AND WE WORK OUR FINGERS RAW.

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS
AND WE CAME TO TAME THE LAST FRONTIER,
CAME TO LIVE WITH STRANGERS HERE,
CAME TO CLEAR AND PIONEER,
AND CONQUER THE LAND.

MAYBE THERE'S A FLOOD.
MAYBE THERE'S A FIRE,
MAYBE THERE'S A LOG-JAM IN THE FLUME.

MAYBE THERE'S A PLAGUE,
MAYBE THERE'S A DROUGHT,
MAYBE ONE MORE LOGGER MEETS HIS DOOM.

MEN
AND WE RISE,

WOMEN
AND WE RISE,

MEN
AND WE WORK,
IN THE BITTER COLD AND DAMP.

WOMEN
AND WORK,

MEN
AND WE CHOP,

WOMEN

AND WE CHOP,

MEN

AND WE CLEAR,
AND WE HAUL FROM CAMP TO CAMP.

LUMBERCAMP FOLKS

AND THERE AIN'T A SINGLE THING THAT'S SURE,

THE MAMMA

'CEPT THE SUN AND COW MANURE.

LUMBERCAMP FOLKS

THAT'S THE LIFE YOU LIVE, IF YOU'RE
TO CONQUER THE LAND!

THAT'S THE LIFE YOU LIVE, IF YOU'RE
TO CONQUER THE LAND!

(The lumber camp folks freeze. Opal enters wearing a simple dress home-sewn dress and lace-up anklet shoes.)

OPAL

(Out front; to the sky.)

Dear Angel Mother and Father...until I find the way to be with you again, I am staying with someone called "the mamma." The more I know *her*, the more I miss *you*.

(**First vignette.** Opal and the mamma [Mrs. Potter] at breakfast.)

The mamma enters with a pan and a bowl. She hands Opal the bowl, then mimes slopping a ladle of mush into the bowl.)

THE MAMMA

Eat yer grub.

OPAL

(Stares at it, incredulous.)

What is it?

THE MAMMA

It's mush.

OPAL

But Madame la chef always made me crepe.

THE MAMMA

(Misunderstanding.)

Uh huh. Well, this *crap* is mush.

(Activity resumes. The lumber camp folks cross through, indicating the passage of time.)

LUMBERCAMP FOLKS

THAT'S THE LIFE YOU LIVE,
IF YOU'RE TO CONQUER THE LAND.

OPAL

(Out front.)

The mamma does not have a cook or a governess or a servant. So she needs lots of help and has lots of do's for me to do.

(**Second vignette.** Opal and the mamma by the pig trough.)

THE MAMMA

(Mimes filling a trough with a heavy bag of feed.)

This is how yer ta slop the hogs.

(Calling and tossing some feed.)

Suuuuueeeee!

[Here, and whenever we "see" the pig, a Male Narrator is nearby, providing pig noises. A patch of light or spotlight may be used to establish the pig's location.]

OPAL

The fat one with the curly tail is Peter Paul Rubens! He has the soul of an artiste, for there is poetry in his tracks.

THE MAMMA

(Ignoring her.)

Suuuuueeeee!

(Opal kneels by the pig, petting him.)

OPAL

Peter Paul Rubens, why are you always rolling in the mud? I really must teach you some manners so you can become a gentleman pig!

(The mamma shoos the pig away.)

THE MAMMA

That pig is not a pet!

OPAL

Why?

THE MAMMA

'Cause soon as he gits big enough ta make me some money, he's gonna git sold.

OPAL

But you can't sell Peter Paul Rubens! It would hurt his feels!

(Beat.)

THE MAMMA

Just exactly where did you come from?

OPAL

I don't know. When I was there, everybody knew where they was, so nobody asked me.

THE MAMMA

Well, yer here now, an' here we work or we starve.

OPAL

I'm only here until I find the way to Mother and Father.

THE MAMMA

I told you, yer folks ain't comin' back!

(Beat.)

OPAL

I have not likes for you.

THE MAMMA

Well, that just hurts my feels!

(Calling.)

Suuuuueeeee!

(Activity resumes. Time passes.)

LUMBERCAMP FOLKS

AIN'T A SINGLE THING THAT'S SURE,
'CEPT THE SUN AND COW MANURE.
THAT'S THE LIFE YOU LIVE IF YOU'RE
TO CONQUER THE LAND.

OPAL

(Out front.)

The mamma is teaching me to do "chores." I have wants to do things right, for she gets sparky when I do things wrong. Everyday I sweep the floor, wash the plates, empty the ashes, scrub the clothes, churn the butter --

(Third vignette. Opal and the mamma doing chores.)

THE MAMMA

-- and fetch that pail!

(Opal fetches a rug-beater.)

THE MAMMA (cont'd)

(Getting it herself.)

Not a rug-beater! The pail!

OPAL

Yesterday, it was a bucket.

THE MAMMA

Just scrub.

(She hands Opal the bucket and brush. Opal looks at them curiously.)

THE MAMMA (cont'd)

Don't tell me you never scrubbed before!

OPAL

All right.

THE MAMMA

(A huff.)

(Showing her each item)

Pail.

OPAL

(Unintentionally imitating the mamma's coarse accent)

Pail.

THE MAMMA

Brush.

OPAL

Brush.

THE MAMMA

Bon Ami. [Prounouced Bahn Am-ee]

OPAL

(Pointing excitedly.)

Ah, oui! Je le connais! Bon ami! [French pronunciation.]

THE MAMMA

I told you, no more queer talk! It's Bon Ami!
(Shaking the can, she gets powder in her face.)

(A cough.)

OPAL

(Imitating the mamma)

Bon Ami! (A cough.)

THE MAMMA

(Fuming.)

Scrub.

(The mamma exits. Opal scrubs the floor. We hear the music box theme.)

OPAL

(Singing along.)

FIND THE WAY TO MAKE EARTH GLAD,
AND EARTH WILL LEAD YOU HOME.

(Out front.)

Every day I think of those words and wonder what they mean. If I can find the way to make earth glad, I know I will be with you again!

(Bright music. The mamma hands Opal a basket.)

THE MAMMA

Take these eggs around to the folks that buys 'em.

OPAL

(Out front.)

Folks like the Gossip Sisters.

(Two female Narrators don shawls and flowered hats to become the Gossip Sisters — spinsters who speak simultaneously.)

[For variety, some of their lines may be divided between them — one of them starting a sentence and the other finishing it.]

GOSSIP SISTERS

(To each other and to the audience.)

She's a demented little foreign girl. Half of what she says you can't understand, and the other half comes out like she's talking backwards.

OPAL

You look like a painting in the Louvre!

GOSSIP SISTERS

The louver?

OPAL

Yes. The painting of the big ladies by Peter Paul Rubens.

GOSSIP SISTERS

Who is Peter Paul Rubens?

OPAL

(Pointing.)

Him.

(The pig snorts loudly.)

GOSSIP SISTERS

(A gasp; to the audience.)

Demented!

(They exit.)

OPAL

(Out front.)

But many folks here are sad because they have needs. Like the man that wears gray neckties...

(A lumberjack steps forward.)

GOSSIP SISTERS

(To the audience.)

Who needs a wife.

OPAL

And the thought-girl with the far-away look in her eyes...

GOSSIP SISTERS

Who needs a husband and a baby. In that order.

(A primly-dressed young woman steps forward. She is soft and feminine. Neckties watches her longingly.)

A MALE NARRATOR

(To the audience.)

They met in the General Store the first week of logging season.

(He dons a visor and becomes the General Store Owner. The Gossip Sisters are there, buying goods.)

The thought-girl mimes entering the General Store. A little bell rings as she opens the door.)

GENERAL STORE OWNER

Morning, Miss Ryden.

THOUGHT-GIRL

Did the new catalogs come in?

GENERAL STORE OWNER

Yes, ma'am.

(He fetches one.)

GOSSIP SISTER 1

(Whispering.)

Wasted her youth on a college education.

GOSSIP SISTER 2

(Whispering.)

She'll never get married now. She's too smart.

GENERAL STORE OWNER

(Handing her a catalog.)

I saved one for you special.

THOUGHT-GIRL

That's very thoughtful, Mr. Walters. Thank you.

GOSSIP SISTER 2

(Whispering.)

What kind of foolish man would ever look twice at an old maid like that?

(Neckties mimes entering the General Store. A little bell rings.)

NECKTIES

Them new catalogues come in yet?

GENERAL STORE OWNER

Sorry, Mr. Givens. I just gave out the last of 'em.

NECKTIES

Oh.

THOUGHT-GIRL

Here. Take mine.

NECKTIES

No, ma'am, I couldn't.

THOUGHT-GIRL

Please. My father probably has one.

(The Gossip Sisters observe with interest.)

NECKTIES

(Accepting it.)

That's right kind a you. Thank you, Mrs. -- uh --

THOUGHT-GIRL

Miss. Miss Ryden.

NECKTIES

Say, Miss Ryden, I seen ya serving in the cook house. Don't normally see a proper lady like yerself slinging hash.

THOUGHT-GIRL

I like to help out in the kitchen. It makes me feel useful.

NECKTIES

I figger yer pa must be one of us shanty boys.

THOUGHT-GIRL

Well, sort of.

GENERAL STORE OWNER

(Pulling Neckties aside.)

Mister, her pa owns the whole damn lumber mill!

NECKTIES

Forgive me, ma'am. I wouldn't a been so familiar if I'd known you was who you are.

THOUGHT-GIRL

(Overlapping his last words.)

But you weren't, honestly.

NECKTIES

(Overlapping her last words.)

I mean, you are who you were.

THOUGHT-GIRL

(Overlapping.)

But, I'm not. I mean --

NECKTIES

(Trying to be suave.)

An' if I find another catalogue in the outhouse, it's yours.

(A beat of realization; to himself.)

Duuuummbbbb.

(Neckties exits, flustered, as the bell on the shop door rings.)

THOUGHT-GIRL

(To the Gossip Sisters as she exits.)

Maybe *that* kind of man.

NARRATORS

(To audience.)

And, shortly after that day, Miss Ryden began finding bunches of wildflowers -- left on the path outside her father's house.

(A Narrator lays a bouquet of wildflowers on the ground before the Thought-girl. She discovers it and picks it up quizzically.)

Lights up on Opal leading a young woman who wears dark, wire-rimmed glasses.)

NARRATORS (cont'd)

And there is the girl that has no seeing...

OPAL

(Out front.)

...who needs eyes.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I used to see when I was your age. Then I lost my sight.

OPAL

Your eyes aren't *lost*. I can see them. Maybe they're just broken.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(Charmed by Opal's perspective.)

Yes, they are.

(A male Narrator dons a slouch hat and becomes Selena's Father, entering the scene suddenly and pulling Selena away.)

SELENA'S FATHER

You keep away from my daughter, you strange little foreign girl!

NARRATORS

And there is Sadie McKibben,
an old scrub woman,
who lives at the far end of the forest,

(Lights up on Sadie McKibben, who is scrubbing clothes with a wash-board and tub. Opal goes to her.)

GOSSIP SISTERS

(Out front.)

And does other peoples wash, if you can imagine!

THE MAMMA

(To Opal.)

You stay away from that old fool.

GOSSIP SISTERS

She's odd — reads tea leaves or foreheads or something. But she's no seer. She's just senile.

(Opal approaches this mysterious woman cautiously but full of wonder.)

OPAL

Do you have any children?

SADIE MCKIBBEN

(Scottish accent.)

No. I wanted children very much, but it was ne'er in the stars. And now I am too old.

OPAL

I know! Why don't I come live with you until I am with my mother and father again? You wouldn't spank me, like the mamma I live with for now.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Is she harsh with ye?

OPAL

Yes.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Perhaps that's because she needs yir help so much.

(Pause.)

What's yir name, child?

OPAL

I don't have one anymore. I used to be Françoise. But now, the mamma calls me Opal.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Opal. 'Tis a gem, ye know. Very rare and precious.

OPAL

Let me live with you. I could give you helps.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Perhaps I shall, if it's in the stars. For if there's one thing we all need, it's a bit of help.

(This word has struck a chord. Opal contemplates it as she comes to the audience.)

OPAL

Help....

(A revelation; out front.)

Dear Angel Mother and Father, now I know what the song of music box means! It means, I must *help* these folks get the things they need to be happy. Then you will come and take me home! As soon as I...

OPAL AND NARRATORS

Make earth glad!

(The Narrators suddenly turn back into the lumber camp folks and we see once more the harshness of their lives. Opal exits as the mamma, Sadie, and Selena reenter variously.)

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS

MAYBE YOU GET SICK!

MAYBE YOU GET LICE!

MAYBE YOU CHOP OFF ANOTHER TOE!

MAYBE YOU GO BROKE!

MAYBE YOU GO BUST!

MAYBE IS THE ONLY LIFE WE KNOW!

AND WE CAME TO TAME THE LAND.

MEN

AND WE HEAVE,

WOMEN

AND WE CUT,

MEN

AND WE ROPE,

WOMEN

AND WE STITCH,
AND PLOW, AND PLANT.

MEN

AND WE SHOVEL, PLOW, AND PLANT.

AND WE FORGE,

WOMEN

AND WE CARVE,

MEN

AND WE BOLT,

WOMEN

AND WE NAIL,
FROM "CAN" TO "CAN'T."

MEN

AND WE WORK FROM "CAN" TO "CAN'T."

AND WE'RE PAPER COLLAR LUMBERJACKS,
WITH A BACKSAW ON OUR BACKS,
AND A TWO BIT TWO-BIT AXE,

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS

COME TO LIVE IN SHANTY SHACKS,
COME TO CHANGE THE ALMANACS,
AND CONQUER THE LAND.

AND WE CAME TO CHANGE THE ALMANACS,
AND CONQUER THE LAND!

(All freeze in a stoic tableau.

(The noon whistle blows. As the lumber camp folks
disperse, Neckties bumps into the blind girl,
causing her to drop a basket she is holding.)

3a - Underscoring

(Music underscores. Neckties, flustered and apologetic, picks up the basket and returns it to Selena. They mime a brief conversation in which he conveys concern for the blind girl. Selena gently reaches up and feels Neckties' face. He freezes a moment, then mimes a goodbye and leaves. It's clear the blind girl doesn't want him to go.

As Neckties exits, Selena's Father appears and comes to her.)

SELENA'S FATHER

(Stern but caring.)

Selena, I told you to wait for me outside the General Store and not to talk to nobody --

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(Out front.)

But, he seemed right nice.

SELENA'S FATHER

-- especially a lumberjack.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

He didn't talk coarse like the others. His voice was gentle and he wore the nicest shaving lotion. He said his name was Mr. Givens.

SELENA'S FATHER

That man is too old to have a respectable interest in a child like you.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I'm not a child. I know how old I am.

SELENA'S FATHER

You will always be a child. I never should have let you come with me to a place like this.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I won't go back to that institution!

SELENA'S FATHER

That's enough.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I won't go back! I'd rather die!

SELENA'S FATHER

That's enough! I don't wanna hear another word about none of this. Now, come on.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(Under her breath.)

He liked me.

(Selena and her Father exit as the scene dissolves to:

THE FOREST NEAR THE MILL OWNER'S HOUSE

Neckties enters with two bouquets of wildflowers. He looks around furtively, then lays a bouquet on the ground. Unknown to him, Opal has been following.)

OPAL

Hello!

NECKTIES

(Startled.)

Oh, uh, howdy.

OPAL

You're the man that wears gray neckties.

NECKTIES

(regarding his tie)

That's me. And yer the new girl I heard about.

OPAL

That's me, too.

(Indicating the flowers.)

And those are fleurs.

NECKTIES

Ya mean *flowers*.

OPAL

Somebody leaves fleurs just like those near the house of the thought-girl with the far-away look in her eyes.

NECKTIES

Ya mean the mill owner's daughter?

OPAL

Yes. And I know who leaves them.

NECKTIES

I was afraid ya might.

OPAL

It was the tree spirits!

NECKTIES

Who?

OPAL

The magic tree spirits!

NECKTIES

(Relieved.)

Okay.

OPAL

They bring wishes. They always did when Father was with me.

NECKTIES

Say, I hear yer folks is gone.

OPAL

(Matter-of-factly.)

Yes.

NECKTIES

That's, uh -- I'm, uh --

(A thought.)

Hey! I got this mail order wish book here.

(Takes a catalogue from his nap sack.)

If you was a tree spirit pickin' out a wish, what would you choose?

(Thumbing through; having fun with her.)

How 'bout a bottle a "Dr. Harvey's Fast Acting Worm Elixir?"

OPAL

No.

NECKTIES

No?

(Turns a few pages.)

Okay...Well, how 'bout a "Luxury, galvanized, indoor bath tub?"

OPAL

(A little laugh.)

No.

NECKTIES

Well, what, then?

OPAL

More colored pencils to write with!

NECKTIES

Color pencils, huh? Okay. If I see any tree spirits, I'll tell 'em.

OPAL

Men that wear neckties are a multiplication table of comfort.

(Takes the catalogue and begins looking through it.)

Now, let's pick out a wife.

NECKTIES

A wife?

OPAL

The Gossip Sisters say you need a wife, and I'm going to help you find one.

NECKTIES

(Playfully; taking back the catalogue.)

Off with ya.

(Just then, the thought-girl enters holding a bunch of wildflowers.)

THOUGHT-GIRL

(Surprised to see him.)

Mr. Givens.

NECKTIES

Miss Ryden.

OPAL

Look! She found a bunch of fleurs, too!

THOUGHT-GIRL

I find these nearly every day. It must be the school children who leave them.

NECKTIES

Must be.

OPAL

It wasn't the school children!

NECKTIES

(To Opal; trying to usher her out.)
We'll see ya later.

OPAL

It was the tree spirits!

THOUGHT-GIRL

(Maternal.)
It was?

OPAL

And guess what?

THOUGHT-GIRL & NECKTIES

What?

OPAL

I've been asking them to bring you a baby!

THOUGHT-GIRL & NECKTIES

A baby?

OPAL

Yes. The Gossip Sisters said an old maid like you ought to have a baby by now. So I'm going to help you get one!

(While she is still talking, Neckties picks her up and whisks her away.)

NECKTIES

Off with ya!

(He returns. Awkward silence.)

NECKTIES (cont'd)

I'm sorry. She's just, uh --

THOUGHT-GIRL

It's all right. I know what people say.
(Noticing.)

I see you found a bunch of flowers, too.

NECKTIES

I did, I found 'em.

THOUGHT-GIRL

I like wildflowers, because they're just what they are — not too fancy.

NECKTIES
(Trying to be suave.)
You're not too fancy yourself.

THOUGHT-GIRL
(Flustered.)
Thank you.

NECKTIES
No, I mean, you are too fancy.

(He groans at his blunder and turns away,
embarrassed.)

THOUGHT-GIRL
I know.

(She exits quickly.)

Underscoring

NECKTIES
I mean, I know yer used ta the finer things in life,
like plumbing. But the way you serve flapjacks, you
just have this look of kindness about you and I
suppose it's too much to hope that --

(He turns and finds her gone.)

4 - Sears & Roebuck Wedding Band

NECKTIES (cont'd)
GO ON, WALK AWAY.
I'M A WASTE OF TIME.
CAN'T TAKE ME TO A DIME STORE,
'CAUSE I HAVEN'T GOT A DIME.

DREAMS ARE ALL I GOT
THAT'S NOT IN SHORT SUPPLY.
BUT, IF I PRINTED MONEY,
THEN I KNOW JUST WHAT I'D BUY:

THAT SEARS AND ROEBUCK WEDDING BAND,
ON PAGE ONE HUNDRED THREE.
GOLD ELECTROPLATED,
WITH A LIFETIME GUARANTEE.

THAT SEARS AND ROEBUCK WEDDING BAND,

TO FLASH BEFORE YOUR EYES.
ONE IN JUST YOUR SIZE.

(He sits and looks through the catalogue.)

NECKTIES

WHAT I CAN'T AFFORD,
THAT'S WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE.
LIKE AN "ACME WONDER WASHER,"
OR "BONJOUR" PARISIAN SALVE.
[mispronounced as "bahn-djrrrr"]
PATENT LEATHER SHOES,
OR A PATENT-PENDING SIEVE.
AND THERE'S SOMETHING WITH ENGRAVING
I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO GIVE.

(Opal appears. She hides and spies on Neckties
from a distance.)

NECKTIES

(Turns to a dog-eared page.)

THAT SEARS AND ROEBUCK WEDDING BAND,
ON PAGE ONE HUNDRED THREE.
GOLD ELECTROPLATED,
WITH A LIFETIME GUARANTEE.

THAT SEARS AND ROEBUCK WEDDING BAND,
DELIVERED C.O.D.
JUST FOR YOU FROM ME.

(He steps away, lost in thought, leaving behind
the catalogue. Opal comes and looks through it.)

NECKTIES

SEE, AS LONG AS I KNOW
NOTHING'S GONNA COME TRUE,
GUESS I MIGHT AS WELL GO
FOR THE TOP OF THE LINE,
FOR A DELUXE EDITION LIKE YOU,
AND THAT...

OPAL AND NECKTIES

SEARS AND ROEBUCK WEDDING BAND,

(Neckties turns to discover Opal.)

OPAL

ON PAGE ONE HUNDRED THREE.

OPAL AND NECKTIES

GOLD ELECTROPLATED,
WITH A LIFETIME GUARANTEE.

NECKTIES
A FELLA NEEDS A DREAM TO DREAM,
ESPECIALLY IF HE'S POOR.
THAT THE THING
THAT CATALOGUES
AND PRETTY GIRLS ARE FOR.

(Neckties carries Opal off, as the lights fade.)

SEQUENCE THREE: THE NEXT DAY

THE LANE TO THE SCHOOL HOUSE

5 - The School House Song

(Lively music. The Narrators.)

NARRATORS
(To audience.)
And so, Opal set out on her quest to make earth glad,
by getting a wife for the man that wears gray
neckties,
and a baby for the thought-girl,
And teaching the blind girl to see,
and...

(Opal has entered, leading her pig. Snorts and grunts.)

[A moving pin spot might be used to represent the pig. As always, a Narrator provides the pig sounds.]

OPAL
Peter Paul Rubens, I'm going to help you become a gentleman pig, just like Pygmalion. First, you need a proper education.

(The pig grunts. Energetic music. And the scene transitions to...)

THE SCHOOL HOUSE

(Opal leads the pig to the school house and ties him up outside.)

The din of children's laughter and shouting. The Narrators become the school children. [Their "school desks" are perhaps benches or overturned crates.]

The teacher is inordinately tall and towers over the children. [She is played by a female Narrator, who perhaps stands on a barrel which is covered by her very long skirt.]

TEACHER AND CHILDREN

(General commotion; ad libs.) That's mine! Gimme that! I broke my pencil! I have to go to potty! I hate school! Stay away from me! Class! Children! Stop that! (Etc.)

CHILDREN

I CAN'T WAIT TILL RECESS.
WANNA PLAY WITH ME?

GIRL

I THINK BOYS ARE UGLY.

BIG JUDD

LOOK, IS THIS A FLEA?

CHILDREN

LET'S GO RUN WITH SCISSORS.
YOU LOOK LIKE A SQUID!

BOY

(To Lola.)

LET'S GO PRACTICE KISSING.

LOLA

LET'S NOT, AND SAY WE DID!

(Laughter. The teacher bangs her pointer.)

TEACHER

Children! Children!

(The children quiet down obediently as Opal ties up Peter Paul Rubens outside.)

OPAL

You must stay outside and listen through the doorway. But be very quiet, for the teacher has a tall temper!

(Opal enters the school.)

CHILDREN
LOOK, THERE'S LITTLE OPAL.
SHE'S SO IMMATURE!
DRESSES LIKE A HOBO.

LOLA
(Glaring at Big Judd.)
I THINK I SMELL MANURE!

BIG JUDD
Don't look at me!!

TEACHER
Opal! You're tardy! Why?

OPAL
There was trouble in the chicken coop. Henry VIII
pecked Pope Pius VII on the head.

(The children laugh.)

TEACHER
Sit down!

CHILDREN
SHE GETS TEN DEMERITS!
THAT'S WHAT I CALL DUMB!
SHE TALKS REALLY FUNNY.
I WONDER WHERE SHE'S FROM?

SAYS THAT SHE'S A PRINCESS!
WHAT A LITTLE RUNT!

BIG JUDD
OPAL IS SO STUPID!

LOLA
I THINK I HEARD A GRUNT!

BIG JUDD
I did not!!

(Hubbub.)

TEACHER
Class! Class!
(Pointing to an imagined chart.)
Who can name the animals in this picture?

(The children raise their hands enthusiastically.)

CHILDREN

(Ad libs.) Ooooh! Ooooh! Me! Me! I know! I know!
You never call on me! (Etc.)

TEACHER

Big Judd?

(Big Judd stands excitedly. He is an idiot.)

BIG JUDD

(A big breath.)

I dunno.

(He sits.)

TEACHER

Lola, dear, can you name the animals in this picture?

LOLA

(Jumping up; breathlessly.)

Donkey, cow, goat, frog, rat!

(Curtsyng.)

Thank you. Thank you very much.

CHILDREN

(Variously applaud, jeer, make a raspberry, etc.)

(Lola sits.)

OPAL

(Out front.)

The teacher is beaming delights all over Lola.

TEACHER

Ooooooopaaaaaaal!!!

OPAL

(Out front.)

I have anticipations the teacher will beam delights
all over me, too!

TEACHER

Can you name the animals in *this* picture?

(Opal stands cautiously.)

CHILDREN

SEE IF SHE CAN ANSWER,
WHAT A LITTLE WART!

BIG JUDD

I LIKE EATING RUBBER.

LOLA
I KNOW I HEARD A SNORT!!

BIG JUDD
Shut up!!!

TEACHER
Well?! What are they called?!

(Big silence. Opal walks bravely to the front of the class as the children glare at her.)

OPAL
(Pointing to each.)
Poisson, canard, poulet, cochon.

(The children snicker.)

TEACHER
They are called no such thing!

OPAL
Yes they are!

(The laughter grows louder and louder.)

TEACHER
Don't you be insolent with me, young lady!

LOLA
Maybe she's talking in tongues!

BIG JUDD
Maybe she's just stupid!

(Laughter.)

OPAL
Stop laughing!

TEACHER
There's no such thing as a cochon!

OPAL
Yes there is! That's what Father called a pig!

BIG JUDD
A pig?! That's ain't how ya call a pig. Ya call a pig like this: "Suuueeee!"

OPAL

No, don't say that!

BIG JUDD

Suuueeeee!!!!

(Laughter. Jeering. Ad lib furor. We hear Peter Paul Rubens snorting.)

CHILDREN

SUUEE, SUUEE, SUUEE, SUUEE!
SUUEE, SUUEE, SUUEE, SUUEE!

(Peter Paul Rubens charges into the classroom and chases the children around the desks. Pandemonium. Screams. Chaos.)

TEACHER AND CHILDREN

(Ad lib commotion.) A pig! A pig! He's after me! Get away from me! Stop him! (Etc.)

OPAL

(Shouting over the din.)

Come, Peter Paul Rubens! Come!

CHILDREN

OPAL IS IN TROUBLE!
WHAT A LITTLE FOOL!
NO ONE BUT A PIGHEAD,
WOULD BRING A PIG TO SCHOOL!

(Frantic music. The scene whirls away as Opal runs with Peter Paul Rubens, circling the playing.)

OPAL

Come, Peter Paul Rubens! Sadie McKibben! Sadie McKibben!

(Opal arrives at:

SADIE MCKIBBEN'S SHANTY

Sadie is on her porch scrubbing clothes with a washboard and tub. There is a clothesline with laundry hung across the stage.

Opal runs in, followed by the pig.

[As always, a male Narrator provides the pig

noises from the sidelines.])

SADIE MCKIBBEN

What's wrong, child?

OPAL

Peter Paul Rubens was ex-spelled from school because he is smelly and needs a footbath!

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Oh, dear.

OPAL

And the children laughed at me!

SADIE

Why?

Because I talk in a different way.

SADIE

The same could be said of Sadie.

OPAL

I don't like it here, Sadie McKibben. I miss the far-away lands.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

(An immigrant, herself.)

Aye...

OPAL

I want to go home!

SADIE MCKIBBEN

I understand.

OPAL

(Suddenly listening.)

Sadie McKibben! It's Felix Mendelssohn! He's squeaking his *cheese* squeak!

(Opal mimes taking a mouse from her apron pocket. She pets it.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN

And I've none to give. I'm poor as a church mouse myself.

OPAL
Felix Mendelssohn longs for cheese, just like I long
for Angel Mother and Father.

SADIE MCKIBBEN
Aye.

5a - Underscoring

OPAL
(Putting the mouse back in her apron pocket)
The mamma says they're never coming back — but she
is wrong. For they said, if I find the way to make
earth glad, I would be home again.

SADIE MCKIBBEN
And so you shall — only not in the way ye intend.

OPAL
But I'm trying real hard to make folks glad and get
them the things they need.

SADIE MCKIBBEN
Not glad without. Glad within.

OPAL
I don't understand.

SADIE MCKIBBEN
Ye must find peace within. They're not coming back.

OPAL
Yes they are! I know they are.

(Opal kneels and pets the pig.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN
(A thought.)
Then, perhaps...Perhaps, they *will* return to you —
in a special way.

OPAL
How?

6 - Send You a Sign

SADIE MCKIBBEN
(Mystically.)
YE ASK FOR A WAY
YE MAY HEAR FROM BEYOND.

A WAY FOR THE LOST TO BE FOUND.

I KNOW A WAY.

A WAY WITHOUT WORDS.

ITS LANGUAGE THAT'S HERE, ALL AROUND.

(A lively Scottish fling begins.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN

THEY WILL SEND YE A SIGN.

THEY'LL SEND YE A SIGN.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE IN DISGUISE.

THEY WILL SEND YE A SIGN.

OPAL

WHAT SORT OF A SIGN?

SADIE

WELL, THEREIN, THE MYSTERY LIES.

OPAL

I don't understand.

SADIE

YIR PARENTS MAY COME

AS A VOICE IN THE WIND,

OR COME AS A VISION OF LIGHT.

OR MAYBE A BIRD,

OR A CHILL, OR A DREAM,

WHENEVER THE MOMENT IS RIGHT.

SADIE AND OPAL

THEY WILL SEND YE/ME A SIGN.

THEY'LL SEND YE/ME A SIGN.

SADIE

YE NEVER KNOW HOW THEY'LL BE CLAD.

SADIE AND OPAL

THEY WILL SEND YE/ME A SIGN.

THEY'LL SEND YE/ME A SIGN.

SADIE

BUT FIRST, YE MUST LEARN TO BE GLAD.

All right, Peter Paul Rubens. We're going to give you
a footbath!

(Throughout the following, Sadie cheers Opal by scrubbing the pig.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN

MY HUSBAND DEPARTED —
MAY GOD REST HIS SOUL —
BEFORE ONE AND ONE COULD MAKE THREE.

BUT I THINK, PERHAPS,
HE SENT ME A SIGN,
THE DAY THAT HE SENT YOU TO ME.

SO LISTEN AND WATCH
FOR A WORD FROM BEYOND,
A VOICE FROM THE PAST IN THE NOW.

A MESSAGE TO SAY
THEY'RE GONE BUT NOT GONE.
AND NEVER LOSE FAITH THAT SOMEHOW —

SADIE

THEY WILL SEND YE A SIGN,
A MYSTICAL MAGICAL CLUE.

OPAL

THEY WILL SEND ME A SIGN.
SEND ME A SIGN.

SADIE AND OPAL

THEY WILL SEND YE A SIGN
DIVINE TO DIVINE,

OPAL

THEY WILL SEND ME A SIGN.
SEND ME A SIGN.

SADIE

YES, SOMEWHERE OUT THERE IS A SIGN,

OPAL

THERE'S A SIGN,

SADIE AND OPAL

THAT IS SEARCHING FOR YOU!

(As the song ends, Opal and Sadie embrace,
laughing.)

Suddenly, the mamma enters.)

THE MAMMA

(To Opal.)

I told ya that pig ain't no pet! He's all I got ta sell!

SADIE

Mrs. Potter, please!

THE MAMMA

You was brung here ta help me out, but all you've been is a nuisance! Do you know what a nuisance is?

OPAL

I don't even know what an *old-sance* is.

THE MAMMA

Don't chu sass me, girl!

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Mrs. Potter, sye mustn't shout at the child! I'll not let ye!

(Opal hides behind Sadie, clinging to her skirt.)

THE MAMMA

You stay outa this. She's mine, not yours.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

If yir angry, be angry with me!

THE MAMMA

That can be arranged, seein' as Opal's always over here playin', while I'm back home doin' both our chores!

SADIE MCKIBBEN

I'm to blame for keeping her from her chores. I get lonely and she brings a smile.

THE MAMMA

An' walkin' my best pig around, so's it gits skinny? That's yer fault, too?

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Perhaps I filled her head with silly notions.

THE MAMMA

Then there's the tea pot lid she glued on, so it wouldn't fall off, an' the washtub she floated down the creek, 'cause it needed a vacation, and the fifty tomato plants she yanked up, so their toes could git

THE MAMMA (cont'd)

some air! Come ta think of it, Mrs. McKibben, you got a lot to answer for!

SADIE

It's only that --

THE MAMMA

It's only that I got crops ta tend an' livestock ta raise an' no husband and no money. An' just when I thought I couldn't be happier, I git Helpful Hannah, here, ta feed and clothe!

OPAL

I thought my name was Opal.

THE MAMMA

You shut up!

SADIE

Mrs. Potter, is that any way to —

THE MAMMA

You want 'er?

SADIE

(Taken aback.)

What?

THE MAMMA

I said, you want 'er? Go on...Take 'er.

OPAL

Please, take me!

SADIE

Ye know I can barely feed myself.

THE MAMMA

Then you shut up, too. I don't need talk! I don't need advice! I need somebody ta take the load off me, just once! Somebody ta be there ta help me, just once! Somebody! Anybody! Just once! That's what I need!

(Pause; pulls herself together.)

Come on, Opal.

(Opal doesn't budge.)

OPAL

(Afraid.)

No.

THE MAMMA

Take that pig ta the pigpen an' stay away from 'im from now on. And when we git home, remind me ta spank you.

(The mamma exits.)

SADIE

Go mind your elders. They may not be wiser than ye, but they've been foolish a lot longer.

6a - Underscoring

(Sadie exits, leaving Opal.)

OPAL

(Out front.)

Dear Mother and Father...there is bumps on the mamma's temper again. Please come back to me...real soon.

(Opal hears grunting and snorting, as the scene shifts to:

THE BARNYARD

[A pool of light establishes the pig's location. As always, a male Narrator provides the pig sounds.]

Opal kneels beside the pig and mimes petting him.

The Narrators enter to observe from the sides of the playing area.)

OPAL

Oh, Peter Paul Rubens. The teacher thinks you are a "new-sance." I'm a "new-sance, too." But, don't have sad feels. Once you become a gentleman pig, I shall take you to the Louvre Museum and show you all the pictures you painted.

(The pig snorts.)

OPAL (cont'd)

First, you must have your christening!

(Taking the mouse from her pocket.)

And Felix Mendelssohn will be your godfather.

7 - Little Lamb

(She sets the mouse on the ground nearby.)

NARRATORS

And she sang him a lullaby poem by William Blake --
a lullaby she used to hear every night.

OPAL

(Comforting the pig.)

LITTLE LAMB, WHO MADE THEE?
DOST THOU KNOW WHO MADE THEE?

OPAL AND FEMALE NARRATORS

GAVE THEE LIFE AND BID THEE FEED
BY THE STREAM AND O'RE THE MEAD.

(The Narrators surround Opal to observe the
ceremony.)

OPAL AND NARRATORS

GAVE THEE CLOTHING OF DELIGHT,
SOFTEST CLOTHING, WOOLLY BRIGHT.
GAVE THEE SUCH A TENDER VOICE,
MAKING ALL THE VALES REJOICE.

(A Narrator hands her a watering can, which Opal
uses to baptize the pig. He squeals.)

OPAL

Tonight, I christen thee Sir Peter Paul Rubens,
Gentleman Pig.

(The pig snorts.)

OPAL (cont'd)

LITTLE LAMB, WHO MADE THEE?
LITTLE LAMB, I'LL TELL THEE:

OPAL AND FEMALE NARRATORS

HE IS CALLED BY THY NAME,
FOR HE CALLS HIMSELF A LAMB.

(The Narrators join hands.)

OPAL AND NARRATORS

HE IS MEEK AND HE IS MILD,
HE BECAME A LITTLE CHILD:
I A CHILD AND THOU A LAMB,
WE ARE CALLED BY HIS NAME.

OPAL

(A realization.)

Why, Peter Paul Rubens! I know why you always roll in the mud! You want to get roots and grow into a *beautiful flower!*

(Petting the pig.)

LITTLE LAMB, GOD BLESS THEE.

OPAL AND NARRATORS

LITTLE LAMB, GOD BLESS THEE.

(Magical chords underscore. The wind blows. The Narrators back away slowly and exit.)

NARRATORS

(Make the sound of wind and buried in the wind are overlapping whispers of "Make Earth Glad.")

(Unnoticed by Opal, the mamma enters purposefully in the distance.)

THE MAMMA

Opal...I told ya ta take that --

(Seeing Opal with the pig, the mamma stops. She seems about to object, then doesn't.)

OPAL

(To the pig.)

Do you hear what the wind is saying? It says, soon we will be...

(With great emphasis.)

home.

(The mamma watches her contemplatively. Lights fade.)

SEQUENCE FOUR: AUTUMN
THE RANCH HOUSE SOCIAL

8 - Night of Shooting Stars

(Magical music. In the darkness, the lumber camp folks enter with glowing lanterns, which they hang in the ranch house. Excitement, laughter, anticipation. Streamers and harvest decorations. The entire lumber camp is there. The tough-girl enters, holding a baby. Sadie enters, leading Selena. The mamma enters with Opal.)

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS

(Various ad libs.) Come on, bring the lanterns! Hang the streamers over hear! I've got the cider! (Etc.)

(People congregate and a dance begins.)

ALL

IT'S THE HARVEST ONCE-A-YEAR JAMBOREE.
IT'S THE ONCE-A-YEAR YOUR FANCY IS FREE.
ALL THE BEAUS ARE WEARING
BOW-TIES,
AND THEY'RE FEELING SHY AS
SHOO-FLIES,
BUT THEY'RE QUITE A SIGHT FOR
SORE EYES
TO SEE.

IT'S A NIGHT OF SHOOTING STARS,
WHEN THEY RICOCHET ABOVE.
IT'S A NIGHT FOR MAKING WISHES,
AND A NIGHT TO FALL IN LOVE.

SQUARE DANCE CALLER

Welcome, one and all, to the harvest social.
Everybody, find yerself a partner!

(Opal runs up to the thought-girl.)

OPAL

(Pointing to the baby.)
Look! The tree spirits brought you your baby!

THOUGHT-GIRL

No, dear. This isn't my baby. I don't have one.

OPAL

You will when I get through!

SQUARE DANCE CALLER

HEAR THE FIDDLE PLAYER SCRATCHIN' HIS BOW,

SQUARE DANCE CALLER & OTHERS

WITH A FIDDLE-DIDDLE-DIDDLE-LEE DOE.
ALL THE OLD MAIDS GOSSIP
AND STARE,
WHILE THE YOUNG MAIDS FLY THROUGH
THE AIR,
AND THE RAFTERS RATTLE,
LIKE JER-

ICO.

SQUARE DANCE CALLER

(In rhythm.)

Shanty boys left.
Ladies on my right.
You're sure to find
Your sweetheart tonight!

(At one side of the dance floor:)

GOSSIP SISTERS

Go out and dance, Miss Ryden. You heard what he said.
You'll meet your sweetheart tonight!

THOUGHT-GIRL

But, I'm minding the babies.

GOSSIP SISTERS

(Taking the baby.)

We'll mind the babies. You mind the men.

(At the other side of the dance floor:)

GENERAL STORE OWNER

Go on, Andrew. Ask Miss Ryden ta dance.

NECKTIES

I couldn't.

GENERAL STORE OWNER

(Nudging him over.)

Go on! Everybody knows ya want to. Everybody but her.

NECKTIES

Uh, Miss Ryden —

GOSSIP SISTERS

(Shoving the thought-girl into Neckties'
arms.)

She'd love to.

(Neckties and the thought-girl are embarrassed,
but they get swept up into the dance.

Perhaps the mamma dances as well. For the first
time, we see her somewhat carefree and young.

Opal and Sadie dance together, perhaps eventually
joining the others.

The blind girl stands to one side, singing along and trying to sense the motion of the dance.

Some of the men take turns showing off fancy dance steps. Even Neckties begins to gain confidence and shows some steps.)

ALL

SO, DON'T LET YOUR GET-UP GET UP AND GO,
'CAUSE THE NIGHT IS YOUNG AND YOU NEVER KNOW,
EVERY LAD MAY FIND HIM HIS GAL
AND ANOTHER GAL FOR HIS PAL,
HERE AMONG THE RUFFLES
AND CAL-
LICO.

IT'S A NIGHT OF SHOOTING STARS,
WHEN THEY RICOCHET ABOVE.
IT'S A NIGHT FOR MAKING WISHES,
AND A NIGHT TO FALL IN LOVE.

(Laughter. Hoots. Hollers. Clapping and perhaps folk instruments -- banjo, spoons, washboard.)

ALL

IT'S A NIGHT OF SHOOTING STARS,
WHEN THEY RICOCHET ABOVE.
IT'S A NIGHT FOR MAKING WISHES,
AND A NIGHT TO FALL IN LOVE.

(Opal leaves Sadie and goes to the blind girl. Throughout the following, Opal coaxes Selena onto the dance floor.

Lines of women. Lines of men. Two by two, couples are formed.

Suddenly, Neckties and thought-girl find themselves pushed out into the center of the dance floor, face to face.)

SQUARE DANCE CALLER

Go on, Andrew. Give 'er a whirl!

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS

(Ad libs of encouragement; whistles, hoots.) Go on! Burn up the floor! Dance! You can do it! Don't be shy! (Etc.)

(Neckties reaches out. The thought-girl takes his hand. At first unsteadily, they begin to dance.

Meanwhile, Opal is teaching the blind girl a dance.)

ALL

IT'S A NIGHT OF SHOOTING STARS,
WHEN THEY RICOCHET ABOVE.
IT'S A NIGHT FOR MAKING WISHES,
AND A NIGHT TO FALL IN LOVE.

IT'S A NIGHT OF SHOOTING STARS,
THOUGH THEY ONLY SHINE TILL DAWN.
BUT, IF YOU SHOULD MEET YOUR SWEETHEART,
THEN THE SHOOTING STARS GO ON
AND ON!

(All cheer as the square dance ends triumphantly, with the dancers bunched together and many of the women lifted up by the men. The thought-girl is in Neckties' arms.

But then, Neckties loses his balance and falls with the thought-girl, bringing everyone else down. There is much laughter and merriment about this, until it is noticed that, in the midst of the people, the blind girl has fallen, too.

The lumber camp folks rush to around Selena on the floor. Neckties and the thought-girl help Selena to her feet.)

ALL

(Ad lib commotion.) Are you all right, Selena? What happened? It was that little foreign girl's fault. She was trying to dance. She bumped into someone. (Etc.)

(The mamma reproachfully pulls Opal aside.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Where are my glasses?

NECKTIES

Are you all right?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(Deeply embarrassed.)

I'm perfectly fine, thank you.

NECKTIES

(Retrieving Selena's glasses from the floor.)
Here are your glasses, Selena.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Thank you. Don't fuss, please. Just lead me back to my chair. My father will be back soon.

NECKTIES

Sure, Selena. Lemme help you.

(Neckties takes Selena to a chair. The thought-girl goes back to minding babies.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Tell everyone to go on dancing.

NECKTIES

(To the others.)
You heard what she said. Go on.

8a - Underscoring

(The lumber camp folks converse among themselves and gradually disperse.)

NECKTIES (cont'd)

I'll just sit with ya till —

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(Embarrassed, but upbeat.)
That's all right, Mr. Givens.

NECKTIES

Oh, ya remember me.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I can take care of myself. You don't have to stay.

NECKTIES

But, I'd like to. I'll just wait till your pa gets back.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I'm certain you'd much rather be dancing with the others.

NECKTIES

No, not me. I don't think Miss Ryden would wanna dance with me again, anyway. Not that I blame 'er. I

NECKTIES (cont'd)

got these two feet that don't git along with each other. I make a spectacle when I try ta dance.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(Making a little joke.)

Me too.

NECKTIES

I'm sorry, Selena. I didn't mean —

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Are they watching?

NECKTIES

Who?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

The other folks. Are they all looking at me?

NECKTIES

No, Selena. Nobody's looking.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I'm only glad my father wasn't here to see. He'd never let me forget it. Sit in the corner. That's your place, he said. It makes folks uneasy when you try to socialize, he said.

NECKTIES

Now, that ain't true. Not a bit.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

That's nice of you to say.

NECKTIES

I mean it. Yer fine company.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Thank you.

NECKTIES

Yer pretty. Yer bright. An' yer easy to talk to, or my mouth wouldn't be movin'.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Thank you, Mr. Givens. You're easy to talk to, too.
(Touching him on the arm.)
You have a real, real nice voice.

(Beat. Neckties grows uncomfortable.)

NECKTIES

You know what?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

What?

NECKTIES

I see a room full a young fellas just your age who'd like to git ta know a pretty young lady. Sometimes it takes patience.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

But, I —

NECKTIES

I'll go git yer father for ya.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

But, Mr. Givens, I —

(He is gone. Opal comes to Selena.)

OPAL

You had a big fall-down.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Yes, I did.

OPAL

I have thinks you cannot see because your glasses are painted black.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I'm blind, Opal. That means I can't see.

OPAL

Then why must you wear glasses?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

The glasses aren't for my eyes. They're for everyone else's eyes.

8b - Underscoring

OPAL

Potatoes have eyes, so they can see all that goes on under the earth. I have wants to have more eyes. There's so much to see.

(A thought.)

If potatoes can see in the darkness underground, you can see, too!

(The mamma comes to Opal.)

THE MAMMA

Opal. I'm goin' home early. I got somethin' that needs ta be done. You do what chu want fer a little while.

(The mamma exits.)

OPAL

(Puzzled.)

That's something I never heard her say before.

(A thought.)

Do you want to go on an exploration trip?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

What for?

OPAL

To search for eyes!

(Opal takes Selena by the hand and whisks her out into the night. The ranch house vanishes behind them as they enter:

THE FOREST

A cold wind whooshes through the trees. Animals and birds call. The Narrators intone a mystical theme and watch from the shadows as Opal pulls the blind girl deeper and deeper into the forest.)

NARRATORS

OOOH,
OOOH...
Etc.

(Selena's Father appears at one side of the stage, as if far away.)

SELENA'S FATHER

(Calling out front.)

Seleeeeeeeeeena! Where are youuuuuuu?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(Frightened.)

Opal, where are you taking me?

OPAL
(Through much of this scene, with a sense of
wonder and mystery.)
To my forest cathedral.

SELENA'S FATHER
Seleeeeeeeeeeeena!

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
That's my father. He's worried. He never lets me
wander off alone.

OPAL
But we're not alone! Michael Angelo is here!

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
(Alarmed.)
Michael Angelo? Is someone else here?

(Opal and the blind girl arrive at:

THE FOREST CATHEDRAL

A lush vault of towering pine and oak trees -- non-
literal trees, perhaps represented by poles and
lighting. Majestic shafts of moonlight filter down
through branches, casting shadows on the earth.

That Narrator playing Selena's Father removes his
slouch hat and joins the other Narrators as they
form themselves into living tree -- perhaps by
extending their arms, or holding branches, and
standing on graduated crates and barrels or on a
tall step ladder.)

OPAL
Michael Angelo is a fir tree. His soul is very old
and wise.

(Listens suddenly.)
Listen! He is speaking to us!

(The Narrators create the sound of wind.)

OPAL (cont'd)
He wants to give you one of his arms!

(Opal goes to break off a long branch.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
(Confused and scared.)
His arms?

OPAL
(Deep voice.)
"Take my arm," he says. "Trust me, and I shall guide you."

(Opal breaks off a branch held by a Narrator.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
(Frightened.)
Opal, what are you doing?! Please, stop! Take me back right now! I don't want to -

(Opal puts the branch in Selena's hand.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING (cont'd)
(Relief; small, tense laugh.)
Oh...It's only a branch. A walking stick.

OPAL
A *feeling* stick. So you can have *sees* by *feels*.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
Father would never let me go wandering on my own.

OPAL
The mamma never does, either. But tonight must be a special night!

([The Narrator playing Selena's Father momentarily turns his head away and calls.])

VOICE OF SELENA'S FATHER
(Calling from a great distance.)
Seleeeeeeeeeena! Come back here right now!

OPAL
Maybe we should go back.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
No. Show me how to use this.

OPAL
(Guiding her hand.)
Like this...side to side...inch by inch...like a caterpillar making s's along the path. Soon you shall come to the forest alone whenever you wish — to drink in inspirations.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Yes. Yes, I can do this.

(Opal kneels and takes out a small candle and lights it with a match — or it may be handed to her by a Narrator.)

NARRATORS

(Singing a Gregorian chant.)

GLORIA DOMINE.

GRATIA DEO.

(The Narrators exit.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

What are you doing?

OPAL

Lighting a candle of hope, as Angel Father did when he took me to cathedral in the far-away lands.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Can I hold the candle?

(Opal hesitates.)

Please.

(Opal gives the candle to Selena and kneels beside her.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING (cont'd)

A long time ago, I heard voices, I lit candles in the dark...But that was before the fever came.

OPAL

What can you see when you cannot see?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

You see nothing. It's always midnight. It's always very, very black.

OPAL

Oh.

(Opal removes Selena's dark glasses.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Opal, there's something I need to know...

9 - Opal

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING (cont'd)
What color are Mr. Given's eyes?

OPAL
Sky color.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
Sky color. I thought so.

OPAL,
BEFORE I GREW,
I SAW
A CHILD LIKE YOU
INSIDE A LOOKING GLASS.
AND SHE WAS ME, REVERSED.

OPAL,
MY OTHER HALF
KNEW HOW
TO PLAY AND LAUGH.
SHE KNEW THOSE SECRET GAMES
WE ONLY KNOW AT FIRST.

(Selena moves away, lost in memory.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
SHE SAW YOUR WORLD,
THAT WORLD OF HOPE AND SURPRISE,
FULL OF DRAGONS AND CASTLES
AND FAIRY QUEENS AND VASSALS,
AND A PRINCE,
WITH SKY-COLORED EYES.

OPAL,
WHAT FRIENDS WE WERE,
TILL I
LOST SIGHT OF HER.
WHEN LAST I SAW MYSELF,
SHE'S WHO I USED TO BE.

OPAL,
IF YOU SHOULD KNOW
WHERE OLD
REFLECTIONS GO.
HELP ME LOOK.
THROUGH THAT LOOKING-GLASS SEA,
FOR THAT LONG LOST OPAL

IN ME.

(Suddenly, we hear an animal's distant squeal.)

9a - Underscoring

OPAL

(Alarmed.)

That's Peter Paul Rubens! He needs me!

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Go, Opal.

OPAL

But you —

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Go! I can find my own way.

OPAL

(Calling as she runs.)

Peter Paul Rubens! Peter Paul Rubens! I'm coming!

(Selena exits with the candle. The scene dissolves cinematically, as we watch Opal running breathlessly through the forest — perhaps circling the stage — to:

THE BARNYARD

We see the mamma and farm workers herding Peter Paul Rubens into an unseen horse-drawn wagon offstage or into a large crate held by the men. There is a terrible din. Squealing. Wood and metal sounds of the heavy wagon. Horses snorting and pulling at their bridles.)

MAN 1

Help me git 'im in the wagon.

MAN 2

He's gittin' away!

MAN 1

Come on, boy, this way!

MAN 2

Go on, pig, git in there!

THE MAMMA, MAN 1 & 2

(Ad libs.) Git in there! Come on! Go on, pig! Etc.

(We hear the heavy clang of the wagon gate
slamming shut, and the squeals of the trapped pig.)

Opal runs in.)

OPAL

(Shouting.)

What are you doing?!

MAN 2

Git outa the way, girl!

OPAL

Where are you taking Peter Paul Rubens?!

(The men exit.)

THE MAMMA

(Grabbing her.)

Go in the house!

OPAL

Where are they taking him?

THE MAMMA

Away.

OPAL

When is he coming back?

THE MAMMA

He ain't comin' back. I told ya this day would come.
I told ya from the start, he was gonna git sold.

MAN

(Offstage; calling to the horses.)

Geeeeeyup! Yaaaah!

(Horses whinny. The wagon hitch clangs. Hooves
clopping away.)

OPAL

(Struggling to run after the pig.)

Nooo!!!

THE MAMMA

(Stopping her.)

Opal, the hogs is all I got ta sell.

OPAL

Don't let him go away!

THE MAMMA

Listen ta me! I don't know what sorta life you had before, but it's over! And it's time ta grow up. Yer here with me now, like it or not.

OPAL

No!

THE MAMMA

I didn't choose this life, either. It chose me!
(She starts to leave, then stops.)

Sometimes ya don't git ta do what ya want! Ya do what ya can!

(The mamma exits. Opal sinks to her knees, helplessly watching out front as the wagon disappears. We hear the pig squeals and the horses' hooves grow more and more faint.

We hear the music box theme gradually slowing to silence.

OPAL

Oh, Peter Paul Rubens...

(The wagon sounds fade away. The music box theme ends.)

OPAL (cont'd)

You cannot be gone for good.

(with great emphasis)

I shall *find...your...soul!*

(Lights change on Opal as the scene shifts to...)

SEQUENCE FIVE: WINTER

THE LUMBER CAMP AND MRS. POTTER'S SHANTY

10: To Conquer the Land (Reprise)

(The lumberjacks enter in winter garb. Opal exits.)

LUMBERJACK 1

AND WE RISE,
AND WE WORK,

IN THE ICY WINTER DAWN.

LUMBERJACKS 1 & 2

AND WE CHOP,
AND WE CLEAR,

LUMBERCAMP FOLKS (ALL BUT OPAL)
FOR A YEAR, AND THEN MOVE ON.

(Activity begins. Full cast enters -- all but Opal. Rhythmic work movements. The weather is cold and harsh. We see the lumber camp folks swathed in tattered coats and scarves. Some mime huddling before a fire in a barrel, trying to stay warm. Selena no longer wears her glasses.)

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS

AND WE
CAME TO TAME THE LAST FRONTIER,
LEAVING ALL THAT'S NEAR AND DEAR,
CAME THIS WAY TO PIONEER,
AND CONQUER THE LAND!

MEN

AND WE HACK,

WOMEN

AND WE SCRUB,

MEN

AND WE HEW,

WOMEN

AND WE SCRAPE,
AND TIE, AND SAW.

MEN

AND WE TETHER, TIE, AND SAW.

AND WE GRIND,

WOMEN

AND WE STRAIN,

MEN

AND WE CLAMP,

WOMEN

AND WE POUND OUR FINGERS RAW.

MEN
AND WE WORK OUR FINGERS RAW.

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS
AND WE CAME TO TAME THE LAST FRONTIER,
LEAVING ALL THAT'S NEAR AND DEAR,
CAME THIS WAY TO PIONEER,
AND CONQUER THE LAND!

(Opal enters in a winter coat or wrap.)

OPAL
(Out front.)
Dear Angel Mother and Father...Peter Paul Rubens is
gone away.
(She leaves her diary and comes downstage.)
The mamma says he is gone for good. But if *he* is gone
for good, then maybe so are *you*.
(She runs up to a lumberjack.)
Do you know where the soul of Peter Paul Rubens is?

ROUGH LUMBERJACK
Go away!

(She runs up to the a lumber camp woman.)

OPAL
Have you seen the soul of a pig?

WOMAN
Shoo!

(Neckties comes to Opal, bringing her crayons.)

NECKTIES
Hey, will ya look at this? Them tree spirits brought
ya colored pencils.

OPAL
(Trying to be happy.)
Oh.

NECKTIES
Opal, ya gotta stop singin' that sad song.

OPAL
But the soul of Peter Paul Rubens is lost.

NECKTIES
Where's that happy little girl I used to know, huh?
She's the one that's lost.

(He rejoins the ensemble. Sadie McKibben comes to Opal.)

OPAL

(Out front.)

Sadie McKibben said if I made earth glad, you would send me...

SADIE MCKIBBEN

A sign.

OPAL

...to tell me you are not gone for good. But I must find the soul Peter Paul Rubens, or I shall never, never be able to make earth glad.

SHOW ME WHERE HIS SOUL IS,
NOW THAT HE'S NOT MINE.
MOTHER, FATHER,
THAT WILL BE YOUR SIGN.

(The mamma appears suddenly.)

THE MAMMA

Opal! There's chores ta do!

(With an angry look at Sadie, the mamma yanks Opal away and hands her a broom. Opal sweeps.)

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS

AND WE RISE,
AND WE WORK,
IN THE BITING WINTER AIR.

(The others freeze.)

OPAL

(Out front.)

AND I SEARCH,
FOR A SIGN,
FOR A SIGN THAT YOU'RE STILL THERE.

(Activity resumes.)

MEN

AND ANOTHER WINTER TURNS TO SPRING,
ONCE AGAIN, THE AXES RING,
ONCE AGAIN, THE SAWMILLS SING,

LUMBER CAMP FOLKS

ONCE AGAIN, WE'RE WONDERING

WHY WE GAVE UP EVERYTHING
TO CONQUER THE LAND!

'CAUSE YA HAVE TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING,
TO CONQUER THE LAND!

(Lights cross fade to convey the passage of time
and a change of season.)

SEQUENCE SIX: EARLY SPRING
THE FOREST PATH

(As the lumber camp folks disperse, Neckties looks
around to make sure no one is watching, then lays
a bunch of wildflowers along the path.)

11 - Someone

NARRATORS

(To the audience.)

Spring came.
And once again, the thought-girl began finding
bunches of wildflowers,
left along the path outside her home.

(Unbeknownst to Neckties, the thought-girl has
seen him. After he and the Narrators leave, she
fetches the flowers.)

THOUGHT-GIRL

I HAVE A SOMEONE
DREAMING OF ME,
LEAVING ME DAISIES EACH DAY.

SOMEONE WHO IS TIMID,
AND YET UNDETERRED.
TELLING ME HE CARES,
WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.

MY SECRET
SOMEONE IMAGINES
NO ONE CAN SEE
ALL HE'S UNABLE TO SAY.

IF HE
ONLY
TOLD ME, HE'D SEE,

I HAVE A SOMEONE
AND SO DOES HE.

(Out front.)

I can't tell him, Father. He needs to tell me.

(Selena enters at another part of the stage. She
and the thought-girl are in separate worlds. Their
lines overlap.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(Out front; spoken simultaneously with the
thought-girl.)

I'm not a child anymore!

THOUGHT-GIRL

(Out front; spoken simultaneously with
Selena.)

I've known since the first day I met him.

(They speak the following lines simultaneously.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

And I don't need your advice!

THOUGHT-GIRL

And ever since then, he's left flowers along the path
every day.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

No, he hasn't exactly said so in so many words.
But...

THOUGHT-GIRL

He's trying to find the courage. But...

BOTH

I can hear it in his voice.

THOUGHT-GIRL

(Sung in counterpoint with Selena.)

I DON'T NEED TO HEAR
WHAT I ALREADY KNOW.
FINALLY...

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I DON'T NEED TO HEAR
WHAT I ALREADY KNOW INSIDE ME.
I KNOW:

THOUGHT-GIRL

MY SECRET

SOMEONE IMAGINES
NO ONE CAN SEE
ALL HE'S UNABLE TO SAY.

IF HE
ONLY
TOLD ME, HE'D SEE.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
(Sung in counterpoint with the thought-girl.)
FINALLY,
I HAVE A SOMEONE.
FATHER, PLEASE LISTEN.

IN KNOW THAT
HE CARES FOR ME
IN HIS OWN WAY.
SOMEDAY, YOU'LL SEE,

BOTH
I HAVE A SOMEONE,
AND SO DOES HE. (AND SO DOES HE.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
I don't care what you say, Father.

THOUGHT-GIRL
I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN,

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
It's true.

BOTH
I HAVE A SOMEONE,
WHO'S MINE
ALONE.

(Lights fade on them and come up on...)

SEQUENCE SEVEN: SPRING TO SUMMER 1905
MRS. POTTER'S SHANTY

12 - What Might Have Been

(The mamma enters with a bucket. As she bends to set it down, a locket hanging around her neck swings into view. She opens it.)

THE MAMMA
YOU'D A BEEN PRETTY,

IF YOU'D A GROWN.
YOU'D A BEEN PRETTY AS SIN.

WE'D A BEEN HAPPY,
US AND YOUR PA.
KEEP THINKING WHAT MIGHT A BEEN.
KEEP THINKING WHAT MIGHT A BEEN.

THERE'D A BEEN LILACS
ALL THE YEAR LONG.
THERE'D A BEEN ALL SORTS OF KIN.

SUPPERS AND SWEET THINGS,
AND PLENTY TO EAT.
KEEP THINKING WHAT MIGHT A BEEN.
KEEP THINKING WHAT MIGHT A BEEN.

LOOK AT THAT SMILE.
LOOK AT THEM CLOTHES.
LOOK AT YOU DRESSED UP
IN NEW, STORE-BOUGHT CLOTHES.

IF I'D A THOUGHT...
IF I'D A KNOWN...
WOULD I BE WONDERING HERE
ALL ALONE?

OR WOULD THERE BE GAMES?
"COME ON, IT'S TIME TO COME IN."
ALMOST LIKE CLOCKWORK,
AT THIS TIME EACH YEAR,
THE MEMORIES BEGIN,
CAN'T HELP IT, THE MEMORIES BEGIN.
THE MEMORIES THAT MIGHT A BEEN.

(Just then, Opal enters, carrying her diary --
brown paper pages bound with string.)

OPAL
(Seeing the locket.)
What is that?

THE MAMMA
Just a locket.

OPAL
There's a picture inside.

THE MAMMA
It's none of your concern.

OPAL
It's a little girl. Who is she?

(Beat.)

OPAL THE MAMMA
(Exasperated.)
Opal.
(Pause.)
My girl.

OPAL
Where is she?

THE MAMMA
She's gone.

OPAL
When will she be back?

THE MAMMA
She ain't comin' back. She's gone fer good.

OPAL
Like Angel Mother and Father?

THE MAMMA
Yup.

OPAL
And Peter Paul Rubens?

THE MAMMA
Yeah.

OPAL
Maybe they know one another.

THE MAMMA
Girl, when are you gonna understand the way things
is?! When are you gonna grow up an' learn that people
don't just —

(The mamma chokes back a sob.)

OPAL
What is wrong? You look like you is going to have cry-
feels. I didn't know you could. Don't be sad. She's
not gone for *good*. You just have needs of a sign.

THE MAMMA

Oh, hush! Yer always babblin'. An' what's worse is,
I'm startin' ta listen!

(Almost conciliatory.)

Sometimes I think that —

(The mamma turns and notices Opal's diary.)

THE MAMMA (cont'd)

What's that?

OPAL

It's my diary. I write in it.

THE MAMMA

(Suspicious.)

Who you writin' to?

OPAL

Mother and Father.

THE MAMMA

Yer writin' ta that scrub woman, ain't chu! What chu
sayin' 'bout me?

OPAL

Nothing.

THE MAMMA

What are you tellin' her?! Gimme that!

OPAL

No.

THE MAMMA

My business ain't hers. Now, gimme that.

OPAL

No! No! I won't! I won't!

(Opal breaks away and runs off with the diary.)

THE MAMMA

You come back here! Come back here! Opal!...Opal!...I
need yer help!

12a - Underscoring

(The mamma exits as Opal circles the playing area
and runs through the forest to...)

THE FOREST CATHEDRAL

(The Narrators enter quickly to "become" the fir tree.)

NARRATORS

(To the audience.)

Opal ran to the forest cathedral,
to talk things over with Michael Angelo,
the fir tree.

(Opal runs to Michael Angelo — portrayed, as before, by the Narrators in a tree formation.)

OPAL

(Calling as she runs to him.)

Oh, Michael Angelo! The mamma tried to take away my diary.

12b - Underscoring

OPAL (cont'd)

(Listens.)

What did you say?

(Listens.)

Yes...That's true...I knew you would know the right thing to say. Let me climb up into your arms.

(She climbs up into the tree. The Narrators assist her up to the treetop, where a male Narrator holds her in his arms or on his shoulder.)

NARRATORS

And she climbed up into his branches,
where the world looks like a doll house,
and big problems look much smaller.

OPAL

It is such a comfort to snuggle in your strong arms.

(She hugs him.)

When I hug you, I can hear your sap going up.

12c - Underscoring

(Neckties enters leading Selena by the arm.)

NARRATORS

Just then, she saw the man that wears gray neckties,
leading the girl that has no seeing.

OPAL

Look, Michael Angelo! The girl that has no seeing is on explores.

NECKTIES

You shouldn't go wanderin' through the woods alone like that, Selena. It's a dangerous place for a youngster like you.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(Playing a happy romantic subtext throughout.)

Really?

NECKTIES

We're cuttin' trees. There's widow-makers hangin' in the treetops and brush on the ground. The forest is a tinder box this time a year. Who knows what could happen?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I appreciate your concern, Mr. Givens. It means a lot.

NECKTIES

Yer just lucky I found you! I can't imagine why yer Father just lets you wander off alone like this.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

He doesn't. But I told him I've got a mind of my own, and I'm going to go wherever and whenever I please.

NECKTIES

Ain't you afraid?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

(A little joke.)

Not really. The forest looks the same to me as our parlor. What you can't see, can't scare you.

NECKTIES

You got spunk, that's fer sure.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Is that good?

NECKTIES

I'll say. Maybe if I had some a yer spunk, I wouldn't always be so tongue-tied.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

I don't think you're tongue-tied.

NECKTIES

No, not around you. Yer easy ta talk to. But generally, when I got somethin' important ta say, my mouth runs outa words.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

Oh, I don't know, Mr. Givens.

(Reaching out and touching his chest.)

Sometimes a person doesn't need words. Sometimes a person just knows.

NECKTIES

(Uneasy.)

Let's git chu back home. I suspect you wanna pay a visit on Elsie Fairchild.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

What for?

NECKTIES

Ain't chu heard?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

No, what?

NECKTIES

That baby finally come ta Elsie an' her husband last night.

(With a little laugh.)

Come on.

(He pulls her off playfully — almost seeming like boyfriend and girlfriend. Ad lib good humor and laughter as they exit.)

OPAL

(Suddenly alarmed.)

A baby?!...To Elsie Fairchild?...

12c - Underscoring

OPAL (cont'd)

Oh, no! I have so much work to do!

(She climbs down quickly, and dashes away.)

NARRATORS

Maybe the tree spirits had a mix-up.
This was a big cal-lamb-of-tea!

(In unison.)

Now, there was only one thing to do!

(A baby cries. A woman shouts. The Narrators
transform into their various characters and we are
at...

THE MILLTOWN

Opal dashes through, clutching a baby in her arms.
She is pursued by the young Husband of Elsie, who
is wearing long-johns. They are followed by the
Gossip Sisters.)

ELSIE'S HUSBAND

Stop! Stop! Come back here with our baby!

ALL

(Ad lib commotion.) Oh, my goodness! She's stolen the
baby! Gimme that! Come back you little brat! I won't!
Sadie McKibben! (Etc.)

(Opal leads the chase leads to:

SADIE MCKIBBEN'S SHANTY

Opal bursts in with the baby. Laundry flies.)

OPAL

Sadie McKibben!

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Opal! What's wrong?

ELSIE'S HUSBAND

I'll tell ya what's wrong! That little foreign girl
stole our baby!

GOSSIP SISTERS

(A gasp.)

ELSIE'S HUSBAND

She stole our pride and joy!

GOSSIP SISTERS

(A louder gasp.)

ELSIE'S HUSBAND

(Raising his hat in a dramatic gesture.)
She stole the fruit of my loins!!

GOSSIP SISTERS

(Swooning and shouting.)

(One of the Gossip Sisters faints. The other one fans her in the background as the scene carries on.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Opal, give back the babe!

OPAL

I won't!

(To Elsie's husband.)
This isn't your baby!

(This suddenly revives the Gossip Sisters, who sits up suddenly to reply:)

ALL (BUT OPAL)

What?!

OPAL

Your wife had someone else's baby!

ALL (BUT OPAL)

(Ad lib reaction.) Oh, my Heavens! This is terrible! You little brat! Wait'll I git my hands on you! Now, Opal, give it back! I will not! Keep away from me! (Etc.)

(Elsie's husband chases Opal around the Gossip Sisters and Sadie.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN

(Forcibly silencing the uproar.)
Silence!

(To Opal.)
Now, Opal —

GOSSIP SISTERS

(Bursting in.)
Give that baby back!!

OPAL
I won't! This baby was an accident!

ALL (BUT OPAL)
(Simultaneously.)
What?!!

OPAL
It was meant for the thought-girl!

GOSSIP SISTERS
The thought-girl?

SADIE
(Explaining.)
Laura Ryden.

OPAL
(To Elsie's husband.)
Laura Ryden wants to have your baby!

(Big reaction. Elsie's husband lunges for Opal as
the Gossip Sisters restrain him.)

ALL (BUT OPAL)
(Ad lib furor.) That's dreadful! I'll kill 'er! What
an awful little child! You don't understand. Opal!
That's gutter talk! (Etc.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN
Opal, Miss Ryden can't have a baby until she has a
husband.

OPAL
Why?

GOSSIP SISTERS
If you have to ask, you're too young to know!

ALL
(More ad lib furor.) That's shocking! Dreadful child!
Lemme git my hands on her! No, ye don't understand!
(Etc.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN
Silence! You'll not say another word against the
child!

(All fall silent.)

SADIE

Opal, it's time you start to learn, there is order in things. Babies are always brought where they belong.

OPAL

So this is not the thought-girl's baby?

ALL (BUT OPAL)

(Simultaneously.)

No!

(Opal considers a moment.)

OPAL

(Reluctantly handing over the baby to Elsie's husband.)

Very well. You can keep it.

(Beat.)

But I get the next one!

ELSIE'S HUSBAND

Stupid girl!

(He exits with the baby.)

OPAL

But I must get a baby for the thought-girl. Maybe the man that wears gray neckties should ask the tree spirits to bring her one.

GOSSIP SISTERS

The man that wears gray neckties?

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Andrew Givens.

GOSSIP SISTERS

Oh, we know all about that!

(Delicious gossip.)

It's L.O.V.E. But, he can't tell her, she can't ask him, and we can hardly sleep at night!

(They exit.)

OPAL

(Suddenly anxious to leave.)

I must go now. There are hurries in my feet.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

I understand. But mind your ways.

(Opal hurries outside, taking her mouse from her pocket.)

OUTSIDE THE SHANTY

OPAL

Did you hear that, Felix Mendelssohn? It's L.O.V.E.!
I only hope the thought-girl can spell.

13 - Everybody's Looking for Love

(Bright music. Opal runs off and Sadie exits as Neckties and two male Narrators enter as the General Store Owner and his buddy. Dissolve to:

GENERAL STORE, THOUGHT-GIRL'S HOUSE, AND THE FOREST

Neckties enters the General Store. The bell dings.)

NECKTIES

Did it come today?

GENERAL STORE OWNER

(Playing a joke.)

Noooo.

(Neckties looks disappointed.)

GENERAL STORE OWNER (cont'd)

(Handing him a small package.)

Yes, it came! Direct from Sears and Roebuck!

(Neckties opens the box slowly. It is so wonderful, he is nearly overwhelmed.)

NECKTIES

Lips, don't fail me now.

(Practicing.)

Miss Ryden...

(Stops.)

It's no use. I can't ask 'er.

GENERAL STORE OWNER

Sure ya can, Andrew. Ya just need to practice.

NECKTIES

But, what do I say? I've spent my whole life in the forest. I can't talk fast or fancy.

BUDDY

Just talk about what you know. Say what's in yer heart.

(Neckties considers a moment.)

The following song is about the intersection of two plot lines: Neckties mustering the courage to propose, while Opal plays match-maker and brings the thought-girl to him.

Perhaps Neckties or one of the men accompanies on a guitar or banjo.)

NECKTIES

(At first, haltingly.)

I HEARD ME A CRICKET
AS HE STIRRED IN THE THICKET,
MAKING MUSIC ALL ALONE.

GENERAL STORE OWNER

That's good!

BUDDY

Real pretty!

GENERAL STORE OWNER AND BUDDY

Go on.

NECKTIES

I HEARD ME THE WHISTLE
OF A BIRD IN THE THISTLE,
FOR A BIRD TO CALL HIS OWN.

GENERAL STORE OWNER

You're gettin' it.

NECKTIES

AND WHEN THAT BIRD
GAVE OUT HIS CRY,
AND LAID A CLAIM FOR A MATE, HE DID
THE SAME AS THE KATYDID —
SO I CLAIM, WHY CAN'T I?

(A steady rhythm begins.)

GENERAL STORE OWNER

EVERYBODY'S LOOKING FOR LOVE,
I SAY THEY'RE LOOKING,

LOOKING HIGH AND LOOKING LOW.

ALL THREE
EVERYBODY'S LOOKING FOR LOVE,
I SAY THEY'RE LOOKING,
LOOKING EVERYWHERE THEY GO.

NECKTIES
EVERYBODY'S LOOKING FOR LOVE,
I SAY THEY'RE LOOKING,
BUT IT'S ONLY FAIR THEY KNOW:

ALL THREE
NO USE LOOKING 'ROUND ON YOUR OWN,
'CAUSE NO ONE EVER FOUND IT ALONE,
IF EVERYBODY ONLY KNEW,
THEY'D GO LOOKING TWO BY TWO,
WHENEVER THEY GO LOOKING FOR LOVE.

(At another part of the stage, Opal runs through followed by the thought-girl, who is carrying a wildflower bouquet.)

OPAL
Come on! Come on!

THOUGHT-GIRL
Opal, wait!

(They exit and we focus back on Neckties at...)

THE BARBER SHOP

(Neckties sits with a towel around his neck. A Male Narrator becomes the barber and mimes giving him a shave.)

GENERAL STORE OWNER
You're on a roll, Andrew.

BUDDY
Don't stop now.

GOSSIP SISTERS
(Entering.)
Yes, go on.

NECKTIES
(Embarrassed, but persisting.)
Anyway, Miss Ryden, what I'm tryin' to say is:

I SPIED ME A RAVEN
AND HIS BRIDE IN THEIR HAVEN
MADE OF TWIGS, ABOVE THE KNOLL.

GOSSIP SISTERS
(Sentimental reaction.)

Oh...

NECKTIES

I SPIED ME A FROG
UPON THE SIDE OF A BOG,
ABOUT TO DIVE INTO HIS HOLE.

AND, THOUGH THAT HOLE
WAS MUD AND LOAM,
THAT FROG WAS CLEVERLY CROAKING,
"BE IT EVER SO SOAKING,
THERE JUST AIN'T NO LOAM LIKE HOME."

(As they sing, the other lumber camp folks descend
on Neckties and help spruce him up for the
occasion - perhaps dressing him in a new tie and
coat.)

ALL
EVERYBODY'S LOOKING FOR LOVE,
I SAY THEY'RE LOOKING,
LOOKING HIGH AND LOOKING LOW.

GOSSIP SISTERS
EVERYBODY'S LOOKING FOR LOVE,
I SAY THEY'RE LOOKING,
LOOKING EVERYWHERE THEY GO.

ALL
EVERYBODY'S LOOKING FOR LOVE,
I SAY THEY'RE LOOKING,
BUT IT'S ONLY FAIR THEY KNOW:

SADIE MCKIBBEN
NO USE LOOKING 'ROUND ON YOUR OWN,

GOSSIP SISTERS
'CAUSE NO ONE EVER FOUND IT ALONE.

ALL
IF EVERYBODY ONLY KNEW,
THEY'D GO LOOKING TWO BY TWO,

WHENEVER THEY GO LOOKING FOR LOVE.

(At another part of the stage, Opal runs through,
leading the thought-girl.)

OPAL

No! It's not the tree spirits!

THOUGHT-GIRL

Opal!?

(They exit.)

We focus on Neckties finishing his shave. The
others lend encouragement. As they sing, they head
through the forest, en route to the thought-girl's
house.)

GENERAL STORE OWNER

Go on, Andrew.

GOSSIP SISTERS

Practice makes perfect.

NECKTIES

(Really gaining confidence.)

But, to get right to the point, Miss Ryden, you're a
man and I'm a woman --

(All register concern.)

NECKTIES (cont'd)

Oh, Lord. What I mean is:

I HEARD ME THE SWISHES
OF THE TURTLES AND FISHES,
THAT WERE DANCING IN THE BROOK.

WHERE THE WATER WAS RISING,
WHAT I SAW WAS SURPRISING,
WHEN I WENT TO TAKE A LOOK.

I SAW A FACE
COME INTO VIEW,
AND THAT FACE SHOWN FULL OF TROUBLES,
YUP, IT SURE WAS A CASE, IT
WAS ALONE WITH THE BUBBLES.
I SAID, "SIR, BETTER FACE IT,
LIFE IS ONLY FOR DOUBLES,

FIND A MERMAID TO CHASE."

ALL

IT'S WHAT I'D DO, IF I WERE YOU!"

(During the following, Neckties shows everyone the ring. The men pat him on the back, congratulate him and bolster his courage. The others put the finishing touches on his appearance. Meanwhile, Opal leads the thought-girl to the forest.)

(Opal and the other watch as Neckties turns and sees the thought-girl. At first he is dumbstruck, but summons his courage and approaches her.

Opal gives the thought-girl a gentle nudge towards Neckties.

Neckties kneels and takes out the ring as the lumber camp folks look on.

Silence.)

NECKTIES

(Suddenly holding out the ring.)

Here.

(She is surprised, then extends her hand. Neckties kneels and puts the ring on her finger.)

NECKTIES (cont'd)

EVERYBODY'S LOOKING FOR LOVE,
I SAY THEY'RE LOOKING,
LOOKING HIGH AND LOOKING LOW.

(Now we are at their wedding. The General Store owner officiates over the ceremony. The mamma places a veil on the thought-girl. The Gossip Sisters wax romantic and dab away a tear of joy.)

ALL

EVERYBODY'S LOOKING FOR LOVE,
I SAY THEY'RE LOOKING,
LOOKING EVERYWHERE THEY GO.

EVERYBODY'S LOOKING FOR LOVE,
I SAY THEY'RE LOOKING,
BUT IT'S ONLY FAIR THEY KNOW:

NO USE LOOKING 'ROUND ON YOUR OWN,
'CAUSE NO ONE EVER FOUND IT ALONE.

IF EVERYBODY ONLY KNEW,
THEY'D GO LOOKING TWO BY TWO,
WHENEVER THEY GO LOOKING FOR LOVE.

IF EVERYBODY ONLY KNEW,
THEY'D GO LOOKING TWO BY TWO,
WHENEVER THEY GO LOOKING FOR LOVE.
FOR LOVE.

(Neckties and the thought-girl kiss, then run out
hand in hand. The town folk cheer and wave
goodbye.)

As everyone is joyously dispersing, the blind girl
enters, using a cane. She senses something has
taken place.)

13a - Underscoring

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
Opal, what happened?

OPAL
The man that wears gray neckties has got his wife.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
What do you mean?

OPAL
He gave the thought-girl a ring of gold, and now she
is his wife.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
The thought-girl?

OPAL
Laura Ryden.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
Laura Ryden?

OPAL
Yes...There are trouble lines on your face...What is
wrong?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
Nothing.

OPAL
You look like you are going to have cry-feels.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
Nonsense. Why would I cry?

OPAL
I have not imagines.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
And I have too many "imagines." That's the problem.
When you can't see, all you can do is imagine.

OPAL
I don't understand.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
Go on, Opal, please.
(Opal doesn't go.)
Please. I just want to be alone!

OPAL
Did I say something bad?

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
It has nothing to do with you! It has nothing to do
with anybody. Please go.

(Selena starts to leave.)

OPAL
The house you live in is the other way.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING
I know! Just go! I don't feel like playing anymore.

(Selena ventures on into the forest. Opal leaves
hesitantly, somewhat mystified.)

THE DEEP FOREST

The Narrators appear and watch from the shadows as
Selena walks deeper and deeper into the forest,
feeling her way with her cane. The music turns
eerie and foreboding as Selena enacts the
following narration:)

Underscoring

NARRATORS
The blind girl walked deeper and deeper into the
forest alone,
going farther and farther into the deserted timber.

(We see Selena's father at another part of the stage.)

SELENA'S FATHER

(Calling from far away.)

Seleeeeeeeenaaa!

NARRATORS

Leaving the path, she wandered aimlessly,
hour after hour.

(The lighting grows dark and ominous. It is dusk.
The tree branches cast long, strange shadows on
the forest floor.)

SELENA'S FATHER

Seleeeenaaaa! Come back here! Seleeeeeenaaaaa?!

(Selena kneels down and takes a candle from her
pocket. She lights it. Or perhaps it is handed to
her, lit, by a Narrator.

The Narrator playing Selena's father doffs the
slouch hat and joins the other Narrators.)

NARRATORS

The blind girl lit a small candle of hope,
as Opal had done.
And in the dead heat of summer,
in search of hope,
the blind girl lost her way.

(Selena carries the candle and feels her way with
the cane. She becomes disoriented. Lost. She
panics. Then trips, dropping the candle. The
ground catches fire.)

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

No!

(The forest fire spreads — represented by the
Narrators, who surround Selena, closing in on her
little by little as the sound of crackling flames
grows ever louder.)

NARRATORS

A small flame ignited.
Selena sensed danger.

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING

No! No!

NARRATORS

Which way was safety?
Was it this way?
Or this?

(Selena tries to escape the Narrators, but they pursue her — their hands reaching out to her like flames. They surround, and, eventually, trap her.)

NARRATORS (cont'd)

The fire spread.
(All; in unison.)
Smoke...Crackling flames...Selena tried to escape.

SELENA'S FATHER

(Calling from far away.)
Selena?! Where are you?!

GIRL THAT HAS NO SEEING AND
NARRATORS

(Very long and dying away.)
Noooooooooooo!!!!

(Selena disappears into the smoke and flames.)

Suddenly, the Narrators become the lumber camp folks battling the fire. Shouting. Commotion.)

LUMBERJACK 1

Fire!!!

LUMBERJACK 2

Get the buckets!

(Joined by Sadie and the thought-girl, the lumber camp folks stagger through the heat and smoke, trying to beat out the fire with rugs and burlap sacks and lumberjacks relay buckets of water to throw on the flames.)

Coughing. Shouts. Falling trees. Danger.

[Several of the poles representing trees might be tipped to lie on the ground.]

SADIE MCKIBBEN

It's spreading to the milltown!

LUMBERJACK 1

Somebody go warn 'em!

WOMAN 1

We need blankets, rugs, anything!

ALL

(Ad lib furor.) Get more water! Look out!!! More buckets! This smoke! I can't breath! (Etc.)

WOMAN 1

I can't breathe!

(Just then, the mamma runs in.)

LUMBERJACK 1

There's a girl in the fire!

THE MAMMA

(Deeply alarmed.)

What?!

LUMBERJACK 2

There's a girl in the fire!

THE MAMMA

(Runs off, shouting.)

Opal! Opal!

(As the mamma exits, Neckties runs in commanding a party of men.)

NECKTIES

(Shouting.)

Take those buckets and douse the clearing. Get the horses outa the barn! The rest a you, break up an' warn the folks along the ridge.

(Opal runs in past Neckties. He grabs her.)

OPAL

(Calling.)

Girl that has no seeing!

NECKTIES

Hey, where you goin'!?

OPAL

To save the girl that has no seeing!

NECKTIES

Go home, girl!

OPAL
(Struggling.)
Please, let me go!

NECKTIES
I said, go home!

OPAL
She needs me!

NECKTIES
Opal, I said ta —
(Pause.)
...we found the blind girl in the clearing. She was
overcome with smoke.

OPAL
No.

NECKTIES
They took her to the ranch house. But it was too
late.

OPAL
Too late?

NECKTIES
I'm sorry. Now, go home.
(To the others.)
Come on, men, let's go!

(Neckties and the remaining lumberjacks run out,
leaving Opal alone, in shock.)

Sadie appears at another part of the stage. She is
weary and disheveled — her face smeared with
ashes.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN
Opal.

OPAL
(In shock.)
I taught her to walk the forest. I made her go away.

14 - If You Want to See

SADIE MCKIBBEN
Yir not to blame! It was her own doing. Yir a child.
She was not.

OPAL

Now she is going away, like Mother and Father.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Aye.

OPAL

And Peter Paul Rubens.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Aye.

OPAL

And they are never, never coming back! Just like the
mamma said all along.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Aye.

(Opal breaks away from Sadie.)

OPAL

You said they would send me a sign! I believed you!
Why can't I see it! Why?!

SADIE MCKIBBEN

IF YOU WANT TO SEE,
SEE WITHOUT YOUR EYES.
YOU WILL SEE A REALM
MORE REAL THAN YOU CAN REALIZE.

(Sadie reaches for Opal. Opal pulls away.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN (cont'd)

OH, MY LITTLE CHILD,
DEATH IS BUT A BORDERLINE.
IF YOU LOOK BEYOND DISORDER,
YOU WILL SEE DESIGN.

(Opal turns away. She doesn't want to hear.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN (cont'd)

THE WORLD OF NOW IS FIRE AND ICE,
A THIMBLEFUL OF PARADISE,
A TEMPORARY DOORWAY TO ETERNITY.

A SHADOW-PLAY OF FLEETING THINGS --
OF COINS AND WATCHES, SPOONS AND RINGS.
BUT WHAT WE ARE, WE ALWAYS ARE.
WE LIVE FOREVER IN FOREVER.

(Sadie comes to Opal.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN (cont'd)

IF YOU WANT TO SEE,
SEE WITHOUT YOUR EYES.
SEE BEYOND MIRAGE --
THE DREAM OF DUST THAT LIVES AND DIES.

OH, MY LITTLE CHILD,
WE ARE MORE THAN SMOKE AND ASH.
WE ARE BEINGS THAT
WILL NEVER CEASE TO BE.

(Opal comes slowly to Sadie's arms.)

SADIE

FOR, MY CHILD,
MY CHILD,
WE'RE JOY, AND LOVE,
AND HOPE, AND FREE.

WITH A VISIONARY VISION,
YOU WILL LOOK AND SEE.

(Distant smoke. Burning embers. Just as the song
is about to end, the mamma rushes in.)

THE MAMMA

(Calling desperately.)

Opal! Opal! Where are you?! Opal!

(She sees Opal with Sadie. She runs, falls on her
knees before Opal.)

THE MAMMA (cont'd)

(Deeply upset.)

They said a girl was in the fire, Opal...And I was so
afraid...I thought fer a minute...

(Opal pulls away from the mamma and backs toward
Sadie.)

THE MAMMA (cont'd)

Why didn't chu answer me when I called you, Opal?

OPAL

That is not my name.

(She looks to Sadie for support.)

My name is Françoise.

(Long silence. The mamma considers a moment, then glares at Sadie and rises to her feet.)

THE MAMMA

(Muttered.)

Come on.

(She pulls Opal away, as the scene dissolves to:

SEQUENCE EIGHT: DAYS LATER
THE LUMBER CAMP AND MRS. POTTER'S SHANTY

14a - Leaving the Lumber Camp

The Narrators, as the lumber camp folks, begin tearing down camp and leaving town. They pass by in procession, carrying their satchels and belongings. Music underscores throughout.)

NARRATORS

(Out front.)

The lumber camp...days later.
The forest had been destroyed.
The mill town folks began tearing down camp and moving on.

(Opal enters and comes forward.)

NARRATORS (cont'd)

And on the final page of her diary, Opal wrote:

OPAL

(Out front.)

Dear Angel Mother and Father...The forest that was...is gone.

(Neckties and the thought-girl enter and come to Opal.)

NECKTIES

The whole reason Laurie and me heard wedding bells last spring was thanks to you. You said you was gonna git me a wife, an' you did.

THOUGHT-GIRL

And I have a secret...It's something the tree spirits let me know ahead of time...by this time next year, they're going to bring me a baby.

OPAL

(Rousing a little.)

That gives me joy-feels.

NECKTIES

Be good, little girl.

(He pats her on the head. Neckties and the thought-girl leave.)

Sadie enters, carrying her washboard and a bundle of possessions, and comes to Opal. The remaining lumber camp folks gradually leave.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN

The stars only know where I will go.

OPAL

Take me with you, Sadie McKibben.

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Child, I'm poor and unwell. If I should take ye, ye would all too soon be penniless and alone.

OPAL

Sadie McKibben, the freckles on your wrinkled face are as lovely as the stars in the Milky Way...Take me with you.

(The mamma enters, laden with satchels. She stops when she hears this last phrase, unseen by Opal and Sadie.)

SADIE MCKIBBEN

I should say no, but I haven't the strength. Though I've not the means, I've a mind to take ye.

(Thinks.)

Ye can come with me or not. Ye decide. Ye decide what is in the stars.

(The mamma comes to them.)

THE MAMMA

(Pretending she didn't hear.)

It's movin' day. I'm gonna need yer help, girl.

(To Sadie.)

We're movin' ta Lonesome Pine lumber camp ta live with my brother.

(To Opal.)

Only, don't chu give him no sass, 'cause he don't love children like I do. Now, none but yer necessary

THE MAMMA (cont'd)

things can go. That's yer McGuffie's Reader, yer apron, yer calico dress, an' yer shoes.

(Rummaging through the satchel.)

Oh, an' while I was packin', I found this. What is it?

(She pulls out Opal's diary.)

OPAL

My diary.

THE MAMMA

Uh huh.

OPAL

I write in it.

THE MAMMA

Uh huh.

OPAL

It's a necessary thing.

THE MAMMA

Uh huh.

(Opens the diary accusingly.)

I see ya been writin' somethin' 'bout me. 'Spose ya tell me what's so necessary 'bout that?

(She hands Opal the diary.)

Read it.

OPAL

"There is no song in the mamma's heart. Somebody took it away. I'm saving my pennies to buy her a singing lesson."

(The mamma considers a moment, perhaps smiling, then puts the diary back in her satchel.)

THE MAMMA

Well, why not? Maybe it'll keep you outa trouble.

(She looks at Sadie, then at Opal.)

I'll wait fer ya by the road.

(The mamma exits.)

OPAL

(To Sadie.)

Is Felix Mendelssohn a necessary thing?

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Ye decide, child, where it is best he go.

OPAL

And where is it best *I* go? With the mamma or with you?

SADIE MCKIBBEN

Ye must decide -- what will make earth the most glad. I'll wait fir ye in the clearing.

(Sadie leaves -- in a direction opposite from the mamma.)

Opal takes her mouse from her pocket.)

OPAL

Felix Mendelssohn, it is best you stay in the forest with the other mice, because they need you. But don't be sad. I shall always be with you *inside*.

(The Narrators enter circles the stage, as if walking into the forest.)

NARRATORS

Opal returned to the forest cathedral one last time.

(The scene around Opal transforms into:

THE CHARRED REMAINS OF THE FOREST CATHEDRAL

Eerie death-music. The forest is a wasteland. Burned tree trunks. Ash-colored earth. Long, stark shadows.

Opal walks slowly through the scorched rubble, summoning her courage.)

NARRATORS

The forest was black and desolate.
The ground was charred.

(All; in unison.)

The trees were scorched and skeletal.

(Individually.)

She could hear their death song echoing through the canyon.

(Opal arrives at the place where Michael Angelo once stood.)

NARRATORS (cont'd)

She saw that Michael Angelo, whose arms were once so strong,
was now blackened, brittle, and bone-like...

(All.)

The empty color of shadows.

(Opal kneels down and releases her mouse. As Opal does this, something on the ground catches her eye.)

NARRATORS (cont'd)

But, as she knelt down to release Felix Mendelssohn, she discovered something wonderful.

(A small, white lily appears on the ground before Opal -- either held there by a Narrator or perhaps growing magically out of the earth.

Opal gently picks the lily, awestruck. The music builds.)

NARRATORS (cont'd)

(All; in unison.)

There, among the blackened debris,
was a small, white lily.

(All.)

It had survived the fire...and bloomed that day.

(Silence.)

OPAL

(After a pause; whispering; in awe.)

Peter Paul Rubens,

(Slowly.)

I have found...your...*soul*.

(The Narrators back away and leave.

We hear the music box theme playing faintly, gradually slowing.

Sadie and the mamma enter and stand at opposite sides of the stage.

Opal first looks toward Sadie, then toward the mamma. Then, deciding, Opal runs to Sadie and gives her the lily.)

OPAL (cont'd)

(Quietly.)

Sadie McKibben...It's the *sign*.

(They embrace. Sadie leaves.)

Then Opal turns and walks very slowly to the
mamma.

Silence.)

THE MAMMA

Let's go...

(Brief pause.)

Francine.

(They leave. Lights fade.)

EPILOGUE

15 - Epilogue

(The epilogue is set in a perfect time and place. This is both a celebration of the characters, and a unique curtain call at which the audience will applaud the actors. However the actors should not bow. They remain in character throughout and may enter with props.)

As the characters enter, they take their place in a tableau, looking out toward the future.

The lumberjacks enter with their axes and saws. As they sing they might shake hands and say goodbye.)

LUMBERJACKS

AND WE RISE,
AND WE WORK,
IN ANOTHER NEW-BORN DAWN.

AND WE LIVE,
AND WE TRY,
AND FOREVER JOURNEY ON,

(The Gossip Sisters enter -- along with any additional lumber camp women. They bid each other farewell for their journey.)

LUMBERJACKS, GOSSIPS SISTERS
(INCLUDING ADDITIONAL WOMEN)
TO ANOTHER CAMP, ANOTHER MILL,
WHERE THERE IS A JOB TO FILL,
WRESTLING THE EARTH UNTIL
WE CONQUER THE LAND.

(Neckties and the thought-girl enter. He carries a
suitcase. She straightens his tie.)

LUMBERJACKS, GOSSIP SISTERS,
NECKTIES & THOUGHT-GIRL
SOMEWHERE THERE'S A HOME,
LARDER FULL OF FOOD,
PARLOR WITH A VELVETEEN SETTEE.

(Selena enters. She is well and fully sighted. No
glasses or cane.)

LUMBERJACKS, GOSSIP SISTERS,
NECKTIES, THOUGHT-GIRL & SELENA
SOMEWHERE THERE'S A WOODS,
WAITING TO BE HEWED,
WHERE THE CEDARS REACH ETERNITY.

(Sadie enters with her washtub and scrub board.)

LUMBERJACKS, GOSSIP SISTERS,
NECKTIES, THOUGHT-GIRL, SELENA &
SADIE
SO WE STRIVE,
AND WE SEARCH,
AND WE MAKE THE SACRIFICE.

AND WE HOPE,
AND WE DREAM,
AND WE LOOK FOR PARADISE,

(Opal and the mamma enter, hand in hand.)

ALL (BUT OPAL)
IN ANOTHER CAMP, ANOTHER MILL,
SOMEWHERE ON A VIRGIN HILL,
FOLLOWING THE WHIPPOORWILL,
WHERE THERE IS A JOB TO FILL,
WRESTLING THE EARTH UNTIL
WE CONQUER THE LAND.

(All come forward.)

ALL (BUT OPAL) (cont'd)

WE WILL
WRESTLE WITH THE EARTH UNTIL
WE CONQUER THE LAND!

(The future seems bright with promise.

The characters freeze in a tableau as the lights
fade.)

THE END

(In place of a bow, the lights come up again. The
characters maintain their tableau. Lights fade.)