David Reeves’
SEVEN LITTLE AUSTRALIANS
(The Musical)

Music By David Reeves
Book by David Reeves, John Palmer & Peter Yeldham
Lyrics by John Palmer & David Reeves
David Reeves' 

SEVEN LITTLE AUSTRALIANS  
(the musical)  

(KRANGI-BAHTOO)  
(SEVEN!)  

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(CELEBRATING THE TWENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY)  

MUSIC – DAVID REEVES  
BOOK – DAVID REEVES – JOHN PALMER - PETER YELDHAM  
LYRICS - JOHN PALMER/DAVID REEVES  

PREMIERED COMEDY THEATRE – MELBOURNE - 1988  

[Based on the Australian classic of the same name by Ethel Turner]  

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SEVEN LITTLE AUSTRALIANS

Synopsis….

A musical feature stage production created by Australian composer David Reeves based on Ethel Turner’s classic story “Seven Little Australians” premiered in 1988

Ethel Turner’s classic tale has been taken to heart by young and old since 1894. It has been turned into film in 1939, a television series in 1973 and the stage musical in 1988. The book has been translated into nine languages and has never been out of publication in over a hundred years.

Elegant and handsome but recently widowed Captain Woolcot struggles with himself and his once well ordered young family after re-marrying a child bride fresh from a huge outback property and who quickly provides him with a seventh young mouth to feed. The Captain’s commanding officer thinks it best if the Captain and his family take a new house well away from the barracks.

This is a powerful love story between an inhibited father and a very uninhibited daughter, told through song and dance. It tells of the love that is not always easily expressed between a man and woman, a father and daughter, in fact that which is often so confused between the generations. Captain Woolcot was one such man and his journey and the journeys of the ones he loves so dearly are compellingly revealed in this musical stage production.

This is a story of yesterday…and very much of….today, with all its possibilities ….. and dangers.
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SEVEN LITTLE AUSTRALIANS (musical)
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(KRANGI-BAHTOO)
(SEVEN!)

MUSIC (not including incidental music)

ACT 1
1] “LOOK FOR A RAINBOW”
2] “KRANGI-BAHTOO”
3] “CHILDREN”
4] “SHINING STAR”
5] “PARRAMATTA RIVER”
6] “CAN YOU LOVE ME?”
7] “L’ACADEMIE DU MONSIEUR MARCEAU”
8] “THE LITTLE GENERAL’S MARCH”
9] “DISCIPLINE”
10] “WHAT IS A WOMAN TO YOU?”
11] “WALKING THE BLOCK”
11] “IN MY MIND”
13] “MY LOVE”

ACT 2
1] “KRANGI-BAHTOO” [Instrumental Reprise]
2] “DEPORTMENT”
3] “WHEN THINGS GO WRONG”
4] “FALL IN LIKE”
5] “STRANGE GOINGS ON” (Parramatta River)
6] “THE CENTRAL EXPRESS”
7] “YARRAHAPPINI RHAPSODY” (TRILOGY)
   [The Boys from Yarrahappini/To Fall in Love/Dream Sequence]
8] “KRANGI-BAHTOO” (Reprise)
9] “SHINING STAR” (Reprise)
10] “PARRAMATTA RIVER” (Reprise)
11] “LOOK FOR A RAINBOW” (Company)
CHARACTERS

Captain John Woolcot: (army captain approximately 45 – 50 years old, tenor-baritone)

Esther Woolcot: (the young wife of John Woolcot, only just older than Meg her newly acquired step daughter. Head and chest voices required)

Martha: (the long suffering Irish housekeeper)

Colonel and Mrs Bryant: (Woolcot’s commanding officer and his wife)

Mr Hassal: (Esther’s father a successful outback grazier)

Miss Burton: (The proprietor of ‘Miss Burton’s Academy for Girls’ in the Blue Mountains)

Miss Jolly: (Miss Burton’s piano playing assistant)

Dr Gormiston: (the family doctor)

Monsieur Marceau: (the Principal of L’Academie du Monsieur Marceau)

Tettawonga: (an old aboriginal who has worked for Mr Hassal all his life on the Yarrahappini property)

Alan Courtney: (suitor for Meg, a young medical student)

And... a police sergeant, constable, farmhands from Yarrahappini, the Vicar, army corporal, Mrs Hassal, Pat the groomsman etc.

THE CHILDREN: Pip, Meg, Judy, Nell, Bunty, Baby and the Little General.

Pip… (male, approximately 5’ 6” – 5’8”, able to appear as a 17 year old, to sing, dance and act with special skill in one of these)

Meg… (female, approximately 5’ 3” – 5’ 5”, able to appear as a 16 year old, to sing, dance and act with special skill in one of these)

JUDY… (female, approximately 5’ – 5’ 2”, able to appear as a 14 year old, to sing, dance and act with special skills in singing and dancing)
(juveniles)

**Nell**…(female, approximately 4’ 5” – 5’, able to appear as a 12 year old, to sing and dance and to act)

**Bunty**…(male, approximately 3’6”- 4’, able to appear as a 10 year old, to sing and dance and to act)

**Baby**…..(female, approximately 3’4”- 3’8”, able to appear as a 10 year old, to sing with the potential to dance and act on stage)

**and the LITTLE GENERAL**…(male, approximately 2’6”-3’, able to appear as a 3-4 year old who can be played by a girl(prepared to cut hair) or boy of believable size, physically fit, not easily intimidated by numbers of people, to be comfortable being gently handled on stage and able to maintain reasonable concentration for age)

**CHORUS**…. 6 x singer/dancers male and 6 x singer/dancers female. Additional chorus members can be added as required.

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**SCENES**

**ACT 1**

Theatre Dress: Foliage on either side of the Proscenium Arch.

SCENE 1: Bare stage in front of scrim.

SCENE 2: ‘Krangi Bahtoo’. A deep ravine surrounded by large river gums projected on to a forward scrim set a quarter back from arch. A large, dead tree leans ominously from near prompt corner.

SCENE 3: The rambling rundown Woolcot home “Misrule”. Physical Front Exterior includes verandah, French windows (opening outwards), rosebush quasi garden below, drive at side leads to front door with half hanging name ‘Misrule’ above, Parramatta river bank at stage lip with weeping willow at one corner. A dunnee outhouse and barn in the distance. Set on revolve with two reverse interior sets.
SCENE 4: Dining Room at ‘Misrule’. One of the two spit house ‘Reverse Interior’ sets, table, chair props truck in.

SCENE 5: Girl’s Bedroom. Four beds truck in front of forward scrim with rear projection of bedroom surrounds.

SCENE 6: Woolcot’s Study. The second of the two split house ‘Reverse Interior’ sets, including reverse opening French windows to verandah, book shelves set in wall etc. A ‘partner’s desk’ trucks in.

SCENE 7: Woolcot’s Study.


SCENE 9: Victoria Barracks. Full stage two level projection of the main two story building. The upper screen set back from lower to accommodate two levels of stage dance etc. A ‘guardhouse’ door opens through the projection.

SCENE 10: Victoria Barracks (as above).

SCENE 11: Woolcot’s Study.

SCENE 12: Verandah.

SCENE 13: Sydney Square. Full stage two level projection of the ‘square’ including the façade to the sandstone church (with opening doors similar ‘Garrison Church Miller’s Point), terraces, shops etc. Physical riser trucks in square centre with horse trough, public signage, items for stage business etc.

SCENE 14: Girl’s Bedroom.

SCENE 15: As for Scene 3 re-set from point of view of physical dunnee, drive, background barn etc.

ACT 2

OPEN: Bare stage front of scrim for music intro.
SCENE 1: Miss Burton’s Academy at Blue Mountains. Forward scrim rising to realize full stage projection of Miss Burton’s Academy, snow falling, galahs settle on picket fence etc as seen through large portrait window. Piano sits at one corner with props including ‘Heath-Robinson’ posture/deportment style contraptions.

SCENE 2: Woolcot’s Study.

SCENE 3: As for Scene 3 (Act 1) with accent on the garden.

SCENE 4: A physical open barn front to audience (a two story open interior with ladder ground to loft) including bales of hay as props.

SCENE 5: Misrule Pantry’. A line of kitchen/scullery props (in order as dictated by musical number) trucked in front of forward curtain/scrim and set in semi-darkness.

SCENE 6: The verandah.

SCENE 7: Woolcot’s Study.

SCENE 8: A physical fly representing a train sleeper compartment with two facing cushioned bench seats, luggage racks and train lighting etc. Risers truck in to create platforms behind.

SCENE 9: Woolcot’s Study.

SCENE 10: Full stage two level projection of a ‘woolshed’ surround. As before the upper level set back allowing two levels of dance/stage business etc. A physical podium/stage riser.

SCENE 11: ‘Krangi Bahtoo’. As in Scene 2 (Act 1) forward scrim rising to reveal a full stage ravine and grass verge projection. River gum at prompt corner to collapse, it’s parts falling behind the line of the forward scrim which falls to reflect the ‘rainbow’ and rises to reveal ‘Misrule’.

SCENE 12: Garden. As for Scene 3 (Act 1) with the additional ‘wedding dressing' etc.

SCENE 13: Garden. As above without wedding theme.

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David Reeves'

SEVEN LITTLE AUSTRALIANS
(SEVEN!)
(KRANGI - BAHTOO)

ACT 1

SCENE 1  (A BARE STAGE IN FRONT OF SCRIM)

(DARKNESS. FOLLOW SPOT RISES ON ESTHER. SOFT LIGHTS UP TO REVEAL SCENE BEHIND SCRIM AS SONG DEVELOPS)

MUSIC # ONE - “LOOK FOR A RAINBOW” [Solo]

SCENE 2  (KRANGI BAHTOO IN THE OUTBACK)

(TIMPANI EXPLODES. FLASHES OF LIGHT SPOT LIGHT THE INDIVIDUAL FACES OF THE CHILDREN, ONE AFTER THE OTHER FROM DIVERSE LOCATIONS AROUND THE FORESTAGE)

PIP:  I’m Pip!

MEG: I’m Meg.

JUDY: I’m Judy!

NELL: I’m Nell.

BUNTY: I’m Bunty!

BABY: I’m Baby.

(BIG MOMENT)

ALL: (POINTING TO GENERAL) and he’s ..... the Little General!

(SOFT LIGHT STARTS TO FADE UP. IMAGE OF KRANGI BAHTOO PROJECTS BEHIND THE SCRIM WHICH RISES. FORWARD STAGE PROMPT IS A LONG DEAD RIVER GUM LURCHING DRAMATICALLY OVER STAGE. A LAUGHING KOOKABURRA SOUNDS. THE GENTLY FAADING UP LIGHT
REVEALS TETTAWONGA DEMONSTRATING HIS KOOKABURRA CALL TO WHICH THE CHILDREN Respond. DURING THE SONG FLASH LIGHTING, INCLUDING LIGHTENING STABS SUGGESTS AN APPROACHING STORM)

*MUSIC # TWO* - “KRANGI-BAHTOO” [Children]

(END OF SONG)

**SCENE 3 (THE VERANDAH OF ‘MISRULE’)**

(EXTERIOR AND VERANDAH OF THE WOOLCOT’S RAMSHACKLE HOME DOMINATES, ITS ‘MISRULE’ SIGN SETTING THE CHAOS. THE CHILDREN ARE FROZEN IN POSITIONS ABOUT THE GARDEN AND HOUSE. JUDY POISED AND ABOUT TO PUT A SCYTHE ACROSS THE ROSE BUSH, PIP STANDS ON THE VERANDAH BALUSTRADE, BUNTY AIDS A SLING SHOT AT MEG WHO SITS DEMURELY AT THE OTHER END READING A ROMANTIC NOVEL, BABY TUGS AT NELL’S DRESS TRYING TO DRAG HER TO THE GARDEN. FRENCH DOORS OPEN ON TO VERANDAH AND AND ASLEEP ON A WICKER CHAIR IS CAPTAIN WOOLCOT, SMILING AS HE ENJOYS A PLEASANT DREAM)

WOOLCOT: Kim, kim, bricki…Krangi – Bahtoo….

(MARTHA RUSHES ONTO THE VERANDAH)

MARTHA: Captain Woolcot, sir! Wake up! The guests are early!

(A BUGGY APPEARS IN THE DISTANCE CARRYING COLONIAL AND MRS BRYANT, MISS BURTON. BUNTY SEES BRYANT AND EXPLODES)

BUNTY: Cripes! It’s HIM!

(WOOLCOT ON HEARING BUNTY’S CRY JUMPS UP IN BLIND PANIC, QUICKLY EXAMINING HIS TIME PIECE)

WOOLCOT: Stone the crows! They’re not due until seven!!

MARTHA: Oh my knees and britches! (TO THE CHILDREN)
Children! To the nursery!

WOOLCOT: On the double! Left, right, left right...

(THE RABBLE UNENTHUSIASTICALLY ENTER THE HOUSE THROUGH THE FRENCH DOORS, MARTHA AND WOOLCOT BRINGING UP THE REAR. BUGGY PULLS UP. DRIVER ATTENDS TO HIS PASSENGERS WHO LOOK DOWN THEIR NOSES AT THE BROKEN SIGN AND THE UNKEMPT HOUSE)

SCENE FOUR  (DINING ROOM AT ‘MISRULE’)

(HOUSE SET REVOLVES TO DINING ROOM. GUESTS ENTER USHERED IN BY MARTHA WHO TRIES HARD TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION. AS THEY ENTER ROOM MISS BURTON IS IN FULL SWING)

MISS BURTON:  (SUPERIOR AND SANCTIMONIOUS)  …must be SEEN and not HEARD...

MARTHA:  (INTERRUPTING) Captain Woolcot and Mrs Woolcot crave your indulgences and have asked me to convey their most humble apologies on behalf of…er…themselves. Said Captain Woolcot and Mrs Woolcot have been delayed and invite you's…through me…to partake of sherry (SHE NODS HER HEAD TOWARDS A DECANTER AND GLASSES) … ‘til they imminent appear!

BRYANT:  (A SMELL UNDER HIS NOSE) Thank you, Martha.

MARTHA:  (COMPLIENT BUT IN HER UNIQUE MANNER) Thank YOU…sir.

(MARTHA EXITS, BOWING AS IF THEY ARE ROYALTY)

BRYANT:  (TO MISS BURTON) I am told she’s very Inexpensive. (QUICKLY CHANGING THE SUBJECT) You were saying, Miss Burton…?

MISS BURTON: Weeell…my pupils stay for as long as they please..., subject of course, to their parent’s bank accounts. My Academy in the Blue Mountains is
really a ‘finishing school’ but the more affluent ‘gels’ sometimes benefit from the extra time...afforded for them to be...er, ‘finished’, so to speak.

MRS BRYANT: A very special privilege, I’m sure, Miss Burton.

BRYANT: Quite, quite. (TAKING A SHINE TO MISS BURTON) I’m afraid I’m frightfully old fashioned when it comes to the education of young ‘gels’. I mean...I don’t think they should be educated at all, fills their heads with all sorts of silly ideas. More sherry, Miss Burton? (REACHING FOR THE DECANTER)

MISS BURTON: Just a drop, colonel...no...a little more than that? Thank you so much.

(BRYANT FILLS HIS OWN AND REPLACES THE DECANTER AS MRS BRYANT LOOKS AT HIM, THEN AT HER OWN EMPTY GLASS, APPALLED AT HIS BAD MANNERS)

MISS BURTON: (RAISING HER GLASS) To the suppression of unruly children!

BRYANT: Now I’ll drink to that. Here, here!

MARTHA: (TO HERSELF AS SHE ATTENDED TO MRS BRYANT’S EMPTY GLASS) You’d drink to anything, you pickled ‘one man’ tavern.

MRS BRYANT: (DEMEANINGLY TO MARTHA) What did you say..., my girl?

MARTHA: (FLASHING AT THE AFFRONTARY) ...er...we was expecting you at seven...m’lord.

BRYANT: (TO NO-ONE IN PARTICULAR) Did we settle on a time? I’m sure I don’t know.

(ESTHER AND WOOLCOT ENTER)

MARTHA: (OVERWHELMED BY ESTHER’S STUNNING APPEARANCE) Wow! Doesn’t you look the business!
WOOLCOT: Martha?

MARTHA: (MEEKLY) Yes, sir?

(MARTHA POURS WINE INTO THE GLASSES ON THE TABLE, EXITS AND RETURNS CARRYING A LARGE SILVER SERVER WHICH SHE PLACES BEFORE THE HEAD OF THE TABLE)

WOOLCOT: (TO BRYANT) So kind of you to come. (TO MRS BRYANT) And of course to you, Mrs Bryant. (LOOKING TO MISS BURTON) You both know Miss Burton…the principal of Miss Burton’s Academy in the Blue mountains?

BRYANT: Yes Woolcot. We brought her here.

WOOLCOT: Of course.

ESTHER: Would you all please be seated. Dinner is served.

(ESTHER SHOWS THE GUESTS TO THEIR SEATS, WOOLCOT ASSUMES THE HEAD OF THE TABLE, AND BRYANT, WAITING UNTIL THE LADIES ARE SEATED AND THEN SITTING THEMSELVES. WOOLCOT CARVES THE FOWL AS MARTHA SERVES AND PASSES AROUND THE PLATES. AS HE FINISHES THERE IS A TIMID KNOCKING SOUND. ALL HEADS TURN TOWARDS THE DOOR WHICH SLOWLY SQUEAKS OPEN AND PIP NERVOUSLY POPS IN HIS HEAD)

PIP: (FROM THE DOORWAY) Excuse me, father? May I have some roast fowl?

WOOLCOT: (FURIOUS BUT CARVING OFF A FURTHER SMALL PIECE) Yes, Pip…just a little. (TO THE GUESTS) My eldest son, Phillip…

(THE GUESTS LOOK SANCTIMONIOUSLY TOLERANT AS PIP ENTERS SLOWLY AND WOOLCOT LIFTS THE MEAT TO HIS PLATE)

WOOLCOT: (FIRMLY) Goodnight, Pip!
(HE EXITS QUICKLY AND AN EMBARRASSED LULL IN CONVERSATION IS BROKEN BY THE CLASH OF METAL AS WOOLCOT RESUMES CARVING)

ESTHER: (BREAKING THE SILENCE AND LOOKING TO MISS BURTON) We hear such excellent reports of your Academy, Miss Burton. To what do you attribute your enormous success?

(ANOTHER GENTLE KNOCK ON THE DOOR. THE HEADS AS ONE TURN AGAIN FOLLOWED BY A PREGNANT PAUSE. THE DOOR OPENS AND NELL’S ANGELIC FACE APPEARS. THE ROOM IS DEATHLY QUIET)

WOOLCOT: Yes, Nell?

(NELL TAKES A STEP IN BUT FREEZES IN TERROR)

ESTHER: (HELPING HER DESPARATE HUSBAND) Come in Nell, but be quick.

(SHE ENTERS, ONE HAND BEHIND HER BACK, AND BRYANT TAKES A SHINE TO HER)

BRYANT: (OFFERING HIS HAND AS SHE PASSES) Well, my little maid, won’t you shake hands with me?

(NELL FUMBLES WITH BOTH HANDS BEHIND HER BACK SHIFTING THE PLATE FROM ONE TO THE OTHER SO AS TO SHAKE BRYANT’S HAND)

WOOLCOT: What a little barbarian you are, Nell? What have you behind your back?

(OUT COMES THE PLATE. THE GUESTS GASP)

NELL: (SMILING TO BRYANT) I thought father might give me some roast fowl too, just a leg, or a wing or…

(BRYANT ENJOYS ENCOURAGING NELL AT WOOLCOT’S EXPENSE)

WOOLCOT: (EXPLODING) What is the meaning of this?
ESTHER GESTURES TO NELL TO APPROACH HER FATHER WHO IS TRYING TO RESTRAIN HIMSELF. SHE NERVOUSLY HOLDS HER PLATE FORWARD ARMS AT FULL STRETCH. WOOLCOT SAVAGELY SEVERS A LEG AND BANGS IT ON HER PLATE.

WOOLCOT: Now back to the nursery. I don’t know what has possessed you both tonight!

(NELL DAINTILY HALF DANCES AS SHE WALKS AWAY. ALL THE HEADS FOLLOW HER, BRYANT SMILING. AS SHE REACHES THE DOOR SHE TURNS)

NELL: If you would just give me a wing for poor Meg...and there’s Baby...and Bunty...

WOOLCOT: Be OFF! Good NIGHT!

(SHE RACES OUT AND THE DOOR SLAMS OMINOUSLY. THE SILENCE THAT FOLLOWS PUNCTUATES THE TENSION AS WOOLCOT FINISHES CARVING AND PLACING THE LAST PLATE IN FRONT OF HIMSELF)

MRS BRYANT: (SIPPING HER WINE GENTLY) I understand that the medicinal qualities in Australian red wine are well noted. I have it on the best authority that...

(THERE IS ANOTHER SHARP KNOCK ON THE DOOR. ALL JUMP WITH FRIGHT AND MRS BRYANT SPILLS HER WINE. ESTHER RISES TO ATTEND TO HER AS THE DOOR FLIES OPEN AND JUDY PUSHES THE GENERAL, BOWL HELD TIGHTLY IN BOTH HANDS, INTO THE ROOM. WOOLCOT LEAPS TO HIS FEET AND IS MOMENTARILY DISTRACTED BY BRYANT EATING NOISILY WHILE THE OTHERS SIT GOBSMACKED BY EVENTS)

BRYANT: (TAKING NO NOTICE OF WOOLCOT’S RAGE) I say, this fowl is AWFULLY good, what?

(MUSIC STRIKES UP AS ESTHER RUSHES TO PICK UP THE GENERAL)
WOOLCOT: (SINGS) Children!

No-one has an inkling where they come from…
but anyone can see where they have been.
You wouldn’t understand unless you own some
They’re so horribly…UNCLEAN!

They must have learned to speak from some barbarian!
They bellow and they crackle and they yell,
their tiny lungs are practically Wagnerian
like a market day…in HELL!

Children! Children! Children! Children!

BRYANT: Contrary and cantankerous,

MISS BURTON: Obstreperous and raucorous,

BRYANT: Illogical and ignorant,

(ESTHER CAN’T BELIEVE WHAT SHE IS HEARING)

MISS BURTON: Asinine, capricious, perverse and avaricious,

MRS BRYANT: Their proclivities unpleasant,

MISS BURTON: Their manners a disgrace!

Martha enters as Woolcot addresses his questions.

WOOLCOT: (TALKS OVER MUSIC) WHO… released the
chickens in my study?

WHO… was it, put gunpowder in the tea?

WHO… mixed all that cheese with my tobacco?

CERTAINLY…it wasn’t…ME!

WHO… dropped my King James bible in the river?
WHO... clogged the kitchen sink with blotting paper?

(SINGS) Their attitude pugnacious, 
their statements are mendacious, 
unnecessary luxuries a drain on any purse!

Their behaviour bacchanalian, 
so confoundedly Australian, 
I cannot think of anything....WORSE!

(ESTHER TRIES TO REASON)

ESTHER: But then one day they’ll drift away, 
when they decide to leave us... 
I’m told such times occasionally occur...

Will their departure break my heart or 
desolate or grieve us...

WOOLCOT: (BELLOWS) Not likely! NO SIR!

CHILDREN! CHILDREN!

(ALL HEADS TURN IN THE DIRECTION OF THE DOOR 
WHICH SLOWLY OPENS)

JUDY: (O. S.) Angelical and lovable, 
affectionate and sweet...

Big blue eyes, and golden locks, 
all rosy cheeks and cotton socks...

CHILDREN: (O. S.) We’re the nicest people you could 
ever want to meet...

(THE CHILDREN FLASH BY THE DOORWAY)

JUDY: Just look at me?

MEG: and me?

PIP: and me?
NELL: and me?

PIP: (POINTING TO BUNTY) ...and him?

BABY: and me?

CHILDREN: We’re as good...as good can be....

(THE CHILDREN ALL MAKE THEIR ENTRANCE TOGETHER INTO THE ROOM)

WOOLCOT: Shameless!

CHILDREN: Blameless!

WOOLCOT: Lawless!

CHILDREN: Flawless!

WOOLCOT: Fearful!

CHILDREN: Cheerful!

BRYANT: Devastating!

CHILDREN: Captivating!

MRS BRYANT: Alarming!

CHILDREN: Charming!

MISS BURTON: Frightful!

CHILDREN: Delightful!

WOOLCOT: Deplorable!

JUDY: (WITH THAT KNOWING LOOK) adorable...

(THE GUESTS RE-ENFORCE WOOLCOT’S STAND)

WOOLCOT/GUESTS: Children! Children!
CHILDREN: We’re the nicest people you could ever hope to meet…

WOOLCOT/GUESTS: Children! Children!

CHILDREN: …angelical and lovable, affectionate and sweet!

WOOLCOT: You wouldn’t understand unless you own some!

GUESTS: Children! Children!

CHILDREN: Children! Children!

WOOLCOT: Enough to make a grown man cry…

GUESTS: Children! Children!

CHILDREN: Children! Children!

ALL: CHILDREN!!

(END OF SONG)

SCENE FIVE (THE GIRL’S BEDROOM)

(A BRIEF ‘NUTCRACKER’ BALLET STYLE VERSION OF “KRANGI BAHTOO” OPENS AS NELL DANCES GRACEFULLY ABOUT, OBLIVIOUS TO THE OTHERS AND THE CRISIS.

FOUR BEDS ARE SET IN A LINE RANGING FROM NORMAL SIZE TO SMALL.

AT RISE, MEG, BABY, AND GENERAL SIT IN A ROW ON THE LARGEST BED WHILST JUDY PERFORMS IN FRONT OF THEM MIMICKING HER FATHER’S ARMY OFFICER ROUTINE, AS SHE WHACKS HER LEFT PALM WITH THE BACK OF NELL’S HAIR BRUSH FOR EMPHASIS. BUNTY LISTENS AT THE CLOSED DOOR AND THE OTHERS MAKE A PLACE ON THE BED FOR NELL)

JUDY: (MIMIC) …You’re a disgrace, all of you. I sometimes have the impression that I am living in a madhouse. (PICKS UP A BOOK) Look at this,'Love in the Outback'…. Meg, if you
spent less time reading these trashy romances, you’d be a better example to the young ones. (TO PIP) And you, sir?

PIP: Me, sir?

(PIP IS ANXIOUSLY MOVING ABOUT THE ROOM AND AS IS HIS HABIT BEATS OUT REPEATEDLY A SHORT ['DISCIPLINE'] QUICK FIGURE WITH HIS HANDS ON ANYTHING HARD HE CAN FIND AS HE MOVES.)

JUDY: Yes, you sir. Almost an adult, and still behaving like a child.

PIP: Sorry, sir.

JUDY: And...YOU! (REPLYING) “Yes, father”? (AS HER FATHER) I despair. What am I to do with you? What? WHAT, I ask you?

BUNTY: (HIS EAR TO THE DOOR) Shhh. SHHH! He’s coming.

(JUDY TOSSES THE BOOK SHE HAS PICKED UP TO MEG, WHO CATCHES IT AND SITS ON IT. JUDY JOINS THE OTHERS IN A LINE ON THE BED, TAKING GENERAL ON HER KNEE, AS SHE, NELL AND BABY ALL SIT UP, RAMROD STRAIGHT.)

PIP RATTLES OFF THE FIGURE AGAIN WITH KNUCKLES ON THE BOOK CASE THEN SNATCHES A BOOK FROM A SHELF AND QUICKLY LEANS AGAINST THE WALL, AS IF STUDYING IT. BUNTY RUNS BACK TO THE BED AND TRIES TO LOOK GOOD. WOOLCOT’S ANGRY VOICE SOUNDS OFF STAGE)

WOOLCOT: (O. S.) …not their fault? Then, pray, whose was it? Mine? My fault?

ESTHER: (O. S.) John...

WOOLCOT: (O. S.) No, Esther. Stop trying to protect them all the time...

(WOOLCOT AND ESTHER ENTER. HE IS FURIOUS. THE CHILDREN ALL SPRING TO THEIR FEET, JUDY LEADING
THEM, LOOKING LIKE LITTLE MISS PRIM. MEG HIDES HER BOOK BEHIND HER BACK)

JUDY: Good evening, father.

(SHE GESTURES, AND THE OTHERS ALL CHORUS IN PERFECT UNISON)

CHILDREN: Good evening, father. Good evening, Esther.

(IT INFURIATES WOOLCOT, WHO SURVEYS THEM GRIMLY. HE STEPS TOWARDS PIP, TAKES THE BOOK FROM HIS HAND, AND TURNS IT THE RIGHT WAY UP.

ESTHER STANDS AT THE DOOR, WORRIED AND SHAKING HER HEAD.

WOOLCOT PACES UP AND DOWN, SLAPPING HIS PALM WITH HIS RIDING CROP THE WAY THAT JUDY HAD MIMICKED)

WOOLCOT: I sometimes have the impression that I am residing in a … a …

JUDY: …a madhouse?

WOOLCOT: I’ll thank you not to finish my sentences for me, Judith. (TURNING HIS ATTENTION TO MEG) Meg!

(MEG GIVES WOOLCOT THE BOOK SHE HAS BEEN HIDING BEHIND HER BACK. WOOLCOT READS THE TITLE)

WOOLCOT: “Love in the Outback” .. “Further Adventures of Chastity Jones”. No wonder you’re mooning about all day. What sort of example is this for the younger ones? (HE THROWS THE BOOK ON THE BED) As the eldest, you have responsibilities which, of late, you seem to have neglected entirely…Pip…a man behaving like a child… (PIP GOES TO TAP OUT ANOTHER RHYTHM BUT THINKS BETTER OF IT. WOOLCOT TURNS SUDDENLY TO JUDY) And YOU Miss!! What have you to say for yourself?