

SEVEN LITTLE AUSTRALIANS

(c) copyright David Reeves January 1987

MUSIC by DAVID REEVES

LYRICS by JOHN PALMER & DAVID REEVES

LIBRETTO by JOHN PALMER, PETER YELDHAM & DAVID REEVES

BASED ON ETHEL TURNER'S AUSTRALIAN CLASSIC STORY

CHARACTERS

Captain John Woolcot

Esther

Judy

Pip

Meg

Bunty

Nell

Baby

Little General

Martha/Miss Jolly

Colonel Bryant/Mr Hassal

Alan Courtney

Miss Burton/Mrs Hassal

Andrew/Sentry

Aldith/Schoolgirl

Dr Gormiston/Corporal/M. Marceau

CHORUS:

**Soldiers, Students, James, Beatrice, Janet,
Clara, Schoolgirls, Bush band et al.**

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

- 1] Overture (Orchestra)**
- 2] Spring**
- 3] Children!**
- 4] If You're Good**
- 5] The Academie du Monsieur Marceau**
- 6] Can You Love Me**
- 7] The Little General's Parade (Orchestra)**
- 8] Discipline!**
- 9] The Soldiers of the Lord**
- 10] Walking the Block**
- 11] Parramatta River**
- 12] What is a Woman to You?**
- 13] My Love**
- 13a] Closing Music Act One (Orchestra)**

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT TWO

- 14] Entracte - Seven Little Australians Waltz (Orchestra)**
- 15] Department**
- 16] Look for a Rainbow**
- 17] Strange Goings On**
- 18] Fall in Like With You**
- 19] Krangi – Bahtoo**
- 20] Can You Love Me Reprise**
- 21] Catching the Central Express**
- 22] Krangi – Bahtoo Reprise**
- 23] The Boys from Yarrahappini**
- 24] The Seven Little Australians Waltz (Orchestra)**
- 25] My Love Reprise**
- 26] If You're Good Reprise (No Music – Bunty a capella – take from # 4)**
- 27] Look for a Rainbow Finale**

SEVEN LITTLE AUSTRALIANS

(c) copyright David Reeves January 1987

MUSIC by DAVID REEVES

LYRICS by JOHN PALMER & DAVID REEVES

LIBRETTO by JOHN PALMER, PETER YELDHAM & DAVID REEVES

BASED ON ETHEL TURNER'S AUSTRALIAN CLASSIC STORY OF THE SAME NAME

ACT ONE

MUSIC NO 1 "OVERTURE"

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

THE GARDEN OF "MISRULE", THE WOOLCOT HOME BESIDE THE PARRAMATTA RIVER. THERE ARE NATIVE SHRUBS, A HOME GAZEBO, AND IN THE BACKGROUND THE OUTLINE OF A BARN, AND A GLIMPSE OF A LARGE OLD FAMILY HOUSE.

AT RISE:

ESTHER ENTERS. SHE WEARS A SIMPLE BUT ATTRACTIVE DRESS, A STRAW HAT, AND CARRIES A BASKET AS SHE GATHERS FLOWERS.

MUSIC NO 2 "SPRING" ESTHER AND CHILDREN.

ESTHER

This is the first day of Spring
To me it's the first day of everything
Everything.

A time of creation
 For celebration
 The first day of Spring is here.

(LIGHTS UP ON CHILDREN)

BUNTY

Cream buns and sausages, big supply,
 Hundreds and thousands for you and I,
 If I shoot a pigeon up in the sky,
 Esther, will you put it into a pie?

NELL

Swinging higher and higher,
 And up into the sky we fly,
 On a marvellous stairway,
 A swing's a magic carpet ride.

BABY

Spring's the season for babies,
 And puppies and guppies and yabbies and birds.
 Our cat just had ten kittens,
 All lovely and fluffy, or hadn't you heard?

MEG

Romance and love and a handsome face,
 I have been searching all over the place,
 But no matter how far and how wide I look,
 I never find romance outside of a book.

PIP

I'm the son of a soldier
 With lots to put up with, and lots to endure,
 On parade like a ninny,
 I'm constantly told I am immature.

JUDY

I'm in favour of holidays
 Autumn and summer and winter so mild,
 But Spring's my favourite season,
 So close the school and free the child.

ALL

We're the terrible seven,
We squabble and bellow and wrestle and rave,
Winter's gone and it's Springtime,
We promise our best that we'll try to behave.

The terrible seven is what we are,
News of our nonsense has travelled afar,
Now it's Spring and we promise we'll try to be good,
We're really quite charming but misunderstood.

(THE LITTLE GENERAL SALUTES TO THE MUSIC)

ALL

BUNTY

Cream buns, cream buns.

NELL

Swinging high, up in the sky.

BABY

Ten kittens, ten kittens.

MEG

Romance and love, romance and love.

PIP

Son of a soldier, son of a soldier.

JUDY

Holidays far away, holidays far away.

ESTHER: (SPEAKS) Now then, you wicked tribe.

ESTHER & THE CHILDREN SING

This is the first day of Spring
To me it's the first day of everything.

Everything.
 A time of creation
 For celebration.
 The first day of Spring is here.

(FROM THE DIRECTION OF THE HOUSE THE DINNER BELL SOUNDS. THE CHILDREN RUSH OFF, LED BY BUNTY. JUDY CARRIES LITTLE GENERAL.

ESTHER IS LEFT ALONE. SHE STARTS TO FOLLOW AS THE LIGHTS FADE)

ACT ONE: _____ SCENE 2

AT CURTAIN RISE: A POOL OF LIGHT (STAGE RIGHT) REVEALS A FORMAL DINING TABLE SET FOR SIX. STANDING WITH SHERRY GLASSES ARE COLONEL BRYANT (IN FULL DRESS UNIFORM) AND MRS BRYANT, DOCTOR GORMISTON AND MISS BURTON, A MIDDLE-AGED SCHOOLMISTRESS.

NOW CAPTAIN WOOLCOT ENTERS, IN HIS DRESS UNIFORM, SNEAKING A FROWN AT HIS WATCH, AND MANAGING A WELCOME SMILE FOR HIS GUESTS.

WOOLCOT: My wife's apologies. Do help yourselves to sherry. She'll be with us in a moment.

(HE EXITS AGAIN, RATHER TIGHT LIPPED AND FLUSTERED)

MISS BURTON: Extraordinary.

COLONEL BRYANT: An unconventional household, I fear, Miss Burton.

MRS BRYANT: And so many children. Seven ...

MISS BURTON: Seven? But I was told Mrs Woolcot is herself quite a young person?

DR GORMISTON: Young and very charming .. and Captain Woolcot's second wife.

COLONEL BRYANT: Hence, responsible only for the newest addition. The other six are the first Mrs Woolcot's .. (God rest her) .. sherry?

MISS BURTON: Just a drop, Colonel .. thank you. Are they very well behaved children?

COLNEL BRYANT: As a Headmistress, Miss Burton, you must know that's a rare commodity.

MISS BURTON: Not at my school, sir. I only have gels from the best families.

COLONEL BRYANT: Quite. However, I daresay it would come as no surprise to learn the Woolcot menagerie has never been accused of being well behaved. Indeed, not to put too fine a point on it, the brood are universally acknowledged as the most objectionable, obnoxious, uncontrollable, awful ... weather we've been having! So humid! Ahhh .. our hostess.

(HE BEAMS AS ESTHER ENTERS WITH WOOLCOT. SHE HAS DRESSED IN A RUSH, AND WOOLCOT IS A TRIFLE TERSE)

WOOLCOT: You know Colonel Bryant, and Mrs Bryant. And Dr Gormiston, of course.

(ESTHER SMILES AND SHAKES HANDS WITH DR GORMISTON, THEN WITH MORE RESERVE GREETES THE BRYANTS)

WOOLCOT: And Miss Burton .. the Principal of Miss Burton's Finishing Academy for Girls.

ESTHER: How do you do.

MISS BURTON: Delighted.

ESTHER: I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. I was with the children.

COLONEL BRYANT: We were just talking about the dear children.

MISS BURTON: The Colonel painted such a .. a vivid picture, I feel as if I know them.

(AS THE GUESTS TAKE THEIR PLACES AT THE TABLE, THE LIGHTS RISE [STAGE LEFT] ON A TABLE WHERE THE CHILDREN SIT HAVING THEIR TEA. ALL SIX ARE PRESENT, BUT NOT THE LITTLE GENERAL.

THEY ARE DUTIFULLY EATING BREAD AND JAM.

MARTHA COMES THROUGH CARRYING A STEAMING COVERED SERVING DISH. MARTHA IS THE COOK/GENERAL FACTOTEM.

ALL THE CHILDREN'S ATTENTION FOCUSES ON THE DISH.

MARTHA GOES INTO THE DINING ROOM, WHERE SHE SETS OUT THE MEAL, AND WOOLCOT CARVES THE TURKEY.

WE CAN SEE BOTH THE DINING TABLE WITH THE GUESTS, AND THE NURSERY WITH THE CHILDREN DURING THE REST OF THIS SCENE, WITH THE LIGHTS BRIGHTER ON THE SECTION OF THE STAGE WHERE THE MAIN ACTION IS TAKING PLACE)

BUNTY: What a beautiful scrumptious smell.

PIP: Chicken.

BABY: Are we having chicken?

MEG: No. That's for the visitors.

NELL: Who's visiting?

MEG: Colonel Bryant.

BUNTY: Oh, him.

JUDY: Be respectful now. He's father's Commanding Officer, doncha know.

BUNTY: He's boring.

JUDY: He's brave.

PIP: Who said?

JUDY: He saved India, and the Sudan .. not to mention the British Empire.

PIP: Who told you that?

JUDY: He did.

(PIP MAKES A BALL OUT OF A PIECE OF BREAD AND THROWS IT. JUDY DUCKS AS IT NEARLY HITS MARTHA RETURNING FROM THE DINING ROOM)

MARTHA: (LOOKS AT THEM ALL) Bunty?

BUNTY: Wasn't me. It was him.

JUDY: Martha, I appeal to you. Is it fair that we have bread and jam, and they have chicken?

MARTHA: It isn't chicken. It's turkey.

(SHE EXITS)

BUNTY: (IMPRESSED) Wow .. I've never tasted turkey.

MEG: Father says we can't afford it.

PIP: Only when old iron boots comes to dinner.

JUDY: I hope they're enjoying it.

BUNTY: I'll bet they are.

(JUDY GATHERS THEM AROUND HER AND WHISPERS A PLAN.

THE CHILDREN ALL TAKE THEIR EMPTY PLATES, AND MARCH INTO THE DINING ROOM.

WOOLCOT IS STARTLED, ESTHER WORRIED, THE GUESTS SURPRISED TO BE CONFRONTED BY SIX CHILDREN WITH EMPTY PLATES IN THEIR HANDS)

ESTHER: Children, what's this?

CHILDREN: (CHORUS IN PERFECT UNISON) Good evening, Esther. Good evening, Father. Good evening Colonel Bryant, Mrs Bryant, Doctor .. er .. (TO MISS BURTON) .. hello.

WOOLCOT: Now children .. we have guests for dinner, as you can see.

JUDY: Yes, Father. We came to wish you bon appetit.

WOOLCOT: (TRYING TO APPEAR CORDIAL) Well, thank you. Now off you go.

JUDY: It's the aroma, Father.

WOOLCOT: I beg your pardon, Judy?

JUDY: The aromatic influence of the turkey. It's all over the house.

PIP: Everywhere, Father.

JUDY: It's quite unlike the smell of boiled mutton and rice pudding ..

PIP: Which we had for lunch ...

JUDY: Or bread and jam, for tea. It isn't fair, Father, and we thought, since fair

play is what you've always taught us, that a slice of turkey each would be extremely fair.

PIP: If you've all had sufficient that is, sir.

(WOOLCOT - TAKING CARE THE GUESTS DO NOT SEE - GLOWERS AT THE CHILDREN, THEN MAKES THE BEST OF HANDING OVER THE COVERED DISH TO JUDY)

JUDY: Thank you, Father. (TO OTHERS) Say thank you and goodnight all.

CHILDREN: (CHORUS) Thank you and goodnight all.

(THEY EXIT WITH BARELY SUPPRESSED GLEE. ♦

WOOLCOT TRIES TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT AS HE RESUMES HIS PLACE)

WOOLCOT: I'm afraid they should have been in bed. I find that, like oil and water, adults and children don't mix.

(THE CHILDREN HAVE RUSHED OFF [L] WITH THEIR PRIZE. NOW JUDY REAPPEARS LEADING THE LITTLE GENERAL IN HIS PYJAMAS. SHE BRINGS HIM BACK TO THE DINNER TABLE)

JUDY: Excuse me. The Little General wants to say thank you.

(THE GENERAL SALUTES. THE REST OF THE CHILDREN WHO HAVE CREPT BACK TO SEE THIS, EXPLODE IN GIGGLES)

WOOLCOT: (ANGRILY) Goodnight, children!

(MUSIC OPENS AS WOOLCOT GETS TO HIS FEET)

MUSIC No 3 "CHILDREN" WOOLCOT with ESTHER, COL BRYANT, MISS BURTON, Dr GORMISTON, MARTHA & CHILDREN.

WOOLCOT: 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 cackle and they yell.
Their tiny lungs are practically Wagnerian;
Like market day - in hell!
Children, children, children, children.

OTHERS: (SOLO LINES) Contrary and contankerous,
 Obstreperous and rancorous,
 Illogical and ignorant,
 Insolent and base;
 Asinine, capricious,
 Perverse and avaricious,
 Their proclivities unpleasant,
 Their manners a disgrace.

WOOLCOT: (SPEAKS) 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 decapitated my prize English roses – and
 broke the kitchen window three times in a week?

WOOLCOT: (SINGS) Their attitude, pugnacious
 Their statements are mendacious
 Unnecessary luxuries,
 A drain on any purse.
 Their behaviour bacchanalian,
 So typically ORstralian.
 Who could think of anything worse!

ESTHER: But then one day they'll drift away
 When they decide to leave us.
 (I'm told such things occasionally occur)
 Will their departure break my heart
 Or desolate or grieve us?

WOOLCOT: Not likely! No sir!

Children! Children!

JUDY: Angelical and loveable,
 affectionate and sweet.
 Big blue eyes and golden locks all rosy cheeks and cotton socks.

ALL CHILDREN: We're the nicest people you could ever hope to meet.

PIP: Just look at me,

NELL: and me.

BUNTY: and me,

BABY: and me,

JUDY: and him,

MEG: and me,

MEG/BUNTY/JUDY: We're as good,

PIP/NELL/BABY: We're as good,
 MEG/BUNTY/JUDY: We're as good,
 PIP/NELL/BABY: We're as good as we can be
 MEG/BUNTY/JUDY: As we can be.

WOOLCOT: Shameless!
 CHILDREN: blameless,
 WOOLCOT: Lawless!
 CHILDREN: flawless,
 WOOLCOT: Fearful!
 CHILDREN: cheerful,
 WOOLCOT: Devastating!
 CHILDREN: captivating,
 WOOLCOT: Alarming!
 CHILDREN: charming,
 WOOLCOT: Frightful!
 CHILDREN: delightful,
 WOOLCOT: Deplorable!
 CHILDREN: adorable.

WOOLCOT: Children! Children!
 CHILDREN: We're the nicest people you could ever hope to meet,

WOOLCOT: Children! Children!
 CHILDREN: Angelical and loveable, affectionate and sweet!

WOOLCOT: You wouldn't understand unless you own some!
 ALL OTHERS: Children! Children!

WOOLCOT: Enough to make a grown man cry.
 ALL OTHERS: Children! Children!

MARTHA: (SPOKEN) The children. Bless their little hearts!

ALL: (SUNG) Children!

(AS THE SONG PROGRESSES, THE DINNER PARTY IS ENDING.
 THE GUESTS PUT ON COATS AND COLLECT THEIR BELONGINGS.

AT THE END OF THE NUMBER, AS IF REALISING THEY ARE IN
 DEEP TROUBLE, THE CHILDREN RUN OFF.

JUDY CARRIES THE LITTLE GENERAL.

ESTHER AND WOOLCOT SEE THE GUESTS OUT.

MARTHA REMAINS, HAVING A QUICK TIPPLE FROM THE SHERRY

BEFORE CLEARING THE TABLE. SHE RAISES HER GLASS IN A MOCK TOAST)

ACT ONE: _____ SCENE 3

THE GIRL'S BEDROOM. A LARGE ROOM WITH FOUR BEDS, RANGING FROM SMALL TO NORMAL.

IT IS SHORTLY AFTERWARDS. NIGHT.

AT RISE: MEG, PIP, BUNTY, NELL, BABY AND LITTLE BENERAL SIT IN A ROW ON MEG'S BED.

JUDY MIMICS HER FATHER'S ARMY OFFICER ROUTINE, AS SHE WHACKS HER LEFT PALM WITH A FEATHER DUSTER.

BUNTY LICKS HIS LIPS ENJOYING AN EXTRA PIECE OF TURKEY HE HAS SECRETED IN HIS POCKET.

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. 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?

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

PIP: Sorry, sir.

JUDY: And Bunty, forever hungry, and that frog! And you, Miss .. (REPLYING) Yes, Father? (AS HER FATHER) I despair. You're hopeless.

BUNTY: (LISTENING AT THE DOOR) Shhh! He's coming.

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

PIP SNATCHES A BOOK FROM A SHELF, LEANS AGAINST THE WALL AS IF STUDYING IT.

BUNTY RUSHES BACK TO THE BED AND TRIES TO LOOK GOOD. A PIECE OF BREAD SLIDES OUT FROM BENEATH HIS SHIRT. HE STUFFS IT BACK, TAKING A QUICK BITE FIRST.

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 INNOCENT LIKE MISS PRIM. MEG HIDES HER BOOK BEHIND HER BACK)

JUDY: Good evening, Father.

(SHE GESTURES, AND ALL THE CHILDREN CHORUS AGAIN 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. THE BOOK WAS UPSIDE DOWN.

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

WOOLCOT PACES UP AND DOWN, SLAPPING HIS PALM WITH HIS RIDING CROP IN EXACTLY THE WAY THAT JUDY HAD MIMICKED. HE SEES THE END OF THE BREAD PROTRUDING FROM BUNTY'S SHIRT, AND PULLS IT OUT, WAVING IT UNDER BUNTY'S NOSE)

BUNTY: (MOUTH FULL) Who put that there?

WOOLCOT: (SEEING THE FROG) And who put that there!

BUNTY: That's Algenon.

WOOLCOT: I don't wish to know his name.

(WOOLCOT SILENCES BUNTY WITH A HARD LOOK AND HOLDS HIS HAND OUT TOWARDS HIM. BUNTY AT FIRST PRETENDS NOT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THIS IS ABOUT, BUT SOON REACHES INTO HIS BACK POCKET, TAKES OUT HIS SHANGHAI AND RELUCTANTLY GIVES IT TO WOOLCOT)

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

JUDY: .. a madhouse?

WOOLCOT: I'll thank you, Judith, not to finish my sentences for me. Meg!

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

WOOLCOT: "Love in the Colonies" .. "Further Adventures of Chastity Jones". No wonder you're mooning about all day. What sort of example is this for the young 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 ... Bunty, must you always be so ravenous? ... And You Miss! What have you to say for yourself?

JUDY: We thought it was fair.

WOOLCOT: Fair? To ruin our dinner party? Upset my Commanding Officer?

JUDY: It was my idea. The others are innocent.

PIP: No, we're not.

WOOLCOT: Indeed you're not, sir. And you must be punished. All of you. You will not be going to the pantomime tomorrow.

(A CHORUS OF DISAPPOINTMENT)

ESTHER: John .. they've been looking forward to that show for months.

WOOLCOT: Esther, I was made to look a fool in front of Colonel Bryant. (TO CHILDREN) You are confined to quarters. No visits, no visitors, no riding, no pantomime. I shall send your tickets to the Digby-Smiths.

JUDY: Not the DIGBY-Smiths, Father. Anyone but them.

WOOLCOT: Judith ... I don't know why you can't behave like a normal girl, and play quietly with dolls. Any further bad behavior, and I promise that .. (A DEEP BREATH, AS HE TRIES TO THINK OF A WORSE THREAT AND CANNOT) .. goodnight children.

CHILDREN: (DUTIFUL CHORUS) Goodnight, Father.

(WOOLCOT GLARES, NOT SURE IF THEY ARE MOCKING HIM. HE EXITS, LEAVING ESTHER WITH THE STUNNED CHILDREN, AS HE SHUTS THE DOOR)

18

PIP: Confined to quarters ..

JUDY: At least we'll miss French lessons. That's something.

(WOOLCOT OPENS THE DOOR AND RE-ENTERS)

WOOLCOT: You will, of course, attend French class on Saturday, as usual.

(HE EXITS AGAIN. THERE IS A GLOOMY SILENCE)

BUNTY: Every kid in Sydney's going to the panto.

PIP: Except us.

JUDY: Six tickets wasted! Six horrid Digby-Smiths sitting in the theatre watching our pantomime, with their six horrid piggy eyes.

PIP: Twelve.

JUDY: What?

PIP: Six people, twelve eyes.

JUDY: Honestly, Pip ... How can you count eyes when the whole world is collapsing?!

ESTHER: (FONDLY) Come on, you disgraceful lot. I'll try to shorten confinement to barracks .. but you must help me.

NELL: How, Esther?

ESTHER: By being surprisingly, amazingly good. Come on now .. bedtime. Prayers ..

(AS PART OF A WELL-KNOWN ROUTINE, THE CHILDREN KNEEL, HANDS TOGETHER. EXCEPT FOR THE GENERAL.

GENERAL JOINS IN THE PRAYER NUMBER)

MUSIC NO 4 "IF YOU'RE GOOD" BUNTY, ESTHER AND CHILDREN.

BUNTY: (SOLO) If you're good you'll go to Heaven
With the little angels.
God will make you nice and new
And you'll become an angel too.
You will surely go to Heaven
If you're good.

CHILDREN: If you're good you'll go to Heaven
 Mother will be waiting
 Grandpa's there, and grandma too;

BUNTY: St Peter's there to welcome you.
 You may stay with us in Heaven
 If you're good.

BUNTY: God bless Esther,
 BABY: God bless Father,
 PIP: God bless darling Nell.
 NELL: God bless Bunty
 JUDY: God bless Meg
 MEG: and God bless Pip as well.
 ALL: Dear God bless our little General,
 BABY: God bless Baby fat and small;
 ALL: Please God bless our family
 BUNTY: But Judy most of all.

ALL: If you're good you'll go to Heaven
 Mother will be waiting.
 Grandpa's there, and grandma too;
 St Peter's there to welcome you.
 You may stay with us in Heaven
 If you're good.

BUNTY: You may stay with us in Heaven
 If you're good.

(BABY GOES TO ESTHER MAKING BRUSHING MOTION)

BABY: (SPOKEN) You forgot our teeth.

ESTHER: (SPOKEN) So I did, off you go then all of you.

(FINALLY ESTHER IS LEFT ALONE ON STAGE, PICKED OUT BY A
 SPOTLIGHT)

ESTHER: (SINGS) If they're good they'll go to Heaven,
 Little angels every one,
 But will it be the same in Heaven
 With the advent of the Seven?
 Heaven knows if Heaven's ready,
 If they're good. If they're good.

THE SPOTLIGHT FADES TO BLACK.

ACT ONE: _____ SCENE 4

SATURDAY MORNING. L'ACADEMIE DU MONSIEUR MARCEAU:
A LARGE ROOM IN WHICH HE COACHES FRENCH TO THE
OFFSPRING OF ASPIRING SYDNEY GENTRY.

THERE IS A BLACKBOARD DRAPED WITH A FRENCH FLAG.

JUDY ENTERS, HAND IN HAND WITH THE LITTLE GENERAL. SHE
LIFTS HIM AND DEPOSITS HIM ON A TABLE.

JUDY: It's rotten! It's not fair! Father's going to the polo match with Esther .. and we
all have to go straight home. I'm in charge of you, mon petit Genral .. so this
is your first encounter with French verbs.

(DURING THIS, MEG, PIP, NELL, BUNTY AND BABY ARRIVE. JUDY
PICKS UP AN EXERCISE BOOK)

JUDY: (READS) That man has a moustache. This man does not have a moustache.
(TO GENERAL) See how much you're going to learn?

(THE DOOR IS PUSHED OPEN AND A NUMBER OF NOISILY
CHATTERING YOUNG FOLK ENTER. ALDITH MACCARTHY, JAMES
GRAHAM, BEATRICE, JANET, ALEX AND ANDREW COURTNEY.

GREETINGS ARE EXCHANGED, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE OLDER
WOOLCOT CHILDREN, AND THE NEWCOMERS.

ALDITH FLUTTERS UP TO MEG, GUSHINGLY GREETES HER, AND
PECKS HER ON BOTH CHEEKS, CONTINENTAL FASHION)

ALDITH: Meg Daaarling! It's been centuries.

JUDY: Aldith, daaaaaarling! It's been three days, actually. (SIGHS) Would it were
longer.

MEG: Judy!

ALDITH: (TO MEG) She must be such a trial to you. Good heaven's! Where did you
get this?

(ALDITH FINGERS THE SLEEVE OF MEG'S DRESS)

MEG: I ... I ... made it.

ALDITH: (TURNING HER NOSE UP) ... really?

BEATRICE: (ARRIVING) Aldith!

ALDITH: Daaaarlings!

(BEATRICE AND A FLOCK OF GIRLS SURROUND ALDITH AND MEG. THERE IS CHIRPING AND CHEEK PECKING)

ALDITH: Oh yes, have you heard? .. The Bondi Aquarium's open. There's skating and a roller-coaster .. and boats. They say it's divine. Everyone's coming. That is, everyone who is anyone ... We'll see you there, apres le lecon francais, n'est-ce-pas? (GIGGLES) But please, Meg, change into something a little more ... fashionable.

MEG: This is all I have. I've grown out of my old things.

(GIRLS GIGGLE)

ALDITH: (CONDESCENDING) Poor Marguerite ...

(ALDITH'S FRIENDS GIGGLE. JUDY MAKES A FACE AT HER, WHICH ALDITH DOES NOT SEE)

ALDITH: I'll lend you one of my last year's. You can't go to Bondi like that ... well, you could, but no-one would talk to you, would they.

BEATRICE: She's so funny.

JUDY: Hilarious. She reminds me of one of the witches of Salem.

MEG: Aldith, I'm sorry, I can't go anywhere. I've been gated! We all have to go straight home.

ALDITH: Oooooo! That is a shame. Poor you. (SHRUGS) Still ... c'est la vie.

(ALDITH SWEEPS OFF, FOLLOWED BY HER ENTOURAGE. ANDREW APPROACHES JUDY AND, DROPPING ON HIS KNEE, ADDRESSES HER IN MOCK PASSION)

ANDREW: Judy, my proud beauty. I beg of you accompany me to Bondi after class and I will be yours forever.

JUDY: Who pays?

ANDREW: You do. I'm financially embarrassed at the moment.

JUDY: Sorry. Ask someone else.

ANDREW: I've asked everyone. You're the last on my list.

(ANDREW STROLLS OFF, TO JOIN ALDITH'S GROUP. JUDY LOOKS AT PIP)

JUDY: Imagine it. The Bondi Aquarium. Boats .. skating .. roller coasters. I love roller coasters.

PIP: (WARNINGLY) Judy ...

JUDY: Merry-go-rounds .. fairy-floss ...

PIP: Coconut shies ...

JUDY: Certainly .. and waxworks ... there must be a way ...

PIP: We can't, Joods. You're minding the Little General.

(JUDY IN A REVERIE. SHE STARTS TO SMILE. PIP SPOTS THE DANGER SIGNALS)

JUDY: I have just conceived the most brilliant plan in a career studded with brilliant plans.

PIP: Judy .. no ...

JUDY: There comes a time when French must be sacrificed for more important things .. like Bondi. Right, General?

(THE LITTLE GENERAL NODS "YES")

PIP: Quelle hope. Marceau never cancels a lesson.

JUDY: (GRINS) There's always a first time. Just watch me! Goodness me! He's late again! (SHOUTS) We want Marceau! We want Marceau!

PIP: Judy! No!

JUDY: We want Marceau!

(WITH GIGGLES AND LAUGHS, THE OTHERS JOIN IN THE CHANT)

ALL: We want Marceau! We want Marceau!

(JUDY RUNS TO THE CENTRE OF THE TEACHING AREA, ASSUMES A TERRIBLE AUSTRALIAN-OCKER-FRENCH ACCENT AND COPIES MARCEAU'S JERKY MANNERISMS. EVERYONE CHEERS AND CLAPS)

JUDY: Silence! Silence mes petits imbeciles. Maintenant we will begin le preier lecon.

(JUDY PICKS UP A LONG POINTER AND TAPS AS IF TO PICK OUT FRENCH PHRASES ON THE WALL. THIS IS THE RECITATIVE TO THE NUMBER)

MUSIC NO 5 "L'ACADEMIE DU MONSIEUR MARCEAU" JUDY, THE CHILDREN, AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHORUS.

JUDY: (SPRECHTEGESANG) Repeatez apres moi. Quelle heure est'il?

CLASS: (SPRECHTEGESANG) Quelle heure est'il?

JUDY: Madame Rimbaud ouvre la fenetre. Ici le nez!

CLASS: Ici le nez!

JUDY: Monsieur Marceau trouve la lettre. Ou sont les chapeaux des enfants?

CLASS: Je suis, tu es, il est; nous somme, vous etes, ils sont.

JUDY: Donnez-le-moi.

CLASS: Donnez-le-moi.

JUDY: Les vaches dorment en Septembre. Fermez la porte.

CLASS: Fermez la porte.

JUDY: Ma tante n'aime pas Decembre.

CLASS: Un, deux et trois, quatre, cinq et six, Comme le canard de mon oncle mange des cerises.

(THESE WORDS BECOME MARCEAU'S COUNTER MELODY.

THE NUMBER PROPER BEGINS.

MONSIEUR MARCEAU ENTERS DURING THE SONG AND IS FLABERGASTED)

JUDY: (SINGS) Saturday morning is with us again
We all get refined at a quarter-to-ten.
And for medicinal culture, there's one place to go:
L'Academie du Monsieur Marceau.

And if your pedigree's thin and your accent is quaint
 And ar-is-to-cratic is something you ain't.
 And if you're common and boorish and vulgar and low
 Just take your-self to Monsieur Marceau.

(BRIDGE) Co-lo-ni-als (Colonials) are very pleb-ei-an
 But if they drop a word of French
 They're less An-ti-po-dian.

Magnifique: Bon appetit, has more style than "g'day"
 And it comes in real useful round Erskineville way.
 You're gonna knock 'em all dead when you say mademoiselle
 And won't the sheilas know that you're as classy as (hell).

MARCEAU: Donnezle-moi, donnez-le-moi.
 Ici Les vaches dorment en Septembre
 Fermez la porte, fermez la porte
 Pour ma tante n'aime pas Decembre -
 Un, deux et trois, quatre, cinq et six
 Come le canard de mon oncle mange des cerises.

CLASS: And if your pedigree's thin and your accent is quaint
 And ar-is-to-cratic is something you ain't.
 And if you're common and boorish and vulgar and low
 Just take your-self to Monsieur Marceau.

And if your Daddy came out as a government guest
 And there's a ball and a chain on your family crest
 You simply parlez some Francais and no-one will know
 So Merci beaucoup Monsieur Marceau.

MARCEAU: (COUNTER) Quelle heure est-il? Quelle heure est-il?
 Madame Rimbaud ouvre la fenetre.
 Ici le nez, ici le nez
 Monsieur Marceau trouve la lettre.
 Ou sont les chapeaux des enfants?
 Je suis, tu es, il est, nous sommes,
 vous etes, ils sont.

ALL: Saturday morning is with us again
 We all get refined at a quarter-to-ten.
 And for medicinal culture, there's one place to go:
 L'Academie du Monsieur Marceau.

MARCEAU: (SPOKEN) Silence! Mesdames and Messieurs, if you please! Seat yourselves.
 Sacre bleu. Pleas remember, you are expected to be tres gentil. (AS THEY
 LAUGH AT THIS)

CHILDREN: Tres gentil!

MARCEAU: BARBARIANS! If La perouse had arrived a little earlier you would all be civilised - and French. (THE CLASS REACTS TO THIS: LAUGHTER)
Very well, GO. ALLEZ! All of you. Depart! I cannot teach savages the language of Roussey and Montaigne. Out! Out! Allez!

(HE SHOOS EVERYONE OUT, EXCEPT JUDY, PIP AND THE LITTLE GENERAL, WHO ARE HIDING BEHIND THE BLACKBOARD.

THINKING HIMSELF ALONE, MARCEAU GLARES AROUND, UNCONSCIOUSLY PUTTING HIS HAND IN HIS WASTCOAT, LIKE NAPOLEON)

MARCEAU: Rotten kids. C'est outrageux. Scandaleux, I shall soon give up this self imposed exile and return to La Belle France.

(JUDY APPEARS FROM BEHIND THE BLACKBOARD, WITH PIP AND THE GENERAL. SHE LOOKS INNOCENTLY SURPRISED)

JUDY: What, no French lesson? No Francais? Quel damage! Quel horreur! Goodness me!

MARCEAU: The lesson, she is obliterated.

JUDY: Cancelled?

MARCEAU: That, also.

JUDY: What a shame. Whatever shall we do to wile away this glorious Saturday morn?
(TO PIP) Bondi, mon frere, would you say?

PIP/GENERAL: Oui! Bondi!

MARCEAU: Scandelous!

HE EXITS

PIP/JUDY: (SING) And so it's: Saturday morning is with us no more
We'll all say adieu as we walk out the door

JUDY: Because we're common and boorish and vulgar and low

PIP/JUDY: It's Au Revoir to Monsieur Marceau!

(JUDY WAVES TO MARCEAU AS SHE EXITS)