

Emerald Coast

ACT I

OVERTURE

PROLOGUE - The Cemetery (Deirdre', James, the minister and a small group)

(The year is 1925. The minister is ending the funeral service. Deirdre' Dunn and her son James, dressed in a naval aviator's uniform, are sitting at the grave site of Franklin Kaiser.)

Minister

And so on this day, the third day of June, nineteen hundred and twenty-five, into your hands, Father of mercies, we commend the soul of our brother, Franklin Mathias Kaiser. Merciful Lord, grant him and the souls of all the faithfully departed eternal rest. May perpetual light shine upon him and may he rest in peace.

(The minister finishes his remarks, walks over to Deirdre' and James and offers condolences. As the minister and the others gathered begin to walk away, James stands and extends his hand to his mother)

James

Come, mother, we really should be going.

Deirdre'

No, James, let's stay a little while longer. Your father was such a wonderful man; so kind, so caring, so strong – yet, so gentle.

James

I know, mother, he was a very special person. He was the best father a boy could have.

Deirdre'

(Deirdre' stands in front of James, smiles and cups one hand on the side of his face)

You have his smile, his wit, and I know when the time comes, you'll have his courage.

James

Thanks to Uncle Sam, I get to test that every time I land one of those aero planes on the deck of a moving ship.

Deirdre'

Your father stood by my side no matter what, all these years, and now – it's so hard to say goodbye. I'll never say goodbye.

*Goodbyes were meant forever, and I know that's such a long, long time
But I'll be with you whether it's in my arms, my heart or in my mind*

*You were my friend and you stood by me, and never asked me why
You were my lover and you gave to me the best days of my life
And now you're gone and my broken heart is trying to survive
So I'll say until tomorrow, but I'll never say goodbye*

SCENE ONE - The Wharf (Fishermen, Dock Workers)

(The year is 1896. Three fishermen and four dockworkers are on the Pensacola wharf. A young dockworker walks to the front of the stage and addresses the audience.)

Narrator

The year is 1896 and I'm standing here on the Pensacola wharf

(Gestures over the audience)

overlooking Escambia Bay. Just beyond the bay

(Pointing over the audience)

is the Gulf of Mexico. It's boom time in Pensacola and there's two things that give an able bodied man all the work he can handle – red snapper and long leaf pine.

(He walks back to the group.)

Pensacola Fisherman

(Swatting insects, heavy southern drawl accent)

These little buggers are down right aggravatin'. Ya can't see the dang things and then, ouch! They sting the tarnashion out 'o ya.

German Fisherman

(Swatting insects, German accent)

Yah! Downright irritating! Never before seen anything like diese. Vee have not diese tings in Deutschland. Only bees, vunderbar honey bees, terrible sting,

(Pause)

but, you *could* see them coming!

British Dock Worker

(Picking up a dead rat by the tail, heavy English sailor accent)

What about these? Did ya have any ‘o these in Germany, mate?

German Fisherman

Yah! Vir haben diese. Vir shipped dem all to England!

(Everyone laughs except the Englishman)

mit die plague!

(Another burst of laughter except the Englishman, who has a look of disgust, tosses the rat into the water and wipes his hands on his shirt and pants)

Young Dock Worker

(A young man in his mid twenties, taking his shoes off and pouring sand out)

This area is so beautiful, but this sand’s enough to drive a man crazy!

Pensacola Fisherman

Now, that wouldn’t be a very long trip, would it?

Young Dock Worker

Nope, fact o’ the matter, I think I’m already there!

*Gnats, rats, sand in my shoes, here on the waterfront singin’ the blues
Nothin’ to gain and nothin’ to lose, I got
Gnats, rats, sand in my shoes*

All Fishermen and Dock Workers

*Gnats, rats, sand in my shoes, here on the waterfront singin' the blues
Nothin' to gain and nothin' to lose, I got
Gnats, rats, sand in my shoes*

British Dock Worker

*I could be in jolly London sittin' at The Lamb and Flag, just a
Pubbin' and a grubbin', grubbin and a pubbin'
With Sally and her sister Peg, but now I got*

*Gnats, rats, sand in my shoes, here on the waterfront singin' the blues
Nothin' to gain and nothin' to lose, I got
Gnats, rats, sand in my shoes*

All Fishermen and Dock Workers

*Gnats, rats, sand in my shoes, here on the waterfront singin' the blues
Nothin' to gain and nothin' to lose, I got
Gnats, rats, sand in my shoes*

German Fisherman

*I could be in Bremerhaven mit meinem schonen Madchen
Tanzen und trinken, trinken und tanzen
'til sie break of day, aber jetzt ich habe*

*Gnats, rats, sand in mein shoes, here on die vasserfront zingin' die blues
Nussink' to gain und nussink' to lose, mit
Gnats, rats, sand in mein shoes*

All Fishermen and Dockworkers

*Gnats, rats, sand in our shoes, here on the waterfront singin' the blues
Nothin' to gain and nothin' to lose, we got
Gnats, rats, sand in our shoes*

*Gnats, rats, sand in our shoes, here on the waterfront singin' the blues
Nothin' to gain and nothin' to lose, we got
Gnats, rats, sand in our shoes
Gnats, rats, sand in our shoes*

Young Dock Worker

(Looking out over the water)

Well, lookie' there yonder. That's gotta be the biggest ship I've ever seen in the bay.

Pensacola Fisherman

Yup! That's a biggin'. Looks like you boys is got ya'lls work cut out fer ya. Ya'll gonna be loadin' Mr. Kaiser's stack o' lumber for a while.

British Dock Worker

Yeah, mate and you gotta sit in the bloody Gulf 'o Mexico all day gettin' smacked around by the bloody waves in your bloody smack boats catchin' those stinkin', bloody fish for Mr. Saunders. No damn wonder the only ladies that wanna have anythin' to do with ya is the ones that can't smell! Ha! Ha! Ha!

(Hearty laughter from the dockworkers)

German Fisherman

Schmell? Schmell? Ich denke I schmell eine rat! Here, let's go catch Mr. Saunder's fish und let the rats shtack die lumber! Ha! Ha! Ha!

(Hearty laughter from the fishermen, fishermen exit.)

Young Dock Worker

Well, fellas, won't be long now

(Pointing to the boat in the bay)

we'll have ourselves a real purpose in life.

British Dock Worker

Yeah, mate, our purpose in life will be to break our bloody backs loading Mr. Kaiser's bloody lumber on that bloody ship, only to do it again in the morrow. Hah! Bloody purpose in life, hah!

Young Dock Worker

Yep, we'll load that ship, and this one here

(Pointing to the ship already on the dock)

and that lumber will be sent all over the world and it'll be used to the build the dreams of so many. And we're helping to build those dreams. You gotta dream.

*The wait is over, my ship's come in
The wait is over, my ship's come in*

*I traveled the world a million times, then I set foot on this fine shore
Here's where I find my peace of mind; my traveling days will be no
more*

*The wait is over, my ship's come in
The wait is over, my ship's come in*

*I had some dreams not long ago, I planted them here in this fine place
Nurtured them well and still they grow; they put a smile upon my face*

*The wait is over, my ship's come in
The wait is over, my ship's come in*

SCENE TWO - Zeke's Office (Zeke, Adam)

(Zeke and Adam sit at their drawing boards)

Zeke

Look, Adam, if we build the road here and the bridge here, we create a more direct route over better terrain. That'll cut the travel time in half. Adam, do you have *any* idea what we're doing here?

Adam

Uh, drawing lines on paper?

Zeke

Drawing lines . . .

(His voice trails off in exasperation)

yeah, we're drawing lines alright.

(Zeke stands)

We're drawing lines between the known and the unknown, between history and the future, between the unimagined and the enlightened. Adam, just think about what we've

accomplished so far. Why, the locomotive can carry cargo clear across the country in hours! From water, we can create ice – on a warm day!

Adam

Yeah, I could use some of that ice right now.

Zeke

With the telephone, we can speak to people miles away.

Adam

You know my aunt Winnie could do that long before the telephone was invented.

Zeke

And one day,

(Raising one finger in the air)

man will fly.

Adam

(Adam slaps his hands on the table and stands up)

He already has!

(Arms spread wide like a gliding bird)

Why, I saw my uncle Jessie flying through the doors of Archie's saloon last Saturday night.

(He pauses and slams one hand on his drawing board)

He crash landed on Palafox Street.

Zeke

Adam, my friend, we're drawing lines alright, lines that will make this area of the country accessible to all – and they *will* come, by the thousands.

Adam

Zeke, I think I'd better get 'ole Doc Hargis. You mighta got too much sun today. You feelin' alright?

Zeke

Never felt better. It's a great time to be alive!

I got blue skies everyday, I got blue eyes

(Picks up a picture from his desk)

*lookin' my way
Destiny has found me, my moment has arrived,
It's a great time to be alive, yes, a great time to be alive*

*I got big plans I gotta make, I got chances I gotta take
I gotta take my chances, my moment has arrived
It's a great time to be alive, yes, a great time to be alive*

*Never stop the world from goin' round
Never gonna let things get me down
Think of all the happiness I found
This is world is mine 'cause*

I got blue skies everyday, got blue eyes

(Picks up a picture from his desk)

*lookin' my way
Destiny has found me, my moment has arrived,
It's a great time to be alive, yes, a great time to be alive*

Adam

Zeke, I'd loved to share your enthusiasm, but what about the heat. Why, hell's gotta be cooler than this place in the summertime. Yeah, we can turn water into ice, alright, how about inventin' somethin' that'll cool this air down. And what about those gnats,

(Swatting at the air)

those sceeters, and those gators,

(Raising one finger in the air)

let's don't forget the gators. Shootin' a line in the swamp; you're likely to get yourself eatin' alive! And the storms, those terrible storms, come outa nowhere and make a mess outa everything. How many times can we rebuild? Tear up! Rebuild! Tear up! Rebuild!

Zeke

Adam, my friend, this *is* paradise and living in paradise has its price, but, they *will* come. Now, we've got work to do. Look, those ships have been droppin' their ballast on the point for years now. They're makin' new, dry land out there and we need to get out there and survey it.

Adam

So what you're saying is . . . we gotta get to the point?

Zeke

Yep, that's right. We gotta get to the point!

*We gotta get to the point! We can't worry about tomorrow today
We gotta get to the point! While the sun shines we gotta make hay
If it's gonna be, it's up to you and me,
We gotta get to the point! We gotta get to the point!*

Adam

*We gotta get to the point! We can't beat around the bush all day
We gotta get to the point! While the sun shines we gotta make hay
If it's gonna be, it's up to you and me
We gotta get to the point! We gotta get to the point!*

Zeke and Adam

*We gotta get to the point! We can't worry about tomorrow today
We gotta get to the point! While the sun shines we gotta make hay
If it's gonna be, it's up to you and me
We gotta get to the point! We gotta get to the point!
We gotta get to the point! We gotta get to the point!*

Zeke

OK, get your gear. Let's get to the point!

(Zeke and Adam exit)

SCENE THREE - The Wharf (Fishermen, Dock Workers)

Loading Mr. Kaiser's Lumber – The Orchestra

(Dock workers load the stack of lumber onto the ship and then collapse on the bench exhausted. Fishermen enter.)

Pensacola Fisherman

(Looking at the dock workers)

Well, that's gotta be the sorriest sack 'o bones I ever seen!

German Fisherman

Yah! Sehr schrecklich,

(Pensacola Fisherman gives German Fisherman a funny look)

terrible!

Young Dock Worker

Yeah, well at least our feet been on solid ground all day. Beats the heck outa being tossed around out there in the gulf. You never know when the next wave'll send you overboard.

German Fisherman

Yah, vir haben many fine men lost to the sea.

British Dock Worker

Yeah, mate, I used to be a bloody fisherman, bloody North Sea. Went out one fine December day from Ipswich on a herring drifter with a crew of nine aboard. We were headed home with a mighty fine catch. Got caught in a wicked gale, lost the bloody rudder. Tossed about like a cork when she started to take on water. Me and another bloke were rescued by a passing trawler. Nearly froze to death. Don't know why we didn't. Suppose it just wasn't our time. The bloody sea took seven souls that day. Ha! Seven! Bloody lucky number. Not that day!

Young Dock Worker

(Talking to the fishermen)

Speakin' 'o gales, you boys hear anything about a storm brewin' out in the gulf? You know I heard about some nasty ones 'round here this time 'o year.

Pensacola Fisherman

'Been livin' here all my life 'n we had storms that'll blow down everything. Houses get washed away, boats end up on Main Street and this dock here'll get knocked down like match sticks. Seems like I heard some of the other fellas talking about a storm comin' up from down south.

British Dock Worker

Well, mate. I ain't gonna worry about that tonight. I'm gonna take what life gives me and me thinks it's going to give me a bloody good time down at the Risin' Sun tonight.

German Fisherman

Der Risin' Sonne! Ah, best in town! Und vas is so special about tonight?

British Dock Worker

Well, if ya have to know, mate. Today's me birthday, and I always give meself somethin' special on me birthday. I'll just go down to the Risin' Sun and have a good look at that Deirdre' Dunn.

Young Dock Worker

Yeah, a good look is about all you'll get.

Pensacola Fisherman

Ah, a good look at Deirdre' Dunn is all you need!

Young Dock Worker

Oh, oh, Deirdre' Dunn, madam of the "Rising Sun"

British Dock Worker

In all the world, there's only one

German Fisherman

So much pleasure

Pensacola Fisherman

So much fun

Young Dock Worker

*Eyes as blue as a winter's sky
Hair as golden as the summer's sun
She's as pretty as a picture, sharp as a tack
And a smile that'll keep you coming back*

All Fisherman and Dock Workers

*Oh, oh, Deirdre' Dunn, madam of the "Risin' Sun"
In all the world there's only one
So much pleasure, so much fun*

Young Dock Worker

*The lady's got style and so much grace
She puts a smile upon my face
She so much more than a touch of class*

British Dock Worker

From the top of her head to her magnificent . . . toes

All Fisherman and Dock Workers

*Oh, oh, Deirdre' Dunn, madam of the "Risin' Sun"
In all the world there's only one
So much pleasure, so much fun*

*Oh, oh, Deirdre' Dunn, madam of the "Risin' Sun"
In all the world there's only one
So much pleasure, so much fun*

SCENE FOUR - Rising Sun (Peaches, Anna Lou, Deirdre', Franklin, and Zeke)

Peaches

Honey, how long you been here?

Anna Lou

Oh, I don't know, seems like all my life. Miss Deirdre' was a little girl when I got here. Her momma was the madam then. She came here when her husband got shot in a barroom fight. He was a hard drinking, hard livin' Irishman – a gambler whose luck run out one night.

Peaches

Why did she come *here*?

Anna Lou

Don't know. I guess she had no place else to go and they took her in. She was the most beautiful woman I ever seen, well, at least until Deirdre' grew up. Come from Sweden or Norway or some place like that. She had fair skin, beautiful blond hair and blue eyes, and when she got here – a baby on the way.

Peaches

So Miss Deirdre' was born here?

Anna Lou

That's right! But she didn't have nothin' to do with no customers, and her momma saw to that; sent her away to a fine finishin' school in New Orleans. When the yella' fever got her momma a few years ago, she came back and took over the

(Gesturing quotes)

family business. Miss Deirdre' is the smartest person I know – man, woman or child! And everybody knows it. Makes those society ladies so jealous. Funny, those society ladies ain't so different from us when you think about it; they gotta “deliver the goods” whether they like it or not, just like us, just to survive.

Peaches

Yeah, that's right, and some of their *men* are my best customers!

(Both laugh)

Anna Lou

Ah, men – grown up little boys!

*Men, there's no doubt about 'em
Men, can't live with or without 'em*

*Melting hearts with a little boy's smile
Making girls crazy, driving girls wild
Men, ah-men*

Peaches

*Men, there's no doubt about 'em
Men, can't live with or without 'em*

*Your love boat says he'll always be at your side
Next thing you know he sails away with the tide
Men, ah-men*

Anna Lou and Peaches

*Men, there's no doubt about 'em
Men, can't live with or without 'em*

Anna Lou

*He lovingly says you're his only one
Then you find he's got three wives and a son
Men, ah-men*

Anna Lou and Peaches

*Men, there's no doubt about 'em
Men, can't live with or without 'em*

*Melting girls' hearts with a little boy's smile
Making girls crazy, driving girls wild
Men, ah-men*

(Franklin Kaiser enters, a handsome, well dressed man in his early forties.)

Franklin

Evenin', ladies.

(Takes off his hat)

Anna Lou

Good evening, Mr. Kaiser, and how are you this fine evening?

(Anna Lou approaches him suggestively and runs her index finger around his shoulder)

Franklin

Uh, mighty fine, Anna Lou, and uh, how are you?

Anna Lou

Well, that depends, Mr. Kaiser,

(Walking around him sizing him up)

it's been some time since you and I . . .

Franklin

Yes, well, Anna Lou,

(Holding his hat in his hand and looking down at it while he speaks)

I suppose things have changed since then.

Anna Lou

Changed? Changed? You mean you don't like ladies no more?

Franklin

Uh, no! Uh, I mean yes! 'Course I like ladies!

Anna Lou

So what in the world are you doing *here*, Mr. Kaiser if you and I ain't gonna . . .

Franklin

Anna Lou, why don't you run 'n go fetch Miss Deirdre' for me

Anna Lou

Oh? Miss Deirdre'? So Anna Lou ain't good enough for Mr. Kaiser no more?

(She walks to the door and calls for Deirdre' in a shrill and mocking tone)

Oh . . . Miss Deirdre'! There's someone here to see you! It's a *changed* man!

(Deirdre' enters)

Deirdre'

Hello, Franklin. What can we do for you this evening?

Franklin

Deirdre', I just wanted to come by and talk.

Deirdre'

Talk? Franklin, we do very little of *that* here.

Franklin

Alright, I just needed to see you, and uh, ask you if you'd like to go with me to the opera house this Saturday night.

Deirdre'

Franklin, I'd love to go to the opera house with you, but you know I can't do that. All those society folks will just die. Your reputation will be ruined if you take someone like *me* there.

Franklin

Don't worry about my reputation, my dear. I do more for this town than most folks know, my business puts food on the table for hundreds of families, and somehow, yes, somehow, I think you'd get a good chuckle out of seeing the look on the faces of those society ladies when you and I show up there. That is, of course, if you think you can handle it.

Deirdre'

Franklin Kaiser, there is nothing, and I mean nothing in this world I can't handle. I get along just fine by myself and I don't need you or anyone else telling me what I can or can not handle!

Franklin

(Walks close to her and looks into her eyes)

Deirdre', wouldn't it be wonderful if you just had some security in your life. You know, someone to take care of you.

Deirdre'

I have my ladies and a good business here. I make a nice profit, you might say, a *decent* profit, and I provide a valuable service for this town. Of course the *men* like us, but think of all the married *women* who are glad we're here!

Franklin

But, what about a man, Deirdre'? Don't you wish you had a *man* in your life?

Deirdre'

I have *never* needed a man! My poor old daddy got himself shot before I was even born. I never had *a* daddy of my own, I had *hundreds* of 'em! When I was a little girl, before my mother sent me away, the men who came here were always nice to me. When they finished their business with one of mother's ladies, they patted me on the head, gave me a candy and went back to be with their own families. I thought about what it would be like to have a regular family – mother, father, sisters, brothers, but this,

(Hands in the air and gesturing around)

this is the only family I've ever known, the only family I've ever needed.

Franklin

(Holds Deirdre's hands and looks into her eyes)

Deirdre', I want to be your family. I want to be your security. I want to take you away from this life and give you the life you were meant to live. Take my hand, and I'll take you there.

*Look at your life
Is there someone who thinks you walk on water
Someone you'd like to sail away with
Someone who'll love you 'til the end of time*

*Look at your life
Is there someone who thinks you make the sunrise
Someone you'd like to fly away with*

Someone who'll give you the moon and stars

*Take my hand, and I'll take you to paradise
Take my hand, I'll make all your dreams come true*

*Look at your life
Is there someone who thinks you make the world turn
Someone you'd love to give your heart to
Someone who'll say, "Yes" to you every time*

*Take my hand, and I'll take you to paradise
Here I am, let me take you to paradise
Take my hand, and I'll take you to paradise
Take my hand*

Deirdre'

Oh, Franklin, you're so very sweet, but I think you're chasing a dream and I'm sure you're mother told you many times to be careful what you wish for. Don't you know that I can see the way men look at me, but beauty is only skin deep. If you want to know who a person really is, what they really think you have to go deeper, into that person's soul, and that's a place I won't allow just anyone to go.

Franklin

Deirdre', I'm a successful businessman, and I got what I have through hard work and persistence. But I'm also a man, I have a heart and a good life, and I'd like to share them both with you. I won't stop trying.

Deirdre'

I know, Franklin, I know. We're all looking for the same thing.

(Sung in a major key)

*Everyone loves a beautiful thing; everyone loves the joy it can bring
A beautiful place, a beautiful face, everyone loves a beautiful thing*

*When we are children beauty surrounds us
Then we grow up and real life astounds us
Casting a veil on everything we see*

*Everyone loves a beautiful thing; everyone loves the joy it can bring
A beautiful place, a beautiful face, everyone loves a beautiful thing*

*Lives of illusion listening to voices
Chanting confusion, challenging choices
Casting a veil on everything we see*

*Everyone loves a beautiful thing; everyone loves the joy it can bring
A beautiful place, a beautiful face, everyone loves a beautiful thing*

Franklin

The opera house, Saturday night. I'll be here at seven o'clock to pick you up.

(Franklin exits and bumps into Zeke as he enters)

Franklin

Excuse me, Zeke!

Zeke

That's quite alright, Mr. Kaiser. And how are you on this fine evening?

Franklin

Oh, couldn't be better, Zeke.

Zeke

Yeah, I don't think anyone leaves *here* unhappy. Deirdre's ladies have a way of makin' a

(Gesturing quotes)

changed man out of ya.

Franklin

Yes, well, ah, it's not quite like that, Zeke. There's only one lady that I fancy.

Zeke

Yeah, I know what you mean. By the way, Mr. Kaiser, that was an awful big ship sailing into the bay today. Business must be good!

Franklin

Yes, that ship'll be headin' to Spain with a load of Florida's finest lumber, and business has never been better. Now, you have yourself an enjoyable evening.

Zeke

Oh, I intend to, Mr. Kaiser, I intend to.

(Franklin exits. Deirdre walks up to Zeke and smiles.)

Deirdre'

Hello, Zeke. And how are *you* on this fine evening?

Zeke

Well, I suppose we'll just have to see how I am on this fine evening. You know, my old coach at Vanderbilt always told me "If you want somethin' bad enough, it *can* be yours."

Deirdre'

Now, Zeke Martin, what in the world are you talking about?

Zeke

I don't know, Deirdre'. I went to college to be an engineer, but the lessons I learned playin' sports were just as important. There was nothin' like the feelin' I got when we won a game. That's the way I feel now. It's just that I, I feel like I'm livin' a dream. Just look at this beautiful place we live in, and I have the best job a person could have. I feel that what I'm doing right now will make a difference for generations to come. I mean, I think it's important for a man to set his sights on what he wants and then go after it. And, oh yes, did I forget to mention

(Stands in front of Deirdre', takes her hands)

that I have the most beautiful girl in the world?

Deirdre'

Oh, and who might that be?

Zeke

Well, let's see. She's got beautiful eyes, but don't let those eyes deceive you. You think those eyes are for looking *at*, when in fact they're keeping a careful watch on every move *you* make. She's got a wit about her sharp enough to cut a man in half and a smile that'll melt his heart before he hits the ground. Now, that just might be someone I've been looking for all my life.

(Zeke embraces Deirdre')

Someone who's - perfect in every way.

*If I could be anyone, I'd be me
If I could live anywhere, here's where I'd be
If I could have anyone to give my love to
I couldn't have anyone as perfect as you*

*And you're perfect, perfect in every way
Yes, you're perfect, perfect in every way*

*You are the sun, the moon and the stars
The universe follows wherever you are
You are the flower that blooms in the spring
A beautiful rose that makes my heart sing*

*If I could be anyone, I'd be me
If I could live anywhere, here's where I'd be
If I could have anyone to give my heart to
I couldn't have anyone as perfect as you*

*And you're perfect, perfect in every way
Yes, you're perfect, perfect in every way*

(Deirdre' and Zeke exit the stage together)

ACT II

ENTR'ACTE

SCENE ONE – The Wharf (Fishermen, Dock Workers)

Young Dock Worker

Whew! What a week! I sure am glad tomorrow's Sunday. I sure could use a day off.

British Dock Worker

Yeah, mate, I'll need a day 'o rest meself after I tie a good one on tonight.

Young Dock Worker

Is that what it's all about for you? Tying a good one on? I mean, sometimes I feel like small cog in a big wheel, like a little splinter in a big stack 'o lumber. Don't ya feel sometimes that there's more meaning to your life than mere existence?

British Dock Worker

Mate, me thinks ya thinks too much. Somewhere in the Good Book it says we're on this earth to eat, drink and be merry. And if we find the time, we sleep. We work so we can eat, drink and be merry. Mate, it's what we call "the circle of life."

Young Dock Worker

I suppose so. But some folks dream big dreams; move mountains. Didn't ya ever want to accomplish more in your life? Do you wanna load ships the rest of your life?

British Dock Worker

Mate, them that have will always have, them that needs will always need and them that wants will always want. You can't change it, unless you change it.

Yong Dock Worker

That's pretty profound. Why, you're a real philosopher. And you're right! I've got high aspirations for myself! I'm not gonna be workin' on this dock all my life. You just watch and see. I'm gonna make something of my life and make a difference in this world. Just ain't figured out exactly what that'll be, but I will!

British Dock Worker

I'm sure you will, mate. The world's made up of two kinds 'o blokes, them that do and them that wish they had! Now, I've got week's worth 'o stink on me and I'm gonna let the bay wash it away. It's a nice time for a dip.

*It's a mighty fine day for a dip in the bay
Gonna wash all the grime and me troubles away
Got no mountains to move, I got nothin' to prove
I only live for today*

*It's a mighty fine day for a dip in the bay
Gonna let me regrets with the lyin' dogs lay
Got no big dreams to fill on the top of the hill
I have but one thing to say*

*It's a mighty fine day for a dip in the bay
Gonna wash all the grime and me troubles away
Got no mountains to move, I got nothin' to prove
So I think I'll take a dip in the bay*

(Fishermen enter)

British Dock Worker

Ahoy there mates! We were just about to cool ourselves off in the bay. Care to join us?

Pensacola Fisherman

Ain't nothin' more soothin' than a little dip in the bay on a hot summer's day.

German Fisherman

Yah, die vasser ist sehr schoen! Vundabar!

Young Dock Worker

Translation, I think he likes it.

Pensacola Fisherman

It sure was calm out there in the gulf today. We been hearin' about that storm that's headin' our way. Sometimes them big 'ole storms suck the water in toward 'em. Flatten the seas out smooth as glass. Gives you a strange, eerie feelin' out there.

British Dock Worker

Yeah, mate, that's the calm before the storm. But, for now, we'll just let the 'morrow take care of the 'morrow.

*'Cause it's a mighty fine day for a dip in the bay
Gonna wash all the grime and my troubles away
Come what might or come what may
It's a mighty fine day for a dip in the bay*

(The men start taking their clothes off as the curtain closes)

SCENE TWO – The Opera House (Deirdre', Franklin, Society Ladies and Men)

(Two married couples are standing in the crowded lobby of the Pensacola Opera House awaiting the performance of Maude Adams)

Society Lady 1

Well, isn't this exciting, Miss Maude Adams, famous Broadway star performing right here in little Pensacola.

Society Lady 2

Yes, isn't it though? This is just what our town needs – a big time performer to help our little town image. Don't you agree?

(Looking at Society Man 1)

Society Man 1

(Holding a cigar in the manner of W. C. Fields)

Uh, well uh, yes, indeed, by golly! Yes, indeed. And uh, who exactly is this uh, Mamie Adams?

Society Lady 1

It's Maude Adams! And she just happens to be one of the brightest young actresses on Broadway today. That's Broadway – in New York city!

Society Man 1

New York city? Well, uh, that's mighty fine! Mighty fine! And uh, just what is this Mamie Adams gonna do for us tonight?

Society Lady 1

It's Maude Adams! And she's going to sing and dance, and perform excerpts from some of her plays.

Society Man 1

Well uh, that's mighty fine. Yes, uh mighty fine indeed! You know things ain't been the same 'round here since they turned the lights on a few years back. Now we can stay up past nine o'clock at night enjoyin' the likes of this Mamie Adams.

Society Ladies and Man

(In unison)

Maude Adams!

Society Man 1

(Chuckles)

Oh, yes, well uh, yes indeed, yes indeed.

(Franklin and Deirdre' walk into the lobby. Franklin tips his hat to the ladies as he walks past while the men gaze at Deirdre' and following her every step, prompting nudges from their wives)

Society Lady 2

Oh, my! Look what the cat drug in.

Society Lady 1

You mean, look what the cat house drug in.

Society Man 1

Hmm, yes indeed, a mighty fine feline!

Society Lady 1

(Gives him a whack)

I'll fine feline you! I think it's a disgrace! Someone like Franklin Kaiser should have more sagacity than to bring the likes of someone like her to a place like this.

Society Man 1

Indeed! Maybe he's trying to refine that fine feline!

Society Man 2

I heard tell she don't need no refinin'. Heard she was already refined at a fine finishin' school in New Orleans.

Society Man 1

Hmm, mighty fine!

Society Lady 2

(In a threatening manner)

And just how do you know that?

Society Man 2

Don't know,

(Cowering away)

just heard tell.

Society Lady 1

With a pedigree quite debatable

Society Lady 2

And a livelihood based on a whim

Society Lady 1

His pocket book, quite inflatable

Society Lady 2

You know what she sees in him

*But just who, who, who, who, who does she think she is
Just who, who, who, who, who does she think she is*

*But just who, who, who, who, who does she think she is
Just who, who, who, who, who does she think she is*

Society Lady 1

With intent that's bordering criminal

Society Lady 2

And attributes she loves to flaunt

Society Lady 1

His judgment being quite minimal

Society Lady 2

You know what she really wants

*But just who, who, who, who, who does she think she is
Just who, who, who, who, who does she think she is*

*But just who, who, who, who, who does she think she is
Just who, who, who, who, who does she think she is*

(The group finishes mocking Deirdre' then leave the lobby and enter the theatre for the show)

Franklin

Oh, Deirdre', I'm so sorry! Are you OK? I never should have brought you here. Would you like me to take you home?

Deirdre'

(Bursts out laughing)

Oh, Franklin! You silly man! Those poor souls haven't a clue. They live there little secluded lives totally oblivious to the real world around them. If they ever opened their eyes, I'm afraid they'd be completely overwhelmed!

Franklin

Deirdre', how can you be so wonderful? You turn their mocking and ridicule of you into their *own* character flaw! You're amazing! Aren't you just a bit upset?

Deirdre'

No, Franklin, not really, it's something I've lived with all my life. I'm just a little sad for them. Sometimes judgmental people suffer from a severe lack of judgment.

Franklin

Deirdre', I see the way men look at you and I know what they're thinking. And I see the way women look at you – envy and contempt! They don't know you the way I do. Sure, I see the most beautiful woman that ever lived, but I see more. I see a warm, intelligent, graceful soul. Tell me . . .

*Is there someone who thinks you make the world turn
Someone you'd love to give your heart to
Someone who'll say, "Yes" to you every time*

*Take my hand, and I'll take you to paradise
Take my hand; I'll make all your dreams come true*

Take my hand, Deirdre'

(Franklin extends his hand to Deirdre'. They lock arms)

Deirdre'

OK, Mr. Kaiser, I've believe we have a show to enjoy!

(They walk arm in arm into the theatre as Maude Adams being introduced)

SCENE THREE – Rising Sun (Anna Lou, Peaches, British Dock Worker, Pensacola Fisherman, Franklin, Deirdre' and Zeke)

(Peaches and Anna Lou are standing in the parlor talking with the British Dock Worker and the Pensacola Fisherman)

British Dock Worker

(Speaking to Peaches, caressing her shoulder with his finger)

My love, you are the sweetest of all the forbidden fruits! How is it that you stay so sweet and ripe and never wither?

Peaches

Dear sir, you are speaking to the sweetest of all God's fruits. I am a peach! Sweet and tart and tasty beyond the sense's ability to comprehend.

British Dock Worker

Dastardly delicious!!

(They laugh)

Pensacola Fisherman

All this talk 'bout food's making me hungry.

Anna Lou

They ain't talking about food, you dunce. Besides, I lost my sense of taste and smell years ago. Must 'o been some kind 'a sickness.

Peaches

That's why *you* get the fisherman, honey.

Pensacola Fisherman

Ya'll got some grub back there in the kitchen. Thought I smelt a nice stew 'a simmerin'.

Anna Lou

Oh, go on back and help yourself. And don't forget to leave a little somethin' on the table.

Pensacola Fisherman

(Gesturing to British Dock Worker)

Come on 'n join me.

British Dockworker

Don't mind if I do, mate.

(They begin to exit when British Dockworker turns to Peaches)

I'll be back for desert, love.

(They exit)

Anna Lou

Men!

Peaches

Grown up little boys!

(Deirdre' and Franklin enter, laughing)

Franklin

(Takes off his hat)

Did you see the look of shock and disbelief on their faces when we walked in? Why, the suspense was so thick you cut it with a knife!

Deirdre'

I must say, it was quite to be expected. Everyone has their crosses to bear.

Franklin

And how about you, Deirdre', did you have a good evening?

Deirdre'

Yes, Franklin, I did. That Maude Adams is such a great talent. Tonight reminded me of some of the wonderful shows I saw when I lived in New Orleans. It's been quite a while since I've been to a show like that. I was wrong when I said I couldn't go to the Opera House with you. I want to thank you for a wonderful evening.

Franklin

Deirdre', it was six years ago when I lost my lovely Clara to the yellow fever. She was the only woman I thought I'd ever love. Her loss put me into a deep depression. We had no children and I became completely immersed in my business affairs. I've built quite an operation. I didn't allow myself the time to have a meaningful relationship and I found comfort here, at your mother's place. She was a wonderful woman. Plenty of business savvy and I admired her for that. But she was also very compassionate. Deirdre', I'm a lonely man. I fell in love with you the moment I laid eyes on you and the more I've gotten to know you, the more I've come to appreciate the woman you are.

Deirdre'

Franklin, you're so kind and wonderful, but I can't be sure that I feel the same way.

Franklin

Sometimes the obvious isn't realized right away.

Peaches

Just look at the way that Franklin Kaiser is moving in on Miss Deirdre'.

Anna Lou

Yeah, pretty smooth, he's just another high powered businessman tryin' to close another deal.

Peaches

You got that right, sister.

Anna Lou

With a pocket book that's quite inflatable

Peaches

And a lifestyle most would prefer

Anna Lou

Her attributes never debatable

Peaches

You know what he sees in her

*But just who, who, who, who, who does he think he is
Just who, who, who, who, who does he think he is*

Peaches

His effectiveness being quite minimal

Anna Lou

It doesn't seem he's gonna last

Peaches

I really hate to be cynical

Anna Lou and Peaches

(Looking at each other)

But he's getting nowhere fast

*And just who, who, who, who, who does he think he is
Just who, who, who, who, who does he think he is*

*But just who, who, who, who, who does he think he is
Just who, who, who, who, who does he think he is*

Franklin

Now Deirdre', I've heard some talk of a storm approachin' and I want you to take all the precautions you can.

(He puts on his hat and takes both her hands in his)

If you need anything, anything at all, just let me know. I'll call on you soon.

Deirdre'

I'd like that. Good night, Franklin.

Franklin

Good night, my dear.

(Franklin exits and bumps into Zeke as he enters)

Franklin

Well, hello again Zeke. How's your surveying projects coming along these days.

Zeke

Well, Mr. Kaiser, you know how it is.

(Looking at Deirdre' in the distance)

There's always a project to work on. By the way, have you heard the news about a storm headin' this way. I'm gettin' some information on the wires that we could be gettin' some serious weather here in the next couple of days. You might want to get your men ready. Start securing those docks.

Franklin

Yes, I have heard about a storm out there. So you think it could be headin' toward us, eh? Let me know if you hear anymore and if there's anything I can do to help.

Zeke

Sure thing, just keep your men on stand by. We may need all the help when can get if we get hit.

Franklin

You bet, Zeke. Now you go have yourself a real good time.

Zeke

Oh, I intend to do just that, Mr. Kaiser.

(Franklin exits. Zeke walks up to Deirdre')

Evenin', mam. I stopped by earlier and the ladies said you were out with Mr. Kaiser at the Opera House.

Deirdre'

That's right, Zeke.

Anna Lou

Looks like you got a little competition there, Zeke.

Zeke

Competition? Competition? I love competition! Now Mr. Kaiser has enough money to buy anything he wants in this town. But, I figure some things are not for sale, no matter what the price. What do you think, Deirdre'?

Deirdre'

I think you are wise beyond your years, Mr. Martin. There's nothing that says a lady can't have an enjoyable evening without having to promise the world to someone.

Zeke

The world is a pretty big place, Deirdre', but I think the person who wins your affection would be getting something a lot larger than the world, more like – the universe!

Deirdre'

Oh, Zeke! You're such a silly boy. What *am* I going to do with you?

Zeke

Oh, I don't know, maybe you can promise me the world?

(She crosses her arms and gives him a look of consternation)
the universe? OK, OK, I'll settle for the world. But first, let *me* promise you this:

*If I could be anyone, I'd be me
If I could live anywhere, here's where I'd be
If I could have anyone to give my love to
I couldn't have anyone as perfect as you*

*And you're perfect, perfect in every way
Yes, you're perfect, perfect in every way*

Deirdre'

You know, Zeke, there *is* something you and I need to discuss.

(She pauses)

But it can wait.

(Deirdre' and Zeke exit the stage together)

SCENE FOUR – Zeke's Office (Zeke, Adam, Franklin, Young Dock Worker)

(It is afternoon and the storm is approaching the wind is gusting and the rain is falling outside.)

Adam

Well, mister sunshine and roses, looks like we're in for a long night. News we got from Cuba wasn't very good and as hot as it's been the last couple of days, that storm has had chance to get up a full head 'o steam. We need to get somewhere safe to try and ride this thing out.

Zeke

We'll be fine, Adam. These things happen. 'Least we've had a little warning and we know it's comin'. Just think of those poor folks who tried to settle here over three hundred years ago. They didn't know what hit 'em; took 'em over thirty years before they tried to settle again. But they did. And folks 'bin livin' here ever since. We'll be fine, just fine.

Young Dock Worker

(Rushes into Zeke's office)

Mr. Zeke, we just got word on the dock that there's a family stranded out on the island and they don't have any way to get in. We was wondering if we could use your boat to get 'em outta there before the waves get too rough in the bay.

(Zeke looks at Adam)

Adam

Oh, no! Zeke, you got that crazy look in your eye again. Look, they'll be fine if they just hunker down.

Zeke

(Zeke turns to the Young Dock Worker)

OK, give me their exact location and I'll go get 'em.

Young Dock Worker

Alright! I'll go with ya.

Adam

Damn it, Zeke! If you think I'm going to risk my neck for some fool family out on the island, you got another think coming!

Zeke

Adam, I'd never ask you to do anything like that, but if this thing's as bad as the reports we've gotten, they'll never make 'til morning.

Adam

Damn it! I don't know who's the biggest fool – you or me! Let's get outta here before I change my mind.

Zeke

You're a good man, Adam. Let's go!

(Adam, Zeke and the Young Dock Worker exit.)

The Storm - Orchestra

SCENE FIVE – Rising Sun (Deirdre', Anna Lou, Peaches, Adam, Young Dock Worker and Franklin)

(Deirdre' and the ladies enter the parlor of the Rising Sun which has been nearly destroyed by the storm.)

Deirdre'

What a mess!

(Deirdre' picks up the pieces to a broken chandelier as the ladies pick up fallen chairs and tables)

Anna Lou

Miss Deirdre', what are we gonna do?

(Anna Lou starts to cry, Deirdre' walks over and comforts her)

Deirdre'

What are we gonna do? We're gonna do what we've always done my dear Lou Lou. We're gonna do whatever it takes.

Peaches

(Looking around with her hand in the air)

What it's gonna take is a miracle.

Deirdre'

Then a miracle it'll be! No matter how bad this situation is, no matter how desperate we become, there's always someone else who's suffering more than us. Maybe we can keep our minds off our problems by offering to help those folks around town who have it much worse than us. We'll be alright.

(Adam and the Young Dock Worker rush in and take off there hats.)

Adam

Miss Deirdre'! Miss Deirdre'! Something terrible has happened!

Deirdre'

Adam, of course something terrible has happened. The whole town has been turned upside down.

Adam

No, Miss Deirdre', it's about Zeke!

Deirdre'

What about Zeke?

(Adam looks down, holding his hat and shaking his head.)

Adam! What about Zeke?

Adam

(Still shaking his head)

He's gone, Miss Deirdre', he's gone.

Deirdre'

Adam, Adam! What do you mean, he's gone.

(Adam still looking down with his hand over his eyes, the young dock worker steps up)

Young Dock Worker

Well, Miss Deirdre', the storm was comin' up real bad, and we got word of a family stranded out on the island.

Adam

I told Zeke to let 'em just ride it out and we'd go fetch 'em in the morning. "No," he said, "we gotta go get 'em outa there now." You know Zeke. He said he'd go by his self, but I couldn't let him do that, so we went with him. Miss Deirdre' it was terrible.

Young Dock Worker

The wind was whipping us real hard and those waves were crashin' over the boat so bad I thought we was gonna flip over. Well, we reached the island and found the family right where they said they'd be. Miss Deirdre', the way that big wave come over the island, they never woulda made it. Well, we got 'em all down in the cabin and I took the wheel and Zeke went out on the bow to check somethin'.

Adam

I told the dang fool to get in the back of the boat with us.

Young Dock Worker

Just about that time, a big wave come and knocked him right overboard. It was so dark and waves was so rough, he just disappeared. They found his body washed up on shore this morning. I'm so sorry, Miss Deirdre'.

(Adam walks closer to Deirdre.)

Adam

I know you meant a lot to him. He just loved his work, he loved livin' here and he never come out and said it, but I think he loved you too, Miss Deirdre'. And now, he's gone.

(Adam and the young dock worker exit)

Deirdre'

(Deirdre' looks up and raises her hands)

Oh, Zeke! Oh, Zeke! Why? You always said we lived in paradise. Is this the price we have to pay? Everything has its price.

(Sung in a minor key)

*Everyone loves a beautiful thing; everyone loves the joy it can bring
A beautiful place, a beautiful face, everyone loves a beautiful thing*

*When we are children beauty surrounds us
Then we grow up and real life astounds us
Casting a veil on everything we see*

*Everyone loves a beautiful thing; everyone loves the joy it can bring
A beautiful place, a beautiful face, everyone loves a beautiful thing*

*Lives of illusion listening to voices
Chanting confusion challenging choices
Casting a veil on everything we see*

*Everyone loves a beautiful thing; everyone loves the joy it can bring
A beautiful place, a beautiful face, everyone loves a beautiful thing*

(Deirdre' sits in a chair and cups her face in her hands. Franklin enters, takes off his hat and puts it on a table, rushes to Deirdre' and takes her hands)

Franklin

Deirdre'! Thank God you're alive! Are you alright? Do you need anything? How are your ladies?

Deirdre'

Oh, Franklin, you're so considerate, but, look around. All is lost.

Franklin

Deirdre', don't worry about anything. I'll help you rebuild. You'll come back even better than before. I'll take care of you.

Deirdre' – Oh, Franklin,

(She stands and pushes him away)

you don't know what you're saying. You don't know me! You're just a fool in love with a pretty face!

(Raising her voice and pointing to the door)

You should leave! Now! And never come back!

Franklin

(Rushes to Deirdre' to embrace her)

I can never leave you! Deirdre', I love you!

Deirdre'

(As he attempts to embrace her she pushes him away)

Franklin, I'm carrying a child, and as you know, it's not yours.

Franklin

(Steps back in disbelief, looks down then slowly up and steps toward Deirdre')

Well, then, who?

Deirdre'

He's, he's gone.

(Sits in a chair with her head down and crying)

And he's never coming back. Now, please, leave!

Franklin

(Walks slowly to Deirdre', gets down on one knee and takes her hands, looks into her eyes)

Deirdre', I will never leave you. I was wrong to think that you needed to change for me so that I could take care of you and give you that better life. But you don't need to change for me at all, because to me, you are truly perfect in every way.

*If I could be anyone, I'd be me
If I could live anywhere, here's where I'd be
If I could have anyone to give my love to
I couldn't have anyone as perfect as you*

*And you're perfect, perfect in every way
Yes, you're perfect, perfect in every way*

*You are the sun, the moon and the stars
The universe follows wherever you are
You are the flower that blooms in the spring
A beautiful rose that makes my heart sing*

*If I could be anyone, I'd be me
If I could live anywhere, here's where I'd be
If I could have anyone to give my love to
I couldn't have anyone as perfect as you*

*And you're perfect, perfect in every way
Yes, you're perfect, perfect in every way*

EPILOGUE – The Cemetery (Deirdre', James)

James

Mother, you never talk much about the days when you and father met. As a matter of fact, father didn't talk about it much either, only that you were brought together by the storm of '96. I've heard rumors about you and father, and they aren't very good ones. I just pass it off as folks envious of your success and the way we live. Do you think maybe one day we can talk about it?

Deirdre'

Oh my dear James, there's really not much to say. I loved your father with all my heart. I ran a hotel downtown; took it over from your grandmother when she died of the yellow

fever. That's where I met your father. The place was destroyed in the great storm of '96. Your father offered to rebuild it. Lord knows, he had the lumber. Then in the midst of all the destruction and despair, he asked me to marry him. Well, I thought it was a good time for a change for me anyway, and being the shrewd business man he was I think he knew his timing couldn't have been any better. I didn't really know how much I loved your father at first. I knew he was a kind man and a very successful business man, but I had no idea how loving he was. My love and admiration for him grew over the years. He always wanted the best for you, James. I hope that one day you can realize just how much he cared about you.

James

I realize it, mother. I do. Now, I think it's time.

Deirdre'

Yes, it is.

*“Goodbyes” were meant for lovers, lovers you can't see eye to eye
But friends, when friends are lovers, friends can never say “goodbye”*

*You were my friend and you stood by me, and never asked me why
You were my lover and you gave to me the best days of my life
And now you're gone and my broken heart is trying to survive
So I'll say until tomorrow, but I'll never say goodbye*

*“Goodbyes” were meant forever,
And I know that's such a long, long time
But I'll be with you whether it's in my arms, my heart or in my mind*

*You were my friend and you stood by me, and never asked me why
You were my lover and you gave to me the best days of my life
And now you're gone and my broken heart is trying to survive
So I'll say until tomorrow, but I'll never say goodbye*

FINALE – The Company

Copyright 2008 Wilkin McKean

