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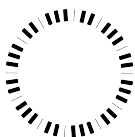
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**CONCORD**  
THEATRICALS

# FLOWERS FOR MRS HARRIS

Based on the novel by Paul Gallico

Book by Rachel Wagstaff

Music and Lyrics by Richard Taylor

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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*FLOWERS FOR MRS HARRIS* was first produced at Sheffield Theatres on 19th May 2016. Directed by Daniel Evans, Designer Lez Brotherston, Musical Supervisor and Musical Director Tom Brady, Orchestrator Richard Taylor, Lighting Designer Mark Henderson, Sound Designer Mike Walker, Movement Director Kay Shepherd, Assistant Musical Director Peter Wilson, Dialect Coach Budgie Salam, Casting Director Charlotte Sutton CDG, Assistant Director Charlie Kenber, Production Manager Kate West, Stage Manager Sarah Gentle, Deputy Stage Manager Kim Lewis, Assistant Stage Manager Rosalind Chapelle. The cast was as follows:

**MRS ADA HARRIS** ..... Clare Burt  
**MR HARRIS / MARQUIS DE CHASSAGNE** ..... Mark Meadows  
**VIOLET BUTTERFIELD / FRENCH CHARLADY /**  
**DIOR DRESS MAKER** ..... Anna-Jane Casey  
**LADY DANT / MME. COLBERT** ..... Rebecca Caine  
**BOB / ANDRÉ** ..... Louis Maskell  
**PAMELA / NATASHA** ..... Laura Pitt-Pulford  
**MAJOR / M. ARMAND / FRENCH WAITER / CUSTOMS OFFICER**.. David Durham  
**COUNTESS WYSZCINSKA / SYBIL SULLIVAN / STEAMSTRESS** ..... Nicola Sloane  
**FLOWER SELLER / FRENCH FLOWER SELLER / ENSEMBLE** ..... Moyo Akandé  
**WIRELESS COMMENTATOR / TERRY / TERENCE** ..... Luke Dale

#### **ORCHESTRA**

**CONDUCTOR**..... Tom Brady  
**PIANO** ..... Jon Laird  
**VIOLIN**..... Juliet Leighton-Jones  
**DOUBLE BASS** ..... Nicki Davenport  
**HARP** ..... Vicky Lester  
**FLUTE**..... Abigail Burrows  
**CLARINET / TENOR SAXOPHONE**..... Rhys Taylor  
**FRENCH HORN** ..... Ruth O'Reilly  
**CORNET** ..... Cai Isfryn  
**TROMBONE** ..... James Adams  
**PERCUSSION**..... Jim Wycherley

#### **SHEFFIELD PEOPLE'S THEATRE ENSEMBLE**

Rosie Ibbotson, Alex Kinch, Rebecca Lowndes, Bethany Moore, Charlotte Schofield

First performance of this production at Chichester Festival Theatre, 8 September 2018. Presented in association with Vicky Graham, Joseph Smith and Bob Bartner. Directed by Daniel Evans, Designer Lez Brotherston, Musical Supervisor & Musical Director Tom Brady, Orchestrator Richard Taylor, Lighting Designer Mark Henderson, Sound Designer Mike Walker, Movement Director Naomi Said, Casting Director Charlotte Sutton CDG, Associate Set Designer Colin Falconer, Associate Costume Designer & Costume Supervisor Irene Bohan, Assistant Director Charlie Kenber, Assistant Musical Director John Laird, Production Manager Jacqui Leigh, Company Stage Manager Emma Banwell, Deputy Stage Manager Maddie Cupples, Assistant Stage Managers Amy Hawthorne, Katie Sherratt. The cast was as follows:

**MRS ADA HARRIS** ..... Clare Burt  
**MR HARRIS / MARQUIS DE CHASSAGNE** ..... Mark Meadows  
**VIOLET BUTTERFIELD / FRENCH CHARLADY/**  
**DIOR DRESSMAKER** ..... Claire Machin  
**LADY DANT / MME. COLBERT** ..... Joanna Riding  
**BOB / ANDRÉ** ..... Louis Maskell  
**PAMELA / NATASHA** ..... Laura Pitt-Pulford  
**MAJOR / M. ARMAND / FRENCH WAITER /**  
**CUSTOMS OFFICER** ..... Gary Wilmot  
**COUNTESS WYSZCINSKA / SYBIL SULLIVAN /**  
**MME. RAIMBAULT** ..... Nicola Sloane  
**FLOWER SELLER / FRENCH FLOWER SELLER /**  
**DIOR DRESSMAKER** ..... Rhona McGregor  
**WIRELESS COMMENTATOR / TERRY /**  
**DIOR DRESSMAKER / TERENCE** ..... Luke Latchman  
**MODELS** ..... Ella Bassett-Jull, Skye Broughton,  
Lydia Hague, Ella Jarman, Emily McAlpine, Charlotte Schofield,  
Freya Shepherd-Bland, Evie Shiner

## **ORCHESTRA**

**CONDUCTOR** ..... Tom Brady  
**PIANO** ..... Jon Laird  
**VIOLIN** ..... Kathryn James  
**DOUBLE BASS** ..... Nicki Davenport  
**HARP** ..... Vicky Lester  
**FLUTE** ..... Abigail Burrows  
**CLARINET / TENOR SAXOPHONE** ..... Rhys Taylor  
**FRENCH HORN** ..... Laura Llewellyn-Jones  
**CORNET** ..... Owain Harries  
**TROMBONE** ..... Jane Salmon  
**PERCUSSION** ..... James Turner

**ORCHESTRAL MANAGEMENT**..... Andy Barnwell  
for Musical Coordination Service Ltd  
**COPYISTS**..... Simon Nathan, Peter Wilson

**SUPPORTED BY** *THE FLOWERS FOR MRS HARRIS*  
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**SPONSORED BY CONQUEST BESPOKE FURNITURE AND OLDHAM SEALS GROUP**

Chichester Festival Theatre cast album available on SimG records, iTunes download and streaming platforms.

## CHARACTERS

MRS HARRIS  
MR HARRIS / MARQUIS DE CHASSAGNE  
VIOLET / FRENCH CHARLADY  
BOB / ANDRÉ  
PAMELA / NATASHA  
MAJOR / MONSIEUR ARMAND / FRENCH WAITER / CUSTOMS  
OFFICER  
COUNTESS / SYBIL SULLIVAN / SEAMSTRESS  
LADY DANT / MADAME COLBERT  
TERRY / WIRELESS COMMENTATOR / DIOR DRESSMAKER /  
TERENCE  
FLOWER SELLER / FRENCH FLOWER SELLER/ DIOR DRESSMAKER

## SETTING

London / Paris

## TIME

1947–1951

## AUTHORS' NOTES

*Flowers for Mrs Harris* was commissioned by producer, Vicky Graham, and given its first production at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, directed by Daniel Evans.

Vicky brought Paul Gallico's beautiful novella to us and we both immediately fell in love with Ada Harris. The piece grew and evolved, stitch by stitch, over six years. The storytelling naturally seemed to favour a very fluid use of time and place, as Mrs Harris weaves herself effortlessly in and out of the lives of others. And so we found the musical style worked similarly, blending speech and song seamlessly. I (Rachel) would write scenes and send them to Richard... which I (Richard) would musicalize and send back! Any dialogue within (now) lyrics could be re-worked, sent back again, and so on. Where there was a 'number', it would be approached almost sideways, without fanfare, as seemed to befit our quietly humble central character.

Throughout this process we were blessed with a series of in-depth workshops, where we could really test-drive the material. Our very first Ada was the wonderful Clare Burt and, as she sang the first song we'd written, **[THERE IS MORE TO LIFE]**, we realised we were not only in for a treat (one widely recognised years later when Clare won the UK Theatre award for Best Performance in a musical for the first production) but also a masterclass in truth and honesty in a performance. We were lucky enough to work with incredible actors in each workshop, not

only enriching the depths of our characters but also highlighting anything that wasn't working (yet!)

This was never a story about woman wanting a dress. It is about a lonely, widowed cleaning lady, needing something or someone of her own. She has an epiphany when she sees the dress but only later does she realise why she has to have one. She just wants beauty and colour in her life; something to which she can come home. And this is why Mr Harris was so key to us. As present in our piece as he is absent in the novel, he embodies both everything Mrs Harris has lived without and everything she has managed to do, alone, for so many years. She has depths and needs even she doesn't fully understand until the final moments.

This show is a celebration of an ordinary woman, who has no idea how extraordinary she really is, in her courage and her unfailing care for others. Every single character is quietly helped and transformed (for the better) by Mrs Harris, although she never asks anything of them. Only at the end is the unsung heroine finally not just appreciated but even visibly thanked. More than anything, she realises she actually matters. And that is more healing than any dress could ever be. At last, Mrs Harris is able to let go of the tightly-held grief with which she has silently been living for so long.

## THE PRODUCTION

Director Daniel Evans encouraged and delighted in our split-screen, multi-location style and, along with designer Lez Brotherston, knew it was always about what happens in the flats, houses and mansion, rather than the need to see those environments fully realized on stage. Lez provided a deceptively open space with a large revolve, allowing the storytelling to flow seamlessly, with only the minimum furniture required to suggest location. Lighting closed down the space and gave us walls and windows that vanished in an instant. Only when we arrive in Paris did the back wall open and allow a sweeping Dior staircase to come forward and dominate the stage, down which, and from under which, new entrances and exits could happen.

For the Dior dresses, we decided the first dress Mrs Harris sees would be seen only by Ada herself. Our focus would be on her reaction, the affect the dress has on her. This could equally be the device deployed for the act two dress showing scene (or there are doubtless other ingenious ways of presenting this), but we were treated in our production to a jaw-dropping display of nine exquisitely detailed, Brotherston-designed, New Look-style gowns, modelled by young women drawn from the local community (who, needless to say, were reluctant to part with their costumes!) A similarly sumptuous visual feast was the display of flowers at the finale, when the stage filled with vases, buckets, planters and boxes of every kind of flower, surrounding Mrs Harris. If a production could only afford one extravagance, it would surely be this. Mrs Harris' simple life totally transformed for all to see.

If reading this while listening to the Chichester Festival Theatre cast album recording, it is worth noting some cuts and edits in both dialogue and music were made there for the purposes of preserving storytelling. But also worth noting is the skill demonstrated in how to transition from speech into song, without gear-change, something so crucial for this piece.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Our immeasurable thanks first and foremost to Vicky Graham, who gave us this true gift of everlasting flowers. We are also deeply indebted to the inspirational Daniel Evans, for his brilliance and his expert guidance, and to Tom Brady, our incomparable musical director. Huge thanks, too, to everyone at Sheffield Theatres and Chichester Festival Theatre, who worked so beautifully on the workshops and productions.

We are also grateful to directors Derek Bond and Jonathan Kent, who read early drafts and gave us incredibly helpful feedback. To all the actors who took part in our many workshops, we owe you a massive debt of gratitude for lifting us up and showing us the way. Likewise, to all who encouraged and supported us, from our agents (Dan Usztan, Rose Cobbe and Rachel Daniels), our family and friends and our colleagues and producers (including Becky Barber, Joe Smith, Bob Bartner and Bob Benton). Sincere thanks too to the Paul Gallico Estate, for their backing, and to all at Concord Theatricals, for helping Mrs Harris to live on!

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### ACT I

- |                                         |                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Kitchen                              | <i>Orchestra</i>                                                                                      |
| 2. All I Ever Needed                    | <i>Mrs Harris, Mr Harris</i>                                                                          |
| 3. Lady Dant                            | <i>Violet, Lady Dant.</i><br><i>Mrs Harris</i>                                                        |
| 4. There Is More To Life                | <i>Mrs Harris, Lady Dant</i>                                                                          |
| 5. Clients #1 - Look At Me              | <i>Bob, Mrs Harris, Pamela,</i><br><i>Countess, Major</i>                                             |
| 6. Something To Come Home To            | <i>Mrs Harris, Violet</i>                                                                             |
| 7. Rain On Me                           | <i>Mrs Harris, Mr Harris</i>                                                                          |
| 8. Clients #2                           | <i>Bob, Pamela, Countess, Major,</i><br><i>Mrs Harris</i>                                             |
| 9. The Pools Win                        | <i>Mrs Harris</i>                                                                                     |
| 10. Mrs Harris Does A Budget            | <i>Mrs Harris, Mr Harris</i>                                                                          |
| 11. Clients #3                          | <i>Violet, Major, Mrs Harris,</i><br><i>Countess, Pamela, Flower Seller,</i><br><i>Bob, Mr Harris</i> |
| 12. Pamela                              | <i>Pamela</i>                                                                                         |
| 13. Underscore                          | <i>Orchestra</i>                                                                                      |
| 14. Albert: The Watch                   | <i>Mrs Harris, Mr Harris</i>                                                                          |
| 15. Rain On Me – Reprise/End of Act One | <i>Violet, Mrs Harris,</i><br><i>Mr Harris</i>                                                        |

### ACT II

- |                                      |                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 16. 30, Avenue Montaigne             | <i>Mrs Harris, French Cleaner,</i><br><i>Madame Colbert, André,</i><br><i>Natasha</i> |
| 17. Mme Colbert/André Aside          | <i>Madame Colbert, André</i>                                                          |
| 18. Every Woman Is A Princess        | <i>Mrs Harris, Monsieur Armand,</i><br><i>Madame Colbert</i>                          |
| 19. The Dress-Showing                | <i>Mrs Harris, Marquis</i>                                                            |
| 20. Measuring                        | <i>Seamstress, Mrs Harris</i>                                                         |
| 21. Seamstress/Natasha               | <i>Seamstress, Natasha</i>                                                            |
| 22. Natasha Exit                     | <i>Orchestra</i>                                                                      |
| 23. Dress-Making #1 / She Kissed Me! | <i>André</i>                                                                          |
| 24. The Doorbell                     | <i>André</i>                                                                          |

- |                                       |                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25. The Girl In The Magazine          | Natasha, Mrs Harris                                              |
| 26. The Sad Story of Madame Colbert   | Natasha, André                                                   |
| 27. Dress-Making #2/The Flower Market | André, French Flower Seller                                      |
| 28. Dress-Making #3                   | Madame Colbert, Natasha,<br>André, French Cleaner<br>Orchestra   |
| 29. Bistro du Midi Underscore         | Seamstress, Madame Colbert,                                      |
| 30. Dress-Making #4                   | André, Natasha, French Cleaner,<br>Mrs Harris<br>Customs Officer |
| 31. Customs (A Fib, Not A Lie)        | Customs Officer, Madame                                          |
| 32. Returning Home/Visiting Pamela    | Colbert, Mrs Harris, Pamela<br>Mrs Harris<br>Company             |
| 33. 5, Willis Gardens                 | Mrs Harris, Pamela, Lady Dant,                                   |
| 34. Flowers (Something For You)       | Violet, Countess, Bob, Major                                     |
| 35. The Garden Of Eden                | Orchestra                                                        |
| 36. Payout                            |                                                                  |



*For our mothers, Sheila Taylor and Ann Wagstaff*



## ACT I

1947. London.

*We are in the era of Make Do and Mend. Clothes are drab; second hand; life is grey.*

[MUSIC NO. 01: "KITCHEN"]

MRS HARRIS *holds a bunch of flowers out to* MR HARRIS.

MRS HARRIS Happy anniversary.

MR HARRIS You shouldn't have.

*A shared smile. MRS HARRIS finds a vase. Begins to arrange the flowers. MR HARRIS settles down to his newspaper.*

MRS HARRIS Crimson or scarlet?

MR HARRIS Mmmm?

MRS HARRIS Would you say they were crimson, or would you say they were scarlet?

MR HARRIS *considers carefully. Inspects them.*

MR HARRIS I'd say they were dead.

MRS HARRIS Ah, but you're forgetting... Always brings them right back.

*And MRS HARRIS fishes out a penny. Drops it triumphantly into the jug.*

MR HARRIS Waste of a good penny, if you ask me.

**MRS HARRIS** But I didn't ask you, did I now, love? And you know what I always say. A life without flowers—

**MR HARRIS** Isn't any kind of life at all.

**MRS HARRIS** *smiles again. She's won that battle.*

Mauve.

**MRS HARRIS** Now you're being ridiculous.

*During the following, MRS HARRIS prepares a meagre supper. MR HARRIS takes her hand.*

**MR HARRIS** Look at your hands—

**MRS HARRIS** I know what you're going to say, and the answer's still no.

**MR HARRIS** When was the last time you had an 'oliday? Or even a day off?

**MRS HARRIS** You and me went to Bognor Regis.

**MR HARRIS** That was thirty-one years ago!

**MRS HARRIS** Yes—

**MR HARRIS** Ada. Sell it. Let it go.

[MUSIC NO.02: "ALL I EVER NEEDED"]

You could go to the seaside.

**MRS HARRIS** (*warningly*) Albert—

**MR HARRIS** Or you could treat yerself. Buy yourself...

**MRS HARRIS** Yes?

**MR HARRIS** (*feebly*) A nice hat?

**MRS HARRIS** What would I want with a new hat?

**MR HARRIS** You could wear it.

**MRS HARRIS** Where?

**MR HARRIS** On your head.

**MRS HARRIS** I am not selling your watch!

**MR HARRIS** It's just a thing.

**MRS HARRIS** But it's yours.

**MR HARRIS**

YOU'RE STUBBORN AS A BLEEDIN' MULE,  
YOU KNOW THAT, ADA HARRIS?

**MRS HARRIS** Stubborn? (*teasing*) Coming from you!

**MR HARRIS**

ANYBODY AND THEIR FLAMIN' WIFE, YOU'D PUT THEM FIRST.

**MRS HARRIS** That's not true.

**MR HARRIS**

THEM YOU 'DO' FOR,  
WELL, WHEN D'THEY EVER THINK OF YOU, EH?

*He rubs her knees.*

THOSE POOR KNEES,  
YOU'LL WEAR 'EM RIGHT THROUGH.

YOU GOT TO LEARN TO HAVE A MOMENT  
JUST FOR ADA HARRIS.

**MRS HARRIS** I know.

**MR HARRIS**

EIGHT WHILE SIX, INCLUDING SAT'DAYS,  
AN' HOW MUCH FOR?

THREE-SHILLINGS-AN-HOUR,  
PAY YOU WHEN THEY LIKE.

LOVE TO SEE 'EM COPING IF YOU EVER WENT ON STRIKE!

ADA, CAN I HELP ME FEELINGS?

I JUST WISH I'D GIVEN YOU MORE.

**MRS HARRIS**

SILLY MAN.

**MR HARRIS**

JUST A LITTLE GARDEN OR A PATH UP TO THE DOOR...

**MRS HARRIS**

YOU KNOW VERY WELL THAT  
ALL I EVER NEEDED IS HERE.  
WHAT WOULD I GO WANTING FOR?  
STUFF TO CLUTTER UP A DRAWER?  
AND AS FOR GARDENS,  
ALL I EVER NEEDED IS HERE, RIGHT HERE,

*She looks to her vase of flowers.*

NO FLOWERBEDS OR FOUNTAINS.  
HERE'LL DO ME VERY WELL,  
SEE US THROUGH.  
BRIGHT ENOUGH FOR PENNY-BLOOMS,  
I ALWAYS KNEW.  
CUP O' TEA AND SLICE OF BREAD  
AND THAT'LL DO ME AND YOU.  
ME AND-

**MR HARRIS**

YOU COULD PUT A SHINE ON ANYTHING,  
MY ADA HARRIS.

**MRS HARRIS** I mean it, though.

**MR HARRIS**

BRING A TOUCH OF SPARKLE ANYWHERE,  
BY JUST BEING THERE.

**MRS HARRIS** I wish it was that easy!

**MR HARRIS**

DON'T YOU WISH YOU WAS LIVING IN BELGRAVIA SQUARE, EH?

**MRS HARRIS**

NOT FOR A MINUTE!

**MR HARRIS**

PULLING UP A FANCY CHAIR BY A GREAT BIG WINDER.  
TELLING SOMEONE *ELSE* THERE'S DUST ON THE STAIR.  
GAZING OUT WITH NOT A CARE  
THROUGH YOUR GREAT BIG WINDER.

**MRS HARRIS**

IT'S ME NIGHTMARE, ALBERT!  
THESE HANDS ARE FOR GRAFTING,  
ALWAYS WILL BE.  
SURE-AS-HECK THEY'D FALL RIGHT OFF IF I STOPPED.

**MRS HARRIS**

THERE IS NOTHING,  
NOWHERE ELSE  
I'D RATHER BE, MY DEAR,  
IN ALL MY DREAMS,  
IT'S ALL I EVER NEEDED IS  
HERE.

**MR HARRIS**

OH ADA!  
(*mimicking*)  
ALL I EVER NEEDED...

**MR HARRIS**

YOU DRIVE ME BARMY, ADA.

**MRS HARRIS**

WHAT'S THE USE IN FANCY THINGS?

**MR HARRIS**

NEVER LISTEN TO ME...

**MRS HARRIS**

THESE FINGERS AIN'T FOR DIAMOND RINGS.

**MR HARRIS**

YOU DESERVE 'EM, THOUGH...

**MRS HARRIS**

I COUNT ME BLESSINGS.  
ALL I EVER NEEDED IS HERE,  
RIGHT HERE,

**MR HARRIS**

RIGHT HERE.

**MRS HARRIS**

NO PALACES OR MANSIONS.

**MR HARRIS**

FIVE, WILLIS GARDENS,  
BATTERSEA?

**MRS HARRIS**

FIVE,

**BOTH**

WILLIS GARDENS,  
BATTERSEA.

**MRS HARRIS**

OH, SILLY MAN,  
DON'T YOU SEE?  
YOU AND ME...  
ALL I EVER

**BOTH**

NEEDED IS  
RIGHT HERE.

*And MRS HARRIS lays her head on MR HARRIS's chest.  
Suddenly, there's a blackout.*

**MRS HARRIS** Oh...bother.

*MRS HARRIS fumbles for a candle, matches. We can just  
about make her out in the moonlight. She strikes a match.  
Lights the candle. MR HARRIS has gone.*

*MRS HARRIS smiles ruefully. She's finished laying up, for  
one. She tucks into her supper, alone.*

**VIOLET** Oh Ada!

**VIOLET** *bursts in.*

I've had the most terrible day. And now the power's gone  
out again.

**MRS HARRIS** What's happened?

**VIOLET** I bet it's gone out for good this time.

**MRS HARRIS** (*calming*) You've been saying that for years, Violet—

**VIOLET** And I've run out of tea again. Three bleedin' ounces.  
How are we meant to get by on that? You wouldn't think we won the war.

**MRS HARRIS** No one wins a war.

**VIOLET** I just want my Reggie to put his arms round me. Tell me it'll be all right.

Don't you miss your Albert?

**MRS HARRIS** All the time, love. All the time.

**MRS HARRIS** *looks ruefully to where MR HARRIS had been standing.*

But we were very lucky to be loved by such smashing fellas.  
I'm sure things'll pick up soon.

**VIOLET** Oh no – Oh Ada, I'm so sorry. Here's me harping on, when it's your anniversary.

**MRS HARRIS** It's just a date, like any other.

**VIOLET** But it's not though, is it?

I made you this.

**VIOLET** *presents MRS HARRIS with a cake.*

**MRS HARRIS** You always remember. Better than Albert ever did.

*The lights come back on.*

There. What did I tell you? Now, have a sit down, we'll have a cup of tea and slice of this and you can tell me all about it.

**[MUSIC NO.03: "LADY DANT"]**

**MRS HARRIS** *lights the stove.*

**VIOLET** She sprang it on me, you see–

**MRS HARRIS** Who did?

**VIOLET** Lady flamin' Dant. Well! She only wants me to clean for her tomorrow but she's me Monday, Wednesday and Friday

job, and I've got all me other clients tomorrow. How the hell could I fit her in?

**MRS HARRIS** I could do it for you, first thing, and then I'll whizz over to my clients.

**VIOLET** Don't be daft. You couldn't possibly manage—

**MRS HARRIS** We're a team. You'd do it for me.

**VIOLET** Well, yes, but—

**MRS HARRIS** Look at you, bringing cake – I bet you used up all your eggs—

**VIOLET** Well, yes, but—

**MRS HARRIS** So let me help you.

**VIOLET** I know I'm ridiculous. Getting meself in a state like this. It's just—

**MRS HARRIS** I know, love. You need a bit of—

**BOTH** –warning.

*Beat.*

**VIOLET** No. I can't let you. That grand old house of hers.

**MRS HARRIS** I'll fly round. Anyway, it might be fun. (*mischievous*) I can see if she really is as bad as you say.

*As VIOLET sings (below), the kitchen begins to dissolve, as, the next morning, MRS HARRIS puts on her coat and hat, helped by VIOLET.*

**VIOLET** Oh! You're a wonder, Ada Harris. You really are.  
(*spoken in rhythm*) I THOUGHT, NO I CAN'T ASK YOU,  
(*spoken in rhythm*) YOU GOT CLIENTS ENOUGH  
OF YOUR OWN TO DO.

**MRS HARRIS** *makes her way to LADY DANT's house.*

**MRS HARRIS** (*walking*) It's just one day.

**VIOLET**

*(spoken in rhythm)* A TUESDAY TOO!

TYPICAL!

BUT THAT'S LADY DANT!

TYPICAL!

**MRS HARRIS** You'd do the same for me.

**VIOLET**

I KNEW THE MOMENT I WOKE THIS MORNING,

"VIOLET, TODAY WON'T END WELL."

THEN ME TEA AND THEN THESE POW'R-CUTS...

ADA, I CAN TELL.

IT'S IN ME WATERS!

IT'S LIKE A DREADFUL WARNING...

**MRS HARRIS** Now you are being ridiculous—

**VIOLET** Something's going to happen. I just know it.

***MRS HARRIS**, now standing in front of a grand front door, presses the doorbell. We hear a suitably grand doorbell sound within. **VIOLET** remains as though in **MRS HARRIS**'s kitchen.*

AND IT'S NOT HELPED BY LADY DANT.

CHANGING THINGS.

THINKS THAT SHE CAN JUST GO RE-ARRANGING THINGS.

S'JUST LIKE HER.

AS YOU'LL SEE.

DOUBT SHE'LL EVEN NOTICE YOU'RE NOT ME.

***MRS HARRIS** is just about to press the doorbell again when the door opens and there is **LADY DANT**.*

**LADY DANT** *(uninterested)* Ah, Mrs Butterfield.

**VIOLET**

SELF-OBSSESSED.

**LADY DANT** I'm terribly busy.

**VIOLET**

SECOND YOU ARRIVE THERE'S NOT A MOMENT'S REST.

**LADY DANT** This step needs scrubbing–

**LADY DANT** *crosses this off the jobs-list she is holding.*

**VIOLET**

FANCY LIVING SOMEWHERE THAT BIG ON YOUR OWN.  
F'YOU ASK ME, SHE SPENDS TOO MUCH TIME ALONE  
GOING QUIETLY ROUND THE BEND MAKING LISTS,  
GAWD, HER LISTS ARE NEVER-ENDING!

**LADY DANT** Next, Mrs Butterfield–

**VIOLET**

HOW MANY TIMES A WEEK D'YOU NEED TO SCRUB THE PANTRY  
FLOOR?

**LADY DANT** – and then–

**VIOLET**

LET ALONE CLEAN THE SILVERWARE YOU CLEANED THE DAY  
BEFORE.  
AND THEN WATCH HER COUNT THE CUTLERY AS YOU PUT IT  
BACK IN THE DRAWER!

**VIOLET**

JUST TO BE SURE!

**LADY DANT**

Just to be sure!

**MRS HARRIS** *works quickly as VIOLET sings and LADY DANT, all the while not looking directly at MRS HARRIS, ticks the jobs off her list, one by one.*

**VIOLET**

SKIRTING BOARDS, PICTURE RAILS.  
ORNAMENTS HAVE TO BE THREE-INCHES-SPACED.

**LADY DANT** No more, no less!

**VIOLET**

DRAWING ROOM, DINING ROOM,  
EV'RY NOOK, EV'RY SPECK...

**LADY DANT** Now, I have a very special visitor this afternoon,  
which is why you simply had to come.

**MRS HARRIS** Oh yes?

**VIOLET**

BRACE YOURSELF.

**LADY DANT** The Princess Elizabeth.

**VIOLET**

THOUGH YOU'LL WANT TO LAUGH YOU GOT TO PACE YOURSELF.

**LADY DANT** She's popping in for tea, *again*.

**VIOLET**

ON SHE GOES.

ALWAYS SOMEONE ELSE SHE *CLAIMS* SHE KNOWS!

**LADY DANT** Perhaps she'll bring that charming fiancé of hers.

**VIOLET**

SHE KNOWS THEM ALL *SO WELL!*

**LADY DANT** Prince Philip. Such a dear. Always knows the right  
thing to say.

**VIOLET**

SHE'S INVITED TO THE WEDDING, BUT OF COURSE.

**LADY DANT** (*simultaneously*)    **VIOLET** (*simultaneously*)

Front row pew...

FRONT ROW PEW,

**VIOLET**

SHE SAYS,

AS IF TO REINFORCE JUST HOW POPULAR SHE IS WITH 'EM ALL,  
WHO *SUPPOSEDLY* COME CALLING BY!

**LADY DANT** [*suggestions of continuing prattling*] One's diary-

**VIOLET** (*sings over her*)

THE KEY IS TO IGNORE HER,  
JUST LET HER PRATTLE ON.

**LADY DANT** So *busy*-

**VIOLET**

AND HEAD ON UP THE STAIRS TO HER DRESSING ROOM AND  
*WELL!* THERE'S A SIGHT TO SEE AND MAKE NO MISTAKE,  
WHAT A BLEEDIN' MESS!

**MRS HARRIS** *looks around, aghast.*

I KNOW, YOU'D NEVER GUESS!  
EV'RYTHING, FLUNG EV'RYWHERE!  
MOST OF THE CONTENTS OF HER WARDROBE  
SLUNG ON THE BACK OF A CHAIR  
FANCY FROCKS AND FRILLY WOT-NOTS  
DROPPED, WITHOUT A CARE.  
JUST SCOOP 'EM ALL UP,  
WHERE THE GREATEST MESS IS.  
HANG 'EM IN THE WARDROBE  
WITH HER OTHER DRESSES-

**MRS HARRIS** *has opened the wardrobe door and seen something hanging out of sight of the audience. Everything stops. MRS HARRIS is frozen to the spot.*

**MRS HARRIS**

OH... MY...

**VIOLET**

ALL LOOK THE SAME TO ME,  
NOT THAT I PAY MUCH ATTENTION...

**MRS HARRIS**

OH... MY...

**VIOLET**

'MAKE DO AND MEND', THEY SAY.  
S'DIFF'RENT FOR THEM AS HAVE MONEY TO SPEND...

**VIOLET** *fades.*

[MUSIC NO.04: "THERE IS MORE TO LIFE"]

**MRS HARRIS** (*nervous, awe-struck*)

ADA HARRIS,  
YOU GOT TO FIFTY-THREE,  
THOUGHT YOU'D SEEN THE LOT, YOU DID,  
ALL THERE WAS TO SEE...

ADA HARRIS...  
WHOSE DREAM IS THIS?

THIS COLOUR...  
YOU KNOW COLOURS,  
WHAT'S THIS COLOUR, ADA?  
THERE AIN'T NO FLOWER,  
NOT THE SHADE O' THIS...

AND HOW IT SHINES...!  
AND HOW IT FLOWS...!  
AND HOW IT FOLDS AND CURLS AND FALLS AND TUMBLES.  
HOW IT TUMBLES!  
WHO COULD EVER MAKE SUCH MAGIC...?

ADA!  
YOUR HEART IS POUNDING, GIRL!

**LADY DANT** (*appearing, harshly*) What on earth are you doing,  
Mrs Butterfield—

Oh. You're not Mrs Butterfield!

**MRS HARRIS** My name's Mrs—

**LADY DANT** No matter. I see you've found my new dress.  
"Ravishing", of course.

**MRS HARRIS** (*hypnotized*) Oh – it is...

**LADY DANT** (*with great reverence*) No, this particular design is  
named 'Ravishing'.

MONSIEUR CHRISTIAN DIOR,  
ON THE AVENUE MONTAIGNE.  
PARIS'S GLORIOUS NEW DESIGNER.

**MRS HARRIS** What's it made of?

**LADY DANT** Iridescent organza.

**MRS HARRIS** I've never seen anything like it...

**LADY DANT**

WITHIN IT ARE ALL THE COLOURS AND HUES  
AND LIGHTS OF THE RAINBOW.

**MRS HARRIS** All those flowers...!

**LADY DANT** Individually crafted in finest chiffon.

**MRS HARRIS** It's like a work of art!

**LADY DANT** No, Mrs...

**MRS HARRIS** Harris, dear.

**LADY DANT** It is not *like* a work of art, Mrs Harris. It *is* a work of art.

**MRS HARRIS**

**LADY DANT**

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE?

ALL THE SHADES OF THE  
RAINBOW!

I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MUCH  
MATERIAL IN ONE  
PLACE,  
IN ONE DRESS..!

ALL THE FLOWERS FROM  
THE GARDEN OF EDEN..!

WHO EVER COULD  
DREAM OF A THING SO  
BEAUTIFUL..?!

A PRINCESS IN HER HEART.

HE'S A GENIUS,

A MASTER!  
SUCH ARTISTRY,

SIXTY METERS IN A SINGLE  
GOWN.

EACH FLOWER IS CRAFTED

AND SEWN BY HAND..!

EV'RY WOMAN IS A  
PRINCESS,  
A PRINCESS!  
DEEP IN EV'RY HEART  
THERE SLUMBERS A  
DREAM.

**MRS HARRIS**

THE BUST, THE WAIST, I'VE  
NEVER SEEN IN ALL MY  
DAYS

A SHAPE THAT'S QUITE  
LIKE THIS,  
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT SUCH  
A THING  
WAS POSSIBLE!

**LADY DANT**

THE WORLD HAS NEVER  
SEEN

A SHAPE THAT'S QUITE  
LIKE THIS,  
ONLY DIOR, MONSIEUR  
DIOR, KNEW THIS  
WAS POSSIBLE!

**LADY DANT** *fades from sight.* **MRS HARRIS** *remains, with the dress.*

**MRS HARRIS**

THERE IS MORE TO LIFE, ADA HARRIS,  
THAN YOU EVER KNEW,  
THAN YOU EVER DREAMED...  
AND YOU SEEN IT NOW,  
THERE AIN'T NO UN-DOING IT...

WHAT JUST HAPPENED HERE, ADA HARRIS?  
YOU SEEN THINGS BEFORE,  
PRETTY THINGS BEFORE...  
BUT NOT LIKE *THIS*.

THIS IS SOMETHING NOT QUITE REAL, THIS IS.  
THIS SEEMS MADE TO MAKE YOU FEEL A DIFF'RENT WAY.  
THIS SEEMS MADE TO MAKE YOU *FEEL*, ADA!

AND YOU SEEN IT NOW...

**MRS HARRIS** *arrives at a startling conclusion:*

I have to have one.

*She registers what she just said, and repeats it, just to be sure she actually said it.*

I have to have one!

*She shakes herself out of her reverie as she remembers.*

My clients!

**[MUSIC NO.05: "CLIENTS #1 – LOOK AT ME"]**

**BOB** *appears, in a state.*

**BOB** *(as he enters)* Numbers... Numbers!

**MRS HARRIS** Sorry I'm late, Bob. I just had to–

**BOB**

ALL I CAN SEE IS HER,

ALL I CAN SEE IS *HER!*

NUMBERS DANCING ON A PAGE IS PAM'LA GLIDING 'CROSS A  
STAGE.

PAM'LA IN THE CHAIR.

PAM'LA THERE AND THERE AND THERE...

**MRS HARRIS** You could just talk to her...?

**BOB**

SHE'D LOOK RIGHT THROUGH ME.

**MRS HARRIS** Just say hello to her...

**BOB**

I COULDN'T DO IT TO MESELF.

MRS HARRIS I'M A BORING ACCOUNTANT JUST  
LOOK AT ME.

WHY WOULD SUCH BEAUTIFUL PERFECTION EVER LOOK AT ME?

I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO STEP INSIDE HER GAZE.

*(steeling himself)* ONE OF THESE DAYS, MRS HARRIS,

I'M GONNA TURN MY BACK ON ALL THIS.

ONE OF THESE DAYS, MRS HARRIS,

I'LL *SHOVE* THESE PAPERS OUT THE WINDER!

**MRS HARRIS** Then do it!

**BOB** Eh?

**MRS HARRIS** Do it! Find a different job. What d'you like doing  
most of all?

**BOB** *(embarrassed)* Well...

**MRS HARRIS** Go on...

**BOB**

...I'VE GOT A DREAM OF TAKING PICTURES.  
ONE DAY.  
PHOTOGRAPHS OF LIFE AS IT IS:  
BARGES ON THE RIVER,  
SHADOWS IN THE PARK,  
BUSES ON THE STREET,  
ALL THE LIGHTS IN PICCADILLY.  
*(cautiously, confessional)* I SEE THINGS SOMETIMES  
SO BEAUTIFUL THEY MAKE ME GASP...

**MRS HARRIS** ...*(moved)*

**BOB**

I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT...

**MRS HARRIS** *understands perfectly well.*

THERE IS

**BOB & MRS HARRIS**

MORE TO LIFE...

**BOB**

THAN NUMBERS, MRS HARRIS.

You think I'm barmy.

**MRS HARRIS** If you'd told me yesterday...

But what could be so wrong with wanting something  
beautiful...?

**BOB** *yelps.*

**BOB** There she is!

**MRS HARRIS** Who?

**BOB** Pamela, opposite! You do for her next, don't you?

**MRS HARRIS** Yes, and actually I really must [be off]–

**BOB**

WILL YOU PUT A WORD IN FOR ME?  
NO, WAIT! NO, WAIT... DON'T...  
JUST THINK THIS CAREF'LLY THROUGH, BOB.

NO DON'T SAY A THING.  
PLEASE SAY THAT YOU WON'T.

**MRS HARRIS** (*leaving*) Not if you don't want me to.

**PAMELA**

FINALLY YOU'RE HERE!

*And in a step, MRS HARRIS is now in PAMELA's untidy apartment.*

**MRS HARRIS** ...sorry I'm late, I just had to—

**PAMELA**

FINALLY YOU'RE HERE, MRS HARRIS!  
PILES AND PILES OF JOBS TO DO LIKE  
STOCKINGS DARNING, THESE ARE THROUGH.  
WHEN YOU'RE DONE WITH THOSE  
THIS NEEDS IRONING, HEAVEN KNOWS.  
I'VE GOT THE MOST-IMPORTANT-EVER EVENING.  
THE BIG PRODUCER OF THIS NEW REVUE I'M DUE TO MEET.  
WELL, I MIGHT BE,  
HE'LL BE THERE.  
WELL... HE *MIGHT* BE...  
OH BUT LOOK AT ME.  
A TOTAL FRIGHT FROM HEAD TO TOE, I KNOW,  
*DON'T* LOOK AT ME!  
HE'LL SEE A THOUSAND GIRLS OR MORE I'M SURE,  
BUT NONE OF THEM WILL QUITE BE WHAT HE'S AFTER, RIGHT?  
BUT ME.  
I'LL FIT THE BILL PRECISELY, RIGHT?  
THAT'S ME.  
THE PERFECT BLEND OF DARK AND LIGHT, THAT'S ME.  
I'M NOT SOME SILLY FRILLY LITTLE FILLY LIKE HE'S USED TO,  
I'LL SAY!  
OH!  
BUT WHAT *WOULD* I SAY?  
AND WHY WOULD HE BOTHER?  
OH WHY DO *I* BOTHER?  
OH!—

**MRS HARRIS** You look beautiful, dear.

**PAMELA** (*sincere*) Do I really?

**MRS HARRIS** You always do.

You should just talk to him.

**PAMELA** Oh, I couldn't!

**MRS HARRIS** If you don't try, you'll never get anywhere.

Pamela, I was just wondering... Where d'you get those Christian Dior dresses?

**PAMELA** How on earth would I get to Paris?

**MRS HARRIS** You can't buy one here?

**PAMELA** Don't be ridiculous.

NOW DON'T YOU DILLY-DALLY, MRS HARRIS, YOU'VE GOT FAR  
TOO MUCH TO DO!

**BOB** *is watching through his window opposite. He leaps  
out of the way when spotted.*

WHO'S THE CHAP LIVES OPPOSITE?  
HE'S ACTING LIKE A PROPER TWIT.

*And MRS HARRIS is in the MAJOR's house.*

*The MAJOR is clearly in bad-temper and ill-health, walking  
with difficulty, with the aid of a stick.*

**MAJOR**

LOOK AT ME!

**MRS HARRIS** Morning, Major!

**MAJOR**

EV'RY DAY A BLOODY TRIAL.

**MRS HARRIS** Whatever's happened?

**MAJOR**

LOOK AT ME!

THE LEGS DON'T WORK.

THE LUNGS DON'T WORK.

THE EYES DON'T WORK.

I'M FINALLY DECREPIT, MRS HARRIS...

**MRS HARRIS** Nonsense! You'll feel much better if I can just—

**MAJOR**

THERE IS NO POINT!

*(banging his stick)* LEAVE ME BE, I TELL YOU!

LET ME SIT, GATHER DUST,

AS IT ALL GATHERS DUST...

*(defeated)* THERE IS NO *POINT*.

**MRS HARRIS** Life's not done with you just yet. You never know what's round the corner.

**MAJOR** *(with a sardonic laugh)*

CORNERS ARE FOR YOUNG'UNS, MRS HARRIS.

CORNERS ARE FOR THEM WITH TIME YET TO COME,

WHO CAN WALK MORE THAN TWO FEET DOWN THE STREET

WITHOUT A PAUSE FOR BREATH.

CORNERS AREN'T FOR LOOKING ROUND, MRS HARRIS,

WHEN YOU'RE OLD AND ALL TO BE FOUND IS THE THING YOU

*DON'T WANT TO SEE.*

*More coughing.*

CORNERS AREN'T FOR YOU AND ME, MRS HARRIS.

I'm finished, washed up, done for. We both are.

**MRS HARRIS** Don't be daft. There's always something. Even if you don't know what it is yet. *(Has an idea)* I remember you saying you were a dab hand at the foxtrot. Maybe you should take up dancing again.

**MAJOR** Are you mad?

**MRS HARRIS** *(brain whirring)* If there's something could make you happy, what's the harm in giving it a go?

*The COUNTESS appears.*

**COUNTESS**

A LITTLE LATE TODAY, MRS HARRIS.

NO MATTER.

# WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

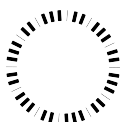
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