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STEPPING OUT

by Richard Harris

SAMUEL FRENCH

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Stepping Out was first presented at the Thorndike Theatre, Leatherhead. Subsequently presented by Bill Kenwright, in association with the Thorndike Theatre, at the Duke of York's Theatre, London on 18th September, 1984. Directed by Julia McKenzie, Designed by Stuart Stanley, Finale choreography by Tudor Davies, Choreography within the play by Jenifer Mary Morgan. The cast was as follows:

MAVIS . . . . . Barbara Ferris
DOROTHY . . . . . Josephine Gordon
LYNNE . . . . . Charlotte Barker
MRS FRASER . . . . . Sheri Shepstone
MAXINE . . . . . Barbara Young
ANDY . . . . . Gabrielle Lloyd
GEOFFREY . . . . . Ben Aris
VERA . . . . . Marcia Warren
SYLVIA . . . . . Diane Langton
ROSE . . . . . Peggy Phango

The part of the unseen Stage Manager was played by David Emerson. Other parts were played by Ann Gabrielle, Sue Scott-Davison and Eileen Dunwoodie.

NOTES ON MUSIC

It would be preferable that the music used is from the original production: *The Entertainer*, *Tea For Two*, *I Got Rhythm*, *Let's Face The Music And Dance*, *Happy Feet*, *Revolutionary*.

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CHARACTERS

MAVIS
DOROTHY
LYNNE
MRS FRASER
MAXINE
ANDY
GEOFFREY
VERA
SYLVIA
ROSE
UNSEEN STAGE MANAGER
UNSEEN ANNOUNCER

The script also includes two "extras" at the beginning of the play and two sugar plum fairies in Act Two but these characters may be omitted if desired. If they are the asterisked line of Mavis' dialogue on page 5 will need to be altered to read "Did Maxine pay for last week?"

SETTING

The action takes place in a North London church hall.

ACT I	Scene 1	An evening in Febraury.
	Scene 2	A month later.
	Scene 3	A month later.
	Scene 4	A month later.
ACT II	Scene 1	A week later.
	Scene 2	2 weeks later.
	Scene 3	2 weeks later.
	Scene 4	3 weeks later.
	Scene 5	2–3 weeks later.

The dialogue and stage directions in square brackets on pages 3, 5, 126, 127 are to be omitted if the two extra characters at the beginning of the play, and the two sugar plum fairies, are not included in the cast.

ACT ONE

Scene One

(A church hall in North London. Just before eight o'clock, a February evening.

The elderly and rather rundown hall is wooden-walled with an open girder roof. Most of the rear wall is taken up by a raised stage with steps leading up to it. Rear of the stage is a semi-glazed door leading through to the changing room. Right of the stage, and set at an angle, a pair of semi-glazed swing doors lead through to the unseen entrance lobby. Upstage in the left wall is a pair of doors that are marked as the fire exit. These doors have a crash bar – used by some of the dancers as a practice barre. High up in each of the side walls is an uncurtained and dusty window. There are pull chords, but the windows are obviously seldom opened. Metal stacking chairs are arranged along both side walls and along the front of the stage. There are radiators and a fire extinguisher. On the stage, there is a small untidy pile of chairs next to the changing room door, and a notice-board on legs. Pinned on the board are various notices and posters – showing the activities that go on in the hall – dancing, scouts, art classes etc. Downstage left is a

low upright piano and stool. Next to these, a folding table, which holds the class register and a small metal cashbox. The 'fourth wall' is the unseen practice mirror.

At rise of curtain.

MAVIS *– the teacher – sits on a downstage chair, near the piano, checking her phone. She is an ex-pro dancer, attractive, 40. She wears a faded T-shirt, tights, long legwarmers and ballet shoes. A man's sweater is knotted around her shoulders – she's keeping warm after taking a ballet class. None of the clothes she wears are new. She takes up a small bottle of fruit juice and sips it as she looks at, without really watching.*

DOROTHY *practising a ballet step using the back of a chair, downstage centre, watching herself intently in the mirror and being encouraged by* **LYNNE**. **DOROTHY** *is small, anxious and birdlike, could be anything from thirty to forty five and is somewhere in between. She wears a black leotard, ballet shoes and has an elasticated bandage round one knee. There is a hint of white knicker showing beneath the leotard.* **LYNNE** *is nineteen. She is eager to please, has a lovely face but is of large proportions. She never wears make-up and her skin glows healthily. She wears a tracksuit top, black tights, rumpled legwarmers and scuffed ballet shoes.*

MRS FRASER, *the pianist, sits at the piano reading a woman's magazine and finishing off an apple. She is fiftyish, a square-shaped Northern lady who prides herself on her pessimism. She wears a tweed overcoat,*

knitted hat and clumpy brogues and can more often than not be seen chewing some form of fruit. [A Young Woman in crash helmet bright tracksuit, legwarmers and running shoes, stands making a note of something on the notice board].

MAXINE *and* **ANDY** *stand near the chairs, right. Their topcoats and bags are on two of the chairs.* **MAXINE** *is delving into her copious holdall which contains leotards etc. in their plastic packs. She is in the process of doing a selling job on* **ANDY** *who is tall and thin and in her mid-thirties. She wears a long cardigan over a floral dress, and court shoes. Note:* **ANDY** *always wears long sleeves. She has short hair and an anxious face and is rather inclined to stoop as though ashamed of her height.* **MAXINE** *is a good-looking forty-something. She has dyed blond hair and good make-up. She wears a tight red leotard over a black jumper, tight black shiny trousers and long red legwarmers. There are big rocks on her fingers.)*

LYNNE. There you are, you see, you've got it.

DOROTHY. Was it better?

LYNNE. It was really good – look, look in the mirror – your back's ever so straight and everything.

DOROTHY. And everything – yes. *(She has the habit of joining in on the last two or three words of whatever is said to her. Sometimes she even gets there first.)* It did feel better.

LYNNE. It was really good, wasn't it, Mavis?

MAVIS. *(Who wasn't really watching.)* You're doing very well, Dorothy – off you go now ladies and get your taps on.

(She smiles and takes a couple of pulls on her vape. She is struggling to give up smoking. **MRS FRASER** *sniffs exaggeratedly and makes great play of waving the aromatic smell away.* **DOROTHY** *moves the chair back against the wall and takes up her handbag – where she goes, the handbag goes too – and she and* **LYNNE** *move obediently to the changing room, with.)*

DOROTHY. Only I worry you see.

LYNNE. You mustn't worry about it.

DOROTHY. About it – no – I mean, it's only for fun, isn't it?

LYNNE. Of course it is.

DOROTHY. Is – yes.

MAVIS. *(Calling after them.)* You're doing very well, Dorothy.

MRS FRASER. *(To herself, but loud and clear.)* Oh yes?

(She licks a thumb and turns the magazine page. **DOROTHY** *and* **LYNNE** *go into the changing room.* **MAVIS** *takes a pair of well-used tap shoes from her bag and changes them for the ballet shoes as.)*

MAXINE. What are you – a thirty-four?

ANDY. Umm… well, thirty-three actually.

*(***MAXINE** *takes a blue leotard from its pack and holds it up against* **ANDY**, *guiding her so that they are looking into the mirror as.)*

MAXINE. *(Admiringly.)* Oh yes.

ANDY. You don't think, um, sleeves, do you?

MAXINE. Not in the blue, no, can't help you. I could do you sleeves in the red, but with your colouring, I don't think so.

ANDY. Might you be getting some in?

MAXINE. I can never tell – I get what's on offer, you know what I mean?

MRS FRASER. *(Not looking up.) I* know what you mean.

ANDY. Umm… might I just have a look at the red?

MAXINE. Have a look at what you like, darling.

(And she sorts out a red leotard as.)

[A middle-aged woman swathed in headscarf and anorak and carrying a bulging Waitrose bag comes quickly out of the changing room. She and the young woman exit quickly, as though late, with calls of Thankseversomuch **MAVIS**, *seeyounextweekthen 'night. The others – apart from* **MRS FRASER** *– chorus their goodnights. The two women go out].*

MAVIS. Did she pay for last week?*

MRS FRASER. She did when I reminded her.

(She doesn't look up from her magazine. She seldom looks directly at anyone. **MAXINE** *is holding a long-sleeved red leotard against* **ANDY**. *They look into the mirror as.)*

MAXINE. No, I don't think so… it's the blue, definitely the blue. *(And she holds up the blue one, swivelling* **ANDY** *towards* **MAVIS**, *with.)* Wouldn't you say, Mavis, the blue?

MAVIS. It's very nice, yes, I like it.

MAXINE. There y'go then, Andy, five quid.

ANDY. Yes, well, all right, fine.

(And the transaction will be completed as **GEOFFREY** *enters. He is tall, in his mid-forties. The sort of man who doesn't like being noticed and most of the time wouldn't be. He wears a raincoat over a suit, carries a small rucksack.)*

MAXINE. Hello Geoffrey, how's Geoffrey?

(He manages a brief smile and.)

GEOFFREY. Umm… someone's left their lights on, I think it's you, er, Mavis – the Volkswagen.

MAVIS. Oh Christ not again, thanks, Geoffrey.

MRS FRASER. *(Reading.)* You'll ruin that car

GEOFFREY. If you'd like to give me the key, I'll um…

MAVIS. Would you mind, thanks – *(She tosses him the keys.)* – you're a love.

(He makes to go out again but **MAXINE** *holds up the red leotard against herself with.)*

MAXINE. How about a nice leotard, Geoffrey – if you don't fancy wearing it now, you can always wear it on the beach.

*(***GEOFFREY** *goes out.* **MAXINE** *nudges* **ANDY** *and squeezes the crotch of the leotard.)*

Plenty of room for his wallet.

*(***MAXINE** *and* **ANDY** *sit to put on their tap shoes.* **MAXINE***'s are old and soft,* **ANDY***'s shiny new.)*

MAVIS. Bloody car.

MRS FRASER. You'll forget your head one of these days.

MAVIS. Yes, all right Glenda, thank you.

MRS FRASER. No wonder people take advantage.

MAXINE. *(To* **ANDY**.*)* How are you off for tights?

MRS FRASER. If it was me, I'd say something.

MAVIS. I said thank you, Glenda.

MRS FRASER. Turning the place into a bazaar. *(She does her thumb–licking page-turning routine.)*

> *(***VERA** *enters. She hasn't been here before but is undaunted. She is thirty five, neat and proper as a pin, wears an expensive belted fawn raincoat and high heels, carries a good leather bag. Her dyed red hair and make-up are immaculate.)*

VERA. Excuse me, is this the tap class?

MAXINE. It certainly is – shop!

MAVIS. *(Moving towards* **VERA**, *smiling.)* Hello, I'm Mavis, I run the class, how can I help you?

VERA. Am I too late to join?

MAVIS. No, of course you're not.

> *(***MRS FRASER** *glances up to give* **VERA** *the once-over, then pointedly holds up the register, already back to reading her magazine.* **VERA** *takes the opportunity to look at herself in the mirror, touching her hair.)*

This is Mrs Fraser – she's our pianist.

VERA. Oh yes – hello.

MAVIS. Have you done any tap before?

VERA. Well I did start another class but – well to be quite honest, I didn't really like the teacher. *(It's a careful,*

precise, rather flat accent. An 'improved' Midlands accent that turns 'my' into 'may'.)

MAVIS. *(Smiling.)* I'd better not ask who it was then... *(She makes to write in the book.)* ...Mrs...?

VERA. Andrews, Mrs Andrews.

MAVIS. And what do we call you?

VERA. Oh – yes – Vera actually.

(During this, **GEOFFREY** *enters and moves to* **MAVIS** *with her keys.)*

MAVIS. Welcome to the class then Vera... excuse me... thanks Geoffrey.

*(***GEOFFREY** *moves away to change, where he always changes, behind the notice board on the stage. Unseen, he puts on a roll-necked sweater, dark joggers and a pair of elderly but well-polished tap shoes. He takes his time about changing, so as not to have to make conversation. As.)*

VERA. *(Looking around.)* Are there many?

MAVIS. *(Putting the keys into her bag.)* Sorry?

VERA. I was wondering how many there were in a class.

MAVIS. Not too many: just about the right number.

MRS FRASER. Like flies. They come out in the summer and drop off in the winter. Like flies.

MAVIS. Most of the class are fairly new – apart from Maxine and Lynne who've been with me from the beginning – so you'll have nothing to worry about.

VERA. Oh I'm not worried, I pick things up quite quick actually.

MAVIS. *(Smiles.)* That's what I like to hear

VERA. When would you like me to pay?

(Still reading, **MRS FRASER** *holds out the cashbox.)*

MRS FRASER. Now.

MAVIS. I usually ask people to pay weekly before each session. *(She smiles.)* If you don't come you don't pay.

VERA. Oh I shall come – I like to do things properly, there's no point else, is there?

*(***SYLVIA** *comes out of the changing room. She is in her early thirties, a short, bubbly brunette. Her bright and outrageous clothing accentuates her over-ample curves. She wears tatty white trainers and chews gum most of the time.)*

MAVIS. Give them a shout, will you Sylvia?

*(***SYLVIA** *leans back into the door to shout.)*

SYLVIA. Oi – we're starting!

(And she jumps down from the stage, reacting to the impact and telling herself that she must stop doing that... and moves to regard herself in the mirror as **LYNNE** *comes of the changing room. She wears tap shoes and a cardigan over her tights – it matches the legwarmers she has changed into.)*

LYNNE. Just coming, Mavis – Rose has broken one of her laces.

MRS FRASER. Makes a change.

SYLVIA. *(Of herself, in the mirror.)* Talk about the fairy on the bleeding Christmas tree.

MAXINE. You've lost weight, Sylv.

SYLVIA. Definitely not.

MAXINE. Oh you have, hasn't she?

ANDY. Oh… at least…

VERA. *(Pointing.)* Is that where we change?

MAVIS. Lynne – will you show…

VERA. No that's all right thank you I can manage.

(She is about to move away but takes up the bottle and apple core on top of the piano.)

I'll just get rid of these for you, shall I?

MAVIS. Oh… that's very nice of you, Vera, thank you.

*(***VERA** *carries the debris towards the changing room as* **MRS FRASER** *glances at* **MAVIS** *… hello, we've got one of those…***VERA** *almost bumps into* **DOROTHY** *as she hurries out of the changing room.* **DOROTHY** *now wears a white M&S cardigan over her leotard, and new white tap shoes which have large red laces. Her handbag is over her arm.)*

DOROTHY. Rose says has anyone got a spare lace she can borrow?

MAVIS. *(Generally.)* Rose says has anyone got a spare lace she can borrow.

DOROTHY. Borrow – yes.

GEOFFREY. I say – she can, umm… *(From behind the notice board, he holds up one of his shoes.)*

MAVIS. Problem over, thank you Geoffrey.

*(***GEOFFREY** *takes the black lace from his shoe and gives it to* **DOROTHY** *who hurries back into the changing room.* **SYLVIA** *has remained glumly looking at herself in the mirror.)*

SYLVIA. I ate like a pig this weekend. Saturday it was his firm's dinner dance and Sunday his mother came over so I had to put on a roast, didn't I?

MAXINE. You were doing so well – wasn't she, she was doing really well.

SYLVIA. Well if they don't like the size of it they don't have to look at it, do they? Sod 'em

(And she gives her body a defiant thrust as **DOROTHY** *hurries out of the changing room and puts her bag under a chair as* **MRS FRASER** *strikes a loud chord on the piano and* **MAVIS** *claps her hands.)*

MAVIS. Right – we'll make a start then, shall we? Phones switched off please.

(Several of them check their phones. **MAXINE** *and* **LYNNE** *move directly to the front, but the others are less anxious to exhibit their wares.)*

Let's have you in the front then, shall we Geoffrey? *(She looks pointedly at* **MRS FRASER** *who is still reading.)* When you're ready Glenda.

*(***MRS FRASER** *unhurriedly sets down the magazine and sorts out the first piece of music.)*

Right – we'll start with some relaxing... four bends, four swings... are you with us, Glenda?

MRS FRASER. I'm just getting my bits out, thank you.

*(***VERA** *comes out of the changing room. She wears a neat skirt and new tap shoes. There is a hankie up her sleeve.)*

VERA. So sorry to keep you everyone.

MAVIS. This is Vera – say hello to Vera everyone.

(They chorus their hellos as **VERA** *moves confidently into the front row, admiring herself in the mirror.)*

If you'd like to stay at the back, Vera, then you can see what we're doing.

*(***VERA** *moves into the back row, unoffended, with a last look and touch of her hair in the mirror, as.)*

Don't worry if you get it wrong, you won't get thrown out, it's not an audition – come forward a bit, Geoffrey – all right, Glenda?

MRS FRASER. Whenever you're ready.

MAVIS. OK. So it's five six seven eight…

(And the simple warm-up routine begins. **MAVIS** *faces out front, her back to the class – most of whom intently follow her every move, staring at her feet.* **MRS FRASER** *plays a song in the style of* **[THE ENTERTAINER]** *in very strict tempo. She never looks at the dancers and whenever she is not actually playing, she goes straight back to her magazine.*

And we see our class in action for the first time. **LYNNE** *is good, light on her feet and attentive. She smiles a lot but bites a nail when she does something wrong. She's very serious about dancing.* **DOROTHY** *makes extravagantly large movements, is unsmiling and looking all the time at* **MAVIS***' feet.* **MAXINE** *is confident, competent, and enjoying it. She's the best mover in the group, the most 'natural' dancer and, unlike most of them, uses her arms well.* **ANDY** *is hopeless, with no co-ordination whatsoever. She looks doggedly to the front, keeps her arms tight to*

her sides and her fists clenched. **GEOFFREY** *is limited but competent. When he smiles – for instance at a comment on someone else's mistake – it's as though he has forgotten himself and is quick to control it.* **SYLVIA** *chews gum, isn't very good but doesn't give a damn. She's always that little bit out of step: if the others do something to the left, she's guaranteed to do it to the right.* **VERA** *picks it up quickly. She dances as primly and as efficiently as she does everything else.*

As they dance, **MAVIS** *calls out the steps as they come up, dancing along with them... smiling a lot over her shoulder on a one-to-one basis and seems to be enjoying it. After all, they come here to have a good time and she's a pro whose job is to make the punters happy. So that they are tapping away and* **MAVIS** *is calling out the steps as,* **ROSE** *hurries out of the changing room. She is in her forties, of Trinidadian heritage, wearing an obvious wig, a bright pink dress over black tights and white tap shoes, one of which is done up with* **GEOFFREY***'s black lace and is already coming undone. She has a large crucifix round her neck and lots of rings on her fingers.)*

(As they dance.) Evening Rose, nice of you to join us.

*(***ROSE** *hurries to join them as they are moving backwards so that she bumps into* **ANDY** *before taking her place in the back row.* **ROSE** *has little sense of rhythm but loves every minute of it. And they continue dancing as.)*

OK let's try four tap springs and tap step ball change followed by a cramp roll starting with your left foot...

(And they change the step as.) ...no, Sylvia, your left foot... no, your other left foot.

SYLVIA. I can't think and move at the same time, it's not natural

MAVIS. Well have a go anyway.

(They continue dancing and come to the end of the routine and the music stops and **ROSE** *rubs one of her calf muscles and* **MAVIS** *goes to her.)*

Oh Rose... has your leg gone numb again?

ROSE. I don't know, I can't feel it.

MAVIS. Vera – try and keep the weight on the balls of your feet... no, your heels on the floor but the weight on your toes, yes?

*(***VERA** *tries it, looking at herself in the mirror.)*

Something like that, yes... *(Generally.)* You're all still inclined to be a bit heavy – try and keep it light, nice and light – and Sylvia – try and keep your knees together, yes?

SYLVIA. I've been trying to keep my knees together all my life.

MAXINE. Haven't we all, darling?

MAVIS. OK – move forward everyone and let's have the back row in front this time...

(She indicates for **MRS FRASER** *to resume playing, but* **DOROTHY** *puts her hand up and:)*

DOROTHY. You know that bit where you go... *(She demonstrates.)* ...is it toe toe heel heel?

MAVIS. *(Demonstrating.)* Toe toe heel heel, yes.

DOROTHY. I thought so: only I've been going toe heel toe heel.

ANDY. *(Anxiously.)* Isn't that what it's supposed to be?

LYNNE. No, it's like this… *(And she demonstrates.)*

MAVIS. Have you got it now?

DOROTHY. Yes thank you – sorry.

ANDY. Sorry.

MAVIS. All right Sylvia?

*(**SYLVIA** has been flapping her feet along with the others.)*

SYLVIA. I think so, yeah.

MAVIS. Incidentally, will you be getting some proper tap shoes or what?

SYLVIA. Now I've mastered it, I suppose I'd better.

VERA. *(Putting a hand up.)* Excuse me.

(They regard her.)

I got mine in Northfields Lane actually – they've got ever such a good selection.

ROSE. *(Who has sat down for a rest.)* I wouldn't go into that woman's shop, never again. Not for nothing. That is what I call an awful person.

VERA. I thought she was rather helpful actually.

DOROTHY. Speak as you find, I always say.

ROSE. Well I'm saying: she's an awful person.

MAVIS. Right, let's get on, shall we? We'll have a look at the step we learned last week… you remember… it's… *(She starts to demonstrate, but.)*

SYLVIA. Excuse me.

MAVIS. Yes Sylvia.

SYLVIA. I wasn't here last week.

ANDY. *(Anxiously.)* Neither was I – sorry.

MAVIS. OK – who was here last week?

(Hands go up like children in class.)

OK, let's have you lot at the front then and the others at the back. There's nothing complicated, we'll go through it very slowly... basically it's... *(And she demonstrates as.)* ...three buffaloes to the right and a cramp roll... three buffaloes to the left, cramp roll, four scoops, six tap springs in a circle, tap step stamp stamp... OK – we'll go through it nice and slowly to the music... nice and slowly please Glenda... and it's five six seven eight...

*(***MRS FRASER** *plays a song in the style of* **[TEA FOR TWO]** *– but much too quickly and the dancers stumble and* **MAVIS** *waves for her to stop, with.)*

No, that's too fast... take it at... *(She demonstrates the tempo.)*

MRS FRASER. It's exactly the same as last week.

MAVIS. *(Not prepared to argue.)* OK – just a little slower then... and it's five six seven eight...

*(***MRS FRASER** *plays again at exactly the same tempo.)*

MAVIS. Glenda, it's still too fast.

MRS FRASER. It's exactly the same as last week.

MAXINE. No, it was slower last week – I mean, it doesn't affect *me*, but...

ROSE. Yes, it was definitely slower, definitely.

DOROTHY. Definitely – yes, wasn't it, Geoffrey – wouldn't you say?

GEOFFREY. Umm…

MAVIS. OK, here we go then… five six seven eight…

*(***MRS FRASER** *plays at funeral pace and the dancers stumble.)*

Glenda… it's too slow.

MRS FRASER. You said it was too fast.

MAVIS. And now I'm saying it's too slow.

(A moment.)

MRS FRASER. I see. *(She closes the piano lid and stands.)* When you've made up your mind, no doubt you'll let me know.

(Without looking at anyone, she goes into the changing room. All the others, apart from **VERA***, are used to this performance.)*

MAVIS. Excuse me… *(She moves to the changing room with.)* Take them through it again, will you Lynne?

(She grabs her vape and exits into the changing room.)

(There is a moment's silence.)

VERA. Does she often get upset?

SYLVIA. I think she's going through the change of key myself.

LYNNE. Which bit did she mean?

DOROTHY. I think she meant the last bit.

*(***ROSE** *has moved to sit, adjusting her wig.)*

GEOFFREY. Excuse me, um, Rose – my lace is undone.

LYNNE. *(To* **DOROTHY**.*)* Was it hop hop step turn…?

DOROTHY. Like this.

(She slowly demonstrates with her large movements and **LYNNE** *joins in as.)*

VERA. I did consider Zumba

SYLVIA. Oh I've done all that so I thought, right, now I've cracked the body beautiful, I'll move it about a bit.

VERA. There are so many classes nowadays, aren't there? Everyone I know seems to be going to some class or another.

ROSE. That's because we're a very class-conscious society.

MAXINE. *(To* **VERA**.*)* That's a nice shirt: you didn't get it locally, I bet.

VERA. No, Lionel brought it back from Geneva.

SYLVIA. You coming for a drink after, Rose?

ROSE. Are you going?

SYLVIA. Course I'm going, come on, come for a drink.

*(***MAXINE** *is doing some steps in front of the mirror.)*

VERA. You're ever so good at it, have you been doing it long?

MAXINE. It's all in the genes, sweetheart: my mother was bitten by a tap-dancing mosquito.

*(***DOROTHY** *is practising a ballet step, looking intently into the mirror.)*

VERA. *I* thought about ballet, but…

*(**MAVIS** comes out of the changing room, followed by **MRS FRASER** who is adjusting her hat. **MAVIS** moves straight to the front of the class and **MRS FRASER** returns to her piano as though nothing has happened.)*

MAVIS. *(Clapping her hands.)* OK sorry about that, slight misunderstanding, my fault, let's do it again – are we ready?

And it's five six seven eight…

*(**MRS FRASER** resumes playing a song in the style of **[TEA FOR TWO]** – and this time at the right tempo – to **MAVIS**' obvious relief – and they dance, with **MAVIS** calling out the steps and they continue.)*

And a little faster please, Glenda…

*(They continue, the music a little faster now…with **SYLVIA** colliding into **VERA** who says sorry… and they go through the routine with **MAVIS** leading from the front and they finish, banging their feet more or less together on the last step and they hold their pose for a brief moment and—.*

*The lights go quickly to black-out. At the same time, the orchestrated music in the style of **[HAPPY FEET]** comes up – underscored with heavy tap dancing. The music continues then suddenly stops as the lights come up for the next scene.)*

Scene Two

(A month later, seven forty five p.m. It is cold outside and those arriving show signs of it.

GEOFFREY *sits in front of the stage, having trouble removing the packaging from a Pret A Manger sandwich. He has his raincoat draped around his shoulders and has already changed into his dance gear.*

After a moment, **VERA** *bustles in. She is wearing a leather overcoat trimmed in fur, and long polished boots. She carries her holdall and a Harrods bag.*

GEOFFREY *is rather awkward at being caught with his sandwich.)*

VERA. Oh hello Geoffrey, you're early.

GEOFFREY. Yes, I – came straight from the office.

VERA. It's all rush nowadays, isn't it?

GEOFFREY. *(Standing.)* Usually I have time to go home, but, ummm…

(He vaguely indicates his sandwich.)

VERA. Oh don't mind me – would you like some coffee, I brought some coffee

GEOFFREY. Well actually…

(He indicates a small bottle of water but.)

VERA. Yes of course you would…

(She gives him the metal cup from the flask and pours coffee into it. The cup gets very

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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