

Bernard, Gloria, Bertha - Scene #1

*BERNARD and GLORIA (in skirt and blouse) are breakfasting at the stage left table. GLORIA has an American accent.*

GLORIA Bernard darling, do you think I've time to eat another pancake?

BERNARD (*looking at his watch*) I should think so- if you hurry. (*goes to door up right and calls*) Bertha!

GLORIA I adore pancakes for breakfast, don't you?

BERNARD Not especially.

GLORIA But back home, all our dieticians agree that a big breakfast prevents day-long neurosis.

BERTHA (*entering*) Did you call, Monsieur?

BERNARD Another pancake, Bertha.

BERTHA For Mademoiselle?

GLORIA Please, Bertie.

BERTHA And more of that black stuff to pour over it?

GLORIA Yes, please. But it's not 'black stuff', it's molasses- very good for the complexion.

BERTHA Well, I don't know what it's for, but I suppose it's all right. I don't like the look of it myself, but then I'm not here to reform the world.

BERNARD Well, that's a relief. So, just get busy on the pancake.

BERTHA Right. But don't blame me if it makes her ill.

BERNARD Are you going to eat it?

BERTHA No.

BERNARD So, there's no need to argue about it. Just hurry up- Mlle Gloria hasn't got much time.

GLORIA Please Bertie, do hurry. I shall miss my plane.

BERTHA All right. I'm going. But it isn't easy, you know.

BERNARD What? What? What is it now?

BERTHA Nothing...nothing... (*she exits to the kitchen*)

GLORIA That woman's always in such a bad mood.

BERNARD Is she?

GLORIA It's getting annoying.

BERNARD No. It's just her way. Don't worry about it.

GLORIA I *do* worry. If it goes on like this we'll just have to get rid of her, honey.

BERNARD Whatever for?

GLORIA I don't think she likes me.

BERNARD Now, darling, of course she likes you. It's just all this food you eat. It seems to upset her. It gives her a kind of indirect indigestion.

Robert. Gloria - Scene #2

GLORIA

This is unbelievable! Is it the man or the woman who gives orders in the home?

ROBERT It's the man.

GLORIA No it's not! It's the woman!

ROBERT Oh, come on!

GLORIA And I happen to be the mistress of this house.

ROBERT No comment.

GLORIA In America, the woman of the house gives the orders. And the man keeps his mouth shut. He obeys with no argument.

ROBERT No argument?

GLORIA No argument! The man makes the money and the woman is the brains. That's how it is in America, so let me go into my bedroom and you go in the one opposite!

ROBERT Yes. Yes, But we happen to be in France here, and in France, it's the man who gives the orders. Sorry about that.

GLORIA

You're wrong. Look, I'm starving. But as soon as I've had a coffee and something to eat you and I are going to have a little talk, and I'll bet you fifty dollars to a franc that you're going to agree with me before you're very much older.

Berta. Gretchen - Scene #6

BERTHA Ah, Hello Mlle Gretchen. You're here already.

GRETCHEN Ja. I came as fast as I could. If you only knew how happy I am to be home.

BERTHA I can see that.

GRETCHEN Herr Bernard isn't in?

BERTHA No, no. He's gone out – on business.

GRETCHEN Oh!

BERTHA But he'll be back in a minute.

GRETCHEN Are you sure?

BERTHA Oh yes. It's nothing very serious. He went out just before you telephoned.

GRETCHEN And is he happy?

BERTHA He's marvellously happy. You know how he looks forward to seeing you.

GRETCHEN Do you think he loves me as much as I love him?

BERTHA Well, now, that I don't know. I mean, how could I know a thing like that?

GRETCHEN But Berta, darling, you know I adore him.

BERTHA Well that's all right, then. He adores you too.

GRETCHEN And I've got three whole days this time. Isn't that wunderbar?

BERTHA Wunderbar.

GRETCHEN Herr Bernard will be pleased.

BERTHA I can't wait to see his face.

GRETCHEN You can't realise how marvellous it is to be back. It seems ages since I've seen him. Though I think of him all the time. In Melbourne. In Ankara, in Colombo. I am always dreaming of our little flat, and my little Bernard sitting here all alone thinking of me.

BERTHA It's beautiful.

GRETCHEN And when we're up about nineteen or twenty thousand feet, roaring away at six hundred miles an hour, and if I've nothing special to do, do you know I creep back into the luggage hold.

BERTHA Good heavens above.

GRETCHEN I'm all alone there, you see. And I look out of the porthole and stare at the stars dancing and the moon out there in the sky. And I say to myself that my Bernard is looking at them too. And I feel as though we are looking into each other's eyes across the layers of planets and meteorites and the nebulae. I'm madly romantic, you see.

BERTHA I can see you are. Madly.

Robert. Gretchen - Scene #7

ROBERT

If it hadn't been for that sauerkraut, do you know I would have enjoyed myself very much tonight.

GRETCHEN Why?

ROBERT Well, Bernard wasn't here, and it was very nice- just the two of us.

GRETCHEN Oh please don't waste your efforts.

ROBERT Oh, don't get angry. Come on, give me a little smile. You know you're really very pretty for a...

GRETCHEN For a German girl? Is that it? Is that what you were going to say?

ROBERT No, no, not at all! You've misinterpreted me.

GRETCHEN Do you really think I can't see what you're up to? All through dinner you never stopped winking at me...and those bizarre and cryptic little smiles...

ROBERT Not at all!

GRETCHEN Don't deny it! You're wooing me scandalously! You're hanging round me like... a caveman round his fire...

ROBERT I can't help it if I like you so much.

GRETCHEN That's no reason. And even if you do like me so much, I don't like you... so goodnight.

Gabriella. Bernard - scene #8

BERNARD Oh, yes! Let's go!

GABRIELLA Go where?

BERNARD To dinner, al fresco..

GABRIELLA No, I'd rather stay here. I've told you.

BERNARD But what for? I'd like to take you out. I need the fresh air.

GABRIELLA Then you go and get it. Your friend can keep me company. I'm staying here.

BERNARD Darling, don't you ever want to do anything else but sit at home and slop around in slippers?

GABRIELLA Look, I cover three hundred thousand miles a year. It's a change to slip around in sloppers. I like it. You-

BERNARD This is no time-

GABRIELLA Don't muddle me.

BERNARD Think of all that lovely fresh air.

GABRIELLA We fly at twenty thousand feet. I get enough fresh air. For once I've got a night at home and this is where I'm going to stay.

BERNARD But, darling-

GABRIELLA No, I won't listen to another word. I've made up my mind.

Gabriella, Robert - scene #9

GABRIELLA bursts onto the stage.)

GABRIELLA Where is he?

ROBERT Who?

GABRIELLA Where is Bernard?

ROBERT I thought he was with you. At Saint-Germain.

GABRIELLA What is it with this countryside craze? All through the journey, all through the meal, all Bernard would do was babble about fresh air and chestnut trees. He went on and on just as if he was trying to hide something.

ROBERT Really? What could he have to hide, do you think?

GABRIELLA That's just it! I know he has nothing to hide. I know him...But this insistence is infuriating. The more people tell me to do something the less I want to do it. That's how I am. It's my nature!

ROBERT Now, you musn't be...

GABRIELLA He got on my nerves so much, I didn't even finish dinner! I went out for some air and when I went back into the restaurant he'd gone! Don't you think that's outrageous?

ROBERT Yes, yes, absolutely! Well, perhaps he fancied some air too. And perhaps after you left he went back. Perhaps he's upset too. He loves you...

GABRIELLA But I love him too! Anyway, we wouldn't have these problems if we were together all the time. I know he's here, all alone, when I'm at the other end of the world...I wonder what he's doing, I worry...

ROBERT But he worries too. I'm sure that's why...why he was so keen to take you off to the country, to sort out all the worrying!

GABRIELLA It would all be so simple if only he'd marry me!

ROBERT Simple, yes, absolutely!

GABRIELLA I mean it's really too stupid to spend all that time apart.

ROBERT Stupid.

GABRIELLA Never mind, when we're married it'll all change. Right, well, goodnight, little Robert.

Bernard. Bertha - Scene #3

BERNARD What's for lunch?

BERTHA The American's flying out?

BERNARD Yes. Well?

BERTHA I'm waiting for my orders. Monsieur has his timetables. And the menus change according to the timetables. All the time! They change. They change round all the time.

BERNARD All right. Take it easy. Now then, Mlle Gabriella will be here for lunch.

BERTHA Ah! Well, that's all right then. Think I can cope with that one.

But it isn't easy you know. I find it very difficult to keep track of them all. I don't know how you manage it. It isn't easy.

BERNARD I know it isn't easy. You don't have to keep reminding me.

BERTHA Well, as long as you appreciate me. That's all I ask, just a little appreciation. So what do you want for lunch?

BERNARD You're the cook. You please yourself.

BERTHA Mlle Gabriella? What about saltimbocca alla romana?

BERNARD We had a saltimbocca last Saturday.

BERTHA Of course we did. Mlle Gabriella was here last Saturday. She liked it. She told me so.

BERNARD All right, you win. Saltimbocca alla romana.

BERTHA And what about dinner? A nice roast? Lamb, perhaps?

BERNARD Roast Lamb? Yes, excellent.

BERTHA With olives?

BERNARD (*gets his notebook out*) Yes- er, no, no, wait a minute. Can't be done.

BERTHA No olives?

BERNARD No. No roast lamb either. Near thing that, Bertha. You see it's Mlle Gabriella for lunch, but it's Mlle Gretchen for dinner. She arrives at 19.06.

BERTHA I see. No need to say any more. No roast lamb. Back to sauerkraut and frankfurters.

BERNARD I'm afraid so. Sorry about that.

BERTHA Just one thing after another. I don't know.

Bernard. Robert - Scene #4

BERNARD Well, let's have a quick drink shall we? Whisky?

ROBERT Anything you like. What a lovely girl. And what a fantastic view you've got from up here Bernard. You can see all Paris. (*approaches forestage and surveys auditorium.*)

BERNARD It's all right. So Robert, what brings you to Paris?

ROBERT Well, you always said 'Come and see me when I'm fixed up in Paris' and here you are, all fixed up. And here am I.

BERNARD Dear old Robert.

ROBERT And if you give me the address of your estate agent, I'm going to fix myself up too Bernard - I want a flat just like this. Same layout, same wonderful view, I need a flat because I'm going to get married.

BERNARD You're not!

ROBERT I am.

BERNARD Who are you engaged to?

ROBERT No one, not yet. But I know a girl, well, we're vaguely acquainted, you see. A charming girl. I haven't actually asked her yet but I should think it'll be all right. I'd like to get married, I can't go on living alone much longer.

BERNARD You look perfectly all right to me.

ROBERT Of course I'm alright. So are you for that matter.

BERNARD You're still young.

ROBERT Well, so are you. You're in good shape, you're young, and you're going to get married.

BERNARD I certainly am not.

ROBERT Not? But I thought- well, this charming American girl, just now- she said you were engaged. Wait a minute, you agreed with her. I heard you.

BERNARD Well, if you want to be technical I suppose you could say we were engaged. Yes.

ROBERT Then you're going to get married.

BERNARD No.

ROBERT Bernard, you're always doing this to me. Look. If you're engaged, you're going to get married. It's not only technical, it's logical! Isn't it?

BERNARD It is not. And anyway, why do you want to get married? Do you love this girl?

ROBERT I don't know. I'm not raving mad about her. I don't write poems or refuse to eat or any of that sort of thing. But it would be nice. I mean, think of the social advantages. They're not to be sneezed at, are they?

BERNARD I can't think of *one*. Still if you must get married, get married my way.

ROBERT Your way?

BERNARD Polygamy.

ROBERT Polygamy?

BERNARD It's the ideal life- pleasure, variety...it's fabulous. You ought to try it.



Bertha. Robert - Scene #5

*Afternoon. There is no one on stage. The telephone rings. BERTHA enters and answers the phone.*

BERTHA Hello. Yes, that's right. No, he isn't here at the moment. It's Bertha. Oh! It's you, Mlle Gretchen! You're in Paris? Already! Oh you are early. Yes oh I see, right, right. Well, then, see you later. *(She hangs up. Doorbell rings)*

Oh good God alive, who can that be? All this coming and going. It's no life for a maid, no life for anyone. *(She answers door)*

ROBERT *(off)* It's only me.

BERTHA *(off)* Oh. It's you, Monsieur. *(She enters.)*

*(ROBERT enters with cases)*

ROBERT Could you? *(indicates to cases)*

BERTHA No, I couldn't.

ROBERT There was a queue a mile long at the station. You do wonder why there are so many people in Paris. It's much more peaceful back at home in Aix.

BERTHA It wouldn't be so crowded in Paris if the people from the provinces didn't keep piling in.

ROBERT No, I suppose not.

BERTHA And what do you want with all these bags? I thought you were only here on business.

ROBERT I always believe in being prepared.

BERTHA I hope you're not going to stay too long.

ROBERT Goodness me! You're not very welcoming to your master's friends, are you?

BERTHA I'm only telling you for your own good. Just you wait and see, people coming and going all the time. You'd have been better off at the station and there'd have been more room for your bags!

ROBERT I'm a guest. I have been invited, you know.

BERTHA It's not a hotel.

ROBERT Everything seems beautifully organised.

BERTHA Organised. That's just it. It's too organised. Shall I tell you what I think?

ROBERT Well – I don't know.

BERTHA It's not human! That's what I think. It's all very well for Monsieur Bernard giving out invitations, left, right and centre, but I have to do all the work. What with you and your luggage and now Germany.

ROBERT What about Germany?

BERTHA She's just rung to say she's on her way.

ROBERT Well, that's all right, isn't it? Mademoiselle Gabriella has just taken off.

BERTHA I know, but Germany wants to stay for three days. She just said it to me, thinking it'll be a nice surprise for Monsieur