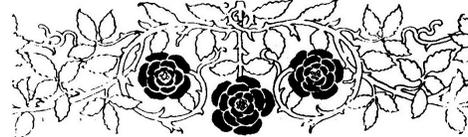


PERUSAL SCRIPT



**The Red  
Plush  
Parlor**



Book and Lyrics by  
**Christie Lund Coles**  
Music by  
**Larry Bastian**



Salt Lake City

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS -- 2M 7W 3Teenboys 2Teengirls 1G**

**LARS KNUDSON** -- Head of the house and husband. Quite stern and stubborn, but kindly.

**LIZA** -- The first wife, in her early fifties? Kindly, patient, motherly type of woman.

**ELEANOR** -- Second wife, Womanly, kind, gracious woman of about forty two.

**LILLY** -- Third wife, of English descent. Outspoken, sometimes a bit sarcastic or witty.

**PETRA** -- Fourth wife, old maid type, quite homely, and sour and critical.

**MARIE** -- Fifth wife, More serious, but friendly and frank.

**ANNIE** -- Sixth wife, in her late twenties. Gay and whimsical, a happy type of girl.

**JOHN KNUDSON** -- Lars and Lisa's oldest son, about twenty-four; good-looking and fun-loving.

**HANS KNUDSON** -- Mischievous boy, about thirteen.

**JANIE KNUDSON** -- Pretty girl, nearly sixteen. Likes Carl.

**CARL KNUDSON** -- Eleanor's son by a former marriage. Sixteen and masculine. Nonchalant.

**BETHIE** -- A young girl, around thirteen.

**OTTO** -- Boy, about fourteen. Typically Danish with light hair.

**JULIE** -- Small child.

**FRANCINE PETTIE** -- Young woman from Chicago of French extraction. Scintillating, gay, charming.

**OTHER CHILDREN** (if desired)

**THE RED PLUSH PARLOR** Book and Lyrics by Christie Lund Coles. Music by Larry Bastian. 2M 7W 3Teenboys 2Teengirls 1G. 3 Interiors. A righteous man who already has six wives has found another lamb to bring into his protective fold. But there is one big problem: his oldest son has fallen in love with this very same young lady. A fun and funny musical comedy. Produced at BYU to great success. 90 mins. **Order # 2074**

# The Red Plush Parlor

## Synopsis of Scenes and Songs

### ACT ONE

#1 -- Overture	Orchestra
<i>Scene 1 -- The Sitting Room of the KNUDSEN home in Salt Lake City.</i>	
#2 -- The Wives' Song	Wives and Dancers
#3 -- Goodness Knows	Annie and Wives
#4 -- Scene Change Music	Orchestra
<i>Scene 2 -- Upstairs sitting area, late evening</i>	
#5 -- The Trials of a Married Man	Lars
#6 -- Prelude to Act II	Orchestra

### ACT TWO

<i>Scene 1 -- The Red Plush Parlor, as opulent as it can be</i>	
#7 -- The Red Plush Parlor	Wives
#8 -- I Saw Her There	John
#9 -- I Saw You There (Reprise No. 1)	Francine
#10 -- Background to Greeting Scene & Scene Change Music	Orchestra
<i>Scene 2 -- The Red Plush parlor, several hours later</i>	
#11 -- I Saw You There (reprise #2)	John & Francine
#12 -- A Man of My Own	Francine
#13 -- Prelude to Act III	Orchestra

### ACT THREE

<i>Scene 1 -- The Red Plush Parlor, the following day</i>	
#14 -- Dress Up Day	Children
#15 -- Party Scene	Orchestra
#16 -- I Saw You There (Reprise No. 2)	Francine & John
#17 -- Confrontation Scene	Lars and Lisa
<i>Scene 2 -- The Red Plush Parlor, sometime later</i>	
#18 -- Finale	Entire Cast

## The Red Plush Parlor

### Act I

#### MUSICAL #1 -- OVERTURE

SCENE 1 -- *The Sitting Room of the KNUDSEN home in Salt Lake City.*

#### MUSICAL #2 -- THE WIVES' SONG

**ALL:**

WE'RE OFTEN VERY BUSY  
A-CLEANING UP THIS PLACE,  
THOUGH IT SOMETIMES LEAVES US DIZZY  
WE DO IT ALL WITH GRACE.

**MARIE:**

WE'RE REALLY VERY HANDY  
WITH SOAP OR STEAMING POT  
WHEN COOKING SOMETHING DANDY  
OR WASHING OUT A SPOT.

**OTHERS:** Oh, yes!

**PETRA:**

SOON AFTER MY CONVERSION  
I LEARNED THERE'S WORK TO DO,  
BUT IN OUR HOMELY VERSION  
ONE'S WORK IS DONE BY TWO.

**OTHERS:** Oh, yes'

**LIZA:**

YOU GIRLS ARE MOST AMBITIOUS,  
YOU HELP SO WELL, YOU KNOW.  
THIS ROOM WILL SEEM AUSPICIOUS  
I'M SURE YOU'LL MAKE IT GLOW.

**LILLY:**

TO TAKE A WIFE IS PROPER,  
THE COMBINATION FITS.  
AND IN THIS HOUSE OUR PROPERNESS  
IS MULTIPLIED BY SIX!

**OTHERS:** That's us!

**LIZA:**

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PROPER IS MARRIAGE,  
AND ALL THESE WIVES A HAPPY SIGHT.  
DO NOT DISPARAGE,  
FOR MANY HANDS MAKE HOUSEWORK LIGHT!

**ALL:**

PROPER IS MARRIAGE,  
AND ALL US WIVES A HAPPY SIGHT,  
WE'LL NOT DISPARAGE,  
'CAUSE MANY HANDS MAKE HOUSEWORK LIGHT!

*(CARL enters and dances. JANIE enters and dances. CARL and JANIE do a short dance to each other, surrounded by the wives.)*

**ELEANOR:**

I'VE COME SO MUCH TO LOVE YOU,  
THIS LIFE IS MEANT TO BE.  
THE WORLD CAN HAVE IT'S VALUE,  
YOUR TRUST MEANS MORE TO ME.

**ALL:**

YES, PROPER IS MARRIAGE,  
AND ALL US WIVES A HAPPY SIGHT.  
DO NOT DISPARAGE,  
FOR SUCH A LIFE IS PURE DELIGHT.

**ANNIE:**

WE OFTEN SIT TOGETHER,  
AND REST AND KNIT AND THEN  
WE SOMETIMES TALK FOREVER,  
OF COURSE WE TALK OF  
THE WEATHER.

**ALL:**

PROPER IS MARRIAGE,  
AND ALL US WIVES A HAPPY SIGHT.  
WE'LL NOT DISPARAGE,  
FOR SUCH A LIFE IS PURE,

*(The CHILDREN run through chasing each other, disturbing the group.)*

WELL, ALMOST PURE DELIGHT!

*(CARL enters and dances a few steps with each WIFE -- MUSIC fades to a softer lever and the dialog begins.)*

**LIZA:** *(Laughing)* My, what an exciting development.

**PETRA:** We've reason to be,

**LILLY:** You mean this or that?

**ELEANOR:** Carl, come on now-get the wood in. You promised.

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*(ELEANOR follows him to the exit.)*

**MARIE:** I'll help you, Carl.

**CARL:** That's alright.

**JANIE:** *(Leaving)* When's father coming?

**LIZA:** It won't be long, dear.

*(JANIE exits)*

**ELEANOR:** I love this time of day. The dusk reminds me of England, and I see so many things ...

**PETRA:** That is why you drop so many stitches. You're too busy watching sunsets or firelight.

**LIZA:** *(Meaningfully)* Sometimes a dropped stitch is better than a word dropped unkindly.

**ANNIE:** *(Quickly)* I keep my eyes on my stitches but I still drop some.

**MARIE:** I like to look at fires too. It will soon be fall and then we will need one more often.

**PETRA:** It shouldn't be so chilly yet, according to the almanac.

**LILLY:** But it is. What is, is best, remember.

**ANNIE:** Yes, and think how lucky we are to have a nice house and fire. Think of the pioneers, they ... they ...

**LILLY:** *(laughing)* We know-We know.

**MARIE:** Well, what the pioneers went through is no joke, Lilly. And even to have an Indian come and ask for food scares me to death.

**ANNIE:** And, we'd just better give it to them, too. They steal sometimes if we don't. Liza, do you remember when they were mean and making wars and things?

**LIZA:** *(Rising and walking to the window to look out)* Yes, I recall some very unfortunate things when I was a child. They tried to bury one old squaw alive just outside of town. Our men wouldn't let them, and she lived with a pioneer family who had only a house built of mud and straw. None of us had much better. Even when Lars and I were first married we had a humble home. John's first toy was the head of a cow which he pulled around. I can see him yet.

**ELEANOR:** *(Kindly)* And now when you have a lovely home with a red plush parlor, upstairs bedrooms, all this ...

*(She motions around her)*

... you have to share it with five other wives.

**MARIE:** Oh, Yes. But should we be talking about that?

**LILLY:** Well, we all know we're in it. We might as well discuss it. Especially now. Perhaps we should have some Brigham tea to warm our innards.

**MARIE:** Speaking of John, Liza. Is he coming home soon? He makes it so fun when he's home.

**LILLY:** *(Not to be distracted)* We all know about this girl from Chicago. We're pretty sure he has asked her to come out here.

**ANNIE:** *(Wide-Eyed)* He let slip that she was part French. Isn't that something? Maybe she wouldn't like it here after all.

**PETRA:** And then you could still be the baby.

*(ANNIE flushes, the OTHERS give small embarrassed laughs.)*

**LIZA:** *(Returning to her chair which she stands beside.)* Now, to answer the first question, John will be coming

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home soon if he is not too involved with the girl he likes at Fairfax. About the other question; father has been writing to this convert to the church; she may be coming out. More than that we do not know.

**LILLY:** He liked her well enough when he was back there buying cattle. Why else would she be coming?

**ELEANOR:** But, as Liza says, we are not even sure she is coming yet.

**ANNIE:** French. Gee Whiz. And John ... there may be a double wedding.

**LIZA:** We will all know soon enough. We will be consulted. Now, we must begin supper duties. Petra, you get the ham and fry it; Eleanor, peel and boil the potatoes; Marie, you can sweep up a bit before we start; Annie, you can set the table. I will make the gravy as I seem to be the only one who can make it to quite please him. Always, milk gravy, peppered and peppered.

*(LIZA moves toward the door)*

**PETRA:** *(Upstage)* I hate that spidery cellar and she knows it.

**ELEANOR:** *(Pleasantly)* Why boil the potatoes when he ends up putting gravy on his bread?

**MARIE:** I think I will learn to make the gravy like she does.

**PETRA:** So he will say he prefers yours?

**MARIE:** No, so it will save her some work. She's getting older. She's two years younger than my mother, and she looks tired.

**ELEANOR:** I know. Each of us must be harder for her, though she never shows it. But, then, he may not marry her.

**LILLY:** You know, she may not marry him!

*(They ALL gasp.)*

**MARIE:** But why not? One reason is that there aren't enough good men to go around. At least that's what they told me.

**ELEANOR:** That's right. And we needed to build up our population.

**LIZA:** *(Coming from other room with apron in process of being tied)* Is this conversation still going on?

**ELEANOR:** We were just talking about plural marriage.

**LIZA:** The Bible says that every law of the original gospel will be restored in the latter days. It was the law of Solomon and David, and it serves its purpose now. It may not even continue. Our job is to be worthy to live it.

**LILLY:** But only a few church people live it now--

**LIZA:** Maybe not enough are ready.

**ANNIE:** Do you think this girl knows about us?

**PETRA:** Yes ... If I had known

**LILLY:** You know ... well enough. You just didn't think there would be more after you. That was what we all hoped. At least to be the last.

**LIZA:** *(Firmly)* I think we've had enough of this talk. You all know Lars must have the consent of each of us before he marries again. So be thinking about it.

**ANNIE:** *(Coming to the front of the stage)* French --- Gee!

**MUSICAL #3 -- GOODNESS KNOWS**

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**ANNIE:**

GIRLS FROM PARIS ARE SOMETHING TO BEHOLD.  
I ONCE SAW ONE,  
WHEN I WAS YOUNG,  
I GUESS JUST NINE YEARS OLD.  
A PARIS GIRL WALKS WITH A SWIRL,  
AND MOVES JUST SO AND SO.  
SHE'LL DANCE AND SING AND EVERYTHING,  
I'LL BET HER ANKLES SHOW!

*(Other WIVES react in mock horror.)*

**OTHERS:**

GOODNESS KNOWS,  
GOODNESS KNOWS.

**ANNIE:**

IF SHE IS FRENCH,  
AS A CONSEQUENCE  
MY COMMON SENSE  
IS IN SUSPENSE.

**OTHERS:**

PERHAPS WE SHOULD OPPOSE!

**ANNIE:**

BUT IT'S OKAY, I SUPPOSE.  
GIRLS FROM PARIS ARE OFTEN VERY RUDE.  
THEY LAUGH OR CRY  
OR FUSS OR SIGH  
WITH EVERY LITTLE MOOD.  
THEY'RE NERVOUS TOO, I HEAR IT'S TRUE  
A FRENCH GIRL IS HIGH STRUNG.  
AND SO, GEE WHIZ, THE QUESTION IS  
IF SHE CAN HOLD HER TONGUE!

*(OTHERS react with nods and expressions of approval.)*

**OTHERS:**

GOODNESS KNOWS,  
GOODNESS KNOWS.

**ANNIE:**

IF SHE IS FRENCH  
MAKE NO PRETENSE.  
FROM EXPERIENCE,  
THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.

**OTHERS:**

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AND THIS WE SHOULD OPPOSE.

**ANNIE:** *(Speaking)* But it's okay I suppose.  
GIRLS FROM PARIS ARE LOVELY, YES INDEED'  
COMPARED TO HER  
YOUNG CURVATURE  
I'LL LOOK LIKE SOME OLD SWEDE!  
THEY WINK A LOT AND FLIRT SOMEWHAT  
WITH EVERY MAN THEY SEE.  
SO HOW CAN SHE TO THIS DEGREE  
LIVE IN POLYGAMY?

*(OTHERS nod and express firm approval.)*

**ANNIE:**  
GOODNESS KNOWS

**OTHERS:**  
GOODNESS KNOWS

**ANNIE:**  
GOODNESS KNOWS

**OTHERS:**  
GOODNESS KNOWS

**ANNIE:**  
IF SHE IS FRENCH, MAKE NO PRETENSE,  
MY INTELLIGENCE SAYS THIS RESIDENCE  
WILL HAVE BIG EXPENSE AND INCOMPETENCE  
AND NEGLIGENCE AND INDIFFERENCE  
PERTINENCE AND ARGUMENTS,  
AND MAYBE EVEN VIOLENCE!

**OTHERS:** *(Speaking in Mock Shock)* Did you say violence?

**ANNIE:**  
YES, MAYBE EVEN VIOLENCE!

**OTHERS:**  
WELL, THIS WE MUST OPPOSE!

**ALL:**  
GOODNESS KNOWS!  
GOODNESS KNOWS!  
IF SHE COMES WEST, WE'LL DO OUR BEST,  
BUT WE'RE HARD PRESSED, IF NOT DISTRESSED.  
AS WE'VE ASSESSED OUR NEW-FOUND GUEST,  
IT'S LIKELIEST WE'LL BE DEPRESSED.

**ANNIE:**  
AND THIS WE MUST OPPOSE!

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**OTHERS:** *(In a mock shout)* Yes!

*(General laughter)*

**LIZA:** Here comes Lars now. Make yourselves presentable, girls. Petra, put that down. He has a letter in his hand. Perhaps..perhaps ...

*(PETRA sets ham down on cabinet, starts cutting slices from it. Others go about duties: sweeping, peeling potatoes, etc. LARS KNUDSON Comes through outside door, removes his hat, shaking the rain from it, and his coat. Seeing the six, he hesitates before he speaks, then speaks in a genial, almost jolly tone of voice.)*

**LARS:** Good afternoon. My, what an industrious group of young ladies. How are you dears?

*(He goes from one to the other, kissing each one. The others, one by one, turn their heads as he kisses the other one. As each one is kissed, she lifts her head to say, "Very well.")*

**LIZA:** *(Anxious to get the news over, she sits down and motions the others to do likewise.)* We are all well, sir. How are you?

**LARS:** Very well, my dear, very well indeed.

**MARIE:** Can I make some Brigham Tea to warm you?

**LARS:** *(Pulling chair from table to the circle where they are seated)* Oh...Well, I don't know. I believe not now.

**LIZA:** My dear, you think Brigham Tea is a cure for all the ills of the world. I believe father has something to tell us. And it is quite near supper time, isn't it, father?

**LARS:** Yes. Yes, it is. We may well dispense with it for the time being. But later-later, perhaps for supper.

**ANNIE:** But you always drink milk

**ELEANOR:** Hush, Annie...

*(There is an awkward silence, then...)*

**LARS:** As a matter of fact, I do have something to talk to you about. As you know, I met this young woman when I was in Chicago for the Cattlemen's Convention. She was a convert to the church...Eager to meet other Mormons ... we formed a good friendship and have been writing. She now...

**LIZA:** *(As though she already knows but wants the others to hear)* Yes, Father, go on. Tell them.

**LARS:** Well, she would like to come out here where there are more of her people. If it is agreeable to her ... and to you ... I may even marry her.

*(They ALL pretend to be surprised - looking from one to the other. LARS straightens up.)*

You would not object? The girl needs a home, security, love.

*(WIVES all shake their heads.)*

**WIVES:** *(variously)* Oh no! We do not object.

**LIZA:** Is she willing?

**LARS:** *(A bit indignantly)* I have not asked her yet. I would not dream of asking her until she has been here and seen our family. She is a spirited young woman. She is part French, you know.

**ANNIE:** French ... Gee-ee

**LARS:** What did you say, child?

**ANNIE:** Oh, nothing, nothing, sir.

**LARS:** I received the letter today that she is coming. She will be a guest and I hope things will be in order.

Now, I must get the boys to the chores before supper. The other children will be coming down.

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*(Turning to Liza)*

I trust we will have some of your choice milk gravy with plenty of pepper.

*(LIZA nods, smiling faintly. LARS rises.)*

I will see you later then.

*(LARS rises and leaves by outside door)*

**LILLY:** Of course it may not go through.

**LIZA:** I'm sorry, but I feel a little faint.

**ELEANOR:** Let me take you into your sitting-room where you can rest. It's been a hard day for you.

**LIZA:** *(Rising, says firmly)* NO, it isn't that. I've had these dizzy spells lately. It's nothing a few minutes rest won't help. I'll be back in time to make the gravy. He would be disappointed if I didn't

*(When they have gone, MARIE says)*

**MARIE:** Just think, there was a time when there was just the two of them.

**ANNIE:** Maybe we're jealous. And Sister Liza says jealousy has no place in the Kingdom.

**LILLY:** I say six ought to be enough!

**ANNIE:** I still think we're jealous. I know I am. I'm sure she must be pretty.

**ELEANOR:** We must all get busy. And we must spare her as much as possible. But we must not murmur against principles nor authority. We are each here because we wanted to be. There has been purpose in it. Look at our children-they are living proof.

**LILLY:** But you were a widow. You'd had your own man. And you already had Carl who needed a father...and a home.

**ELEANOR:** I know that, Lilly. That is why I'm so grateful to Liza for being so good to me, and to him...

**MARIE:** You are sweet, Eleanor. But, maybe for her sake, we could keep her from marrying him. You know, finances haven't been too good lately. With the eight children we're a crowd to feed.

**ANNIE:** But what could we do? French ... Gee.

**CURTAIN**

**MUSICAL # 4 -- SCENE CHANGE MUSIC**

**SCENE 2 -- Evening.** *A sort of hall sitting space before the doors of the wives' rooms. LARS enters carrying a cup of hot Brigham Tea. He removes his coat, takes a sip of tea, finds it too hot to drink, and sets it down.*

**LARS:** It is well to have a minute or two of quiet to think and read a bit.

*(He bends over and removes his shoes.)*

None of my wives understands my need to remove my shoes, of course, they don't complain too loudly, but they let me know. There is disapproval in their eyes. Still, a man's home is his castle. I am the master, I think.

*(LARS reflects a moment, then takes another sip of tea, and succeeds in burning himself slightly, he puts the tea down)*

Ummmm! That's hot!

**MUSICAL #5 -- THE TRAILS OF A MARRIED MAN**

**LARS:**

IF A MAN WILL GAIN NOBILITY  
HE MUST WITHIN HIS TIME  
ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY  
AND THEN BEGIN TO CLIMB.

TO TRIALS, AND THERE MAY MANY BE  
HE MUST FIRMLY SAY "I CAN",  
THESE TRIALS, THOUGH THIS BE HARD TO SEE,  
THESE TRIALS CONSTRUCT A MAN.

THE TRIALS OF A MARRIED MAN,  
THE TRIALS OF A VERY MARRIED MAN.  
A WOMAN NEEDS LOVE,  
SHE CAN'T BE LEFT ALONE.  
A CHILD NEEDS LOVE  
EACH DAY UNTIL IT'S GROWN.  
AND I GIVE LOVE,  
MUCH AS ANY MAN I'VE KNOWN,

BUT SOMETIMES ...  
BUT SOMETIMES ...

THE TRIALS OF A MARRIED MAN,  
THE TRIALS OF A SIX-TIME MARRIED MAN,  
MY WIVES ARE SWEET,  
THEIR SENTIMENTS ARE GRAND,  
MY HOUSE IS ALWAYS NEAT,  
EACH LENDS A HELPING HAND,  
MY LIFE SHOULD BE COMPLETE,  
I'VE A KINGDOM TO COMMAND,  
BUT SOMETIMES ...  
BUT SOMETIMES ...

**LARS:** (*Speaking*) Liza seemed to feel poorly. Perhaps the shock of learning that Sister Pettit was coming, though she has known for some months about the girl...It's not that I want another wife -- surely six should be enough -- but the Bishop has intimated that there are widows and old maids in the town who should be taken care of. Well, Eleanor was a widow, and Petra was an old maid. If Francine comes - and she is coming

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- I cannot leave her to the mercies of the rousters in this town. She would be quite lost here alone. I feel it is my duty. And she is attractive.

THE TRIALS OF A MARRIED MAN.  
THE TRIALS OF A HARRIED MARRIED MAN.  
THIS GIRL WILL SOON BE HERE.  
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.  
I'M PETRIFIED WITH FEAR,  
OH, IF SHE ONLY KNEW,  
AND YET MY PATH IS CLEAR,  
I MUST SEE THE DUTY THROUGH,  
BUT SOMETIMES ...  
BUT SOMETIMES ....

WELL, I'LL DO AS I MUST AS I ALWAYS HAVE.  
MY CHOICE IS PLAIN TO SEE.  
I'LL WALK RIGHT UP AS I ALWAYS HAVE  
AND SHOW THAT I CAN BE A MAN,  
BUT SOMETIMES...  
SOMETIMES ....

**LIZA:** (*offstage*) Lars!

(*LARS exits leaving the tea on the scene. The CHILDREN enter.*)

**OTTO:** Come on, Father's gone. Give me the ginger, Bethie.

**BETHIE:** I just hope he doesn't smell it first. Don't you?

**HANS:** I think it's a crazy idea. Like all girls have.

**JULIE:** oh, you'll change in a year or two. You're just a little squirt.

**HANS:** Shhh. Shhh. Do you want everyone to hear us?

**OTTO:** Yeah, C'mon - stay away from each other. All you do is argue.

**HANS:** Yeah. What did we come here for? I thought it was to play a trick on father. Let's get at it.

**EDDIE:** Are you sure everyone's asleep? What about Aunt Petra?

**OTTO:** Yeah, what about her, that snooty one. Boy, if she ever caught us--

**EDDIE:** Shhh. Do you want them to hear us?

**OTTO:** You sure you saw her Hans?

**HANS:** Yeah, she was tip-toeing down the hall for something. Her hair was all in papers; cream smeared all over her face.

**BETHIE:** Well, she didn't look any worse than your mother.

**JULIE:** Probably looking for her cat.

**BETHIE:** Yeah, she lets it sleep at the foot of her bed all the time.

**OTTO:** C'mon, let's hurry. Papa'll get here soon and he'll blister us so we'll never sit down.

**EDDIE:** Yeah -- that's what I'm afraid of.

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**JULIE:** Papa's not that bad. He's always kind to me.

**HANS:** Sure he's kind, but we gotta add a little spice to his life, haven't we?

**OTTO:** Just let him find out we put ginger in his tea and you'll see some spice in the woodshed where he takes us, I'll bet.

**BETHIE:** Boy, Mama would blister me if she even knew I was up. I'm supposed to be asleep. Do you think we ought to do this?

**EDDIE:** Why are we using ginger, why not red pepper?

**HANS:** Look, if ginger's good for us when we're sick, it ought to make father feel great. He'll just think he made a mistake. And he'll never admit it. You know, sometimes he says his memory's failing. Come on.

**EDDIE:** Yeah. Let's get out of here.

**BETHIE:** But what if Aunt Petra catches us. Or Aunt Eleanor, or Aunt Lilly?

**JULIE:** I'm scared.

*(JULIE begins to cry)*

**HANS:** Oh, don't be scared. And quit crying. There, see. I don't like a girl who is a fraidy cat, even if she is my sister.

*(HANS swoops JULIE up and they all leave. CARL and JANIE enter from separate sides - BUMP.)*

**JANIE:** Oh!

**CARL:** What are you doing here?

**JANIE:** Well, what are you doing

**CARL:** Oh, I heard the kids fooling around and I know they're up to no good.

**JANIE:** So did I, but what do you care?

**CARL:** What do I care? Look, Papa's got enough trouble without Sh--

**JANIE:** I know, and it looks like there's going to be another wife around here before long.

**CARL:** Well, I heard that too, but I don't think we should be talking about it.

**JANIE:** Is she from Denmark too?

**CARL:** I know, half the time I start talking Danish in school. But I think she's from Chicago - part French. Now, hop off, I want to fix this

**JANIE:** I heard that John's coming home. He and his sweetie broke up.

**CARL:** How'd you hear that?

**JANIE:** Oh, I just heard

**CARL:** He probably broke it. I never did think he was too crazy over her.

**JANIE:** It doesn't matter who decides it, a lady always breaks the engagement.

**CARL:** And how'd you know?

**JANIE:** I just know. I read it in Miss Godey's book -- or someplace else.

**CARL:** You're gettin' pretty grown up, if you ask me.

**JANIE:** *(Loudly)* Nobody's askin' you.

**CARL:** *(Urgently)* Hush up, do you want us to get switched?

**JANIE:** *(Pause)* I'm sorry. I don't want to get you in trouble. I like you Carl.

**CARL:** What do you care, you're just my sister.

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**JANIE:** I'm just your half-sister. Not even that. We're no relatives. My mother just happened to marry your father. But if that's the way you feel ...

**CARL:** I've seen that Swenson kid playing up to you.

**JANIE:** (*Loudly*) Oh? Well, what about ...

**CARL:** Sh ... I told you to be ...

*(Hearing LARS, CARL & JANIE flee. From door left front, LARS comes in, in long night shirt covered by a robe, night cap, and slippers. He looks for the cup and saucer. He takes it up, settles back into his chair and takes a tentative sip. He swallows, savoring the taste for a moment before suddenly and violently expelling the rest of the liquid out of his mouth.)*

**LARS:** Hans! Bethie! Otto!!! Petra!

*(Going to PETRA's door)*

Petra! Petra!

**PETRA:** Who is it?

**LARS:** (*Softly but vehemently*) It is your husband. Who were you expecting? Prince Albert?

**PETRA:** (*She opens the door a crack. Her hair is tied in rags, her face is smeared with cream. They are both taken aback.*) Whatever is the matter?

**LARS:** Those kids, they-they spiked my Brigham Tea.

**PETRA:** Oh, Sir, I think you have made a mistake.

**LARS:** Mistake indeed. I do not make mistakes.

**PETRA:** Oh, Of course. It is just that I ... I suppose I had forgotten.

**LARS:** You should not forget, my dear. I expect better discipline in this house.

*(He leaves. One of the doors opens, then another until all are open.)*

**MARIE:** (*Softly*) Something is going on. Perhaps the children have upset him again.

**LIZA:** He is not that old. But he has been tired and concerned about us, and that new family in the valley. He was down there with food and bedding tonight.

**LILLY:** Yes, my dear. We will start with quilting tomorrow.

*(LILLY closes her door as though the matter is settled, then opens it as an afterthought.)*

**LIZA:** For the sake of Lars' pride, there must be no mention of what has happened-ever. Now let's see if we can't watch the children more carefully.

**WIVES:** (*In unison*) No, Ma'am. Not ever.

*(They close their doors.)*

**CURTAIN**

**21 pages more in Act Two and Act Three**