

KEEP DANCING

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PRINCIPLE CHARACTER LIST

The action takes place from 1907 to 1960
in New York City, Asheville NC, Atlanta GA, and Paris.

THE TEICHMAN FAMILY:

MOE/ARTHUR MURRAY

ABRAHAM

SARAH

DAVID

BECKY

IRA

THE BARONESS

KATHRYN KOHNFELDER

ACT I

SCENE 1

Mid-1950s. The Arthur Murray Dance Studios, USA.

In lighted spots around the stage we see four Arthur Murray teachers, men and women, and their students dancing to the fast, infectious beat of the CHA-CHA. Each pupil differs in age and ability and dances with a distinctive style and personality.

The music changes to Glenn Miller and the dancers break into a LINDY. During the Lindy an over-enthusiastic pupil, swings out too far, almost losing his teacher.

The music changes to a FOXTROT, one pupil speeds up the tempo and needs to be slowed down.

The music changes to a lively MERENGUE. A student forgets his step and has to be reminded.

Throughout the scene, as part of the choreography, a graceful middle-aged man wearing a suit and tie moves through the dancing couples demonstrating a step or two and giving the students pointers.

The dance music fades as the students come together to sing and dance:

ARTHUR MURRAY TAUGHT ME DANCING IN A
HURRY
I HAD A WEEK TO SPARE
HE SHOWED ME THE GROUNDWORK
THE WALKIN' AROUND WORK
AND TOLD ME TO TAKE IT FROM THERE.

SCENE 2

New York City, 1958.

The Arthur Murray Christmas Party. An elegant ballroom. Polished floors, chandeliers, floor-to-ceiling windows with velvet drapes.

Attractive young men and women in ball gowns and tuxedos WALTZ across the floor to the romantic strains of "The Blue Danube."

(The dance ends and the couples stay on the floor, smiling and talking to each other. We see festive Christmas decorations. There is a lighted crèche showing the three wise men bringing presents to the baby Jesus.)

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE (O.S.)

NBC Television brings you The Arthur Murray Party. You're always sure of a warm welcome at any Arthur Murray studio party, and tonight is no exception. Now here to greet you is Arthur Murray's favorite dancing partner, Kathryn Murray.

(The audience applauds. The teachers stand and turn to Kathryn as she enters from the back smiling. She wears a very stylish ankle-length evening dress.)

KATHRYN

Hello everybody. We're so glad you could come to our Christmas party. We all love Christmas, don't we? And tonight we have a wonderful present for all of you. Johnnie Ray is here to sing a few of his latest hits.

(We hear delighted laughter as the audience claps. JOHNNIE RAY enters dancing the quick FOXTROT with a pretty teacher and sings the up-beat, sexy "You'd Be Surprised.")

During the number we hear girls in the audience squeal as Johnnie takes a young woman in each arm. Towards the end of the number Johnnie grabs Kathryn's hand, pulls her toward him and flirtatiously sings to her.

Kathryn responds with humor, pretending to be overwhelmed by his charm. Everyone on stage and in the audience laughs. The girls squeal again.)

KATHRYN

(smiling up at Johnnie)

Oh Johnnie, now I see why the girls squeal like that, and why you're number one on the Hit Parade.

JOHNNIE RAY

Well thank you Kathryn. I'm getting a real kick out of being here tonight and meeting all these great folks.

(Laughing, Johnnie takes Kathryn in his arms and does a quick twirl. Kathryn laughs. Johnnie turns and smiles at the audience. We hear more squeals and clapping.)

KATHRYN

Now, Johnnie for a change of tempo, how would you like to meet Arthur?

JOHNNIE

Arthur Murray, America's dancing master? I sure would! Maybe he can give me some pointers, improve my style.

KATHRYN,

(laughs flirtatiously)

Oh Johnnie you're doing just fine! But, as luck would have it, here he is now: my husband Arthur Murray.

(The audience applauds as ARTHUR MURRAY walks on stage in a black tux. Tall and distinguished, he turns to the audience with a shy, boyish smile. The audience claps. Arthur pauses and nods, to the audience. He walks over to Kathryn and Johnnie, smiling.)

ARTHUR

Hello.

(Arthur shakes hands with Johnnie, then he looks at Kathryn and touches her arm.)

JOHNNIE

(broad smile)

I've always wanted to meet the man who taught the world to dance. But can I ask you a question Mr. Murray?

ARTHUR

Johnnie, call me Arthur. What's your question?

JOHNNIE

Mr. Murray, why are you in such hurry?

ARTHUR

(stage whisper)

Don't tell anybody, but I'm afraid I'll forget the steps.

(Johnnie and the audience laugh. Johnny moves back and stands with the teachers in half-circle behind Arthur and Kathryn.)

KATHRYN

Arthur, what do you say we show everyone my favorite dance, the Tango?

(Arthurs looks at the audience questioningly. The audience claps. Arthur smiles at Kathryn.)

KATHRYN

(teasingly)

Is that a yes?

(Arthur nods.)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

What's the matter, dear, the cat got your tongue?

(TANGO music starts. Arthur takes Kathryn in his arms.)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

(to the audience)

Oh, by the way, if you'd like to learn the Tango, just hurry to your nearest Arthur Murray Studio and tell them Kathryn sent you.

(Arthur and Kathryn dance the Tango. The lights dim.)

SCENE 3

The stage lights are dark. On the back screen, images of Grand Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side in 1907 appear. We see men and women, pushcarts, boys playing stickball, tenement apartment buildings.

Those images fade and we see the outside of a modest Conservative Jewish Temple. Stage lights go up inside the Temple.

On a raised platform, MOSES TEICHMAN, 13, stands next to the RABBI, a grey-haired man in his seventies. The Torah is open on a table in front of them.

Moses, thin with a slightly receding chin, wears a suit and tie, a tallis and yarmulke.

His parents, SARAH and ABRAHAM TEICHMAN, in their thirties, stand behind him. Sarah, a large imposing woman, wears her best dress and a feathered hat. Abraham wears a dark three-piece suit, a yarmulke and a tallis.

The Congregation sits on either side of the platform.

Moses's older sister BECKY TEICHMAN, 16, a pretty redhead in a blue summer dress sits next to her two younger brothers, DAVID, 10, and IRA, 4, dressed in white shirts and brown knickers, in the front row.

RABBI

Moses, son of Sarah and Abraham this is your day, and it is a joyous occasion. Today, Moses, you take your place among us as a Jewish man. We welcome you.

(The audience nods and murmurs approval. The Rabbi starts intoning the traditional Bar Mitzvah blessing. The Rabbi pauses and looks at Moe, expectant.)

MOE

B--B--B--A--A--

(A child in the audience laughs. We hear a mother's "shush." Moe looks shaken and ashamed.)

RABBI

Never mind. Again Moe, *Bar'chu'et Adonai...*

(Moe tries to speak. He looks at the congregation and freezes.)

RABBI

Moe, relax. *Bar'chu'et Adonai...*

(Moe opens his mouth again, but no words come. Abraham steps forward and puts his hand on his son's shoulder. Moe glances up at his father. Silently Abraham encourages Moe to continue.)

SARAH

(stern)

Moe, just like you practiced.

(Moe opens his mouth. He makes a sharp, strangled sound. The congregation gasps.)

ABRAHAM

(disappointed, shrugging)

Well, if you can't...

(Moses looks down in shame, his shoulders hunched.

Then drawing on some inner strength, he stands up straight and stares over the heads of the congregation at something no one else can see.

Moe's body begins to sway, his feet begin to move.
Suddenly he is dancing around the platform, and the
words of the Torah spill out into song.)

BAR'CHU ET ADONAI HAM' VORACH!
BAR'CHU ET ADONAI HAM' VORACH
L'OLAM VA-ED!
BARUCH ATAH, ADONAI

(The congregation laughs and applauds.)

ABRAHAM

(loud and commanding)

Stop! Show God some respect. No dancing in Temple.

SCENE 4

*Lower East Side, 1909, two years later. Outside
The Teichman's flat.*

*We see images of the neighborhood surrounding
Moe's Suffolk Street tenement: outhouses in the
backyard, young boys sleeping over a warm fire
grate in winter. The images fade as the lights go
up on the Teichman's small flat with spare
furnishings. The kitchen is the main room, and
doubles as a small bakery.*

*A white enamel bathtub is visible against one
wall. On plain wooden tables we see mixing
bowls, baking utensils and two loaves of
unbaked bread. In the bathtub are loaves of
freshly baked bread.*

*Abraham sits at a small table, reading silently
from an open prayer book, a glass of tea beside
him.*

(Sarah watches Moe, 15, and David, 11, mix and
shape dough into loaves.

The following action is choreographed — a
combination of movement and dance.

From under Abraham's chair a beam of light slowly emerges. Abraham lifts his foot, the light goes under his shoe, Abraham motions to Moe as the light scurries towards him. Moe lifts his foot. The light dashes under his foot and sweeps across the floor. Ira, 5, sees the light. He laughs and chases it.

Moe drops the dough and grabs Ira. He holds him high over the light as the it moves into a hole in the baseboard.)

MOE

I--t's--a--rat.

IRA

(kicking to get loose)

I like rats.

(Moe puts him down.)

SARAH

No filthy rats. They'll bite your fingers off.

(Ira runs to the baseboard rat hole.)

ABRAHAM

Hey, your brother saved you. Next time you could lose a leg.

(Ira shakes his head and saunters around the kitchen nibbling scraps of bread on the tables and counters. He wipes his hands on his pants and starts running around the kitchen.)

SARAH

Ira, help David.

(Moe sweeps Ira up in one arm, and does a few quick dance spins making Ira laugh, then dances him over to the mixing table and puts him down next to David.

Ira runs to get one of the loaves in the bathtub.
Sarah grabs him, smacks his hand. Ira makes funny
face, Sarah laughs.

Ira runs over to Abraham and leans against him for
a minute.)

IRA

I'm hungry.

SARAH

It's not six o'clock. At six o'clock you can be hungry.

IRA

Papa, I'm cold.

(Abraham gives Ira a few sips of his hot tea.)

SARAH

It's almost winter. Everybody's cold.

(Moe does some quick dance spins in place.)

MOE

K--k--eep m--m--o--ving.

(David and Ira try to imitate Moe. Sarah smiles,
Abraham laughs.

Moe picks up a bag of coal and begins to fill the
stove. A book falls out of his back pocket. David
picks it up and leafs through it.)

DAVID

Wow, look at these fancy digs!

MOE

That's how the u--up--t--town people l--l--ive.

(David hands Moe his book.)

DAVID

I wish we could live like that.

MOE
(smiles confidently at David)

We will. Someday.

(David rolls his eyes and punches Moe's arm. Moe shoves the book back into his pocket.)

ABRAHAM
Read boys, read, read. It's good for the brain.

(Abraham looks at the door expectantly. He pulls out his pocket watch.)

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
Sarah, it's five o'clock.

(Becky, rushes in flushed and excited. She wears a white blouse and a gray skirt: the colors of the suffragettes. Becky carries a painted sign reading "*Women Demand the Vote!*")

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
(relieved)
Becky, where were you?

(As she is about to throw her coat on a chair, Becky hands Moe her sign.)

SARAH
(to Becky)
Hang!
(to Abraham)

She was uptown, marching.

BECKY
For the vote. For your right to vote.

(Becky hangs her coat on a hook wall hook. Comically, Moe waves the sign over his head. David and Ira laugh.)

SARAH
We'll all get arrested for your nonsense. Stay downtown where you belong. Fancy *Goyim* live uptown.

BECKY

The newspapers don't send reporters down here.

SARAH

Listen to me! No waving signs. No making trouble.

BECKY

(passionate)

Yes, making trouble — or we'll never get the vote.

SARAH

(voice rising)

No fighting in the streets like a hooligan.

IRA

(sing-song)

Hooligan, hooligan.

BECKY

Mama, I'll go where I please. I'm a citizen.

ABRAHAM

You're a Jewish woman. Have some pride.

BECKY

Right. A proud Jewish woman fighting for justice like Deborah and Esther... and Sarah.

(looks at her mother)

I'll go anywhere in this city I damn please.

SARAH

Loudmouth. You'll scare people away, people you're gonna need. *Shayna maidel*, a woman who wants to be a doctor needs help. A Jewish woman who wants to be a doctor needs a miracle.

(taking her arm)

Isn't that enough, being a doctor?

BECKY

(seriously)

It's everything.

(Sarah, points to the counter.)

BECKY (CONT'D)

Ma, you gotta vote. Your voice should count.

SARAH

In this kitchen my voice counts! Here I got the vote, and I vote that you sprinkle the poppy seeds. The pushcart is downstairs waiting for the bread.

BECKY

Voting is more important than baking bread.

SARAH

Not in this house! Here, bread is king.

MOE

(stuttering)

Mama, B--b--ecky's r--right.

SARAH

(annoyed)

For you, Becky's always right.

(Moe, David and Becky perform the following actions as a choreographed dance.

Moe kneads the dough, David wraps the baked loaves in the tub, Becky sprinkles poppy seeds on fresh loaves. Working too quickly, Becky spills seeds on the floor. Abraham reads from his prayerbook and sips his tea.)

SARAH

Oy, oy! Abe, stop praying and carry the bread downstairs.

(Abraham goes to the counter. David lifts the loaves of bread from the tub, gives them to his father who puts them in a bag and exits. Ira grabs a small broom, looks at Sarah to see if she's watching, then brushes the seeds under the sink. Becky smiles and gives him a pat on his head.

Moe starts to daydream and slows his movements while kneading the dough.)

SARAH

(to Moe)

Moe where are you? Can you hear me?

(Moe nods.)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Speed it up. Not slow like a dummy.

ABRAHAM

Sarah, don't talk to him like that.

SARAH

He's my son, I'll talk as I please.

(She aims a small smile at Moe.)

ABRAHAM

He's fifteen, almost a man. Show him respect. Also he should be paid a few cents for his work.

(Moe, Becky and David look up in surprise.
Abraham sits down at his table.)

SARAH

Are you crazy? Paid for his work? Who pays me for my work?

IRA

I will Mama.

ABRAHAM

A few cents I said. He must become a serious man, who knows work has value. We are Jews, not slave owners.

SARAH

(shrieking)

Oh my God, now he's a slave? No. Not any cents.

(Sarah and Abraham glare at each other.)

BECKY

Stop fighting! We're all going crazy with the roaches, the flies in the food, the rats... and the smell of the chamber pots!

IRA

I like rats.

BECKY

In winter we turn to ice. In summer, the only place we can breathe is on the fire escape.

MOE

(anger pushing out his words)

It's a dirty s--s--lum.

ABRAHAM

Don't you think I pray for a better life? Soon, no more outhouses. No more chamber pots. Soon, toilets in the hall.

DAVID, BECKY, MOE

When?

ABRAHAM

Well, change is slow.

MOE

(stuttering less)

I can't w--ait.

ABRAHAM

You're a boy. First a diploma, then a steady job.

(The family freezes in place as Moe sings
PUSHCART PARADISE.)

YOU THINK I'M JUST A KID
WHO CAN'T STRING TWO WORDS TOGETHER
NOT TOO BRIGHT
NOT TOO QUICK
THINK I'LL STAY THIS WAY FOREVER

YOU'VE GOT NO FAITH IN ME
WELL JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE

I LOOK AROUND THIS HOVEL
WITH THE BATHTUB IN THE KITCHEN
STEAMING HOT
FREEZING COLD
RATS HAVE FISTFIGHTS WITH THE PIGEONS

BUT WHERE I STAND TODAY
ISN'T WHERE I'M GONNA BE
JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE

YOU SEE PUSHCARTS
I SEE PARADISE
YOU SEE SWEATSHOPS
I SEE CHAMPAGNE ON ICE
I REFUSE TO LET SOME ACCIDENT OF BIRTH
ACCIDENTALLY DETERMINE WHAT I'M WORTH
NEVER DOUBT
NEVER DOUBT
I'LL GET US OUT!

THERE'LL BE FANS IN EVERY ROOM
AND A STEINWAY GRAND PIANO
JUST ONE HEAD
IN EVERY BED
A SILVER TORAH
GOLD MENORAH
CAN I DO IT?

YES I CAN, OH

EVEN IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE
JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE

YOU SEE PUSHCARTS
I SEE PARADISE
YOU SEE SWEATSHOPS
I SEE CHAMPAGNE ON ICE
I REFUSE TO LET SOME ACCIDENT OF BIRTH
ACCIDENTALLY DETERMINE WHAT I'M WORTH
NEVER DOUBT
NEVER DOUBT
I'LL GET US OUT!

BUM DA DA DA
DA DA DA DA DA DA

ABRAHAM

Moe, don't get lost in dreams. Concentrate on the important things. Family, the word of God, and a serious profession.

MOE

I want to get us out of this ghetto.

(The sounds of festive music are heard. Becky turns slowly and smiles at Moe.)

BECKY

I hear wedding music down the street — dancing, cake... and swell-looking boys. Let's go!

(Becky grabs Moe's hand and they exit running.)

SCENE 5

A festively decorated tenement yard, where a Jewish wedding party is in full swing. Musicians play as couples dance a spirited TURKEY TROT.

(Becky and Moe watch from the sidewalk. Moe's feet start to move. Becky pushes Moe through the gate into the yard. Moe suddenly freezes.)

BECKY

Hey come on.

(Moe doesn't move.)

BECKY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna find me a good-looking boy.

MOE

Help.

BECKY

(impatient, rolling her eyes)

Follow me.

(She shows Moe a new dance step. He learns it quickly.)

BECKY

Hey brother, you've got dancing feet.

(HELEN and ESTHER, two laughing teenage girls, are dancing together. As they pass Moe he stops dancing with Becky and eyes them with interest.

Helen slows down and smiles at Moe. He smiles then drops his eyes. Helen giggles. She pokes Esther and whispers something.)

ESTHER

(laughs)

Him? That goop? Just a kid from my class. Gosh, he c--c--can't even t--t--talk right.

(Helen, embarrassed, gives Moe a small smile before the girls dance across the yard. Becky sees Moe's crushed expression.)

BECKY

Nincompoops!

(The guests create a circle as the musicians start to play a WALTZ. The bride and groom enter the circle and waltz together. Moe stands mesmerized, staring at the couple. His body sways to the music.

Suddenly a group of ROWDY YOUNG MEN shout at the wedding party from the street.)

ROWDIES

Hey what do ya think you're doin' here? Ya bunch of stinking Yids. Go back to where ya came from. Go back, you dirty Jews.

MEN AT THE WEDDING

Come on tough guys, we're ready for you. We'll break you in half. Take another step and we'll twist your scrawny, chicken necks!

(Some of the women, including Helen, yell and shake their fists while others, frightened, hang back.

The Rowdies crash into the yard and the men begin to fight. A big tough grabs Moe and punches him in the chest. Moe stumbles and falls. Helen watches him, her eyes wide with fear.

Encouraged by Helen's concern, Moe jumps to his feet and lunges at the Rowdy and gives him a hard punch in the mouth. The Rowdy falls back, gets up and runs at Moe again, but before Moe can punch him, Becky grabs him and runs.

SCENE 6

Becky's bedroom. Minutes later.

Moe and Becky are doubled over, out of breath.

BECKY

Hey, I didn't know you could fight.

MOE

I should've p--p--unched them out!

BECKY

They're stupid Anti-Semites! Stay out of their way. No fighting.

MOE

Y--yes, Mama.

BECKY

Oh my God, I sound just like Mama.

(laughing)

Those dumb toughs think they're so smart. They should listen to Papa, he'd tell them the Jews are God's chosen people.

MOE

It doesn't f--f--eel l--l--ike the Jews are anybody's ch--ch--osen people. Maybe God m--m--ade a mistake.

BECKY

(laughs)

Sha! Don't let Papa hear you question God. Ever!

(Becky pauses and takes a deep breath. In pantomime she puts a recording on her phonograph. We hear the music of a romantic WALTZ.)

BECKY

Want to learn the Waltz?

(Moe nods. Becky takes his hand and places it around her waist. She holds his other hand in the starting position.)

BECKY

Follow me: one, two, three... one, two, three...

(They start to dance.)

BECKY (CONT'D)

Don't look down. Keep your chest up. Hold your head high, like you're looking at the stars.

(As Becky leads, Moe picks up the Waltz easily. Smiling, he switches positions and waltzes Becky around the room.

Laughing, Moe pulls away and as the music changes to RAGTIME, he starts making up new steps. Moe goes a little wild, creating a new "Animal Dance.")

MOE
(letting loose)

O--ooh, ye--ah!!

(Moe grabs Becky.)

BECKY

Hey what is this?

MOE
(laughing)

I made it up.

(Moe and Becky sing and dance THE
KANGAROO

MOE:

DOIN' SOMETHING CRAZY
 TRYIN' SOMETHING NEW
 A LITTLE OFF-CENTER
 A LITTLE ASKEW

THIS ROCKIN' RHYTHM
 KEEPS BREAKIN' FREE
 IT'S GOT ME BOUNCIN' 'ROUND THE ROOM
 MAKIN' A FOOL OUTTA ME

CAN'T STOP HOPPIN'
 CAN'T STOP HOP-HOP-HOPPIN'

I DO THE KANGAROO
 I DO THE KANGAROO
 ALL THE ANIMALS IN THE ZOO
 THEY WANNA DO IT TOO
 I DO THE KANGAROO
 COME ON, LET'S ME AND YOU
 SHOW 'EM HOW TO DO THE KANGAROO

BECKY:

YOU SHAKE LIKE JELLY
 JUMPIN' OUT OF THE JAR
 YOU'VE GOT LIGHTNING IN YOUR SHOES
 NO CLUE WHO YOU ARE

WHO STOLE MY BROTHER
 'N STUCK YOU IN HIS PLACE
 'CAUSE I DON'T RECOGNIZE
 THAT LOOK IN YOUR EYES
 THAT SILLY SMILE ON YOUR FACE

BOTH:

CAN'T STOP HOPPIN'
 CAN'T STOP HOP-HOP-HOPPIN'

I DO THE KANGAROO
 I DO THE KANGAROO
 ALL THE ANIMALS IN THE ZOO
 THEY WANNA DO IT TOO
 I DO THE KANGAROO

COME ON, LET'S ME AND YOU
SHOW 'EM HOW TO DO THE KANGAROO

(The song ends.)

A transitional DANCE INTERLUDE on a bare stage follows.

As Moe dances, he matures. His technique and self-confidence grow. The interlude ends at the Grand Central Dance Palace in New York City.)

SCENE 7

The ballroom of the Grand Central Palace in New York City. 1912.

Moe is 18 years old.

(A dance contest is about to begin. Several enthusiastic couples find their places on the dance floor.)

Moe stands on the sidelines. As he looks around for a partner, GLORIA, a sexy redhead in her late twenties, rushes in, annoyed and frustrated. She sees Moe.)

GLORIA

Hey there handsome, are you alone?

(Moe smiles and nods.)

GLORIA

Good, 'cause my partner musta gotten lost somewhere out there.

(The EMCEE, wearing white dinner jacket, speaks into a microphone.)

EMCEE

Welcome to the Grand Central Palace's Waltz Contest. All contestants should now be on the floor.

(The music begins. Gloria takes Moe's arm and pulls him onto the floor.)

GLORIA

(shouting to the Emcee)

Hold it, Bub. Wait for us!

(to Moe)

What's your name, kid?

MOE

Moe Teichman.

GLORIA

A Jew boy?

(Moe, angry, pulls away from Gloria.)

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Hey I don't give a damn what you are. Can you waltz?

MOE

Let's find out.

(The band plays a WALTZ and the couples begin dancing. Each couple's interpretation is unique. Moe leads Gloria in some surprisingly intricate steps. Gloria smiles, impressed.)

The Emcee taps a few couples on the shoulder and they leave the dance floor.

The Emcee moves behind two other couples and holds his hand over each couple's heads. The audience's reaction is unenthusiastic. Finally he holds his hand over Moe and Gloria's head and the audience gives them a rousing applause.

The other couples leave the stage.

The Emcee walks over to Moe and Gloria, taps them on the shoulder and holds the silver trophy over their heads.)

EMCEE

(smiling at Gloria)

What's your name, little lady?

GLORIA

Gloria.

(Emcee looks at Moe.)

MOE

Moe.

EMCEE

(smiling broadly)

Well congratulations, kids. You won!

(More applause from the audience. Moe and Gloria smile. The Emcee hands his microphone to Gloria, who shakes her head, tongue-tied.)

EMCEE

Aww, look folks, isn't that cute? She's shy.

(Gloria glares at the Emcee. The Emcee hands the mic and the silver trophy to Moe, who holds the mic in one hand and the trophy in the other.)

MOE

(bowing slightly)

Thank y--you very m--much.

(The audience applauds.)

GLORIA

You're not half bad! Where'd a Yid learn those fancy steps?

MOE

I made them up, walking home from *shul*.

(Suddenly Gloria grabs the trophy from Moe.)

MOE

Hey!

GLORIA

Listen, I'm broke. I'm gotta hock this to pay my rent.

(She runs off the floor and disappears. Moe, shocked, stares after her.)

SCENE 8

New York City. Two years later.

Castle House, an elegant Fifth Avenue dance studio.

The ballroom features high ceilings, chandeliers, mirrored walls, and a polished dance floor.

(IRENE and VERNON CASTLE, in their forties, are poised and smartly dressed. They stand facing a group of new dance instructors, including Moe.)

VERNON

Okay girls and boys, watch and learn. Here's our new step for the Castle Walk. You're going to teach it, so pay careful attention.

(The music starts as Irene and Vernon dance the a very spirited and polished CASTLE WALK.

The lights dim on Irene and Vernon and go up on the new teachers as they repeat the step with their students.

Moe dances with MRS. ABBOTT, a woman in her forties. When the dance concludes, the other teachers and students exit, leaving Moe and Mrs. Abbott center stage.)

MRS. ABBOTT

(smiling flirtatiously)

So, kind sir, how did I do on my first lesson?

MOE

(smiling and controlling his stutter)

You're a f--fast learner, Mrs. Abbott.

MRS.ABBOTT

(smiling)

Did I wow you?

MOE

You did. I'd like to teach you another step, but our time is up.

MRS. ABBOTT

So soon? And I was having so much fun.

(Moe smiles and offers his arm to lead her out of the ballroom.)

MOE

I'm glad. Next week, same time?

MRS. ABBOTT

(taking Moe's arm)

Oh yes, yes indeed Mr.... Oh my, what's your name again, dear?

MOE

Mr. Moe.

MRS ABBOTT

Mr. what?

MOE

Moe.

(She gives him a hard look and pulls her arm away.)

MRS. ABBOTT

Surely you mean Morgan.

MOE

(looks at her)

No. Moe.

(Mrs. Abbott turns away from Moe.)

MRS. ABBOTT

You know my dear, one has to be very careful these days. Some people misrepresent themselves... perhaps take advantage.

MOE

Would you'd be happier with another teacher Mrs. Abbott?

MRS ABBOTT

Yes. I would.

MOE

Let me take you to the reception desk.

(Moe offers his arm, but Mrs. Abbott brushes past him and exits.)

THE BARONESS, Moe's supervisor, a self-confident, strikingly attractive woman in her late thirties, approaches Moe.)

BARONESS

Is there something wrong?

MOE

Not anymore.

(He pauses, takes a breath and smiles.)

MOE (CONT'D)

B--Baroness, are you ch--checking up on me?

BARONESS

Yes dear, that's what I'm paid to do.

MOE

How am I doing?

BARONESS

You've mastered the steps, your technique is good, and you're pretty smooth with the ladies.

MOE

Well, I try.

BARONESS

Why did Mrs. Abbott storm out like that?

MOE

(stuttering very slightly)

She had some issues.

BARONESS

Did you resolve them?

MOE

No.

BARONESS

Have we lost her?

MOE

I don't think so. She'll pick another teacher.

BARONESS

Well despite Mrs. Abbott, I say you're doing a bang-up job. Let me know if you have any questions about technique... or anything else. Feel free to ask. Don't be shy.

MOE

There is something.

BARONESS

Anything.

MOE

Baroness, you have a lot of style. You seem like a modern woman...

BARONESS

Oh, you're sweet.

MOE

Why do you call yourself Baroness de Kuddlestone? That sounds very "old world-ish."

BARONESS

(taking his arm)

Darling, I'm so glad you asked. You're such a nice boy and I don't want to keep any secrets from you. I am a very modern woman, but I am also a very respectful woman.

(sighing)

And out of deep respect for my late husband, the Baron de Kuddlestone, whom I adored, and who died so young, too young, I honor our love by retaining his family's title. It was his dying wish.

(Her eyes well up.)

MOE

Oh, I understand. Of course I understand.

BARONESS

(smiles up at him)

I hoped you would. Now it's my turn to ask a question. Shall we have a drink tonight, after work?

MOE

(surprised)

We shall.

BARONESS

I warn you, I'm going to try to interest you in exploring an idea with me.

MOE

I'm interested in exploring anything with you.

SCENE 9

Reedy's Bar. Later that night.

Reedy's is small and intimate. Soft music plays in the background. Moe and the Baroness sit at a small table center stage. The Baroness sips a glass of wine. Moe's glass is untouched.

BARONESS

No wine tonight?

MOE

I'm not a drinker.

(The Baroness picks up Moe's glass and holds it out to him.)

BARONESS

Please darling, I want you open and relaxed when I proposition you.

(Moe takes the glass. He smiles at the Baroness and takes a slow sip of wine.)

BARONESS

Run away with me.

MOE

(grins)

What shall I pack?

BARONESS

(laughing)

I've been teaching at Castle House for five years, and it's been wonderful. Vernon and Irene have been so good to me. And now I'm ready to open a studio of my own.

MOE

That would be something.

BARONESS

But first I have to make a name for myself, develop a reputation.

MOE

I hear you already have a reputation...

BARONESS

Oh darling, I'm flattered.

(taking another sip of wine)

I've been offered a marvelous opportunity that will give me the professional recognition I need. I've been invited to go to North Carolina for the summer to run the ballroom dancing program at the famous Biltmore Hotel in Asheville.

I'll be teaching the most important families in the country — The Morgans, the Astors, the Vanderbilts... the captains of industry, and, of course, their charming wives and their beautiful daughters.

I'm to prepare the young ladies for their debutante balls at the end of the summer. Darling, when I get finished polishing those girls they'll shine brighter than a sky full of moonbeams. Isn't that the cat's meow?

MOE

(flirtatiously)

Meow!

BARONESS

It's my dream come true.

(smiling)

What's your dream darling?

MOE

To dance my way around the world. And make some money.

BARONESS

Well then, run away with me.

(Moe leans back, studying the Baroness.)

BARONESS (CONT'D)

(touching Moe's hand)

Darling, I need a partner to make this work. I need you to teach and to dance with the wives and the lovely daughters. We'll make a perfect team. Think of all those influential people, all the connections I can... we... can make. There's an awful lot of money in Asheville.

(The Baroness hands Moe his glass. He takes another sip.)

MOE

Everybody needs money, but dancing is my life.

BARONESS

Are we partners? What do you say?

MOE

Yes. Yes, how c---c---ould I say anything else?

(Moe jumps up, pulls the Baroness to her feet and leads her into a few quick dance steps. She stops and kisses his cheek.)

BARONESS

Oh darling, we'll have a wonderful time.

(Moe sits down, dazed.)

The Baroness sings JUST ONE LITTLE THING.)

YOU'RE A GENTLE BOY
WITH A TENDER TOUCH
AND A CURIOUS MIND
THOUGH YOU DON'T SAY MUCH
GOT A STYLE SO SMOOTH
SO GENTEEL
BUT UNDERNEATH THAT STYLE
THERE'S A SPINE OF STEEL

GOT A DREAM SO SWEET
YOU CAN ALMOST TASTE IT
WHAT A SHAME
WHAT A CRIME IT WOULD BE TO WASTE IT
BUT BEFORE YOUR DANCE INTO YOUR DESTINY

THERE'S JUST ONE LITTLE THING
ONE LITTLE THING
THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO DO
ONE LITTLE CHANGE
SO TINY
A TRIFLE
THAT'LL MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE...

WITH YOUR POCKETS FULL
YOUR TUXEDO PRESSED
YOU'LL LIGHT UP EVERY BALLROOM
FROM EAST TO WEST

EVERY NIGHT THE BOOZE WILL FLOW LIKE WATER
ON EACH ARM
A MILLIONAIRE'S DAUGHTER
BUT BEFORE I SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE

THERE'S JUST ONE LITTLE THING
 ONE LITTLE THING
 THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO DO
 ONE LITTLE CHANGE
 SO TINY
 A TRIFLE
 THAT'LL MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE

DARLING, I LOVE YOU JUST AS YOU ARE
 IN MY EYES, YOU'RE ALREADY A STAR

BUT THERE'S JUST ONE LITTLE THING
 ONE LITTLE THING
 THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU
 AT THIS TIME
 IN THIS WORLD
 WITH THIS WAR GOING ON
 YOU SIMPLY CANNOT BE...

A JEW

(The song ends.

The Baroness takes Moe's face in both hands and
 kisses him slowly on the lips. Moe is overwhelmed,
 confused, delighted.)

SCENE 10

A few days later. Afternoon.

(Becky and Moe stand in front of the closed
 curtain.)

BECKY

You'll kill them!

MOE

Don't be so dramatic. I'll explain.

BECKY

Explain that you're becoming a Goy? Papa will never forgive you. Respectability, the
 word of God, that's what Papa understands. He'll say you're selling your soul.

MOE

My God, Becky, movie stars and immigrants change their names every day! Papa knows that whatever my name is, I'm still his son. He'll be proud of me.

BECKY

He'll be ashamed. Moe. Tell that Baroness woman no.

(Moe shakes his head.)

SCENE 11

The following week.

The living/dining room of Sarah and Abraham's new flat on Grand Street on the Lower East Side. Though small, this home is a step up from the original flat in Scene 1.

In the center of the room, a dining table is set for the Shabbat Friday Night Dinner.

*Upstage Becky, Sarah, Ira and David talk.
Downstage center, Abraham talks with Moe.*

ABRAHAM

You're in and out, I never see you. Always running. Stand.

MOE

(laughs)

I'm standing.

ABRAHAM

How's Cooper Union? Getting good grades?

MOE

I'm keeping up. Papa I have two new students at Castle House. I'll be able to give you and Mama more money.

ABRAHAM

Castle House, always Castle House. Don't worry, the bakery is doing alright. We're not starving.

(patting Moe's back)

Just graduate. Become an architect. A serious profession.

MOE

Papa, I always want you to be proud of me.

ABRAHAM

I am. I can't imagine a better son. Sarah, my stomach says it's late.

SARAH

Okay, Everybody sit down.

(Ira and David sit down at the table. Becky stands next to Sarah as Abraham lights the Sabbath candles. Abraham says a prayer and sits down. Sarah and Becky bring platters of chicken and vegetables, setting them in the center of the table to a chorus of "oohs and ahhs." Becky and Sarah sit down. Sarah fills the plates and passes them around. They all start to eat.

MOE

(excited)

I have an announcement to make.

(Everyone turns to Moe. He stands up.)

IRA

I'm starving.

BECKY

Moe, let's eat first.

ABRAHAM

Announcements after we eat.

(Moe sits.)

SARAH

No, Abe, I don't want to wait. Moe, go ahead.

(Everybody stops eating and looks at Moe.)

MOE

I've just been offered a wonderful opportunity.

BECKY

Moe, be careful.

MOE

I've been offered a very good job.

ABRAHAM

A job? You're in college...

MOE

Yes, but Papa...

ABRAHAM

Here it comes.

MOE

Papa, you're a very fair man. You love your children. Their happiness is...

ABRAHAM

Go on.

MOE

Now be happy for me.

SARAH

Okay, he'll be happy. We'll all be happy.

BECKY

Moe!

MOE

(giving Becky a dismissive look)

My supervisor, The Baroness de Kuddlestone...

SARAH

Who?

MOE

Well, she wants me to go to Asheville.

(Everybody except Becky looks at Moe with blank expressions.)

MOE

Asheville, North Carolina. She asked me to be her dancing partner. We'll be teaching ballroom dancing to our country's captains of industry. The Vanderbilts, the Mellons — they all have summer homes in Asheville.

ABRAHAM
You'll be doing what?

SARAH
The Baroness de who?

ABRAHAM
What about your education?

MOE
This summer the Baroness will be my professor. She'll educate me.

ABRAHAM
College is where you will be, summer and winter, until you graduate.

MOE
But Papa....

ABRAHAM
You will not leave college to go dancing around with some woman of questionable experience.

MOE
I want this job. I'll be in the dance business. I'll be able to help you and Mama. I'll meet the best people.

ABRAHAM
You mean the *Goyim*.
(Sarah and the boys look at him. Becky looks down at her plate. Abraham looks at Moe, furious.)

Anything else?

MOE
Just one more thing...

ABRAHAM
(in a hard voice)
What thing?

MOE
It's hardly anything. Nothing, really.

What nothing? ABRAHAM

I have to change my name. MOE

Why? DAVID

Moe Teichman. I have to reconstruct it. For some people it's hard to pronounce. MOE

What will your name be? IRA

Arthur. MOE

Arthur what? ABRAHAM

(Moe hesitates.)

Arthur what? ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Murray. Arthur Murray. MOE
(defiantly)

(Everyone looks at Moe dumbfounded. Sarah shrieks as if she's been cut with a knife.)

Ooooy! Oh my God. He wants to be a *Goy*. SARAH

No. It's just business. MOE

Will you still be my brother? IRA

Of course, nothing changes. MOE

SARAH

That's right! Nothing changes.

MOE

Mama, we're almost at war with Germany. Nobody likes the Germans. Especially German Jews.

BECKY

He's right, Papa. Jews aren't accepted in the society hotels Moe's talking about.

MOE

That world is restricted — no Jews allowed.

SARAH

You're ashamed of who you are.

MOE

No, I'm not ashamed, but I have to dance. And they won't hire Moe Teichman.

(Abraham stands and faces Moe across the table.)

ABRAHAM

How could you want to live in that world? Lying about who you are, disrespecting your heritage, disrespecting me... and disrespecting God?

MOE

People change their names every day. If Izzy Berlain can be Irving Berlin, and Asa Yuelson can be Al Jolson, then Moe Teichman can become Arthur Murray.

Papa, I'm getting out of this slum. I want a better life. I love you and respect you. But I have no other choice.

ABRAHAM

Are you so stupid that you can't see what you're throwing away your heritage for a few dollars in the bank. I want you to have a better life. That's why you're getting a college degree. Dancing around in fancy pants like a clown? *Bulvan!* That's no life.

MOE

It's my calling. God wouldn't have given me this talent if he didn't want me to use it. Papa, I'm still your son.

ABRAHAM

No. The son I raised would never say these things.

(Moe goes to him. Abraham puts up his hands,
fending him off.)

MOE

Papa, you're a stubborn man.

ABRAHAM

An educated man does not waste his time in frivolous activities. What respectable man
wants to...

(spitting out the word)

...dance?

(Moe stands up, pulling himself together.)

MOE

Hillel. Hillel the Elder.

(Abraham looks at Moe, surprised.)

ABRAHAM

What do you know of Hillel? I've never heard his name come out of your mouth.

MOE

I know that Hillel was a great leader. And I know he said, "I get up. I walk. I fall down.
Meanwhile I keep dancing." Hear that Papa? Hillel said it. "Meanwhile I keep dancing."

(Moe comes center stage as the family moves back
and fades.)

Arthur sings KEEP DANCING. Eventually he is
joined by a stage full of dancers doing the
CHARLESTON.)

(SPOKEN)

YOU'RE RIGHT
I WILL STUMBLE
THE ROAD AHEAD IS ROUGH

(SUNG)

YOU'RE RIGHT
MANY CRUMBLE
BUT THEY'RE MADE OF WEAKER STUFF

YOU SAY YOU WANT ME SAFE, SECURE
A STEADY PAYCHECK, NOTHING MORE
ACCEPTABLE
RESPECTABLE
BUT THAT WOULD BE MY DEATH, I'M SURE...
I'VE GOT TO

KEEP DANCING
KEEP DANCING
I CAN'T STAND STILL, I'VE GOTTA MOVE
KEEP DANCING
KEEP DANCING
I GOT A GREAT BIG DREAM AND A LOT TO PROVE

IT'S IN MY SOUL
IT'S IN MY BONES
FROM THE ROOFTOPS TO THE COBBLESTONES
KEEP DANCING
KEEP DANCING
I'VE GOTTA, I'VE GOTTA, I'VE GOTTA
I'VE GOTTA DANCE

SCENE 12

Asheville, North Carolina, 1915, six months later.

In the elegant ballroom of the Battery Park Hotel, we see wealthy guests dressed in ball gowns and tuxedos on the floor dancing the MAXIXE. Some guests sit at small tables drinking wine.

ARTHUR MURRAY, now 20, in black tails and stylish two-toned shoes, leads EDITH VANDERBILT, mid-forties and elegantly gowned, onto the floor. The other dancers move back as Arthur and Edith do a faster, more stylized version of the Maxixe.

(The dance ends.)

ARTHUR

(formal, with a slight bow)

Thank you, Mrs. Vanderbilt.

EDITH VANDERBILT

(laughing)

Oh Arthur, still so formal? Loosen up a little! I shouldn't be the only one having fun.

ARTHUR

(smiling)

Don't worry, you're not. You're a great dancer.

EDITH

Well, I give you the credit for that — all the latest steps you taught me, and your attention to technique. I am much smoother, don't you think?

ARTHUR

Very smooth.

EDITH

(whispering)

Listen, don't tell anyone, but you're my favorite dancing partner.

(They sit at a small table where two glasses of wine are waiting. Edith sips her wine.)

EDITH

(turning serious)

Arthur, there's something I have to tell you... about the Baroness.

ARTHUR

The Baroness?

EDITH

She'll be leaving soon.

(Arthur looks surprised.)

EDITH (CONT'D)

I wanted to warn you.

ARTHUR

But why?

EDITH

Because we just learned that the Baroness is a fraud.

ARTHUR

Wh--at?

EDITH

Yes. The Baroness is almost a Jew.

ARTHUR

Almost a Jew?

EDITH

Her husband was Jewish.

ARTHUR

The Baron?

EDITH

She has to leave.

ARTHUR

But, she's worked so hard and she's a good teach...

EDITH

Yes but she never told us. She was dishonest, and honesty is very important to us. She'll be leaving at the end of the month.

ARTHUR

What did she say?

EDITH

She doesn't know yet. I'll tell her next week, after the debutante balls. Don't say anything to her, dear, until the girls have been presented.

(Arthur takes a slow sip of wine.)

EDITH (CONT'D)

(smiles at him)

But Arthur, don't you worry, we want you to stay. You're a wonderful teacher, and the girls love you. Of course you'll have to find someone else to work with.

(Arthur starts to stand up. Edith stops him.)

EDITH

There's one more thing about the Baroness. She's been cheating you.

(Arthur sits down and leans toward Edith.)

SCENE 13

The elegant ballroom at Biltmore House, Edith Vanderbilt's mansion. The Debutante Ball is in progress. Young men in tuxedos WALTZ with lovely young debutants in flowing gowns.

(Arthur watches the dancers from the terrace adjoining the ballroom. The Baroness, fashionably dressed, steps to Arthur's side and links her arm through his. Arthur stiffens.)

BARONESS

Oh darling, not a missed step, not a missed turn. They're perfect. We created a masterpiece.

ARTHUR

We did. A masterpiece.

(Arthur removes his arm from hers. The Baroness looks at Arthur.)

BARONESS

Something wrong?

ARTHUR

I think so.

BARONESS

What, darling?

ARTHUR

We are partners, fifty-fifty partners.

(The Baroness nods.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

And partners don't cheat each other.

BARONESS

Of course not.

ARTHUR

But you're cheating me.

BARONESS

What the hell are you talking about?

(The music and dancers fade.)

ARTHUR

I counted the money in my envelope. There's less than half of what I earned.

BARONESS

Nonsense!

ARTHUR

Mrs. Vanderbilt said she's been paying you fifty dollars for each lesson I teach. You've been giving me only five dollars a lesson. You owe me four hundred dollars.

BARONESS

Darling don't be a smart-ass. I don't care how many society ladies you teach, I decide how much you're paid... if you're paid.

ARTHUR

We have a contract. Fifty-fifty.

BARONESS

You obviously skimmed through it. Read it again — it doesn't say fifty-fifty. I may have said that to you in a moment of passion, but it's not in black and white. I hired you as my assistant. I promised that you'd make money. And you sure did!

(Arthur glares at the Baroness.)

BARONESS

(patting his cheek and smiling)

Oh, admit it darling, we work well together.

ARTHUR

I don't work with cheats.

BARONESS

That's a mighty high horse you're riding, Moe Teichman. When we met you were a nice Jewish boy... going nowhere. You should be grateful to me for every damned penny I've allowed you to earn. You should kiss my feet, not whine like a brat. I made you into a high-society ballroom dancer. Remember that! Don't be so goddamned greedy. You owe me.

ARTHUR

You're right. I do owe you. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you, Baroness. I learned a lot from you. So I'm going to tell you a secret, but you have to promise me that you'll keep it under your hat, but it's something you should know.

BARONESS

What?

ARTHUR

Promise not to say anything.

BARONESS

Okay, okay I promise.

ARTHUR

(looking the Baroness in the eye)

They found out that the Baron was Jewish. They say you're a liar and a fraud.

BARONESS

Shit! I'm not a liar, and I'm not Jewish.

ARTHUR

Oh no?

(To prove her point, the Baroness sings and dances a VAUDEVILLE-STYLE SONG from her childhood, "I'm Mary Maud Mant from Cornwall and Camden.")

The song ends.)

ARTHUR

(smiling, starts walking away)

Okay Mary, now we're even. Good luck.

BARONESS

Where are you going? You've got a full schedule tomorrow.

ARTHUR

I quit.

BARONESS

We're not finished yet. We have weeks left to go. It's not over.

ARTHUR

It is over. I'm going down South to teach dancing. I wish you all the best.

BARONESS

You won't be able to get a job without a good word from me.

ARTHUR

I don't know about that. I'm sure Mrs. Vanderbilt will vouch for me. I hear there are great opportunities in Atlanta.

BARONESS

You'll fall right on your fuckin' ass. Nobody down South likes Yankees, especially Yankee Jews.

ARTHUR

Oh, you don't have to sweet-talk me. They may not like Moe Teichman, but they're going to love Arthur Murray.

(Arthur exits.)

BARONESS

Kike!

SCENE 14

Atlanta, 1916.

A ballroom in the Georgian Terrace, a fashionable hotel.

(The MANAGER of the hotel's dancing classes, a dapper man of 50, paces back and forth near the door while a group of fidgety 8- to 10-year-olds waits on the dance floor. The girls wear pastel flowered dresses and white gloves. The boys wear dark slacks, jackets and ties.)

Arthur runs in buttoning his blue sports jacket.)

MANAGER

Mr. Murray, you're late... on your first day. They're waiting.

(Arthur smiles and walks into the room and over to the children.)

ARTHUR

Hello ladies and gentlemen, I'm your teacher, Arthur Murray.

CHILDREN

Hello, Mr. Murray.

ARTHUR

(smiles)

Please take a partner and form a circle. Today we will learn the Foxtrot. You'll start by learning the Box Step. Now watch me.

(He carefully demonstrates and explains the BOX STEP.)

ARTHUR

Got it?

CHILDREN

Yes, Mr. Murray.

ARTHUR

This is the way to hold your partner.

(He picks one girl from the circle, leads her in front of the group and demonstrates the step. When he finishes he bows to the girl and she goes back to her partner.)

Arthur puts on a FOXTROT.)

ARTHUR

Now let's all do the Box Step.

(The children form a circle and, in couples, slowly move to the music.)

Arthur stands in the middle of the circle giving hand directions. The children dance dutifully and silently around the room.

Soon, many of the children yawn and stumble. They look down at their feet, up at the ceiling, anywhere but at each other.

Realizing no one's having fun, Arthur takes off his jacket and lays it over the back of a chair. He changes the music to lively CHARLESTON and starts to dance. The girls and boys stand still and watch in amazement.)

ARTHUR

Come on in, the water's swell!

(The boys throw off their jackets, girls throw off their gloves, and they go wild. Everyone follows Arthur, except one little girl who stands alone.

Arthur holds out his hand to the little girl. She shakes her head, turns around and starts to run toward the door. Arthur catches her.)

ARTHUR

Hey, I didn't mean to scare you.

GIRL

I'm not scared.

ARTHUR

Don't you like me?

GIRL

I do.

ARTHUR

Then what's the matter?

GIRL

(softly)

I can't dance.

ARTHUR
What?

GIRL
(louder)
I can't dance.

ARTHUR
You can't dance?

(The little girl nods.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Oh, yes you can.

GIRL
(wailing)
I can't, I can't, I can't.

ARTHUR
How do you know?

GIRL
I just do.

(Arthur kneels down next to her.)

ARTHUR
Can you walk?

(She stares at him.)

ARTHUR
Can you walk?

(She nods her head.)

Arthur sings "IF YOU CAN WALK, YOU CAN DANCE.")

DON'T BE SCARED
DON'T BE SHY
DON'T STAND STILL -- LIFE WILL PASS YOU BY
DON'T YOU FEEL THAT RHYTHM RUNNIN' THROUGH YA

TAKE ONE STEP
TAKE ONE MORE
GRAB MY HAND AND WE'LL TAKE THE FLOOR
SUDDENLY ALL GOOD THINGS ARE COMIN' TO YA
'CAUSE...

IF YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN DANCE
IF YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN DANCE
DON'T SWEAT IT
YOU'LL GET IT
THE MINUTE YOU TAKE THAT CHANCE
IF YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN DANCE
IF YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN DANCE
JUST DO IT
NOTHIN' TO IT
IF YOU CAN WALK...
YOU CAN DANCE

FOUND YOUR BEAT
FOUND YOUR STRIDE
FOUND OUT THERE'S NO NEED TO HIDE
FINALLY YOU'RE COMIN' OUT FROM UNDER

CATCH THE WIND
CATCH A STAR
MOVE LIKE THAT AND YOU'RE GOIN' FAR
WELCOME TO A BRAND NEW WORLD OF WONDER
'CAUSE

IF YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN DANCE
 IF YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN DANCE
 DON'T SWEAT IT
 YOU'LL GET IT
 THE MINUTE YOU TAKE THAT CHANCE
 IF YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN DANCE
 IF YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN DANCE
 JUST DO IT
 NOTHIN' TO IT
 IF YOU CAN WALK...
 YOU CAN DANCE

(As the song progresses, more boys and girls enter. Soon the room is filled with dancing children. By the end Arthur transforms the shy little girl into the star dancer.

The song ends.)

SCENE 15

Two separated bright spots on a dark stage.

We see Arthur in Atlanta and Becky in Manhattan. A telephone rings. Becky faces Arthur.

ARTHUR

How are you, Madam Doctor?

BECKY

Working like crazy.

(beat)

We all miss you.

ARTHUR

I miss you too. All of you. Did Mama get the money?

BECKY

Moe, you're a generous boy.

ARTHUR

I'm paying off my sins.

(beat)

How's Papa?

BECKY

He's been very quiet since you left.

ARTHUR

I'll talk to him when I come home.

BECKY

Yes, come home. You don't belong in the sticks. You're a city boy.

ARTHUR

Atlanta's not the sticks.

BECKY

Well, it's not New York and you're a New Yorker. Just a few more courses and you could have been an architect. A real profession. Not all this ballroom hooley.

ARTHUR

I love this ballroom hooley.

BECKY

Oh Moe, for God's sake, grow up.

ARTHUR

I'm not Moe Teichman from Suffolk Street anymore. I'm Arthur Murray.

BECKY

No, Arthur Murray is like a bright, shiny clown suit. It's a costume you wear to fool people.

ARTHUR

Well, it's a perfect fit! Arthur Murray knows how to talk without letting his hands fly in the air, he knows which dinner jacket to buy, the proper fork and spoon to use, and how to charm society girls.

BECKY

Papa would say you sound silly, not like a serious man.

ARTHUR

Becky, this is my life now. I'm dancing, I'm making some money and it's as far away from the slums as I can get.

BECKY

Oh, Moe.

ARTHUR

Becky, from now on, call me Arthur.

SCENE 16

Atlanta, 1920.

Arthur's first dance studio. A full-length mirror hangs on one wall, a long table with a phonograph and a pile of records on the other side. A sign reads: "Arthur Murray's School of Dance."

(Arthur is teaching the Box Step to ALVIA WALKER, a shy, tall woman in her fifties. Alvia's husband, CLARENCE, a dour, heavysset man also in his fifties, sits in a chair watching their every move.)

Alvia, unsure of herself, stumbles. She keeps her head down and looks at the floor.)

ALVIA

Sorry, I'm so clumsy...

ARTHUR

No, no you're fine. Head up, Mrs. Walker.

(Alvia raises her head, but her eyes keep looking down at the floor.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Step, step, side, together. Step, step, side, together. Look up at the stars.

(Alvia stumbles her way through the step.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

We'll try it again. Now just look into my eyes, Mrs. Walker. May I call you Alvia?

(Alvia nods and looks up. Arthur smiles.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

That's better.

(Clarence, wary of Arthur, starts to get up. Arthur stops dancing and turns off the phonograph.)

He moves in front of Alvia and takes both of her hands in his. Clarence is about to protest.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Now Alvia, just walk with me. Keep looking into my eyes and walk.

(Slowly he leads her around the room.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You're doing very well.

(Alvia manages to relax a little. She almost smiles. Arthur puts on FOXTROT music and takes her in his arms. They dance around the room. The music and the lights change, indicating time passing, as Arthur leads a more confident, graceful Alvia into the CASTLE WALK and then a lively QUICK STEP.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Look at you Alvia, a few lessons, and you're dancing.

ALVIA

(to Clarence)

Look dear, I'm dancing!

(Arthur goes to Clarence and pulls him up off his chair. He arranges Clarence and Alvia in dance position. They dance together as the scene ends.)

SCENE 17

Atlanta. Months later. Evening. A popular Jazz club.

The band is playing DIXIELAND. The music ends and the audience applauds. Arthur and David sit at a table near the band.

BAND LEADER

Thanks folks, we appreciate it! Be back in ten.

DAVID
(excited)

So this is a nightclub.

ARTHUR
No. Not just a nightclub, the hottest Jazz club in Atlanta. Best champagne around.
(he raises his glass)
Here's to you, brother. Happy birthday.

(Arthur takes a sip, then David does the same.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Just don't tell Papa.

DAVID
(laughs)
I won't! Moe, come back.

ARTHUR
Not now. I just opened my own studio. I like it here.

DAVID
I miss you. Becky's always at the hospital. Ira's... well... Ira.

ARTHUR
(laughs)
Yeah he can be a brat... So, I hear you have a girl.

DAVID
(brightening)
I do, Sabina. Mama doesn't like her. She wears glasses and her family takes in boarders. Mama says I should fall in love with a rich girl.

ARTHUR
Do you know any rich girls?

(David shakes his head.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
It's better to have a poor girl — even one with glasses — than to have no girl.

DAVID
Are you serious about anyone?

ARTHUR

I'm serious about making money. The folks need help, and you're going to law school. When you graduate I'll come home and open a studio. You and I will work together.

DAVID

No kidding?

(Arthur nods and puts his arm around David's shoulder.)

ARTHUR

You're going to be my top guy, my personal legal advisor. I trust you.

DAVID

You promise, Moe?

ARTHUR

I promise. But kid, from now on, call me Arthur.

SCENE 18

Arthur's Dance Studio, six months later.

(Arthur flips through the local newspaper. ELLEN, his pretty assistant and dance instructor, enters.)

ELLEN

Have you had lunch?

(Arthur doesn't look up and shakes his head. Ellen hangs up her sweater.)

ARTHUR

Not yet, I'm concentrating on these ads.

(smiling)

Sizing up the competition.

ELLEN

I want to show you something.

ARTHUR

In a minute. Ellen, I want a stronger ad. Something eye-catching, compelling.

ELLEN

I think we have a very good ad.

ARTHUR

Yes, but we can do better.

ELLEN

I think we're doing well.

ARTHUR

Yes, but students come and go, and I still have to pay the rent, the phone bill... and you.

ELLEN

And we'll get them. Here, let me show you what I found.

(Ellen starts playing with a small hand-held device.
Arthur goes back to the paper.)

ARTHUR

Ellen, listen to this: "Learn to swim and meet people. Don't sit alone on the sand. With our illustrated manual you can practice kicks on your own floor, and learn underwater breathing in your own bathtub."

(laughing)

"After just four easy lessons, you'll win every race, and bring home the gold."

ELLEN

Well, why not? They sell brides to cowboys through the mail.

ARTHUR

I can teach people to dance in the comfort and privacy of their own homes. Mail Order. We just need an eye-popping ad...

(smiles at her)

No rent or electric costs. Why didn't I think of that?

ELLEN

Well you, can't think of everything. Look at this.

(She plays with the little flip-book.)

ARTHUR

What is that thing?

ELLEN

A kid was selling it on the street. Called it a kinetoscope. Look!

(As Ellen shows Arthur how to use the kinetoscope, dancers launch into a cartoon-like dance using strobe lights to evoke the kinetoscope's motion, giving the appearance of real movement.)

ARTHUR

Hey, it moves. I could send one out with every teaching manual.

ELLEN

What teaching manual?

ARTHUR

I'll write a teaching manual, all the steps and positions included. It'll be a smash! Ellen, get us 100 kinetoscopes.

(Arthur goes to Ellen and holds her in dance position.)

ARTHUR

I'll teach them how to hold their partner.

(Music starts. They dance cheek to cheek.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Like this.

ELLEN

Umm, like this. Arthur, you do like me don't you?

(He kisses her.)

ARTHUR

Can't you tell?

ELLEN

We don't spend much time together, except when we're working.

ARTHUR

And we work so well together.

(Ellen moves out of his reach.)

ELLEN

There are other things besides work.

ARTHUR

Like what?

ELLEN

Arthur, do you love me?

ARTHUR

(surprised)

Love you? I think you're b--b--eautiful. I think You're w--w--wonderful.

ELLEN

But do you love me?

ARTHUR

I've no time for love. All my energy and time goes into running this studio. I need money to help my parents and put my brother through law school.

(Ellen moves closer to Arthur.)

ELLEN

But, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Ellen, don't push me. If this studio fails my father will say, "Idiot! I told you dancing is for fools."

ELLEN

The studio is doing well. People love to dance. The thing is, they think dancing lessons are a luxury.

ARTHUR

I have to show them dancing is a necessity — like food, like air.

ELLEN

That's gonna take some time.

ARTHUR

I don't have time, I'm almost 26!

(Arthur sings MY TIME'S RUNNING OUT.

When the song ends, there's a knock on the door. The landlord, MR. BELL, a man in his sixties, enters wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase.)

ARTHUR

Mr. Bell, nice to see you. What's wrong? I mean, you don't come here very often.

MR. BELL

I'm bringing you the rent notice.

ARTHUR

You usually mail it.

MR. BELL

Well... there's something else.

(uncomfortable pause)

I like you Arthur. I do. You're a good boy. So I wanted to tell you the bad news in person. Face to face, eye to eye, man to man.

ARTHUR

Shall I sit?

MR. BELL

(nodding at Arthur)

It wouldn't hurt.

(Arthur continues to stand. Ellen is at his side.)

MR. BELL

(sadly)

You know, it's a fast world. Things move very, very quickly. The war's over. The economy is, as they say, roaring. Prices are shooting up, food prices are shooting up, electricity rates are shooting up, and...

ARTHUR

Rents are shooting up.

MR. BELL

(shrugs and nods)

Like rockets.

ARTHUR

How much?

MR. BELL

Over fifty percent.

(Arthur groans.)

MR. BELL (CONT'D)

Maybe sixty-five percent cent...

(Arthur gasps loudly.)

MR. BELL (CONT'D)

Okay, fifty percent.

ARTHUR

Mr. Bell, I can't afford to pay fifty percent more. I'm starting a mail-order business, which will be a great success... soon. Of course I'll have to expand.

ELLEN

Expand? Arthur!

MR. BELL

A very ambitious young man.

ARTHUR

I am very ambitious.

(slowly pondering)

Now, Mr. Bell, I know you have a very small storefront, in very bad condition. Unfortunately you can't do anything with it unless you fix it, which is very expensive! Oh, I know it needs lots and lots of work, which would take up all your time.... So I was thinking, maybe I can offer you a deal.

MR. BELL

A deal?

ARTHUR

Maybe I'd be willing to take it off your hands, fix it up, relieve you of the burden of repairing it and then... well... I'd test it out for a year. After a year or so you'd be able to rent it for a very good price. I won't even ask for any remodeling fee. I mean, if you included that store in my current lease...

MR. BELL

(claps his hands together)

I like that. The place needs too much work for me — repairs, cleaning, painting. If you do all that, you can use it. God knows what for... And I'll include it in your current rent, with a small, say 25% increase.

ARTHUR

It's a deal.

MR. BELL

It's a deal!

(they shake hands)

Want to see it?

(Ellen, perplexed, looks at Arthur.)

ARTHUR

Absolutely!

MR. BELL

Go look. And bring a flashlight.

(On his way out, Mr. Bell hands Arthur a piece of paper and the key.)

SCENE 19

Atlanta, minutes later in a dark room.

(Arthur enters, turns on the flashlight and sprays the beam around the room. The windows are covered with paper. He rips off the paper and uncovers the two windows, showing the floor covered with thick white dust. As Arthur walks around the room he leaves footprints in the dust.

Arthur looks at his footprints and laughs, then goes into a dance as his footprints suddenly light up. Two glowing colors differentiate the man's and woman's steps.

Suddenly the floor is filled with brightly colored footprints. Arthur dances, both leading and following the footprints.

Projected on the wall behind Arthur we see the famous Arthur Murray FOOTSTEPS AD. A few dancers appear, reading the diagrams and dancing as they follow the footprints.

Ellen enters and joins Arthur in a dance number, FOOTSTEPS ON THE FLOOR.

The dance ends.

A ramp appears, rising to a higher level: Arthur's road to success.

Arthur kisses Ellen goodbye. With tears in her eyes, Ellen waves goodbye. Arthur leads the dancers up the ramp, following the lighted footsteps, the way Dorothy followed the Yellow Brick Road.

Arthur sings a look-at-me-now song, declaring "I'm on my way, nothing can stop me now."

SCENE 20

New York City, 1925.

(Arthur walks into a Manhattan radio station wearing his beaver coat. He takes off the coat, throws it on a chair, and steps to the microphone. The studio features a dance floor and a small audience seated on stage right.)

The Carolinians, a popular Jazz band, is playing. Arthur looks out at the audience. In the first row he notices a pretty girl, KATHRYN KOHNFELDER. She smiles. The music stops.)

ARTHUR

Hello and good evening. This is Arthur Murray, coming to you from WBJZ in New York City. Tonight we are going to learn the Foxtrot — a very popular dance, which will make you very popular, too.

Now, all of you listening at home, stand up, because I'm going to teach you and the studio audience the first step of the Foxtrot, which is the Box Step. Men, start with your left foot, ladies with your right. And now men, walk forward, one, two, step to the right, and side together. And repeat, one, two, side together.

(The Carolinians play a FOXTROT.)

ARTHUR

Now, if I can find a partner, I will demonstrate the Box Step for the studio audience.

(Arthur goes over to the pretty girl, Kathryn, and holds out his hand.)

ARTHUR

May I have the pleasure?

KATHRYN

(exaggerated)

I'd be delighted.

(Kathryn stands up and takes Arthur's hand. They both have an immediate physical reaction. For a moment they freeze, unable to move. Then Arthur leads Kathryn onto the dance floor.

KATHRYN

So, the man with the footsteps is real.

(Arthur takes Kathryn in his arms.)

ARTHUR

Very real.

(He nods to the Carolinians, and they begin to play. Arthur and Kathryn dance, and it's love at first touch.

After the dance Arthur leads Kathryn center stage. The lights on the audience go down. Lights up on Arthur and Kathryn.

They both sing the duet, SMITTEN.)

ARTHUR:

MY LIFE IS AS GOOD AS LIFE EVER GETS
 A LIMOUSINE, A SMART ADDRESS
 THE PUBLIC KNOWS MY NAME NOW
 I'VE GOT A BIT OF FAME NOW
 AND I'M THOROUGHLY ENJOYING EVERY MOMENT
 OF SUCCESS

ONE TOUCH, AND MY PERFECT PLAN TOOK A TWIST
 AND I CAN SEE THE WORLD I'D MISSED
 WHATEVER SPELL YOU'RE SPINNING
 HAS SPARKED A NEW BEGINNING
 YOUR SMILE IS SO BEWITCHING
 YOU WERE BORN FOR ME TO KISS

SMITTEN
 I'M SMITTEN
 MY ARMS ARE OPEN, PULSE RUNS FAST
 SMITTEN
 I'M SMITTEN
 MY HEART IS HOPING THIS WILL LAST
 I'M HOOKED
 I'M COOKED
 I'M SMITTEN

KATHRYN:

THIS FLAPPER DON'T FLIP OVER JERSEY BOYS
 I THREW AWAY THOSE CHILDISH TOYS
 PURSUING EVERY PASSION
 IN THE LATEST FASHION
 AND DANCING WITH A STAR
 WHOM I THOROUGHLY ENJOY

BOTH:

SMITTEN
 I'M SMITTEN
 MY ARMS ARE OPEN, PULSE RUNS FAST
 SMITTEN
 I'M SMITTEN
 MY HEART IS HOPING THIS WILL LAST
 I'M HOOKED
 I'M COOKED
 I'M SMITTEN

WOKE UP THIS MORNING
 I HAD NO WARNING
 I'D BE IN YOUR ARMS BY TONIGHT
 THANKS TO YOUR TALENTS
 I'VE LOST MY BALANCE
 THIS IS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

SMITTEN
 I'M SMITTEN
 MY ARMS ARE OPEN, PULSE RUNS FAST
 SMITTEN
 I'M SMITTEN
 MY HEART IS HOPING THIS WILL LAST
 I'M HOOKED
 I'M COOKED
 I'M SMITTEN

SCENE 21

Jersey City, NJ, 1924.

*The living room of Kathryn Kohnfelder's home.
 From the furnishings it is clear that the
 Kohnfelders are comfortable but not wealthy.*

(Kathryn and her father, AL KOHNFELDER, in his
 late-forties, face each other.)

AL
 (shouting)

He does what?

(Kathryn is silent.)

AL (CONT'D)
 Out of the question! End of discussion.

KATHRYN
 I love him.

AL
 You do not love a penniless dance teacher.

KATHRYN
 He's not penniless. He's on the radio. And I love him very much.

AL
 (shouting louder)
 You do not! That's final. End of...

KATHRYN
(with great determination)

I'm going to marry him.

AL

Over my dead body! You don't know anything about him.

KATHRYN
(smiling sweetly)

He has a nice car and he's crazy for me. What else do I have to know?

AL

Does he observe the Sabbath for example?

(Kathryn shrugs)

What's his name?

KATHRYN

Arthur Murray.

AL

Sounds Irish. Is he Irish?

KATHRYN

His father's name is Abraham Teichman.

AL

Well... that's something. What two-bit dance joint does he work for?

KATHRYN

He's self-employed.

AL

Oh God, he doesn't have a steady job. What does he know about you?

KATHRYN

He knows I graduated high school with honorable mention, and that I'm going to be a writer.

(smiles)

And, that I have wonderful, open-minded parents.

AL

You're not getting married.

KATHRYN

He's very smart.

AL

Doesn't sound too smart to me, carrying on with a schoolgirl.

KATHRYN

I'm not a schoolgirl. Please just talk to him.

AL

No. You're not getting married. End of discussion!

ACT II

SCENE 1

Jersey City, 1924.

Outside the front door of the Kohnfelder's home, Al stands smoking a cigar.

(A Rolls Royce pulls up in front of the house.
Kathryn's father watches Arthur get out.)

ARTHUR
(smiling awkwardly)

Good evening sir.

(Arthur holds out his hand.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Arthur Murray.

(Al nods but doesn't shake Arthur's hand.)

AL

The dance teacher... self-employed.

(Arthur drops his hand.)

ARTHUR

Yes.

AL

Listen, you'd better not waltz in here thinking — whatever it is you're thinking.

ARTHUR

Sir?

AL

Nice car. Are you trying to impress me?

ARTHUR

I am.

AL

Well you failed. I'm not impressed. Is there something you want?

ARTHUR

Yes.

AL

(looking him over)

She's inside.

(Kathryn's father blocks the door. Arthur starts to go around him.)

AL

Hold on, Murray. Don't side-step me. You think I'm going to let you just dance right in and steal my little girl.

ARTHUR

I ne--ver stole a th--ing in my life.

AL

Good-bye Mr. Murray.

ARTHUR

(stands up straight)

I love her, sir.

AL

Forget it. You're too long in the tooth. She's a baby... only 18. How old are you?

ARTHUR

A very young and very determined 29. She loves me and I love her.

AL

Yeah, yeah I know, very romantic. But my Katie's a hot-house flower. She's an innocent child who thinks she's a flapper. She doesn't know anything about the world. Christ, she's never been out of New Jersey. She could get hurt. She needs attention — a lot of attention.

ARTHUR

She'll have all of my attention. I promise you that! And I'll keep her safe. I've never loved a woman as much as...

AL

That's your problem, she's not a woman. She's a teenager. Mr. Murray, do you know anything at all about teenage girls?

ARTHUR

I'll learn.

AL

Yeah, yeah. You have a penny or two?

ARTHUR

(nods)

And a growing bank account. Next month I'm opening another studio on Fifth Avenue. I'll take good care of her.

(Al looks at him for a minute then accepts the inevitable.)

AL

I don't ever want to see her cry.

SCENE 2

An ocean liner at sea, 1925.

Early morning. Arthur and Kathryn's lavish stateroom.

(Arthur, in a silk dressing gown, eats breakfast. He keeps glancing at the door. Kathryn bounces in, full of zip.)

ARTHUR

Where were you?

KATHRYN

I just took a run.

ARTHUR

I was worried.

KATHRYN

(laughing)

I'm fine. I was running around the deck and punching... boom, bam, boom.

(She feigns a few punches.)

ARTHUR
(sipping coffee)

Punching?

KATHRYN
I found a gym on Deck Two. I threw some great punches. Now I'm starving.

(She takes a piece of toast from Arthur's plate and nibbles. She takes a sip of his coffee.)

KATHRYN
Delicious.

(She takes another sip.)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)
(about to take a third sip)
Oh...

ARTHUR
(laughing)
Hey, that's my coffee.

KATHRYN
Darling, do you know that this is my very first cup of coffee? Daddy never let me drink coffee, but now I'm an old married lady and I can do what I please.

(Kathryn pours herself a cup. Arthur adds a teaspoon of sugar and a some cream, and she takes a sip.)

KATHRYN
Oh it's so delicious, like dessert.

ARTHUR
You're delicious.

(Arthur suddenly reaches for Kathryn, holds her close, and kisses her slowly, with passion. Kathryn is breathless. She looks at him, eyes wide.)

ARTHUR
(with a slow smile)
About the punching... I don't want you hurting yourself on our honeymoon.

KATHRYN

Oh I won't. There's this wonderful gym trainer. He held my arms and showed me exactly what to do. You don't have to worry.

ARTHUR

Held your arms?

KATHRYN

That's right, he showed me how to punch like a pro.

(She pretends to punch Arthur.)

ARTHUR

Wasn't that a little inappropriate?

KATHRYN

No.

ARTHUR

Tomorrow wait for me. I don't want you running around the ship alone.

(Kathryn grins, realizing he's jealous. She blows him a kiss and saunters into the bathroom.)

ARTHUR

Teenagers!

SCENE 3

The next two scenes smoothly transition into each other, creating one continuous musical sequence.

A fine restaurant in Paris.

(Kathryn and Arthur sit at a table for two. Arthur wears an evening jacket. Kathryn wears a charming but provincial white dress with silver stars around the neckline. The table covered with a white linen cloth, is set with ornate silverware and a lighted candelabra.

A uniformed waiter pours Arthur some Champagne in his glass, Arthur tastes it, nods. The waiter continues serving the Champagne and exits.)

KATHRYN

(sipping Champagne)

Oh Arthur, this is the most beautiful place I've ever seen. How did you ever find it?

ARTHUR

(laughing)

Dear, *Le Grand Véfour* is the best restaurant in Paris. And nothing's too good for my beautiful bride.

(Arthur raises her hand to his lips.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

In 1795, Napoleon proposed to Josephine at this very table.

KATHRYN

Really?

(Arthur nods and kisses her hand.)

KATHRYN

Oh darling, you're so romantic. Just like Napoleon.

(She picks up the large fork and digs in.)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Mmm, delicious. This is the best salad ever, beets and nuts and...

ARTHUR

Pistachios. Kathryn dear, you're not using the salad fork.

KATHRYN

The salad fork?

(She looks at the fork.)

ARTHUR

Dear, put down that fork. Can't you see it's too big? Use the small fork.

(Kathryn looks at him. She puts the fork down and picks up the salad fork.)

KATHRYN

This little fork? This is only for salads?

(Arthur nods.)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Gee, at home every fork was a salad fork, and a meat fork, and...

ARTHUR

You're not at home now. In Paris we use a salad fork, an entrée fork and a dessert fork.

KATHRYN

Gee, I hope I can remember which is which.

ARTHUR

(Teases her with a smile)

Don't worry dear, I'll remind you.

Transition to an elegant Parisian dress shop.

*Kathryn is seated on a couch with Arthur.
Standing before them are four beautiful models,
each in a different outfit. Standing at attention
next to the models is MADAME NICOLE, the
manager of the shop.*

(Madame Nicole snaps her fingers and each model comes forward, and takes a turn in front of the Murrays.

The models perform a song and dance: PATOU, CHANEL, VIONNET.

The song ends.)

MADAME NICOLE

Madame, which outfit pleases you?

KATHRYN

Oh golly, I don't know, they're all so nifty.

(She scrutinizes the models and points to a Chanel suit.)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Maybe that one.

MADAM NICOLE

Oh yes, Madame, very chic.

KATHRYN

Arthur?

ARTHUR

You'd look lovely in any of them. That one's very nice, but a little too boxy... a little too dowdy.

KATHRYN

Dowdy?

ARTHUR

Too mature. You're young and lovely — I want to show you off.

(Madame Nicole motions to a model wearing a Vionnet blue silk evening gown with a revealing neckline.)

MADAME NICOLE

Very charming for a lovely young lady.

KATHRYN

(enthusiastic)

Oh yes, I love it! Just love it.

MADAME NICOLE

Shall you try it on?

KATHRYN

(jumping up)

I shall.

ARTHUR

Katie, the neckline is rather low.

KATHRYN

I thought you wanted to show me off.

ARTHUR

Not all of you.

KATHRYN

Oh, Arthur, don't be an old fuddy-duddy.

(Kathryn goes behind a screen and comes out wearing the dress. She looks gorgeous. Arthur looks at her, slowly turns her around, then with a big smile, takes her in his arms and leads her into a spirited, flirtatious QUICK STEP.)

SCENE 4

A deck on the ocean liner steaming home, months later. Sunset.

(Kathryn, with a serious expression, stands at the railing, looking at the ocean. Arthur finds her.)

ARTHUR

Where's your sweater? You'll catch cold.

KATHRYN

I'm fine.

ARTHUR

I'll get your jacket from the cabin.

KATHRYN

Oh Arthur darling, you're so good to me.

(Arthur slips his arm around her and laughs.)

ARTHUR

I hope you appreciate it. Katie, you're precious to me.

(resting his cheek on her hair)

I'm glad we're going home.

KATHRYN

It's been the most exciting time in my life. There's something I have to tell you.

(Arthur waits.)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Well, it's ...

(Arthur waits.)

ARTHUR

Dear, you can tell me anything.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

(looking into his eyes)

It's just that... that... I can't be your wife.

ARTHUR

(laughs)

But darling, you are my wife.

(Kathryn moves away and shakes her head.)

ARTHUR

Listen young lady, we signed a contract and you're not wiggling out of it.

KATHRYN

I am.

ARTHUR

Sweetheart, don't you love me anymore?

KATHRYN

I worship you. That's just it.

ARTHUR

Then what the hell are you talking about?

(Kathryn and Arthur speak-sing A PERFECTLY
PERFECT, SLIGHTLY IMPROPER WIFE.)

KATHRYN:

YOU DESERVE A WIFE THAT'S SMART
ONE WHO READS AND APPRECIATES ART
I KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT LIFE
AND NOTHING ABOUT BEING A WIFE.

ARTHUR

You know how to please me. I'll teach you anything else you have to know.

KATHRYN

But Arthur, you deserve a wife who doesn't have to be taught.

KATHRYN:

YOU DESERVE THE BEST

ARTHUR:
YOU'RE RIGHT
I DO!

KATHRYN:
THE VERY BEST

ARTHUR:
AND THE VERY BEST IS YOU

KATHRYN:
NO, NO
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO COOK

ARTHUR:
SO WHAT?
I'LL BUY YOU A BOOK

KATHRYN:
OR CLEAN THE HOUSE
OR SHOP
I CAN'T EVEN TWIST A MOP

ARTHUR:
I DON'T GIVE A HOOT ABOUT THAT

KATHRYN:
I DO
I'M A FLOP

ARTHUR:
KATIE STOP
PLEASE DEAR, STOP

KATHRYN:
I FLUB IT WHEN IT COMES TO SCRUBBING A TUB
CAN'T CHANGE A BULB OR A SHOWER HEAD
OH, I CAN JOKE AND GET A LAUGH
BUT I CAN'T EVEN MAKE A PROPER BED

ARTHUR:

THEN MAKE ME AN IMPROPER ONE INSTEAD
 YOU'RE THE ONLY WOMAN I WANT IN MY LIFE
 MY PERFECTLY PERFECT
 SLIGHTLY INSANE
 COMPLETELY ADORABLE WIFE
 PLEASE DARLING GET THIS INTO YOUR HEAD
 YOU'RE THE ONLY WOMAN I WANT IN MY BED!

(Arthur kisses her with passion. Kathryn is dazzled
 and convinced.)

SCENE 5

Arthur's office in New York, one year later.

*We see Arthur's modern desk and two
 upholstered chairs around a glass coffee table.*

*On the table is a plate of chocolate chip cookies
 and lemon bars. There is also a framed picture
 of Kathryn, 6 months pregnant.*

(Arthur stands next to his desk. David and Ira enter
 the office.)

ARTHUR

Have a brownie. Kathryn made them.

(Ira tastes the brownie and rolls his eyes in
 appreciation. He nods towards the framed photo.)

IRA

How soon?

ARTHUR

About six months.

(big smile)

We're having twins.

IRA

(laughing)

One for you and one for me.

DAVID

Congratulations. How's she feeling?

ARTHUR

You know Kathryn, rarin' to go.

DAVID

And you? Ready for twins?

ARTHUR

I hope so. Sure. I'm fine.

(beat)

Let's get down to business.

(Arthur looks at Ira, who hands him an envelope.)

IRA

The rents from the Bronx buildings.

(Arthur opens the envelope, smiles, and puts it on his desk.)

ARTHUR

Mama's a smart negotiator, and she made good investments.

DAVID

You made good investments.

ARTHUR

Well, I provide the money, but I depend on Mama. She knows real estate. She's shrewd. Stands her ground.

IRA

I'm taking real estate courses at City College so I can make my own investments. I don't want to depend on anyone.

(David laughs.)

ARTHUR

Still a know-it-all.

IRA

I know buildings — how to manage 'em and how to fix 'em.

ARTHUR

You know about collecting rents and fixing frozen pipes, but not what to buy or when.

IRA

But I will — all of that. I'm educating myself.

ARTHUR

Maybe you should write a book.

IRA

I will, soon but now I've gotta go to the Bronx and talk to the plumber. Mrs. Feinberg has a leak in her kitchen sink.

(Ira exits.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

(laughs)

He loves managing those buildings.

DAVID

He does.

ARTHUR

And you?

DAVID

Not me.

ARTHUR

So stick to our plan. You're a lawyer. Be my legal counsel.

DAVID

I'm not sure I'm ready for that.

ARTHUR

You are. I want you.

(putting his arm around David's
shoulder)

You'll have your own office, two big windows, cross-ventilation. What more can you ask?

DAVID

There's a lot of hard-selling, too much hype.

(Arthur drops his arm.)

DAVID (CONT'D)

(torn)

Papa says I should open a law office.

ARTHUR

Private practice? You'd be fighting lots of competition. Pushing, pulling. That's what you want? Listen, brother, I need you. I don't trust easily, but I trust you. We'd be working together. That's what you always wanted. Right?

DAVID

(nods)

I have to think about it.

ARTHUR

So while you're thinking, bring Sabina to the Studio Ball at the Biltmore on Saturday night.

DAVID

The Biltmore... pretty fancy.

ARTHUR

Music, dancing, awards. The teachers put on a great show, and the students love it. Sabina will love it. And you'll be doing me a big favor. I'll be busy running the show and glad-handing. I don't want Kathryn to feel neglected. She's very self-conscious now. Please take care of her, and make sure she doesn't overdo it. Maybe you'll change your mind about the business.

SCENE 6

A ballroom at the Biltmore Hotel. A band plays as the teachers and students dance the QUICK STEP.

(Kathryn sits with David and his wife, SABINA, at a table on the edge of the dance floor. Kathryn is big, pregnant with twins. They are all dressed in evening clothes.)

The Quick Step ends. The audience applauds as the dancers leave the stage. Another group of Arthur Murray teachers runs onstage dressed in Spanish costumes and perform the MERENGUE.)

SABINA

This is wonderful, I've never been to a ball.

KATHRYN
(gives Sabina a big smile)

Yes, it is wonderful!

SABINA

All the women look so beautiful.

KATHRYN

Very beautiful.

(Kathryn quickly looks down at her belly then looks up at the dancers. She sighs, and puts on a smile.)

DAVID
(to Kathryn)

So, you're having a good time?

KATHRYN

You bet I am.

(The dancers open the formation to admit Arthur, in a black tuxedo, surrounded by beautiful young women in ball gowns. Arthur and a lovely young teacher step forward and go into a FOXTROT.

Kathryn watches Arthur. Sabina looks at Kathryn, then nudges David.)

DAVID

Kathryn, you look lovely.

KATHRYN
(laughs)

I look like a cow.

(Kathryn watches as Arthur and his partner take a graceful turn around the floor. Kathryn looks at David.)

DAVID

It's business. He doesn't even see her.

KATHRYN

He's not blind.

(Arthur and his partner finish the dance and bow to the applause. His partner goes off stage. Arthur goes to Kathryn and kisses her cheek. He smiles at Sabina and David.)

ARTHUR

Everybody having a good time?

DAVID

We are.

SABINA

Oh yes. I wish I could dance like that.

(Arthur smiles and turns to Kathryn.)

ARTHUR

Sweetheart, you look very pretty. Are you tired?

KATHRYN

I'm wide awake. This is a ball and I want to dance with you. Besides, what's the fun of being married to Arthur Murray if you can't dance with him?

ARTHUR

(concerned)

We'll be dancing together for the rest of our lives, but now you need to rest. I don't want you taking any chances.

(to David)

See that she gets home. There's a limo waiting outside.

(Arthur kisses Kathryn's cheek.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I'll kiss you when I get home.

(Arthur walks away toward a group of students eager to shake his hand.)

KATHRYN

I'm invisible.

DAVID

Kathryn, it's just business.

KATHRYN

(almost in tears)

No. Dancing is his life. He loves every minute of it. And I don't blame him, it's exciting, glamorous... but when he looks at me...

DAVID

He loves you Katie.

KATHRYN

But he doesn't see me. When he looks at me the only thing he sees is the mother of his children.

SCENE 8

One year later, New York City. 1937.

Arthur's new office: updated, but like his previous office uncluttered, with low, modern furniture and a thick rug.

Arthur and Ira stand facing each other. David is seated.

ARTHUR

Accept it. I'm selling the buildings. They say the Nazis are taking over Europe and we're going to get dragged into the war and I don't want any Nazis bombing my buildings.

IRA

Roosevelt doesn't want war. And besides, the Germans can't bomb the Bronx.

ARTHUR

Not yet, but who knows. Things are too unpredictable.

IRA

We're making good money with the apartment rentals. Now's the time to buy real estate, not sell! What kind of a businessman are you anyway?

ARTHUR

The cautious kind. The studios are doing very well and I want to concentrate on expanding.

(Frustrated, Ira takes a step toward Arthur. Arthur leans in, ready to fight. David jumps between them.)

DAVID

Hey, we're brothers.

(Arthur and Ira back off.)

DAVID (CONT'D)

What does Kathryn say about all this?

ARTHUR

About selling the buildings?

(David nods.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I never talk to Kathryn about business. She's busy with her life, the girls and the PTA. Why would I bother her?

DAVID

Not bothering, discussing. She's your wife.

ARTHUR

Look, making money is my responsibility. I don't want her worrying about money, about the war, about anything.

IRA

If you sell those buildings, I'm out of a job.

ARTHUR

You'll find another job. You're very resourceful.

IRA

(anxious)

It's not that easy, and Anne's pregnant. I have bills.

ARTHUR

I'll pay your bills until you find a job.

IRA

I want to pay my own bills.

ARTHUR

Okay, okay, I'm not stopping you.

IRA

Yes, you are. What am I going to do?

(Arthur goes to Ira and pats his back.)

ARTHUR

Calm down, we'll think of something.

DAVID

Frankly, I'll be glad to be rid of the buildings.

IRA

Because you're terrible with people.

ARTHUR

Because he's not a schmoozer like you. But he's a hell of a lawyer.

IRA

Admit it, you hate the dance business, right?

DAVID

No. But I will admit I'm not sure what we're selling.

IRA

Well we're not selling steps. We're selling self-confidence, popularity and romance.

ARTHUR

For once in his life, the kid's right. Everyone loves to dance, and as soon as they walk in to the studio they're sold.

IRA

Damned right I'm right! Brother, you don't have one romantic bone in your body.

DAVID

Why? Because I can't see why people who work and pinch pennies want to throw their money away learning the Foxtrot? Makes no damned sense.

IRA

You sound just like Papa.

DAVID

Well maybe Papa knows what he's talking about. Maybe it is some fad that will come and go... not a serious business.

IRA

Arthur and Kathryn live in luxury. That's serious enough for me. And let me tell you brother, you're lucky to be here.

(Ira looks at Arthur.)

IRA (CONT'D)

Trouble is, David, you've got the bleeding heart of a socialist. Social equality, freedom, etcetera, etcetera. Right?

DAVID

Damn right!

IRA

Well, teaching someone to dance is the greatest kind of social work there is.

DAVID

Dope, ballroom dancing has nothing to do with social equality.

IRA

Why do you think they call it social dancing? Because it's all about social equality. A man can't lead if the woman won't follow. They always have to keep in step with each other. Togetherness.

DAVID

Nincompoop!

(Ira sings and dances the comical song, "EQUAL.")

MARY IS A SECRETARY
CHAINED TO AN OFFICE CHAIR
PEEKING OUT FROM UNDER PILES OF PAPER
JOE'S A SWANKY BANKER BOSS
BARKING IN HIS DICTAPHONE
HIGH AND MIGHTY UP IN HIS SKYSCRAPER

MARY DOES WHAT'S NECESSARY
EVERY BILL GETS PAID
TYPING, TYPING, 'TIL SHE'S ABOUT TO DROP
JOE CAN'T FIND THE PERFECT GIRL
ONE WHO HEATS HIS FROZEN HEART
THEN COMPLAINS IT'S LONELY AT THE TOP

SUDDENLY THEY SEE OUR AD
AND A LIGHTBULB FLASHES
OUR COUPONS IN THEIR HANDS
THEY COME, THEY SEE, THEY DANCE
AND THEY ARE...

BEAUTIFUL, GRACEFUL
ELEGANT, TASTEFUL
HEAVEN IN EVERY STEP
NO HIGH, NO LOW
NO RICH, NO POOR
GLIDING ACROSS THE BALLROOM FLOOR
ALL DANCERS ARE CREATED EQUAL
ALL DANCERS ARE CREATED EQUAL

HARRY THOUGHT WHEN HE GOT MARRIED
LIFE WOULD BE A BREEZE
HIS WIFE WOULD BE HIS COMFORT AND HIS JOY
BUT HELEN'S HAD IT UP TO HERE
WITH DISHES, KIDS AND DIAPER PAILS
SHE LONGS TO MINGLE WITH THE HOI POLLOI

SUDDENLY THEY SEE OUR AD
AND A LIGHTBULB FLASHES
OUR COUPONS IN THEIR HANDS
THEY COME, THEY SEE, THEY DANCE
AND THEY ARE...

BEAUTIFUL, GRACEFUL
 ELEGANT, TASTEFUL
 HEAVEN IN EVERY STEP
 NO HIGH, NO LOW
 NO RICH, NO POOR
 GLIDING ACROSS THE BALLROOM FLOOR
 ALL DANCERS ARE CREATED EQUAL
 ALL DANCERS ARE CREATED EQUAL

IRA

Arthur, hire me, I'll be a great teacher... once I learn how to dance.

ARTHUR

You'll just stir up trouble.

IRA

I won't. Gimme a chance.

ARTHUR

(softening)

If you want to teach, I won't stop you.

(Ira laughs. He reaches out to embrace Arthur.)

ARTHUR

(embarrassed)

Okay, okay. In a few weeks we're sending teachers to hotels to introduce a new step.
 Better learn fast.

IRA

A few weeks, that's a snap.

ARTHUR

Who knows, maybe you'll work out.

(Ira joins the Arthur Murray teachers in the BIG
 APPLE DANCE NUMBER.)

SCENE 9

*Arthur Murray Studio in NY. Several years
 later.*

Different areas of the Arthur Murray Studio are spotlighted as Kathryn walks through them on her way to Arthur's office. She is dressed in a very smart, expensive wool coat.

Kathryn walks through a well appointed reception area, she pauses to look into a small ballroom where an animated young man is teaching the SWING to a very enthusiastic young woman. She pauses again to watch several pairs of teachers and students dancing the CHA-CHA.

(Kathryn arrives outside Arthur's office.)

Inside the office, CHARLES, an art director, stands near an easel where a large color illustration of a couple dancing is displayed. Charles waits for Arthur, who is pacing as he speaks on the phone.)

ARTHUR

(into the phone)

Yes, Havana, from the third through the tenth. I have to learn the new Cuban Motion for the Latin Rumba. I'm taking two teachers. Make all the arrangements, Marla. Thanks.

(Kathryn opens the door and sticks her head in.
Arthur is surprised to see her.)

KATHRYN

Not a good time?

(Arthur smiles and motions for her to come in.
Kathryn sees Charles, nods hello and sits down,
waiting for Arthur to finish.)

ARTHUR

(on the phone)

So about the ad, a few things still bother me. Let me get back to you. Yes, today.

(Arthur hangs up, goes to Kathryn and kisses her on the cheek.)

ARTHUR

Did I know you were coming?

KATHRYN

No, I had lunch with Becky, and just thought I'd say hello. Didn't want you to forget me.

(Arthur smiles and motions to Kathryn to sit down.)

ARTHUR

(to Charles)

Okay, let's see it.

(studying an illustration)

Hair too short, dress too yellow — change it to a soft blue.

(Charles nods.)

ARTHUR

(to Kathryn)

Have you eaten lunch?

(before she can answer)

And Charles, give her bigger hair and higher heels. Thanks.

CHARLES

Okay, boss.

(Charles takes the easel and exits.)

ARTHUR

Lunch?

KATHRYN

Dear, I just told you, I had lunch with Becky.

ARTHUR

Sorry.

(Arthur looks for something on his desk.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

How is she?

KATHRYN

Working hard, lots of patients. Still she and Bernie find time to go dancing.

ARTHUR

(preoccupied)

What?

KATHRYN,
Nothing.

ARTHUR
(looks at Kathryn)
It's nice to see you during the day.

KATHRYN
(smiling with pleasure)
They do a lot together.

ARTHUR
Who?

KATHRYN
Becky and Bernie. I want to talk to you, but you're always busy.

ARTHUR
Well here you are... What is it?

KATHRYN
I have an idea. I want you to like it.

ARTHUR
Of course I'll like it. I like all your ideas.

(His desk phone rings. Marla runs in and grabs it.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Sweetheart, can we talk about this when I get home?

KATHRYN
We never talk at home. The girls and I are asleep by the time you come in.

ARTHUR
Tonight I'll try to be early. We'll have dinner together.

KATHRYN
Can't you listen now, for a minute?

MARLA
(sticking her head in)
Mr. Murray, just a reminder, you have that meeting about your Cuba trip in twenty minutes.

(Marla exits.)

ARTHUR
 Okay, what's your idea?

KATHRYN
 You're going to Cuba?

ARTHUR
 Just for a week.

KATHRYN
 You didn't tell me.

ARTHUR
 Sorry, it just came up.

KATHRYN
 Sounds like fun.

ARTHUR
 It won't be any fun without you.

KATHRYN
 Take me with you.

ARTHUR
 It's going to be all business. Maybe next time.
 (seeing her disappointment)

ARTHUR
 Dear, what's your idea?

KATHRYN
 A magazine. For our students. I thought we'd interview them, tell their stories, and have features about all the exciting things that go on at the studio. We'd call it the Murray-Go-Round.

ARTHUR
 (laughs)
 The Murray-Go-Round, that's clever. Who's going to do all the writing and editing?

KATHRYN
 Me. I'd work here two or three days a week. I'd be a part of things.

ARTHUR

Here?

(Kathryn nods.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

That's a lot of work. Do you know anything about editing a magazine?

KATHRYN

I've been editing the PTA magazine for over two years.

ARTHUR

Oh yes, and that's a big job. Katie, you do so much, cooking, and baking, and raising the twins. You're busy enough.

KATHRYN

I don't just want to be busy. I want to do something important... or at least relevant. I want share your life.

ARTHUR

What are you talking about? You are my life.

KATHRYN

No. I'm your wife.

(She gestures to everything around her.)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

This your life. Exciting, important. You're changing the lives of so many people. I'm nowhere to be seen.

ARTHUR

My God, Katie you have two beautiful, brilliant, well-behaved children, engraved sterling silver, a big house. You have everything.

KATHRYN

Except your attention. Editing this magazine... I'd love to do it. Please think about it.

ARTHUR

I will. I'll give it my full attention, as soon as I get back from Havana.

(Arthur embraces Kathryn.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Just promise me, you'll always take time to bake my cookies.

Do you even hear me?
KATHRYN

SCENE 10

A split scene.

Stage Left: Havana, Cuba in summer.

A festive nightclub. A Cuban jazz band plays.

Arthur sits at a table next to the dance floor with NINA and JIM, two young, attractive teachers. They are partying with LOLA and CARLOS, two Cuban dancers. Carlos is muscular with black curls and a trim mustache. LOLA is stunning and sexy.

(Carlos jumps onto the dance floor and does a short RUMBA by himself. Arthur and the rest of the party clap. Carlos motions to Nina who joins him on the floor. He guides her in the CUBAN MOTION. More appreciative laughs and claps from Arthur and Jim and Lola.)

LOLA

(to Arthur, opening her arms)

Come, I teach you how we do it.

ARTHUR

(smiling, taking her hand)

Yes, I'm here to learn.

(Lola pulls Arthur on to the floor and teaches him mechanics of the Cuban Motion. Dancers join them on the floor and the lesson turns into a production number.

Lola and Carlos sing THE CUBAN MOTION.)

TRANSITION TO:

Stage right: the same night in the living room of the Murray's house Mt. Vernon, New York.

(Kathryn sits alone on the couch, looking increasingly anxious. She picks up the phone, then puts it down. She gets up and turns on the radio then quickly she turns it off. She picks up a book, riffling through it, then throws it on the couch. She turns on the radio again and hears a crooner singing "*Embraceable You.*")

Kathryn stands and listens to the song. Her eyes fill.

Kathryn sings the song, "INVISIBLE."

The song ends. Kathryn pours herself a shot of whiskey and quickly downs it.)

CUT BACK:

The Cuban nightclub.

ARTHUR

Carlos, Lola... what can I say? You're the best. You're invited to come to New York and teach us the authentic Cuban Rumba.

(They all raise their glasses.)

ALL

To the Rumba! The Rumba!

SCENE 11

Mt. Vernon, New York.

Lights up on same living room a few nights later. Kathryn sits on the couch. A plate of cookies is on the coffee table.

(Arthur enters carrying flowers.)

ARTHUR

Kathryn, I'm home.

KATHRYN

I'm not blind.

(Arthur goes to her and tries to kiss her. Kathryn dodges his kiss. Arthur gives her the flowers.)

ARTHUR

Katie, I missed you. Kiss me.

KATHRYN

Maybe later.

ARTHUR

What's the matter?

KATHRYN

Nothing. Nothing new.

ARTHUR

Aren't you going to put those in water?

(Kathryn tosses the flowers in the wastebasket.)

ARTHUR

Wrong colors?

(Kathryn stands silent.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Where are my girls?

KATHRYN

Asleep.

ARTHUR

I'm going to kiss them goodnight and tell them I love them.

KATHRYN

No, it's too late.

(Arthur moves toward the hall.)

ARTHUR

(in a Cary Grant voice)

It's never too late for love.

(Kathryn steps in front of him, blocking his way.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Be careful young lady, because if I can't kiss them, I just might kiss you!

(Kathryn stands her ground. Arthur pulls her close.
She tries to push him away. He kisses her.)

KATHRYN

(hissing)

Barbarian!

ARTHUR

(laughs)

That's me.

KATHRYN

Damn you! You leave me every chance you get.

ARTHUR

I'm right here.

KATHRYN

After a week of cavorting with Cuban whores.

ARTHUR

Dancers. And it was business. They were teaching me the Cuban Motion.

KATHRYN

I'll bet!

(Kathryn pours a shot of whiskey.)

ARTHUR

Stop it, you don't need that.

KATHRYN

(raising the glass)

When I'm all alone it keeps me company.

ARTHUR

That's such nonsense. You sound like a silly child.

KATHRYN

(laughs)

That's me, a silly child.

(Kathryn drinks the shot. She pours another one. Arthur looks at her, furious, then turns and walks across the room.)

ARTHUR

It's so damned hot.

(Arthur opens a window, his back toward Kathryn.)

KATHRYN

Don't you turn your back on me.

ARTHUR

I can't listen to you anymore.

(Kathryn bangs the glass down on the table.

Arthur turns to see Kathryn, in choreographed movement, run towards the open window.

Kathryn leaps — and Arthur catches her just in time. They are both in shock.)

ARTHUR

(holding her close)

K--K--atie... W--what the fuck!

(Kathryn clings to him. Arthur struggles to recover his composure.)

ARTHUR

Tomorrow you're coming to the studio with me to start working on that magazine you've been pushing. Any objections?

(Kathryn shakes her head.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

And by the way, partner, start packing — we're moving to Manhattan.

SCENE 12

A few weeks later. A Midtown hotel in Manhattan.

It's the debut of the Arthur Murray Studios Cuban-American Dance-Off, and Arthur has assembled newspaper reporters and photographers who stand with cameras ready.

(Flashbulbs light up as Arthur and Kathryn enter together and step to center stage.)

KATHRYN

Hello everybody! Arthur and I want to welcome you to our first Cuban-American Dance-Off. Our Cuban friends will challenge our own Arthur Murray teachers, and each group will present their version of the Rumba. Let the music begin!

(A BIG DANCE NUMBER begins.)

The Cubans enter in native dress and dance the sexy CUBAN RUMBA. They finish and look at the Arthur Murray teachers, challenging them to a dance battle.

The Arthur Murray teachers take the challenge and demonstrate the traditional, more sedate EUROPEAN RUMBA.

The Cubans counter, showing off some new steps. The Arthur Murray teachers then add more steps of their own. The dance speeds up, becoming more competitive. Then the Cubans and the Arthur Murray teachers exchange partners and dance the new Latin Rumba together.)

SCENE 13

New York City, 1950.

Arthur's office.

(Kathryn enters the office, where Arthur stands talking with BURT, a television director. On the coffee table we see a big plate of chocolate fudge brownies.)

KATHRYN

Hello.

ARTHUR

Kathryn, this is Burt, from LA. He's going to direct our new television show.

KATHRYN

That's exciting. Welcome Burt.

(Burt finishes a brownie. He wipes his hand on a napkin. Kathryn and Burt shake hands.)

BURT

Mrs. Murray, such a pleasure.

KATHRYN

Oh, please, call me Kathryn. Burt, we're all so excited. Television is brand new to us, and when Arthur said we'd be producing a television show I didn't think he was serious. I'm still in shock.

BURT

It's happening, alright. And Kathryn, Arthur's been bragging about your talents.

KATHRYN

My talents?

BURT

Your brownies — they're delicious.

ARTHUR

Burt is going to help us pull the show together. He has some very good ideas.

BURT

You'll feature a new dance every week, offering free lessons. Lots of celebrities, and everyone will have fun, like they do at your studio parties.

KATHRYN

Sounds great!

(Kathryn parodies Eddie Cantor, singing and dancing to MAKING WHOOPIE.

Burt laughs.)

BURT

Hey, you're great! Arthur, she's really good!

ARTHUR

(smiles and nods)

And of course we'll need someone to host the show.

KATHRYN

Arthur, you'll be a wonderful host.

ARTHUR

No, I'm too stiff.

KATHRYN

(laughing)

That's true. Well, you'll just have to work on loosening up... or we can get...

ARTHUR

(cutting her off)

I want a woman.

KATHRYN

(mock shock)

Arthur, another woman? Oh no.

ARTHUR

Men respond to a pretty woman. And women — they identify.

BURT

That's true!

KATHRYN

We have a lot of smart, talented women right here... How about Adele Kaye from the Brooklyn? She's beautiful, full of beans, a great sense of humor. She'd be perfect.

ARTHUR

I don't think so.

KATHRYN

Why not?

ARTHUR

I'm thinking of someone else.

KATHRYN

Who?

ARTHUR

You.

(Kathryn looks at him, then bursts out laughing.)

KATHRYN

Of course! Me! Shucks, why didn't I think of that? I can't sing or dance but, yes, of course, you're right! I'm the perfect choice.

ARTHUR

You are.

KATHRYN

You're certifiably mad. Burt, tie him up and haul him away.

BURT

Now hold on, Arthur may be on to something. I've just seen you and I'm impressed. You're something!

ARTHUR

You're a natural. I want you!

KATHRYN

Don't be ridiculous, Arthur. Forget it. You know I'm a coward. I could panic or worse, faint.

ARTHUR

Katie trust me, you'll be a smash.

SCENE 14

A ballroom in an Arthur Murray studio.

Arthur, in a black tux, poses for a magazine spread with a famous SOCIALITE in an elegant gown. A very animated photographer, JONAS, places them for the shot. Everyone is focused on the job.

JONAS

Okay Mr. Murray, stand right here. Almost, almost, like this. Yes, yes, good.

(Marla runs in.)

MARLA

Oh excuse me Mr. Murray, excuse me but...

ARTHUR

Not now, we're busy. Very busy.

MARLA

It's your brother Ira. He says it's very important. Something about your father.

JONAS

Perfect, Mr. Murray. Don't move, just hold that pose.

ARTHUR

(torn and flustered)

Tell him I'll call him back.

MARLA

But he says it's very...

ARTHUR

I'll call him back!

(Marla nods and exits.)

SCENE 15

Sarah's living room, a few days later.

Arthur, Kathryn, Becky, David, Sabina, Ira, Anne and two OLDER WOMEN, friends of Sarah, are sitting Shiva. They sit in groups near Sarah. Arthur stands alone.

SARAH

(almost keening)

So fast, so fast. Who could believe it?

WOMEN

(like a Greek chorus)

Who could believe it? Who could believe it?

BECKY

(putting her arm around Sarah)

Mama, you knew his heart was not good.

SARAH

(angry)

He was a young man. His heart was good enough.

BECKY

Mama, he was 87.

SARAH

That's what I said, a young man.

(shaking her head)

Who could believe it?

THE WOMEN

Who could believe it? Who could believe it?

IRA

(choked up)

I feel bad about a lot of things.

SARAH

Don't. You were a good son.

IRA

I shoed him off. I didn't pay attention to what he said.

SARAH

He didn't have much to say.

DAVID

He loved you, Mama.

SARAH

Already I miss him.

(Arthur walks down to center stage and stares into space. Becky goes to Arthur.)

BECKY

How are you?

ARTHUR

I'll never forgive myself for letting him die alone.

BECKY

He wasn't alone. I was there, and Mama held his hand the whole time.

ARTHUR

What kind of son lets his father die without saying goodbye? A self-centered clown. I was too busy posing for the camera to take Ira's call.

BECKY

Oh, Arthur.

ARTHUR

I thought we had plenty of time. All I wanted was for him to be proud of me.

BECKY

He was proud, but he never understood you.

ARTHUR

He felt betrayed.

BECKY

Papa felt you he had lost you. He loved you very much.

ARTHUR

Now, when it's too late, I see how much I hurt him. I got off scot free.

BECKY

You paid a heavy price to be Arthur Murray.

ARTHUR

No, I got what I wanted. I got out of the slums.

BECKY

You got us all out.

ARTHUR

You got out on your own. You have a respected profession.

BECKY

And you haven't done so badly. Any regrets?

ARTHUR

Yes... I should have begged for Papa's forgiveness.

SCENE 16

Six months later, A conference room adjoining Arthur's office.

Arthur and Ira are in the middle of a conversation in Arthur's office. The decor has changed with the times.

IRA

So what do you say?

ARTHUR

You have some good ideas, I give you that.

IRA

Great ideas. Admit it, that Lucky Buck promotion paid off. One dollar, two correct numbers, a free lesson...

ARTHUR

(laughs)

You're a genius.

(David enters.)

IRA

Hey, he just called me a genius.

(David laughs.)

ARTHUR

He says he has an idea. It's going to make us a fortune.

DAVID

Let's hear it.

IRA

Canada. We don't have studios in Canada. Why not? It's a perfect fit. It's a big untapped market.

ARTHUR

There are a lots of dance studios in Canada.

IRA

Not like ours. They're small operations — mom and pop studios. No smart, professional dance studios like Arthur Murray's. We have to open Dance Studios in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa...

(David looks interested.)

ARTHUR
(hesitant)

Maybe.

IRA
No maybe about it! I checked it out, it's ripe. Canada's the place.

(Arthur appears unconvinced.)

IRA (CONT'D)
Look, it's freezing up there! Canada's big and cold and there's nothing to do at night but sit home and read.

ARTHUR
What the hell are you saying? Canada's a big country. They don't need us.

IRA
Yes, they do. People love to dance. People want to hold each other close and sway to the music in their hearts. We can give them all that warmth and romance in a big way.

(Ira starts swaying to imaginary music. David laughs.)

IRA (CONT'D)
We can't lose.

ARTHUR
Oh, yes we can. It would mean a huge investment. A very risky investment.

IRA
Just give me a franchise for Montreal and Toronto, and I'll make it work!

ARTHUR
Oh, just Montreal and Toronto? That's all, Montreal and Toronto?

IRA
Okay, okay... Montreal.

ARTHUR
Listen, you're full of ideas, but you're inexperienced. Maybe in a couple of years.

IRA
I'm a natural. I can do it now.

(Arthur's daughter PHYLLIS knocks on the door
and puts her head in.)

ARTHUR
(shouting at Ira)

Not now!

PHYLLIS
Sorry, Daddy.

DAVID
Not you Phyllis, he's discussing things with your Uncle Ira.

PHYLLIS
Okay but Daddy, it's important.

ARTHUR
I'll be right there.

(Phyllis closes the door.)

IRA
She's gotten so pretty. I'll bet she has lots of boyfriends.

ARTHUR
She's still a child.

IRA
Arthur listen, just gimme a try in Montreal.

ARTHUR
Don't push me. It's a big risk, and right now I'm not going to do it. When I feel you're ready, we'll discuss it.

IRA
Goddamn it, I am ready. Let me prove it.

ARTHUR
No. I tell you when you're ready.

(Ira stands and faces Arthur.)

IRA

Okay, now let me tell you what I'm going to do. First, I'm going to get a lawyer and change my name to Murray. That's right: Ira Murray. Then I'm going to Canada and open the Ira Murray School of Dance.

(Arthur and David look at him in disbelief.)

IRA (CONT'D)

The Ira Murray School of Dance. It has a familiar ring don't you think? Ira Murray Studios in Montreal... and Toronto. How's that for a great idea?

(Arthur, stunned, starts to pace.)

ARTHUR

(roars)

I'll sue the goddamn pants off you.

(Ira looks at him, not backing down.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Counsel, tell him he can't do this to me.

DAVID

Legally, he can.

IRA

And I will.

DAVID

(going to Arthur)

Arthur... maybe you should reconsider.

ARTHUR

I will not. I know what's best for my business.

IRA

Smug and pompous as ever.

(Ira makes for the door. David stops him.)

DAVID

We just lost Papa... Are we going to lose each other in a fight over a business decision?

ARTHUR

There's no fight. I make all the business decisions.

IRA

(in Arthur's face)

I'll let you know how much I make in Montreal.

ARTHUR

Brat. Traitor.

(Ira gives Arthur the finger and exits with David.
Phyllis knocks, then enters.)

PHYLLIS

(all smiles)

Now?

ARTHUR

(growls)

Yes.

(Arthur walks downstage.)

PHYLLIS

Daddy?

ARTHUR

I don't feel well.

PHYLLIS

Well you're going to feel much better. I have something wonderful to tell you.

ARTHUR

(tries to smile at Phyllis)

What?

PHYLLIS

I'm engaged.

ARTHUR

Don't be silly, you're still a baby. My baby.

PHYLLIS

I'll always be your baby, but I am engaged. To be married.

ARTHUR

Don't keep saying that. You never told me.

PHYLLIS

I did. You never listen.

ARTHUR

Well, I'm listening now.

PHYLLIS

(rapturous)

He's wonderful. I mean really wonderful.

ARTHUR

Do I know him?

PHYLLIS

He came to dinner last week. His name is Ted.

ARTHUR

Ted? Ted what?

PHYLLIS

McDowell.

ARTHUR

Never heard of him.

PHYLLIS

Daddy, don't you want me to be happy?

ARTHUR

Of course! But you're only 23, too young to think about marriage.

PHYLLIS

I'm 24.

ARTHUR

Anyway, McDowell doesn't sound very Jewish to me.

PHYLLIS

Oh really? Well Arthur Murray doesn't sound very Jewish to me. Arthur Murray sounds really WASPy. Really privileged.

(Arthur's face hardens.)

ARTHUR

Is this some new discovery? Don't you like your very privileged life any more?

PHYLLIS

Of course I do.

ARTHUR

Well you can thank Arthur Murray.

(they look at each other)

I've never heard any complaints, am I hearing one now?

PHYLLIS

I think it's a laugh that you're angry because I'm marrying a Gentile when you've always hidden the fact that you're Jewish.

ARTHUR

I have never denied being Jewish.

PHYLLIS

I can count your Jewish friends on one hand. My friends don't know I'm Jewish unless I tell them. Then they say, "Wow, you don't look Jewish." I think you're ashamed of being Jewish.

ARTHUR

(furious)

Don't ever say that to me again.

(He turns away from Phyllis.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

But, I'll tell you this, I will never let them destroy me.

PHYLLIS

No one is out to destroy you.

ARTHUR

I've felt their anti-semitic hatred since I was a boy. And under the smiles and the applause it's still there.

PHYLLIS

Daddy, you sound paranoid.

(Arthur puts his arm around Phyllis.)

ARTHUR

You've always been protected.

(He holds her for a moment.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Will this Ted make you happy?

PHYLLIS

Very happy.

ARTHUR

A tall blond boy? I remember some blond... strange-looking...

PHYLLIS

Brown hair. He smokes a pipe. Serious, but he's got a wicked sense of humor.

ARTHUR

Well, if you're so crazy about him...

(Phyllis hugs him.)

ARTHUR

As long as he can support you.

PHYLLIS

Oh, you don't need to worry about that.

ARTHUR

(smiles)

Good. What does he do?

PHYLLIS

He's a teacher.

ARTHUR

Where does he teach? Columbia? NYU? What does he teach? English? Math?

PHYLLIS

Daddy, later... not now. I have to go.

ARTHUR

What?

PHYLLIS

Ballroom Dancing.

ARTHUR

(stares at her)

Out of the question! End of discussion! No damned dance teacher for my daughter.

PHYLLIS

You're a dance teacher.

ARTHUR

No more — I own the business.

PHYLLIS

You're a hypocrite.

ARTHUR

And you are a very disrespectful girl!

PHYLLIS

Well, I'm your daughter.

ARTHUR

You are not marrying this man. I'm not giving you my permission.

PHYLLIS

I don't need your permission.

(Phyllis and Arthur face each other.)

ARTHUR

Where does he work? Which studio?

PHYLLIS

Why?

ARTHUR

I'm going to fire him.

PHYLLIS

You can't. He doesn't work for you. He doesn't teach at Murray's.

ARTHUR

Where does he teach?

(Phyllis pauses.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Tell me!

PHYLLIS

Fred Astaire's.

(Arthur, furious, starts to raise his hand. Phyllis's look dares him. She grabs her coat and purse and makes a quick exit. Arthur stiffens in anger.)

David knocks and opens the door. He stands in the doorway.)

ARTHUR

So... Ira's ready to apologize.

DAVID

He's giving you one more chance to reconsider.

(David shuts the door and exits.)

Arthur's secretary, Marla, runs in holding a newspaper.)

MARLA

Oh my God, look at these headlines!

(A change of lighting and effects indicates that the following scene is a DREAM SEQUENCE.)

As Marla hands Arthur the newspaper, huge images of the headlines appear, framed in lights.)

NEWS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Arthur Murray is a fraud, a fake, a phony! Turns out he's a ghetto Jew! That's right folks, we've all been bamboozled.

(We hear derisive laughter. Rock music to the song THE JIG IS UP begins.)

Suddenly four uniformed POLICEMEN wearing Arthur Murray masks rush into Arthur's office. The stage fills with bursts of red smoke as we hear a volley of GUNSHOTS.

The policemen handcuff Arthur, and stand him up against the wall. Images of the Lower East Side in 1910 appear. The policemen sing.

POLICEMEN:

WE TAILED YOU
TRAILED YOU
NAILED YOU TO THE WALL
WE KNEW YOU
SAW THROUGH YOU
YOU'RE GONNA LOSE IT ALL

AND EVERYTHING YOU BUILT IS GONNA CRASH
YOU'LL BE RIGHT BACK WHERE YOU STARTED
EMPTY-HANDED, BROKEN-HEARTED

THE JIG IS UP
NOBODY'S DANCING HERE
BLACK OUT THAT CHANDELIER
'CAUSE THE JIG IS UP

THE JIG IS UP
YOU'RE NOTHIN' BUT A CON
YOUR DAY HAS COME AND GONE
THE JIG IS UP

ARTHUR:

I TOOK OFF
SHOOK OFF
THREW MY PAST AWAY
MADE MY LIFE
THE HIGH LIFE
BUT NOW THERE'S PRICE TO PAY

CUZ EVERYTHING I BUILT IS GONNA CRASH
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK WHERE I STARTED
EMPTY-HANDED, BROKEN-HEARTED

THE JIG IS UP
NOBODY'S DANCING HERE
BLACK OUT THAT CHANDELIER
'CAUSE THE JIG IS UP
THE JIG IS UP
I'M NOTHIN' BUT A CON
MY DAY HAS COME AND GONE
THE JIG IS UP

WAIT — THIS CAN'T BE HOW MY STORY ENDS
NO FAMILY, NO FRIENDS
WAIT — I'LL WIN THEM BACK AGAIN
I'M GONNA MAKE AMENDS!

THE JIG IS UP
BUT I'M STILL DANCIN' HERE
I'M STILL DANCIN'
THE JIG IS UP
BUT I'M STILL DANCIN' HERE
I'M STILL DANCIN'
THE JIG IS UP

(Arthur goes into a quick, upbeat dance. He is
joined by the four policemen.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 17

The Arthur Murray Party, 1960

*Returning to the same scene as we saw in Act I:
an elegant ballroom with beautiful young
couples WALTZING to the “The Blue Danube.”*

ANNOUNCER’S VOICE (O.S.)

Welcome to The Arthur Murray Party. And here to greet you is Arthur Murray’s favorite dancing partner, Kathryn Murray.

(The stage goes dark. A spotlight follows Kathryn, dressed in a smart short evening dress, walks on stage to audience applause.)

KATHRYN

Welcome everybody. We’re so glad you could come to our party, because tonight we have a special treat for you, the irrepressible RITA MORENO.

(Wild applause as Rita comes on stage.

Rita, looking chic and sexy, sings and dances
“ARTHUR MURRAY TAUGHT ME DANCING
IN A HURRY.”

The song ends to enthusiastic applause.)

KATHRYN

You know, the first time Johnny Mercer played this song for Arthur, Arthur thought it was awful. He said it would ruin the business.

(Kathryn and Rita laugh. The audience laughs with them.

Lights dim. Rita exits.

A young man takes Kathryn’s hand and they break into a fast SWING.

Kathryn’s partner lifts her high over his head and swings her under his legs. The audience gasps as she almost touches the floor. The dance ends and the audience applauds.

Arthur walks on stage smiling. He wears a black suit and bow tie. Kathryn smiles and goes to him.

Arthur takes Kathryn in his arms. They begin to WALTZ.

Suddenly, a high-spirited JIVE song drowns out the strains of the Waltz. Arthur and Kathryn seem confused as teenagers enter dancing the Jive. They take over and push Arthur and Kathryn offstage.

We are witnessing the beginning of the end of ballroom dancing.)

SCENE 18

New York City, 1962. The ballroom of an elegant hotel.

Phyllis and Ted's lavish Episcopalian wedding reception features tables of food, floral arrangements, and uniformed attendants carrying trays of champagne glasses. Fashionably-dressed guests are seated near a large dance floor and an orchestra.

Arthur and Kathryn, Phyllis and Ted, PHYLLIS's SISTER and her BOYFRIEND, sit at one table with the REVEREND. The rest of Arthur's family sits at another table.

(The Reverend walks center stage and clinks his glass to make a toast.)

REVEREND

Good afternoon! Let's raise our glasses to Phyllis and Ted, wishing them every joy and great happiness in the future. It's wonderful to see both families, the Murrays and the McDowells, together on this beautiful occasion. I now give you the father of the bride.

(The guests settle in anticipation. Arthur stands.)

ARTHUR

Thank you Reverend, and thank you to everyone who's here today to celebrate with us. Kathryn tells me that I can be pretty hard-headed at times... but I'm learning. And because I love my daughter, I made an effort to get to know Ted, whom, it turns out is a very decent and fairly smart fellow.

(Arthur raises his Champagne glass for a toast.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I welcome Ted into our family. To Phyllis and Ted.

(The guests all raise their glasses.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

And now, the bride and groom will have their first dance.

(The orchestra starts playing a WALTZ and the Phyllis and Ted begin to dance. At the end of their dance, Arthur dances with Phyllis.)

Suddenly Ira runs onto the floor and cuts in on Arthur and Phyllis. Arthur is beyond surprised. Phyllis laughs and opens her arms.

Ira smiles, shakes his head and grabs Arthur instead, forcing him to dance. Everybody is amazed and begins to laugh. Phyllis moves aside and gives the two brothers the floor.)

ARTHUR

(furious, flustered)

What the hell are you doing?

(Arthur tries to push Ira away, but Ira holds on.)

IRA

I'll lead. Just follow. Phyllis looks beautiful.

ARTHUR

Yes. You know, kid, I never thought you could do it. Montreal I mean.

(Arthur stops dancing looks at Ira.)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I must be crazy, but I'm too old to hold a grudge.

IRA

What are you saying?

ARTHUR

I'm saying that I was wrong. The Canadian studios are big success. I'm saying I forgive you.

(Ira forcefully twirls Arthur around again and again.
Arthur almost falls.)

IRA

You do?

ARTHUR

Yes, I forgive you! Get away from me. Brat!

IRA

(turning to the audience and shouting)

I always knew he loved me!

(Ira hugs Arthur, then laughs out loud, opens his arms and pushes Arthur away.)

Arthur, thrown off balance, takes a few steps backward. He regains his footing, shakes a fist at Ira, then gracefully spins around the floor. The guests applaud.

Finally, Arthur throws off his tuxedo jacket, and allows himself to become immersed in the joy of the family event as he starts to dance the traditional JEWISH HORA.

Following his lead, the band launches into a lively Hora.)

ARTHUR

(shouting to the guests in Yiddish)

Tantsn mit mir! Tantsn mit mir!

(then in English)

Come on everybody, let's dance!

(The whole family joins Arthur in the Hora. Arthur is beaming — back in his element, surrounded by his family.)

Everyone in the wedding party joins in on a reprise of KEEP DANCING. The stage is filled with enthusiastic dancers.

On a screen above the stage, we see people from every nation join the couples on stage.

The Grand Finale is filled with light and music and contagious rhythm, as we see the whole world dancing.

THE END