

HENNESSEY. You know the work I've put into this show? The days and nights of rehearsing a routine over and over until we dropped—and then throwing it out because it was lousy! Lousy! So far "Dames At Sea" has cost me my bank balance, my health, and now my wife! (*Ad-Libs.*) She said "Choose, Harry, it's either *it* or me!" Now what choice does any real trouper have? It was far different when we lived at the Ritz and Variety headlined "Hundredth Hit for Harry Hennessey!" Yeah! But that was before Lady Luck handed me twelve floperooos in a row. An even dozen! With "Dames" I was gonna make my big comeback. But when the Shylocks screamed for their pound of gelt, the well was dry. They sold the theatre right out from under my heart. (*Loud NOISE.*) You hear that? Some call it progress—but it's really Harry Hennessey's Swan Song. It's the W.P.A., kids, they're tearing down the theatre.

# RUBY/DICK/LUCKY/ MONA/JOAN/HENNESSEY

#1

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(*More Ad Libs: "Oh no! You don't mean it!"*)

MONA. (*Furious.*) Why wasn't I told?

HENNESSEY. They're turning it into a roller rink.

JOAN. A roller rink!

MONA. That means the show can't open.

JOAN. But it's opening night!

LUCKY. And you gotta open on opening night.

RUBY. And it's my big break on Broadway.

MONA. (*Taking to RUBY—menacing.*) *Ohhh?*

LUCKY. Oh, by the way, Miss Kent, did you know that they spelled your name wrong on the marquee?

MONA. *What!*

(*Crosses to HENNESSEY, slaps him. He is knocked to his knees.*)

LUCKY. They switched the A and the N . . . *Moan Kent!*

(*MONA stalks Offstage and returns with a ladder which she drags back across Stage and off.*)

HENNESSEY. That does it. Joan, post the closing notice? I haven't the strength.

ALL. Oh, no!

RUBY. You mean—you mean—?

HENNESSEY. Yeah, kid! Utah!

RUBY. Oh, no!

(*She swoons. DICK catches her.*)



DICK. Straighten up, Ruby, straighten up! You're not going to Utah. Nobody's going anywhere. We're all staying right here until we lick this thing. You're all right now, aren't you?

RUBY. I am now. Thanks to you, Dick.

DICK. What's all the commotion about? We still got the scenery, don't we?

HENNESEY. Yeah.

DICK. And the costumes?

HENNESEY. Yeah.

DICK. Then we still got a fighting chance, don't we? Well, don't we?

*(No one reacts but RUBY.)*

RUBY. Yes, Dick!

DICK. All we need is a theatre.

HENNESEY. Yeah! Just try and find one.

JOAN. Got twenty-five G's on you?

RUBY. Listen to Dick, everyone, even if it is hopeless. Dick, what are we going to do?

DICK. Let me put all my cards on the table: I don't know. But I'm working on it.

RUBY. Don't be downhearted, Mr. Hennesey, Dick will find a way.

JOAN. Yeah, buck up! So it's your thirteenth turkey! So what? It's my one hundred and tenth!

HENNESEY. I got a cold.

JOAN. Cut the malarkey.

HENNESEY. I got a headache.

JOAN. Tell it to the marines.

HENNESEY. I got the grippe.

JOAN. Baloney!

LUCKY. He does look a bit green around the gills. What does he have?

RUBY and DICK. Yeah? (*MUSICAL INTRO.*) What does he have?

# RUBY/DICK/LUCKY/ MONA/JOAN/HENNESSEY

#2

DICK. (*Suddenly inspired.*) I got it! Yeah! I'm sure of it. What's the name of this show?

HENNESSEY and JOAN. "Dames at Sea."

MONA. (*Entering and crossing with ladder.*) Mona Kent in "Dames at Sea."

DICK. But what's the show about?

HENNESSEY. Dames!

DICK. But where?

ALL. At sea!

DICK. Well?

LUCKY. You mean—?

DICK. Why not?

LUCKY. On the battleship? Are you *crazy*? What would the Captain say?

MONA. (*Kidding.*) Which Captain? Bligh? Hornblower? Captain Courageous?

BOTH. Yeah!

DICK. That's our skipper!

MONA. You don't mean "Kewpie-Doll" Courageous is your commander? Well! Just leave him to me!

(*Ad-Libs.*)

LUCKY. Now we got the greatest producer in the world.

RUBY. Who?

LUCKY. Uncle Sam!

RUBY. You mean—you mean—?

DICK. Yes, Ruby! The show's opening tonight, on schedule!

RUBY. Oh, Dick, I knew you could do it.

HENNESSEY. But that means we got to move seven tons of costumes and scenery.

RUBY. I'll help you, Mr. Hennessey.

MONA. Oh, Dick, I guess I'll need an escort through the Navy Yard.

JOAN. Just follow the fleet.

HENNESSEY. Wait, Mona, are you sure you can swing it?

MONA. Lis'en—when it comes to Naval affairs, I've been compared to John Paul Jones. (*Sings.*)

# RUBY/DICK/LUCKY/ MONA/JOAN/CAPTAIN

#3

DICK. Forgive me, Ruby, but I couldn't say no to Mona Kent.  
(*Unseen by DICK, MONA has entered. She is playing tag with the CAPTAIN, wearing his cap. She smiles on hearing DICK's line; glares on the pay-off.*) It's like Fay Wray saying no to King Kong.

MONA. (*In a rage at seeing RUBY.*) What, may I ask, is she doing here?

DICK. Ruby's in the show, Miss Kent.

MONA. Not in my show, she isn't. Oh Kewpie-Doll! I need you!

JOAN. She's taking Glenda's place.

MONA. We'll see about that.

CAPTAIN. (*He enters at a run and he grabs MONA.*) Gotcha!  
(*MONA shrugs him off.*) Yes, angel?

MONA. I want Little Miss Twinkletoes off this battleship immediately!

CAPTAIN. But Consuelo—

MONA. (*Handing the CAPTAIN his cap.*) You have your orders, Captain, follow them!

DICK. Have a heart, Miss Kent, this is Ruby's first show.

MONA. And her last!

JOAN. (*Having had enough of MONA's theatrics.*) You listen to me—Grace Topolovsky!

MONA. (*Stunned.*) What did you say?

JOAN. You heard me! If Ruby goes, so do I—

(*RUBY tries to restrain her.*)

MONA. That's the best thing I've heard all day.

JOAN. *And the chorus girls and the orchestra.*

MONA. (*Hysterical.*) Then go! All of you! *Go!*

JOAN. (*Easily.*) I can't wait for your bird number without a band to give you the beat.

(*This hits MONA where it counts.*)

DICK. (*Indicating RUBY.*) Give her a chance, Miss Kent. She's from Centerville.

MONA. Well— You're very persuasive, Dick. (*She affectionately puts her arm around him.*)

(*This stuns RUBY. She turns her back on everyone.*)

CAPTAIN. (*Heart-struck.*) Consuelo!

MONA. She can stay for the opening number—

LUCKY. Gee, Ruby, you can stay for the opening number!

MONA. But that's all! Oh Dick, my nerves are in shreds. Would you hum something?

JOAN. (*Aside.*) How 'bout Lohengrin's Funeral March?

MONA. *Our song!* (*Hums "IT'S YOU" and shoots RUBY a look of triumph.*)

(*RUBY is shattered.*)

CAPTAIN. (*To MONA, grabbing her arm.*) Angel! Don't desert me!

MONA. (*She angrily flings his hand off.*) Putting chains on me already? Mona Kent belongs to no one, do you hear? No one!  
(*She grabs DICK and pulls him off with her.*)

JOAN. Hey, Commodore, I got a great idea for the finale. Let's send Mona Kent out to sea—on a harpoon.

CAPTAIN. Consuelo, Consuelo— Oh, that gypsy heart! But courage, Courageous! A Broadway show on my ship! Won't that make the Admiral green?

JOAN. Shhh! (*She sees RUBY tragically standing at the side.*)

# RUBY/DICK/LUCKY/ MONA/JOAN/CAPTAIN/HENNESEY

#4

HENNESEY. Again. (RUBY tries again and stops.) Again.

RUBY. I can't; I can't.

HENNESEY. I know you can't. (Shakes her shoulders.) You know you can't. But you will, Ruby. You will.

LUCKY. (He enters.) Five minutes, Ruby. (To HENNESEY.) Mr.

Hennesey! No one can stop the bubble machine. (HENNESEY rushes out. LUCKY looks at watch.) Five minutes. (LUCKY out.)

DICK. (He enters.) Darling!

RUBY. (Without looking at him.) I'm very busy, Dick.

DICK. These are yours. (She doesn't answer.) They're good luck telegrams from all over the world. Here's one from Gertie Lawrence. Maurice Chevalier. Al Jolson.

RUBY. Richard!

DICK. Ruby, all I want to say is, if you forget your lines, and miss your cues and fall flat on your face, just remember I'll be standing in the wings, waiting to take you in my arms, no matter what happens, no matter what! Good luck, darling. Give 'em heck! (He clips her affectionately on jaw, practically dislocating it; exits.)

LUCKY. (Rushing across.) Ruby, they changed the flag to stage right. (Exits.)

(JOAN enters.)

RUBY. Oh, Joan, I'm frightened.

(They BOTH hug.)

JOAN. Oh, Ruby, it's only natural. Your first time on a stage with the critics out there ready to tear you to bits. I'd be scared stiff!

RUBY. (Petrified.) Oh, Joan, I can't go out there, I can't!

JOAN. (Seizing RUBY by shoulders.) Listen, Ruby, you're going out on that poopdeck a chorus girl but you're coming back a star!

LUCKY. (He crosses over with gloves.) Ruby, your gloves! (Hands them to her and exits.)

JOAN. Ruby— (Clinch.) Break a leg! (JOAN socks RUBY encouragingly on arm, bruising it quite badly; exits.)

(MONA, looking deathly ill, enters with the CAPTAIN, whose robe she is wearing. She stands behind RUBY for a moment and sadly observes her.)

MONA. Ruby—

RUBY. (Turning around.) Miss Kent! What are you doing out of bed?

MONA. (Softly and dramatically.) I just wanted to tell you—

LUCKY. (Crossing over again.) Ruby, your hat! (Hands it to her and exits.)

RUBY. (Putting on hat and gloves.) Captain! Why have you let her out of Sick Bay?

CAPTAIN. She insisted, the brave soul, she insisted.

MONA. (Desperately.) Ruby, Ruby—

LUCKY. (Racing across Stage and off.) Places! Places!

CAPTAIN. Now, darling. Remember what the doctor said. You're weak—

(With a sudden burst of energy MONA gives him a push which sends him staggering back. She faces RUBY.)

MONA. Ruby, I want you to be so darn good, I'll hate you for the rest of my life. (She pinches RUBY's cheek kindly, and painfully.)

LUCKY. (Offstage.) YOU'RE ON, RUBY. YOU'RE ON!

# DICK/ MONA/ CAPTAIN

MONA. Do we get zee ship?

CAPTAIN. Si, si.

MONA. Nice little yacht you got here, Kewpie-Doll. It must have cost you a pretty penny.

CAPTAIN. Oh, didn't you hear? We Courageouses are doing very well these days. Mother just bought Sears-Roebuck.

MONA. (*Massive take.*) OH?

CAPTAIN. Yes, she traded Montgomery Ward for it.

MONA. So I guess your scrambled eggs are from Cartier?

CAPTAIN. No, Tiffany.

MONA. Ah, la mer! (*She looks at sea, turns green, staggers.* CAPTAIN catches her.) Oh, la mer. Remember how I even got queasy in the tunnel of love? Could you get me a bicarbonate of soda?

CAPTAIN. Your wish, dear, is my command.

MONA. (*To CAPTAIN, as she sees DICK enter.*) With a bromo chaser? (*CAPTAIN exits and MONA crosses to DICK.*) Oh, Dick, I have great news for you.

DICK. You have?

MONA. As I'm simply gaga about your marvelous melodies, I told Hennesey to get rid of all the trashy numbers and put yours in instead.

DICK. Really? Does that mean I'll have my name up in lights?

MONA. You are eager, aren't you? You know, Dick, I adore that "Tar Star" number especially. Just wait 'til you see me in my star-spangled bell-bottoms.

DICK. Gee, Miss Kent, you've made this the happiest day of my life!

MONA. Good! Now let's see what I can do for your nights. (*She suddenly gives him a deep, passionate kiss. RUBY enters, sees them, rushes off, horror-struck. The CAPTAIN enters with drink, humming "THE BEGUINE." DICK hears CAPTAIN, leaps up to salute. MONA drinks bicarbonate neat.*) Delicious! Oh, Kewpie-Doll, this is Dick! Oh dear, I guess you've met already, *n'est ce pas?* Don't you work together or something like that?

CAPTAIN. (*Seething.*) Something like that.

DICK. Uhh—I better see about—uhh—swabbing down the hatches!

MONA. Not yet, dear. Kewpie-Doll, did you have any idea that between the fore and aft of this oversized tin bucket of yours, you've been harboring a musical virtuoso?

CAPTAIN. You don't say!

MONA. But I do! Dick here just reeks with talent! *Reeks* with it! He's a regular Broadway Beethoven—only much more attractive.

CAPTAIN. Indeed! Tell me, Ludwig, what sonata was that you were playing on her keyboard just now?

MONA. Now, Kewpie-Doll, it was only an arpeggio. Dick and I were hard at work, weren't we, Dick? I was auditioning him for my big love scene in the second act.

CAPTAIN. How was he?

MONA. Promising. Very promising. But not half as much as you are, Captain, darling. Don't you know Mona Kent only allows a man of maturity and rank to steer her rudder? A man like yourself, Kewpie-Doll.

CAPTAIN. Really, Consuelo, really?

(*She offers her cheek to be kissed, which he does.*)

MONA. Tell me, darling, what arrangements have you made for my dressing room?

CAPTAIN. Will my cabin do?

MONA. Will you put a star on the door? A big, silver one?

CAPTAIN. No siree! A big gold one! This is the navy, my dear. (*He salutes.*)

(*DICK grabs his chance, salutes and exits.*)

MONA. (*Swaying again.*) Oh! This time I *am* dizzy!

CAPTAIN. Will you be able to perform?

MONA. Are you kidding?

# HENNESSEY

BE GUINE

63 64 65 HENNESSEY!

**START THE BE-**

**F** 66 67 68 69

GUINE \_\_\_\_\_ I HEAR THE BE- GUINE \_\_\_\_\_ DEEP IN MY

70 71 72 73

HEART IT'S BEAT-ING A WILD TAT- TOO. \_\_\_\_\_ THE BE-

**G** 74 75 76 77

GUINE \_\_\_\_\_ THE FA-TAL BE- GUINE \_\_\_\_\_ RE-CALL-ING





78 *TRCO-1-CAL GLOOM* *CRCH-IDS IN BLOOM* *PUN-BENT PEO-FUNE* *AND*

82 *YOU.* *YES I RE-* **END**

**I** 86 *MEN - DER* *PEN - SA - CO - LA* *SUL - TRY DE -*

91 *SIRE, PAS-SONS ON FIRE, UN-DEE THE MOON* *THOSE NIGHTS OF*