

Fatty Short finally dies at the age of 92.

Saint Peter admits Fatty into Jazz Heaven.

Fatty is back! Back in swing. Back in Sydney.

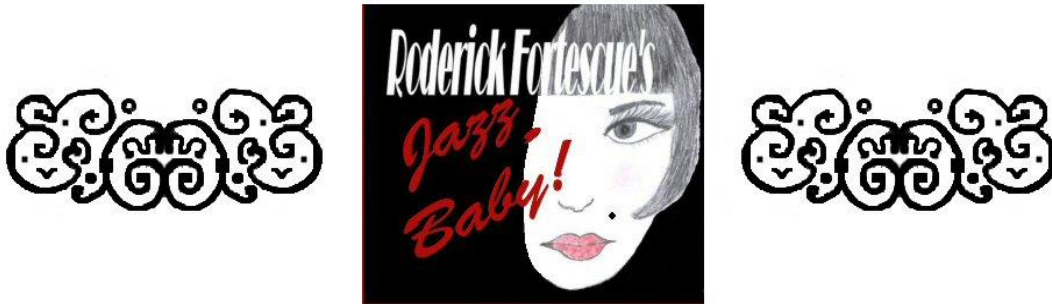
Back with his old mates from the 1920s.

***And they are all 26 years old.***

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## ACT I

### Opening Credits and Prologue

*A snooty butler makes his stately way across the large expanse of the ballroom. His heels click importantly on the highly polished floor. He draws to a halt beside an ornate side table. He bows to the camera and gestures to a huge tome lying on the table. The impressive leather-bound volume is entitled "Jazz, Baby!" by Roderick Fortescue Esq.*

The Butler *grand manner*

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Welcome to the official launch of what will no doubt become Book of the Year: Roderick Fortescue's magnificent opus, "Jazz, Baby!"

*The butler then adopts the folded-hands demeanour of a "butler-in -waiting". He taps his foot three times, and thus begins the music "Slater Street": a sleazy, gin-slinging, wonderful piece of jazz music. The film titles appear in 20's style script against a backdrop of dancers, who slide oilily and seductively onto the dance floor. There is an over-all sepia tone. The couples are of all ages and sizes, and the more interesting their dancing styles and their profiles, the better. The costume can be anything: modern, 20's flapper, whatever. We should see something utterly modern (eg a state-of-the-art sound system) so that we are aware that this book launch is being staged after 2000.*

*As the titles finish, a slight "rain" of tiny pieces of ripped-up paper begins to fall on the dancers. The "rain" becomes more evident. One by one the dancers stop and look up. There is a mingling of English accents (again, very arresting and individual, especially some marvellous nasal sounds): "What is it?"*

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*"Is it snowing inside?" "Oh, Roddy, what is happening?" girlish giggles and so on. Everyone is looking up. The music stops quite suddenly.*

*We see the millionaire Fortescue on the grand staircase, looking up in surprised horror at the "snow" of paper. He is dressed for golf, but expensively, a pin-up for a late '20s fashion magazine. He stands in such a way that a wall lamp on the staircase forms a halo round his head.*

*In growing alarm, he gropes his way down the stairs, always looking up. The crowd noise continues, grows. He mouths "My book!" and pushes his way through the amazed dancers, over to the butler and the table. Unbelievably, the book is wrecked; every page has been ripped out. He glares at the butler, who with one look expresses both amazement and a complete lack of knowledge as to the cause of this miracle.*

END OF PROLOGUE

## **I, Scene i: Fatty's Death**

*The camera focuses on a very modern radio, or iPod.*

ABC News announcer      The last remaining member of the Larrikins jazz band, Thomas "Fatty" Short, died yesterday in a Double Bay nursing home. He was 92. The Larrikins was known as Sydney's first jazz band. In the 1920s, they produced a string of popular hits, including *Slater Street* and *Carnegie Blues*. A popular trumpet-player and singer, Short went on to perform in many of Australia's leading dance bands during the '30s and '40s. He later worked extensively as a musical director in the early decades of television in Australia.

*Fatty's soul is transported at high speed upwards, in a huge white pipe or conduit. He arrives as a man in his mid-20s, wearing a white hospital gown, in a crowded, noisy waiting room. The other people milling around are a vast variety of ages. Fatty is immediately called over the public address system (as Thomas Short) and told to enter Room 2. He does so.*

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene ii:** The Debriefing With St Peter

*Room 2 turns out to be an old-fashioned office, with solid, expensive-looking furniture. Something out of the 1940's. The music is that of an angelic choir sings a tune befitting a welcome to heaven theme.*

*St Peter is a meticulous 1920's business type in horn-rimmed spectacles. His oiled hair is parted in the centre, and his collar is high. His manner (as he reads, as he speaks) gives the impression that he is hard-working, punctilious and conscious of his dignity. St Peter signs to Fatty to be seated.*

St Peter                      Good afternoon. I'm Saint Peter. I shall only take a few moments of your time, Mr Short, to explain to you what you might expect in Jazz Heaven. Then you may make your way into the paradise of Eternity.

Fatty                            *[Breathlessly surprised]*

Heaven?

St Peter                      Now, when our Father gave Mankind the gift of music, he enjoyed most of the sounds which emanated from Earth.

But his favourite music has always been Jazz. Hence, all Jazz aficionados come directly to Heaven. There is no Purgatory, no pre-requisites and no entrance examination. Straight in, as it were. You will spend the rest of your death as a man of 26 years old. You must understand, Thomas, that everybody in Jazz Heaven (no matter how old they were when they passed away) is now 26. Good!

*St Peter riffles through drawers as if looking for something. He mutters away to Fatty as he does so.*

St Peter *distracted*            Other kinds of music each have their own heaven. And of course you may change heavens when the mood takes you ... Not advised, however ...

*St Peter finds what he is looking for. He hands over to Fatty three pamphlets.*

St Peter                      No. My best advice to you is that you stay at 26. Your age goes up and down as you totter around the different heavens. Can be wearing even if you **are** already dead!

Right!

The ground rules are that there is no food, drink, nor tobacco at all. No bodily functions of any kind are permitted. Definitely no pets of any description.

You will retain all your memories from Earth, but you will remain forever in the Jazz era. The Roaring '20s, in fact. I have to tell you that your beloved departed parents and wife are not inmates. However, your brother made it in on a technicality.

When you get a chance, you can read up on it all.

*St Peter vaguely gestures to the several pamphlets in Fatty's grasp. St Peter then leans his elbows on the desk, linking his fingers in reverie.*

St Peter                      Now, before you embark on your adventure, I want you to do me a great favour. I've been waiting what seems like an eternity for you to expire, and now we do not have much time left.

A rogue by the name of Roderick Fortescue is about to publish a mammoth work on the subject of Jazz. However, it contains a number of ghastly inaccuracies as to the invention of this music. They **must** be corrected. I want you to make this your mission. Please edit that book and get it right! In one week! (God has kindly put the offending party in suspended animation for a mere 7 days. Not much time but one does what one can ...)

*Dismissive, St Peter begins to read from another sheet of paper. With a nod of his head, St Peter indicates that Fatty's time is up. Fatty nervously stands, unsure of what to do.*

St Peter *distracted*              Thank you, Thomas, that will be all. Please leave by that door over there, will you?

Fatty Er, thanks. Um ... Where do I ...

*St Peter signals very dismissively to Fatty that he should leave. Awkwardly, in great uncertainty, Fatty Short shambles forwards.*

END OF SCENE

### **I, Scene iii: The Boulevard; Walking To The Garage**

*Beyond the door is a wide thoroughfare, lined with well-tended date palms. It is outer Sydney in the late '20s, and it is a beautiful day. People stroll by, and a couple of cars of the period thrum past.*

*The music is now dominating. A very up-tempo instrumental version of Dark Town Strutters Ball belts out. This fades out as instructed below.*

*Fatty is pushed by unseen hands through the door. He stares in disbelief, then eventually moves on. As Fatty wanders along, he stops constantly to reminisce aloud over memories which rush back to him. Then he comes to the Haig Bros Garage. The music fades out. The garage is just as it had been in the 20's.*

Fatty *astounded* Well, I'll be blowed!

*Some young men sit around in the sunshine on boxes and folding chairs at the entrance to the garage. They are loudly and enthusiastically playing a game of cards on a crate. On seeing Fatty with the sun behind him, they look up enquiringly, then challengingly.*

Spud *unfriendly* Who's this?

*They all squint into the light: Fatty is seen by the men in silhouette.*

Seagull Can we help ya, mate?

Nuggett *coughs and splutters* Stone the crows: it's Fatty!

*They all look aghast.*

Cockie Never!

Nuggett *getting up* My oath it is. G'day, Fatty. Long time, no see, mate.

*Nuggett heartily shakes hands with Fatty.*

Fatty *in wonder* Nuggett? Christ, it's good to see you again.

*The others rush up. There is a deluge of handshaking, back-slapping, laughter – the hubbub of happy reunion.*

Fatty Spud, Cockie, Seagull. How the hell are you?

Spud I saw this bloke looking at us ... I thought you were a queer or something.

Fatty Not me, digger. Aw, this is grand! We're all together again. Just like the Good Times.

Seagull Hey, I'm winning. Do we wanna finish this hand?

Spud Na, na. Let's leave it now.

*[To Fatty, with a twitch of his head in Seagull's direction]*

He's still the same.

Spud We were just going for a stroll to the beach when we finished that hand. Come with us, and we'll catch up with all the gossip.

*As they walk to the beach, lots of things are explained to Fatty.*

Fatty Is Pat O'Shea up here?

Cockie Nup. Not 'ere.

Fatty Not in Jazz Heaven? But he's dead, isn't he?

Cockie Oh, yeah. But 'e necked himself. Not 'ere.

Spud Can't come to Paradise if you necked yourself. Ya just evaporate into the ether. Anyway, not much more than a hanger-on, was 'e?

Cockie Our "manager", that's what 'e called 'imself.

Seagull Yeah, 'e certainly managed 'is way into the strong box, didn't 'e?  
... And Edna's 'ere, and yer brother, Teddy.

Fatty *nods* So St Peter said.

Cockie *laughs* E's a dag, that St Peter. Eh?

Spud I suppose 'e read the Riot Act to ya, before 'e let you in 'ere?

Fatty Er, yes he did. Sounds a bit scary. Can't do this, can't do that.

Spud Nah! Don't believe a word of it. All the things he said are rocking-horse poop. We worked our way around all the limitations and handicaps he put in front of us. We eat, smoke, drink, have sex --

Fatty Bewdy!

Cockie *winks, aside to Fatty* The girls can't get preggers, ya see.

Spud -- and everything. Why, the cars don't have engines, but we gave them sound so that we'd feel more at home. Whatever we wanted. Seagull is pretty good at pulling a swift, and he's been here a long time. He nutted-out the works.

Fatty Jeez! It's good to catch up with you blokes again. I can still remember when you died, Seagull. You were the first to go, and so young! The band was doing extra well, too. More recording contracts. I sat on my bed and cried. I was stunned ... absolute disbelief.

Seagull Yeah. Bit of a shame. But you know, I was as crook as a dog in them last days. I reckon I knew I was goin' to cark it.

Spud And not another decent bull fiddle in the whole of Sydney to replace you. We fell apart after you died, 'Gull.

Seagull Drank, smoked, stayed up late. And when I finally fell into bed at night, I really wondered if there'd be a tomorrow for me. And I sort of got to the stage where every new morning was a bonus. Only I didn't appreciate the sunshine or that because I was always sleepin' one off or tryin' to shut out the noise of the cops bangin' on the door.

Cockie But St Peter finally got yer by the nuts, didn't he, 'Gull?

Seagull Yairs ... he finally got me by me nuts. Peritonitis, it was. I sort of drifted in and out of this bewdiful dream, like. I was in a hospital bed, and nurses kept sticking their faces down into mine. And I wanted them to pee off and let me go back to me dream. And next thing, I was in St Peter's office bein' ticked off for bein' a no-hoper. But 'e said I could come to Heaven because at least I'd tried to scratch a life together.

Fatty *meditative* Go on!

Seagull Yeah. Pretty sad. And I was lonely up here in those days. Not many people here. Hard to get a good band together. Had to borrow some of the angels, but not many of them had any swing. Still, it's alright now, with all youse blokes up here.

*They stroll along in thoughtful reverie. The silence is broken. Nuggett takes a quick breath and suddenly blurts out uninvited.*

Nuggett Put me age down and joined the War effort. Fought and died in Borneo.

Fatty Don't say? I lost track of you ... and so that's how you died?

Spud Yeah, our very own war hero. And Cockie went back to the farm at Deniliquin, and I went into Dad's firm (we wuz house painters, right?) when he chucked it in.

Cockie But I was real ironic, the way I died.

Fatty Ironic?

Cockie Yeah. Me and me brother got some tickets to the Games. You remember: Melbourne hosted the Olympic Games in '56. I got in the old crop-dusting plane to come down to the Big Smoke and crashed it just after take-off. I lived for about half-an-hour after the crash, but. Anyhow, I just lay there looking at the most glorious country in the world. 'Cause you know how lovely the





*each other, in the manner of bold young men. We get a roving close-up of the faces: grim, menacing, belligerent.*

Jack Give us our footy back, Cockie, yer bastard.

Cockie *head on side* Haven't got yer footy, Jack.

Dixie Come on: give us the bloody footy back.

Cockie Dunno where it is. Sorry.

*Cockie shrugs his shoulders broadly. Squizzy is now really sick of waiting. He steps forward.*

Squizzy Are youse spoilin' for a fight, are yuz?

Seagull *feigning surprise* Dunno what yer mean, Squizz.

Squizzy Do you wanna have a go, do ya?

Spud Yeah, mate. We'll have a go. And since we're not outnumbered anymore ...

*Suddenly, the Melbourne boys realise that there is another man on the Sydney side.*

Dixie *points at Fatty* Who's this bloke?

Seagull Oh, this is Fatty Short. He used to be our horn-player. He just died. He was 92 when he came over to Jazz Heaven.

Dixie Go on! Nice to meet you, Fatty.

*Dixie shakes hands with Fatty, and in a serious but friendly fashion, introduces Squizzy, Pete, Jack and Harry. They all shake hands, murmuring words of greeting. Fatty reciprocates. This is all ludicrous as the young men are about to indulge in a fight.*

Spud So. Who's gonna throw the first punch?

Dixie Well, I reckon Fatty ought to do that. In honour of his just being new here, and that.

Seagull Yeah. Go on, Fatty, let `er rip!

*Fatty does not need much encouragement. He bangs hard into Harry's belly. Harry promptly yells and doubles over in extreme pain. There is a moment of hesitation, then the free-for-all begins. However,*

*Pete and Nuggett merely shape-up to each other, maintaining the perfect straight-backed boxing stance of olden times. They dance about, holding the pose, but no punches are thrown. The others are brawling, grunting, cursing and rolling about in the sand. It is just a general melee.*

*Then, the fight stops. The Melbourne boys get their ball out of the sand, and leave. They say goodbye cheerfully, especially to Fatty ("Nice to meet you", and so on). They start to jog down the beach. The Sydney boys stay sprawled in the sand, watching them go.*

Harry                    See ya Thursday.

Cockie                    Righto.

Fatty                     What's on Thursday?

Seagull                  Oh, we team up with them to play cricket against the Jamaicans.  
Every Thursday.

Fatty                     That Squizzy ... He wasn't ... You know ... The crim ... ???

Cockie                    Yeah. That's him.

Fatty                     Jeez! Fancy him making it to Heaven.

Spud                      Ha! Fancy *us* making it!! Come on.

Fatty                     Why? Where're we going now?

Spud                      *[Dragging Fatty to his feet]*

For a bit of culture. We're going to knock around with the Pommies.

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene v:** The Great Britain Hall

*This daytime scene is grand and marvellous. It is a ripper.*

*The scene outside the Hall is one of richly outfitted swells arriving in chauffeur-driven limousines.*

*Furs, jewels and a sweep of lilting greetings and arrivals pervade the scene. A large, solemn porter*

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*Colonials. Monty wears a Panama hat, and speaks into megaphone, tending towards a droning tone by the end of speech.*

Monty *megaphone*

Would those "gentlemen" who are creating an unseemly disturbance in the rear stalls kindly refrain from spoiling the pleasure of those good folk who have come to this theatre in the hope of experiencing an enjoyable afternoon of culture and refinement?

There are many among us, show business people and audience alike, who are **disgusted** by this thoughtless, brash and unamusing hooliganism being displayed by a group of ruffians who are no better than the spawn of convicts. The rotting hulks of London provided the first inmates --

*Under the evil stares of the audience, the boys randomly shrug out of the theatre. As Monty continues, several voices cry out "Hear! Hear!"; and all the while, the woman and trumpet-player press on with their performance.*

Monty

-- the first inmates, Ladies and Gentlemen, for the Penal Colony in the Antipodes. England rid herself of her scuff and raff by transporting that pond-scum to the farthest reaches of the world. And now the descendants of those backwoods, cultureless swine, these beer-swilling, rough, boorish yahoos, are annoying the sons and daughters of Empire with their rumbustious derring-do.

This foul, loud-mouthed, chain-gang fodder, with their rum currency, cohabit and sleep with wild dogs, and **then** have the unmitigated effrontery to try and disrupt our ...

*By this time, the Larrikins are leaving the foyer of the Hall. Monty's voice is now merely a drone, and we can only pick up one or two words. From the Strictly No Admittance door, Sugar waves violently to Fatty, trying to catch his attention.*

Sugar *urgently*

Psst! Mr Short ... Excuse me, but here is the book you've been asked to amend

*Sugar hands Fatty the same book seen in the Prologue, except that now all the pages are intact.*

Fatty Oh, thanks. That's marvellous!

*Sugar winks and grins, then disappears. Fatty stands for some seconds staring at the door, and then goes outside. He finds that the other boys are wiping their feet on the grass outside.*

Spud Bloody nancy-boy! I'll give him "boring" and "unsophisticated" one of these fine days!

Cockie I didn't understand much of what he said. Did anyone else pick up his meaning?

Fatty Yeah. It was just a general run-through of "bastard" from Roget's Thesaurus. And he called us "boorish", not "boring". Nobody in a pink fit would call us ***boring***.

*They walk off. In the late afternoon sunshine, Fatty realises that he is holding the book entitled "Jazz, Baby!"*

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene vi: Fatty's Cheap Flop-House Room**

*Fatty is domiciled in Jazz Heaven in a cheap, dirty room in a flophouse. The room is dark, mainly because the small, curtained window is filthy. Fatty's room contains one bed, a small dresser and a chair.*

*Here, there is no music. For most of the scene, we will hear a background hum from the people in the anteroom. Towards the end of the scene, as instructed, a bright, happy tune evolves, which continues into the next scene.*

*Fatty wakes up. He is dressed in singlet and old-fashioned footy shorts. He yawns, stretches, goes to the window and swishes back the curtains. Instead of a view, St Peter is standing before him in the crowded and noisy anteroom from scene ii. St Peter is now wearing a lovely smoking jacket, has a cravat, and wears waxed moustaches. He is smoking with a cigarette-holder and drinks a cup of coffee. St Peter, out of his office, is obviously more relaxed, less inhibited. The people in the crowd*

*behind him behave as they did in scene ii. However, their noise is only a background hum, as we have to be able to clearly hear the conversation.*

*Fatty does a complete double-take and visibly jumps.*

Fatty *shocked*                   Shit! What a **fright** you gave me.

*St Peter takes a long, artistic drawback on the cigarette.*

St Peter *ultra-suave*           Took ten years off your life, right?

Fatty *chuckle*                   Something like that.

*[Points accusingly]*

Oi! You told me there was no smoking or drinking!

St Peter *shrugs*               Got a workaround. Can't live on ether. So -- how's the book revision coming along?

Fatty                               Oh, yes. A beautiful girl gave me the book yesterday.

St Peter *nods*                   And how's it going? You've made a start, no doubt?

Fatty                               Not yet. I only just got it. Anyhow, I don't think it's all that important.

*St Peter closes his eyes. Then he emits a long, expressive sigh.*

St Peter                         ***It - is - vital!***

Fatty                               Why?

*St Peter ignores the question, and walks into the room, stretching out gracefully, elegantly, on his elbow, on the bed.*

St Peter                         The French aficionados have an atmospheric little café ... ask for Emile. Another good source of information is the band, Slick Cool. They have connections. And get yourself invited to Marshall Bilt's party on Saturday night. Go to the drawing room.

Fatty                               Yeah, but what am I supposed to --

St Peter                         Fortescue has made some appalling gaffs regarding the birth of jazz. That's where you start. How, when, why, who, what.

*St Peter takes another long, elegant puff of the cigarette.*

St Peter                      Well, I'll leave you to it.

*St Peter is about to rise from the bed.*

St Peter *kindly*              Good night, Thomas.

Fatty                              Hang on. Got a question for you. This Heaven business, where people go to the right one for the type of music they admired on Earth.

Yeah, it got me thinking ...

Well, so what's the go with babies and children that die? You know, died before they had a chance to hear anything other than lullabies.

St Peter                        They go straight to the status of angels. They populate the ranks of archangels, cherubs, seraphs ... that sort of thing. They are innocent, pure and unsullied. As one would expect.

Fatty                              I haven't bumped into any angels yet.

St Peter                        Yes you have. Sugar (the girl who handed you the book) is an angel. She died at birth along with her mother. Within minutes of each other. That's what God told me, anyway. And why not believe Him, eh? And in Eternity, Sugar was able to meet her mother and father for the first time. Sweet, isn't it?

Fatty *shocked*                Sweet? I would have said unbearably *sad* rather than sweet.

... So, Sugar is an angel? I would never have known.

St Peter *drawls*                Yairs. She does a couple of days on Earth to steer people straight, then comes back here. She borrowed that book you have to fix up, and when you've done the deed, it will be Sugar who returns it to Earth. Of course, you and your cronies can never return to Earth, but the angels are in and out like a dog at a fair.

*St Peter rises and begins to wander over to the anteroom.*

Fatty *smiling* Up and down like a harlot's drawers.

*St Peter turns as he lifts a satirical eyebrow.*

St Peter Quite. Cheerio.

*St Peter swiftly shuts the curtains behind him. The anteroom noise ceases abruptly. Fatty stares in disbelief. Then he re-opens the curtains quickly and the dingy, industrial view is there again. Fatty cannot make it out. He touches the dirty window and then opens it. The background music becomes a bright, happy tune which continues into next scene (in the next ACT).*

*Spud knocks and wanders in.*

Spud G'day. Draggin' you off to the Botanical Gardens. Gotta find some snails.

Fatty What?

Spud The French. They eat snails, don't they?

Fatty *doubtful* Yeah ...

Spud We chuck snails at the French blokes. They hate it. Always winds up in a punch-up.

Fatty *chuckle* Well, at least death in Jazz Heaven isn't all choir practice and cloud-floating.

Spud *[Laughs and pats Fatty on shoulder]*

Too right it's not!

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT I



Cockie Oh, sorry, mate. This is Fatty Short that we told you about. Horn-player. Only just died. We won't have to borrow Dizzy anymore when we want to vamp up a tune. Fatty, these blokes are the **best** combo in Jazz Heaven, without doubt. Slick Cool. Meet Chops, Syd, Trummy, Dizzy, Will and Vernon.

*Introductions, handshakes. Throughout, the Afro-Americans lean back languorously.*

Chops So now you got your band together again ... and you can play the old tunes just like you used to do in the Good Times. It's always fine to have your old friends around you.

Fatty Yeah. Listen, mate, you might be able to help me. St Peter gave me this mission to clean up a dodgy book about the birth of Jazz. You may be able to steer me the right way.

Dizzy *giggles* St Peter once asked me to find a virgin up here. He's just too funny for words, that guy!

Fatty But you'd know some of the historical background, wouldn't you? Do you think you can help me?

Chops I'll help you Fatty because your boys make me laugh all the time.

Will Why do they call you Fatty? You ain't fat.

Fatty I wasn't skinny like the other kids. More solid. See, my parents were fairly well-off. Always food on the table. Dad wanted me to be a doctor.

Dizzy *appalled* A doctor? But yo boys told me that you such a fine musician. Why'd he want you to be a doctor?

Fatty He ... He believed that people who had a comfortable life should do what they could to help the less fortunate people. I suppose that's what he thought ... he was a very religious, God-fearing man. Sober and careful. I reckon I was a bit of a disappointment

to him.

Vernon                    You could have helped a small number of people as a doctor, Fatty. What you did as a horn-player was far better for Mankind: you gave them the joy of music.

Chops                    Here. Pass that horn to me, Trummy. Fatty, we'd be obliged if you would play somethin' from yo ... yo *repertoire*, and we can tell you if you should ha' been a doctor or not.

*Fatty lovingly handles the trumpet.*

Fatty                    Haven't played one of these for years.

*Fatty gives them an obligato on the trumpet. This rendition must fit in perfectly with the background music. He is a very gifted musician.*

Vernon *shakes head*    Yo daddy was crazy.

Will                    Is you all fetchin' them snails? Boy, I *hates* it when you does that!

*The boys squat down among the garden beds to collect snails, which they put into paper bags, a billie can and into their pockets.*

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene ii: Café De Jazz**

*It is night. The band area is an alcove with a curtain-covered doorway at the side. There is an upright piano in this alcove, along with various types of chairs, crates, boxes. Musical instruments have been dumped on the chairs and crates. There is a litter of dirty ashtrays, bottles, glasses, filthy cups and saucers, etc, etc. The mess extends onto the piano and the floor of the alcove.*

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Spud Rightio. Where are yer boys? Are they waggin'?

Emile *covering for his boys* No, no. They are sick, I regret to say.

Seagull *scornful laugh* That's what **you** think.

*Spud pokes Emile in the chest.*

Spud How the Hell can they be "sick" when they're dead?

Emile *squirms* Aaaaawwww ... Monsieur. You know, eh?

*Emile looks embarrassed as he makes a very rude pantomime of love-making. Yet that explanation thoroughly pleases Spud who slaps Emile on the shoulder.*

Spud Having a naughty, are they? Fair enough! Shoulda said so in the first place.

Emile *quickly* And no escargots tonight, I beg of you.

*As the boys walk over to the alcove, Spud signals to the boys at the table that he has his paper bag of snails with him. He winks. More handshakes, more tuning, more laughter. Spud holds up the paper bag.*

Spud Me lunch.

*Quebec, dressed up more than are the members of the band, comes through the door to a light applause from the crowd. Quebec is famous: he has a superb, deep, Gallic voice, thickly accented.*

Quebec Welcome to Café de Jazz. I am named Quebec Gaussons, and these chaps `ere are Les Fils de Jazz. They will play for you this evening, and if you like, you dance. There is some space here for that.

*Quebec makes a vague gesture to the dancefloor before him. With a nod to the band, the performance starts. They go into a fabulous slow, sleazy jazz number. Spud (trombone) and Seagull (bass fiddle) prove to be very talented. Quebec slowly "speaks" rather than "sings" the words, in a deep bass voice. He does not use a megaphone: the performance is quite effortless.*

Quebec *spoken song*      *My woman has left me.*

*I cry all alone.*

*I loved my woman*

*And now she is gone ...*

*The crowd love this stuff. They call out, as in "Ooooooooh" and "Jouez, bébé". There is some sporadic clapping. A few couples dance: this is divinely sensual, clinging. Because of the dim lighting, we can clearly see the band, but the dancers in front of them are in silhouette.*

*Now the snails have escaped from the paper bag and from Seagull's pockets. We get a few close-ups of the snails crawling over each other, juxtaposed with the clinging dancers.*

*La Femme slinks into the café and sashays up to Quebec. She puts an arm around his neck. When the verse finishes, Quebec dances in intimate closeness with La Femme. They have eyes only for each other. The crowd makes many sporadic comments on this liaison.*

*The dance takes over; it develops into a beautiful, sexy ballet, fluidly matching the jazz piece. After a couple of minutes, we come back to reality, as the band comes into focus, Quebec starts "singing" again, and the music comes to a neat conclusion. Enthusiastic applause.*

*The band members get drinks, smoke, chat, re-tune. Emile congratulates them happily.*

Spud                              Ah, *l'amour!* Looks like we lost our vocalist.

*The boys laugh. Quebec gathers the woman into his arms and kisses her hungrily. The lovers stroll out of the café, arm-in-arm. Emile surprises Fatty, Nuggett and Cockie, as he has wandered up unseen and now leans on the table, watching the lovers depart.*

Emile                              That one! He thinks that his death was the most romantic part of his life.

Fatty                              His death?

*Cockie nods as do Emile and Nuggett.*

Cockie                              He's going to get bumped off. Again. Does anyone want a

drink?

Nuggett I'll be in that.

*Nuggett and Cockie wander off. Emile leans forward such that he may address Fatty.*

Emile May I sit down?

Fatty No worries.

Emile And you are Monsieur Short, no?

*Fatty agrees. The two men shake hands. Emile sighs.*

Emile I can help you with your task for St Pierre. Despicable rogue!

Fatty *surprised* Yes, St Peter's a bit of a dag, isn't he?

Emile No, no, no. Not St Pierre. I mean the other one ... this Fortescue.

*[Pause]*

I have all the great stars here at my Café: Armstrong, Monk, and Gillespie ... even Le Duc.

Fatty Fair dinkum?

Emile *Oui*. They talked about the good times ... I wrote it all down. Come, I have these notes in my office.

*Emile stands, expecting Fatty to follow suit.*

Fatty *still seated* But there's something dodgy here. Why should some book written in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by some Pommie prick be capable of changing Jazz heaven? Doesn't make any sense to me.

*The next piece of music begins. Not too loud as to drown out the conversation. This is another great piece of jazz music. Once again, the couples spill onto the floor. Emile pouts and then resumes his seat.*

Emile Oh, yes! These historians must get it right: the birth of the

music, that is. Why, we had a case of a learned priest (many centuries ago). He inadvertently misrepresented the genesis of Troubadour music. It was a catastrophe! God almost had to close their heaven down as a result.

Think for a moment. To talk about the style is easy. To decide **when** and **how** that style started ... this is a most difficult task. Fortescue ... he guesses **this** and theorizes about **that** ... he will end up ruining us all! Come!

*Nuggett and Cockie return with drinks. Emile gestures with his head (to Fatty) that they should leave. Emile gives his excuses to Nuggett and Cockie. As Emile and Fatty go to the office, Cockie and Nuggett sit down. Cockie fishes his snails out of his pocket.*

Cockie                      Race ya.

*Cockie lines up his snails on the table.*

Nuggett *laughs*              Awright.

*Nuggett moves in on Cockie's snails.*

Nuggett                      I have to use some o' yours, but.

Cockie *surprised*              Why, where's yours? You had a whole billiecan full of 'em!

Nuggett                      Aw, that tough bloke on the door wouldn't let me bring it in.

Cockie                      The bastard!

*The two boys amuse themselves with the snails. A well-built, hard-faced man moves quickly onto the dance floor, up to the band. He wears a hat and overcoat. His stance leaves us in no doubt that he is angry. The band play on. They see him, but the music will not be interrupted. This Frenchman (L'Homme) has a harsh, unattractive French accent.*

L'Homme *passionate*              Where is she? Where is my woman?

*L'Homme looks around suspiciously, even more angry at the titters of the audience and the band's unconcern*



done somebody a fearful damage!

Alec *patient* They're not marbles, old chap. Here, try one.

Monty What??

*Alec lowers his voice in a conspiratorial way.*

Alec Chocolate balls covered with orange-coloured sugar-coating.  
They're sweeties. Have one.

*Alec leans forward and pops a Jaffa in Monty's mouth. Monty speaks thickly owing to the sweet.*

Monty Week after week. I tell you we have to bring them into line.

Gladys I thought that your speech was thrilling, Monty!

*Such adulation causes Monty to swell with pride.*

Alec And **I** told you that everything is under control.

Gladys Do you know what you **should** do? You should have them perform one of their numbers, then boo them off the stage. They'd **never** be able to live down the indignity.

Archie *sadly* Wouldn't work. Those chaps have no appreciation of shame.

Monty *concerned, disapproving* Oh, I don't know about that, at all. And I'm very reluctant to allow any second class acts at the Great Britain Hall.

*[Afterthought]*

Even if it is in a good cause.

Archie *brightening* They're frightfully good at cricket, what?

Lord Stainford Did y'know that Daddy was a punishing fast bowler in his day?

Monty The eighth Earl, Baron Fayn? Yes, and an exceptional athlete, too, if memory serves.

Where to tonight, Alec?

Alec It's time to don the glad rags and broaden the horizons, chums. We are about to embark on an exciting adventure, in which we will meet some extremely interesting characters. I trust that your father would approve, Lord Stainford.

Lord Stainford *ponders* Think he would have. Daddy packed me off on the Grand Tour, don't y'know. Paris, Berlin, Rome, Athens. With m' tutor in tow. I was no more than a shaveling at the time. Quite an adventure. Most interesting, 'twas.

Gladys How lovely! And what were some of the highlights of your Grand Tour, my Lord?

Lord Stainford Can't remember any highlights. Slept most of the time. Always sleep in trains.

*[Archie nods]*

Must be the motion. Lulls one to sleep. However, the food was extraordinarily good. I remember that quite well.

Monty *enthusiastic, bon vivant* Ah, French cuisine. Yes, it's *magnifique!*

Lord Stainford *appalled* Good God, no. None of that. Mummy was concerned for my digestive system; sent a cook from Yorkshire along with me. Did a superb rack of lamb with some sort of wine sauce. Very memorable.

*Lord Stainford is lost in reminiscence. He fails to notice that Alec, Monty and Gladys are stunned by his admission.*

Alec My Lord, *this* soiree will open your eyes as nothing else has ever done before.

Monty Where to?

Alec *low, thrilling* To a hell-hole.

*Archie rises from his armchair. He is up for anything.*

Archie Lead on then.

Alec Come along, Gladys. We're off to a clip joint.

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene iv: Johnny "Bathtub" Vasco's Speakeasy**

*We are now inside the speakeasy that is owned and run by John Vasco (known as "Bathtub Johnny"). It is small, smoky, crowded, noisy, cramped. The light is bright, the furnishings metallic, and the place is filled to more than overflowing with shrill, strident voices. Loud, blowsy women and florid men with loud, raucous laughs.*

*The tables are jammed up so close, that there is hardly room for the chairs. People have to squeeze past. Italian-looking waiters with tea-towels around their waists carry trays crammed with all kinds of cups, glasses, jars, and so on, containing all manner of evil-looking drinks.*

*Music: There is no room for a band (let alone any kind of dancefloor), so a small gramophone (the old type with a huge horn phone) will suffice. Old songs (sung by crooners and tenors) from pre-1920 are constantly crackling away in the background.*

*To the side, a waiter is whispering into the ear of Johnny "Bathtub" Vasco, a large, bloated man, with slicked-down, oily hair and a trimmed moustache. The waiter is also pointing. And once again, everyone is 26 years old.*

*Bathtub Johnny appears impressed by what the waiter has apparently said. Johnny squeezes his way over to the table where the five English characters are seated. They are totally overdressed for the occasion. We can tell by their expressions that they are determined to enjoy themselves, in spite of their surroundings. All the other patrons are rough-edged, looking suspicious. Bathtub Johnny is so delighted by these patrons that he rubs his hands together.*

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Bathtub Johnny        My dear sirs! And Madame! Welcome to Vasco's. I'm the proprietor, John Vasco. But you are to call me Johnny, as my friends do.

*Alec stands. The two men shake hands.*

Alec                      Please allow me to introduce the Honourable Lady Gladys Phanton, Lord Stainford, Mr Montmerency Humber, and the Honourable Archibald Covington. Mr Vasco.

*With extreme difficulty, the gentlemen rise and solemnly shake hands with, and murmur "How do do?" to Bathtub Johnny. Except for Alec, they are again seated. A bevy of waiters bring in a silver-service, 3-course meal: Windsor soup, Roast Beef with Yorkshire pudding, Jam Roly-Poly with custard and cream. All the food is set down at once, as it does not get cold. The members of Alec's party juggle with the table settings in this extremely cramped environment.*

Bathtub Johnny        I must fervently apologise for the meanness of my club. It is nothing, I know, to compare with your palatial Hall.

Alec                      Thank you, Mr Vasco. We are more than comfortable. However, I wish to speak to you confidentially, as we arranged over the telephone this afternoon.

Bathtub Johnny        Certainly. As we arranged. Please.

*John gestures to Alec, indicating that the latter should go with him to his office. They leave, threading their way through the jostling diners.*

Gladys *over-bright*    Oh I say! This is all rather fun!

*Archie momentarily loses the plot. He touches the arm of a passing woman who looks at him with alarm.*

Archie                    Could we see the wine list, m'dear?

Gladys                    And look: there's a pudding for afters.

END OF SCENE

## II, Scene v: John Vasco's office

*Vasco's office is small, dark and sombre. The dominant feature is a fringed, billiard room light, suspended over the desk.*

*The two men sit on either side of this "flood-lit" desk. The camera closes in on this lit area, with the men on either side. There is a feeling of clandestine plotting between Bathtub Johnny and Alec. The conversation is couched entirely in gentlemanly, civilized tones. Both men toy with brandy balloons, enjoying the liquid in the manner of connoisseurs. They smoke Havana cigars, allowing the smoke to drift from their lips.*

*Music: The same gramophone music as is heard in the club. However, it is now distant and softer.*

Bathtub Johnny            Would it be impolite to ask, Sir, if one of your guests is an English lord?

Alec                            You have that right, my friend. Lord Stainford, the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Saltbush, Baron Fayn is certainly one of my party. A welcome addition.

Bathtub Johnny            Ahhhhhh ... And so many "Honourables". It is indeed a joy to welcome you and your friends to my club.

*We hear a screech of immoderate laughter coming from the speakeasy. Both men raise their eyebrows. John is keen to apologize for his clientele.*

Bathtub Johnny            One allows the less cultured to imbibe. They do so immoderately. What can one do? I had rather cater for the real aesthete, such as your good self. But there are so very few of you ...

*The men lean back, relaxing.*

Alec *suave, at his ease*    You are known throughout Jazz Heaven as a thoroughly capable, resourceful entrepreneur, who will not balk at even

the most difficult operation.

Bathtub Johnny

Let me see ... I'm sure that I understand your meaning. You have a problem, and you expect that I, with my skills and expertise, am the right man for the job.

Thank you. It is gratifying to be admired for one's talents.

Alec *smoothly*

The Great Britain Hall is an object of architectural, aesthetic and cultural grandeur. You may yourself have been a patron at one time or another.

*John Vasco smiles wickedly, and nods.*

Bathtub Johnny

I follow you well.

The problem is that you run a very classy establishment. Its tone is being somewhat compromised by a rather unsavoury element. You wish me to rid you of these pests.

Certainly. I'm willing to undertake the venture. And the reward?

Alec

One has put it about that one was gunned-down in a botched jewel robbery at Knightsbridge. Whereas, in fact, the ghastly truth (I will not hedge with you, my good sir) is that I perished in a fly-fishing accident some 65 years ago. *Quelle horreur, mon cher!*

*John nods compassionately, then wags his cigar at the Englishman.*

Bathtub Johnny

Well, as there is no money in Heaven, and supposedly no concept of "wealth", you wish to understand why I just don't take on your commission simply for the pride?

Thank you once again for your faith in my capabilities. I shall most gladly accept this task and will not demand from you or from your allies any recompense of any kind. Pride it shall be!

*The subtleties are over. The men stand, and Alec solemnly shakes Johnny's hand. They both have to lean over the table and are focused under the single light. Bathtub Johnny leans forward, still gripping Alec's hand in both of his.*

Bathtub Johnny           And upon whom will I be exercising my much-vaunted talent,  
*under voice*               Sir?  
 Alec *under voice,*       A group of Australians, known as the Larrikins.  
*silky*

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene vi: A Waiting-Room Outside John Vasco's Office**

*Although the club is trashy, and Vasco's office unprepossessing, this waiting room is very ornate, something like a lobby in a grand hotel. It has velvet curtains, artworks, columns and tastefully-decorated occasional tables. To the left is a door, which leads to Vasco's office.*

*Still the gramophone songs filter through. But now, they are more audible. Further, the noise of the revellers can be heard randomly.*

*Johnny leaves his office and walks to the centre of the waiting-room, where his four henchmen (Dino, Irish, Spats and Lenny) await instructions. Looking tough, and chewing gum, they gather around John Vasco. The latter drops the cultivated tones, speaking like any Chicago gangster.*

Bathtub Johnny           Okay fellers. The hit is on. I have a very prominent English  
                                   businessman, who has hired our talents as exterminators. This  
                                   is very important to me that we do this right. Okay?

                                  This party is connected to a real English lord, a titled  
                                   gentlemen, and also to some Honourables. They are our  
                                   guests at this moment. So don't louse it up, guys. The --

Spats *impatient for*       Who is da mark?  
*action*

*Now Bathtub Johnny is impatient at being interrupted.*

Bathtub Johnny           Spats! Settle down!

                                  Now, the mark is a group of five Austrians. A crummy band



stomach for a fight?

*Spats covers for Lenny, whose shoulder he pats.*

Spats                    Sure he got de stomach, Dino! He just ain't so itain where he should go to to get de guns. Ain't dat right Lenny? Hey, he only been here a short time ... he ain't bin dead very long, have ya Lenny? He just ain't sure where he gotta go

*Lenny drags himself from his reverie.*

Lenny                    I was wondering what kind of weapons we wuz thinkin' about. Dat's all.

*Surprised, Spats looks from one man to the other before he answers.*

Spats                    Why, machine guns and Derringers, as usual, Lenny.

*Lenny turns to look directly at Spats.*

Lenny                    And dat's exactly what dem Austrian guys is gonna be expectin', ain't dat so?

*Spats hesitates as he searches for support from the other guys.*

Spats                    Well, sure. What else would dere be?

Lenny                    No, see, I was just thinkin'. I died as an old man, but I used to be a very good father and grandfather, once I got out of Sing-Sing, dat is. And I spent a *lot* o' time wit my grandson, Ronny. And Ronny, see, he grew up and he started to play dese great action games on his ... on his, ya know, on his computer.

*There is now general concern for Lenny's mental health. The three men (Dino, Spats and Irish) shift their body weight, and look to each other for some glimmer of understanding.*

Irish                    Sure, Lenny. Maybe you better sit down here for a little minute while I gets a nois for ya. I tink you mighta bumped

your head sometime.

*Lenny warms up to his theme. Thus, he ignores the interruption.*

Lenny                   And dese games were great, ya know, like comic strips toined into movies. And when da hero-guy was in trouble, see, well all ya had to do for him was to press da red button and da hero ... he got himself some swell weapons from his inventory so dat he could pulverize da bad guys. You follow?

Dino                    But dere ain't no red button for us to press, ya know?

*General agreement with Dino by the others.*

Lenny                   Yeah? I hate to argue wit you guys, but look! Dere's a red button right dere!

*The gangsters get close to the sideboard, where Lenny is pointing to a flat red button, similar to that found in any shoot-em-up computer game. The camera now close-ups the button. The button's caption is "Inventory: Upgrade Your Weaponry". A big index finger moves over the button, and instantly, our scene changes to that of an animated computer game's Weapon Choice screen. The usual gallery of howitzer, chain saw, flame-thrower, cannon, Scud missile, and so on are displayed. An arrow-head cursor scoots across the screen, clicking here and there as weapons are selected. We can hear the excitement of the men as they choose; I leave it up to the actors to thoroughly ham this bit up.*

*The computer game screen zaps out and we are left with the unbelievable sight of all this huge equipment, and how will it be transported? Everyone looks at Lenny in growing annoyance.*

Dino                    Smart move! So what do we do now, Mr Clever Claw?

Lenny                   No problem. Look ... it's easy ... ya just put da heat in yer pocket. Like dis!

*As would be the case in a computer game, the "Inventory" can be stashed without any problem in the top inside pocket of a suitcoat. Lenny takes his Scud missile and miraculously stows it (flat as a pancake) in his breast pocket. The others gingerly follow suit and stand around looking very pleased with themselves.*

Spats                                    Okay, gentlemen. Now we depart to take care of our European friends.

Irish                                     Or don't you mean "Our European *enemies*"?

Spats *brash, laughs*                Correctamundo!

END OF SCENE

## II, Scene vii: The Lane Outside the Speakeasy

*It is night. The lane is typical of a London or New York access to the kitchen and stage of any restaurant or theatre (of the 1920's era). Garbage bins, discarded boxes, prowling tomcats all proliferate. From a solid door, complete with "peep-hatch", there is a short, steep flight of wooden steps going down into the lane. Lighting is random from nearby streetlights. A black limousine has its engine running.*

*Music: There is none, except later for the tumultuous God Save the King, with full symphony orchestra towards the end of the scene.*

*The four gangsters are seen hurrying out of the speakeasy, into the lane. They take a quick look around, and then climb speedily into the limousine. The unseen driver guns the car and off they race.*

*A few moments later, Monty, Archie, Gladys, and Lord Stainford pour out of this door, somewhat inebriated. Alec, stone cold sober, is with them. Negotiating the steps is extremely difficult, as there is much pausing to recite from Shakespeare, as well as the usual difficulties of drunkenly descending steps.*

Monty                                    But it was *Wellington*, I tell you. Not Nelson at all. Everyone *insists* on confusing our Great Men.

Archie                                    Nelson said it at T'falgar. Just before ... just before ...

Gladys                                   Kiss me, Hardy?

*Lord Stainford teeters about: inebriated and excited.*

Lord Stainford                        Ah, England and her heroes. Henry V. Agincourt. ... And



Alec I must say that I loathe those damned Americans as much as I detest those damned Colonials.

*General agreement.*

Monty Whatever happened to "The sun never sets on the British flag?" Don't those dreadful people realise that **we** are EMPIRE??

*Solemnly, standing strictly to attention, led by Monty, they all sing "God Save the King". They only get a few notes out unaccompanied before a full symphony orchestra swells the tune as they sing.*

*It is a magnificent moment. Gladys begins to dab at her eyes with a lace hankie, whispering "God Save England" and the men are moist-eyed, trembling-lipped. There is a long silence, wherein nobody moves much.*

Gladys *sniffs* Which king was it?

Archie The one before the one who abdicated.

Monty George V?

Lord Stainford Yes. "Bugger Bognor".

Monty Then ... is he here?

Lord Stainford No. He went to Elysium. They all do.

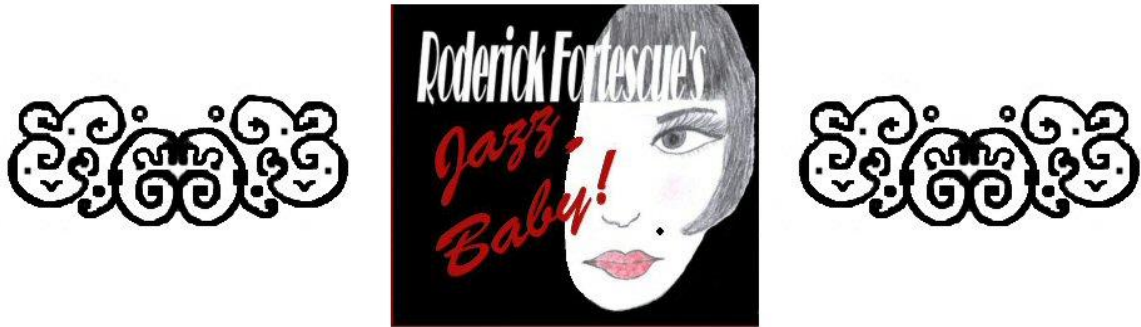
Gladys I say! David and Wallis are said to be here, in Jazz Heaven; on that island there. They're both devoted to syncopation.

Lord Stainford Quite right. He wrote me a letter telling me how ripping it all was and would I like to throw some togs into a valise and motor over to visit them.

Alec *smug* I've dined with them on the island on several occasions.

Gladys *incredulous* Have you? And was the abdication discussed?





## ACT III

### III, Scene i: Quebec's Murder

*Very "film-noir". This scene is very much "On-The-Waterfront". It is night. The street is industrial/mercantile, badly lit, and filthy. The footpath is littered with industrial by-products and rubbish. Stray cats roam about, fighting. Somewhere close by, a foghorn sounds mournfully at long intervals throughout the scene. Seabirds caw overhead (like the mutton birds at Appleton Dock in Melbourne), and chains clank threateningly. An offshore fog spills over the landscape, creepily.*

*Music: There is no music, only the mournful background noise, until the gangsters leave the scene. Then a lone trumpet plays, as was witnessed on the stage at the Great Britain Hall.*

*From the gloom, Quebec and La Femme walk aimlessly, with their arms entwined. They wander along, oblivious to the depressing surroundings, whispering love-talk in French. Along the street, they drift out of camera-shot as they stroll.*

*Behind them, in the shadows, L'Homme approaches, watching them. We hear his quick footstep as he flits from shadow to shadow, undetected. He is dressed in trench coat and hat. Beside a fog-bound lamppost, we see (from behind) the silhouette of L'Homme. He flicks open a switchblade in his hand; the knife winks wickedly as it catches a glint of light from the lamp.*

*From behind, the camera is shooting up the street, towards the departing ambling couple. L'Homme now runs up behind the couple, crouched ready to pounce. When this trio speak, it is in English, but*

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*heavily accented. During the following interlude, La Femme is quickly frightened, and backs away from the two men, against a wall.*

L'Homme                    Eh, Gaussons. What do you do with my woman, uh?

*Quebec turns slowly back toward the camera, aware that he is being threatened.*

Quebec                    We are in love, *mon cher*. Leave us alone, will you.

L'Homme *low*                Yes, old man. Alone. You will certainly be alone in your grave,  
*satirical laugh*                *monsieur*. It is cold and lonely in the ground, no?

*Quebec shrugs with a certain fatalism.*

Quebec                    Maybe ... but right now, *mon cher*, it is as warm and cosy as the womb. Perhaps you have forgotten what that is like ...

*Quebec glances toward the woman with hungry eyes. This enrages L'Homme. His voice now throbs with passion.*

L'Homme                    You stole my woman, you bastard, and now you pay with your life for that crime!

Quebec                    She came to me all too willingly, old man. She fell into my waiting arms like very ripe fruit.

*Angry and in a wild passion, L'Homme lunges with the knife. The fight between the two men is beautifully balanced. In close-up, we see the play of muscles in neck and jaw as they tussle desperately for possession of the knife. The grim night sounds continue in harmony with this cruel fight to the death. The play of the dim patches of light through the swirling fog is perfectly pitched.*

*They wrestle on the ground, rolling on the street in a deadly embrace. But L'Homme gets the better of Quebec and we see him make stabbing motions into his opponent. The woman screams. As she tries to escape, the man rushes after her into the night.*

*The camera is focused on the patch of light on the dirty street in which Quebec goes through his death-throes. Almost beyond camera shot, just within it, L'Homme murders the screaming woman in the dark shadows. Suddenly, the man takes fright when the realisation of what he has done sinks in. He is poised for flight, the bloody knife still clenched in his fist. He looks from Gaussons to the woman*



*along, kicking cans and stones: just casual. They pass La Femme (who ignores them as she struts off). The men stop walking to watch her leave, and there are some random coughs and laughs at her expense.*

*Then they proceed until Fatty stops in alarm at the sight of the body on the street. However, the rest of the blokes are completely unconcerned. They saunter over to Quebec's stationary body. Seagull digs him in the ribs with his foot.*

Seagull                      Come on, mate. Buy you a beer.

Fatty *aside to Spud,*        What's goin' on?  
*concerned*

Spud *dismissive*              Nah. It's alright. Just hang on.

*The men wait patiently, smoking, blowing noses, spitting, adjusting, etc, while Quebec stirs and drags himself up from the street. The foghorn sounds again, just as a loud shouting match starts way off somewhere. But the jazz solo continues. As though in some pain, Quebec dusts himself off. Two very skinny, poor women appear, watching the Australians in the manner of wild, trapped animals. Without warning, they run away. All the men watch them go, without any visible emotion or concern.*

*Fatty gestures to Quebec with a nod of his head.*

Fatty                          She shot through. I mean, your woman is gone.

Quebec *grins, weak*        Yes. Oui. I know. She ... she always does so, no?  
*laugh*  
*[Another nervous laugh]*

Cockie                        All be the same in 100 years, mate.

Quebec *reluctant*            Yes. Yes ... I suppose so. But I only wish that ...

*Seagull puts a lid on any possible emotional outpourings from Quebec.*

Seagull                        No yer don't. Come and have a beer.

*As they leave, Fatty grabs Nuggett's arm to stop him.*

Fatty Listen, Nuggett. What in the name of hell was *that* all about?

Nuggett He loves her, and the other bloke loves her too. So the other bloke kills them both.

[*Shrugs shoulders*]

Does it every week.

*Nuggett nods to indicate that that is all the explanation he is willing to give. However, Fatty is none the wiser.*

Fatty Oh.

*As the men disappear out of camera shot, the jazz solo comes with perfect timing to its end. We savour the dying notes a second too long.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene ii: The Abduction Of Vera**

*This is Jazz Heaven's version of Bondi beach. Another beautiful morning in Paradise.*

*Music: No music to start with. It changes through the various locations, as instructed.*

*The Larrikins are seated in the sand, dressed as usual. They are eating ice creams or drinking a cup of tea (with saucer), or just smoking. The boys have a copy of a 1920's newspaper, and Spud, Nuggett and Seagull are sharing it. Fatty (who is unusually gloomy) and Cockie are in conversation.*

Cockie And what's got up your nose? Yer don't look very chirpy this mornin'. Now, yer not dicey about what yer saw last night, are yer? 'Cause if ya are, he does it all the time ... Gaussons, I mean. He's a bit keen on how he died, rather than how he lived. So he keeps revisitin' his death. Bit off-colour, but there it is. Don't waste

time worryin' about it.

Fatty Oh, no. I wasn't thinking about that at all.

... I miss Vera, really. We were married 54 years.

Cockie Go on! Any nippers?

Fatty Yeah. They're still alive. And grandkids. They'll eventually all go to Rock 'n' Roll heaven I s'pose. I won't ever see them again.

*Fatty lowers his head in gloomy despair. Cockie laughs heartily.*

Cockie Then they'll be older than you. Did yer know that? People there are about 48 years old. They all strut about in leather jackets, and touch-up their grey hair. Lot of drongoes ...

Ah ... Rock 'n' roll was just coming in when I died. I missed all that ... thank Goodness!!

*Spud joins the conversation.*

Spud Rock 'n' roll Heaven? Some bloke I met once accidentally went there ... didn't see Elvis, though. There's lots of chaps who looked like him, of course.

Fatty What? Can you switch which Heaven you're in?

Cockie *cannot be sure* Well ... A South American chap I know spends 6 months in Latin Paradise, then 6 months here. He likes to tango and rumba, and all that.

Spud How old are they there? Wouldn't be no good if you wuz doin' the Samba in yer 90's, would it?

Cockie *not really interested* Oh ... you know ... about ... 34 or that ...

Fatty So how do yer do it?

Spud Do what?

Fatty Go to Latin ... thingo ...

Cockie Dunno.

Fatty Then ... Vera might be in one of the other heavens?

Cockie Yeah. I remember now. She's in Classical Heaven. They call it ...?

Spud, Seagull *together* Elysium.

Cockie That's right. Elysium. Toffee-nosed and high-brow. Opera and that stuff. They're all oldies there!

Fatty Why the hell didn't you tell me that before? Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Wait a ...

*[Snaps fingers]*

How did you know that she was in this Elysium place? You haven't ever left Jazz heaven.

*Cockie is perplexed. He scratches his head.*

Cockie Aw, somebody went there and then came here, I think. That must be it. One of them jazz fiddle players ...

Spud That Quebec that you met often does that. Some souls are not sure where their heaven is. So they just drift.

*Fatty becomes excited as realisation dawns on him.*

Fatty But ...

But that means that **I** could leave here and go to Elysium, to be with Vera. Oh, Jeez! That would be wonderful!

*Fatty leaps to his feet. He begins to pace excitedly in the sand. Everybody is now concerned about Fatty. They watch him from their seated positions as he paces.*

Seagull Don't be a ratbag, Fatty. Why, everyone there is an old fossil in their 70's. You wouldn't like that, would ya?

Fatty Yes, but Vera was about that age when she died. Look ... when yer **love** somebody, you --

*Seagull is now struck by a brilliant idea.*

Seagull Hold on! I reckon a **better** idea is to bring **her here!**

Fatty And how do we do that?

Cockie *roars with laughter* Kidnap and abduction! Grand idea, George, old boy.

Fatty *alarmed* But ... **kidnap??** Isn't that a bit drastic?

*By now, all the men are on their feet, keen as mustard to carry out the plan.*

Nuggett Don't worry, Fatty. She'll be apples.

Spud Does anyone know how to get into Elysium? Is there a trick to it?

Seagull My word there is! And by a happy coincidence, I know that trick.  
We have to go through a secret door in the Great Britain Hall.

*Seagull rubs his hands together gleefully, whilst the others (except for Fatty, who is uncertain) show their pleasure and excitement.*

*The following scenes change several times, since the boys will be moving from heaven to heaven, with consequent age changes.*

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene iii:** Running Into The Great Britain Hall By The Side Entrance.

*The music is swift, exciting and pacey. The boys run through twisting Dickensian corridors, passing surprised stage hands, as they make their way to a heavy, bolted STRICTLY NO ADMITTANCE door.*

Seagull                                      Christ! When did Beethoven die? Um ... oh, I remember.

*[Yells]*

26th of March, 1826.

*The bolts drop off, and the door opens by itself. The boys run into another labyrinthine corridor.*

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene iv:** Running along the corridor to Elysium.

*As the Australians run along the corridor, they age to mid-70s. At the end of the corridor, there is another big door, which they haul open. This takes them into the back stalls of a huge, very grand opera house.*

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene v:** The Grand Theatre In Elysium.

*We are confronted by a full symphony orchestra in bowtie and tails. The finale of Mahler's Titan is playing, and the conductor is very reminiscent of Leonard Bernstein: a commanding presence and a sweep of startling white hair. Old Vera is in the audience.*

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*The boys (now old men) trot up and down the aisles, looking for Old Vera and calling her name.*

Old Fatty                      Hear she is!! Fellows: she's here! Hello, Hon. Quick, come on! I'll explain later.

*Old Fatty scrambles over the surprised patrons and grabs Old Vera's arm. She does not resist but is evidently very surprised. The other Larrikins converge on Old Vera's row. They scurry her back to the door through which they came moments before.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene vi:** Running Along The Corridor From Elysium Back to Jazz Heaven.

*Back along the corridor run the Australian men and Vera, still in the guise of old people. The big door is completely impenetrable; they all try hard to get it open, but to no avail. Shouting "26th March 1826" does not help.*

Old Fatty *desperate*              Christ, boys! What do we do now?

Old Seagull                      Money for jam. We just have to make a slight detour through Musical Comedy.

*Old Seagull starts singing "Tea for Two" and doing a soft-shoe shuffle. He becomes breathless as he gasps for air.*

Old Seagull                      Come on, you old goats! Help me!

*The Old Larrikins and Old Vera join Old Seagull in a riotous performance of "Tea for Two". They try the door again. It slightly gives way. This partial success excites Old Seagull.*

Old Seagull                      More gusto, more dancing, louder and louder! Come on, youse lot, give it some **oomph!**

*They respond, even though they are panting for breath. They then try the door which suddenly swings open, and they all stagger through.*

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene vii:** Running Along The Corridor From Elysium Into Musical Comedy Heaven.

*Quickly, the Larrikins and Vera turn into child actors, of about 12 years old. Vera has plaits. They are all dressed in the play clothes of The Sound of Music's Von Trapp children.*

*Child Vera is now reluctant and starts crying. The lads lift her over their heads, as if she were a surfboard. She wails and screams.*

*The Child Larrikins really sprint along this corridor, with the screaming Child Vera overhead. They reach another solid door. This they open by using Child Vera as a battering ram. They burst immediately into the wings of the stage in Musical Comedy Heaven.*

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene viii:** The Stage Of The Rehearsal Hall In Musical Comedy Heaven.

*A group of child actors is rehearsing Guys & Dolls. The Child Larrikins (with Child Vera still screaming overhead) scramble their way through the melee of young racing types and their dolls, singing snippets from The Sound of Music as they go. The Child Larrikins cross from one side of this huge stage to the other. The rehearsal breaks into pandemonium.*

*Then the Child Larrikins & Child Vera lob against another solid door, where they bang, yell, kick and scream out any old Jazz number that they can think of. There is a resounding crash, whereupon they all fall face-down into the sand at the Bondi beach in Jazz Heaven.*



Fatty Tell me how this thing works. My early memories are that rotten people went to Hell, but good people rushed straight through the Pearly Gates. So murderers, conmen, crims ... they would spend Forever-After in a fiery Hell. But I come here and I find out that that's all wrong.

St Peter More or less.

Fatty What a slap in the face *that* is! So where's the Divine Justice?

St Peter There's Divine Justice.

Fatty Where?

St Peter Thomas, you will spend the rest of Eternity doing what you're doing now. Are you happy?

Fatty Yeah ... I 'spose so.

St Peter Then you're in Heaven.

Fatty But so are the rapists, the child molesters, the gangsters, the --

St Peter Yes, but *are they happy?*

Fatty How should *I* know?

St Peter God is a bit of a larrikin Himself, in many ways. "Heaven" to some is "Hell" to others. That's His little joke, you see. I mean, look what you guys are doing to Sir Alec Stokes-Brentley and his British cohorts from the Great Britain Hall.

*[Long thoughtful pause]*

The secret to getting on in Heaven is how you coped with Life.

The motto is: Scratch out a living. The best way you can.

Fatty Aw, what does *that* mean?

St Peter                   It means that you have to give Life a go and put your best efforts into it. Look for the bright things about Life, rather than the dull things.

Fatty *frustrated*       Christ that's twaddle! Where did yer get that from ... the back of a Weeties packet?

St Peter                   Yeah, it sounds corny, I know. God would have expressed it better. *[Pause]*

I guess ...

*Fatty cannot help but be impatient with the pause.*

Fatty                       Come on. Give me something. I'm in the mood to talk this thing through. Religion and Death and "what is the point to it all".

*St Peter looks out over the surf. He wants to say something, but the words will not come. He merely shakes his head.*

St Peter                   I gotta catch a wave.

*Fatty watches St Peter run into the surf and paddle out. Fatty looks frustrated. Then, looking around for an idea, he spots Vera paddling at the water's edge, and runs up to her.*

Fatty                       Shit! I'm bloody glad that you're here. We can pick up again where we --

Vera *awkwardly*       No we can't. No ... We can't ...

Fatty *surprised*       Yeah. Yeah, we can.

Eggs and bacon on toast for breakfast with tomato sauce. A nice pensioner special lunch at the Bowls Club and then off to the RSL for Happy Hour. Fish 'n' Chips on Friday night. And the usual barbeque with the rellies on the first Sunday of every month.

Vera                       Darl, I can't think what to say, without hurting you. But I want to

go back to Elysium.

Fatty As an old woman? Why? When you can be young here with me.

Vera *satirical* For the Happy Hour and the Red Onions Jazz Band re-union tour?

Fatty *lost* But I want you to be happy.

Vera Elysium is superb. Everyone is sophisticated and charming. Why not make a switch? You might enjoy it.

Fatty *appalled* I'm playing our music, with the greats of the Jazz era. You always loved my music.

Vera Not to my taste anymore.

Fatty Hang on a minute ... In my last days on Earth, I kept thinking of you, and how we'd be together again. Walking arm-in-arm along Slater Street. Me whistling and you smiling. Together for ever. Eternity.

Vera *sadly* And I was married for 54 years to a man who was totally devoted to his music. Now it's *my* turn.

Fatty What?

Vera Nothing is forever, even in Eternity.

Thomas, just think what would have happened if you'd remarried after my death parted us? And what if your second wife had died too? Which one of us would you be spending Eternity with?

Fatty *appalled* Aw, break it down! I was devastated by your death, and I never even *looked* at another woman.

Vera But do you see my point? You'd have to visit Country-and-Western Heaven if you want to see your Mother and your Father floats between the Gilbertians and British Music Hall. Nothing is set in concrete once you die. Your soul is free to follow its own bent.

Anyway, I'll be drowning in Mahler's music.

*Vera becomes awkward as she prepares to go. She mouths: "See you ..." Fatty reaches out to grab her arm*

Fatty                                      No ... don't' go.

*The background music stops. This is a rather touching moment. The pair are looking at each other, these two people who had loved each other for over 54 years, with the surf beach behind them.*

*Fatty's eyes and voice plead with Vera; his voice contains a moving catch.*

Fatty *in despair*                      Don't go.

Vera *heavy, shaken*                      Since I died, I've been sleeping with Thomas Arne. He was a composer from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We adore each other without reserve.

Fatty *appalled*                              Another man? But ... but he must be a really old geyser?

Vera    He died in 1778. But in Elysium, we're both 72 years old.

*[Laughs awkwardly]*

At least I stuck with a "Thomas". 'Bye.

*Vera kisses Fatty's cheek then slowly walks off. Fatty is gutted. He turns first this way and then that, trying to understand the parting.*

Fatty *angry*                                      Hell and the Devil!

*As Vera walks off, she strolls through the wave edges, head down. Fatty is confused and disappointed. The camera backs right off, so that we see both Fatty and Vera splitting up. Then completely breaking the mood, the footy bounces across the scene, and Jack bounds after it. Then, with Fatty still in the background, Jack runs back through the scene, with the footy.*

*An Irish tenor starts to sing. The camera moves around so that two of the gangsters (Lenny and Dino, Vasco's henchmen), can be seen striding along the beach towards Fatty. They are dressed as in earlier scene, in suits and hats. But they wear no shoes nor socks, and their trousers are rolled up.*

Dino Hey, new guy on da beach!

Fatty *surprised* Me?

Dino Hey! How d'ya say "Dere's a blind chicken in the corn" in Austrian?

Fatty I dunno. I'm not Austrian.

Dino But how would ya say it if you **WUZ** Austrian?

Fatty *lost* Wouldn't have a clue, mate. How do ya say: "I wanna fuck yer sister" in Israeli? No, mate, you'll have to work on it by yourself.

Dino Oh, a wise guy! Let me break `im in two.

*Dino manhandles Fatty aggressively. Fatty fights back with vigour.*

Lenny Nix on dat. Bud, we're lookin' for a bunch of Austrians dat are shakin' up Mr Brentley pretty bad. You seen dem bums around?

*Dino releases Fatty. Fatty gives Dino a speaking look.*

Fatty No, mate. I don't even know who Mr Brentley is.

Lenny He's a empire-asario dat manages da Grand England Hall and --

Dino Ever hoid of da Lambkins, dat play Jazz music?

Fatty No. Never.

Lenny Well, Mr Brentley's pretty sore. You just tell any Austrians dat you meet to keep lookin' over deir shoulders, see?

Dino See?

Fatty *amused* Yeah. Okay, mate, whatever you say.

*The gangsters go swiftly. Fatty watches them in awe. The football lands on Fatty's chest and he marks it neatly.*

Pete *voice-off* Over `ere, Fatty.

*Without consideration, Fatty kicks the ball.*

Squizzy *voice-off*            Good on ya, mate. Ta. Nice kick.

*Fatty is really cheesed off. To himself, he counts his grievances out on his fingers.*

Fatty                            My wife's being rooted by a composer who died over 300 years ago. And now I've got a bunch of whacko Chicago gangsters breathing down my neck.

St Peter, the custodian of Heaven, is wandering around dressed like a beach bum, and he wants me to edit a history book for him.

I wake up every morning in a flophouse but can't ever remember going to bed there. I'm in Heaven, but it's only for Jazz fans.

Furthermore, I'm always 26 years old.

*[Pause, huge shrug]*

If I'm **very lucky**, I'll wake up back in that nursing home in Double Bay, and that tarty nurse will have her big tits stuck in my face. Then I can have another go at this dying business and see if I can't get it right a second time.

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene xi:** Rehearsal at the Great Britain Hall

*Inside the Great Britain Hall, the Blackbottom Girls will be presenting "Varsity Drag"; they are in rehearsal. Alec is at the piano (on which rests Monty's Panama hat) to stage left. On top of the piano sits an overflowing ashtray. Alec smokes (using an ornate cigarette holder). His lips will clench over the cigarette holder in the manner of pianists.*

*Monty is in the flea-pit, directing, with megaphone in hand. Both Alec and Monty have removed their jackets and rolled up their sleeves. Alec has even gone so far as to wear green eye shade.*

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*The Larrikins are in drag, pretending to be Blackbottom Girls, as a jape. In fact, Fatty is the "mad woman" who has kissed Lord Stainford, in his guise as a showgirl.*

*As expected, the seating area is hardly lit. Gladys sits primly in a seat a few rows back, watching respectfully. Beside her is Archie, who tries not to look bored.*

*Music: Alec plays the piano, but not continuously through the scene. During the rumble, the Varsity Drag is played by a full jazz band.*

*Lord Stainford joins Gladys and Archie, sitting beside Archie. We see by His Lordship's expression that he is most perplexed and anxious.*

Gladys *somewhat shocked*                      My Lord Stainford! There's **lipstick** on your cheek!

Lord Stainford *very put out*                      Yes, blast it! Some woman or other stopped me as I stepped out of the Daimler. Told me that she was thrilled to death to meet a Peer of the Realm. And **then**, damn it, she **kissed** me!

*Gladys and Archie gasp in shock.*

Gladys                                      What a nerve! And what did you say to this ... this ... this femme fatale?

Lord Stainford *stiff upper-lip*                      Well, of course, I blathered about (stalling for time, y'know) and then sprinted into the Hall. Never been so terrified in my life! Er ... I mean ... death, naturally!

Archie *appalled*                              By Gad, that's quite shocking! Ought to be arrested! Can't have that kind of wild behaviour going on, you know.

Lord Stainford *nods*                              Quite.

Archie *very put out*                              I mean, here's a chap ... gets out of his Daimler, intending to saunter over to the Hall, minding's own business, and then anybody who feels like it can just fling themselves at him and ...

*[Snorts his disapproval]*

Sorry, old boy, but definitely **not cricket!**

Lord Stainford                      Quite. Absolutely right! Not cricket at all!

*Monty turns on his friends. He shouts at them via his megaphone.*

Monty                                      Begging your Lordship's pardon, but when you three have quite finished your utterly enthralling and **loud** conversation, perhaps we'll get on with our rehearsal.

*[Returning his focus to the stage]*

Now girls, again. And put your heart and soul into this number, will you?

Gladys *slightly*                      We weren't making that much racket, were we?

*affronted*

*[Cups hands around mouth and calls out to Monty]*

Stains has been **attacked** just now, outside the Hall!

*Monty turns back to the group of his friends, still using megaphone.*

Monty                                      Attacked?

Gladys *nods with*                      Assaulted by a mad woman. Right out there, on the footpath.  
*enthusiasm*

*The rehearsal has stopped. The girls group around front of stage, trying to see what the commotion is about. A few of the girls (the Larrikins) can be seen to be big and bulky; quite out of place among the sylph-like dancers. Monty makes no attempt to approach his friends but continues to bellow at them through the megaphone.*

Monty *to His Lordship*              Did you know her, Saltie?

*Monty is now the centre of attention, so rises to his feet and clears his throat. He delivers his response pompously.*

Lord Stainford                      Never seen the creature before in my life, Monty, dear boy.

Monty But could you identify her in a police line-up?

Lord Stainford *positive* I should rather think so. Largish sort of lass. Buxom.

Monty Well, I suppose that's all you can do about it.

*[Shrugs shoulders, loses interest, turns back to the stage and calls girls to order]*

Alright. Take it from the top. Sorry, ladies, about these incessant interruptions.

*The rehearsal resumes with Alec tickling the ivories. But by now the girls are too overwhelmed (with laughter at the Larrikins' antics) to be able to concentrate. The Australian boys are overdoing the "feminine, girlie" giggling and wiggling. His Lordship admits defeat.*

Lord Stainford That's all I can do, then.

*Still on his feet, somewhat abashed, Lord Stainford begins to lower his frame into the seat, when he is totally arrested. Half-seated he points a shaking finger towards the stage. He points directly at Fatty.*

Lord Stainford Why, there she is! Look! That's her ... that hussy there!  
*outraged*

*The Larrikins look ghastly. Whereas the girls are dancing in uniform lines, hands on the hips of the girl in front, the boys are being vulgar (with their hands on the breasts of the girls in front) and kicking their legs out of step with everyone else. Naturally, the girls are in gales of laughter, spoiling the rehearsal. Alec and Monty realise what is going on and begin to protest. Alec stands, looking about.*

Alec *shouts* What on Earth ... This is a rehearsal, not a knees-up. Girls! Girls!

*Monty puts his megaphone to one side. He is extremely angry.*

Monty Hi, there! What the devil do you think you're about? ***You're not chorus girls!***

*Seagull's imitation of a girl's voice is very poor. Seagull wriggles about in a lewd manner to the*

*hilarious laughter of the girls.*

Seagull Oh, but we've got "It", Mr Brentley.

Monty *confused* What did she call me? My name isn't ...

Hold everything! These aren't gals!

Why ... They're the Colonial rogues disguised as women trying to disrupt our practice. Be damned to you!

*Monty yells to the stagehands. He is beside himself with anger. But something must be done!*

Monty *in command* Throw these blighters out, for Goodness sake. Come on, chaps!  
Lay into `em!

*Monty comes after the Larrikins with his cane.*

Monty *fuming* You desperados are asking for a damn thrashing, by Gad!

*The chase is on, with the Larrikins running amok from the stage to the seats, over the seats, back on stage again and hiding amongst the Blackbottom girls. All the while our boys are chased by stagehands, Alec and Monty. The boys are very athletic and lead the Poms a merry dance. Bits of costume, female trappings, wigs and so on become dislodged or are removed throughout. It is alright though; they are wearing shorts underneath.*

*Suddenly, Fatty confronts Lord Stainford, who is totally confused. His Lordship rises to the occasion.*

Lord Stainford I say, Madam. This hoydenish behaviour is just not on, y'know.  
Bad tone. Frightfully sorry and all that, but there you are. Can't have --

*Fatty slugs Lord Stainford right in the nose and His Lordship reels back artistically, landing among the seats. Archie remains seated throughout, as if this spectacle is being staged for his benefit. He speaks to no-one in particular (as is his habit). Archie particularly admires the king hit.*

Archie Very neat punch. Good footwork, fine balance. Pretty boxer, that one.

*Gladys screams, and stands on the seat, swinging her handbag randomly at anyone who comes within range.*

*The chase goes on. Spud is serving back the diatribe to Monty.*

Spud *shouts*                    The gents from the rear stalls would like to point out to the hypocritical turds that are trying to run this show that the old Colonies became known as "The Lucky Country", while proud old Mother England went down the gurgler. So stick that in yer pipe, young Monty. And yer know just where you can stick yer bloody Empire ...

*Nuggett very neatly trips up one of the stagehands and Fatty (the only one doing any punching) lands another telling blow on someone else.*

Archie                            Ah, yes. Remember that chap. Saw him bowling yesterday against those Jamaican fellows. Good seamer. Very handy to have a bowler like that on the team.

*[Considers a moment]*

Wasn't wearing that war paint when I saw him on the field, however. But I'd recognize that ripping style anywhere.

*Lord Stainford is rousing himself. He sits, dabbing at his face with his fingers, as he sees the blood on them. He is horrified.*

Lord Stainford *appalled*    Great Zeus! My ... my claret is flowing!

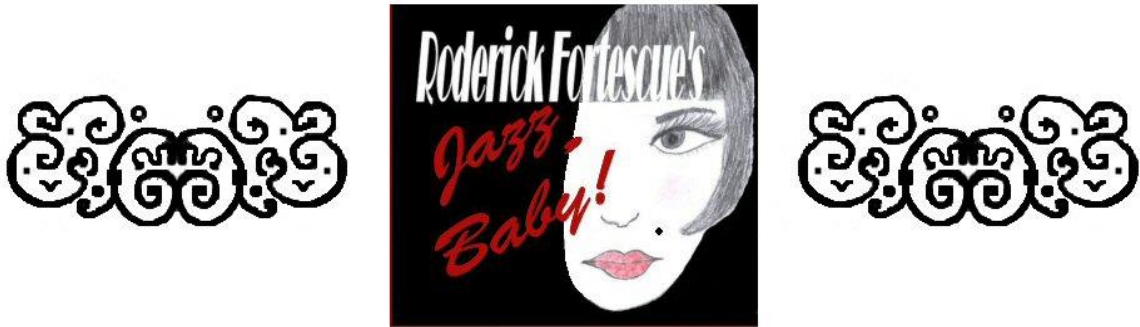
*Archie politely hands to Lord Stainford a neatly pressed hanky.*

Archie                            Take mine, old boy.

*The Larrikins leave in disarray, throwing some choice insults at the Brits as they go, along with obscene gestures. The girls on stage roll about laughing.*

*The music (orchestral) to Varsity Drag kicks-in: lively, spirited, toe-tapping and marvellous. The showgirls, with help from the stagehands (those still standing), begin to rehearse in earnest.*





## ACT IV

### IV, Scene i: Outside The Great Britain Hall

*With no music, we find ourselves in the neat, attractive small park outside the Great Britain Hall.*

*Still dressed appallingly as rehearsing showgirls, the Larrikins collapse onto the ground, completely dissolved in laughter. They try to talk but cannot get their words out because they are crying with laughter. Finally, they compose themselves.*

- Spud                                We have to celebrate that, gentlemen. Off to the pub to get Adrian Quist.
- Fatty                                You mean "Mendelssohn and Liszt".
- Seagull                             As a newt.
- Fatty                                Nix on that. I just remembered that I've got a book to edit. I'm going to call on those jive chaps. Slick Cool.
- Seagull                             St Peter's really got you by the short and curlies, has he?
- Fatty                                With hot pincers, mate. See you later.
- Spud                                Oi, do ya know where to go to find 'em?



*he is in a sumptuous meadow, complete with lilac and catkin. Walking up a rise, he comes to the homestead.*

*The house where Dizzy, of the band Slick Cool, lives. This is something from old Louisiana; huge trees, a cosy kitchen garden, a picket fence, chickens pecking about, and an old dog which trots out to greet Fatty, tail wagging. Just in camera shot is a 1920's style van (well-maintained), with "Wilson Furniture Removals" painted brightly on the side.*

*The house has a wide porch, with the traditional swing seat. Superb flowering climbers and vines growing up the uprights decorate this verandah. Note that the flywire door always opens with an annoying squeak and closes with an alarming bang.*

*The music continues as before. At first, the last strains of the ukulele/singing music from the previous scene are heard. Then we will switch to the music played by Slick Cool on the porch.*

*The last few steps are difficult. Fatty swings himself up onto the porch, where Chops and Vernon lounge about, not at all surprised to see him roll up.*

Chops                    I had a feelin' you was comin'.

Fatty                    G'day. G'day. Duty calls.

*Dizzy sticks his head around the flywire door.*

Dizzy                    Hey, Fatty. Welcome to my humble home.

*[To somebody inside the house]*

You there, Ferdie? There's a guy here wants to pick yo brains a piece. 'Bout the Good Times.

*Jellyroll Morton, wearing some flashy jewellery, comes through the fly-wire door onto the porch. He is a bit twitchy, and his eyes rove. He marches up to Fatty, brashly, and extends his hand. Fatty takes it.*

Vernon                    Thomas Short from Sydney, Australia, I'd like for you all to meet Ferdinand Joseph La Menthe.

Fatty Er, just call me Fatty. My friends all do.

*Jellyroll Morton has bright eyes to go with an arresting smile.*

Morton Hey, Fatty. And ma devotees, of whom I have many, call **me** Jellyroll Morton.

*Fatty's surprise is evident. The pair go to a table and sit side by side, with the book before them. Their conversation is hardly audible. We see that they talk, smile, frown, look puzzled, read the pages of the book. A large young woman serves them tea, gingerbread and flapjacks with syrup. Meanwhile, the members of Slick Cool open the French windows which lead onto the verandah and quickly get their instruments out onto the verandah. They play one of Morton's best-loved tunes.*

*While all this goes on, there are some girls in cheap cotton frocks, bare-foot, with lots of ribbons, flowers and plaits in their hair. They are picking beans in a cosy kitchen garden. They laugh and jig around, dancing to the music of Slick Cool.*

*Overlaying all this, a selection of sepia photographs from the book drift across the screen, fill the screen, and then move off screen. Every now and then, Morton commentates on the subject matter of the photographs.*

*The scene ends when the music ends. Fatty waves goodbye and heads back, with the book under his arm. Morton watches him go, hands in pockets, then he wanders over to the group, and pats Chops on the shoulder.*

END OF SCENE



always needed to be patted on the back and told how terrific he was. Got a chip on his shoulder the size of Texas. Never got rid of it, even in Heaven!

Edna I can't believe how lucky I am bein' here. I thought I was goin' to Hell ... nothin' surer! Every man I ever lived with bashed me up. I was a hopeless drunk, Tom. And lost everythin' on the pokies. Ended up old before me time, pushing around a pram that contained all me belongings. No home, yer see. Me children hated me and wouldn't come near me. Can't say I blamed 'em; they wuz ashamed of me. And I died when a car hit me as I staggered drunk from the footpath onto the road. Pretty shitty life, eh?

Fatty *appalled* Christ! I wish you'd let me know that you'd hit hard times. I could have helped you out with money and that. I never looked back when television started. I made a packet out of working behind the scenes as a musical director on a TV station. Got quite rich.

Edna Thanks anyway. I don't know how many people I bit for money in them days. And I always hated askin' friends. But ... Look at me now: young and well-dressed. I play golf once a week with some French girls and I eat lollies after dinner and me teeth don't rot. It's amazing, Tom. I'm a picture of health and clean-living.

*Spud plonks himself down next to Edna, his foul mood dissipating.*

Spud Ha! Yer dead! How the hell can you be healthy and live clean?

Edna You know what I mean, John.

*Fatty introduces a more cheerful note.*

Fatty Will you be at the Charleston party on Friday night, Edna? 'Cause if you are going, I'll book a dance with you.

Edna *looks doubtful* I might be there. Usually on Friday nights, I just walk down to the

park and stare at the palm trees.

*[Stands and extends a hand to Fatty]*

Goodbye, Tom. It was grand to catch up with you again.

*[Turns to the others]*

Goodbye everyone. See yers all later.

*General farewell to Edna, who wanders off.*

*Fatty to himself*                      Now that's what you'd call a troubled soul who's found peace at last. She's more of a lady than any of those girls around the traps. In life, people tossed her aside, but underneath, she was a genuine lady. And that side of her only came out in death.

Makes you think ...

Spud                                      What's that yer say?

Fatty                                      I say that men have always been arseholes when it comes to women. But I don't understand why ...

*Spud is fairly sick of the whole Edna business. He gives Fatty a sidelong look. Rising from his seat, Spud slaps his legs.*

Spud                                      Yeah, if you say so.

Well, chaps: do we require liquid refreshment? I could go for a coldie.

Fatty                                      Yeah, I'll --

Oh, shit! I almost forgot! I've got to get that history book right. Don't let me forget to take it with me to the Charleston party.

*Cockie laughs loudly as usual.*

Cockie                                    Now, Fatty ... reading is the very **last** thing you're going to do at





#### **IV, Scene v:** Revisit The Swells' Picnic

*The day is overcast. Under the spreading tree, the tables remain from the picnic of two days previous. They are still spread with the snowy linen cloths and covered with all the food, plates, drinks, cutlery and so on as previously seen. Nothing has been removed. Even a little dog cowers under a table, uncertain of his fate.*

*But there is now also an old upright player-piano, under the tree. Off to the right, the Melbourne boys are still wearing their footy togs. They have seconded several of the swells' picnic chairs. They have piled plates high with food and are hoeing-in voraciously.*

*Fatty sits on the piano with his feet dangling on or just above the keyboard. All the Larrikins are there, with the other four men scavenging this discarded feast. There is a lot of food and drink left, and nothing has gone off. They all have plenty of beer. Fatty has just poured himself a glass from a bottle atop the piano. He is working his way through a sheaf of notes.*

*For music, the piano plays by itself a selection of early jazz tunes. We can see the keys move. These must sound as if they were recorded in the '20s to get that authentic, scratchy sound.*

*Spud pulls his jacket tightly around him, shuddering. Meanwhile, Nuggett squats on the ground, snapping his fingers to coax the little dog to approach him.*

Nuggett                      Look! The swells left one of their little dawgs behind. Come `ere, little feller. Come `ere.

Spud *dirty on everyone*      Real beauts, aren't they? Yeah, I could believe they'd do that. Bloody bastards. Don't care about people, and don't care about animals.

*[Sarcastic, to the Melbourne boys, on the right]*

You're alright, though, aren't yuz. Got the chaff bags on, I see. Jeez ... Ned Kelly'll never die!

Squizzly *from afar*              Plenty left, ya nong.

*There is a bit of rude gesturing between the two groups. The Melbourne boys are concentrating on their food, however.*

Seagull *stroppy* Which ones of these flamin' sangers doesn't have sand chucked on it? Stone the crows, you're a mongrel, Spud.

*Nuggett continues to coax the dog.*

Nuggett I'm gunna call 'im Spinner.

Spud That's a crook name for a dog.

*[To Seagull]*

They've **all** got sand in 'em. I wanted those shiny-tails to break their teeth.

*Seagull pulls a face as he picks up and discards portions of food.*

Seagull Well, I'm not gunna break mine, I can tell ya.

Fatty Hey. Bit of shoosh, will you?

Now, I'm going to run through these corrections and see if I've missed anything.

Cockie This one's got corned beef in it.

*[To Seagull]*

Here, mate, give this one to Fatty. 'E likes corned beef ones.

*Without pause, Seagull swallows the sandwich whole. When he speaks, it is with difficulty.*

Seagull So do I.

Fatty You bastard! Save one for me!

*A large hand passes a plate of an unbelievable selection of food up to Fatty.*

Fatty *smiles* Thanks. Corned beef with the lot.

*The other Larrikins watch in awe as Fatty takes refreshment.*

Fatty                                Aw, I'm sick of this cloudy day rubbish! Sunshine, if you don't mind.

*With a snap of Fatty's fingers, the weather changes from overcast and gloomy, to bright, jolly sunshine. All the men, except for Fatty, look upwards in amazement. The Melbourne boys are making a move to go onto the beach and play kick to kick.*

Spud *in amazement*            Good on ya. What other tricks do ya do?

Fatty *triumphant*                Last night, I fucked a beautiful angel at least five times. (Let's see Thomas Arne achieve *that!*).

*No-one seems even remotely impressed with that feat. The conversation meanders on as before. The men are much more impressed by Fatty's ability to snap for better weather than in his sexual prowess. Cockie is in the mood to spin a yarn.*

Cockie                                Met a bloke up `ere. `E used to be a sax player in the Swing era. Only liked thunderstorms. Inspired `im, `e said.

Anyhow, this bloke sat on `is beach and played `is sax with this dirty great thunderhead cloud overhead, and rain beltin' down. Never had any sunshine. How do ya like that?

*Spud makes a face and shrugs. He is completely unimpressed.*

Spud                                    Bloody marvellous.

*Nevertheless, Nuggett (with the little dog now at his heels) is impressed.*

Nuggett                                Is that a fact?

Fatty                                    Alright, pay attention, or I'll thump the lot of you.

Spud                                    Listen to him! What's got up your nose?

Cockie *reasonable*                No ... Ya gotta respect a bloke who can summon-up the weather whenever he likes.

Spud                                    That's exactly what I mean, Cock. If he's so God-damn smart,

then what's he got to complain about?

Fatty *boiling over*

Fair suck of the saveloy! "What's up my nose", Spud?

I'm dead for starters, only I'm not really dead at all. I'm a fit, healthy, strong young man again, and all me bits seem to be in good working order.

Things are better here than they were on Earth, except that St Peter is giving me a hard time with his constant nagging about this effing book. Which is why I want a bit of shoosh so's I can concentrate.

Oh ... And I just found out that my old missus is rooting a bloke who died more than 300 years ago. Isn't that enough for starters?

Seagull

I haven't heard from my missus since 1922, so I reckon I'm having a purple patch of good luck.

Nuggett

Go on. I never knew you was married.

Seagull

'Er name was Joyce. Told me she was up the spout. Got married. She spent me money. Drove me stupid with 'er belly-achin', then pissed off with a sailor two years later.

*General laughter follows Seagull's announcement.*

Fatty

Okey-doke.

*Fatty calls his audience to order. Fatty takes a big breath. This is an important moment, as Fatty is summing up the corrected history of Jazz*

Fatty

This is the gen. According to Satchmo and all that push, Jazz was a cumulative effort based on ragtime, old Afro-American rhythms and cake-walks. But the main ingredient was improvisation. Then Jellyroll Morton put the rhythms and the main notes down in musical notes on paper. You could still improvise; but at least the basic tune was safely copied down, not just in someone's head.

That's how it started.

Cockie

So where did Rodney Frankfurter-face go wrong?

Fatty

Roderick? He is way off the beam. He has classical composers and trumpet-players as his heroes. Not a word written about pianists like Jellyroll Morton or the great bands.

And yet ... his book contains lots of photos and drawings of all the bands and groups ...

How could this twit have got it all so wrong?

I don't know ... Maybe someone stuck it up him, and this is a pay-back ... But how stupid would that be?

Spud

Did you ever get to meet Jellyroll?

Fatty

Sure did. I have had that immense pleasure. Yes.

Nuggett

How'd `e strike ya? What's `e like?

Fatty *slow, thoughtful*

Dunno. He sometimes strikes you as being furtive or secretive. Then you think he's really open and honest. He spent a lot of his youth as a pool hall hustler, of course. Bit of a card shark. Dunno what I thought of him ... maybe, a trickster? A rogue?

Seagull

He goes to Emile's place a good deal. But never plays. Just sits back and watches everyone. I've never spoken to him, in all this time.

*The footy bounces perilously into the fray, and everyone dodges it. Harry runs up to rescue the ball.*

Spud *annoyed*

Look out, you lunatic.

Harry

Sorry.

*Harry stands with the Larrikins, with the football tucked under his arm. He nods to Fatty.*

Harry

Couldn't help listen-in to what youse was saying. So, what I

wanna know is ... how did **youse** blokes get a leg up with yer music? What got you started into Jazz?

*The Larrikins are lost for an answer. They look from one to the other, then start mumbling more or less at the same time.*

Seagull	Cockie	Fatty	Spud
... someone's brother came back from America --	... Spud's Aunty Muriel had a player-piano and Spud got hold of music rolls from America --	... I heard this fabulous music on a gramophone record - -	... I think we heard somebody's records and decided we <b>had</b> to play that music.

*Everyone stops talking. They all look at Nuggett.*

Nuggett *nervous* Um ... Tuba. I was in a military band. Cadets. Played tuba. And then ... Gull tapped me on the shoulder. "D'ya wanna play yer tuba in a Jazz band?" he said. So, I said: "Yeah, why not?" But I never had a clue what Jazz was or that ...

That's how I got started ...

*The other Melbourne boys are singing out to Harry to hurry up with the ball.*

Harry *calls back* Righto! Er ... thanks. Cheerio.

*Harry runs off, bouncing the ball. Nuggett watches Harry, thoughtful.*

Nuggett *musing* I always thought we made it up ourselves.

*Fatty snaps the book shut.*

Fatty And we did! We were probably the first band in Sydney, you know. And definitely unique. Practising in the Haig Brothers garage; feeling natural with the sound. The Larrikins: we were

really hot!

*The camera backs off slowly. The little dog is seen wagging his tail next to Nuggett, and the foraging for food goes on. Fatty continues to drink beer atop the piano. The tinkling of the piano continued throughout that scene.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene vi:** The Charleston Party

*The Larrikins arrive at the mansion of Marshall Bilt in a borrowed jalopy, with Spinner the dog on board. Fatty drives. Strains of Jazz music can be heard as the boys career up the long drive. They hang out of the car, shouting drunkenly and waving beer bottles at the partygoers who are either in other cars, or walking up the drive.*

Cockie *calling out*            Tell Marshall that the Larrikins have arrived! Chill the beer and warm-up the women!

*The crowd of men in the car yell and laugh even louder. They are the equivalent of a happy group of football supporters whose team has won a big match.*

Inside the Bilt Mansion.

*Inside the mansion (note that the boys take the dog with them), there is a throng of wonderful party guests. Once again, everyone is 26 years of age.*

*An unidentified lady acts as hostess. Our roving camera moves-in to closely observe Fatty being introduced by this lady to some of the partygoers: an inventor, a mother-daughter outfit looking like twins, a fat, oily butcher, a rollicking group of "swells", some English twits, and some of the over-amorous Blackbottom girls. Fatty even reunites with his brother Teddy. The conversation is drowned-out by the music: we only hear scattered words.*

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Lord Stainford            We were as drunk as lords every Saturday night!

Gladys                      We had such fun in Londres, didn't we?

Monty *scornful*            This Bilt chap puts on these entertainments once a week, and we all pour through his doors, living the high life ... but really ...

Gladys *prim-mouthed*    Quite!

Alec                         Monty? England? Your favourite place?

Monty                        In fact, I adored Scotia rather than Angleterre. Fobbed myself off as a Highlander, in full costume with kilt, dirk, plaid, sporran and feather bonnet. Clan MacLeod. Spoke Gaelic with correct burr and drank all other comers under the table. Such effrontery, for I'd nary a drop of Scottish blood in my whole body. All Geordie, I was (though I took extravagant pains to conceal it).

                                  How crass we were in our youth!

*They sigh. Then they notice the Melbourne boys, plus Archie, playing kick to kick on the lawn. All these men are dressed to the nines. A couple of stray attendants are holding lanterns for them so that they have more light. Their voices, and encouragements to Archie, float up in vague drifts to the balcony.*

Gladys *shocked*            I was about to ask where Archie had got to ... and there he is on the lawn.

                                  What on **Earth** is Archie doing with those dreadful people? Good grief, Alec! Are there **more** Australians for you to exterminate?

Alec                         Those creatures are from Melbourne, which is another part of Terra Australis. Judging by popular report, one would have hoped that they would be more cultured than their Sydney counterparts ...

                                  But, alas.



*The camera (positioned up on the balcony) picks up the English people collecting Archie and making off with him. Archie turns to wave at the Melbourne boys, who return his wave. Now the camera moves-in, such that we are in the midst of the boys (Squizzie, Harry, Dixie, Pete and Jack).*

*There is a change in the background music. Now, Quebec Gaussons is singing/talking in his slow, sensual way, to a very smooth, down-beat tune.*

Pete                                    Hey! That French bloke is havin' a sing.

Jack                                    Never mind that snail-eater; do we have the hand thing?

*Dixie pats his jacket pocket.*

Dixie                                    Yeah, I got it.

Harry                                   And it'll work?

Dixie                                    Sure!

Squizzy                                And I've sent them off on a wild goose chase.

Pete                                    So we only have to wait until they get back and then ...

Dixie                                    Ka-boom!

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene vii:** The LaSalle Sedan Belonging To Irish

*The car is left-hand drive.*

*The camera is mounted where the hood ornament would be, pointing into the interior of the car. Irish drives. Dino sits in the front passenger seat. Spats and Lenny sit in the back seat. There is no conversation. All four men are dressed in suits, wear hats and chew gum.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene viii:** The Ballroom At Marshall Bilt's Mansion

*During the dancing, we stumble across Lord Stainford and Gladys, dancing together extremely correctly and with straight backs. Of course, everyone else is dancing the 2-step briskly and with swing.*

Lord Stainford                      Gladys. I ... will you marry me, my dear?

Gladys                                No, Lord Stainford. I won't. But thanks ever so for asking me.

Lord Stainford *hurt*                You won't marry me? Why ever not? Is there another fellow?

Gladys                                Oh, no. Nothing like that. It's just that we can't marry. The instant we were made One, death would part us. You know ... "Til death us do part". It can't be thought of.

Lord Stainford *stunned*        Gosh! You're right. Sorry, but I tend to forget the rules a trifle ... in the heat of the moment.

Then, would you consider ... em ... er ...

Gladys                                Do you mean coitus?

Lord Stainford                      Yes. Yes, I do mean that.

Gladys Or rather. I'd love to, My Lord.

Lord Stainford Really?

*[Trembling with delight]*

No, dash it all, Gladys. You've made me the very **happiest** of men.

*They continue to dance without any alteration in the stiff-backed style.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene ix:** The Drawing room At Bilt's

*Fatty has found his way to the drawing room. He pushes open the door, to see from behind a gentleman idly strumming the grand piano. Throughout, this man plays general jazz tunes, softly enough for us to hear the dialogue. The gentleman is dressed in full evening wear. It is St Peter.*

Fatty Aw, sorry. I was told that Scott ... I mean, that Mr Joplin was in here?

St Peter He was. I asked him to leave us alone.

Fatty It's you?

*Fatty approaches the piano and puts the book on it.*

Fatty I need to interview Scott Joplin so that I can finish the book. Remember? It's due in tomorrow.

*St Peter pushes a glass of champagne across the piano towards Fatty.*

St Peter Champers?

Fatty I'd rather have a beer.

*As St Peter does not respond, Fatty gives in.*

Fatty Oh, alright.

*Fatty takes the glass and drinks.*

St Peter You didn't believe that story that I pushed on you, did you?

Fatty About our Heaven caving in if Fortescue was wrong? Nah. Thought it was absolute twaddle. I just went along with it to get you off my back.

*There is an uncomfortable pause.*

St Peter All true, I'm afraid. That is, I was telling the absolute truth.

*[Another long pause]*

Unfortunately.

You may not know this, but during the High Middle Ages, the scholars in Europe became deeply immersed in the nature of the Godhead, of the Holy Ghost, of Transubstantiation. Life decidedly became a heavy welter. Which brought on St Peter's nervous breakdown.

Fatty What are you on about? You always told me that **you** were St Peter?

St Peter No, I'm not, as it turns out. That was a filthy lie. Sorry. *Mea culpa.*

St Peter is doing Country and Western for a while; to put his taste in music into perspective. Doesn't actually care for Jazz. Can you understand that?

Anyhow, at that time, I sent St P. down to Earth to sort the academics out. What should the silly bugger do but write a shonky history of Medieval Music which turned the whole of Travelling

Minstrel Heaven right on its head!

Fatty

Yes, Emile, a Froggie bloke I met, told me that one.

But hang on a minnie. If you're not St Peter, then you must be ...

Oh shit! You're not, are ya?

St Peter

Yes, I am He. The Holy Father. The Godhead.

I recall that I vented my anger against St P. via volcanoes, or famines, or something major.

*[Remembers]*

The black plague, that's right. I can't risk **ever** having that happen again. That proved one of my darker ideas.

*[Artistic shudder]*

Never to be repeated.

So, the point to all this is that I sent the Archangel Gabriel earthwards for a spot of R & R. He's unbelievably old and getting very frayed. "Bring back St Peter ... in chains if necessary" I told Gabie. "Righi-ho" he agreed. And off he toddled. Chief of the Angels: Righti-ho!

Blow me down if **he** didn't pen a doubtful volume on the origins of Jazz, under the penname of Roderick Fortescue.

*Fatty flops helplessly into a nearby chair.*

Fatty

My God!!! Oh, Jeez ... I mean. I'm sorry for blaspheming, but I'm overcome. Fortescue is an archangel on leave?

St Peter *nods*

And the most famous trumpet-player of all time to boot. So his bias in favour of horn-players as the creators of Jazz would have blown this place to the ends of the Universe. I could only ask a genuine trumpeter to edit that History, and so save our Heaven.

Hence, your commission.

Fatty

Well! ... I suppose it all sounds reasonable now.

Then, I never met St Peter, only You.

And the Archangel Gabriel is ...

So who's taking his place on bugle-duty?

St Peter

Satchmo. And a couple of others. Swing shift.

*[This with a wry smile]*

Fatty

And Scott Joplin? I'd better find him, so that the book --

St Peter

Ragtime. Yes, great music. But not Jazz. A precursor perhaps, but not Jazz. No, I think that your amendments to the opus "Jazz, Baby!" might suffice now.

Thank you. You've saved the day. And ...

Ah! I hear the opening strains of the Charleston. You'd better hit the dance floor, Fatty, and strut your stuff.

*Fatty is quite overcome. He rests his head in his hands, elbows on knees.*

Fatty

I can't possibly dance. I'm numb.

St Peter *kindly*

You can't visit Marshall Bilt's and not dance the Charleston, Fatty.

Go on. They're waiting for you.

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene x:** The LaSalle Sedan Belonging To Irish

*The camera is positioned as before. However, the car has stopped, with the engine running. All four men seem utterly calm.*

Dino                                      What did dat guy say?

Spats                                      Dat dey wuz here, at dis picnic area. He told me dat dey'd be here. And I believed him, 'cause he had a honest face.

*Irish reaches into the glovebox and extracts a folded poster. He hands this across to Dino. Dino unfolds the poster and holds it open. Spats and Lenny lean over the back of the front bench seat.*

*Dino points to the poster, which we now see is a rather amateurish representation of the Larrikins (advertising a 1920's gig at which they had played).*

Dino                                      Spats, is dis guy de one wit de "honest face"?

Spats *pointing, excited*      Yeah, yeah, Dino! Dat's de guy!

Lenny *pointing, excited*      And dem udder guys is dem Texans dat said dey wuz millionaires.

*There is silence. Irish takes back the poster, folds it and stows it once more in the glovebox. Spats and Lenny relax back into their seats. Irish looks at Dino who looks at Irish. Irish guns the car into life, then drops a loud, sliding U-turn, then speeds off into the night.*

END OF SCENE









*[Hands her the book]*

Give us a kiss before you go.

*A barrage of insults are aimed at the departing LaSalle sedan. Camera-shot moves to a nearby clump of bushes, behind which stand Alec and Monty, both ashen-faced. Monty is horror-stricken as he attempts to speak.*

Monty *gulps*                      Perhaps the Duke's island will provide a pleasurable sojourn, after all.

Alec                                      He invited us to visit him whenever the fancy took us.

Monty                                  I rather think that that time has come, dear boy.

Alec                                      Yes. Profoundly so. The fancy certainly has me by the testicles.

Monty                                  And the Hall?

Alec                                      Archie. Archie will run the Hall.

Monty                                  Archie?

Alec *firmly*                              Archie. And probably his new chums. I shall write to them, inviting their participation. And then we'll decamp.

END OF SCENE



Seagull                      What?

Spud                         Fatty hasn't played in a famous Sydney band known as the Larrikins, since 1928.

*There is agreement, and light laughter. One by one, the Larrikins pick up their instruments and (from the disparate notes that they play) Slater Street begins to take shape.*

*They belt out Slater Street, with the camera slowly moving back.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT IV

## **Roll Through The Credits**

*In sepia, the dancers at Roderick Fortescue's book launch. The dancing has resumed, but now it is to the Larrikin's version of Slater Street. Credits.*

END OF FILM

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