

ROBERT LECKIE INTERMEDIATE, GOOSE BAY

presents

PARADISE CAFE

CAST

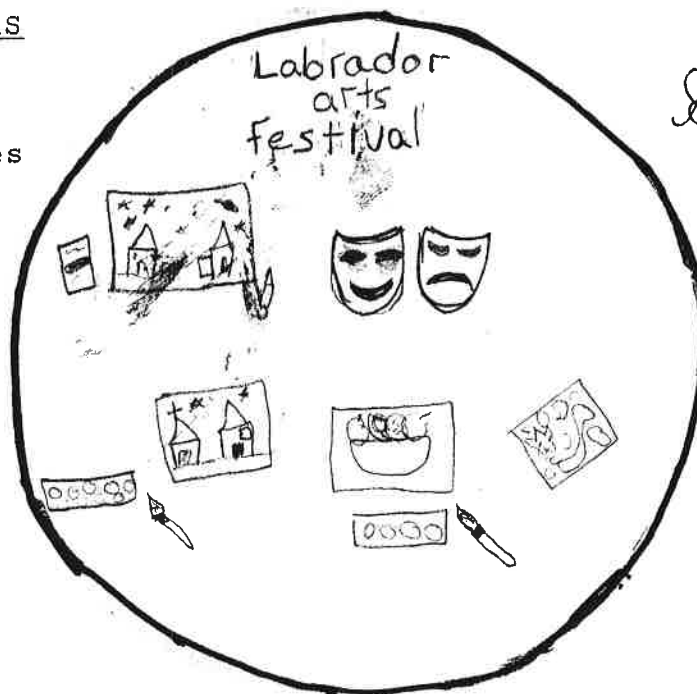
Kirk Sooley.....	Be-Bob
Adrienne Edmunds.....	Young Gladys
Dwayne Hopkins.....	Jim
Wendy Hicks.....	Old Gladys
Clint Meade.....	Real Estate Agent
Natalie Spurrell.....	Clarice
Blaine Anderson.....	Buddy
Michelle Chinn.....	Teenager
Rosie Winters.....	Teenager
Carla Oldford.....	Town Councillor
Fabien Pittman.....	Town Councillor
Sacha Woodward.....	Teenage Dancer
Susan Pardy.....	Teenage Dancer
Marjorie Gear.....	Teenage Dancer
Robin Bowers.....	Teenage Dancer
April Larkham.....	Cheerleader
Flora Dyson.....	Cheerleader

CREW

Shelly Pardy.....	Stage Manager
Keri Holwell.....	Props

TEACHER ADVISORS

Wendy Allen
Dorrie Brown
Mary Ellen Giles



Irin Coffey
Gr. 5
Eric B. Lambert

Paradise Cafe

SET. The "cafe" itself is set on the major part of the stage.
On the stage apron, the Real Estate Man and Old Gladys will speak, to coordinate the scenes.

SCENE 1 ("Paradise Cafe" sign shines on drawn stage-curtains)

Real Estate Man: (enters from side. Carries free-standing tripod, "FOR SALE" sign, hammer and nails. Sets tripod down, and begins to nail first nail into sign)

Gladys: (enters slowly. Studies man and sign. Looks long at cafe; back to sign). This place has such memories. It's a shame we have to part with it. I was here the day it opened -- I can't believe I'm here now, selling it. If it could talk, what stories it could tell....

R.E. Man: (turns, looks intently at Gladys, and listens...)

CURTAIN OPENS; "Paradise Cafe" sign shines against back wall. The cafe is a social club for armed forces personnel, stationed at Goose Air Base in the 1940's. Gladys and Clarice are young waitresses.

Gladys is clearing a table at the back of the stage. Clarice is serving at centre-stage, front. Round tables are filled with service personnel, chatting. Music is playing ("Big Band"):

Jim: (enters, with a buddy).

Clarice: (spies Jim. She pauses, while this registers with her; then rushes back to pull Gladys, who resists, to centre-stage. Gladys is confused, reluctant. Clarice is very animated).

Gladys: (protesting; ad lib) What? What're you doing? I gotta finish that that table. Clarice! Leave me alone. What'll people say?

Clarice: (continues to drag her along) C'mere! Nevermind. C'mere! I gotta tell ya -- he's here! He's here! He just came in!

Gladys: Who? What're you talking about? Who's here? C'mon, Clarice...Leave me alone. People are gonna see... They'll complain...

Clarice: You know, that guy...You know the one...

Gladys: What guy --- ?

Clarice: You know, that guy you were telling me about. The one that was sitting over at the corner table the other night, and was going through the records looking for _____, and he couldn't find it, and he came over and asked you if we had it....

Gladys: Ohh-- Ohh, him! Ohh -- no!

Clarice: ...and you told me about him -- 'bout how he talked just like Gary Cooper...

Gladys: Ohh, Clarice! Not him! Oh, no! I---

Clarice: Oh, yes!

Gladys: Oh, what'll I do? Clarice --

Clarice: You'll go and do the table, that's what you'll do!

Gladys: Oh, no -- I can't! I'm too nervous. I'll drop everything over him.

Clarice: Yes, you can! Don't be so silly. If you don't go now, you might not have another chance. It's perfect! Go on...

Gladys: No, Clarice. It's your table. I can't do that. I'll get in trouble.

Clarice: Nevermind that. Nobody'll know. I'll trade with you -- (she leaves abruptly, leaving Gladys no choice...)

Gladys: (stands perplexed; worried -- ad lib "approach-avoidance" --finally, she turns to the audience [which, in fact, represents 'the window' of the cafe, in which she sees her night-time reflection]. She smooths her hair, and pats her apron.. Then turns decidedly, takes a deep breath, and heads for Jim's table).

(approaching table, eyes down) Um...can I -- would you -- um...are you ready to oder? (pause)

Jim: (pauses; looks at buddy, as both register what Gladys has said. Both turn to her, exaggerated enunciation; raised eyebrows:)

Together: "O-DER"???

Gladys: (embarrassed) Oh -- oh, I mean order. Are you ready to order? (she shoots a glance towards Clarice; then again drops her head in embarrassment)

Buddy: (laughing, good-naturedly) Jim, didn't I tell you we shoulda showered b'fore we came in here? The girl thinks we stink!!...

Gladys: (embarrassed) Oh, no -- no, I don't. I mean -- I meant "order". Can I take your order? Oh, (Clarice!)

Jim: (rescuing her) Yeah, I'll order. I think I'll have a beer. You got any _____? How 'bout you, buddy?

Buddy: Make that two -- I'll join ya.

Gladys writes the order quickly; then leaves, moving to side-front of stage to prepare the order. Clarice eyes her; then rushes up.

Clarice: Well ---? How'd it go? What'd he say? Is he as cute as you thought? Well---? Well ---? C'mon...

Gladys. (busying herself very deliberately). Oh, Clarice, it was awful! I made such a fool of myself. I told you I shouldn't have done it. Why didn't you just keep your own table, like you were supposed to...?

Clarice: What's the matter? What happened? Did he--?

Gladys: I asked them did they want to "oder"?

Clarice: (laughing) You what??? (laughs) Oh, no, you didn't! "Oder"! How could you? (laughs)

Gladys: Oh, don't laugh, Clarice! It's not funny. I'm so embarassed. I can't go back there. They must think I'm some ignorant! I told you I shouldn't have done it. Now just look at what I've done...

Clarice: Don't be so worried! He probably thinks you're nice. You better take the order over to them, though, before they begin to wonder what happened to it.. Go on, it'll be alright. Go on, now... (gently pushing Gladys)

Gladys: (turning back to Clarice) You do it, Clarice! I can't. Really! I'm so embarassed. You'd do that for me, wouldn't you? Be a pal...

Clarice: Nope. Not a chance. I'm not the one who wants to marry him...

Gladys: (even more embarassed) Oh, Clarice! Who said anything about that? I just want to die! C'mon...

Clarice: Nope. Now, go on... go on...

(Gladys steels herself, working hard to seem in control. She carries the order over and sets it on the table; then turns quickly to leave)

Gladys: (setting glasses on table) Here's your order... (as she turns to leave, Jim stays her hand)

Jim: Wait a minute...not so fast. What's your name?

Gladys: Uhn... Gladys... my name's Gladys...

235

AUDIO immediately cuts in as lights fade: "...And do you, Gladys, take this man, Jim, to be your lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live?" (L.I. do "...")

FROM OFF-STAGE, someone throws a wedding bouquet, which Clarice can either catch, or let fall at her feet. (LIGHTS OUT)

(In black-out, remaining players remove '40's picture, replacing it with '50's one. Add juke-box, etc., and set for next scene.)

SPOT ON OLD GLADYS and REAL ESTATE MAN on apron. He is nailing in the second nail, and stops to look at Gladys as she speaks.

Gladys: Yeah, Clarice married a serviceman, too, but she went on back to the States with hers. Me and Jim, we stayed here. He liked it here. I went on working at the cafe for the first few years, while Jim was still in the Air Force. Then when he got out, we collected our pennies and put them together for a small down payment on the little place. It was hard work to make a go of it. And when the youngsters came along, well, even they were raised in this cafe. As they got older, it got even harder...

SCENE II.

(Cafe is empty, except for teen-aged daughter, Donna, who is dancing to the juke-box. When it falters, she kicks it to make it go again. She is supposed to be getting the place ready for customers...)

Gladys (off) Donna! Are the salt & pepper shakers all filled?

(Donna continues to dance. Music is loud).

Gladys. DONNA! Did you hear me? Are the salt & pepper shakers filled?

(Donna still either can't, or doesn't want to, hear. She goes on dancing).

Gladys. DONNA! (Gladys enters, carrying tray filled with serviettes and sugar for filling bowls on tables). Donna, turn that thing down! Did you hear what I asked you? Are the salt & pepper shakers filled? No! (sarcastically) Nevermind that, now that I'm here, I can see for myself....And now that I'm here, I might just as well do it myself -- you're not saving me any time or work. For goodness' sake, Donna.....

Donna. Mom...don't blow a gasket. I didn't even hear you!

Gladys. No, I'll say you didn't hear me. How could you? That music is only blaring! I daresay you wouldn't hear anything if work was involved. Donna, your father and me work awful hard here, day and night, to keep this place going. And what do you do to help?

236

Donna. I do! I'm getting your salt & pepper shakers...Relax, Mom, you were young once, too, remember. (unsure) Weren't you?

Gladys. I never had the chance to be young. When I was your age I was working in my Mom's kitchen, every day, morning to night. I was helping my father with the fish. I was helping to clean his catch, when he came home from hunting. I was helping with 7 younger brothers and sisters. And when I came here to Goose Bay, I was right away working out as a waitress in this very cafe, to help support my family!

Donna. Oh, Mom, I've heard all that before. But I don't live on the coast -- I don't have fish to clean...

Gladys. No more you don't. Maybe I should send you back there for awhile so you could learn to appreciate some of those things. Maybe you're growin' up too irresponsible!

Donna. Oh, come on, Mom -- this is the fifties! We don't have to work like that, now -- not here...

Gladys. No, perhaps you don't. But I do -- and I do need your help: here: ~~now:~~ with this little business of ours. In fact, I need you to waitress tonight, because Blanche has just called in sick.

Donna. What! Mom! This is teen night. All my friends are going to be here. I don't want to work tonight -- I want to dance! -- with them!

What about the sock hop? I can't dance if I have to work! Come on, Mom, I'll work any week-night for you -- really I will -- but not the week-ends. Please, Mom???

Gladys. What choice do I have? If Teen Nights are held here, we should be glad, but we also have to do the work that goes along with them.

Get out your uniform.....and your skates.....

....and, don't forget the salt & pepper shakers.

(this last line is tossed back over her shoulder, as Gladys resumes placing ketchup bottles on tables. Donna exits, "huffy" and somewhat pouting, to put on her uniform.)

(Teenagers begin to arrive in small groups and sit at tables, just as Gladys is finishing up.)

AD LIB. Teenagers call out greetings to one another; banter, joke, good-natured fooling around. Gladys talks briefly with some of them.

(Be-Bob enters; others call out to him. He joins a table, and calls out to Gladys:)

Be-Bob. Hey, Mrs. G. Where's Donna?

Donna. (entering, on skates; in uniform; disgusted and resigned)
Guess!

Gladys. Donna has to work tonight, Robert. Blanche is sick.

Donna. (disgusted) Mom, everybody calls him Be-Bob!

Be-Bob. Aw, that's o.k., Mrs. G. Not quite everybody -- my mom

still calls me "Bobby" -- and I can't^{even} tell you what my brother calls me! (he grins; Gladys eyes him undertainly)

Teen #1. (heading for juke-box) Hey, guys! What do you want to hear?

(Be-Bob wheels around and calls out):
Be-Bob. "Great Balls of Fire!" (mimicking Jerry Lee Lewis.

(others laugh, and cheer, but veto his selection. They call out other '50's selections:

-
-
-
-
-
-

(finally, they settle on "Rockin' Robin". MUSIC STARTS).

*choreography

(Donna looks on, while carrying out duties)

(Donna delivers hamburger orders, on skates, to the rhythm and beat of the song. As it draws to a close, "Rock Around the Clock" takes over. ALL get up, and join in a group dance, around the cafe. As song ends, they flop down in their chairs

Things soon are quiet again, and in the lull, someone starts to beat out "Bee-bop-a-lula" with his/her hand on the table. One-by-one others pick up the beat. Donna looks around, meaningfully. Others look at her, expectantly. Be-BoB, too, eyes her, hopefully, beckoning with his eyes

Donna suddenly sits down and quickly removes skates. Be-Bob heads for juke-box, and starts the song ("Be-bop...").

Donna and Be-Bob dance, with others gathering round in a half-circle, approving.

Before the song ends, Gladys enters. She goes to juke-box and pulls the plug. The dance stops. Everyone turns to look at her.

Gladys. (quietly) Donna.

Teens. (ad lib) Well, must be just about time for that movie. I guess we should be going now. Thanks, Mrs. G. ...etc. (they leave, as Gladys and Donna slowly move together at centre stage. They look at each other, without speaking.

Be-Bob is the last to leave. As he goes out the door, he pauses, and looks back over his shoulder.

Be-Bob. Be seein' ya...."Lu-Lah" (Donna looks at him just long enough to make eye contact and follow him out with her eyes; then she looks again at her mother. LIGHTS FADE.)

Change picture and set, as necessary.

SCENE III.

SPOT BACK ON APRON: Gladys and Real Estate Man.

Gladys. But the '70's, now, they brought a different kind of problem... At first, they seemed promising enough. The military weren't building so much anymore, but they were employing a lot of people. And there was a feeling of growth -- little Happy Valley was not just a construction camp built up around the Base. It was beginning to be a real little community, in its own right. It has schools, and churches, and its own hospital; a small library Those were the LinerBoard Days. Oh, yes, Joey had BIG plans for us then...

LIGHTS UP ON CAFE. Gladys is seated at a table, sketching renovations. Jim carries in a step-ladder, to begin working.

Gladys. Watch out for the table, there -- don't knock that bottle off! Careful, Jim, you're going to hook up on the table-leg!

Jim. No, I won't -- I'm alright. I know what I'm doing. What am I doing, Glad? You said you wanted to change a few things.

Gladys. Yeah, come here for a second, Jim, and see what I've got done, now. (he moves over to where she is working). I been thinking, if we moved this wall here (she points to sketches), we could expand the dining room, and make it into a proper sit-down place, you know what I mean? Now, we'd still need to add on, to make the kitch larger...

Jim. Things really are lookin' up, aren't they? I mean, whoever would a' thought, those years ago, that we'd be changin' this place like this now?

Gladys. Well, things change, Jim. Places, and people, and things -- all change. And if it's good, like now, well then, let's go along with it. We are doing good business now -- the accounts are all in the black; the deposits are goin' in real regular to the bank. We should use some of the money to fix the place up, now. Make it more modern, somehow. Like that old window, there, for instance.

Jim. Whatsa matter with "that old window"? I like it fine.

Gladys. It's fine, Jim...except that it's about 30 years old -- something the Americans (no offence, of course old dear!) [she grins at him] -- had left over. The casings are beginning to let the rain and wind through. Besides, it just looks like something left over from the war-years -- and the Base...

240

Jim. (grinning, and leaning over the table at her)...Like me?

Gladys. I didn't say that! (she protests, good-naturedly) You, I can't replace, but that old window, I can!

This place has come into its own -- surely, by now, it's time to call our little cafe "our own", too. Give it its own character...

Jim. "Character"? A cafe has character?

Gladys. Yeah - yeah, it does. Actually this one's had lots of character over the years -- and characters...

(Donna enters and immediately serves herself a coffee)

Donna. Hi! (Gladys and Jim stop talking; look at each other, and grin, knowingly) Hey! What're you smiling at? I'm not interrupting something important, am I? What're you two at now, anyway?

Gladys. Oh, I'm just trying to convince your father, here, that it's time to renovate, since business is finally looking up.

Donna. I've been telling you both that, for years!

Jim. O.K., Glad, so you don't like the window. What else?

Gladys. Well, the sign. Maybe we should change the sign, too. That lettering is something left over from Donna's "ponytails & pimple" days -

Donna. Mother! No, but you're right...

Jim. You're talkin' expensive...

Gladys. Jim! That's what I'm trying to tell you! This is not the War anymore. It's not even the struggle we had, to pay the mortgage. We've made it. We can afford to do something.. something.....different! We don't have to be satisfied just to paint over the old war-surplus clapboard. We can put new siding on, if we want.

Jim. Well, yeah, but...

Gladys. No buts, Jim. Don't be sentimental, now. It's time to move on -- look to the future, and all that.

Donna. Yeah, Dad.

(Gladys has a satisfied "so there!" look)

Donna. and Mother... (Gladys' face falls slightly; suspicious)

Gladys. What?

Donna. (fingering a menu, and laying it down on the table in front of Gladys) How about some pizza on the menu? Nobody in Goose Bay is selling it yet, but everybody's selling it on the outside.

Gladys. Yeah, well...I've thought of it, but...I don't know. I'm not sure I can make it.

Donna. Of course you can.. It's not hard. A bit of tomato sauce; some salami; some pepperoni....

Gladys. What's that?

Donna. Sausage, Mom. Just different kinds of sausage.

Gladys. Well, why didn't you say "sausage", then? You puttin' on airs, or what?

(Jim raises his eyebrows, looking over Gladys' head to Donna; they exchange knowing glances).

Jim (leaning over, beside Gladys' chair, takes one shoe off).

Gladys. (abruptly) What's the matter with you?

Jim. Oh, nothing. (he smiles, wryly, looking at Donna) I was just puttin' a shoe over on the other foot...

Gladys. You two are makin' fun of me...

Donna. No, we're not (she gives her a quick hug). Just helping you to keep up with the times (she grins). I gotta go -- you know how it is when you have teen-agers to keep up to... Happy Renovations!

Jim & Gladys. "Bye, now -- see you later.

Jim. (taking a chair beside Gladys) Before you get too carried away with your "renovations, now, what're you gonna do if the military really do pull out, like some people say they will? And what if the government doesn't come through with the bucks for the Linerboard operation? What're you gonna do if you got the window out, and one wall torn up, and the Labrador winter whistlin' through? Maybe you shouldn't build on promises and hopes...

Gladys. Jim, if we don't build on promises and hopes, then what can we ever build on?

(Jim gets up from the table, and sets his ladder up at the back of the stage. He begins to nail a board horizontally, as if to make a new window-fram. LIGHTS FADE, BUT NOT OUT. As he does,

242

AUDIO. (radio announcement) The American Air Force announced today that it will be pulling out of its Goose Bay operations in June of this year. The news is no surprise, as it had been rumoured for some time... (fade)....(volume up again).... Premier Frank Moores announced today that the Labrador Linerboard will close down its operation on.....(fade)...

11.

(As the AUDIO announcements play, Jim places the board diagonally across the "window" he was fixing, and begins to nail it in place. LIGHTS OUT). (FREEZE)

Change picture and set, as necessary.

SCENE IV.

SPOT ON APRON. Real Estate Agent picks up hammering action, frozen by Jim on main stage. Lights are dim in cafe. Workmen (in bib overalls) are miming the busy work of completing renovations, to low, fast-paced MILITARY MARCH MUSIC. ("Keystone Cops" idea, but not intended as particularly humorous -- just fast-paced, and busy)

Gladys.We didn't even try to sell in the '70's. 'Course no one would have bought it anyways. People were pretty depressed after the Americans left, . . . but then the '80's picked up again with the promise of NATO expansion and more military money coming back again...

MUSIC UP. LIGHTS UP. Workmen finish their renovations and exit.
MUSIC OFF.

Enter two businesspersons (Town Councillors) for coffee, to compare notes on what expansion might result).

Gladys passes by their table.

#1. Couple of coffees, Glad. (they settle at a table)

Gladys. You just comin' from the Council Meeting? (she serves coffee)

#2. Just stepped out, Glad. Just now.

Gladys. Good news? What's all the talk? Our town gonna burst its seams, or what?

#1. It could, Glad, it could. (she grins at them, and leaves)

#2. (leaning over his coffee toward his companion). What do you make of it all, boy? Sounds good, doesn't it?

#1. It does, if it all really happens. There's so much that's "iffy" in situations like this. But now, take that new hospital. That's something we need regardless, whether NATO comes through or not. We just don't have the facilities to meet the need we have right now -- nevermind with an influx of new people.

#2. You're right -- I agree with you. Even without military money, we'd have to do something about that. But even better for us, if someone else pays -- or helps pay -- the shot.

- #1. Can you imagine a population here like the one they're talkin' about? I mean, I know it's possible, but I've lived here all my life, and somehow, I just can't imagine it! 1500 housing units! A booming city, for crying out loud!
- #2. That's not all -- NATO's also talking about another 2000 buildings just for their own employees! It's big, boy, it's big. This is no small potatoes they're talking about
- #1. That Rec Centre would be something, too, eh? Swimming pool, bowling alley, theatre...
- #2. If our population boomed that much, we could get our own Arts & Culture Centre, too.
- #1. And CANEX would undoubtedly expand...
- #2. Oh, it would have to, yes...but don't forget the restricted entry. You won't be just percolating up the road to the Base whenever you please. You'll have the old Check-point to deal with...
- #1. Yeah, that's true, I keep forgetting. It's been open for so long...But other businesses would be popping up and expanding, too. Building supplies - Man! Can you imagine how much building would be happening if this thing comes on-stream?
- #2. That's right! And the Churchill Road would be finished. Maybe we couldn't go up on Base too easily, but we could sure get across to Churchill Falls, and Labrador City like we've never done before. Something we can't do now, without sacrificing a vehicle...
- #1. You're right, there! And that could be some long time coming, if we have to wait on the province to finish it...
- (Gladys returns, to fill their cups a second time)
- Gladys. More coffee for you, Councillors?
- #1. Sure, Gladys. We can afford it.
- Gladys. So, what do you think? Is NATO going to build here, or what? You boys should know all the answers, being on Town Council and all...
- #2, It's looking good, Gladys. It's looking good. Building permits are up 36% this year, already. And they seem to be increasing all the time.
- #1, And all those new building lots were boggled up right away. People were lined up at 5:00 in the morning, waiting to buy them!
- Gladys. Not true! Is it? I tell ya...

#2. Yes, Glad, in all the years I've lived here -- and that's my whole life, as you well know, -- this is the most promising time I've seen...

Gladys. Yes, you're right. I've been around here some long time myself, and I can honestly say that this is the best time I've seen yet. I know it's not all signed and delivered, but everything seems to point that way...

My own little cafe, here, for instance. Well, just look at it! It's not just "a little cafe" -- it's a proper restaurant! Sometimes I think I've been to hell and back with it -- up one day and down the next -- and it's been my whole life. You could almost say my six kids were born between pouring coffee and filling shakers. But in spite of everything, it's had the same name -- and the right name throughout. Hell? Yes. But Paradise, too. Just like Goose Bay...

#1. (shaking head, approvingly) Yes, Glad, it's lookin' good, girl, it's lookin' real good!

LIGHTS FADE AND OUT.

SPOT ON APRON. Real Estate Agent nails last nail.

Gladys. I did build one more time on hopes and dreams, I guess. But that's the last time. I can't keep doin' that forever -- not that I wouldn't want to, but I guess I just don't have the energy anymore, and maybe not the time, neither. --specially when it don't seem to work out.

I can't say I'm sorry that I tried. And I can't say I'd want others to stop tryin' Somebody's got to.

But it won't be me anymore... (she looks at the cafe; Real Estate Agent looks at her)

Donna (entering) Oh, there you are! Dad said he thought I might find you down here. (she stops, realizing that her energy is somehow inappropriate to her mother's mood. They look at each other, and then at cafe. Donna takes Gladys by the elbow and gently begins to lead her across the stage) C'mon Mom. I'll take you home now. Be-Bob's waiting in the car. (Gladys smiles at her, appreciatively, but her reverie is still apparent).

(They go off. Real Estate Agent moves finished sign to centre stage, and goes off. Paradise Cafe sign goes out. SPOT on FOR SALE sign.

BUYER enters briskly. Stops at sign. Studies it; then cafe. Rubs chin, considering the purchase possibilities. Optimistic look on face: nods, smiles to self, giving it some thought. Heads off, confidently.)

LIGHTS OUT.