

A WOMAN'S PLACE

by Menihek Drama

February 1990

Characters

Krista Harris	Rose - a 22 year old orphan in the Nfld. signal corps.
Christa Freake	Trixie - a 22 year old orphan in the signal corps.
Lisa Ivany	Ruby - Rose's 13 year old sister
Lorena Efford	Trish - Trixie's 17 year old sister
Sheila Fry	Trixie's Mom
Deanna Hepditch	Lizzie - Rose's friend
Wendy Chambers	A nurse (Sc. 6) and a German fraulein (Sc. 11)
Angela Welshman	Sailor and trombone
Sandra Head	Sailor and saxophone
Donna Simpson	Sailor and piano
Gena Vey	Sailor and saxophone

Scene 1 - A bare stage with some large cloths spread over the props that are used throughout the show. Wendy, Krista, Christa, Sheila, Donna, Sandra and Angela walk across the stage, down the stairs, out the door and circle back behind the stage beginning the cycle again, so that they achieve the effect of people walking by.

Deanna, Lisa, Lorena and Gena stand in the theatre as the house lights dim. They are dressed as 1940's paper carriers with salt and pepper hats and suspenders.

Deanna: Extra, Extra.

Lisa: Read all about it.

All 4: Extra, Extra, Read all about it.

Deanna: Hitler annexes Austria.

Lorena: Chamberlain follows policy of appeasement.

Gena: Get your papers here.

Lisa: Only 5 cents.

All 4: Extra, Extra.

Deanna & Lisa: Queen Beatrix escapes Holland for England.

Gena & Lorena: Royal Nfld. Regiment enlists hundreds.

All 4: Extra!

Lorena: Panzer division captures northern France.

Deanna: French underground members executed.

Lisa: Division rescued from Dunkirk.

Gena: Churchill leads England in her darkest hour. (The theatre is now bathed in a red glow and the characters who were acting as passers-by freeze on stage. During the Churchill speech the newspaper kids move to the stage removing their hats and suspenders.

Churchill: (A telegraph sound can be heard.)

Deanna: Dateline Rome. Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini announced a military treaty today with Hitler making Italy an ally to that villain's madness.

Gena: Dateline, Dec. 8, 1941. American forces are now actively involved against the Nazi dictator augmenting earlier financial assistance programs. God willing, the war will end by spring.

Lorena: Dateline, Sept. 5, 1942, Bell Island. Today the Saguenav, a ship of British registry laden with iron ore, that raw material of war, was sunk by a Nazi u-boat. 43 men had their lives snuffed out. As another ore boat struggled to assist, she too was struck and sank in 90 seconds. Fortunately, none of her crew were lost.

(A chant begins, very slowly and disportely, but grows stronger and together over Lisa's speech and the seconds that follow).

Lisa: Dateline Newfoundland. Merchant marine numbers grow as Prime Minister Churchill calls on Newfoundlanders, the best small boat people in the world, for their help.

All:best small boat people in the world...in the world, in the world, in the world, in the world. (Blackout).

Lisa: (A lone voice as the lights fade) When sun rays crown thy pine clad hills, and summer spreads her hand.

All: Silvern voices tune thy rills, we love thee smiling land - God (they stop. Trixie, Wendy, Angela, Sandra, and Rose exit with military precision. Rose gets her trumpet. The remainder sing.) God save our gracious King, long live our noble King, God save our King. Rule Brittania, Brittania rules the waves. We, never, never, never shall be slaves. (They exit. Deanna and Lorena go to follow spots at back of theatre. Sheila, Donna, and Gena remain. They are dressed in berets and long black coats.) They sing: Le Marseille.

(There is the sound of an air raid siren. They stop singing and freeze. Angela and Sandra run in dressed in sailor suits with swastikas on their arms. They line the berets against an imaginary wall and shoot them. They have a smoke. They freeze while Krista plays the Last Post. She stops. A blackout. Two follow spots follow Wendy center stage who is dressed for a nightclub. With a plunger mute Krista plays and Wendy sings Bel Mir Betdu Schoen. At the end Wendy exits with the 2 sailors but on her way out we hear the voice of Hitler. Wendy and sailors freeze, turn and come down center).

All: Zeig Heil...Zeig Heil. (It builds to a chant and a blackout. There is silence for a moment and then in the distance the sound of the ocean.)

Scene 2 - It is a foggy night. A fog horn blows and the crash of waves can be heard. Rose is crouched in a bunker with binoculars. Trixie creeps up behind her and scares her.

Trixie: Boo!

Rose: What are you doing?

Trixie: I just came down to see you.

Rose: Well, it's not funny.

Trixie: Yes it is.

Rose: No it's not. You can't do that.

Trixie: I don't get to see you much any more.

Rose: I'm working.

Trixie: It's quarter to eight. The shift in the other bunker is changing.

Rose: I don't believe you. Is it really quarter to eight. (She looks at Trixie's watch.) Oh.

Trixie: I even brought you a donut.

Rose: Thank you. You don't realize how important my job is. I can't talk to you when I'm working. I have to keep watch. That's what the signal corps is all about. You know a ship filled with iron ore went down last week at Bell Island. I was there.

Trixie: Tell me about it.

Rose: I was sittin' there and all of a sudden we heard this great big explosion. The ship burst into flames. You could see the sailors running in a panic. It was horrifying.

Trixie: Were you on watch?

Rose: No, Margaret was. She felt bad too. I mean, you can't help it. I know she was watching but that's the thing about German subs - if they don't have their conning tower up you can't see them.

Trixie: Were there any survivors?

Rose: A few. There was this one big buck negro from west Africa who made it to shore. They gave him a drink of raw whisky and as soon as it hit his heart he died.

Trixie: I guess he wasn't used to that.

Rose: Negroes? They all drink like fish.

Trixie: Sure there are people around here with a flask hidden in their jacket.

Rose: Well, they don't drink as much as negroes. What do you know anyway?

Trixie: I don't get it. You're Salvation Army.

Rose: So?

Trixie: Well, don't you believe that all people are equal?

Rose: We believe that "the scriptures of the old and new testaments were given by the inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice."

Trixie: What's that supposed to mean? I don't get it.

Rose: Negroes are Canaanites. They are the Christian's slaves.

Trixie: I don't get it.

Rose: Negroes and Canaanites. They are the Christian's slaves.

Trixie: No church would ever believe that. Don't you believe that you should love your brother as yourself?!

Rose: I only know what the old testament says.

Trixie: (While they turn away from each other, Trixie takes Rose's donut and Rose takes Trixie's coffee). Well, I only know what the new testament says.

Rose: Where's my donut?

Trixie: You ate it.

Rose: I didn't touch it yet. Where's my donut? We don't have much time. Give me my donut, Trixie.

Trixie: Here. You're not going to eat it. All that fuss and you're not going to eat it? Fine, I'll eat it. (She eats it). Where's my coffee?

Rose: I don't know.

Trixie: You're just doing that to get me back.

Rose: I wouldn't do that.

Trixie: Where is my coffee?

Rose: I didn't touch your coffee. You took it. It's probably over there on some rock. Why would I take it, you like your coffee black.

Trixie: ...and you wouldn't like that, would you? Can I just have it please?

Rose: Why?

Trixie: It's not the coffee - it's the cup. It's a special cup.

Rose: (Mocking.) It's a special cup. What about it?

Trixie: Trish gave it to me.

Rose: I thought you didn't get along.

Trixie: Rose, she's my sister. Just before my parents died, Mom gave it to her, and she gave the cup to me.

Rose: Here's your cup. (She pulls it from a nook in the rock and holds it overhead.) Do you really want it?

Trixie: Rose!

Rose: Well, come and get it. (Trixie chases Rose and Rose falls across a rock spilling hot coffee. She screams a little, then Rose is up and running until she runs to the top of a rock on the extreme downstage side, overlooking the audience and an imaginary ocean. The sound the waves increases).

Trixie: Rose, get down.

Rose: (sing-songy) Come and get it.

Trixie: You'll slip.

Rose: Are you scared?

Trixie: Rose - look out for the waves.

Rose: I've been out here before. Haven't you?

Trixie: A soldier got washed away there last week.

Rose: Trixie...

Trixie: Rose. LOOK OUT!

Rose: Oh my God!

Trixie: ROSE! (Trixie grabs Rose and pulls her back to stage level as the cup drops to the floor below and as sounds of waves rises and then falls.) You could have been killed. Why don't you listen to me.

Rose: Your cup.

Trixie: This wouldn't have happened if you listened.

Rose: Your cup, I'm so sorry.

Trixie: Forget it.

Rose: But it was special to you. I know how these things can be.

Trixie: Just forget it, okay?

Rose: But, when my parents died I had something like that. I know it won't be the same but I'll get you a new one.

Trixie: (She walks back to the bunker and picks up Rose's binoculars.) How do you work these?

Rose: You're in signal corps. You know.

Trixie: But we don't use them in the command bunker. I just send messages.

Rose: Well, look out - no, not at me - out there.

Trixie: What do you look for?

Rose: German ships, planes, anything that looks funny.

Trixie: (Looks at Rose again.) You're funny.

Rose: Ha, ha...maybe the conning tower of a submarine.

Trixie: You mean those things that stick out of the water?

Rose: Yeah.

Trixie: (Very excited.) There's one right there. Look, see, right there.

Rose: Really! Wait a second...(she moves a nail on the top of the bunker) Is it gone?

Trixie: Yeah.

Rose: Is it back?

Trixie: I see it again. Look, look!

Rose: Trixie, calm down.

Trixie: But...

Rose: Trixie, it's just this nail. Look through them this way. (Rose turns the binoculars around so you can see properly.)

Trixie: Oh. (She takes a letter out of her coat.) Did you hear about this?

Rose: What?

Trixie: (reading from the letter) To all base commanders in the North American command. The Andrew's sisters are about to begin a USO tour of Europe to keep up the spirits of our fighting men. As a part of the tour they will also visit select bases in the North American command as well. In order to maintain community support and to promote the sales of victory bonds, they will invite local civilians to play with the band at each stop on the tour. Below the process for auditioning is outlined...

Rose: I told you last week I didn't want to do it.

Trixie: But I need your help.

Rose: Why?

Trixie: Because you're a good trumpet player and you'll know about everything that they'll need.

Rose: You play.

Trixie: I'm not as good as you are.

Rose: So?

Trixie: You're just chicken.

Rose: I am not.

Trixie: You are so.

Rose: I am not. You said the auditions were supposed to be at officer's club.

Trixie: So?

Rose: I'm Salvation Army. I wouldn't go in there.

Trixie: But that's just the audition. The concert will be in the park. Please?

Rose: No.

Trixie: Is it because work takes u p too much time.

Rose: Takin' care of my sister takes up all my time.

Trixie: But I take care of Trish and I've got time to do it.

Rose: But I take better care of Ruby than you do of Trish.

Trixie: Trish is old enough to take care of herself.

Rose: It doesn't mean you have to desert her.

Trixie: That's not the issue. Will you help or not... Ok, I lied to try and get you to help. I don't need your help. I'm a better clarinet player than you are a trumpet player anyway.

Rose: No way.

Trixie: Yes, I am.

Rose: I could play with the band if I wanted.

Trixie: Then prove it.

Rose: Ok, fine, I will.

Trixie: Deal? (they shake)

Rose: Fine.

Trixie: I better get out of here. I got to get home and check up on Trish. Bye.

Rose: Start practicing.

Sound of waves comes up. As they fade we hear TRISH practicing "Boogey Woogie Bugle Band".

Scene 3

Trixie: (Enters) What are you doing?

Trish: Practicing.

Trixie: All day?

Trish: Oh, I went over to Joan's and we chatted for a while.

Trixie: Chatted about what?

Trish: You know, girl stuff.

Trixie: I'm a girl.

Trish: Well, it's just that Joan is mad at her mom.

Trixie: Why?

Trish: Because she won't let her go to the concert.

Trixie: What concert.

Trish: You know, the Patti Andrews concert.

Trixie: How did you know about that?

Trish: Joan wanted to try out but her mom wouldn't let her. then I thought I would try out. Would you let me?

Trixie: You're seventeen. Suit yourself.

Trish: Alright. So, did you get your ironing done?

Trixie: This morning.

Trish: What about my skirt?

Trixie: What about your skirt?

Trish: Did you put the hem on it?

Trixie: I had more important things to do.

Trish: But, I told you, I needed it for tonight.

Trixie: You were out all afternoon, if you wanted it that bad you should have stayed home and done it yourself.

Trish: I can't sew!

Trixie: It's about time you learned.

Trish: Forget it.

Trixie: Something wrong?

Trish: No.

Trixie: Looks like something's wrong.

Trish: Well, actually there is.

Trixie: Oh?

Trish: Yeah, when you were seventeen, did you ever have a relationship with a guys.

Trixie: Mom was always against me dating.

Trish: Well, there's this guy...

Trixie: So?

Trish: Don't you even want to know about him?

Trixie: Not really.

Trish: You're my sister. You're supposed to take care of me.

Trixie: Take care of yourself.

Trish: Suppose he asked me to go back to his ship with him.

Trixie: What do you want me to say?

Trish: I want you to say "no"! I want you to make my decisions.

Trixie: I can't make your decisions!

Trish: I'm only seventeen! I can't make them myself!

Trixie: When I was seventeen, I had to make all of the decisions.

(A flute plays "Early Autumn" from upstage.)

Mom: Trixie?

Trish: Just cause you had to don't mean I got to.

Trixie: Well, Mom left us in a fine mess didn't she. After she died I had no one to turn to.

Mom: Trixie, I'm you're mother. Come here right now.

Trixie: I was only seventeen.

Mom: You're seventeen, you can do better than this. The place is a mess. Sweep the floor.

Trixie: I asked Trish to do it.

Mom: She's only 13.

Trixie: I had to look after a 13 year old.

Trish: I want you to be my mother.

Trixie: (To Mom) I'm not her mother.

Mom: I've had responsibilities put on me that I've put on you! Can't you keep track of a little thirteen year old?

Trixie: She's not a baby! If it was so simple, how come you couldn't do it?

Mom: I'm at work all day! I don't have time to do all this! I put my responsibility on you!

Trixie: Well, maybe Lorene should have some of my responsibilities.

Mom: Christa!

Trish: Mom, I'm home.

Mom: Where were you?

Trish: I was over to Joan's playing hopscotch.

Mom: Did you have fun?

Trish: Yah, I did.

Mom: It's a nice day for hopscotch.

Trish: Uh-uh.

Mom: Did you win?

Trish: Of course.

Mom: Of course, you're Mom's little girl.

Trish: Yah. How was your day at work?

Mom: It was ok.

Trish: I wish you didn't have to work, I miss having you around. Everything's changed.

Mom: I'm sorry, but a lot changed since we lost your father. I remember when your father used to come home from work and see you kids playing on the floor, he would rip off his jacket, run over, and throw you in the air with a big 'ole bear hug. So, you asked me how my day was, my typical day, get you up in the morning, send you off to school, do simple chores around the house, and make supper. But, it made me happy. I was always happy. Your father used to have a nasty habit of leaving his tools all around the house. Sometimes I wish I could trip up over some of his tools. But things change, and we have to learn to change along with it.

Trish: I don't want things to change, ever.

Mom: I don't want things to change either.

Trixie: But, things are changing, and especially to me!

Mom: I don't know what the future's going to be like! There are lots of opportunities out there!

Trixie: I don't know what I want to be! I need you there to decide with me.

Mom: I can't decide for you, you've got your whole life ahead of you! I can't make your decisions for you, I'm not going to be here forever.

Scene 4 - A bar. Rose and Trixie are getting ready for the audition by setting up stands, etc.

Trixie: ..."I'm not going to be here forever". That's the last thing she told me. Maybe it's my fault.

(The flute stops.)

Rose: Sure it's your fault. Like you never did a thing to help your mother, did you? You never did the dishes when she asked you, did you?

Trixie: I did.

Rose: You never made your bed.

Trixie: I did.

Rose: You never looked after Trish.

Trixie: I did.

Rose: So what's the problem?

Trixie: Didn't you ever feel guilty?

Rose: Not over the death of my folks but, I guess I feel guilty all the time. It's the war you know. Maybe I could do more.

Trixie: You have a great relationship with Ruby - you're active in the Salvation Army. What more could you do?

Rose: There you go. You just proved my point. If I shouldn't feel guilty because I can't do any more for the war effort, then why should you feel guilty that you can't do any more for your folks. They're dead, Trixie - bury them.

Trixie: (Turning away.) What about this tune?

Rose: No, no, no. Don't change the subject, I'm right.

Trixie: Ok, you're right.

Rose: So, say it. You shouldn't feel guilty.

Trixie: You shouldn't feel guilty.

Rose: Not me - you.

Trixie: What about this tune? I can't play it.

Rose: What's the problem?

Trixie: The rhythm.

Rose: Have you practised it?

Trixie: Kind of.

Rose: Well, you gotta tap your foot. (Rose taps and they sing I'se the By'.) Got it?

Trixie: That's 4-4. This is 3-4.

Rose: Ok. (She sings I'se the By' again in 3-4 and counts). 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3.

Trixie: I got it.

Rose: So tap it. (Trixie tries to tap but can't). No - you gotta count. We'll skate ok? (They begin to skate around.) 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3.

Trixie: I've never been on skates before. (She falls.) See, this is not helping.

Rose. Get up.

Trixie: Nothing is going to work.

Rose: Ok. We'll dance. Pretend I'm a handsome American soldier. I'll lead. I'll get up on my tippy toes. (Rose begins to hum the Blue Danube waltz). Hmm hmm hmm
hmm hmm.

Trixie: Plink, plink, plink, plink. Didn't you say you were handsome.

Rose: I am handsome.

Trixie: You're the ugliest soldier I ever saw.

Rose: I'm a gorgeous American soldier.

Trixie: You don't have a mustache - you're not my type.

Rose: I do now. (holding a comb beneath her nose)

Trixie: Kiss me you fool.

Rose: I knew that was coming.

Trixie: I love you.

Rose: You lost me now. (Trixie chases Rose. They run to each other, as if in a field.) Now do you get it?

Trixie: Is it like this? (she dances)

Rose: That's 4-4.

Trixie: Is it like this?

Rose: That's 2-4.

Trixie: How about this?

Rose: Yes. You got it.

Trixie: I GOT IT. I GOT IT. Now let's dance.

Rose: and I am the American soldier. (They dance)

Trixie: ...and we dip.

Rose: The only dip is you. (Trixie dips rose and lets her fall on the floor.) Get me up. What happens if the Captain comes in. This is not respectable to the uniform.

Trixie: (Mocking the captain) Attention. Nice shoes Rose. Your hair is well groomed.

Rose: Yours is too, sir. What's left of it. Looks as if you may have been on Signal Hill.

Trixie: Is there anything wrong with your lips, Rose? Do you want to kiss me?

Rose: No, sir, I just talk like this.

Trixie: The floor's not very shiny.

Rose: Maybe we should use the same polish you use on your head.

Trixie: I used it all last week and the women just loved me. Huh, huh, huh. Who do you think will be at the audition?

Rose: Well...the string bass guy who taps his foot.

Trixie: And the tuba player with the puffy cheeks. Did I read all of the letter to you?

Rose: What's that supposed to mean?

Trixie: Well, it says in here that (she reads) the purpose of the auditions is to select civilians or military personnel to perform with the Andrews sisters in their respective communities. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the band will also select 5 players from the North American tour to accompany the Andrews sisters on their European tour. Don't you see - if I was good enough I could actually get to tour with the Andrews sisters in Europe. Do you think I'm that good?

Rose: Well, you're just as good as the tuba player.

Trixie: I am.

Rose: Ah-yeah. I heard a lot about him. Actually Trixie - you're - ah - unique. I like unique. You've done things with the clarinet that I've never heard done before. I can honestly say I've never heard anything quite like it. Benny Goodman has a lot to worry about.

Trixie: Just picture it! Patty Andrews and Trixie...or even Patty Andrews, Trixie and Rose.

Rose: I want my name first.

Trixie: Well, try out for the European tour too.

Rose: That's my dream that will never come true.

Trixie: You're just a chicken.

Rose: No I'm not.

Trixie: Yes you are.

Rose: Ok, I am.

Trixie: Give yourself a chance. Think of what you'd do for the war effort.

Rose: What if I didn't make it?

Trixie: No loss.

Rose: What if I got in Europe and I didn't like it?

Trixie: Come home.

Rose: What about my sister?

Trixie: Ruby could stay with me.

Rose: I don't think so.

Trixie: You're right. You don't have a future. You and your 5 piece band from church. You'll travel the world all the way down to Water Street.

Rose: Are you trying to say something about my church?

Trixie: All I'm saying is ten years from now you'll still be home polishing your trumpet. You're right - you wouldn't make it. You're not as good as people from Halifax.

Rose: Just because they're from Halifax doesn't mean they're better.

Trixie: Then you're not as good as these people from the States. You're lazy and you don't practice.

Rose: I practice just as much. They just get more opportunities than I do.

Trixie: Well, now you got an opportunity to play with the Andrews sisters. What more do you want?

Rose: Ok, ok. I want to go with Patty Andrews.

Trixie: You said you had a dream...

Rose: I just think that I could do good things if I had a chance to play more. I could entertain people.

Trixie: Well, this is perfect for you.

Rose: I guess so. Look, I gotta go and check on Ruby. See ya'.

Trixie: Bye.

Scene 5 - Rose's and Ruby's house. Ruby and Elizabeth are playing flute.

Liz: That was really good. Keep up with all the practice and you'll soon be better than I am.

Ruby: I wish.

Liz: Did you hear about Patty Andrews coming to town?

Ruby: Rose said. She's my idol. If only there was some way I could get to sing with her.

Liz: She's looking for local talent too.

Ruby: Do you think I could try out?

Liz: You're not old enough.

Ruby: What difference does that make?

Liz: The auditions are at the officer's club - they wouldn't let you in.

Ruby: Isn't there something I could do?

Liz: Forget it, kid.

Ruby: Maybe I could get in some back way.

Liz: How do you figure that?

Ruby: You're in the army. you figure it out.

Liz: You're only 13, kid.

Ruby: If you did me up, I'd look older.

Liz: How am I gonna do that?

Ruby: With makeup! I've got some foundation.

Liz: I don't think so.

Ruby: and some lipstick.

Liz: I don't think we should do this.

Ruby: and some eyeliner.

Liz: No! I'm not doing it.

Ruby: Why not?

Liz: Because you'll get caught and I'll get in trouble.

Ruby: Wasn't there a place that you shouldn't have gone to but you did?

Liz: Well, yeah. My friends took me out to this club a couple of years ago when I was only 20. But that's not the point.

Ruby: What is the point?

Liz: I didn't have a sister like you have. Rose is...

Ruby: She won't find out. Please?

Liz: She will.

Ruby: Pretty please.

Liz: I don't think so, Ruby.

Ruby: But my sister never does anything for me. You could. You could be more like my sister than Rose is. Pretty please with sugar on top.

Liz: I HATE IT when kids beg.

Ruby: I'm not begging.

Liz: Yes you are.

Ruby: Ok, I'm begging. But you could try.

Liz: Well, seeing how it is only a try-out, I guess I can help you with some make up.

Ruby: Will I look old enough?

Liz: Look, kid, when I'm finished with you, you'll look old enough.

Ruby: I love Patty. She does so much for so many people. If only I could sing just like she does. When I sing in church I always try to use her style.

Liz: You know, I was talking to this guy on the street car the other day from Pennsylvania, and he said he can't wait. He figured it would be like a breath of home. (She begins to tell a joke. Rose enters.) What did the Englishman say when he came home and found her in bed with 3 other men?

Ruby: What?

Liz: Hello. Hello. Hello.

Rose: Liz, what are you doing?

Liz: Just telling a joke.

Rose: When we worked out this deal for you to give Ruby Flute Lessons I didn't think you'd be going on with this smut.

Liz: Relax, Rose. It's just a joke.

Rose: There's more to it than that.

Liz: So you didn't like the joke. What was the last thing that went through the flies mind when he hit the front of a German tank?

Ruby: What?

Liz: His bum.

Rose: Get out.

Liz: If you didn't like that, I got a million more.

Rose: That's the problem.

Liz: C'mon, lighten up, it's only a bit of fun.

Rose: Look, I don't think you're being a very good influence on her.

Liz: So, you're saying I'm being a bad influence on her?

Rose: By telling these jokes, of course you are!

Liz: It was only a bit of fun.

Rose: Yah, but she's young, she shouldn't be listening to this yet.

Liz: We all do when we're kids, didn't you?

Rose: No!

Liz: Why not?

Rose: Because I'm in Salvation Army uniform (she begins to change into it.)

Liz: So you're saying just because I have different beliefs than you I'm a bad influence?

Rose: Yes! So when do I get to hear her play, anyway?

Liz: Don't try to change the subject.

Rose: Hey, I've got a joke for ya! There was this dumb blond, see, and she walked into a restaurant. She ordered a sandwich, and the waiter said "Do you want that cut into two pieces or into four quarters?" Two pieces, I don't think I could eat four quarters!

Liz: Ha, I've got a joke. Did you hear about the Salvation Army person who came in and told the flute teacher how to run her life?

Ruby: Every time we have someone here you act like this. do you remember the time when you pushed me off my bike?

Rose: I didn't push you off your bike, you fell off your bike! You're not the only one that falls off a bicycle, you know. I remember when I was small and fell off my bike, too. It was my black bike and I was really lucky to have it because not many people had one. I was doing so good until this dog came along. He was bigger than my bike, and I was so afraid. I started pedalling faster and I was going so fast, I hit a rock, fell off, and skinned out my knee. I remember the day dad died, the last thing he said to me was "Remember when I taught you to ride your bike." It reminded me of life, a lot of times you have problems and that, but you have to keep going. But sometimes, the further along you go, the more problems you have. Like that big dog, Liz, I don't need you coming in here and creating more problems.

Ruby: So?

Rose: So I'm not saying that we should care about everybody, but I cared about my father.

Liz: What about the American soldier out there risking his life for you, don't you care about him?

Rose: No.

Liz: What about his wife and kids?

Rose: I don't even know them. They're known only to God.

Ruby: Isn't that what's written on the grave of the unknown soldier?

Rose: If I was a soldier in the war, would you care about me?

Liz: Yes.

Rose: Would you care about my wife and kids?

Liz: Yes.

Rose: And what would you do to support them? Send them money?

Liz: No.

Rose: Send them letters?

Ruby: No.

Rose: Would you send them care packages?

Liz: No.

Rose: Well?

Liz: Well, what are you doing?

Rose: Nothing.

Liz: Are you sending them money?

Rose: No.

Liz: Are you sending them letters?

Rose: No.

Liz: Are you sending them care packages?

Rose: No.

Liz: Well?

Rose: Ha! You're the one who said we should care about everybody, but I disagree.

Liz: Aren't you in the Salvation Army?

Rose: What's it to ya'?

Liz: Shouldn't you care?

Rose: I do care about the people around here.

Liz: And what do you do?

Rose: We work at the Thrift Shop.

Liz: We pick up old clothes.

Rose: And we help out families who have fires.

Liz: What about the American soldier overseas? What do they do for him?

Rose: My grandfather fought at Vimy Ridge in 1917. He had his leg blown off and the first ones to help him were the Salvation Army.

Liz: So people who didn't even know him cared about him?

Rose: They were missionaries. I'm just a soldier.

Liz: So if there was a war over here and someone got shot, you wouldn't care?

Rose: Then I'd be a missionary.

Liz: Doesn't someone care?

Rose: Sure.

Liz: Who?

Rose: God.

Liz: If God cares about everybody, how come he allows people to go out and shoot others?

Rose: Because He has to allow freedom of choice.

Liz: What do you mean?

Rose: If He didn't, then we'd go around doing everything that God wanted us to do, and we wouldn't be our own individuals.

Liz: So, I could go out and shoot you and no one would care?

Rose: God would.

Liz: What would he do?

Rose: He would punish you.

Liz: How?

Rose: He'd send you to hell.

Liz: We don't know that.

Rose: I do because I believe in God.

Liz: I believe in God, but I also believe you can help others.

Rose: So do I.

Liz: I believe you can help everybody in the world. (Ruby goes back to playing.)

Rose: That can't be done.

Liz: Look, didn't a complete stranger ever help you once?

Nurse: Rose.

Rose: Yes?

Liz (Nurse): Well...

Rose: What?

Scene 6 - A flashback in a hospital. Rose is waiting. Ruby continues to play.

Nurse: You can go home now.

Rose: But I want to stay.

Nurse: Well, there's no point in you staying. You can't do anything.

Rose: I want to be here in case Dad needs me. It's the least I could do. He's always there for us.

Nurse: Rose, there's something I have to tell...

Rose: Matter of fact, he's always there for everybody. Whenever there's work to be done around the neighbourhood he's always there to lend a hand. No matter what he does, he's good at it. The neighbours used to always say if anyone can do it, William can. I remember the time the little Harrison boy fell through the ice. There were so many people who didn't know what to do, but Dad didn't think twice - he just ripped off his coat and boots and dove right into that icy cold water without even thinking about his own life. He had to go down 3 times before he finally found him and brought him up. You know he fought so hard for that little boy's life. Now he's struggling for his own.

Nurse: Tell me about the bike, Rose.

Rose: I was 4, and I had a brand new black bike. After a while he stopped holding on to the seat and I rode the bike all the way down the street. He was so proud of me. Then I fell off and I cried and cried. He said, you can't let one small fall stop you from riding your bike. No matter what you have to go on.

Nurse: Rose, your father told me to tell you to always remember that bike. He said that as a girl you would find it hard in a man's world. But he wants you to remember. Rose, I'm sorry...

Scene 7 - Trixie is playing the clarinet. She falters on a note.

Gena: Ok, honey. I think we heard enough.

Trixie: Well, what do you think?

Gena: Kid, I think I've never really heard anything quite like it.

Trixie: Yeah, that's what Rose said.

Gena: No hard feelings but I guess we just don't have room for a clarinet player right now. When the rest of the band flies in from New York, they'll fill the rest of the parts. Sorry.

Trixie: That's ok.

Angela: Do you have the other civvies in costume yet?

Sandra: Yeah (Trish enters).

Trixie: You made it.

Gena: So, that's it. (Ruby runs in from the back.)

Ruby: Wait. Wait. Am I too late?

Gena: Aren't you a little young for this kid?

Ruby: But Miss Andrews is my idol and...

Angela: Look, we need somebody to sing in the rehearsal until Patty flies in tomorrow.

Donna: Give her a listen.

Gena: Ok, kid. We'll hear you. You know Opus 1?

Ruby: Hit it. (She sings Opus 1)

Gena: That was really good honey. (Points to Sandra) She'll help you with a costume. (Ruby/Sandra exit.)

Gena: I guess that's it.

Rose: (Running from the back.) Am I too late?

Gena: You just made it. What do you play?

Rose: Trumpet.

Gena: We've got one opening left. Wait 'til everyone comes back and we'll hear you.

Donna: Want a coffee?

Rose: Oh, no thanks. So where are you from?

Gena: Everywhere (she leaves).

Donna: New York.

Rose: Welcome to Newfoundland. Like it?

Donna: Yeah.

Rose: What do you play?

Donna: Piano.

Rose: You're pretty lucky.

Donna: I guess so. to tell you the truth I wish I could be home. My momma needs help, but I guess I'm doing something important by playing with the band. You know, back home as soon as you leave your neighbourhood people are really - well - racist. What's your name?

Rose: Rose.

Donna: You're lucky Rose. Not everyone can enlist and stay home. You should count your lucky stars. Nfld. is really - well - open minded about people who are different or from away. Don't you think?

Rose: Ah - yeah.

Gena: Ready?

Rose: What are you doing here?

Ruby: The same thing you're doing here.

Rose: (To the others) She's just a kid. (To Ruby) I'm not letting you do this, let's go.

Gena: Hey, give her a break.

Angela: Maybe you should listen to her sing.

Donna: Hey, leave Rose alone. If she doesn't think the kid can stay it's her decision. But Rose - this is the only shot the kid will ever get at this. Are you sure you want her to go?

Ruby: Please?

Rose: Well, ok, for a little while.

Gena: Let's try "In The Mood". (They play) Wow! Sensational!

Donna: Really good, Rose.

Angela: Hey, why don't you stay with the band?

Gena: We've got an opening.

Donna: You could tour with Patty! (They begin to chant and hoist her on their shoulders) Ro-se, Ro-se, Ro-se.

Trixie: Do it.

Rose: (To Ruby) What do you think?

Ruby: This is the only shot the kid will ever get. Do it. It'll be ok.

Gena: Well?

Rose: I think I'd go (they cheer), but I can't.

Ruby: Rose, don't stay for me.

Rose: (She looks at Donna) Well, maybe I learned from somebody that I wouldn't be staying for you - I'd be staying because I want to be with you. (They hug. A fade while the sound of a propeller revs and a plane takes off. There is gun fire and the sound of an explosion. The lights come up. Donna, Angela, Sandra and Gena are lying on the floor. Lisa, DeAnna, Wendy and Lorena dressed in sailor uniforms drape their bodies with a flag with military precision. As they do, Trixie and Rose salute, but talk.)

All: Dateline St. John's. Today Nazi fighter squadrons attacked a lone military transport plane as it crossed the English Channel. The aircraft was carrying members of a band that played with the Andrews sisters at USO concerts near the front. There were no survivors.

Trixie: I don't believe this happened. We play one day - we bury the next. You're lucky you weren't one of them.

Rose: It wasn't luck, Trixie. It was my place.

Trixie: To be where?

Rose: Home with Ruby.

Trixie: Rose, this war has shown that women don't belong just at home anymore.

Rose: Women don't - I do. Because Ruby's all I've got, Trixie. Just like the piano player proved something by playing with an all white band. The band was her place. My family is mine.

Trixie: We can do whatever needs doing...

Rose: That's a woman's place.

(Rose plays Last Post as the lights fade.)