

CAPE
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GUY exits rather unhappily.

FAY sits on at her table for a minute, smiling to herself.

A light comes up on LINDA.

LINDA (as Lucy, singing)

THUS WHEN A GOOD HUSWIFE SEES A RAT
IN HER TRAP IN THE MORNING TAKEN,
WITH PLEASURE HER HEART GOES PIT A PAT,
IN REVENGE FOR HER LOSS OF BACON.
THEN SHE THROWS HIM
TO THE DOG OR CAT,
TO BE WORRIED, CRUSHED AND SHAKEN.

As the song ends, FAY exits.

General lights come up on LINDA to reveal she is in rehearsal with both HANNAH and CRISPIN, as Polly and Macheath. Also in attendance, BRIDGET with the prompt script, as usual. DAFYDD is prowling the auditorium and, away in one corner paying little attention, JARVIS sits with a small portable cassette player clipped to his person and a pair of lightweight headphones clamped to his ears. He is in a private world of his own. GUY who has entered during the song also watches the ensuing rehearsal. CRISPIN stands holding a freestanding mock-up rehearsal gaol door, through which he plays the scene.

LINDA (as Lucy) Am I then bilk'd of my virtue? Can I have no reparation? Sure men were born to lye, and women to believe them! O Villain! Villain!

HANNAH (as Polly) Am I not thy wife? Thy neglect of me, thy aversion to me, too severely proves it. Look on me. Tell me, am I not thy wife?

LINDA (as Lucy) Perfidious wretch!

HANNAH (as Polly) Barbarous husband!

STAGE
3RD REHEARSAL #
FAY [8]
LINDA Sc2
HANNAH
CRISPIN
BRIDGET
DAFYDD
JARVIS
MR AMOS
REBECCA
FAY GUY
REBECCA
GUY
No
Ted
Ovid
lan

LINDA (*as Lucy*) Hadst thou been hang'd five months ago, I had been happy.

HANNAH (*as Polly*) And I too. If you had been kind to me 'til Death, it would not have vex'd me. And that's no very unreasonable request, (though from a wife) to a man who hath not above seven or eight days to live.

Under this last exchange, DAFYDD seeing GUY has joined the rehearsal, strolls over to him.

DAFYDD (*in a loud whisper*) Sorry. We're running a bit late. Be with you in a second.

GUY (*sotto*) OK.

DAFYDD Bloody hard work it is with these three. This lad—great voice. But he moves like something out of Austin Reed's window. And as for this prissy little madam... (*He indicates LINDA*) Look at her. I've seen rougher trade on a health food counter...

The rehearsal continues.

LINDA (*as Lucy*) Are thou then married monster? ... (*She hesitates*)

BRIDGET (*prompting loudly*) Art thou then married to another?

LINDA (*as Lucy*) Art thou then married to another? Hast thou—

BRIDGET (*interrupting her*) Hast thou two wives, monster?

LINDA All right, all right, I know it...

BRIDGET I was giving you the line...

LINDA Yes, well, I knew it. I knew it, didn't I?

HANNAH wanders away from the exchange. There's evidently been quite a lot of this sort of thing. CRISPIN remains amusedly detached. DAFYDD returns his attention to the rehearsal.

DAFYDD All right, all right, girls. Come on, get on with it now.

LINDA Every time I pause for breath, she reads out my line.
Would you kindly ask her not to, please?

DAFYDD Bridget, don't read her lines out unless she asks for them. And Linda, you stop pausing for so much breath.

LINDA I have to breathe, don't I?

BRIDGET (*in an undertone*) Not necessarily...

DAFYDD You can't take that long breathing onstage. You want to breathe deeply, you breathe offstage in your own time...
On we go. And Bridget, shut up!

BRIDGET (*muttering to herself*) I thought the only reason I was here was to prompt. I mean, what's the point of sitting here for three months...?

DAFYDD Bridget. Shut up! Go on.

A slight pause. The women look at CRISPIN.

CRISPIN Oh, it's my go, is it? Right. (*As Macheath*) If women's tongues can cease for an answer—hear me.

DAFYDD *whimpers audibly at CRISPIN's effort.*

(*Looking out in DAFYDD's direction*) I heard that...

LINDA (*as Lucy*) I won't. Flesh and blood can't bear my usage.

HANNAH (*as Polly*) Shall I not claim my own? Justice bids me speak. Sure, my dear, there ought to be some preference shown to a wife! At least she may claim the appearance of it. (*Pointedly in GUY's direction*) He must be distracted with his misfortunes, or he could not use me thus!

Another silence. HANNAH looks at LINDA.

LINDA (*realizing belatedly that it's her*) Urn. Oh. Yes. Urn.
Oh. Eee. (*She twists herself in knots trying to remember; to BRIDGET, reluctantly*) What is it, then?

BRIDGET (*prompting*) Oh...

LINDA (*repeating her*) Oh...

BRIDGET (*forming the first syllable of "villain"*) V...v...

LINDA (*with her*) V...v...vain...vish...voo...ver...ver...

DAFYDD (*screaming from the back of the auditorium*) Look, what the hell is this, twenty bloody questions?

LINDA (*wailing*) She won't tell me my line...

DAFYDD Bridget, for God's sake, tell her her line...

BRIDGET You just told me not to. (*Reading rapidly*) Oh villain villain thou hast deceiv'd me I could even inform against thee with pleasure not a prude wishes more heartily to have facts against her intimate acquaintance...

LINDA *starts wailing during this monotone rendition by BRIDGET.*

DAFYDD Bridget! That'll do...

BRIDGET *stops.*

BRIDGET (*innocently*) What?

HANNAH (*comforting LINDA*) Now, come on, dear...

LINDA (*scarcely audible, weeping*) She does that all the time. She keeps doing it. All the time...

DAFYDD *gives a vast groan of impatience.*

HANNAH Just a minute, Dafydd, just a minute...

A very private women's huddle between LINDA and HANNAH that none of us can hear. CRISPIN, the root cause of all this, stands looking quite pleased with himself. He pulls faces at DAFYDD through the gaol door.

DAFYDD (*to GUY*) Look at that smirking oaf. I wish to God they were professionals. Then I could sack them. These bastards, they've got you over a barrel. Unless you say well done all the time they don't turn up. What are those two doing? It's