

SCENE 6: SPOONFUL OF SUGAR - Street, Kitchen

#7A - Winds Do Change

(Some time has passed, perhaps a week or so. On the pavement outside No. 17, BERT sweeps the gutter and addresses the audience.)

BERT

WINDS DO CHANGE, TIDES CAN TURN.
SINK OR SWIM, SEE WHAT YOU LEARN.
ME, I WAS TOLD WHEN I WAS SMALL,
JUST LEARN A TRADE, SO I LEARNED 'EM ALL.
CHIM CHIMINEY, CHIM CHIM CHER-EE-

(ADMIRAL BOOM and MISS LARK appear.)

ADMIRAL BOOM

'Morning, Bert. Swabbing the decks today, I see.

BERT

Gotta keep the street ship-shape, Admiral!

ADMIRAL BOOM

Tell me, how are things aboard No. 17? All plain sailing with Mary Poppins, I trust.

BERT

There's some rough weather on every voyage, Admiral.

(BERT resumes his sweeping, moving away from ADMIRAL BOOM and MISS LARK.)

ADMIRAL BOOM

(shaking his head)

Ah Miss Lark, what those children need is a touch of the cat and a night on the yardarm.

MISS LARK

What those children need, Admiral, is a touch of happiness!

(This is a novel idea for ADMIRAL BOOM, as he watches MISS LARK walk on, clutching WILLOUGHBY, who barks.)

Willoughby!

(In the kitchen, a nervous WINIFRED is with MRS. BRILL. All around are signs of preparations for the tea. ROBERTSON AY watches.)

WINIFRED

Mrs. Brill, don't make the sandwiches too early. They'll get stale before the guests arrive.

MRS. BRILL

Everything's under control, ma'am.

WINIFRED

What about the cake?

MRS. BRILL

Cooling on the tray, waiting to be iced.

WINIFRED

And you're quite sure you know how to ice it?

MRS. BRILL

Quite sure. And in case you're worried, I have not been exchanged by the fairies for a total nincompoop!

WINIFRED

No!

ROBERTSON AY

No...

WINIFRED

Well. I'll just go up and check the drawing room.

(WINIFRED leaves MRS. BRILL fuming. ROBERTSON AY pipes up.)

ROBERTSON AY

I'd like to be helpful.

MRS. BRILL

I'd like to be rich. But the Good Lord thought otherwise.

(JANE and MICHAEL come through the door.)

JANE

Mother wants you in the drawing room.

MRS. BRILL

Well she can't have me. I've got enough on my plate as it is.

JANE

She says you can tell Robertson Ay what to do.

MRS. BRILL

Does she indeed? Well, why don't I go and have a smoke near the gasworks for good measure?

ROBERTSON AY

Please, Mrs. Brill. I don't mind, honest.

MRS. BRILL

All right. I will give you one task and one task only. And, so help me, if you get this wrong I'll swing for you and sing as they pull the lever!

ROBERTSON AY

(filled with a sense of the task's importance)

What is it, Mrs. Brill?

MRS. BRILL

Put the icing tools next to the cake, and I'll need a bowl of hot water to warm them. I will make the icing as soon as I'm back.

ROBERTSON AY

(simultaneously committing the tasks to memory)

Icing tools... cake... hot water... I will make the icing as soon as I'm back...

MRS. BRILL

Now, do you think you can manage that?

ROBERTSON AY

Is that all?

MRS. BRILL

For you, yes. For me, no. Once the cake's done, I've the sandwiches next because Madam wants them fresh. So I can't start them until there's no time to finish them. I swear, a slave in ancient Rome was on a pleasure cruise compared to my life in this house!

(MRS. BRILL storms out and slams the door behind her.)

JANE

Well, don't just stand there, Robertson Ay.

ROBERTSON AY

Right... no...

(ROBERTSON AY looks around.)

JANE

What are you looking for?

ROBERTSON AY

A bowl. For the water.

(ROBERTSON AY goes to the kitchen dresser. JANE has an idea.)
