FOREVER DUSTY
The Dusty Springfield Musical

Book By Kirsten Holly Smith & Jonathan Vankin
Music and Lyrics By Various Composers

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WGAW REGISTRATION #: 1597229
CAST OF CHARACTERS


JERRY WEXLER: Veteran record producer. Seen it all in the music industry. Age 51.

TOM SPRINGFIELD (aka DION O'BRIEN): Dusty's brother, older by four years. Excellent musician and songwriter.

BOB THACKERAY: English music journalist. 30s-40s.

BECKY BRIXTON: English television producer who becomes Dusty's manager. Approximately same age as Dusty.

CLAIRE BENNETT: African-American. Journalist. Late 20s through mid-30s; also depicted in her 50s.

MR. VANDER SANT: South African government official circa 1964. 40s or 50s.

RECORD EXECUTIVE: One of the most powerful men in the music business. 30s or 40s

GINI: Dusty's drug and alcohol counselor and friend. 30s. New Age/former hippie.

SCHOOL GIRLS (2)

THE LANA SISTERS (2)

SOUL SINGER

STAGE MANAGER

SEXY WOMAN

DOCTOR
The story of FOREVER DUSTY takes place over the course of Dusty Springfield's life, from her teen years in the 1950s until her passing at age 59. The major story elements occur in the 1960s and 1970s.

The action takes place in multiple settings. In the original Off-Broadway staging of FOREVER DUSTY, scene changes were accomplished by use of projections.

The cast consisted of five actors, each playing multiple roles with the exception of "Dusty," in the following configuration.

CAUCASIAN FEMALE 1 - Dusty Springfield

CAUCASIAN FEMALE 2 - Becky Brixton / Gini / School Girl 2 / Lana Sister / Sexy Woman

AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE - Claire Bennett / Soul Singer / School Girl 1 / Lana Sister

CAUCASIAN MALE 1 (20's-30s) - Tom Springfield / Record Executive

CAUCASIAN MALE 2 (40s - 50s) - Jerry Wexler / Bob Thackeray / South African Official / Stage Manager / Doctor
ACT ONE

Scene ONE


Lights up on DUSTY SPRINGFIELD, behind a microphone.

She's classic 1960's Dusty, blond, sexy with her trademark heavy eye-liner and oversized false eyelashes, a self-aware pastiche of the big-screen glamor queens she worshipped as a teenager: Catherine Deneuve, Kim Novak, Monica Vitti.

Dusty is not a teenager anymore. She's a star, struggling not to fade.

JERRY WEXLER, grizzled music biz veteran, sits at the studio control desk. Large glasses and a newsboy cap. This is the man who invented the phrase "rhythm and blues." Nothing that happens in a recording studio fazes him. But he's never worked with Dusty Springfield. Until now.

They've been in this studio far longer than either wanted or planned.

"son of a preacher man"

Dusty
Billy ray was a preacher's son
and when his daddy would visit he'd come along when they gathered round and
started FLockin' That's when Billy would --

JERRY
Hold it! Dusty, stop.

DUSTY
Oh dear. What have I done now?

JERRY
Screwed up the words. Again.

DUSTY
Did I? Really?
JERRY
Yeah, it's "talkin'." "Gathered 'round and started talkin'." Not "flockin'"

DUSTY
Are you quite sure?

JERRY
"Flockin'" doesn't even make sense.

DUSTY
I'm terribly sorry. I usually write the words on my hands and wrists so when I'm performing I can --

She throws up a few of her signature, sweeping hand gestures.

DUSTY (cont'd)
-- see them.

JERRY

"SON OF A PREACHER MAN"

DUSTY
Has it really been that many?

Music stops!

JERRY

"SON OF A PREACHER MAN"

DUSTY
Billy ray was a preacher's son and when his daddy would visit --


JERRY
It's not your vocals I'm worried about.

DUSTY
What's that?

JERRY
Don't worry, hang on a second. I'll take care of it.

Jerry sits down, lights a cigarette. Waits a moment.

JERRY (cont'd)
Okay, I turned up the thermostat. Is that better?

DUSTY
I think so. Thanks so much.

JERRY
Dusty in Memphis. "Son of a Preacher Man." Take twenty-eight.

"SON OF A PREACHER MAN"

DUSTY
Billy ray was a preacher's son and when his daddy would visit he'd come along when they gathered -- Jerry, the tempo's too fast! What is this? The bloody Grand Prix? You're not getting it!

(to band)

JERRY
Dusty, these cats are the Memphis Cats. The Memphis Sound is their sound. They invented it.

DUSTY
And I'm just a middle-class white girl from England.

JERRY
Well...

DUSTY
It's fine, Jerry. No, you can say it. It's true. These blokes have played for Aretha, Isaac, Otis. Now they're reduced to playing for -- who's that girl who thinks she can sing our music? Oh, yes. Dusty Springfield!

JERRY

DUSTY
Jerry, I can't. I want to, more than anything. But I can't sing the way you want me to.

JERRY
All right, everyone. Call it a night. We'll get back at this later.

DUSTY
No, no, Jerry. I'm sorry. I'll get it! I think I'm getting it now.
(to band)
Please don't leave. Jerry, please?

But Jerry is gone. The Memphis Cats drop their instruments, exhausted, disgusted and done for the night.

Dawn breaks. Dusty hails a taxi.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Peabody Hotel. Please. If you would be so kind.
(leaning forward)
Your name is Samuel is it? My name is --
(thinks)
-- Mary.

Scene TWO
Schoolyard at recess, presided over by stern nuns.

Dusty is now Mary. She slips on thick, black horn-rimmed glasses.

NUN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Mary Isobel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien!

MARY
Coming, Sister!

A sharp RECESS WHISTLE!

Mary rushes into line. She stands at attention with other girls. She sneaks a peek at the backside of the girl next to her.

GIRL 1
What you lookin' at, O'Brien?

Another WHISTLE. The girls relax.

GIRL 2
She ain't even got a voice, does she?

MARY
No, I do.
GIRL 1
I heard a scandalous rumor that she sings.

MARY
Occasionally. In the bath.

GIRL 2
Let's hear it, then. Sing for us.

MARY
I'll be in trouble with the sisters if I do.

GIRL 2
You'll be in trouble with us if you don't.

Girl 1 moves closer, flirty.

GIRL 1
We'd love it if you would.

"WISHIN' AND HOPIN'"

As the song opens, Mary is painfully shy, barely singing at all.

As the number continues, Mary comes to life and wins the girls over completely.

MARY
WISHIN' AND HOPIN'
AND THINKIN' AND PRAYIN'
PLANNIN' AND DREAMIN'
EACH NIGHT OF HIS CHARMS,
THAT WON'T GET YOU INTO HIS ARMS.

SO IF YOU'RE LOOKING TO FIND LOVE YOU CAN SHARE.
ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS HOLD HIM AND KISS HIM
AND LOVE HIM AND SHOW HIM THAT YOU CARE.

SHOW HIM THAT YOU CARE JUST FOR HIM,
DO THE THINGS HE LIKES TO DO,
WEAR YOUR HAIR JUST FOR HIM,
CAUSE YOU WON'T GET HIM
THINKIN' AND A PRAYIN',
WISHIN' AND A HOPIN'.

CAUSE WISHIN' AND HOPIN'
AND THINKIN' AND PRAYIN',
PLANNIN' AND DREAMIN'
HIS KISSES WILL START,
THAT WON'T GET YOU INTO HIS HEART.

SO IF YOU'RE THINKING OF HOW GREAT TRUE LOVE IS.
ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS HOLD HIM AND KISS HIM
AND LOVE HIM,
JUST DO IT AND AFTER YOU DO,
YOU WILL BE HIS.

YOU GOTTA SHOW HIM THAT YOU CARE JUST FOR HIM
AND DO THE THINGS HE LIKES TO DO
WEAR YOUR HAIR JUST FOR HIM
CAUSE YOU WON'T GET HIM
THINKIN' AND A PRAYIN'
WISHING' AND A HOPIN'
'cause wishin' and hopin'
Thinkin' and prayin'
Plannin' and dreamin'
His kisses will start,
That won't get you into his heart.

SO IF YOU'RE THINKING OF HOW GREAT TRUE LOVE IS.
ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS HOLD HIM AND KISS HIM
AND LOVE HIM,
JUST DO IT AND AFTER YOU DO,
YOU WILL BE HIS.

The other girls exit.

Scene THREE

O'Brien family home. A modest, middle class place.

Mary's brother DION enters, with guitar. Slightly annoyed, he tries to tune and play.

MARY (cont'd)
wishin' and hopin'
Thinkin' and prayin'
Plannin' and dreamin'

DION
Mary, would you mind?

MARY
Oh, Dion. I didn't notice you there.

DION
I can't imagine why not.

MARY
Dad's scheduled a lesson with me later. I needed to practice.

DION
Practice for your practice?

MARY
It's Dad.

DION
Yes, well, I know what that's like. In any case, I've got a melody that's just popped into my head, so if I could have quiet for a few moments...

Mary waits, fidgety, as Dion plays his tune. She can barely contain herself.

The tune is a rudimentary version of "Island of Dreams."

DION (cont'd)
High in the sky is the bird on the wing please take me with --
(thinks)
Please carry me --

MARY
I'll sing it with you!

DION (amused)
I haven't finished it yet, Mary.

The voices of Dusty's father, O.B., and mother, Kay, are heard from off stage.

O.B. (O.S.)
You're off to France again? You don't even speak bloody French!

KAY (O.S.)
Maybe this time I'll learn.

DOOR SLAMS
Dion places a comforting, big-brotherly arm around
his sister.

MARY
It's my fault. I upset Dad yesterday.

DION
Mary, they don't need a reason to argue.

MARY
I don't know how I'd survive without you, Dion.

DION
(teasing)
You wouldn't, of course.

They share a smile. Dion hands a newspaper to Mary.

DION (cont'd)
Look, this may brighten your spirits.

MARY
"Girl group seeks backup singer. The Lana Sisters." Dion, do you think I'm ready?

DION
Not with these.

Dion takes Mary's glasses off of her face. She squints, nearly blind.

DION (cont'd)
Now you're ready.

Mary hesitates.

DION (cont'd)
Go on, now. When they hear your voice, well -- just go!

Scene FOUR

Audition room. A basement somewhere. Dion watches, silent but proud.

AUDITIONER (V.O.)

Next!

Mary steps forward carefully.
Name!

MARY

O'Brien. Mary O'Brien.

Louder!

MARY

O'Brien. Hello.

"WISHIN' AND HOPIN'"

YOU GOTTA SHOW HIM THAT YOU CARE JUST FOR HIM
AND DO THE THINGS HE LIKES TO DO
WEAR YOUR HAIR JUST FOR HIM
'CAUSE YOU WONT GET HIM
THINKIN' AND A PRAYIN'

AUDITIONER (V.O.)
(cuts her off)

Thank you!

A lengthy, nerve-wracking PAUSE.

AUDITIONER (V.O.) (cont'd)

Well, when can you start?

Scene FIVE

Music hall at an English holiday resort camp. The late 1950s.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening and welcome to Butlin's Holiday Camp on the lovely seashore in Blackpool! For your entertainment this evening, Butlin's proudly presents Britain's new girl group sensation -- The Lana Sisters!

Mary and the other two "sisters" enter.

"SEVEN LITTLE GIRLS SITTING IN THE BACK SEAT"

ALL GIRLS

ALL TOGETHER NOW, 1.2.3.
KEEP YOU MIND ON YOUR DRIVING, KEEP YOUR HANDS ON THE WHEEL
KEEP YOUR SNOOPY EYES ON THE ROAD AHEAD
WE'RE HAVIN' FUN, SITTIN' IN THE BACK SEAT
KISSIN' AND A HUGGIN' WITH FRED
DO DO DO DO DUM
DO DO DO DO DUM
DO DO DO DO DO

DION
(enters, enthusiastic)
Bravo! Encore!

MARY
Dion! What are you doing here?

DION
I came to see my sister -- the pop star.

MARY
Oh, please.

DION
But there's one thing. Why don't you call me Tom from now on?

MARY
Well, all right. Tom.
(awkward silence)
Why am I calling you Tom?

Dion is now referenced as "Tom."

TOM
Because I'm starting my own group!

MARY
Your own group? That's fantastic, Dion. Tom.

TOM
I'll write the songs. But I need a lead singer. A stage presence. I know how you can sing and, well, look at you!

Mary looks toward her "Sisters."

MARY
We have songs on the charts. A tour.

TOM
They're not really your sisters, you know. But I am your brother.
MARY
I'd love to join your group! What are you -- what are we calling ourselves?

TOM
Remember how we used to look at the maps of America? In Dad's atlas?

MARY
Yes?

TOM
And we'd pick out these loads of American towns all with the same name?

MARY
Yes, I suppose.

TOM
We're calling ourselves "The Springfields!" It just sounds so American, you know. I'm Tom. And you...?

MARY
Remember how I used to play football with the boys?

TOM
Yes?

MARY
And these boys used to knock me on my arse, time after time?

TOM
Yes, I suppose.

MARY
(gets it)
Oh! They called you --

Dusty!

With that, Mary is now "Dusty."

DUSTY AND TOM
Dusty Springfield!

Scene SIX
A TV Studio. STAGE MANAGER enters. Hands Tom his guitar.

STAGE MANAGER
Remember, big smiles, kids. Our sponsor, Mother's Pride Bread, is in the
audience tonight. Big smiles! Big! And you're on in five, four --

Stage Manager counts down with hand signals.

"ISLAND OF DREAMS"

DUSTY & TOM
I wandered the streets and the gay crowded places
Trying to forget you but somehow it seems
My thoughts ever stray to our last sweet embraces
Over the sea on the Island of Dreams

High in the sky is the bird on the wing
Please carry me with you
Far far away from the mad rushing crowd
Please carry me with you

Again I would wander where memories enfold me
There on the beautiful Island of Dreams
Far far away on the island of dreams

Scene SEVEN
New York, 1963. Dusty enters Colony Records store. Tom is with her, but off on his own with his own agenda.

DUSTY
"Far, far away, on my island of dreams..."

Her thoughts are broken by the raucous opening bars of...

"TELL HIM"

The sound stops her. She's never been so excited!

DUSTY (cont'd)
Excuse me, Sir? Sorry. It's my very first time in America. We're here on tour with our group. The Springfields?

Nothing coming back.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Yes, well. Anyway. What is this record you're playing?
Female R&B SINGER enters.

         DUSTY (cont'd)
"Tell Him." The Exciters!

         SINGER
I KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT LOVE
YOU'VE GOTTA WANT IT BAD
IF THAT GUY'S GOT INTO YOUR BLOOD
GO OUT AND GET HIM
IF YOU WANT HIM TO BE
THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU
MAKE YOU WANT TO BREATHE
HERE'S THE THING TO DO
TELL HIM THAT YOU'RE NEVER GONNA LEAVE HIM
TELL HIM THAT YOU'RE ALWAYS GONNA LOVE HIM
TELL HIM, TELL HIM, TELL HIM
TELL HIM RIGHT NOW

         DUSTY
Oh, Tom! Doesn't it leave you breathless?

         Tom's not a fan.

         DUSTY (cont'd)
The attack on it! We don't have anything like this in England!

Overwhelmed with the magnitude of her discovery, from this moment Dusty's life has changed.

Dusty moves to the music. As the song continues, she loosens up and moves less like a Lana Sister and more like a soul singer.

         SINGER
I know something about love
you gotta show it and
Make him see the moon up above
Go out and get him
If you want him TO
make your heart sing out
If you want him to
only think of you
Tell him that you're never gonna leave him
Tell him that you're always gonna love him
Tell him, tell him, tell him
tell him right now
Tom checks his watch, forces a smile.

DUSTY
The least you can do is act like you enjoy it.

TOM
I'm sorry. Not my scene, I'm afraid.

SINGER
I know something about love
You gotta take his hand
Show him what the world is made of
One kiss will prove it

DUSTY
If you want him to be
always by your side
Take his hand tonight
swallow your foolish pride

DUSTY & SINGER
Tell him that you're never gonna leave him
Tell him that you're always gonna love him
Tell him, tell him, tell him
tell him right now

Tune continues, underscore.

TOM
Look, I've nothing against this R&B music. But this is not The Springfields' sound.

DUSTY
But Tom, I think this is my sound!

TOM
Your sound? If you haven't noticed, the people singing this music that you love
so much, well--

Music suddenly STOPS.

TOM (cont'd)
-- they're black.

Tom looks around, mortified that someone heard that.

DUSTY
I've had an offer. "Ready Steady Go." It's a program on telly.
TOM
I know what it is. You mean you're booking our television appearances now?

DUSTY
No.

TOM
Good. That's my job, you know.

DUSTY
It's not The Springfields that received the offer, Tom.
It's me.

TOM
What? Solo? That's not possible. Without you, The Springfields are finished. We have songs on the charts. A tour!

DUSTY
I'm sorry, Tom.

TOM
It's not your decision.

DUSTY
But it is.

TOM
If you end the group, we're finished.

DUSTY
I know.

TOM
(more sad than angry)
I don't mean the group. I mean you and me. Dion and Mary. You shan't hear from me again.

DUSTY
I love this music Dion.

Tom/Dion gives her one last look. He turns and walks out of her life.

Dusty stands alone -- with her future.

Scene EIGHT

A cramped London TV studio, the home of "Ready,
Steady, Go."

BECKY BRIXTON enters, urgent.

BECKY
Dusty! Where the hell is she?

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)
Ninety seconds to air. Miss Brixton, you're the producer. You've got to get her out there.

BECKY
Yes, yes!
(to herself)
I've got to bloody find her first. Dusty!

Dusty enters.

DUSTY
Coming! Coming! Sorry! Sorry!

BECKY
Dusty, you're not dressed yet.

DUSTY
I can't do this, Becky. I can't do this alone.

BECKY
You'd better. Or London will be looking at three minutes of dead air. "Ready, Steady, Go" is live!

DUSTY
An encouraging word might not kill you.

STAGE MANAGER (V.O.)
One minute to air!

BECKY
We have clocks in here, thank you!

DUSTY
What if my wig falls off?

BECKY
Hair pins.

DUSTY
My throat! What if my voice completely goes?

BECKY

Sucrets.

DUSTY

Or my stockings run?

BECKY

Seamless micro-mesh. Guaranteed run proof.

DUSTY

My God! I forgot to feed the cat!

She begins heaving, about to lose her lunch. She finds a wastepaper bin.

DUSTY (cont'd)

I really thought I could do this alone. But I can't! I just can't. I -- I...

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)

Thirty seconds to air!

Dusty's about to lose it right into the trash bin! But Becky yanks it away.

BECKY

You're not getting out of this that easily.

Dusty turns green.

BECKY (cont'd)

You're on!

Becky exits. Dusty is alone, looking in the mirror.

DUSTY

The bigger the hair, the blacker the eyes, the more I can hide.

MUSIC starts, underscore

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

All right, boys and girls, the weekend starts here on Ready, Steady, Go. Here she is, in her solo telly debut -- Dusty Springfield!

Dusty rushes to the stage.

"I ONLY WANT TO BE WITH YOU"
The moment the music starts, it's as if Dusty were born under spotlights.

DUSTY
I don't know what it is that makes me love you so.
I only know I never want to let you go,
'cause you started something, oh, can't you see
That ever since we met you had a hold on me?
It happens to be true, I only want to be with you.

It doesn't matter where you go or what you do,
I want to spend each moment of the day with you.
Oh, look what has happened with just one kiss.
I never knew that I could be in love like this.
It's crazy but it's true, I only want to be with you.

You stopped and smiled at me,
As you care to dance.
I fell into your open arms
And I didn't stand a chance!

Now, listen honey,
I just want to be beside you everywhere
As long as we're together, honey, I don't care.
'cause you started something, oh, can't you see
That ever since we met you had a hold on me?
No matter what you do, I only want to be with you.

No matter, no matter what you do
I only want to be with
I only want to be with
I only want to be with you!

As the music plays off, Dusty basked for a moment in her triumph.

She exits.

Scene NINE

London's Rainbow Theatre, teeming with kids.
Becky enters. BOB THACKERAY trails behind her, observing.

BECKY
You there! Get off your arse and reset those lights! Dusty's on next!
THACKERAY
Congratulations, Brixton. The first Motown revue in the UK and it's a smashing success.

BECKY
What are you getting at, Thackeray?

THACKERAY
Well, if you don't mind my saying, you seem a little tense.

BECKY
This show was all Dusty's idea really. You'd be tense too if you were answering to her.

Dusty enters, relaxed, happy.

BECKY (cont'd)
(all smiles)
Dusty! I'd like to introduce --

THACKERAY
Bob Thackeray, Miss Springfield. Daily Mail.

DUSTY
I know your writing well, Mr. Thackeray. I'm so pleased you're here tonight.

THACKERAY
Yes, well, I was wondering -- you're both hosting and lending your name to this revue, at which all of the performers are American and colored. Are you concerned how the British public might respond?

Dusty approaches Bob as if she's got a secret for him.

DUSTY
Here's my answer.
(he leans in)
Stuff the British public!

Bob gets a chuckle out of that. He puts pen to notepad.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Oh, don't write that down.

THACKERAY
Any pop star willing to tell the British public to stuff it deserves not to be quoted.
DUSTY
Bob, these musicians are my friends -- my idols. Let's just -- enjoy their performances.

THACKERAY

Fair enough.

Thackeray exits, thoroughly amused by this character. CLAIRE BENNETT enters, head down, scribbling her notepad.

Claire is African-American, approximately Dusty's age, strikingly beautiful, businesslike.

Dusty walks toward Becky -- and crashes into Claire!

DUSTY
Oh! Excuse me.

CLAIRE
Excuse you!

DUSTY
I'm sorry. Journalists are seated --

She's struck by Claire's beauty.

-- in the fourth row.

DUSTY (cont'd)

CLAIRE
You don't look like no press agent, Sugar.

BECKY
Look here, Miss.

CLAIRE
I'm with Down Beat.

(to Dusty)

Heard of it?

Dusty waives Becky off. Becky exits.

DUSTY
I have. And why is an American jazz magazine sending a reporter to write about Motown acts in England?
CLAIRE

It isn't.

DUSTY

Oh, really? Then may I ask, why are you here?

CLAIRE

You may.

A silence. Claire enjoys this.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

I dig your outfit.

DUSTY

Thank you.

CLAIRE

Little old to be dressing like one of those teenage mod girls, aren't you?

DUSTY

Old? No, you see, they are dressing like me. Silly. I know. Your answer to my question. Why are you here?

CLAIRE

Same as you. To hear this Motown sound for myself.

DUSTY

But these songs are all over the charts in America.

CLAIRE

But I don't live in America. I'm living in Copenhagen right now. Stockholm before that. And a little in Paris and Nice.

DUSTY

You must have quite a story behind your travels.

CLAIRE

Back in the States, no one cares about jazz. All the best players go to Europe. So I moved to Europe.

DUSTY

I would give anything to live in America.

CLAIRE

Haven't you seen what's going on in Mississippi? Alabama? Doesn't that make the news here?
DUSTY
Yes, of course. I don't pay much attention to newspapers.

CLAIRE
America don't want people like me.

DUSTY
You haven't told me your name.

Music begins. Underscore.

DUSTY (cont'd)
I'm sorry, it seems to be my time to sing.

CLAIRE
In this show?

DUSTY
Yes. It appears so

"The look of love"

DUSTY (cont'd)
You'll stay to hear me?

CLAIRE
I've got a deadline. So...

DUSTY
I'd love it if you would.

CLAIRE
Claire. My name's Claire.

DUSTY
Claire.

Dusty rushes to the "stage."

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
And now, ladies and gentlemen, your hostess -- Dusty Springfield!

Claire is impressed. Stunned. She can't stop watching Dusty.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

The look of love
Is in your eyes,
The look your heart
Can't disguise.

The look of love
Is saying so much more
Than just words could ever say.
And what my heart has heard,
Well, it takes my breath away.

I can hardly wait to hold you,
Feel my arms around you.
How long i have waited--

DUSTY (cont'd)
Waited just to love you
Now that i have found you.

CLAIRE
You've got the look of love
It's on your face
A look that time
Can't erase.

Be mine tonight
Let this be just the start of
so many nights like This.
Let's take a lover's vow
And then seal it with a kiss

DUSTY AND CLAIRE
I can hardly wait to hold you,
Feel my arms around you.
How long i have waited--
waited just to love you
Now that i have found you
Don't ever go.
Don't ever go.
I love you so.

Dusty and Claire exit, hand in hand.

Scene TEN
A few days later. Dusty's flat. A swanky, swinging London pad.
Claire, in a robe, types madly on a manual Smith-Corona. Dusty, also in robe, enters.

MUSIC UNDERSCORE throughout.

"JUST A LITTLE LOVIN'"

CLAIRE
Just got one last deadline.

DUSTY
Work, work, work. I work all the time. Not you too.

CLAIRE
Not all the time. Obviously.

DUSTY
JUST A LITTLE LOVIN'

CLAIRE
Dusty...

DUSTY
EARLY IN THE MORNIN'
BEATS A CUP OF COFFEE
FOR STARTIN' OUT THE DAY

CLAIRE
JUST A LITTLE LOVIN'
WHEN THE WORLD IS YAWNIN'
MAKES YOU WAKE UP FEELIN' GOOD THINGS
ARE COMING YOUR WAY

DUSTY AND CLAIRE
THIS OLD WORLD
IT WOULDN'T BE HALF AS BAD
IT WOULDN'T BE HALF AS SAD
IF EACH AND EVERYBODY IN IT HAD

DUSTY
I didn't know I owned a typewriter.

CLAIRE
This girl's mine. I had her shipped the other day.

DUSTY
Oh. Then -- you'll be staying a while?

(they hug)
Darling, that makes me so -- happy!
CLAIRE
Dusty, you sure this is cool? The newspapers? The gossip?

DUSTY
Oh, please. The newspapers have me sleeping with Burt Bacharach. That's this week. Last week they had me turning down McCartney, but jumping into bed with Jagger.

CLAIRE
Oh God.

DUSTY
Oh God.

(beat)
Love, there's something I must tell you.

CLAIRE
You can tell me anything, Baby.

DUSTY
In a few days from now, I'm leaving.

CLAIRE
Wait -- what?

DUSTY
On a tour, Darling. That's all! Just a couple of weeks. An international tour.

CLAIRE
I'll come with you. I travel for work all the time.

(reads Dusty's reaction)
Oh. I dig.

DUSTY
No, it isn't that. It's not that at all. I swear. I'm only looking out for you, Claire. You must know, I can't bear to be apart from you even for --

CLAIRE
Shhh. A few days from now ain't now.

DUSTY
THIS OLD WORLD
IT WOULDN'T BE HALF AS BAD
IT WOULDN'T BE HALF AS SAD
IF EACH AND EVERYBODY IN IT HAD
JUST A LITTLE LOVIN'
EARLY IN THE MORNIN'
Scene ELEVEN

Dusty's flat. Evening. Becky is there. Dusty is poised to sign a contract.

CLAIRE
When you said "international" you didn't say you were going to South Africa.

BECKY
Dusty, please, sign the bloody contract.

Dusty moves pen toward paper. Claire shoves her hand in the way.

CLAIRE
You don't know what you're up against, Girl.

BECKY
She has everything sorted!

DUSTY
Becky! Claire, I have everything sorted.

BECKY
Dusty. May I speak with you a moment? Privately.

DUSTY
Whatever you need to say to me, Becky, you can say to Claire as well.

BECKY
Fine. You've trusted me for almost two years. Have you been disappointed yet?

DUSTY
Of course not.

BECKY
Six hit singles? A top 10 LP? New Musical Express female performer of the year?
DUSTY
Becky, where is this leading?

CLAIRE
It's okay, Dusty. She's right. Why should you listen to me?

DUSTY
Never say that, Claire.

CLAIRE
Just ask yourself something. Why do you want to perform in that country?

DUSTY
I just want everyone who digs my music to be able to come and hear me sing it.

CLAIRE
But not everyone can come hear you sing it. Unless by "everyone," you mean "everyone white."

DUSTY
That's unfair. I will never perform to a segregated audience.

BECKY
It's right here, in black and white.

CLAIRE
Why are you being so naive?

BECKY
My God. She is many things. But naive? I think not.

DUSTY
God damn it, Becky! Claire, I won't sing for a segregated audience. It's my promise to you.

Dusty signs the paperwork.

CLAIRE
Dusty, it's apartheid.

Scene TWELVE

South Africa. Dusty on stage.

DUSTY
Hello, Cape Town! It's such a delight to be here tonight and to see so many
beautiful faces, together as one.

"PEOPLE GET READY/Willie and laura mae jones"

I hope these songs will inspire you, all of you, to dream about true community and friendship that sees no color.

People get ready, there's a train a comin'
You don't need no baggage, you just get on board
All you need is faith to hear the diesels hummin'
Don't need no ticket, you just thank the Lord

WILLIE AND LAURA MAE JONES WERE OUR NEIGHBORS A LONG TIME BACK
They lived right down the road from us
In a shack just like our shack.

The people worked the land together
And we learned to count on each other.
When you live off the land you don't have the time to
Think about another man's color.

The cotton was high and the corn was blowin' fine,
But that was another place and another time.
Sit out on the front porch
In the evening when the sun went down.
Willie would play and the kids would sing
And everybody would mess around.

Daddy'd bring out his guitar
And play on through the night.
Every now and then old willie would grin
And say, "hey, you play alright."
(spoken) Made me feel so good!

I remember the best times of all
Saturday came around,
We all would stop by willie's house
And say, "do ya'll need anything from town?"

He'd say, "no, but why don't ya'll
Stop on the way back through?
But i'll get laura mae, yeah,
To cook up some BARBECUE.
(spoken) And you know that's good!

The cotton was high and the corn was blowin' fine
Yes it was
Well that was another place and another time.

The years rolled past the land
And took back wheat they've given.
We all knew we had to move
If we were gonna make a livin'
So we all moved on
And went about our separate ways
It sure was hard to say good-bye
To willie and laura mae.
Oh, yeah...

The cotton was high and the corn was blowin' fine,
YES it was,
But that was another place AND ANOTHER TIME
People get ready, there's a train a comin'
You don't need no baggage, you just get on board
All you need is faith to hear the diesels hummin'
Don't need no ticket you just thank, OH YOU JUST THANK THE L--

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Stop! By order of the Cape Town City Police, this performance has been declared a threat to public safety!

Dusty stands speechless, stunned.

Scene THIRTEEN

Dusty's hotel room. She argues with a South African official, MR. VANDER SANT.

She eats a damp sandwich off a paper plate.

DUSTY
Mr. Vander Sant! We've been confined to this hotel room for three days. Can I at least get a decent meal? A plate of bangers, even. If I look at one more bloody tomato sandwich, I'll vomit!

VANDER SANT
Please sign this document, Miss Springfield. Then we will be able to let you leave.

DUSTY
If I put my signature on that document, I lose whatever rights I have under my contract.

VANDER SANT
The contract is not valid.

DUSTY
My contract, Mr. Vander Sant, quite clearly states that we were to perform in cinemas because racially mixed audiences are not yet banned there. We held up our end of the bargain.

VANDER SANT
Mixed-race audiences violate South African law.

DUSTY
To hell with your laws! If I'm in violation of your law, deport me!

VANDER SANT
(after a BEAT)
If you are deported, the government is obligated to purchase your airline fare. And that's -- expensive.

DUSTY
Expensive? Dear God, you're both evil and cheap!

VANDER SANT
All we ask is respect for tradition when you are in our country.

Respect?

DUSTY
Yes.

Tradition?

VANDER SANT
Yes.

DUSTY
Mr. Vander Sant, neither I nor anyone in my group is signing any piece of paper you place in front of us. Unless it's a receipt for a ticket out of this bloody backwards country. So unless you're looking to get your scrawny arse kicked by a former field hockey player, I suggest you arrange our travel and get the fuck out of my hotel room this instant!

Scene fourTEEN
Heathrow airport. A pack of reporters. Dusty enters in coat and dark glasses.

GROUP OF REPORTERS (V.O.)
(ad lib)
Miss Springfield! Dusty! Over here! Just one question!

REPORTER ONE (V.O.)
Dusty, was your stance against the South African government just a stunt to get your name in the papers?

DUSTY
Look, if you believe this was a publicity stunt, you're out of your mind. I need this kind of publicity like a hole in the head. In fact, I may sue the South African government. If they want to sling mud around, they've picked the wrong person. I have a far more deadly aim.

Dusty exits.

Scene FIFTEEN

Dusty's flat. Claire talks on the phone. A TV is on in the background.

CLAIRE
I'm saying Coltrane's made another leap forward, like he did with "Giant Steps."

FEMALE TV PRESENTER (V.O.)
Pop star Dusty Springfield arrived at Heathrow this morning, direct from Cape Town, where her actions have caused a row between Britain and the government of South Africa.

CLAIRE
I'll call you back.

FEMALE TV PRESENTER (V.O.)
Actor Derek Nimmo, in particular has strong views on the Springfield situation.

Claire hangs up, troubled by what she hears on TV.

DEREK NIMMO (TV) (V.O.)
There's no question that her actions were foolish and irresponsible.

Dusty enters, exhausted.

DEREK NIMMO (V.O.) (TV) (cont'd)
Miss Springfield has certainly achieved an enormous step backward as far as the
cause of racial equality --

Claire switches off the TV. Dusty stands speechless.
Mortified.

CLAIRE
I'm really sorry, Dust.

DUSTY
(bravely)
Never mind. It's only Nimmo. What a prat!
(pours vodka)
I was trying to bring people together. They're portraying me like some kind of villain.

Dusty washes down a pill. Claire takes the drink from Dusty, sets it down.

CLAIRE
Come on, Dusty. It's not even noon.

DUSTY
Oh, please. I flew for more than 12 hours through the night and --
(off Claire's look)
You're right. As always, Darling. You're right.

DOORBELL rings.

DUSTY (cont'd)
They've come for me in my own home! Give me back that vodka!

Claire warily answers the door. Standing there --
Bob Thackeray.

CLAIRE
May I help you?

THACKERAY
Oh. I am at the right flat, aren't I?

DUSTY
Is that Bob Thackeray?

She collects herself, dries her eyes.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Come in, Bob. Of course. Won't you sit down?
THACKERAY
No need, Dusty. Thank you. Didn't want to bother you at Heathrow. Just a couple of questions, then I'll be on my way.

DUSTY
This is my -- dear friend. Claire.

THACKERAY
Pleasure.

He extends his hand. Claire shakes it, skeptical.

DUSTY
How may I help you, Bob?

THACKERAY
Just wondering. All the money you earned from this tour --

DUSTY
-- is going to charity. I don't want one penny.

THACKERAY
So, the South African government claims that you were warned not to perform in front of integrated crowds, but you deliberately chose to defy their orders.

DUSTY
You make it sound so dramatic.

THACKERAY
Did you think anything good could come out of this?

CLAIRE
She stood up to oppression.

DUSTY
Yes, there was one good thing. As I was boarding the plane home, a small group of airport porters, all black men, removed their berets in salute forming a solemn guard of honor.

CLAIRE
In their country, that's the highest display of respect.

DUSTY
Bob, honestly, it was the most sincere form of respect that I've ever known.

THACKERAY
Brilliant.
DUSTY
Be kind to me, will you, Bob?

THACKERAY
Always, Miss Springfield.

He exits.

CLAIRE
I don't get it, Baby. They kill you in the press, so you let them into our house?

DUSTY
I should have listened to you, Claire. I truly believed I was doing the right thing.

CLAIRE
You listened to your heart. I'm proud of you.

(beat)
Sometimes I wish I'd stood up for myself, instead of running away to Europe.

DUSTY
You didn't run away. You came to me. I would never have had the strength to do what I did without you.

CLAIRE
Promise me we'll go there soon, together, to America.

DUSTY
But, I thought you said America didn't want you?

CLAIRE
That's why I have to go.

A pregnant BEAT.

DUSTY
We'll go wherever you like!

"LOVE POWER"

DUSTY (cont'd)
When we walk
Down the street
We don't care Who we see
Or who we meet

CLAIRE
Don't have to run
Don't have to hide
'Cause we got something
burning inside

DUSTY AND CLAIRE

We got love power
It's the greatest power of them all
We got love power
And together we can't fall

CLAIRE

Sometimes we're up

DUSTY

Sometimes we're down

DUSTY AND CLAIRE

But our feet are always on the ground

DUSTY

We always laugh

CLAIRE

Don't have to cry

DUSTY AND CLAIRE

And this is the reason why
We got love power
It's the greatest power of them all
hey, hey, hey We got love power
And together we can't fall
We got love, hey, love power
It's the greatest feeling of them all
hey, hey, hey
We got love, oh, power
And together we can't fall

Scene SIXTEEN


DUSTY

No, no, no, Becky, it's still wrong.

BECKY

Dusty, I'll get Johnny. You really should speak to him about this.
DUSTY
Stuff Johnny. Stuff all English recording producers. They've been doing things the right and proper way for 30 years. You know they're not going to listen to some bee-hived bird.

BECKY
Trouble at home? You know, with her.

DUSTY
Are you referring to Claire?

BECKY
What is the trouble, then?

DUSTY
Him. The bass player.

BECKY
The bass player.

DUSTY
He's striking the strings with a plectrum.

BECKY
The right and proper way.

DUSTY
In America they play with their fingers. That is the sound I want.

BECKY
You! Drop that plectrum.

DUSTY
Becky, I can always count on you for the delicate touch.

BECKY
At your service, as always.

DUSTY
Once more.

(listens)
Bloody hell, Becky! The sound is so muddy, I've heard cleaner sound rumbling up a creaky lift! I need echo in the vocal.

(sighs, disgusted)
I'll be in the loo. And I don't care how many dirty looks I get. I need to feel like I'm living in the sound.

Dusty sits, as if on the toilet.
DUSTY (cont'd)
Living in the -- sound. MMM-mmm-mmm. MMM-MMM-MMMM! Oh my God, it's perfect sound in the bloomin' loo! Get in there, boys! Grab that other mic and swing it over the stall.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Becky, If I get a hit single out of this, who cares if I recorded it in the ladies' toilet?

"I Close My eyes and count to ten"

Scene SEVENTEEN

TV Studio. Dusty sings "live."

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
From the BBC TV Theatre in Shepherd's Bush, London, it's --the Dusty Springfield Show!

DUSTY
It isn't the way that you look And it isn't the way that you talk It isn't the things that you say or do Make me want you so It is nothing to do with the wine Or the music that's flooding my mind But never before have I been so sure You're the someone I dreamed I would find It's the way you make me feel The moment I am close to you It's a feeling so unreal Somehow I can't believe it's true The pounding I feel in my heart The hoping that we'll never part I can't believe this is really happening to me I close my eyes and count to ten
And when I open them you're still here I close my eyes and count again I can't believe it but you're still here We were strangers a moment ago With a few dreams but nothing to show The world was a place With a frown on its face And tomorrow was just, I don't know But the way you make me feel The moment I am close to you Makes today seem so unreal Somehow I can't believe it's true Tomorrow will you still be here? Tomorrow will come but I fear That what is happening to me Is only a dream I close my eyes and count to ten And when I open them you're still here I close my eyes and count again I can't believe it but you're still here I close my eyes and count to ten And when I open them you're still here

Dusty takes a bow and exits.

Scene EIGHTEEN

Dusty and Claire's flat. Claire is mesmerized by images on TV. The U.S. Civil rights struggle. Claire crouches on one knee, scribbling intently in a reporter's notebook.
Dr. Martin Luther King speaks on TV.

Claire pockets down her notes and stands, in awe, deeply moved.

DR. KING (V.O.)
We've got to find a method that will disrupt our cities if necessary, create the crisis that will force the nation to look at the situation, dramatize it, and yet at the same time not destroy life or property. You know what I see that as? I see that as massive civil disobedience.

Dusty enters and pours a drink.

DUSTY
My favorite color. Vodka.

CLAIRE
Dusty, have you thought -- I don't know -- that it's time for a change?

DUSTY
That's exactly what I've been telling you, Darling. When I hear the new music, Rubber Soul, Bob Dylan -- my God, "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me" sounds like the theme from Ben Hur.

CLAIRE
Things are changing back home. I'm changing too.

DUSTY
Oh, Claire. I don't want you to change. You look great.

CLAIRE
You're not listening.

DUSTY
Yes, I am, Claire. Of course I am.

Awkward silence.

DUSTY (cont'd)
What is it?

CLAIRE
America, Dusty. Have you given it any thought?

DUSTY
I've thought about it. It's about time I give those blokes at Phillips Records a right talking to. Their promotional efforts over there have been shameful.
CLAIRE
Are you doing this on purpose?

DUSTY
What's that, Love?

CLAIRE
Bringing everything back to yourself, when I'm talking about something -- bigger?

DUSTY
I hate it when we argue, Darling!

CLAIRE
Dusty, I've spent too long running away. I'm going home. To America.

DUSTY
Are you saying -- you're leaving?

CLAIRE
No. I mean, yes. But I want you with me. I need to -- I don't know -- write about it. Or just be there. When I had the chance -- I just ran. No more.

DUSTY
Well -- I know something about that.

CLAIRE
Dusty, I can't let what's happening there happen without me. I have to go home.

DUSTY
Then I swear to you. I will get us there.

Scene NINETEEN
The office of a big-time American RECORD EXECUTIVE. He's a powerful man and he knows it. Dusty strides in, confident as she can pretend to be.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Good Afternoon. I'm Dusty Springfield. I'll say it right out. I would be honored to sign with your label.

EXECUTIVE
Slow down, Honey. Welcome to the Big Apple.

DUSTY
I have --

EXECUTIVE
How was your flight?

I have --

You want a drink?

I have only one condition.

Guess I'm drinking alone.

(pouring drink)

It's good to relax before talking business. That's my belief. Get to know each other.

Jerry Wexler.

Okay, you win.

(takes a sip)

What about him?

He has recorded all of the great soul artists. I will record with him as my producer and no one else.

I think we can market you that way. A crossover thing. Blacks and whites buying the same album.

Exactly!

Sounds good to me.

I'm delighted you agree.

Sure. But one thing. If I let you have Jerry, what do you have for me?

I'm sorry?
EXECUTIVE
I've followed your career for several years now. I always thought you were a very attractive girl.

DUSTY
Right. If you want to cash in on my unique crossover appeal, as you say, let's make this deal. If not, I'm fully prepared to walk straight out that door and find another American label.

EXECUTIVE
Can't blame a man for trying.

He signs a piece of paper and hands it to Dusty, who grabs it.

Scene TWENTY
A room in the Plaza Hotel, New York. Claire writes on a note pad. Dusty enters with the contract.

DUSTY
Claire, you would have been so proud of me! I just held my ground with the most powerful man in the recording business.

CLaire
Yeah?

DUSTY
Shy Mary O'Brien could never have done that. She would have been flat on her back with her knickers around her ankles.

CLaire
What?

DUSTY
But not Dusty Springfield. She stood strong and proud -- on her own two feet!

CLaire
Whoa, back it up. Rewind it, Dusty. What the hell happened?

DUSTY
I signed my first American recording contract.

CLAire reaches for the document.

DUSTY (cont'd)
You don't want to read this boring thing. We should throw a party!
CLaire
Come on, let me see. This is a big deal.

Dusty reluctantly hands it over. She pours a drink.

CLaire (cont'd)
Dusty this is incredible. "To be produced by Jerry Wexler... American Sound Studios...

(beat)
"Memphis...?"

Dusty (puts on her best happy face)
Here's to "Dusty in Memphis."

CLaire
Baby. Anywhere but Memphis.

Dusty
I brought us to America, as I promised.

CLaire
After what they did to Dr. King, I won't set foot in that town.

Dusty
It wasn't my choice, Claire. Jerry says we must record in the same studio as Aretha, Otis and, well, all of the original musicians. Frankly, I'm terrified.

(beat)
You're scared, too. I understand.

CLaire
Do you? Really?

Dusty
No, I suppose I don't. Still, I'm asking you, Claire, please come with me. I can't do this alone.

CLaire
It's just for a few weeks. You won't be alone.

Dusty
No? I am quite alone, wouldn't you say? Does every journalist ask you if you're bent? Must you pretend to be forever on the hunt for a husband? No one cares who you sleep with. No one cares who you love.

CLaire
(fighting tears)
Go to Memphis, Dusty. You'll be fine.
(grabs a sweater, heads out)
When you get back, we'll see if this still works.

DUSTY

That hurts.

CLAIREDUSTY

You're hurting yourself. But you do that, don't you?

Where are you going?

CLAIREDUSTY

For a walk through the park. Alone.

Dusty, alone, stares at the empty space where Claire used to be.

Scene TWENTY-ONE

1968. Memphis recording studio. Dusty is at the mic. Jerry is at the controls in the booth.

JERRY

"Dusty in Memphis." "Son of a Preacher Man." Take forty-seven!

"SON OF A PREACHER MAN"

The musicians don't get far.

DUSTY

Stop, God Damn it! Jerry, The sound's not right. The beat is sloppy, my voice is weak. And this song. She wants to make love with a preacher's son? Does that sound like anything I've ever experienced?

JERRY

Enough of this shit!

DUSTY

Oh, God. Who nicked my pills? Right, then. I'd like a drink. These things tend to sound better when you're pissed. A God damned Grand Mamier would suit me right now.

JERRY

Do what I tell you and finish this track!
DUSTY

Bollocks, Jerry!

JERRY

Listen Sweetie, I've done this a few times before, you know.
(to the band)
We never got this crap from Aretha. Did we, boys? Now she was a real professional.

DUSTY

Is that it, then? All this is because I have a producer who's a prima donna?

JERRY

There's only one prima donna in this studio.

Dusty hurls an ashtray at him.

A stunned silence follows.

DUSTY

I'm sorry. Jerry, I'm terribly embarrassed.

JERRY

Okay. It's all right. Wow. We're going to make a hell of a record here. All you gotta do is sing.

DUSTY

Not here. I'm sorry, Jerry. Not in Memphis. I need to go back to New York.

JERRY

Let me understand what you're saying. You want to record this album, "Dusty in Memphis," in New York City?

Scene TWENTY-TWO


JERRY (cont'd)

Dusty in Memphis. "Son of a Preacher Man." New York City. Take -- one!

"Son of a preacher man"

Claire enters, joining Jerry in the booth. Dusty launches into the song. This time, she sounds amazing.
DUSTY
BILLY RAY WAS A PREACHER'S SON
AND WHEN HIS DADDY WOULD VISIT HE'D COME ALONG.
WHEN THEY GATHERED ROUND AND STARTED TALKIN'.
ALL THROUGH THE BACK ROADS WE'D GO WALKIN'
THEN HE'D LOOK INTO MY EYES,
LORD KNOWS TO MY SURPRISE!
THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD EVER REACH ME
WAS THE SON OF A PREACHER MAN.
THE ONLY BOY WHO COULD EVER TEACH ME
WAS THE SON OF A PREACHER MAN.
YES, HE WAS, HE WAS, HE WAS...

BEIN' GOOD ISN'T ALWAYS EASY,
NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY.
WHEN HE STARTED SWEET TALKIN' TO ME
HE'D COME AND TELL ME EVERYTHING IS ALRIGHT.
HE'D KISS AND TELL ME EVERYTHING IS ALRIGHT.

THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD EVER REACH ME
WAS THE SON OF A PREACHER MAN.
THE ONLY BOY WHO COULD EVER TEACH ME
WAS THE SON OF A PREACHER MAN.
YES, HE WAS, HE WAS, HE WAS...

HOW WELL I REMEMBER,
THE LOOK THAT WAS IN HIS EYES,
STEALIN' KISSES FROM ME ON THE SLY,
TAKIN' TIME TO MAKE TIME,
TELLIN' ME HE WAS ALL MINE,
LEARNING' FROM EACH OTHER'S KNOWIN'
LOOKING TO SEE HOW MUCH WE'VE GROWN.

AND THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD EVER REACH ME
WAS THE SON OF A PREACHER MAN.
THE ONLY BOY WHO COULD EVER TEACH ME
WAS THE SON OF A PREACHER MAN.

YES HE WAS, HE WAS, HE WAS...
OH OH YES HE WAS...

Triumph! Claire looks on with the old pride that she always felt. Dusty looks to Jerry, eager for his approval.

JERRY
(with a shrug)
That'll work.

**Scene TWENTY-THREE**

The Record Exec's office. 1970. The EXEC is in the middle of lunch.

DUSTY

"Not available in the current catalog?"

EXECUTIVE

There's no question. "Dusty in Memphis" is a great album. Destined to be a classic. I couldn't be more proud.

DUSTY

And...?

EXECUTIVE

There was one small problem. No one bought it.

DUSTY

Rolling Stone wrote a rave review. People loved "Dusty in Memphis."

EXECUTIVE

Not people.

(beat)

Critics.

DUSTY

My music brings people together.

EXECUTIVE

Things changed. White audiences hear the black sound and all they hear is, "Kill the honky." Black audiences see a white face and they see -- well, you know what they see.

DUSTY

But that's not who I am.

"Little by little"

EXECUTIVE

This is the '70s now, Kid. Be someone new.

Dusty sings to the Executive.

DUSTY

Little by little by little by little
Little by little by little by little by little.
You're messin' up my life
Tearing me apart,
Breaking up my world
By giving up my heart
OoooH little by little by little by little.

Dusty exits.

Scene TWENTY-FOUR

Song continues. Scene shifts from New York to Los Angeles.

Dusty's Laurel Canyon villa. A lesbian party. Claire enters -- followed by a SEXY WOMAN who gulps a cocktail.

CLAIRE
I'm losing all my pride.
It's really gettin' bad.
Hurting deep inside--
It's making me go mad
OoooH little by little by little by little.
Little by little,
Bit by bit,
I'm going crazy and you're causing it.
Little by little,
Bit by bit,
I should stop caring but my love won't quit.

I don't know where to turn.
I don't know what to do.
Walking on thin ice
It seems i'm falling through.
OoooH little by little
Little by little

Dusty re-enters. With Claire watching, she flirts with the Sexy Woman.

DUSTY
I'm the queen of fools,
You know the deck is stacked.
I'm on a losing streak
But I'm gonna get you back
OoooH little by little by little by little
LITTLE BY LITTLE, Little By Little

DUSTY/CLAIRE/SEXY WOMAN

Little by little by little by little by little
OoooH little by little by little by little
Little by little by little by little by little!

OoooH little by little by little by little.

CLAIRE
Are you trying to humiliate me?

The Sexy Woman knows she's not welcome. She exits, staggering out.

DUSTY
Not at all, Darling. I love you, of course. But you have to admit, this is thrilling. Right here in our little hovel, a Who's Who of the "Hollywood Lesbian Underground."

CLAIRE
The party's over, Dusty.

DUSTY
It's Los Angeles, Dear. The party's never over.

CLAIRE
(offs.) The party's over, Dusty. Claire tosses Dusty's pills. She pours the vodka on the floor.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Darling, the carpet. Do you know the price of maid service in this town?

CLAIRE
(re: Sexy Woman, offstage)
What about her?

DUSTY
Who? Oh, her? You want to know if I shagged her! I truthfully don't recall. But, come on love, I could use a little in any event!

CLAIRE
Why are you doing this? What did I ever do besides love you?

DUSTY
Love me? Me? All that time I left you alone in New York? Do you think I'm a complete fool? That I didn't know?

CLAIRE
How dare you? When was the last time you and I made love? And in public, I'm still your "dear friend."

**DUSTY**
Do I need to remind you that it is my career that has given you everything? My career! And do you know what would happen to my career if --

**CLaire**
Your career is over!

"CRUMBS OFF THE TABLE"

**CLaire**
And it is not my fault.

Dusty's stunned. That cut her.

They have a terrible fight.

**CLaire (cont'd)**
Ooh, hoo Get up in the morning 'Bout a quarter to nine
Get home in the evenin'
Too tired to make time
Give me the lovin'
I've been waiting for all day You're always a little too tired
To ever look my way
You got me hungry for your love
But you, you ain't able
All you want to give me
Is the crumbs off the table
What you been doin'?
Who you been wooin'?
Tell me, tell me who you been doin'? 

**DUSTY**
I ache inside With a lovin' desire But you're too tired, baby
To light my fire
I work in this house all day
And I get tired too
There ain't a day goes by
I ain't willing to make love to you I'm hungry for your love
But you, you ain't able
All you want to give me
Is the crumbs off the table
What you been doin'?
Who you been wooin'?  
Tell me, tell me, tell me who you been doin'?  

CLAIRE
Hey, sometimes in the middle of the day  
I get lovin' you on my mind

DUSTY
But as soon as you get home  
You read the paper  
Ain't got the time

DUSTY & CLAIRE
What you been doin'? Who you been wooin'?  
Tell me, tell me, who you been doin'?  
I said I'm hungry for your lovin' But you, you ain't able All you want to give me is  
the crumbs off the table

Dusty hits Claire in the face, hard.

CLAIRE
Good bye, Dusty.

Claire exits, gone for good.

DUSTY
Claire! You're right! You're absolutely right! Don't leave! Please, Darling!  
(totally desperate)
I am so sorry!

Scene TWENTY-FIVE

The Source Restaurant on the Sunset Strip, 1970.

Bob Thackeray examines a menu, puzzled and somewhat disgusted. Dusty enters. Bob rises to greet her.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Sorry, Bob. Didn't mean to hold you up. Have you ordered?

THACKERAY
I asked the waitress for a cheeseburger. She looked at me like I just shot her poodle. I thought this was America.

DUSTY
That's where you're wrong, Bob. It's L.A.
THACKERAY
Y’know, I haven’t been to Los Angeles since The Beatles’ final tour. To be honest, I hoped I’d never be here again.

DUSTY
I understand.

They sit.

THACKERAY
So why did the First Lady of British Pop exile herself -- your words, not mine -- to this faraway and cheeseburger-free city?

DUSTY
It does seem strange, doesn’t it? I must admit, it’s lonely in many ways.

THACKERAY
We’re recording this now.

DUSTY
In England I had a network of musicians who understood my style. As well as Becky -- and other friends who lent an ear to my troubles. And there were many.

THACKERAY
I’ve always respected you, Dusty. But I am a journalist, not a friend.

DUSTY
I’m quite aware of that, Bob. So ask me.

THACKERAY
Ask you? What?

DUSTY
The question you and every other joumo have wanted to ask me for years. Come on, Bob. Don’t be a ponce. Ask the question.

THACKERAY
I see. That question. All right then, Dusty. There have long been certain, shall we say, rumors about you.

DUSTY
Well, Mr. Thackeray. Let me tell you. A lot of people say I’m bent. And I know that I am as perfectly capable of being swayed by a girl as a boy. More and more people feel that way. And I don’t see why I shouldn’t!

THACKERAY
Well. You certainly answered that question.
DUSTY
Do you realize that what I've just said could put the final seal on my doom? I don't know, though, I might attract a whole new audience.

Scene TWENTY-SIX
Thackeray on the phone long distance.

"I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF"

THACKERAY
Yes, are you there? The connection's shite, damn it. I said the connection's sh--. Look, I'm going to give this to you the way I want it printed. Understand? Now I know what you're going to tell me, that I'm burying the lead or some such bollocks. But this is how the story must be. These quotations must remain at the bottom of the interview. I don't want to hurt the girl any more than she's already hurting.

Scene TWENTY-SEVEN
Dusty's Laurel Canyon house. She is alone in the dark.

Dusty has a silver box by her side.

"I just don't know what to do with myself"

DUSTY
I just don't know what to do with myself
I Don't know just what to do with myself
I'm so used to doing everything with you
Planning everything for two
And now that we're through

I just don't know what to do with my time
I'm so lonesome for you it's a crime
Going to THE movie only makes me sad
Parties make me feel as bad
When I'm not with you
I just don't know what to do

Like a summer rose
IT needs the sun and rain
I need your sweet love
To beat all the pain

She reaches into the box. The stage goes BLACK, except for a narrow SPOT on Dusty's face.

DUSTY (cont'd)
I just don't know what to do with myself
Baby, if your new love ever turns you down
Come on back, I will be around
Just waiting for you
I don't know what else to do

Like a summer rose
It needs the sun and rain
Oh, I need your sweet love
To beat all the pain

I don't know just what to do with myself
Baby, if your new love ever turns you down
Come on back, I will be around
Just waiting for you
I don't know what else to do, no, no, no
I'm still so crazy for you, no, no, no
I'm still so crazy for you

Dusty slips into unconsciousness.

SIRENS!

PARAMEDIC ONE (O.S.)
Lady! Wake up! Wake up!

PARAMEDIC TWO (O.S.)
Get some bandages. She's injured!

PARAMEDIC ONE (O.S.)
Jesus. Miss O'Brien? Wake up! Miss O'Brien...

Scene TWENTY-EIGHT

Psychiatric ward. Dusty sleeps.

GINI enters, a hippie/New Age type. Flowing dress
and unstyled hair, pulled into a pony tail.

GINI
Miss O'Brien. Miss O'Brien. Wake up, please.

DUSTY
Claire? Is it morning, Darling?

GINI
Miss O'Brien? My name is Gini.

DUSTY
My name is -- Mary. They do have the prettiest nurses in this institution. In the last one they were all rather old.

GINI
I'm your drug and alcohol counselor. Your file says this is your third hospitalization.

DUSTY
It may be four. Or five. Who can count?

GINI
You're English, are you?

DUSTY
Irish.

GINI
What brought you to L.A.?

DUSTY
I was following a lover!

GINI
That sounds quite romantic.

DUSTY
Sounds quite desperate, really.

GINI
This is the beginning of a long journey, Mary. I know. I've been on it myself for many years. But if you want to heal, I will always be with you.

Dusty smiles. She has a new friend.

Scene TWENTY-NINE
AA meeting, Dusty at center. Gini stands behind
her, proud.

DUSTY
Hello. My name is Mary. And I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP (O.S.)
Hi, Mary!

DUSTY
I can't believe it. I am four years sober!
(becoming emotional)
Still, I cannot stop thinking of the people I've hurt in my life. There is one person, especially. I haven't seen or heard from her in many years. If she were here -- I wish I could repeat the last words I ever spoke to her.

(beat)
I am so sorry!

Gini takes Dusty's hand. They cross downstage.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Gini, I have so much to thank you for. For letting me sleep on your couch, for never failing to pick up the phone, for not giving a shit when your gay flat-mate told you that Mary O'Brien was actually Dusty Springfield. I'm afraid I need to ask your generosity again. I need to get on with my life, and for me that means one thing above all else.

GINI
Music.

DUSTY
And I'm sure, at times, I may slip. But...

GINI
Mary, I'm with you whenever you need me.

The embrace -- the best of friends.

Scene THIRTY
Recording studio. The 1980s. Dusty at the microphone, wearing headphones.

DUSTY
SINCE --
(stops)
Oh, I liked that one.
(listens to headset)
Yes, Neil, I realize it was one word. But it was a bloody good one. Let's keep it.
TOM appears in a corner of the studio.

TOM
Always the perfectionist.

DUSTY
Dion? It's been --

TOM
They're remastering one of my old solo albums. My God, I haven't been in a recording studio in -- ages. In any event, someone mentioned you were working in here. Thought I'd pop by and see my sister the pop star.

DUSTY
Oh -- Dion!

They embrace.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Can you ever forgive me?

TOM
Things turned out all right. For both of us in the end, it appears.

DUSTY
Will you wait for me?

TOM
Of course. But Dusty?

DUSTY
Yes?

TOM
The Pet Shop Boys?

DUSTY
Not your scene, I'm afraid.

She puts the headset back on. This time. We hear the music. She sings -- looking over at Tom.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Since you went away
I've been hanging around
I've been wondering why
I'm feeling down
You went away
it should make me feel better
But I don't know, oh
How I'm gonna get through
How I'm gonna get through

Scene THIRTY ONE

Royal Albert Hall. Tom paces nervously. Gini looks around, fascinated.

TOM
Is she often this late? My God, Gini, this is Royal Albert Hall! It's taken her a lifetime to get here.

GINI
So, she'll be here. There's no reason to worry.

TOM
Tell that to the 5,000 ticket holders out there. Tell that to Princess Margaret.

GINI
Is she coming tonight? How exciting. I've never seen a princess in person.

TOM
We're just minutes before showtime. You're not the least bit concerned?

GINI
No.

TOM
I envy you Americans.

Dusty bursts in, with shopping bags.

DUSTY
WHAT HAVE I, WHAT HAVE I
WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE THIS?
WHAT HAVE I, WHAT HAVE I -- Hello, hello! Is everything all right?

TOM
Couldn't be better. Why do you ask?

DUSTY
I've found the most fabulous shoes!

TOM
Shopping, Dusty? That's why you're two hours late?
DUSTY
That was never two hours! Hmm. I suppose it was. But it was worth it. This is The Royal Albert Hall!

TOM
So you've noticed?

DUSTY
(very sincere)
You know what this performance means to me, Tom. After all I've -- to sing here, at last.

She pulls a pair of glittery heels from her shopping bag and pulls them on.

DUSTY (cont'd)
That's exactly why this audience deserves at least five pairs of shoes. And so do I! Don't I?

GINI
Of course, Mary. You deserve lots and lots of shoes.

DUSTY
Nineteen-Eighty-Seven has been my best year since -- Nineteen-Sixty-Seven! Even the drag queens are doing me again.

"A BRand new me"

TOM
That's you!

DUSTY
Seems to be my time to sing.

DUSTY
THIS IS MY SAME OLD COAT
AND MY SAME OLD SHOES
I WAS THE SAME OLD ME
WITH THE SAME OLD BLUES
THEN YOU TOUCHED MY LIFE
JUST BY HOLDING MY HAND
NOW I LOOK IN THE MIRROR
AND SEE A BRAND NEW GIRL
I GOT A BRAND NEW WALK
A BRAND NEW SMILE
SINCE I MET YOU BABY
I GOT A BRAND NEW STYLE

JUST BECAUSE OF YOU, GIRL
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU, BOY
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU

DUSTY (cont'd)
I GOT THE SAME OLD FRIENDS
THEY GOT THE SAME OLD SINS
I TELL THE SAME OLD JOKES
GIVE THE SAME OLD GRINS
BUT NOW THE JOKES SOUND NEW
AND THE LAUGHTER DOES TOO
EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE
AS FRESH AS MORNING DEW
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU, GIRL
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU

DUSTY (cont'd)
Ladies and gentlemen, my brother, Tom Springfield!

With some pushing from Gini, reluctantly, Tom walks out on to the stage.

DUSTY (cont'd)
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU, BOY
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU

TOM
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU, GIRL
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU

DUSTY
I GO TO THE SAME OLD PLACES
SEE THE SAME OLD FACES
LOOK AT THE SAME OLD SKIES
SEE THEM ALL WITH BRAND NEW EYES
OOH, OOH You get all the credit, BABY Because I love you, BABY

Dusty soaks in the applause. She strides offstage -- but her mood quickly drops. She sits down, fatigued.

TOM
Well, that was quite something, I --
(notices)
Dusty, can I get you a glass of water?

DUSTY
I'm fine, really. I think I'm just -- tired. Yes, I am tired.

GINI
Dusty, look me in the eye. What's wrong?

DUSTY
I don't know. I'm not well. Not well at all. Oh, Tom. I'm a far cry from Ready Steady Go, aren't I?

CROWD NOISE rises. A rhythmic chant. They want more Dusty! She hears the sound. She tries to collect herself.

TOM
Oh, no you don't. You stay right here until we get a doctor. There will be other audiences.

DUSTY
But this one is here tonight, in The Royal Albert Hall!

She gathers all of her energy and rises to her feet -- back on stage! She gives everything to deliver this number. But she nails it.

"Quiet please, there's a lady on stage"

DUSTY (cont'd)
Quiet please, there's a lady on stage
She may not be the latest rage
But she's singing and she means it
And she deserves a little silence

Quiet please, there's a woman up there
And she's been honest through her songs
Long before your consciousness was raised
Doesn't that deserve a little praise

So put your hands together and help her along
All that's left of the singer's
All that's left of the song
Rise to the occasion
give her one last celebration

Quiet please, there's a person up there
And she's been singing of the things
That none of us could bear to hear for ourselves
Give her MY respect if nothing else

Quiet please, there's a lady on stage
Conductor, turn the final page
And when it's over we can all go home
But she lives on -- on the stage alone.
So put your hands together and help her along
All that's left of the singer's
All that's left of the song
Rise to the occasion
give her one last celebration
Quiet please, Quiet please,
there's a lady on stage

The spotlight fades. Dusty has given everything.
Tom and Gini rush to her. She collapses into Tom's arms.

Tom and Gini rush Dusty offstage.

Sounds of a BRITISH AMBULANCE SIREN.

Scene THIRTY-TWO

Dusty waits in a hospital room. DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR
Good afternoon, Miss O'Brien.

DUSTY
Yes, it's quite lovely, isn't it.

DOCTOR
Yes. I have just a few questions.

DUSTY
I'm at your disposal, Doctor.

DOCTOR
First, do you have any history in your family of breast cancer?

DUSTY
Oh my God.

DOCTOR
No need to be alarmed.
DUSTY
Who will take care of my cats?

DOCTOR
We still need to run a few tests.

DUSTY
At least I've quite a collection of wigs!

DOCTOR
A nurse shall be with you in a few minutes.

"WISHIN' AND HOPIN'"

Dusty sings weakly and quietly.

DUSTY
WISHIN' AND HOPIN'
AND THINKIN' AND PRAYIN'
PLANNIN' AND DREAMIN'...

Scene THIRTY-THREE

Time passes. A doctor brings a wheelchair with an IV drip. Dusty sits.

A visitor enters. Claire.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Claire. Twenty years. Twenty years.

CLAIRE
More than that, I think.

DUSTY
Why are you standing so far away? I may look frightening, but I'm really quite harmless. For now.

CLAIRE
I can only stay a few minutes, Dusty. I'm in town to give a lecture at Cambridge.

DUSTY
A lecture! At Cambridge!

CLAIRE
On the history of jazz.

DUSTY
I'm terribly proud of you, Claire. My darling.

Dusty extends her hand. Claire takes it -- reluctantly.

CLAIRE
We had some good times, Dusty.

DUSTY
I miss you awfully, Claire!

CLAIRE
Dusty, it was a lifetime ago. Your recovery? You stuck with it?

DUSTY
Does a morphine drip count?

Claire backs away.

DUSTY (cont'd)
I really did try, Claire. I tried so hard.

CLAIRE
We both tried.

DUSTY
Then why, Claire? Why did it have to end?

CLAIRE
It was good to see you again, Dusty. It really was.

Claire walks out of Dusty's life for a second time.

Dusty softly begins to cry.

Tom enters. With one look at her, he becomes very concerned. He kneels beside her, attempting to look in her eyes. But she won't make eye contact.

TOM
Dusty? Speak to me, please.
(no response; growing concern)

Mary?

Dusty finally looks up at him. She places a hand on his shoulder.

She struggles mightily to rise from her chair.

TOM (cont'd)
Wait. I'll get someone to help you into bed.

DUSTY
No.
(on her feet)
I want to go to Ireland, Dion.

TOM
Ireland?

DUSTY
I want to go home.

Scene THIRTY-FOUR

The Irish coastline. The Cliffs of Moher.

SOUNDS of ocean and seagulls.

TOM
This place, it never changes.

DUSTY
The sea is peaceful today, isn't it, Dion?

Tom struggles to hold back tears.

TOM
How did you ever survive without me, Mary?

Dusty looks up at him, gives him the best sisterly smile her weakened state will allow.

DUSTY
You know, you invent another person, Tom, because you feel like you're not good enough. Then you realize, all along, you actually were.

She steps forward, taking in the beauty of the sea -- and of life.

DUSTY (cont'd)
Now I have nothing to hide from anymore. It's beautiful to be Mary, to be Dusty, to be a survivor and to simply be -- imperfect. That's me. And that's brilliant!

"I FOUND MY WAY"

DUSTY
In my life i have known many sorrows.
in my time trouble has shadowed my way.
and my path has been covered with tear drops from my eyes like the cold, cold
rain that comes in the fall.

i found my way through the darkness.
nobody but you could have brought me out.
you fill my life with sunshine,
you always bring me gladness. nobody but you could've brought me out.
i've seen men on their knees come crawling and my friends begging along all of
their days and i've heard thunder, thunder roar down the mountain, you know
i have, and the cold, cold winds blowing through the haze. i found my way
through the darkness. nobody but you could have brought me out. you fill my
life with sunshine, you always bring me gladness. nobody but you could've
brought me out.
nobody but you baby, could have brought me...out!

Dusty/Mary stands proud, confident, honest and real.

She exits.

SCENE THIRTY-FIVE

Dusty enters, singing directly to audience.

"DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME"

DUSTY (cont'd)
Baby, i know you've got to go
I have no right
To tell you not to go
The road just isn't there for us
There never was a prayer for us
You know how much i want you
now i don't wanna stay here
Give you fits and haunt your mind
And for now, baby
Since you're free to choose again
It's your life to win or lose again
But, hey, just don't forget about me, now, baby
Baby, please, just don't forget about me, now, baby
Today I cannot borrow
A minute of your tomorrow
Don't let it cause you sorrow
Come on baby, please
don't forget about me, now, baby
don't forget about me
Ah, someday, our paths may cross again
Baby, then we'll find the kind of love
We've lost again
But for now, I've got to let you go
It's ourselves we've got to get to know
Ah, no, don't forget about me, now, baby
don't forget about me
don't forget about me

CURTAIN CALL
MUSIC plays out.
Entire cast on stage.

END OF PLAY
SONGWRITING CREDITS

Wishin' and Hopin' (Burt Bacharach/Hal David)
Seven Little Girls Sitting In the Back Seat (Bill Hilliard/Lee Pockriss)
Island of Dreams (Tom Springfield)
Tell Him (Bert Berns)
I Only Want to Be With You (Michael Edwin Hawker/Ivor Raymonde)
The Look of Love (Burt Bacharch/Hal David)
Just a Little Lovin' (Barry Mann/Cynthia Weil)
Love Power (Teddy Vann)
People Get Ready (Curtis Mayfield)
Willie and Laura Mae Jones (Tony Joe White)
I Close My Eyes And Count To Ten (Clive Westlake)
Son of a Preacher Man (John Hurley/Ronnie Wilkins)
Little by Little (Buddy Kaye/Bea Verdi)
Crumbs Off the Table (Ronald Dunbar/Edith Wayne/ Sherrie Payne)
I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself (Burt Bacharach / Hal David)
What Have I Done To Deserve This (Allee Willis/Neil Tennant/Christopher Lowe)
Brand New Me (Thom Bell/Jerry Butler/Kenny Gamble)
Quiet Please There's a Lady On Stage (Peter Allen/Carole Bayer Sager)
I Found My Way (Gil Slavin/Mike Soles)
Don't Forget About Me (Gerry Goffin/Carole King)