

# VOYAGE IN A BOAT

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## CHARACTERS:

*The characters are aged between thirty and old.*

Bert Treadwell - husband

Millicent Treadwell - wife

Valerie Rixen - an old family friend of the Treadwell's

Art Wrigley - an old family friend of the Treadwell's

Pearl Tutchen - an old family friend of the Treadwell's

*Valerie wears a wig of curls.*

## SETTING:

*The play is set in an ordinary living room - except for a row boat in the middle. The living room includes several armchairs, a liquor cabinet at the back with a chair next to it, and a radio.*

*The curtains open to Bert Treadwell sitting in the boat. He is rowing happily.*

**Bert:**                   *(singing)* Row, row, row your boat,  
Gently down the stream.  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,  
Life is but a dream.

*Millicent enters and joins in singing the round. She sits in an armchair and picks up her embroidery work.*

**Millicent:**           *(singing)* Row, row, row your boat,  
Gently down the stream.  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,  
Life is but a dream.

*Millicent continues her embroidery. Bert continues to row. The song lapses into silence. Millicent reaches over and turns a radio on. It is the Maori station, which continues to play quietly.*

**Bert:**                   *(rowing)* Just another half hour. Another half hour. It's a special day. A special day today, Millicent.

**Millicent:**           A special day, Bert.

*He rows.*

**Millicent:**           You realize, of course, that you're going nowhere.

*He stops rowing.*

**Bert:**                   Nowhere?

**Millicent:**           Nowhere. You're going nowhere in that thing.

**Bert:**                   *(standing)* You mean to say? You mean to say ...

**Millicent:**           Nowhere, Bert. Absolutely nowhere.

*She continues her embroidering. He sits and returns to his rowing.*

**Bert:**                   I'm getting fit, Millicent. That's what I'm doing.

**Millicent:**           Fat lot of use that is.

**Bert:**                   Hardening of the arteries, lowering the cholesterol, you know, Millicent, a healthy body.

**Millicent:**           But why?

*She embroiders. He rows.*

**Millicent:**           *(more vehemently)* Why?

*Bert stops rowing and stands.*

**Bert:**               *(ruffled)* Well I'm allowed to, you know. I'm allowed to row the boat. I don't have to have a reason.

**Millicent:**       Oh yes you do, Bert. You just can't go through the day aimlessly doing things without reason. It's meaningless. Utterly meaningless.

**Bert:**               *(sitting down again and rowing)* Well I was perfectly happy doing it until you told me I was going nowhere. Now I realize I'm going nowhere. It was a stupid thing for you to tell me. You should've kept your thoughts to yourself.

**Millicent:**       I'm not stupid. Anyone who comes into the room could tell you that what you were doing was meaningless. It doesn't take a genius to see you're going nowhere in that thing.

**Bert:**               *(still rowing, but slower)* I was happy till you told me. I was singing. I was perfectly content.

*She continues to embroider. He continues to row. He stops.*

**Bert:**               *(a plan comes across his face)* You realize of course, Millicent, that what you're doing there is also perfectly meaningless.

**Millicent:**       I'm making it for Esme's smallest. It's a blouse. You can't call that useless.

**Bert:**               But it doesn't have to have all those decorations on it. What are they? Flowers? Butterflies?

**Millicent:**       Flowers.

**Bert:**               Well it could be left plain white. She doesn't need to walk around looking like a piece of wallpaper.

**Millicent:**       *(holding it up)* I think it's nice. I think she'll like it.

**Bert:**               I think it's meaningless. You're doing it merely to fill in time in the evenings. There's no reason for doing it. You could just as easily give her the money, and then she could buy what she liked in a shop.

**Millicent:** But this is personal. She'll wear it because I made it. It's my way of telling her I love her. I'm going to a lot of trouble.

**Bert:** *(returning to his rowing)* It's a waste of time. It's a waste of time. It's completely meaningless.

**Millicent:** *(returning to her embroidering)* It's no more meaningless than rowing the boat.

**Bert:** Ha! So you admit it. What you're doing is as useless as what I'm doing.

*They continue to row and embroider.*

**Bert:** *(triumphant)* At least I'm getting fit.

*They continue to row and embroider.*

**Millicent:** *(frantically embroidering)* Well I was perfectly happy doing it until you told me I was doing nothing worthwhile. Now I realize I'm doing nothing worthwhile. It was a stupid thing for you to tell me. You should've kept your thoughts to yourself.

*They continue to row and embroider.*

**Millicent:** There was no need for you to tell me that what I was doing was a waste of time. I have to do something. I'm doing it for Esme's youngest and I'm doing it because I love her. I don't know why I love her. Don't ask me. I don't know what doing this says, but it says something. Anyone can see that. *(Breaking down)* I have to do something. I have to fill in the time. I'm happy to do it. I'm perfectly happy to be doing it. At least I was until you said that what I was doing was useless. Now I don't know what to do.

*She gets up and walks back and forth.*

**Bert:** You're filling in time. Just cluttering up your life with needles. It's futile. *(Rowing furiously)* It's bloody futile.

*He rows. She paces. Suddenly Bert stands and steps out of the boat.*

**Bert:** Perhaps. Perhaps we could go to the pictures or something?

**Millicent:** What for? What for? What's the use?

**Bert:** Or watch T.V. or something? We should do something.

**Millicent:** *(in a panic)* But what, Bert? What? What? What can we do?

**Bert:** What?

*He begins to pace. They become more frenetic.*

**Bert:** And it's meant to be a special day. A special day, Millicent.

**Millicent:** I know. I know.

*They pace.*

**Millicent:** This is useless. This is useless. This is quite useless.

**Bert:** I know! I know! Sit! Sit!

*Bert pushes Millicent into the armchair.*

**Bert:** You're at an airport. You're waiting for a plane. You're going on a journey.

**Millicent:** I'm going on a what?

**Bert:** A journey. You're at the airport waiting. Wait! Wait!

*Bert rushes from the room. There is considerable noise off stage of someone rummaging in a panic. He returns with a suitcase.*

**Bert:** Here! I'm at the airport too. But I'm not with you. Oh no! I'm another person at the airport. I walk past. You look at me.

*He walks passed Millicent with the suitcase. She doesn't look.*

**Bert:** Look at me! You've got to look at me walking past.

**Millicent:** Oh Bert, this is silly.

**Bert:** No, look at me go by - the way we all watch people walking past at an airport. Don't you wonder where I'm going? Who I am?

*He walks past Millicent again, as if at an airport. He looks at his watch.*

**Bert:** Goodness! Late again!

**Millicent:** You're late. You're catching a plane. You're travelling to Wellington where your second daughter has the measles. You're taking her a blouse, beautifully embroidered by your wife, to cheer her up. It's your way of saying how much you love her. But I know better. I know in fact that you're wasting your time flying up and down the country, pacing up and down the airport terminal because the plane is late in leaving, taking each daughter

blouse after bloody embroidered blouse. And you're doing it more and more frantically because suddenly you realize that your life is a morass of meaningless activity. You didn't used to be like ...

*Bert stops his act, leaving the suitcase on the floor.*

**Bert:** Shut up. Shut up, Millicent. We could've fallen in love at the airport if you hadn't been so cynical. We could've fallen in love again. You and me strangers.

**Millicent:** *(vehemently)* Well we didn't, and it's your fault in the first place. I could've easily have fallen in love with you at the airport if you hadn't made me aware in the first place. I would've happily fallen in love while I was sitting here embroidering.

**Bert:** *(angrily)* You took the romanticism out of it. I was happily rowing my boat. But no. That's not good enough for you. We could've rowed together. But no.

*Pause.*

**Millicent:** *(gently)* Oh Bert Treadwell. Do you think we could go back to the way it was?

**Bert:** We could try.

**Millicent:** Shall we? Get back in the boat, Bert. Get back in.

*Bert gets into the boat and sits.*

**Bert:** You too, Millicent. We'll go somewhere.

*Millicent steps into the boat and Bert stands to help her in. He begins to row.*

**Bert:** Here. Take an oar, Millicent.

*They row.*

**Bert:** It's no use, Millicent.

**Millicent:** It's no use, Bert.

**Bert:** We're not going anywhere.

**Millicent:** Nowhere.

**Bert:** It's no use now that we realize we're going nowhere.

**Millicent:** There's no going back to the way it was.

**Bert:** We know now. We know.

*They stop rowing.*

**Millicent:** So what will we do Bert?

**Bert:** I don't know.

*Millicent gets out of the boat and sits with her embroidery. She is near to tears.*

**Millicent:** Just row. Just row. It was meant to be special.

*They continue to row and embroider. The doorbell rings. Bert gets hastily out of the boat. Millicent puts her embroidery down and answers the door. The doorbell rings a second time as she goes to open the door. Valerie Rixen, Art Wrigley and Pearl Tutchen enter. They are carrying parcels.*

*Valerie, Art and Pearl sing "Happy Birthday" to Bert.*

*They tumble their parcels into Bert's arms with Valerie and Pearl kissing him and Art shaking his hand.*

**Valerie:** I bet you thought we'd forgotten!

**Art:** Not us! No, not us!

**Pearl:** We can't stay long.

**Valerie:** Open them!

**Pearl:** Yes! Come on! Open them!

**Millicent:** Why Valerie. You've changed your hair. How nice.

**Valerie:** Thank you.

**Millicent:** I love the curls. And it used to be so straight.

*Bert opens the first parcel. It is a pair of socks. The wrapping paper lies on the floor, where it remains.*

**Bert:** Lovely! Lovely! Thank you very much. Thank you. Who's this from?

**Pearl:** Read the card!

**Bert:** *(reading from card)* It's nothing much,  
You know I'll say -

But something for you  
 On this day  
 To say I love you  
 All the way.  
 Love Valerie.

*He screws up the envelope the card was in and drops it on the floor, where it remains.*

**Bert:** That's lovely, Valerie. Thanks very much.

*Bert kisses Valerie. He opens the second parcel. It's an identical pair of socks. The wrapping paper lies on the floor, where it remains.*

**Bert:** I can always do with socks.

*He reads the card.*

**Bert:** *(reading from card)* It's nothing much,  
 You know I'll say -  
 But something for you  
 On this day  
 To say I love you  
 All the way.  
 Love Pearl.

*He screws up the envelope the card was in and drops it on the floor, where it remains.*

**Pearl:** It's the same card!

**Millicent:** But it's lovely! It's lovely Pearl.

**Pearl:** I had it gift-wrapped.

**Bert:** Thanks Pearl.

*Bert kisses Pearl. He reads from the third card.*

**Bert:** *(reading from card)* I know you're getting older  
 There's little you can do;  
 Just remember one thing -  
 I'm getting older too.  
 From your friend, Art.

*He screws up the envelope the card was in and drops it on the floor, where it remains.*

**Bert:** *(feeling the parcel)* Well it's not socks. Or a tie. Or a hanky.

*He opens the parcel. It is a "thing". The wrapping paper lies on the floor, where it remains.*



**Bert:** Thanks, Art.  
**Millicent:** What is it, dear?  
**Bert:** That's great, Art. Thanks.

**Valerie:** What is it?

**Bert:** It's great.

**Pearl:** How does it work?

**Bert:** Thanks.

**Millicent:** *(realizing)* It's great!

**Art:** I got it at Jessica's Gift Shop.

**Bert:** It's great!

*They all look at it.*

**Millicent:** Would you like a drink. We must have a birthday drink.

**Valerie:** We can't stay long. What's it for, Art?

**Bert:** What's your poison?

**Pearl:** I'll have a sherry.

**Valerie:** A sherry thanks.

**Art:** I'll have a whiskey thanks, Bert.

**Bert:** I'll have a whiskey too.

**Millicent:** I'll have a gin, thanks dear.

*Bert goes to a cabinet to pours drinks, stepping through the boat as a he does so - as if it wasn't there. While he does so, the ladies sit. Art follows Bert to the drink cabinet, stepping through the boat as he does so - as if it wasn't there.*

**Valerie:** *(picking up embroidery)* Oh Millicent! Are you doing this? It's beautiful!

**Pearl:** I wouldn't have the patience. It's beautiful.

**Bert:** Sherry you said?

**Millicent:** It's for Esme's youngest.

**Valerie:** It's beautiful.

*Bert returns, through the boat, with two sherries and gives them to Valerie and Pearl. He return to the cabinet through the boat.*

**Valerie:** And how old is she now?

**Bert:** *(pouring whiskey for Art)* Tell me when to whoa.

**Millicent:** Seventeen.

**Art:** Whoa.

**Pearl:** And what's she doing?

**Millicent:** She's living with her boyfriend.

**Valerie:** *(referring to embroidery)* It's beautiful.

**Art:** I got it at Jessica's Gift Shop.

**Bert:** It's great.

**Art:** I thought you'd like it.

**Pearl:** Who's she living with?

**Millicent:** Well his name's James Joyce.

**Millicent and Bert:** Not the novelist!

**Valerie, Art and Pearl:** The novelist?

*They all laugh. A long pause while they all drink. The following conversation is slow, and filled with embarrassing pauses.*

**Valerie:** *(referring to embroidery)* It's beautiful, Millicent.

**Bert:** *(to Art)* How's work?

**Pearl:** *(to Millicent)* I hear you've got a job.

**Art:** Great.

**Millicent:** Great.

**Valerie:** Fabulous.

*An embarrassing conversational pause. Suddenly:*

**Pearl:** Well we said the visit would be short, and short I'm afraid it has to be.

**Art:** Yes, we must get going.

**Millicent:** Get going?

**Valerie:** Yes, we've got to get going.

**Bert:** Get going?

*The lights change to denote a dreamlike quality. From now on each character is talking to her/himself. There is a certain desperation.*

**Millicent:** It will happen. It will happen. It will happen.

**Bert:** I wish they'd go. I must row the boat. I must row the boat.

*Bert gets into the boat and begins to frantically row.*

**Art:** I must dig a hole. Is there a spade? Is there a spade in the house?

*Art gets a spade and begins to dig a hole.*

**Valerie:** The ironing. I really want to go, it's so boring. I want to go home. I've got to do the ironing.

*She sets up an ironing board, takes off her wig and begins to iron it. Pearl goes to the back of the stage next to the liquor cabinet where she stands on a chair and drinks from a whiskey bottle. More and more empty bottles and beer cans pile up around the stage.*

**Bert:** Row. Row. I'll get somewhere.

**Millicent:** *(returning to embroidery)* I'm doing it because I love her, but I'm really waiting for an aeroplane to Wellington.

**Art:** The only way to climb the ladder is to dig.

**Pearl:** There was a seagull on the beach. I saw it.

**Millicent:** She'll really look nice in this blouse. A stitch in time saves nine, and I'm doing my best. I'm doing my best.

- Valerie:** *(frantically ironing)* My name is Valerie. Valerie Rixen in case you wondered. I must iron it straight again. I must iron it straight again. It's an old fairy story I know, but it still holds true. I must get the curls out. Oh god! Oh God! I'm desperate.
- Pearl:** I saw the seagull on the beach. It had a pipi. It kept flying up and dropping it. Flying up and dropping it. Down it flew, and picked up the pipi. It kept dropping it. It was trying to break it open. It didn't have any luck. I watched it for an hour. It flew all the way along the beach. I watched it. I followed it. I followed it along the beach.
- Art:** They told me that if I dug the hole I would find it. I'm nearly through to Spain. I can't find anything.
- Bert:** *(singing)* Row, row, row your boat  
Gently down the stream.  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,  
Life is but a dream.
- Millicent:** A French knot. How do you do a French knot?  
  
*It builds up to a frenzy.*
- Valerie:** Rapunsel! Rapunsel! Let down your hair! there's just no way I can straighten it out, no matter what I do. There's no way. I'm desperate.
- Millicent:** There's really very little to the patterns. It's just time. It just takes time. Nothing complicated - except for the French knots.
- Bert:** *(singing over Pearl)* Row, row, row your boat,  
Gently down the stream.  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,  
Life is but a dream.
- Pearl:** *(singing over Bert)* Alive alive-o, alive alive-o,  
Singing cockles and mussels, alive alive-o.
- Valerie:** I've been ironing it now for thirty-four years and seven months. Goodness! It's my birthday soon, and I'll have nothing to show for it.
- Pearl:** That's how Molly Malone felt. Different place, different century. Today it's Pearl Tutchen's turn. It was black and white. A black-backed gull. Or was it a red-billed gull? They're black and white too, except for the beak and legs. But who gives a brass farthing?

- Art:** Once I get through to Spain there'll be nowhere left to dig unless I dig into the sky. Dig into the sky, but that's pointless.
- Pearl:** Magpies are black and white too, but they hardly eat pipis.
- Valerie:** My cousin said she saw me get out of the car. She recognized the hair, she said. Recognized the hair. And that was after nineteen years absence. So I had it curled. But I can't stand it.
- Millicent:** I'm getting better at the French knots. They're quite simply really, but I'm not quite used to them. They're inconsistent. Different shapes and sizes. I can't control them. But when I can, that's all I need know about embroidery, then there's nothing more to learn. Just patience. Just time.
- Pearl:** Actually, it probably wasn't a pipi at all, but a tuatua. The hinges are different. A pipi has its hinge in the middle; a tuatua has its hinge to the side. Most people when they go pipi-ing get tuatuas, the ignorant poops. But it doesn't change the world, it doesn't change the universe.
- Art:** I started digging in Tolaga Bay, New Zealand. Or was it Eketahuna, or Caroline Bay, or Invercargill, or Dargaville? They said "DIG", so I'm digging. Struck oil, or so I thought. Gas even. Couldn't harness it anyway. Molten hot it got. Got myself dirty in the process.
- Pearl:** But this seagull - it kept dropping the pipi or tuatua (or was it a mussel?) without any luck. It never broke it open. It went hungry. It was starving, poor thing. It was desperate.
- Millicent:** All for Esme's youngest, but God knows why. As Bert so wisely asks, "What are you doing that for?" I don't know. I really don't know. Now that he's asked the question, I'm not comfortable with it any more. Still, they are very pretty dahlias.
- Pearl:** I followed it all the way along the beach and landed myself in the middle of a nudist colony where everyone was looking for answers by taking off their clothes. The seagull didn't notice; it was so starved. I didn't bother either. I wanted to find out what the seagull did in the end - like Robert the Bruce's spider.
- Art:** Pretty futile getting dirty. Just a brief fling and Bob's your uncle. That's all. It'll be different in Spain - bullfights and all, and a few chicks wearing mantillas or something that I can go to bed with AND ...
- Valerie:** I can't abide these curls. I'm unhappy with the way it is. I'm unhappy with the way it was.

**Art:** Maybe that's what I'm looking for: chicks in mantillas. Or was it oil or gas? Who can remember?

**Pearl:** It flew off with the pipi in its mouth, and I never saw how it solved the problem.

**Art:** Still. I made a commitment, and a commitment is a commitment. You're a hero if you stick to a commitment.

**Bert:** A voyage in a boat.

**Art:** Edmund Hillary climbed a mountain and everyone thought he was great. I'm digging a hole. He's satisfied. I'll get there maybe with the next shovel load.

**Millicent:** Very pretty dahlias. Or daffodils. Or pansies. Who gives a hoot what they are?

*All stop. Bert stands in the boat. The stage darkens, except for a spot on Bert.*

**Bert:** An Angel showed me a field and gave me a spade and a sack of cabbage seed. "Dig the field and sow the seeds," the Angel said. "When the cabbages are ready, God will take you away." I began to dig and in my joy there seemed no night. Sometimes, for a change, I'd stop and look towards the trees near the fence. I think there were further fields afield. And now the seeds were planted. They sprouted and I knew every leaf. Not a weed survived! Sometimes I'd chase a butterfly. It was a game, like a children's game. Maybe the butterfly was God coming for a look. Months passed and hearts began to form. Soon God would come. I'd been asked to grow these cabbages for heaven! It was a joke and I was jester. Then I knew: they were ready for harvest. God would take me away for it was the time of the Angel's promise. But there's no telling with cabbages as to the moment of ripeness. It could be now, but then again, it could be in a while. I waited. God did not come to get me. The cabbage hearts broke open and the stalks grew into a field of yellow flowers. I gathered the seeds into the old sack.

*An appropriate silence. The lights change again. Valerie has put the wig back on. Everything is as if it has returned to normal - except for the presence of the boat, the embroidery, the ironing board, empty bottles and cans, the hole, the suitcase, the parcel wrapping, envelopes, socks and "thing".*

**Bert:** Millicent! The boat! Quick! Get in the boat!

*Millicent gets in the boat.*

**Bert:** Row, Millicent. Row! Just any where.

**Millicent:** *(beginning to row)* I'm trying, Bert. I'm trying.

**Bert:** I'm desperate, Millicent. Desperate.

**Millicent:** I'm desperate too, dear.

**Bert:** I feel terribly faint.

**Millicent:** I hope you don't die. I feel faint too.

**Bert:** What a coincidence. I hope you don't die either.

**Millicent:** I am.

**Bert:** So am I.

*They both die. The radio in Maori which has been playing quietly all this time, gently fades out as the lights change to the after life. Valerie Rixen, Art Wrigley and Pearl Tutchen have donned wings and halos, and appear as angels. They pick up Bert and Millicent.*

**Valerie:** Welcome to the after life.

**Bert:** But I don't believe in the after life. At least not since I heard of Father Christmas.

**Millicent:** The tooth fairy, dear. Not since the tooth fairy.

**Pearl:** We were angels, sent to watch. Surprised?

**Millicent:** But I don't believe in angels either.

**Art:** We weren't happy with what we saw.

**Valerie:** You never bothered.

**Bert:** *(stepping out of boat)* So?

**Pearl:** What a waste of life.

**Art:** It went nowhere.

**Bert:** We travelled.

**Millicent:** *(stepping out of boat)* We did our best.

**Valerie:** Best, my foot! (*Correcting herself*) Wing!

**Bert:** We didn't know where to go.

**Millicent:** What to do.

**Art:** I'm afraid it's hell.

**Pearl:** To hell.

**Bert:** But ...

**Valerie:** Go to Hell.

**Millicent:** Hell?

**Bert:** Hell!

**Valerie:** It's the myth of Sisyphus.

**Bert:** Don't be silly.

**Millicent:** Oh my God, or something.

**Valerie:** She's educated enough to know what it means.

**Art:** PhD in biochemistry from Lincoln University.

**Pearl:** Don't get trite.

**Valerie:** (*pointing off stage*) Over there is the boulder.

**Art:** Roll it up the mountain.

**Pearl:** When you reach the top.

**Valerie:** Let it fall.

**Pearl:** And follow it.

**Art:** Follow the boulder down.

**Pearl:** Down.

**Valerie:** Down the mountain side to the bottom.

**Art:** Let it roll down.



**Valerie:** And then push the boulder up again.

**Art:** To the top.

**Pearl:** And let it roll down.

**Valerie:** And up again.

**Art:** Up again.

**Pearl:** Let it roll down - again.

**Valerie:** And up!

**Art:** And down!

**Pearl:** And up!

**Valerie:** And down!

**Art:** And up!

**Pearl:** And down!

**Valerie:** For ever.

**Pearl:** And ever.

**Art:** Amen.

**Valerie:** I'll watch your face - because I'm in heaven.

**Pearl:** An angel.

**Valerie:** And that's my joy.

**Bert:** But ...

**Valerie:** Watching your face when the boulder rolls down is what an angel does.

**Millicent:** This is futile. It's useless.

**Art:** Indeed.

**Valerie:** As it was is now, and ever shall be - as we say up here.

**Millicent:** Futile.

- Pearl:** Quite.
- Valerie:** Quite special.
- Art:** World without end.
- Millicent:** That's not fair.
- Pearl:** Amen.
- Valerie:** Oh the compulsion.
- Pearl:** Between heaven and hell is the boulder-roll.
- Valerie:** Between the mountain and the valley.
- Art:** The tragedy.
- Bert:** *(stepping back into boat)* I did my best.
- Valerie:** The compulsion. The compulsion.
- Millicent:** *(getting into the boat)* It was a voyage in a boat.
- Valerie:** *(ignoring her)* Oh the terrible compulsion of futility.

*Valerie, Pearl and Art cackle and take off their wings and halos as the lights change to normal.*

- Valerie:** It's been lovely.
- Bert:** Thank you very much.
- Art:** Super.
- Bert:** Thank you very much.
- Pearl:** We must do this again.
- Millicent:** That's just what I was going to say!

*Bert and Millicent show them to the door.*

- Pearl:** Good night.
- Valerie:** Have a lovely evening.

**Bert:** Thanks very much.

**Millicent:** Thanks for calling.

**Art:** We must do this again.

**Bert:** It's been a special day.

**Millicent:** Good night.

**Bert:** Thanks again.

**Valerie:** Yes, the Government do have a lot to answer for.

**Bert:** Thanks for the socks.

**Valerie:** Good night.

*They have gone. Millicent and Bert stand arms around each others waist.*

**Millicent:** That was nice, wasn't it dear?

**Bert:** Lovely, Millicent. A complete surprise.

**Millicent:** I had no idea they would call. No idea.

**Bert:** It was lovely. It was really lovely.

**Millicent:** Special. A special day.

*Millicent gathers her embroidery and sits in the boat. Bert steps into the boat too. Bert frantically rows. Millicent frantically sews. After a while the pace slows down. They stop.*

**Bert:** We've had a nice life, Millicent.

**Millicent:** A good marriage.

**Bert:** It's been worth it.

**Millicent:** It's had its moments.

*They row and sew gently. They stop.*

**Bert:** If you had your life over would you do it again?

**Millicent:** I think so, Bert.

**Bert:** A few changes? Eh?

*Millicent doesn't answer.*

**Bert:** Would you knit me some socks?

**Millicent:** Thanks, Bert. *(Tears in the eyes)* Thanks.

*They row and sew.*

*Lights darken as an Angelic Choir is heard in the far distance singing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" in 29-part polyphony accompanied by a full String Orchestra.*

**CURTAINS**