MARGUERITE

Yes. In..- In England, Percy- when do the wedding guests leave the bride and groom. alone?

(After a beat, PERCY whirls about to the guests.)

PERCY

Time to go! Tally-ho. Home, everyone! Bedtime for all!

OZZY .

Not bloody likely, m'lad. Not before we've danced with the bridge

PERCY

And so you shall, but if you think I'll relinquish my French jewel this quickly, you're quite mad!

(PERCY and MARGUERITE begin to dance.)

PERCY

Darling, I hope you like our English style of dancing

MARGUERITE

It's lovely, Percy- yes, but perhaps later tonight I shall teach you how we French...dance.

PERCY

Later tonight, we shall not...be dancing.

(ELTON cuts in to dance with MARGUERITE.)

PERCY

Oh, all right then, Elton—you may borrow her for all of five minutes. But mind you don't tread upon her feet! She's made of crystal, my wife.

(DEWHURST enters.)

PERCY

Oh but I do love the sound of that my wife

START

DEWHURST

Percival.

PERCY

Dewhurst!

DEWHURST

Percy, I've just returned from Paris. I must speak with you. Now.

(The men take turns dancing with MARGUERITE as PERCY and DEWHURST step aside.)

PERCY

Dewhurst, though I do always relish a chat with you, I am at the moment a bit more eager to share my bridal night with my bride, so if this might wait-

DEWHURST

Percy, the Marquis de St. Cyr is dead.

PERCY

What?

DEWHURST

Yes. By the guillotine. And his family killed with him.

PERCY

But-... *how*?!

DEWHURST

Denounced by Citizen Chauvelin, whose power grows in France by the day.

PERCY

Yes, I know, but- But my God, Dewhurst- how did Chauvelin <u>find</u> him? I arranged the safe passage *out*.

DEWHURST

Percy, someone betrayed St. Cyr. Delivered to Citizen Chauvelin a note with the exact whereabouts of his hideaway.

PERCY

Impossible. No one knew but you and Ozzy and myself, and I suppose Marguerite knew. I'd trust you and Ozzy with my life, and Marguerite-... Don't be absurd. Marguerite feels nothing but disgust for this new French regime.

DEWHURST

Percy, how well do you know your wife? In six weeks time, how well could any man know a woman?

PERCY

I know her as I know my own heart.

(DEWHURST takes a note from his pocket. It is the note Marguerite gave Chauvelin at the Comedie Francaise.)

DEWHURST

Then lay your eyes upon this. A note from your wife to Chauvelin. I was able to obtain it just before I left. I believe that is her hand.

DEWHURST SIDE 2 44

PLEASE READ ALL ROLES THAT AREN'T PERCY AS ONE CHARACTER

SCENE ELEVEN Blakeney Estate: The Library

(As the lights come up, PERCY stands in his library, wearing an outrageous outfit. JESSUP enters.) **JESSUP** Sir- The gentlemen have been, readied. Send them in. JESSUP exits. DEWHURST, OZZY, ELTON, FARLEIGH, HAL AND BEN enter, wearing equally outrageous outfits.) **START** DEWHURST Percy, really now-there is a limit. PERCY Patience, lads. There's a method to my madness. **DEWHURST** But tis madness! Spies and cutthroats surround us and we play dress-ups? PERCY Precisely. **FARLEIGH** Percy! I demand to know why I'm forced into this get-up! Upon leaving my house, the footman giggled- right in my face! **ELTON** Well, I think it's rather nice for a change. Quite..summery. **PERCY** Elton, sometimes you frighten me... But- we shall all continue to look "summery" for a while yet, boys. Desperate times call for desperate measures, what? We've been summoned to the palace. BEN The palace? FARLEIGH By the *prince*?

PERCY

Yes. He has his suspicions. If he finds us out, he'll shut us down straightaway. British-French relations are tenuous enough these days without rabble rousers runnin' about.

HAL

Is that what he calls us? Rabble Rousers?

PERCY

That is how he refers to "the Pimpernel and his men," whomever they might be. But he'll never think it's *us*, will he? Naturally not, for the mere mention of that scoundrel makes us...

ALL

..Swoon?

END

PERCY

Indeed! Such ruffians besmirch the very name of manhood. Nay, tis our duty as males not to rush to the battle, but to the tailor!

No. 12 THE CREATION OF MAN

(Percy, Ozzy Dewhurst, Elton, Farleigh, Hal & Ben)

Percy:

PEACOCKS!

Elton:

SINK ME!

Percy:

THINK YE, SIR,

HOW THOSE FEATHERED BOYS LOVE TO FLAUNT THEIR TAILS!

STALLIONS!

Farleigh:

ZOUNDS, SIR!

Percy:

HOUNDS, SIR! STAGS!

Dewhurst:

OF THE GOOSIE AND THE GANDER, SIR,

WHICH GENDER IS THE GRANDER, SIR?

Percy:

TO RENDER TOTAL CANDOR, SIR:

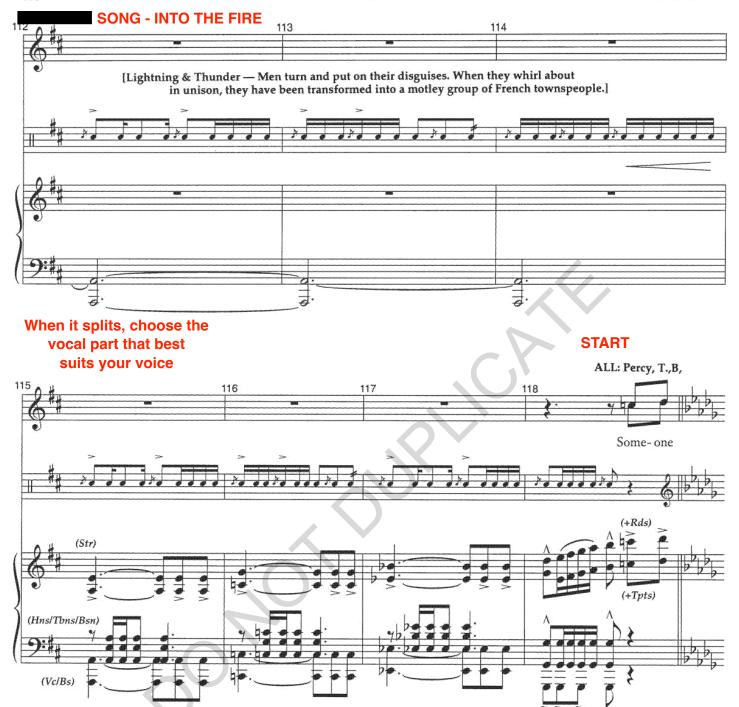
THE SPLENDOR IS THE MALE'S!

OZZY

But Percy, I simply can *not* hop about wearin' pink chiffon.

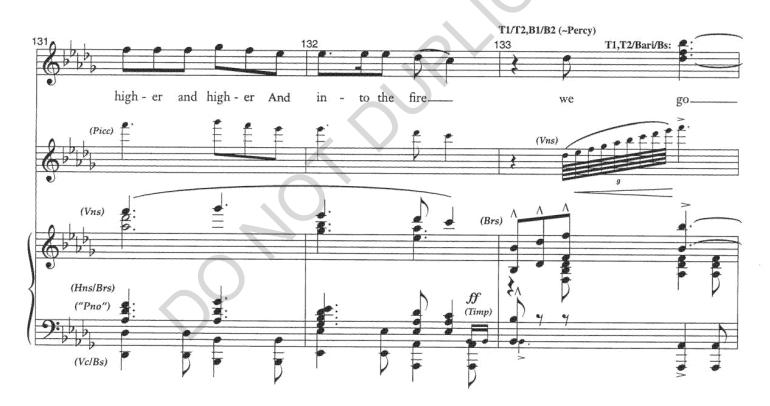
PERCY

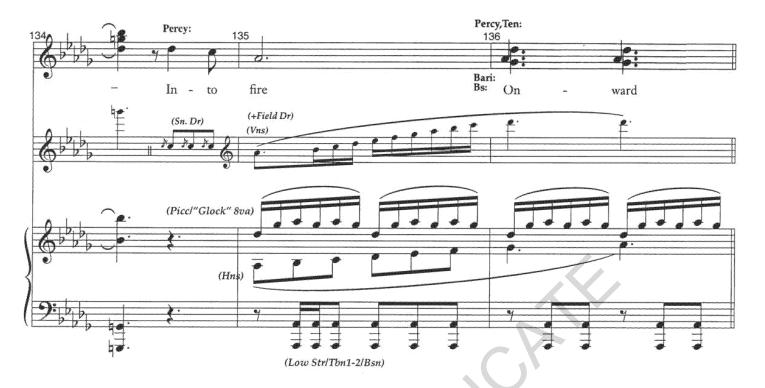
Ozzy, whatever we *must* do to deflect suspicion, we *shall* do- which in this case is.. to *shimmer*!

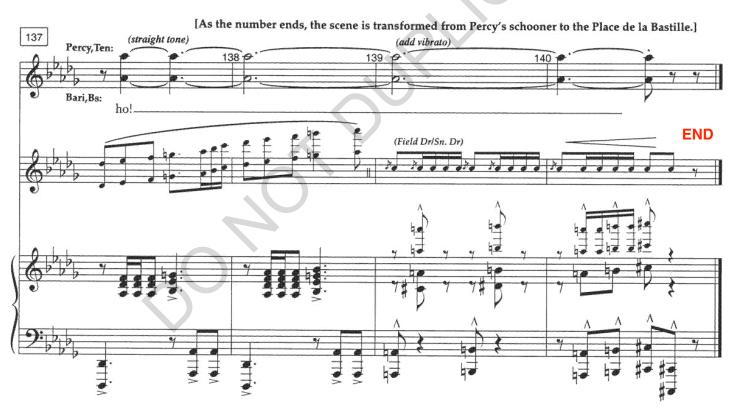












Applause segue