

End Of The Pier

A One Act Play

by

Karen Doling

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Characters:

Gypsy Rosie Lea
Bernard
Miles Edmunds
Doreen Binding
Peter Allen
Barry Shillingford
Madeleine Shillingford
Jennifer James

Setting:

The play takes place on the end of a seaside pier. The stage is set with a large old-fashioned style tent to one side and a bench on the opposite side of the stage. The tent takes up a large portion of the stage and is open to the audience. Rosie and Bernard enter the tent through a flap that leads off stage, cast members going in and out of the tent as part of the action access it through an entrance at the side, near the bench. The effect could be achieved using flats draped with material to give the illusion of a tent.

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End Of The Pier

Scene 1:

(The tent is empty. Rosie enters from a flap at the back and plonks herself down. She looks around and then realises something is missing. She starts hunting through the scarves hanging around the tent for whatever it is, turning up all manner of weird and wonderful things, like a stuffed animal, totem pole etc)

Rosie: Bernard! **(Pauses)** Bernard!

(Bernard enters from same flap as Rosie came through)

Bernard: Yes dear?

Rosie: Have you seen my crystal ball?

Bernard: No dear.

Rosie: Well I can't find it! I am due to open up in **(checks watch)** five minutes and I can hardly tell my paying customers its palm or cards as I have mislaid my crystal ball can I?

Bernard: **(Puts a lid on the goldfish bowl that was behind Rosie and upending it on the table)**

There you go dear, problem solved.

Rosie: Oh my god, it's got a goldfish swimming around in it, I think they might notice don't you?

Bernard: I doubt it my dear, and if they do tell them you can see a trip that involves scuba diving – they will look in the 'crystal ball' and see a goldfish swimming around in it – that'll make it even more convincing.

Rosie: Oh don't be ridiculous. Take it away.

(Bernard moves it off the table, carefully turning the correct way up.)

Bernard: Have you looked in your handbag?

Rosie: Handbag? What on earth would my crystal ball be doing in my handbag?

Bernard: Just a thought. **(Picks up very, very large bag and hands it to Rosie)**

Rosie: **(Sighs)** For goodness sake, give it here. **(Starts rifling through it pulling out more weird bits and pieces, finally pulling out a crystal ball. She looks at it in surprise)** Well I never, how did that get in there?

Bernard: Try looking in it and you might find out. Now, shall I put the sign up to say you are open for business?

Rosie: Just a minute, let me get myself psyched up. **(Goes into a trance-like state and begins to hum.)**

Bernard: I hope that isn't for my benefit.

Rosie: **(Opening one eye)** Hardly. It's for my benefit. It's to calm me down after I get stressed. Now go away and put the sign up. And I could murder a cup of tea.

Bernard: Relegated to tea boy now. When I met you, you said I would enjoy a life of luxury and pampering.

Rosie: And did I see that in the crystal ball?

Bernard: **(Thinks)** Now you come to mention it, yes, I think you did.

Rosie: Well in that case you should have known it was a load of old cobblers. Now clear off.

(Bernard exits through flap where customers will enter, taking with him the board saying 'Open'. As he puts it up a small queue of people that has built up, stirs. First in the queue is a man who pushes past Bernard and enters the tent.)

Miles: About time too. Couldn't you see in your crystal ball that there was a queue out there? **(Sits down)**

Rosie: **(Sarcastically)** Please take a seat. Strangely enough I don't sit here peering into my crystal ball all day. Now what can I do for you?

Miles: Well I've come to get my future told.

Rosie: **(Aside)** Keep going the way you are and you won't have much of one sunshine.

Miles: Sorry? I didn't catch that?

Rosie: I was just preparing myself. Now, would you like a palm reading, the cards or the crystal ball?

Miles: Which one will tell me I'm going to win the lottery and marry a page three girl?

Rosie: Possibly all of them. Which one is it to be?

Miles: I'll go for the... crystal ball. **(Contorts himself)** Can I see anything from this angle?

Rosie: Probably only your rear end. Right, now please concentrate. **(She rubs the crystal ball with a silk scarf and whips it away with a flourish. She then puts on a spooky voice)** I can see a tall, well-endowed blonde woman. She appears to be ... Topless??? She is holding a... cheque for three million pounds along with a wedding bouquet! I think that means you are going to win the lottery and marry a page three girl. **(Looks up with a smile)** That'll be ten pounds please.

Miles: **(Horried)** What?

Rosie: Only joking! You should have seen your face. **(Settles down)** Right. Lets get on with it. **(Rubs the crystal ball with a silk scarf and starts peering into the ball)** You are successful in your job but you don't think you are appreciated at work. Your boss claims all the credit for your work and there is nothing you can do about it.

Miles: That is spot on! Amazing. What else can you see?

Rosie: Hang on, it's not like the television you know, you need to let the mist clear... Are you married?

Miles: No.

Rosie: ... Right, Good! Because I see a *[tall, dark, beautiful woman]* that is going to make a big impact on your life.

Miles: Don't tell me, she's topless?

Rosie: Certainly not! I don't see things like that – well rarely, and never topless women... men occasionally, but not often. Well not often enough for me anyway. As I was saying... This woman you will meet soon. What do you do for a living?

Miles: I'm not telling you that - you should be able to tell just by looking in your crystal ball.

Rosie: It's going a little hazy, you appear to be in uniform, are you in the Air Force?

Miles: No, and I don't wear a uniform.

Rosie: Are you here on holiday?

Miles: Long weekend – stag weekend. My mate is getting married and this is his last weekend of freedom.

Rosie: Could be yours too, if this woman has her way. What else is there... do you have a cat?

Miles: No.

Rosie: Dog?

Miles: No.

Rosie: Er... hamster?

Miles: No. Are you fishing?

Rosie: Oh, that's it, fish! Do you have tropical fish?

Miles: **(Suspiciously)** Yes. Well, goldfish, why?

Rosie: Err... you will meet this woman through your pets.

Miles: What? I am going to meet my future wife through my goldfish? I think you're taking the mick...

Rosie: Look, I can't explain what I see, I just tell it like it is. Do you want me to have a look at your palm?

Miles: Oh why not. This is only for a laugh anyway isn't it?

Rosie: What? A laugh? This is most certainly not a laugh. I haven't ever had a complaint so far. What were you expecting?

Miles: I don't know, that I would marry a topless page three model and win the lottery.

Rosie: Be careful what you wish for. Let me have your palm. **(Studies his palm)** Hmm, you have a long life ahead of you. You will fall in love three times and marry twice...

Miles: Well that doesn't bode well for the *[tall, dark, beautiful]* woman does it?

Rosie: I'm only saying what I see, I can't help whether they contradict each other – anyway you could be married for donkey's years then be widowed, then marry again when you're in your nineties. How many times have you been in love?

Miles: Twice.

Rosie: Hmm, interesting. So you will fall in love once more and marry twice.

Miles: Well, life can be surprising. And at least it sounds interesting.

Rosie: Well that's about it. Ten pounds please.

Miles: Do you give a money back guarantee?

Rosie: I've never thought about it – mainly because no one has ever come back to ask. Good luck in your search.

Miles: **(Getting up)** Thanks, I won't hold my breath though. Perhaps I should send Peter in here, you might be able to talk some sense into him and stop him from marrying Jessie. She is a beautiful blonde and he is smitten. She is taking him for a very long ride and we can't get him to see it. The poor guy has even had to change his job to suit her. He is now a security guard! Perhaps if you were to tell him that he was going to meet a *[tall, dark, beautiful]* woman he might think twice. **(Exits from the tent and off the stage.)**

(Bernard reappears. He has obviously been listening at the flap)

Bernard: Well that went well didn't it? You will have to come up with something better than the cat/dog story - I don't think he went for the fact that he is going to meet someone through his goldfish somehow. And meeting a *[tall, dark, beautiful]* woman? Please. You use that on every man that comes in. I was in the pub yesterday evening and a woman came in with a couple of friends. She was *[tall, dark and beautiful]*, but I heard her complaining that she had been propositioned by five men that same afternoon, and that they had all walked off the pier into her shop. She found it most disconcerting.

Rosie: She should be grateful. Most women would be flattered.

Bernard: Couldn't they meet some short blonde occasionally?

Rosie: "I can only tell what I see"

Bernard: This is me you're talking to, Gypsy Rosie Lea. Do you know in all the years we've been married I have never asked you - how did you come up with that name?

Rosie: It was my Grandmother. She used to be a cleaner for a very posh house up on the hill and one day decided she'd had enough. She bought a scarf and set herself up at the end of the pier. She came up with the name as a bit of a play on words, Rosie Lea, tea? And she was a Charwoman - Char? Tea? She was told by an old woman in the village where she was born that she had the gift, so she thought she could make it work.

Bernard: She had the gift of second sight?

Rosie: No, the gift of the gab. She could talk on anything for hours, regardless of whether she knew anything about it or not – and people would listen and believe her. That is a talent far beyond spiritualism believe me.

Bernard: Ah, and that is what you inherited from her.

Rosie: Yes. And the name.

Bernard: I think you should have come up with something more original when you took over.

Rosie: What, like Ruby Murray?

Bernard: Well it might appeal to the Asian clientele...

Rosie: Only if they're Asian Cockneys. Anyway, are there any more people out there waiting to come in or can I now have my cold cup of Rosie Lea?

Bernard: I never made it - I'll do it now. **(Exits)**

(Doreen appears and hesitates outside the tent before peering in.)

Rosie: Come in, come in. Welcome to the future! Please take a seat.

(Doreen sits gingerly.)

Rosie: Now what can I do for you?

Doreen: I thought you could do a reading for me.

Rosie: That's what I do best. Would you like the Crystal ball, tarot cards or palm?

Doreen: Tarot cards I think. My palm is rather worn and I wouldn't want to discover that due to hard work I have worn away my lifeline and I'm about to pop my clogs.

Rosie: Well it's never happened yet, but if you choose the cards that is what is best for you. **(Hands the cards over)** please shuffle them and deal three cards.

(Doreen does as directed.)

Rosie: Hmm, interesting. Your first card is the Lovers. This indicates the beginning of a new relationship. This doesn't necessarily mean a love affair, but might do. Are you married?

Doreen: No, not any more. I was but my dear husband died fifteen years ago and I haven't been able to find a suitable replacement. I've almost given up trying.

Rosie: Your second card, the Chariot, could mean a rushed decision. So I suggest that if you start a new relationship you take it quite slowly. Your third card... five of Pentacles, a new interest, revived courage. Hmm, well they are very interesting cards, they really indicate a new start of some kind or another. I deduce that you will meet a man who will have a profound effect on you, and you will have the courage - or foolishness - to jump in with both feet. I'll have a quick look in my crystal ball and see if I can see anything else of interest... **(Runs the scarf over the ball and whips it away)** Hmm, I can see what looks like a lot of money, and I can see a house you move too - are you on holiday or do you live locally?

Doreen: I'm on holiday, well a weekend break really, Saga holidays. Perhaps I will have to look a little more closely at the men on the coach on the way home.

Rosie: I can see you will meet this man through a shared interest, but it will be a great surprise. That'll be ten pounds please.

Doreen: Thank you very much. I come here every year you know and you've never been wrong.

Rosie: **(In surprise)** Really? I mean, of course not, I am third generation of Gypsy Rosie Leas and with each generation the gift gets stronger.

Doreen: Do you have a daughter to pass it on to - will there be a fourth generation?

Rosie: No, unfortunately not. I had four boys and I did think about continuing until I had a girl, but Bernard, that's my husband - well as good as - drew the line at four. Shame really. So I will be the final Gypsy Rosie Lea at the end of the pier, unless one of them has a sex change or we have a complete change of gender, somehow 'Gypsy Bob Ackroyd' doesn't have the same ring about it. I knew I should have gone for more exotic names. Bernard wanted traditional, so we have Thomas, Richard and Harold, then we had Robert. 'Tom, Dick and Harry, then Bob's your uncle' as he is so fond of telling me. Gets a bit wearing after nearly thirty years of it I can tell you.

Doreen: He sounds a bit of laugh does your Bernard. I wish I could find myself a man who enjoys a laugh. My Bert - that was my late husband - was a lovely man but never laughed much. His father laughed himself to death so he was always a bit worried about letting himself go.

Rosie: **(Incredulously)** Laughed himself to death? I've never heard that happening before.

Doreen: Oh, it was a long time ago as you can imagine, in the days when they used Nitrous Oxide as an anaesthetic, dentist gave him an accidental overdose. Most unfortunate. Anyway I'd better go and leave you to your customers. As I said, you've never been wrong before so I will wait my fate at the hands of this tall, dark, handsome man.

Rosie: I never said he'd be tall dark and handsome - just that he'd be a man.

Doreen: At my age dear you'd be happy if he was breathing. Toodl-oo. **(Exits on to pier, looks around and sits on a bench.)**

Rosie: **(Gets up and looks out of tent to see if there is anyone around - there isn't except Doreen. Rosie returns to the tent and peers through the back curtain)** Bernard! Can I please have that bleeding tea?

(Bernard appears holding a cup of tea.)

Bernard: Here you are. It was all ready and waiting. What was the last customer like?

Rosie: Little old lady, usual type. Hung off my every word, apparently she's been here every year and I've always been right with what I've told her.

Bernard: Well stranger things have happened - though I'm not sure when. I'm off for a walk along the pier for a bit of fresh air.

Rosie: I'm off for forty winks. **(Exits through back of tent.)**
(Bernard exits through the front of the tent and sees Doreen sitting on the bench. He sits beside her.)

Bernard: Nice afternoon isn't it?
Doreen: Lovely. I like sitting here watching the seagulls dive bombing the tourists.
Bernard: The best bit is when they steal the ice cream out of the cones.
Doreen: Tourists don't realise how big they are – they're pretty scary when they come straight at you.
Bernard: Are you a local then? I haven't seen you around before.
Doreen: No. I'm down for the weekend. I've been coming here for forty years, ever since I was a young girl. Well OK, in my twenties. I met my first husband here.
Bernard: How many husbands have you had?
Doreen: Just the one. But I'm working on it.
(Peter Allen enters and sees the tent. He checks his pockets to see if he's got enough money and peers through the flap. There is no one there. Bernard gets up.)
Bernard: **(To Doreen)** Excuse me a moment. **(Approaches Peter)** If you would care to enter I will go and get Rosie Lea.
Peter: Oh, no, don't worry.
(Peter goes to exit but Bernard is in his way.)
Bernard: It's no trouble, take a seat. **(He steers Peter to the chair and makes sure he sits, then pokes his head around the other flap and calls to Rosie, then turns to Peter)** This might change your life – you can't give up an opportunity like that.
(Peter sits and gazes around. Throughout the next bit of text Peter occasionally gets up to try to 'escape' but Bernard sees him and points him back into the tent. Bernard returns to the bench where Doreen is sitting.)
Doreen: You must be Bernard.
Bernard: How did you know that?
Doreen: Perhaps I have the gift...
Bernard: Really?
Doreen: No. I just went in and had my cards read by your wife. She's very good, she's never been wrong in all the years I've been coming here.
Bernard: What kind of things has she told you that have come true then?
Doreen: She told me my Bert would die – not in so many words of course, but the implication was there – she said that I would lose someone close to me, I thought she meant the cat, but it was my Bert, bless his soul. One year she told me I would go on a long trip, and I went to Bognor. Another time she said that there would be big changes in my life and there were – I bought a new fridge. She's very good. She never mentioned that we would win the jackpot on the lottery mind.
Bernard: **(Stunned)** Didn't she?
Doreen: No. She probably didn't want us to get too excited – not at our age. It was that that did for my Bert, when he found out he had a heart attack and keeled right over. Dreadful shame. But you can't mourn forever can you? I haven't let it change my life, I bought the new fridge but that was about it. Still come here every year for my holidays.
Bernard: What did she tell you this time?
Doreen: She said I was going to meet a man!
Bernard: Really? And have you?
Doreen: Well give me a chance, she only told me ten minutes ago. **(Gives a flirtatious nudge to Bernard)** I've met you though.
Bernard: Yes, and I'm technically single - we never married. Mind you after nearly thirty years I don't think we need a marriage certificate. I don't think she had me in mind for you though, she wouldn't have anyone to do her bidding and boss around. Apart from the boys.
Doreen: Really? I think a woman should look after her man, I'm a bit of a traditionalist in that way. Well I'm off for a walk, to find me a man. Want to come?
Bernard: I was about to go in to the town anyway, if you're heading that way. I just hope I don't cramp your style.

(Both exit. Rosie finally appears in the tent.)

Rosie: I do apologise. I was, err... otherwise detained. Now what can I do for you?

Peter: Erm... I'm not really sure. What do you suggest?

Rosie: I can't do that I'm afraid, for a reading to be successful you must go with what your heart tells you. I can give you some hints though. The crystal ball gives me precise pictures – the tarot cards are very idealistic – they rely on me giving you ideas and you putting them in the context of your life, the palm can give me more of your past and how it will affect your future.

Peter: I'll go with the crystal ball then.

Rosie: Is there anything specific that is bothering you?

Peter: **(Hastily)** No, Nothing. I only thought about entering out of curiosity and I was hustled in by a man standing outside. He was a bit frightening to be honest.

Rosie: **(Laughs)** Oh that would be my Bernard. Soft as a brush...

Peter: **(Interrupting)** Some brushes have very hard bristles, I mean, think of a chimney sweep's brush. I always think that is a silly saying to be honest. It's up there along with 'honesty is the best policy'. Trust me, I know that's not always the case.

Rosie: Right. Well I will try not to say anything else silly. Crystal ball it is. **(Waves the scarf over it and whips it away)** Now...

Peter: You don't have to do all that for my benefit. I will be just as happy if you gave it a wipe with your sleeve. I'm not taken in by all the hocus-pocus stuff.

Rosie: **(Incredulous)** Run my sleeve across... Well! What do you think I am?

Peter: Well you're probably just someone whose grandmother started the fortune telling for a laugh.

Rosie: **(Jumps up in a rage)** How dare you? I think you'd better leave. Bernard! **(Pauses)** Bernard! **(Gets up and goes to find him but he is nowhere in sight.)**

Peter: **(Gets up)** I didn't mean to offend you. I am sorry. I do tend to speak my mind, and I can be rather tactless. That's what I meant when I said about honesty is the best policy – I just can't help it. Sorry.

Rosie: Well you did offend me. Speaking your mind is one thing, but insulting my grandmother is another. She would turn in her grave.

Peter: **(Handing over twenty pounds)** Look, no hard feelings, please see what you can see in the crystal ball for me.

Rosie: **(Slightly mollified, pockets the money and returns to the crystal ball)** I can see you are not from these parts. You are on holiday?

Peter: I'm on my stag weekend. I managed to slip away from the other guys for a while.

Rosie: **(Guessing that he is the friend of Miles)** Ah, yes, I do see a girlfriend. Her name is... Jessica?

Peter: **(Amazed)** Yes! Can you see that?

Rosie: I cannot see everything precisely – the ball gives me ideas, essences if you like. **(Peers into the ball)** I think she is a beautiful blonde woman, but I see a little disharmony between your friends and your girlfriend – do your friends not like her?

Peter: No they don't.

Rosie: Sometimes they can see things more clearly from far away. She is very forceful?

Peter: **(Defensively)** She knows her own mind, yes.

Rosie: Do you know yours? Are you being true to yourself?

Peter: What?

Rosie: 'To thine own self be true' that's Shakespeare, from Hamlet

Peter: I know where it's from – I used to be an English teacher.

Rosie: Oh, used to be? What do you do now? No, don't tell me, let me see, I see a uniform...

Peter: I'm a security guard.

Rosie: Heavens, that was a bit of a career change.

Peter: Jessie didn't like me marking homework and things in the evenings, and going on school camps and running after school clubs, so I changed jobs.

Rosie: Oh. Do you enjoy your work?

Peter: No. It is mind-numbingly boring. However I do get to spend more time with Jessie, even if we have no money to do anything with.

Rosie: (**Peering in the ball**) So if I told you that you were going to meet a *[beautiful dark haired]* woman you wouldn't be interested?

Peter: Oh no. My Jess's the one for me. (**Pauses**) What kind of *[beautiful dark haired]* woman, and what might happen?

Rosie: I cannot say, just that she will change your life forever. I think that is about it. Do come back if you want anything else, perhaps next time I could do your cards.

Peter: Thanks. I might just do that. You've certainly given me something to think about. (**Exits.**)
(**Rosie is about to disappear into the back of the tent when Barry Shillingford enters.**)

Barry: (**Peering into the tent**) Are you open for business?

Rosie: I certainly am, come in and sit down. (**Sits down**) Now what would you like, crystal ball, cards or palm?

Barry: Crystal ball I think.

Rosie: Most people like the crystal ball. (**Does the usual bit with the scarf**) Let me see...
Hmmm, are you married?

Barry: Yes, well kind of.

Rosie: Kind of? How can you be 'kind of' married?

Barry: Technically I'm married but we're separated, due to get a divorce.

Rosie: Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to pry. Well in that case I have good news, you are due to meet a *[tall dark, beautiful]* woman who will change your life.

Barry: That's unlikely, I am right off women. Especially *[tall dark beautiful]* ones. My ex was exactly that and she was nothing but trouble. She had men falling over themselves to chat her up and she was always flirting. What a nightmare. You might know her – she runs the florists shop opposite the end of the pier.

Rosie: Errrr... No, can't say I do. So you are local?

Barry: Yes.

Rosie: OK, so apart from the beautiful woman – of course this might mean that you are going to get back with her...

Barry: I don't think so. I can't cope with a woman who is a horrendous flirt and who has men chasing her all the time.

Rosie: Right, lets see what else we have. I see a new job for you in the near future. What do you do for a living currently?

Barry: I'm a computer salesman – so if you see a change from that I would be very interested, I can't wait to get away from it.

Rosie: I see something, more... 'Hands on' shall we say, do you have any hobbies that you could turn into a business?

Barry: I do have a hobby, but I'm not telling you what it is, you'll think I'm mad. I have thought about doing it as a job but it's finding the right place – it's all about location, and although I've found the perfect one unfortunately it's not available.

Rosie: Well that's OK, I can't make out what it is in the crystal ball, but all I am saying is have a think about it. The only other thing I can see is a house move. Are you planning on moving house?

Barry: Yes, very shortly. I moved out from the house I shared with Madeleine and moved in with a mate, but that isn't a long term prospect so I shall be looking for a flat soon, as soon as the divorce has come through and I get my half of the proceeds.

Rosie: Well good luck with your new life. Ten pounds please.
(**Barry hands over the money and exits.**)

Barry: Thanks very much.
(**Bernard returns up the pier. Rosie pokes her head out of the tent and sees him.**)

Rosie: About time too, where have you been?

Bernard: I've been for a stroll along the prom.

Rosie: A stroll along the prom? What on earth for? You've been here for thirty years and you've never had the urge to go for a stroll along the prom before.

Bernard: Perhaps that's because I didn't have anyone to stroll with.

Rosie: **(Suspiciously)** And who did you have this time?

Bernard: A very nice little old lady. We had a very nice, very long chat. It was quite enlightening.

Rosie: Really. I am going into town for a quick bit of shopping, so you can either take that sign in or put on a headscarf and dangly earrings and pretend to be Gypsy Rosie Lea.

Bernard: I'm not doing that again. Once was more than enough for me. Especially after that customer tried to chat me up. He was horrible. I felt a bit sorry for him when he explained that he'd broken his glasses earlier that day, but he was lucky I didn't sock him one. I'll see you later. **(Takes sign and puts it in the tent, exits through the back of the tent.)**

(Rosie exits down the pier. Blackout.)

Scene 2:

(Later that afternoon. Bernard is sitting on the bench reading a newspaper. The sign is back outside the tent. Madeleine Shillingford appears and looks around, sees the tent and peers in.)

Maddy: **(Coming back out sees Bernard)** Excuse me, do you know if there is anyone in here?

Bernard: As far as I'm aware, hold on I'll give her a shout. **(Enters the tent and shouts through the back)** Rosie! Client for you!

(Rosie appears a little flustered.)

Rosie: **(To Maddy)** I do apologise, please come in and take a seat. It's a lovely afternoon isn't it?

Maddy: Yes.

Rosie: What can I do for you today?

Maddy: I'd like my fortune told. I'm not having a very good time of late. Not that I really believe in all this kind of stuff but one of my friends suggested it, so here I am.

Rosie: Well most of my time is spent converting non believers so you're not the first. Now what would you like, crystal ball, tarot cards or palm?

Maddy: I'm not really sure, erm... Crystal ball I think.

Rosie: Good choice **(swishes the scarf over the ball and whips it away)** I'll just let the fog clear... Right, what have we here... a *[tall dark handsome]* man...

Maddy: **(Deep sigh)** That'll be my ex husband.

Rosie: Oh. That's a bit odd. He appears to be your love interest. Are you divorced?

Maddy: Not yet, we're separated. However there is no way that we will get back together, he is completely intolerant. I never realised in all the years I went out with him how jealous and petty he can be. Do you know, he left me because he couldn't take the fact that I continually get chatted up by men! As if it's my fault! I can be working away, all scruffy and covered in dirt and still men come and chat me up. I mean, what's a girl to do?

Rosie: **(Light dawning)** I agree. Let me see... I see a lot of flowers, you seem to be surrounded by them...

Maddy: I'm a florist.

Rosie: **(Her suspicions confirmed)** Ah, I see, that would explain it. I see the sea, do you live here? You're not a tourist?

Maddy: I live here, I have the florists opposite the pier.

Rosie: Oh. Is your marriage completely dead? I mean... if I were to tell you that your current husband was definitely the one for you and that things would be improving, would it make a difference?

Maddy: I love him to bits, but I can't take the jealousy. I've never given him any reason to think I would cheat on him, but he just doesn't seem to trust me.

Rosie: I really think that he is the one for you, perhaps you should try talking to him.

Maddy: I never see him, that was part of the problem. I have my own business and I start early and finish early, his work meant he worked late and so by the time we got together we were both tired and crotchety. Then he found out I was being chatted up all the time and get cross about that, and things just escalated.

Rosie: If he changed his job would that help?

Maddy: I don't know, if he changed his job and stopped accusing me of flirting all the time it might help I suppose.

Rosie: (**Peering in to the ball again**) I can see a lot of changes – a house move, and I see you and a man – presumably your husband – strolling along this pier, arm in arm. I really think you should give it another go, just to make sure.

Maddy: Well, OK. I must admit this wasn't what I expected to hear when I came here.

Rosie: What did you expect?

Maddy: I don't know, that I would win the lottery and marry some gorgeous hunky model from the front cover of 'Men's Health' magazine I suppose.

Rosie: From what I've seen of your husband you've got your own gorgeous man, you don't want a vain creature that keeps nicking your moisturiser would you?

Maddy: (**Laughs**) No I suppose not. Thanks very much. (**Hands over the money and exits.**)

Rosie: (**Goes out the front of the tent to find Bernard still reading the paper. She looks at her watch**) I think I'll call it a day to be honest.

(**Jennifer James enters. She is wearing a tabard, the kind caterers wear. She approaches the tent.**)

Rosie: We're just closing I'm afraid.

Jennifer: (**Looking as if she is about to burst into tears**) Oh. Could you just squeeze me in quickly? I'm desperate.

Rosie: Oh alright then. Come on in.

(**Both enter the tent and sit down.**)

Rosie: Now, what would you like?

Jennifer: Crystal ball please.

Rosie: (**Runs scarf over it and whips it away**) Let the mist clear... Let me see. I can see a *[tall, dark handsome]* man about to appear in your life...

Jennifer: I don't think so. I have just been well and truly dumped by a *[tall, dark, handsome]* man, and there is no way on this planet I would ever look at another one. In fact, after the experiences I have had with men recently I am thinking I might become a lesbian.

Rosie: Right. OK. Let's see what else I can see. You are thinking about changing your job. You work in catering I think?

Jennifer: Yes. Well kind of. I work in a company canteen.

Rosie: Are you thinking about moving on?

Jennifer: Well I wasn't, but to be honest, the guy I've been seeing works there and now I've just been dumped I can't bear to keep seeing him. I think he's still in love with his wife, even though they're separated. It's awful.

Rosie: I can see a move, but not just a job, but away from here. You are local, not on holiday?

Jennifer: (**Brightens up**) Yes. I think I might like that, fresh start and all that. Where am I going, can you see?

Rosie: No, not really. Do you have family and friends anywhere you could start again?

Jennifer: I've got a cousin near Bedford, I could try over there. It would be a bit strange though, not having the sea around.

Rosie: It's got a very nice river. And I've heard it's very up and coming.

Jennifer: Well I'll have to work my notice, but it's something to look forward to. Anything else in there?

Rosie: Let me see... I do see a bit of a windfall, do you do the lottery?

Jennifer: (**Squeals**) Oh wow! Does that mean that I'm going to win the jackpot? Brilliant!

Rosie: I wouldn't got that far, but you might get a tenner.

Jennifer: You wouldn't see a tenner in there – so it must be loads. Woohoo! Right, well I'm off to see about changing my life, starting with buying a lottery ticket. Thanks very much (**Hands over the money and exits down the pier, skipping happily.**)

Rosie: (**Exits and sits down next to Bernard**) Well that's it for today, it's been really busy – I wish everyday was like this – I could retire to a little cottage in the country.

Bernard: Don't you mean 'we'.

Rosie: Of course. I just told that young girl she was going to win the lottery, she went off happy as Larry. If only it was that easy.

Bernard: Isn't it? We have a pretty good life. You work the summer on the pier, I work the winter in the theatre. I think it's pretty good.

Rosie: Don't you ever get bored?

Bernard: Of course I do, mainly in the summer when I've got nothing to do. Do you?

Rosie: Summer, winter, all the time. I just wish something exciting would happen.

(Blackout)

Scene 3:

(The next day. Same set. Bernard is setting up the 'open' board then joins Rosie in the tent, Doreen is sitting on the bench and Barry is leaning over the railings, back to the audience. Madeleine appears.)

Maddy: **(To Barry)** I thought I might find you here. Can we have a chat?

Barry: If you want. I'll be sorting out somewhere to live shortly, so I'll move my stuff as soon as I do. And, yes, you can have the Barry Manilow CD's – I only ever liked 'Copacabana' anyway.

Maddy: I wondered whether you'd like to have another go.

Barry: **(Turning around to face her)** What?

Maddy: Perhaps if we found time to talk to each other we might be able to sort things out.

Barry: Why? We've been separated for six months. What brought this on?

Maddy: Just something somebody said. Would you like a coffee?

Barry: I suppose it wouldn't hurt. Where do you want to go?

Maddy: We could go to Lily's, next to my shop.

Barry: OK.

(Both exit. Bernard exits from the tent and sits next to Doreen.)

Bernard: Did you find your man?

Doreen: No. Well actually I did find a very nice one but he's taken. Which is a shame because I think we would get along really well and I could spoil him rotten, what with all the money I won on the lottery. But there you are, you can't have everything.

Bernard: And have you said anything to this man?

Doreen: Oh no. I don't believe in breaking up relationships. I think if a couple are happy together they'll stay together through thick and thin, if they're not then they will split up, simple as that.

Bernard: But it's not is it? Sometimes it's just easier to stay together and convince yourself things are fine, when you know in your heart of hearts that they're not.

Doreen: To be honest I wouldn't know. I had a wonderful marriage with my Bert and I haven't really had anything long term since then. So I'll believe you if you say that's the case. But I do think that life is far too short to live a lie, you only get one crack at it so why on earth would you stay where you're not happy? – Oh I don't mean you, I mean in general.

Bernard: I know. Perhaps if you were to say something to this man then you might find he's happy about leaving his wife. You never know what might happen unless you ask.

Doreen: I'll think about it, perhaps I'll say something before I go, give him a bit of thinking time until I'm back again. I thought I'd come back in about a month or so. **(Exits.)**

(Peter appears, strolling down the pier, followed by Miles and Jennifer, not obviously together.)

Rosie: **(Poking her head out of the tent, she sees them and motions to Bernard)** Bernard!

(He gets up and enters the tent.)

Bernard: Yes?

Rosie: Do those lot look like they're together?

Bernard: **(Looking out at the three on the pier)** No, why?

Rosie: I thought that that one there **(Indicates Miles)** was on a stag do with the other bloke.

Bernard: And what about the girl?

Rosie: I thought about fixing her up with the guy who's stag weekend it was, that's him (**Indicates Peter.**)

Bernard: Hang on, so you thought that the two blokes were on a stag weekend and you'd fix the one that is supposed to be getting married up with that girl?

Rosie: Yes.

Bernard: Why?

Rosie: Well that one (**Indicating Miles**) said that no one could stand the other one's fiancée and he should dump her.

Bernard: And that's a good reason is it? And how does the girl come into it?

Rosie: Oh she was having an affair with someone and it had just finished, so she needed cheering up, I told her that she would move away for a fresh start – and win the lottery. So if he does chat her up it can't go anywhere as she's leaving, so he'll just go ahead and marry his Jessie.

Bernard: Why can't you just keep it simple? (**Walks off shaking his head**)
(**Miles is leaning against the railings, Jennifer and Peter are sitting on the bench.**)

Peter: Nice here isn't it?

Jennifer: S'pose.

Peter: Are you local?

Jennifer: At the moment. However I do plan on moving away shortly I think.

Peter: Oh, anywhere exciting?

Jennifer: Not sure. I've just come out of a bad relationship and there are too many reminders of the bloke to be honest. You on holiday?

Peter: Stag weekend.

Jennifer: Oh right. We get a lot of those here, who's getting married?

Peter: Me.

Jennifer: Oh.

Peter: I'm not sure I'm doing the right thing though.

Jennifer: Why?

Peter: (**Nodding to the tent**) I went to see Gypsy Rosie Lea and she started me thinking. She told me to make sure that I'm true to myself, and I haven't been, and I really don't know what to do.

Jennifer: Difficult. When's the wedding?

Peter: Three weeks.

Jennifer: Well whatever you do don't marry the girl if you're not a hundred percent certain, it'll end in tears, believe me.

Peter: You sound like you know what you're talking about

Jennifer: I do, been there, done that, shredded his t shirt. And then I went and got involved with a married man, how stupid is that?

Peter: Difficult aren't they, relationships?

Jennifer: Yeah. I don't know why we bother. Always hoping the right one is around the corner I suppose. I mean, you see these old people who've been married for like, fifty years and you think, how do they manage it? How did they manage to find the love of their life when I can't even find someone I can put up with for five years?

Peter: Exactly. All I want is someone who will love me for who I am and not want to change me, I'm not a bad person. I might have a few strange little habits, but who hasn't? I could put up with someone's strange habits if they could put up with mine...

Jennifer: (**Flirty**) Oooh, what strange habits have you got then?

Peter: Well that would be telling. Tell you what, you tell me yours, and I'll tell you mine.

Jennifer: Buy me a coffee and you're on.

Peter: Come on then.

(**Both exit. Miles takes a seat on the bench and waits. Rosie pokes her head out of the tent and sees Miles. She goes to join him.**)

Rosie: Nice afternoon isn't it?

Miles: Hmm.

Rosie: Did your friend have a good stag do?

Miles: **(Taken aback)** Oh, errrr, yes I think so.

Rosie: And have you met a *[tall dark beautiful]* girl yet?

Miles: No. I did meet one, in the florists at the end of the pier but she was very abrupt with me, so no. I never even got to ask her if she kept goldfish. Which actually leads me on to my next question.

Rosie: What's that then?

Miles: I noticed that you had a goldfish.

Rosie: Yes, bleeding thing, doesn't do anything except swim around in circles.

Miles: Bit difficult to do anything else when you're in a round bowl I suppose, otherwise you'd keep bashing into the side.

Rosie: I suppose so.

Miles: So you could say that I met you through goldfish, couldn't you?

Rosie: Oh. Er... Well I suppose you could, if you were clutching at straws. And if I were *[tall dark and beautiful]* – and single.

Miles: Well all that is irrelevant, because...

(Bernard appears as does Barry and Madeleine, with Doreen trailing behind.)

Miles: **(Whipping out a pair of handcuffs and slapping them on Rosie)** Gypsy Rosie Lea, also known as Janice Ackroyd, I am arresting you for obtaining money by deception. You do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you say may be given in evidence.

Rosie: What? What are you doing? Get these things off me. What do you mean 'obtaining money by deception'? Bernard, do something!

Miles: We've had complaints that you take money off people and tell them a load of rubbish about what their future holds. As you are unable to substantiate any of these claims it is deception. So please come with me and we'll sort you down the station. **(Gets up and takes her down the pier.)**

Rosie: Well I was right, I did see you in a uniform, and you're a copper...

Miles: Plain clothes unfortunately. You couldn't even get that right.

Rosie: Bernard! DO something.

(Bernard shrugs and removes the 'open' sign from outside the tent.)

Bernard: I don't suppose we'll be needing this for a while.

(Rosie and Miles exit. Peter and Jennifer return looking back at Rosie being carted off.)

Peter: Blimey, what's going on?

Bernard: They've just arrested Gypsy Rosie Lea for obtaining money by deception.

Peter: No! Really! Thing is, it was all a bit of fun wasn't it, no one takes it seriously do they? I mean, it's a tent on the end of the pier.

Bernard: Apparently the Police do. Someone made a complaint so they've taken her away.

Peter: Blimey.

Jennifer: **(Seeing Barry)** Barry?

Barry: **(Embarrassed)** Oh hi Jen.

Jennifer: Is this your wife?

Barry: Yes.

Jennifer: **(To Maddy)** He's still in love with you, you know.

Maddy: How do you know? Barry, who's this?

Jennifer: Just an... old friend. I'm thinking of moving Barry, I thought I might try Bedford, got family there, so might give it a go. See you around sometime.

Peter: Bedford? I come from Luton, pretty close to Bedford. We could meet up for a coffee occasionally if you move.

Jennifer: Won't you be married?

Peter: No, I'm going to call it off when I get back, it'll be hell but it's got to be done.

Jennifer: Well if that happens, I'd love to meet you for coffee.

(Both go and sit on the bench.)

Doreen: **(To Bernard)** What are you going to do?

Bernard: I suppose we'll have to close the business, certainly for this season. Even if they let her out on bail she won't be able to continue. Not sure what we'll do.

Barry: **(Approaching Bernard)** Excuse me, I heard you say that you'll be giving up for the season. Could I suggest something?

Bernard: Go ahead.

Barry: I have been waiting for an opportunity to start my own business, but could never find the right location, the end of the pier would be perfect. Could I rent it off you for the rest of the season?

Maddy: Barry? What are you talking about?

Barry: This is it Maddy. I am giving up the computer store and finally doing what I always wanted to do.

Maddy: You can't be an artist in a tent on the end of the pier!

Barry: No, but I can sit here and do caricatures – do my painting in the garage like I used to but earn money here. It's worth a try for a season. If it doesn't work out then we've only lost a couple of months of my wages. Come on Maddy, it means that I will only be five minutes walk from your shop, we can meet for lunch, I can finish work at the same time as you. This might actually be the break we need.

Maddy: OK, but just for this season, see how it goes.

Barry: **(To Bernard)** What do you reckon?

Bernard: I'm quite happy with that, for the rest of this season. Of course you might get the regulars expecting you to be wearing a headscarf and dangly earrings but as long as you're OK with that, it's a deal.

(Both shake hands.)

Barry: **(To Maddy)** Come on, let's go and celebrate. Well I never expected that this morning when I came to have my cards read. **(Stops)** Mind you she did say that I would be changing my job and getting back with you.

Maddy: How weird, I came here this morning as well, she told me that I would get back with you too.

Barry: That's a bit spooky. Perhaps she did know her stuff after all.

Peter: She told me that I would meet a *[tall dark, beautiful]* woman...

Bernard: She told every guy they would meet a *[tall, dark, beautiful]* woman.

Maddy: That explains a lot then, no wonder I had all these guys chatting me up as they came off the pier.

Bernard: She was a bit of a fraud, she was just lucky occasionally.

Doreen: Well what about you?

Bernard: I don't know. I think this might be the break I've been looking for. I think I will take the opportunity and leave.

Doreen: Well, I have a spare room if you want somewhere to stay. I'd be grateful for the company. And you wouldn't have to lift a finger.

Bernard: Perhaps she did know what she was talking about after all.

Doreen: Why?

Bernard: She told me that I would live a life of luxury and pampering. I don't think this was quite what she had in mind though...

(Blackout.)

Production Notes:

Throughout the play Madeleine is described as a ‘tall dark beautiful’ woman and Barry is described as a ‘tall dark handsome man’. This text will change to suit the cast member in the role, so she could end up being a ‘beautiful short redhead’, he could be a ‘brown-eyed handsome man’ or similar.

Props List:

Tent, decorated inside with fortune teller-like paraphernalia (Onstage)
Bench (Onstage)
Table in tent (Onstage)
2 chairs in tent (Onstage)
Goldfish in a round bowl with lid (Onstage)
Large sandwich board with writing on – Gypsy Rosie Lea or similar - ‘Open’ (Onstage)
Cup and Saucer (Bernard)
Very large handbag containing any very odd items and crystal ball (Rosie)
Scarf (Rosie)
Tarot cards (Rosie)
Watch (Rosie)

Setting:

The play takes place on the end of a seaside pier. The stage is set with a large old-fashioned style tent to one side and a bench on the opposite side of the stage. The tent takes up a large portion of the stage and is open to the audience. Rosie and Bernard enter the tent through a flap that leads off stage, cast members going in and out of the tent as part of the action access it through an entrance at the side, near the bench. The effect could be achieved using flats draped with material to give the illusion of a tent.

Stage Layout:

