

« TOO DARN HOT »

ACT I

Scene 1 – the interior of the Porter household in Peru, Indiana – evening

On stage are Samuel (Cole's father), Kate (Mother), Cole Porter (aged approx. 20) a maid, a butler and 3-4 other staff.

All (spoken) : Like the beat, beat, beat of the tom-tom
When the jungle shadows fall
Like the tick, tick, tock of the stately clock
As it stands against the wall

Like the drip, drip, drip of the raindrops
When the summer shower is through
So a voice within me keeps repeating you, you, you

Music to Song 1.1 "De-Lovely" starts, the actors "unfreeze"

Cole: *I feel a sudden urge to sing*

Mother (spoken): Cole, are you done packing?

Cole: *the kind of ditty that invokes the Spring*

Father (spoken): Time waits for no man Cole Porter and neither does the overnight train to Connecticut
!!!

Cole: *So, control your desire to curse while I crucify the verse
This verse I've started seems to me the "Tin Pan-tithesis" of melody
So to spare you all the pain, I'll skip the darn thing and sing the refrain*

Maid (spoken): Really Cole, we have to hurry!

*The night is young, the skies are clear
And if you want to go walkin', dear
It's delightful, it's delicious, it's de-lovely*

*I understand the reason why
You're sentimental, 'cause so am I
It's delightful, it's delicious, it's de-lovely*

*You can tell at a glance what a swell night this is for romance
You can hear, dear Mother Nature murmuring low "Let yourself go"*

*So please be sweet, my chickadee
And when I kiss ya, just say to me
"It's delightful, it's delicious, it's delectable, it's delirious,
It's dilemma, it's de limit, it's deluxe, it's de-lovely"*

The scene changes to Cole arriving at Yale carrying a suitcase. Various students & academics are milling about

All: *You can tell at a glance what a swell night this is for romance
You can hear dear Mother Nature murmuring low "Let yourself go"*

*So please be sweet, my chickadee
And when I kiss ya, just say to me
"It's delightful, it's delicious, it's delectable, it's delirious,
It's dilemma, it's de limit, it's deluxe, it's de-lovely"*

The other students/teachers exit leaving Cole and Gerald Murphy in their room.

Cole: Is this room "Gamma - 89A"?

Gerald: Well, if it isn't I've been sleeping in some other poor dolt's bed!

Cole: Cole, Cole Porter. Law. Guess I must be your new room-mate

Gerald *(looking slightly disappointed)* : Law! Oh Christ! All those rules & regulations & depositions: I mean really ... if you obey all the rules, you miss out on all the fun! Beer?

Cole: I'm not much of a drinker

Gerald: I am. I'll teach ya

He hands him a bottle.

Gerald: Gerald Murphy. Nice to make your acquaintance, Mr Cole Porter Law (they clink bottles). I think we're gonna get along just fine

Cole: I'd better unpack

Gerald: Well, don't take to long about it. Tonight's the Freshman's Ball. And I have it on good authority that there'll be some lovely young fillies in attendance.

Scene 2 – The Freshman's Ball – outside on a balmy September evening. Couples are strolling arm in arm. Slow instrumental version of "You Do Something to Me" plays in the background

Gerald: Cole, may I present Ms. Sarah Elisabeth Fuller, recently of Augusta, Georgia. Miss Fuller, Mr. Cole Porter Law

Cole: It's just Porter. Nice to meet you, Ms. Fuller.

Sarah: It's just Sarah, Mr. Porter. The pleasure's mine

Gerald: Cole here, aims to be a Supreme Court judge by the age of 30, but I have a feeling that's not going to happen for him.

Sarah: You look more of the artistic type to me, Mr. Porter.

Cole: Well, I do love signing. Not very good at it, though.

Sarah: You should try out for the Wiffenpoofs. Gerald was a member in his freshman year, weren't you, sweetie?

Gerald: Till my voice broke (*they laugh*) And I discovered the delights of Ms. Sarah Elisabeth Fuller, recently of Augusta, Georgia. (*she swats him with her fan*)

Music to Song 1.2 "You do Something to Me" starts

Gerald: *You do something to me
Something that simply mystifies me*

Sarah: *Tell me, why should it be
You have the power to hypnotize me?*

Gerald: *Let me live 'neath your spell
Do, do that voodoo that you do so well*

Sarah: *For you do something to me
That nobody else could do*

Gerald: *Let me live 'neath your spell
Do, do that voodoo that you do so well*

Both: *For you do something to me
That nobody else could do

That nobody else could do*

Gerald: Say, how about we take in a show?

Sarah: I'm saying no right now to anything vaudeville!

Gerald: Only the highest of high-brow for you, my love!

Scene 3 – The inside of some decidedly low-brow musical theatre. Various people are drinking & laughing

Music to Song 1.3 "Be a Clown!" starts

Clowns:

*Be A Clown, Be A Clown,
All The World Loves A Clown.
Act A Fool, Play The Calf,
And You'll Always Have The Last Laugh.
Wear The Cap And The Bells
And You'll Rate With All The Great Swells
If You Become A Doctor, Folks'll Face You With Dread,
If You Become A Dentist, They'll Be Glad When You're Dead,
You'll Get A Bigger Hand If You Can Stand On Your Head,
Be A Clown, Be A Clown, Be A Clown.
Be A Clown, Be A Clown,
All The World Loves A Clown.
Be A Crazy Buffoon*

*And The Demoiselles'll All Swoon.
 Dress In Huge, Baggy Pants
 And You'll Ride The Road To Romance.
 A Butcher Or A Baker, Ladies Never Embrace,
 A Barber For A Beau Would Be A Social Disgrace,
 They All'll Come To Call If You Can Fall On Your Face,
 Be A Clown, Be A Clown, Be A Clown.
 Be A Clown, Be A Clown,
 All The World Loves A Clown.
 Show 'Em Tricks, Tell 'Em Jokes
 And You'll Only Stop With Top Folks.
 Be A Crack Jackanapes
 And They'll Imitate You Like Apes.
 Why Be A Great Composer With Your Rent In Arrears,
 Why Be A Major Poet And You'll Owe It For Years?
 When Crowds'll Pay To Giggle If You Wiggle Your Ears?
 Be A Clown, Be A Clown, Be A Clown*

The 2 couples leave accompanied by 2 further couples they've "acquired" in theatre.

Scene 4: Tales from the Riverbank

They stroll along the riverbank under the moonlight

Mitzi: It's such a lovely evening, aint it?

Cole: De-lovely

Mitzi: Huh?

Cole: Very pleasant. I love the river by moonlight.

Mitzi: Swell! So, what do you think of New Haven girls?

Cole: I ... err.... Haven't really thought about it. I don't have anything to compare it to, really

Mitzi: *(repeats)* you don't have anything to compare it to? Oh OH ! You never been with a girl before, huh?

Cole: One time back in Indiana, to the theatre

Mitzi: Oh you're so sweet!

Gerald: Hey, Porter! How you doing back there?

Cole: Fine and ... err de-dandy

Sarah: Leave the poor boy alone, for Heaven's sake!

Gerald: Just checking

They all sit by the river bank, the ladies trailing their hands in the water. The men standing smoking cigars

Theodore: Say Cole, you seem to be hitting it off with Miss Mitzi. Better watch yourself there, or she'll eat you alive!

Cole: Oh I (*blushing*)

Gerald: Now Theodore, Cole is a little shy. Be gentle with him

Theodore: I, Sir, am a gentleman!

Gerald : A gentleman is simply a patient wolf!

Theodore : Not really a ladies man, eh?

Cole: I guess I never really had chance to find out

Theodore: I've had chance. Somewhat over-rated in my opinion.

They exchange a look

Gerald: If you two chatty chappies don't mind, I think it's time we entertained our women folk .
If you please?

They stand in a row as the ladies look on

Music to Song 1.4 "In the Still of the Night" starts

In the still of the night

As I gaze from my window

At the moon in its flight

My thoughts all stray to you

In the still of the night

All the world is in slumber

All the times without number

Darling when I say to you

Do you love me, as I love you

Are you my life to be, my dream come true

Or will this dream of mine fade out of sight

Like the moon growing dim, on the rim of the hill

In the chill, still, of the night

Like the moon growing dim, on the rim of the hill

In the chill, still, of the night

Scene 5: A party in a bar

A year has passed. Gerald has married Sarah. Cole has dropped his Law degree in favour of Musical composition. A party is in full swing. The band are playing ragtime jazz.

Cole (to Sarah): So you're now officially an upright, forthright married lady – congratulations!

Sarah: Forthright perhaps ... but definitely not upright or uptight

Cole: I'm so happy for you both. My nearest & dearest. I wish you all the happiness on God's green earth

Sarah: And you certainly seem happier since you dropped law for musical composition, no? You know what would make me really happy Cole? (*he shrugs*) That you could find your special someone too.

Cole: But I'm having too much fun! Sometimes I wonder if men and women really suit each other. Perhaps they should live next door and just visit now and then.

Sarah: There's a lot to be said for occasional callers Even gentlemen callers (*Cole looks shocked, embarrassed*) Oh, for goodness sake Cole, Gerald & I aren't stupid. We know! And believe me, it wasn't too difficult to guess!

Cole: That's not the entire sum of it, you know. Maybe if the right gal came along

Sarah: Oh who gives a crap! As long as you're happy (*they embrace*)

Gerald: May I cut in? (*he pours more champagne*) Tonight let's celebrate. First to me finding the one woman in the whole of New England who'll put up with me

Cole: Cheers to that!

Gerald: AND ... to Cole's new adventure in gay Paris! Though why anyone would go there when there's a full blown war on, is anyone's guess!

Cole: I told you guys. I want to play my part and, you know, Paris is so intoxicating. It'll do wonders for my music. I asked you to come with me!

Gerald: Yeah sure. Maybe next year. In the meantime LET'S MISBEHAVE!

Music to Song 1.5 "Let's Misbehave" starts

*We're all alone, no chaperone
Can get our number
The world's in slumber
Let's misbehave*

*There's something wild about you child
That's so contagious
Let's be outrageous
Let's misbehave*

*When Adam won Eve's hand
He wouldn't stand for teasin'
He didn't care about those apples out of season*

*They say the Spring
Means just one thing to little lovebirds*

*We're not above birds
Let's misbehave*

*Let's misbehave
Let's misbehave*

*If you'd be just so sweet
And only meet your fate, dear
It would be the great event of 1928, dear*

*Let's misbehave
Let's misbehave*

Scene 6: A slightly sleazy bar in Paris (c. 1921)

All (spoken) : Like the beat, beat, beat of the tom-tom
When the jungle shadows fall
Like the tick, tick, tock of the stately clock
As it stands against the wall

Like the drip, drip, drip of the raindrops
When the summer shower is through
So a voice within me keeps repeating you, you, you

*When they begin the beguine
It brings back the sound of music so tender,
It brings back a night of tropical splendor,
It brings back a memory ever green.*

*I'm with you once more under the stars,
And down by the shore an orchestra's playing
And even the palms seem to be swaying
When they begin the beguine.*

*To live it again is past all endeavor,
Except when that tune clutches my heart,
And there we are, swearing to love forever,
And promising never, never to part.*

*What moments divine, what rapture serene,
Till clouds came along to disperse the joys we had tasted,
And now when I hear people curse the chance that was wasted,
I know but too well what they mean;*

*So don't let them begin the beguine
Let the love that was once a fire remain an ember;
Let it sleep like the dead desire I only remember
When they begin the beguine.*

*Oh yes, let them begin the beguine, make them play
Till the stars that were there before return above you,
Till you whisper to me once more,
"Darling, I love you!"*

*And we suddenly know, what heaven we're in,
When they begin the beguine*

(music keeps playing bossa nova type song. Cole & Gerald are quite drunk)

Cole: Bienvenue à Paris!

(a lady of the night approaches them)

Hooker: Bon soir Messieurs

Gerald: And a bon "sir" to you, enchanting lady! My, you are HEVEANLY!

Hooker: Only good girls go to Heaven, Monsieur. Bad girls go EVERYWHERE ! *(she slinks off)*

Gerald: Ahem, moving on so how goes the new show? I hope you've come up with a new title?

Cole: What's wrong with the title?

Gerald: "Olga, come back to the Volga"? Really Cole! That might pass on Vaudeville but not on Broadway!

(Cole shrugs)

Cole: I like it – anyway, when did you say Sarah arrives?

Gerald: On the Normandie this Tuesday. She's with some friends. Linda Lee Thomas is one of 'em? You ever meet her?

Cole : Can't say that I did. So, just 2 more night's of freedom. Better make the most of it !

A chanteuse arrives on stage, accompanied by 3 male & 3 female "dancers" The music to "Love for Sale" starts

*When the only sound in the empty street
Is the heavy tread of the heavy feet
That belongs to a lonesome cop
She opens shop
When the moon so long has been gazing down
On the wayward ways of this wayward town
That her smile becomes a smirk
She goes to work*

*Love for sale
Appetizing young love for sale
Love that's fresh and still unspoiled
Love that's only slightly soiled
Love for sale*

*Who will buy?
Who would like to sample her supply?
Who's prepared to pay the price*

*For a trip to paradise?
Love for sale*

*Let the poets pipe of love
In their childish way
I know every type of love
Better far than they
If you want the thrill of love
She's been through the mill of love
Old love, new love
Every love, but true love for sale*

*Appetizing young love for sale
If you want to buy his wares
Follow me and climb the stairs
Love for sale*

*Let the poets pipe of love
In their childish way
I know every type of love
Better far than they
If you want the thrill of love
He's been through the mill of love
Old love, new love
Every love, but true love for sale*

*Appetizing young love for sale
Love for sale, honey
If you want to buy his wares
Follow me and climb the stairs
Love for sale*

Cole: One for the road?

Gerald: Whoa! Not for me. What time is it, anyhow?

Cole: Time for another drink - say, who is THAT over there? (he nods to a group of men stood near the bar. Gerald instantly knows which one he's referring to)

Gerald : That, my friend is Prince Dimitri Alexandrovich Boris Obolensky, he's a White Russian

Cole: A White Russian, eh? My favorite drink.

Gerald: He's also known as "Alex le taxi", "Dimitri le debile" and to some "Obolensky The Obelisk" – if you get my drift

(Dimitri approaches them)

Dimitri: Good evening, Gentlemen. Are you enjoying the show?

Cole: Very much so. How about you?

Dimitri: Is OK. I prefer other entertainments

Cole: Couldn't agree more. May I buy you a drink?

(He takes him by the elbow towards the bar. Gerald looks on, despairing)

Scene 7: The deck of the Normandie – a sunny late afternoon. Sarah is lounging with Linda and 3 other female friends

Sarah: Oh, I'm so looking forward to exploring Paris! And ... err... to seeing Gerald, of course

Linda: Of course

Friend 1: And I bet you can't wait to get home to Paris, Linda?

Linda: Well, it's been almost 2 months. I do miss New York but Paris has a certain quality

Friend 2: (*smirking*) I hear French men have a certain "quality" too

Linda: That they do, my dear

(*a waiter offers drinks*)

Waiter: Compliments of the Normandie, Madame.

Linda: Je vous remercie

Friend 3: My, if French men are all like him, I'm going to need to go on a diet when I get back to the States!

(*they all giggle*)

Sarah: So Linda, we simply must introduce you to Cole Porter at the earliest opportunity. Did I mention he's already had 2 shows produced on Broadwaywell, off-Broadway to be precise.... Well, upstate, to be exact

Linda: You've barely talked about anything else! Do I sense I'm being pushed into something?

Sarah: Not at all I wouldn't dream of pushing you into anything! Maybe the Seine, if you don't hit it off with Cole!

Linda: I'm not promising anything: You know full well I'm only recently divorced.

Sarah: And thank the Lord for that! Edward Russel Thomas was a beast!

Linda: It's a rare man who can stand being around an intelligent woman, let alone married to one.

(*A handsome Normandie sailor strolls by He smiles seductively at Friend 2, nodding*)

Friend 3: (*flushed*) Mon Dieu!

Linda: Live dangerously, my dear. There's a lot to be said for sinning. We are 20th century women. We're independent and strong!

Music starts for "Anything Goes"

*Times have changed
And we've often rewound the clock
Since the Puritans got a shock
When they landed on Plymouth Rock.
If today
Any shock they should try to stem
'Stead of landing on Plymouth Rock,
Plymouth Rock would land on them.
In olden days, a glimpse of stocking
Was looked on as something shocking.
But now, God knows,
Anything goes.
Good authors too who once knew better words
Now only use four-letter words
Writing prose.
Anything goes.
If driving fast cars you like,
If low bars you like,
If old hymns you like,
If bare limbs you like,
If Mae West you like,
Or me undressed you like,
Why, nobody will oppose.
When ev'ry night the set that's smart is in-
Truding in nudist parties in
Studios.
Anything goes.
When grandmama whose age is eighty*

In night clubs is getting matey with gigolo's,

Anything Goes.

The world has gone mad today

And good's bad today,

And black's white today,

And day's night today,

And that gent today

You gave a cent today

Once had several chateaux.

And though I'm not a great romancer

I know that you're bound to answer

When I propose,

Anything goes

(They "disembarque" from the Normandie SR and arrive at a posh Parisienne restaurant SL

Scene 8: Posh Parisienne restaurant. Seated at a table are Cole, Gerald & Sarah. Various waitresses are milling about. Josephine Baker is sat at a nearby table with friends. She blows Cole a kiss. He waves back a bit sheepishly

Sarah: Who is that?

Cole: Ms. Josephine Baker. She's from back home. St. Louis, I think. I'm writing a show for her. Do I look OK?

Sarah: You're the top! *(adjusting his bowtie slightly)* She looks amazing! *(catching Gerald waiving at Josephine enthusiastically)* And how do you two know her? Or shouldn't I ask!

Gerald: Everyone who's anyone knows Josephine!

Sarah: Well, she certainly looks hot enough to burn down a plantation! *(seeing Cole fiddling with his bowtie)* Don't be nervous. Linda will adore you!

(Linda approaches the table, very elegantly dressed. Looking gorgeous)

Linda: Good evening

(Cole just stares at her, unable to speak)

Cole: Mr. Porter, I presume?

..... enchanting Enchanted

Linda: I was told you're something of a wordsmith, Mr Porter. Don't shatter my illusions

Cole: Please, Cole. And I wouldn't want to shatter a darn thing

(she smiles coyly)

Linda: Sarah hasn't really told me a thing about you, Cole so speak

(he chuckles, glancing conspiratorially at Sarah, music starts, instrumental version of "What is this Thing called Love" and an animated conversation ensues) Singer moves centre stage

*I was a humdrum person
Leading a life apart
When love flew in through my window wide
And quickened my humdrum heart*

*Love flew in through my window
I was so happy then
But after love had stayed a little while
Love flew out again*

*This funny thing
Called love
Just who can solve its mystery
Why should it make
A fool of me?*

*I saw you there
One wonderful day
You took my heart
And threw it away
That's why I ask the lord
In heaven above
What is this thing
Called love?*

*This funny thing
Called love
Just who can solve its mystery
Why should it make
A fool of me?*

*I saw you there
One wonderful day
You took my heart
And threw it away
That's why I ask the lord
In heaven above
What is this thing
Called love?*

(during the song, Sarah & Gerald depart, leaving Cole & Linda alone at the table with a spotlight on them. Towards the end of the song, they kiss) Stage lights dim. They exit. A bed has been moved on stage. Linda is in Cole's arms, wrapped in sheets. It is dawn.

Scene 9: In bed

Cole: My God, you're so beautiful.

Linda: *(she kisses him gently, her eyes locked on his)*

I certainly approve of those lyrics, Mr. Porter

Cole: Not exactly original, but I mean them *(he kisses her)* You know, from now on, I think it will be easier to write lyrics thinking about you All my music will be about you

(she tuts and play slaps him playfully) .

No! Really! Because you are an art form, an art form that deserves to be preserved forever. I can't paint to save my life, so music it will have to be! And when you hear my songs, every song, you will know that I wrote it about you, only you.

(she looks at him adoringly & snuggles up to him, closing her eyes contentedly)

Linda, I've never been completely honest with anyone. Until you.

Linda: Cole, don't you think I've heard a thing or two about you?

Cole: Then you know that I can be that I have otherinterests? Interests that to most might seem Bizarre? Cruel To you?

Linda: *(she sits up in bed looking at him)* You mean men?

Cole: Yes, men

Linda: Let's agree that you probably like them more than I do. It's not cruel if people promise to be honest with one another. We can fulfil your promises together ... as a couple

(she closes her eyes, smiling. He stares at the ceiling) Fade

Projection: A YEAR LATER. THE WEDDING

Scene 10: The Wedding Party – all cast on stage, stand around chatting, drinking. The happy couple are mixing, chatting to their friends. Champagne is flowing.

Gerald: A toast! To the happy couple! Cole and Linda!

Everyone: To Cole and Linda!

Music starts to "Just One of those Things" duet. Chorus dancing. Cole & Linda looking at each other, so in love

*It was just one of those things
Just one of those crazy flings
One of those bells that now and then rings
Just one of those things*

*It was just one of those nights
Just one of those fabulous flights
A trip to the moon on gossamer wings
Just one of those things*

*If we'd thought a bit 'bout the end of it
When we started painting the town
We'd have been aware that our love affair
Was too hot not to cool down*

*So good-bye, dear, and amen
Here's hoping we meet now and then
It was great fun
But it was just one of those things*

*It was just one of those nights
Just one of those fabulous flights
A trip to the moon on gossamer wings
Just one of those things*

*If we'd thought a bit 'bout the end of it
When we started painting the town
We'd have been aware that our love affair
Was too hot not to cool down*

*So goodbye, goodbye, bye, bye, goodbye baby and amen
Here's hoping we'll meet now and then
It was great fun
But it was just one of those things*

CURTAIN