

TULIPS AND ROSES

By Maggie Lane

Thorne and Moorends Community Play

Characters

The Locals

Sir Robert Portington
Lady Portington
Richard Portington (their son)
Sarah Foster
Annie Thorpe
John Thorpe (her son)
Thomas Barley
Martha Barley (his wife)
Alice Fisher
Jane Fisher (daughter)
Mary (Jane's friend)
Annette (tavern woman)
Marie (tavern woman)
Jannette (tavern woman)
David (child)
Nancy (child)
Lizzie (child)
Anne (child)
Jean (child)

The Royals

King Charles 1
Queen Henrietta Maria
Duke of Buckingham (King's advisor)
Sir John Banks (Attorney General)
Lady Antoinette (Lady in waiting)
Lady Dalkeith (Lady in waiting)

The Dutch

Cornelius Vermuyden
Catherina (his daughter)

The Soldiers

Captain Noble
Sergeant Williams
Drummer Boy

Townfolk, Dutch workers, Soldiers.

ACT ONE

The Court is set on a raised level at the rear. A bridge leads from the Courtroom to the main acting area in which two tables and several stools and a bench are set. As the audience enter, townspeople, street vendors, etc. mingle with them. The Orchestra tunes up and plays the overture. As the lights fade the townspeople gather around the tables to hear the Duke of Buckingham announce the case. Drums roll as the charges are read out.

BUCKINGHAM:

A complaint comprising of three charges has been laid by Sir John Banks, the Attorney General, and Sir Cornelius Vermuyden against Sir Robert Portington aided and abetted by others from the town of Thorne. The First Charge...., damaging and destroying property belonging to the Dutch participants engaged in the draining of Hatfield Chase. The Second Charge ,grievous wounding of workers employed in the said drainage. The Third Charge..... murder in the first degree.

Sir Robert Portington and Sir John Banks take up positions each side of the court. A steady drum beat follows each answer.

BUCKINGHAM: Sir Robert Portington, how do you plead?

SIR ROBERT: Not guilty.

BUCKINGHAM: Richard James Portington, how do you plead?

RICHARD: Not guilty.

BUCKINGHAM: Sarah Emily Foster, how do you plead?

SARAH: Not guilty.

BUCKINGHAM: Martha Ann Barley, how do you plead?

MARTHA: Not guilty.

BUCKINGHAM: Mary Garden, how do you plead?

MARIE: Marie Gardener. Not guilty your honour.

BUCKINGHAM: I am not your honour, Sir will do.

MARIE: Well, not guilty then, SIR.

The drum rolls that began during the charges have changed to the start of, "We'll Fight" played softly in the background as the pleas are heard. This builds as each plea of not guilty is answered. The crowd of onlookers then burst into the song on the last 'not guilty' plea.

BUCKINGHAM:

All rise for Their Most Serene and Royal Majesties, King Charles 1 and Queen Henrietta Maria.

The King and Queen, Lady Dalkeith and Lady Antionette enter and take their seats in the royal box where they are joined by Buckingham. There are some boos from the crowd for the King and even more for the Queen.

BUCKINGHAM: Silence! Silence for Sir John Banks, His Majesty's Attorney General.

SIR JOHN: Your Majesties, Sir Robert, ladies and gentleman. It is my intention to prove, without doubt, the guilt of all the accused of the three charges before you. The Dutch workers, under the guidance of Sir Cornelius Vermuyden, and by Royal Decree, are draining the waste grounds in the area of the town of Thorne. Sir Cornelius and his workers have been subject to countless attacks by the rebellious inhabitants on numerous occasions. Their work has been damaged and destroyed. Their working implements have been stolen and burnt under cover of night. Cattle have been driven through their camp and the newly dug dykes. The culmination of these acts came in a vicious and brutal attack ending in murder. I shall be demanding the severest of penalties for these heinous crimes.

There is a flutter of applause from the royal party, which stops abruptly as Sir Robert rises to speak. Sir John sits down.

SIR ROBERT: Your Majesties, Sir John, ladies and gentlemen, people of Thorne (*cheers from the crowd*). I intend to conduct the defence for all the accused. I further intend to disprove entirely these trumped-up charges. To call our behaviour a rebellion is absolutely ridiculous. There may have been the odd argument, even the occasional fight, but only ever in our own defence; against soldiers sent to protect those who were wrongfully stealing our land..... I humbly submit in evidence a legal deed signed over two hundred and fifty years ago by the Earl of Epworth, Sir John Mowbray. This deed awards rights to the people occupying the common land. Rights that are binding on all future Lords of the Manor; binding in perpetuity. Rights to make their homes, dig the moors, graze their cattle, fish the waters, cut the trees, plant crops and trade their wares..... As the deed says, these rights shall prevail “in time out of mind”.

During his speech Sir Robert has walked over the bridge and the lights slowly fade on the courtroom. The main acting area, where the crowd is watching the proceedings, now becomes the Market Place in Thorne. The tables are turned over to make stalls and street vendors move across shouting their wares. A juggler comes in and starts to perform. A few people watch him whilst others move amongst the stalls. Sir Robert sees his son Richard and Sarah Foster strolling away from the Juggler.

SIR ROBERT: Richard, Sarah, how nice to see you together. What a picture you make.

Richard and Sarah look at each other, they have heard this many times.

RICHARD: Good morning father. What’s got you out so early in the morning?

SIR ROBERT: Don’t change the subject Richard. Just look at her, how can you resist her? If you don’t watch out someone is going to steal her from under your nose.

RICHARD: Well they have my permission to do just that!

SIR ROBERT: Look at her face, so pretty, such a smile, such a quick mind.....

RICHARD: Such a sharp tongue!

Sir Robert sighs.

SARAH: Please don't sigh Sir Robert. As much as I love you, I could never marry such a spoilt brat, even to please you.

RICHARD: Will you listen to her. Who has just had to have that brand new gown and those very latest shoes?

SARAH: At least it's not all I think about, like you. I don't think you've ever read a decent book in your life.

RICHARD: I've read lots of books, decent and otherwise! And seen plays!

SARAH: But you always manage to leave before the last act. That is if you haven't already fallen asleep!

LADY PORTINGTON: *(Coming over...)* For goodness sake are you two bickering again? Just look who I've found skulking about amongst the sheep.

Lady Portington has John Thorpe in tow. As they exchange greetings Sir Cornelius Vermuyden, his daughter and a Dutch engineer come across the bridge. Catherina walks over to one of the stalls whilst Vermuyden and the engineer start to take measurements and sketches of the market square.

JOHN: Morning Sir Robert. Hello, Richard, Sarah.

SIR ROBERT: *(Ignoring him)*. Ever since dear Henry died and left me in charge of Sarah it's been my dearest wish that you two should marry. It was his too.

RICHARD: Well you and late old dear Henry are going to be very disappointed then.

LADY PORTINGTON: *(going)* Come Sarah, help me choose a cape. *(She turns back to Richard)*. You're a fool Richard. You can't see what's right under your nose.

RICHARD: Look, I agree she's pretty father, but that pretty mouth has far too much to say for itself. Now that pretty mouth over there *(He looks across at Catherina)*.

JOHN: Hey! I saw her first! I've been following her from the edge of town.

RICHARD: Just like one of your sheep eh! Who is she?

JOHN: I don't know. I've never seen her before, but she's not English.

The two young men start to move nearer to Catherina. Thomas Barley, his wife Martha, Annie Thorpe and Alice Fisher walk across to Sir Robert. As they get nearer they are overtaken by Jane and Mary on stilts.

THOMAS: Morning Sir Robert, Richard. *(He turns to greet Richard)*. Now where are them two off to?

SIR ROBERT: Don't ask me. I've just been trying to get Richard to think about his future. The next ten minutes is about all he can manage!

THOMAS: What future? If these rumours are right there ain't going to be no future.

MARTHA: Don't start all that again. If I hear any more about moving rivers and digging up marshes I shall go mad!

ANNIE: Draining Martha, not digging up, draining.

MARTHA: Draining, digging, what's the difference? I've got better things to think about. I've got flour and grain to buy; I've got to get back and cook and clean for this lot. I'd have thought you had more to think about an' all Annie Thorpe, without whittling about rivers.

ALICE: Your place at Holten Bridge would be the first to go if they alter 'course of river. Then you'd have nothing to rush back for.

MARTHA: Well I have now!

ALICE: You're always in such a tearing hurry Martha. *(She laughs)*. I wonder you manage to get anywhere in them daft wooden shoes, though. If you really want to get home fast let's see you rush back on our Jane's stilts!

MARTHA: Don't you think I couldn't either!

ANNIE: Let's see you then!

MARY: Go on Jane, let her have a go.

Others join in urging Martha onto the stilts which Jane has brought across.

MARTHA: Alright! Alright! Give 'em here.

JANE: Be careful, one of them's a bit wobbly.

Several people have gathered now to watch. Martha tries to walk on the stilts to much laughter and cheers from the crowd. The fun is interrupted by Sir John from the Courtroom.

SIR JOHN: *(loudly)* I would like to ask Sire, if Sir Robert's opening address is going to go on all day?

SIR ROBERT: Oh.....err.....yes, sorry.

He hurries across the bridge as the lights fade on the market scene and it is hastily cleared. The crowd moves back to their first positions watching the Court.

SIR JOHN: If you've quite finished this romantic tale of idyllic village life, perhaps I might be allowed to continue?

SIR ROBERT: Quite finished, thank you, Sir John. For now at least.

SIR JOHN: I call my first witness. Call Sir Cornelius Vermuyden.

As the call is echoed, Vermuyden makes his way over the bridge to the witness stand. The crowd grumble to each other about him.

SIR JOHN: I wonder, Sir Cornelius, if you would tell us in your own words exactly what happened during your valiant attempts to rein the land around Thorne!

VERMUYDEN: Gladly, Sir John..... but first I would like to make my position perfectly clear. The work I was undertaking was being done with royal authority. It was in fact by royal command.

As Vermuyden speaks, courtly dance music is heard. The main acting area becomes the palace. Two large banners are held up by pages at the back and the dance progresses into the light, led by the King and Queen. Behind them come Lady Dalkeith and Buckingham, bringing up the rear is Lady Antoinette who is joined by Vermuyden as she reaches the foot of the bridge and the banners part. The dialogue in the following scenes takes place as they dance.

QUEEN: 1-2-3. That's it. 1-2-3. You have a gift for the dance, my Lord. Unlike your Dutch friend who would, I think, be more at home in his clogs. He is a clog-hopper is he not? *(she turns and laughs with her ladies)*.

LADY DALKEITH: Watch his clogs don't crush your feet Antoinette!

KING: His clogs contain much money, Henrietta. Money I need.

QUEEN: Money! The King of France would simply raise the taxes. He would not be dictated to by this, this puritan parliament.

BUCKINGHAM: She's right, Sire. You have the right, as the King. The divine right to do just as you wish.

QUEEN: No-no-no. Concentrate. 1-2-3. You are the clog-hopper now!

LADY ANTOINETTE: The King's legs would look well in clogs!

KING: How can I concentrate with your constant harping about the King of France and money.

QUEEN: *(in time to the music)* 1-2-3. You started it. 1-2-3. Money. *(Her ladies in waiting join in with the chant)*. 1-2-3. Money!

KING: See how these women nip at my heels, Meneer Vermuyden?

LADY A & LADY D: 1-2-3. Clogs!

BUCKINGHAM: Then consider Sire, Meneer Vermuyden's plan. He will provide the skills. He will provide the workers, and most importantly, he will provide the money.

QUEEN: 1-2-3. Money!

KING: My brother Henry went to Hatfield Chase to hunt. There are apparently hundreds and hundreds of deer.

QUEEN & LADIES: 1-2-3. Deer!

BUCKINGHAM: Deer that is constantly being poached, Sire.

KING: Deer that would have to be removed, Buckingham.

VERMUYDEN: That will be no problem, Sire.

KING: And very much of the land is marshy and under water.

QUEEN & LADIES: 1-2-3. Water!

KING: This would also have to be removed.

VERMUYDEN: That will be no problem, Sire.

BUCKINGHAM: Our skilful friend has undertaken much of this draining work in his own country, and for your father here in London. He is quite famous.

QUEEN & LADIES: 1-2-3. Famous! 1-2-3. Drains!

KING: (*getting a little irritated*). And there is the issue of the people's right to use this common land.

QUEEN & LADIES: 1-2-3. Rights!

QUEEN: 1-2-3. Divine!

KING: These rights would also have to be removed.

VERMUYDEN: That will be no problem, Sire.

QUEEN: 1-2-3. Why not give these "common" people a little bit of the land back?

QUEEN & LADIES: 1-2-3. Land!

BUCKINGHAM: (*joining in*). 1-2-3. The Crown. The Dutch. The People. 1-2-3. A third each.

QUEEN & LADIES: 1-2-3. A third!

KING: But not the best third!

VERMUYDEN: That will be no problem, Sire.

They dance off, eventually taking their seats again in the royal box. The proclamation is read out from the courtroom. The scene changes to the market tavern. Sir Robert, Richard, John, Thomas, Jannette, Marie and Annette all listen.

BUCKINGHAM: Out of his most royal and princely care for his subjects, His Majesty, King Charles hereby decrees that Hatfield Chase and surrounding land and wastelands of Thorne, Epworth, Sandtoft and other such small outcrops, which yield little, nourishing beggars and poachers, shall for the public good, be drained and reclaimed. And that likewise the great herd of red deer, which greatly annoy the populace, shall be removed. Thus making this otherwise drowned and boggy ground into arable meadow and pasture. In consideration for this public service, the King shall retain a portion of this reclaimed land equal to one third. In consideration for undertaking this work of draining, Cornelius Vermuyden and the Dutch participants and their heirs shall likewise receive a portion of this reclaimed land equal to one third. The remaining land, by order of the King's great bounty shall be for the sole use of his loyal subjects. Sworn under The Great Seal of England in the City of London this twenty-fourth day of May, sixteen hundred and twenty six.

ANNETTE: What's all that mean then Thomas?

THOMAS: (*who is a little drunk*). Well

MARIE: (*laughing*). It means that the great and bountiful King is letting them keep a third of what was once all theirs!

SIR ROBERT: (*seriously*). It means much more than that. It means all the land around here is going to change, it means

THOMAS: Vermuyden and a whole boatload of bloody Dutchies are going to come over here and dig every damn thing up!

JOHN: Can't we stop them?

JANNETTE: Oh don't stop a load of new men coming. We're short of decent men.

RICHARD: They'll be decent alright, Jane. They'll be more puritan than half the Parliament!

JANNETTE: Not Jane, Jannette. We've all taken French names like in the court. I'm Jannette, Mary is Marie and Ann is Annette.

JOHN: What's wrong with Mary, Ann and Jane?

RICHARD: They can charge more if they're French!

SIR ROBERT: Richard!

MARIE: (*going over to John*). C'mon John. Are you going to sit there all day gazing into that beer? I've seen you looking at that foreign lass. You didn't seem to object to her coming over here. Anyway it'll be good for our trade if a load of workers want somewhere to spend their wages.

ANNETTE: If they drink.

JANNETTE: I've not met many men that don't.

SIR ROBERT: Well you soon will. They're a very industrious and God fearing lot, the Dutch.

THOMAS: God fearing or not, they're not taking my land!

RICHARD: Nor ours, eh, father?

SIR ROBERT: It's a great worry. If the King's behind them

JOHN: There must be something we can do.

RICHARD: What about that, err, Mowbray award? We could start with that.

MARIE: You could start with having another drink!

THOMAS: That's a good idea.

RICHARD: C'mon John. Let's leave these old men to their worrying and drinking. *(He goes outside and John follows).*

RICHARD: *(walking to the bridge).* You're right though. We must do something. We can't let them come and just take everything. We must stop them.

JOHN: How can we? They're coming under royal command.

RICHARD: I'll think of something. We'll stop them.

JOHN: Just you and me, against an army of Dutch workers?

RICHARD: That's right, just you and me. Like always. Friends! Brother-in-arms!

Womb to tomb! Aye? *(He looks at John and bursts out laughing).*

JOHN: Womb to tomb! *(They shake hands and hug each other).*

Lady Portington, Sarah, Martha and Annie Thorpe come on in a hurry. They are followed by other women from the town.

LADY PORTINGTON: Richard where's your father?

MARTHA: And Thomas? There's a load of men coming down the low lane.

ANNIE: They're not English.

ALICE: A lot have stopped at the end of the lane.

JANE: They're making a sort of camp.

LADY PORTINGTON: The rest are headed this way. Now where's your father?

Richard inclines his head towards the tavern.

LADY PORTINGTON: Right! Robert! Robert!

MARTHA: Thomas, you just get out of here.

Jannette and Marie come to the door. The four women eye each other suspiciously.

RICHARD: See John, they're coming already. Action, that's what we need. We must form up and stop them. Down with the Dutch! Go home! Go back!

Just as Richard is getting into his stride Catherina Vermuyden enters carrying some luggage and a hat box. Richard sees her just before John and his voice trails off. They look at each other then both rush over to offer her assistance.

RICHARD: Let me help with these heavy bags.

CATHERINA: Thank you.

JOHN: I'll take this.

RICHARD: No. I will. *(They struggle over the suitcase and the hat box).*

CATHERINA: Really, they're not heavy.

RICHARD: You shouldn't be carrying even the lightest of bags. Now which way are you going? *(He bows).* Richard Portington at your service! *(John coughs).* Oh yes, this is John Thorpe, my err

JOHN: Brother-in-arms?

CATHERINA: I'm very pleased to meet you both. I'm Catherina, Catherina Vermuyden.

Richard and John stare at each other. Richard drops the case.

SARAH: You are clumsy! Here let me. I'm Sarah. I think you'd better come with me. I think there may be a bit of trouble here soon.

Sarah starts to lead Catherina to safety, followed by John who has managed to hang onto the case he was holding. The sound of many clogs marching can be heard. A band of Dutch workmen march across, perhaps singing. At any event they make a great noise and the people all turn to watch, dumbstruck.

Everyone has come out of the tavern. Thomas, who by now is quite tipsy, attempts to stop the workmen.

THOMAS: (*Shouting*). Hey hold on! Stand Fast! Where d'you lot think you're all bloody going to!

Vermuyden is at the back of the workmen. He sees Catherina.

VERMUYDEN: Come Catherina.

CATHERINA: Yes father.

She takes her bags and follows her father, looking back at John.

MARTHA: (*Getting hold of Thomas*). Let's get you home! Such language in front of all these! You have a drink and you think you can take on the whole world!

ANNIE: John, you're needed at home.

John is still looking in the direction of Catherina.

JOHN: Coming Mother.

RICHARD: Now that's definitely one foreigner I would make an exception for. Did you see the way she looked at me?

SARAH: I saw the way she looked at John.

SIR ROBERT: We'd better all get home and see if there's been any damage.

ALICE: Whilst we've still got homes to go to!

The townspeople go off leaving Marie, Annette and Janette in the doorway of the tavern.

ANNETTE: They didn't look much like drinkers to me!

JANNETTE: They didn't look much like anything to me!

MARIE: They looked like trouble to me!

*As the three women clear the tavern scene the lights go up on the Court.
Vermuyden is still on the witness stand.*

SIR JOHN: So the work commenced, Sir Cornelius, despite the opposition?

VERMUYDEN: Yes indeed. But the opposition continued. I was mightily annoyed by the gnats and flies of the town.

SIR JOHN: gnats and flies?

VERMUYDEN: The common people. They broke down the banks as fast as we could construct them. They stole our carts and working implements and burnt them on bonfires. The only way I could protect my workers was to buy land at exorbitant prices so the work could continue. But still we were interfered with

SIR ROBERT: (*jumping up*). What about the flooding when you stopped up the course of the River Don? What about the people who now face utter ruin?

VERMUYDEN: A most regrettable incident.

MARTHA: Regrettable! Houses were washed away. Jim Fisher and his lad were drowned!

VERMUYDEN: Most unfortunate. But in the undertaking of such an ambitious scheme it is to be expected there will be some accidents.

ALICE: What about his widow?

JANE: How more lives will be lost before you're done?

SIR JOHN: I must demand an end to all this shouting out! I feel we are rather straying from the point. Sir Cornelius Vermuyden is not on trial here. (*The crowd quieten down*). Now Sir Cornelius, am I right in saying that most of these problems the people brought upon themselves?

VERMUYDEN: Yes.

There are further shouts from the crowd at this.

SIR JOHN: (*raising his voice above the crowd*). And your own problems got worse?

VERMUYDEN: Much worse. It was impossible. I had no alternative but to go again to his Majesty for help.

The main acting area becomes the royal bedchamber. Lady Dalkeith and Lady Antionette are preparing the Queen for bed. A minstrel plays the lute and the two ladies sing. As the song nears its end the King enters, looking extremely annoyed.

QUEEN: *(sarcastically)*. What an unexpected honour my lord! It must be weeks since you have visited my bedchamber. I was beginning to think you did not want an heir! You will never get an heir if we do notnow what is the word in English? Oh no matter!poor Charles! No heir! No money! No

The two ladies in waiting are laughing with the Queen.

KING: Get out damn you! Get out! *(they hurry off)*. Madam, the last thing on my mind at the moment is the getting of an heir! *(he sits down sulkily)*.

QUEEN: *(going over to him)*. Do you know Charles, in spite of everything I think I'm growing quite fond of you. *(she takes his hand)*. Come to bed, come on. *(He resists at first, and then lets himself be coaxed into bed)*. Now tell me what's wrong?

KING: It's that damned Dutchman. He's been here all day complaining and making excuses why the work isn't finished. He says the people are in rebellion! They obstruct him at every turn. Gnats and flies he calls them!

QUEEN: Well then we must squash these gnats and flies beneath his clogs!

KING: He wants me to squash them. He wants me to send the army to squash them.

QUEEN: The army for a few 'common' people with sticks and stones!

KING: In any event Parliament controls much of the army. And Parliament would never agree. It would lead to more interminable arguments.

QUEEN: Parliament! Parliament! You seem to spend you whole life arguing with the stupid Parliament.

QUEEN: Are you not the King? You can do anything you want. If you don't like the stupid Parliament, dissolve it!

KING: (*getting up*). It is not as easy as you seem to think. They mean to deny me of my rights to raise taxes from my own subjects. To make laws. To command my own army. That is why I need this Dutchman.

QUEEN: (*going over to him and leading him back to bed*). Well, if you can't send the army, send a small well-trained troop. Even English soldiers should have no problem against gnats and flies!

The King looks at her and they begin to smile, the lights fade.

SIR JOHN: Call Captain Noble to the stand. (*The call is echoed and Captain noble takes the stand*). Captain Noble, you led the troop of soldiers sent to Thorne to quash the rebellion?

SIR ROBERT: (*jumping up*). There was NO rebellion!

SIR JOHN: I believe that Captain Noble's evidence will prove once and for all that there was indeed a rebellion. A rebellion led by you. (*Sir Robert sits down*). Now Captain, tell us what happened when you eventually arrived in Thorne.

The lights fade on the courtroom and up onto the Market Square. Sarah and Catherina walk across followed at a short distance by Richard and John.

SARAH: They both say they're in love with you. For John I think it's the first time. But Richard falls in love at least twice a week!

CATHERINA: You rather like Richard, don't you?

SARAH: Richard! He's arrogant, self centred, conceited, empty headed

CATHERINA: Yes. You like him! I think you're secretly in love with him.

SARAH: Rubbish.

JOHN: Just look at her Richard. Look at how she walks. Look at her hair. Listen to her soft voice.

RICHARD: Enough! Enough! You've been mooning about like a love sick calf for days! My God, Sarah's more fun than you!

JOHN: I don't know if you realise it Richard, but you talk about Sarah nearly all the time. I'm beginning to think you're secretly in love with her.

RICHARD: Sarah! She's a tongue like an asp! She's arrogant, self centred She thinks she's so clever.....

JOHN: Yes, you're in love.

RICHARD: Rubbish!

All four faced the front and sing the love song and it's counterpart. At the end of the song Catherina and John look at each other lovingly, whilst Richard and Sarah exchange a glance but then they quickly turn away.

CATHERINA: *(going over to John)*. I know I shouldn't tell you this, but

JOHN: What is it?

CATHERINA: I I'd better go. My father will be waiting.

JOHN: Don't go Catherina. Tell me, what were you going to say?

CATHERINA: I must go. *(She starts off, but turns back)*. Look you're in danger here. All of you. My father has been again to the King. He is sending a troop of soldiers. Please be careful. Don't do anything foolish. They are very well trained men. They have orders to get the job sorted out whatever it takes I really must go now. I have said too much already. *(She hurries off without looking back)*.

JOHN: *(shouting after her)*. I love you Catherina

RICHARD: What did she just say? Soldiers are on the way?

SARAH: She said the King is sending a troop. Richard we must do something.

JOHN: I must go after her. *(He rushes after Catherina)*.

RICHARD: John! Come back! Oh what's the use. Look, I must tell father about this. Sarah, you had better go straight home and for God's sake stay inside.

SARAH: I'm staying right here. We must hold them back.

RICHARD: Don't be so bloody stupid girl! Who d'you think you are, Joan of Arc?

SARAH: I'll thank you not to use that kind of language to me Richard Portington! You're not in the tavern now Mind you I'm most impressed you've even head of Joan of Arc.

RICHARD: This is hardly the time for a discussion of my knowledge of French history. C'mon.

He attempts to drag her forcibly away. They struggle for a moment then stop suddenly and look directly at each other as if seeing each other for the first time.

RICHARD: *(Letting go)*. Oh stay then. What do I care?

Richard goes, shaking his head slightly. Sarah stands looking after him. We hear the melody of the love song and she too shakes her head. The mood is broken as Lady Portington, Martha, Annie, Alice etc. rush in.

LADY PORTINGTON: Sarah, what are you doing here? There are soldiers coming, we must get home.

SARAH: Yes, I know. Catherina told us.

MARTHA: That Dutchman's daughter?

SARAH: Yes.

ANNIE: Well I never!

SARAH: Richard's gone to find Sir Robert to tell him.

ALICE: Well he'll have to go a long way! They've gone to York.

JANE: They all have. For pigs they said.

MARTHA: Pigs! I'll give 'em pigs! They'll spend more time supping ale than buying pigs.

ANNIE: Oh, what's to be done? Soldiers coming and here we are unprotected with all our men gone to buy stupid pigs in York!

MARY: They wouldn't shoot us, would they?

SARAH: Of course they won't shoot us. We don't need men! Who needs men! We can defend ourselves! *(They all look at her in disbelief)*. How often do men really help you? C'mon, how often? When you struggle with the cows and the milking? When you're digging peat and making flax? Do they help? Are they even there? *(There are a few nods of agreement)*. Well, we are going to have to stand up to this troop on our own too. Because, besides Richard and John, and goodness knows where they are, there is only us. Let's show these King's soldiers what women can do. Let's build a barricade across the square and stop them getting to the river.

Slowly the women follow Sarah's lead. The introduction to the barricade song is played as they build. Annette, Marie, and Janette come out of the tavern to help. The townswomen glare at them so they stand watching. The townswomen sing as the work, really starting to enjoy themselves now. We hear in the distance, coming ever nearer, the sound of the soldiers and the counterpart to the song. The two versions of the song reach a crescendo as the soldiers march on. The opposing factions sing the final verse facing each other over the barricade.

CAPT. NOBLE: *(Shouting)*. Attention. Forward march. Break through the barricade!

Several of the women come forward and stand in front of the barricade.

CAPT. NOBLE: Forward march! Are you afraid of a few women? Sergeant, order your men forward!

SGT. WILLIAMS: *(hesitantly)*. We have never attacked women before, Sir.

The women move forward a little.

CAPT. NOBLE: Rifles to the ready! Take aim! – Take aim! – damn it!

The women fall back a little as the soldiers take aim. Marie, Jannette and Annette come forward and join the women in front of the barricade. All differences are forgotten. Marie throws a flagon at the soldiers and Jannette throws a tankard. There are cheers from the other women. They all start to move nearer the men jeering, picking up sticks and stones to throw. The Captain realises his bluff has failed.

CAPT. NOBLE: Shoulder arms. *(To the women)*. Don't think for a minute that this is the end of it! *(The women jeer at him)*.About turn. Quick march. *(He turns back)*. You! You with the red stockings! Laugh while you can. We'll be back!

The women cheer and hug each other. We hear the barricade tune but during the last few bars the discordant soldiers theme can be heard.

Interval

ACT 2

In the courtroom Captain Noble is still on the stand.

SIR ROBERT: So Captain, let me get this right, the women at the barricade armed only with sticks and stones drove back your well trained and fully armed troop?

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Erryes.

SIR ROBERT: And this was the so-called rebellion in Thorne?

CAPTAIN NOBLE: No, far from it. Much worse was to come.

Lights fade on the courtroom and come up on the main acting area. Part of the barricade is still standing. To one side are the women of the town, to the other side, the soldiers. Some children are playing at soldiers by the remains of the barricade. As Captain Noble crosses the bridge to join his men the children mimic and make fun of him.

DAVID: Fall in. Attention. *(The children line up)*. Nancy stand up straight.

The children line up to be inspected. David walks up and down the line to giggles behind his back. They have pieces of wood for guns. Amidst the giggles Jean drops her 'gun'.

DAVID: Pick that up. Stand to attention. No laughing. How d'you think we'll beat the King's soldiers if all you do is mess about and giggle?

NANCY: All you do is march up and down.

LIZZIE: When are we going to do something?

ANNE: When are we going to attack?

DAVID: Soon.

JEAN: *(startled)*. We're not really going to fight the soldiers are we?

LIZZIE: Oh yes we are, scaredy cat. As soon as it gets dark.

DAVID: We'll attack when I say.

ANNE: Why when you say?

NANCY: Who said you could give all the orders?

LIZZIE: Just 'cos you're a boy!

ANNE: We don't need boys!

They skip round in a circle teasing David, moving round to the front of the barricade.

JEAN: I want to go home. I don't like this game anymore.

The drummer- boy with the soldiers has been watching the children. He starts to slowly walk towards them.

DAVID: Don't come any nearer, I'm armed. *(He points his wooden gun at the drummer- boy).*

DRUMMER-BOY: Well I'm not, not unless you count this.

The drummer-boy gives a roll of his drum, drawing all the children to him. They all want a go and begin to make friends.

CAPTIAN NOBLE: Hey! Back to your post soldier!

ALICE: Nancy! Anne! Get back over here!

The Captain and Alice speak the above words simultaneously.

The children and the drummer-boy slowly return to their sides.

DRUMMER-BOY: *(turning)*. My name's Frank. What's yours?

DAVID: David.

The women push the children behind them and look over at the soldiers. The captain pushes the drummer-boy behind the troop. The opposing factions look at each other for a moment.

ANNIE: How long d'you think it'll be before Sir Robert and the others get back?

ALICE: I don't know.

SARAH: Don't worry. We held them off once we can do it again.

MARTHA: You don't think they'll try and break through again, do you?

LADY PORTINGTON: Oh I do hope so! I haven't enjoyed myself so much for years!

SARAH: You were wonderful. *(She hugs her)*. I didn't know you had it in you.

LADY PORTINGTON: Neither did I! But you Sarah, you were like Joan of Arc, leading the French army.

SARAH: That's the second time I've been called Joan of Arc today.

LADY PORTINGTON: What?

SARAH: Oh Nothing.

MARIE: If you don't mind me putting my two penneth in, I think they are planning to try again. I've been watching that captain and he's definitely up to something.

ANNIE: They keep looking over here.

ANNETTE: We should try and find out what they're up to.

JANNETTE: I've got an idea.

She fetches ale and tankards from the tavern and starts to tell the others her plan quietly. Sergeant Williams and a soldier rush on at the other side.

SOLDIER: The camp at Sandtoft's been attacked Sir. The church has been set on fire.

Sgt. WILLIAMS: There's a gang on people blocking the road. We had to crawl along the dyke.

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Who's leading them, Sergeant?

SGT. WILLIAMS: It's hard to tell Sir.

SOLDIER: I heard the name Portington shouted out.

SGT. WILLIAMS: I really don't know if they started it though Sir. I think the men you left were a bit nervous. One of them opened fire, then all hell broke loose. Beg pardon, Sir. This Portington grabbed a Dutch hostage

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Just a minute, just a minute, Portington, you say?

SOLDIER: Yes Sir.

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Sir Robert Portington! I know I'd heard that name somewhere. He's one of the Guardians of the Chace. (*sarcastically*). Yorkshire High Society! I bet he's behind all this. He's been bombarding the court with letters of complaint.

SGT. WILLIAMS: Well they've stepped up the action now Sir, and they're coming this way.

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Soldier, you'd better go on watch. Sergeant, listen. I've been thinking of a plan and if, as I suspect, Portington's behind all this troubleit makes the idea all the sweeter.

Captain Noble starts to tell Sgt. Williams his plan. Annette, Marie and Jannette sidle across to the soldiers. They are singing a bawdy song and handing around the ale. Eventually everyone joins in.

MARIE: You see, not all the women from Thorne are the same. (*She sits on Sgt. Williams's knee*).

ANNETTE: Fancy letting that stuck up lot get the better of you.

CAPTAIN NOBLE: I seem to recall that you three charming ladies were shoulder to shoulder with that 'stuck up lot' less than an hour ago!

SOLDIER: Throwing bloody stones! Oh sorry Sir.

JANNETTE: But Captain, you were threatening to shoot them.

MARIE: So we joined in. We love a good fight!

ANNETTE: Among other things!

JANNETTE: This is much more fun!

SGT. WILLIAMS: Give us some more ale woman!

MARIE: Here you are. Now tell me Sergeant dear, how are your big, strong soldiers going to beat those silly little women? What are you going to do?

SGT. WILLIAMS: Nothing. We've much bigger fish to catch. Ain't that right Sir?

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Very much bigger Sergeant. When these silly women do some real damage, then I think you will see events turn in our favour.

ANNETTE: And when are these events going to happen?

CAPTAIN NOBLE: When we give them a little push, dear lady, when we give them a little push.

Captain Noble starts to go off pushing Annette in front of him.

SGT. WILLIAMS: *(shouting after him)*. And the right person gets the blame, aye Sir? *(turning to look at Marie)*.

MARIE: Who is the right person Sergeant dear?

SGT. WILLIAMS: *(he laughs)* Yorkshire high society, that's who. Yorkshire high society!

The lights fade on the market square. Captain Noble has returned to the stand.

SIR ROBERT: So you admit there was a plot to put the blame on someone from the town?

CAPTAIN NOBLE: I never said that.

SIR ROBERT: The right person must get the blame, isn't that what you said?

CAPTAIN NOBLE: What I meant was that the right person was apprehended, the guilty person.

SIR JOHN: *(rising)* in the event, Captain, there was more than one person involved?

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Yes.

SIR JOHN: Exactly how were these persons caught?

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Red handed Sir.

The lights fade on the courtroom. In the market square it is night. In the semi-dark, Sgt. Williams, the soldier and a Dutch worker come on. They go under the bridge, the soldier keeping watch. Sgt. Williams and the Dutchman come out and they begin to make their escape. Jannette, Marie, Annette, Lady Portington, Sarah, Martha, Annie, Alice, etc. rush on, grabbing the sergeant and the Dutchman. After a short chase they also catch the soldier.

DUTCH WORKER: Laat me in's hemelsnaan gaan! *(He struggles to get away)*. Ze gaan de brug opblazen!

LADY PORTINGTON: Oh no you don't my lad!

DUTCH WORKER: We moeten weg! Sergeant, we moeten weg!

SGT. WILLIAMS: *(struggling with Marie)* For goodness sake let me go woman!

MARIE: What's all the rush Sergeant dear? What are you up to?

The soldier, Sgt. Williams and the Dutch worker desperately try to get away from the women. Annie starts up the steps of the bridge. The Dutch man shouts

out a warning to her as a massive explosion tears away part of the bridge and Annie falls to her death. Sir Robert, Richard, John and Thomas rush on. They gather round the body. Captain Noble and soldiers enter from the other side with their guns raised.

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Sir Robert Portington, I arrest you for wilful damage to property, grievous wounding and murder!

Sarah leaps forward and stands between the captain and Sir Robert. He gets hold of her to push her away.

SARAH: Let me go! It wasn't Sir Robert who did this!

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Arrest this woman as well Sergeant!

RICHARD: *(spinning the captain round)*. Take your hands off her! Can't you see? Neither of them had anything to do with it!

CAPTAIN NOBLE: You seem to know a great deal about it. I think you had better come along as well! Now, anyone else?

Everyone steps forward. Sgt. Williams looks at Captain Noble, not quite knowing what to do.

SGT. WILLIAMS: We can't arrest them all Sir.

CAPTAIN NOBLE: Right. YOU *(he points to Martha)*, and YOU *(indicating to Marie)*. You've had a great deal to say for yourselves, haven't you, first on one side then the other? Let's see how you like the company in a cramped prison cell! Lead on Sergeant!

The prisoners are led away. The rest are left to carry the body of Annie off. Catherina comes on and after a brief word with the Dutch worker she goes over to John who is helping to carry his mother. The lights slowly fade and go back to the courtroom.

SIR JOHN: Captain Noble and his men had in fact been tipped off by one of the Dutch workers that Portington and his followers were going to blow up the bridge.

DUTCH WORKER: Dat is den leugen! Dat is den leugen!

SIR JOHN: (*raising his voice above the interruption*). Call Catherina Vermuyden.
Catherina makes her way to the witness stand.

SIR JOHN: May it please your Majesties, I have here in Jeffrouw Vermuyden a somewhat hostile witness. I will however attempt to get to the truth. Now Juffrouw Vermuyden, you were present on the night Sir Robert and his cohorts blew up the bridge in Thorne?

CATHERINA: I was not there when the explosion actually happened. I came later. But I am sure that neither Sir Robert nor anyone from Thorne was involved.

SIR JOHN: How can you be sure? You have already told us you were not there when it happened.

CATHERINA: Sir John I really think

SIR JOHN: The court is not interested in what you think happened. We deal in facts in this court not suppositions. Please stick to the events that you were actually involved in. What happened once you arrived on the scene?

CATHERINA: I helped John to take his mother back home. I too have lost a mother. He was very upset. I tried to comfort him.

SIR JOHN: Yes, yes, very commendable. What happened the next day?

CATHERINA: My father was very angry. His workers refused to have anything more to do with the soldiers. You see they knew

SIR JOHN: Can you stick to what you knew Miss Vermuyden. What did your father decide to do?

CATHERINA: He went again to seek help from the King.

The scene changes to the palace. The two ladies-in-waiting sing, updating the King's situation. The Queen sits listening whilst the King paces up and down. The song ends.

KING: Your idea to send in the troops, madam, has caused even more problems than before. Vermuyden is back complaining again. And still the work is unfinished. I'd be grateful if you'd keep your ideas to yourself in future!

QUEEN: The idea was perfectly good, my Lord. Your so-called soldiers, not so good.

KING: The question remains, what to do about this damned Dutchman. Even his men are refusing to work for him now. In spite of the high wages he pays them.

QUEEN: Let the 'clog-hopper' pay some of those high wages to the 'common people' then. There must be enough work if they are so behind. They are bound to accept. They will never have seen so much money.

KING: If Vermuyden will agree to pay.

QUEEN: Give him something in return my Lord.

KING: What! I cannot afford to give him money. You, with your follies and your followers keep me poor!

QUEEN: Then give him something you can afford.

KING: I have a feeling this is another of your ideas madam. I have not recovered from the last one yet.

The Queen goes over and tickles him under the chin.

QUEEN: You are a cross-potch today!

KING: Cross-patch.

QUEEN: That too! What do all these puritans secretly want, Mmm? Well I'll tell you. They secretly want to be just like us. That's what they're really down on their knees praying for all the time. They want to be royal. They only want to

Get rid of us because they are jealous of us! Give him a title. Meneer Vermuyden 'clog-hopper' becomes Sir Cornelius Vermuyden 'aristocrat'!

KING: (*grudgingly*) it might work.

The Queen kisses him lightly on the cheek and smiles.

QUEEN: It will work. I promise.

KING: I want more than a promise madam. Let's go to your bed-chamber to discuss it.

QUEEN: (*turning to the ladies*) Twice in a month! Oh la la!

KING: (*calling as they leave*) Send Vermuyden in to me in half an hour. (*the Queen looks at him*). No, an hour.

The lights fade as they leave. The action returns to the courtroom.

CATHERINA: (*quietly*) My father is now Sir Cornelius and seems quite willing to spend whatever it costs to get the work done. He has offered employment to these people you call rebels. Surely this proves you are wrong about them.

SIR JOHN: It proves nothing.

CATHERINA: They are good people. I have come to know them. They would never have done this thing.

SIR JOHN: Is it not true that you have formed a relationship, a close relationship with one of these rebels?

CATHERINA: I have formed a friendship

SIR JOHN: More than a friendship, surely. Is it not true that you are in love with the farmer known as John Thorpe? And that this love is colouring your judgement. Miss Vermuyden, I asked you a question. Are you in love with John Thorpe?

CATHERINA: Yes. (*she looks down*) But I am telling the truth. I would not lie.

SIR JOHN: I think we can let the court be the best judge of that. You may go Miss Vermuyden. No further witnesses.

SIR ROBERT: Call Jean Warren to the stand.

Jean Warren, one of the children who were playing round the barricade, comes cautiously to the stand.

SIR ROBERT: Don't be afraid Jean. Just tell the truth and you've nothing to worry about. Just tell me what you were doing on September 23rd?

JEAN: *(whispering)* it was Nancy's birthday.

SIR ROBERT: Speak up Jean so we can hear you. It was Nancy's birthday?

JEAN: We were playing. It was late and we were playing hide and seek. They think I'm a baby so I wanted to find a really good place to hide.

SIR ROBERT: And did you?

JEAN: I went behind the bank by the bridge.

SIR ROBERT: Did they find you?

JEAN: No. I waited and waited. I heard a noise; I thought it was Nancy but when I looked out it was some soldiers.

SIR ROBERT: What did they do?

JEAN: They didn't see me. They went under the bridge but one kept watch so I daren't come out. They were under a long time, then they ran out but they were caught.

SIR JOHN: *(jumping up)* I really must object. This child has obviously been very well rehearsed.

SIR ROBERT: There is more Sir John.

SIR JOHN: Is this the best you can come up with Sir Robert?

SIR ROBERT: If I may continue?

SIR JOHN: Carry on. Carry on. I enjoy a good fairy story as much as the next man!

SIR ROBERT: Go on Jean.

JEAN: The one who'd been keeping watch had a paper in his hand. When they tried to run off he dropped it. I picked it up.

SIR ROBERT: Have you still got that paper Jean?

JEAN: Yes. I couldn't read the writing but it had a drawing on it.

She takes the paper out of her pocket and hands it to Sir Robert.

SIR ROBERT: I would like to submit in evidence, this paper, which contains a detailed drawing of the bridge in Thorne with the place to plant explosives clearly marked.

SIR JOHN: *(leaps to his feet)*. You could have drawn that yourself!

SIR ROBERT: *(triumphantly)*. It is drawn on the back of a letter Sir John, a very personal letter, to a Captain James Noble.

Sir John sits down stunned. There are cheers from the crowd. Jean beams at them.

SIR ROBERT: I demand that all the charges be dismissed.

SIR JOHN: *(rising slowly)*. The prosecution will not oppose the request.

FINALE

The tune for the last song begins.

Sir Robert walks forward from the courtroom and lights go up on all the cast rebuilding the bridge. Vermuyden joins the King and Queen isolated from the towns folk.

SIR ROBERT: The court case is over but we realise that the problems are not resolved and might flare up again in the future.

The cast sing the song and their actions illustrate the song words.

SONG:

OUR TOWN.

We can build together (all)

We will stand together (all)

We must work together (all)

Thorne is our town.

(Repeat verse one to different actions)

We will stay together (lovers and couples)

We'll make hay together (bar women and soldiers)

We'll get paid together (Vermuyden and the King)

Thorne is our town.

(Repeat to more actions)

The song goes into a bell-like round.

Thorne is our town; Thorne is our town, etc.

THORNE IS OUR TOWN *(all together)*.