

# SIDE 4

FLO leads and MINISTER OF WAR looks bewildered and slightly terrified. ROSCOE approaches the MISTRESS OF THE WARDROBE.

ROSCOE            May I have the pleasure of this dance?

WARDROBE        Certainly not!

ROSCOE            How kind of you.

He takes her out onto the floor, unwillingly but she doesn't have much choice. FLO shouts across the floor to ROSCOE.

FLO                How's your humble servant, Roscoe?

ROSCOE            Humble ! Very humble!

During this, EMPEROR is promenading about in a one-man orgy of narcissism. FLO gets quite caught up in the music, then totally carried away. She lets go her partner and dances in rapture. Others, one by one, stop to observe. Eventually, EMPEROR notices and stands dumbfounded for a moment before he speaks.

EMPEROR         Stop! Stop the music! (Orchestra ceases abruptly.) Who is that woman?!

FLO                Hello. You're looking very smart.

EMPEROR         Who is she?!

ROSCOE            (To himself. ) Oh, no.

FLO                Forgive me, O Most Imperial Graciousness, but ain't them the same clothes you had on before?

EMPEROR         (TO himself. ) Oh, no! (A beat.) What?! Wear the same thing twice?! Us? It does not happen! However . . . this fabric . . . it has the feel of . . . familiarity. No, no, no, it couldn't be. Still . . . this wig . . . could it be that it has adorned our head before? Can it be that we have worn these threads before? I abhor the sort of Emperors who wear the same clothes twice! (Turning to MINISTERS and MISTRESS. ) Believe us, it would be a great shame for anyone who was

responsible for such an error . . . whether it were our Dresser or the Emperor's Prime Minister! *(They tremble; MINISTER OF WAR swoons into the arms of MISTRESS.)* It would make us lose our temper, believe you us! Wait a moment... wait a moment... It is! It is! We knew it! This cuff! We've worn it before! This cuff, with the single-hemmed double-stitched multi-colored ruff! We'd know it anywhere! *(TWO beats, as he gathers his rage.)* This . . . does . . . not . . . happen . . . to us! Out! All of you! Get out! *(DANCERS scurry out. MINISTERS and MISTRESS try to exit with them.)* Not you three! Come here to us at once! *(They obey, trembling. BOY dashes onstage and pulls at FLO and ROSCOE.)*

- BOY                      Quickly! You must leave!
- FLO                        I'm awfully sorry, Roscoe. Have I given away the game again?
- ROSCOE                 Given away the game? *(He kisses her. )* My dear, the game has just begun!
- FLO                        The game's begun? Oh, Roscoe -which one?
- EMPEROR                Who are these people?
- ROSCOE                 It's new game, my dear—one we've never tried before.
- BOY                        *(To Roscoe and Flo. )* Come with me, please—before it's too late.
- FLO                        *(To Roscoe. )* But how'll I know what to do?
- EMPEROR                *( Still muted by the dam is about to burst.)* Who... are these people?
- ROSCOE                 *(To Flo.)* Just go along with everything I say – you'll catch on soon enough.
- BOY                        *(Tugging at Flo and Roscoe.)* Please !
- EMPEROR                WHO ARE THESE JABBERING FOOLS? *(Roscoe turns and looks innocently at the Emperor.)*
- ROSCOE                 Could you possibly mean me , fellow?

EMPEROR           *(A deep nod; a nearly apoplectic whisper.)* Who are you?

ROSCOE            You don't recognize us?

EMPEROR           We don't.

ROSCOE            Well. My friend and I are weavers, of course.

FLO                 Well of course we are. My friend an I are... *(To Roscoe.)* Excuse me - what?

ROS COE           Weavers, of course.

FLO                 Of course. Of course. Weavers.

ROSCOE            Sir, the cloth we weave is known throughout the world, you must have heard of us.

EMPEROR           We haven't

ROSCOE            Very strange. Why, just this morning we were in that other empire down the road...

FLO                 You know the one: around the bend, two rights and then a left at the moat.

ROSCOE            We were having breakfast with t he Emperor there, and he said, 'Why don't you pop over and see my neighbor Emperor What's-His-Name. And so we did.

FLO                 *(Musical. )* Hello!

EMPEROR           We know the Emperor of whom you speak. He's no friend of ours. Did you notice how he dresses? No sense of style whatsoever. The man's a fool.

ROSCOE            Well. Yes. In many respects he is.

**END**