



# Thank you for downloading this script from the Great War Theatre project.

The project team has undertaken a significant amount of work to identify the copyright status of the plays made available on the website and strives to indicate as clearly as possible what others are able to with it within the boundaries of the law. For more information on this please read the **Copyright and Reuse Guidelines on the website**. If you have any questions about how you can use the script please contact [greatwartheatre@kent.ac.uk](mailto:greatwartheatre@kent.ac.uk).

---

## Rica Bromley Taylor, *Na Poo*, 1917

### Citing this script.

If you wish to use the script, or cite from it, please reference it in the following way.

Taylor, Rica Bromley, *Na Poo*, British Library, Lord Chamberlain's Collection of Plays 1917/11, Add MS. 66166 J. Licensed for performance on 24 May 1917. Great War Theatre Project database, ([www.greatwartheatre.org.uk](http://www.greatwartheatre.org.uk), accessed *insert date*)

Subsequent citations to the same manuscript (consulted at the same time) could use a shortened form, such as:

Taylor, *Na Poo*, GWT, LCP1917/11

### Copyright Status: Public Domain

This play has been identified by the project as being in the **Public Domain**. This indicates that the project team have researched the author's date of death and have determined that the copyright in the work has expired. Although we cannot guarantee that our research is 100% accurate and that no one will have a claim to the work, we can confirm that we have carried out a due diligence search and believe that the risk of using the work is low. Even though the material may be free from copyright restrictions we ask that you always provide a citation or reference back to the Great War Theatre project as the source and that you treat the material respectfully.

### Script Source: Transcription

This script is a transcription from a manuscript which is part of their Lord Chamberlain's collection at the British Library. The script has been transcribed by a volunteer on the Great War Theatre project and we are grateful for the time and effort they have given to make this text available.

NA POO!

-----@@@-----

An Original Sketch

By

Rica Bromley Taylor.

CHARACTERS.

-----@@@-----

'ENRY ..... A wounded Tommy

KITTY ..... The maid

ELAINE ..... A lady of uncertain years.

-----@@@-----

PERIOD:-      The Present

TIME:-        Afternoon.

-----@@@-----

1.

NA POO.

-----@@@-----

SCENE: - A WELL-FURNISHED ROOM – DOOR CENTRE LEADING TO CONSERVATORY, OR VESTIBULE.  
DOOR R.

‘ENRY DISCOVERED SEATED IN A WHEELED INVALID’S CHAIR – A PAIR OF  
CRUTCHES BESIDE HIM – THERE IS A TABLE ADJACENT – WITH A CARD-  
BOARD BOX AND AN INK-POT UPON IT. CIGARETTES – ETC., ‘ENRY  
WHISTLING A POPULAR SONG SOFTLY AND STOPPING IN BETWEEN TO GRIN  
SLYLY – TAKES ONE OF HIS CRUTCHES AND VERY DEFTLY PUSHES A BOX OF  
CIGARETTES JUST OUT OF HIS OWN REACH – HE THEN WHISTLES SHRILLY  
ON HIS FINGERS – KITTY RUSHES ON TO THE STAGE SHOWING GREAT  
CONCERN.

KITTY. What’s wrong now? What’s the matter? Anything ‘urting yer?

‘ENRY. Yes. You ain’t been in to see me for arf an hour.

KITTY. Glory! Do you think I’ve got nothin’ else to do but to keep runnin’ in and out  
attendin’ to you.

‘ENRY. Not arf. – But I don’t think yer time could be better occupied.

KITTY. (SMILING) Well, what’s the trouble now?

(‘ENRY PANTOMIMICALLY MAKES KITTY UNDERSTAND THAT THE CIGARETTES  
ARE OUT OF HIS REACH – KITTY IS INSTANTLY CONTRITE.)

Oh, you silly cuckoo! Why didn’t you say so at once?

(SHE PUTS THE CIGARETTES WITHIN ‘ENRY’S REACH AND TURNS TO GO.)

2.

- 'ENRY. 'Ere 'old on a minute – what's the 'urry?
- KITTY. My word, you seem to think that toast makes itself. The tea gets itself – the tray lays itself, the bell answers itself, the –
- 'ENRY. Oh stop it. The pore feller that's been shot through the ankles doin' 'is bit can't 'elp itself, can it? You ain't got no correct idea o' dooty –
- KITTY. Well, you 'aven't much to grouse over – don't I look after yer every spare minit?
- 'ENRY. Yes! But the minutes are so jolly spare!
- KITTY. Well, miss, you know – (SHE NODS HER HEAD BACKWARDS) she don't give anyone else much chance –
- 'ENRY. (GROANS) Whose fault is that? P'haps you'll tell me – not mine and you know it.

(KITTY SNIFFS)

- Don't sniff – You've always got yer apron – I carn't 'elp the bloomin' sitooation – I carn't get up and walk out – I know I jolly bloomin' well 'ud run out if I could –
- KITTY. Then why don't you 'ide yer fascinatin' smile.
- 'ENRY. I'd 'ide me fascinatin' carkus if I knew 'ow! But lor! Kitty, I don't wanten seem a towerin' monyment of ingratitood, after all the nursin' and feedin' that I've 'ad, but why? Couldn't they let me stop in the kitchen –
- KITTY. It's not "good form" for 'eroes to be in kitchens –
- 'ENRY. Well, it's jolly bad for the seat o' yer trousers to sit on tenter hooks – Oh lor! I've got the fair 'ump! The un'appy part is that I'll be able to walk in a month or two and then it'll be too late.
- KITTY. I dunno why, but not while I'm about, you poor dear.

( 'ENRY SMILES BENIGNLY AND TAKES KITTY'S HAND. SHE TRIES TO DRAW IT AWAY BUT HE DRAWS HER GRADUALLY CLOSER AND CLOSER. SHE RESISTING UNTIL THEIR LIPS NEARLY TOUCH – AT THAT CRUCIAL MOMENT A BELL IS HEARD.)

3.

KITTY. (DARTING AWAY) Oh! Oh! that's the drawin' room bell and all me toast'll be burnt.  
Tra la la! (SHE RUNS OFF.)

(‘ENRY SHOWS BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT, HE WHISTLES SHRILLY – NO ANSWER – HE WHISTLES AGAIN – STILL NO ANSWER – HE TAKES HIS BOX OF MATCHES AND THROWS IT JUST OUT OF HIS REACH – THEN WHISTLES LOUDLY THREE TIMES. KITTY RUNS ON BREATHLESS AND ANXIOUS.)

‘ENRY. I've dropped me matches!

(KITTY PICKS THEM UP AND HANDS THEM TO ‘ENRY WHO WHILST TAKING THEM CAPTURES KITTY’S HAND.)

Don't go, Kitty – not fer a minit – I'm – I'm 'orribly nervous –

KITTY. Cowardy cowardy custard – A great 'efty soljer feller like you. What about?

‘ENRY. (GLOOMILY) 'Er!

KITTY. Miss Elaine? – What for?

‘ENRY. (HESITATINGLY) Oh well, I dunno! I'm just nervis!

KITTY. (UP IN ARMS) What's she done to yer?

‘ENRY. Oh, nothin', no nothin' – No I mean she's done too much, much too much.

KITTY. (BITTERLY) Oh, I'm not suffering from cataracts, nor yet was I born larst Sunday week – No young woman'll run after a man unless 'e gives her some encouragement.

‘ENRY. Kitty! I takes my solemn oath –

KITTY. Well, then she's a brazen 'ussy – Oh lor, there's the bell again.

(A BELL IS HEARD – KITTY RUNS TO THE DOOR.)

‘ENRY. 'Ere, Kitty, Kitty, KITTIE!!!!

4.

(KITTY RUNS BACK AT THIS URGENT SUMMONS WHILST THE ELECTRIC BELL RINGS CONTINUOUSLY.)

KITTY. (AGITATEDLY) Well, 'Enry, what is it? Wot? Tell me?

'ENRY. Scratch the back o' my neck, will yer?

(KITTY GIVES HIM AN ANNIHILATING LOOK AND DISAPPEARS THROUGH THE DOOR. 'ENRY LIGHTS A CIGARETTE AND BLOWS THE SMOKE THOUGHTFULLY UPWARDS – HE SINGS MOURNFULLY.)

'ENRY. (SINGING) If I was the only moke in the world and she was the only (HE SCRATCHES HIS HEAD) Wot rhymes with moke? (SINGS) If I was the only bloke in the world and she was a sort o' joke! No that won't do – (SINGS) If I'd only thought to order the - the coke, I don't fink the fire would smoke! Matteremoney's a pig in a poke and means that you're always broke! That don't sound right – Oh Lord – 'Ere she comes –

(ENTER ELAINE DRESSED IN CLINGING AND ARTISTIC ROBES. SHE HOLDS A BOOK IN HER HAND AND COMES FORWARD WITH A TENDER LOVING SMILE.)

ELAINE. What a sweet little song you were singing – Well – friend of mine, and how are the dear dear feet?

'ENRY. Me corns 'urt a bit – that means rain.

(ELAINE SITS DOWN BESIDE 'ENRY AND PLACES HER HAND ON HIS. 'ENRY EVIDENTLY ILL AT EASE TRIES – BUT NOT TOO ABRUPTLY – TO MOVE IT AWAY.)

ELAINE. (SOFTLY) Fine gentle brave soul.

'ENRY. It isn't me sole, Miss – it's me ankles!

ELAINE. Oh, try to understand. I am speaking of your great heart.

5.

'ENRY. They never put that it was enlarged down on me charge sheet at the 'orspital, miss!

ELAINE. (SMILING TENDERLY) But I always knew it was too big even for that splendid chest of yours.

'ENRY. Well! It's no use 'avin' a trunk if yer carn't fill it – I always seem to be 'ungry.

ELAINE. Now, I'm going to give you food for the mind!

'ENRY. (SIGHING HEAVILY) Yes, miss-

ELAINE. (IMPLORINGLY) Oh! Don't call me Miss.

'ENRY. I thought you wasn't married!

ELAINE. (WITH MEANING) Not yet – but you don't grasp my meaning. I want you to call me – just Elaine.

'ENRY. Yes, miss.

ELAINE. (PUTTING HER HAND ON HER HEART) Oh, don't - don't – you hurt me – say Elaine.

'ENRY. Yes, miss; just Elaine.

ELAINE. Do, do drop the miss.

'ENRY. I 'aven't picked yer up yet, Miss.

ELAINE. Ah, you could do so – so easily in those wonderful strong arms of yours.

'ENRY. Wot's the good of arms when yer legs ain't in working order?

ELAINE. (LANGUISHING) Oh, never, never mind. I am here to walk for you – I am here to run for you – I am here to march with you – to step with you – to halt with you – to – to – kneel with you - !

('ENRY WRIGGLES UNEASILY.)

Oh Henry, my life's work shall be devoted to making these hands replace your feet.

'ENRY. Yer carn't get gloves to do the work o' boots, miss.

(ELAINE COMES CLOSER WITH A DIE AWAY EXPRESSION AND IS JUST ABOUT TO SPEAK.)



6.

Excuse me, miss, but I want to sneeze! And I 'aven't got an 'ankerchief.

ELAINE. (SHE GIVES HIM HERS) Here's mine. (SHE QUOTES) "A princess wrought it me and and I did never ask it back again."

'ENRY. (USING IT VIGOROUSLY) Well, I 'ope not till it's bin to the wash.

ELAINE. Henry – (SHE COMES CLOSER TO HIM) Henry – my Henry. I have something very sweet to tell you.

'ENRY. (WOODENLY) Yes, miss.

ELAINE. Yes, Elaine.

'ENRY. (MORE WOODENLY) Yes, Miss Elaine.

ELAINE. I feel the moment has come when you should know all.

'ENRY. (RESIGNEDLY) Well, wait a minit till I lights up. (HE LIGHTS A CIGARETTE) Well, miss.

ELAINE. Well, Elaine.

'ENRY. Well, Miss Elaine.

ELAINE. When you came here first I was merely sorry for you.

'ENRY. Thank yer, miss.

ELAINE. You have been here for three months.

'ENRY. Lor! 'Ave II

ELAINE. Three glorious wonderful months, and as time went on I knew pity was turning into – (SHE SIGHS A LONG AH! AND LOOKS AT 'ENRY WITH DEEP MEANING)

('ENRY LOOKS ROUND APPREHENSIVELY)

At first I am ashamed to say I considered class.

'ENRY. (INDIGNANTLY) A.1. I am.

ELAINE. I don't mean that. I was talking of class distinctions.

'ENRY. (UNEASILY) Yes, miss.

ELAINE. Yes, Elaine.

'ENRY. Yes, Miss Elaine.

7.

ELAINE. Oh, Henry as time went on I commenced to find what a noble mind you had behind those poor wounded ankles.

'ENRY. (LOOKING TERRIFIED) I always 'ave been led to believe they was calves.

ELAINE. When at length I gathered that your sphere was the same as my own.

'ENRY. Rifles, bayonets, not spears, miss!

ELAINE. (DESPERATELY) When I found that you were rifling my very heart –

'ENRY. Oh my! Lor!

ELAINE. Then I knew that the time for action had come – oh Henry, dearly loved hero. I have known now for many weeks that I am yours and you are mine.

(SHE SINKS UPON HER KNEES BESIDE 'ENRY WHO TRIES UNSUCCESSFULLY TO BACK AWAY.)

What does rank signify. I know I have beauty – wealth – position – but what is the use of all these things if there is no loved one to share the - I want love and in you I have found it. I know that in your gentle modesty you would reject me, but I am beyond all convention, Henry. I love you! As you love me.

('ENRY ROLLS HIS CHAIR BACKWARDS ALMOST UPSETTING ELAINE WHO FOLLOWS HIM.)

I laugh prudence to scorn. I will help you, guide you, educate you – if needs be, die for you!

('ENRY LOOKS AT HER HAIR AND PUSHES HIS CHAIR A LITTLE FURTHER BACK. ELAINE STILL FOLLOWS.)

Oh, wonderful man, I knew that you would hesitate to accept that which you might consider a sacrifice on my part, and so I have arranged all – all- all! In less than twenty minutes my car will be at the door We will drive to London and in a few hours you will be mine – mine – for ever and always. I got a special license yesterday!!!!

(‘ENRY DRIVES HIS CHAIR VIOLENTLY BACKWARDS, HIS FACE EXPRESSING THE UTMOST HORROR. ELAINE BENDS TENDERLY OVER HIM.)

And now my own Henry your little Elaine must leave you, but only for a brief, brief time, to arrange all final details. When next we meet it will be to part no more.

(SHE GOES OUT LINGERINGLY KISSING HER HAND WHEN SHE REACHES THE DOOR.)

(‘ENRY REATHES A SIGH OF GREAT RELIEF AND FANS HIMSELF VIOLENTLY WITH THE LID OF THE BOX ON THE TABLE –AND WIPES HIS FOREHEAD ON HIS COAT SLEEVES.)

‘ENRY. Phew! (HE TRIES IN DESPERATION TO REACH HIS CRUTCHES WITH THE EVIDENT IDEA OF BOLTING, BUT HE CANNOT.) Oh lor! Oh my lor! If only Fritz ‘ad ‘it me on the ‘ead and left me me feet to run away with. Oh my lor! This is ‘ot! She’ll ‘ave me out in that bloomin’ car if I don’t think of some way to escape. Oh, I’m fair off me nut. Me ‘eart’s beatin’ like an aeroplane propeller. She’ll cop me. I know she will, and it’s my Kitty I wants, (CRESCENDO) Kitty! Kitty! Oh my Kitty!!!!

(KITTY RUNS IN SHOWING EVIDENT ANXIETY.)

KITTY. ‘Enry, whatever is the matter. Why! Yer eyes are startin’ out of yer ‘ead.

‘ENRY. Well! It seems that it isn’t only me eyes that’s about to start.

KITTY. What do yer mean? And yer all of a tremble!

‘ENRY. No wonder. Kitty, you’ve got to save me.

KITTY. Save yer – from what!

‘ENRY. Matteremony!

KITTY. (DRAWING HERSELF UP OFFENDEDLY) I ain’t aware that I ever agreed to “walk out”.

‘ENRY. Oh, there’s no time for a scrap up. I tell you strite – if you don’t walk out of ‘ere with me in five minutes – my number’s up!

KITTY. (WITH DEEP CONCERN) ‘Enry, are you barmy?

‘ENRY. Not yet. But I jolly well soon shall be. Oh, Kitty, she’s gone to get the car and she’s going to take me out elopin’.

KITTY. (SHRILLY) What? Who? When? Why? Where?

‘ENRY. One at a time please! Miss Elaine! Now! I dunno! To London!

KITTY. But she can’t.

‘ENRY. (WITH CONVICTION) Oh! Carn’t she!

KITTY. But she shan’t.

‘ENRY. Oh! Shan’t she.

KITTY. But she won’t.

‘ENRY. Oh! Won’t she.

KITTY. Oh – oh oh! (SHE HIDES HER FACE IN HER APRON AND ROCKS TO AND FRO.)

‘ENRY. (TENDERLY) You seem a bit upset ‘oney.

KITTY. I won’t have you treated like a brown paper parcel!

‘ENRY. I don’t mind bein’ a parcel but what I do mind is – who has the tyin’ of the string!!

KITTY. (INDIGNANTLY) She’s a forward minx. Wot about the banns? Where’s she put ‘em up?

‘ENRY. She ain’t! But she seems to think I’m worth a matter of thirty quid. Kitty, my girl – if you don’t think o’ some plan in arf a minit I’m a goner.

(KITTY WALKS UP AND DOWN DISTRACTEDLY, THEN STOPS AND CONSIDERS  
– ‘ENRY WATCHES HER ANXIOUSLY.)

(SOTTO VOCE) Always the females as swamps yer with the brain waves!

KITTY. I know!

(KITTY DARTS OUT OF THE DOOR CENTRE AND WHILST SHE IS AWAY 'ENRY GAZES ANXIOUSLY AT THE DOOR R. NEARLY STARTING OUT OF HIS CHAIR WHEN A DOOR BANGS OFF, AND EXPRESSING UTTER DESPAIR WHEN A MOTOR HORN IS HEARD.)

(KITTY RETURNS WHEELING A WHEELBARROW IN WHICH LEAVES ETC. ARE PILED UP. SHE PUTS THE BARROW DOWN AND SPEAKS HURRIEDLY.)

KITTY. I've planned it all out, and I'll save yer – if I'm killed for it, my poor 'elpless boy. My uncle, the taxi- driver, just by a slice of luck has driven over and is 'avin' a bit o' food with Mother down at the lodge. I'll wheel you down there. They won't see us if we go the back way. We'll pop you in the taxi, and Uncle'll drive you to 'is 'ome! It's not over seven miles away, but you'll be safe. No one'll ever know where you've gone.

'ENRY. There's only one really safe way out of the mess, Kitty, you gotter marry me yerself!

KITTY. Oh well, we'll settle that later. Come on! Oh be quick or she'll catch yer!

(KITTY HELPS 'ENRY TO HIS FEET AND WHAN HE STANDS WITH HIS ARMS ROUND HER TO SUPPORT HIMSELF, HE KISSES HER ECSTATICALLY. SHE IS QUITE HELPLESS AND PRETENDS TO BE VERY ANGRY, AND STRUGGLES.)

'ENRY. Easy! Mind me foot!

(KITTY INSTANTLY CEASES STRUGGLING.)

Now my girl .. Say - yes.

KITTY. Shan't.

'ENRY. All right, then I shan't get into the barrow, and she'll have me.

KITTY. Oh, well! Yes then!

'ENRY. (THREATENINGLY) Kiss me!

11.

KITTY. Shan't!

'ENTRY. (ATTEMPTING TO SIT DOWN) All right. The trip's off.

(KITTY COYLY KISSES HIM.)

(WITH GREAT RELIEF) Ah! (QUOTES) "A marriage has been arranged"!

KITTY. Oh 'Entry, do 'urry.

(WITH MUCH BUSINESS 'ENTRY IS PACKED INTO THE WHEELBARROW WHICH HE DOES NOT FIT.)

'ENTRY. Kitty, be a bloomin' robin and cover your 'Entry with leaves! Then I'll be the babe and you'll be the wooded!! My word these cushions are soft I don't fink, and where's me rug and lamps and me 'ooter.

(KITTY TUCKS HIM UP IN A GREAT HURRY AND PICKING UP THE HANDLES OF THE BARROW SHE WHEELS HIM TO THE DOOR, WHERE SHE LEAVES HIM, AND RUNS BACK; SHE BUNCHES UP THE CUSHIONS IN THE INVALID CHAIR TO LOOK LIKE A HEAD, THEN TAKES THE LID OF THE CARDBOARD BOX, DIPS HER FOREFINGER IN THE INK AND WRITES. MEANWHILE 'ENTRY IMPLORES HER TO BE QUICK. SHE PINS THE CARD WITH A HAIRPIN ONTO THE CUSHION AND TURNS THE CHAIR TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE, THEN PICKS UP THE HANDLES OF THE BARROW AND WHEELS 'ENTRY OFF QUICKLY. )

(ON THE CARD THE WORDS WRITTEN ARE:-

NAH POOH!!!)