

*(LITTLE PRINCE starts digging up weeds at a distance from her. ROSE watches with growing impatience. Finally she tries to tempt him away with musical refrains.)*

Start

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ROSE *(a cappella)*. LA-LA-LA-LA— *(LITTLE PRINCE smiles but continues working. She looks around for distraction and suddenly spies a caterpillar on her leaf.)* Eek!

LITTLE PRINCE. What is it?

ROSE. It's a monster crawling on me. *(She holds out her leaf to show him.)*

LITTLE PRINCE. Oh. It's just a caterpillar. They're really very marvelous creatures. One day it will turn into a beautiful butterfly. But if it upsets you, I'll take it away ... in just a moment.

ROSE *(waits impatiently trying to think of another way to get his attention. She clears her throat. He looks up)*. I seem to be very dry. Do you think I might have a drink?

LITTLE PRINCE. Certainly. As soon as I get this last little baobab. *(She is annoyed. She begins to cough lightly at first, then more vociferously. He rushes to her side.)* What is it?

ROSE *(coughing dramatically. Hoarsely)*. Water ...

LITTLE PRINCE *(rushes to water her)*. Are you all right?

ROSE. Much better now. Thank you. *(They smile. LITTLE PRINCE heads back to his work.)* But, I am feeling a bit of a chill.

LITTLE PRINCE *(gets her a screen)*. Better? *(She nods. He tries to leave again.)*

ROSE. Oh, but now it seems I'm terribly warm again. *(He takes the screen away and waters her again.)*

LITTLE PRINCE. And so it went— *[Tape Cue #14]* day after day—until finally I had to tell her. *(To ROSE.)*

Don't you see, if I don't return to my work, the baobabs could become dangerous to you.

ROSE. Well, go back to your baobabs then, if they're so very important. (*LITTLE PRINCE is hurt and does not move.*) Go on. Go back to your precious weeds! (*With this she has flailed dramatically and pricked him with her thorns. She is embarrassed and turns away.*)

LITTLE PRINCE (*to AVIATOR*). I was confused. She was so beautiful but she made me so upset. I didn't understand her. I had so many questions, but no one to ask. I had to find some answers. I had to— I had to leave. I cleaned out my volcanoes for the last time—even the extinct one. And then—

(*ROSE watches sadly as he does the above parting tasks. He approaches ROSE with wind screen.*)

LITTLE PRINCE. Goodbye. (*She does not answer.*) Goodbye.

ROSE. Take the screen away ... please.

LITTLE PRINCE. But the wind—

ROSE. I don't really need it. The night air will do me good. I am a flower, after all.

LITTLE PRINCE. Here then, let me take that caterpillar away. I know how it upsets ...

ROSE. No, no. Leave it. I suppose I must endure the presence of two or three caterpillars if I wish to be acquainted with the butterflies. It seems that they are very beautiful. And if not the caterpillars and the butterflies, who will I talk to? You'll be far away. And as for any larger creatures, I'm not afraid. I have my thorns— (*She exhibits them, just missing LITTLE PRINCE. She is embar-*

*ressed.) —to protect me. (After a moment.) Don't linger like this. You've decided to go now—so— (She doesn't watch as he begins to leave. Suddenly she turns to him.) Of course, I...lov— (She cannot say "love." (She can look at him no longer and turns away.) Goodbye.*

End

*(He leaves dejected and confused. Lights cross back to the desert. AVIATOR is drawing absent-mindedly in the sand.)*

LITTLE PRINCE. That was the last time I saw her. (*Music ends.*) Is that my flower?

AVIATOR (*caught unawares, trying to hide it*). It's just a doodle—

LITTLE PRINCE. You should doodle more often. Of course, she has more petals than that—and her stem is really longer—and she has four thorns, you remember.

AVIATOR. Listen, I told you—I don't draw. I've only ever drawn boa constrictors from the outside and boa constrictors from the inside and—

LITTLE PRINCE. It's all right. Children will understand.

AVIATOR. Children were never the problem. It was the grown-ups who couldn't see—

LITTLE PRINCE. It's really quite good—not so good as my sheep, of course—but if you keep trying, who knows? You could maybe be an artist instead of—

AVIATOR. Instead of what? Listen, I have work to do—important things—

LITTLE PRINCE. Important things?

AVIATOR. Yes, important things. And besides, isn't it about time for you to take your leave? The sun has set, after all.