

RISING SUN

A Musical by Tim J Spencer

SCRIPT

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CHARACTERS

Theresa - Age 45

Nell - Age 52

Sarah - Age 26

Abby - Age 32

Connie - An Orphan, aged 14

Dottie - Age 35

Meg - Age 42

Sian - Sister of Sarah, age 29

Mary - Daughter of Nell, age 15

Cathy - Age 37

Edna - Age 31

Rachel - Age 27

[Edna starts the 'bout' easier into it, trying to make the contest last a little longer. Abby comes up behind Edna and runs her finger down Edna's back. Edna is distracted and Mary wrenches her arm down to win. Mary celebrates whilst Edna faces up to Abby, who is laughter, as are the rest of the girls. Cathy and Sian are not amused though.]

Nell : That's it girls. Lights out.

Abby : *(Triumphantly)* Reigning champion of the dorm is.....Mary Dixon.

[The rest of the girls applaud whilst Mary celebrates. They all begin to settle down to bed.]

Mary : *(just a little miffed)* I would have won that without your help.

Abby : *(playing along)* I know kid. I was just making sure.

[They exchange smiles]

[Blackout]

SCENE FOURTEEN – The Dormitory

[The next morning before work. The room is set up so that they can practice for the fight. What follows is a choreographed routine of practice.]

Rachel : You know the routine girls. Keep it quiet. Connie, Mary keep guard will you? Time to practice.

Nell : Get your weapons girls.

Mary : Can't I practice as well?

Cathy : It your turn to keep guard while Abby plays the records shrimp.

[Mary gives Cathy an evil stare then goes to the door. As the girls practice the two youngsters keep watch. As the practice develops the noise level rises a little and the two girls become more interested forgetting they are on guard. Suddenly there is a bellowing from the loudspeakers in the Auditorium from the governor, as the girls get too carried away]

Governor : Dixon, my office. NOW!!!!

[The girls are stopped in their tracks]

Cathy : Shit Mary! Weren't you keeping guard!

[Mary looks sheepishly back at Cathy]

Nell : I'd better go.

Meg : Take care Nell.

Nell : See you later.

[Nell leaves]

Meg : She's had it.

Cathy : We've all had it. If they haven't worked it out by now they're fools.

Meg : We've got God on our side.

Sian : Oh don't you start, please. We get enough of that off her (*indicates Mary*) mother.

[Abby and Nell re-enter]

Rachel : Well?

Nell : That was close. If it weren't for Abby we'd all be for it.

Abby : (*Trying to brush it off*) They believed me that's all.

Cathy : What happened?

Nell : I went in and Abby was outside, she'd heard the screaming, like everyone else. I tried to come up with some reason for the practice but they weren't having any of it. Abby heard the conversation, knocked and somehow was allowed in.

Sian : Friends in low places no doubt, or is it high, I never can remember.

[Sian and Abby exchange looks]

Abby : (*defensively*) I did have a reason.

Nell : Well. She fed them some story about it raising morale to practice self defence with sticks.

Sian : You mean you told them the truth.

Nell : Yes, but then she said (*imitating Abby*) "What chance do a bunch or women with sticks have against the glorious Japanese Army and their machine guns. They're no threat it just gives them something to do in the hours off. It's not exactly the most enthralling place here."

Abby : (*Mildly amused as Nell's impersonation leaves a lot to be desired*) I couldn't have said it better myself.

Meg : And they went for it?

Abby : Sure, they have no reason to think that we have any chance against them.
 They don't know that we know what they've got planned.

[The girls look approvingly]

Anyway the wireless is unmanned. I'd better get back there.

*[She passes the group a smile and departs.
Each of the girls look like they have forgiven her]*

Song 13 – Maybe we were wrong

Edna : *She plays a different game to us*

Sian : *She lost our patience lost our trust*

Both : *But deep inside her she is the same as us all*

Cathy : *After all the things we've done*

She is still like us, everyone

All three : *Her rules are different, she has her own kind of laws*

All : *So where did we go wrong*

Fighting her so long

The enemy within prevented us from fighting

The enemy we see

Where did we go wrong

Letting this go on

And now we find the truth that read between the lines

And so the fault must lie within

Everything we thought of only to be taught

That maybe we were wrong

Rachel : *Maybe if we start again*

Wipe the slate clean, that story ends

Dottie : *She's still our Ally*

Both : *A friend who's hidden by a shawl*

All : *So where did we go wrong*

Fighting her so long

The enemy within prevented us from fighting

The enemy we see

Where did we go wrong

Letting this go on

And now we find the truth that read between the lines

And so the fault must lie within

Everything we thought of only to be taught

That maybe we were wrong

SCENE FIFTEEN – The Dormitory

[Lunchtime back at the dormitory. The end of “Washing” leads to a change of song – “It’s a long way to Tiperrary”. The girls gradually realise what’s being played]

- Meg : She’s playing “Tiperrary” on the wireless.
- Cathy : What’s she doing? Does she know something we don’t?
- Nell : They’re bound to suspect her.
- Cathy : She’s off her trolley.
- Rachel : The fight. It’s got to be soon. Is everyone ready?
- Sian : We’re ready if they give the extra roll call.
- Cathy : We’ll be fine.
- Dottie : *(totally melodramatic)* Together we’ll be invincible! *(then realises)* Well we’ll certainly give them a surprise.
- Rachel : Don’t get carried away Dottie, just be prepared.....

[GUNSHOT]

Song 14 –One of Us

[This is a ‘Quasi’ Round style. Chrs 1 sings their verse then repeats as chrs 2 sing theirs, when chrs 3 enters chrs 1 & 2 repeat theirs again until all 4 groups sing at the same time before the Unison section designated by ‘All’]

[This is a moment of confusion and concern until when all sing together they realise that it’s Abby who has been shot]

Chrs 1 : ***Gunshot tells me that something’s wrong
Sound of proud soldiers sound of gongs
Some poor soul has been lost to war
Somebody say what the fighting’s for***

Chrs 2 : ***Oh God take me away
Tell me not one today
Please God don’t let this be
Why God wasn’t it me***

Chrs 3 : ***Someone lost which one is gone from us
Who’s here now
Who is safe, who’s missing
Where’s the child tell me not***

Chrs 4 : *Hell hears no pleas
Which one is to leave
Life in this way
Tell me not*

All : *Abby, tell me not Abby
Someone where's Abby
Say she's alright
Abby, tell me not Abby
Say it's not true*

Mary : *(Screamed)* No ! No !! No !!!!

<p>SCENE SIXTEEN – The ‘Back-Sand’</p>

*[The girls have made a cross for Abby.
They are having a small memorial service. Nell speaks.]*

Nell : May her soul rest in peace. She died, one of us, defending us all. She is a symbol of our despair but also our hope. She was a friend and will be sorely missed. The radio system is gone but Abby's memory will live. Our deepest respects go with her, wherever she may be.

Song 14 –Pie Jesu

Mary : *Pie jesu domine
Dona eis requiem
Qui tollis peccata mundi
Dona eis sempiternam
Requiem, requiem*

*The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want
He leads me down to lie
In pastures green he leadeth me
The quiet waters by
Requiem, requiem*

*Pie jesu domine
Dona eis requiem
Qui tollis peccata mundi
Dona eis sempiternam
Requiem, requiem, requiem*

[The girls' ceremony ends. It has been tearful and the girls are obviously drained]

- Meg : It's so damn hot.
- Cathy : Too hot. Did Abby know something we don't?
- Nell : I don't know.
- Theresa : They'll be deciding what to do with us if it's the end of the war. We have to be ready.
- Rachel : We're as ready as we can be.
- Nell : Now all we can do is pray.
- Cathy : Pray for a bloody miracle.
- Rachel : Cathy come on. This time we have to stick together.
- Cathy : We are together. You know that. Especially after today.
- Edna : Nell, how are we going to get through this?
- Nell : Faith in the lord. He'll take care of us.
- Edna : How can we believe that when he lets things like this happen to everyone?
- Nell : I know he works in mysterious ways, but he does care. The lord always cares.
- Mary : I wish I could believe that, but after what happened to Abby I can't. I don't think I ever will.

Song 16 - Somewhere

- Nell : ***Sometimes the world can feel like home
And sometimes you feel you're on your own
But when you find the world's too close
Remember those you love the most
And maybe there's a God after all***
- Somewhere the sun is shining
Somewhere the air is still
Somewhere there is no dying
And somebody feels no ill
Somewhere the skies are golden
And somewhere the wells are filled
There's someone to turn to
Cause somebody trusts
And somewhere there's a heaven still***

*Living this life you start again
And only your kin you will defend
Not trusting those you have to trust
Or blaming those for all you've lost
And hoping that someday this will end*

*Somewhere the sun is shining
Somewhere the air is still
Somewhere there is no dying
And somebody feels no ill
Somewhere the skies are golden
And somewhere the wells are filled
There's someone to turn to
Cause somebody trusts
And somewhere there's a heaven still*

Chorus : *Somewhere, somewhere, somewhere*

Nell : *Somewhere the sun is shining
Somewhere the air is still
Somewhere there is no dying
And somebody feels no ill
Somewhere the skies are golden
And somewhere the wells are filled
There's someone to turn to
Cause somebody trusts
And somewhere there's a heaven still*

[The silence is broken by a bell sounding. The extra-curricular roll call]

Meg : Not now.

Nell : It's time.

Rachel : Is everyone ready?

Cathy : Ready as we'll ever be. We've got the reason to fight now. We have to for Abby's sake.

Mary : She wouldn't have wanted us to lay down.

Rachel : This is what we've been waiting for. Are the stones and sticks ready?

Sian : Yes.

Meg : Good luck, each of you. Fight as we learnt and nothing will be able to stop us.

Mary : For Abby! They'll hear your name in Carolina.

RISING SUN

Character Breakdown

Most of the characters ages can be played with, they are only guidelines. The only ones who are specifically needed to be of a certain age are as follows ; Mary and Connie are 14 and 15 so early teenagers. Nell is Mary's mother so needs to be round the 40s mark at earliest. Meg is also a senior member of the group. Although not entirely necessary it is more likely that Abby, Cathy, Dottie and Edna would be around the same age somewhere around the late twenties-thirties mark. Sarah and Sian are sisters so probably would be only a few years apart although again this is not essential.

Abby Age 32

Abby is the main protagonist of the piece. Originally a Cabaret singer from Carolina Abby has wandered the world singing and leading a very different and frivolous life in comparison to the rest of the girls in the camp. Around mid-to-late twenties she, although loud, is very private and keeps her 'front' so the girls cannot see her true feelings.

Nell Age 52

Nell is the mother of Mary. She comes from a religious background and was a teacher before the war took place therefore casts a mothering influence over the group. She is also more willing to accept the situation than most and therefore is willingly the spokeswoman of the group. The only time she is flustered and flounders is when her daughter, Mary, goes missing in camp. Probably aged around the late 40s/50s mark.

Mary Age 15

Mary is 15 and, although a schoolgirl, also very aware of the situation the group finds itself in. She, and her mother Nell, have been here for over two years so she has grown up knowing this situation. In Abby she finds a friend and someone who she believes is worth fighting for. Mary is the lynchpin of the show to give the link between Abby's true side and the rest of the girls.

Meg Age 42

Meg is the other senior party of the group. Her family moved out to the East years ago and she has spent most of her life in this part of the world.

Cathy Age 37

Cathy is the 'tough nut' of the group. Far more aggressive than the others Cathy grew up in a more streetwise environment. She is the ringleader in the 'Berry' sequence with Abby.

Edna Age 31

Edna is the newest member of the group who arrives during the first scene. She has lost her husband during recent months, killed by the Japanese. She is still rather shell-shocked by what has happened but is again fairly street-wise.

Dottie Age 35

Ditsy and naive. Dottie is always looking on the bright side but is also easily led, hence her involvement in the 'Berry' sequence. She is a follower as well as naively optimistic.

Connie Age 14

Connie is an orphan who is the best friend of Mary. She has been in the camp for some time. Mary has always been her closest friend and, in doing so, Nell has almost become her adopted mother.

Theresa Age 45

Theresa is always on edge. She always tends to be flustered and maybe the frailest member of the group. She is looked after by the girls rather than a leader. When she sees the incidents of Abby sleeping with the guard, and overhears the Governor's plans for the girls, she instantly dashes to tell the girls rather than think of the consequences of her actions, it is as it is almost too much for her. She is used to Paris, travelling and more refined ways of life.

Rachel Age 27

Rachel has travelled the world, spent time in many luxurious places and has finally ended up here. She is a 'hands-on' person, therefore making the suggestion of fighting rather than dying. She takes all in her stride and is another leader in the group. Again this can be given through the seniority of the role.

Sarah Age 26

Sian's sister she believes that the only people who look out for you are your family. Hence her and her sister keep very close together in situations, can both be involved or not involved with the 'Berry' sequence but should be 'in' things if her sister is.

Sian Age 29

As with Sarah the two sisters act together, as a whole and are quite close during the piece. They do not have to be together all the time during the piece but it should be very much like sisters.

Director's Notes

Rising Sun is a one-set stage. The set consists of The Dormitory, a front stage area where the Tenko takes place, and a 'backsand' area that is Abby's hideaway.

The Dormitory can be as symbolic or realistic as necessary, The photo shows just one way the dorm can be staged.

The first number '*Overture/Hell*' should open with the girls asleep on stage (*as in the photo*) although this could obviously be problematic if there is no curtain, it just helps enhance the mood, and can work very effectively if there is no curtain.

Costumes for this musical are very simple. There are no costume changes as all the girls would be wearing what they were arrested in. Obviously hair styles and make up would be needing to reflect the fact that the girls have not seen a bath or shower for the period of time they have been in the camp.



Lighting needs to be bright and 'hot' to reflect the atmosphere the camp is in. The overall feeling of heat and oppressiveness is one that must come over.

The 'Berry' sequence is something devised by the girls as a punishment for Abby for her escapades with her former love. The 'idea' is that they hold her down and emblaze a red berry into her head that would therefore symbolise her links with the Japanese. It is to give the imprint of the Rising Sun into her head. Therefore it needs to be a circular-esque symbol that is engrained. Also this has to be a very violent scene with Abby being violated to do this, i.e. Held down and the mark put on her head against her will.

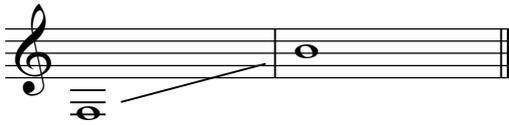
The Roll Call (Tenko) is also paramount to the production. The girls are lined at the front of the stage, in two rows, military style facing to the audience. The governor's voice which is recorded is projected, as such, from behind the audience thus the audience are able to see the reactions of the girls to everything that is said by the Governor.



Rising Sun

Vocal Ranges

Abby (*Alto*)



Musical notation for Abby (Alto) showing a vocal range from G3 to G4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note G4 on the first line of the next staff.

Nell (*Soprano*)



Musical notation for Nell (Soprano) showing a vocal range from G3 to A#4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note A#4 on the second line.

Theresa (*Soprano*)



Musical notation for Theresa (Soprano) showing a vocal range from G3 to A#4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note A#4 on the second line.

Meg (*Soprano*)



Musical notation for Meg (Soprano) showing a vocal range from G3 to A#4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note A#4 on the second line.

Cathy (*Mezzo*)



Musical notation for Cathy (Mezzo) showing a vocal range from G3 to G4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note G4 on the first line of the next staff.

Dottie (*Upper Mezzo*)



Musical notation for Dottie (Upper Mezzo) showing a vocal range from G3 to A#4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note A#4 on the second line.

Mary (*Mezzo*)



Musical notation for Mary (Mezzo) showing a vocal range from G3 to G4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note G4 on the first line of the next staff.

Rachel (*Upper Mezzo*)



Musical notation for Rachel (Upper Mezzo) showing a vocal range from G3 to A#4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note A#4 on the second line.

Sian (*Alto*)



Musical notation for Sian (Alto) showing a vocal range from G3 to G4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note G4 on the first line of the next staff.

Sarah (*Mezzo*)



Musical notation for Sarah (Mezzo) showing a vocal range from G3 to G4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note G4 on the first line of the next staff.

Edna (*Mezzo*)



Musical notation for Edna (Mezzo) showing a vocal range from G3 to G4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note G4 on the first line of the next staff.

Connie (*Mezzo*)



Musical notation for Connie (Mezzo) showing a vocal range from G3 to G4. The notation consists of a treble clef, a whole note G3 on the first line, a diagonal line indicating a rising interval, and a whole note G4 on the first line of the next staff.

RISING SUN

Cast

12 Female cast, 1 recorded Governor of either gender.

Orchestrations

9 : Piano, Keys 2, Bass Gtr, Kit, French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Wind 1 (Flute, Oboe), Cello, Perc

Synopsis

AUGUST 1945. This story takes place in a Women's Prisoner of War camp in Burma. Eleven of the twelve characters have been imprisoned here for at least a year, some as long as three. Edna, the twelfth character arrives at the camp during the first scene. Her husband has just been executed and she has been moved from the multi-sex prison further north, to the all-women's camp here. The show begins with the women rising from their dormitories for the day and attending the "Tenko" – the roll call (Song 1- Hell). The governor/ess's voice is a sound recording and the women face to the front to hear what she has to say, therefore the audience sees the action as if they are the guards or the governor. They hear the usual propaganda fed them by the Japanese that it won't be long before the war is over with the Japanese being the victors, a morale deflating exercise which happens every day. As the ladies are dismissed Edna arrives and is seen by the two youngest girls who, Mary and Connie. They demand to know her story and she sings of her "Fairy Story" (Song 2) which now has gone wrong. This satisfies the girls and they leave. One of the girls, a Jazz singer called Abby has been listening. She is extremely tough and synical but after a brief altercation tells her there is a spare blanket in the dorm that she can use. We then see some of the girls working in the fields ploughing the crops, which is a nearly pointless exercise in the heat of the camp. (Song 3 – A Day in your life). Concealed in the work area is a stone, with resistance notes of how the fighting is going, it is their small voice from the outside world and informs them that the fighting is not going the Japanese way at all their morale is slightly lifted. They tell the girls the news the next time they are all together in the dorm. In the background we hear the strains of "We're gonna hang out the Washing" from the wireless. Mary explains that the wireless has only 8 songs and is controlled by Abby, they play a different song depending on the mood. The eighth song "Tipperary" is saved and will only be played the day the war is over.



Later that evening as dusk falls on the camp the girls reminisce about their lives before the war (Song 4 – I Remember). The next morning Theresa enters the dormitory in a panic and tells the girls that she has just seen Abby having sex with one of the guards in the back-sand

(Song 5 – The traitor within). The girls are horrified and when Abby returns she is turned on in rage by the girls, Abby leaves but as she does the ground in front of her is spat on by Edna. Abby goes to a secluded spot and sings of her love for the guard, who she first met and loved before the war, and the girls would never understand (Song 6 – He’s A Man). Mary has been watching from afar and hears the feelings. She asks Abby why she doesn’t tell the girls to which Abby is adamant that will never know. Mary agrees to keep the secret. Back in the dorm the girls are surprised when Theresa then informs them that the war could be at an end soon, which may not be as good as they first think. They could just line the girls up and kill them, with machine guns. Rachel tells the girls that they must learn to use what they can should that day come, sticks, stones, anything has to be better than standing there and waiting for it. (Song 7 – Fight to live). The girls agree and start to think about how they would defend themselves. Time passes and the subject comes back to the traitor, Abby and what should be done. Led by Cathy, they plot their revenge (Song 8 – The Traitor in Disguise) and when Abby returns they grab her and use “The Berry” to inscribe a red circle in her forehead to symbolize allegiance to the Rising Sun, the Japanese Flag. Nell, Mary’s mother, a schoolteacher who is devoutly religious, enters and breaks up the ritual. Once done so she orders everyone out except Abby and both Nell & Mary say that they will stand with her (Song 9 – Hymn).

The girls practice for the fight and then think about times gone by first with “That night on the sand” (Song 10) and “The Life we Had” (Song 11) . We then find Abby and Mary alone. Mary is interested in Abby’s singing career before and Abby tells her of her life (Song 12 – Back Home). When the next roll call comes both Mary and her friend Connie are missing. The girls are told that a search will begin and woe betide the girls if the guards find them first. The dorm splits up and looks for the missing youngsters. It is Abby who finds them, in her secluded place. Mary and Connie had decided to run away, Nell and the rest of the girls are horrified but thank Abby for her help.



The next morning the girls practise again but don’t take enough care and Nell is summoned to the governor’s office. Abby joins Nell and helps them survive with nothing more than a warning. The girls are now convinced that Abby is not the bad person she first seemed and contemplate their thoughts (Song 13 - Maybe we were wrong). That lunchtime the girls suddenly hear “Tipperary” being played on the wireless system, shocked themselves they are worried that the governor will be suspicious but before anything more can be said a single gunshot is heard. (Song 14 – One of Us). Abby has been shot dead by the guards who realised that the wireless was a system. Mary is heartbroken and the rest of the girls are shattered by it. They have a small memorial service at which Mary sings a “Pie Jesu” (Song 15). The girls have almost given up hope and Nell tries to remind them that somewhere there is hope (Song 16 – Somewhere). Just as Nell finishes reassuring the girls the roll call bell sounds, at an unusual time. This must be the one, they think and prepare for the fight that might ensue. (Song 17 - This is the Moment). The girls are lined up for roll call expecting to be shot. The

governess informs them that the war is over, and, to their complete surprise, they will be released later in the day. Stunned and overcome the girls are left to rejoice in the fact that they will indeed be going home (Song 18 – Finale (Somewhere)).