

SCENE 2: MARY'S ARRIVAL - Parlor

(MARY POPPINS appears among them. She is wearing a hat with cherries in the brim and carrying an umbrella with a handle shaped like a parrot's head.)

MARY POPPINS

Good morning.

GEORGE

(approaching MARY POPPINS)

Yes?

MARY POPPINS

I've come in answer to the advertisement.

GEORGE

What advertisement? We haven't placed any advertisement. Not yet.

MARY POPPINS

George and Winifred Banks live here, do they not?

GEORGE

Mr. and Mrs. Banks live here, yes.

MARY POPPINS

And you are looking for a nanny?

GEORGE

Well, I suppose—

MARY POPPINS

Very well then. Now, let's see.

(From her pocket, MARY POPPINS takes a torn but now mended piece of paper.)

"Play games, all sorts." Which I most certainly can. "Take us on outings, give us treats."

(GEORGE casts an uneasy look towards the CHILDREN. This sounds very like... but it can't be! He stares at MARY POPPINS blankly. JANE and MICHAEL listen from the staircase.)

JANE

Michael! It's our advertisement!

MARY POPPINS

"Rosy cheeks and fairly pretty."

(to GEORGE)

There's no objection on that score, I hope?

GEORGE

(blushing)

Oh, none at all.

MARY POPPINS

I'm glad to hear it.

(MARY POPPINS stares at him so firmly that, for a moment, it is like a ray of light passing right through him.)

GEORGE

But—oh, take it up with Mrs. Banks. She manages all that side of things. Nothing domestic has anything to do with me! And don't forget the references!

(GEORGE is gone, leaving WINIFRED and the newcomer staring at each other. After a moment, MARY POPPINS speaks.)

MARY POPPINS

I make it a rule never to give references.

WINIFRED

But I thought it was usual.

MARY POPPINS

A very old-fashioned idea to my mind. The best people never require them now.

WINIFRED

I see. You will have every third Thursday evening off from five until nine.

MARY POPPINS

The best people give every second Wednesday from six 'til late, ma'am, and that is what I shall take.

WINIFRED

Oh, I see... well... it's all settled then...

MARY POPPINS

As long as I am satisfied. I'll see the children now, thank you.

WINIFRED

Of course...

(turns back nervously)

You'll find they're very nice children...

(JANE and MICHAEL come screaming down the stairs and stand in front of MARY POPPINS.)

Now this is... oh.

(WINIFRED is surprised to find that she has employed someone without knowing her name.)

MARY POPPINS

Mary Poppins.

(For a moment, MARY POPPINS looks at the CHILDREN as if she were reading their souls. They stare back.)

Jane, don't stare. And close your mouth, Michael. We are not a codfish.

(But MICHAEL is not so easily conquered as he continues looking at MARY POPPINS. She gives a sharp nod and starts up the stairs.)

Best foot forward. Spit-spot.

#4A – Spit-Spot

orchestra

(MICHAEL and JANE run up the stairs in front of MARY POPPINS as the relieved WINIFRED watches. MRS. BRILL has joined her.)

WINIFRED

Mrs. Brill, we have a new nanny.

MRS. BRILL

She passed her interview, then?

WINIFRED

Or I did.

(WINIFRED and MRS. BRILL exit.)

SCENE 3: PRACTICALLY PERFECT – Nursery

(The nursery is an airy room, light and full of optimism. The CHILDREN rush in to find that MARY POPPINS is already there.)

MARY POPPINS

Very tidy, I must say. Tidier than I was expecting. Who's responsible for that?

JANE

Mrs. Bri—

MICHAEL

Me. I am. I like to keep things neat.

MARY POPPINS

Do you indeed? Well, I look forward to making use of that. If there's one thing I appreciate, it's a child whose word I can depend on.

(scoops up a boy doll)

Who's he when he's at home?

JANE

That's Valentine. He's mine.

MARY POPPINS

From the look on his face, I'm not sure he'd agree with you.

JANE

He's just a doll and I don't want to play with him now.

(JANE throws the doll into a box.)

MARY POPPINS

Treat him like that and he might not want to play with you. Now, first things first. I always say the proper place to hang a hat is on a hat stand.

#4B – Magic Music 1

orchestra

(MARY POPPINS reaches in her bag and takes out a hat stand. JANE and MICHAEL look inside as they move the bag.)

JANE

There's nothing in it!

MICHAEL

We'd better keep an eye on this one. She's tricky.

JANE

Mary Poppins, how could you know what we wanted in a nanny... when we made our list?

MARY POPPINS

Your "list"? I'm not an item in the weekly shop, thank you very much.

#4C – Magic Music 2

orchestra

(MARY POPPINS takes another item, perhaps a plant, out of her bag and places it strategically in the nursery.)

JANE

How did you come then? It was as if the wind just blew you here.

MARY POPPINS

It did. Now, stand over there!

#5 – Practically Perfect

Mary Poppins, Jane, Michael

(MARY POPPINS pulls a measuring tape from the bag, holds it against MICHAEL, and reads the measure.)

(MARY POPPINS)

Just as I thought. "A noisy, mischievous, troublesome little boy."

MICHAEL

You're making that up!

(Without a word, MARY POPPINS holds the tape for MICHAEL to read.)

"A noisy, mischievous, troub—"

(Stunned, MICHAEL looks at JANE.)

MARY POPPINS

Now you.

(holds the tape against JANE and reads)

"Thoughtless, short-tempered and untidy."

JANE

I don't believe you. Let me see—

MARY POPPINS

BY THE TIME THE WIND HAS BLOWN
THE WEATHER VANE AROUND,

(MARY POPPINS)

I'LL SHOW YOU, IF I CAN.
NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCE,
FOR ONE THING I'M RENOWNED:
MY CHARACTER IS SPIT-SPOT SPIC AND SPAN.

JANE

What about your measurement, Mary Poppins?

MARY POPPINS

I'M PRACTICALLY PERFECT IN EVERY WAY.

JANE

PRACTICALLY PERFECT?

MARY POPPINS

SO PEOPLE SAY.
EACH VIRTUE VIRTUALLY KNOWS NO BOUND.
EACH TRAIT IS GREAT AND PATENTLY SOUND.
I'M PRACTICALLY PERFECT FROM HEAD TO TOE.
IF I HAD A FAULT, IT WOULD NEVER DARE TO SHOW.
I'M SO PRACTICALLY PERFECT IN EVERY WAY.

(MARY POPPINS pulls a mirror from her bag. She places it on the wall and admires herself as she puts on an apron.)

Ah... lovely!

BOTH PRIM AND PROPER AND NEVER TOO STERN.
WELL EDUCATED YET WILLING TO LEARN.
I'M CLEAN AND HONEST, MY MANNER REFINED.
AND I WEAR SHOES OF THE SENSIBLE KIND.
I SUFFER NO NONSENSE, AND WHILST I REMAIN
THERE'S NOTHING ELSE I FEEL I NEED EXPLAIN.

I'M PRACTICALLY PERFECT IN EVERY WAY.
PRACTICALLY PERFECT—THAT'S MY FORTÉ.
UNCANNY NANNIES ARE HARD TO FIND,
UNIQUE YET MEEK, UNSPEAKABLY KIND.

I'M PRACTICALLY PERFECT, NOT SLIGHTLY SOILED.
RUNNING LIKE AN ENGINE THAT'S JUST BEEN FRESHLY OILED,
I'M SO PRACTICALLY PERFECT IN EVERY WAY.

Well, those are my credentials. Perhaps you have a few questions.