

Ursula: The Musical by Ava Moylan

URSULA: THE MUSICAL

A stage musical

By Ava Moylan

Ursula: The Musical by Ava Moylan

Character List:

- Ursula Kemp
- Grace Thurlow
- Alice Newman
- Brian Darcy
- Thomas Rabbet
- Alice Letherdale
- Townsman
- Townswoman
- Townspeople

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ACT 1, SCENE 1.

EXT. ST OSYTH TOWN CENTRE – DAY

There is a light wash across the stage, and an instrumental composed of harpsichords and lutes start to play.

There is a stone-brick fountain CS with steps around it. There is a market SR with a TOWNSMAN manning it, heckling people to buy his goods. There is a backdrop of Tudor-style houses with wooden beams.

The TOWNSPEOPLE walk around the stage limping, retching and looking very ill. The TOWNSWOMEN are wearing dresses in colours such as brown, beige, yellow, orange, green, grey and blue. The pigmentation is dull from years of wear. Some dresses are stained or tattered. They wear off-white aprons over their dresses. The TOWNSMEN wear tunics and trousers of the same colours. Some wear hats or caps.

'Ursula, Help Me!' begins to play. It starts with a slow, hymn-like sound.

TOWNSPEOPLE

O PLEASE DEAR LORD,
COULD YOU LISTEN TO MY PLEA?
I BELIEVE THERE IS SOMETHING
THAT IS WRONG WITH ME.

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URSULA KEMP enters SR and walks to CS to stand on the steps of the fountain. The music picks up, people start to look better and they start to dance.

URSULA KEMP

PLEASE COME INTO MY HOUSE,
I'LL CURE YOU WITHOUT A DOUBT.
BUT IT'LL BE FOR A FEE.

A concerned-looking TOWNSMAN approaches URSULA KEMP.

TOWNSMAN

I HAVE BEEN HAVING A CRISIS,
BECAUSE MY BOWELS KEEP GIVING ME SURPRISES.
I TRIED CHANGING WHAT I EAT,
I EVEN CUT DOWN ON SOME MEAT.

URSULA KEMP

MAYBE TRY SOME OF THESE SPICES.

TOWNSMAN

THANK YOU!

The TOWNSMAN looks happy and resumes singing and dancing.

TOWNSPEOPLE

O PLEASE DEAR LORD,
COULD YOU LISTEN TO MY PLEA?

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I BELIEVE THERE IS SOMETHING
THAT IS WRONG WITH ME.

URSULA KEMP

PLEASE COME INTO MY HOUSE,
I'LL CURE YOU WITHOUT A DOUBT.
BUT IT'LL BE FOR A FEE.

A TOWNSWOMAN approaches URSULA KEMP.

TOWNSWOMAN

URSULA, PLEASE, CAN YOU FIX MY HUSBAND'S HEART?
I THINK IT NEEDS TO RESTART.
HE DON'T KISS ME ANYMORE,
AND KEEPS ON SLEEPING WITH SOME WHORE.

URSULA KEMP

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T CURE THAT OLD FART!

TOWNSWOMAN

(Spoken)

Worth a try..

The TOWNSWOMAN shrugs and then joins back in with the TOWNSPEOPLE.

TOWNSPEOPLE

O PLEASE DEAR LORD,
COULD YOU LISTEN TO MY PLEA?

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I BELIEVE THERE IS SOMETHING
THAT IS WRONG WITH ME.

URSULA KEMP

PLEASE COME INTO MY HOUSE,
I'LL CURE YOU WITHOUT A DOUBT.
BUT IT'LL BE FOR A FEE.

GRACE THURLOW approaches URSULA KEMP, slightly limping.

GRACE THURLOW

I AM IN A LOT OF PAIN
MY LEGS ARE NOT WORKING THE SAME,
I THINK I MIGHT NEED A CANE.
I'M STRUGGLING TO WALK,
IT'S LIKE MY JOINTS ARE MADE OF CHALK.

URSULA KEMP

I BELIEVE YOU HAVE FALLEN LAME.

URSULA KEMP puts her hand on GRACE THURLOW's shoulder, reassuringly.

URSULA KEMP (CONT'D)

DON'T YOU WORRY ANYMORE,
FOR THERE'S A VERY SIMPLE CURE.
JUST TAKE THIS REMEDY,
AND DO THESE EXERCISES DAILY,
AND YOU'LL BE AS FIT AS BEFORE!

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The TOWNSPEOPLE create a line at the front of the stage to block the people changing the set in the background. URSULA and GRACE THURLOW stand in the middle of the line.

TOWNSPEOPLE

O PLEASE DEAR LORD,
COULD YOU LISTEN TO MY PLEA?
I THINK THERE IS SOMETHING
THAT IS WRONG WITH ME.

URSULA KEMP

PLEASE COME INTO MY HOUSE,
I'LL CURE YOU WITHOUT A DOUBT.
BUT IT'LL BE FOR A FEE.
IT'LL BE FOR A FEE.

The TOWNSPEOPLE start to leave the stage, revealing the new set. The lights change to a warm wash.

URSULA KEMP (CONT'D)

I DO NOT WORK FOR FREE.
PLEASE PAY ME MY FEE!

URSULA KEMP holds out her hand to GRACE THURLOW as if expecting payment. The song ends.

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ACT 1, SCENE 2.

INT. URSULA KEMP'S HOUSE – DAY

A Tudor-style house with white walls and wooden beams to hold the structure. There are holes in the walls in place of windows. In the middle of the room, there is a fire with pots and pans beside it, and a kettle boiling on top of the fire. There are lamps dotted about, emitting warm light.

On SL, there are two straw beds, one smaller than the other. Next to the beds a few wooden and cloth toys are dotted about. On SR, there is a small wooden table and stool that appears to be hand sculpted. Atop it are various herbs and spices alongside a mortar and pestle and a stone tablet. The floor is just dirt – there are no carpets or rugs.

GRACE THURLOW

Twelve whole cents?

URSULA KEMP

I don't work for free, Grace.

GRACE THURLOW

But we're close friends! Have been for years.

URSULA KEMP sighs, ignores her and sits down at her table to grind some herbs and spices with her mortar and pestle.

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GRACE THURLOW (CONT'D)

Do you not have any sort of discount at all?
I mean, I helped you get that stain out of your
dress last month.

URSULA KEMP

And I thank you for that. But I'm running a
business here; my remedies cost a lot of money
to make, and my time is valuable.

*URSULA KEMP pours the spices she just ground into a vial. She then
gathers some more herbs and puts them into the mortar and pestle.*

GRACE THURLOW sighs.

GRACE THURLOW

Well, I suppose I was wrong in thinking we were
friends if you're refusing to help me o-

'Get Off of My Land' starts to play.

URSULA KEMP turns in her stool to face GRACE THURLOW.

URSULA KEMP

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO CATCH A NEWT
AND PLUCK OUT BOTH ITS EYES?
OR GATHERED WATER FROM THE HILLS
BEFORE THE SUN CAN RISE?

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URSULA KEMP stands and gestures as she sings.

URSULA KEMP (CONT'D)

MY PRECIOUS HERBS AND ROOTS ARE ALL
GROWN WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS.
YOU THINK I'LL WORK FOR FREE?
WENCH, PLEASE GET OFF OF MY LAND.

URSULA KEMP points to the other side of the stage.

GRACE THURLOW

WELL, YOU DID NOT CHARGE ME LAST TIME.

URSULA KEMP

(Spoken)

I didn't? When was this?

GRACE THURLOW

WHEN DAVY'S DYSENTRY WAS RIFE.

URSULA KEMP

WELL, I DO NOT CHARGE KIDS.

GRACE THURLOW slowly steps towards URSULA THURLOW.

GRACE THURLOW

I DON'T SEE WHY THIS WOULD BE DIFFERENT.
I'M JUST AS, IF NOT, EVEN MORE SICK!

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URSULA KEMP

WELL, SUE ME FOR HAVING A SOFT SPOT,
I DON'T BELIEVE CHILDREN SHOULD BE LEFT TO ROT.

*GRACE THURLOW puts her hand in URSULA KEMP's face to dismiss her,
and addresses the audience.*

GRACE THURLOW

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOU DON'T HAVE
ENOUGH HOURS IN YOUR DAY?
OR JUGGLED KIDS AND JOBS,
ONLY RECEIVING MEAGER PAY.

GRACE THURLOW turns to face URSULA KEMP.

GRACE THURLOW (CONT'D)

THEN YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN FALL ILL,
AND YOU'RE SCARED FOR YOUR LIVES.
AND THE WOMAN YOU THOUGHT WAS YOUR FRIEND
JUST STABBED YOU WITH A KNIFE.

GRACE THURLOW storms off towards SR. URSULA KEMP grabs her wrist.

URSULA KEMP

GRACE, I NEED TO MAKE A LIVING SOMEHOW.

GRACE THURLOW turns to face URSULA KEMP.

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GRACE THURLOW

I GUESS I UNDERSTAND.

URSULA KEMP

SINCE THE LAST JOB I APPLIED FOR WAS TURNED DOWN.

GRACE THURLOW gasps and steps away in shock.

GRACE THURLOW

(Spoken)

You're still bitter about that?

(Sung)

THE PRICE YOU CHARGED WAS
SIMPLY NOT AFFORDABLE,
AND WHEN I TURNED YOU DOWN
YOU WERE JUST HORRIBLE.

URSULA KEMP gestures angrily.

URSULA KEMP

WELL, I COULDN'T EAT A THING
FOR A WHILE,
BUT NO, I SHOULD BE SORRY
I DIDN'T SMILE!

GRACE THURLOW walks towards DS and faces the audience.

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GRACE THURLOW

HAVE YOU EVER MOURNED A CHILD
WHO SHOULDN'T HAVE DIED SO SOON?
AND BLAMED YOURSELF BECAUSE IT
HAPPENED WHEN YOU HAD LEFT THE ROOM.

ONLY TO START REALISING THAT THINGS
WEREN'T AS THEY SEEM.
AROUND THE TIME OF HER DEATH,

GRACE THURLOW turns to face URSULA KEMP and points at her.

GRACE THURLOW (CONT'D)

YOU WERE ACTING SUSPICIOUSLY!

URSULA KEMP storms up to GRACE THURLOW.

URSULA KEMP

(Spoken, shocked)

What?!

*GRACE THURLOW brings her hand down to her side and gets close to
URSULA KEMP's face, confrontationally.*

GRACE THURLOW

MY DAUGHTER DIED BECAUSE OF YOU.

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URSULA KEMP

WHERE IS THIS COMING FROM?

GRACE THURLOW

WENCH, DON'T DENY IT, YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE!

URSULA KEMP

YOU COULDN'T BE MORE WRONG!

GRACE THURLOW

YOU HAD CURSED HER TO FALL OUT OF HER COT,
YOU KILLED MY BABY WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT.
ALL BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO HAVE REVENGE,
WHEN WILL YOUR ATTACKS ON ME COME TO AN END?

URSULA KEMP storms downstage and addresses the audience.

URSULA KEMP

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SO DISGUSTED
BY YOUR FORMER FRIEND?
WHO PUTS ALL OF THE BLAME ON YOU WHEN
YOU REFUSE TO BEND
BACKWARDS TO APPEAL TO HER EVERY DEMAND.
YOU'RE ACCUSING ME OF HEINOUS THINGS,
THAT COULD GET ME HANGED!

URSULA KEMP faces GRACE THURLOW.

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URSULA KEMP (CONT'D)

YOU HAVE TO LEAVE MY HOUSE RIGHT NOW.

GRACE THURLOW

(Spoken)

Fine, but I'm not paying!

URSULA KEMP starts walking towards GRACE THURLOW slowly.

URSULA KEMP

DON'T WORRY I'LL GET EVEN WITH YOU SOMEHOW.

GRACE THURLOW

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHO I WORK FOR?

THE DARCY'S HAVE THE POWER TO RUIN LIVES, WHORE.

URSULA KEMP

ARE YOU SERIOUSLY THREATENING ME?

GET OUT NOW, OUT OF MY HOUSE! LEAVE ME BE.

URSULA KEMP points to the other side of the stage.

GRACE THURLOW

(Spoken)

This isn't over!

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GRACE THURLOW storms out of the house SL.

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ACT 1, SCENE 3.

EXT. MARKET – DAY

A bright wash is cast across the stage. Ambient noise such as people's voices and horses hooves can be heard.

A large market spans across the back of the stage. There are VENDORS trying to sell their goods. There is a backdrop of old Tudor buildings and a bright morning sky.

There is a bench at SL.

URSULA KEMP and ALICE NEWMAN enter SR, walking arm in arm slowly across the market.

ALICE NEWMAN

I cannot believe she did that.

URSULA KEMP

I know! She seriously accused me of killing her daughter?

I wasn't even in the room.

ALICE NEWMAN

She just doesn't want to accept that she's such a neglectful mother.

URSULA KEMP

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Indeed. And she didn't end up paying me either.

ALICE NEWMAN

Are you serious?

URSULA KEMP

Yes I am. She said she didn't have the money.

ALICE NEWMAN

She must be lying. She works for the Darcys for Christ's sake! They throw out shillings like the world is their wishing well.

URSULA KEMP

Maybe they're not paying her and just offering food and shelter?

ALICE NEWMAN

You would think they'd cover her health as well.

They reach the bench on SL and sit down.

URSULA KEMP

Well, they're not the kindest of people.

ALICE NEWMAN

Probably why they get on so well with Grace!

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URSULA KEMP laughs.

ALICE NEWMAN (CONT'D)

I don't know how I ever called her a friend.

URSULA KEMP

Me neither. All it took was twelve cents to end our friendship. Clearly it didn't mean much to her.

ALICE NEWMAN puts her arm around URSULA KEMP.

ALICE NEWMAN

Well, we won't let her ruin our day. Come, let's browse some of these stalls.

URSULA KEMP smiles, stands up and puts her arm out.

URSULA KEMP

Shall we?

ALICE NEWMAN stands and links arms with URSULA KEMP.

ALICE NEWMAN

We shall.

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ALICE NEWMAN and URSULA KEMP both turn to face the stalls. GRACE THURLOW storms in SL.

GRACE THURLOW

Let me tell you all something about Ursula
Kemp!

URSULA KEMP snaps back around to face GRACE THURLOW.

URSULA KEMP

Grace, what are you doing?

GRACE THURLOW

Telling the people what they need to know:
the truth!

'One Who Can Curse' begins to play.

GRACE THURLOW (CONT'D)

SHE USED TO BE A FRIEND OF MINE,
OH, SO VERY DEAR.

WE'D TALK AND LAUGH AND DANCE,
I ALWAYS HELD HER VERY NEAR.

SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO FOUND
THE CURE TO HEAL MY SON.
BUT NOW HE'S SICK ONCE MORE,
LORD KNOWS WHAT URSULA HAS DONE?

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URSULA KEMP runs up to GRACE THURLOW.

URSULA KEMP

(Spoken)

What!?

GRACE THURLOW

ONE WHO HEALS,
IS ONE WHO CAN CURSE.
IF SHE CAN MAKE YOU BETTER,
SHE CAN ALSO MAKE YOU WORSE!
HER SKILLS ARE USED FOR GOOD
BUT IF YOU CROSS HER,
YOU'LL END UP JUST A LAMB
TO HER SLAUGHTER!

The TOWNSPEOPLE start to slowly gather around GRACE THURLOW and URSULA KEMP. GRACE THURLOW interacts with the TOWNSPEOPLE, engaging them.

GRACE THURLOW (CONT'D)

ONE WHO CHARMS,
IS ONE WHO CAN HARM.
IF YOU DON'T PAY UP QUICK,
THEN YOU WILL END UP VERY SICK!
SHE ALWAYS SEEMS SO KIND,
CARING AND WILLING,

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BUT NOT IF YOU CANNOT
COUGH UP A SHILLING!

URSULA KEMP turns to address the TOWNSPEOPLE. She waves her arms to get their attention away from GRACE THURLOW and towards her.

URSULA KEMP

(Spoken)

Don't listen to her! She's just bitter because
I wouldn't let her use me for free!

GRACE THURLOW

(Spoken)

So you're saying the poor
Don't deserve to live?

The TOWNSPEOPLE gasp dramatically.

URSULA KEMP

(Spoken, exasperated)

What? That is not what I said!

GRACE THURLOW walks in front of URSULA KEMP to block her, and poses dramatically. Annoyed, URSULA KEMP steps out of her way. ALICE NEWMAN runs over and pats URSULA KEMP's shoulder.

GRACE THURLOW

SHE APPLIED TO WORK AS MY

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DAUGHTER JOAN'S NURSEMAID

I SAID I COULDN'T AFFORD THAT,
MUCH TO HER DISMAY.

DISGRUNTLED, SHE WOULD IGNORE ME,
AVOID ME ALL THE TIME.

SO I BECAME SUSPICIOUS WHEN
MY JOAN SUDDENLY DIED.

URSULA KEMP

(Spoken)

By God's bones!

GRACE THURLOW holds up a finger as if to shush URSULA KEMP, and then faces forward again. ALICE NEWMAN gasps.

GRACE THURLOW

ONE WHO HEALS,
IS ONE WHO CAN CURSE.
IF SHE CAN MAKE YOU BETTER,
SHE CAN ALSO MAKE YOU WORSE!
HER SKILLS ARE USED FOR GOOD
BUT IF YOU CROSS HER,

GRACE THURLOW walks DS and beckons the TOWNSPEOPLE to join her.

GRACE THURLOW (CONT'D)

YOU'LL END UP JUST A LAMB

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TO HER SLAUGHTER!

GRACE THURLOW (CONT'D)

(Spoken)

Who's with me?

GRACE THURLOW dances around from DS, to DR and finally to DL.

TOWNSPEOPLE

ONE WHO CHARMS,
IS ONE WHO CAN HARM.
IF YOU DON'T PAY UP QUICK,
THEN YOU WILL END UP VERY SICK!

GRACE THURLOW AND TOWNSPEOPLE

SHE ALWAYS SEEMS SO KIND,
CARING AND WILLING,
BUT NOT IF YOU CANNOT
COUGH UP A SHILLING!

URSULA KEMP walks to DR and faces GRACE THURLOW.

URSULA KEMP

GRACE, WHY DO YOU ACCUSE ME?
I'VE ONLY EVER HELPED YOUR FAMILY.

GRACE THURLOW snaps to face URSULA KEMP.

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GRACE THURLOW

THEN EXPLAIN WHY MY LAMENESS RESUMED.

URSULA KEMP starts slowly walking towards GRACE THURLOW, clutching her chest.

URSULA KEMP

I CAN'T CURE PERMANENTLY.

GRACE THURLOW slowly stomps angrily towards URSULA KEMP. She gestures violently with her hands as she sings.

GRACE THURLOW

AND WHY MY SON KEEPS EXPELLING WHAT HE'S
CONSUMED.

URSULA KEMP

YOU STOPPED COMING TO SEE ME.

GRACE THURLOW

WAS KILLING MY DAUGHTER NOT ENOUGH?

URSULA KEMP

I AM NOT A KILLER!

GRACE THURLOW

NOW YOU ARE PLACING ALL BLAME ON US!

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URSULA KEMP

I NEVER CAME NEAR HER!

By now, URSULA KEMP and GRACE THURLOW are face to face DS.

GRACE THURLOW

(Spoken)

Of course that's what you'd say!

Anything to make these accusations go away.

GRACE THURLOW steps back and points at URSULA KEMP.

GRACE THURLOW (CONT'D)

BUT YOU CANNOT STOP ME,

NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU WISH.

FOR I HAVE ALREADY REPORTED YOU

FOR BEING A WITCH!

The TOWNSPEOPLE, ALICE NEWMAN and URSULA KEMP all gasp.

URSULA KEMP

(Spoken)

No!

URSULA KEMP's eyes go wide and she holds her head. GRACE THURLOW and the TOWNSPEOPLE travel DR, singing and dancing. ALICE NEWMAN tries to confront GRACE THURLOW, but keeps getting blocked by the TOWNSPEOPLE who are dancing around her.

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GRACE THURLOW AND TOWNSPEOPLE

ONE WHO HEALS,
IS ONE WHO CAN CURSE.
IF SHE CAN MAKE YOU BETTER,
SHE CAN ALSO MAKE YOU WORSE!
HER SKILLS ARE USED FOR GOOD
BUT IF YOU CROSS HER,

URSULA KEMP faces the audience.

URSULA KEMP

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

GRACE THURLOW AND TOWNSPEOPLE

YOU'LL END UP JUST A LAMB
TO HER SLAUGHTER!

URSULA KEMP looks around the stage.

URSULA KEMP

IT SEEMS THERE'S NO WAY OUT.

Wearily, URSULA KEMP walks towards CS, facing GRACE THURLOW and the TOWNSPEOPLE.

GRACE THURLOW AND TOWNSPEOPLE

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ONE WHO CHARMS,
IS ONE WHO CAN HARM.
IF YOU DON'T PAY UP QUICK,
THEN YOU WILL END UP VERY SICK!
SHE ALWAYS SEEMS SO KIND,
CARING AND WILLING,

URSULA KEMP

I ALWAYS HAVE HELPED YOU!

GRACE THURLOW AND TOWNSPEOPLE

BUT NOT IF YOU CANNOT
COUGH UP A SHILLING!

URSULA KEMP

I PROMISE IT'S NOT TRUE.

URSULA KEMP falls to her knees and starts to cry. The TOWNSPEOPLE and GRACE THURLOW point at her, and circle around her whilst dancing. ALICE NEWMAN fights her way through the TOWNSPEOPLE to help URSULA KEMP.

GRACE THURLOW AND TOWNSPEOPLE

SHE USES HER SPELLS AND
WITCHCRAFT TO HARM US,
SO NOW WE HAVE SOMETHING
THAT WE MUST DISCUSS!

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ALICE NEWMAN helps URSULA KEMP onto her feet and drags her offstage SR. The TOWNSPEOPLE and GRACE THURLOW gather together and face the audience as if they are a choir. GRACE THURLOW stands front and centre.

GRACE THURLOW AND TOWNSPEOPLE (CONT'D)

THIS IS GOING TO NEED
A LITTLE PLANNING,
SHALL WE EXECUTE BY BURNING
OR BY HANGING?

The lights go out.