



BRIEF ENCOUNTER – Content Warning

This sheet is for anyone who would like to have a greater understanding of any sensitive content prior to seeing the show. **Please be aware that if you read on, there will be significant spoilers.**

BRIEF ENCOUNTER has an age guidance of 12+ and contains smoking, loud noises, moments of audience interaction and moderate sex references.

Please Note: Throughout the show, several of the cast will play more than one role. There will also be loud sound effects throughout, including waves crashing, train noises, bells ringing, wind blowing, thunder and music.

PLOT SUMMARY

When a chance encounter in a train station refreshment room kindles a timid, yet passionate, love affair between a married doctor and a suburban housewife, the two are forced to question if it's worth risking everything for the sake of love. Tender and joyous, this show has all the drama of the original masterpiece with added live music, comedy and spectacle, taking you on a rollercoaster ride through all of love's beautiful complications.

At the beginning of the show, Alec and Laura are sat on the front row of the audience. Alec is declaring his love for Laura and asking if she feels the same way. At the same time, her husband Fred (onstage) starts looking and calling out for Laura. Laura tells Alec they must be sensible and ends up caught between the two men. In the end, she chooses Fred and goes to sit with him in the living room of their house.

The next scene takes place in Milford Junction Tea Room, where Laura is sat having tea. We meet Beryl, her boss Myrtle and Stanley, who all work at the tearoom; Stanley treats Myrtle with respect but is flirty towards Beryl. Albert (the Ticket Inspector) arrives for a cup of tea and tells Myrtle about his day; she is cold towards him, as he didn't stop by to visit her the day before. The station bell rings and Laura exits. Alec enters and orders a cup of tea. Myrtle and Albert continue to bicker about his absence the day before. The express train goes through the station very loudly, and Laura enters in pain with something in her eye. Myrtle and Albert try to help her, then Alec takes over explaining he's a doctor. He removes the grit from her eye, she thanks him and leaves. Stanley and Beryl sing 'Any Little Fish', then Stanley chases Beryl, continuing to sing later in the scene.

Laura and Fred enter; Fred says he's thrilled to have her home as their children have been fighting and won't go to sleep without speaking to their mother. The children (Bobbie & Margaret) are bickering about whether to go to the circus or the pantomime the following day for Bobbie's birthday. Laura tells them to go to sleep and discusses with Fred where they should take them. Laura then bumps into Alec on the street, who asks her whether her eye is better; they make small talk briefly before parting ways. The scene shifts to a restaurant, where Alec asks to share Laura's table as there is no space anywhere else. They begin to get to know each other as an orchestra begins to play very loudly. They discover they are both intending to go to the pictures that afternoon and agree to go together.



The next scene opens in the tearooms, where Myrtle and Beryl are having tea and cakes fresh from the oven. Myrtle gives a bun to a male member of the audience and tells Beryl about how she left her husband and opened a teashop with her friend; her ex-husband then died three years later. Stanley enters and flirts with Beryl, for which Myrtle reprimands him. Laura and Alec enter and order tea and cake. Myrtle asks Beryl to let her know when Albert arrives, then leaves to go over her accounts. Albert then arrives and Myrtle lets him in. Laura asks Alec if he feels guilty for skiving off work for the afternoon, saying she feels they are letting something happen that shouldn't. She reminisces about how she and her sister used to sneak down to swim in the sea at night when they were children, and Alec asks if she still has some of that spirit in her. Laura and Alec tell each other about their spouses, and Alec talks about his passion for medicine. Alec's train draws into the station, and he asks Laura repeatedly if they shall meet again. Laura agrees to meet him at the same time the following Thursday, then Alec departs on his train. Myrtle proclaims that 'it will all end in tears'. Myrtle, Beryl and Stanley then sing 'No Good at Love' together.

Laura returns home, where Fred tells her that their son Bobbie was hit by a car on his way home from school but isn't badly hurt. Laura sings Bobbie to sleep, then tells Fred that she had lunch and went to the cinema with a strange man that day (information that seemingly doesn't bother her husband at all). She asks Fred if she can invite Doctor Harvey over for dinner, and Fred says he'd prefer if he came over at lunch as he won't be there. Laura laughs, saying she had been an idiot for worrying about things that don't really exist. The curtain closes on Laura and Fred; Myrtle and Beryl appear and sing 'Mad About the Boy'.

In the next scene, Laura is sitting alone in the station café. Albert arrives and flirts with Myrtle, singing and trying to get her to kiss him. Stanley arrives, looking for Beryl, then leaves. Beryl arrives and tells Albert that Mr Saunders is looking for him, so Albert leaves. Two soldiers arrive and pester Myrtle to serve them alcoholic drinks; she insists she cannot legally, as it's outside of her licenced hours. Myrtle gets angry and sends Beryl to fetch Albert, who helps get the rowdy soldiers to leave. Myrtle tells Albert she'll see him later, and he winks at her as he leaves. Laura leaves to catch her train, and runs into Alec; he apologises, explaining that he was delayed, and they agree to meet the following Thursday. The rest of the cast sing 'The Wide Lagoon'.

The action shifts to a lake, where Alec and Laura are rowing a boat and they both fall in. They take off their wet clothes, and whilst they are drying by a fire, they confess their love for one another. Throughout the scene, a solo voice is singing 'Go Slow, Johnny'. Laura says that they must end their relationship before it goes further, but Alec says it is already too late. They dress each other, and a train whistle sounds, and they are saying goodbye to each other on the train platform. Laura says she worries someone will see them, but they kiss. Alec peels himself away from Laura to go and sit in the auditorium, whilst she finds herself back in her living room with Fred. He tries to kiss her, but she turns away. A week passes, and Alec and Laura meet in a fancy restaurant; as they drink champagne, Laura says that loving Alec makes being in her own home very hard. Alec says he's also struggling, wishing every minute he could be with her instead. They start to dance to the sound of the band, and the company sing 'Romantic Fool'. Alec exits, and Hermione and Mary appear; they know Laura, and begin to quiz her about who Alec is. Alec re-enters with their coats, and Laura pretends that he has met Mary at a dinner party before. However, Alec and Mary insist they do not know each other. Mary and Hermione leave, and Laura panics that they recognised



her and leaves. Myrtle and Albert enter and embrace, very much in love, as the company sing 'So Good at Love'.

In the next scene, Beryl is shutting up the tearoom when Stanley arrives and tries to persuade her to sneak off with him before she goes home. After a brief fumble, she agrees to meet him out in the yard. Elsewhere onstage, Laura and Alec have met at Stephen Lynn's flat, where they begin to make love. However, they are interrupted by Stephen returning home, so Laura has to sneak out via the tradesmen's staircase. Stephen tells Alec that he knows he's had a woman there with him and he's disappointed in him. Alec apologises and leaves, after giving Stephen his key back. At this point, Laura enters the station café, orders a brandy from Beryl and begins to write a note. Alec arrives and Laura tells him how humiliated she felt by what just happened at the flat. She tells him she can't continue their affair anymore; Alec says he will always love her, that he knows it is over, but they agree not just yet. Beryl interrupts, saying she really must close the café and they should leave. Alec pays her ten shillings to let them stay a few minutes longer with the lights off, and Beryl leaves. Alec tells Laura that they must meet next Thursday and that he is going to be moving to Johannesburg. Laura leaves to get her train, and Alec sings 'A Room with a View'.

The final scene shows Laura and Alec meeting in the train station café one last time. They wonder whether they shall ever meet again, or if their children shall ever know each other. Alec professes his undying love for Laura, then Dolly Messiter arrives from a day of shopping. She talks incessantly until Alec's train arrives, so he leaves without saying a proper goodbye to Laura. We hear his train pull away, as Dolly continues to talk about another couple who are getting a divorce as the husband has been caught having an affair. When Dolly gets up to buy some chocolate, Laura swiftly leaves and stands on the edge of the platform as the express train approaches. The rest of the cast sing 'Always' as the train roars past, and Laura is left stood on the platform – she has not jumped but doesn't quite live anymore. Finally, we see Laura and Fred at home; Fred says that she's been away for a long time, and thanks her for coming back to him. The show ends with the sound of crashing waves, and Laura playing the opening bars of Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 2.

SCENE BY SCENE BREAKDOWN

Prologue

- Actors pretending to be ushers will be in the foyer and auditorium.
- Alec and Laura are sat on the front row amongst the audience at the start of the show and say their first few lines from the auditorium.

Scene 1

- The cups and cutlery rattle as the train goes through the station.
- Laura gets grit in her eye which causes her pain, and Myrtle talks about someone she knew going blind.
- Stanley chases Beryl in a flirty way after they sing together.
- Bobbie kicks his sister Margaret.



- Fred jokes about thrashing both children soundly and locking them in the attic whilst he and Laura go to the cinema.
- Alec and Laura go and sit back in the auditorium amongst the audience as if they're going to watch a film.

Scene 2

- Myrtle offers a bun to a male member of the audience. She snatches it back off them later and gives it to a female audience member.
- Myrtle tells Beryl that her ex-husband died after she left him.
- Myrtle holds two buns up in front of her breasts.
- Laura says she doesn't want a bun because they are very fattening.
- We learn that Laura's son Bobbie has been hit by a car.

Scene 3

- Albert slaps Myrtle on the behind, then says he didn't think she'd 'object to a little slap'.
- Albert implies that it's Myrtle's fault he slapped her, as he was thinking about their meeting later that night.
- Albert tries to get Myrtle to kiss him, and they scuffle over it.
- The noise of 'Spitfire' planes is heard when the two soldiers enter the tearoom, who then proceed to harass Myrtle.
- Myrtle downs two glasses of brandy.
- Myrtle tells Albert that she shall see him later, and he winks at her.
- Laura and Alec both fall out of the rowing boat into the water.
- Laura and Alec modestly and shyly take their wet clothes off, being careful not to show too much.
- Laura & Alec kiss.
- Alec goes and sits in the auditorium.
- Fred tries to kiss Laura, but she turns her head away.
- Albert kisses Myrtle along her arm and up her body.

Scene 4

- Beryl says that Myrtle and Albert are away having 'a bit of slap and tickle'.
- Beryl and Stanley fumble and end up on the floor.
- Laura and Alec 'begin to make tender and clumsy love'.
- Laura and Alec smoke a cigarette.

Scene 5

- Laura says that she wants to die.
- Laura rushes to the edge of the platform as a train is approaching. She does not jump as it passes, but it's clear she considered it.