Doris enters in the 1920s print dress which Jackie pulled from the box in Act II and a straw hat trimmed with flowers. She is breathless and her hair is awry. It is May 1923.

DORIS: Mother! Mother? Oh, what do you think! It's happened, happened to me! All the way back on the train I could hardly keep still, I don't know what the other passengers must've thought, but I wouldn't be ladylike. Mother! Come and look. Do I look different? I must look different, I feel as though I've swallowed a firework. Oh it was a lovely, lovely day. We took a picnic, climbed up to the Waterloo Memorial, sat in the sunshine and it was after we'd finished the egg and cress; he couldn't wait till after the fruit cake! I felt so — shy, suddenly — I had to just stare and stare at the tablecloth while he was asking, blue and yellow squares, there was an ant struggling to carry a piece of cress across the corner... These are things you remember all your life, I suppose. I didn't think it would be like this. [Pause] And then we just ran and ran! Talked, made plans, I felt somehow — weedy! [She laughs] — Sort of silly, for having given in ... to — love! — Do you know what I mean? [Silence] Mother? We ate your fruit cake on the train, Jack put a paper down so as not to drop crumbs on the velvet upholstery, but then he sat on a strawberry — and oh, I got a grass stain on my frock, but Jack says he'll buy me a new one. And, Mother, and I got promoted to Head of Infants this morning! Miss Butterworth called me into her office, my heart was in my mouth, I thought she was going to tick me off for this dress being too short! ... Jack was very proud when I told him, but of course he says I shan't need to work when we're — when we're — oh, of course he's going to ask you first, he's waiting in the front room, I opened the curtains so the neighbours can see — Oh and —

_The lights begin to fade_

I've seen just the posy, tiny white flowers, in the window of Ambleton's... Oh Mother, I'm so happy, SO HAPPY! I suppose, really and truly, this is the beginning of my life!

_The lights fade to a single spot on Doris, then snap out._

_Charlotte Keatley_
Charlotte Keatley (born 1960) is an English playwright and her first play was ‘My Mother Said I Never Should’. It has subsequently been translated into 22 languages and has become the most performed play in the English language written by a woman.

The play is about the difficult relationships between mothers and daughters and explores the lives of four generations of women: Doris, Margaret, Jackie and Rosie. This extract is a ‘Flash Back’ in time to 1923 and a young Doris is telling her mother about a proposal of marriage from her boyfriend Jack.

Compare ‘My Mother Said I Never Should’ with Sharman MacDonald’s ‘When I was a Girl I used to Scream and Shout’ an extract from which can be found in the Anthology.