

Beautiful Lady, Tell Me...

by
Shirley Barrie

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BEAUTIFUL LADY, TELL ME...
The Story of Florence Kinrade
By
Shirley Barrie

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Florence	22-23 & 37
Ethel	her older sister, 25
Mrs. Kinrade	her mother
Mr. Kinrade	her father
Ernest	her older brother, late 20's
Montrose	handsome ministerial student, mid-20's
Jimmy Baum	escapologist/actor
George Blackstock QC	representing the Crown at the inquest
Kit Coleman	columnist with Toronto Mail & Empire, 30 & mid-40's
George Lynch-Staunton QC	representing the Kinrade family at the inquest
Detective Miller	provincial Policeman
Stephen Butler	manager of Orpheum Theatre
Reporter	from Hamilton Spectator

Also:

Nurse
Constable at the inquest
Emcee 1 & Emcee 2
Musician
Photographer
Nora Bayes, noted vaudeville star, 45
Inspector McMahan
Mrs. Hickey, a neighbour
Motorman Stone
Woodridge
Digger 1
Digger 2
Scalper
Foreman
Various Men and Women

There are many doubling possibilities and the play can be done with 5f, 7m and 1 musician. In the initial production 4 actor/musicians were able to join the band, and five of the actors also played a troupe of back stage clowns who set the scenes, produced props as needed and linked the scenes with their antics. Two of the clowns acted as Jimmy's "assistants" in his acts, for example.

BEAUTIFUL LADY, TELL ME... was commissioned by 4th Line Theatre and first produced from August 7 - September 1, 2007. The opening was on August 9, 2007.

Director: Molly Thom
Musical Direction: Susan Newman & Rob Fortin
Costume Design: Angela Thomas & Kim Dooley
Choreography: Janette Winslow
Set Design & Technical Direction: Gregory Smith
Props Design: Helen Musgrave
Stage Manager: Radha-Prema McAllister
Assistant Stage Manager: Shannon Ireland
Production Manager: Ray Henderson
Wardrobe Manager: Ruth Weaver
Backstage Assistant: Whitney Wakefield

THE CAST

Florence Kinrade: Alison Jutzi
Ethel Kinrade/Various women: Amy Fort
Mrs. Kinrade/Nora Bayes: Susan Newman
Mr. Kinrade: Rob Fortin
Ernest Kinrade: Mark Hiscox
Montrose Wright/Woodridge: Jeff Schissler
Kit Watkins/Mrs. Hickey/Mrs. Kinrade's Nurse/Clown: Haley McGee
George Blackstock: Richard Plant
George Lynch-Staunton/Inspector McMahon/Stephen Butler/Clown:
Robert Winslow*
Jimmy Baum/Motorman Stone/Clown: Beau Dixon
Detective Miller/Emcee/Digger 2/Clown: Tim Walker
Reporter/Photographer/Emcee 2/Digger 1/Scalper/Foreman of
Jury/Clown: Rick Jongejan
Various women: Janette Winslow
Constable: Justin Hiscox
Florence's Nurse/Various women: Radha-Prema McAllister
Tramp: Ray Henderson

THE BAND

Piano/Tuba/Accordion/Trombone/Band Arrangements: Justin Hiscox
Tuba/Percussion: Mark Hiscox
Percussion/Baritone/Banjo/Guitar: Beau Dixon
Clarinet/Banjo/Guitar: Rob Fortin
Accordion/Mandolin/Vocal Arrangements: Susan Newman

*appeared with the permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association

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SCENE LIST

ACT 1

Scene 1	1922	Pantages Theatre, Hamilton, Ontario
Scene 2	1922	Pantages Dressing Room
Scene 3	1907	The Kinrade House, Hamilton
Scene 4	1907	Central Presbyterian Church, Hamilton
Scene 5	1907	On the street in Hamilton
Scene 6	1907	Shea's Vaudeville Theatre, Toronto
Scene 7	1922	Pantages Dressing Room
Scene 8	1909	On the street in Hamilton
Scene 9	1909	The Police Station
Scene 10	1909	Hamilton - the day of the murder
Scene 11	1909	Courtroom - the Inquest
Scene 12	1907/08	The Kinrade House/Betty's Tea Shop/Hamilton Train Station
Scene 13	1908	Orpheum Theatre, Portsmouth, Virginia
Scene 14	1909	Courtroom - the Inquest
Scene 15	1908	Orpheum Theatre
Scene 16	1908	The Kinrade House,
Scene 17	1908	Water Street Bar, Portsmouth
Scene 18	1909	Courtroom - the Inquest

ACT 2

Scene 1	1909	The Kinrade House - the day of the murder
Scene 2	1909	Hotel Suite at the Royal York, Toronto
Scene 3	1909	The Cellar of the Kinrade House
Scene 4	1908	Orpheum Theatre, Portsmouth, Virginia
Scene 5	1909	Courtroom - the Inquest
Scene 6	1909	The Kinrade House - the day of the murder
Scene 7	1909	Courtroom - the Inquest
Scene 8	1909	The Kinrade House - the day of the murder
Scene 9	1909	Courtroom - the Verdict
Scene 10	1909	Royal York Hotel, Toronto
Scene 11	1909	Hamilton Train Station
Scene 12	1909	The Kinrade House - the day of the murder
Scene 13	1922	Pantages Theatre, Hamilton

ACT 1

ACT 1

SCENE ONE. PANTAGES THEATRE, HAMILTON. 1922. A MUSICAL
INTRO. EMCEE ENTERS.

EMCEE

(To pianist)

Thank you.

The pianist responds with an additional flourish. The Emcee tries to cut him off.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

Thank you, Maestro.

The pianist responds musically ending on a discordant note. The emcee starts back.

EMCEE

What is that? A cat fight?

MUSICIAN

No. It's a pro-dog.

EMCEE

I think you mean pro-logue. (Pause) Something that comes before the thing that comes behind.

MUSICIAN

Huh?

Some of the company laugh. Others echo the musician's huh?

EMCEE

It starts a play.

MUSICIAN

I play.

EMCEE

Well now is your chance to prove it, Sir, as you prologue our headliner this afternoon.

The Musician plays a chord.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

Ladies and Gentleman. Fresh from her sold out performances at Woods Theatre in Chicago, please welcome to Hamilton's Pantages Theatre, the rising star of Canadian vaudeville, Miss Flossie Wright!!

Applause and music. Florence makes an entrance. She's a striking youthful looking woman of 37. She sings, *Come to the Garden* flirting with the audience, seductively enticing them into her charms.

FLORENCE

*Let us walk in the garden of dreams, love,
The mystical garden of dreams;
Where thoughts are the only things real, love,
And the world is almost what it seems.
Where hopes that our fancy creates, love,
And the joys we imagine to be,
Are the flowers that bloom for us there, love,
When you walk the dream garden with me.*

*Come, love, come!
To the beautiful garden of dreams.
Come, love, come!
By its flowering pathways and streams.
Oh! Come, while youth is a-flying.
Joy lives; hope is undying,
Come to the garden of dreams, love,
The beautiful garden of dreams.*

There's wild applause from the company, whistles, hoots. She curtseys elegantly. She curtseys again, smiles seductively, blows a kiss at the audience. They cheer, and stomp. She exits as music plays.

SCENE TWO. A DRESSING ROOM IN THE PANTAGES THEATRE WITH A FOLDING SCREEN. 1922. KIT COLEMAN, A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN IN A RESPECTABLE SUIT, WAITS. FLORENCE ENTERS.

FLORENCE

I do apologize for keeping you waiting. Two encores were demanded.

KIT

They obviously love you. Congratulations.

FLORENCE

Thank you. I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name. The doorman just said a reporter -

KIT

Columnist. Kit Coleman. From the *Toronto Mail and Empire*.

FLORENCE

They've sent you all the way to Hamilton to interview me?

KIT

I go where I please.

FLORENCE

(Laughs in acknowledgement of
the honour)

Well. I do look forward to performing in Toronto.

Kit gets out her notebook and pen.

KIT

You have dates booked?

FLORENCE

(Avoiding this)

I saw my first vaudeville performance at Shea's in Toronto. I hope you'll excuse my talking to you while I change. I have a business appointment before the next show. You will stay for the performance?

KIT

I plan to. Yes.

FLORENCE

Good.

Florence goes behind the screen.

KIT

How long have you been performing, Miss Wright?

FLORENCE

Oh. Just a couple of years. I think it was early in 1920 when I -

KIT

A couple of years - this time.

FLORENCE

I don't know what you mean.

KIT

You are Florence Kinrade, are you not? (Kinrade is pronounced with the emphasis on the first syllable)

FLORENCE

Ah.

Well?
KIT

Florence comes out from behind the screen, tying up her dressing gown.

FLORENCE
I was Florence Kinrade. Yes.

KIT
So Flossie Wright is yet another stage name?

FLORENCE
It is no such thing. Wright is my married name and my friends have always called me Flossie.

KIT
Well, Flossie.

FLORENCE
Miss Wright, if you please.

KIT
Of course, Miss Wright. So your husband would be -

FLORENCE
My husband is dead. The great flu.

KIT
I'm so sorry.

FLORENCE
I'm the sole support for my young daughter.

KIT
She travels with you?

FLORENCE
My goodness no. She's in school.

KIT
It must be difficult.

FLORENCE
She is well looked after. My Geraldine is a very sweet girl.

KIT
You must be especially pleased with the response you've received here in Hamilton.

FLORENCE
So - you are more interested in gossip than art.

KIT

I am interested in news. I would have thought you might want to avoid this city.

FLORENCE

Because of Ethel, you mean.

KIT

Well - not exac...

FLORENCE

Poor Ethel. We were very close, you know.

SCENE THREE. THE KINRADE'S UPPER MIDDLE CLASS HOUSE IN HAMILTON. 1907. ETHEL KINRADE ENTERS. SHE'S 25, A BIT PLAIN, TIMID, AND EXHAUSTED.

MRS. KINRADE

(from off)

Ethel! Is that you?

ETHEL

Yes, Mother.

Mrs. Isabella Kinrade enters. A brisk, capable woman with a ramrod moral fibre, she has far more to do with the business of running this family than an outsider would suspect.

MRS. KINRADE

You take longer with your rent collections every month. What's the matter, my dear?

ETHEL

(dismissively)

Ohh.

MRS. KINRADE

You're so pale. I must order some liver. You need iron.

ETHEL

I've just got a headache.

MRS. KINRADE

Not now, Ethel. Did you see your father on the street?

ETHEL

No.

MRS. KINRADE

He said he'd leave the school early. And the photographer is already here.

The photographer enters with his camera. Mrs. Kinrade smiles at him and indicates where he can set up. She turns back to Ethel.

MRS. KINRADE

Take off your hat and fix your hair, dear. Where's Florence?

Ethel shrugs.

MRS. KINRADE

(Calling)

Florence!

Mr. Kinrade, the stern paterfamilias, and Ernest enter. Ernest is in his late twenties, lacks ambition, is prone to cut corners and seems fated to work for his father.

MRS. KINRADE

Thomas! Where have you...

MR. KINRADE

Sorry, my dear, but there was a little issue that had to be dealt with.

MRS. KINRADE

(Re: the photographer)

He was early.

Mr. Kinrade goes to the photographer.

MR. KINRADE

Clem.

They shake hands. Mrs. Kinrade looks at her son.

MRS. KINRADE

Oh, Ernest.

ERNEST

What?

She straightens his tie.

MRS. KINRADE

There. That's better.

ERNEST

Glad you're happy, Ma.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Now. If you could all line up here. (He considers) Mr. Kinrade, maybe you could sit. Nice.

The photographer prepares to shoot.

MRS. KINRADE

Wait.

(She calls)

Florence!!

FLORENCE

(from off)

Coming.

Florence at 22 enters. She's stylishly dressed, pretty and vibrant. She takes her place in the family portrait.

The Kinrades sing. (To the tune of *Who Would True Valour See.*)

KINRADES

*We are Kinrades of Hamilton
See how we've risen
We work as if we're one
With no division.*

WOMEN

We women collect the rents

ERNEST

Construction's my preference

MR. KINRADE

I deal with dollars and cents.

KINRADES

We are the Kinrades.

A flash and a pop. They break out of the pose. The photographer re-positions the camera. Mr. Kinrade takes out a notebook and Ernest pares his nails.

MR. KINRADE

So. Ethel.

ETHEL

(Startled)

Sir.

MR. KINRADE

If you jump like a scared rabbit at every voice, my dear, it's no wonder you're having trouble collecting the rents.

ETHEL

I try not to let them see it, Father.

MR. KINRADE

Good girl.

ETHEL

But some of them don't have the money.

MRS. KINRADE

Then they shouldn't live in our houses, Ethel.

MR. KINRADE

Florence has collected all of her rents.

ERNEST

Flossie could charm the food right out of a hungry man's mouth.

FLORENCE

Do I get a bonus for a perfect round?

MR. KINRADE

Now, now, Flossie. We have an agreement. Three percent.

FLORENCE

I know, daddy.

She kisses him.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

But there's a lovely fox collar at Thomas Watkins that would look just darling on my maroon coat.

The photographer clears his throat to indicate that he's waiting. The family poses: this time indulgent Father and devoted daughter side by side.

The Kinrades sing (last half of verse).

ERNEST

(Referring to Florence)

She is the family jewel

MRS. KINRADE

(Referring to her husband)

He's principal of a school

ETHEL
And all obey his rule

ALL
We are the Kinrades.

The camera flashes. The family breaks out of the pose. Mr. Kinrade waves a bill at Ernest.

MR. KINRADE
 What's the meaning of this, Ernest.

ERNEST
 Relax, Dad.

MR. KINRADE
 I won't have that slangy talk in this house, young man. Since when did wood cost this much?

ERNEST
 It's finishing wood.

MR. KINRADE
 I've a good mind to go down to the lumber yard and have a talk with Flanagan.

ERNEST
 Go right ahead. If you want him to think you don't trust me.

MR. KINRADE
 I never said....

ERNEST
 And you don't mind the whole city thinking you're too cheap to finish your houses properly.

Mr. Kinrade is about to bluster a response, but the photographer is ready to take another shot.

PHOTOGRAPHER
 (clears his throat)
 Ready?

They smile and pose.

The Kinrades sing.

KINRADES

*We are Kinrades of Hamilton
And Presbyterian
We work as if we're one
With no division
We work as if we're one
With no division
We work as if we're one
For we are Kinrades.*

Flash. They break. Ernest jokes with the photographer as they exit one way, Mr. and Mrs. Kinrade leave by another exit.

Ethel and Florence rehearse. Ethel has a script and wears glasses. Florence is playing the "melodrama."

FLORENCE

"I tell you Sir, it cannot be. Never will I consent to become your wife."

ETHEL

(Flat)

"Ha, ha, we shall see. Do you think I..."

FLORENCE

Ethel. It says hiss.

Florence takes the script and reads.

FLORENCE

"He hisses between his set lips."

Ethel looks blank. Florence hisses.

FLORENCE

"Ha, ha. We shall ssssee. Do you think I will let a ssnip of a girl like you baffle me!?" Now you do it.

ETHEL

(A pale imitation, occasionally glancing at the script)

"Ha, ha. We shall see. Do you think I will let a snip of a girl like you baffle me. We are alone."

FLORENCE

Good.

ETHEL

(Beginning to get into it)

"What is to prevent me from clasping you in my arms and stealing the necktie."

FLORENCE
Nectar, Ethel.

Ethel takes another look at the script.

ETHEL
Oh. Sorry. "Stealing the nectar from your ruby lips."

FLORENCE
(Starts back)
"No!!" Come at me.

Ethel does.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
"Villain! One more step and I'll rouse the house. Help! Help!!" Ethel, you have to grab me.

Ethel grabs her arm.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
In your arms.

Florence places Ethel's hands.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Now you're about to kiss me.

ETHEL
You're really going to let a man -

FLORENCE
It's acting, Ethel.

ETHEL
I could never let someone...

FLORENCE
Not even if it was Montrose?

ETHEL
Oh, Flossie, don't be silly.

FLORENCE
What's silly?

ETHEL
He's studying for the ministry. He'd never... Maybe I shouldn't be ...

She hands Florence the script. Florence gives it back.

FLORENCE

You're not auditioning. You're just helping me. Now take your position.

Ethel stiffly puts her arms around Florence and leans forward, pursing her lips. Florence strains back wrenching her head away.

FLORENCE

"Help!!"

Mrs. Kinrade enters.

MRS. KINRADE

What on earth is going on!

ETHEL

Oh!

She lets go. Florence staggers backward, narrowly missing a fall.

ETHEL

We're ... rehearsing. Florence is -

FLORENCE

The dramatic society is producing a variety entertainment and-

MRS. KINRADE

You girls know very well that Kinrades don't get involved in that kind of thing.

FLORENCE

They're raising money for charity.

MRS. KINRADE

We already give to charity.

FLORENCE

But -

MRS. KINRADE

Hush.

(Sotto)

Montrose is here.

ETHEL

Oh, Flossie, you made me forget.

MRS. KINRADE

(Calls offstage)

They're in here, Montrose.

Florence moves away in frustration.
Ethel quickly takes off her glasses.
Montrose Wright enters. He's a well-
dressed, serious young man in his mid
20's.

MONTROSE

Ethel. Hello, Florence.

Ethel is all smiles, but Florence
doesn't turn to him. He's a bit
disconcerted.

MRS. KINRADE

It's so kind of you to take time from your studies to escort -
(She means Ethel, but says)
my girls - to choir practice.

MONTROSE

(trying to attract Florence's
attention)

Well, as Florence is fond of telling me, - "All work and no
play, makes Jack a dull boy."

Ethel laughs.

MRS. KINRADE

That's one point of view, I suppose.

There's an awkward pause.

MONTROSE

Have - I come too early?

ETHEL

No! No. We were just...

FLORENCE

I'll get my things.

She exits.

MONTROSE

I'm sorry. Did I say something to offend her?

ETHEL

Of course not.

MRS. KINRADE

She's not...feeling her best.

(To Ethel - low)

Wear the rose hat, dear. It brings out your colour.

Ethel exits. Mrs. Kinrade begins to lead Montrose off in another direction.

MRS. KINRADE

Your mother must miss you now you're so much in Toronto, Montrose.

MONTROSE

I try to get back as much as I can.

MRS. KINRADE

Yes.

They exit.

SCENE FOUR. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. 1907. MUSIC. MR. AND MRS. KINRADE AND A WORSE FOR WEAR ERNEST, ARE IN THE CONGREGATION. THE CHOIR, INCLUDING ETHEL, BACKS FLORENCE IN A RENDITION OF *O HAPPY DAY, THAT FIXED MY CHOICE*. IT BEGINS IN STAID FASHION, BUT FLORENCE BY THE FORCE OF ENTHUSIASM AND WILL, AND DRAGGING SOME OF THE CHOIR ALONG WITH HER, TURNS IT INTO A MORE UPBEAT NUMBER WHICH SHE ORNAMENTS WITH CURLYCUES AND FURBELOWS.

FLORENCE/ETHEL/CHOIR

*O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.*

*O happy bond, that seals my vows
To Him who merits all my love!
Let cheerful anthems fill His house
While to that sacred shrine I move.
Aaaaaaaamen!*

Florence is pleased. The rest of the choir and Mr. and Mrs. Kinrade don't know what has hit them. The choir leaves. Ernest disappears. Mrs. Kinrade nods and Mr. Kinrade tips his hat to people as they leave.

MR. KINRADE

We are to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, Bella.

MRS. KINRADE

I know that, Thomas.

MR. KINRADE

Worship is for edification, not....entertainment. You'll have to speak to her.

MRS. KINRADE

Me?

MR. KINRADE

You're her mother. I don't know what's gotten into the girl. Did she think she was with the Methodists?

SCENE FIVE. THE STREET. 1907. ERNEST WALKS WITH FLORENCE.

ERNEST

(Imitating Mr. Kinrade)

"Did she think she was with the Methodists?!" When Dad complains about you to me, he's really upset. What were you thinking?

FLORENCE

I was just trying to make a boring old hymn live a little.

ERNEST

In a Presbyterian church?

FLORENCE

I want to sing on the stage, Ernie. Just thinking about it sends the blood racing through my veins. I want to feel the glare of the footlights, hear the roar of applause, be showered with flowers. They won't even let me try out for the amateur operatic society.

ERNEST

If you're not careful you won't even be allowed to sing in church.

FLORENCE

They're so rigid.

ERNEST

And so rich.

FLORENCE

Don't be silly.

ERNEST

Comfortable anyway. Plenty comfortable. And he what pays the piper...

FLORENCE

I can't stand it.

ERNEST

Fancy a nip?

He takes out a pocket flask. Florence shakes her head.

ERNEST (CONT'D)

Just as well. You can't go home smelling of the demon drink, can you.

He takes a big swig.

ERNEST (CONT'D)

Look. The way I figure - as long as me and Lily and the kids get to live rent free, and I can be in charge of building the houses...

FLORENCE

Why are we talking about you?

ERNEST

Use your noggin', Floss. You can get a lot out of the old man as long as it doesn't affect his public image. Take your pleasure where you can, but don't rock the boat.

SCENE SIX. SHEA'S VAUDEVILLE THEATRE IN TORONTO. 1907. IT'S MID-ACT OF A PHYSICAL COMEDY ACT - PERHAPS A COMIC JUGGLER? FLORENCE, ACCOMPANIED BY MONTROSE, MAKES HER WAY TO A SEAT IN THE AUDIENCE. HE'S DELIGHTED TO BE WITH HER BUT FEELS UNCOMFORTABLY OUT OF PLACE. THE ACT ENDS. PERFORMER BOWS AND TAKES HIS/HER APPLAUSE. EMCEE ENTERS.

EMCEE

That was _____ (a name appropriate for the act).

He introduces the final act with much importance.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the moment you've all been waiting for. On her first visit to Shea's Theatre, please put your hands together in a warm Toronto welcome for the world renowned *Empress of Vaudeville*, Miss Nora Bayes!

Cheers, claps, whistles. Nora Bayes sweeps on and prepares to sing *Shine on Harvest Moon*.

NORA

*Oh, shine on, harvest moon, up in the sky.
I ain't had no lovin'
Since April, January, June or July,
Snow time ain't no time to stay outdoors and spoon,
So shine on, shine on, harvest moon,
For me and my gal.*

*I can't see why the boy should sigh, when by his side
Is the girl he loves so true,
All he has to say is "Won't you be my bride, for I love you."
Why should I be telling you this secret
When I know that you can guess
Harvest moon will smile, shine on all the while,
If the little girl should answer "Yes."*

Oh, shine on, harvest moon etc.

Florence watches Nora sing, enraptured. Nora slowly draws Montrose in, until she seems to be directly singing to him. He's mesmerized. The song ends. Florence claps enthusiastically. Nora curtseys, and does a suggestive exit.

FLORENCE

Do you know she makes \$2000 a week? Imagine a woman making that much money! I'm so glad I persuaded you to bring me. Although I could have come on my own, I suppose.

MONTROSE

Florence!

FLORENCE

Well, look at all the women in the audience.

MONTROSE

It still wouldn't be... Promise me that you won't ever...I'd always be glad to...

Florence laughs and checks her watch.

FLORENCE

Look at the time!

MONTROSE

Don't go.

FLORENCE

I must get to Eaton's. That's supposedly why I came to Toronto after all.

MONTROSE

Florence...I...you...Will you marry me?

FLORENCE

What?

MONTROSE

When I've finished my training, of course.

FLORENCE

But what about Ethel?

MONTROSE

Ethel? She's a wonderful girl. But it's you I love. I'd be the happiest man in the world if you said yes.

FLORENCE

That's very sweet. But I wouldn't be good for you.

MONTROSE

Yes you would. You are. You make me feel - alive.

FLORENCE

Montrose -

MONTROSE

Will you think about it?

FLORENCE

I have to go.

She leaves. Montrose sings 2nd verse of *When Song is Sweet* (to music for the first verse.

MONTROSE

*Moonlight rays are brightest dear
When on you they beam,
Sleep is only sweet my dear,
When of you I dream,
Morning light comes far too soon
Bidding dreams adieu
Life is only sweet my dear
When I am with you.*

Montrose exits.

SCENE SEVEN. THE DRESSING ROOM. PANTAGES THEATRE. 1922.
FLORENCE, IS WEARING THE DRESSING GOWN.

KIT

So, you and Ethel were close.

FLORENCE

Of course. She was my best friend.

KIT

Then returning here - to the scene of her *murder* must be -

FLORENCE

It is difficult. But as I said - I need to work.

KIT

I was younger then, of course. Somewhat naive. But it was very hard to sit and listen to the reports of the wounds that your sister -

FLORENCE

Please. Miss Coleman. If we can't talk about something else, I will have to ask you to...

KIT

I'm sorry. It's just such a pity that the case was never solved.

FLORENCE

It was a tramp. Hamilton was overrun with them.

SCENE EIGHT. THE STREETS OF HAMILTON. FEBRUARY, 1909. THE CITIZENS ENTER IN GREAT AGITATION. A TRAMP IS IN THE CROWD.

COMPANY

(sharing the lines)

Something has to be done
 Last night there was a man standing on the corner of my street
 We're overrun with these "won't works" and "weary willy's"
 I give to the lodging houses
 The amount of food that flies out my back door-
 It's getting worse
 I blame the police
 We're too generous, that's the problem

The company sings to the tune of *Our Great Mikado, Virtuous Man.*

COMPANY

*And more and more these tramps appear
 They beg for bed and purchase beer
 The problem's growing every year
 Enough of generosity*

*The word that hobo gives to bum
 Is take the road to Hamilton
 Our city could become a slum
 Unless we act decisively
 Decisively, decisively
 Unless we act decisively*

The tramp is booted away.

*And I am sure that you agree
That this is not hyperbole
And she is right and he is right
And all's not right as right can be
And you are right and we are right
And all's not right as right as right can be.*

An agitated Mrs. Kinrade emerges from the crowd of citizens. She straightens her hat, and takes a couple of calming breaths.

SCENE NINE. THE POLICE STATION. FEBRUARY 25, 1909. MRS. KINRADE, ILL AT EASE, CONFRONTS INSPECTOR MCMAHON WHO IS SURPRISED TO SEE HER.

MCMAHON

Mrs. Kinrade.

MRS. KINRADE

Inspector McMahon.

MCMAHON

What brings you here to the police station, ma'am?

MRS. KINRADE

It's uh...It's...

MCMAHON

Yes?

MRS. KINRADE

It's these tramps.

MCMAHON

Ah.

MRS. KINRADE

I've handed out twelve lodging tickets at our door in the past week.

MCMAHON

Your family is well known for its generosity. I know it is a nuisance but...

MRS. KINRADE

It is a danger!

MCMAHON

Oh, I don't think -

MRS. KINRADE

These... people are becoming increasingly bold. A couple of nights ago a very unsavory character rang our bell at nine in the evening demanding, not asking, for food. And later my - daughter thought she heard noises.

MCMAHON

Noises?

MRS. KINRADE

At the window. My girls are afraid to be out alone after dark. In the best neighbourhood in the city!

MCMAHON

I assure you. We are doing what we can, Mrs. Kinrade. Within the law.

MRS. KINRADE

You could have more patrols.

MCMAHON

There are budget constraints.

MRS. KINRADE

Constraints! Where public safety is concerned?

MCMAHON

If you'd like to make an official complaint, ma'am, I can have someone take your statement.

MRS. KINRADE

No! No. I can't do that. I'm meeting my daughter - Ethel - for some shopping. She - I'm sorry - I -

MCMAHON

Are you all right?

MRS. KINRADE

I'm fine. Fine. Thank you.

She exits through the crowd which is taking it's place for the next scene

COMPANY

(Sings)

*And I am sure that you agree
That this is not hyperbole
And she is right and he is right
And all's not right as right can be
And you are right and we are right
And all's not right as right as right can be*

SCENE TEN. FEBRUARY, 1909. THE PEOPLE OF HAMILTON WATCH WITH FASCINATION AND HORROR AS THE FIRST PART OF THE SCENE IS PLAYED OUT.

FLORENCE (O.S.)
Help! Murder!! Help. So horrible.

Florence runs on.

FLORENCE
Ethel... Oh, poor Ethel. Help!!

MRS. HICKEY
What is it dear?

FLORENCE
A man.... Oh, Mrs. Hickey, Ethel... He...

MRS. HICKEY
You're not making sense, Florence.

FLORENCE
Ethel is murdered!

The crowd gasps.

MRS. HICKEY
Surely not.

FLORENCE
Shot. By a tramp.

MRS. HICKEY
A tramp?

COMPANY
A tramp?!

COMPANY
(Sharing lines)
In broad daylight.
On Herkimer Street?
What's happening to our city?
Terrible!

Mrs. Hickey leads Florence to one side and comforts her.

MRS. HICKEY
Where's your mother, dear?

FLORENCE

I want Ernest. Find me Ernie.