

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

A Full-length Farce

By

Robert Thomas Noll & Pamela V. Noll

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Copyright © 2025 by Robert Thomas Noll & Pamela V. Noll

CAUTION: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that performance of **A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN** is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of The United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth) and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission of which must be obtained from the Authors in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for **A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN** are controlled exclusively by Next Stage Press. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance written permission and paying the requisite fee

SPECIAL NOTE

Anyone receiving permission to produce **A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN** is required to give credit to the Authors as sole and exclusive Authors of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the Authors must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Authors.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MORRISSecretary to Rightmire and Bellows
LILY LE FLEURJazz dancer at the Garden of Eden
WILBURFORCE RIGHTMIRE ... Middle-aged lawyer
BRUCE BELLWS Playboy partner of Rightmire
VICTORIA RIGHTMIRE Rightmire's wife
ANNABELLE BELLWSBellows' wife
FREDDIE BUMPAS.....Victoria's brother
PORTER, CONDUCTOR'S VOICE, JACQUES. (These roles can
be played by a male or female actor.)

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT 1, SCENE 1: Law offices. Afternoon.

ACT 1, SCENE 2: Grand Central Station. Later that afternoon.

ACT 2: Two private dining rooms with an adjoining corridor in the
infamous Garden of Eden rendezvous rooms in New York City's
Tenderloin District. Later that evening.

TIME

The Roaring 1920s

PLACE

New York City.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

ACT 1, SCENE 1

New York City during the Roaring 1920's. It is the time of Prohibition, speakeasies, and secrets that simmer in this jazz-soaked world.

Scene: Law offices of "Rightmire and Bellows." Time: Late Afternoon. Rightmire's office. The waiting room also serves as the secretary's office. There is a wastebasket, a sofa, a coat tree and on the wall a portrait of a woman. Rightmire's office has two doors: one leads to a waiting room and the other to a private entrance. There is also a map of New York on the wall. Door to Bellows's office is stage opposite the waiting room.

At rise: MORRIS sits with his feet up on his desk going through tabloid-style newspapers with headlines like "Sex Scandal Deepens in the Skinkle Court Case!" "Secret Rendezvous Revealed in Skinkle Skandel!" and "Skinkle Scandal Becoming Trial of the Century."

LILY. *(Entering.)* HELLO! HELLO! Anybody here?
(LILY LE FLEUR enters seductively past Morris and poses in front of sofa. She is wearing a daytime flapper outfit with a cape and carrying a large handbag.) Good afternoon.

MORRIS. May I help you?

LILY. I'm here to see Mr. Wilburforce Rightmire. Are you Mr. Wilburforce Rightmire?

MORRIS. I'm his secretary.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. I need to see him. Right away!

MORRIS. He's in court.

LILY. Is it the Skinkle Scandal Case?

MORRIS. That case resumes Monday morning.

LILY. Is he returning here today?

MORRIS. Eventually...

LILY. *(Sits on sofa.)* Then, I shall wait right here.

MORRIS. I don't know when Mr. Rightmire will be in. You might even have to wait for hours.

LILY. Then I will wait. It's important I see him today.

(Batting her eyelashes and taking a compact to check how she looks. She also might powder her nose.)

MORRIS. Why don't I make an appointment for you?

LILY. No, I need to see Mr. Rightmire today. It's urgent. It's about the Skinkle Scandal.

MORRIS. Are you... involved in the case?

LILY. Very much involved.

MORRIS. Are you a witness?

LILY. I am the STAR witness.

MORRIS. Really?

LILY. I am Lily Le Fleur. Perhaps you have heard of me?

MORRIS. Sorry, no.

LILY. Believe me, soon you will know my name.

MORRIS. You are a witness for the defense, I presume?

LILY. Oh, it doesn't matter to me. As long as I am a witness.

MORRIS. It matters to the case.

LILY. This is why I need to see Mr. Wilburforce Rightmire. I am his star witness.

MORRIS. He never sees anyone without an appointment first.

LILY. When he comes in please give him this handbill. *(Hands him publicity handbill with a sexy picture of her on the cover.)*

Once I tell him my involvement in the case he will want to see me.

MORRIS. *(Excited at what he sees.)* Sure!

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. See? I'm sure he'll feel as excited as you are, when he sees my picture. *(Rises and moves to the corner of Morris's desk and sits in a chair near him and crosses her legs seductively.)*

MORRIS. Really, Miss La... La...?

LILY. Le Fleur. Lily Le Fleur.

MORRIS. *(Leaves the handbill on his desk.)* Mr. Rightmire is a very conservative person.

LILY. I'm sure he will see me! Today! *(WILBURFORCE RIGHTMIRE enters his office from his private entrance carrying an umbrella and a briefcase. He places the umbrella noisily in a stand. He then moves behind desk, sits down and starts going over a stack of legal papers.)*

LILY. I hear someone in the office. Is that Mr. Wilburforce Rightmire?

RIGHTMIRE. *(Shouting from office.)* Morris, I need you.

LILY. Don't forget to show him who is waiting for him... *(Says his name very flirtatiously.)* Morris.

MORRIS. *(Reluctantly takes handbill.)* Maybe he'll have time to see you today. *(Rises and rushes toward Rightmire's office. At the same time, Lily rises and removes her cape and tosses towards the coat tree, but it lands on Morris' head.)*

LILY. Tell him I'm waiting patiently.

RIGHTMIRE. *(Shouting from his office.)* Morris!

MORRIS. I'm coming, Sir.

LILY. *(Calling out.)* Tell him his star witness is only a few feet away. *(Morris rushes to Rightmire's office, struggling with her cape, and almost trips over the wastebasket and enters Rightmire's office.)*

MORRIS. Good afternoon, Sir.

RIGHTMIRE. Who are you talking to out there?

MORRIS. A woman. She says she's a witness concerning the Skinkle Scandal. She says she's the "Star" witness. She told me to give you this. *(Hands him Lily's publicity handbill. Rightmire takes but doesn't even look at it.)*

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

RIGHTMIRE. Tell her, she'll have to wait. What's with the cape?

MORRIS. Oh, uh, ha, ha. Sorry, Sir. It belongs to the lady waiting for you.

RIGHTMIRE. A witness, huh? Well, she'll just have to wait.
(Hands Morris some legal papers.) I have to get these briefs out by tomorrow. Proofread them. *(Morris starts to exit.)* And Morris, get rid of that cape.

MORRIS. Yes, Sir. *(Rushes out, almost tripping on rug.)*

RIGHTMIRE. *(Picks up handbill and gives it a more careful look.)* What's this? "Lily La Fleur. The world-famous jazz dancer! Appearing twice nightly at The Garden of Eden Nightclub Rendezvous, in the Tenderloin District." Actually... She seems quite alluring. *(At the same time, Lily notices a woman's portrait hanging on waiting room wall.)*

LILY. What an ill-tempered mouth she has!

MORRIS. He will see you if he can find the time today.

LILY. I need to see him now! *(Rises and heads for Rightmire's office.)*

MORRIS. Oh, no! *(Morris looks frightened as Lily barges into Rightmire's office.)*

RIGHTMIRE. Who do you think you are, barging in my office like this?

LILY. Let me introduce myself. I am Lily Le Fleur. *(Notices her handbill on his desk.)* Ah, you looked at my flyer. And you now have the opportunity to see me in the flesh. *(Morris looks through keyhole.)*

LILY. *(Puts out her gloved hand.)* Please to meet you, how do you do? *(Briefly touches his hand.)*

RIGHTMIRE. *(Startled.)* Do! Do what?

LILY. You know, Mr. Rightmire, you did keep me waiting.

RIGHTMIRE. Keep you waiting? You had no appointment.

LILY. No apology needed. *(Notices her sexy handbill on his desk.)* And how do you like my publicity handbill? Look at me, now look at that picture. Do you think the photograph captures who I am?

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

(Rightmire embarrassed, tries to hide the handbill with a clumsy flourish.)

RIGHTMIRE. And I'm giving you the opportunity to get out of my office now!

LILY. Mr. Rightmire, I am also a very busy person. I perform two shows a night. Have you ever heard of me? Lily Le Fleur.

RIGHTMIRE. No, I haven't.

LILY. *(Very friendly.)* Well, once we get to know each other... you'll know a lot about me.

RIGHTMIRE. I really have some work to do. I will try to get back to you later.

LILY. You will get to know me now, Mr. Rightmire. You see, I can help you win the Skinkle case.

RIGHTMIRE. My secretary told me that you want to be a witness, Miss Le Fleur.

LILY. And I will be your best witness ever!

RIGHTMIRE. Miss...

LILY. Call me Lily. Lily Le Fleur.

RIGHTMIRE. Miss Le Fleur. Alright. I will give you a minute. What do you know about the Skinkle Scandal?

LILY. I know you are the main lawyer in the case.

RIGHTMIRE. Correct.

LILY. And are you winning the Case?

RIGHTMIRE. Too early to tell. One never knows what juries are thinking.

LILY. Then you need to hear me out.

RIGHTMIRE. Young lady, what do you have to do with Skinkle Scandal?

LILY. Aren't you going to offer a lady a seat?

RIGHTMIRE. *(Flustered.)* Seat? Oh, yes. Please, sit down. Now, what do you have to do with the Case, "Miss La Fleur"?

LILY. Plenty, as I will now tell you.

RIGHTMIRE. Go ahead, "Miss La Fleur."

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. So, you haven't yet seen my act at the Garden of Eden, have you?

RIGHTMIRE. No, I haven't.

LILY. Well, you must come. Yes, you must come! *(She gives him a seductive smile. Makes Rightmire very nervous. Morris is enjoying what he is seeing through the keyhole.)*

RIGHTMIRE. Excuse me, just a moment please. *(Opens door as Morris still behind it, falls down. He quickly rises as Rightmire hands him Lily's handbill. Stage whispering to Morris.)* Rip it up and throw in the garbage. My wife must never see it. And, I have never been to The Garden of Eden, understand?

MORRIS. Yes, Sir. You've never been to The Garden of Eden. *(Rightmire quickly closes door. Morris rips handbill in many pieces. Morris continues to snoop through keyhole.)* The notorious Garden of Eden --Where my roommate Fritz is a waiter. *(Jealous.)* All those big tips he gets every night.

LILY. I will have free tickets for you anytime you want. You must see my dance, I bump *(She bumps -- demonstrates to the left.)* And bump. *(She bumps -- demonstrates to the right.)* And for the finale, the drummer goes – boom-boom-boom, and then I go boom-boom-boom. *(Bumps her hips with each "boom"-- right, left, right.)* Quite a climax, huh? Any time you want, there will be a free ticket for you.

RIGHTMIRE. *(To himself.)* Just the thought of seeing her...

LILY. You should see the happy faces of the gentlemen in the audience after I finish my act. And then, as a bonus, I come back to the stage for an encore and dance on top of the piano. Boom-boom-boom. *(Bumps her hips with each "boom," and might even stand on Rightmire's desk.)*

RIGHTMIRE. I feel a thrill just from your description.

LILY. But you must experience my act – live – and in the flesh.

RIGHTMIRE. Yes, I should like to experience you in the flesh. I mean, I don't see how I can possibly go there. In my position. Officer of the court. Propriety must be met.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. To remind you to see my act. (*Hands him another photograph of her in an even sexier pose.*) Here's another picture of me. Keep it handy so it will remind you to see my act soon.

RIGHTMIRE. (*Looking at photograph.*) Even less clothes on. Oh – dear. Now, Lily, let's get down to business. You said you want to be a witness in the Skinkle Scandal. And you say you'll be our best witness.

LILY. Yes, I will be your very best witness. I expect to be well displayed.

RIGHTMIRE. And why will you be my best witness?

LILY. I have followed this sensational case with the greatest of interest. Every day the newspapers takes photographs. In the court room and outside the court house. Every witness is seen on the front page. Every day.

RIGHTMIRE. Yes, it seems that all of New York... the entire country, in fact... is fascinated by this Case. It's a painful look at the private lives of the upper class.

LILY. A socialite finds her husband and his mistress – “en flagrante.” It's too fascinating! And I was right there. Mr. Rightmire, I am an expert of their affairs.

RIGHTMIRE. On affairs?

LILY. And especially, on tennis.

RIGHTMIRE. Tennis? What does tennis have to do with this Case?

LILY. You must know the Skinkles are fanatics about tennis. Especially mixed doubles.

RIGHTMIRE. Mixed doubles?

LILY. I watched a single match between Mrs. Skinkle and her husband. Mrs. Skinkle was already very tense because of her shots to the service box.

RIGHTMIRE. Service box?

LILY. That's a tennis term. It's where the balls have to land.

RIGHTMIRE. But it was his fault?

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. Ooh! A double fault, you might say. (*Raises her eyebrows with a knowing look.*)

RIGHTMIRE. Huh?

LILY. “Fault” is another tennis term. When she saw him score she lost her mind. And then what happened next...?

RIGHTMIRE. What happened? Tell me more.

LILY. No, No, Mr. Rightmire. That is all I will tell you for now.

RIGHTMIRE. I need more details. What exactly did you see? What happened? Why does a jury need to hear from you? Tell me more.

LILY. Sir, I cannot do that now.

RIGHTMIRE. Why not?

LILY. In order for me to be a great witness, that’s all I need to tell you now. I will tell you the rest when I take the stand.

RIGHTMIRE. Miss Le Fleur, it is common practice to get all the facts before the examination.

LILY. Well, I am not common, although, (*Seductively.*) Although I look forward to you examining me.

RIGHTMIRE. Oh, oh, dear.

LILY. A good witness’s testimony only comes off real when one tells the story unrehearsed. I will give you the details in full when I take the stand. (*Beat.*) Mr. Rightmire, I want you to draw me out. (*Very seriously.*) Question me. Ask me all about my life. So exciting and full of drama. Together we will make headlines.

RIGHTMIRE. But, what does your story about the Skinkles have to do with the Case?

LILY. You of all people should know about tennis – a game that requires a court. And you go to court often. When you score it’s “love.”

RIGHTMIRE. Love is a score?

LILY. Don’t you know these facts?

RIGHTMIRE. Oh, uh, you seem to know so much about Skinkle’s balls. Er, tennis balls, I mean, his faults – on the tennis court. But really, you need to give me more facts.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. Of course, when you put me on the stand. And this is how I'll give you every startling fact: You must ask me, like this: *(Speaking like Rightmire when she says his lines.)* "Are you the Miss Le Fleur, the world-famous dancer at the Garden of Eden?" And I'll answer *(Mimicking herself in almost falsetto voice.)* "Yes, Sir. I perform twice every evening at the world-famous Garden of Eden night club in the colorful Tenderloin District." Then you say, "I understand you are very good at what you do." "Yes, Sir," I say. I am the act that always delivers again, and again, and again. Then, *(Seductively.)* Mr. Rightmire, you continue to examine me –

RIGHTMIRE. *(In a trance.)* I'll examine you.

LILY. *(Dramatically continues her interview imitating Rightmire and herself.)* "Miss Le Fleur, do you remember last December a gentleman sent you some very costly jewelry?" "Really, Sir... I receive so many gifts. I cannot distinguish one gentleman from another. "Come, come, Lily La Fleur from the Garden of Eden Nightclub in the Tenderloin District of New York City, you must have known the victim in this case. Mr. Skinkle had fallen for you last summer. He then gave you diamonds; besieged you with flowers." You can keep me on the witness stand as long as you please. *(Sits confidently sits crossing her legs, as Rightmire stares under her spell.)*

RIGHTMIRE. I would like that. I mean, I could do that. If all that you're telling me is true.

LILY. Mr. Rightmire, do I look like someone who would tell you an untruth? Especially such an intelligent man like yourself?

RIGHTMIRE. Why didn't you come forward earlier? Lily.

LILY. You see, I may be the world-famous dancer, but when I am not performing, I am really very shy. *(Lily demonstrates being shy.)*

RIGHTMIRE. Lily, somehow, I doubt that. *(Hides his hand behind his back and turns slightly, and is seen twisting his wedding ring off and puts it in his pocket.)*

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. Oh, that voice of yours. How it makes my heart throb and my hands tremble. Feel my hands trembling. (*Reaches her hands out to Rightmire, with theatrical trembling.*)

RIGHTMIRE. (*Touches her hands.*) Y-y-yes, your hand does tremble.

LILY. And your hands tremble, too.

RIGHTMIRE. I am mh-mh-mh-mh.

LILY. You're what?

RIGHTMIRE. (*Lets go of her hands.*) I should tell you I am mh-mh... most happily mar...mar... Happy to meet you!

LILY. The pleasure's all mine. So – you'll put me on the stand?

RIGHTMIRE. I'm thinking about it.

LILY. I like a man who thinks. Do you know what I am, right now?

RIGHTMIRE. (*Looking at her handbill.*) “The world-famous jazz dancer?”

LILY. A bundle of nerves, all a throb... (*Takes his hand and puts it on her heart.*) Feel my heart throbbing.

RIGHTMIRE. Yes, I feel you th-th-throbbing. (*Again, realizing what he's doing, he removes his hand away from her like he's burnt.*) Cyst and decease! (*Morris, on his knees still behind Rightmire's door, straining to hear their whispers.*)

LILY. Mr. Rightmire.

RIGHTMIRE. Wilburforce. Lily, call me Wilbur...

LILY. Oh, no! Not Wilbur... “Alfred.” I wish to call you “Alfred”

RIGHTMIRE. “Alfred?”

LILY. Yes, that is my favorite name.

RIGHTMIRE. I get it. Like “Being Earnest.” (*Lily looks blankly at Rightmire.*) You know, “The Importance of Being Earnest?”

LILY. I am always earnest.

RIGHTMIRE. No. No. You are Lily Le Fleur.

LILY. And you are my “Alfred.”

RIGHTMIRE. Then I will be honored if you call me “Alfred.”

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. I am so glad I honor you. And I hope you will honor me by being my guest at the Garden of Eden? I want you so badly – to see my performance.

RIGHTMIRE. I want to, but really. I can't. You see, I'm a respected member of my church – a lay minister.

LILY. Well, laying or standing, Alfred, you said you'd come. So, if you do not, you will be breaking a promise and isn't that the Seventh Commandment?

RIGHTMIRE. Oh no! The Seventh Commandment is "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

LILY. Oh? That's a Commandment?

RIGHTMIRE. Since Moses.

LILY. Well, breaking a promise must be a Commandment, too.

RIGHTMIRE. I didn't promise you anything.

(Bruce Bellows, enters the waiting room with umbrella and brief case. He observes Morris on his knees in front of Rightmire's door. Bellows drops umbrella into stand making a loud noise. Morris lurches.)

BELLOWS. Morris! What are you doing?

MORRIS. *(Reacts startled.)* Oh, Mr. Bellows, Sir. I dropped a box of paper fasteners. How clumsy of me.

BELLOWS. You should be more careful.

MORRIS. Right, Sir. *(Pretends to pick up fasteners.)*

LILY. *(To Rightmire.)* It is settled. You will see my show tonight.

RIGHTMIRE. I really have other plans tonight ... With a friend... a close friend.

LILY. Tell your friend something's come up – you have to cancel – you have business tonight. It will mean so much to me.

BELLOWS. *(To Morris.)* Is Mr. Rightmire in?

MORRIS. Yes, sir. He's "engaged" with a client at this moment.

BELLOWS. *(Suspiciously.)* Oh, yeah? Let me listen, too. *(Morris lets him look through keyhole, too. Then they take turns.)*

RIGHTMIRE. *(Thinking it over, to Lily.)* If it means that much to you, I will.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. Wonderful! And here, let me sign my newest picture.
(*Takes Rightmire's pen from desk and signs.*) You can have it framed and displayed in your office. "To Alfred, faithfully yours, Lili Le Fleur!" And speaking of pictures. That painting of a woman on the wall in your waiting room is very... uninviting.

RIGHTMIRE. Oh, that picture. It's a portrait -- of -- of -- Mrs. Bellows! My partner is Bruce Bellows, the lawyer and real estate developer. That's his wife.

BELLOWS. (*To Morris.*) I can't see who that woman is.

MORRIS. Lily Le Fleur. (*Bellows drops his briefcase on Morris' toe.*)

BELLOWS. Lily Le Fleur!

LILY (*To Rightmire.*) I know your partner. Bruce Bellows! He is one of my greatest admirers. (*Aside.*) He never told me he was married. Poor Brucie. She looks like a real viper. She's pretty, but looks so ill-tempered. How could any man be attracted to a woman like that?

RIGHTMIRE. God only knows...

BELLOWS. (*To Morris.*) Lily Le Fleur -- the world famous...

MORRIS. Live and in person!

RIGHTMIRE. Poor Bellows.

BELLOWS. Lucky Rightmire.

LILY. I must not take any more of your time. Please think of me not only as an artist, but also as your "Star Witness" who will be well-displayed in the Skinkle Scandal trial.

BELLOWS. (*With Morris in front of Rightmire's door.*) I know her! A real firecracker.

MORRIS. Boom-boom?

BELLOWS. Boom-boom-boom!

RIGHTMIRE. Morris, I know you're behind this door. Bring me Miss Le Fleur's cape.

MORRIS. Right away, Sir. (*Quickly grabs cape and in his rush in stumbles over the wastebasket and exits closing Rightmire's door behind him.*)

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

RIGHTMIRE. It has been a real pleasure...

BELLOWS. I bet it was.

RIGHTMIRE. A great pleasure meeting you, Miss Le Fleur.

LILY. Until tonight, Monsieur Alfred. *(Slightly performing “boom-boom-booms” with her hips.)*

BELLOWS. *(To Morris.)* Monsieur Alfred?

MORRIS. That’s what she called him. *(Rightmire opens door to his private entrance and Lily exits. Bellows and Morris ears still in front of door. Rightmire opens door and Bellows and Morris fall all over themselves.)*

RIGHTMIRE. What’s this?

MORRIS. Uh, paper fasteners.

BELLOWS. What are you up to, lover-boy?

RIGHTMIRE. Bellows, it is not what it seems. Miss Le Fleur is a new witness in the Skinkle Case.

BELLOWS. Well, “Alfred,” if you need any help with Miss Le Fleur, I would be every so glad to help you “handle” her. *(Beat.)* After all, I too am an “Alfred.”

RIGHTMIRE. Why am I not surprised? *(To Bellows.)* Believe me, Bruce, this was a perfectly innocent consultation. Just because you have boom-booms on your mind, that doesn’t mean – She was a perfect lady. Don’t go getting any ideas... And that goes for you too, Morris.

MORRIS. I am but a simple secretary. I never get any ideas.

BELLOWS. *(Picks up Lily’s photograph from desk.)* My, my, what do we have here among your briefs? Ooh!

RIGHTMIRE. That belongs in my drawers!

BELLOWS. I’ll bet, Wilbur... Or should I say “Alfred.” *(Mocking.)* Ha-ha!

RIGHTMIRE. You’ve got the wrong idea.

BELLOWS. Do I?

RIGHTMIRE. You know I am a married man.

BELLOWS. Did you remove your wedding ring?

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

RIGHTMIRE. Of course not! (*Shakes his head “no” as he puts his wedding ring back on hiding the action from Bellows.*)

MORRIS. (*To Rightmire.*) You should have seen Miss Le Fleur examine that picture of your wife in the waiting room, Mr. Rightmire.

RIGHTMIRE. Morris, I hope you didn't tell her who's portrait that is, did you?

MORRIS. Oh, no. She moved too fast.

BELLOWS. Built for speed.

RIGHTMIRE. Morris, you can go back to your desk right now. (*Morris hurrying, trips over the wastebasket, then sits at desk. Bellows looks more closely at Lily's photo.*)

BELLOWS. You're already planning something, aren't you Wilbur?

RIGHTMIRE. Planning something? Bruce, remember, I love my wife.

BELLOWS. I love your wife, too.

RIGHTMIRE. You love everyone's wife.

BELLOWS. I know what you're really up to. How would you like this evidence to be submitted to the scrutiny of Mrs. Rightmire.

RIGHTMIRE. (*Stops in front of wife's picture.*) Vic-tor-i-a!

BELLOWS. (*Also stares at picture.*) Anyway, why is there a picture of your wife in our waiting room? Afterall, these are my offices, too.

RIGHTMIRE. It was Mrs. Rightmire's idea to have her portrait hung there. Why don't you put Annabelle's right next to Victoria's?

BELLOWS. (*Still staring at portrait.*) Poor Morris: Those eyes following one everywhere. (*Moves about while observing the eyes of the portrait.*)

RIGHTMIRE. Enough teasing now, Bruce. (*Tries to snatch Lily's handbill back.*) Give me that picture back.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BELLOWS. Only if you admit you are human. Although you're a married man right now, you are having certain thoughts. Am I right?

RIGHTMIRE. I did not invite that woman here. Ask Morris.

MORRIS. She didn't have an appointment.

RIGHTMIRE. I swear I never met her before today, but, she did say she knew you. *(Grabs his picture back.)*

RIGHTMIRE. The verdict is in. The defendant – that is me – is found innocent of all charges. Case closed!

BELLOWS. She wants you, Wilbur.

RIGHTMIRE. No! She does not want me, Bruce.

BELLOWS. Yes, she does. She wants –

RIGHTMIRE. To be a witness in the Skinkle Scandal. That's all. That's all. To be well-displayed as the star witness.

BELLOWS. Okay, if that's the case, I hope you don't mind but I will go down to the Garden of Eden right now and serve her subpoena for you. Personally.

RIGHTMIRE. That's alright. Lily, er, Miss Le Fleur – expects me to do that... tonight.

BELLOWS. As your best friend, it is my duty to accompany you.

RIGHTMIRE. There is no resisting you!

BELLOWS. I wish you could make all women think that. *(Beat.)* Please, let me welcome you to the club.

RIGHTMIRE. Club? What club?

BELLOWS. The Married Bachelor's Club.

RIGHTMIRE. You devil!

BELLOWS. Yes, I am a devil. Everyone knows that – including my wife. And to inaugurate the occasion, we'll make a night of it! This change of scene will do you good.

RIGHTMIRE. But, my wife?

BELLOWS. Since we're speaking of "cases"-- she's not that possessive. She's subjective.

RIGHTMIRE. You are being most accusative. She's not that possessive. She's subjective. And I'm the subject.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BELLOWS. Yes, she loves you... to be right under her thumb.

RIGHTMIRE. You know how terribly jealous she is. It makes me tense.

BELLOWS. Make that the past tense.

RIGHTMIRE. Let's get out of this grammar kick... Do you know why I dress so plainly? Any snazzier and she will suspect I am looking for her replacement.

BELLOWS. Exactly! You have never given her any cause to worry. Therefore, she is anxious and anxiety leads to suspicion.

RIGHTMIRE. I don't follow.

BELLOWS. This is your chance to justify her suspicions. The fact is, she finds you so perfect it makes her uneasy. And tonight, you will be generous – you will help her!

RIGHTMIRE. I don't know about this.

BELLOWS. Just look at my Annabelle. Distrust is firmly established in her mind, and she is thus relieved from all anxiety. I will teach you everything I know. I shall send Annabelle a note not to expect me for dinner.

RIGHTMIRE. You will?

BELLOWS. Yes, I have to accompany you to the deposition in... er—a—let me see— (*Looks at map of New York on the office wall.*) A...how about Poughkeepsie? This evening. Which may detain us until tomorrow morning, so do not wait up.

RIGHTMIRE. And she will believe you?

BELLOWS. If I told her the truth, she wouldn't believe me. So, I might as well lie. And you will do the same.

RIGHTMIRE. I have never stayed out late for a case before. Victoria will never believe—

BELLOWS. There's always a first time, dear boy. (*Rightmire staring at Lily's handbill.*) After all, you did accept her invitation. You did invite her to supper after her show, of course?

RIGHTMIRE. (*In a daze.*) It all happened so fast. A dream. Did I really accept her invitation?

BELLOWS. Of course, you did, Morris and I heard you.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

RIGHTMIRE. Morris neither heard nor saw anything.

BELLOWS. (*Sing song.*) But, I did and I saw, everything.

RIGHTMIRE. Then I'm well and truly done!

BELLOWS. After her show, we'll dine at the Garden of Eden's famous Rendezvous Nightclub.

RIGHTMIRE. In public?

BELLOW. Not to worry. It's in the Tenderloin district. Nobody you know will see you.

RIGHTMIRE. Am I mad? To even consider going there.

BELLOW. Everything is private ...

RIGHTMIRE. Completely?

BELLOWS. No one will ever know.

RIGHTMIRE. (*Takes out picture of Lily.*) I am half-inclined.

BELLOWS. It would be the best thing for your marriage.

RIGHTMIRE. I really resent it when Victoria accuses me of being interested in other women.

BELLOWS. If you are interested in other women – then you will no longer resent her for accusing you.

RIGHTMIRE. That's it! And I'll be able to love her even more.

BELLOWS. Which will make her even more happy. And your marriage will be even stronger.

RIGHTMIRE. (*In front of wife's portrait.*) I'm doing all of this for you, Victoria!

BELLOWS. And since I'll be there, I will make my Annabelle happy, too.

RIGHTMIRE. Bruce, I am most grateful. (*They shake hands. Bellows sits at desk and starts to write.*)

BELLOWS. I will ask Miss Happy Knight to join our party tonight. Happy is a charming dancer who is featured with Lily. We'll be a foursome. Terribly decadent. I'm writing to invite Happy to dine with us at eleven when her last show ends. It will be delightful. There. Done. (*Addresses envelope.*) Now, you, Wilbur.

RIGHTMIRE. (*Picks up pen, thinks, then puts down pen.*) Bruce, help me! What shall I say to Miss La Fleur?

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BELLOWS. I've got it! (*Dictating.*) "Tonight, after your last performance, please join me for supper in the Garden of Eden Rendezvous Restaurant. Uh ... Sincerely – "

RIGHTMIRE. Sincerely – Wilbur--

BELLOWS. Stop! You fool! Do not sign your name! Use the one she gave you!

RIGHTMIRE. Oh, yes! (*Signing.*) "Alfred." (*Bellows takes letter from Rightmire and puts into envelope. Calls out.*) Morris! Deliver these letters immediately. (*Morris takes letters.*)

MORRIS. Yes, Sir. Immediately. (*Grabs an umbrella from stand and almost falls over wastebasket but doesn't fall. He exits. Rightmire having a panic attack starts to shake.*)

BELLOWS. What is the matter now? Steady, Wilbur, steady!

RIGHTMIRE. I'm having second thoughts... and third thoughts.

BELLOWS. Hey, come on, Old Boy, don't think of Victoria right now. Think of tonight. You and I are going to Heaven.

RIGHTMIRE. And tomorrow... straight to Hell. (*Bellows takes out a silver flask from his coat pocket.*)

BELLOWS. Here, this will help calm your nerves.

RIGHTMIRE. (*Holds his hand up, and waggles it, palm out.*) Oh no. You know I don't. Prohibition, and all...

BELLOWS. Lily and Miss Happy Knight. Like the Fourth of July! Fireworks! (*Rightmire grabs flask and drinks and hands the flask back to Bellows.*) A toast! To fun, to freedom.

RIGHTMIRE. Freedom! (*Drinks from flask again. Both take another drink. VICTORIA and ANNABELLE enter the waiting room. They are in 1920's fashionable outfits with cloche hats and gloves and carrying umbrellas. Victoria's umbrella is elaborate and larger than normal.*)

ANNABELLE. Isn't it fun we ran into each other on Fifth Avenue? Oo-oo. I love your umbrella. It's so unique.

VICTORIA. It is the first present my dear Wilburforce ever gave me. I plan to be buried with it.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

ANNABELLE. I can't say Brucie has ever given me anything quite so – so -- compelling.

VICTORIA. Do you think it's a good idea to surprise the boys like this? After all, Wilburforce has the Skinkle Scandal and ...

ANNABELLE. Believe me, Victoria, they can spare a few minutes to say hello to their wives. I think I hear my Bruce in there.

(Annabelle moves to Rightmire's door and knocks.)

RIGHTMIRE. Is that you, Morris?

ANNABELLE. No. It is I, Annabelle Bellows.

BELLOWS. *(Horried.)* Annabelle! *(Quickly hides his flask. Victoria leads toward the door, and calls out.)*

VICTORIA. And me too. Wilburforce, dear!

RIGHTMIRE. Good God! Victoria. *(Quickly puts Lily's picture in desk drawer. He and Bellows quickly fling open a couple legal books and files and intently start looking through them as Annabelle and Victoria enter.)*

BELLOWS. Annabelle! What a surprise.

RIGHTMIRE. Victoria! Yes, what... a... er... pleasant surprise!

VICTORIA. How pale you look! Wilburforce, you are overdoing it. He's overdoing it, isn't he, Bruce?

BELLOWS. Yes. Your Husband is overdoing it again... And the poor man has to go to Poughkeepsie on business this evening. And he's asked me to accompany him.

VICTORIA. Poughkeepsie? *(Incredulous.)* What dreadful news.

ANNABELLE. Brucie, you never told me you had to go to Poughkeepsie today.

BELLOWS. It just came up. An emergency!

ANNABELLE. An emergency?

VICTORIA. What kind of an emergency, Wilburforce?

RIGHTMIRE. To depose a witness. I have to go to Poughkeepsie to depose a witness.

BELLOWS. Yes, that is it!

VICTORIA. Wilburforce, you do not look well.

BELLOWS. That's why I need to go with him.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

ANNABELLE. An emergency deposition?

RIGHTMIRE. A big, BIG emergency... But, it's confidential.

BELLOWS. Of course, it is. Very confidential. You don't expect him to violate a client's confidentiality? (*Victoria and Annabelle shake their heads "No."*)

ANNABELLE. (*Moves around desk sniffing.*) I... I smell... liquor.

BELLOWS. Alcohol. Impossible! In these chambers? (*Fiddles with his tie.*)

ANNABELLE. Sorry. I swear I smell alcohol. (*Under her breath.*) He always fiddles with his tie whenever he's telling a lie... He's lying.

VICTORIA. It's still Prohibition and you'd never break the law. Isn't that right, darling?

RIGHTMIRE. Quite right. Dearest, you know I never... I believe it's Morris's-es-es typewriter cleaning fluid.

BELLOWS. Yes, cleaning fluid!

VICTORIA. You're speaking oddly. I couldn't let you go to Poughkeepsie without me.

RIGHTMIRE. You never before interfered with my business.

BELLOWS. And – it's confidential – a confidential emergency!

VICTORIA. Something is not right. It's my duty to look out for my husband.

ANNABELLE. Why can't Victoria come with you?

RIGHTMIRE. Because ... a...

BELLOWS. We have to leave immediately.

RIGHTMIRE. (*Inspired.*) Immediately. Right away, immediately!

BELLOWS. The five o'clock train.

RIGHTMIRE. (*Looking at his watch.*) We'd better hurry.
(*Rightmire starts to show the effects of the booze.*)

BELLOWS. As we have been saying. It's an important deposition – cut and dried. (*Victoria and Annabelle, with arms folded across their chests, look very skeptical.*)

RIGHTMIRE. (*Inspired.*) It concerns the Skinkle Scandal.

VICTORIA. That horrible case?

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BELLOWS. (*Adjusting his tie.*) This deposition is key. But we can't say more.

VICTORIA. Wilburforce, I think we should –

RIGHTMIRE. My precious, there's no time to discuss this -- we must catch that five o'clock train!

BELLOWS. (*Looking at his watch.*) We have less than an hour to get to Grand Central.

VICTORIA. What shall I do all alone this evening?

RIGHTMIRE. Poor dear! I shall miss you, too.

VICTORIA. At the least I'm coming to send you off.

RIGHTMIRE. Not necessary, dear. It's just to Poughkeepsie.

ANNABELLE. (*Closely watching Bellows.*) Brucie, dear –

BELLOWS. Yes, dearest?

ANNABELLE. Surely Wilburforce can get the deposition without you. He could take Morris instead, if he needs help?

BELLOWS. But my Sweetness, I – er – Wilbur asked me because Morris had to go home. I can't turn down a colleague. He needs me.

ANNABELLE. (*Under her breath.*) Notice him adjusting his tie. (*To Bellows.*) Where you are needed, Brucie, is at home. With me. That is, if you wish me to sign this. (*Whips out legal papers from her purse.*)

BELLOWS. What is that?

ANNABELLE. The deed to the land in Newark.

BELLOWS. Aren't we buying that property "in joint tenancy?"

ANNABELLE. Using my money.

BELLOWS. Ha-Ha-Ha. What's the big deal? It's just a mere matter of form.

ANNABELLE. And without that mere matter of form you can't buy that property, can you?

BELLOWS. Er-ah-well-ah.

ANNABELLE. Perhaps if you take me shopping first. Then dinner tonight. Then I will sign the paper. First thing tomorrow.

BELLOWS. But, Sweetheart! Why not now?

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

ANNABELLE. Those are my terms, Lover-boy.

VICTORIA. Wilburforce, you have never travelled without me since we married. You know I will worry so. (*Moves to kiss Rightmire who inhales and because he's aware of his alcohol-breath, he covers his mouth. They embrace while Rightmire holds his breath. Victoria begins to weep.*)

RIGHTMIRE. (*Patting Victoria's shoulder while turning his head away.*) Oh, there, there, my dear.

BELLOWS. There, Annabelle, look at that picture of marital trust. We should be like that.

ANNABELLE. We will... Once I sign the papers.

RIGHTMIRE. I'm leaving. (*Moves away from Victoria and starts to leave, then stops.*) Bellows, we must leave "soot tweet."

BELLOWS. Uh, yes, "Tout de suite."

ANNABELLE. Oh, no. You're staying with me.

RIGHTMIRE. Oh, please, Annabelle, I need him.

ANNABELLE. But, he needs me more.

BELLOWS. (*To Rightmire.*) Sorry, Old Man. I need that deed. Can you imagine what property in Newark, New Jersey will be worth someday?

RIGHTMIRE. You know, I'm beginning to feel better. I think I am fully able to go alone. (*Morris enters office completely soaked from the rain.*) Oh Morris! There you are.

MORRIS. Yes, I'm back, Sir.

ANNABELLE. Oh, Morris.

MORRIS. Yes, Mrs. Bellows?

ANNABELLE. Call for a cab right away!

MORRIS. Right away, Mrs. Bellows.

ANNABELLE. I thought you went home. (*Morris glances at Rightmire who silently signals in broad comic gestures.*)

MORRIS. Oh, no. I'm not, I mean... I... I am. Here. I am back from home.

VICTORIA. But why are you here? I'm confused.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

MORRIS. I came back, from home, because... I wasn't sure if I had finished.

RIGHTMIRE. Morris often has to go home as he takes care of his elderly mother. Yes, that's it.

MORRIS. My Mother? Oh, yes, my Mother.

RIGHTMIRE. That's why he couldn't assist me in Poughkeepsie. Yes, you've finished, Morris. He really must go back home... and we really need to get to the station. I will go to Poughkeepsie by myself. Alone.

VICTORIA. I think we should all go. Don't you agree, Annabelle?

ANNABELLE. That's not a bad idea. What adventure it could be for us.

MORRIS. I'll call a cab. (*Moves quickly to door and runs into Bellows.*)

BELLOWS. (*Stage whisper.*) Morris!

MORRIS. Yes, Mr. Bellows?

BELLOWS. Did you deliver those "special letters"?

ANNABELLE & VICTORIA. Special letters?

RIGHTMIRE. Uh... Business. The Skinkle Case.

BELLOWS. Confidential.

MORRIS. The uh, important – confidential – uh business letters were uh... most definitely delivered, Sir.

RIGHTMIRE. Get going! Just hail us a cab. (*Morris runs out of office.*)

VICTORIA & ANNABELLE. Something is suspicious.

BELLOWS & RIGHTMIRE. Oh, God! (*Annabelle and Victoria exit.*)

RIGHTMIRE. Bruce, what are we going to do?

BELLOWS. (*Starts pacing.*) Yes, what do we do? What do we do? We'll do something.

RIGHTMIRE. And what is the plan?

BELLOWS. By the time we get to Grand Central, we'll have a plan.

RIGHTMIRE. We will?

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BELLOWS. Not to worry. *(He exits.)*

RIGHTMIRE. *(Under his breath.)* What have I got myself into?
(Rightmire grabs his umbrella and exits as lights fade. In darkness, hear the sounds of the busy Grand Central railroad station.)

SCENE 2

Grand Central Station. Stage Right is a sign marked "Exit." Center Stage is a door marked "Ladies Waiting Room." Stage Left are different Station services, indicated by signs (Telegraph Office, Newspapers, Cigars, Tickets). Lieutenant Freddie Bumpas enters with a small duffle bag, Stage Left. Porter is just behind him carrying Bumpas' two heavy suitcases. Bumpas' military uniform is very similar to Porter's railroad employee's uniform. As they walk, Porter struggles carrying the heavy suitcases. Both come to a stop left of Center Stage.

BUMPUS. I have sailed around the world and I can't tell you how many cities I've visited, but do you want to know something, Porter. New York City is still my favorite city. *(Watches Porter struggle with suitcases.)* Have you thought of using one of those luggage carts?

PORTER. Sir, there aren't enough to go around. You have to be Jack Dempsey to get one from the other porters.

BUMPUS. Well, I am in no hurry. I'll wait here until you obtain one. Be tough!

PORTER. Very good, Sir. For you, I will be a prizefighter!
(Bumpas laughs good naturally as Porter exits. Bumpas takes out a cigar and lights it and strolls and puffs a few times before speaking.)

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BUMPUS. Boy, will my sister, Victoria be surprised to see me. I feel awful I was away at sea when she got married. To a lawyer named Wilburforce Rightmire, Esquire. Upstanding, churchgoing, no nonsense kind of a guy. A husband she can trust. A man she can easily control, because my sister loves to be in control. I can hardly wait to meet him. *(Porter returns with a cart, but he now has a black-eye, and clothes torn up, and in disarray.)*

PORTER. Your cart, Sir.

BUMPAS. I see I chose the right man. Well, Porter at least a black-eye heals faster than a rupture. Ha-Ha-Ha.

(Lily enters Stage Left wearing her cape and carrying a bag full of publicity handbills. Bumpas and Porter notice her, as she pauses behind pillar, hidden from the Rightmires who enter Stage Left and pause near the entrance to talk. Lily eavesdrops.)

BUMPAS. Voom!

RIGHTMIRE. You can wait right here in the Ladies' Room while I get a ticket.

VICTORIA. I can go with you, Wilburforce. *(Bellows enters Stage Left, hurrying toward the Rightmires.)*

BELLOWS. I'll buy the ticket. That will give you two more time to be together.

VICTORIA. Why, Bruce, how thoughtful of you. And my faithful husband, it would also be very thoughtful if you sent me a telegraph telling me you've arrived safely.

RIGHTMIRE. Sure, my darling. *(Stressed, takes out money and hands it secretly to Bellows. The two strike a confidential pose.)*

BELLOWS. On second thought, Rightmire, I need to discuss a confidential legal matter before you go. Victoria, we will be right back. *(Bellows and Rightmire move Down Stage center, near a pillar, away from Victoria.)*

BELLOWS. I have thought of a way out!

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

RIGHTMIRE. Thank goodness! What's the plan?

(Annabelle enters Stage Left, carrying packages. She stops near the entrance, looks around, sees Victoria and approaches her, stopping nearby Lily. Rightmire and Bellows see Lily near Annabelle. They do a double take at the same time, and both try to hide behind another pillar to avoid their wives.) You better go get that ticket, Bellows. *(Bellows moves Stage Left to ticket office.)*

LILY. *(Under her breath.)* Why it's Mrs. Bellows with that same ill-tempered mouth. Oh, dear. *(Lily looks pointedly at Annabelle who stares back at her. Lily moves to the other side of the pillar.)*

ANNABELLE. This is not a proper place for a woman alone. *(Annabelle approaches Victoria.)*

VICTORIA. Annabelle, did you see that creature staring at me? *(Indicates Lily.)* I hope she isn't on the same train as Wilburforce.

RIGHTMIRE. *(Aside.)* What are the odds that all three ladies would be here at the same time? What have I done? *(Beat.)* I am being punished.

ANNABELLE. Come with me to the Ladies Waiting Room.

VICTORIA. I know it's not customary for a woman to go to the Ladies alone, but I don't want to miss a moment with my Wilburforce. But I'll go with you anyway. *(Victoria & Annabelle moves to the Ladies Waiting Room.)*

CONDUCTOR'S VOICE. Now boarding on Track Number Nine... for River Dale, Saint Vincent, Tarrytown and Poughkeepsie! All aboard!

PORTER. Where shall I tell the driver to take you to, Sir?

BUMPAS. To my dear sister at... Shoot. Now what was the address again? It's in her letter. Hang on. Her address is... a... a... Now where did I put that letter? *(Checks pants pocket.)* I'm certain it was in this pocket.

BUMPAS. *(Notices a large hole in the pocket and sticks his hand through and can't find it.)* Oh, no. It's gone. Porter, where can I find a phone directory?

PORTER. At the cigar stand, Sir. I will take you there.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BUMPAS. Much obliged. I shouldn't have any problem looking up my sister's new name. I mean, how many Wilburforce Rightmires can there be?

(Bumpas and Porter move to the Cigar Stand. Bellows returns, ticket in hand, and looks around for Rightmire, who is still cowering behind a pillar.)

BELLOWS. Oh, there you are!

RIGHTMIRE. I think I am going back to the office.

BELLOWS. No, you're not. *(Gives him the train ticket.)* Too late. *(Rightmire looks at ticket, and is suddenly alarmed.)*

Round trip to River Dale? What about Poughkeepsie?

BELLOWS. Sh-sh-sh! Don't you get it?

RIGHTMIRE. I wish I did.

BELLOWS. Victoria will see you leave on the train that goes to Poughkeepsie. But, the first stop is River Dale. Less than ten minutes from here.

RIGHTMIRE. And this helps me... how?

BELLOWS. You get off in River Dale and take the return train back to Grand Central.

RIGHTMIRE. What about the telegram Victoria wants me to send her from Poughkeepsie?

BELLOWS. When I purchased your ticket, I contacted a friend that works at Western Union to send a telegram to Victoria--"My Dear Little One..."

RIGHTMIRE. Why, that's my special endearment I use for Victoria!

BELLOWS. I know! And she'll believe that! Don't worry, my friend will send the telegram on time...

RIGHTMIRE. You work awfully fast, Bellows.

BELLOWS. Practice, my friend, practice. I've so much practice I could be at Carnegie Hall! Ha-ha-ha! *(Bellows gestures folding money to Rightmire.)*

RIGHTMIRE. Oh, a bribe. I'm paying for an awful lot.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BELLOWS. Of course. It's your adventure... Oh, and there's another thing, Wilbur.

RIGHTMIRE. Oh, no. Another thing!

BELLOWS. I won't be joining you tonight. *(Rightmire nearly explodes, but Bellows puts a hand over his mouth. Lily overhears this from her hiding spot and reacts.)*

LILY. I've got to get a message to Happy.
(Bumpas and Porter return as Lily approaches.)

LILY. *(Moves to Bumpas.)* Porter, can you tell me where the telegraph office is?

BUMPAS. You could ask a railroad employee.

LILY. Pardon me. You look like a railroad porter. *(Lily looks back and forth from the Porter to Bumpas, eyeing their uniforms.)*

BUMPAS. My Dear Madam, I am a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy. A gunnery officer.

LILY. I need to get a message to my friend Miss Happy Knight.

BUMPAS. THE Happy Knight... of the Garden of Eden?

LILY. The same one.

BUMPAS. What a small world. I have been there! Does Happy Knight still do those amazing contortions?

LILY. Absolutely! But, have you never heard of the star of show...? Me?

BUMPAS. And who are you?

LILY. You really don't know who I am?

BUMPAS. I've been out of the country for the past four years, Miss.

LILY. *(Relieved.)* That explains it. I am now the Headliner at the Garden. For the past three years.

BUMPAS. And may I ask, what is your specialty?

LILY. I am Lily Le Fleur, the world-famous jazz dancer. *(Puts hands on her hips and boom booms once discreetly. Bumpas startled, drops his suitcase on Porter's toes. Porter winces in pain, as he picks up the suitcase and places it on cart.)*

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LILY. (*Cont'd.*) Now that you are back in New York, will you promise to come and see me perform? Then, you too can become one of my beloved “Alfreds.”

BUMPAS. I promise! And soon! I’d love to be an Alfred.

LILY. And keep reading the papers. I will soon be there – well-displayed on the Front Page. I promise.

BUMPAS. I sure hope so.

LILY. Perhaps one of you gentleman can help me?

BUMPAS & PORTER. (*Simultaneously.*) Anything!

LILY. Where is the Western Union window?

PORTER. The office is just over there, Miss.

LILY. Thank you, Porter. (*Hands them each one of her publicity handbills, and then moves away after waving “toodle oo.” Bumpas and Porter are transfixed.*)

BUMPAS. Ah, New York – what distractions, I mean attractions!

PORTER. Sir, do you still want the phone directory? (*Bumpas snaps out of his trance.*)

BUMPAS. Oh, yes! Right. (*Bumpas and Porter exit Stage Left. Bellows and Rightmire move to rejoin Victoria & Annabelle who are exiting the Ladies Waiting Room. Victoria is without her umbrella.*)

BELLOWS. Ah, here are our lovely ladies.

VICTORIA. Oh, dear. This is the first time I’ll be alone at night. It’s not too late... why don’t I get a ticket and go with you? (*Rightmire and Bellows cry out together.*)

RIGHTMIRE & BELLOWS. (*Simultaneously.*) NO!! (*Victoria looks shocked and steps back.*)

VICTORIA. Have I said something wrong? To want to be with my husband?

RIGHTMIRE. Oh, no, no, no, my dear. It’s just the suddenness...

BELLOWS. And the confidentiality. That is very important.

RIGHTMIRE. My dear, you are so beautiful and lovely, if you were to come with me to Poughkeepsie, why, everyone would notice you.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BELLOWS. And then there would go the confidentiality...

BELLOWS & RIGHTMIRE. (Simultaneously.) Right down the drain!

VICTORIA. Wilburforce, you know I'm not used to being alone.

BELLOWS. (Aside.) Or getting your own way.

RIGHTMIRE. In some ways, Victoria, you are spoiled. Yes, I've spoiled you. All of my cases are here in the city, and I've never had to leave.

BELLOWS. That's good, Rightmire. (*Victoria glances at Bellows quizzically.*) I mean, that's so true. Much different than me and Annabelle. I'm always away at night handling Real Estate contracts.

VICTORIA. Oh, Annabelle just hates that. I guess I'm really fortunate, after all... But, this better not become a habit!

(*Lily finished sending her telegram and is moving in their direction.*)

RIGHTMIRE. (*Spots Lily. To himself.*) Oh, no, Lily! What bad luck. (*Rightmire and Bellows try to hide their faces but Lily comes up to them.*)

VICTORIA. (*Moves toward Rightmire, who blocks Lily by turning his back and stepping toward Victoria. Lily moves away from them to eavesdrop and observe, unseen by Victoria.*) Oh, embrace me, my love. (*Annabelle returns from the Ladies Waiting Room.*)

RIGHTMIRE. Victoria, I'm going to miss my train.

VICTORIA. Wilburforce, darling! I'll be thinking only of you as I sleep alone tonight.

(*Victoria and Rightmire hug. Lily watches them together.*)

LILY. So, Mrs. Bellows is hugging Rightmire.

VICTORIA. (*Tearful.*) All alone, while you're in Poughkeepsie.

LILY. He's going to Poughkeepsie and he didn't even have the courtesy to cancel our dinner? There goes my chance to be well-displayed. (*Hear train whistle.*)

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

CONDUCTOR'S VOICE. All aboard...for River Dale, Saint Vincent, Tarrytown and Poughkeepsie! Now boarding on Track Number Nine.

RIGHTMIRE. Victoria, I must hurry!

CONDUCTOR'S VOICE. Final call! All aboard. (*Victoria, Annabelle and Bellows wave to Rightmire as he boards the offstage train. Victoria and Annabelle turn to leave. Lily spots Bellows. He motions for her to be quiet.*)

BELLOWS. (*To Victoria and Annabelle.*) I forgot to get a newspaper today. I'll meet you both by the entrance. (*Bellows moves to Lily as Victoria and Annabelle begins to move towards the exit.*)

LILY. Bruce! Alfred, Alfred-Bruce, I thought tonight I was meeting my other "Alfred," but he just got on the train. Has he stood me up?

BELLOWS. Ssssh! I promise your other dear Alfred will be back in plenty of time.

LILY. You're sure?

BELLOWS. I'm so disappointed but something came up. And so, I cannot join you tonight.

LILY. But you're sure my "Alfred-Wilbur" will be there?

BELLOWS. Don't worry. It's all set. Eleven o'clock. (*Annabelle looks over shoulder and sees Bellows with Lily. Annabelle quickly moves back to Bellows. Victoria pauses and waits for Annabelle. Lily moves off but observes Bellows and Annabelle from the side.*)

ANNABELLE. Brucie, do you know that "person" over there? I saw you speaking to her.

BELLOWS. "Person"? Oh, uh... She was looking for the Ladies' Room.

ANNABELLE. And where's the newspaper?

BELLOWS. Oh, the newspaper.

LILY. I never thought I'd see a mistress treat a lover like... like... a husband.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

ANNABELLE. *(To herself.)* People think I was crazy to marry “Brucie the Flirt.” But he loves me and he knows I love him. Would he ever cheat on me? If he ever did that. *(Annabelle is suddenly, very angry.)* If he did I would divorce him and take every cent he has. *(Opens her purse and flaunts the deed. Bellows reacts. Bumpas enters with directory in hand, still smoking his cigar.)*

LILY. It’s my gunner! *(Oblivious, Bumpas passes Lily with his nose buried in the directory. Bellows stares after Lily in a daze.)*

BUMPAS. Who’d have thought there’d would be thirteen Rightmires in Manhattan?

ANNABELLE. And what are you so dazed about, Bruce?

BELLOWS. Oh, Annabelle, I’m thinking about the evening we have ahead of us. Why don’t you sit here and wait for Victoria while I go hail a cab.

LILY. They all know each other! There used to be rules about these things.

VICTORIA. *(To Annabelle.)* Oh, oops, I forgot my umbrella. Go ahead. I’ll catch up. *(As Annabelle and Bellows exit. Victoria notices Bumpas and does a double-take. Bumpas, nose still buried in directory, doesn’t notice her.)*

BUMPAS. Oh, what the heck is my brother-in-law’s first name? Him... And I just said it just five minutes ago. *(Victoria stares at Bumpas in disbelief.)*

LILY. Now she has her eyes on my sailor. What a tramp! This is too crazy for me. I’m going to where Ladies still act like ladies. *(Lilly raises her hand and signals the approaching Porter.)* Will you get me a taxi to the Garden of Eden Night Club? *(As she exits, her publicity handbills are still on a bench.)*

VICTORIA. I don’t believe my eyes.

BUMPAS. I’ll begin with 2423 Seventh Avenue, “Horace Rightmire.” *(Victoria approaches him as Bumpas fumbles with the directory.)*

VICTORIA. Begin with “Wilburforce Rightmire, East Fifty-seventh Street.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BUMPAS. Victoria!

VICTORIA. Freddie! *(They embrace.)* I didn't know you were back.

BUMPAS. I'm on a long leave, and I thought I'd surprise you.

VICTORIA. You certainly did, Freddie. Oh, please put away that awful cigar. I am so glad to see you. *(Squints at the cigar smoke.)* The cigar please.

BUMPAS. *(Gets message and throws cigar away.)* Bossy as ever! But, Victoria, what in God's Name are you doing here by yourself – and in a train station? You never know who –

VICTORIA. – Not to worry, Dear Brother –

BUMPAS. Where is your Husband? I'm so eager to meet this fellow.

VICTORIA. You just missed him. Not five minutes ago. That's why I'm here. I was seeing him off. Wilburforce left for Poughkeepsie for a case. It's the first time we've been separated since we married.

BUMPAS. Then I'll keep you company until he returns.

VICTORIA. Tomorrow.

BUMPAS. Then let us make the most of tonight.

VICTORIA. It's so good to see you again.

BUMPAS. What shall we do? Where shall we go? Just you and me. We'll have fun tonight.

VICTORIA. We don't go out often. All my Wilburforce does is work, work, work! *(Bumpas and Victoria embrace as Lily re-enters looking all around.)*

LILY. I was in such a hurry I left my handbills around here. Now where did I leave them? *(Moves past Bumpas and Victoria.)* Excuse me, Lieutenant.

VICTORIA. Lieutenant?

LILY. Have you seen my bag of handbills?

VICTORIA. No, he hasn't.

LILY. *(Under her breathe.)* She sure works fast. *(Lily and Victoria exchange dirty looks.)*

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BUMPAS. Lily.

VICTORIA. How do you know her name?

BUMPAS. (*Pointing.*) Lily, your handbills are on the bench.

(*Victoria looks knowingly at Bumpas.*)

LILY. Thank you. (*Moves to bench, picks up the bag and turns toward Bumpas and Victoria and breezily exits, winking at Bumpas, wiggling her fingers goodbye. Victoria playfully swats Bumpas's shoulder.*)

VICTORIA. Freddie, you haven't changed –

BUMPAS. Her name and picture here on the handbills. I couldn't help but notice... It's been four years since I've seen my sister, so let's just have some fun. We'll start the evening by seeing a Broadway show of your choosing.

VICTORIA. That will be fun.

BUMPAS. And then we'll have a late supper.

VICTORIA. Where?

BUMPAS. I know just the place.

VICTORIA. Where, Freddie? Tell me! (*Bumpas has Lily's publicity flyer in his hand, he is hiding it from Victoria.*)

BUMPAS. It's a surprise. We'll get a private dining room somewhere you've never been before, and then we can catch up on everything that's happened since I've been gone. After all, you're a married lady now, and I've been at sea.

VICTORIA. How can I indulge in all this excitement while Wilburforce is deposing in Poughkeepsie?

BUMPAS. Do you think he'd hesitate if you couldn't be there?

VICTORIA. My Wilburforce is a slave to his practice, but he is also quite dedicated to me. Why, he gave me a custom-made umbrella at our engagement and said it was a symbol of his protection. Oh, my umbrella! (*Spins around toward the ladies' room.*) If I hadn't left my umbrella in the Ladies' Lounge, I never would have run into you, Freddie. I will go get it, and we'll be on our way. I hope no one stole it.

BUMPAS. I'll wait here.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

VICTORIA. You could call a cab, Freddie. (*Quickly heads toward Ladies' Room.*)

BUMPAS. (*Under his breath.*) I love my sister, but this Wilburforce must be either a martyr or a masochist. (*Moves to exit as Bellows enters.*)

BELLOWS. Excuse me, Porter. When will the train from River Dale arrive?

BUMPAS. I am not a Porter. I'm a naval officer on leave, Sir.

BELLOWS. Oh, I'm terribly sorry! Your uniform looks just like –

BUMPAS. – I understand I've already been told that.

BELLOWS. Let me introduce myself. Bruce Bellows, Esquire. If you need a place to stay while in New York, here is my card. Real estate and law. Only first-class clientele.

BUMPAS. I'm Lieutenant Frederick Bumpas. (*Bellows and Bumpas exchange cards and tuck them into their vest pockets, shake hand and moves to the opposite direction. Bumpas remains waiting for Victoria. Rightmire enters from railroad platform and approaches Bellows.*)

BELLOWS. (*To Rightmire.*) I thought you left on the train!

RIGHTMIRE. (*To Bellows.*) I realized something: I don't have to actually take the train. She'll never know I actually didn't go to Poughkeepsie.

BELLOWS. Like a bird set free from a guilty cage.

RIGHTMIRE. But if I get caught?

BELLOWS. Don't think about that. Think about having one entire evening to enjoy yourself.

RIGHTMIRE. Enjoy myself.

BELLOWS. I've got to take my wife shopping and dinner. (*Looking at his watch.*) I'm already late.

RIGHTMIRE. You're deserting me?

BELLOWS. Annabelle plans to shop at Gimbles, and you know the deal. I really want that Newark property and if Annabelle doesn't get what she wants, she won't sign the deed. She's blackmailing me.

A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

RIGHTMIRE. So, you're abandoning me?

BELLOWS. I maybe be able to meet you at the Garden of Eden. Around eleven tonight. *(Under his breathe.)* IF I can get away.

RIGHTMIRE. What will I do until then?

BELLOWS. Well... Uh... Do you play pool?

RIGHTMIRE. Pool! Now you're talking.

BELLOWS. All right then. Dugan's. It's right on the Bowery. There won't be a lot of people there at this time, and I know the owner.

RIGHTMIRE. And you know this Dugan guy, how?

BELLOWS. I sold him a place on Fire Island. *(Hands him a card.)* Show him my card. Get a sandwich, play some pool. Dugan will take good care of you.

RIGHTMIRE. I hope so.

BELLOWS. You can hang out until it's time to catch Lily's show. Problems solved! Eleven o'clock at Garden of Eden Rendezvous room. Order champagne... And don't worry! *(Quickly moves to Annabelle who waits patiently.)* Time to go, my dear! To begin our special evening. *(Bellows & Annabelle exit.)*

RIGHTMIRE. *(Under his breath.)* Don't worry, he says. *(Rightmire stands bewildered. Bumpas enters with Porter pushing his luggage cart toward the exit. Rightmire never sees Bumpas' face, only his back. Rightmire sees Victoria returning with her cherished umbrella. He quickly pulls up his collar and slinks behind a trunk.)*

VICTORIA. *(To Bumpas.)* Sorry I took so long. I ran into a friend from the Junior League. Did you get the cab?

BUMPAS. The cab's waiting for us out front. *(Bumpas and Victoria exit. Rightmire takes a deep breath.)* This has got to get easier... *(Fade to black.)*

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS--
ORDER A COPY AT WWW.NEXTSTAGEPRESS.COM***