

Young Alice
Young Jimmy Ray

SCENE 5

(1923. A HOUSE IN THE VERY SMALL TOWN
OF ZEBULON, NORTH CAROLINA.)

(JIMMY RAY (20), the Mayor's son, works
outdoors under a tree. He fiddles with
an old ice box on the street. ALICE
enters, now age 16.)

(She approaches Jimmy Ray.)

ALICE

Now that's a sight. The Mayor's son with his sleeves rolled
up repairing an ice box.

JIMMY RAY

Well, if it isn't the little princess of Zebulon. Princess,
what's the matter with repairing an ice box?

ALICE

Jimmy Ray, an ice box has no moving parts. My granny could
repair an ice box. There's ice and a box. I think you're
just showing off your muscles.

JIMMY RAY

Keep talking, Alice Murphy. I'm curious how your mind
works.

ALICE

Okay. You remind me of Adonis. You know who Adonis is?

JIMMY RAY

I sure do. He's a Greek God.

ALICE

Well, you remind me of him. In fact, you remind me of the
myth of Adonis when he repaired the ice box.

JIMMY RAY

You ever think you might be too smart for this town?

ALICE

All the time.

JIMMY RAY

What makes you so sure?

COPY

#1

COPY

COPY

#1

ALICE

I entered an essay contest in Raleigh. The first prize was five dollars, and I won it.

JIMMY RAY

What was it about?

ALICE

I wrote about how there should be a rebirth of Southern writers, all writing about the Southern way, and that's how we can make our voices known.

JIMMY RAY

I don't know how a group of judges from Raleigh could turn that down.

ALICE

They couldn't. I took that five dollars and put it toward my college fund.

JIMMY RAY

How much do you have in your college fund?

ALICE

Five dollars.
(then)
Want a biscuit?

JIMMY RAY

I wouldn't mind havin' a biscuit.

(ALICE takes one over to him. He reaches out for it.)

ALICE

Your hands are dirty! You don't want to eat a dirty biscuit.

JIMMY RAY

You better feed it to me then.

ALICE

Now, you and I were thinking the exact same thought.

(ALICE feeds him the biscuit.)

COPY

#1

JIMMY RAY

You got a little wildcat about you, Alice Murphy.

ALICE

What's that book?

(ALICE grabs the book out of his toolbox.)

JIMMY RAY

Hey there!

(ALICE looks at the title.)

F. Scott Fitzgerald. He's a new writer.

ALICE

(reads)

I know who he is. "The Beautiful and Damned." Is that us, Jimmy Ray?

JIMMY RAY

Damned if I know, but you're sure beautiful. I finished it. You can keep it.

ALICE

If my daddy sees the title he'll kill me.

JIMMY RAY

Read it under the covers.

#5 WHOA, MAMA

ALICE

(looks at poster for dance)

So, who you gonna take to the Couples' Day dance?

JIMMY RAY

I don't know yet.

ALICE

Well, I'm standing right here in front of you.

JIMMY RAY

That's not proper, you asking me.

COPY

TRM Not for Production

COPY

Mayor
Young Jimmy Rae
Stanford

#2

SCENE 7

(1923. ZEBULON. MAYOR'S LIVING ROOM.)

(The living room of MAYOR DOBBS (43).)

COPY
(MAYOR DOBBS, a powerful man, physically and professionally, stands with his lawyer, STANFORD ADAMS. JIMMY RAY enters.)

MAYOR

Jimmy Ray. You were supposed to be here a while ago. Thank you, ladies.

JIMMY RAY

Sorry, Daddy, I was out fixing Aunt Idell's icebox.

MAYOR

(to STANFORD)

Can you believe my son? I'm trying to hand over an empire to this boy and he's out fixing an icebox.

(picks up a document)

What's that?

JIMMY RAY

(grabs paper)

Application for college. I've been thinking about it.

MAYOR

Four years away from home when everything you need to learn I'm teaching you here within these walls? Your grandfather taught me and I teach you. That chain must not be broken.

JIMMY RAY

Well, Daddy, I understand, but I thought we'd discussed this.

MAYOR

Stanford, do I sense disinclination?

STANFORD

None of my business, Mayor.

JIMMY RAY

There's a whole world outside Zebulon. I want to get to know it.

summer set theatre 2024 32
Season 54

COPY
1-7-pg1.

MAYOR

Who are you getting this from? Where's that book you were reading?

JIMMY RAY

I gave it away.

MAYOR

Good. Let the Jazz Age infect someone else.

STANFORD

Mayor, the Conklins.

JIMMY RAY

The Conklins? In Charlotte? What about them?

MAYOR

They've got a beautiful daughter. Ola.

STANFORD

Well, a daughter with resources.

JIMMY RAY

Stanford, what exactly isn't your business?

MAYOR

The Conklins are a family with produce trucks that drive across this state, and we are the second biggest purveyors of produce for three hundred miles.

JIMMY RAY

You want me to marry someone for her trucks?

MAYOR

That's an equation they don't teach in college.

JIMMY RAY

Where's the romance in that?

(The MAYOR looks over at STANFORD.)

MAYOR

Romance?

STANFORD

(snide)

I have no comment.

COPY

#2

JIMMY RAY

(to Stanford)

No comment? What do you think that was?

MAYOR

Just have lunch with her.

JIMMY RAY

I couldn't do that. I know their daughter. She's a dumbbell.

MAYOR

Doesn't have to be her. The Wilsons in Winston-Salem have a daughter and a very active horse farm.

JIMMY RAY

I've met her. She is indistinguishable from the horses.

MAYOR

How about Naomi Weiss? The daughter of tobacco. And she plays the banjo.

(then)

All right, I know.

JIMMY RAY

Daddy, I couldn't carry on a conversation with any of them.

MAYOR

You don't have to carry on a conversation. You ever seen me carry on a conversation with your mother?

STANFORD

It's not necessary.

JIMMY RAY

And that is a tragedy.

MAYOR

Son, the way it works is the business is handed down, and we marry conveniently. In order to live well.

#7 A MAN'S GOTTA DO

Billy
Margo

Summerset theatre 2024
Season 54

#3

BILLY CANE

Hello, Margo. The bookstore looks spick-and-span.

MARGO

I just made room for a new magazine rack.

BILLY CANE

Well, that's appropriate.

MARGO

Oh? How?

BILLY CANE

I've got something for you.

(He digs in his pocket.)

MARGO

You said you did. I was wondering...

*(He produces a folded piece of paper.
MARGO looks at it; opens it.)*

BILLY CANE

It's my new address.

MARGO

Oh.

BILLY CANE

In Asheville. I'm going to live there and write there.

MARGO

Are you sure that's...

(He shows her the check.)

Ten dollars? From the Asheville Southern Journal.

BILLY CANE

Not published yet, but...

MARGO

Oh Billy, that's so exciting! A real adventure.

BILLY CANE

I can still send you my stories. That all right?

COPY

COPY

#3

MARGO

(gathers herself)

Of course. You're going to need someone to cash that check.

BILLY CANE

Are you kidding? I'm going to frame it.

MARGO

If you frame it, you can't cash it.

BILLY CANE

Hello and goodbye. Will you miss me?

MARGO

Like I miss trouble.

BILLY CANE

Did you ever think that you might be selling a magazine with one of my stories in it?

(She hands him the money.)

MARGO

Yes.

BILLY CANE

Oh Margo, I could almost kiss you!

(He shakes her hand. BILLY disappears down the road and is out of sight.)

#8 ASHEVILLE

Alice

Sunset theatre 2024
Season 54

Billy

ALICE

(to LUCY and DARYL)

Thank you.

(to Billy)

Mr. Cane, your latest submission is a bit of a mess. What's going on?

BILLY CANE

I'm sorry, Miss Murphy. I'd sent it to Margo and hadn't gotten it back yet. So I just turned it in. Frankly, I'm getting a little discouraged.

ALICE

Well, don't get discouraged. Work on it with Daryl. He's a fine editor.

(She hands him the manuscript.)

BILLY CANE

Why did my mouth just go dry? How about if I work with Lucy?

ALICE

No, I should keep you out of harm's way.

(He starts to go.)

BILLY CANE

Miss Murphy, what do you think of it?

ALICE

What do I think of it?

BILLY CANE

Yes.

ALICE

Well, first you need to cut out three hundred words...

BILLY CANE

Three hundred?! Which three hundred?

ALICE

The superfluous ones.

(then)

You look shocked.

BILLY CANE

I always thought that was pronounced "superFLUous."

ALICE

And, you should open with your second paragraph, not the first. The action begins there.

#4

COPY

COPY

BILLY CANE

What do I do with the first paragraph?

#4

ALICE

Turn it into a lullaby because it put me to sleep. Look.

(She shows him the heavily penciled manuscript.)

BILLY CANE

Anything else?

ALICE

You have to cut the word "twixt."

BILLY CANE

Wait, what's the matter with "twixt?" You don't like "twixt?"

ALICE

Use "between."

BILLY CANE

Why?

ALICE

Because a man wrote this, not Tinkerbelle.
(then)

And the second to the last paragraph should be cut.

BILLY CANE

What? I cried when I wrote that.

ALICE

Clearly. It's as purple as a baboon's butt.

BILLY CANE

(shocked)

Miss Murphy!

ALICE

Well, it's true.

(then, thoughtfully)

And then there's this last sentence. It flows nicely, but I'm curious.

BILLY CANE

About?

ALICE

Now why...why, Mr. Cane, would you end your essay with a word ninety-nine percent of our readers would have to look up?

(reads)

Dot dot dot, "the longing of the human heart and its search for propinquity."

BILLY CANE

I did that on purpose, Miss Murphy.

ALICE

Why?

BILLY CANE

It's the only five-dollar word in the whole piece. And because of it, I get the impact of the ending twice. The reader lands on a striking word with an elegant cadence. "Propinquity." Then, the reader goes to the dictionary...

(he mimes the action of picking up a dictionary)

"The longing of the human heart and its search for..."

(he opens the pages of the imaginary dictionary)

...closeness."

(There is a pause.)

ALICE

I'll tell you what. If you can sway Daryl, you can sway me.

BILLY CANE

So then there's hope.

ALICE

Let me put it this way. No one has ever swayed Daryl.

(She exits.)

#4

COPY

COPY

Daryl
Lucy
Billy

(1946. People are dancing - along with LUCY and DARYL - to a jazzed up version of Asheville. They separate from the dancers. Light music continues.)

#5

DARYL

I gave Miss Murphy one of my humor pieces.

LUCY

Oh, great Daryl! What did she say?

DARYL

She said she really liked it and could I turn it into a humor piece.

(BILLY enters.)

Well, look who walked in. Does he know this place sells intoxicating beverages?

LUCY

(rising)

I say he's lonely. Let's find out.

(LUCY goes over to him.)

Well, boy meets girl. This calls for a sloe gin fizz.

BILLY CANE

It does?

LUCY

It does.

BILLY CANE

I'll have one.

LUCY

Have you had one before?

BILLY CANE

I've seen photos.

LUCY

So, you lonely since you've been here?

BILLY CANE

Every evening I have a date...with my typewriter.

LUCY

That's not company. This is what a real person feels like, in case you forgot.

(She takes his hand.)

BILLY CANE

That does feel real.

Summerset Theatre
Season 54
2024

COPY

2-2-pg1.

LUCY
There's more where that came from.

*(She offers the other hand. He takes it
- for a moment. DARYL delivers the two
gin fizzes.)*

DARYL
Don't drink 'em both, Lucy.

(DARYL exits.)

LUCY
Here you are.
(he tastes)
What do you think?

BILLY CANE
It's sweet and tart at the same time.

DARYL
Just like Lucy.

(BILLY takes another swig.)

LUCY
It's called a sloe gin fizz, but you don't have to drink it
slow.
*(She downs her glass, and helps BILLY
down his.)*

BILLY CANE
You are a modern woman, Lucy.

LUCY
A bit.

BILLY CANE
You want to be a writer?

LUCY
Better than that. I want to be a censor.

BILLY CANE
A censor? Why a censor?

LUCY
When I was twelve, I gave my father a Raymond Chandler
mystery novel. I was watching him read it and suddenly, his
face went the color of a rose. He set the book face down
and called for my mother and took her into another part of
the house and shut the door. I went over to the book to see
what he had just read, and right there in the middle of the
page was the word "brassiere." I thought, "this must never
happen again." So now, a few nights a week, I take a
manuscript home, fix myself a Manhattan, and search for
hidden erotic content. Would you like to do that with me
sometime?

#5

COPY

COPY

BILLY CANE

Well...

LUCY

Well? What? You got a girl back home?

BILLY CANE

Well, no...uh...I don't know.

LUCY

Well, don't bring her to Asheville.

BILLY CANE

Why not?

LUCY

(indicates her body)

Because country girls flatten out under the city lights.

(she calls to the waiter)

Another round!

#17 ANOTHER ROUND

BILLY CANE

Really?

DARYL

You heard the lady.

LUCY

Lady? Please! Not on a Friday night!

ALL WEEK LONG I'M UP TO MY ELBOWS
WORKIN' AWAY AT MY 9 TO 5

I'M NOT GONNA WASTE AWAY AT HOME
HITTIN' THE TOWN EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT

POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND

COPY

COPY