

FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS
by Nicholas Martin
(1944)

Some short scenes and character roles with brief dialogue have not been included from the original. Some scenes have been combined when the action or dialogue is otherwise continuous. The focus remains on Florence, Bayfield, and Cosme. Included are the scenes involving Kathleen Weatherly and Carlo Edwards as well as the maid, Kitty, who have integral exchanges with Florence and Bayfield. Descriptions and locations are consistent with the film.

INT. VERDI CLUB - NIGHT

Inside the Ritz Carlton Hotel in New York City, and on stage is charming and debonair ST. CLAIR BAYFIELD reciting a monologue to the assembled Verdi Club members.

ST. CLAIR BAYFIELD
'Swounds I should take it,
for it cannot be but I am
pigeon-livered and lack
gall to make oppression
bitter, or ere this I
should have fattened all the
region kites with this
slave's offal. Bloody,
bawdy villain! Remorseless,
treacherous, lecherous,
kindless villain! O
vengeance!

The Verdi Club members, slow on the fact that the performance is suddenly over, politely clap that turns into a boisterous applause.

ST. CLAIR BAYFIELD
Thank you. Thank you very
much. Thank you. Thank you,
thank you. That was, of
course, a speech of
Hamlet's from a play I was
lucky enough to perform in
on several occasions,
though not, as yet, in the
principal role.

With a wink to stage right, Bayfield continues.

BAYFIELD

Our next tableau features someone who has devoted herself to the musical life of this city. Amongst others, she is patron of the Euterpe Club, of the Brooklyn Orchestra for Distressed Gentlewomen, as well as, of course, our very own Verdi Club. Let us journey back in time to 1850 and the state of Alabama.

Bayfield steps to stage left as the curtain opens to STEPHEN FOSTER playing tunelessly at the piano, frustrated and desperate to develop a melody.

BAYFIELD

America's greatest popular songwriter, Stephen Foster, has run out of ideas. He's a desperate man. But wait. What is this?

Bayfield points up.

INT. VERDI CLUB - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Three men struggle with a rope.

STAGE MANAGER

Now.

The men slowly let the rope up so that the object at the other end would lower. The wheels and rope squeak under the weight.

STAGE MANAGER

More.

INT. VERDI CLUB - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

From above a chiffon white gown appears, the tips of toes peeking through. As the squeaking of wheels and

the grunts of the men continue, more and more of the angel appears with feathered wings, tunelessly playing a golden harp until FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS appears bejeweled with diamonds and a feathered crown looking like the cross between an angel and a albino rooster.

BAYFIELD

It is the Angel of
Inspiration sent from on
high.

Florence continues to be lowered through applause, squeaks and grunts, occasionally halting as the contraption stutters from moment to moment, taking Florence out of character to wonder what is happening, and then continue to lower her, now horizontal and swinging back and forth, toward Stephen Foster who looks up in amazement. Florence is lowered until she is face to face with Stephen Foster.

Florence taps Stephen Foster on his bald head and there is a DING. Stephen Foster, suddenly filled with inspiration, turns back to the piano and plays Oh Susanna.

BAYFIELD

At last, Stephen Foster can
write his song.

Stephen Foster taps out the tune and begins singing tentatively.

STEPHEN FOSTER

I came from Alabama with my
banjo on my knee. I'm goin'
to Louisiana, my true love
for to see.

Bayfield leads a clap in tempo to the music while Stephen Foster plays and sings with gusto. A chorus of 1850 clad men and women come out of the wings singing and dancing. Florence continues to hang forlornly from the rope struggling to smile and hang on to that harp. She starts to swing side to side.

STEPHEN FOSTER AND CHORUS

Oh, Susanna! Oh, don't you
cry for me.

INT. VERDI CLUB - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

The men struggle against the weight and awkwardness of the contraption.

STAGE MANAGER
Hold her. Hold her!

INT. VERDI CLUB - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Stephen Foster and the chorus finish the song in a crescendo.

STEPHEN FOSTER AND CHORUS
I came from Alabama with my
banjo on my knee.

The crowd cheers and applauds.

BAYFIELD
The Angel of Inspiration,
featuring Madam Florence
Foster Jenkins!

The curtain closes on a smiling Florence.

INT. VERDI CLUB - GREEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Florence is removing her costume. Bayfield enters filled with enthusiasm. Florence is not enthusiastic.

BAYFIELD
It's going very, very, very
well.

FLORENCE
I don't feel that I imbued
the moment of inspiration
with the intensity it
deserved, but it was a
serviceable attempt.

BAYFIELD
Better than serviceable. It
was good.

FLORENCE
My amulets, please.

BAYFIELD

Armlets.

He assists Florence with placing the armlets onto her upper arms.

FLORENCE

Has the impending potato-salad catastrophe been averted?

BAYFIELD

Even as I speak, the chef has a team out scouring Manhattan for chives.

FLORENCE

No chives. What next, I wonder!

Bayfield continues to assist her by adjusting her cape.

BAYFIELD

Unconscionable, but they tell me there is a war on, Bunny.

OVERHEAD SPEAKER

Valkyries on stage, please. The overture has begun.

FLORENCE

What about the sandwiches?

BAYFIELD

Ham and tomato, plain cucumber and chicken with a hint of Dijon mustard.

Bayfield assists Florence with her Valkyrie helmet and curly, longhaired, blonde wig.

BAYFIELD

Actually delicious.

FLORENCE

Excellent. How do I look?

BAYFIELD

Wunderbar!

Florence grabs a leather briefcase. Bayfield escorts her out of the green room.

BAYFIELD

Now, schnell, schnell. Go on, quickly. You're a very naughty Valkyrie.

INT. VERDI CLUB - STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Bayfield appears onstage as the orchestra plays Richard Wagner's Ride of the Valkyries. Bayfield introduces the next act with dramatic flair.

BAYFIELD

We now come to the finale of our evening. I should warn you that the vision you're about to witness will be both shocking and terrifying. A battle is raging. Volleys of arrows pierce the air. Shields clash and swords do their terrible work. But swooping down from the clouds comes the most terrible spectre of all. Ladies and gentlemen, the Verdi Club presents the Ride of the Valkyries!

Bayfield steps aside as the curtain opens THUNDER and a display of four women dressed in white robes, steel breastplates, horned helmets and long, curly, blonde wigs. They pose triumphantly with lances held phallicly to the sky. Florence stands in the middle on the highest rock formation, her arms held wide open. Four slain male warriors lay bloody at their feet. An off stage fan blows wind into which Florence turns dramatically allowing the wind to blow her blonde curls back exposing her red hair below. She sneaks a look at the audience to see their response. The audience, taken by the drama, applauds wildly.

BLUE HAired AUDIENCE LADY
Oh! Oh, my God! Bravo!

INT. VERDI CLUB - DINING AREA FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

ORLANDO ADAMS, conductor of the Verdi Club orchestra,
presents a narrow gift to Florence.

ORLANDO ADAMS
It is my pleasure to
present you with this small
token of our esteem.

FLORENCE
Oh! Thank you. Shall I open
it?

AUDIENCE
Yes!

FLORENCE
(opens to a diamond
encrusted watch)
Well, this is beautiful.
Thank you. Thank you all so
very much. You know, years
ago when I founded the
Verdi Club, I never could
have imagined that I would
be here tonight, 25 years
on, with my beloved husband
by my side. Music... Music
has been, and is, my life.
Music matters. Thank you.

The audience and orchestra applaud
warmly.

BAYFIELD
Bravo!

FLORENCE
And at this dark moment in
our history, with our brave
boys fighting for
civilization itself, it
matters more than ever. So
I implore you to continue
to support the musical life

of this city.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - ENTRANCE - LATER THAT NIGHT

KITTY, Florence's maid, opens the door of the posh Manhattan apartment, located in Hotel Seymour, to Florence dressed in fur and a beautiful velvet dress. Bayfield, dressed in his tuxedo, overcoat and top hat, enters behind her. Kitty takes the fur.

KITTY

Good evening, Madam
Florence.

FLORENCE

Hello, Kitty.

KITTY

How did it go?

BAYFIELD

Very, very well, thank you.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - BEDROOM -
CONTINUOUS

Bayfield tucks Florence into bed.

BAYFIELD

And now, my bunny, you must
sleep.

FLORENCE

I don't want this day to
end.

BAYFIELD

I know, I know. Shut your
eyes.

FLORENCE

Only if you recite for me.

BAYFIELD

Very well. Let me not to
the marriage of true minds
admit impediments. Love is
not love Which alters when
it alteration finds, or

bends with the remover to
remove: O no.

Florence falls asleep. Kitty enters to assist. Bayfield removes Florence's wig and hands it to Kitty who places it on the manikin head. Bayfield carefully removes Florence's eyelashes. Kitty places a turban on Florence's head while Bayfield assists. Bayfield checks his watch and times Florence's pulse, while Kitty turns off the lights. Bayfield notes her vital signs in the small notebook at the side of the table. He kisses Florence on the forehead. Florence stirs lightly.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Kitty assists Bayfield with his overcoat
and his top hat.

BAYFIELD
Thank you, Kitty.

KITTY
Goodnight, Mr Bayfield.

BAYFIELD
Goodnight.

EXT. FLORENCE'S HOME - STREET ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Bayfield exits Hotel Seymour to the
DOORMAN standing on duty.

BAYFIELD
A taxi if I may. Thank you.

The Doorman hails a taxi and he opens the
door for Bayfield.

BAYFIELD
Thank you very much.

DOORMAN
Goodnight, sir.

INT. TAXICAB - NIGHT

Bayfield watches the city go by as he is
driven along.

EXT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bayfield's taxicab arrives and Bayfield gets out of the cab. He ascends the stairs.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Bayfield enters a well-appointed, but lower class apartment. He goes to the desk and begins going through the day's mail. KATHLEEN WETHERLY enters with a drink in her hand.

KATHLEEN

Welcome home, darling. I'm a tad drunk.

BAYFIELD

Oh. Lucky you.

KATHLEEN

How was Florence?

BAYFIELD

Magnificent.

KATHLEEN

And you?

BAYFIELD

I would say I gave an adequate performance.

KATHLEEN

I wish I could have come.

BAYFIELD

How was Augustus's play?

KATHLEEN

Oh, terrible. (hands him drink) Finish it. I'm teaching first thing. The oculist with bad breath and two left hands, both of which tend to wander.

Bayfield and Kathleen have a passionate welcome-home kiss.

KATHLEEN
I love you, St Clair.

BAYFIELD
Hmm. With knobs on.

They continue their kiss.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

Florence sits in bed reading the paper. She wears her turban and reading glasses. Bayfield, dressed in a day suit, carries in a breakfast tray with hot coffee for two, white flowers, and assorted food.

BAYFIELD
Good morning, Miss Rabbit.

FLORENCE
Have you seen the reviews, Whitey? Carlton Smith in the Musical Courier says it was the event of the season.

BAYFIELD
Well, it jolly well was. Now...

FLORENCE
No. Put it on the table. I'm getting up.

BAYFIELD
Bunny, that's not a good idea. Last night...

FLORENCE
On the table. Please. We have to plan the Verdi lunch.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - MORNING

Florence is studying a seating chart for the Verdi Club luncheon. Bayfield watches her while CHARLIE, a piano tuner, tunes the piano.

FLORENCE

Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no.
You can't put Mrs James
O'Flaherty next to the
baroness. She slurps her
soup.

BAYFIELD

Then let's serve smoked
trout, because I doubt that
even Mrs O'Flaherty could
slurp a trout.

FLORENCE

The Verdi luncheon always
begins with a soup. You
know that. How could we not
begin with a soup? There
would be a riot.

BAYFIELD

In that case, let us put
her over here on the card
table between Mr and Mrs
Levi. Perfect.

FLORENCE

No. Mrs O'Flaherty isn't
keen on the Jews. We'll put
her between Prince Galitzer
and Mrs Oscar Garmunder.

BAYFIELD

No.

FLORENCE

Yes. They're both deaf as
posts.

BAYFIELD

No!

FLORENCE

Yes!

Kitty enters.

KITTY

Maestro Toscanini is here.

FLORENCE

Oh.

BAYFIELD

Charlie, cup of coffee?

FLORENCE

Do show him in, Kitty,
please.

KITTY

Please come in.

Bayfield escorts Charlie from the room.

BAYFIELD

Thank you so much.

ARTURO TOSCANINI enters in all his glory with a shock of white hair, double-breasted pinstriped suit, designer bow tie and contrasting pocket silk. His smile is charming and his accent is Italian.

FLORENCE

Arturo. What a wonderful
surprise.

Arturo and Florence give double cheek
kisses.

ARTURO

You don't mind me visiting
unannounced?

FLORENCE

Oh, no. La mia casa la tua
casa.

ARTURO

Ah. I have a little gift.

Arturo holds up a VINYL RECORDING in a brown paper
ALBUM COVER.

FLORENCE

Oh.

ARTURO
My recording of the Bell
Song with Lily Pons.

Florence takes the recording.

FLORENCE
Oh, Arturo, how very
thoughtful of you. Thank
you. You know, we are so
looking forward to that
concert. Are the
preparations going well?

ARTURO
Very well. Though there are
some financial matters that
remain... problematico.

FLORENCE
Hmm.

ARTURO
Madam Florence, without
your help, there will be no
concert.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Florence removes the recording from the paper sleeve to
place it on the player. Bayfield enters.

BAYFIELD
How much did he want?

FLORENCE
A thousand. But he gave me
a record.

Florence starts the playback of LILY PONS singing, in
French, "The Bell Song" from "Lakm."

LILY PONS (O.S.)
Filles des Parias
Elle court sur la mousse
Et ne se souvient pas
Le long des lauriers roses

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. CARNEGIE HALL - NIGHT

The New York Philharmonic, led by Arturo Toscanini, plays The Bell Song while Lily Pons sings coloratura. Florence and Bayfield sit next to each other. Florence is tickled by the performance.

LILY PONS
Rvant de douces choses
Elle passe sans bruit
Et riant a la nuit

Florence is brought to tears.

INT. TAXICAB - NIGHT

Florence rests her head on Bayfield's shoulder.

FLORENCE
I haven't heard a voice
that good since Caruso.

BAYFIELD
Extraordinary little thing,
isn't she?

FLORENCE
Can you imagine what that
must feel like? To hold
nearly 3,000 people in the
cup of your hand. To share
such profound communion.

BAYFIELD
Hmm.

FLORENCE
Did you see Carlo Edwards
from the Met?

BAYFIELD
No.

FLORENCE
Well, he was seated to our
right. I gather he's
coaching again.

BAYFIELD

Oh, is he now, Bunny?

FLORENCE

I would like to take some more lessons with him.

BAYFIELD

Then I shall phone him first thing in the morning.

FLORENCE

I shall need a pianist.

BAYFIELD

Yes.

FLORENCE

Someone young. Someone with passion.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - MORNING

COSME McMOON enters behind Bayfield and sits at the piano

COSME

What should I play?

FLORENCE

Well, I really don't mind. As long as it's not too loud.

Cosme plays Saint-Saens' "The Swan," with gentleness and quiet passion.

FLORENCE

What loveliness.

BAYFIELD

Hmm.

Cosme's playing deeply moves Florence to nostalgic tears. She walks to the piano side.

FLORENCE

You know. You know, when I

was... when I was 16 years
old, my father told me that
if I didn't give up music
and marry a dull banker,
he'd cut me off.

Cosme stops playing to take in the story.

BAYFIELD

That's true.

FLORENCE

Sorry. It's OK, continue,
Mr. McMoon.

Cosme continues.

FLORENCE

Course, he didn't
understand musicians. We'd
rather go without bread
than Mozart, wouldn't we?

COSME

It's not even a choice for
us.

FLORENCE

Course, he did cut me off,
but I got myself a little
apartment in Philly and I
made a living teaching
piano to children. And we'd
play The Swan. That was my
favorite.

COSME

Wow. Great story.

FLORENCE

Yeah, it is, isn't it?
Course, he came round
eventually and then I was
back in the will.

BAYFIELD

Yes.

With such gentleness, COSME finishes the piece, holding
the last note.

FLORENCE

Well, I must say, I think
you're absolutely ideal.

COSME

Did I mention that I also
compose?

FLORENCE

And he also composes.

BAYFIELD

Yes, I'm sure he does.
Well, you know, there are
some other candidates to
hear, Bunny.

FLORENCE

Hmm?

BAYFIELD

Some more.

FLORENCE

Do you know any of them?

COSME

I do. They're all rather...
heavy-handed, I'm afraid.

FLORENCE

Now, I must warn you, I
work very hard. I study an
hour every day. Sometimes
two. And my father didn't
leave me as much money as
everybody thinks, so I
couldn't pay you more than
a hundred and fifty.

COSME

A month?

FLORENCE

A week. I'm not destitute.

Florence leaves. Bayfield remains with Cosme.

BAYFIELD

A few pointers as to how Madam Florence does things. You will note that she carries a leather briefcase with her at all times. You are not to touch that briefcase or to enquire as to its contents.

COSME

Right.

BAYFIELD

In the hall, Madam Florence keeps a collection of chairs in which people of note have expired. They're not for practical use.

COSME

I understand.

BAYFIELD

She abhors all pointed objects, so don't smoke in her presence or hand her a knife or anything like that. Are you fond of sandwiches?

COSME

Yes.

BAYFIELD

Good, good. Madam Florence is inordinately fond of sandwiches. And potato salad as well. When we throw parties, we make mountains of the stuff. It would serve you to consume both with enthusiasm.

COSME

I shall.

BAYFIELD

So, here is a week in

advance and a teeny bit
extra for a new shirt.

COSME

Thank you.

FLORENCE

If you can forgive Madam
Florence her little
eccentricities, you will
find her to be a most
generous and delightful
person. Ours is a very
happy world.

Bayfield extends his hand and they shake hands.

BAYFIELD

Welcome, Mr McMoon.
Tomorrow morning at nine.
Don't be late.

COSME

I won't, sir.

BAYFIELD

Good.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - MORNING

Kitty enters with Cosme directly behind. Bayfield and
Florence's vocal coach, CARLO EDWARDS, are already
present to welcome Cosme.

KITTY

Mr McMoon is here.

FLORENCE

Oh, do come in, Mr McMoon.
This is the talented young
man I was telling you
about.

CARLO

How do you do, Mr McMoon?

FLORENCE

My vocal coach. Maestro
Carlo Edwards, assistant

conductor at the
Metropolitan Opera.

COSME

How do you do, sir? I saw
you conduct
La Bohme last season.

CARLO

Oh, no, please don't remind
me.

FLORENCE

Carlo! He's kidding. He's
kidding.

Cosme sits at the piano and the others gather round.

COSME

I've learned everything.
I'm virtually off score.

CARLO

Good. Then let's get
started. Here we are. The
Bell Song.

FLORENCE

Oh. Isn't it a little early
in the morning for Lakme,
Carlo?

CARLO

Not for a singer of your
ability. Whenever you're
ready, Mr McMoon.

Cosme plays the intro to the "Bell Song."

FLORENCE

(about to sing)

No. No, uh, no. A little
more allegretto, please, if
you don't mind, Mr. McMoon.

COSME

Sorry.

Cosme plays the intro allegretto. Florence sings

coloratura and out of tune while her voice swoops up and down tunelessly, her voice cracks as she sings a low note.

CARLO
(over Florence's singing)
Raise the soft palate.

Florence continues, her voice cracking.

CARLO
Good.

Florence continues coloratura and out of tune.

CARLO
(while Florence continues uninterrupted)
Use the air.

Florence gulps for air.

CARLO
On the breath.

Florence sings quietly, still out of tune.

CARLO
Project forward.

Florence sticks her chest out and butt backward while singing loudly breaking into a shriek. Her voice swoops to a low note while Carlo continues to lovingly conduct her.

CARLO
Bella.

Cosme has stopped playing, in part due to shock, and finds himself again. He picks up where he left off.

FLORENCE
O va la jeune Indoue. Fille
des Parias.

CARLO
(as if conducting a master)
Think of the mask,

Florence.

FLORENCE
Quand la lune se joue. La
squillo. Dans les grands
mimosas.

CARLO
The voice is in the mask.

FLORENCE
Quand la lune se joue.

Florence squawks coloratura.

FLORENCE
Dans les grands mimosas. Le
long des lauriers roses.

CARLO
Yes.

FLORENCE
Rvant de douces choses.

CARLO
Yes, yes.

Florence again squawks coloratura and then continues
gruffly.

FLORENCE
Elle passe sans bruit. Et
riant la nuit

Florence sings a sustained out-of-tune high note.

CARLO
Stop there. There's work to
be done. But you've never
sounded better.

FLORENCE
Oh!

BAYFIELD
Hear, hear.

FLORENCE

Maestro, it is true that a lot of singers my age are on the decline, but I seem to just get better and better.

CARLO

I know. It's hard to believe, isn't it?

FLORENCE

Well, I am so blessed.

CARLO

There is no one quite like you. Onwards!

Carlo turns to Cosme.

CARLO

I thought you were off score.

Carlo and Florence leave.

BAYFIELD

Did you enjoy the class?

COSME

Very much so.

FLORENCE

Yes, she's remarkable, isn't she?

COSME

She is.

BAYFIELD

I thought you played very nicely.

COSME

Thank you.

BAYFIELD

Good. Same time tomorrow, then.

COSME

Yes. Goodbye.

BAYFIELD

Bye.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Cosme enters the elevator filled with people. He stifles a laugh. Then clears his throat trying to hold it in and stifles another laugh. Finally the pressure becomes so great that he laughs out loud to the consternation of everyone around him, but he cannot control himself.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - MORNING

Florence uses her reading glasses to study the sheet music that rests on an ornate wooden music stand while she sings "Biassy" in Russian based on the Prelude No. 166 by J.S. Bach with words by Pushkin. Cosme is at the piano. Carlos conducts and Bayfield stands nearby hanging on every note and occasionally surprised by Florence's transitions.

CARLO

Find a breath, Florence.

Florence bellows out of tune.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - MORNING

Florence sings Liadov "Musical Snuff Box"
Op. 32, coloratura.

CARLO

Good.

Florence struggles to maintain her breath while singing coloratura.

CARLO

Appoggio. Lean into it.

Florence grabs her waist with one hand and a chair to steady herself with the other while she continues to sing coloratura.

CARLO

Expand your diaphragm,
Florence.

Carlo comes to her aid to help steady her. Somehow, he's gotten directly behind her, both hands on either side of her chest while Florence leans further and further at the waist until it resembles a sexual position.

CARLO

Breathe. Breathe, Florence.
Good.
Good.

Florence straightens as she sings a sustained high note.

CARLO

Good.

FLORENCE

(singing)

Faint melodies bring back
old days.

CARLO

Soar like a bird.

FLORENCE

(singing)

Faintly the old music box
plays.

CARLO

Wonderful.

Florence continues singing coloratura ending in a series of squeaks.

CARLO

One word. Authenticity.

FLORENCE

Maestro, do you think I'm
ready... for a concert?

CARLO

You'll never be more ready.

BAYFIELD

You have been absent from
the stage for far too long,
Bunny.

FLORENCE

Mr McMoon? Do you think I'm
ready?

COSME

Sure.

BAYFIELD

And perhaps I shall perform
a monologue. Or not. Or
not. I shall start to make
arrangements.

Florence exits.

CARLO

Obviously I'll do my utmost
to attend the concert, but
I'll be away in Florida at
some point.

BAYFIELD

Oh, right. When?

CARLO

Let me know when you've
fixed a date. One other
thing. Since I've been
working so intensively with
Florence, I've rather
neglected my other
students. It might be best
if we were discreet about
these classes. I'd be
mortified if Madam Florence
become the focus of any
envy.

BAYFIELD

Well, thank you so very,
very much.

Bayfield produces a small envelope from his pocket and

hands it to Carlo.

CARLO

Oh, she spoils me. But then she spoils us all. Doesn't she?

BAYFIELD

Enjoy Florida.

CARLO

I will.

Carlo exits.

BAYFIELD

Mr McMoon.

COSME

Could we speak, Mr Bayfield?

BAYFIELD

Yes, of course. What is it?

COSME

Well, uh, I thought I was being hired to accompany Madam Florence's lessons.

BAYFIELD

Yes.

COSME

I'll be honest with you, Mr. Bayfield. I think Madam Florence might need a little more preparation before she sings in public.

BAYFIELD

We've been rehearsing for a month.

COSME

Well, I know. But from time to time, she can be a little...

BAYFIELD

Yes?

COSME

Flat.

BAYFIELD

Flat?

COSME

A tad. Well, just a tad.

BAYFIELD

Carlo Edwards didn't mention any flatness, and he is the leading vocal coach in the city.

COSME

Jeez, Mr. Bayfield, we can't be talking about the same singer. I mean, her vocal cords, they don't phonate freely. Her phrasing is haphazard. As for her subglottal pressure... it defies medical science.

BAYFIELD

Is her instrument quite what it was? Perhaps not. But as Beethoven said, a few wrong notes may be forgiven, but singing without feeling cannot.

COSME

Mr. Bayfield, is there any way I could do the lessons but not the concerts?

BAYFIELD

No, I'm afraid not.

COSME

But I have my reputation to think of.

BAYFIELD

Oh, really? And what reputation is that? If you want to go back to playing for tips in a steakhouse, be my guest. Oh, Cosme, Florence is very fond of you, she's paying you well and she knows, well, she knows everyone.

COSME

But, Mr Bayfield...

BAYFIELD

And she has sung in dozens of sell-out concerts. She has a magnetism that her followers adore.

COSME

I understand that, but what if less educated members of the public show up?

BAYFIELD

No, you're right, we must exclude the hoodlum element and ensure that only true music lovers gain entry. These events take all kinds of careful preparation.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - MORNING

Bayfield and Cosme sit at the dining table converted into an office workspace while a line of men and women from the street, blue collar, white collar and housewives, stand in a line waiting to step up to be interviewed. Bayfield interviews a blue collar BROOKLYN MAN.

BAYFIELD

And have you attended one of Madam Florence's concerts before?

BROOKLYN MAN

No, but I heard all about
her.

Brooklyn Man laughs at the idea of
Florence singing.

BAYFIELD

Well, I'm afraid we're
giving priority to Verdi
Club members at the moment.

BROOKLYN MAN

But I came all the way from
Brooklyn.

BAYFIELD

I'm so sorry. Next, please.

Brooklyn Man exits.

BAYFIELD

Not a music lover. You take
over. Two dollars a pop.

The phone rings and Bayfield goes to
answer it.

BAYFIELD

(into phone)

Yes? Thank you for calling
back. The poster.

"President and founder,
Florence Foster Jenkins",
that should be larger, 28
point. Finally, the line
below that should read,
"Directed by St Clair
Bayfield, eminent actor and
monologist." "Eminent",
yes.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - EVENING

Bayfield is at his desk counting up money from ticket
sales. Kitty enters.

KITTY

There's an Earl Wilson

here.

BAYFIELD
Send him in. Thank you,
Kitty.

Kitty leaves and EARL WILSON, reporter for the New York Post, enters.

BAYFIELD
Earl Wilson of the New York Post.

WILSON
How do you do, Mr Bayfield?

BAYFIELD
How do you do? I read your column. It's great fun.

WILSON
Thank you.

BAYFIELD
What brings you here?

WILSON
I was hoping I could get a ticket for the concert.

BAYFIELD
Oh, well, I'm afraid we're all sold out.

WILSON
Oh? Carlton Smith from the Musical Courier has got one. So has Stubbs from World Bugle.

BAYFIELD
I'm not sure it's an event that would interest the readers of the New York Post.

WILSON
My editor would disagree. There's quite a buzz around

town about it. He sent me
down here himself. So, can
I get that ticket?

BAYFIELD

Why not?

WILSON

Thank you.

Bayfield puts a ticket into a small envelope and then
conspicuously places a ten-dollar bill in the envelope.
He hands the envelope to Wilson.

BAYFIELD

Voila.

WILSON

I just need the ticket.

BAYFIELD

It's both or neither, Mr
Wilson.

WILSON

Then I'll trouble you no
more. Good evening.

BAYFIELD

Good evening.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bayfield enters his apartment. Kathleen sits in the lap
of AUGUSTUS CORBIN.

KATHLEEN

Darling. Augustus is here.

BAYFIELD

Ah, what a surprise. How
are you, Augustus?

AUGUSTUS

Couldn't be better.

BAYFIELD

I hear your play was a
triumph.

BAYFIELD

I am a second-rate playwright and we all know that. But I'm a first-rate friend, the latter outweighing the former, I feel.

KATHLEEN

With knobs on.

AUGUSTUS

So, is it really true?

BAYFIELD

What's that?

AUGUSTUS

Madam Florence is taking to the stage once more?

BAYFIELD

Yes.

AUGUSTUS

Ah, it's been too long. How much are tickets?

BAYFIELD

I'm afraid we've already sold out.

AUGUSTUS

You can't be sold out.

BAYFIELD

I'm so sorry.

KATHLEEN

St Clair, don't be a silly arse.

AUGUSTUS

Yes, don't be a silly arse, St Clair.

BAYFIELD

The concert is for true music lovers, not mockers and scoffers like you and

your artistic friends.

AUGUSTUS

When have I ever mocked or scoffed? The lady is an eloquent lesson in fidelity and courage, and that's why we love her. Please, St Clair. Do you want to see a grown man cry?

Kathleen moves to Bayfield's side.

KATHLEEN

Be a sport, darling, and I'll make it up to you.

BAYFIELD

No, I'm sorry.

KATHLEEN

Please.

BAYFIELD

No. Non. Nyet.

INT. VERDI CLUB - BACKSTAGE - EVENING

Cosme sneaks a look between the stage curtains to see hundreds of audience members milling about and finding their seats.

COSME

Oh, God.

BAYFIELD

All set?

COSME

I guess.

BAYFIELD

They are going to adore you. You have my word.

COSME

Ok.

Cosme whimpers and then groans. Florence enters in full

costume. Cosme sits at the piano.

FLORENCE
Too many? Too many feathers
you think?

BAYFIELD
The perfect number of
feathers. Restrained and
elegant.

FLORENCE
I'm so nervous, Whitey.

BAYFIELD
Oh, don't be.

FLORENCE
Are you nervous, Mr McMoon?

COSME
Somewhat.

BAYFIELD
You have a full and very
warm house and you are both
going to be sensational.
Ready?

FLORENCE
Hm-hm. Yes.

BAYFIELD
Break a leg.

Bayfield moves off stage.

BAYFIELD
(to stage manager)
House lights, please.

Florence and Cosme remain working through
their nerves.

FLORENCE
This is what we live for,
isn't it? This moment.

The curtains open and the audience applauds warmly.
Florence and Cosme take their bows and Cosme moves to

his seat at the piano. When the applause dies down, Cosme begins to play "Adele's Laughing Song" from "Die Fledermaus."

FLORENCE

(singing in her usual style)

O noble sir
How far you err
You're really not discreet
Therefore my advice
is that you look twice
When judging those you meet
My little white hands are
fine
Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!
My foot with its contour
divine
Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!
My speech so disarming
My waistline so slim and
charming
No lady's maid could be
full of so much grace, you
see
No lady's maid could be
full of so much grace, you
see
Now you must own to your
mistake
Your blunder almost takes
the cake
Oh, how funny
You amuse me
If I laugh so! Ah, ha, ha
Pray excuse me
Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Ah, ha, ha! You amuse me
Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!
So look through your
glasses
and see...
Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!
My costume, my air of
grandee
Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Your love is short-sighted
Alas, you're benighted
You seem to see her

everywhere
It's very droll, I do
declare
Oh how funny! Ah, ha, ha!
You amuse me! Ah, ha, ha!
Should I laugh so! Ah, ha,
ha
Pray excuse me!
Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Oh how funny! Ah, ha, ha!
You amuse me! Ah, ha, ha!
Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Ha! Ha!
Ha, ha, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!
Ha, ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Ha!
Ha, ha, ah, ah, ah,
ah, ah, ah, ah, ah
Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah
Ha, ha
(Florence shrieks) Ha, ha!
(and sings a sustained high
note)

The audience loudly applauds yelling out "Bravo!" and "Bravo, Madam Florence!" again and again. The curtain closes. Bayfield comes to Florence's side who can barely hold herself up. He steadies her.

BAYFIELD
Is everything alright?

FLORENCE
I don't... I don't feel
very well, Whitey.

BAYFIELD
Let's get you home.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Florence lays in bed with Bayfield at her side. DR.
HERMAN auscultates her breath sounds and heart.

HERMAN
If I may, please.

Dr. Herman gently lifts her back up to help her sit up.

He examines her back to auscultate, but is shocked by her scarring.

HERMAN

I didn't have time to look at your medical notes.

FLORENCE

The scarring is from syphilis.

HERMAN

When did you contract the disease?

FLORENCE

On my wedding night. My first husband, Dr Frank Thornton Jenkins. Something of an alley cat.

HERMAN

How old were you?

FLORENCE

18.

HERMAN

Where did the chancre first appear?

FLORENCE

It was on my left hand, right here.

HERMAN

Are you taking any medication?

FLORENCE

Just mercury and arsenic, of course.

HERMAN

Any other symptoms?

FLORENCE

No.

BAYFIELD

She has seizures from time to time, when she has overexerted herself.

HERMAN

I see. Well, there is a murmur and some palpitations but no indication the disease is entering the tertiary phase. The two and a half hours of coloratura you performed this evening might account for the tiredness. Bed rest until your strength returns. I'll speak to Dr Hertz and let him know.

FLORENCE

Thank you, Doctor.

Bayfield walks Herman to the door as they talk.

HERMAN

I've known patients survive 20 years with syphilis but never nearly 50. I'm amazed. What is her secret?

BAYFIELD

Music. She lives for music.

HERMAN

And no doubt your love has proved to be a panacea too.

BAYFIELD

We were fortunate to have found each other.

HERMAN

Clearly. I don't mean to pry, Mr. Bayfield, but how is your own health?

FLORENCE

Florence and I have always

abstained.

HERMAN

Very wise. I have several patients who observe the five-year rule, but it's no sure prophylactic.

BAYFIELD

Well, from the start, Florence felt that my health was paramount.

HERMAN

Excitement stimulates the disease. She needs rest, Mr. Bayfield. Rest.

Herman leaves. Bayfield returns to Florence's bedside.

BAYFIELD

Rest, my love.

FLORENCE

I can't help wondering what my life would have been like if I'd never met Frank Jenkins.

BAYFIELD

Well, he's in his grave now. Forget him.

FLORENCE

But I could've... could've given you a child. We could've been a family.

BAYFIELD

We are a family. A great and devoted family. United by our love of music. Are we not happy? Shut your eyes. I'll recite for you. Bright star! Would I, were steadfast as thou art. Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night. And watching, with eternal lids apart,

like Nature's patient,
sleep-

FLORENCE
I think I'll read.

BAYFIELD
Well, goodnight, my love.

FLORENCE
Night-night.

Bayfield leaves.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bayfield enters to a post-performance party.

KATHLEEN
Oh, everybody, look who's
here! Darling.

BAYFIELD
Um...

Bayfield notices the SHOWGIRL dancing in the corner.

KATHLEEN
Oh, you don't mind? I
invited the showgirl. She
is simply adorable.
Darling, the concert was
wonderful. How is Florence?

BAYFIELD
She's absolutely...

Bayfield notices Cosme over by the bar drinking Coca
Cola out of the bottle with a straw.

KATHLEEN
Well, I couldn't not invite
him. Would you like a
drink?

BAYFIELD
In a minute.

Bayfield goes over to Cosme.

BAYFIELD

Cosme.

COSME

Good evening, Mr. Bayfield.

BAYFIELD

Cigarette?

COSME

No, thank you. I hope you don't mind me being here. Your friend Kathleen was most insistent that I stop by.

BAYFIELD

Really? Well, you're very welcome. You have a drink?

COSME

Yes. Maybe I should get home.

BAYFIELD

No, no, no. You stay where you are.

COSME

This is all a little awkward. I mean, I... thought you and Madam Florence were married.

BAYFIELD

We are.

COSME

But you live here with Kathleen. Is she your sister?

BAYFIELD

No, she's my girlfriend.

COSME

Oh.

BAYFIELD

It's a little complicated.

COSME

Yes, it is.

BAYFIELD

But, Cosme, you have nothing to worry about. Florence and I have an understanding.

COSME

Madam Florence, she knows about Kathleen?

BAYFIELD

Well, she understands that love takes many forms.

COSME

Oh.

BAYFIELD

Believe me, there's no shortage of love between any of us. Surely you can see I'm devoted to Florence. Our marriage is a thing of the spirit. It transcends this realm. It's...
Yes?

COSME

Yes.

BAYFIELD

I'm very fond of you, Cosme. I think of you as a chum.

COSME

Oh! That's kind of you, Mr. Bayfield. Seeing as we're talking in a familiar fashion, could I possibly ask what it is Madam Florence carries in that

briefcase?

BAYFIELD

No.

COSME

No?

BAYFIELD

Now, what do you say we
grab ourselves a couple of
Manhattans and go and join
the hepcats?

Cosme and Bayfield return to the main group.

COSME

OK. Mr. Corbin's friends
are all so personable.

BAYFIELD

Yes, I bet. Here we are. To
a friendship. In one. Go.

They clink their glasses and Louis Prima's *Sing, Sing, Sing* (With a Swing) starts from the record player.

COSME

Hey, Mr. Bayfield, I want
to see you dance.

Kathleen and the rest cheer the request.

BAYFIELD

No, no, no, no, no. My
dancing days are done.

KATHLEEN

Dance, St Clair, dance.

BAYFIELD

No, I really... No. No.

COSME

Come on.

KATHLEEN

Go!

Suddenly Bayfield starts a solo swing. After a few moments, Kathleen joins him and they start a couples swing dance. Cosme downs a drink and joins in with the whole room with lots of Whoops and Hoots.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - MORNING

Cosme snores on the couch amongst the detritus of the party from the night before. There is a knock at the door. Cosme stirs.

FLORENCE (OS)
St. Clair? Are you there?
St Clair! Wake up!

Cosme awakes, realizes Florence is at the door and runs to the door in his boxers and t-shirt and socks with garters. Stops short of the door.

FLORENCE (OS)
I've got something I want
to show you!

Cosme runs about looking for his pants and throws them on. He runs over to the bedroom. The knocking continues.

FLORENCE (OS)
St Clair, are you in there?

Cosme sees Bayfield and Kathleen asleep and naked in bed.

COSME
Oh, golly. Mr. Bayfield,
wake up. Madam Florence is
here.

BAYFIELD
What?

The knocking continues.

COSME
That's her at the door.

FLORENCE (OS)
I can hear you in there.

BAYFIELD
(to Kathleen)
Wake up, wake up, wake up.
Wake up!

KATHLEEN
What's the matter?

BAYFIELD
It's Florence, she's here.
(to Cosme) Stall her.
Stall her, stall her.

Cosme slow walks to the door.

BAYFIELD
Get out of bed. Out of bed.
Up.

KATHLEEN
What?

The knocking continues.

FLORENCE (OS)
St Clair, are you there?

Cosme stops short of the door.

COSME
Um, just a moment, Madam
Florence.

FLORENCE (OS)
Who is that?

COSME
It's me, Mr McMoon. How are
you?

FLORENCE
Mr McMoon? What are you
doing here? Open the door
at once!

COSME
Goodness me.

Cosme opens the door. Florence enters with a stack of
newspapers over her arm.

FLORENCE

Oh! Oh! Where... Where is
Mr. Bayfield?

Florence slips or trips on an empty beer bottle. She
takes in the post party disaster area.

FLORENCE

Oh, my hat! St Clair!

COSME

Madam Florence, please,
please...

Florence enters the bedroom.

FLORENCE

Whitey?

Bayfield is sitting in bed in his robe casually reading
a book.

BAYFIELD

Bunny. How very, very nice.
I was just reading a little
early Austen. Quite fun.
May I offer you some tea?

FLORENCE

What is going on? Why is
Mr. McMoon here?

BAYFIELD

He lost his house key, so I
put him up for the night.

FLORENCE

Oh. But what about the
mess?

BAYFIELD

There's a mess?

FLORENCE

Oh!

Bayfield enters the living room.

BAYFIELD

Good God. When I said "help yourself to a nightcap", I meant one. Just look at the place! Look what he's done, Bunny. Aren't you going to chastise him?

FLORENCE

Well, I... I am very disappointed in you, Mr. McMoon. I do not approve of drinking.
What got into you?

COSME

I'm very sorry.

BAYFIELD

Never again, Mr. McMoon.
You understand?

Bayfield notes the newspapers over Florence's arm.

BAYFIELD

Reviews.

FLORENCE

What? Oh! Oh!

BAYFIELD

What do they say?

FLORENCE

They're simply marvelous.
Come, come, come.

Florence sits with her back to the apartment.

FLORENCE

That's what I... I wanted to... Look. Page seven.
Here, here, down below.

A PARTY GIRL appears in the back, stumbling toward them.

BAYFIELD

Oh, da, da, da, da, da

da... "And the consensus was that she'd never sung better."

"Her grace and brilliant personality only added to the remarkable quality of her voice." "By the end of her performance, the stage was a...

Bayfield notices the Party Girl behind Florence's back and shoots a look at Cosme. Bayfield continues without losing a beat.

BAYFIELD

...bower of blooms and Madam Jenkins retired to thunderous applause."

Cosme grabs the Party Girl and forces her back into the bowels of the apartment. She grunts, drawing Florence's attention, but Bayfield raises his voice in congratulations to draw her attention back to him before Florence can see the Party Girl.

BAYFIELD

Bravo, Bunny. Bravo!
Bravissima!

FLORENCE

And I've had a simply darling idea for the Christmas gift for the members. We're booked for eleven o'clock.

BAYFIELD

Booked for?

COSME

It's a surprise.

BAYFIELD

Oh.

Florence heads for the door as Bayfield follows.

FLORENCE

So continue your ablutions,
quickly. Got a cab waiting
downstairs. And bring
McMoon with you. I've been
looking for him all
morning.

BAYFIELD

I shall.

FLORENCE

Just hurry.

Florence exits.

BAYFIELD

Yes, yes. There in a
demisemiquaver.

Bayfield closes the door and goes to the
closet and opens it. Kathleen steps out.

BAYFIELD

She's gone.

KATHLEEN

This is just ridiculous.

BAYFIELD

I am very, very sorry.

KATHLEEN

I shouldn't have to hide in
my own home. It's
humiliating. And there are
rules.

BAYFIELD

I think she was just
overexcited.

KATHLEEN

Well, you are to speak to
her.

BAYFIELD

Yes, that's a very good
idea. I shall say,

"Florence, although you pay the rent on my apartment, would you mind not visiting?"

KATHLEEN

Oh, shut up. I won't go on living like this. Do you understand? What am I doing here? I'm willing to share you, St Clair, but I need some dignity.

BAYFIELD

Of course, of course, of course.
I'm so sorry. I'll make sure it doesn't happen again. I don't know how. Why don't we go away for a few days, yes? Golf? Hamptons? Good idea?

KATHLEEN

Yes.

INT. MELOTONE RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Florence enters with Bayfield and Cosme in tow.

FLORENCE

Here we are! Oh! We're going to make a recording. And give a copy to the members for Christmas. I'm so excited!

BAYFIELD

It's a wonderful idea, Bunny. But Dr Hermann was very, very specific about excitement.

FLORENCE

Oh, phooey.

Florence heads into the recording room. Cosme is reluctant to follow

BAYFIELD

Come along. Come on. Come
on, come on, come on.

INT. MELOTONE RECORDING STUDIO - RECORDING ROOM - DAY

Florence sings piercing coloratura into a microphone
while Cosme plays piano accompaniment.

FLORENCE

Like a bird on the wing
Like a bird
Like a bird
Like a bird

Florence sings a sustained high note and
there is feedback squeal.

BAYFIELD

Bravo! It was wonderful,
Bunny.

EXT. HAMPTONS GOLF COURSE - DAY

Kathleen is tee'd up a swings at the ball but misses as
Bayfield watches

KATHLEEN

Oh! Flipping hell!

Bayfield hands her a different club.

BAYFIELD

Kathleen, try this one. I
did suggest it earlier.
It's a little shorter and a
little easier.

KATHLEEN

Yes, I like this one,
darling.

She positions herself for her swing. Bayfield grabs
her by the hips from behind to adjust her stance.

BAYFIELD

And slightly to the left.
And swing as though it's

through molasses.

Kathleen swings and connects.

KATHLEEN

Oh, yes!

Kathleen squeals as she watches the ball fly.

KATHLEEN

Yes!

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - DAY

Florence is at home with a stack of vinyl albums and a stack of Christmas wrapping paper. She busies herself wrapping the albums, awkwardly works the tape dispenser, and tries to make progress. She takes a break and paces the room listening to the NBC Radio Network's "The Firestone Hour." Gentle music plays and then an announcer, RICHARD CROOKS, speaks.

CROOKS (OS)

You're listening to "The Firestone Hour" with me, Richard Crooks, on the NBC Radio Network. We have a caller on line one, Mrs. Edna Hoffman of New Jersey. Go ahead, Edna.

EDNA (OS)

Mr. Crooks, would you play Brahms's "Lullaby"?

CROOKS (OS)

I'd love to. For anyone in particular?

EDNA (OS)

My son Samuel. He's a flight navigator. He's missing in action over Germany.

FLORENCE

Oh, my.

CROOKS (OS)
Our hearts go out to you
today, Edna. And we'll all
be thinking of Samuel.

Florence has an idea.

EXT. HOTEL SEYMOUR - ENTRANCE - DAY

Florence steps up to the doorman, JIMMY, and hands him
one of the Christmas wrapped albums.

FLORENCE
Jimmy, I'd like you to have
this hand-delivered for me.
And I'm gonna grab one of
these cabs.

JIMMY
Sure.

INT. McMOON'S STUDIO - DAY

Cosme is pressing dumbbells in his t-shirt and pants
with exercise sheets laid out on his music stand. The
studio is in an attic and is open without a door.
Florence walks in.

FLORENCE
I hope I'm not disturbing
you, Mr McMoon.

COSME
Oh! Madam Florence.

FLORENCE
I was out and about and I
suddenly realized I was in
your neighborhood.

COSME
What a happy coincidence.

FLORENCE
Indeed.

COSME
Is Mr. Bayfield with you?

FLORENCE

No.

Florence is practically in the studio.

FLORENCE

May I come in?

COSME

Sure.

FLORENCE

I've brought you our recording.

COSME

Gee. Thank you, Madam Florence.

FLORENCE

You're very welcome. You haven't done your dishes, Mr. McMoon. Would you like me to do them for you?

COSME

No, you don't need to do that, Madam Florence.

FLORENCE

Well, they'll not wash themselves, will they? I'll make you a deal. I'll wash your dishes if you play something for me. How about that?

COSME

Madam Florence, I can --

FLORENCE

Do we have a deal, Mr. McMoon?

Cosme sits at the piano.

COSME

What shall I play?

FLORENCE
Anything you like.

Cosme plays a tuneful melody.

FLORENCE
That's such a pretty
melody. Is it yours?

COSME
Yes.

FLORENCE
Oh.

Florence begins a high-pitched and completely out of
tune humming, and then mumbles some words in her
attempt to quietly sing.

FLORENCE
You inspire me. I shall
write some lyrics for you.

COSME
Oh, wonderful.

FLORENCE
(singing)
There's a bird in the... in
the trees

COSME
Madam Florence, do you mind
if I ask how you met Mr.
Bayfield?

FLORENCE
Oh, well. I was performing
in a musicale at the
Waldorf, 1919. And I was
wearing a violet velvet
gown. I looked out at the
audience and I saw a man
with the most beautiful
smile I'd ever seen. He had
an aristocratic bearing and
that was that. Of course,
his grandfather was an
earl, you know.

COSME

Doesn't that make him an earl too?

FLORENCE

Well, he wasn't on the legitimate line. Nothing for him in England. So he came here and became an actor. He wasn't always successful. Had to hide the reviews occasionally. You play so beautifully, Mr. McMoon.

COSME

Ah.

FLORENCE

You know, I played for the president, when I was eight years old.

COSME

Really?

FLORENCE

Yes, I played at the White House.

COSME

Really?

FLORENCE

Little Miss Foster, they called me. And I had very high hopes of becoming a concert pianist myself. But then when the nerves were damaged in my left hand, that was not to be.

COSME

That's too bad. What happened to your hand?

FLORENCE

Oh, it was just a—

Florence backs to the counter and a knife drops to the floor. She gasps and screams. Cosme runs and throws a dish towel over the knife.

FLORENCE

I'm s... I'm sorry. I'm a silly woman.

COSME

No. Would you like a glass of water?

Cosme pours a glass of water and hands it to her and she drinks it down.

FLORENCE

When Mr. Bayfield is away playing golf, the days can seem awfully long. I understand that he needs his... sport. But I miss him. I... I miss him terribly.

COSME

He'll be back soon. Madam Florence, he's devoted to you. He told me so.

FLORENCE

Oh. Oh.

COSME

Are you OK?

FLORENCE

Well, it's just the change in temperature, you know. It can be very painful, so... Oh. Do you know the Prelude in E minor? Chopin? Oh, gosh.

She begins to play the opening notes, but is struggling with her left hand so she can only play the right hand.

FLORENCE

That one?

Cosme stands next to her and play the left hand.

FLORENCE

That's it.

They play several measures of the Prelude.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Kathleen and Bayfield return with their bags from their weekend in the Hampton's.

BAYFIELD

Drink?

KATHLEEN

Rather.

BAYFIELD

Let me just take your bags,
madam. And may I say what
lovely legs you have,
madam.

Bayfield takes the bags to the bedroom. Kathleen turns on lamps and turns on the radio. Madam Florence's recording is playing.

FLORENCE (VO)

I am singing
Like a bird on the wing
Like a bird

KATHLEEN

St Clair, come in here.

BAYFIELD

Yeah, one moment.

Florence's recording continues.

Kathleen

St Clair!

Bayfield enters.

BAYFIELD

What?

Florence's recording continues. Bayfield and Kathleen listen.

KATHLEEN

How did she get on the radio?

CROOKS

That was Florence Foster Jenkins singing "Like A Bird" by Cosme McMoon. We're getting quite a few calls on that one. We have Ed calling from the military hospital.

KATHLEEN

How did Richard Crooks get-

Bayfield shushes her.

CROOKS

Ed, you're on the air.

ED

Mr. Crooks, the guys here, we all love that record. I lost my left leg and half my face at Guadalcanal, but that dame's got me feeling happy to be alive. Could you play it again? And please tell us where we could find her record.

CROOKS

I don't think it's for sale. It's a private recording.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - MUSIC ROOM/LIBRARY - DAY

Bayfield enters and Kitty greets him.

KITTY

Oh, thank goodness you're here, Mr. Bayfield. Things have been going crazy. It's

difficult when you're away.

BAYFIELD

Yes, I'm very sorry, Kitty.
Tell me this. How did
Richard Crooks get the
record?

KITTY

She gave it to him. He's
been playing it all
weekend. The phone's been
ringing off the hook with
people wanting a copy.
Cole Porter called. It put
Madam Florence into one of
her excited moods.

BAYFIELD

I'll talk to her.

KITTY

She's not here. She's at a
meeting.

BAYFIELD

With?

BAYFIELD

Mr Totten.

BAYFIELD

Thank you very much. Thank
you.

INT. CARNEGIE HALL - DAY

Bayfield enters and TOTTEN greets him.

BAYFIELD

A-ha.

TOTTEN

Ah, Mr. Bayfield, how good
to see you.

BAYFIELD

And you, Mr. Totten. Is
Madam Florence here?

TOTTEN
She's in the hall.

FLORENCE
Ah. Thank you.

TOTTEN
You have a moment?

BAYFIELD
Yes, in a jiffy.

Bayfield runs into the hall. Florence sits in one of the rows. Bayfield approaches.

BAYFIELD
Do I see a pair of rabbit ears?

FLORENCE
Oh, Whitey.

BAYFIELD
Bunny.

FLORENCE
How was the golf?

BAYFIELD
It was nice enough, thank you.

FLORENCE
Good. This is my favorite place in the whole world. And I'm going to sing here.

BAYFIELD
Uh-huh?

FLORENCE
I've booked the hall. For October 25th. And I'm going to give a thousand tickets away to the soldiers, because we must support our boys.

BAYFIELD

Well. I applaud your courage. And. And no one would enjoy seeing you triumph here more than I, obviously. But this place is just. It's so big, you know. It's nearly a thousand, three thousand people.

FLORENCE

Well, Lily Pons's voice filled it. She's just a little bird.

BAYFIELD

Yes, but she's a young woman with a young woman's strength and perfect technique, and it's... it's...

FLORENCE

My technique isn't perfect?

BAYFIELD

No, it is, it is, it is, but I. I just think this might be too much for you.

FLORENCE

Well, if Mr. Churchill had adopted that attitude, why, Herr Hitler would be standing on the balcony of Buckingham Palace howling like a Doberman as we speak.

BAYFIELD

You're not strong enough, Bunny. What if it kills you?

FLORENCE

Oh, then I shall die happy. Death has been my constant companion for almost 50

years. I've lived day to day never knowing if my body, if it'll succumb and my... my... my... my reason desert me. But I've fought and I've fought and I've fought. And I'm still here. And I'm going to sing here.

BAYFIELD

But have I not stood by you?

FLORENCE

If you truly love me, you'll let me sing here.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Kathleen and Bayfield sit at a table drinking martinis.

KATHLEEN

It was a lovely weekend.

BAYFIELD

It was, it was, it was.

KATHLEEN

We must... We must do it again.

BAYFIELD

Yes, we must.

KATHLEEN

Darling, please don't look so out of sorts.

BAYFIELD

Sorry.

KATHLEEN

She might change her mind, you know.

BAYFIELD

No, I very much doubt that.

KATHLEEN

Well, let's just try and be
happy tonight, eh?

BAYFIELD

And I'm trying.

KATHLEEN

Yes, you certainly are.

BAYFIELD

You see, I just feel that
if we had not gone away,
none of this would have
ever happened. It's
completely my fault, so...

A GUY near the bar announces with glee to everyone that
he has Florence's recording and places it on the record
player.

GUY

Hey, guys, you're not gonna
believe this. You gotta
hear this. Play it, guys.
Guys, wait till you hear
this.

The piano intro to "Like a Bird" starts and Florence's
voice fills the bar.

GUY

It's Florence. I've got her
record.

He imitates Florence singing.

BAYFIELD

Scum.

KATHLEEN

Darling, ignore them.

BAYFIELD

I will not ignore them.

KATHLEEN

This is our night out, St
Clair.

BAYFIELD

So you think I should just sit here and have a jolly drink with you while human vermin laughs at my wife? Is that what you think?

Bayfield rises.

KATHLEEN

You will sit down or, so help me God, I will leave you. Do you understand?

Bayfield goes to the Guy.

BAYFIELD

Excuse me, excuse me. You have absolutely no right to this. This is a private recording!

Bayfield removes the record. He and Guy struggle for the recording.

GUY

That's my record!

Bayfield attempts to retrieve it but fails.

BAYFIELD

It is not yours! Take your filthy philistine hands off me. Give it to me or I will call the police. Give it to me now.

The Guy pulls Bayfield's silk from his suit coat and drops it on the floor.

GUY

You dropped your mouchoir, Mr. Fancy-Pants. Beat it, you hefty old sap.

Bayfield returns to their table as Kathleen exits.

BAYFIELD

Kathleen! Wait!

Kathleen is gone.

INT. McMOON'S STUDIO - DAY

COSME

I cannot play Carnegie Hall with Madam Florence. Maybe you could speak to Mr Totten, tell him it's not such a great idea. Surely he'd understand.

BAYFIELD

It's too late. She's given a thousand tickets to the War Veterans Association.

COSME

Well, I... What did Kathleen say?

BAYFIELD

Kathleen... has left me.

COSME

Oh. Jeez, I'm so sorry. That's awful.

BAYFIELD

Please, Cosme, will you do it?

COSME

Mr. Bayfield, I am a serious pianist. I have ambition. I...

BAYFIELD

Oh, you think that I didn't have ambition? I was a good actor. But I was never going to be a great actor. It was very, very hard to admit that to myself. But once I had, I felt free from the tyranny of

ambition. I started to live. Is ours not a happy world, Cosme? Do we not have fun?

COSME

Please, Mr. Bayfield.

BAYFIELD

You see, we have to help her because without loyalty, there's nothing.

COSME

We'll be murdered out there!

BAYFIELD

You think that I'm not aware of that? For 25 years, I have kept the mockers and scoffers at bay. I'm very well aware of what they might do. But Florence has been my life. I love her. I think you love her too. Singing at Carnegie Hall is her dream. And I'm going to give it to her. The only question now is whether you will stand by your patron and friend in her hour of need, or whether you will focus on your ambition. Please, Cosme. Will you play for your friend?

COSME

OK.

BAYFIELD

Thank you.

COSME

Oh, golly. Oh, golly gosh.

BAYFIELD

Come on, you're gonna play

at Carnegie Hall. How many
people can say that?

COSME

Oh, boy, we're gonna die
out there.

INT. CARNEGIE HALL - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Bayfield works with Florence to prepare her for her performance with vocal exercises while thousands of people are seated in the auditorium including Cole Porter, Tallulah Bankhead, dozens of paparazzi, Verdi Club members, society friends, and one thousand drunken, rowdy soldiers.

BAYFIELD

From the diaphragm, Bunny.

FLORENCE

Ha.

BAYFIELD

And again, lower.

FLORENCE

Ha.

BAYFIELD

From the diaphragm, Bunny.

FLORENCE

Ha.

BAYFIELD

Blow the candles out.

FLORENCE

Ha!

BAYFIELD

Ha!

FLORENCE

Ha!

BAYFIELD

Hate the candles. Ha!

FLORENCE

I don't have -- Where is
Cosme?

BAYFIELD

He will be here.

FLORENCE

He's very, very, very late.

BAYFIELD

Bunny, you must relax.

COSME

What if he's dead?

BAYFIELD

He has never been late.

There is a knocking at door.

FLORENCE

Oh, here he is. Oh, my
goodness me.

Bayfield goes to the door, opens it and
in walks the COLONEL.

BAYFIELD

Oh, Colonel.

COLONEL

Could I speak to Madam
Florence for a moment?

BAYFIELD

Of course. Please. Bunny,
it's the colonel.

FLORENCE

Yes. Ah, Colonel. I hope
the house is warming up
nicely.

COLONEL

It sure is, Madam Florence.
I'm not surprised. You're
the talk of the town.

BAYFIELD

She sold out faster than
Sinatra.

COLONEL

I don't doubt it.

COLONEL

On behalf of the Marine
Corps, I just wanted to say
thank you so much for the
free tickets. The boys are
very grateful.

FLORENCE

Given the sacrifices you
have made, it's the very
least I can do.

COLONEL

Some things are worth dying
for.

FLORENCE

Hmm. You take the words
right out of my mouth.
Colonel, you'll forgive me.
I must prepare.

COLONEL

Of course. Break a leg.

FLORENCE

Thank you so much. Oh.

COLONEL

That's what you say, isn't
it?

FLORENCE

Yes. Yes, of course. I'll
try.

BAYFIELD

Thank you, Colonel. Thank
you. Those were kind words.

The Colonel leaves.

FLORENCE

Now, we are ten minutes
away from going on stage.

BAYFIELD

Bunny, you must relax.

FLORENCE

Where is he? Where is
Cosme? Cosme?! Where is
that silly, silly boy?

BAYFIELD

I don't have an answer,
Bunny. I wish I did. We
know the traffic is
terrible and I'm sure he'll
be here any moment.

FLORENCE

Here! My briefcase. I want
you to keep it close.

Cosme, a bit disheveled, but putting himself together,
runs onto the backstage area.

FLORENCE

Cosme! Where have you been?

COSME

I got jumped by a bunch of
sailors. They were most
disrespectful.

BAYFIELD

Let's straighten you up.

Bayfield looks out the side curtain. Florence joins
him.

BAYFIELD

Well, it's quite a house,
Bunny. I spy Cole Porter in
the front row no less.

Florence peaks a look.

COSME

Cole Porter?

Cosme peaks a look.

BAYFIELD

Tallulah Bankhead is here.

FLORENCE

Oh, my hat. What have I done? I can't do it, Whitey. I can't go on that stage.

BAYFIELD

Oh! Sit.

FLORENCE

I can't. I've made a terrible mistake.

BAYFIELD

Sit. Listen to me, Bunny. Listen. Those men out there, they've seen horrors. Their bodies have been smashed, their minds torn to shreds. They need joy. They need... music. You can heal them, Bunny. That is your purpose. Believe it. Believe.

FLORENCE

But I'm afraid.

BAYFIELD

Don't be. Don't be. They're going to love you.

COSME

You'll be great, Madam Florence. We can do it.

FLORENCE

Whitey, may I have my briefcase? Thank you. And a pen.

Florence takes out a thick will from her briefcase. Bayfield produces a pen.

FLORENCE

I'm adding a codicil to my will. Because I would like you to have a little something when I die, Cosme.

Florence handwrites out a clause or codicil to a blank page at the end of the will.

COSME

Thank you, Madam Florence.

FLORENCE

Whitey, would you mind witnessing right here? Right here. Oh, thank you very much.

Florence folds up the thick will and places it back into the briefcase. She hands it to Bayfield while she hums.

BAYFIELD

Ready?

Florence takes a breath, and nods.

BAYFIELD

(to the stage manager)
House lights down, please.
Now, then, Little Miss Foster, make me proud.

INT. CARNEGIE HALL - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Cosme enters the stage, the audience cheers, he bows and takes his place at the piano. He looks off stage to Florence who mouths "Go ahead, go ahead." Cosme plays a rousing introduction. Florence enters the stage in a 1920's vamp pose. The audience cheers. Bayfield stands just off stage.

Florence sings a shrieking coloratura as Cosme plays Ottorino Respighi's Valse Carresante.

FLORENCE

Valse caressante
Verse ancienne

Calls up the joys of les
nuits d'antan

First a little laughter from a few soldier, but the audience quickly erupts into raucous laughter. Florence looks to Cosme and Bayfield, but continues without losing a beat.

FLORENCE
Song that sings in my ear
when I'm in your arms

The audience continues to laugh. Florence begins to mumble her words and begins to sing faintly until she stops. Florence sways under the pressure of ridicule. Finally, the SHOWGIRL, sitting in the audience, stands and turns on the audience.

SHOWGIRL
Hey. Hey! (whistles) Give
the dame a break! She's
singing her heart out. Sit
your ass down. Shame on
you! Shame on all of you!
You better cheer, assholes.
Cheer! Cheer! Bravo!

The audience slowly comes round and begins to cheer, shouting Bravo and Sing!

BAYFIELD
Sing, Bunny, sing!

Cosme plays the intro and Florence starts again.

FLORENCE
Valse caressante
Verse ancienne
Calls up the joys of les
nuits d'antan
Song we sang on the night
when I'm in your arms
Air that captured my ear
that will ever charm
Melodies
On the breeze
Bring back sweet old
memories
Valse caressante

Verse charmante
How the music we used to
know
Brings back the memories of
long ago

INT. CARNEGIE HALL - COAT CHECK - CONTINUOUS

EARL WILSON, New York Post columnist is getting his
coat and hat. Bayfield comes up to him.

BAYFIELD

Mr Wilson, are you leaving
already? She's only just
started.

WILSON

I've heard enough. Thank
you.

BAYFIELD

Oh, she just needed a
little warming up, that's
all. Listen to her.

WILSON

I have never seen such a
pathetic, vainglorious
display of egotism in my
life. That you encouraged
Mrs. Jenkins to make a
spectacle of herself is
quite simply unforgivable.

BAYFIELD

Will you be writing
something?

WILSON

Yes, and it will be the
truth.

BAYFIELD

Isn't the truth that a lot
of hurt people are having
some fun? Did you not
notice?

WILSON

- Music is important. It should not be mocked.

BAYFIELD

How dare you? She has done more for the musical life of this city than anyone. And that includes you.

WILSON

Do you mind?

Wilson moves around Bayfield so he can exit.

BAYFIELD

You're nothing but a jumped-up hack. Name your price, Wilson. What is it? 100? Is it 200? \$300, that's my final offer.

WILSON

You're insane.

BAYFIELD

500. Listen! Listen to them, hack!

Wilson is gone.

INT. CARNEGIE HALL - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Florence sings "Queen of the Night," an aria from the 1791 Mozart opera, "The Magic Flute."

FLORENCE

Figlia mia non
Figlia mia non
Figlia mia non
Figlia mia non
Ciel!
Ciel!
L'orren do mio voto
Ah! Ascolta, o ciel

Florence ends on a sustained, out-of-tune high note to wild cheering and applause.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Kitty opens the door for Florence, Bayfield and Cosme.
Kitty takes Florence's coat.

KITTY
Congratulations, Madam
Florence.

FLORENCE
Oh, thank you, Kitty.

KITTY
The phone hasn't stopped
ringing.

FLORENCE
Oh, hasn't it?

BAYFIELD
Now, you are pooped, Bunny.
Straight to bed or I shall
be very, very cross.

FLORENCE
Oh, yes, alright. Well, Mr.
McMoon, we did it.

COSME
We did it.

FLORENCE
And goodnight.

COSME
Goodnight.

FLORENCE
And you'll come kiss me
goodnight?

BAYFIELD
Of course I will, yes.

Florence and Kitty exit to Florence's bedroom.
Bayfield invites Cosme into the music room.

BAYFIELD
Come.

COSME

Oh! I played Carnegie Hall.
God darn it, Mr. Bayfield,
Cosme McMoon from San
Antonio, Texas, played
Carnegie Hall.

Bayfield presents a scotch for Cosme who takes it.

BAYFIELD

And he was brilliant.
Utterly, utterly brilliant.

COSME

We did it.

BAYFIELD

Yes, I think we did. Mud in
your eye.

They clink their glasses and sip at the scotch.

COSME

Thank you, Mr Bayfield.

BAYFIELD

Hmm?

COSME

Thank you for everything.

BAYFIELD

Oh, no, don't thank me. No,
I... I had the night of my
life. Down in one. Go!

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Bayfield grabs his coat to go when the bedroom door
opens. Florence stands in the light.

BAYFIELD

Kitty said you were asleep.

FLORENCE

No. You will buy the papers
in the morning, won't you?

BAYFIELD

Yes, of course, of course.

FLORENCE

Stay the night. I love you
so, St Clair.

BAYFIELD

I love you, my bunny
rabbit.

EXT. MANHATTAN - STREET CORNER NEWSPAPER STAND -
MORNING

Bayfield and Cosme approach the stand manned by the
NEWSPAPER VENDOR.

BAYFIELD

The Post, please. Thank
you.

The Vendor hands him the Post. Bayfield opens it to
Wilson's Column, which reads "Florence Foster Jenkins -
The Worst Singer in the World?"

COSME

Oh, God.

BAYFIELD

She must never see this.
I'd like every copy of the
Post that you have, please.

VENDOR

But I got regular
customers.

Bayfield hands the Vendor a twenty-dollar bill.

BAYFIELD

I'm sure they'll manage.

VENDOR

I think so too.

The Vendor hands over all copies of the Post.

BAYFIELD

I'd also like the Bugle,

the News and the
Correspondent.

The Vendor hands those over too.

VENDOR
Thank you, sir.

BAYFIELD
Thank you.

Bayfield and Cosme walk away and Bayfield drops all of
the copies of the Post into the trash can.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - ENTRANCE - MORNING

Kitty reads to Florence as Florence lies in bed. The
bed is covered in newspapers.

KITTY
"Madam Jenkins's
performance conquers
Carnegie Hall."

FLORENCE
Oh, my hat!

KITTY
"Only the night before at
Carnegie Hall, Sinatra
entertained 3,000 of his
bobbysox followers."

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Cosme enters as Bayfield speaks into the phone.

Bayfield
The piece was spiteful,
vicious and wholly
inaccurate and it has
caused a great deal of
upset. Do I need to remind
you that Madam Florence is
a very close personal
friend of Arturo
Toscanini's? It would be
such a pity if the Post
were excluded from Carnegie

Hall. Thank you for your understanding, Mr. Thackrey. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Bayfield hangs up the phone.

COSME

I bought up every copy of the Post within two blocks.

BAYFIELD

Well done, and I very much doubt that the piece will be in the afternoon edition, so... a few more hours and we're in the clear.

Florence yells out from the bedroom.

FLORENCE

St Clair!

Bayfield walks to the bedroom.

KITTY

"Madam Jenkins wore a series of extraordinary costumes of great elegance and beauty."

FLORENCE

Whitey, Whitey. Read the thing about the simultaneous something.

KITTY

"Even their simultaneous reflexes--

FLORENCE

--Sinatra fans--

KITTY

-- were as nothing compared to the applause and community spirit afforded Madam Jenkins."

BAYFIELD

Oh, bravo, Bunny.

FLORENCE

And all the reviews are just terrific. But no Post?

BAYFIELD

I don't think they covered the concert.

FLORENCE

Oh, the Post always covers Carnegie Hall.

Florence gets out of bed and sits at her makeup table.

BAYFIELD

Well, then, I shall find a copy. Now, are you sure you should be getting up? You must be so tired.

FLORENCE

(out of breath)

The baroness and some of the others are gathering for lunch downstairs. I'm going to join them.

BAYFIELD

Now, Florence, that's really not a good idea.

FLORENCE

What on earth is the matter with you today?

INT. SEYMOUR HOTEL - LUNCHEON ROOM - NOON

Florence sits at a table with her elderly Verdi Club compatriots, the BARONESS, Bayfield and Cosme enjoying Danish.

FLORENCE

Well, after the first half, I was pooped.

BARONESS

Oh! Well, your voice was as
fresh as the morning dew
till the very last,
Florence.

FLORENCE

Hear, hear.

BARONESS

I don't remember such a
wonderful night. And, you
know, people were fighting
for tickets outside.

Cosme and Bayfield notice a DINER enter with a copy of
the morning Post. Bayfield looks at Cosme and tilts
his head toward the diner as if to say, "Go get it."

COSME

Excuse me.

Cosme leaves the table and goes to the Diner who is
sitting. Bayfield watches the action intently.

BARONESS

Why, I was offered \$20 for
mine. What was the high
point of the evening for
you, Mr. Bayfield?

BAYFIELD

I'm sorry, Baroness, what
did you say?

BARONESS

What was the high point of
the evening for you?

BAYFIELD

Well, there were so many.

BARONESS

No, it was your Queen of
the Night aria, Florence.

BAYFIELD

Oh, yes.

Cosme speaks with the Diner.

COSME

It's an emergency. My boss
has no paper this morning.

DINER

I'm sorry, this one's mine.

COSME

But...

DINER

No, you can't have it.

BAYFIELD

Excuse me, ladies.

Bayfield leaves the table and goes to Cosme and the
Diner.

BARONESS

Mr. McMoon, has he got a
sweetheart?

FLORENCE

I really don't know.

Bayfield speaks with the Diner.

BAYFIELD

I realize this is absurd,
but is there any way we
could persuade you to part
with your newspaper?

DINER

Well, no, you couldn't.
This one's mine.

BAYFIELD

How much?

DINER

What is going on? I'm not
taking your money.

BAYFIELD

50 bucks?

DINER

Well, if you insist.

BAYFIELD

Thank you so very much.
It's very, very nice of
you.

He walks off with the newspaper and hands it to Cosme.

BAYFIELD

Get rid of it.

Bayfield returns to the table. Florence is gone.

BAYFIELD

Where's Florence?

BARONESS

She's gone to powder her
nose.

BAYFIELD

A-ha. Thank you.

Bayfield starts to leave for the restrooms.

BARONESS

She's gone to powder her
nose, Mr. Bayfield.

BAYFIELD

Oh, quite. Quite.

INT. SEYMOUR HOTEL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Florence, on her way to the bathroom, runs into a FAN.

FAN

Madam Florence? It's you!

FLORENCE

Oh!

FAN

I saw your show at Carnegie
Hall last night. It was

wonderful.

FLORENCE

Thank you. Thank you very much.

FAN

I've never laughed so hard. My ribs are still aching. You have an enormous comic talent, Mrs, Foster Jenkins. It was so funny.

FLORENCE

Oh, thank you very much. Um... Um... I must be on... Good afternoon to you.

FAN

And don't pay any attention to that review. That hack knows absolutely nothing.

The FAN leaves and Florence turns and heads out of the club into the street.

EXT. MANHATTAN - STREET CORNER NEWSPAPER STAND - NOON

Florence goes to the VENDOR for a newspaper.

FLORENC

The Post, please.

VENDOR

Oh, sorry, lady, all sold out.

FLORENCE

Already? How come?

VENDOR

You won't believe it. This guy comes by this morning, takes all the copies I got. An Englishman.

FLORENCE

What did he look like?

VENDOR

Oh, tall. You know, your
gentleman type.

FLORENCE

Why did he buy all of them?

VENDOR

I don't know. 20 bucks he
gives me. Then he dumps
them in the trash.

Florence goes to the trash bin and pulls out a copy of
The Post and turns to Wilson's Column. She stumbles as
she reads. Then she stops reading and begins looking
at all of the people around her. She begins wandering
aimlessly back toward the Seymour Hotel.

INT. SEYMOUR HOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Florence enters and passes out. Bayfield runs to her
aid.

BAYFIELD

Bunny. Bunny. Bunny, it's
me, it's Whitey.

(to the doorman)

Get a doctor. Quickly.
Quickly.

(to Florence)

My darling, it's me. It's
me. It's me, my precious.
I'm going to turn you over.
Speak to me, Bunny. Please.
Please, my darling.

(to no one in particular)

Where's the doctor?

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

While Cosme play Saint-Saens in the music room,
Bayfield sits at Florence's side as she lays in bed,
her wig off and her head wrapped in a turban. Florence
opens her eyes from her deep coma.

BAYFIELD

Bunny. Bunny. It's me.
Bunny, I'm here. Can you
hear me?

Florence struggles to speak and to sit up. She gasps.
Bayfield calms her.

BAYFIELD

No, shh, shh. Shush, my
love. Shh, shh.
Shh, shh. Shh, shh. Rest,
my beautiful. Rest.

FLORENCE

Was everyone laughing at me
the whole time?

BAYFIELD

I was never laughing at
you. Yours is the truest
voice I have ever heard.

FLORENCE

Listen. Listen.

Florence has a vision of the performance. In that
vision she sings perfectly in tune.

INT. CARNEGIE HALL - STAGE - NIGHT

Florence performs Ernest Charles, "When I Have Sung My
Songs to You," in perfect tune. Cosme plays.

FLORENCE

To you
I'll sing no more...
'Twould be a sacrilege to
sing
At another door
We've worked so hard
To hold our dreams...
I love you, my bunny.
Just you and I
I could not share them all
again
I'd rather die
With just the thought
That I had loved so well...
That I could never sing
again
No, I could never
Never sing again

Except
To you

Cosme and Florence link hands to bow, and Florence reaches out to Bayfield just off stage and waves for him to come out. He shakes his head no. Florence insists and Bayfield enters the stage and all three join hands and take a bow to the cheering audience.

INT. FLORENCE'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

FLORENCE

The audience, they were
applauding.
And cheering. People may
say I couldn't sing, but no
one can say I didn't sing.

BAYFIELD

Bravo, my love. Bravo.

Florence takes her last breath deeply immersed in the vision.