

PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

2400 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404
612-872-5108
FAX 612-874-8119

The Scent of the Roses

or

*The Unlikely Tales of Molly Moonshine: Lady Traveler
and Unreliable Raconteuse*

By
Brendan Murray

The Scent of the Roses was first presented by Redbridge Drama Centre, UK, in 2011.

The license issued in connection with PYA perusal scripts is a limited license, and is issued for the sole purpose of reviewing the script for a potential future performance. All other rights regarding perusal scripts are expressly reserved by Plays for Young Audiences, including, but not limited to, the rights to distribute, perform, copy or alter scripts. This limited license does not convey any performance rights of any kind with this material. By accepting any perusal script(s), Licensee agrees to and is bound by these terms.

The Scent of the Roses: Introduction

The play was commissioned by Theatre Centre and grew out of a series of meetings, conversations and workshops involving Natalie Wilson, Siobhan McSweeney and myself. In the event, Natalie was not available to direct, nor Siobhan to perform but the original aim of a small, linguistically rich show (that could be performed either in theatres or classrooms) remained.

Thanks...

To the company, creative team, and everyone at Theatre Centre – but above all, Siobhan & Natalie, without whom...

Production Credits

The Scent of the Roses (under the title Molly Moonshine) was first performed at Redbridge Drama Centre, London on October 20th 2011

Company

Molly	Fiona Bruce
Stage Manager	Annette Waldie

Creative Team

Director	Lawrence Evans
Designer	Sophia Lovell Smith
Composer	Darryl Goodwin
Dialect coach	Jonathan Dawes

Theatre Centre

Natalie Wilson	Artistic Director
Charles Bishop	General Manager
Mark Lovell	Production Manager
Caroline Schreiber	Marketing Manager
Marigold Hughes	Schools Producer
Sarah Nutland	Office & Tour Coordinator

THE PLAY BEGINS

BACK TO THE AUDIENCE, A CURIOSLY DRESSED WOMAN OF INDETERMINATE AGE IS PEGGING WASHING ON A LINE. ON THE GROUND NEARBY, A NUMBER OF BAGS. NOW AND THEN SHE CHECKS A BROKEN POCKET WATCH. WITH HER BACK STILL TO THE AUDIENCE SHE REMOVES HER DRAWERS, INSPECTS THEM AND DECIDES TO ADD THEM TO THE LINE. ONLY THEN DOES SHE REALISE SHE'S NOT ALONE...

MOLLY

Oh! Weren't you near to making me jump! And my jumping days are long gone, I can tell you. [BEAT] What? [BEAT] Wasn't I just... [BEAT] Have you never seen..? [BEAT] Well, it's come to something when a respectable woman can't give her drawers an airing without folk gawping like she's just killed the cat!

SHE COLLECTS HERSELF AND RELENTS A LITTLE. PERHAPS SHE SITS...

Still it's glad I am to see you for if you weren't here, wouldn't I be on my own and if on my own, then talking to myself - and isn't that the devil of a thing when you've something to ask a person? [BEAT] Did I not say? Oh, indeed I have - and not just something but something of the utmost importance.

[BEAT] If only I could remember what it was! [BEAT] I wonder if I... [SHE HOLDS HER BREATH] ... No... Sure isn't my memory as full of holes as an old colander?

Well, if we're to be passing the time together – and it looks like we are - I'd best be introducing myself: Molly's the name, Molly Roe Rafferty – although Moonshine's what they call me: Molly Moonshine on account of all the... stories I tell which some people say are little more than moonshine but which, I can assure you, are eye-witness accounts, every one of them, of the actual events described as they actually occurred. [BEAT] More or less.

Moonshine... Did you ever hear the like? Mind, I once knew a woman called Hurley who married a man named Burley. And wasn't she christened Shirley? So that was Shirley Hurley-Burley! [BEAT] Now is that true do you think – or was I making it up? [...] Who's to say?

But wasn't I trying to remember something? Something I was wanting to ask you... [BEAT] I wonder if... [SHAKES LIKE A JELLY] ... No... Sure, isn't my memory as full of holes as an old Swiss cheese?

Half the time I don't even know where I am! [BEAT] Come to think of it, where am I? [...] London? [...] London, is it? And what sort of place would it be, this London? [...] And the people, what are they like? [...] And what goes on now here and hereabouts? [...] Is that right? Is that a fact? And do they have cars? [...] And do they have buses? [...] And do they have magic carpets flying about all over the place?

Sure they do not! / I should think they don't! / I can see I'll have to be keeping an eye on you a lot and not believing a word you're telling me. Flying carpets indeed! Do you think I was born yesterday? Well, I wasn't – for wasn't I having my hair done yesterday, so it couldn't have been then.

Mind, if I told you how I got here myself, you'd not believe me – for wasn't I blown by the wind: blown by the wind like a blessed balloon! Oh and it's a tricky means of transportation for not only do you have to keep your legs crossed but you never know where you'll be pitching up next. I mean, last week wasn't I on the moon?

Now you needn't look at me like that! – I'm telling you it was the moon I was on - for didn't I go and hit my head on one of them old moon beams? And I went to a party. But there was no jelly and no dancing so I didn't think much to that. [BEAT] Is that true do you think or was I making it up? [...] Who's to say?

But wasn't I was wanting to ask you something... Something important... I wonder... [SHE HOLDS HER BREATH AND SHAKES LIKE A JELLY AT THE SAME TIME] No... Sure, isn't my memory as full of holes as an old string vest?

These days I can hardly remember what day it is. [BEAT] What day is it, by the way? [...] Is that a fact? [...] Would that be the day after ---day? [...] And the day before ---day? [...] Best make a note of that...

SHE MAKES A NOTE THEN REALISES

Isn't that it? Isn't that what I did? The very thing I was wanting to ask you: didn't I write it down so as not to forget it? Yes, yes, it's all coming back: I wrote it down on a piece of paper! [BEAT] Now if I could just remember which piece of paper and where I put it...

[LOOKING ABOUT HER] You haven't seen it, have you? [...] A piece of paper with... [BEAT] Will you check your pockets and be having a look? [...] Anything? No? What's that? Oh, now isn't that interesting! But not...

CHECKING HER OWN POCKETS SHE FINDS A NOTE

Ah! [READING] *This isn't what you're looking for.* [BEAT] Well, that's a big help!

TOSSES THE NOTE AWAY AND FINDS ANOTHER

Ah-ha! [READING] *Did I not tell you, this isn't it?* [BEAT] Of all the - !

TOSSES THIS AWAY AND FINDS A THIRD [BEAT]

[READING] *For the last time, will you look somewhere else?* [BEAT] All right, there's no need to be rude! I mean, would it kill you to come up with a positive suggestion? [SPOTTING A PS AND READING IT] *PS: If it's a positive suggestion you're after, try looking up your jumper.*

Up my..! [SHE TOSSES THE THIRD NOTE AWAY] Right then, up your jumpers with you as the man says... [...] Anything? No?

LOOKING DOWN HER OWN JUMPER SHE FINDS A STRING WITH A TIN LID AT ITS END

What the -? Will you look at that? Isn't this the gold medal I won at the Olympics for throwing the... thingamabob? Or was it for the running now... or the jumping maybe..?

Life is full of mystery I find... Questions every way you turn... For instance, are you ever sitting in the bath - you know, just minding your own business like - when up between your legs come all these bubbles? Has that ever happened to you? [...] Now where are they coming from? I'd be interested in the answer to that one... [BEAT] But now I come to look, isn't this just a bit of an old tin can?

AND SHE TOSSES IT AWAY, BEMUSED...

So nothing in the pockets... And nothing up the jumper...
[BEAT] Then it's on your feet with you and see if you're sitting on it. Anything? [...] No? Then sit yourselves down again...

A TELEPHONE RINGS AND SHE TURNS TO THE BAG TO HER LEFT. REACHING INSIDE SHE PRODUCES FIRST ONE THEN ANOTHER CURIOSITY THAT MIGHT FEATURE ELSEWHERE IN THE PLAY. AT THE THIRD ATTEMPT SHE PULLS OUT A TELEPHONE RECEIVER...

Hello..? Yes, this is Molly... Is that right? Well I can't talk now for aren't I looking for something... Well, a piece a paper if you must know... No, not just any - A very important piece of paper for your information... Yes, we looked in our pockets... No... Yes, and up our... No... Well, weren't we doing that even when you telephoned... Oh yes. Yes, I will. Yes, and you be careful with them snakes now. [HANGS UP] Wasn't that Saint Patrick, checking up on us?

I wonder if...

AND SHE REACHES BACK INTO THE BAG AND PRODUCES A BUNCH OF KEYS...

Now haven't I been looking for these since the very day I lost them! And if only I could remember what they were for, sure things might have been very different...

REPLACING THE KEYS AND REACHING AROUND AGAIN SHE PRODUCES A HANDFULL OF PEBBLES (POSSIBLY STRUNG LIKE A NECKLACE)

And will you look at these! Aren't they my jewels, given to me by the King of Killarney and fit for a true princess? Oh, you needn't look at me like that! If you don't believe me, answer me this: how many fingers does a princess have on her right hand? [...] And how many on her left? [...] Well, there you go, for don't I have five myself on either hand? So I'd say, considering the evidence, that as near as damn it makes me a princess.

Wasn't it just last week I was having tea with the queen? Oh, yes! And she was full of news about all the goings on in fairyland. [BEAT] Didn't I say it was the Queen of the Fairies? Did you think I was meaning the queen of England? Oh, no indeed – for wasn't I having tea with her the week before?

[CONFIDENTIALLY] And you know about fairies, do you? How they creep up your nose while you're sleeping. Oh yes! For isn't that why you sneeze – because you've too many fairies up your nose? [BEAT] Now is that true do you think or was I making it up? [...] Who's to say?

REPLACING THE PEBBLES SHE PULLS OUT A ROSE...

Sure, isn't that always the way: when you're looking for one thing, don't you find something else?

SHE LOOKS AT THE ROSE FOR A MOMENT, REPLACES IT AND PRODUCES AN OLD BOOK...

Well, I'll be..! Sure, isn't this my old mammy's book of stories? And when I was ready for bed and all tucked up, wouldn't she open it with a quizzical look and "Will we have one, do you think? Have we time enough?" [...] [BEAT] And will we now? [...] Well just a quick one then... [LOOKS THROUGH THE BOOK] Oh yes... here's one she used to tell...

SHE SITS ON HER TROLLEY, ANNOUNCES THE NAME OF THE STORY AND READS IT...

Wasn't she the one, my old Ma, with her laundry and potato cakes and always a place to rest your head? Sobbing at my Da's sweet songs and laughing at the radio - fit to burst and redder than a beetroot! I remember sitting on her knee when I was no bigger than you... [BEAT] And where is she now? Sure, she's helping God with the washing up... but she'll never be dead while I'm alive.

AND SHE PUTS THE BOOK AWAY...

Now where was I? [BEAT] Wasn't I here all along and trying to remember something? But you would go interrupting with your story books and beetroot! [BEAT] Don't I have something to ask you? I think I have. And didn't I write it on a piece of paper? I think I did. And weren't we looking for it even now? I think we were.

A TELEPHONE RINGS AND SHE TURNS TO THE BAG TO HER RIGHT. REACHING INSIDE PRODUCES FIRST ONE THEN ANOTHER CURIOSITY THAT MIGHT FEATURE ELSEWHERE IN THE PLAY.

AT THE THIRD ATTEMPT SHE PULLS OUT A TELEPHONE RECEIVER – SMALLER THAN THE FIRST...

Hello..? Yes, this is... You'll have to speak up... Oh, is that where you are..? Isn't that great now? Well, as I told you before, I can't talk now for – yes, I'm still looking for it, yes...A piece of paper, that's right... Yes, we did look there... No... Yes, and there... No... Yes and... No... Oh yes. Yes, I will. Yes. And the same to your good self. [HANGS UP] Wasn't it Saint Pat again? Discovering himself in America!

I wonder if...

AND SHE REACHES BACK INTO THE BAG AND PRODUCES A PIECE OF KNITTING...

And will you look at that! Sure isn't that going to make a lovely... or maybe a... or a nice new pair of... Well, if I ever finish it I dare say we'll find out.

REPLACING THE KNITTING AND REACHING ROUND, SHE PRODUCES A PORTRAIT OF THE MONA LISA

Now I haven't seen that since... well, it must be... for wasn't I only... To tell you the truth, I've not the least idea how long it's been for I was never much of a one for the numbers.

SHE SHOWS THEM THE PORTRAIT

What do you reckon? Do you think it looks like me? [...] Neither do I. Didn't I have it done by old whatsisname... you know, the Italian feller ... Leonardo da... da... da feller who does the paintings? I told him: I said, *I'm not paying you for that* so he gets himself into a fine old strop and off he goes to invent the helicopter or some such contraption. [BEAT] Now is that true, do you think – or was I making it up? [...] Who's to say?

REPLACING THE PORTRAIT SHE AGAIN FINDS THE ROSE...

Now isn't that the damndest thing? Some things you can't seem to find at all and others you can't seem to lose...

SHE LOOKS AT THE ROSE FOR A MOMENT, REPLACES IT AND PRODUCES AN OLD RADIO...

Well, who'd've..! Sure isn't this the old radio my Da'd sing along to when he'd had a drop? Friday night and a fine fish supper. Rebel songs to stir your blood and others softer than a sigh – not lullabies as such but sad, sweet airs to soothe your soul... [SHE TURNS THE KNOB AND HER FATHER'S VOICE SINGS FROM THE PAST] Wasn't this one of his..? And him singing...

SHE LISTENS AND / OR JOINS IN...

Wasn't he the one, my old Da, with his terrible jokes and the smell of tobacco and vegetables not fit to eat? And he'd hoist me on his shoulders like a fabulous beast from the time before stories were stories and history was happening by the day. [BEAT] And where is he now? Sure he's planting praties in paradise ... but he'll never be dead while I'm alive!

AND SHE PUTS THE RADIO AWAY...

Now where was I? [BEAT] Wasn't I here all along and trying to remember something? But you would go changing the subject with your lullabies and tobacco! [BEAT] Don't I have something to ask you? I think I have. And didn't I write it on a piece of paper? I think I did. And weren't we looking for it even now? I think we were.

A TELEPHONE RINGS AND SHE TURNS TO THE TROLLEY-COME- SEAT. REACHING INSIDE SHE FEELS AROUND AND TAKES OUT A SMALLER BAG. REACHING INTO THIS SHE PRODUCES A THIRD BAG, SMALLER STILL AND FROM THIS FIRST ONE THEN ANOTHER CURIOSITY THAT MIGHT FEATURE ELSEWHERE IN THE PLAY. AT THE THIRD ATTEMPT SHE PULLS OUT A TELEPHONE RECEIVER – SMALLER EVEN THAN THE SECOND...

Hello..? Yes but I can hardly hear a word you're... Oh, is that right? Well, no wonder then... Yes, still looking... That's right, we did... No... No... Oh yes. Yes, I will. Yes. And all the best to the man himself... [HANGS UP] Sure he never gives up! Calling from you know where with him being a saint and all! Showing off now! I wonder if...

AND SHE REACHES BACK INTO THE BAG AND PRODUCES AN APPLE

Now isn't that a great thing – yes indeed - for won't I be wanting something to eat when I'm on my way? Of course you know when you eat an apple, you must never swallow the pips or won't they sprout inside you and the branches come out of your ears and the roots out of your... Well, that's what they say at any rate and I for one am not inclined to put it to the test.

REPLACING THE APPLE, SHE PRODUCES SOME OLD PHOTOGRAPHS AND LOOKS AT THEM THROUGH FIRST ONE, THEN ANOTHER AND FINALLY A THIRD (ROSE-TINTED) PAIR OF SPECTACLES...

Now these take me back and no mistake... Here I am in a gorgeous frock, the leading soprano at La Scala Milano – carousing with Caruso and dying of love! [BEAT] Or is this me, do you think, the Bolshoi ballerina with the big bouquet and the crowd going crazy for her port de bras? And who's this now, digging a canal – or laying a railway, is it, all across America? For sure that's me – or is it? It's all so long ago... Oh but here I am with the circus! That was something, I can tell you.

Now, what do you think I did when I worked in that old circus? Was I the artful, aerialist – the acrobat atop the human pyramid? I was not. Was I the lady in the leotard way up high – no, higher than that – on the swaying, swinging flying trapeze? Nor was that my occupation - and just as well as I've a terrible head for heights and can hardly catch a cold let alone the outstretched hands of a sparkly partner. No indeed. When I worked in the circus, wasn't it my job to sweep up the elephant pooh and spin the candyfloss? Oh yes – and woe betide you if you ever got the two mixed up!

Oh, I've lived and loved and laughed and more but when the bad times came and the Great Hunger... didn't the landlords feed the cattle with corn the people might have eaten..? And that's all true, for such things cannot be made up... Still, I'm here to tell the tale. Aren't I here to tell the tale? I am.

REPLACING THE PHOTOS SHE FINDS THE ROSE FOR THE THIRD TIME...

Sure there's no getting away from some things...