

GOODBYE, PICCADILLY

by

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Sixth Draft
March 2, 2004

SCENE

The play takes place in and around The Spinney, a small country inn in a town in Canada. The story begins in November, 2000, and continues over the ensuing year and more.

CHARACTERS:

CECIL BEAUREGARD "BRICK" BRICKLEY -- 75

BESS BRICKLEY, Brick's wife -- 73

ROBERTA "BOBBIE" BRICKLEY, their daughter -- 47

KITTY McCOOEY -- 71

A MAN -- fiftyish

PRE SHOW --

A woman (KITTY) sings a medley of some of the more evocative WW II songs -- White Cliffs of Dover, We'll Meet Again, Lili Marlene.

A man (BRICK) accompanies her on the piano, not a pro, but someone who can play a tune or two.

(Note: The pre-show is optional. Alternatively we could hear recordings of WWII songs -- Vera Lynn, Glenn Miller or the like.)

At CURTAIN TIME -- the lighting changes, isolating Kitty in a pool of "memory light". She sings I'll Be Seeing You --

KITTY

I'll be seeing you in all the old familiar places
That this heart of mine embraces all day through,
In that small cafe, the park across the way,
The children's carousel, the chestnut trees, the
wishing well --

She's interrupted by the sound of Churchill's distinctive VOICE on a crackly radio, announcing that the German High Command has surrendered, the war in Europe is over --

Kitty reacts with elation, laughing, hugging (unseen) people --

Brick's reaction is quite different. He sits there, almost stunned -- then gets up and slips away.

We begin to HEAR the shrill RINGING of a phone, as light shifts to --

ACT ONE -- SCENE ONE

(The basic set is the main sitting room and reception area of "The Spinney" -- a small country inn, with a comfortable, wood-panelled, country-craftsy feeling about it -- such as one might find in any number of Canadian towns.

There's a reception desk, a main entrance door, a hallway and staircase (or two?) to other parts of the inn -- but this may be more of a suggestive set with certain key props such as the piano, some conventional landscape and wildlife prints on the walls -- rather than a fully-dressed, naturalistic one.

We also need a sense of a couple of downstage playing areas which are not part of the main set, where scenes away from the inn will occur. The location of these scenes -- a church, a lawyer's office, etc. -- are indicated in the scene headings as an aid to the reader, and again these settings will be merely suggestive -- chairs, a table, the odd telling prop.)

As the phone continues to ring --

BESS (off)

I'm coming!!

BESS rushes in. She's 70 if she's a day, but still quick-witted, sharp as a tack, at the moment a bundle of harried energy. She grabs the phone impatiently.

BESS

The Spinney B&B!! ... Oh, Marge, sorry. I didn't mean to bark, but it's been a madhouse here! You'll never guess who I just got off the line with -- Dave Stevens!! ... Of course you know who Dave Stevens is! CBC. Radio Noon. Ed Lawrence. The gardening phone-in ... No, no. I didn't call about my gloxinias. He called here! Looking for Brick! -- He's been awarded the Order of Canada! ... Not Dave! Brick! ... Yes! The blessed phone has been ringing non-stop! ... Oh, he doesn't know yet. He left yesterday on his damfool canoe trip into the wilds of Algonquin Park ... I know. A 75-year old man. Alone in a canoe in November. It's foolishness -- but we've done it this way forever. I go off on my yoga retreat. He goes off into the forest primeval to get in touch with his inner paddle. We spend every day together 51 weeks a year. One week apart is probably good for us -- and the truth is I don't even start missing him until the fourth or fifth -- hour. I know. It's so sappy. I don't know how people can stand us ... Going to the ceremony?! Of course I'm going! How often will I get to hobnob with Governor General Adrienne Clarkson -- and John -- I really should try and read one of those books of his. Voltaire's Buggers or whatever it's called. I've got it around here somewhere. They've already sent us an e-mail from Ottawa with all sorts of instructions about how to address Adrienne -- a deep curtsy and a heartfelt "your Majesty" will do nicely (almost giggly) ... Brick? Oh, he'll pooh pooh it, but he'll be pleased, deep down. He'll have one of his fits though, because the citation calls him Cecil! No one's called him Cecil since Miss Whittle in Grade Six!

(the line beeps)

Ooops, there's the other line again. Probably Adrienne wondering what I'm going to wear. Hang on --

(presses the button)

Order of Canada Central ... Yes, this is the residence of Cecil Beauregard Brickley ... You're calling from where? ... Really? Hold on a sec --

(presses button)

It's London, Marge -- England! I better take it. (laughing) It may be the Palace! Look, come to Toronto with me and help me pick out a dress. We'll take the club car and drink Drambuie. My treat. Next week. I'll call you.

(presses button)

Sorry to keep you waiting. This is Mrs. Cecil Brickley. I expect you're looking for my husband. He's known as Brick by the way ... (listening, slightly puzzled) -- No, no. You don't understand. My husband's not in England. He's in Algonquin Park. Here in the colonies. Paddling. (silence) -- No, no, no. You're not making sense. That's quite -- impossible -- (longer silence) -- Well, it's obviously a different Cecil Beauregard Brickley -- It's not an uncommon name ... His wallet? But?... Please stop saying you're sorry! I have no idea who that is, but it cannot possibly be my husband! He drove away yesterday with a canoe on top of his car! You think -- you think a man who's going to England would spend an hour putting a canoe on his car? The very idea is ludicrous. You don't canoe in England. You punt -- or whatever -- This is all some horrible -- dreadful --

(line beeps again)

-- mistake --

(presses the button, dazed)

Yes ... Who is this? ... Oh, hello, Bobbie, dear. I'm sorry,. Of course I recognize your voice. I'm just -- distracted ... Your father -- your father -- your father has won the Order of Canada.

Brownout.

Bess remains sitting there in the half light. She looks numb -- and very much her age. The phone keeps ringing, nerve janglingly. She doesn't move, doesn't seem to hear it -- lost --

BOBBIE comes in, puts down her bags. She's mid-fortyish, trim, athletic, tomboyish. Almost a sense of slow motion here, two characters under water emotionally. Mother and daughter embrace wordlessly, stand holding each other --

BRICK materializes out of shadows. He's 75 as we've heard, but solid and fit-looking, salt of

the earth. He comes forward and hugs them both.
They don't know he's there --

Blackout.