

***“IVY”***

**A One Act Play  
by Jean Blasiar**

**with music by  
Edward Mullen**

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AT RISE, a little blonde girl , IVY, age 7, is asleep on the ground of a beautiful flower garden.

ROSE, LILY and IRIS (flowers) are huddled over the little girl.

ROSE

(whispers)

When she awakens, I hope she won't still be crying.

LILY

What made her so unhappy in the first place, won't go away after a nap.

ROSE

Well, of course, you're right, Lily, but we do feel better about things after we sleep.

LILY

You do?

ROSE

Yes, I do.

LILY

I don't. I feel limp and weary inside.

IRIS

If you waken her with your chatter, we're going to have a frightened and unhappy little girl on our hands.

OWL is sitting on a ledge within branches of a big tree.

OWL

Stop that incessant talk!

ROSE

Owl, what will we do when she awakens?

PARROT, on another ledge within the big tree.

PARROT

SQUAK! What now, old Owl. SQUAT!

ROSE

Oh, parrot, now you've done it. She's awake.

Ivy stretches her arms and yawns, looking around her.

LILY

Oh, dear.

OWL

It's all right, little girl. You're perfectly safe here in the garden.

Ivy turns around anxiously.

IVY

Who said that?

OWL

Owl. Over here in the tree.

IVY

Al, who?

LILY

Not "Al" dear. Owl. Like in wise old owl.

IVY

Who? Who?

ROSE

Oh, she whoos. Just like you, Owl.

Lily walks over to the edge of the garden.

LILY

Who is talking, please. I don't see anyone.

OWL

Up here. In the tree.

LILY

(looks up in the tree)  
Where in the tree?

OWL

Higher.

LILY

(looks higher)

Oh. I see you now. Hello.

OWL

Hello. Don't be afraid. Everyone here is friendly. Even Parrot.

PARROT

SQUAK! Pretty Miss. Throw a kiss. SQUAK!

OWL

Parrot! Stop that!

IVY

I've never seen a live parrot before. How beautiful he is.

OWL

Don't flatter him. He's difficult enough to handle.

PARROT

SQUAK! Pretty bird, pretty bird. SQUAK!

IVY

I didn't know there was a parrot out here so close to my home.

OWL

Where is your home?

IVY

(Walks to the tree and looks out between the bushes.)

It's the big white house on the hill. You can see it through those trees.

(she bends down to look)

At least, I think you can. I don't believe I've ever been here before.

(she looks around the garden)

Where am I, exactly? And what time is it?

OWL

It's about one bell, I should think.

IVY

One what?

PARROT

One bell. SQUAK! All's well. SQUAK!

IVY

You mean, one o'clock? In the afternoon? I must have fallen asleep.  
It was morning when I... when I...

LILY

When you what, little Miss?

IVY

Oh, nothing. Who spoke to me then?

LILY

I spoke. Lily's the name.

IVY

Lily.

(walks over to Lily and bends down.

Of course, that would be your name. You are a beautiful lily, Lily.

(Rose and Iris cough for attention.)

IVY

Don't tell me. You must be Iris and you must be...

ROSE

Rose.

IVY

I was going to say, that you must be an American Beauty.

ROSE

(flattered)

Oh, dear. Oh, dear, dear, dear.

IVY

(puts her hands on her hips, looks around)

Is there anyone else here?

OWL

Well... there's Monk. He's down at the stream right now.

IVY

And who is Monk?

OWL

A skunk.

IVY

Oh, I see. I suppose he's bathing.

OWL

We hope so. Actually, Monk isn't... you know... objectionable, unless he's startled or threatened or just plain cantankerous.

LILY

Which he is a lot.

OWL

Well, frequently, anyway. And then, of course, there's Mole. He's very likely to show up some place quite suddenly, unannounced.

LILY

Like under your roots.

OWL

I don't think he'll do that again, Lily. I've spoken to him.

LILY

It's very unsettling, Owl.

OWL

Of course, it is.

(turns to Ivy)

Monk and Mole are quite mischievous. Like little boys with nothing to do.

LILY

(nods)

I know a few of those.

(brushes the leaves from her skirt)

Well, I suppose I better be going. How did you know it was so late?

OWL

The bluebelle, Miss.

LILY

The what?

OWL

The bluebelle. When the sun shines through those trees and lands on that bluebelle over there, it's one bell, or thereabouts, depending upon the time of year and the position of the sun, of course.

LILY

(blinks rapidly, trying to keep up with what Owl is saying)  
You are a very wise owl. What if the sun lands on...  
(looks around the garden)  
on that gate over there?

PARROT

SQUAK! Getting late. On the gate. SQUAK!

IVY

Did I come through that gate? I don't remember.

OWL

You had to come through the gate. It's the only way in.

IVY

Oh? Well, I shall leave the same way.

OWL

I'm afraid that it's a one way gate. It only opens in.

PARROT

SQUAK! One way. Must stay. SQUAK!

OWL

Parrot! Stop repeating everything I say!

PARROT

SQUAK! Fly away. Fly away. SQUAK!

The sound of wings flapping. Parrot disappears off the ledge (light off Parrot).

IVY

I don't understand about the gate. But I suppose if there is a gate to let one in, there is a gate to let one out. Now where would that be, I wonder?  
(she looks around in all directions)

OWL

I'm afraid that the "out" gate is not as easy to find as the "in" gate.

IVY

Why is that, Owl?

OWL

Because this is a secret garden.

IVY

A secret garden? Oh, Owl, I love secrets. Am I the first ever to find it?

OWL

As a matter of fact, you are. And that is what concerned Iris and Rose and Lily so much when they noticed you. They knew it would be very difficult for you to find the “out” gate. You see, there’s no path for humans.

IVY

Do you know where it is?

OWL

Of course, I do, but you can’t fly to it like I can or burrow underground like Mole, so you will have great difficulty finding it. There’s only one thing that will help you find it.

IVY

And what is that?

OWL

Determination.

IVY

Oh, I have lots of that.

OWL

You have to be determined to return home.

IVY

(less sure)

Don’t worry. Even though I don’t have wings to fly or claws to burrow, I’ll walk to the gate through the trees. Which way is it?

For a long while no one replies.

OWL

I’m afraid... that is the secret, and only someone who is determined to go home will find it.

Ivy sits on the ground, buries her head in her hands, and begins to cry.



IVY

I'll never find the "out" gate then. I've run away from home.

Scene Two.

Much later that afternoon.

Ivy is sitting on a bed of leaves surrounded by tasty things to eat.

IVY

Oh, this looks delicious. Thank you, everyone. I'm starving!

(looks down at the food in front of her)

What is it?

OWL

Honey.

ROSE

And rose petals.

IVY

Rose petals? I've never eaten rose petals before.

ROSE

They're very good. Red ones, especially.

LILY

(somewhat sarcastically)

Oh, of course, red ones.

IVY

And what is in this buttercup?

ROSE

Dew drops.

IVY

Dew drops?

(she drank it)

Oh. Refreshing.

LILY

And good for you. Full of minerals and vitamins and wonderful nutrients.

ROSE

It will make your stem grow and your petals shine like satin.

IVY

(giggles)

Oh, Rose, I don't have any of those things.

Rose

But you have hair and nails and teeth that will sparkle and shine and grow to be beautiful.

IVY

Really?

IRIS

What is your name, little lost girl?

IVY

Ivy.

IRIS

Ivy. How lovely. I think you will like it here, Ivy. We have food and water and leaves on the ground for your bed, birds to sing to you, sunshine to warm you, rain to bathe you, a breeze to cool you, stars to dazzle you. And it will be such fun to have you here.

IVY

Thank you.

(suddenly she begins to cry)

LILY

Now you've done it, Iris.

IRIS

Oh, Lily, I was only trying to make her feel at home.

LILY

But home is what she misses.

IVY

(insistently)

I don't!

LILY

Besides, you can't impress humans with things that are free. They don't want something if it isn't expensive, if they can't skin it and wear it, rope it and ride it, kill it and eat it, or dig it up and sell it. That's all they really care about.

OWL

Lily... my magnificent white beauty, have compassion.

LILY

I know what I'm saying, Owl. If it isn't for sale, humans don't appreciate it.

IVY

(insistently)

That isn't true! I'm not like that. You're wrong.

OWL

I'm afraid that our Lily is right. It's what makes humans... human, I'm afraid.

IVY

Then I don't want to be human.

OWL

Oh, come now, child. It's what you are. Why, you'd be no more content living in this garden than I would be perched on someone's bookcase... stuffed!

(flexes his wings)

So, like it or not, Ivy child, you will only be happy with your own...

IVY

(shouts)

I won't! I won't! And I'm never going back! They don't want me. My mother doesn't want me. My father doesn't want me. Nobody wants me. I'm a big nuisance and I'm never going back!

Ivy falls on the ground, crying inconsolably. The flowers close their petals in despair. Owl covers his eyes with his wings and Parrot screeches loudly.

### Scene Three

The next morning.

Monk arrives in the garden. Owl is also there.

MONK

Well... where is she? Where is this human you're keeping?

OWL

I beg your pardon, Monk. We are not KEEPING anyone.

MONK

Then why's she still here, huh. Answer me that.

OWL

She's here because she's run away from home and hasn't yet decided to return.

MONK

They why isn't somebody out there looking for her, huh? Answer me that.

OWL

You know, Monk, you are obnoxious in more ways than one. I can tell you that.

MONK

Just answer the question, Owl. Don't beat around the bush with me.

OWL

Never, Monk. I would NEVER beat around the bush with you. What is it you want to know?

MONK

Why isn't there somebody out there looking for her? A posse or a search party with dogs and rifles and...

OWL

I get the picture, Monk. It's true that there is very little activity of an investigative sort emanating from the vicinity of the village and it's most disconcerting to all of us.

MONK

Aw... nuts! Are they comin' or aren't they?

OWL

(shakes his feathers fidgetly)

I dare say they aren't. I would have thought by this time...

MONK

You darned tootin'! Where is she anyway?

OWL

I believe she's out picking berries for breakfast.

MONK

Did she cry out for her mamma in her sleep?

OWL

No! I can assure you that she did not do that. I kept a most watchful eye on her the entire night.

(yawns, before he is able to get a wing over his mouth)

And now, Monk... if you'll excuse me. I'd like to close my eyes for the brief period that Ivy is gone. Good day, Monk. Please don't leave any... traces that you've been here. We do want Ivy to stay with us while she makes up her mind.

MONK

Makes up her mind about what?

OWL

About whether she will stay with us permanently.

MONK

(shocked)

Ridiculous!

OWL

Good day, Monk. Try not to run into Ivy in the woods, will you?

MONK

Why not? Afraid I'll frighten her?

OWL

No. I'm afraid that Ivy might startle you and you might... "react" in that nasty way that you do. And Monk... if you do come upon Ivy and if she asks you where the "out" gate is, please don't tell her.

MONK

Why not? Let her go if she wants to.

OWL

Of course, I would let her go if she wanted to. No one is stopping her, but she has to find the gate for herself, when she's ready to go home.

MONK

(grumbling as he walks away)

I don't know where that confounded gate is myself. But if I ever do find it, I'll skedaddle out of this perfumey garden faster than a hummingbird flies. I can tell you that.

(grumbles as he leaves)

Can't stand flowers' scent.

OWL

(yawns)

Vice versa, Monk.

(closes his eyes)

Vice versa.

Scene Four

A while later.

The flowers – Rose, Iris and Lily – and Owl are all awake.

IRIS

Oh, dear. Oh dear, dear, dear.

OWL

What is it now, Iris? What's upsetting you now?

IRIS

A man, Owl. Heading this way. He may be looking for Ivy.

OWL

Where?

IRIS

Through the trees.

Owl turns around for a better look as he bends to peek between the branches into the open field.

OWL

I see him. He doesn't appear to be looking for anyone.

LILY

(whispers)

Ivy's returning, Owl.

IRIS

(panicky)

What will we say?

OWL

Sweetness and light, everyone. I'll handle this.

Ivy enters carrying a handful and a mouthful of raspberries as she plops down on the ground beside the flowers.

IVY

Oh, these raspberries!

(pops more into her mouth)

They're delicious. And growing right here in the garden for anyone to pick.

OWL

(adds hastily)

If you know where to find them.

IVY

You gave very good directions, Owl. Pity you can't direct me to the "out" gate the same way.

OWL

All in good time, Ivy. When you're ready, you won't need directions from anyone.

(clears his throat)

Walk over to that clearing between the oak trees, Ivy, will you. And look out into the field.

Ivy pops the last raspberry into her mouth, gets up, turns around and peers through the trees into the field.

IVY

Here, Owl?

OWL

Yes, dear. See that man out there. Do you recognize him by any chance?

IVY

Oh. It's our neighbor, Mr. Wheat.

Rose giggles.

OWL

What's funny, Rose?

ROSE

Wheat. In the field.

(giggles again; notices no one else is laughing)

Sorry, Owl. I shouldn't have laughed.

OWL



I'm glad you realize that. Now then, Ivy... does it seem to you that Mr. Wheat is looking for... anyone?

IVY

(her gaze on the man in the field)

No. I'm afraid he isn't.

Suddenly, Ivy turns around and sits down on the ground and begins to cry.

IVY

He's heading back home.

OWL

(distressed to see Ivy so upset)

Now there, there, dear... I'm sure Mr. Wheat will return and bring others with him. He may have been looking for some sign... footprints or something that you may have dropped.

IVY

(between sobs)

Don't bother making excuses, Owl. The truth is...

(sobs)

the truth is, no one is looking for me at all. It's been a whole day and a night and no one is out there looking for me.

OWL

But, of course, they are, child. We just don't...

IVY

(crying hard)

Do you hear them? Do you? Have you heard even one person calling, "Ivy! Ivy!?"

Well, have you?

OWL

(quite at a loss for words)

No, no... but then, my hearing isn't what it used to be.

IVY

Oh, Owl, don't lie.

OWL

(shaken)

Me, lie? Never. I never lie. As a matter of fact, I have been known to completely mistake the sound of anyone approaching. Isn't that right, ladies?

Only quiet little sobs from Iris and sniffles from Rose.

OWL

Ladies! I said... isn't that right? My hearing is not what it used to be.

IRIS

Definitely not, Owl. Your hearing is not what it used to be. Why... I can remember the time when you could hear caterpillars climbing up the pin oak looking for new leaves.

OWL

Ah... that is true, Iris. It seems like yesterday.

IRIS

It was yesterday, Owl.

Owl glares at Iris.

IVY

(wipes her tears from her cheek)

Thank you, Owl, for trying to make excuses for my family. It's just so obvious that no one misses me or cares what may have happened to me. No one at all.

Blackout.

