

Under a Magical Moon

Patrick Gaffney





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UNDER A MAGICAL MOON

by Patrick Gaffney

CAST

KATHLEEN O'CONNELL-HIGGINBOTHAM: A woman, late 50's to early 60's, living in Muncie, Indiana, but who once lived in New York City. Her character and style should reflect some of that urbanity.

GAVIN KELLY: A New Yorker, late 50's to early 60's.

PLACE

Muncie, Indiana.

TIME

The present. Late summer.

Setting: All action occurs around an outdoor table and chairs in the backyard of KATHLEEN's house. A barely perceivable hint of magic may pervade the air. All three scenes occur from late Saturday afternoon until Sunday, noontime.)

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

Setting: The backyard of a house which was built in the 1940's. There is nothing modern about its architecture. The backyard is a place one would love to sit and sip sun-tea over ice with a wedge of lemon.

At Rise: GAVIN and KATHLEEN are seated, a table between them, with two tall glasses of sun-tea over ice with a wedge of lemon, resting atop. They are both in their late fifties to early sixties and, though they appear to be in good health, no one would describe them as exceptionally handsome or beautiful.

KATHLEEN: And I know who I forgot to ask you about, Timmy McCann! He was so full of energy, swooping in here for one deal, then rushing there for another deal. It seemed as if he hardly ever slept! My gosh, he used to stay out till four in the morning listening to jazz at that little club over on West 44th Street, long after our bedtimes! Scotch and water after scotch and water right up until the moment he left. And he had to be at work at 9 a.m.! I never understood how he could function. I guess some people

are just born with a bundle of energy in their pockets and they proceed to charge through life like a locomotive! Charming, funny, witty, constantly 'on,' zipping hither and yon all over New York City, making all his 'deals.' In fact, he was the only one of us who had any money back them. I haven't heard from him in years and years. How is he?

GAVIN: Dead.

KATHLEEN: Oh, no.

GAVIN: Heart attack.

KATHLEEN: Oh, no. Gavin...

GAVIN: Two years ago.

KATHLEEN: So much heart trouble! My Arthur, too.

GAVIN: Yeah, well, it really came as no surprise with Tim. The way he lived! He never really stopped since the time you knew him. I kept pleading with him to slow down, relax a little, enjoy life. But he just kept over-extending himself, burning the candle at both ends.

KATHLEEN: He always did work so hard, even as a young man.

GAVIN: Drinking...all that drinking. He finally went to AA a few years ago, thank God, but, like he said, he was so glad to give up drinking because it freed him up for more important things.

KATHLEEN: Like all his 'deals?'

GAVIN: You got it! He got over-leveraged in some real estate, and when the market went south, so did he...six feet south.

KATHLEEN: That's so sad. He was always so...so...fun.

GAVIN: And now he's so...so...dead.

KATHLEEN: Gavin, that's cruel.

GAVIN: (*laughing*) No, it's not! He just plopped over dead one day. Times Square, Broadway and 47th Street. Timmy lived three lives more than anyone else I've ever known. And, if I know Timmy, he's probably sold the Brooklyn Bridge to St. Peter and signed Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to a literary contract with a book a year deal! He probably considered 'dying' just better market 'positioning.'

KATHLEEN: So much dying going on.

GAVIN: Well, we have definitely reached an age when it can happen to anyone, at any time. Kind of like that poem, "At my back, I hear Time's Winged Chariot hurrying near." How old was your Arthur?

KATHLEEN: 58.

GAVIN: Young.

KATHLEEN: But old enough. My little brother.

GAVIN: Brendan?...

KATHLEEN: Right, Brendan.

GAVIN: Well?

KATHLEEN: Dead.

GAVIN: No!

KATHLEEN: Aneurysm. 37 years old. Went out to dinner with his wife one Sunday evening. Complained of a headache, went home...two hours later, he died. Left two young children.

GAVIN: I still picture him as a kid of 12. Of course, I still think of you as 28.

KATHLEEN: I'm a far cry from that! Which, I'm sure, you can see is quite evident.

GAVIN: No apologies, Kathleen. You look great. "Vanity, thy name is woman!" I'm the one who should have sent some dashing, young 'Christian,' to front for my 'Cyrano.'

KATHLEEN: False modesty, Gavin! If you were concerned about how you looked, you never would have written me. And if I was concerned about my looks, I never would have let you come to Muncie. Poor Brendan. Leaving two young ones. And then I think about my Arthur and how lucky our children are to have grown up enough with their father. He died young, but the children knew their father. He was such a good father.

GAVIN: I'm sure he was.

KATHLEEN: A good, good father...I'm sorry, Gavin. (*chuckling*) Here you come flying out all the way from New York City and I start delivering eulogies. I'm not being a very good hostess.

GAVIN: Nonsense. Are you okay? Do you want to be alone for awhile? I could go back to the Ramada Inn and freshen up before dinner and come back later.

KATHLEEN: No, I'm fine. I'm glad you're here. It's kind of refreshing to see someone from my 'old day'

GAVIN: That sounds ancient. Let's not talk like that!

KATHLEEN: How about if I say, "Before I move to Muncie." Everyone knows me as 'Kathleen O'Connell-Higginbotham,' not as 'Kathleen O'Connell.' Most of my friends here didn't know me B.C.

GAVIN: B.C.?

KATHLEEN: 'Before Children.' A.D. is 'After Delivery.'

GAVIN: Well, I just couldn't get over it when I heard you had married a Protestant! I think one of the things between us that made us work so well...I mean, when we did, was the guilt. Between your 'O'Connell' and my 'Kelly' somehow it worked. We understood each other. Sort of like two negatives making a positive. But, when I heard you married a Lutheran, I was so jealous. I mean...where's the guilt?! Protestants. Lucky Stiffs!

KATHLEEN: Are you saying Irish Catholics are born with a neatly embroidered Scarlet 'G' across their chests?

GAVIN: The 'G' on a Protestant's chest probably stands for 'Golf.' Imagine the guilty burden they must bear every 18 holes!

KATHLEEN: You're still a funny guy, Art.

(pause)

GAVIN: Gavin.

KATHLEEN: Hmm?

GAVIN: Gavin.

KATHLEEN: Yes?

GAVIN: Not...Art.

KATHLEEN: Did I?...

GAVIN: You called me Art.

KATHLEEN: Oh, I'm sorry, Gav...I didn't mean...

GAVIN: That's okay...Harriet!

(they laugh)

KATHLEEN: Oh, stop! I'm glad you're here.

GAVIN: Are you?

KATHLEEN: I'm just a little startled by it all...that I said...that I said...

GAVIN: "Yes?"

KATHLEEN: Yes. That I said, "Yes."

GAVIN: So am I. I was terrified to call you.

KATHLEEN: *(disbelieving)* Go on.

GAVIN: I was terrified, I tell you. It's been so long, and I stood there, just staring at the phone, trying to work up enough courage to talk myself into dialing.

KATHLEEN: Oh, you were not!

GAVIN: I mean, you had replied to my letter, even though it took over a month. It's not as if it would have been totally out of place for me to call you, but there I was...hovering over the phone like a schoolboy. After I hadn't heard from you right away, I thought I had made a fool out of myself by even writing you from a thousand miles and thirty years away. Then, I said to myself, "Gavin Kelly, you are a 60-year-old man; you've achieved a modest degree of success in that period of time. You've never committed a felony, and my god, it's not as if you didn't know the woman...even though it was some years ago." Now I am sounding like a fool...

KATHLEEN: I assure you, you're not.

GAVIN: I mean, I've had to call up hard-core businessmen, top CEO's, university presidents, mayors, and even a corrupt congressman now and then, and here I was, a 60-year-old man, dilly-dallying over the phone, frozen in fear about calling you. After I finally dialed, it seemed thirty years between each ring, just when I was hoping I would get your voice mail or an answering machine, you answered.

KATHLEEN: And?

GAVIN: And?

KATHLEEN: And...?

GAVIN: And, just for a moment...Time's Winged Chariot stabled his horses.

(pause. They look at each other.)

KATHLEEN: And now you're here.

GAVIN: Yes, I'm here, and so are you.

KATHLEEN: We're both here.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!