

Raymond (w/Lottie,  
Skeeter & Cait)

Act I, Sc 5

Well now, anyway. It used to be blue. It was a rooming house. Mostly Lottie's friends from show business. Actors, gays, all "unwanted." A bunch of characters, all of them. They all called it "Lottie's Flop House." She was a big libertine. In fact, the whole family consisted of either

CAIT

(heard it before) Prudes and lib...

SKEETER

(overlapping) ...prudes and libertines. Raymond, her husband? Now he was a prude. Prudes and libertines.

(SIGN change: FINLAY AND BURKE)

Scene 5

LOTTIE'S FLOP HOUSE,  
Massachusetts, 1906

*Start*  
(A man with a newspaper over his face. Another old-timer juggling 3 balls. BLIND MAE, an ancient from early vaudeville, taps her way around the room with a cane. Raymond, with a bottle of beer, holding a document in his trembling hand.)

RAYMOND

Why of all the low down lies you have told me. She's been rehearsing this whole time!

LOTTIE

Now Raymond Finlay, you listen to me, do you hear?

RAYMOND

You told me she was at catechism!

LOTTIE

I went on the stage when I was younger than Mary is now. With both my parents. It's perfectly fine, and you know it.

RAYMOND

I can't trust you as far as I can throw you!

LOTTIE

You, yourself an actor, and my mother and father. Where did I meet you Raymond? Where was it? It was at The *Boston Theatre*. The *theatre*, Raymond. So tell it to the Marines! Mary's a natural talent.

(The CHILD MARY, the heart and soul of the family, enters in cupid wings, and approaches her grumpy father. Music. RAYMOND melts like butter when she asks him to dance. He accepts. She stands on his toes as he leads. LOTTIE joins them and they make a circle. Music changes and the three of them dance a jig. Simultaneously...

MARY

Oh, I got good at it. My father, he was like Dick van Dyke, you know. Tall, lanky, rubber-legged. Really something. And he taught me all those dances. All gone now. When Papa and I retired in 1927, I don't believe I'd seen that jig in thirty years or something. But Finlay and Burke, my parents, they were noted for it.

LOTTIE

Now Raymond Finlay, you listen to me.

MARY

Handing them down to me like a family quilt.

you just don't say No to the *Four Cohans*. You know it. I know it.

When my sister, Irene, came along, it was a different story.

(Time has passed. LOTTIE even more determined. RAYMOND is drunk).

Irene is coming with us this time. We'll be out for months and I'll not leave Irene with the nuns again.

RAYMOND

She's not going.

LOTTIE

This is their brand new show, for heaven's sake and well, frankly Jerry told me Irene's might be perfect for the little girl.

RAYMOND

Whatdaya deaf or some'n? She's not coming with us!

CAIT

You said your mother was an only child.

SKEETER

No, I didn't.

CAIT

Yes you did. You said she was the only child and girl.

SKEETER

No! She had a sister! They were nine years apart I think, so you could say she was an only child for a long time yes, but no. Irene was born in Mary Irish's boarding house. When they went on the road they used to leave Irene at the convent.

CAIT

Jesus.

SKEETER

Caitlin-Anne!

CAIT

Hey...prudes and libertines. Right? Sorry Jeez.

SKEETER

Smart-ass. The convent was Raymond's idea of course.

LOTTIE

Raymond Finlay, you listen to me!

RAYMOND

Forget it, Lottie.

SKEETER

They met when Lottie was sixteen.

LOTTIE

..and if you had any sense at all, you'd get that bottle out of your Irish face, and come on with us.

MARY

My father just twenty six...

LOTTIE

Georgie wrote that show just for you. And you let him see you like this and well there went that opportunity.

MARY

And they were the act...

LOTTIE

"Little Johnny Jones," for Christs' sake.

SKEETER

They were the act of...

LOTTIE

Raymond, ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?

RAYMOND

FINLAY AND BURKE!!! The great *Finlay and Burke*. Whop de do. New York Palace. How could I forget.

LOTTIE

(discusted)

It was the opportunity of a lifetime!

RAYMOND

What's that?

LOTTIE

"Little Johnny Jones!" For god's sake. Down the drain, drunk fool.

RAYMOND

They can wait for me, they want me so bad.

LOTTIE

They don't want YOU anymore. Georgie's made the part for a short man now. Do you understand. He's Little Fucking Johnny Jones. Couldn't wait for you. He'll be a big star, you wait.

RAYMOND

(covering his ears) Stop it woman.

LOTTIE

(to Mary) You wouldn't know it to look at him now, but your father had real talent. I mean BIG talent. Now look at him. (to Raymond, as if he's deaf) Irene is going on the road this time.

*end*