



KITTY

A DUOLOGUE

By

ROBERT HIGGINBOTHAM

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KITTY

Originally produced at the Marlborough Theatre, London, on Monday, August 7, 1911, with the following cast:—

LIL *Miss Evelyn Summers.*

SID *Mr. Edward Nimmo.*

Afterwards revived at the Savoy Theatre, London, on Monday, June 23, 1913, with the same cast.

SCENE.—*A public park.*

TIME.—*A summer evening (present day).*

PROPERTIES.—*Two iron chairs or an iron bench. Tree.¹*

HAND PROPS (for LIL).—*Parasol, postcard, handbag.*

¹ Not essential.



KITTY

SCENE.—A public park. Two “park” chairs are set under a tree. Enter two Cockney lovers arm-in-arm, he taking her arm. She looks glum and is apparently sulking.

SID (as they walk). Wot d’you say to ‘avin’ a sid’down?

LIL. I don’t mind!

SID (indicating chairs). ‘Ow’ll this do yer?

LIL (without interest). Good as anywhere else, I s’pose.

SID. D’you want to sid’down or would y’ sooner keep walkin’?

LIL. All one to me!

SID. Well, let’s make our minds up, else some other party’ll pinch the seats. There’s a couple comin’ along now. (Looks off.)

LIL (petulantly). Oh! Orl right! (They sit.)

SID. Only just in time—they was makin’ strite for ‘ere. We’ve done ‘em in a fair treat, eh? (Chuckles. Slaps his knees. She doesn’t respond.) Bit o’ luck jest spottin’ this seat, eh? (She still doesn’t reply.) You’re very chatty this evenin’, I don’t think—wot’s up, Lil? Anything wrong, old dear?

LIL. Oh no! I’m nicely, thanks.

SID. Thought per’aps it was that ice-cream we ‘ad jest now ‘ad upset yer.

LIL (scornfully). Didn’t ‘ave enough to upset me!

SID (*huffed*). Oh, I say, 'ang it all—you 'ad three goes and chance it.

LIL. They was only penny ones, and small enough, I'm sure.

SID. Well, you could 'ave 'ad more if you'd wanted—only got to sye. You can turn y'self into a bloomin' skatin'-rink if you got a mind to—I'm not the one to grudge you—you know that right enough.

LIL. I didn't say you was.

SID. No! But you 'inted—spoke *very* nasty, I thought.

LIL. Well, o' course, if the cap fits, wear it! You grumble when I don't say nothin', and then you complain when I do. No pleasin' you.

SID. Oh! well, we don't want no words about it, do we? P'r'aps it was somethin' you 'ad with y' tea upset you. I noticed you was pretty free with the shrimps. There's some can't take shrimps at all—I 'ad an old uncle, lived down Chingford wye, whenever 'e tasted 'em 'e come over that queer—

LIL. There's no shrimps nor nothin' the matter with me—I'm nicely, thanks.

SID. Oh! you are, are you? That's good 'earin', anyway. You don't be'ave like it.

LIL. Oh! So now I don't know 'ow to be'ave right, that's the latest, is it?

SID. 'Oo said?

LIL. You did.

SID. No, I never—

LIL. Yes, you did.

SID (*rising*). No, I never. (*Goes R.*) All I said was you didn't be'ave like as if nothin' 'adn't upset you; no more you do, neither. If you can't see no difference in that, you must be thick.

LIL. Huh! Thick, am I? Thanks for the information! You're the first one that's noticed it. I'm learnin' somethin' to-day and no mistake. Anything else in a small way?

SID. There you go! I didn't say you *was* thick.

LIL. Oo! What a whopper!

SID. No! it ain't. I didn't sye so. Wot I said was you must be thick if you couldn't see as 'ow it was different me sayin' you didn't be'ave like as if nothin' 'adn't upset you, and—and me sayin' as 'ow you didn't know——

LIL. You're gettin' a bit tied up, strikes me.

SID. Ah! There's none so blind as them as won't 'ear.

LIL. See, you mean, don't you?

SID. Never you mind what I mean.

LIL. I don't. Tell you the truth, I don't think you know y'self.

SID. Oh! I know right enough, don't you fret. Only you keep twistin' my words to mean somethin' different.

LIL. Pity I can't twist a bit o' sense out o' them—that's along o' me bein' so thick, I s'pose.

SID. Oh! Cheese it, Lil! Wot's the use to keep all on?

LIL. I've no wish to keep all on—thought you seemed to 'ave a lot to say.

SID. Well then, let's drop it, shall we?

LIL. Oh! Certainly! (*She hums to herself.*)

SID. It ain't early closin' every afternoon o' the week, y'know, and when we do get a bit o' time together, we may as well try and enjoy ourselves, and makes things a bit pleasant, eh? (*She continues humming.*) What I mean is, talk a bit civil to each other—eh?

LIL (*indifferently*). Orl right! Go ahead! (*Pause—during which she looks straight in front of her—still humming. He fidgets nervously with stick, trying to think of a remark.*)

SID (*suddenly*). This fine weather's a bit o' fat, ain't it?

LIL. You're right.

(*Pause.*)

SID (*tilting back his hat and mopping his brow*). Phew! Tidy 'ot, ain't it?

LIL. I'm quite cool.

SID (*angrily*). Cool, are yer? You're not 'alf of a wet blanket. Ain't yer got nothin' to sye to a wet fellow?

LIL. That's something else I am—I'm thick, I don't know 'ow to be'ave myself, and now I'm a wet blanket.

SID. Oh, lor! Don't start in again! (*He looks at her*.) I wish y'd tell us what really *is* wrong with yer, Lil.

LIL. Don't I keep sayin' there's not nothin' wrong with me? 'Ow many more times? You don't 'alf want tellin' a thing, do you? Strikes me, I'm not the only one wot's thick.

SID. Well, you ain't a bit like y'self to-day, sittin' there so glum and all. Any one would think you was in church.

LIL. Shouldn't mind if I was in church. As good as bein' 'ere, any'ow.

SID. Well, you will be, one day soon, along o' me, won't yer, old dear?

LIL. 'Ow d'yer mean?

SID. Why? You know! When we goes through it like, that's to sye—gets tied up by the parson—see what I mean?

LIL. P'r'aps we shan't.

SID. Shan't what?

LIL. Not get tied up by no parson.

SID. You never mean to sye you'd rather go and get done by the registrar bloke, like wot I wanted? What'd your poor old aunt sye? She'd 'ave a fit! she would!

LIL. No, thanks! I go to church when my time comes. My family's all been respectable.

SID. Well, then, what do yer mean?

LIL. P'raps (*with a catch in her voice*) we shan't never get married at all.

SID (*aghast*). Not get married! Well, you are a one to croak!

LIL. Dunno so much about croak.

SID. What yer mean?

LIL. Might be better orf like I am.

SID. Without me—eh?

LIL. That's about the size of it.

SID. Well, I'm bust! That's a nice sort of thing to sye to a chap. And me and you fixed everythin' up, and all—and me savin' up to buy you a ring.

LIL. Oh! I dessay you could find some one else to spend the money on if you was to try.

SID. I dessay I could, only I don't choose, see? Look 'ere, Lil, I've 'ad jest about enough o' this. What's the game? (*Sits, taking her hand.*) Come on! Tell us!

LIL (*pulling her hand away*). There isn't no gime, so far as I'm aware of.

SID. Well then, what yer gettin' at?

LIL. I'm not gettin' at nothin', thenks.

SID. Oh lor! Women are rum starts, and that's a fact. (*Rising.*) Well, I reckon I'd better be clearin, orf. (*He turns to go off R. She starts, and is about to stop him, then turns away from him.*)

LIL. Don't let me detain you!

SID (*turning to her*). See you Sunday?

LIL. You'd bestways ask 'er, 'adn't you?

SID (*astonished*). 'Er? 'Oo?

LIL. The one what you're going to meet Saturday night.

SID. I am? 'Oo says so?

LIL. Never you mind 'oo says—

SID. Tell yer what it is, Lil, old girl, you ought to see a doctor. You're—you're balmy—

LIL. Oh! am I?

SID. Yes! Fair up the stick! Any'ow you talk like it.

LIL (*rises, coming to him*). P'r'aps I got a bit more

sense than you think, m' friend. P'r'aps I know a bit more than you bargain for.

SID. You know a jolly lot more than what I do then. Blow'd if I know what you're driving at.

LIL. I got the proof in writin'—'ere in m' and-bag.

SID. 'Ave you, by gum! Look 'ere, Lil! some one's bein' leadin' you up the garden; 'oo is it?

LIL. M' aunt Emma found it out. She just 'appened to——

SID. Oh! This is yer aunt Emma's doin', is it? I might 'a known it was 'er. Never did trust that woman, for all 'er playin' 'ymns on the 'armonium Sunday nights.

LIL. Don't you say nothin' against my aunt Emma! She's too good for you.

SID. Yes, I reckon she is. I never could stick that sort. She 'ad 'er knife into me from the start, cos I took a glass o' bitter with m' supper. Well, what's she been puttin' you up to now?

LIL. She—she found somethin' at 'ome, that come out o' your pocket—— Somethin' in writin'. You must 'a dropped it when you was there last.

SID. Oh, indeed! She got a sauce to read what weren't addressed to her, to start orf with.

LIL. She said she couldn't 'elp but read. It was on a postcard.

SID. Couldn't 'elp! Well, any'ow, what about it?

LIL (*producing card from bag*). I've got it 'ere.

SID. Orl right! Let's 'ear what it says, read it.

LIL (*reading tearfully*). I am sendin' Kitty up on Saturday, arrives Waterloo, 8.30, of course you will meet 'er—she's grown such a beauty. I know I can trust you to treat 'er well.

(He throws himself down on chair, puts his head back and shouts with laughter.)

LIL. I don't see nothin' to laugh at. What call

'ave you got to go treatin' Kitties, I'd like to know? Oh! Sid, she's not more beautiful than me, is she?

SID (*feebly, through laughing*). Oh lor! that beats all' that does!

LIL (*angrily*). 'Ow dare you make a joke of it?

SID (*rising*). My dear old girl, d'you know 'oo Kitty is?

LIL. No! and don't want, neither.

SID. She's a cat.

LIL. Yes, I knew that—girls like 'er, always is.

SID. No! No! She's comin' up in a basket.

LIL (*amazed*). In a basket?

SID. Yes, m' sister's sendin' 'er up from the country, for you.

LIL. For me! Why, you mean——

SID. Yes! She's a real cat—you know—four legs and a tail—one what mews and purrs and all—like wot you said you wanted.

LIL. Oh, Sid! 'Ow good of you, dear—and I've bin thinkin' such 'orrid things about you. (*She embraces him.*)

SID (*holding her in his arms*). That's all right, old sport. No 'arm done. Let's go and 'ave another ice cream—one of them pink, tuppy ones, shall we?

LIL. I don't mind.

(*Exit together.*)

(CURTAIN.)

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