

When Oscar Met Billie
Mash-up Madness script
By Jason Hall

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OSCAR WILDE is seated, reading a book. BILLIE moves from one side of the bench to Oscar's side. She flirts; Oscar continues to read. She runs the back of her hand across Oscar's cheek a few times.

OSCAR

Madam, the back of your hand is quite forward.

The stroking continues.

BILLIE

Well, I like to like what's better to like.

OSCAR

Then in the interests of self-preservation:

Oscar removes her hand, sets it down.

OSCAR

There. As you Americans are fond of saying, that's very "big" of you.

BILLIE

You think I'm gettin' bigger?

OSCAR

I mustn't presume. But you have the opportunity to romance anyone in history, and you choose me. You could be in command of Napoleon, and you choose to dally with lowly scribe Oscar Wilde. I am flattered.

BILLIE

Glad to hear it. So I'd rather be with a happy peasant than Napoleon. So who wouldn't?

OSCAR

Admiral Nelson, for one. And your fiancée Harry would probably not enjoy the French emperor's company.

BILLIE

What makes you think not?

OSCAR

He would be too busy thinking of you.

Oscar bows.

BILLIE

He probably never heard of Napoleon.

OSCAR

Napoleon doubtless never heard of him. I regret I brought the short man up. Napoleon. We should speak of another subject.

BILLIE

You hate him like poison?

OSCAR

Harry? He is engaged to you, and thus engages you. If he keeps you from romancing me, I adore him.

BILLIE

(Skeptical)

Yuh.

OSCAR

Do not presume jealousy where there is none to find.

BILLIE

But you don't like him?

OSCAR

Harry is not my choice of companion. He is coarse and vulgar and perpetually uncouth. But you make a lovely couple.

BILLIE

What?

OSCAR

You and Harry belong together. I can not provide anything to you other than intellectual discourse. I'm sorry to inform you, but I am homosexual and dead.

BILLIE

You're not so bad. I've seen worse.

OSCAR

(Sternly)

Madam, who is really in this room?

BILLIE

Me.

OSCAR

And what in this room holds real value?

BILLIE

Well, I got two mink coats.

OSCAR

I do not refer to those prematurely expired pelts.

BILLIE

Don't get dirty! You're supposed to be so wonderful so don't get dirty!

OSCAR

You hold real value.

BILLIE

Who does?

OSCAR

You do. Right here.

(Taps his head)

You conjure me up to shape and support your own romantic ideas, yet I am long gone.

BILLIE

I can hear you.

OSCAR

Of course: my voice, my spirit lives on--through my words.

BILLIE

That's why I started doin' all this. I guess you know.

OSCAR

I know.

BILLIE

A lot of good it did me. I never had this kind of trouble before, I can tell you. After that first night when I met you-

OSCAR

Through a shopworn edition of *An Ideal Husband*.

BILLIE

--I figured it was all going to work dandy. Then, when you wouldn't step across the line--I figured maybe the way to you was through your--head.

OSCAR

(Kindly)

Your head, dearest.

BILLIE

Anyway, what's the diff now? Difference? But I like you anyways. Too late for the rest.

OSCAR

And Harry? Affectionate Harry, who bought you two mink coats and provided you with a tutor so you could feel like an educated and accomplished woman? A tutor who introduced you to the works of Oscar Wilde?

BILLIE

Look, Oscar, there's a certain time between a fella and a girl when it either comes off or not and if it doesn't then, then it never does.

OSCAR

You never gave Harry a chance.

BILLIE

I did too. And he dropped the ball.

OSCAR

So you choose to avoid Harry--who loves you--to spend time with a gay hallucination.

BILLIE

I know! I've had lots of fellas and I haven't had lots of fellas. If you know what I mean.

OSCAR

Madam, I do.

Billie sits, grabs the book, opens it. The following is addressed to the pages of the book, though Oscar stands nearby and listens.

BILLIE

But I sure never thought I'd go through a thing like *this* for anybody! Gettin' all mixed up in my head. Wondering and worrying and *thinking*--stuff like that. You know last night I went to bed and I started in thinking and I couldn't get to sleep for *ten minutes*! And I don't know if it's good to find out so much so quick!

Oscar takes the book out of Billie's hands. He picks up a fur coat that lays nearby and drapes it over Billie's shoulders. Billie takes comfort in the coat. Oscar starts to leave, then turns back.

OSCAR

When men love women, they give them but a little of their lives. But women, when they love, give everything.

Oscar leaves. Billie stays seated, thinking. Lights fade.