

Ashdown-Lee

By
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*Dedicated to the memory of Jean Fayers, a wonderful lady,
great talent and a true friend.*

The playwright, Hilary Mackelden

STORY OF PLAY

Rick and coworkers, Joe and Samantha, are on an outward-bound training weekend, organized by their boss, Rick's father, when they become hopelessly lost in the forest. Through the fog they finally stumble upon a remote little village, Ashdown-Lee. But the villagers are dressed as 18th century peasants and wary of the intruders.

Ingrid, the mayor's daughter, however, is attracted to Rick and invites the trio to stay. They soon discover that the magical village appears only one day every fifty years. To the villagers it is the next day, but to the rest of the world a new era. As the coworkers make friends and enemies, fall in love and create jealousies, they discover each other's true personalities and motives. Rick is weary of the business world, Samantha wants to become rich by stealing a village treasure, and Joe admits he is also being paid to protect his best friend Rick.

But a showdown is coming. The three must decide by midnight if they want to remain in Ashdown-Lee, and once decided, the person can never leave again or the whole village will perish. This ethereal, yet luminous play explores the universal dream of wishing for a more idyllic life but wondering if it would, indeed, be better.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(14 m, 10 w, 3 flexible, extras)

MOLLY: Quiet young woman in love with Martin.

SALLY: Martin's mother.

MARTIN: Strong villager who is in love with Ingrid.

EDWARD: Good-natured blacksmith.

SIR THOMAS: Village elder.

INGRID: Daughter of the Mayor, falls in love with Rick.

MAYOR: Ingrid's father.

LUCY: Ingrid's mother and Mayor's wife.

SERGEANT: *(Appears in Act I, Scene 1, only.)*

SOLDIER 1

SOLDIER 2

JACK BURGESS: Wealthy, modern-day business owner,
Rick's father. *(Appears in Act I, Scene 2, only.)*

JOE: Modern-day employee in his 20s, best friends with Rick.

RICK BURGESS: Jack's son and heir who falls in love with
Ingrid.

SAMANTHA: Modern-day employee who is greedy, older.

SMALLER ROLES OF VILLAGERS INCLUDE:

WOMAN 1- 3, BUTCHER, GIRL 1-2, TRADER, MAN 1-2,
VILLAGER 1-3, CHILDREN and YOUTHS

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I

Scene 1: The village square of Ashdown-Lee, a spring day,
18th century.

Scene 2: A London office, evening, current day.

Scene 3: Ashdown-Lee, a few days later.

Scene 4: The village square, a few moments later.

Scene 5: The Mayor's home, a few moments later.

Scene 6: The village square, a short time later.

Scene 7: The Mayor's home, a short time later.

Act II

Scene 1: The village dance, that evening.

Scene 2: The church crypt, a few minutes later.

Scene 3: The bridge, a short time later.

Scene 4: The village square, the next morning.

COSTUMES

The costumes for the villagers are simple and straightforward peasant's clothing of the era, with Ingrid's family perhaps being slightly better dressed. Sir Thomas, the village elder and cleric, has a change of clothes into a nightshirt and cap. Also, in the last scene Sally is dressed in mourning clothes.

For the modern people, current outdoor wear is appropriate. Samantha has a jacket and watch. Jack Burgess wears a business suit. In the last scene, Joe appears as an old man with a walking stick.

PROPS

Act I

Scene 1: *Money, crown of flowers, flowers, jeweled chalice, knife, stretcher.*

Scene 2: *Duffel bag, file, cell phone.*

Scene 3: *Parcel of food, basket of flowers, map.*

Scene 4: *Cloth/ bonnet, fruits and vegetables, map of village and tacks, arm sling.*

Scene 5: *Kettle, books, candlestick, jeweled chalice, book of maps, drinks.*

Scene 6: *Tankards, bag, drinks.*

Scene 7: *Book, shawl.*

Act II

Scene 1: *Punch bowl and cups, musical instruments such as fiddle and flute, dance card, shawl, chalice in jacket.*

Scene 2: *Lock pick, single key, ring of keys,*

Scene 3: *Knife, chalice.*

Scene 4: *Walking stick, chalice.*

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The village square, Ashdown-Lee, 18th century. It is the spring Founding Day celebration. VILLAGERS gather at a fair. We see stalls, peddlers, entertainers, games, dancers, shoppers, children playing, and men drinking. A young girl, MOLLY, looks out anxiously. A MAN asks her to dance. She refuses. He asks another GIRL, she accepts and they join the DANCERS. Molly keeps looking. WOMEN point at her, shake their heads in sympathy. An older woman, SALLY, watches her. A noisy crowd of YOUNG MEN ENTERS, following MARTIN, who is drunk. In the crowd is EDWARD. OTHERS look disapprovingly at them or turn their backs, pointedly ignoring them. Molly moves towards Martin. He bumps into her, knocking her off balance. He does not notice. Edward helps her stay on her feet as Martin passes by.)

EDWARD: Are you all right?

(MOLLY nods her thanks. The CROWD cheers as MARTIN and MAN 1 arm wrestle. Man 1 loses and hands money to Martin.)

MARTIN: Anyone else?

(There are no takers for his challenge.)

MARTIN: Oh, come on. The pot's getting bigger.

MAN 1: What about Edward? He's a blacksmith. If anyone can beat you, he can.

(MARTIN is unhappy. EDWARD steps forward.)

MARTIN: Not Edward. Someone who hasn't tried it before.

MAN 1: Scared he might beat you?

(OTHERS laugh. MARTIN does not. EDWARD watches Martin for a moment.)

EDWARD: I'm not interested. The parade will be here soon.

(The CROWD groans. EDWARD and MARTIN nod their understanding, then Martin cheers triumphantly, playing to the crowd.)

MARTIN: Anyone else?

(The MEN shake their heads and back off. MOLLY approaches MARTIN.)

MOLLY: Hello, Martin.

MARTIN: Molly. Look, I'm sorry, I meant to be here earlier, but – *(HE realizes his FRIENDS are watching and his attitude changes completely.)* What are you pestering me for? You're pathetic.

MOLLY: Why are you being like this?

MARTIN: How do you want me to be? Like this?

(HE tries to grab HER. His FRIENDS cheer as she pulls away. SALLY steps forward.)

SALLY: Martin, please! People are watching you. *(MARTIN lets go of MOLLY. His FRIENDS egg him on. SALLY smells his breath.)* Have you been drinking?

MARTIN: *(Defensive.)* It's a holiday.

SALLY: Don't spoil it for everyone else.

MARTIN: I'm having fun. *(HE turns away.)*

SALLY: Don't turn your back on me. I'm your mother.

MARTIN: *(Unbothered, sneers at MOLLY.)* I'm with my friends. I'll see you later.

SALLY: *(Taking MOLLY'S hand.)* Come on, Molly. There's a better view over here, anyway.

(SHE leads MOLLY away. MARTIN makes a face, mocking them. His FRIENDS laugh.)

End of Freeview

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