

Title: American daisy: a commedietta [sic] in one act

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Maine -- Bar Harbor
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romance
courtship
marriage -- engagement -- broken

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AN AMERICAN DAISY

A Commedietta in One Act

by

Edward Carpenter

Persons Represented

Lord Granshaw

Jack Earle

Daisy Fairfax

Servant

Time - Present

Scene - A Garden

SCENE PLOT

Act I - Scene 1

Exterior in S G.

Set cottage L.

Set stump L.

Set tree R.

Rustic bench R.

Small table R.

AN AMERICAN DAISY

Act I.

Scene - A Garden

Enter JACK EARLE, L.C., with a bunch of daisies.

Jack. Here I am at last. Yes, it is the same old place. The house looks just as it used to look; and here is the old wooden bench in the very spot it stood five years ago. #Places daisies on small table R. of bench.# It seems but yesterday; and yet how much has happened in those five short years. They tell me in the village that Mr. Fairfax has become a very rich man. However, I see that he still insists upon preserving the old homestead in its original simplicity. Daisy, I hear, has been abroad for several years completing her education and only returned some few weeks since, and is now resting here in anticipation of a gay summer at Bar Harbor. I wonder if she will have changed any.
#Singing within.#

Enter Daisy Fairfax, L. from cottage, singing.

Jack. Ah! There she is, as pretty as the flower whose name she bears, and far, far sweeter. #Advances.# Daisy! Daisy! Don't you know me?

Daisy. #Surprised.# Why it is -- #Coldly.# Mr. Earle.

Jack. Mr. Earle? What do you mean? It used to be Jack.

Daisy. Oh yes, I suppose it did - long ago.

Jack. Then why not still?

Daisy. Things have changed; we are older now. #Sits on bench.#

Jack. That should make no difference. As persons grow older they should become closer friends, not drift apart. I have always thought of you as Daisy, and it would be very hard to think of you under any

other name, but, of course, Miss Fairfax --

Daisy. Oh; Jack don't! You bore me dreadfully.

Jack. There you have called me Jack. #Sits on bench.# We are friends again. Tell me what you have been doing these past five years.

Daisy. #Indifferent# Nothing very much. I stayed here a year after you left; then father sent me to school in New York, and after that, mother and I went abroad. That is all I have done. What have you been doing?

Jack. When I left here, I went to my uncle's home in the west. I started in business with him, and am now on the fair road, to , what men call, success. Still I am not the happy boy I once was. Daisy, do you remember what great friends we were? What jolly times we had? How we went to school, day after day? Ranged the woods and fields together, hunting for the first daisies? Those were happy days.

Daisy. Yes, those were happy days Jack. Remember how we used to sit here on the old bench, and watch the sun set on the hills?

Jack. I have often thought of that. I wonder if our initials are still here, as I carved them, long ago. Here they are. #Points to carving on seat of bench.#

Daisy. They have almost worn away.

Jack. #Takes out his knife.# I'll cut them deeper this time.# #Heels and cuts.# Daisy, do you recall how I used to say, that some day, I would make that "F" of yours an "H"

Daisy. Oh, Jack, you can't expect me to remember all the foolish things you ever said? #Rises.#

Jack. #Rises. Leaves knife on bench.# If you cannot recall what I said, perhaps you will remember what you said.

Daisy. No - I do not remember that either. I was only fifteen then.

Jack. Well, I do. You said I should have to wait, until you were twenty. You are just twenty now, Daisy. #Puts his arm around her#

Daisy. #Crosses L.# What funny things we used to say to be sure, but we were very young then; and children do say such silly things.

Jack. I do not see anything very silly about that. Is it silly for a fellow to love a girl? Is it silly for the fellow to tell this girl he loves her? Is it silly for him to ask this girl to become his wife?
#Advances toward her.#

Daisy. Yes, very silly.

Jack. Daisy, you do not mean that, you know very well I love --

Daisy. #Crosses R.#. Jack, stop! I have done my best to keep you from this subject. I appreciate your regard for me, and think too much of you to cause you pain; but I beg of you to speak no more of this. I cannot hear it, and I will not.

Jack. Daisy, you can't be serious. Tell me, tell me that you do not mean what you have said.

Daisy. It may seem very hard to you, but I am very much in earnest. I had hoped to spare you this, but you have brought it on yourself.

Jack. It does seem pretty hard. I have been working all these years for one end, but, of course, that is all over now. I only came back to the old village just to see you, and as there is nothing to keep me here now, I leave to-morrow. When we parted before, Daisy, I knew that it was only a matter of time until we should meet again. I remember how I kissed you good-bye then. I am going once more, and very likely I shall never see you again. Can't you grant me the same privilege now, you did then? One kiss, Daisy, is all I ask.

Daisy. Do not ask me. I cannot. They are not mine to give.#Crosses L.#

Jack. Not yours to give? Not hers to give. #Aside.# I understand it all now. Your coolness toward me is explained. Had you but told me of your betrothal at first, it would have saved you annoyance, me pain.

Daisy. I had hoped it would not be necessary. My betrothal to Lord Cranshaw, whom I met in London last season, has not, as yet been

announced. However, I had intended writing you of it, but had misplaced your address.

Jack. Daisy, I hope that he will make you as happy as I know you will make him. I will say good-bye. We shall, at least, part friends, and in parting will you accept #Presents daisies.# these few --

Enter SERVANT, L. C., with box.

Servant. Miss Daisy, here's a package for you. #Gives box.#
#Exit Servant L. C.# #Daisy crosses and sits on stump L.; opens package, and discovers roses. Jack sees roses and drops the daisies and goes up stage.#

Jack. Good-bye, Daisy. Good-bye, Daisy. She does not hear me.
#Exit R. C.#

Daisy. They are so beautiful. #Looks up.# Where's Jack? He's gone. I wonder if I treated him right? He always was such a good friend, and I do like him. I am afraid I did not treat him as I should. Yet what could I do? When a girl is betrothed she cannot have other men making love to her. What would his lordship think? I don't fancy he would like that; and I must not displease him. How jealous all the girls will be of me. A real live lord - all my own. I caught him myself too - I never dreamt of being so fortunate - Papa said it was my money, but I don't believe that. His lordship seems so very sincere - he has so much style about him - he is so very, very English, don't you know. He should be here soon, as his steamer was due in New York yesterday. He must have sent these flowers as soon as he arrived. Let me see. #Looks in box.# There should be a card or note some where. Here it is at the bottom of the box. #Takes out note.# Let me see what he has to say. #Opens note and reads.# "My dear Charlie." What can he mean? There must be some mistake. Yes it is from his Lordship, for here is his signature. I'll read and see what it is. #Reads.#

"I write to tell you of my betrothal to an American girl." I see, his lordship must have put Charlie's letter in my envelope by mistake, and sent my letter to Charlie. I know Charlie will read my letter, so I'll just read Charlie's. Besides, as we are betrothed, I have a right to know something about his lordship's correspondence. #Reads.# "She is very wealthy, and they say she is quite pretty, but I never noticed that." I like that. "Her father, of course, made his money in trade, but Oh such a beastly trade - soap manufacturing - you know - Dreadful, isn't it? I fancy, however, the money is just as sweet, as though he made it in sugar, and as long as that is all I am after, I don't care." The wretch after telling me he only cared for myself alone. #Reads.# "And then I don't suppose I will have to stay long at the factory; I'll bring her back to England just as soon as I can. Tell the dear ^{girls} of the Alhambra that I have not forgotten them, and that as soon as I return, we will have one of our jolly sprees." #Crushes letter.# So this is the character of the man I have chosen for my husband. I have accepted him in preference to the true hearted, manly fellow, I have just now cruelly sent away. #Rises.# Takes flowers from her breast.# With these flowers I cast from me all thoughts of Lord Cranshaw; #Throws flowers down stage L.C.# and I fancied I loved him.

Exit - Enters cottage.

Lord Cranshaw. #Without.# Say there fellow, can you tell me where Miss Fairfax lives?

Voice without. Keep right on - the house is just in front of you.

Lord Gran. #Without.# Ah, thank you.

Enter LORD CRANSHAW, R. C.

Lord Gran. Oh, dear me, so I have reached my destination, have I? Oh, dear, it is so very far from the station, you know. No one there to meet me - I could find no trap to drive me here, so I had to walk.

Oh, such a beastly dirty road, dontcherknow - O my: I'm all covered with dust - Pshaw! I've soiled my new spats too. #Takes his handkerchief. Leans over a little. Very stiff. Dusts one shoe then the other. He drops his handkerchief.# Damn! I've dropped it. Oh, what shall I do? If I stoop to pick the confounded thing up, I know I'll break something. #Looks at handkerchief. Thinks a moment. Laughs.# The idea that I should have an idea. Dear me, what a queer idea. #Tries to pick up handkerchief with cane. After failing several times, finally succeeds.# Clevah - devilish clevah. #Shakes handkerchief. Coughs.# That beastly dust chokes me so. #Puts handkerchief in his pocket. Adjusts his monocle and looks around.# So this is the place - I don't see the factory any where. Perhaps she doesn't live there - I hope not. I remember I once passed a soap factory in London - I have never passed another. Soap is all right in a bath, but I don't care for it in the process of manufacture. I wonder where I can find Daisy - perhaps, she lives in that house there. Oh, dear me, this whole affair is such a dreadful bore, but to what ends won't a fellow go, who needs money. Oh, I suppose, like all American girls, she will actually expect me to make love to her. Well I'll try my best. #Takes out his card and looks at it. Walks up stage, and looks at house.# Dear me, what a peculiar house - no door-bell - no knocker - no anything. I wish I could see someone to take my card - there seems to be no one about anywhere. #Servant enters L. U. E. , crosses and exit R. U. E.# Ah: say there. #Exit R. U. E. #

Enter DAISY FAIRFAX, from cottage.

Daisy. No one here? Well, I am glad to be alone - everything wearies me. What was once a pleasure, now bores me, for things have changed since yesterday. #Crosses and sits R. end of bench.#

Re-enter LORD CRANSHAW, R. U. E.

Lord Cran. Egad! there is some one sitting on that bench - Bah Jove! it's Daisy. #Advances and extends his hand.# Oh, Daisy, how-de-do, how-de-do?

Daisy. #Coldly.# I am very well.

Lord Cran. What, won't you shake hands with me?

Daisy. No.

Lord Cran. Oh, dear me - how very strange. It strikes me you have grown dreadfully cold suddenly - I can't understand it.

Daisy. Then read this, #Gives him letter.# and you will. #Crosses L.#

Lord Cran. #Adjusts monocle.# Reads.# "My dear Charlie." My dear Charlie? Who's Charlie?

Daisy. I am sure I do not know. You should - you wrote it.

Lord Cran. #Laughs.# Oh, yes - so I did; but how did you get this?

Daisy. You sent it to me.

Lord Cran. I did? Oh, deuce - how stupid of me.

Daisy. Yes, very stupid in you, but most fortunate for me. Lord Cranshaw, that letter has shown me what you are - you may consider our betrothal broken; for I despise you.

Lord Cran. You break off your betrothal with me? You despise me? Dear me, do tell me is that an American joke? I am so beastly dull, you know - I should like to laugh, if it is a joke. An American chap I once met, said I would have to be hit with an ax, before I could see a joke; but really, Daisy, do you mean that you positively throw me over?

Daisy. I mean exactly what I said.

Lord Cran. Dear me, what a shabby way to treat a fellow. But, I suppose one must expect that sort of things from Americans. Well, now that I am not going to marry you, I fancy, I will have to marry some other American girl - I wonder who the next one will be. Good-bye.

#Exit, L. C.#

Daisy. So ends my engagement to Lord Cranshaw. #Sits on bench.#

At times what strangers are our hearts and heads. Had I but understood the true feelings of my heart, and owned unto myself my love for Jack, as I now do, he would be here. Fool! fool! that I was to lose a noble love for the empty honors of a title. What better name could I bear than Earle. #Picks up Jack's knife from bench.# How easy to change #Cuts.# this "F" to an "E". It might have been. #Sighs. Lays down knife.# Would it were in my power to regain the love I once rejected, even as I now recover these once discarded daisies. #Picks up daisies and pins them to her breast.# Alas, it is too late. #Weeps. Foot-steps without.# I hear some one coming - I must not be seen. #Exit R. S. E.#

Enter, JACK EARLE, R. C.

Jack. I wonder where I left my knife? I should be very sorry to lose it - it was father's. It must be on the bench. Here it is. #Takes knife from bench.# What is this? The "F" has been changed to "E" - How strange: #Sees roses.# What! those roses there. #Picks up a rose. Looks around.# Where are the daisies?.

Re-enter DAISY FAIRFAX, R. S. E.

Daisy. Here they are Jack.

Jack. Daisy!

Daisy. #Takes the daisies from her breast and offers them to him.# See, I have kept them for you.

Jack. Will you still keep them for me?

Daisy. If you wish, I will.

Jack. Daisy, tell me who threw those roses there? #Points to roses#

Daisy. I did.

Jack. Why did you do it?

Daisy. Because I despise the man who gave them to me. I have broken my betrothal with Lord Cranshaw.

Jack. You have: Tell me who did that. #Points to letters on bench#

Daisy. Why - I - I did -

Jack. You did? - Daisy! #Clasps her in his arms.#

Quick Curtain.