

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook ***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please check with an FP administrator before proceeding.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. **If the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file.**

Title: The Journey of the Soul

Date of first publication: 1928

Author: Edward Plunkett (Lord Dunsany) (1878-1957)

Date first posted: Jun 2 2013

Date last updated: Jun 2 2013

Faded Page eBook #20130605

This eBook was produced by: Delphine Lettau & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

Drawn from:

Seven Modern Comedies

By

Lord Dunsany

G. P. Putnam's Sons
London & New York

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MR. POLLIT, *a Playwright.*

MR. TOTE, *Stage Manager.*

ALF
BILL } *Scene Shifters.*

MR. TRENDER
MR. HANLEY } *Actors.*

MISS PHYLLIS PERKINS, *a Famous Actress.*

THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

SCENE: The Lord Chamberlain's Theatre.

TIME: The Present.

ALF. Come on, Bill; they're going to go through that curtain-raiser.

[They bring bed to centre back.]

BILL. What do they want?

ALF. All the usual stuff.

[They bring on bedroom utensils.]

BILL. What's the curtain-raiser, Alf?

ALF. "The Journey of the Soul" they call it.

BILL. "The Journey of the Sole"? Soles don't make journeys.

ALF. 'Ow do you mean—don't make journeys?

BILL. They just flap about in the sea.

ALF. Well, can't he flap from one sea to another?

BILL. Yes; I suppose so. Who's playing it?

ALF. Mr. Trender.

BILL. He's not generally funny.

ALF. Give it me.

BILL. Alf——

ALF. They'll want that here.

BILL. Alf——

ALF. Well?

BILL. If it's all about a sole, will they want a bed?

ALF. Of course they'll want a bed.

BILL. What for, Alf?

ALF. 'Aven't you ever heard of dramatic technique?

BILL. Yes. Read of it often.

ALF. Well, they always do have a bed in this theatre. It's dramatic technique.

BILL. Well, we've got it fixed up for them.

[They sit on the bed.]

ALF. Talking to Mr. Zoss himself the other day, and he tells me about this very thing. The public, he says, demands a bed. Doesn't care about beds himself, but the public must have it; and as a humble servant of the public, he says, he has to give it 'em. And what Mr. Zoss doesn't know....

BILL. Oh, that's all right. Still, I can't see as how a sole can want to flap about in a bed.

ALF. That's 'cause you know nothing about dramatic technique.

BILL. Well, the sea's the place for a sole.

Enter the Stage Manager.

STAGE MANAGER. We shan't need a bed to-day, Alf.

ALF. Not need a bed, sir?

STAGE MANAGER. No; not to-day.

ALF. God 'elp us!

[*They take off some utensils.*]

Enter the great actress, Phyllis Perkins.

STAGE MANAGER. Oh, good-morning, Miss Perkins. I'm afraid we aren't quite ready for you yet.

PHYLLIS. Good-morning.

STAGE MANAGER. We've a bit of a curtain-raiser to run through, but it will only take a few minutes. Mr. Pollit! Mr. Pollit! Would you mind coming now? "Journey of the Soul," please. We'll only be a few minutes, Miss Perkins, if you don't mind.

PHYLLIS. Not at all. I'm before my time.

[*She sits on bed.*]

Re-enter Bill and Alf.

STAGE MANAGER. Oh, well, you can leave the bed for the present.

ALF. It will never go without a bed, sir.

STAGE MANAGER. Oh, won't it. We *make* 'em go here. We *make* 'em.

[*Exit Alf, wagging a doubtful head. Exit Bill.*]

Enter Pollit.

STAGE MANAGER. Ah, this is Mr. Pollit, Miss Perkins. He's written the little thing that comes on before yours.

POLLIT. Oh, it's nothing really. How do you do? It's not anything. It's nothing compared with what you do.

PHYLLIS. What's it about?

POLLIT. Well, it's called "The Journey of the Soul."

PHYLLIS. Oh?

POLLIT. Yes; you see the Soul sets out accompanied by Hope to find the Celestial Heights. Well, then, he meets Despair and Remorse, and—and Temptation; and—and all that sort of thing.

PHYLLIS. (*unhappily*). Oh.

POLLIT. Yes; and after that he meets Sin.

PHYLLIS. Oh, does he?

POLLIT. Yes; and then—of course I'm not *telling* it very well—then he comes at last to a sort of place where he meets one with an inexpressibly beautiful face, and....

PHYLLIS. (*slightly interested*). Oh?

POLLIT. Yes; and he....

PHYLLIS. (*bored again*). Oh, it's a he?

POLLIT. Well, it's a sort of an angel, you know, really. They aren't any particular sex, I think.

PHYLLIS. (*very bored*). Oh.

POLLIT. Yes; and then you see——

PHYLLIS. But does anything *happen* at all?

POLLIT. Oh, yes. You see he guides the Soul of Man to the Celestial Heights—and that of course, well that's Eternity really. It's rather ... er, er.... What do you think of it, Miss Perkins?

PHYLLIS. Oh well, I think, you know, you ought to have something happen a little more.

STAGE MANAGER. Oh, that will be all right, Miss Perkins. We'll put in lots of things. Ginger it up, you know.

POLLIT. Well, I don't know if I'd like too much put in, you know.

STAGE MANAGER. No, no; not too much. Just what you want to say yourself, you know. Only put so that it will get over.

POLLIT. I ... see.... What sort of things exactly?

STAGE MANAGER. Well, there's the journey itself, for instance. You want to tell them that it takes—it's a hundred years, isn't it?

POLLIT. Yes.

STAGE MANAGER. Well, you want them to know it.

POLLIT. But I tell them that right at the beginning of the play.

STAGE MANAGER. Right at the beginning. Yes. That's the point. They're none of them in their places by then.

POLLIT. None of them?

STAGE MANAGER. Except the pit.

POLLIT. Oh.

STAGE MANAGER. No. You want to get it over. Now a little bit about the South Eastern would *show* them that it was a slow journey. I've thought of a bit that would make your point quite clear, and it would be sure of a laugh. One's always sure of a laugh over the South Eastern.

POLLIT. Well, I'm not quite sure that I quite wanted a laugh. You see, it's meant to be rather serious, and....

STAGE MANAGER. You don't quite *want* a laugh? You *don't want* a laugh? Well, if you'd told me that before. I mean to say, I've spent a lot of time on your play, and if you'd told me before that you didn't want a laugh—— Well, I should have perhaps understood you better, that's all.

POLLIT. Well, I'm sorry; but I'd much rather they didn't laugh, if you don't mind.

STAGE MANAGER. We can't have them all scared out of the house by your trying to be solemn.

POLLIT. You see I meant the Soul really to be each of their own souls, and——

STAGE MANAGER. Well, let's get on with it; they're all here. (*Reads.*) One with an inexpressibly beautiful face. Come on, Mr. Hanley. We'll start from there. We shan't keep you long, Miss Perkins.

PHYLLIS. Never mind.

STAGE MANAGER. One with an inexpressibly ... (*Sees Hanley, who has been lolling against the wings, coming forward with script.*) That's right. (*Mr. Hanley is not looking his best to-day, and his cigarette has a sickly droop.*) Now, where's the Soul?

TRENDER. Oh, I beg your pardon.

STAGE MANAGER. Come on, Mr. Trender, please. We're taking it from where one with an inexpressibly beautiful face comes on.

TRENDER. Oh, all right.

[*Takes script from pocket.*]

HANLEY (*reading, still smoking*).

Henceforward follow me.
Yonder below you lie the forms and shades
Of monstrous images.

TRENDER. Just a moment. (*Turns pages.*) Oh, all right.

HANLEY. Henceforward follow me.

Yonder below you lie the forms and shades
Of monstrous images; amongst them Sin
With all her children—Gluttony and Sloth,
O'er-reaching Pride and deadly Lechery,
And stubborn....

PHYLLIS. Mr. Tote.

STAGE MANAGER. Yes.

PHYLLIS. Excuse me a moment. Would you mind if I got ready for "A Girl On Her Own"?

STAGE MANAGER. Certainly, Miss Perkins, certainly. We'll only be a few minutes.

PHYLLIS. Thank you so much.

[*She takes off her hat.*]

STAGE MANAGER. All right, Mr. Hanley.

HANLEY. Henceforward follow me.

Yonder below you lie the forms and shades
Of monstrous images; amongst them Sin
With all her children—Gluttony and Sloth,
O'er-reaching Pride and deadly Lechery.

[Miss Perkins gets into the bed.]

And stubborn worldliness, not to be turned.

[Pointing as to a mountain-top before them.]

And yonder lies the goal of all desire,
Erect, transcendent, shining, seen more far
Than on earth only....
(Damn this typescript; it's like mud!)
Than on earth only, gleaming to great spheres
That throng the night in numbers past thy guess.
Mr. Tote, how *am* I to read this script. It's all blurred like *this*.

STAGE MANAGER. Well, she's done her best.

HANLEY. Oh, all right. I'll try and make it out.

STAGE MANAGER. Now, Mr. Trender.

TRENDER. Excuse me one moment; I wanted to ask Mr. Pollit....

POLLIT. Yes?

TRENDER. I wanted to be sure if I quite got your symbolism. Which kind of a soul did you mean?

POLLIT. Which *kind* of soul?

TRENDER. Yes. You see there's—there's what one calls one's immortal soul....

POLLIT. Yes?

TRENDER. Well, and then there's the kind we eat.

POLLIT. Oh, Heavens!

TRENDER. Well, I only wanted to be sure if I got your idea.

STAGE MANAGER. Well, perhaps we'd better get on. "That throng the night in numbers past thy guess." We'll go on from there.

TRENDER. Henceforth I follow; those dark images
Forgotten, and all else that is of Earth.
That peak alone shall beckon....
or is it "reckon"? I can't read it either.

STAGE MANAGER. Let me see. (*Sees.*) It's "reckon."

POLLIT. No, no, no. "Beckon."

STAGE MANAGER. Well, she's *put* "reckon."

POLLIT. No, no, *no*.

STAGE MANAGER. Well, it's "reckon" here.

POLLIT. Oh, it's all wrong. It should be "beckon."

STAGE MANAGER. Are you sure?

POLLIT. Of course I'm sure.

STAGE MANAGER. Well, if you like; but "reckon" seems better to me. What do you think, Mr. Trender?

TRENDER. Well, I think "reckon's" better. I don't see how a peak could beckon very well. Not a mountain peak.

POLLIT. Well, how could it reckon?

TRENDER. Well, I don't know of course. I don't quite see what you're driving at.

STAGE MANAGER. Well, perhaps we'd better get on. We'll have it "beckon," Mr. Pollit, to please you. We'll have it just as you want. But perhaps after this you wouldn't mind letting us get on with it by ourselves. We'll get through much quicker that way; and you can safely leave it in my hands. You see, we've met you over "reckon," and now if you'll just meet us by letting us get on with the rehearsal——

[Exeunt Stage Manager and Pollit.]

TRENDER. Well, where were we?
That peak alone shall reckon me and guide
These weary feet——

HANLEY. Better wait for Tote.

TRENDER. All right. Alf!

Enter Alf.

ALF. Yes, sir?

TRENDER. Where's Mr. Tote?

ALF. He's seeing off of Mr. Pollit, sir.

HANLEY *(to Trender)*. This thing will never go. There's no snap in it.

ALF. Oh, it will go all right, sir. Mr. Tote will make it go. But it would be better if there was a bed in it.

Enter Stage Manager.

STAGE MANAGER. Now, Miss Perkins. I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting. Now. "A Girl On Her Own." You're both in this, so we can get started. Miss Esmer will be here in five minutes. Now. Curtain up!

PHYLLIS *(in bed, and looking charming. Reading from script)*. Count, this is charming of you.

CURTAIN

[The end of *The Journey of the Soul* by Lord Dunsany]