

The Amateurs Plot

A group of amateurs in Lindsay Ontario in the late nineteenth century get together to put on an operetta.

Scene

1. Fred recruits Bob to the project. Bob is in a bad mood because his Sunday was not a day of rest. Bob is sceptical of the idea of amateur theatricals. Why does Fred think that Bob would be an obvious recruit? Bob loves to sing. But getting up on stage and doing it? They discuss Bob's brother's likely opposition. **Song:** Go to theatre. Point of the scene: to establish that Bob's brother Obadiah is opposed to many pleasant social activities including the theatre.
2. Cornelia and Sarah in the kitchen of the manse. Sarah is reading a novel and quickly hides it when she hears someone come in. Sarah is obviously relieved to find that it is only Cornelia. Cornelia says no, it isn't Obadiah. Cornelia has a pack of cards. "Cornelia, where did you get those?" She wants Sarah to play a game she has learned from a friend. Sarah says Obadiah would not approve. **Song:** He's against it. Obadiah comes in time to catch the gist of what Sarah and Cornelia have been saying. Sarah tells Cornelia that her mother will be wondering where she is. Cornelia denies this, but leaves. Obadiah complains that Cornelia is poorly disciplined, and running wild. Sarah replies that Cornelia is a good girl, only with high spirits. Obadiah hints that he has heard some of what the others have been saying. Sarah tries to sooth his feelings, but he is hurt. Sarah asks what has become of his sense of humour. He replies that this world is a vale of tears, not laughter. Sarah asks if there will be laughter in heaven. Obadiah will not presume to speculate on the arrangements of the Almighty. The points to be established: that Sarah is deeply fond of her niece
Cornelia and that Sarah and Obadiah are in conflict over his very narrow views.
3. Tempe's music lesson, followed by Fred and Bob interview with the Professor and Fiona. **Song:** Vocalese for Bob and Fiona. What shall we take to the stage of the music hall? How shall we brighten the darkness of the waning year? Fred proposes an "olio". The professor say they should aim higher than a mere tossed salad of songs and sketches. Discussion of operetta. The Professor sings **Song** "Princess Myrtle" a song outlining the plot of the operetta. Point of the scene: to establish that the Amateurs are going to do an operetta not just a variety show. Also the first meeting of Bob and Fiona.
4. Bob and Obadiah confrontation over the theatre. Bob says that the amateur theatre is a harmless amusement. Obadiah what is the world coming to. One righteous man. **Song:** One man of faith and principle.

Point of the scene: to establish that Obadiah considers his views to be justified.

5. Obadiah goes to confront the Professor. The Professor greets him kindly, but Obadiah is truculent. Obadiah tells the Professor that this nonsense of amateur theatre must cease. Why? Because theatre is the Devil's workshop. **Song:** "Dancing with the Devil". Get thee behind me Satan. Professor dances behind Obadiah. Obadiah leaves in a huff, and Fiona comes in to remonstrate with her brother. Point of the scene: To establish that there is something odd about The Professor and his sister.
6. Rehearsal. **Song:** The Villain. Fred why am I playing the Villain? Tempe says that Fred is the villain through and through. No other possible choice. Bob is much more villainous than I could ever be. Especially on a Monday morning. Professor says that this Villain turns out in the end to be a fine fellow, only misunderstood, as his very moving song makes clear. Point of the scene: those who seem to be villains may be no such thing, if properly understood.

Tempe say if the villain is such a fine fellow why does he tie Princess Myrtle to a railroad track? It's not a very friendly act. It shows a lack of refinement. Just a momentary lapse, a little faux pas, says the Professor.

7. Fiona and Cornelia. Song Curiosity. Cornelia and Bob could sing the song, or Cornelia by herself. People are always saying "I wonder why". What is the point in asking questions, when you ask them of yourself? It isn't very logical, it seems to me. For if you knew the answers, you wouldn't have to ask. But it's simply human nature, it's curiosity. Human nature. Human nature. What is curiosity? The point of the scene: Fiona is interested in everything human, and wants to know what it is like to be human.
8. George Wright working on the drops. Song Dreams of Distant Lands. Cornelia wants to help with the painting, but George tells her to leave his paints and brushes alone. You're just a kid. Point of the scene: to provoke Cornelia's anger and make her subsequent damage to the drops plausible.
9. Bob and Fiona. The meaning of home. Home. When you feel far away, home is where you are far from. Home is people that you love, and places you remember passing day after day. Where you thought the same thoughts. Memories of friends you've walked with. When you have been someplace it is never quite the same simply because you have been there. This street corner will never be the same for me, because you have stood here. Point of the scene: Bob and Fiona are falling in love.
10. Obadiah **Song:** Sleepless Night. Cornelia has gone to the theatre determined to show what she can do with the paints and brushes but she makes such a mess that she panics and brushes paint on many of the drops to make it look like vandalism. She then flees and runs into Obadiah who is coming toward the Music Hall. Obadiah goes into the theatre with a

lamp, and is there when Fred and George arrive. The point of the scene: to set up a situation in which Obadiah is suspected of damaging the drops but cannot reveal the truth out of concern for Sarah.

11. Bob confronts Obadiah. Obadiah refuses to admit that he damaged the drops, but refuses to say who did. Bob is so angry that he moves out of the house. Sarah also confronts Obadiah who replies in much the same way as he did to Bob. **Song:** for Obadiah and Sarah. Trust. Sarah tells Obadiah that she is going to go along to help the Amateurs.
12. Cast meeting. George says we caught him red-handed!. We were right there. Professor asks if anybody saw Obadiah damaging the drops. Nobody did. George says he could just spit. Were you ever just so mad that you could spit? **Song:**? Sarah arrives. Bob asks what she is doing there. She replies that she wants to help. The Professor praises her, saying that's the spirit. The cast agree to say nothing publicly about Obadiah being caught in the music hall. Point of the scene: To set up the situation in which Obadiah may be drawn into joining the Amateurs.
13. The cast work together to repaint the drops under George's direction. Word gets around about the damage, and the community offers support. In no time the damage is repaired. George is recognized as a good artist, and the local newspaper runs an article about the operetta, and George Wright's fine painting of the scenery. Point of the scene: good may come from apparent evil.

Professor remarks that so often something good come out apparent disaster. **Song:** "You never know what good good will come" And speaking of something good coming out of disaster, says the Professor, I must have a word with Obadiah.

14. The Professor visits Obadiah. Professor hints that Obadiah and he are really on the same side. Obadiah is sceptical. The Professor tells Obadiah that he knows that Obadiah did not damage the drops. He suggests that Obadiah could remove any suspicion against him by joining the Amateurs, saying that Sarah is taking a small role, and that he could do the same by playing the King, Princess Myrtle's father. Obadiah is reluctant, but the Professor wins him over by saying that Sarah would be pleased.
15. Bob and Fiona. Love scene. The meaning of things. The mystery of things. **Song:** The Nature Of Things. Bob tells Fiona that he loves her. Fiona replies that that is not possible. Bob asks why not. Fiona comes close to admitting her true nature to Bob, but runs away instead. Point: deepening the attachment of Bob and Fiona and leading her toward becoming human.
16. Last rehearsal. Obadiah and Sarah part of the cast. The rest of the cast are suspicious but Obadiah does something funny as the King. What? Gets a positive response from the others. Likes it.
17. Fiona becomes human and feels pain. Seamus says that pain is a part of being human. Seamus admits that he feels something like sadness at

taking leave of his sister. **Song:** What lies ahead for me? Point: Taking leave is a part of the human experience.

18. The Night. **Song:** Stage Fright. Fiona nervous, for the first time. Her brother tells she is not going to die, not of stage-fright.
19. Performance of Princess Myrtle. **Songs:** The Hero, Princess Myrtle. A long scene.
20. The Professor gets Cornelia to confess that she was responsible for the damage to the drops. She tried to do some painting of her own, made a mess, and in a panic did more damage. She asks the cast for forgiveness, and Obadiah in particular. Obadiah says that he knew that Cornelia was responsible, but because she was his niece, and especially because of Sarah, he said nothing. Professor **song:** "You never know what good will come"
21. The Professor takes his leave of Obadiah. The cast are assembled on stage after the show. The strange woman, Sarah in a veil. Obadiah and Sarah united. Bob and Fiona united.