

**A KISS FOR
CINDERELLA:
A COMEDY**

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A Kiss for Cinderella: A Comedy by J. M. Barrie

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J. M. BARRIE

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A COMEDY**

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THE PLAYS OF
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J. M. BARRIE, *Genl.*

A KISS
FOR CINDERELLA

A COMEDY

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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I

The least distinguished person in 'Who's Who' has escaped, as it were, from that fashionable crush, and is spending a quiet evening at home. He is curled up in his studio, which is so dark that he would be invisible, had we not obligingly placed his wicker chair just where the one dim ray from the stove may strike his face. His eyes are closed luxuriously, and we could not learn much about him without first poking our fingers into them. According to the toms mentioned (to which we must return him before morning), Mr. Bodis is sixty-three, has exhibited in the Royal Academy, and is at present unmarried. They do not proclaim him comparatively obscure: they left it indeed to him to say the final word on this subject, and he has hedged. Let us put it in this way, that he occupies more space in his wicker chair than in the book, where nevertheless he looks as if it was rather lonely not to be a genius. He is a painter for the nicest of reasons, that it is delightful to live and die in a messy studio; for our part, we too should have become a painter had it not been that we always lost

our paint-box. There is no spirited bidding to acquire Mr. Bodie's canvases: he loves them at first sight himself, and has often got up in the night to see how they are faring; but ultimately he has turned cold to them, and has even been known to offer them, in lieu of alms, to beggars, who departed cursing. We have a weakness for persons who don't get on, and so cannot help adding, though it is no business of ours, that Mr. Bodie had private means. Curled up in his wicker chair he is rather like an elderly cupid. We wish we could warn him that the policeman is coming.

The policeman comes: in his hand the weapon that has knocked down more malefactors than all the batons—the bull's-eye. He strikes with it nose, right and left, revealing, as if she had just entered the room, a replica of the Venus of Milo, taller than himself though he is stalwart. It is the first meeting of these two, but, though a man who can come to the boil, he is as little moved by her as she by him. After the first glance she continues her reflections. Her smile over his head vaguely displeases him. For two pins he would arrest her.

The lantern finds another object, more worthy of his attention, the artist. Mr. Bodie is more restive under the light than was his goddess, perhaps because he is less accustomed to being stared at. He blinks and sits up.

MR. BODIE (*giving his visitor a lesson in manners*). I beg your pardon, officer.

POLICEMAN (*confounded*). Not that, sir; not at all.

MR. BODIE (*pressing his advantage*). But I insist on begging your pardon, officer.

POLICEMAN. I don't see what for, sir.

MR. BODIE (*fancying himself*). For walking uninvited into the abode of a law-abiding London citizen, with whom I have not the pleasure of being acquainted.

POLICEMAN (*after thinking this out*). But I'm the one as has done that, sir.

MR. BODIE (*with neat surprise*). So you are, I beg your pardon, officer.

(*With pardonable pride in himself MR. BODIE turns on the light. The studio, as we can now gather from its sloped roof, is at the top of a house; and its window is heavily screened, otherwise we might see the searchlights through it, showing that we are in the period of the great war. Though no one speaks of Mr. Bodie's pictures as Bodies, which is the true test of fame, he is*

sufficiently eminent not to have works of art painted or scratched on his walls, mercy has been shown even to the panels of his door, and he is handsomely stingy of draperies. The Venus stands so prominent that the studio is evidently hers rather than his. The stove has been brought forward so that he can rest his feet on it, which ever of his easy chairs he is sitting in, and he also falls over it at times when stepping back to consider his latest failures. On a shelf is a large stuffed penguin, which is to be one of the characters in the play, and on each side of this shelf are two or three tattered magazines. We had hankered after giving Mr. Bodie many rows of books, but were well aware that he would get only blocks of wood so cleverly painted to look like books that they would deceive everyone except the audience. Everything may be real on the stage except the books. So there are only a few magazines in the studio (and very likely when the curtain rings up it will be found that they are painted too). But