

The Livermores

Pocket Opera No. 1: Moe and the L.G.

Libretto

Friday night. The sound of 1920's style old-time jazz on a scratchy Victrola. The room is dark except for the glint of a cigarette, with smoke hazing upwards into the dim. The cigarette illuminates a silhouette of a man and a big jug. He is GILBERT LIVERMORE, a tall, rail thin man in his fifties who looks older than his years, with coke bottle glasses, and thinning hair. To his family, he's mockingly called LORD GILLIE or THE L.G. for short. He's a rocket scientist by day, a raging drunken jazz loving loner by night.

"Bix and a Bottle"

LG: BIX AND A BOTTLE OF MUSCATEL
WHERE MY HOLLOW SHELL
CAN GO TO HELL
NO SLIDE RULES AND ROCKET PARTS
JUST ME IN THE DARK

SQUINTING THROUGH MY COKE BOTTLE LENS
SITTING WITH MY ONLY FRIENDS
BOOZE AND JAZZ
I'M IN THE PAST
WITH MY BOOZE AND JAZZ
I LOVE MY
BIX AND A BOTTLE
BIX AND A BOTTLE

BIX AND A BOTTLE OF MUSCATEL
WHERE I FACE REGRET
ON A BENT CORNET
PLAYING ALONG WITH BIX BEIDERBECKE
AND HIS DAVENPORT HORN

HOLED UP HERE IN MY SMOKE FILLED STUDY
AWAY FROM MY FAMILY
THEY ALL MOCK ME
THEY CALL ME THE LORD GILLIE
THE LG
SINCE 1963
BUT HERE, IT'S JUST ME, ONLY ME
WITH MY ONLY FRIENDS
BOOZE AND JAZZ
BOOZE AND JAZZ

BLUE NOTE COOL OR RED HOT
AND GODDAMIT!
WHY THE HELL NOT?

I'M SO LOOSE, I'M TIGHT TONIGHT
I'M SO TIGHT, I'M LOOSE TONIGHT
DIGGING MY
BIX AND A BOTTLE
BIX AND A BOTTLE

In the room next door, on a quilted queen sized bed lays an obese woman with a huge polka dotted dress: MOE LIVERMORE, late 40s. She has brown eyes, a mane of wild, kinky black hair, and a triple chin. In spite of her obesity, or perhaps because the fat hides her wrinkles, she has a surprisingly youthful face. She has the voice of a young woman too – and the cackle of an old hag. She rests her massive frame on a sea of pillows and clothing all the while talking incessantly on her phone. A bowl of Ricotta cheese sits next to the pillow, and Dandy Dogs and Jack in the Box wrappers are strewn across the floor. Baroque harpsichord music is heard from a small cassette tape player on the nightstand next to her, though intermittently we can hear music blaring from The LG's room. MOE lets out a cackle, says goodbye and hangs up, then immediately dials a new number on her rotary phone.

“Too Smart to be Happy”

MOE: HELLO, AVONELLE
I'M SO GLAD YOU PICKED UP THE PHONE
I'M NOT WELL AVONELLE
“WHO IS THIS?”
WHY IT'S YOUR DEAR FRIEND MOE

WHY WOULDN'T I FEEL LIKE HELL, AVONELLE?
I'M IN THE “WHO'S WHO”,
I'M A WOMAN OF RENOWN
HOW'D I GET STUCK IN THIS COWBOY TOWN
WHERE IT'S HARD TO GET AROUND
BECAUSE I'M 400 POUNDS?

I'M TIRED FROM STAGING OPERAS AND COFFEE CANTATAS
PUTTING HORNS ON BRUNHILDAS AND BEARDS ON *IL TRAVIATAS*
HIRING FIDDLER ON ROLLER SKATES AND SOUSED KRAUTS IN OOMPA BANDS
ALL TO RAISE MONEY FOR THIS MEDIOCRE SYMPHONY'S BABY GRAND!

I'M BRINGING CULTURE TO THE STICKS
WHORING HAYDN TO THESE HICKS
BUT THEY RARELY THANK ME,
NO, BLESS THEIR HEARTS, THOSE UNEDUCATED PRICKS

AND DON'T GET ME STARTED
ON GILLIE AND HIS BOOZE AND BIX
WOAH! WOE IS MY LIFE
AS THE UNCONDITIONALLY LOVING WIFE OF A PHYSICIST
A WIFE TO A BRUTE WHO BRAYS LIKE AN ASS
AND DRINKS LIKE A FISH

IGNORANCE IS BLISS
BUT INTELLIGENCE IS PAIN
OH, IF ONLY YOU AND I WERE AT LEAST ONLY AVERAGE
WITH MEDIOCRE BRAINS
O! FOR EDUCATED WOMEN
LIKE YOU AND ME
WE'RE TOO SMART TO BE HAPPY!
WHAT? I SAID
WE'RE TOO SMART TO BE HAPPY!

AND NOW, WITH OUR SONS COMING BACK
AND WHEN HE FINDS OUT MY MOTHER'S COMING TOO
GILLIE WILL HAVE A HEART ATTACK!

SO, AVONELLE, WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?
OH WAIT! I'VE GOT TO RUN TO THE LITTLE GIRL'S ROOM-

MOE drops the phone receiver to the floor and waddles down a dark hall to the bathroom, leaving the door partially open. Moe hikes up her flowered print dress to expose layers of fat hanging over the toilet seat. We see half eaten cottage cheese containers and peach pits next to the sink, and a coffee cup with fat lipstick smudges. A chili dog wrapper is on the floor stuck to some dried out and sticky urine. From her throne, MOE reaches over to the counter and grabs a heaping tablespoon containing cottage cheese along with a few globs of grape jelly. She reaches for the toilet paper. There is none.

“The Very Least You Can Do For Me”

Moe: GILBERT! GILBERT!!
I NEED SOME HELP!
DROP THAT CONFOUNDED HORN AND HELP ME!
GILLIE! GILLIE!!
PLEAEEEEEEEEEESE!!

I'M IN HERE IN THE CAN
AND
I NEED A HAND

IT'S THE LEAST YOU CAN DO
IT'S THE LEAST YOU CAN DO
FOR ME! FOR ME!
THE VERY LEAST YOU CAN DO FOR ME!!

The LG storms out of his room, with billows of smoke following him. He heads over to MOE's bathroom and quickly opens her door. His wisps of hair fly up in the wind and his glasses are foggy. He looks every bit the mad scientist that he is.

“Holy Gamole”

LG: HOLY GAMOLE
GEE MANEE
CHRIST ALMIGHTY
WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO ME!

YOU'LL WAKE THE NEIGHBORS
RAISE THE GOD BLESS-ED DEAD
NOT IN THIS HOUSE
YOU KNOW HOW I'M SENSITIVE!

Moe: BUT I AM YOUR WIFE!
FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE,
YOU CAN BUY ME SOME T.P. FROM BIG T
IT'S THE LEAST YOU CAN DO
THE VERY *LEAST* YOU CAN DO FOR -

LG: HOLY GAMOLE, GEE MANEE
CHRIST ALMIGHTY, WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO ME

AND I WON'T HAVE THIS YELLING!!
NOT IN *MY* HOUSE
NOT WITH THE DEBTS YOU'VE RUN
SO BUY YOUR OWN SHITRAGS AND -

"Get Out, You Damned One"

LG GET OUT, YOU DAMNED ONE
GET OUT
GET OUT

YOU DRIVE ME OUT OF MY GOD BLESSED MIND
WHY DO I KEEP YOU AROUND?
I GUESS IT'S ONLY FOR THE SEX
THAT'S THE ONLY FRIGGING REASON I'VE FOUND

GET OUT, YOU DAMNED ONE
GET OUT
GET OUT

SURE, YOU CAN BE TONS OF FUN...
AT 400 POUNDS, YEAH, YOU'RE TONS, TONS, AND TONS OF FUN
BUT, CHRIST ALMIGHTY!
GET OUT, YOU DAMNED ONE
GET OUT
GET OUT!

LG throws the coffee cup against the wall, crashing into shards and leaving a trail of coffee dripping down it. He wrestles the tablespoon out of MOE's mouth and hands and throws it into the

sink. He slams the bathroom door shut and storms back to his room where the old 78 record is at its end, scratching and skipping over and over. LG grabs a dim flashlight and finds his jug of Muscatel. Unscrewing the top, he holds it up to his mouth, and sips like a hamster slurping on its water feeder. Oblivious to the skipping record, LG grabs a beat up copper trumpet and starts noodling on it.

MOE is left in the bathroom by herself. She pushes aside an apricot pit and takes a bite of cottage cheese from a serving spoon. Then she searches around: behind her, underneath, near her dropped underwear, and then frantically up in her bowling ball bag-sized pocket book near the sink.

MOE yells above the din of the old jazz and the LG's trumpet accompaniment.

“Shitty Shit Shit”

Moe: GILLIE!
GILLIE!

LORD GILLIE
YOU'RE A SHITTY SHIT SHIT
HAVING A SNIT
WHILE I SIT ON THE PIT

LORD GILLIE
YOU'RE A SHITTY SHIT SHIT
I NEED SOME T.P., IT'S FOR MY SLIT
SO DON'T BE AN IDIOT

GILLIE!
YOU SHITTY SHIT SHIT
YOU'RE ACTING LIKE AN UN-EDUCATED NITWIT
AS YOU SO INSENSITIVELY,
SO UNCARINGLY...
SO INTEMPERATELY
BLAST THAT TRUMPET!

LORD GILLIE!
LORD GILLIE!!
COME HERE!
YOU SHITTY SHIT SHIT!

LG: (coming out of his room, covering his ears)
ALL RIGHT! JEEEE-SUS, STOP YELLING!
(he grabs hold of large kink of her hair)
YOU KNOW I'M GODDAMN SENSITIVE!

Moe: AND ALL I DO IS GIVE, GIVE, GIVE
JUST THIS ONE THING.
IT'S THE LEAST
THE VERY LEAST YOU CAN DO

FOR ME! FOR ME! FOR ME!!
GILLIE, YOU SHITTY, SHIT SHIT

“Twelve Dollars a Day”

LG: HOW MANY ROLLS HAVE YOU BEEN THROUGH THIS WEEK!
BEFORE YOU SPEND MY MONEY TURN THE OTHER CHEEK
YOU’RE RUNNING UP BILLS THAT I REFUSE TO PAY
YOU KNOW WE GOT TO LIVE ON \$12 DOLLARS A DAY.
YOU BET -

Moe: WELL, SINCE YOU STARTED DOING GOVERNMENT WORK
WE’RE ALWAYS SHORT OF MONEY, YOU TINY HINIED JERK!
YOU HAVE PUT THIS FAMILY THROUGH A LIVING HELL
BUT WITH YOUR PhD YOU COULD HAVE TAUGHT AT CORNELL!
BIG SHOT ROCKET SCIENTIST – REDUCED TO THIS PAY?
YOU KNOW WE CAN’T LIVE ON \$12 DOLLARS A DAY

LG: YOU’RE SPENDING ALL OUR MONEY ON THAT GODDAM PHONE
YOU’RE HANGING BY A THREAD, YOU LARDY, BEARDED CRONE

MOE: MOST OF OUR MONEY GOES TO YOUR WINE AND SMOKES
THOSE CAMELS AND JUGS ARE THE REASON WE’RE BROKE
YOU’RE CHEAP TO THE BONE ABOUT SHARING YOUR PAY

LG/MOE: NOW WE HAVE TO LIVE ON \$12 DOLLARS A DAY

He slaps her across the face and grabs her arms as he hovers over her with his jaw jutting out like Popeye.

LG: IF YOU WANT A FIGHT, I’M JUST ITCHING
HOW ‘BOUT I PUT A PADLOCK AROUND THE KITCHEN?
YOU GOT TO EARN YOUR KEEP IF YOU WANT TO STAY
AND WE ALL GOT TO LIVE ON TWELVE. DOLLARS. A. DAY.

He lets go of her. She slaps him back. He nurses his hurt face – and his hurt feelings.

“Crimanee”

Moe: YOU’VE MADE ME WHAT I AM NOW!
YOU CALL ME YOUR FATTED COW
BUT THAT’S JUST YOUR TWISTED THINKING
ALL BECAUSE OF YOUR WRETCHED DRINKING

LG: CRIMANEE!

MOE: YOU NEED HELP, GILLIE,
IT’S TRUE!
ANY PHYSICIST WILL TELL YOU.

OH, THE PAIN THAT I ENDURE!
BUT WE'LL HIRE THE BEST FOR YOUR CURE
DOCS FROM HARVARD, OR MAYBE FROM YALE
EXPERTS ON DRINKING, WHO WON'T LET YOU FAIL,
SHRINKS YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE AGAIN AND AGAIN
LIKE A SECOND RATE QUACK FROM PENN

NOTHING BUT THE BEST FOR GILLIE, YOU KNOW -

LG: HOLY GAMOLE, GEE MANEE MOE!

Moe: YOU SEE WHAT I GO THROUGH?
ALL THE HARD WORK I DO
ALL MY CALLS OVER TOWN
JUST TO PRAY FOR YOU!
OH, WOE TO MOE,
'CAUSE WHEN YOU MARRIED ME
YOU MARTYRED ME

LG: ALRIGHT, GEEZ, CRIMANEE.
I'LL GO BUY THE HINEY PAPER...

Moe: AND YOU OWE ME ANOTHER FAVOR –
BUY ME SOME KOTEX!

LG: YES, I KNOW, THE KO-

Moe: *NEXT*
DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD BE
GOOD TO DRIVE TO BIG T
TO PICK UP A JUG
FOR YOUR ALCOHOL BUG?
YES, YES, OF COURSE, LORD GILLIE
SO BRILLIANT WITH YOUR PhD!
THERE'S SO MUCH IN YOUR GENIUS MIND
YOU DESERVE TO BE WINED
AND I DESERVE TO BE DINED
SO PICK UP YOUR SPIRITS AND ALSO YOUR EGG NOG
AND WHILE YOU'RE THERE, GO OVER TO DANDY DOGS
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO
IS TO GO THROUGH THE DRIVE-THRU

LG: YEAH, I'M SURE THEY REMEMBER YOU:
TWO CORN DOGS, A CHILI, AND A KRAUT -

Moe: ALSO WHILE YOU'RE OUT, I WANT SOMETHING SUGAR-FREE

A DRINK WITH NO CALORIES...
MAYBE A FRESCA, NO MAKE IT A TAB
WE'LL NEED A SUPPLY, IN CASE YOU END UP IN RE-HAB
SO JUST GRAB ME FORTY EIGHT CANS,
AND DON'T BE CHEAP AGAIN WITH THOSE KNOCK-OFF BRANDS

LG: ALRIGHT, I'LL BE BACK, WITH YOUR T.P.,
AND CROTCH RAGS FOR YOUR PEE PEE
AND YOUR TONS AND TONS OF SNACKS!
(To himself) AND FOR ME
MORE MUSCATEL
AND TWELVE MORE CAMEL PACKS

Moe: AND BY THE WAY, DEAR, THE BOYS WILL BE HERE TOMORROW!

LG: TOMORROW?! YOU'RE ALWAYS SPRINGING THINGS ON ME LIKE THAT
THAT'S JUST LIKE YOU; EVERYTHING'S ALWAYS JUST OUT OF A HAT!

Moe: OH, AND DEAR, I NEED GRANOLA
AND DON'T FORGET MY DOGS AND COLAS!
AND TURN OFF THAT HORRID VICTROLA!!

The old record reaches the end and keeps spinning, making a rhythmic, but scratchy and noisy loop, as The LG searches for his last disc: an up-tempo number called "**Don't Jump Salty, Daddy.**" He cranks up the old record player and sneaks out of the house through a side exit, amid MOE's yelling and screaming from the bathroom.

Moe: GILLIE! GIL-LIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!

END Part One

(Continued: *Part Two: The Sons are Here*)