

ACT ONE – SCENE 3

New York Street and the exterior of Mrs. Molloy's Hat Shop.

MINNIE FAY enters upstage left carrying a hat box, crosses above the Hat Shop, then around to the front door, tries it. It's locked. As 1ST PASSERBY enters stage left, MINNIE FAY turns to speak to the audience.

MINNIE. (*Babbling a mile a minute throughout*) Oh dear, oh my, will you look at that, ten o'clock and the shop's not opened yet. (*1ST COUPLE crosses right to left.*) It's all because of that impending marriage, I tell you, what marriage? Oh I thought you knew. Why the marriage Mrs. Levi is arranging between Mr. Horace Vandergelder, the well known Yonkers half-a-millionaire and my employer and friend, Mrs. Irene Molloy. (*ERNESTINE crosses right to left*) ...although if you ask me he'll never take the place of her late husband, Mr. Peter Molloy may he rest in peace wherever he is I'm not sure — he was a caution you know! Oh it's all too much what with late husband's and new marriages and on top of everything else ... (*2ND COUPLE crosses left to right*) Miss Mortimer returning this hat for the third time! Same old story, she wants more cherries and feathers...cherries and feathers, to catch a beau I suppose, although if you ask me she'd be better with a nice heavy veil! (*MINNIE exits right and returns*) I told her, ribbons down our back is what we'll be wearing this summer if we want to catch a gentleman's eye, but she'd have none of it! Cherries and feathers she wants, on today of all days, when that poor dear sweet Mrs. Molloy has enough on her mind what with ...

MRS. MOLLOY has entered stage right.

MRS. MOLLOY. With what, Minnie? (*Crosses to the Hat Shop door*)

MINNIE. (*Following MRS. MOLLOY*) With the door! It's stuck.

MRS. MOLLOY. It's stuck? Then push!

The Hat Shop turns around as the side walls of the Hat Shop come on left and right MINNIE & MRS. MOLLOY enter.

MRS. MOLLOY. Whew!

*****START*****

MINNIE. (*Who's evidently been talking throughout*) ... And as I was saying, Mrs. Molloy, I could bite out my tongue

Music fades out.

for the things I've said and the things I'm going to say but as long as I've gone this far I might as well go all the way! Mrs. Molloy ... why ... why ...

MRS. MOLLOY. Say it, Minnie. Why have I decided to marry Horace Vandergelder?

MINNIE. Oh, Mrs. Molloy, I didn't ask you that! I would rather die on the rack than ask you such a personal question! But as long as you did bring it up ...

MRS. MOLLOY. I am marrying Horace Vandergelder for one reason and one reason alone, Minnie! To get away from the millinery business. I hate hats!

MINNIE. Mrs. Molloy!

MRS. MOLLOY. *(Taking a stool out of a cupboard)* And I can no longer stand being suspected of being a wicked woman with nothing to show for it.

MINNIE. *(Getting the hat box)* Oh, Mrs. Molloy!

MRS. MOLLOY. Don't protest, Minnie! All millineresses are suspected of being wicked women. That's why I can't go into restaurants or balls or theaters — that's all the proof they'd need! Take my word for it, Minnie — either I marry Horace Vandergelder or I break out of this place like a fire engine! *(Pointing to the hat box)* Oh no, not Miss Mortimer again?

MINNIE. Miss Mortimer. I'll take care of it. *(Starting right with the hat box)*

MRS. MOLLOY. No, Minnie, leave it be! You can make another hat for Miss Mortimer if you like. I'm wearing this one myself. *(Takes the hat box)*

MINNIE. Mrs. Molloy, you can't! You're a widow and that hat... well, it's ... it's provocative, that's what!

MRS. MOLLOY. It is, Minnie?

MRS. MOLLOY *removes the hat from its box. Music starts.*

No. 5 Ribbons Down My Back

(Mrs. Molloy)

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MRS. MOLLOY. *(Continued, over music)* Well, who knows who may walk into the shop today ... and provocative may be just what I want to be!

Minnie. *(Shocked, exiting right)* Mrs. Molloy!

*****END*****

MRS. MOLLOY.

I'll be wearing ribbons down my back
This summer.
Blue and green and streaming in the yellow sky.
So if someone special comes my way,
This summer,
He might notice me passing by.

And so I'll try to make it easier to find me
In the stillness of July,
Because a breeze might stir a rainbow up behind me