

BABY KINTYRE
A CBC Radio Opera Serial
EPISODE ONE: I ONCE WAS LOST

CHARACTERS

Bob, a contractor (tenor)

Jill, his wife (soprano)

(July 24, 2007. 8:00PM. The gutted second floor of a century-old home in East Toronto. Bob, a contractor works on wiring in the ceiling; drilling, moving his ladder and muttering as he pulls on crumbling plaster. From downstairs can be heard the sound of hammering.)

BOB: *(spoken conversation with downstairs worker)* Mark! Mark...yeah, shut off the power...on the second floor...shut it ALL off. I'm starting on the wiring...the ceiling's a friggin' mess...what? Yeah, it's eight, you can take off. See you in the morning, buddy.

(sung) These old houses hold on to their secrets
...and their wiring.
Lathe and plaster may crack
but it never goes clean.
Come on...let go...!
Buried knobs and hidden tubes
make a renovator's life...
...son of a bitch...
hell.

I've fixed a hundred houses,
seen a thousand broken walls and ceilings,
but every single one is different,
every single one takes a different trick.
You never know what's beneath
'til you get your hands dirty.

Still you gotta admire the builders, right.
They did things differently back then.
"They don't make 'em like they used to",
What they did was meant to last forever.
You gotta admire them.
They gave this house good bones.

(We hear sounds of crumbling and exertion as Bob pulls down the wiring from the ceiling. His cell phone rings three times. He climbs down the ladder and answers.)

Yeah, it's Bob...hey sweetheart, I'm almost done for the night...yeah, just a bit more electrical...hold on, I'll put you on speaker, I gotta keep working.

(With a beep, he turns the phone to "speaker".)

JILL: Did you pick up diapers?

BOB: Diapers?

JILL: And the baby wipes?

BOB: Baby wipes?

JILL: Well, did you?

BOB: Do you already know the answer or are you trying to trap me?

JILL: Maybe neither, maybe both. Where are the wipes?

BOB: They're with the diapers.

JILL: And where are the diapers?

BOB: Uh...at the store.

JILL: Uh-hunh.

BOB: I'll pick them up on the way home.

JILL: Thank you. How's it going?

(Bob gets back to work, sounds resume.)

BOB: Not easy. The ceiling is really a mess. I'm gonna be a longer than I thought.

JILL: Take your time, hon. Better safe than...

BOB: Hey.

JILL: What?

BOB: There's something here. Stuffed between the ceiling and the floor upstairs.

JILL: What do you mean 'something'?

BOB: Like a bundle...wrapped up in a comforter.
It looks old...just let me (*sound of exertion*). Got it.

JILL: Hey, maybe it's...

BOTH: A million bucks...

BOB: Yeah, that's what I was thinking.
Maybe I'll be home early after all.

JILL: (*joking*) Don't forget the diapers.

BOB: Let me cut the strings here. (*He does*)

JILL: This is exciting, Bob.

BOB: Hey cool, there's a newspaper inside.
Jeez...September 15, 1925.

JILL: That is old. Quick, open it, open it!

BOB: Hold on, gimme a sec. I don't want to rip it...
There it goes...

JILL: We're gonna be rich.

BOB: Whew, it smells...it smells like...
Oh god...oh, no.
No, no, no!

JILL: Bob, sweetheart, what is it?

BOB: Ten tiny fingers.
Ten tiny toes.
He should be laughing,
crying,
playing.
He should be reaching for a hug,
a little snuggle.
But he's silent

cold
hollow.

JILL: Bob, talk to me!

BOB: It's a baby!

(He throws his head gear and crashes are heard.)

JILL: Bob, you're not making any sense.
Talk to me!

BOB: What else can I say?
What else can I do?
It's a dried up, thrown away baby
Like an old leather glove, or a burnt up doll.
A cold and lonely lifeless, abandoned baby.

You bastards...you sons of a bitch!

Who the hell did this?
A baby stuffed in a ceiling.
No, no, NO!
You murderers, murderers!
Murderers.

JILL: Bob....Bob? I'm going to hang up...
I'm going to call the police.
Just stay calm, please...
I love you.

BOB: Murderers.

(We hear a montage of sound clips which weave in and out of one another: CBC News clips covering the story (A grisly discover today in an East Toronto home...), a police siren and Bob muttering to himself. It ends with Bob's final exclamation.)

BOB: Who the hell did this?

END OF EPISODE ONE