

Carousel

THE STORY OF THE PLAY

CAROUSEL unfolds a strange and beautiful love story, told in unforgettable songs from the hearts and pens of Rodgers and Hammerstein. Lovers walk the rocky Maine shores, sailors sing of the sea, townsfolk gather for a gay clam-bake, and life and death are viewed in a typically New England environment.

The time is 1873 - the place, a small town on the coast of Maine. Billy Bigelow, handsome and proud barker for the carousel in the local amusement park, and Julie Jordan, a lovely young girl who works in a factory, fall in love and go off together, though it costs them both their jobs.

When they return after their marriage, Billy is unable to get work and gets into bad company; he refuses at first to join in the first clam-bake of the season, a June festivity. The news that Julie is expecting a baby makes him change his mind and his unsavoury pal, Jigger, seizes the opportunity to use it in providing an alibi for a robbery he is planning. Billy is desperate and bitter and finally agrees to take part. The robbery goes awry and Billy stabs himself while trying to avoid capture, and dies.

Fifteen years later Billy, looking down from heaven, learns that his child is a girl and that she is unhappy through the taunts of her schoolfellows. He returns to earth for a day, makes himself visible to his daughter and gives her a star. This star, together with Billy's fatherly advice, brings the girl new joy and hope. Billy, satisfied that he has at last done something good for his child, returns to heaven.