

Albert Herring synopsis

The setting of our production is 1935, the year of the Silver Jubilee of King George V.

In the town of Loxford Lady Billows gathers some of the town's leading citizens to choose a young woman to be crowned the Queen of the May. The good names of each of the girls suggested are found morally wanting by Florence, Lady Billow's housekeeper ~

*"Except she went
with her cousin from Kent
for a trip in a dog-cart one Sunday in Lent"*

The gathering becomes despondent until Police Superintendent Budd wonders if the green grocer's son, Albert Herring, might be a suitable candidate to be King of the May.

At the greengrocers the butcher's assistant Sid tries to lure Albert away from the steadfast path of honor and virtue with ideas of

*"Tickling a trout,
Poaching a hare,
Flighting wild geese
Is pretty good sport
For a chap to enjoy".*

Sid and his girlfriend Nancy depart, leaving Albert to wonder if Sid's chiding holds any truth. Florence's arrival at the shop announcing that Lady B and her entourage are on their way sends Albert and his mother into a state, which is heightened by the news that he has been chosen as the King of the May ~

*"In honour of your pure, virtuous life.
Reward for chastity!
Official recognition of your modesty"!*

Albert pushes back against the idea, but his mother, as always, takes control of the situation and demands that her son accept the honor, and the 25 gold sovereigns being offered by Lady Billows.

On the morning of the May Day celebration Sid and Nancy, as a joke, lace Albert's lemonade with rum. As the May Day Coronation proceeds Albert drinks two full glasses and, without knowing what is happening to him, quickly begins to show signs of enjoying the lemonade's effect.

Back at the greengrocery later that evening Albert returns home still tipsy from the afternoon's celebration.

He overhears Sid and Nancy speaking about him ~

*"It does seem wrong
Showing him off to everyone,*

*Like a sort of plaster saint,
Or the village simpleton”.*

and decides to take matters into his own hands.

Flipping a coin to decide yes or no seals his determination and he heads off for an evening of adventure.

The next morning the town is distraught that Albert has vanished and is assumed dead.

As they mourn the loss of him ~

*“That one so fine,
Should live in vain,
And die so young”.*

Albert returns and proceeds to tell Lady B, her entourage, Sid, Nancy and his mother that his adventures

*“Of a night that was a nightmare example,
Of drunkenness, dirt and worse.”*

(which he did not particularly enjoy, but had to be done) have changed him, and that moving forward he will be a different man to the boy they have known.