

ONE DAY MORE

Performed by The Incorporated Stage Society¹ (London) 1905

UNITED KINGDOM

“One Day More: Admirable One-Act Play by Mr. Joseph Conrad,”
Daily Express, 27 June 1905, p. 5; Rpt. Birmingham Gazette &
Express, 27 June 1905, p. 4²

Mr. Joseph Conrad, whose one-act play, “One Day More,” was produced by the Stage Society at the Royalty Theatre³ yesterday afternoon, is a very remarkable personality. ...

The story of “One Day More” is very simple. Two old sea captains live next door to each other in two tiny cottages in a seaport town. One of them is blind, obstinate, and selfish and possesses a daughter whom he has made his slave.

The other, who is equally obstinate, has lost his reason, waiting for his only son, whom he has driven from home, to come back from the sea.

The old man spends all his money buying furniture and getting ready a house for the boy when he comes back – to-morrow – and he has arranged that the daughter of his neighbor shall be his son’s wife.

The boy comes back: his father does not recognise him, and he himself, a full-blooded vagabond, would sooner die than agree to live in the stuffy “rabbit hutch.” So he borrows half a sovereign from the girl, kisses her on

¹ The Incorporated Stage Society was a subscription stage society with limited membership formed in 1899; as such they could avoid the Lord Chamberlain’s office and bypass censorship restrictions. This in turn allowed them to perform many new and innovative plays by prominent playwrights such as George Bernard Shaw (p. 18, note 1), who helped edit *One Day More*, Henrik Ibsen (p. 85, note 1), Gerhart Hauptmann (p. 173, note 4), Anton Chekhov (p. 42, note 1), and the French author and playwright Jean Cocteau (1889–1963). Among the society’s performances were the first showings of plays banned by the Lord Chamberlain. In the 1930s the society fell into abeyance and was succeeded after the Second World War by the English Stage Company.

² This reprint is much abridged.

³ The Royalty Theatre was a small London theatre located in Soho. At the time of the performance of *One Day More*, the theatre was run by Kate Stanley (c.1837–1923). By 1905, it had come to be known for its producing innovative modern dramas.

the lips, and goes cheerfully away, leaving her with her one hope gone – to face the dulness once again.

It is a very simple but magnificently human and admirably written little play, and it may not be unreasonable to hope that it may very soon be seen again. Here, one may suggest, is the opportunity for the music-hall manager who really believes in the artistic possibilities of the variety stage. The acting yesterday was excellent, Miss Constance Collier¹ being particularly good.

“Two New Plays: *One Day More* and *The New Felicity*,” *Daily Mail*, 27 June 1905, p. 5

By far the more interesting of the two new plays presented by the Stage Society at the Royalty Theatre yesterday afternoon was the little one-act drama by Mr. Joseph Conrad, entitled “One Day More.”

Captain Hagberd is a well-to-do, half-crazy old man, whose son Harry has been absent from home sixteen years. Hagberd’s wife has died in the meantime, but the old captain has clung to life in the steadfast belief that his boy will return at last. He has even fixed the day of the return in his own mind, and has stored his cottage with comforts for the truant.

Harry, having seen his father’s advertisement in the newspaper, does come home. But he comes twelve hours too soon, and the old man drives him from the cottage with curses. The curtain falls, leaving us to picture to ourselves the tragedy of the morrow which shall see no fulfilment of the old man’s long-cherished hopes.

Mr. Julian L’Estrange² as the wild, roving fellow who will call no place his home that is narrower than the wide world gave a most admirable performance. Mr. William Farren jun.³ was a little too noisy as the captain. Miss Constance Collier contributed a neat, restrained sketch of the girl who lived next door. ...

¹ Born Laura Constance Hardie (1878–1955), Constance Collier was an English stage and screen actor, performing in numerous roles for more than fifty years.

² Julian L’Estrange was the stage name for Julian Boyle (1880–1918), an English actor who appeared in both stage productions and silent films. He married Constance Collier, with whom he performed *One Day More*, and the couple regularly performed together until L’Estrange’s early death of Spanish flu in 1918.

³ William Farren, Jr. (1925–1908) was an English actor who began his career in 1848. His father was a prominent actor, and William Farren, Jr. actively performed on the stage for nearly fifty years. He retired before the turn of the century, and so his performance as Captain Hagberd may have been one of his final roles.