

The Gazing Globe

BY EUGENE PILLOT

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EUGENE PILLOT

Eugene Pillot, one of the well-known contemporary writers of one-act plays, was born in Houston, Texas. He was educated in the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts, at the University of Texas, at Cornell University, and at Harvard University. While at Harvard, he participated in the activities of The 47 Workshop.

Mr. Pillot's one-act plays are always characterized by excellent and well-sustained technic. Among his best-known one-act plays are *The Gazing Globe*, *Two Crooks and a Lady*, *Telephone Number One* (a prize play), *Hunger*, and *My Lady Dreams*. Mr. Pillot's plays have been produced frequently in schools and Little Theatres of America.

The Gazing Globe originally appeared in *The Stratford Journal*, and was first produced by the Boston Community Players, February 26, 1920, with the following cast: ZAMA, Rosalie Manning; OHANO, Beulah Auerbach; and NIJO, Eugene Pillot. *The Gazing Globe* has unusually sustained tone and dramatic suspense.

CHARACTERS

ZAMA OHANO NIJO

THE GAZING GLOBE[F]

SCENE: *A soft cream-colored room, bare walled and unfurnished except for dull-blue grass mats on the floor and brilliant cushions. In*

the centre of rear wall is a great circular window with a dais before it, so that it may be used as a doorway. A gathered shade of soft blue silk covers the opening of the window.

PLACE: *An island in a southern sea.*

TIME: *Not so long ago.*

[The curtain rises on an empty stage. ZAMA, an old servant woman dressed in dull purples and grays, hurries in from the right. She stops at centre stage and glances about searchingly, then calls in a weazen voice.

ZAMA. Ohano--Ohano! Where do you be, child?

[Listens, looks about, sees drawn shade at the rear, and sighs as she goes to it and starts to raise it.

[As the shade rolls out of sight we see through the open window a bit of quaint cliff garden that overlooks a sea of green. The rocks are higher on the left, near the window, where a purple-pink vine in full blossom has started to climb. At the right the rocks slope down to the sea. At centre, stone steps lead up to a slender stone pedestal that holds a gazing globe, now a brilliant gold in the late afternoon sunlight. OHANO, with hands clasped round the globe, is gazing at it. She is a woman of the early twenties, beautiful and gowned in a flowing kimono-like robe of green with embroideries of white and blue.

ZAMA. *[In a chiding, motherly way.]* Ohano, my child, you must not be so much at that evil ball! How many times be I not telling you it is an *enchanted* ball?

OHANO. Yes, Zama, I hope it is enchanted. I've tried every other means to gain the way to my heart's desire--and they've all failed me. The story these islanders have woven round this gazing globe may be but a myth--but if it shows me the way to my freedom, I shall not have looked at it in vain.

ZAMA. Be you forgetting, child, 'tis said that evil ball shows only the way to destruction!

OHANO. Yes, these island people will create any myth, go any length, to keep one thinking, living in their narrow way. You are destined for evil if you try to follow the urge of your own heart--oh, yes, I know.

ZAMA. But *your* heart, child, should only be wanting the love of Nijo.

OHANO. Nijo--I am hoping that he will be big enough to help me--but my lover has been away so long----

ZAMA. But to-day he be coming back--I came to tell you I think I saw his boat----

OHANO. Nijo's boat? Where?

ZAMA. It be near the edge of the island just where----

OHANO. Why didn't you tell me before?

ZAMA. I came to--but I be forgetting when I see you at that evil ball again.

OHANO. [*All eagerness.*] Perhaps we can see him land--from here on the rocks--come, Zama, I hear the sound of voices down near the sea--come! [*They climb to the highest rock.*] Look, Zama, the boat is there! Already there in the green water against the shore!

ZAMA. It do seem to be so. [*Peers toward right.*

OHANO. And *there*--is Nijo!

ZAMA. Where, where, child?

OHANO. There--see, he's just coming ashore--oh, Nijo! And look, Zama, look what the people crowding round him have done--look!

ZAMA. What? My poor eyes be yet uncertain. What do they be doing to your lover?

OHANO. They have put upon him the Robe of Flame--to greet him with the highest honor of the island.

ZAMA. So they be. The robe they say the gods themselves did wear when time did first begin. Nijo must come back a great warrior now-- a great warrior!

OHANO. Oh, how wonderful to return from the wars like that! Zama, I want to--I *must* go out into the world and do great things too, like Nijo.

ZAMA. Nijo be coming back, child. That do be enough. Look, what is it that glitters so in the sun?

OHANO. Why, they are giving something to my red god--something that's long as a serpent moon--see, he holds it out in admiration, before him. Just what can it be?

ZAMA. In faith I do believe they have given your hero--a sword!

OHANO. A marvellous sword--look, its jewels flash with the shifting lights, warm as the colored rifts of sunset!

ZAMA. Such gems do be a tribute to his greatness, Ohano, they do.

OHANO. How gladly would I have the way I seek without such tribute--how willingly!

ZAMA. And now the crowd do be parting--he leaves the boat and he looks this way, Ohano--he looks!

OHANO. Nijo, my red wonder of the world!

ZAMA. See, he mounts his steed--he waves to you!

OHANO. Nijo! Nijo!

ZAMA. And now he rides off to come to you here. It is better we be waiting inside for him--when he brings back his love to his promised bride.

OHANO. [*As they enter room.*] Ah, Zama, he must bring me more than love this time--much more. Yes, your little Ohano must have more in her life to-day than just love--and Nijo must show her the way to that realm where she may stretch her soul and *live!*

ZAMA. The love of so great a man do be enough for any woman, child.

OHANO. Oh, no--oh, no----

ZAMA. But it do be; and evil will fall, I know, if you do be asking more than love!

OHANO. But I tell you, Nijo's love is not enough. I must have a bigger, greater thing!

ZAMA. The gods do know of none that be more than love.

OHANO. But there must be, else why would I feel the rush of its pulse within my veins? Why would my whole being cry out for action and the glory of doing big things in the lands across the sea? Why, tell me why, I would feel those things if they were not so?

ZAMA. It be not for me to say, child; but I do be thinking you moon at that evil ball too much. It do make your sight grow red! It be not wise to know an enchanted thing so well.

OHANO. If that gazing globe in the garden would only show me the way to my heart's desire, how gladly would I be the victim of its enchantment!

ZAMA. Nijo's kiss do be your enchantment, child. One touch of his lips and you do be forgetting all else.

OHANO. If Nijo's kiss can make me forget this fever within me, I want his kiss as I shall never want anything else in all of this life. I want it!!

[Approaching horse's hoofs are heard from off right.]

ZAMA. Listen--the horse! Ohano, your lover do be coming!

OHANO. *[Running to the window.]* Already? He must have taken the short way through the cliffs.

ZAMA. Ah, child, do you not be excited as a bird in a storm-wind's blow?

OHANO. *[Superbly, as she leans against window.]* Yes, I await my hero!

ZAMA. He's stopped, child! He do be here! At last he comes back to my little Ohano!

OHANO. My hope comes! *[With outstretched arms to right.]* My Nijo!! Oh----!

[She had impulsively started to greet NIJO, but suddenly shrinks back.]

ZAMA. What do be wrong--what?

OHANO. He's so different--so changed--oh, here he is--ssh!

[NIJO appears at the window, where he pauses for a moment. He is a tall, brunette man, scarcely thirty--a handsome, well-knit southern island type, wearing a flowing robe of flame, with a flaring collar of old-gold brocade. A peaked hat completes the costume. A curved sword, with a hilt thickly studded with large jewels and incased in gold, hangs at his belt. He seems worldly weary and sad as he advances into the room.]

OHANO. Nijo!

NIJO. *[Unimpassioned.]* Ohano.

OHANO. [*Eagerly.*] You have come back!

NIJO. Yes--and the season of the heat has been gracious to your health, I hope?

OHANO. Yes--and yours, Nijo?

NIJO. The same.

OHANO. Oh, I am glad--glad as tree-blossoms for the kiss of spring. And Zama here shares my welcome, don't you?

NIJO. [*Recognizing ZAMA.*] Ah, Zama.

ZAMA. [*Bowing before him.*] The gods do be kind to bring back a hero to us.

NIJO. Thank you.

ZAMA. Now I do be going for refreshments for your weariness; great it must be after so long a voyage. [*Exits right.*]

OHANO. Shall we not sit here?

NIJO. As you will.

[*OHANO and NIJO sit upon mats near the window, partly facing each other.*]

OHANO. They--they gave you a sword at the boat.

NIJO. [*Wearily.*] Oh, yes.

OHANO. Even from up here we could see its jewels flash.

NIJO. [*Without interest.*] Yes, it is cunningly conceived.

OHANO. How wonderful it must be. Perhaps--I may see it?

NIJO. [*Still wearily.*] If you so desire.

[*Unbuckles sword and holds it before himself for her to examine. She leans over it admiringly, touching the jewels as she speaks of them.*]

OHANO. Magnificent! Rubies and emeralds and sapphires! And here are moonstones and diamonds. How you must prize it.

NIJO. [*Wearily.*] Of course, one must.

OHANO. And the very people who tried to stop you from going across the sea to win your glory have given it to you.

NIJO. That is the way of the world.

OHANO. Show me the way to glory, Nijo.

NIJO. And why?

OHANO. I would travel it too.

NIJO. You--a simple island maiden?

OHANO. I'm not simple. I've grown beyond the people here.

NIJO. But there is glory in the work women must do at home.

OHANO. And I have done my share of it. I want bigger work now--out in the world.

NIJO. But the simple tasks must be done.

OHANO. I am sick unto death of doing them!

NIJO. But you can't go into the battles of the world. You are an island woman.

OHANO. This last war has made all women free. If the other island women cling to the everlasting tradition that woman should not go

beyond her native hearth, let them cling. I shall reach the summit of things and know the glory of doing big things in the world!

NIJO. But you--sheltered, protected all your life--how can you do it?

OHANO. That's what troubles me. But you were fettered by this island life and you broke through the bars of convention. How did *you* do it?

NIJO. [*Sadly.*] Ohano, I would not spoil your life by telling you.

OHANO. Spoil it? What do you think is happening to it now? Oh, Nijo, can't you understand I'm stagnating--*dying* in this commonplace island life.

NIJO. I thought that about myself, too, when I started my climb to glory; but scarcely a moon had passed before I realized the loneliness of great heights.

OHANO. [*Tigerishly.*] Are you trying to turn me from my wish--to have all the island's glory for yourself?

NIJO. No, but only the valley people enjoy the sublimity of a mountain.

OHANO. [*Scornfully.*] Ha!

NIJO. Those who reach the top have lost their perspective. All they see are the lonely tops of other mountains.

OHANO. [*Sublimely.*] But they've had the joy of the climb!

NIJO. And worth what--no more than the mist of the sea.

OHANO. Do you think that satisfies me? I want to find out for myself! I only want you to tell me the way to use this spirit that boils within my blood, thirsts for action!

NIJO. That I never will.

OHANO. Oh, what shall I do? I've even implored the sun and the moon! [*Looks toward sea.*] Now I *must* listen to my dreams--my dreams that cry and cry: "Look in the gazing globe! Look in the gazing globe! It will show you the way!" And if it ever does, I'll take that path *no matter where it leads*.

NIJO. My journey only made me want to come back to the haven of your love, Ohano. The amber cup of glory left me athirst to be wrapped in the mantle of your boundless love and warmed with the glow of your heart.

OHANO. [*Surprised.*] Your journey has really led you back to me?

NIJO. [*Sadly.*] You're my only hope. I've been as mad for you as the sea for the moonlight.

OHANO. [*Disturbed.*] But you had fire and impulse when you went away; and now--well, you do still yearn for me?

NIJO. [*Quietly, without passion.*] The hope for your love has been the light of my brain, changing from life to dream, from earth to star.

OHANO. My thirst for glory has been that way; but Zama tells me it is as nothing in the kiss of love. If love has that power, I am willing to forget all else. Kiss me, Nijo!

NIJO. At last my lips will press yours, as the sun flames to an immortal moment when it meets the sky.

[*Kneeling opposite each other, their lips meet. OHANO instantly gives a piercing scream and recoils from him. NIJO sinks into a heap.*]

OHANO. [*Rising and turning toward the sea, weeping.*] Oh, oh, oh!

ZAMA. [*Rushing in from right.*] What is it? What is it, Ohano?

OHANO. [*Still weeping.*] Oh--ooh.

ZAMA. What do it be, my little Ohano?

OHANO. [*Turning.*] His kiss--Nijo's kiss!

ZAMA. Yes?

OHANO. Cold as white marble--*cold!*

ZAMA. Cold as white marble?

OHANO. Oh, Nijo, why do you kiss me like a thing of stone?

NIJO. [*As he looks up, pitifully.*] Into that kiss I tried to put all the love I've thought these many years.

OHANO. The love you've *thought?*

NIJO. [*Despondently.*] Yes, I've only thought it--*thought* it!

OHANO. But your heart----?

NIJO. [*Rising.*] My heart feels no more! Only my head thinks.

ZAMA. You love no more?

NIJO. Only with my head, it seems. I see things, know things, understand things; but I no longer feel anything. And my thirst for glory has done it all--killed my love of life and turned my very kiss to stone. Oh, glory, why do men give the essence of their lives to you--you who last no longer than the glow of gold above the place of sunset!

OHANO. [*Superbly.*] Because glory gives you the world--everything!

NIJO. It takes everything away--strips you--and leaves you nothing to believe. Oh, I could have become a common soldier here, marching shoulder to shoulder with the island men going out to war--but no--I must be a great warrior, a hero in position. Had I known then what I know now, how gladly would I have gone as one of the thousands who are known as--just soldiers. They are the ones who know the throb of life and love!

OHANO. You bring back such a message to me? You who have climbed and climbed to heights till I have believed you to be as constant in your quest as the light that shines upon the gazing globe?

NIJO. I--a light?

OHANO. Why not? I've always likened your feet unto the disks of two luminaries, lighting the way for all the world to follow. [*Looks at gazing globe, which is now a ball of gold against the black sea and sky.*] And now you tell me I was wrong. Perhaps the light upon the gazing globe itself is the only one to follow.

NIJO. I--a light? Why, Ohano, if I'm anything, I'm a gazing globe!

OHANO. What do you mean--you a gazing globe?

NIJO. That without I'm all fair, all wonderful--but within I'm empty as a gazing globe.

OHANO. [*Scornfully.*] But a gazing globe shows men the way to their heart's desire.

NIJO. It reflects to men what they see into it. So does glory.

OHANO. I can't believe that--now.

NIJO. Behold what it has done to me! Already as a child I gazed at that globe, longing to grasp the glory of which it was a symbol. It filled me with a red madness, surged with an unbearable music, giving me a riotous pain! Oh, it made me drunk for the wine of glory!

OHANO. I know! I know! Now you talk as the man I thought you were.

NIJO. I'm not a man. I'm dead.

OHANO. But you have known the glory of life. Shall I never know the way to it? [*Appealingly, to the globe.*] The way--the way is what I seek!

ZAMA. Look not so upon the evil ball, child. It do be enchanted for one thousand years! [OHANO *moves nearer the globe.*] Go not so near, child! Evil will fall--and you will be enslaved!

OHANO. What care I, if it shows me the way? [*Hands outstretched to the globe.*]

ZAMA. [*Appealingly to NIJO.*] Sir, I pray you do be stopping her. She do be always gazing at that golden ball; and slowly it do be drawing her within its enchanted grasp. And it do be an enchanted ball!

NIJO. Perhaps there's more to its enchantment than I thought. It claimed me for a victim--and now it's freezing her life's warmth to the falseness of Orient pearl.

OHANO. [*Murmuring to the globe.*] The way--the way! I must have the way!

NIJO. [*Swiftly drawing his sword.*] I will not show you--but I'll save you! [*Starts toward the gazing globe.*]

ZAMA. [*Barring his path.*] Nijo, sir, what do you be doing?

NIJO. [*With a flourish of his sword.*] I kill the thing that freezes another heart!

ZAMA. That do mean ruin! It be an enchanted ball!

NIJO. [*Brushing past ZAMA.*] It will enchant no longer!!

OHANO. No! No, Nijo!

NIJO. [*Running up pedestal steps.*] Yes!!

[*With a mighty blow he strikes the gazing globe with his sword. Frightened, OHANO shrinks to one side, facing right, as a thunder-like crash follows the blow, and pieces of the globe tumble to the ground--all but one piece that remains upon the pedestal. Then from a*

moon off stage right shines a straight golden path across the sea to the bit of gazing globe on the pedestal.

OHANO. [*Triumphantly.*] The moon--The way! At last the way!
From the gazing globe--the golden path to the moon of glory. Now I
am free!

[Rushes wildly down the moonlight path to the sea.

ZAMA. Stop her!

NIJO. No, it is better to let her go.

ZAMA. But the path do lead into the sea. It is death! Stop her!! [*Starts forward.*

NIJO. [*Restraining ZAMA.*] No! In death her soul has found the only
way!

CURTAIN