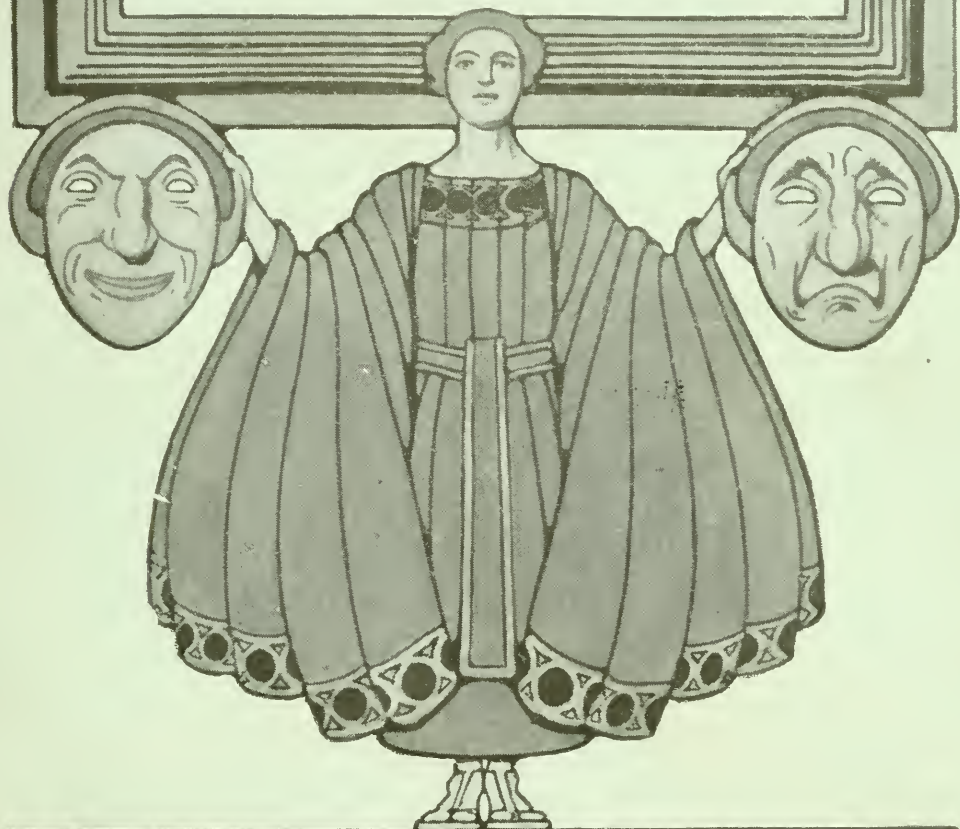


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Buying a Suit for Jimmy

Anne M. Palmer



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THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

Buying a Suit for Jimmy

A Comedy in One Act

By

ANNE M. PALMER



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PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
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Buying a Suit for Jimmy

no 1

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Buying a Suit For Jimmy

CHARACTERS

MRS. GOODWIN	-	-	-	-	<i>mother of Jimmy</i>
JIMMY	-	-	-	-	<i>a spoiled boy, always in mischief</i>
CLERK	-	-	-	-	<i>a meek-looking young man</i>
MRS. MASON	-	-	-	-	<i>a friend of Mrs. Goodwin</i>
JANE	-	-	-	-	<i>her small daughter</i>
MISS RANDOLPH	-	-	-	-	<i>Jimmy's Sunday-school teacher</i>
MRS. DUNCAN	-	-	-	-	<i>a friend of Mrs. Goodwin</i>
ALICE DUNCAN	-	-	-	-	<i>her young-lady daughter</i>
BERTIE	-	-	-	-	<i>her son</i>

TIME OF PLAYING.—Half an hour.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Mrs. Goodwin brings her son, Jimmy, to a clothing store and is attempting to buy him a new suit. "I don't want no new clothes. I want to play ball with the kids!" The clerk becomes utterly exhausted. During their stay in the store various characters come in. Jimmy and Bertie start to fight. "I didn't start it!" Jimmy wants a blue suit with brass buttons. "Well, you can't have it!" Jimmy is quite satisfied when the clerk discovers they have no blue suit in Jimmy's size and his mother refuses to buy any. "I have spent the entire afternoon here, and no suit bought yet!"

COSTUMES, ETC.

MRS. GOODWIN. A woman of about thirty-five. Wears street suit and hat on entrance. Carries hand-bag.

JIMMY. About ten. Wears gray suit and cap. The part may be taken by an older person, if not too tall.

CLERK. About twenty-five. Street suit.

MRS. MASON. A woman about thirty-four. Rather gaudily dressed in street suit, and over-trimmed hat.

JANE. A self-assertive youngster of eleven. Wears hat and coat on entrance.

MISS RANDOLPH. A nice looking girl of about twenty-one. Wears sensible hat and walking-suit.

MRS. DUNCAN. A well-dressed woman of forty. Wears black street suit and black hat.

ALICE. About nineteen. She also is dressed quietly, in good taste, in a dark suit and hat.

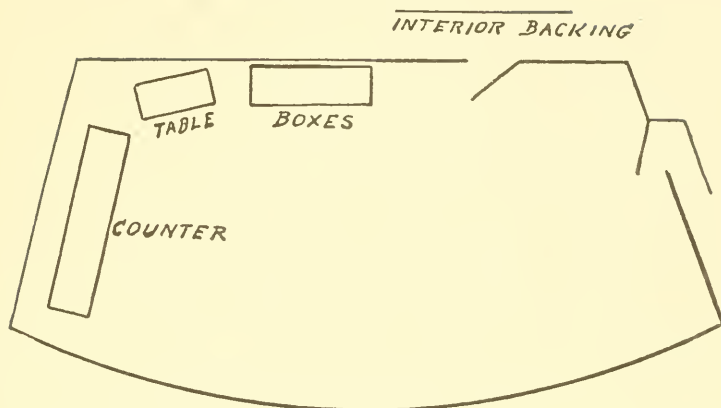
BERTIE. A boy about ten. Wears dark suit and cap.

PROPERTIES

A package for Clerk.

A pile of wooden or paper boxes, and a pile of hats on table, for Jimmy to knock over.

SCENE PLOT



There is only one scene, and this represents the interior of a clothing store. The arrangements may be as simple or as elaborate as desired. On a long counter, R., are piles of clothing, ties, etc. Up L. C. there is a door marked "PRIVATE." Up R., a table piled with hats, and up C. is a large pile of boxes. The effectiveness of the play is greatly enhanced by the realistic appearance of the scenery, and posters, advertisements, etc., should be hung on the walls while necktie racks, collar boxes, etc., may be on the counter. Local storekeepers may furnish goods in return for a notice on the program.

Buying a Suit for Jimmy

SCENE.—*A clothing store.*

(*Discovered: CLERK behind counter, R., arranging piles of clothing on counter. Enter MRS. GOODWIN and JIMMY, up L., the latter dragging along unwillingly. They come down R. to counter.*)

CLERK (*behind counter with ingratiating manner*). Good-day, Madam! Pleasant day, is it not? Hello, sonny!

(*Reaches over the counter and attempts to chuck JIMMY under the chin.*)

JIMMY (*stepping back c. and hitting away CLERK's hand*). Leave me alone! My name ain't "Sonny"!

MRS. GOODWIN (*down R., looking at JIMMY reproachfully*). Why, Jimmy! How very rude! (*Turns to CLERK apologetically.*) I never knew him to be impolite before! I can't think why he acts so. He has been sullen and ill-tempered ever since we left home, and I presume it is because he dislikes shopping. He is usually a very pleasant boy.

CLERK (*smiling*). He meant no harm, I'm sure. And now, Madam, what can I do for you?

(*JIMMY starts on tiptoe for door up L.*)

MRS. GOODWIN. I wish to look at a suit for —— (*Turns to find JIMMY gone.*) Jimmy, where are you? (*JIMMY is about to make his escape.*) Come back here! (*She dashes after him, up L., grabs him*

by the arm and leads him back R.) What do you mean by trying to run away?

JIMMY (*R. C., squirming*). Ouch! You're pinching my arm! Let go of me! I don't want no new clothes! I want to go play ball with the kids!

MRS. GOODWIN (*R., dragging him after her*). Come along this instant! I am heartily ashamed of you! As for playing with the boys—I sometimes think you would behave better if you never played with them! Play ball, indeed! That's all I hear from you the live-long day!

JIMMY (*whining*). Well, I'm—I'm—pitcher, and they can't play without me, and—and—it'll spoil the whole game!

MRS. GOODWIN (*relentlessly*). It'll have to be spoiled, then! But I guess they'll manage to get along without you. They'll have to this afternoon, at any rate. You must have some new clothes, and Saturday is the only time we have for buying them. You need them badly. Why, you look positively disreputable! (*Begins talking coaxingly.*) Now, Jimmy, you know you want to look nice and neat. And this is to be such a splendid suit, too! You can't help but like it! Any boy would be glad to have a suit with pockets and pockets and pockets in it, wouldn't he? And this is to have a great many!

JIMMY (*C., brightening up a trifle*). How many?

MRS. GOODWIN (*R. C., impatiently*). How should I know exactly how many pockets there are in a boy's suit? There will be plenty! You really shouldn't have any, I suppose, the way yours are always filled with rubbish!

(Walks R. to counter and examines suits.)

CLERK (*trying to make the situation more pleasant*). Oh, boys must have pockets! You wish to buy a suit for him, Madam? How old is he?

JIMMY (*interrupting*). Will there be as many as Pete Jones has?

MRS. GOODWIN (*turning abstractedly from examining suits on the counter*). As many what?

JIMMY. Pockets!

MRS. GOODWIN (*in exasperated tones*). Pockets! Are you still harping on that? What on earth do I know about the Jones boy's pockets? Don't let me even hear the word pocket again or I'll buy you a suit without a single one in it!

JIMMY (*c., muttering in low tones*). You can't find one!

MRS. GOODWIN (*grasping his arm*). What's that you're saying? (JIMMY *maintains a discreet silence*.) Don't you dare to be impudent to me! (*Drops his arm and turns to CLERK.*) He is eleven years old, but small for his age, so perhaps —

JIMMY (*interrupting sullenly*). I ain't goin' to have no little ten-year-old suit, so I ain't! I'm always getting things too small for me! And I'm as big as any boy of my age, too! I won't wear it, so I won't!

MRS. GOODWIN (*giving him a slight shake*). Hush, Jimmy! Don't talk to me like that! You will wear exactly what I choose to buy for you! You are a naughty boy and very hard to please. Most boys would be glad of your chance to have nice, new clothes.

JIMMY (*sullenly, walking down R. to counter*). Let 'em, then! Why don't you buy suits for the kids that want 'em, instead of for me, and let me go play ball?

MRS. GOODWIN (*in aggrieved tones*). For shame, Jimmy! You are an ungrateful boy! (*He stands scratching against the counter with his foot.*) Don't dig your foot against the counter! Can't you see you are taking off all the paint?

(JIMMY *desists and stands down R., sullenly.*)

CLERK (*patiently*). What sort of a suit do you wish to look at, Madam? Here are some splendid bargains at \$9.98—regular \$12.50 suits that we are putting on sale to-day.

MRS. GOODWIN (*R., at counter*). Perhaps one of them will do. I want something suitable for school. His clothes must be of a color that won't show dirt easily. And they must be strong! I never knew anything to wear out as fast as his trousers do! He's had

that suit only a short time and just look at it! It isn't fit to be seen! I want something —— (JIMMY *tries to hide at end of counter.*) Jimmy! Stay where you are! (To CLERK.) Something that will wear —— (Turns to find JIMMY *sneaking behind counter.*) Come out from behind that counter! What on earth possesses you? What do you mean by prowling into such places? You know you are not allowed to go there!

(JIMMY *comes out reluctantly.*)

CLERK. You want a good, practical, every-day suit, I presume. Something rather heavy?

MRS. GOODWIN. Yes; something with a double seat and double —— (Turns to see JIMMY *pulling and hauling at a pile of suits farther down the counter.*) Jimmy! Stop pulling over all those clothes! They are men's sizes and nothing you will want!

(JIMMY *stops.*)

CLERK (*wearily rearranging the pile*). Have you any preference as to color? (*Looks over pile of boys' suits on counter.*) How about this brown mixture? (*Holds up a brown suit.*) It is very popular just at present.

MRS. GOODWIN (*emphatically*). It may be popular, but it would never do for Jimmy! Nothing in brown for him! You see, he has freckles, and brown is so unbecoming! Let me see something in gray ——

JIMMY (*down R., interrupting*). There! I knew you'd say that! I always have gray! I don't want it! Let me have a blue suit this time—please! (*Pleadingly.*) One with brass buttons on it!

MRS. GOODWIN (*R., in front of counter, speaking in disgusted tones*). Oh, Jimmy! How ridiculous you are! Who ever heard of a boy wearing a suit with brass buttons! You'd be the laughing-stock of the whole school!

JIMMY (*doggedly*). I don't care if I would! That's what I want, anyway! And I'd just like to see 'em dare to laugh at me!

(*Clenches fists and feels muscle.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*decidedly*). Well, you can't have it! People would think me crazy if I sent you to school decked out like that!

JIMMY (*hopefully, coming down R.*). Can I have the blue suit without the brass buttons then?

MRS. GOODWIN (*impatiently*). How persistent you are! There's nothing as bad as a blue suit for showing every particle of dust and dirt, and goodness knows! your clothes look disreputable enough as it is! No,—it must be gray and there is no use in your sulking over it! (*Picks up a gray suit from counter.*) This seems to be about what I want.

(*Brings it down R., followed by CLERK.*)

CLERK. It is an exceptionally good suit; one of the best we have.

JIMMY (*grabbing at it*). Is there a pocket in the back of the pants?

MRS. GOODWIN (*pulling it away from him*). Yes, there is! Do be quiet, Jimmy! You annoy me when you ask so many questions. (*She examines the suit carefully while JIMMY sulks at one side.*) I wonder if it's all wool?

CLERK (*emphatically*). Yes, Madam, it is!

(*JIMMY begins to slide across L.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*looking at it more closely*). There's a thread here that looks like—— Jimmy, stop that scraping noise this instant! I never saw your beat! Now you come right here by me, sir, and don't you budge! (*JIMMY comes slowly down R. to MRS. GOODWIN.*) If you do, I shall certainly punish you! I should think you would be a little interested in this suit I am buying for you. (*Holds up the coat.*) How do you like this?

(*Attempts to speak with great enthusiasm.*)

JIMMY (*R. C., sullenly*). Don't like it at all! I

told you I didn't want no old gray suit! I don't want any suit!

MRS. GOODWIN. You ought to be ashamed of yourself! You don't deserve a thing in the way of new clothes!

JIMMY (*wrathfully and almost yelling*). Well, I ain't asking for 'em, am I?

MRS. GOODWIN (*shaking him soundly*). Be quiet! Not another word! (*Turns to CLERK.*) If there is one thing I dread it is trying to buy a suit for that boy!

CLERK (*sympathetically*). He does seem hard to satisfy—he surely does!

(JIMMY goes up R. to door marked "Private", and attempts to open it.)

MRS. GOODWIN (*indignantly*). I dare say he's no worse than other boys.

CLERK (*hastily*). Oh, no! No, indeed! I only meant —

MRS. GOODWIN (*interrupting*). Now, where has he gone? (JIMMY *hastily tiptoes across stage R. and stands just behind MRS. GOODWIN.*) Jimmy, where —

JIMMY (*just behind her, speaking so loudly that she starts with alarm*). What is it, ma?

MRS. GOODWIN (*angrily*). Don't yell so! (*Pulls him around beside her. JIMMY grins maliciously.*) Do you think I'm deaf? And don't you move from my side again! Where were you?

JIMMY (R. C., *pointing toward door*). I was trying to get in that door. I wanted to see why it is "Private."

MRS. GOODWIN. The man in there will "private" you if you don't watch out! Stand still and let me try this coat on you. (*She puts it on him and goes up R. to note the effect. JIMMY fidgets from one foot to the other.*) Stand still, Jimmy! I want to see if it is the right size. That looks well, I think.

(Comes down R. to JIMMY.)

CLERK (*down R., at end of counter, rubbing hands together in a pleased way*). It fits splendidly.

MRS. GOODWIN. Turn around, Jimmy. (*He spins about in circles.*) Stop that foolishness! (*He stops so suddenly that she almost falls in trying to catch hold of him.*) Turn around! (*She pulls at back of coat.*) It seems to draw across the shoulders. I believe it is too small.

(*Takes it off and JIMMY slips away up C., where he opens the boxes piled there and looks inside them.*)

CLERK (*obliquely but wearily*). We might try a larger size though I doubt if he can wear it. This may have been a trifle tight.

(*He puts it back on the pile, where it becomes hidden as they search for a larger size and finally locate one.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*looking it over carefully*). This seems immense! Are you sure it is the next size? Jimmy can never wear it! After all, I think we had better try the smaller size again. (*CLERK resignedly hunts it out.*) Try this on, Jimmy! Where is he? (*She rushes to door L., carrying coat.*) Jimmy! (*She sees him up C.*) Oh, there you are! What are you doing? (*Goes to him up C.*)

JIMMY. I was seeing what was in all those boxes.

MRS. GOODWIN (*severely*). Haven't I told you never to meddle with things that don't belong to you? You know very well you have no right to come into this store and tamper with everything you see! Now do come here and try on this coat.

(*Drags him down R. C.*)

JIMMY (*down R. C., petulantly*). I tried it on once! Ain't that enough?

MRS. GOODWIN (*R. C., jerking and pulling him into the coat while he twists and squirms*). No, it isn't! Stand still! You're a regular eel!

JIMMY. I wish I was one! Eels don't have to wear clothes! Why do you jerk me around so?

MRS. GOODWIN. Because you won't be quiet! How can I tell if it fits with you squirming about like that? (*Pulls it this way and that.*) There! That seems all right! Does it feel comfortable?

JIMMY (*hitching in it*). I don't know if it does or not. I like my old coat lots better.

CLERK. I should say that is a splendid fit.

(*Rubs hands together in satisfaction at having suited her at last.*)

MRS. GOODWIN. Stand off a little and let me see how it looks. (*JIMMY walks to the table up R. and begins to examine a pile of hats with the result that they fall to the floor. CLERK hurries to the rescue. MRS. GOODWIN rushes to JIMMY, and hauls him down L.*) Now see what you've done! After this I want you to let things alone! (*Crosses to CLERK as he returns down R.*) I think it is unnecessary to have so many things piled loosely where the slightest touch makes them tumble. (*JIMMY crosses down R. to her. Examines coat again.*) Well, I actually believe this suit is just what I want. (*Turns around as door up L. opens.*) Oh, my goodness! Here come Mrs. Mason and Jane! I declare, I always meet that woman when I have my oldest clothes on! Dear me! Smooth your hair, Jimmy! It looks as though it hadn't been combed for a week! (*As she turns to greet MRS. MASON and JANE, who enter up L., JIMMY runs his fingers through his hair, causing it to stand on end.*) Why, my dear Mrs. Mason! (*Effusively.*) How are you? Fancy seeing you to-day!

(*JANE goes up C.*)

MRS. MASON (*coming down L. C., speaking in a very affected manner*). I am trying to find a suitable tie for Mr. Mason. I always select his ties. He has such poor taste!

MRS. GOODWIN (*C.*). I am buying a suit for

Jimmy, and it surely is a task. I think we have been here for hours! (CLERK *nods head emphatically.*) You know what boys are when it comes to shopping!

(JIMMY, *who is down R., slips off coat and deposits it on counter.*)

MRS. MASON. Indeed I do! And girls as well, though I must say that Jane is usually a well-behaved child.

(*As they talk JIMMY winks an eye at JANE and he and JANE slip out the door up L.*)

MRS. GOODWIN. Jimmy minds very well, too, but he does so hate to try on clothes.

(*Noise of dog howling just outside the door.*)

MRS. MASON (*c., excitedly*). Oh, mercy! I hope no one is hurting my dear little Fido! I left him outside!

MRS. GOODWIN (*R. C.*). Jimmy, run and see what is the matter with —— (*Turns to find him gone.*) He surely hasn't gone out on the street without permission!

MRS. MASON. And where is Jane?

(*Both move toward door up L.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*calling loudly*). Jimmy, what is being done to that dog? (*Turns to MRS. MASON.*) I'm quite sure he is not harming it. He is full of mischief, but he is never mean. (*Enter children, up L.*) What was the matter with that dog?

(*MRS. GOODWIN takes JIMMY'S arm and leads him down L.*)

JIMMY. Somebody pulled his tail.

JANE (*up c., pointing finger at him*). Yes! Somebody!

(MRS. MASON *goes up c., taking JANE with her.*)

JIMMY (*down L., angrily*). You needn't point your old finger at me! I'd like to know if you weren't doing just as much! Tattle-tale!

MRS. GOODWIN (*down L., horrified*). Jimmy! That will do! Never talk that way again! (*Then sorrowfully.*) Jimmy, you surely were not teasing a poor helpless little dog! (*Goes up c. to MRS. MASON. JANE comes down L. to JIMMY.*) I simply can't believe it of him. Why, he loves animals so! And, as I said before, he may be mischievous but he is never mean! He doesn't dream of doing such things when he is alone!

MRS. MASON (*up c., haughtily*). Do you mean to infer that Jane was the cause of it? Why, the child simply worships Fido! (*Turns suddenly and catches children grinning.*) What do you mean, Jane, by laughing behind my back?

JANE (*down L. c., pointing at JIMMY*). He made me!

JIMMY (*down L., hotly*). I did not!

JANE (*nodding head tantalizingly*). Yes, you did!

JIMMY (*fairly shouting*). I did not, I tell you! If you were a fellow I'd punch the stuffing out of you!

(JANE *goes up c. to MRS. MASON.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*rushing down L. and grasping him by the arm in horror*). Jimmy Goodwin! I never heard such talk! Aren't you ashamed of yourself! And to a little girl, too! (*He attempts to speak and she shakes him.*) Not another word! You've said entirely too much already! (*To MRS. MASON.*) I am sorry, Mrs. Mason, if Jimmy has been teasing your dog. He will not do it again, you may be sure. I cannot understand the affair at all. I think the boy hasn't been well lately. Perhaps that accounts for it.

MRS. MASON (*up c.*). Perhaps he isn't well! My John says he eats so many green apples in school. That may be what ails him.

MRS. GOODWIN (*down L., appalled*). Eats green

apples! (*To JIMMY.*) Jimmy! What does this mean? I am certain, Mrs. Mason (*speaking haughtily*), that you must be mistaken. Jimmy, do you eat green apples in school?

JIMMY (*down L. C., doggedly*). No, I don't! It's John Mason himself that eats them!

MRS. GOODWIN (*triumphantly*). I knew my boy wouldn't do such a thing! He knows they would hurt him, don't you, dear?

JIMMY. Sure, I do!.

MRS. MASON (*coming down c., indignantly*). My John told me all about it, and I would as soon believe him as your Jimmy. (*To JIMMY.*) What were you whipped for yesterday?

MRS. GOODWIN (*astounded*). Did the teacher whip you?

JIMMY. Aw! Not very hard! I didn't mind!

JANE (*up L. C.*). You yelled loud enough! She whipped you for eating green apples and throwing the cores at Sally Perkins—you know she did!

JIMMY (*muttering*). Gee! I'll fix you for that! Just you wait!

MRS. GOODWIN (*indignantly*). I certainly shall see the teacher and inquire into this. I am certain Jimmy is not the only one who ate green apples, and I think it is a shame that my poor child should be punished for what other children do! He is not a bad boy and I know he didn't deserve a whipping!

MRS. MASON (*superciliously*). Children are not usually punished by a teacher for nothing! (*Walks R. to counter; to CLERK.*) May I be waited on? I can't stand here all day! Have you anything in a purple tie with small green polka dots?

CLERK. I think not. We have the plain purple, but not —

MRS. MASON (*interrupting emphatically*). I want something with polka dots or nothing at all. It seems to me that any up-to-date store would keep more of an assortment on hand. Come, Jane.

(*They exeunt up L.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*down c.*). Just imagine that red-headed Mr. Mason in a purple tie! Such awful taste as that woman has! (*Turns to JIMMY.*) Why didn't you come home and tell me of the trouble you had at school?

JIMMY (*L. c., sullenly*). Didn't want to!

MRS. GOODWIN (*decidedly*). I shall look into the matter Monday morning. There is no use in talking about it now, and we must get the suit bought. (*Crosses R. to counter.*) I should have had it by this time if that woman hadn't interrupted. (*Picks up coat.*) You'll have to try this on again, Jimmy. (*JIMMY sullenly slouches across stage to MRS. GOODWIN.*) There was something about it that didn't quite please me.

CLERK (*patiently, while JIMMY savagely thrusts an arm into either sleeve*). I think you will find this suit very satisfactory. It is one of our best sellers.

MRS. GOODWIN (*down R., turning JIMMY this way and that*). It is a good-looking suit for the money, and I believe I'll take it. I don't really care for gray, though. He has had so much gray! (*As she stands looking at it thoughtfully a voice is heard off L. and JIMMY suddenly darts behind the counter at the end nearest audience. MRS. GOODWIN follows, drags him out and pulls him down R. c.*) What on earth is the matter with you? You act scared to death! (*He looks apprehensively toward the door up L. and his mother, following his gaze, sees MISS RANDOLPH entering.*) Well, Jimmy Goodwin! Why should you try to hide from your Sunday-school teacher? You act afraid of her!

MISS RANDOLPH (*pleasantly, coming down c.*). Good-afternoon, Mrs. Goodwin. Good-afternoon, Jimmy.

JIMMY (*down R., muttering*). 'Afternoon!

MRS. GOODWIN (*R. c., effusively*). I'm real glad to see you, Miss Randolph, and so is Jimmy. He is so fond of you. How are you?

MISS RANDOLPH. I'm very well, thank you. (*Turns to CLERK.*) Pardon me for interrupting when

you are waiting on a customer, but I think I left a package here yesterday. It contained some collars for my father.

CLERK. I think it was found. I'll inquire about it.

(Goes up R. behind counter and exits into room marked "Private," up L.)

MISS RANDOLPH (down C.). I'm glad to have this opportunity to talk to you, Mrs. Goodwin. Jimmy has been ——

MRS. GOODWIN (R. C., interrupting stiffly). I hope you have no complaint to make about him. He's such a good boy at home.

(JIMMY, down R., makes faces.)

MISS RANDOLPH. He is very annoying at Sunday-school. Last Sunday he came with his pockets full of peas and a pea-shooter hidden under his coat. He sat and shot them all over the room every time my back was turned. I took away all I could get. I thought you ought to know about his sneaking the peas.

MRS. GOODWIN (coldly). There was nothing sneaking about it. The one thing Jimmy never does is to deceive me. He asked me for a few dried peas and I gave them to him. He said he would only shoot them on the way. I've told him often that he must be a good boy in Sunday-school, and I'm sure he tries to be. I'm very sorry he gives you so much trouble, Miss Randolph. Perhaps he had better go into Mr. Davis's class again.

MISS RANDOLPH (somewhat severely). I don't believe Mr. Davis would take him back. He complained of him before until the superintendent thought best to place him in my class.

MRS. GOODWIN (angrily). Mr. Davis had better look to his own children, for they are none too good, I guess. It seems to me that the Sunday-school can't be very well managed. Jimmy has been attending there for over five years, and I should think by this

time he ought to have learned how to behave if his teachers had done their duty.

MISS RANDOLPH (*tearfully*). I'm very sorry you think I don't do my duty by my scholars. I try my best to make good boys of them, but it is impossible to do anything with some of them.

MRS. GOODWIN (*condescendingly*). I presume you do your best.

(*Enter CLERK from door up L.*)

CLERK (*coming down c.*). Here is your package, Miss Randolph.

MISS RANDOLPH. Thank you. (*She takes package. CLERK goes up R. and back of counter. MISS RANDOLPH turns to go, then looks back at MRS. GOODWIN.*) Oh, I meant to ask you if Jimmy can be made to learn his verses.

MRS. GOODWIN (*in surprise*). Why, I always tell him—every Sunday morning—to sit down and study them. You know I do, Jimmy!

JIMMY (*down R., scowling*). I can't learn 'em! I hate verses!

MRS. GOODWIN (*R. c., astounded*). Jimmy Goodwin!

MISS RANDOLPH (*c.*). Perhaps if you could hear him say them it would help. They are hard, sometimes, to learn without assistance.

MRS. GOODWIN (*plaintively*). I can't promise to do it, Miss Randolph. I'm very busy Sunday mornings. But I'll remind Jimmy.

MISS RANDOLPH (*walking up L.*). He needs more than reminding.

(*Exits, up L.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*to CLERK*). No wonder children dislike Sunday-school. I have to fairly drive Jimmy to make him go! No one wants to be picked at and lectured continually. (*Sighs.*) Dear me! All these interruptions, and the suit not yet bought.

JIMMY (*pulling at her skirt*). I'm getting hungry, ma! Let's go home!

MRS. GOODWIN. Not till we decide about this suit. I've spent one entire afternoon at it and I'll not put in another. Let us have another look at the coat. (JIMMY *still has it on*.) Turn around, child, and let me see how the sleeves set. (*Enter, up L., Mrs. DUNCAN, ALICE and BERTIE. Mrs. GOODWIN goes up L. and greets them effusively while JIMMY disappears behind counter, R.*) Mrs. Duncan! Of all the persons I want to see, you are the very one. I am buying a suit for Jimmy and I want your opinion. You have such good taste.

(ALICE *comes down L., BERTIE stays up c.*)

MRS. DUNCAN (*coming down L. c.*). I came to look for a suit for Bertie. Where is Jimmy? Isn't he with you? He isn't ill, is he?

MRS. GOODWIN (*coming down c. and looking about*). He's around somewhere. Ill! Whatever made you ask that?

MRS. DUNCAN. Bertie said he ate so many green apples yesterday in school.

ALICE (*down L.*). Yes, all the children make remarks about the number he eats. They even say that the teacher whipped him for it.

MRS. GOODWIN (*down c., coldly*). I'm sure I don't know how such a story came to be told. Jimmy is a good boy, and I know he obeys the rules in school. (*Calls.*) Where are you, Jimmy? (*He appears from behind the counter, down R.*) Why have you been hiding? Here is Bertie Duncan. Show him your new suit and ask him how he likes it.

BERTIE (*comes down R. to JIMMY, laughing*). Gee! It looks babyish to me. (*Feels about for the pockets.*) There ain't many pockets, are there? I'm going to have a blue suit with about twenty pockets in it, ain't I, ma?

MRS. DUNCAN (*down c., indulgently*). Perhaps!

JIMMY (*down R.*). Ma! I want a blue suit! If Bertie can have one, I don't see why I can't!

MRS. GOODWIN (*to* MRS. DUNCAN). Don't you think blue shows dust and dirt very quickly? It doesn't seem at all practical for an every-day suit.

MRS. DUNCAN (*quietly*). I presume not for most boys, but Bertie is so careful with his clothes that I can buy any color for him and be sure he will keep it neatly.

(BERTIE *goes up c. and looks at the pile of boxes.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*crossing r. and hastily removing the gray coat from* JIMMY). My son is as neat as any boy with his clothes. After all, Jimmy, you might look at a blue suit. (*To* CLERK.) Let me see something in a blue serge. The gray is entirely too dull for a child of his age.

(JIMMY *goes up c. to* BERTIE.)

CLERK (*sorting over suits wearily*). I doubt if we have a blue suit in his size.

MRS. GOODWIN (*to* MRS. DUNCAN). Isn't it provoking not to be able to get what one wants? I have spent the entire afternoon here and have no suit bought yet. (JIMMY and BERTIE, *up c., start to fight. Both women start toward scene of disturbance. ALICE crosses r. to* CLERK *and talks to him.*) Jimmy!

MRS. DUNCAN (*up l. c.*). Bertie!

MRS. GOODWIN (*up r. c.*). What are you doing?

(*Each woman grabs her son.*)

JIMMY. He knocked me down!

MRS. GOODWIN (*up r. c.*). I knew it! Jimmy never quarrels with any one. It must have been Bertie's fault.

MRS. DUNCAN (*up l. c.*). Bertie! How could you!

BERTIE. Aw! Well! He stuck his old fist under my nose and I pushed it away and then he did it again, and said he could lick me with both hands tied

behind his back, and then I gave him a little push and he hit me and—and then we began to fight.

MRS. GOODWIN (*positively*). I never knew Jimmy to start a quarrel.

MRS. DUNCAN. Well, however it happened, I'll see that Bertie doesn't have a chance to fight again. Don't you leave my side again, sir.

(*She goes down L., taking BERTIE with her.*)

MRS. GOODWIN. And don't you stir till I tell you that you may. I can't think what possesses the boy. He is usually so well-behaved. (*Turns and sees CLERK engrossed in talking to ALICE. To CLERK.*) If you are ready to finish waiting on me, I will be glad to get that suit bought.

CLERK. Since we have no blue suit of his size, will you take the gray?

(*ALICE crosses L. to MRS. DUNCAN.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*comes down R., bringing JIMMY with her*). I suppose so, but it is too bad the child can't have what he wants when he has so set his heart on the blue.

JIMMY (*down R. C.*). I won't wear the gray one!

MRS. GOODWIN (*down R., positively*). You will wear whatever I buy for you! (*To MRS. DUNCAN.*) I believe in being firm with children.

MRS. DUNCAN (*down L.*). It is the only way to manage them.

MRS. GOODWIN. Jimmy knows that when I set my foot down, I mean it. By the way, are you going to the Sunday-school picnic on the eighteenth?

MRS. DUNCAN. We are planning on it.

BERTIE (*down L. C.*). Is Jimmy going?

MRS. GOODWIN. Of course. He's a regular Sunday-school scholar. Why shouldn't he go?

BERTIE. Last year the superintendent said he should never go to another.

MRS. GOODWIN (*indignantly*). And why not, I should like to know.

BERTIE. He put salt in all the ice-cream, and none of us could eat it.

JIMMY (*down R. C., threateningly*). Just you wait!

MRS. GOODWIN. Such a fuss to make about a trifle! All boys are up to those little tricks. Jimmy doesn't do it to be mean. He'll get over these capers as he gets bigger.

MRS. DUNCAN. That isn't my way of bringing up children. (*To CLERK.*) I'll come in again about the suit for my son. It is almost closing time now, and you are still occupied. Come, Bertie, and Alice. Let us be going. (*They move toward door up L.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*as they turn to leave*). I've been intending to bring Jimmy and spend the afternoon with you. Since vacation is only a week off, suppose we say the next Tuesday.

MRS. DUNCAN. I have a dressmaker coming on Tuesday. (*They move on.*)

MRS. GOODWIN (*down R., calling after them*). Thursday will suit me as well.

MRS. DUNCAN (*at door up L.*). That's another bad day. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll telephone you when I am going to be home. Good-bye.

MRS. GOODWIN. Good-bye. (*Exeunt, up L., MRS. DUNCAN, ALICE and BERTIE.*) Mrs. Duncan used to be my best friend, but she seems rather cool to-day. I don't believe she really wants me to come and see her at all. (*JIMMY starts whistling.*) Do stop that, Jimmy. I am nervous enough to fly and that is such an abominable tune. Besides, you know you are not allowed to whistle in the house. Come and look at this gray suit again. Don't you think you would like it?

JIMMY (*angrily*). No, I don't want a gray suit. I want a blue.

MRS. GOODWIN (*resignedly, to CLERK*). There's no use in taking the suit, since he dislikes it so greatly. He wouldn't be satisfied, and I should never hear the last of it. If you only had a blue, now, I'm sure I could find what he wants. As it is, I think I'd better not decide on anything to-day. We'll look at John-

son and Brown's, and if they have nothing better, I'll come back for the gray suit. Come, Jimmy, it is almost dark, and your poor father waiting at home for his supper.

(Exeunt, up L., MRS. GOODWIN and JIMMY.)

CLERK. Good-night!

(Falls in a mock faint across the counter.)

CURTAIN



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