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No. 334

RETURN OF HI JINKS

A Comedy in Four Acts

BY
MARION SHORT

Based upon a farce written by J. H. Rortz, and
originally produced at Tufts College, Mass.

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THE RETURN OF HI JINKS.

BY MARION SHORT.

Based upon a farce written by J. H. Rortz, and originally produced at Tufts College.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

- HIRAM POYNTER JINKS. *A junior in Hoosic College*
OBADIAH JINKS. *HIRAM'S father; proprietor of a
feed-store in Wurtsboro*
SOLOMEN BLOOMER. *A Moving Picture director*
THOMAS HODGE. *A senior in Hoosic College, and
manager of the Hoosic Glee Club*
HENRY SHORTER. *A Hoosic freshman; member of
the Hoosic Glee Club*
GEORGE DAVIS. *A Hoosic freshman; member of the
Hoosic Glee Club*
MIMI MAYFLOWER. *A young Moving Picture star*
BEDELIA NORRIS. *MIMI'S particular friend; a mem-
ber of the Wurtsboro Literary Research Club*
THYRZA JUDSON. *President of the Wurtsboro
Literary Research Club*
EMILY SNODGRASS
MINNIE GRAHAM
*Members of the Wurtsboro
Lit. Research Club*
MRS. ROGERS. *Wife of editor of Wurtsboro Weekly
Gazette*
MRS. BUMPSKY. *Janitress of Wurtsboro Town Hall*
EVANGELINE SLATER. *Engaged to HIRAM JINKS;
a member of the Wurtsboro Literary Research
Club*

THE RETURN OF HI JINKS.

DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS.

HIRAM POYNTER JINKS is a young chap who believes in appropriating the best of everything that comes his way, and doing it before the other fellow has a chance. He is magnetic, irresistible and aggressive; a Willie Collier sort of personality. He is well-groomed always, and exceedingly dandified in his manner of dress.

OBADIAH JINKS, in sharp contrast to his son Hiram, wears ready-made suit, turned down collar, and a beard of ancient amplexity and cut. He has the local pride of the inbred small-town type, and is given to boasting in a genial, inoffensive way. His countenance is ruddy, and there is a prominent bald spot on his head.

SOLOMON BLOOMER is about thirty years of age, long, lean, and of the temperamentally artistic type. His manner is that of a man engrossed by his work to such an extent that he is fairly swamped in it. A loose lock of hair strays over his forehead through which he thrusts his fingers frequently. He carries a soft hat, wears soft collar and flowing tie, and his clothing is rather pronounced in color.

THOMAS HODGE is heavily built and dresses unostentatiously. He is slower spoken than Jinks; not so alert and quick to grasp the main chance and this puts him at a disadvantage in the almost constant conflict between the two. When mirthful he is inclined to be boisterous.

HENRY SHORTER is a typical college-boy, rather short and stout.

GEORGE DAVIS is tall and slim, lose-jointed in his movements, nonchalant in manner.

MIMI MAYFLOWER is a pretty and modishly gowned young woman with a wealth of beautiful hair, worn after the fashion of the latest stars in screendom. She is possessed of much feminine charm of manner.

BEDELIA NORRIS is the "flopsy" type of girl. She strives for the extreme of fashion in hats and gowns and does not quite succeed in achieving it. The effect she does arrive at is somewhat bizarre. She is emotional and talkative, but loyal to her friends and attractive in spite of her oddities.

THYRZA JUDSON is a prim girl of the school-teacher type. She wears glasses and is pleasantly dignified in manner. Her hat and gown are in accord with her general personality.

EMILY SNODGRASS is a typical small-town girl, sweet and good-natured. She is rather countrified in dress.

MINNIE GRAHAM, the youngest club-member, is a natural hero-worshiper, and indulges in much clasping of hands and uprolling of eyes when engaged in her favorite pastime. Her gown and hat are very youthful in style, and suggest the home-made variety.

MRS. ROGERS, stately, her hair slightly tinged with gray, is sweet-faced and magnetic, and dresses in the best of taste.

MRS. BUMPSKY, eccentric-comedy type, is frowsy and unkempt. She is fond of hearing herself talk, and takes more interest in the affairs of others than in her own. She wears slatternly dress and shoes, her sleeves rolled above the elbows.

EVANGELINE SLATER wears her hair straight back

from her forehead and cultivates a very clear-cut and somewhat affected manner of speech. She is exacting, sarcastic, and betrays an extravagant fondness for culture and cultured folk. Gown, hat, and arrangement of hair express the extreme of neatness.

THE RETURN OF HI JINKS

ACT I.

SCENE:—*Living room of the Iota Tau Chapter-house at Hoosic College, Hoosic, Pa. Door L. leads into main hallway. Door up R. forms another exit. There is a curtained entrance at C.*

The room is decorated to give a college flavor, but sparingly—a few banners and a fraternity seal over mantelpiece at R. There are several easy-chairs upholstered in leather. A card-table occupies the center of the room. On one big chair, near door C., hats and coats are piled in confusion. Large scrap-basket near mantelpiece.

TIME:—*Saturday noon, shortly before the Christmas vacation at Hoosic.*

DISCOVERED:—*GEORGE DAVIS and HENRY SHORTER sprawling in easy-chairs, each with a book in hand.*

GEORGE. Never felt less like grinding for a Greek exam in my life. (*Rises, crosses to table and slams down book*) I've got to smoke. (*Takes cigar from his pocket, helps himself to a match from box on table and lights up*)

HENRY. (*His attention divided between book and George*) Some party that was last night, I gather?

GEORGE. It sure was. Why didn't you show up?

HENRY. Couldn't get away from the Governor. He stopped off here between trains and kept me busy showing him the college-library, lecture-room, and other ghastly exhibits. Jinksie was there, I suppose?

GEORGE. As usual. You couldn't bribe him to miss anything. (*Puffs at cigar*) You've seen Jinksie with his white lights regalia on, haven't you?

HENRY. Sure. Did he wear his pink waistcoat?

GEORGE. Not this time. It was the pearl one with the up-and-down stripes. The rest of the outfit was all there, though. Carnation in his button-hole, tie a little bit pink, and a double reef in his pompadour.

HENRY. He honored me by borrowing a dress-shirt for the occasion. He didn't like the first one he tried, so he threw it on the floor and stepped on it.

GEORGE. Just like his copper-plated nerve!

HENRY. (*Tom Hodge enters door L.*) Then he came around this morning and told me *he* knew of a place where they sold shirts that wouldn't bulge. I tried to hand him a solar-plexus, but he slid out through the key-hole.

HODGE. (*Advances to c.*) Talking about Jinksie?

HENRY. Good guess!

HODGE. Oh, I've got all sorts of kind feelings for him! I wish his pinch collar would choke him to death.

GEORGE. (*With a grin*) I guess your grouch is a hangover from last night, Hodge.

HODGE. You saw her. Do you wonder?

GEORGE. What made you let Jinksie wish the female booby prize on you like that?

HODGE. He rushed me up to her at the dormitory and introduced us just before the party, and when she once fastened on, I couldn't get away.

HENRY. Who was she, anyhow?

GEORGE. A girl from Wurtsboro, visiting one of the Freshmen. All gauded up she was. You know the kind. Waist line lost somewhere near her shoul-

ders, lace fripperies all over, orange blossoms in her hair, rings on her fingers, etc.

HODGE. (*With deep gloom*) Nine parts excitement, and the rest giggle. About every fifteen minutes she'd ask me to explain football to her. Then I'd grab her arm and say: "Won't you have some punch?" She drank eight glasses by actual count, then gave a gasp, rose to the surface, and said she'd like to hear some more about football. If Jinksie had showed up just about then—(*Makes gesture indicating the punishment he would have meted out to the culprit*)

GEORGE. Notice his new socks?

HODGE. Oh, yes, I noticed them. There's a ray of hope there. If he reefs his pants up another peg, maybe the police will run him in for indecent exposure. Mail in? (*Shuffles through a pile of letters on table*)

HENRY. A bunch of valentines from the faculty.

HODGE. (*Completing the list*) Never touched me! (*Picks up a newspaper*) Here's that Wurtsboro Weekly Gazette for H. P. Jinks.

HENRY. (*Amused*) How the home influences do tag around after Jinksie!

GEORGE. Most anything would follow Jinksie just out of curiosity. Say, look at that Grand Stand notice of our Glee Club in fire-proof letters there on the front page. From the way it reads, Jinksie sent it in.

HODGE. He's the greatest little self-advertiser in Hoosic. all right. Hah, here it is! (*Reads*) "The coming tour of the Hoosic Glee Club is especially interesting to the residents of Wurtsboro, because its reader is Mr. Hiram Poynter Jinks, son of Mr. and Mrs. Obadiah Jinks of this city. He has been winning scholarly honors for himself——"

GEORGE. (*Interrupts, with a laugh*) Collarly honors, it means. Jinksie has had to move his ears up two inches to accommodate his latest in celluloids.

HODGE. (*His eyes still following the notice*)
And a lot more piffle in which Jinksie is the kite and
the Glee Club the tail. He makes me sick.

GEORGE. Did you hear about his encounter with
the new chef at the Frat house this morning?

HODGE. (*Inquiringly*) No.

GEORGE. When he came down to breakfast he told
the chef to bring him a couple of eggs, dress-maker
style. Said they must be shirred, then ruffled and
tucked. He had the poor foreign geezer trying to
guess out a recipe for as much as five minutes, and
finally told him he'd take lamb chops since he
couldn't grasp shirred eggs.

HODGE. It would serve him right if the chef
shirred an egg at him sometime, and put a ptomaine
in it. (*He twists the newspaper into a wad*) I'm
going to tie his Gazette to the dog.

HENRY. We tried that last time, and Jinksie
caught him before he'd gone a yard.

HODGE. Hey? Then here she goes under this
junk. (*Buries the Gazette in waste-paper basket*)
Now, I'll go look him up. When I find him, I'll nip
him by the neck, take him down to the lake, row out
to a deep place and drop him in.

GEORGE. (*With appreciative grin*) There's a
lot of good points to that, all right.

HENRY. Only you'll be embarassed with the rush
of congratulations.

HODGE. I'll hire a secretary to answer them.
(*Starts toward R. and pauses as he reaches the door*)
I may be gone a long time, for I must stick around
the lake until I make sure no one rescues him.
(*Exits R.*)

(HENRY and GEORGE plunge into their respective
books again.)

JINKS. (*Opens door L.; sticks his head in, cau-
tiously*) Good-morning, this evening. (*Remains*

the other side of door, peering around the room apprehensively)

GEORGE. 'Smatter, Jinksie? Haven't you paid your board-bill?

JINKS. (*Enters, trips on rug, goes back and carefully arranges it with his foot*) 'Lo, Hen! 'Lo, Gawge! Has old Hodge been around to-day?

GEORGE. (*Significantly*) Has he?

HENRY. Looking for you with spy-glasses.

JINKS. (*With assumption of innocent surprise*) What? Looking for me? You say he was looking——

HENRY. Sure! (*Jinks drops hat and handkerchief, and knocks a book off the table, stumbling as he goes to pick them up, dropping book a second time*) What's the matter with the man from Wurtsboro?

JINKS. (*Fans himself nonchalantly with hat*) I'm sorry I missed him, that's all.

GEORGE. He's looking for you down by the lake.

JINKS. The lake?

HENRY. Wants to show you something about under-water swimming.

JINKS. So sorry I missed him!

GEORGE. Never saw two people so crazy to meet each other, did you, Hen?

JINKS. (*Begins to paw among articles on table*) Has anybody seen my Wurtsboro Weekly Gazette?

HENRY. "Wurtsboro!" Makes me think of sausage.

JINKS. You tried tying it to a sausage-plant last time. Think up something new. (*Whistles for dog*)

GEORGE. Seems to me I remember there was something on the front page about your father, Mayor Jinks.

JINKS. My father isn't the mayor.

HENRY. You surprise me!

JINKS. When I consent to run, that will be the first Jinks ever elected mayor of Wurtsboro. Say,

fellows, have a heart! My Gazette is due to-day. Where is it?

HENRY. Any item of news that interests you particularly?

JINKS. There will be if it mentions my little sister Lily's recitations at the Baptist Church Social.

GEORGE. I remember the paragraph perfectly. It said: "Miss Lily Jinks pleased all by her sparkling rendition of Kipling's *Thanatopsis*."

JINKS. Eh, what's that?

GEORGE. Kipling's *Thanatopsis*. Well, what's wrong with it?

JINKS. (*With deep scorn*) Kipling never wrote *Thanatopsis*.

GEORGE. Then who did?

JINKS. Do you mean to say that you actually passed the entrance exams for Hoosic without knowing that Bernard Shaw wrote *Thanatopsis*?

HENRY. Somehow I always imagined that Bryant wrote it.

JINKS. Then you're worse than George. Even he knew that Bryant didn't write it. Bryant is the man that runs for peace and the presidency. And my little sister never recited *Thanatopsis* anyhow.

GEORGE. What? You don't believe your own Wurtsboro Gazette?

HENRY. Under the circumstances, how dare you affirm your little sister didn't recite it?

JINKS. Because I never had a little sister. You ginks give me a pain. (*Genially, with a wide smile*) Say, George, didn't we have a hip-hurrah time at that Seminary dance last night? Did you see what I had? Wasn't she a——

GEORGE. (*Interrupts him, enviously*) She sure was! (*Turns to HENRY*) Why is it, Henry, that real men always pick cauliflowers in the garden of love, while the left-overs of the male species gather the pansies?

JINKS. (*Butting in, affably*) You always were a pansy plucker, George.

GEORGE. (*Indignantly*) I say——

JINKS. By the way, did Hodge say anything about the pleasant time he had last evening?

(*Door R. opens tempestuously and HODGE jumps in.*)

HODGE. At last! (*Springs for JINKS, but HENRY comes between and manages to hold him back. JINKS tries to escape off L. at sight of HODGE, but GEORGE goes after him and forcibly faces him around to look in HODGE'S direction. HODGE struggles toward JINKS, and JINKS struggles to get away*)

GEORGE. Did you want Jinksie, Tom? He's been looking for you.

HODGE. Let me at him!

GEORGE. Weren't you looking for him, Jinksie?

JINKS. Certainly I was, but—(*As GEORGE forces him into a seat*) not now.

HENRY. (*To HODGE as he struggles to hold him back*) Cut it out, Tom.

JINKS. Make him be reasonable, or I won't stay (*Tries to rise, but is forced down so hard by GEORGE his feet fly into the air*)

HENRY. Arbitration is the best policy, Tom.

HODGE. (*Stops struggling*) All right, Henry. You needn't hold me. (*HENRY releases him and he drops into a chair. GEORGE releases JINKS and all four are seated*) After all, I don't want to do anything to him around here. It would muss up the place too much.

JINKS. It was all your fault anyhow.

HODGE. Eh? (*Starts up, but is restrained by HENRY'S warning gesture*)

HENRY. Now, Tom!

HODGE. (*Settles back in chair*) Oh, I'll not hurt him, not just now.

JINKS. (*In self-defense*) You said you wanted to be introduced to the girl in the light hair with the dark sweater. Well, I introduced you to a girl with dark hair and a light sweater instead? What's the difference? A girl's a girl, and a sweater's a sweater! She was pleased to pieces with you, Hodge.

HODGE. (*With a groan*) She liked me so well she haunts me still!

JINKS. Bedelia's a nice girl from my own home town visiting a friend at the Sem—an awfully nice girl!

HODGE. (*With suppressed rage*) She is, Jinks, as you say, an awfully nice girl. Just the kind you fight to get away from. Real men are always getting ambushed by the wall-flowers. It's the funny gooks and lollops that the cozy corner ornaments take up with. To see you throwing flipflaps around the girl you knew I wanted—Say, Jinks, did you think I was blind or what? (*Turns to HENRY and GEORGE*) Boys, you can't imagine what I suffered, with that star gusher talking about football!

JINKS. Well, you see, Hodge, I told her you were crazy about football, so she wouldn't feel shy with a stranger.

HODGE. You did? Great Scott! Say, fellows, I still think that lake idea was first class.

JINKS. Changing the subject—I want my Wurtsboro Gazette. It must be some place it hasn't been hidden before. (*He stands in deep meditation for a moment, while the other boys exchange winks, and then suddenly dives for the scrap-basket, throws the contents on the floor, picks out his Wurtsboro Gazette*) Aha! So long, boys! Meet me at the Plaza for tea. (*Carrying the Gazette, and picking up the tail of his coat, skirt-fashion, he dances off L.*)

HODGE. He certainly needs bad medicine.

HENRY. Violence only makes him worse, though.

You've got to think up something that will really deal with the situation.

HODGE. (*Thinking hard*) The thing that would pierce Jinksie to the heart would be to make him appear ridiculous, somehow, in his own home-town—get all Wurtsboro laughing at him. I've sent Glee Club notices and so forth to that hayseed Gazette by the dozen, and maybe I could trick them into printing a fake story about Jinksie.

(*Enter MIMI L.*)

MIMI. I beg pardon—(*Boys rise hastily, with exclamations of surprise. HENRY hastily puts things back into the upturned scrap-basket, while GEORGE and HODGE involuntarily smooth their hair and arrange collars*) but, I'm looking for a Mr. Hiram Poynter Jinks.

OMNES. (*In surprise*) Jinks?

HODGE. (*Advances, his manner one of extreme politeness*) Well, you see, Miss—Miss—(*Waits for her to furnish her name*)

MIMI. Oh, how absurd of me! I quite forgot you wouldn't know who I am. Neither does Mr. Jinks, though I know a lot about him from Bedelia Norris—a girl from Wurtsboro where Mr. Jinks lives, you know.

HODGE. Er—yes, it seems to me that I have met the lady.

MIMI. There don't any of you happen to *be* Mr. Jinks?

HODGE. No. We have a few things to be thankful for, even in Hoosic. Miss—ah—Miss—(*Again waits invitingly for her to announce her name*)

MIMI. Mayflower. Miss Mimi Mayflower, leading lady of the Paradise Multiple Reel Unsurpassed Screen Favorites Company, at present making pictures of a rural drama in the village of Hoosic.

HODGE. Dee—lighted, Miss Mayflower. My name is Thomas Hodge, and allow me to present Mr. Shorter and Mr. Davies—all of Hoosic College. And may I escort you over to the main building? You see—no ladies are permitted to enter the sacred portals of the Iota Tau house.

MIMI. Oh, perhaps it wasn't quite proper for me to come without a chaperone; but—I can't leave now, for I left word at the hotel where I had gone, and our director will follow me over here.

HODGE. Say no more about it, and do have a seat.
(MIMI accepts a seat)

MIMI. No one stopped me out in the hall, and the dog even smiled at me, so I guess I might as well wait here as anywhere. (*Air of a spoiled darling*) Well, is no one going to offer to find Mr. Jinks for me and bring him here?

HODGE. (*Clears his throat*) Unfortunately, the last we heard from Jinksie he was reported among the lost.

HENRY. But if you care to leave any mesasge for him——

GEORGE. We'll be *certain* not to deliver it.

HODGE. (*Draws chair near to hers*) But if there is any other errand, command me.

MIMI. You're very kind, but I did *so* want to interview Mr. Jinks.

HENRY. (*Aside to GEORGE*) Isn't she a peach?

MIMI. (*To HODGE*) We Paradise players are in an awful pickle.

GEORGE. (*Aside to HENRY*) *Pickled* Peach.

HODGE. (*Leans forward, interestedly*) How's that?

MIMI. Why, you see the young actor, who was engaged to take the part of Eddie, the fireman, in our spectacular fire scene, got a telegram yesterday from his sweetheart in Milwaukee saying that she was going to give a birthday party, and he said this obliged him to jump his contract and go right back there

to give her a wrist-watch, personally conducted. Nothing could hold him; and Bedelia, whom I ran into accidentally this morning, suggested that as this was a holiday Mr. Jinks might be induced to substitute. She said he was so good looking he ought to make a real good fireman. Of course if the fireman who saves your life isn't good looking, nobody cares whether you are saved or not, and it hurts the picture. So if Mr. Jinks has any talent for acting at all, Mr. Bloomer will pay well for his services.

HODGE. (*With mock regret*) Now, boys, with such a wonderful Jinksonian opportunity coming Jinksie's way, isn't it too bad he's too shy and awkward to take advantage of it even if he weren't spending the day out of town?

MIMI. Why, *is* he so shy? Bedelia didn't speak of him that way at all.

HODGE. He'd run for cover at the very idea of acting in a play. Mortally afraid of the limelight, Jinksie is. (*Winks surreptitiously at HENRY*)

HENRY. And girls render him simply speechless!

HODGE. No talent for acting at all, and wouldn't consider substituting for a moment.

MIMI. But if we could only manage to send for him, somehow, there's such a very little real acting to do I shouldn't think he would mind. All that is required of him is that in rescuing me from a fire he carries me from danger in his arms——

HENRY. (*Eagerly*) Maybe some of us other boys could help out on that.

HODGE. (*Gently elbows Henry aside*) I'm a real Movie fan. It would be an inspiration to act in the same company with you, Miss Mayflower, and as long as Jinksie is so utterly lacking in courage——

GEORGE. (*Gently manages to retire Hodge for the moment*) Any of us stand ready to help out in his place.

MIMI. (*As the three stand lined up before her*) How nice of you all!

OMNES. (*Eager to be chosen*) Well?

MIMI. But I can't get my mind off Mr. Jinks. (*Boys turn away, disappointedly*) And besides I couldn't make any other selection without consulting Mr. Bloomer; and who knows but what the regular actor he telegraphed for has arrived?

BLOOMER. (*Knocks and straightway admits himself door L.*) Ah, there you are, Miss Mayflower!

MIMI. Yes, I have a little way of always being where I am. Gentlemen, our Multiple director—Mr. Bloomer.

HENRY. Glad to know you, Mr. Bloomer. (*Advances, offering hand*)

BLOOMER. (*Shakes hands with him, then GEORGE, then HODGE*) Which one is Mr. Jinks? (*As he retains hand of HODGE*) Are you Mr. Jinks?

HODGE. (*Snatches hand away*) Not guilty!

MIMI. Unfortunately Mr. Jinks has gone out into the country and can't be found, Mr. Bloomer, and anyhow he has no courage, and can't act, and is dreadfully shy, and girls terrify him, and he wouldn't consider substituting for one moment.

BLOOMER. (*Disappointedly*) Is that so? Sorry we've wasted time looking him up. (*Produces notebook and pencil*) Cancelled, one—Jinks. (*Scratches out a name*) Come, Miss Mayflower, I'll send another telegram that we're short of actors.

HENRY. (*Detaining him*) But I say—wouldn't I do?

BLOOMER. (*Gives him sharp look*) Too short.

GEORGE. What's the matter with me?

BLOOMER. Too long.

HODGE. Wouldn't I do?

BLOOMER. At a pinch.

HODGE. Good!

BLOOMER. Maybe so, maybe not. Our salary for substitutes—

HODGE. It isn't the salary I'm after, it's the lady

—(*Corrects himself hastily*) I mean—the experience.

BLOOMER. You've seen our form of contract?
(*Feels in his pocket after a paper*)

HODGE. Form immaterial. You see. I've been thinking I'd like some training in the Movies for quite a while—oh, as much as the last fifteen minutes, perhaps.

BLOOMER. Very well, then, I——

JINKS. (*Heard off R.*) Hey, Sport!

HODGE. (*In consternation*) Great Scott!

JINKS. Hey, Sport, come here, you old Sophomore!

MIMI. Oh, what a jolly voice! Who is that?

HODGE. Oh, he's the—why, he's the janitor.

HENRY. The kind of employé guaranteed to turn up at the wrong moment.

HODGE. Boys, go out there and stop him from—from bringing his broom and dustpan in here. Savez? If he once got his head inside that door, all Hoosic couldn't hold him.

HENRY. We'll court martial him at sight, Tom.

GEORGE. But if the prisoner escapes in spite of us—good-night! (*HENRY and GEORGE scurry off R.*)

HODGE. (*Turns, facing MIMI and BLOOMER*) Well, it's all settled then?

MIMI. (*Her eye on door R. through which the boys have disappeared*) What was all the excitement? What made them act so funny?

HODGE. The janitor. He makes everybody act funny. Has a distracting personality, so to speak. So I'm accepted for the part of Eddie, the fireman, am I?

BLOOMER. Eddie has to carry Miss Mayflower down a ladder. Are you strong enough to undertake a feat of strength like that?

HODGE. Strong as an ox! (*Looks uneasily over his shoulder toward door R.*) Is it a go?

BLOOMER. You're not exactly the type I had in mind, but beggars must not be choosers.

HODGE. Oh, I'll make good. Thank you very much!

BEDELIA. (*Bounces in at door L. left open by BLOOMER*) Oh, Mimi! Why, I never dreamed of your coming to the Iota Tau rooms to look for Hiram Jinks, but as soon as I heard it, I followed you right over. Girls aren't allowed here at all, you know.

MIMI. But I think it's rather fascinating to be where one isn't allowed. Oh, Mr. Hodge, you said you'd met Miss Norris, I believe?

HODGE. Er—yes.

BEDELIA. (*Offers hand, and speaks enthusiastically*) Oh, you were facing the other way and I didn't realize it was you! Didn't we have a lovely conversation at the dance? When Hiram Jinks said you were perfectly happy if you were talking about football—it made it all so easy. Let me see—there was just another question or two I thought afterwards I might have asked you—(*Pauses, meditatively. HODGE clears his throat and backs away uneasily*) But I've forgotten now what they were.

HODGE. (*Aside*) Thank heaven!

BEDELIA. Wasn't it lucky that I just happened to run across Mimi this morning? We went to the same school when we were little tots, but now I see her so seldom! (*Turns to MIMI*) Isn't it too bad, Mimi, that when I do meet you it's just time for me to go back to Wurtsboro?

MIMI. Oh, but you must stay over until that last train out.

BEDELIA. It's an awful temptation, because Mr. Bloomer said I could see you act one scene at the studio if I did.

BLOOMER. Don't know now, though, whether there'll be any acting to-day. Your Mr. Jinks you

recommended has caused us to waste a lot of time for nothing.

BEDELIA. (*Surprised*) Oh, couldn't you get him?

JINKS. (*Outside; whistles.*) Hey, Sport, be a sport!

MIMI. That janitor again!

BEDELIA. (*Wonders that anyone would call JINKS "janitor"*) Janitor?

HODGE. Excuse me a minute—(*Starts to exit door R. to head off JINKS, but JINKS backs in before he gets there*)

JINKS. Be gentlemanly and come on in, Sport! You don't hate to go to college any worse than I do. (*Holds leash of invisible dog outside*)

MIMI. (*To Bedelia*) What an attractive looking jaintor!

BEDELIA. Janitor? He?

JINKS. (*Echoing BEDELIA'S inflection*) Janitor? Me? (*Let's go of leash which disappears as if dog had made a hasty escape with it*)

JINKS. Not yet, but any American boy can aspire to be a janitor in time. Look at George Washington and Henry Clay! What an unexpected pleasure—to see you at Iota Tau, Bedelia!

BEDELIA. (*Laughingly*) Oh, if a few feminine petticoats do brush the dust off your furniture, it won't hurt your old Chapter-house any, I guess. Miss Mayflower and Mr. Bloomer; allow me to introduce Mr. Hiram Poynter Jinks, the one I recommended as a substitute.

MIMI. (*Offers hand*) Mr. Jinks!

JINKS. (*Tremendously interested*) Not Miss Mimi Mayflower, the latest rage in screendom?

BLOOMER. (*Importantly*) The same.

MIMI. Isn't this is the Mr. Jinks I was asking you about, Mr. Hodge?

HODGE. (*Confused*) Er—yes—I rather think it

is. You were in a hurry, I believe, Mr. Bloomer? Shan't we be moving on?

MIMI. (*As BLOOMER starts with HODGE toward door L.*) Wait a moment, please. (*To JINKS*) I'm sorry you couldn't oblige me by appearing as a substitute just for one afternoon.

JINKS. Who said I couldn't? To oblige you, Miss Mayflower, I'd act as a substitute, institute, or any other kind of a toot—even a tutor at Hoosic—what more can I say?

HODGE. (*Bitterly*) That's right! Butt in!

JINKS. (*Answers him*) I *thought* when George and Henry showed such a sudden interest in my conversation on the outside, there must be some good reason why I should be on the inside instead. (*Turns and bows low to MIMI*) Command me, Miss Mayflower.

MIMI. (*Regards him doubtfully*) It's too bad you're so awfully shy.

JINKS. (*Stupidly amazed at the accusation*) Huh?

MIMI. And that you stand in terror of girls, and are a coward anyhow, and that you'd run for cover at the very idea of appearing in the limelight.

JINKS. Would I run?

MIMI. As fact as possible.

JINKS. Do you see me raising any dust?

HODGE. (*Cuts in, nervously*) Mr. Bloomer, I believe you accepted me for the part of Eddie, the fireman, did you not?

BLOOMER. All except the formality of signing the contract.

HODGE. (*Exultantly*) That lets you out, Jinksie.

JINKS. Out of what?

HODGE. Of appearing in a moving-picture; playing the part opposite Miss Mayflower. As Eddie, the fireman, I have the privilege of rescuing Miss Mayflower from a burning building, and carrying her out of danger in my arms. (*Crosses to MIMI*)

Miss Mayflower, may I walk beside you to the studio?

MIMI. (*Thrown off her balance for a moment*) Why—why, I presume it is time to go. (*Starts slowly toward door L. HODGE accompanying her*)

JINKS. (*Frantic, as HODGE opens door for MIMI to pass out*) Wait a minute, everybody, please! (*Goes up to HODGE and draws him toward c. in spite of himself*) Hodge, my dear old pill—I mean pal—I congratulate you upon becoming a Movie actor on such short notice! Especially in Miss Mayflower's company! You're a lucky dog. I congratulate you again! (*He wrings hand of HODGE repeatedly, HODGE writhing in discomfort*)

HODGE. (*Nurses his fingers*) Oh, I do put one over on you once in a while, friend Jinksie!

JINKS. (*Rushes over and grabs BLOOMER by the hand*) Mr. Bloomer, I congratulate you. You made no mistake in engaging Mr. Hodge for the part. He was great in our late college performance of Julius Cæsar.

HODGE. Thanks, Jinksie.

JINKS. Don't mention it. (*Tries to grab HODGE by the hand again, but HODGE gets away*)

BLOOMER. What part did he play?

JINKS. He played the forum. Everybody stepped on him.

HODGE. (*Enraged*) Well, if I did only act as prompter, I was at least heard, while you didn't have a chance to play even the torn place in Cæsar's toga—not even the rent the envious Casca made!

JINKS. Well, if I didn't *play* the rent, I *pay* it, Hodge. And from what I learn from your roommate—but there, we won't talk about it. And I assure you, Miss Mayflower, that Mr. Hodge will be very earnest and conscientious in all he does—especially if any love making is required. Ask any girl at the Sem. So if you are only brave enough to

permit him to attempt to carry you down that ladder with his bad knee——

MIMI. (*Turns back at door, to great discomfiture of HODGE*) Bad knee?

BLOOMER. (*Half way out of door, returns. Speaks with alarm*) What's that? Bad knee?

HODGE. Bad—I say, Jinks, what the dickens——

BEDELIA. Oh, was it your *knee* that made you stop talking so early last night? I thought something was the matter.

HODGE. (*To BEDELIA*) No, it wasn't. (*Furiously, to JINKS*) There's nothing ails my knee.

JINKS. (*With pretended regret*) I'm sorry I mentioned it, if you're sensitive about it. (*To MIMI, with great pretense of sincerity*) If half way down the ladder he lets you fall, it won't be his fault. He's very earnest and conscientious, and in spite of his bum knee, he——

HODGE. (*Fairly foaming at the mouth*) You take that back!

JINKS. Very well. Then you're *not* earnest and conscientious, if you're going to get peeved over it.

BLOOMER. We're losing valuable time here, and the company is assembled for rehearsal, Miss Mayflower.

MIMI. I know—but if half way down that ladder Mr. Hodge *should* be compelled to drop me on account of his lame knee——

HODGE. But Mr. Bloomer realizes that I *haven't* any lame knee—that it's all bunkum.

MIMI. Well, I don't know know what "bunkum" is, but if you have it in your knee, you might drop me just the same.

HODGE. Now, Miss Mayflower, that's unjust. I insist upon it that my knee——

JINKS. *Why* keep insisting on your knee? This is no anatomy class.

HODGE. (*To JINKS*) Look here! You can't

interfere with me like this. I demand that you take it back.

JINKS. (*Innocently*) Take what back?

HODGE. What you said about my knee.

JINKS. Your knee?

HODGE. Yes, my knee. Take it back!

JINKS. I don't want your knee. I have two perfectly good ones of my own. (*Looks toward MIMI*) And climbing ladders is one of my pastimes.

MIMI. Oh, do you mean you think you might overcome your bashfulness after all?

JINKS. I'm willing to try.

HODGE. Jinks, this isn't fair!

MIMI. (*To JINKS*) And do you really consent to play the part? You're not joking? Mr. Hodge said you were out in the country, but that you wouldn't think of such a thing even if you were here.

JINKS. That's Hodge's idea of being fair. And as for the part of Eddie, the fireman, I feel I was just born for it.

MIMI. Then you're excused, Mr. Hodge.

BLOOMER. (*Sorry for HODGE*) Oh, we might need an extra fireman, Miss Mayflower, if Mr. Hodge doesn't object to taking a very small part.

HODGE. (*Heatedly*) I *do* object. No I don't either. I'll take it, just to prove to Miss Mayflower that there's nothing the matter with my knee!

MIMI. I'm sure I hope there isn't, Mr. Hodge.

BLOOMER. Well, well, last call for the dining-car—come along everybody! We've burned up a hundred dollars worth of time by this delay. (*Exits L.*)

JINKS. (*Gathers hat from chair and walks along beside MIMI, very chummily*) Strange that I should meet you just after reading a glowing account of you in one of the Moving Picture magazines. Someday I hope to see a notice of you in the liveliest little paper in the U. S. A.

MIMI. Thank you. Which one is that?

JINKS. The Wurtsboro Gazette. (*They walk toward door L.*) Hodge can tell you all about it. He's so crazy over it he tried to steal my copy of it and— (*Still talking, exits with MIMI L. HODGE stands, fists clenched, looking after them*)

BEDELIA. Don't look so downcast, Mr. Hodge. I'll walk over to the studio with you. I'm more interested in hearing about football than ever now, for I'm sure you must have been one of those three-quarter backs or something when you hurt your knee!

HODGE. (*Grinning sarcastically*) How did you guess it? Ha, ha, ha! (*They follow MIMI and JINKS off L.*

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

TIME:—*The same afternoon.*

SCENE:—*A parlor in the Hoosic Hotel. Conventional furnishings. Sofa L. Table and chairs at R. Pictures and ornaments ad lib. Doors R., L. and C., as in ACT I. Mantelpiece R. Curtains of door C. are drawn, revealing hall backing.*

DISCOVERED:—BEDELIA, in elaborate afternoon gown and hat, sitting by MIMI on the sofa. MIMI's hair is down, and she is dressed in picturesque tatters.

BEDELIA. Oh, I'm so glad I telegraphed Ma I wouldn't be back in Wurtsboro until to-morrow! Seeing you act before a camera is so fascinating I just can't tear myself away. I don't see why such

a life of excitement doesn't kill you, Mimi! But then it's such fun it's worth dying for! I almost imagined it was a real fire Hi Jinks was plunging through to save your life, instead of just an imitation one. And oh, but you're sweet in that lovely ragged gown!

MIMI. (*Rises, walks to c. and turns around slowly to exhibit the costume*) You like it? I'm so glad! You see, I designed the torn places myself. I wanted to be certain the holes looked artistic. Naturally when one is rescued, one becomes terribly mussed up, and I'm nothing if not realistic. Did my hair hang gracefully over Mr. Jinks's arm as he carried me down the ladder?

BEDELIA. Just like an advertisement in a hair store! And wasn't it thrilling when Hiram skipped a rung and nearly let you fall?

MIMI. Most too thrilling! I banged my crazy bone against the side of the ladder and almost forgot I was unconscious. I don't know anything on earth as conscious as your crazy bone when you bang it. Didn't Mr. Jinks look perfectly stunning in that fireman's get-up?

BEDELIA. Yes, only he kept tickling his Adam's apple, trying to arrange a four-in-hand that wasn't there. He couldn't seem to remember that it wasn't there. Didn't the idea of his carrying you down that ladder scare you?

MIMI. Not at all. I really enjoyed it. He has such a comfortable way of putting his arm around a girl when he rescues her! (*Sighs unconsciously*) I think he must have rescued others before he met me.

BEDELIA. Oh, no! He said this was his first experience in Moving Pictures.

MIMI. (*Thoughtfully*) Perhaps—in Moving Pictures. Well, anyhow, I felt so snug and safe in his arms, I shouldn't have minded it at all if the ladder had been a mile long.

BEDELIA. Mercy, Mimi! You're not falling in love with Hi Jinks, I hope?

MIMI. What an absurd idea!

BEDELIA. I should say so.

MIMI. (*Indignantly*) What's absurd about it, I should like to know? Of course I'm not falling in love with him, but why shouldn't I if I felt like it?

BEDELIA. Didn't you tell me not half an hour ago that you were engaged to a stock-broker by the name of Nash?

MIMI. (*With a start*) That's so. I am. (*Sighs*) But he's the hardest person to remember I know anything about.

BEDELIA. And Hiram Jinks has always been engaged to a girl by the name of Evangeline Slater in Wurtsboro.

MIMI. I might have known it. There's always an Evangeline somewhere in the background if one meets a good-looking boy. What kind of a girl is she, Bedelia?

BEDELIA. Well, she's the kind of a girl nobody can say a word against.

MIMI. How awful!

BEDELIA. She'll lead Hiram around by the nose for his own good all his life.

MIMI. I don't know her, but I dislike her exceedingly. Oh, dear me! I do hope I'll be a success in this picture. If I am it will mean a five year contract at a great big salary for me; and if I get it, and don't have to fall back into being dependent on my step-mother any more, maybe it will give me courage to break off my engagement.

BEDELIA. Why, what has Mr. Nash done that you want to break with him?

MIMI. Absolutely nothing. He's proper to the last degree in all he does and says and wears. He's not a bit like that wild, crazy Hiram Jinks. Maybe it's because I'm sort of wild and crazy myself that

I like the Jinks kind better. It's a case of birds of a feather, I suppose. Nash hasn't any feathers—he's bald!

BEDELIA But he has money to feather a nest, and Mama says those are the most important feathers of all, and that if a girl has stacks and stacks of pretty gowns and hats to think about, it helps her keep her mind off the man she's married to.

BLOOMER. (*Begins to speak off R., and enters still talking, followed by HIRAM JINKS and TOM HODGE, both dressed as firemen, except that JINKS wears a helmet while HODGE wears a cap*) Come right in, boys. I've engaged this hotel parlor for the special use of the company while here.

MIMI. (*Advances, and speaks to HODGE and JINKS very graciously*) You did splendidly, both of you. I'm sorry you can't travel with the company right along.

JINKS. If my Alma Mater didn't have me hitched to her apron strings for the next year and a half, I'd make you prove your words, Miss Mayflower.

HODGE. Was my comedy all right?

MIMI. Fine!

HODGE. (*Sarcastically*) You didn't see that my lame knee interfered any, did you?

MIMI. I never would have known there was anything the matter with it.

HODGE. (*Hastily*) But there isn't.

BEDELIA. Anyhow it's no disgrace, Mr. Hodge.

HODGE. For heaven's sake, Miss Mayflower, you don't still think my knee——

JINKS. (*Interrupting*) That knee again! Always back to his sore spot!

HODGE. (*Turns on him, fiercely*) It's not a sore spot.

JINKS. Then why keep on talking about it? When do I have that next scene with you, Miss Mayflower?

MIMI. We're having the hospital set put in place now.

BLOOMER. It ought to be ready in half an hour.

HODGE. (*To BLOOMER*) Anything more for me to do?

BLOOMER. I believe not, Mr. Hodge. Though you might hang around a bit if you care to after you see our treasurer. You can call on him any time now.

JINKS. And don't stop to tell him about your knee, Hodge. He's a very busy man.

HODGE. I'll give you a few troubles of your own to think about before I'm through with you, friend Jinks.

MIMI. (*Offers HODGE her hand*) Thank you so much for helping us out.

HODGE. (*Bows over her hand*) It was a pleasure.

BLOOMER. We might see how they're getting along with that hospital set, Miss Mayflower.

MIMI. Yes, for I've a few suggestions to make. Come along Bedelia. Oh, would you care to come too, Mr. Jinks?

JINKS. I should say so. Mr. Bloomer says I have some real acting to do in that hospital scene.

HODGE. (*As BLOOMER, BEDELIA, MIMI and JINKS near door L.*) Then heaven help the hospital scene!

JINKS. Hodge, you're getting peevish. It's time you went home and nursed your knee. (*Exits L., following BLOOMER, MIMI and BEDELIA, as HODGE stands frowning, staring after JINKS, HENRY and GEORGE enter R.*)

HENRY. Hello, Tom! We've been looking for you everywhere. Is it true that our Glee Club— (*HODGE, still scowling, turns toward him*) But say—what's the funeral?

HODGE. Jinks, as usual. He's not only acting in this picture play, but running the whole company and bossing Bloomer, the director, as well. I didn't

know that the special comedy stunt they asked me to do was suggested by Jinks, or I wouldn't have agreed to it.

HENRY. What comedy stunt?

HODGE. Why, after I'd nearly broken my back to prove I could come down a ladder carrying a bundle that weighed as much as Miss Mayflower, it seems that Jinks suggested I might supply a touch of comedy by carrying down the fat woman of the company, after he had rescued the leading lady.

HENRY. I saw that fat woman out there in the corridor. She was so wide you had to jump over her head to pass her.

GEORGE. You didn't actually carry her down a ladder?

HODGE. I did. I felt like an imitation of Atlas. Just as we reached the foot of the ladder I stumbled. She fell on me and broke my wrist watch and two ribs. (*Feels his side*) Maybe three. I haven't had time to count. With this added insult, do you wonder I yearn to get even with Jinksie?

GEORGE. Speaking of Jinksie reminds me of Wurtsboro, and speaking of Wurtsboro—Say, is it true that the Hoosic Glee Club is to sing there?

HODGE. (*With air of satisfaction*) Yes, I landed the Wurtsboro date all right.

GEORGE. What for? It must be a rotten season.

HENRY. Never mind, George. It's one place where they will stand for us, and no danger of a machine-gun loaded with eggs.

HODGE. Wurtsboro is necessary to my scheme for revenge on Jinksie.

GEORGE. Who's hiring us? The Epworth League, or the Y. W. C. A.?

HODGE. Pomona Grange Number 13606. We're just a side attraction.

HENRY. Does that 13606 mean there are that many granges in the country?

HODGE. No, that's just part of the regalia. A

big number probably impresses the corn-fed neophyte terribly. They wrote me a letter long enough for a yearly report. Listen to this section of it: (*Reads*)

“We note that you have a song on your program entitled: ‘Drink to me only with thine eyes.’ We want you to understand that Wurtsboro is a hard and fast prohibition town, and we can’t have that song, and furthermore there isn’t going to be no drinking and carousing on the street. I’d also appreciate it if your singers patronize my drug-store for sody while in our midst. I also sell coca crawly. You can’t get no cheaper no where, and remember I done you a good turn with the committee, or they’d have engaged that troupe of New Jersey Yodlers instead.

Yours truly,
Job Turnbull.”

Now will you be good?

HENRY. I suppose Jinksie will be tickled silly when we appear in his own little village in the dale, where the mocking bird singeth of coca crawly.

HODGE. Have you ever noticed how the right fellow always comes from the right place? Jinksie’s kind is never happy outside the alfalfa belt. The Jinkses are peculiar to the Wurtsboros.

GEORGE. It’s like the little boy that just *had* to be named “Clarence.”

HODGE. (*Chanting joyously*) Never mind! We’re going to Wurtsboro! I don’t ask you fellows to help. I’ll get Jinksie for myself.

GEORGE. Get him—how?

HODGE. Mum’s the word, but a story for the Wurtsboro Gazette came to me while I was watching him in that Movie fire scene. Before we sing in his Rube town, I’m going to write him up as the heroic life saver in a real fire—make a lot of his being from

Wurtsboro, you know—so that when the home folks read it they'll delegate themselves a committee of welcome to make a fuss over him at sight; and all that sort of thing. Of course when Jinksie comes face to face with the triumphal procession, he'll have to own up there's nothing to it, and that he was only a very bad actor in a Moving Picture fire. You can imagine how that will go down with Jinksie.

GEORGE. (*Dubiously*) Say, but that's dangerous, rather, Hodge!

HODGE. Why?

GEORGE. Old man Jinks is religiously opposed to Moving Pictures. He's apt to take Jinksie out of college and set him to digging up mushrooms for acting in one.

HODGE. I can't imagine a more fitting job for Jinksie than digging up mushrooms. Just wait until I get it written out!

GEORGE. What's the difference between golf links and a link of sausage? Wurtsboro!

HODGE. (*Laughingly*) Chase yourself! (*Makes a pass at GEORGE who runs off R.*)

HENRY. He's worse than Jinksie. (*HODGE and HENRY run off R., following GEORGE*)

(*Enter MIMI L. followed by JINKS and BEDELIA*)

BEDELIA. Oh, Hiram, it just seems too bad that I can't tell the Wurtsboro folks about your acting when I get back!

JINKS. Don't dally with the temptation. You know dad!

BEDELIA. I should say I did. He's been circulating a petition, lately, to forbid any Moving Picture shows in the town-hall—and it's about the only excitement there is in Wurtsboro these days.

JINKS. Don't talk about it, Bedie. I'm going to pieces rapidly as it is without being reminded of Dad. Miss Mayflower, when I think of that scene I've

got to tackle next, when I don't know any more about real acting than a brindle pup, I'd like to run up one side a hill, and roll down the other, and drop into a deep, deep ditch.

MIMI. (*With surprise*) Why, Mr. Jinks, you're not suffering from stage fright, I hope?

JINKS. (*Tragically*) Suffering doesn't express it. My young forehead perspires, my young bones feel like the bones of a total stranger, and my young hair is doing that fretful porcupine thing. If that is what is known as stage-fright—I'm it. I wouldn't let Hodge and the other fellows catch on to it for a farm, but the fact is that under-side I really am the bashful Rube they said I was. My knees are playing castanets at this moment.

BEDELIA. *You* bashful, Hiram Poynter Jinks? It will take me three years to believe it.

MIMI. (*Reassuringly*) And the worst is over. You don't have to bring me down a ladder again.

JINKS. That was athletics and easy. It wasn't acting. When I think of that next scene where I have to make love to you—(*Puts his hand to his heart, while his knees strike together*)

MIMI. I'm sorry making love to me impresses you as being so difficult.

JINKS. It isn't the making love so much as it is—

MIMI. (*Speaks in*) The lady playing the opposite part. Thank you.

JINKS. (*Plunged into confusion*) I never said that. I said—that is I *started* to say—What *did* I start to say? Anyhow, that wasn't it? (*Remembers*) Oh, yes—why, it's the bellowing director, and the critical company, and the awful, inescapable eye of the camera that shake my nerve. I could make love to you privately without a tremor.

BEDELIA. Oh, Hiram's had lots of practice in parlor love scenes!

JINKS. (*Testily*) Don't victrola my home life to the whole world, Bedelia.

BEDELIA. Well, I can't understand why you should be so afraid of Mimi even if it is before a crowd. Oh, mercy, where did I drop my vanity-bag? It's so becoming to this gown, and suppose some one should step on it! Back in a minute. I'll look for it. (*Runs off L.*)

MIMI. So you're afraid of me! Am I so very terrible?

JINKS. Terrible enough that I've had to look at my watch every few minutes, ever since we met.

MIMI. Your watch? Why?

JINKS. To get square with my conscience for forgetting the girl inside of it.

MIMI. (*As he opens watch and looks inside of it*) Oh, if your conscience is adding anything to your stage fright, I can tell you something to put you quite at ease. I'm engaged and carry somebody's picture too, here in my locket. So you see I'm just as harmless as you are.

JINKS. Engaged? You engaged? I never suspected it for a moment. I—I don't think it's becoming to you somehow.

MIMI. (*Looks at him coquettishly*) Don't you?

JINKS. Where's that confounded watch? (*Produces it hastily and stares fixedly at the picture inside.*)

MIMI. (*Opens locket at the end of her chain*) Want to see the man in my locket?

JINKS. (*Impulsively*) No! (*More politely*) I mean, yes. Deeply interested, of course! (*MIMI detaches locket from chain. JINKS extends watch toward MIMI*) Want to see her?

MIMI. (*Passes locket to JINKS and receives his watch in return*) I shall be delighted.

JINKS. (*Stares at face in locket. Chokes over attempt to be complimentary*) Pleasant expression.

MIMI. (*Who has been looking intently at the picture in watch*) Yes, isn't she? (*They exchange*

property again, each sighing unconsciously after doing so)

BEDELIA. (*Bounds in L., swinging vanity-bag*) Found it! One of the stage hands picked it up off the ground. Oh, that room in the hospital is so realistic it makes you quite ill to look at it!

JINKS. (*Drops back into stage-fright*) I'm ill *without* looking at it.

MIMI. Suppose we run over that next scene, Mr. Jinks. Then you'll feel more at ease in public.

JINKS. (*Sadly*) Oh, thank you, Miss Mayflower, but I shall never feel at ease again!

MIMI. Now, when you make your entrance from R., you find me kneeling here by my sister's bedside in the hospital.

BEDELIA. Oh, and won't you pretend I'm the bedside, I mean the hospital—sister, I mean! Just for this rehearsal? To act in the Movies for a minute would be such fun!

MIMI. Well, then, you are my badly injured sister, and that is the cot on which you are lying. (*Indicates sofa at L.*)

BEDELIA. (*Runs and sits on sofa, bouncing up and down delightedly*) Oh, what fun!

MIMI. You don't bounce after you are badly burned, Bedelia. Try to use your imagination.

BEDELIA. (*Quiets down, suppressed*) Oh, am I dead? (*Stares inquiringly at MIMI, her mouth open*)

MIMI. You have that appearance, I must say.

BEDELIA. (*Lies flat on the sofa*) Very well, then, maybe this suits you better. (*Closes her eyes*) Does it? Do I look more like a dead one now?

MIMI. You can't talk, Bedelia, you are unconscious.

JINKS. That doesn't make any difference to Bedelia—she talks just the same.

MIMI. (*Stands at side of the prostrate BEDELIA, explaining the scene to her very carefully*) When I

plead with you to come to life, you slowly and painfully regain your senses, finally recognizing me. Then Eddie, the fireman,—(*To JINKS, standing at R.*) that's you,—reverently removes his helmet.

JINKS. (*Shakily*) Honest to John Brown's body, I could almost wish this part on Hodge!

MIMI. Nonsense!

JINKS. I was born for home and the fireside.

MIMI. (*To BEDELIA*) Now I am kneeling at your side, (*Kneels by BEDELIA*) not knowing or suspecting that Eddie the fireman is in the background listening while I tell you how brave he is.

JINKS. And what do I do with my hands and feet while you're telling how brave I am?

MIMI. Forget you have any.

JINKS. I can't. They hurt.

BEDELIA. (*Keeping prostrate position on sofa, with her eyes closed, speaks faintly*) Ouch!

MIMI. Bedelia, remember that you are pathetically unconscious.

BEDELIA. How can I be with a pin jabbing my belt line. (*Wiggles*) There, I've joggled it so it quits.

MIMI. (*Rises*) I'll begin where I am admitted to the hospital ward. Of course no one can hear what anyone says in Moving Pictures, but Mr. Bloomer insists on our speaking lines at rehearsals just the same. He says it helps our acting. (*Runs across to door L. and goes outside, then slowly opens door, peering in anxiously, then enters. She tiptoes cautiously to BEDELIA'S side, and as she gets a better view of her, puts hand to heart and staggers, almost falling. Summons up her courage and advances to BEDELIA'S side again, puts hand inquiringly on her cheek, feels to see if her heart is still beating, then kneels, kissing BEDELIA'S hand. She acts the part with entire seriousness, making it as real as possible*) Sister, little sister, don't you know me? Oh, sister, I never spoke to you before when

you didn't smile at me and answer! Try, try to speak to me! Open your dear eyes to show me you're still alive and love me. You're all I have left in the world! You can't go away from me like this without one word of farewell! Don't go away from me—I can't bear it! Ah, surely it was not all in vain that midst flame and smoke and falling walls that brave fire laddie carried you out of danger's way. (JINKS, *trembling, draws in his breath with a nervous gasp, but MIMI continues unheedingly*) What's this? (She leans over BEDELIA *eagerly*) The flutter of an eyelash on your cheek? (Pauses as if for reply. BEDELIA *speaks with set jaw*)

BEDELIA. You didn't tell me to flutter.

MIMI. (*Speaks in her natural manner*) Bedelia, don't interrupt like that! You spoil the illusion entirely. (JINKS *draws in his breath still louder than before, and MIMI shows patient surprise at his continued nervousness*) And what on earth ails you, Mr. Jinks?

JINKS. (*Despairingly*) What *doesn't* ail me, you mean. Frog in my swallow. Won't go up or down. Better get to Eddie pretty soon if you want to see the poor boy alive.

MIMI. You'll be all right when you once get started. Oh, I don't know that I explained to you that you are my former sweetheart who went away thinking falsely that I was in love with another! (*Slight pause*) Well, when I realize that it is you who saved me and my sister from the fire, I embrace you out of gratitude, the old love awakens, and the scene fades out slowly with the lovers clasped in each other's arms. (*Turns back to BEDELIA. As she does so, JINKS takes off watch, lays it on a chair, and covers it with his handkerchief*) By that time you are conscious, Bedelia, and smile sweetly on our happiness. (*Turns back to JINKS*) Now, Mr. Jinks, please stand at extreme R. and don't forget the cue on

which you advance unseen. Your cue is: "My sister, you are alive; you know me!" (JINKS goes to extreme R. and stands rigidly erect. MIMI kneels again by BEDELIA) What's that? The flutter of an eyelash on your cheek? Your heart—yes, I can feel it beating! (She stops acting, and begins to give practical directions to BEDELIA) Now slowly raise your hand to your forehead; (BEDELIA quickly claps hand to forehead with a loud smack) Rise dazedly on your elbow, open your eyes, and smile upon me faintly. (BEDELIA lurches to her elbow, and, facing MIMI, mechanically stretches her mouth, displaying full row of teeth) I asked you to smile, Bedelia, not prepare to have a tooth pulled. (BEDELIA draws her lips into a narrow, mincing smile) There, that's better! More wistful. (Rises, starts back dramatically, and begins acting again) My sister, you are alive! You know me! (Looks toward JINKS remindingly, but he still stands staring stupidly into space. She raises her voice and repeats the cue with marked emphasis) My sister, you are alive! You know me!

BEDELIA. (Trying also to prompt JINKS) I'm her sister, and I'm alive, and I know her. There's nothing dead around here but Hiram Jinks.

JINKS. (Comes to himself with a start) Wh—what?

MIMI. Where on earth are you, Mr. Jinks?

JINKS. Hanged if I know. What's the matter?

MIMI. You didn't take up your cue for advancing unseen.

JINKS. (In self defense) Well, I got the "unseen" part of it all right, didn't I? (Comes to C.) Better late than never. Here I am.

MIMI. (Starts back in assumed amazement) Eddie—after all these years—you! (Speaks in natural voice) And now you begin to question me.

JINKS. About what?

MIMI. About the man you thought I was en-

gaged to. You find that I'm *not* engaged, and that it was all a mistake.

JINKS. (*Forgetting that he is acting, and betraying his personal interest in MISS MAYFLOWER*) I say, aren't you engaged to him after all? Then why have you his confounded picture in your locket? Now that I'm free to speak the truth, he's the most unpleasant looking old fat-head I ever saw; not worthy of a classy girl like you at all. I could see it at a glance! How did you ever come to say you'd have him in the first place?

MIMI. But, Mr. Jinks, those aren't proper lines for Eddie, the fireman.

JINKS. (*In consternation*) Hang Eddie! I forgot all about him.

MIMI. Well, anyhow, I realize at last that it is you and none other that has saved my sister, and fling my arms about you in gratitude! (*She advances toward JINKS. He puts out his arms and returns her embrace with fervor*)

BEDELIA. (*As they continue the embrace; rather disconsolately*) And what do I do? What happens to me?

JINKS. Don't interrupt, Bedelia—this fades out slowly!

BLOOMER. (*Enters L.*) Rehearsing, eh?

MIMI and JINKS. (*Start apart in some confusion*) Er—yes!

BLOOMER. Hm!

BEDELIA. Wasn't it realistic? I couldn't realize they were acting at all!

MIMI. Oh, Bedelia, how you do run on!

BLOOMER. Set ready, and company waiting.

JINKS. (*As BLOOMER, MIMI and BEDELIA start for door L.*) Where's my watch? (*Picks it up. Opens it, gives one mighty sigh and exits L. following the others*)

HODGE. (*Enters R., followed by HENRY and GEORGE*) Sorry, but the old grouch won't let you

see them make the picture! I tackled him twice about it, but it was no good. Say, while I was waiting to get to the treasurer, I scribbled this off. How does it strike you? (*HENRY and GEORGE come to either side of him and look at the sheet of writing in his hand*) For the Wurtsboro Weekly Gazette, previous to our concert there.

GEORGE. (*Reads part of the subject matter aloud*) "Mr. Hiram Poynter Jinks, a junior at Hoosic, and a reader of the Glee Club, covered himself with glory last night——"

HENRY. (*Interrupting*) That's too broad!

HODGE. Nothing's too broad for Wurtsboro. Go on, George.

GEORGE. (*Continues reading*) "—with glory last night, when, at the risk of his own life, he saved from the flames a number of young Seminary girls imperilled by a fire which swept through the main dormitory of Bowling Green Academy, which stands near the Hoosic campus. Young Jinks risked his life again and again in dragging the screaming and hysterical girls to safety!"

HENRY. Oh, slippery elm!

HODGE. Wurtsboro will go crazy over her noble son, and Mr. Jinks, Mrs. Jinks, and all the little Jinkses will crow themselves hoarse. Listen. (*Continues reading where GEORGE left off*) "When the fire was at its height, it was suddenly discovered that Miss Mimi Mayflower, the most beautiful girl in the Academy, was missing. Immediately the gallant youth dashed once more with intrepid fortitude into the fiery furnace——"

GEORGE and HENRY. Ha, ha, ha! (*Slap HODGE on the back. He begins to laugh also, and all three roar together*)

HODGE. (*Folds up his composition well pleased with himself*) That's as far as I've got, but the rest of it will hint at an incipient love affair between

Jinks and the fair Mimi. That will probably queer him with his real girl.

HENRY. Has he got a real girl in Wurtsboro?

GEORGE. Sure. Don't you remember, and that her name is Evangeline? That's why we made him recite "The Forest Primeval" and keep time with a rocking-horse when we initiated him.

HODGE. (*Fools with a camera he has brought in with him*) Well, I've got to leave you fellows now. If I can just manage to get a snap-shot of Jinksie and the fair Mimi together——

GEORGE. What's the idea? (*As HODGE crosses with camera to door L.*)

HODGE. (*Turns at door*) We're going to Wurtsboro, aren't we? (*Exits L.*)

HENRY. (*As he and GEORGE start for door R.*) He's bound to make trouble for Jinksie, I see that.

GEORGE. Yes, only Jinksie has such a confounded way of turning the tables on you, just when you think you've got him. (*GEORGE and HENRY exit R.*)

MIMI. (*Enters c., followed by JINKS*) I don't see where I could have left it.

JINKS. What color was your scarf.

MIMI. (*Finds and picks up a chiffon scarf from arm of sofa*) This color. Here it is! (*Picks it up and starts for L.*)

JINKS. Miss Mayflower!

MIMI. (*Pauses, rather consciously*) Well?

JINKS. I—I want to thank you for giving me an idea of that scene in advance. I—I'll remember your kindness always. You're going away to-morrow, you know, and there's no harm in telling you before we part that I feel as if I'd known you always, is there? And that I like you, like you tremendously and——

MIMI. (*Fools with scarf, embarrassed*) Oh, Mr. Jinks!

JINKS. (*Tumultuously*) Is there any harm? Is there? Where? Why?

MIMI. (*Significantly*) Will you kindly look at your watch and tell me what time it is, Mr. Jinks?

JINKS. (*Chilled, produces watch and speaks very solemnly*) It's half-past Evangeline!

MIMI. (*With equal solemnity*) That's just what I was thinking.

JINKS. What time is it by your locket?

MIMI. (*Opens locket and looks at pictured face inside of it*) Time to remember! (*Sighs convulsively, slowly goes toward L. gazing steadfastly at locket until exit, JINKS follows her to L. and off, gazing determinedly at the pictured face in his watch*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

TIME:—*Two weeks later. Early evening.*

SCENE:—*Room in town-hall, Wurtsboro. Table and chairs at R. Large vase on table. Two vases on mantelpiece. Chairs, and small stand containing receptacle for flowers at L. Door R. leads into supper-room. Doors C. and L. are outside entrances. Large placard on wall at back bearing the words: "WELCOME HOME!"*

DISCOVERED:—*Mrs. BUMPSKY, with scrubbing outfit and dust-cloth. She is wiping off legs of table at R., and singing Annie Laurie with gusto but off the key.*

EVANGELINE. (*Enters C. and regards Mrs. Bump-*

sky disapprovingly for a moment) Mrs. Bumpsky.

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*On her knees, her head under the table*) "I'd lay me doon and de-e-e!"

EVANGELINE. (*Advances into the room*) Mrs. Bumpsky, I say!

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Stops her vocal efforts and straightens up*) Oh, Miss Slater! You most made me bite my tongue comin' in so sudden. Lookin' for some one?

EVANGELINE. (*Rather ungraciously*) Of course, else why am I here? Haven't the girls come yet, any of them?

MRS. BUMPSKY. Not unless some of 'em sneaked by into the supper-room whilst I was lookin' 'tother way.

EVANGELINE. (*Opens door R., looks off, then closes door and returns to C.*) No one there but the pies and the lemons. (*Impatiently taps foot on floor*) Dear me!

MRS. BUMPSKY. Now what on earth did I do with my chewin'-gum? Oh, here it is! (*Dislodges piece of gum from under rim of table and pops it in her mouth*) Makes me so mad when I lose it.

EVANGELINE. (*Shudders*) Please don't chew your cud so audibly, Mrs. Bumpsky! I'm put out enough already. (*Half to herself*) Why should we Wurtsboro Literary Research girls call off our meeting and turn over our rooms to that Hoosic Glee Club, I'd like to know? Oh, I've a good mind to tell Thyrsa Judson what I think of her for suggesting it!

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Rises to her feet, wiping off her arms with her scrub-cloth*) Well, I'm only the janitress of this building, and my opinion ain't been asked, but I'll say free of charge that if I was a lot of Wurtsboro young ladies, I'd a thousand times rather stand round gassin' to good lookin' young men from out of town, than puttin' in my time at a

high-brow hen-party week after week discussin' books and politics and other things the female mind never did understand nor never will.

EVANGELINE. Evidently you haven't a very high opinion of our sex and the female mind, Mrs. Bumpsky.

MRS. BUMPSKY. Well, we can only judge by ourselves in this world, and my own personal mind ain't never done much for me. (*Scrubs violently*) What's the matter with this gum, I wonder? All the snap's gone clean out of it. Mebbe it's the weather. (*Chews determinedly. Scrubs again*)

EVANGELINE. (*Carelessly, as she seats herself by stand at L.*) Your "personal mind" was bright enough to catch you a husband, I believe, even if you were careless about keeping him after he was caught.

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Desisting from work to explain*) It wasn't no female intellect that caught Bumpsky, let me tell you that. It was because I laughed at his bum jokes to keep from cryin' at 'em instead; and because I wore a transformin' hair-piece he s'posed was my own till we was married and he saw it hangin' on the chandelier.

EVANGELINE. You're a primitive sort of creature, Mrs. Bumpsky, who belongs back in prehistoric times.

MRS. BUMPSKY. Never heard of the place. I was born in Newtown, New Jersey, but I belong wherever you find my scrub-pail and mop a settin'. But if I was one of you Wurtsboro girls, and didn't want to be an old maid, I'd drop my brains in the nearest ash-can and sew ruffles on my glad-rags instead. Ruffles, glad-rags and giggles is man's idea of the female angel he'd lay him doon and dee for, I tell you! (*Begins to hum Annie Laurie again as she shakes out dust-rag*)

EVANGELINE. What extremely edifying sentiments! As a type of arrested development, you interest me greatly.

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Flares up, indignantly*) Never was arrested in my life, and don't thank no one for sayin' so.

EVANGELINE. (*Laughs helplessly*) Mercy, I didn't mean anything against your character, Mrs. Bumpsky!

MRS. BUMPSKY. If you didn't, of course I'll overlook it. I ain't much on brains, but I'm strong on character! (*Feels under the back of chair*) My, I ran my hand against another wad of gum! Beats all how they turn up when you get the habit of stickin' 'em round. (*Enter EMILY and THYRZA, door L., their arms laden with flowers*)

THYRZA. Oh, how do, Evangeline! We begged your mother to let us have these flowers. Want to help decorate?

EMILY. (*EVANGELINE lifts her chin scornfully and turns away her head*) Mercy, what's the matter?

THYRZA. Yes, what *is* the matter? You look like a thunder-cloud.

EVANGELINE. Frankly, girls, I don't see why our important Browning discussion should be called off just because those Hoosic boys happen to be coming to town.

EMILY. Why, Evangeline Slater! When you're engaged to Hiram Jinks, I should think you'd be the very one who'd like to have his club drop in for refreshments!

THYRZA. It was the least we could do to show our appreciation of Hiram.

EVANGELINE. (*Puzzled*) But you were never so anxious before to show Hiram appreciation. I don't understand.

EMILY. Surely you realize it's on account of his heroism at that Hoosic fire?

EVANGELINE. (*Greatly surprised*) What Hoosic fire?

THYRZA. Good gracious, Evangeline! Why,

Hiram's thrilling bravery was the central feature in this week's Gazette!

EVANGELINE. (*Rather ashamed of herself*) I haven't seen the Gazette—I confess it. I've been visiting Professor Parker's aunt all week, and the Professor has been so busy showing me his collection of dried botanical specimens that—(*Abandons the subject and picks up a copy of the Gazette from table R.*) Where is the account of the fire? What does it say?

THYRZA. (*As EVANGELINE turns the paper over and exhibits the front page*) It's right before your eyes. Read it for yourself.

EVANGELINE. (*Impressed*) Hiram's name in big letters! And a picture of him when he wore bloomers, and a sailor collar, and his mouth open! Well, I'm glad he has done something at last to distinguish himself!

EMILY. (*Enthusiastically*) Just think! Scores of girls were entrapped by the flames on that upper floor, and everyone of them was saved through Hiram's efforts!

EVANGELINE. (*Interestedly, her eyes on the paper*) So it says! (*Looks up from paper*) I'll have to show this to Professor Parker. Confidentially, girls, he was telling me this morning that he was so afraid Hiram was not quite on my mental plane. But I feel that even the Professor must acknowledge that *this* brings him a little nearer.

THYRZA. (*Lightly sarcastic*) Some one ought to break it to Hiram that he has a rival.

EVANGELINE. (*Pleased but protesting*) Don't be foolish, Thyrsa. The Professor's friendship for me is purely scientific.

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Very significantly, though her back is turned and she is dusting mantelpiece*) Hm! (*Girls all look in her direction, but as she makes no sign they turn away again*) Of course this item hinting at a romance between Hiram and that Miss

Mayflower he rescued, is ridiculous. I shall tell the Professor that, in justice to Hiram. Give me some of those flowers, Emily. (*Emily does so, and the three girls begin to arrange flowers in the various vases*)

MRS. BUMPSKY. Excuse me, young ladies, but if them there young fellows is goin' to sing anything, would you mind askin' 'em to make it: "Comin' Through The Rye?" While I'm scrubbin' out there in the hall. (*Gestures toward door c.*) I can keep time with my brush if they do.

THYRZA. It's hardly likely they'll do any rehearsing here, Mrs. Bumpsy.

MRS. BUMPSKY. Oh, won't somebody tease 'em to sing just one little song? If anything on earth brings back my courtin' days, and makes me feel like a colt kickin' over the barnyard fence, it's that: "Should a body kiss a body comin' through the rye?" (*Gives a hysterical giggle, then chews gum rapidly*)

EMILY. (*Tries to change the subject*) I think I'll put some of these flowers in the supper-room.

MRS. BUMPSKY. I ain't above askin' for a chune myself if I meets one of 'em. (*Sings*) "Comin' up the stairs." That "if a body" just sort of ketches me in the ribs, and tickles me to death! (*Gives another hysterical laugh*)

THYRZA. (*Pointedly ignores Mrs. BUMPSKY*) Those you have arranged look very pretty, Emily.

EGANGELINE. Yes, don't they? (*Pointedly, to give Mrs. BUMPSKY a hint*) The sooner the room is in perfect order, the better.

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Continues, undisturbed*) And there's another song I like: "We are the jolly gay stujents." Say, ain't them college boys just wall-eyed temptations to the female heart anyhow? I'd marry one of 'em myself, if I wasn't already took!

EGANGELINE. (*Sternly*) It seems to me I still

see some dust on the arm of that chair, Mrs. Bumpsky.

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Takes dust cloth and goes over to chair. Stands with cloth poised in her hand and continues talking*) I just lose my mind over them big athloutic ones—all muscles! Land sakes, I've swallowed my gum! And it was the snappy kind I like best. (*Grips at the back of a chair. Smiles delightedly as she feels a dried wad of gum*) I declare, Miss Slater, I'm glad it was *this* chair you pinte'd out. Just catchin' hold of it I found another piece—(*Looks at it*) the snappy kind too! (*Puts gum in mouth; falls to and dusts chair vigorously*)

EVANGELINE. (*To THYRZA*) Do you need any help preparing the refreshments?

THYRZA. The sandwiches aren't made and the lemonade not even started.

EMILY. I'll cut the cake. (*EMILY and EVANGELINE run off door R. As THYRZA reaches it, she pauses and turns to speak to MRS. BUMPSKY*)

THYRZA. Please get through here, Mrs. Bumpsky. We don't want people stumbling over a pail of water as they come in.

MRS. BUMPSKY. It's clean water and won't hurt 'em. But I'll soon move on out into the hall. (*Exit THYRZA R. MRS. BUMPSKY, with hands on hips, looks around inquiringly*) Now what did I do with that extry piece of soap? (*Picks up pail and other belongings*)

BEDELIA. (*Sticks head in at door L.*) How do, Mrs. Bumpsky?

MRS. BUMPSKY. Oh, you're Miss Norris, ain't you? (*As BEDELIA enters*) Land, you ought to catch a feller. You're dressed as handsome as Columbia the gem of the ocean. (*Exits c. humming "Oh, Columbia the gem of the ocean."*)

BEDELIA. (*Speaks off L.*) Come in, Hiram.

They've been here decorating, but there's no one in sight now.

JINKS. (*Creeps in L., limp and forlorn, a copy of the Gazette in his hand*) You were a brick to meet me at the station, Bedelia, and put me on to this. If you hadn't headed me off from going on up to the hotel with the other fellows, I shouldn't have known a thing about it. (*Points to Gazette article*) I couldn't understand from Miss Judson's note what it was the girls wanted to congratulate me about when I got to Wurtsboro, but now I know. (*Reads*) "Hiram Jinks a hero." I feel as heroic—just about—as a dog with a tin-can tied to his tail.

BEDELIA. I couldn't contradict the Gazette, Hiram for of course I never breathed a word to anyone about your substituting in that Moving Picture for fear it would get to your father. So the girls all think it was a real fire, and that you proved yourself to be the bravest thing that ever happened. (*Points to "Welcome" placard on wall*) Look at that placard. That's for you. And the girls are ready to fling roses in your pathway the moment they catch sight of you.

JINKS. I never appreciated the delights of obscurity until now. I've got to refuse the roses, and hand out a basket of eggs to be thrown at me instead. Bedelia, it's tough! I always disliked eggs. They make me bilious.

BEDELIA. Who wrote the thing anyhow?

JINKS. Tom Hodge. It bears his unmistakable ear-marks. Large ears make large marks, and it's spread all over the page.

BEDELIA. (*In surprise*) Mr. Hodge? Why, I should think if he wrote about anything it ought to be foot-ball, followed by his personal experiences.

JINKS. You're mistaken. If Hodge wrote about anything it ought to be suicide, followed by his personal example. He was crazy to meet the Wurts-

boro girls, he said. Now I know why. It was to see me fall off the pedestal they've placed me on and sustain a compound fracture of the neck.

MRS. ROGERS. (*Appears at c.*) Oh, Mr. Jinks. So glad I caught up with you! I just got the note you left at the Gazette office on your way from the Station. It has upset me terribly. I can hardly believe yet that anyone would dare impose upon the columns of my husband's paper like that!

JINKS. Nobody would but the smart Elik that did, Mrs. Rogers.

MRS. ROGERS. Why I regret it all particularly is that I accepted the notice in Mr. Rogers' absence. He's running for State senator and is away making speeches, you know, and I've acted as editor in his place; and just see what a terrible error of judgment it was for me to print that sensational thing without ever attempting to verify it!

JINKS. Nobody can blame the Gazette after they know the truth, and I promise you this whole town will have the straight of the story before night.

MRS. ROGERS. (*Frantically*) Oh, but they mustn't!

JINKS. (*In amazement*) What?

MRS. ROGERS. Oh, Mr. Jinks, just before the election like this, if my husband's opponents can accuse his paper of being sensational and unreliable, printing news only to recall it again—don't you see it might defeat him for the Legislature, and through no mistake of his own?

JINKS. (*Slowly, thoughtfully*) What? You don't mean you want me to be a hero in spite of myself, and let the story stand?

MRS. ROGERS. (*Earnestly*) Just for a couple of days—until after it's too late for them to attack the Gazette. Then you can tell the whole world if you like, and of course the Gazette will come out with a full explanation. Oh, harmless as an edi-

torial mistake might seem at another time, there's no telling what disastrous consequences it might have if discovered now! Please, please, Mr. Jinks, refrain from contradicting the story—just for a couple of days. Promise me you will.

BEDELIA. (*Puts her arm sympathetically about MRS. ROGERS*) Do, Hiram! It's all right to let it stand for such a little while. Anyhow, the girls would be awfully disappointed to find out you're not a hero after all, when they've made sandwiches and fudge on purpose to reward you.

JINKS. (*With a dawning grin*) It wouldn't be a bad scheme to throw a bluff and make Friend Hodge eat his own words if I could get away with it. But when people began to question me about the fire—(*Shakes his head dubiously*)

MRS. ROGERS. Surely you can evade them! Say you don't like to talk about it—refer them to the Gazette.

BEDELIA. Yes! write it down on your cuff if you're afraid you can't remember it: "I don't like to talk about it. I refer you to the Gazette."

JINKS. But it's sailing under false colors, Bedelia—Hodge's colors, and I never did like his taste in tints. He's the worst man to borrow neckties from I know anything about.

MRS. ROGERS. Oh, of course I don't like to ask you to sail under false colors, but when I think how proud my husband was over his nomination and that I—(*Chokes, puts handkerchief to lips and is about to burst into tears*)

JINKS. (*Overcome by her display of emotion*) Don't cry, Mrs. Rogers. Hodge created a hero; now let him walk in the procession behind him.

MRS. ROGERS. (*Eagerly*) You mean?

JINKS. I mean I'll undertake it.

MRS. ROGERS. (*Overjoyed*) How can I ever thank you?

JINKS. Don't! I may fall down on it so hard

they'll have to send for an ambulance. But I'll try to head Hodge off the subject of the fire by inundating him with a flow of language large enough to drown him. (*Chorus of laughter heard from off R.*)

BEDELIA. Sh! Some of the girls are there in the supper-room!

JINKS. (*Beckoning BEDELIA and MRS. ROGERS*) Draw hither, fellow conspirators! (*They draw close and JINKS begins to talk almost inaudibly. EVANGELINE opens door R. and catches sight of the group*) Of course there will be some of the other fellows who may try to stand in with Hodge on giving me the merry ha! ha! and I've got to be prepared for that situation too.

EVANGELINE. (*Rather unpleasantly*) I hope I do not disturb a confidential conversation.

JINKS. (*Embarrassed but game*) Why, how do you do, Evangeline? Not at all. (*Goes up and shakes her by both hands*)

MRS. ROGERS. (*A bit confused*) We were just talking about—(*Pauses awkwardly*)

JINKS. That's right—just talking about—(*Is unable to proceed*)

BEDELIA. (*Airily*) So you see, Evangeline, you were really not disturbing anything at all.

EVANGELINE. (*Looking from one to the other rather suspiciously*) Hm!

BEDELIA. (*In nervous fear of further questioning by Evangeline*) Mrs. Rogers, I'll walk with you as far as the drug-store. I feel like a Sundae.

MRS. ROGERS. (*Bows to JINKS and EVANGELINE, who return the courtesy*) Good-afternoon.

JINKS and EVANGELINE. Good-afternoon. (*Exit MRS. ROGERS and BEDELIA, L.*)

EVANGELINE. That's right—stand out here and talk with just anybody instead of trying to find me! For many reasons, Hiram, this Hoosic fire didn't happen any too soon.

JINKS. Excuse me a minute while I make a

memorandum. (*Takes lead-pencil and begins to scribble on his cuff*)

EVANGELINE. It's high time you did something to redeem yourself.

JINKS. Redeem myself? I didn't know I was in pawn.

EVANGELINE. There you go again, rattling off off those foolish college-boy replies. You haven't written me twice a day as I asked you to, nor shown the slightest realization that there may be other men willing to write me ardent and poetic letters even if you aren't, and then, when you *do* write, it's just ordinary happenings without one word of this important one that's come out in the Gazette! That Hoosic fire, I mean.

JINKS. (*Stutters, consciously*) Y—you read about it in the Gazette?

EVANGELINE. Of course. Isn't it full of it?

JINKS. So full it's a jag.

EVANGELINE. I don't see why you didn't let me know about it instantly, instead of leaving me to hear it from some one else.

JINKS. Well, the fact is, EVANGELINE—(*Glances at his cuff*) I don't like to talk about it.

EVANGELINE. You look dreadfully tired and worried somehow. What's on your mind?

JINKS. I refer you to the Gazette. No—I mean—I—well, I—I did a lot of thinking on the train, Evangeline, thinking of—thinking of—Wurstboro—and home, and everybody. I kept looking out of the window and counting the mile posts as they flashed by like—er—like love-knots in a rope of pearls. The pearls were—were cows—(*He and EVANGELINE are now seated at either side of table R. and he leans across it sentimentally*) it all—reminded me of you, Evangeline, I don't know why.

EVANGELINE. (*Gives a sarcastic little smile, and sighs heavily*) Professor Parker remarked to me this morning that the gift of eloquence can not be

acquired, it must come natural. I'm beginning to think he is right.

JINKS. Oh, it's entirely natural with me. Fr—where was I?

EVANGELINE. You were with the cows on a rope of pearls. The Professor is a wonderful critic. Go on, Hiram.

JINKS. And as I was saying, I was homesick. In some of the towns we passed, Evangeline, there were tin-can factories, and I couldn't help thinking—I suppose it was foolish——

EVANGELINE. (*Softly, not averse to a sentimental speech from JINKS*) Oh, I shouldn't call it foolish if I were you. What was it?

JINKS. (*Bursts forth impetuously*) I couldn't help thinking that they weren't half as big, and didn't have half as many chimneys as our tin-can factory in Wurtsboro.

EVANGELINE. (*Disappointedlly addressing space*) It cannot be acquired—the Professor was right!

JINKS. (*Testily*) You know I wouldn't mind at all if you introduced me to that Professor sometime, Evangeline. I feel that when we parted there might be only one of us to say good-bye.

EVANGELINE. Well, and after you had counted the chimneys, what then?

JINKS. Then, we arrived. I jumped off the train at the station—not on one side of it, nor the other side of it, but right *at* it, you know—Where *was* I?

EVANGELINE. (*With soft sarcasm*) Where you landed, I suppose.

JINKS. Oh, yes! And there stood old Elmer Hankins—half drunk, to be sure, but the same dear old Elmer!

EVANGELINE. I hate to contradict you, but dear old Elmer is dead.

JINKS. (*Discomfited*) Eh? You don't mean to tell me that wasn't Elmer after all? I didn't stop to shake hands with him. I just said: "Elmer,

I'll see you later." Of course I didn't know he was dead, or I wouldn't have promised to see him later. The joke's on me.

EVANGELINE. (*Springs up indignantly*) Hiram Poynter Jinks, if that is the best conversation you are capable of when you haven't seen a girl for months and months, I'm sorry for you, that's all! And for myself!

JINKS. (*Appealingly*) I'm rattled to-day, Evangeline. I've got something on my mind—that has to be met and conquered this evening, and if you'd just pat me on the back a little for a change, and try to brace me up——

EVANGELINE. Something on your mind that has to be conquered, you say? Does that mean your conscience hurts you for thinking of some other girl instead of me?

JINKS. (*Despairingly*) Is this the thirteenth month in the year, or the first of April, or what? Guess I'll run up to the hotel for a shave, and come back with the other boys. (*Starts for door L.*)

EVANGELINE. (*Agitatedly*) Wait! You don't deny it, I notice? The other girl, I mean?

JINKS. But she was engaged to some one else, Evangeline, and it's all over. And I looked at your picture in my watch to help me remember you—kept on looking at it, and that isn't what I was talking about anyhow.

EVANGELINE. But it's what *I'm* talking about. Oh, Professor Parker said it would all come to this some day with your temperament, but I refused to believe him! What's her name? Don't dare to mention it! I refuse to sully my ears by listening. How dare you think of another girl when you're engaged to me? Oh, for the sake of appearances we'll act before the others as if nothing had happened, but before I can ever trust in you again, you'll have to get down on your knees to me and remain there

years, and years, and years! (*Exits R. tumultuously*)

(JINKS, *left alone, rubs his knees ruefully, first one, then the other*)

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Runs into him as he starts to Exit L.*) Excuse me, but are you one of them Glee Club visitors?

JINKS. Don't say "glee" to me, Madam, say gloom.

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Advances, a scrubbing-brush in one hand and a rag in the other*) Because if you are, won't you tell 'em a poor grass widow wants 'em to sing "Comin' through the rye?"

JINKS. We can't sing "Coming through the rye," in this town—it's prohibition. We *might* warble "Skating on the sky," but it's too high for our tenor.

MRS. BUMPSKY. It's a world of disappointment, ain't it? If it wasn't for chewin'-gum, life wouldn't be worth the livin'. (*Starts to exit C. but meets MIMI in doorway*) 'Scuse me, I nearly bumped you.

MIMI. (*Turns toward JINKS*) Certainly. Oh, Mr. Jinks, Bedelia said I'd find you here. (*Comes down and gives him her hand*)

JINKS. (*Amazed*) Miss Mimi Mayflower, in Wurtsboro? Can I believe my eyes?

MIMI. (*Laughingly*) If they're in the habit of telling you the truth.

MRS. BUMPSKY. (*Who has never taken her eyes off MIMI*) Oh, 'tain't polite for me to interrupt, but would you mind tellin' me, Miss, if you're one of them cinnamon-photograph young ladies like I paid a nickel to see over to Fairfield last night?

MIMI. (*Laughs*) While I'm in Wurtsboro, Madam, I'm not a "cinnamon" anything.

MRS. BUMPSKY. Well, you certainly do look it! You'd be grand in one of them Movin' pictures

where your eyes are the size of dishpans and your face as big as the side of the house. "Closed up," they call 'em. Next to chewin'-gum, give me Movin' Pictures! (*Exits L.*)

JINKS. (*To MIMI*) I'm dreaming. I know I am. This isn't you?

MIMI. Yes, but it is! Bedelia wrote me you'd be passing through Wurtsboro, and the Paradise Multiple Reel Unsurpassed Screen Favorites Company sent me down all the way from New York to intercept you on account of the hit you made as Eddie, the fireman.

JINKS. Now please don't guy me like that, Miss Mayflower! Have mercy!

MIMI. They said you were so funny in the hospital scene they cried tears of joy!

JINKS. (*Unbelievably*) Funny? Why, it was tragedy! I was scared blind and on the verge of paresis!

MIMI. Of course you didn't *mean* to be funny, but you *were*.

JINKS. (*Ruefully*) And did they send you here to sue me for damages?

MIMI. On the contrary, they were so enraptured over your comedy, they wish to engage you again during your next vacation. They insist you shall run down to New York to talk things over with them.

JINKS. (*Backs away, suspiciously*) Nay, Nay! They want to lure me into their presence, and shoot me at sunrise. I know! They can't fool Eddie the fireman.

MIMI. (*Coaxingly*) Really, Mr. Jinks, they want you. And at a Broadway salary too! (*Draws folded paper from the bag she carries*) Here's the contract, with a blank space for your name. We picturize so beautifully together! Right here is where you sign. (*Back of table R. places contract*

upon it. She and JINKS lean over to read the terms of contract)

JINKS. (*Softly, his cheek almost touching hers*) That contract goes to my head!

MIMI. (*Softly, pointing to foot of contract*) Does it? Here's where you write your name?

JINKS. Where? (*Their hands descend upon paper at the same moment. Involuntarily JINKS'S fingers close over hers*) Mimi!

MIMI. (*In confusion draws her hand away*) Mr. Jinks!

JINKS. (*With emotion*) You see, little girl, it won't do. I couldn't have my watch strapped to the palm of my hand *all* the time we were rehearsing, you know, it wouldn't be practical. And the girl inside the watch is angry at me now; says the only way I can square myself is to go down on my knees and stay there years, and years, and years.

MIMI. I don't think the position would be becoming to you at all, Mr. Jinks. But of course if the girl has a jealous nature—(*Sighs*) But perhaps it is just as well. Nash is jealous too.

JINKS. (*Very jealous*) It's contemptible in a man to be jealous. There's something about the very mention of Nash's name that makes me sick.

MIMI. (*Innocently*) Is that so? Why?

JINKS. Why? (*Scratches his head to conjure up a reply*) Why—Why, simply because it does, that's all.

MIMI. (*Takes up contract and returns it to bag*) Well, the Paradise Multiple Reel Unsurpassed Screen Favorites Company is going to be awfully disappointed! Oh, by the way, when I met Bedelia a little while ago, she showed me that absurd sensational thing Mr. Hodge sent the Gazette.

JINKS. (*With mock gravity*) "Absurd?" "Sensational?" Why, it's all true, Miss Mayflower, every word of it.

MIMI. (*Understandingly*) True, by special re-

quest of Mrs. Rogers. Yes, I know! You are a real rescuer, and I was really rescued. The Wurtsboro Gazette has said it! (*Makes low curtsy*) Thank you kindly for saving my life. I don't know but what I ought to thank you publicly.

JINKS. (*Laughs, with pleasant sarcasm*) By all means. I deserve it!

MIMI. (*Mischievously*) Maybe I'm in fun, and maybe not.

JINKS. (*Interested*) What do you mean?

MIMI. I mean I've something up my sleeve?

JINKS. You little tease! What is it?

MIMI. My arm! (*Runs to door c. turns, laughingly*) "Au revoir, but not good-bye!" (*Exits c.*)

(HIRAM starts toward door c. to look after MIMI)

THYRZA. (*Enters hastily from R., followed by EMILY.*) Hiram! How do you do?

JINKS. (*As THYRZA offers her hand*) Fine!

EMILY. Evangeline just this minute told us you were here! Welcome to our city! It's a trite saying, but I mean it.

THYRZA. The whole of Wurtsboro means it!

MINNIE. (*Enters L., calls back of her to BEDELIA*) Yes, Bedelia, here is Mr. Jinks! (*Runs up to HIRAM. While she is talking, BEDELIA enters L.*) Congratulations! (*Pumps JINKS's hand up and down vigorously*) You wonderful fellow! We can never call you just plain Hi Jinks again since you've come back to us so famous!

THYRZA. Aren't you going to congratulate him too, Bedelia?

BEDELIA. (*Frightened*) Of course. How do, Hiram—I—I don't know what to say.

JINKS. (*With feeling*) Neither do I, Bedelia.

MINNIE. Just think, girls, we're gazing upon a genuine life saver!

JINKS. Now, please, no haloes! They don't fit me—too large in the head size.

EMILY. Why, he acts as if saving twenty lives was nothing at all!

JINKS. Twenty? Great Scott!

THYRZA. It said twenty in the Gazette.

JINKS. Hm! Nineteen would be nearer the number—one nearer. (*Walks toward door c., trying to escape the chatter*) It's about time some of those Glee Club fellows were getting here, isn't it?

THYRZA. (*Goes up and takes him by one arm*) No, we have you all to ourselves. It's too early for them yet.

EMILY. There must be a lot of interesting details the Gazette didn't get hold of. (*Takes his other arm, and the two girls bring him down to c. between them*) Tell us about them.

JINKS. (*Looks at his cuff, then speaks in strained, mechanical tone*) I don't like to talk about it.

MINNIE. (*With enormous enthusiasm*) Oh, but you must! Just think what it will mean to us girls in after years to be able to tell our children, and our children's children, of hearing you tell us with your own lips how you saved each of those nineteen lives!

JINKS. (*Gasps with horror*) I refer your grandchildren to the Gazette!

BEDELIA. Minnie, how selfish of you not to notice what a dreadful cold Hiram has! We all ought to wait until his voice is clear. (*HIRAM coughs painfully, to give color to BEDELIA'S statement*)

MINNIE. Who cares whether his voice is clear or not? If it's affected by the fire, that makes the account of it all the more harrowing!

THYRZA. (*Promptingly, to JINKS*) The Gazette says you rushed into the burning building without a moment's hesitation.

JINKS. Go on, Thyrza, you tell about it. You always talked better than I do.

MINNIE. Oh, please talk, Mr. Jinks! We're just dying to be thrilled!

JINKS. But—but—it was just an ordinary fire.

MINNIE. (*Shakes her finger at him playfully*)
As if we didn't know better than that!

JINKS. Bells, you know. Flames. Fire-engine. Smoke. Oh, a lot of smoke—and hot air! (*Chokes violently*)

(*EVANGELINE enters R. but remains somewhat in the background*)

BEDELIA. What a shame to make him talk with a cold!

THYRZA. And where were you when it began, Hiram?

JINKS. When what began? The cold?

THYRZA. No, the fire.

JINKS. I was out for a stroll.

EMILY. So late? The paper said the fire broke out shortly after midnight.

JINKS. (*Proceeding somewhat disjointedly and with difficulty*) Well, you see, Emily—I was strolling so late because—because I'd been visiting the poor. Oh, very poor indeed. Ragged! Freezing! That's what gave me such a cold. (*Coughs*) Well, as I said before, I smelled smoke, ran to the spot, and, oh, just did what I could. I—just—rescued them.

MINNIE. But, Mr. Jinks, those poor girls must have been waked from a sound sleep! Oh, they were not in their—(*Pauses, modestly*)

EMILY. In their—(*Shudders*)

THYRZA. (*Severely, to girls*) *Nothing!*

JINKS. (*Mechanically*) I don't like to talk about it.

EMILY. It must have taken courage.

JINKS. It does. Now listen, girls, let us let it rest awhile, until the horror of it dies down a little.

Then I can think more clearly. This was to be your Browning evening, wasn't it? Good scout, Browning! I never fall into a brown study that I don't think of him. Let's get up a heated discussion—in place of the fire.

THYRZA. No, no, no! We absolutely refuse to go back to Browning.

EMILY. If Hiram samples our cake and lemonade, perhaps he'll feel more like the fire.

MINNIE. Splendid idea! With Evangeline's permission, I'll escort him to the supper-room.

EVANGELINE. (*With icy politeness*) You have my permission.

THYRZA. No, Minnie, I planned all this. The honor belongs to me. (*Playfully pushes MINNIE aside and takes JINKS by the arm*)

EMILY. (*Laughingly*) No matter to whom the honor belongs, I'm going to take it. (*The three girls struggle to escort JINKS off R. BEDELIA and EVANGELINE follow and exit after them R.*)

(*Enter MRS. BUMPSKY door c. She is making ready to go home. She sets her bonnet on at a perilous angle, and lets down her sleeves. All the time she is chewing vigorously. Finally she removes a wad of chewing-gum from her mouth, and sticks it carefully under the arm of a chair for future use. She hums "Coming Through The Rye," and exits door L.*)

OBADIAH. (*Heard off c.*) Yes, sir-ee! This is the place where the Literary Research Club researches, if that's where Hiram said he'd meet you. (*OBADIAH enters c., followed by THOMAS HODGE, HENRY SHORTER and GEORGE DAVIS*) He ain't got here yet, I see, but you can set down and wait for him. (*Omnes seat themselves*) Glad your Club's goin' to give a concert at the Grange tomorrow night. Some of 'em wanted the Mexican

Bandit Quartette instead. But I says: "No, let's have the college boys. I don't s'pose there's any real wit to their show, but it pleases 'em to hear themselves sing, and it's cheaper."

HODGE. (*Gives a disagreeable laugh*) Last item most important, I suppose?

OBADIAH. (*Displeased with something in HODGE'S manner*) Is this your first year in college, young man? The fresh year?

HODGE. No, this is my Senior year.

OBADIAH. Hm! You don't look as if you'd learned enough to git a dyeplooma. Now my boy Hiram if I do say it myself, looks as if he could carry off three or four at once and be deservin' of them all.

HODGE. (*Under his breath to GEORGE and HENRY, referring to OBADIAH*) Wurtsboro at its worst.

OBADIAH. Hey?

HODGE. I was just remarking it's strange we should be the first to arrive.

OBADIAH. Well, it's early yet. (*Sniffs*) But I smell coffee a bilin'! Bet there's a committee of gals inside fixin' you somethin' to eat. 'Shall I knock and tell 'em you're here?

HENRY. No, don't, Mr. Jinks.

GEORGE. We'd prefer to be discovered.

OBADIAH. I can't understand where Hiram's keepin' himself, nor why he didn't drop into my feed-store soon as he struck town. Most likely it's because folks is stoppin' him in the street right and left, a slappin' him on the back; braggin' on him for savin' so many lives from the flames; and he can't get away from 'em. It must have been excitin' times for you Hoosic people with that conflagration a goin' on and one of your fellow students a makin' a name for himself in history.

HODGE. He wrote you all about it, I suppose? (*Winks at HENRY and GEORGE*)

OBADIAH. Not a word! If it hadn't been for

the Gazette sendin' for a picture of him in his baby clothes, Ma and me wouldn't have known a thing about it.

HODGE. (*Sarcastically*) And I suppose any news that comes out in the Gazette is law and gospel to you Wurtsboro-ites?

OBADIAH. (*Proudly*) 'Law and gospel', that's right. We're a runnin' its editor for State Legislature, which shows what we think of him and his paper. Nothin' yellow about either one of 'em. Say, if you care to tell me any of the inside particulars about how the boy behaved himself, I'll be glad to hear 'em.

HODGE. I didn't happen to be present at the fire myself, but I know you'll be astonished when the whole story comes out.

OBADIAH. (*Leans back, thumbs in armholes*) Shouldn't wonder if that's so. Some of our leadin' citizens think Hiram ought to be made an honorary member of the fire department, as a reward of merit.

HODGE. (*After another sly wink to his fellow students*) "Fireman Jinks!" Sounds great, doesn't it? But Jinksie deserves all he's going to get, and he's going to get—(*Significantly*) plenty. Ah, there's nobody quite like your noble son Hiram, Mr. Jinks!

OBADIAH. Well, of course it ain't right to get *too* puffed up over him. But I do calculate to raise his spendin' money a dollar and a half a month for his bravery at that fire—providing the smoke didn't injure his clothes. (*Rises*) I'll travel up the block a ways, and see if I can't locate him and bring him along back with me. (*Exits L.*)

GEORGE. Say, Hodge, hand it to Jinksie all you like, but it's cheap work to guy his old man.

HENRY. Right you are, George. I'd soak anyone who handed it to my governor like that.

HODGE. (*Sneeringly*) You fellows make me tired. And I can dispense with either your advice or your help when it comes to the Jinks tribe. All I ask is to be allowed to play my game alone. Old Jinks will get a bump and a half when I make Jinksie own up he's been made a fool of, but it will shake a little of the hayseed out of his hair and do him good. (*Grips arm of chair and encounters MRS. BUMPSKY'S gum*) What in thunder's that? (*Disgustedly throws wad across room*)

BEDELIA. (*Appears in door R.*) For goodness sakes, here you are and no one to meet you! How do, Mr. Hodge? (*Shakes hands with HODGE.* EVANGELINE *enters R. and stands waiting to be introduced*) I want to introduce you to Miss Slater. (*EVANGELINE acknowledges introduction*) And this is Mr. Davis, Evangeline; and Mr. Shorter.

HENRY. Delighted!

EVANGELINE. (*Pleasantly*) Pleased.

GEORGE. I've heard of Miss Slater, often.

BEDELIA. You see we all got to discussing Browning, in there, and forgot possible arrivals and everything.

EVANGELINE. We Literary Researchers are so enthusiastic over culture we sometimes neglect our manners.

JINKS. (*Enters R., followed by THYRZA, EMILY and MINNIE*) "By-paths to Browning!" Your Club couldn't have chosen a better subject, Miss Snodgrass. Browning, the perfect friend! Ah, how do, Hodge! Browning, the perfect lover! Hello, George, you haven't changed a bit! Browning, the perfect poet! Henry, is that really you? Girls, it's really Henry! But, at all events, Browning's doctrine of the infeasibility of essence of the individual cosmos, and the essential community of spirit—ah, there is where we have the poet at his best,—that community of spirit thing, you know.

HODGE. (*Suspicious that JINKS is merely trying to gain time*) Look here, Jinksie, I——

JINKS. (*Apparently unaware that HODGE has spoken*) And you see, honored representatives of the Wurtsboro Literary Research Club, and visiting hoodlums—Hoosics, I mean—all these things manifest themselves in varying connections, but (*Enter OBADIAH unobserved, at c.*) when all is said and done, I ask you earnestly, what is to save the artistic life of the nation from decay——

OBADIAH. (*Advances a step, and extends both arms toward JINKS with fatherly pride*) Hiram, my boy!

JINKS. (*Thrown off his balance by the unexpected interruption*)—decay—decay—er—hello, Dad! Take a chair. As I was saying, ladies and gentlemen,——

OBADIAH. Talkin' about the fire?

HODGE. (*With malicious enjoyment*) No, Mr. Jinks, he's just approaching the fire.

OBADIAH. How does it feel to be the biggest man in town?

HODGE. (*Mockingly*) Tell your father the truth, Jinksie, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

MINNIE. (*With great enthusiasm*) Oh, yes, we're all just dying to hear it!

OBADIAH. How'd she start, eh?

JINKS. (*Rattled*) Who?

HODGE. (*Sarcastically*) The fire.

OBADIAH. The whole town is tickled to death with you, Hiram.

JINKS. (*Evasively*) Oh, all this hero worship doesn't mean anything, Dad!

HODGE. Now, now, Jinksie! Beating around the bush only puts off the evil hour.

JINKS. (*Apparently much depressed*) You're right about that, Hodge. I might as well face it.

HODGE. (*With smile of satisfaction, tilts back in his chair*) Hah!

JINKS. I may as well tell about that Carnegie medal now as anytime.

HODGE. (*Stupidly, not realizing that JINKS has been tricking him*) Huh?

THYRZA. Carnegie medal, did you say?

MINNIE. Oh, how exciting!

EMILY. What about the Carnegie medal?

JINKS. I was obliged to refuse it.

EMILY, THYRZA and MINNIE. (*Disappointedly*) Oh!

JINKS. The Carnegie people annoyed me so with questions and things, and blanks to fill out, that all the fuss kept me from my studies. Hodge can testify to that. And, anyhow, medals make one feel so conspicuous!

HODGE. Well, this is good! This is rich! Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!

OBADIAH. What is he laughing about, Hiram?

THYRZA. (*Rises*) Yes, what are you laughing about?

(OMNES *rise*)

HODGE. Ask Henry! Ask George. They know as well as I do. Oh, Jinks, this was worth coming miles to see. Ha, ha, ha!" What am I laughing at?" Ha, ha, ha!

JINKS. I'll explain. It's a hyena laugh of jealousy!

HODGE. (*Sobers instantly, glaring at JINKS*) Jealousy?

JINKS. (*Grandiloquently*) You are jealous because you did not assist me in my rescue work as did your noble associates, Henry and George. (*Makes gesture toward the astonished HENRY*) Henry, the first man to enter the burning building! (*Makes gesture toward GEORGE, who is equally*)

astonished) George, who had the presence of mind to send in the alarm of fire!

HENRY. (*Recovering*) I say, Jinksie——

EMILY. (*Interrupts him, taking him by the hand*) Oh, Mr. Shorter, the moment I laid eyes on you I said: "He's just one of those splendid college boys that must have stood by Hiram through it all!"

MINNIE. (*Rushes up to George*) And oh, Mr. Davis, I felt all along that in the hour of danger you must have been equal to anything! And now that I know you were the one who sent in the alarm of fire, I can't tell you how much I admire you!

HODGE. (*Furious*) George did nothing at all!

JINKS. Oh, George may have cut his hand a little smashing the glass, but what was that? Nothing at all! He paid no attention to it.

MINNIE. (*To GEORGE*) Your poor hand? Did it leave a scar? May I see for myself? (*Lifts his hand and looks at it anxiously, giving it a little pat of sympathy*)

GEORGE. (*Delighted to attract her attention*) Surest thing you know! (*They walk aside, she looking at his hand*)

HODGE. (*Harshly*) George!

GEORGE. (*Wholly taken up with MINNIE*) Nice town, Wurtsboro. Nice lot of girls! More you see of them, nicer they are!

HODGE. Henry, stand by me. Don't be a second jelly-fish!

HENRY. (*Flares up at this*) Who's a jelly-fish? You asked to play your game alone—now play it!

HODGE. (*Between set teeth*) Traitors, both of you!

OBADIAH. (*To HODGE*) Look here, young man, what's a gettin' your goat anyhow? What have you got ag'in my boy Hiram that's had almost a page a praisin' him in our Wurtsboro Weekly Gazette?

HODGE. (*With a sneer*) The Wurtsboro Weekly

Gazette! A paper that buys its insides from a type-foundry every week. A paper that swallowed a fake story, hook, bait and all!

JINKS. (*Dropping comedy manner entirely*) Hodge you leave the Gazette alone! You may have a few scores to settle with me, but neither the Gazette nor its editor ever did you any harm. Hands off of both of them! (*MIMI appears in door c., a tissue-covered bundle in her hands*)

HODGE. (*In a rage*) Then, Gazette or no Gazette, I propose to let everybody know here and now, that there never was any Seminary fire in Hoosic, there never were any rescues of panic-stricken girls, and there never was a hero by the name of Hiram Poynter Jinks! (*He points accusingly at JINKS. General movement of amazement through crowd at his bold statement. JINKS bows his head, abashed*)

MIMI. (*Advances; speaks in loud clear tone to HODGE*) Perhaps you wish to say, also, there never was a Mimi Mayflower!

OMNES. (*Repeat in amazement*) "Mimi Mayflower?"

HODGE. (*Fairly gasping with amazement at her unexpected appearance*) You here, Miss Mayflower? How? Why?

MIMI. (*Advances to c. with stately steps, others falling back to give her room. She turns and addresses JINKS, eloquently*) Mr. Hiram Poynter Jinks, although this town has not yet been illuminated in honor of your triumphant return; although its flags and banners are not yet flung to the breeze in acknowledgment of your brave deeds at that Hoosic fire; although the school-children have not yet marched the streets in holiday regalia with your picture borne proudly aloft before them, you still shall not fail of immediate appreciation, for I—Mimi Mayflower—here and now, express my personal admiration and regard, by placing upon your marble brow—(*Strips tissue paper from bundle*)

the laurel wreath of fame! (*Places wreath on brow of JINKS who bears his honors meekly*)

OBADIAH. This is the proudest moment of my life! (*Applies huge handkerchief to his eyes*)

MINNIE. (*Wildly enthusiastic*) Everybody ready! Three cheers for Hi Jinks, the hero of Hoo-sic!

OMNES. Hurrah!

(*Girls, laughingly seize roses from vases and begin to pelt JINKS with them. HODGE, thoroughly disgruntled, seizes his hat, brings it down over his eyes, and exits c.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

TIME:—*A week later. Afternoon.*

SCENE:—*Home of OBADIAH JINKS; the sitting-room. Old-fashioned furniture. Picture of JINKS on wall, surmounted by laurel wreath. Essential furnishings are a table at L., a sofa R. and an old-fashioned bureau against wall c. Doors R. and L.*

DISCOVERED:—OBADIAH, sitting by table R., smoking a pipe.

(*Knock at door R.*)

OBADIAH. (*Over his shoulder*) Who's there?

BEDELIA. (*Sticks head in at door*) Me. May we come in?

OBADIAH. (*Rises*) Of course, little neighbor. Who's "we?" (*MIMI steps in, smilingly*) How

do, Miss Mayflower? Still visitin' Bedelia, eh? I thought you was leavin' town to-day.

MIMI. Wurtsboro holds me like a magnet, but I really am going to-night.

BEDELIA. I just made her stay to help me sell tickets for Mr. Rogers' lecture for the Firemen's Fund this afternoon. And, oh, Mr. Jinks, it looks as if the house would be crowded!

OBADIAH. (*Thrusts hand in pocket. Good naturedly*) How many am I held up for? Might as well have it over with.

BEDELIA. I've still a dozen tickets on hand. But seeing that you donated your feed-store to hold the entertainment in, the committee sent you and Mrs. Jinks complimentary seats right in the front row.

OBADIAH. No, sir-ee! And Mrs. Jinks would say so too if she was home! When a man that's just been elected to the Legislature volunteers to give a lecture, and when he's chose as his subject "The Fire at Hoosic," as an extry compliment to Hiram, and when the firemen themselves up and make my boy an honorary member—that's enough honors for the Jinks family already! I'm afraid Hiram's head is goin' to be turned now! Here, gimme that whole dozen tickets, and there's a two dollar bill for 'em—(*Hands her a bill from his trousers' pocket*) and I don't ask for the change.

BEDELIA. That's splendid, Mr. Jinks. Oh, Mimi, now there won't be an empty seat in the house!

MIMI. (*Eagerly*) And you're certain to be there yourself, aren't you, Mr. Jinks?

OBADIAH. (*Pleased to be noticed by one so young and pretty*) Want me to?

MIMI. (*With her most charming manner*) Particularly. And I want you to promise me something besides. Will you?

OBADIAH. Most anything you'd ask me. Seems

like Hiram savin' your life like he did almost makes you a member of the family. Mrs. Jinks says all she wishes is that we had two Hiram instead of one, so's the second one could marry you and keep you in Wurtsboro for good!

MIMI. Oh, that's dear of Mrs. Jinks! I haven't any mother of my own, and I could love her lots.

OBADIAH. (*With sentiment*) How about the old man? (*Flaps his coat-tails, and tecters on his toes*)

MIMI. (*Shakes her finger at him*) Don't you flirt with *me!*

OBADIAH. What was it you wanted me to promise you?

MIMI. I want you to give me your word of honor that you'll stay to the very end of Mr. Rogers' lecture whether you like it or not.

OBADIAH. Why, of course I'll promise that. There won't anybody be so bad mannered as to leave before it's over, I hope. When I came by the store half an hour ago, there was Mr. Rogers himself a helpin' some strange man in his shirt-sleeves fix up a sheet to throw the Stereopticon pictures on.

MIMI and BEDELIA. (*Exchanging scared glances*) Stereopticon?

OBADIAH. It ain't got out yet, and I think he was calculatin' to take everybody by surprise, but it's goin' to be illustrated.

MIMI. (*Timorously*) You—you don't object to the pictures?

OBADIAH. I should say I don't. I was always real fond of the Stereopticon views of the Holy Land we held Wednesday nights in the Sunday School Room when I was a boy. I can see 'em now, with the pyramids and mules and camels a settin' off the scenery. (*Clenches his fist and pounds the table to emphasize his remark*) It's them pernicious Movin' Picture shows I'm opposed to, not the Stereopticon kind.

MIMI. But, Mr. Jinks, I'm sure that if you had ever allowed yourself to go to a good Moving Picture play—just once—you'd have turned into a real Movie fan in spite of yourself.

OBADIAH. (*Rather sternly*) Which shows you don't know Obadiah Jinks. And I'm sorry to hear a sweet young girl like you a standin' up for 'em. They're one of the cryin' evils of the times!

MIMI. And are you opposed to Moving Picture actors too?

OBADIAH. Young lady, you don't catch me allowin' one of 'em inside my door! I wouldn't speak to one of 'em.

MIMI. (*Innocently*) Wouldn't you?

OBADIAH. No, sir-ee!

MIMI. (*Roguishly*) I'm sorry. I'm sure they would enjoy you.

BEDELIA. Have you heard from Hiram since he's been out with the Glee Club?

OBADIAH. Had a letter from him last night. That crazy Hodge feller deserted 'em and went back to Hoosic, but they got along fine without him, Hiram says. The Club's passin' through here on their way back to-day, and Hiram and some of the rest of 'em's goin' to stop off.

MIMI. (*Joyfully*) Oh, is he?

OBADIAH. (*Looks at her a bit suspiciously*) He's engaged; but I s'pose you'll always take an interest in him on account of his savin' your life.

MIMI. Always! (*Sighs*)

BEDELIA. Mercy, we must go, Bedelia! I promised to be an usher, and I really must put on something to ush in.

MIMI. Then good-bye until after the lecture, Mr. Jinks.

OBADIAH. Good-bye! And don't you ever take up with no one that's been in Movin' Pictures, young lady. That's my advice!

MIMI. (*Laughs*) I'll think that over. (MIMI and BEDELIA *exit R.*)

(OBADIAH *pockets the tickets. He goes over to bureau and gets out a hair-brush. Brushes his hair. Gets out huge hankerchief, flaps it and puts it in his pocket. Takes clothes-brush and brushes clothes, and poising his hat on one hand begins to brush it with the other.*)

JINKS. (*Enters L. carrying satchel*) Hello, Dad!

OBADIAH. (*Rejoiced*) Well, Hiram!

JINKS. I cut across lots from the Station and came in the back way to make time. Where's mother?

OBADIAH. (*Continuing his toilet preparations*) Over to your Aunt Sairy's. Sairy ain't well.

JINKS. And what are you primping up for, Dad? Getting ready to divorce mother and marry a milliner?

OBADIAH. Stop your nonsense! (*Puts hat on top of bureau and lays the brushes away in drawer*) Gettin' ready to go to the Firemen's Fund lecture. I was afraid I'd miss you. Your blasted train grunted into town as slow as an old hog rollin' up to the trough.

HIRAM. I didn't mind the slowness. It gave me time to think over all my sins and see which ones I liked best. Henceforth I've decided to disown Annannias as an adopted parent.

OBADIAH. What do you mean by that?

JINKS. Changing the subject—any news since I've been away?

OBADIAH. They've elected you honorary member of the Wurtsboro Fire Department, just as I s'posed they would.

JINKS. (*Despairingly, under his breath*) Oh, Lord!

OBADIAH. And of course you know already Mr. Rogers was elected?

JINKS. Yes. Mrs. Rogers sent me a letter announcing the fact, all blotted with glad tears! The Gazette isn't out yet, is it?

OBADIAH. No. Guess Mr. Rogers is holdin' this issue back to write up the Firemen's Fund affair. It'll be the first number out since his election, and since the Firemen made you an honorary fire-fighter. Folks are braggin' on your bravery yet, Hiram.

JINKS. (*Clenches his fists and raises them in air. Strides up and down the room*) Will I never get away from that Hoosic fire, I wonder? Will the Gazette ever come out and clear up the fog?

OBADIAH. What in the name of common sense are you talkin' about anyhow?

JINKS. Nothing.

OBADIAH. (*With a snort of disapproval*) Sounds like it wasn't *that* much.

JINKS. Well, I've got to improve my time while I'm here! I want to see that Real Estate agent again before I leave town.

OBADIAH. 'Tain't no use. I said my answer was "no," and "no" it stands.

JINKS. You've always wanted money to develop your little farm, and if you made it "yes" there'd be enough money besides to keep me in college without breaking your back.

OBADIAH. (*Losing his temper*) I ain't goin' to lease my feed-store to no pizenous Movin' Picture Company, back or no back, college or no college, farm or no farm! Satan's always willin' to pay a high price for souls, but he shan't buy mine.

JINKS. Dad, be sensible! The automobile craze has turned your feed-store and boarding-stable into a museum for obsolete animals, and it isn't every day

that a Film Company comes along and offers to pay you five times as much as the lease is worth for it. They'll snap up the old skating-rink instead if you dilly dally about answering much longer.

OBADIAH. I ain't dilly dallied. I've said "no" from the start, only it goes in your one ear and out the other. Let 'em lease the skatin'-rink, and let 'em skate. 'I know we're hard run, and if the Methodist Church or the Royal Arcanum or some-thin' like that wanted my feed-store——

JINKS. (*Cutting in*) But they don't, and never will. (*Disgustedly, taking up his hat*) Oh, I'm going over to Aunt Sarah's to talk to mother. It's too bad she doesn't wear the pants in this family. She'd remember there was a hind pocket in 'em that needs money, and needs it bad! (*Exits angrily, door L.*)

(OBADIAH *whistles mournfully, takes up his hat and proceeds slowly toward door R. There is a knock at door just as he reaches it. He opens it, and EVANGELINE walks in.*)

OBADIAH. Hullo, Evangeline! You've just missed seein' Hiram! But I can call him back. (*Calls, toward L.*) Hiram!

EVANGELINE. (*Nervously*) Don't, please, Mr. Jinks! I didn't expect to see Hiram anyhow. I just wanted to leave a package for him with my compliments. This.

OBADIAH. (*Receives the ribbon-bound package from her hands*) Oh, you remembered that this was his birthday, didn't you? That was real thoughtful of you. I intended to give him a pair of suspenders myself, but we got into a little argument about Movin' Pictures, and it skipped my mind. I'm ashamed to say it, but he stands up for 'em!

EVANGELINE. That doesn't surprise me at all, Mr. Jinks. By the way, I drove through Hoosic

with a friend the other day, and while I was there made some very interesting discoveries.

OBADIAH. Did you? Set down and tell me about 'em. (*Rather uneasily*) 'Twon't make *much* difference if I *am* late a minute or two to Legislator Rogers' lecture.

EVANGELINE. Oh, I'll not detain you! Professor Parker and his aunt are waiting for me outside, and I promised them I wouldn't be longer than a minute. But there's a little souvenir of Hoosic in the note I'm leaving for Hiram tucked in under the ribbon; one of my interesting discoveries. It's a snap-shot made by a former friend of Hiram's. He gave it to me himself. When Hiram sees it, he may guess my reason for choosing this particular gift for his birthday.

OBADIAH. He'll be disappointed, won't he, not to see you?

EVANGELINE. Oh, not so much but that he'll recover! (*Offers OBADIAH her hand*) Good-bye, Mr. Jinks—(*She becomes very serious for a moment, and her voice is tremulous*) and please tell Hiram that everything's all right, and that I really do wish him many, happy returns of the day! (*Turns and exits R., precipitately*)

(OBADIAH *looks at the package she has left, and lays it down again on table. He goes to bureau and from a drawer lifts out a very loud new necktie. Brings it to table and lays it down. Just as he puts on hat and starts for door R., HIRAM bursts in.*)

JINKS. (*Just inside door R.*) Dad, was that Evangeline that sped down street in an automobile just now?

OBADIAH. The room ain't cold yet from her bein' here. And she says she wishes you many happy returns of the day. What she came for was

to leave you a birthday present. There it is on the table.

JINKS. (*Picks up necktie*) What? This?

OBADIAH. (*Modestly*) No, that one's my selection.

JINKS. Thanks awfully, Dad. It reminds me of the Hoosic fire.

OBADIAH. (*With pride*) I s'pose mebbe I was thinkin' 'bout that when I picked it out. (*Picks up package*) This is the one from Evangeline, with a note she writ you. Nice girl, Evangeline! Ain't got the takin' way with her that some that visits Wurtsboro sometimes has, but nice—dignified and nice!

JINKS. (*With feeling*) Yes, and this package is just as dainty and blue-ribboned as she is. All the same, I wish she hadn't left it for me.

OBADIAH. How do you know you do when you ain't never looked at it?

JINKS. Dad, it seems wrong, somehow, for a fellow to carry one girl's picture in his watch, when he carries the face of another one in his heart!

OBADIAH. (*Horried*) Hiram Poynter Jinks, you ain't thinkin' of goin' back on Evangeline Slater you've been pledged to ever since you was a youngone?

JINKS. A youngone—that's just it! It was only calf love—with both of us, I believe—not the real thing. I've felt it; almost known it, for a year. And now since I've met the real girl, the only one I can ever care for as a fellow should care—(*Rises and walks away*) I haven't the heart to look at that present—that's all!

OBADIAH. Hiram Poynter Jinks, mebbe you was too young when you started courtin' Evangeline—your mother always said so—but if I thought a son of mine would ever go back on his promise to a girl whose father is a leadin' light in the Presbyterian Church, and who's lookin' forward to gettin' married

when you graduate, I'd cover my brow with sack-cloth and ashes and start a wailin'.

JINKS. Yes, I thought you'd feel that way about it. It isn't a question of whether I'm going to be happy or not, but whether I'm man enough to stand by a bargain once made.

OBADIAH. (*Pleased; with emphasis*) That sounds like Hiram Jinks!

JINKS. It's better to be unhappy than a cad, I know that, and I'm prepared to stick. But I've got to get myself in a different mood before I can touch that present.

OBADIAH. Well, your mother'll cook hot biscuit for supper, Hiram, and that ought to cheer you up. I've got to go, if I'm goin'. This ain't no way to treat Legislator Rogers at all! I'm goin' across lots, fast as I kin scoot! (*Exit hastily L.*)

(JINKS goes to table. Picks up the neck-tie. Hangs it over laurel wreath surmounting his picture. Comes down. Picks up package left by EVANGELINE. Shakes his head mournfully. Takes note from under ribbon and tears open envelope.)

JINKS. (*With a heavy sigh*) I might as well have it over with, I suppose. (*Knocks at door R. JINKS hastily slips note in his pocket*) Come in!

BEDELIA. (*Enters R. Mysteriously, pausing just inside the door*) The outside door was open so I did not ring. Are you homé, Hiram?

HIRAM. I'm under that impression. Come in, Bedelia.

BEDELIA. (*Continues to speak in mysterious hushed voice*) And are you all alone?

HIRAM. Yes. Want to murder me? That's a killing gown you have on.

BEDELIA. (*In special costume with cap and badge*) I've been ushing. But everybody's in now

but two or three, and Mimi simply wouldn't come without me, and she just had to see you.

JINKS. (*Electrified*) Mimi? Mimi, did you say? Impossible! She's not in town. Good heavens, why don't you invite her in?

BEDELIA. (*Calls off R.*) Mimi, good heavens why don't you invite yourself in? (*Enter MIMI, somewhat abashed, R.*)

JINKS. Why, how do, Miss Mayflower? Glad to see you. Sit down. Cold, isn't it, for such warm weather? Sit down. Rocking chair, armchair, any kind. If you don't like any of these we have more up stairs.

MIMI. (*Seats herself on sofa R.*) This will do nicely, thank you. I hope you won't think I'm dreadful to beard you in your den like a lion.

JINKS. If a lion enjoys it as much as I do, he'd stay home weekdays and Sundays.

BEDELIA. Mimi, I really must run back now. They'll notice it if I stay away. And anyhow, I'm dying to see how Mr. Jinks takes that Stereopticon! Bye, bye! (*Rushes off R.*)

JINKS. (*Takes chair at L., across the room from Mimi*) Just one prayer I prayed—an unrighteous prayer to see you once more—and there you are like a miracle!

MIMI. Oh, no, not like a miracle, but like a very scared young woman indeed! I've come to make a confession! And perhaps you'll be angry and sorry you ever met me when you learn what I have done.

JINKS. (*In a trance of happiness*) I'm not hearing a word you say—it's just music! Say on! Say on!

MIMI. When I realized what a tangle grew out of your appearing as Eddie the fireman, I wanted somehow to atone for it.

JINKS. Atone? (*Points to his picture on wall*) Look at that laurel wreath resting on my undeserving

brow! The wreath, not the danger-signal! (*Removes the new necktie*) Hodge had me in a corner gasping for breath, and in another moment I'd have gone over the ropes if it hadn't been for you.

MIMI. But that was only a temporary triumph. Consequently, to clear up the whole matter of Hodge's false account of the fire, Mr. Rogers agreed with me that those Moving Pictures made at Hoosic should be shown in Wurtsboro; so I sent for them and an operator, and they're being seen at your father's feed store at this very moment!

JINKS. (*Gleefully*) What? Dad, looking at a Moving Picture in spite of himself, and seeing his own son shinning up and down a ladder besides? It's too good to be true!

MIMI. Yes, but what if it makes extra trouble for you instead of helping? That's what I ask myself in fear and trembling. How will your father and Wurtsboro take it all? Of course I *hope* they'll laugh so hard at Eddie the fireman they'll forgive you anything, and Bedelia says they will, but if they shouldn't?

JINKS. However they take it, little girl, your sending for those films makes me the gladdest, saddest fellow in the world! The gladdest, because I can't help thinking you care a little about me in spite of Nash to have done it; the saddest because it makes me realize more than ever that I love you. Yes, Mimi. (*Picks up EVANGELINE'S box and sets it down*) in spite of blue ribbons and everything, I love you; but of course it would not be honorable in me to tell you so, and I must keep it to myself.

MIMI. Oh, Mr. Jinks, I've got to tell you something too,—since it's the last time we shall ever meet. I've broken with Nash——

JINKS. What? You—you care for some one else?

MIMI. Oh, it isn't just mere caring, just mere friendliness, it's a love that goes clear to the deeps of my heart, and makes me feel delicious and des-

perate and—and maple sugary whenever I think of—him! (*Embraces herself rapturously*)

JINKS. Lucky “him!” Of course—I haven’t any right to ask his name. It’s no business of mine when I’m bound to another, anyhow. I shan’t ask you who he is, Mimi. Who is he?

MIMI. No one I shall ever marry. Oh, don’t let it make you sad,—my fate! While I’m young, I’ll lose myself in work. I’ve been offered a wonderful contract if I choose to take it. And when I’m an old, old lady, I’ll dress in black lace, and always remember to wave my white hair so I won’t be hard to look at, and I’ll be kind and gentle, and maybe little children will run to my arms when I call them. I hope so.

JINKS. (*Lugubriously*) And Mimi, even when I’ve been married to Evangeline years and years—(*Picks up the box tied with ribbons*) By Jingo, how funny this feels! Excuse me! (*Rips off ribbons and paper hastily, and a bunch of old letters falls out*) My letters! She’s sent them back! Wait a minute—(*Fumbles in pocket, tremendously excited*) wait—a—minute—where’s her note? What’s this? (*Pulls out snap-shot*) Why, a snap-shot inside of it! Look at it! Aren’t those my arms? They are! I know them by the cuffs! *Look!*

(MIMI looks, with him, at snap-shot, almost as excited as he is.)

MIMI. Why, and I’m the girl! That was our embrace in the hospital-scene! Who snapped it?

JINKS. Hodge! He always wabbles his camera! Let’s see what she says. (*Reads note, his hands tremble so that the paper fairly rattles*) She’s thrown me over to marry Professor Parker! (*Drops note. Sadly*) Oh, Mimi!

MIMI. (*Agitatedly*) You're sorry? You do care for her after all, more than anybody else?

JINKS. No, no, that isn't it! Mimi, why couldn't I have been that other maple-sugar fellow you really love?

MIMI. Oh, you ridiculous boy, by the ridiculous name of Jinks—why, he is you, has been you all along!

JINKS. Mimi! (*Takes her in his arms*)

CURTAIN.

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