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Came to Town

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Cabman No. 93, 40 min.	2 2
Case Against Casey, 40 min.	23
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Country Justice, 15 min.	8
Cow that Kicked Chicago, 20 m.	3 2

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago

WHEN THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN

A DRAMATIC COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

HARRY L. NEWTON

AUTHOR OF

*"Breakfast Food for Two," "A Bundle of Burnt Cork Comedy," "Business is
Business," "The Coming Champion," "The Coontown Thirteen Club," "The
Corner Drug Store," "The Counterfeit Bills," "A Dutch Cocktail,"
"Five Minutes from Yell College," "The Heiress of Hoetown,"
"Jayville Junction," "The Little Red Schoolhouse," "Laugh-
land via the Ha Ha Route," "Marriage and After,"
"Oshkosh Next Week," "The Pooh Bah of Peace-
town," "The Rest Cure," "Si and I," "A
Sunny Son of Italy," "The Troubles
of Rozinski," "Two Jay Detec-
tives," "Uncle Bill at the
Vaudeville," Etc.*



CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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WHEN THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN

CHARACTERS.

IN THE ORDER OF THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE.

- CYRUS SKINNER.....*Sheriff, Justice of the Peace and
Keeper of the Golden Rod Tavern*
- GEORGE WORTHINGTON.....*An Erudite Bostonian*
- ANNABELLE REEVES*An Heiress*
- JERRY BARKER ..*Manager of the Great Wonderland Circus*
- "MOTHER" RICKIE*Wardrobe Mistress*
- ZUZU.....*The Principal Clown and in Love with Peaches*
- PEACHES.....*Queen of Bareback Riders*
- FRANCIS CLAY.....*A Disreputable Young Kentuckian*

NOTE.—If desirable Skinner and Clay may double.

PLACE—*The Golden Rod Estate, Kentucky.*

TIME—*The Present.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Two Hours and Fifteen Minutes.*

ACT I—*Exterior Golden Rod Tavern. Afternoon.*

ACT II—*Kitchen of Annabelle's Home. Two Days Later. Morning.*

ACT III—*Lawn in front of the tavern. One week later. Late afternoon.*

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STORY OF THE PLAY.

Due to a long continued run of bad business The Great Wonderland Circus is stranded in Kentucky and has been attached for debt by Cyrus Skinner, the county sheriff, who is also tavern keeper and justice of the peace. Francis Clay, a disreputable young Kentuckian, offers to lift the show and in consequence forces his attentions upon the youthful Peaches, the Queen of Bareback Riders. The financial difficulties so pall Jimmie Barker, the manager of the show, that he is willing to accept aid from any source without question of motive. However, Clay's intentions are strongly denounced by Mother Rickie, the wardrobe mistress, and Zuzu, the clown. Zuzu is in love with Peaches and being resourceful plans to thwart Clay regardless of consequences. He enlists the aid of George Worthington, an erudite Bostonian, who has wandered to this out of the way place in search of peace and quiet, and also the aid of Annabelle Reeves, a young heiress. Worthington admires Annabelle and when he learns that Clay has been showing her marked attention, enters the fray with vigor and determination. There are many complications and difficulties which the ardent lovers overcome, but finally the clouds of trouble disappear. The odious Clay is vanquished. Barker receives enough money from the owners to finance the show. Peaches decides to marry Zuzu. Annabelle accepts Worthington as a life partner, and Cyrus Skinner, as justice of the peace, is delighted to perform the most pleasant duty of his office. Thus, with happiness all around and about, these fun making, tender hearted, star-spangled circus folks, whose home lies in the sawdust under the "big white tops," from the little sleepy town depart.

SYNOPSIS FOR PROGRAM.

ACT I—The man from Boston engages "apartments" at the Golden Rod Tavern. "He's a fine feller, even if he does come from Boston." The circus is tied up by an attachment, which brings the performers to the tavern—hungry. Zuzu finds the "eats." Annabelle, the rich heiress, meets

George, the poor professor, and George meets Peaches. Mr. Clay introduces himself to the circus folks and gets familiar upon short acquaintance. He makes the clown "cut-up" and tries to kiss Peaches, but the man from Boston averts a possible tragedy. "Kiddo, you're all right. Slip it to me."

ACT II—Peaches and Zuzu try the art of bread making under difficulties. George calls on Annabelle. "What a *man* he is!" Mr. Clay again appears. "What I go after I usually get. I want that circus girl." "And the villain still pursues us." Mr. Clay's kindly offer declined. Clay proposes to Peaches. "Say, what are you doing, reading one of them yellow novels?" Zuzu right on the job. "Mother" declares Peaches and Zuzu must marry. "I'm happy, Zuzu—almost. If we was only back with the circus again." Peaches and Zuzu show circus stunts with the aid of a kitchen table. "No, it ain't real circus. I thought it was, Zuzu, but it ain't."

ACT III—Mr. Clay still plots. "Here's two thousand, real money. Take it or not." "Keep it! I ain't as bad as that! That outfit will stay there till hell freezes over!" Zuzu announces his betrothal. "If I get stuck for a clean collar, what size do you wear, and can I borrow one?" George and Annabelle grow sentimental—with interruptions. Jerry gets a wire. "Oh, folks, he's telegraphed the coin to move the troupe." Zuzu makes a clown out of Clay. "Walk out of this yard and give a correct imitation of a man that's never coming back to trouble anybody. Be sure your imitation is good, Mr. Bad Boy." George and Annabelle again grow sentimental—with success. Peaches refuses the simple life idea—back to sawdust for mine."

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

CYRUS SKINNER—A rube, drawling in speech and rather slow in action. Wears brown linen coat and trousers, soft shirt and turn down collar, straw hat and silver spectacles. Face smooth shaven and healthy tanned color; iron gray hair. Man of about fifty. A kind and lovable old soul and generous to a fault.

GEORGE WORTHINGTON—Man of about thirty-five and very much the gentleman. Hair slightly sprinkled with gray over ears; face smooth shaven and made-up rather pale. Wears eye glasses with silk cord attached, which he frequently removes and wipes with handkerchief. In first act he wears a gray business suit; white vest, white standup collar, black bow tie, tan shoes and straw hat. In Act II white duck or flannel outing suit. In Act III dark clothing and shoes. He is quiet in speech and action, very precise in everything he does; also cool and collected, but showing nervousness in the love scenes. Has a pleasant smile for everybody, but knows little of the world outside of his knowledge of books—his dearest treasures.

ANNABELLE REEVES—Girl of about twenty-four or twenty-five, with a sweet toned voice and lovable disposition. Speaks with just a suspicion of the southern dialect. In Act I she wears automobile costume complete. In Act II a simple morning dress. In Act III a handsome afternoon costume.

JERRY BARKER—Man about forty. Loud talker. Wears flashy clothes and big watch chain. Hair black and long. black moustache. No change of costume required, as his clothes are supposed to be tied up with the circus. Face is florid or weather beaten in color. A good hearted individual, inclined to boast of past deeds.

“MOTHER” RICKIE—Woman of about thirty-five. Likes her drink and is always slightly the worse for it. Whole souled and continually inquiring about everybody's health. Thinks everything of Peaches and circus life. Costumes may be ad lib, but appropriate to character.

ZUZU—Clown costume with facial make-up the same. This applies to Act I and finish of Act II. In Act II his costume may be ad lib. He is, however, the typical clown all through play, in voice, action and everything, throwing off care and worry with no effort.

PEACHES—Girl of eighteen or twenty. Talks slang and knows nothing but what pertains to the circus. Sweet and lovable in disposition and almost always cheerful. Looks upon Zuzu more as a pal than lover, but expects some day

to be his wife. Costumes appropriate to part, but wearing bareback outfit in Act I, with wide, flowing, ruffled skirts, ankle length.

FRANCIS CLAY—Young man about twenty-five. A thorough southerner. Fiery in speech and action, also swaggering and boastful. In love with every pretty face he sees, but not thoroughly bad at heart. Face is swarthy and smooth shaven and hair black. In Act I wears a rough riding suit with high boots, etc. In other acts more genteel clothing.

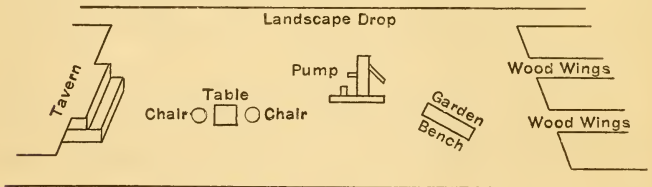
PROPERTY LIST.

ACT I—Dinner bell, suit case, bound book, constable badge, auto horn, several bundles for Jerry and "Mother," bass drum and cymbals, water pail, revolver for Clay.

ACT II—Kitchen utensils, dishes, etc.; large scoop shovel, broom, long carriage whip, quantity of bread dough, newspaper, stuffed animal's head (any kind).

ACT III—Cigarettes for Clay, money for Clay; book for George, bunch of flowers; telegram, revolver, suitcase; several bundles for Jerry and "Mother."

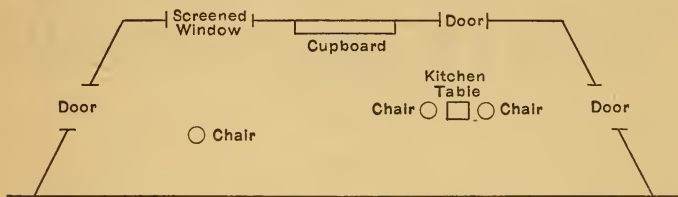
STAGE SETTING.



ACTS I AND III.

NOTE.—The circus tent effect may be made in the following simple manner. On a small square of canvas have your local scenic artist paint a small miniature copy of a circus tent which may be tacked on an ordinary wood drop. For the lights to show, cut several small holes in the canvas and set a strong light back of drop. If there is no scenic artist available it can be done by any sign painter. With ingenuity

and with but small expense a fine effect can be given to Act I and particularly to the finale of Act III.



ACT. II.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of the stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *R. D.*, right door; *L. D.*, left door, etc.; 1 *E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance, etc.; *D. F.*, door in flat or scene running across the back of the stage; 1 *G.*, first groove, etc. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

WHEN THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN

ACT I.

SCENE: *Golden Rod Tavern. Set house, R., with porch and two steps. Sign hangs from top of porch, reading "Tavern." Full landscape backing, showing circus tent in the far distance. Entrances L. 1 E., L. U. E., R. U. E. and R. into house. Plain table and two chairs are placed R and a garden bench, L. Pump L. of C. Grass mats are scattered about. Lights are full on all through act, as it is about five in the afternoon. See Scene Plot for stage setting.*

As curtain is well up, enter CYRUS from house and on porch. He has a dinner bell and rings it vigorously, at the same time yells "Dinner" two or three times, then comes down steps and to table, slams bell on it in disgusted manner.

CYRUS (*disgustedly*). Oh, what the gosh-darn blazes is the use of ringing that bell and yelling dinner. Ain't got no boarder and ain't had one since the country went dry two months ago. I reckon its force of habit ringin' that bell three times a day.

Enter GEORGE, L. U. E. He carries a small grip in one hand and a bound book in other.

GEORGE. Good afternoon, sir. (*Coming down to bench.*)

CYRUS (*surprised*). Afternoon. Travelin 'or just goin' some place? (*Looks at him curiously.*)

GEORGE. Are you the proprietor of this place? (*Waves hand in direction of tavern.*)

CYRUS. I be, but I ain't braggin' about it.

GEORGE (*laughs*). Well, I was directed to your place by a man in the village. My name is George Worthington of Boston.

CYRUS. Well, it won't go any further with me. I kin keep my mouth shut, you bet your boots.

GEORGE (*sets grip on bench*). Oh, I've done nothing to ashamed of, sir, I assure you. (*Laughs.*) I was recommended to your place as being a particularly quiet one—

CYRUS. Mister, it's quiet here—gosh darn quiet.

GEORGE. And that's what I desire—the more quiet the better I shall be suited. I will state briefly what I desire. I am a college professor in search of a quiet place in which I can study and also recuperate a somewhat rundown condition of the system. I think this place an ideal one for my purpose, and I should like to make arrangements to stop with you for some time. Have you room for me?

CYRUS (*laughs*). Room for you? Say, room is all I have got just now. I ain't had a boarder since the country went dry, mister.

GEORGE (*puzzled*). Country went dry? Don't you have rain here anymore, sir?

CYRUS (*looks at him from head to foot before speaking*). Rain? Who in thunder said anything about rain? The Prohibitionists performed an operation on this here country two months ago, mister.

GEORGE (*puzzled*). Performed an operation? I don't believe I quite grasp your meaning.

CYRUS. Why, they cut out our booze.

GEORGE (*laughs*). Oh, now I understand. You'll excuse me if I display ignorance in many of your ways and sayings. I am much wrapped up in my books. However, that is merely by the way. Will you accept me as a guest?

CYRUS (*doubtfully*). I dunno. You see I'm all alone here now. My help all left on account of no business, but if you'll put up with what I—

GEORGE. Say no more, sir. I lead a simple life and shall require but very little attention. Now regarding your rates.

CYRUS. Rates? (*Scratches head thoughtfully.*) Oh, yes. Well, I'll tell you. The last two or three folks I had here didn't pay me a darn cent. If you can do any better than that, go in and make yourself to home.

GEORGE (*laughs, then picks up grip*). I think I can. How will \$2 a day strike you?

CYRUS. Two dollars per day, mister, will strike me where I need it the most—in my pocketbook.

GEORGE (*crosses to porch, carrying grip and book, turns and faces CYRUS*). Very good, sir. I shall expect you to be my host for some days to come. What room, if you please?

CYRUS. Don't matter. Take your choice.

GEORGE. Thank you. (*Starts to enter.*)

CYRUS (*suddenly suspicious*). Say, you're sure you ain't one of them circus folks?

GEORGE (*on porch*). Circus folks?

CYRUS. Yes, one of them fellers from the circus yonder. (*Points at tent. GEORGE looks.*)

GEORGE. No, indeed, sir. I—

CYRUS. It's all right if you say so. You see, I attached that circus outfit a little while ago for debt, bag and baggage, and I reckon them circus folks ain't got a nickel apiece.

GEORGE. Oh! So you are an officer of the law as well as tavern keeper?

CYRUS. Yep. (*Proudly displays badge.*) I'm sheriff, constable, detective, policeman, justice of the peace and owner of the Golden Rod Tavern.

GEORGE (*laughs*). Well, well. But you need have no fear of your money not being forthcoming. If you will step inside I shall be glad to pay a week or so in advance. I shall send to the station for my trunk at once. (*Bows and exits into tavern.*)

CYRUS (*gazing after GEORGE*). Well, he's a likely looker and a fine feller, even if he did come from Boston.

Re-enter GEORGE on porch.

GEORGE. I have forgotten to ask you something. Is there any fishing hereabouts, sir?

CYRUS. Fishin? Well, I reckon.

GEORGE (*pleased*). And do the fish really bite?

CYRUS. Bite? Say, mister, the fish around here are so

vicious that you have to hide behind a tree while you bait your hook.

GEORGE (*laughs*). All right. I'll see you later, sir. (*Exit into house.*)

CYRUS (*with a chuckle*). I reckon that'll keep him quiet for a spell.

Auto horns sound off L. U. E., then sharp report as an explosion of some part of machine.

CYRUS (*at back center, shading eyes with hand and looking off L.*). Gosh all fish hooks! Somebody's had a fallin' out with their automobile. (*Looks again.*) Darned if it ain't Miss Annabelle.

Enter ANNABELLE, L. U. E. She is dressed in fashionable auto costume.

ANNABELLE (*bowing and smiling at CYRUS, then coming down stage*). Ah, Mr. Skinner, I am glad I found you in.

CYRUS. Yes, findin' me in is a heap better than findin' me out, ain't it? (*Chuckles, then comes down to her.*)

ANNABELLE (*laughs*). I just had an accident happen to my runabout. I was out for a ride, thinking I would go around by way of the circus and see what was going on up there. But I'm stopped short now. I pulled every lever and the car never moved. Provoking, isn't it?

CYRUS. Don't know much about them things, Miss. If it was a hoss I'd know what to advise. But there ain't nothin' doin' with that circus up there. (*Indicating tent.*)

ANNABELLE. No? What happened?

CYRUS. Served an attachment for debt a little while ago and tied 'em all up tight.

ANNABELLE. That's too bad, I'm sure. But would you mind if I used your phone, Mr. Skinner? I must call up my house and have one of the men come over and take care of my car. Is your phone in working order?

CYRUS (*doubtfully*). It was last week, Miss.

ANNABELLE (*laughs, then starts for house*). Well, I'll take a chance anyway. I may have to stop here for supper. (*Turns and faces him.*) Will that be all right?

CYRUS. Well, you might take a chance on that, too, as long as you're takin' chances.

ANNABELLE (*laughs*). I'll do that, too, Mr. Skinner. (*Exits into house.*)

CYRUS. Gosh, I'm busier than a yellow dog with fleas. Got a circus tied up, and a feller clean from Boston, and now the richest gal in the country comes to eat supper. (*Goes to back center.*) I'll go take a squint at her machine. Maybe I kin start her up. (*Exit L. U. E., whistling.*)

Enter JERRY and MOTHER RICKIE, R. U. E., each carrying a couple of bundles.

JERRY (*coming down to bench and dropping bundles on it*). Well, we're here.

MOTHER (*dropping bundles on bench, then sitting wearily down beside them*). Yes, but *where* are ye—that's the question?

JERRY (*looking at tavern*). This here is a tavern, Mother Rickie, wherein are contained, I take it, food, drink and rest.

MOTHER. Well, I ain't findin' no fault, but if such like things as them are inside, the chances are they'll stay there, 'cause we ain't got a nickel between us. By the way, Mr. Barker, how are you feelin'?

JERRY. Rotten! And why shouldn't I? It's a fine situation for *me* to find myself in. *Me*, Jerry Barker, manager of the Great Wonderland Circus and Menagerie, broke, and without the price of a hot-dog sandwich in my jeans. Absolutely broke, Mother Rickie—do you get that?

MOTHER. Oh, well, things might be worse.

JERRY. Worse? Nix! Nothin' doin' in the worse line. When that rube sheriff attached our outfit, the worst that could happen came up and happened.

MOTHER. Maybe if you'd let the booze alone a bit, you and the circus would be better off. (*Takes a bottle slyly from pocket and takes a sip.*)

JERRY. Booze? Go way with that kind of noise. I'm no boozer and you know it. But now you mention, it, I'm thirsty.

MOTHER. There's a kindly lookin' pump. Go to it.

JERRY. Bah! There's nothin' in that pump but water.
(*Goes to pump.*)

MOTHER. Well?

JERRY. Of course well water. What else? (*Pumps dipper full, holds it up, sighs.*) I suppose I got to drink it—this once anyhow. (*Takes mouthful, then spits it out.*) Oh, Lord!

MOTHER. Yes, and he made water to drink, too.

JERRY. Don't believe it. Understand I ain't knockin' water, Mother. Water is all right in its place. But its place is under bridges and floatin' ships. Besides, look at the rain we've had in the last two weeks. That's what put our show on the bum, lady—water.

MOTHER. You're right, Jerry Barker. Water is a dangerous companion. (*Takes another nip slyly.*)

JERRY. Where's Zuzu and Peaches?

MOTHER. Say, that's so. Where are they? I ain't seen them since noon. (*Getting up and going back to center, looks off both ways.*) Hope they ain't lost, strayed or stolen.

JERRY. Don't worry. They'll turn up. Zuzu will look out for Peaches all right.

MOTHER (*coming back to bench*). Oh, I ain't worryin' any. But it's just as well to stick together.

Enter GEORGE from R. U. E. and crosses slowly to L. U. E. and exits. He is deeply interested in book and does not see them.

JERRY. Oh, I guess we'll stick all right. There ain't nothin' else to do under these here circumstances.

MOTHER. Don't growl. Don't get you nothin'. Be like Peaches and Zuzu—cheerful like all the time.

Enter CYRUS, L. U. E. Stops and stares curiously at JERRY and MOTHER.

JERRY. The only time I'd feel cheerful would be when I had that rube sheriff by the neck, kickin' him so full of holes that by the time I got through with him he'd be first cousin to a screen door. (*CYRUS does comedy quiet*

sneak down stage to porch and exit into house. March music begins to be played by orchestra, very soft, with sound of drum in distance.)

MOTHER (*rises quickly, goes to back center and looks off R. U. E.*) What's that?

JERRY (*following her*). Sounds like something all right.

(*Music a little louder, with drum beats gradually growing louder and nearer.*)

MOTHER (*looking intently*). It's Zuzu and Peaches or I'm a heathen.

JERRY. What the blazes are they up to now?

MOTHER. Looks like they're doing another of their fool tricks.

Music now "forty." Enter ZUZU and PEACHES, R. U. E., marching to time of music. ZUZU carries a bass drum which he pounds to rhythm of music, and PEACHES follows closely behind, playing cymbals. They march twice about stage. Enter from house ANNABELLE and CYRUS and stand on porch watching the scene. MOTHER and JERRY at back, C., looking on and enjoying it. Put plenty of action in this scene. Music stops after PEACHES and ZUZU march twice about stage, then PEACHES and ZUZU set down drum and cymbals.

ZUZU. Well, good people, here we are—what's left of us. Are we downhearted? Nay, nay! Not even if they didn't give us time to gather together our beloved street clothing and such like things. (*MOTHER and JERRY come down stage again. ANNABELLE and CYRUS on porch. To JERRY.*) Say, Mr. Barker, did you catch the big parade?

JERRY. This thing you just pulled off—do you call that a parade?

PEACHES. Sure, Mike.

JERRY. Don't call me Mike. My name's Jerry.

MOTHER (*to PEACHES*). How you feelin', anyhow?

PEACHES. Immense. Never better.

MOTHER (*to ZUZU*). And how do you feel, Zuzu?

ZUZU. Me? Say, I've got eatin' suspicions, Mother. Genuine eatin' suspicions.

ANNABELLE (*aside to CYRUS*). What a happy-go-lucky kind of people they are.

CYRUS (*aside to her*). All but that big fellow. Don't like the looks of him. (*CYRUS and ANNABELLE exeunt into house.*)

ZUZU (*looking at tavern*). Hello, there's a tavern. (*To MOTHER and JERRY.*) Have you folks dined yet?

MOTHER AND JERRY (*together, disgustedly*). Oh, yes, we've dined.

ZUZU. Do not allow thy angry passions to arise. Thy hungry dining rooms are filled. Ham and eggs! Ham and eggs! (*Sings.*) Ham and eggs! (*Sees sign, "Lunch."*) Behold! Lunch! Watch me, good folks.

Beefsteak and onions through the land
Hold favor, there's no doubt,
But now we eat the onions and
We cut the beefsteak out.

JERRY. Lord, I wish I had your disposition.

ZUZU. You can have it. It don't get me anything.

PEACHES. Ain't he the happy one, tho'?

MOTHER. Did you come down here from the show lot in them clothes?

ZUZU. No. I've got an aluminum kimona on, lined with sheet music.

JERRY. Oh, shut up. You make me tired.

ZUZU. For that tired feeling try this:

There was a young sculptor named Pludias,
He made statues quite hideous;
He carved Aphrodite
Without any nightie,
Which shocked the purely fastidious.

JERRY. That'll be about all from you, sir.

MOTHER. You and Peaches got to git them clothes off and get into something else. Get busy with these bundles.

JERRY (*to Mother*). Well, that's up to you. Go as far as you like and see if I care. (*Sits on bench, moodily stroking his mustache and staring into vacancy.*)

PEACHES. My, but isn't he the gladsome person! Come on, Mother. I'll help.

PEACHES, MOTHER and ZUZU collect the bundles, ZUZU now moving for the first time since his entrance, then business of sorting clothes rapidly, winding up by ZUZU getting a pair of long stockings, a skirt and pair of corsets. He holds them up while MOTHER and PEACHES laugh heartily.

PEACHES. Say, Zuzu, that's the first laugh I've had handed to me in a month. Ha, ha, ha!

MOTHER (to ZUZU). Give them to me, Zuzu.

ZUZU. Nix, Mother. (Puts finger on lips and then tiptoes to bench.) I'll see if I can hand the grouch a laugh. (Drops clothes on JERRY.) There's your clothes, papa.

JERRY (throwing things angrily from him and springing to feet). What do you mean, you fool! Keep that clown stuff for your next audience—I don't want it.

PEACHES. Gee, it don't look as if there was going to be a "next audience."

MOTHER. There must be some way to regain possession of your property, Mr. Barker.

JERRY. Sure there is. All I got to do is to dig up \$1,200 cold cash and lift the indebtedness. One thousand two hundred cold plunks and I kin have the outfit agin. Bah! You make me sick. Where am I goin' to git that much coin?

ZUZU. Don't talk money now. Talk eat. Keep your eye on Zuzu, the celebrated clown. I shall ring the bell for the worthy landlord, and if he doesn't come forthwith I'll ring his neck. (Picks up bell from table and rings it vigorously, then stops and looks expectantly at door.)

PEACHES. I'll bet we nearly get something to eat, Zuzu.

ZUZU. I'm going to press the button again. (Rings bell again.)

Enter CYRUS from house, first cautiously pecking at them through doorway.

CYRUS (on porch). Good afternoon. Did you ring?

JERRY. Yes. Is this a hotel?

CYRUS. Well, some call it that.

JERRY. What do you call it?

CYRUS. Too many ladies present to say.

JERRY (*starting and looking at CYRUS closely*). Oh, I've got you now. You're the rube sheriff that stuck up my show. Come down here. I want to see you. (*Threatening attitude.*)

CYRUS (*nervously backing away*). You kin easy see me from where you be.

PEACHES (*to JERRY*). Forget it, Mr. Barker.

MOTHER. Yes, he only did his duty. (*To CYRUS.*) How you feelin', Mr. Sheriff?

CYRUS Nervous. (*Business.*)

ZUZU. Oh, say, where's the waiter?

CYRUS. I'm him.

JERRY. Well, for the love of Mike! Is there anything else you happen to be? You're sheriff, landlord and waiter.

CYRUS. Yep. And I'm a policeman, detective, justice of the peace, insurance agent, lawyer, blacksmith—

JERRY. Oh, shut up. You must be the only inhabitant of this country.

CYRUS. And I'm owner of the Golden Rod Tavern. (*Coming down steps.*)

ZUZU. Then we'd like something to eat.

CYRUS. Beats all how the tavern business is pickin' up.

ZUZU. Glad some business is picking up. Circus biz is good and rotten, otherwise we wouldn't be in the fix we are.

CYRUS. Some busted, ain't you?

ZUZU. Not me. I got enough coin in my grouch bag to pay for us for a while.

PEACHES. Zuzu, it ain't right to make you the fall guy. No, sir.

JERRY. Shut up. We can pay him back. (*To CYRUS.*) What you got to eat in the joint?

CYRUS. Don't know exactly. What do circus folks usually eat?

JERRY. What do you suppose we eat?

CYRUS. Don't know, mister. I seen one circus fellow eatin' snakes once. But I tell you right now I *don't* keep 'em.

JERRY (*angrily*). Don't get gay.

ZUZU. Yes, cut out the sideshow stuff and let's get to the big performance. My stomach is commencing to think my chewing apparatus is off on a summer vacation.

CYRUS. Well, come on in and we'll see what I kin dig up.

JERRY. That sounds like good news from home. (*Exits into house.*)

MOTHER (*to CYRUS, aside*). Do you serve cold *tea* with your meals? (*Winks.*)

CYRUS. Nope. Dry town, lady.

MOTHER. Well, this is a fine place indeed.

CYRUS. All this place needs is a little rain and good folks for neighbors.

MOTHER. Humph! That's all hades needs. (*Exits into house.*)

PEACHES (*to ZUZU*). Come on, Zuzu. Let's see what's inside. (*Exit into house.*)

ZUZU (*following her*). I hope there's more inside the tavern than there is in me. (*Exit in house.*)

CYRUS (*looking after them*). Beats all how the tavern business is pickin' up, by gosh! (*Exit in house.*)

Enter ANNABELLE from house and GEORGE from L. U. E. GEORGE is absorbed in the reading of his book and does not see ANNABELLE until he collides with her at back, C.

GEORGE (*hastily putting book under one arm, then removing hat and bowing politely*). Really, you know—I beg your pardon.

ANNABELLE (*graciously*). Pray don't mention it, sir. (*Goes a few steps towards L. U. E., then stops and turns to him*). You didn't happen to see anything of one of my men coming this way—no, no; of course not. You wouldn't know whether it was one of my men or not.

GEORGE (*takes a couple of steps as if to exit, but stops as he speaks*). If I can be of any service—my name is George Worthington of Boston, and I am stopping here for a few days.

ANNABELLE. Oh, yes; Mr. Skinner spoke of you. I am

Miss Reeves—Annabelle Reeves. I was out for a ride and something went wrong with my engine, and —

GEORGE. Really, you know, I should like to be of some assistance, but I am not up in automobiles at all. I have threatened many times to read up on that subject, but I have neglected to do so, and—say, I'm really sorry I didn't now; really I am. (*By this time they have worked down stage and stand very close together, and as he finishes last speech his face is very close to hers.*)

ANNABELLE. I'm quite sure you must be. (*Face close to his.*)

GEORGE (*face close to hers for perhaps ten seconds before drawing back and speaking, then he takes book from under arm and taps it with right forefinger*). Are you fond of reading, Miss Reeves?

ANNABELLE (*taken back somewhat and not knowing just how to reply*). Oh, yes—yes, very much. Very much indeed.

GEORGE (*pleased*). Perhaps you have read this. It is "Development Hypothesis." In biology, a hypothesis or theory which contends that species were not each of them a separate creation, but by some process or other came from previous species, the only exception, if any, existing being one or more primordial forms. But of course you have read it, and—

ANNABELLE. Oh, yes, to be sure. (*Aside.*) I don't know a thing he's talking about. (*Looking nervously about.*) I'm not—not keeping you from anything, am I?

GEORGE. Oh, dear no. You see I am here on a sort of vacation. I have plenty of time and nothing at all to do.

ANNABELLE. I'm sorry.

GEORGE (*surprised*). Eh? Sorry?

ANNABELLE. No, no; I meant that I was sorry if I was detaining you.

GEORGE. Quite so, quite so. (*Motions to bench.*) Won't you sit down?

ANNABELLE (*nervously looking about, then sees no way out of it and sits*). Thank you.

GEORGE (*sits on bench alongside of her*). Really, you

know, Miss Reeves, I never expected to come in contact with a person—you'll pardon me, won't you—with a person who had a kindred feeling for my hobbies like you have shown—one so familiar with development hypothesis in this out of the way spot. Really, you show wonderful knowledge of the subject. Suppose we go into the subject more thoroughly. (*Opening book, reads.*) "Everyone has taken note that man comes into the world as an infant, and that bodily and mental development, operating by means of changes—(ANNABELLE rises softly and quietly tiptoes back C. and exits L. U. E., casting backward, cautious glances the while. GEORGE does not miss her and continues his reading.) So gradual as to escape notice at the time, make that infant pass through childhood, youth and so on to full maturity."

PEACHES enters from house, crosses to bench, looking about on ground as if in search of some article, then discovers bundle on bench and at same time discovers GEORGE. She stops and stares at him.

GEORGE (*turning as if to converse or argue a point he has just read and thinking ANNABELLE is still beside him, then looks up and discovers it is PEACHES*). Oh! (*Looks her over curiously, then looks about in searching manner for ANNABELLE, takes off his hat and bows to PEACHES.*) Really, you know, you quite startled me. I thought I was in conversation with another. I wasn't prepared to see—see anything—anybody, I mean, just like—that is, that in anyway exactly resembled you, either in face or—or—(*peering at her skirts curiously, then takes off glasses and wipes them with handkerchief*).

PEACHES. Say, that monologue ain't no hit with me. There ain't a laugh in it. Besides I think you're up against a bad case of stage fright.

GEORGE (*astonished*). I beg your pardon—really I do.

PEACHES (*laughs good naturedly*). All right. The same to you and many of 'em. (*Picks bundle up from bench and turns to go.*)

GEORGE. Are you—are you one of the—the maids employed in Mr. Skinner's tavern?

PEACHES. Me? Say, quit yer kiddin'. I'm a circus lady.

GEORGE. Oh! A light dawns on me now. Mr. Skinner did mention something about a circus, come to think of it. And so you are of the circus, are you?

PEACHES. Don't I look the part?

GEORGE. I really couldn't say, you know. The circus is one phase of our existence with which I am entirely unfamiliar.

PEACHES. Well, wouldn't that make you walk the floor nights! Say, where you from, anyhow, Mister Man?

GEORGE. My name is George Worthington of Boston. (*Bows.*)

PEACHES. Well, it serves you right. And do you mean to hand me the bunk that you've never popped into a big top and caught us folks peddling out the dope?

GEORGE (*completely bewildered*). I—I—really, I don't grasp you at all, you know. Bunk? Popped? Big top? Dealing dope?

PEACHES. Oh, don't kid me. Come clean, come clean!

GEORGE. Come clean? (*Looks at his hands, trousers and shoes, then takes out handkerchief and dusts off shoes.*)

PEACHES (*bursts into hearty laugh*). Well, if you're on the square, you're the biggest rube I ever met up with. Listen: I am a bareback rider with that circus up yonder. Do you get *that*?

GEORGE. Oh, yes; of course. You ride a horse with your—your bare back. (*PEACHES stares at him astonished, giving effect for laugh, then he continues.*) But how is it that you find it necessary to have your—your back bare when you ride?

PEACHES. Say, I never met up with anything like you before. You've got my goat—you sure have!

GEORGE (*looks about as if looking for the goat*). Really, you know, I assure you I haven't even seen your goat. Was it a trained one?

PEACHES (*laughs*). Say, I'd call you a rummie, but you wouldn't know what I meant, so I won't. Besides, I ain't

got no more time to swap chatter with you. I got to go in and put on the big eat thing. If you haven't anything on you might stick around a bit and I'll breeze back this way and give you a few lessons in the English language—you sure do need 'em, party. (*Picks up bundle from bench.*) So long, kiddo!

GEORGE (*recoils in surprise*). Kiddo!

PEACHES. So long, and don't stub your toe. (*Runs up steps, then turns on porch and faces him.*) And don't stub your toe. (*Exit into house.*)

GEORGE (*raises first one foot, then the other and looks at each toe, puts on eyeglasses which he has been polishing with handkerchief, then stares curiously at doorway*). Really, you know—isn't she the most extraordinary young person! I surely must make a mental note of her peculiarities in speech, costume, et cetera, et cetera—especially the costume—and relate them in detail to some of my friends in Boston—really I must. (*Looks searchingly all about.*) I wonder what became of that other young woman? Most extraordinary proceeding, I'm sure.

Enter ZUZU in hurried manner from house. He carries a water bucket and almost collides with GEORGE as he rushes forth, discovers him just in time and runs about him and to the pump. Begins to pump, eying GEORGE curiously, and GEORGE returning the stare.

GEORGE (*staring at him*). I beg your pardon, sir.

ZUZU. What for? (*Stops pumping.*)

GEORGE. Really, you know; I don't know. I suppose on the supposition that I was somewhat surprised.

ZUZU. What at?

GEORGE. Why, at your appearance—perhaps your costume more than anything else. You are of the circus, are you not?

ZUZU. Yes—I am not. I was *but*. Did you get the "*but*"

GEORGE. You have been unfortunate, I understand. And so you are a clown—a buffoon!

ZUZU. Say, don't you call me no babboon—

GEORGE. Nay, nay. I called you a buffoon or practical jester. In Shakespeare's drama a distinct part is assigned to the clown, who no longer appears as an extempore jester, although the part he plays is to a certain extent in keeping with his additional functions.

ZUZU (*with no clear idea of what GEORGE means*). Well, outside of that I'm all right, ain't I?

GEORGE. Certainly, sir—most assuredly. There was a young lady here a few moments ago. She was also of the circus.

ZUZU (*threateningly*). Look here—that'll do you. You can call *me* anything you like; I'm used to it. But you can't slam Peaches—not while I'm around.

GEORGE. Slam Peaches?

ZUZU. Yes, Peaches. She's my pal.

GEORGE. Ah, I see. So that is the young lady's name. And why do they call her Peaches?

ZUZU. Because that's her name. (*Pumps water into pail, then stops again.*) Do you work around here, mister? If you do, you ought to get busy. Don't let me stop you.

GEORGE. I? Oh, dear no. I'm merely stopping at the tavern. My name is George Worthington of Boston.

ZUZU. Boston, eh? Say, get this one:

A Boston maiden owns a dog,
One of those high-toned trowsers.
He's so well bred and nice, 'tis said
He never pants—he trouses.

GEORGE. Ha, ha. Very well put, indeed, sir. I shall try and make a mental note of that.

ZUZU. Go as far as you like. As for me, they're waiting for this water and I must flee. Be good and keep your nose clean. (*Crosses to porch quickly.*) Ta-ta. I'll see you later. (*On porch, turns and quotes*)

Little drops of water, freezing as they fall;

Fat man's feet fly upward—biff! and that is all.

(*Exit into house.*)

GEORGE. Really you know. (*Starts after ZUZU.*) He's another most extraordinary individual. That was quite a clever thing he said about Boston. I must be sure and

remember it. Well, well. The landlord I'm quite sure informed me that this was an extremely quiet place—most extraordinary one, I should call it—quite so. (*Opens book and reads intently as he walks slowly to back C. and exits R. U. E.*)

Enter ANNABELLE at same time from L. U. E. Sound of horses' hoofbeats off L. as if in distance.

ANNABELLE (*gazing after GEORGE*). There goes the gentleman from Boston. (*Turns and looks off L.*) And here comes a gentleman I do not care to meet. (*Goes to porch.*) I'll make myself invisible to him without delay. (*Exit into house.*)

Hoofbeats have been gradually growing louder since first heard and are now just off stage L. Then voice cries "Whoa," and enter CLAY, L. U. E. He is drunk and swaggering and almost rushes on.

CLAY (*at back C. stops, looking all about*). No one in sight, eh? Well, there better be. I'm in no mood to be alone, and I hope that someone wears a skirt. I'm just in the mood to talk nonsense to a woman.

Enter MOTHER from house, stands on porch, calls.

MOTHER. Zuzu! Zuzu! Where the blazes are you?

CLAY (*aside*). Oh, look what I wished for. (*Advancing to porch, taking off hat and bowing mockingly.*) Good afternoon, miss.

MOTHER (*taken aback*). Say, is your name Zuzu?

CLAY. No, miss. My name is Francis Clay—at your service. (*Makes a low bow, then gives a mocking laugh.*)

MOTHER. Well, it ain't nothin' to me who you are—see!

CLAY. I'm sorry—awfully sorry. A charming young lady like you—ah, how can you be so distant?

MOTHER (*smirking and smiling coquettishly at him*). You'll pardon me, sir, but us young girls has to be very careful nowadays. (*Arranges hair and dress with hands.*)

CLAY (*laughs boisterously*). Sure, miss. I understand. But won't you come down here—down here to this rustic

seat? (*Indicates bench.*) I'm sure you can have no objection since I have introduced myself. (*Goes to bench and stands expectantly.*)

MOTHER (*looking about timidly, then assumes a girlish manner and comes down steps to bench*). I'm not accustomed to meeting gentlemen without my chaperone.

CLAY. Oh, you'll be quite safe with me—(*looks at her from head to foot*) dead safe. (*Laughs.*)

MOTHER (*sighs in languishing manner*). You can't always tell. (*Sits on bench.*)

CLAY. Oh, I can, you bet. (*Sits beside her.*)

MOTHER (*sighs as before*). Say, how do you feel today?

CLAY (*surprised*). How do I feel? Say, if I felt any better I'd send for a doctor. Did I catch your name or didn't you mention it?

MOTHER. I'm Miss Rickie.

CLAY. Stranger in these parts, aren't you?

MOTHER. Yes. I'm with the circus up there.

CLAY. Oh! (*Puts an arm about her waist.*)

MOTHER (*pushes him away*). Say, don't get fresh. Just because I'm an innocent young girl, don't think you can bamboozle me.

Enter ZUZU from house, stands on porch, eyeing them.

CLAY (*angrily*). And don't you get fresh with me, either. I don't allow nobody to do that—nobody, understand. (*Rises to feet unsteadily.*)

MOTHER. Go on. You're drunk. (*Rises.*)

CLAY. I am, am I. I'll show you. (*Tries to grab her waist. She draws back.*)

ZUZU (*rushing down and shoving CLAY back*). Keep off the grass, young fellow—keep off the grass.

CLAY. Oh! (*To MOTHER.*) Say, who's your friend?

ZUZU. Don't answer him, Mother. Leave him to me. I'll spank him in a minute and send him to bed without any supper.

CLAY (*drawing back, then pulls gun from his pocket*). Oh, you will, eh? Not while I'm looking you won't. I haven't killed a man in three days, and I'm getting peevish.

If I don't kill somebody every day or two I always get peevish.

MOTHER (*pleadingly*). Please, sir; he didn't mean any harm.

ZUZU (*aside to her*). Run along, Mother. I'll be O. K.

CLAY (*to MOTHER*). You shut up! (*To ZUZU.*) Are you a clown, young fellow?

ZUZU. I should say I am. One of the best in the business.

CLAY. Oh, you are, are you? Well, I'll tell you something. I'm glad I met you. I want to laugh and you've got to make me—see! Now, then, if you're such a cracking good clown, make *me* laugh. (*Points gun at him.*)

ZUZU. Say, hold on, mister. How in thunder do you expect me to make you laugh with that cannon stuck under my nose?

MOTHER. Please don't shoot, mister.

CLAY (*to her*). Shut up and keep shut up. I'm running the circus now. (*To ZUZU.*) I don't care how or what you do so long as you make me laugh. Now start in. But remember—make me *laugh*, and laugh good. (*Sticks gun under ZUZU's nose.*)

ZUZU (*aside*). Oh, Lord! Ask a dying man to be funny. (*To CLAY.*) Say, on the square, I can't make you laugh.

CLAY. Oh, yes, you can. You said you was a good clown—now make good.

ZUZU. What'll I do?

CLAY. As Shakespeare said: "I had rather have a fool to make me merry, than experience to make me sad." Go ahead. Tell me a funny story—and be sure that it's funny. (*To MOTHER, who is sneaking toward house.*) You stay here, Miss Rickie—I ain't selfish. You can laugh, too. (*MOTHER sits on bench, frightened.*)

ZUZU. Say, please try and laugh easy, won't you?

CLAY. Don't stall about it. Tell me something funny.

ZUZU. Well, get this one, then: One time I fell asleep in a coal bin and two men passed. One said to the other: "Isn't he the thrifty one, laying in the winter's coal?" (*Looks anxiously at CLAY to see if he is going to laugh.*)

CLAY (*keeps serious face, acts as though he was thinking point over and couldn't grasp it.*) Nix! That's no good. You got to come stronger than that. Do another one—quick!

ZUZU (*scratches head thoughtfully*). Gosh, I can't think of anything. (*Pause, then*). Get this one—and for the Lord's sake, *laugh!*

CLAY. I'm waiting. I want to laugh just as badly as you want me to, but I think you're a bum clown. (*MOTHER exhibits anxious feeling.*)

ZUZU. Get this one: Why did they make the hand of the Statue of Liberty eleven inches long? You don't know? Well, if they had made it twelve inches it would have been a foot. (*Anxiously looks at CLAY as before.*)

CLAY. Well, that ain't so bad. You're improving. But you notice that I ain't laughing yet.

ZUZU. I do—oh, Lord! Say, let me get a feather and tickle you? Are you ticklish?

CLAY. No, but I am devilish—and I don't want any more *near* jokes. Stand on your head. (*Gun business.*)

ZUZU. I don't want to—

CLAY. Stand on your head, I say.

ZUZU. You bet. (*Gets down and touches head to floor or if performer is capable he may stand on head.*)

CLAY. That's very good. Get on your feet again.

ZUZU. Did you laugh yet?

CLAY. Not yet. Now cry like a baby—and be sure you give a correct imitation.

ZUZU. Say, I can't do that—

CLAY. Oh, yes you can. (*Flourishes gun.*)

ZUZU. I believe I can, come to think of it. (*Comedy business of twisting face and getting ready, then cries baby like.*) How's that?

CLAY. Rotten. Say, I'm getting awfully nervous.

ZUZU. You ain't half as nervous as I am.

MOTHER (*who all through this scene has been anxiously watching proceedings, laughs uproariously as ZUZU finishes baby cry, now appeals to CLAY*). Say, that sure was funny. I nearly laughed my fool head off.

CLAY. Well, I didn't—see! Shut up!

ZUZU. Say, you're the hardest audience I ever worked for. You must have come in on a pass.

CLAY. I'll give you just one more chance—just one. I want you to give a correct imitation of an automobile horn. You understand—that honk-honk sound. And be sure this time that it's a good imitation, because this is positively your *last* chance. Get busy.

ZUZU. Give me a little time first to practice up?

CLAY. Not a practice. Fire away.

ZUZU. Well, good-by, sweet world. I have looked upon your fair face for the last time. (*Draws deep breath, looks all about and then gives a couple of hideous shrieks.*)

CLAY (*laughs uproariously, slapping thighs with hands, etc.*). Great! Immense! I knew you could do it.

MOTHER (*sinking back on seat weakly*). Thank God he laughed at last.

ZUZU. Thank him for me, Mother, while you're at it.

Enter ANNABELLE from house, stands on porch.

ANNABELLE (*to CLAY*). Mr. Clay! What is the meaning of this? (*Comes down steps.*)

CLAY (*advancing to meet her*). Why, dear me, if it isn't the fair Annabelle. Delighted, I'm sure. (*Bows.*)

ANNABELLE. I'm not. You're in no condition to be in the company of—

CLAY. Oh, behave. I'm having the time of my life. Come and embrace me, fair maid. I'm hungry for one touch of your sweet lips. (*Tries to embrace her, she evades him.*)

ANNABELLE. How dare you, Mr. Clay!

Enter PEACHES from house, stands on porch.

CLAY (*discovering PEACHES*). Oh, look who's here. (*To ANNABELLE.*) Say, Annabelle, who's your friend, eh? Introduce me. She's a pippin.

PEACHES (*coming down steps*). Who's the fresh guy, Miss Reeves?

CLAY (*to PEACHES*). I'll introduce myself, if she won't.

My name is Clay. I'm a sweetheart of Annabelle here, but she's peevish today and won't kiss me. You have it all over her—so come on and give me a kiss, little one. (MOTHER, ZUZU and ANNABELLE all start to get between CLAY and PEACHES, but he flourishes revolver and they fall back.)

ANNABELLE. You scoundrel!

CLAY. Don't call me names—I won't stand for it. I'm going to kiss that gal or somebody gets hurt. You know me. When I want anything I get it. (*Points pistol at PEACHES.*) Now, I want a kiss. Do I get one or do you get a bullet?

ZUZU (*jumps in front of PEACHES with arms outstretched in protecting manner*). You don't do either, mister. Not while I'm on the job. (*Picture.*)

GEORGE *enter from R. U. E., reading book. He comes to back C. before discovering situation, then lowers book and comes down to group.*

GEORGE. Really, you know, but isn't this rather an unusual situation? (*Looks from one to other.*)

CLAY (*whirls about on GEORGE*). And who the deuce are you?

GEORGE. My name is George Worthington of Boston.

CLAY. Oh, it is, eh?

GEORGE. Yes, sir. (*Bowing politely.*)

ANNABELLE (*to GEORGE*). Oh, Mr. Worthington, you musn't get mixed up in this affair. He will kill you.

Enter JERRY from house and stands on porch.

GEORGE. Oh, dear me. Is he such a rough person as that? Really, you know, there has been quite a lot of excitement about here since I came. Mr. Skinner, our worthy landlord, informed me that this was an extremely quiet place. In fact, he went so far as to say it was gosh darn quiet—pardon me, ladies. But I fear he is very wrong. (*To ZUZU and handing him book.*) Would you mind holding my book, sir? (*ZUZU takes it.*) Thank you. Please be careful with it, won't you? It's a rare volume. (*To CLAY.*) You'll pardon me, sir, but what's that instrument you have in your hand—if I may ask?

CLAY (*bewildered*). That's—that's a revolver.

GEORGE. Dear me, is it possible? (*Goes close to CLAY, reaches and takes revolver from him, looks at it critically, turning it over and over.*) How very interesting. I don't believe I ever held one in my hand before. I am told they are quite dangerous—especially in some hands. Here, Mr. Zuzu, take it. (*Hands ZUZU gun.*) And please give me my book. I have just reached a highly interesting chapter. (*ZUZU takes gun and gives book.*)

CLAY (*now recovering from his astonishment*). You white-faced, four-eyed butt-in—I'll make—(*threatening attitude*).

ZUZU (*imitating GEORGE's quiet voice and slightly raising gun*). Really, you know, I wouldn't do anything if I were you. (*CLAY recoils.*)

PEACHES (*to GEORGE, putting out hand*). Kiddo, you're all right. Slip it to me. (*Shakes GEORGE's hand.*)

(*Picture as curtain falls. CLAY standing with fists clinched, scowling at group, ZUZU pointing gun in his face, squinting one eye and looking down into the barrel. PEACHES and GEORGE shaking hands. MOTHER at L. of group, reaching for bottle and slyly taking a nip. ANNABELLE at R. of group, smiling at GEORGE. JERRY on porch, smiling broadly.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE: *Kitchen in ANNABELLE's house. Screened window in flat R., practical door in flat L., also practical door. R. Kitchen cupboard between door and window against Flat, on top of which is a stuffed animal of some kind, a pair of horns or anything which will appear to MOTHER RICKIE as something hideous, for drinking scene. Kitchen table and two chairs L. C., one chair R. C. Kitchen utensils, dishes, etc., are in the cupboard. Large scoop shovel and broom stand in one corner of the room. Also a long whip with cracker on one end, to be used in riding*

scene in finalé. Lights full on as it is morning. See Scene Plot for stage setting.

At rise of curtain PEACHES is discovered at table kneading a batch of dough, while ZUZU, not in clown costume, is seated in chair, R., reading newspaper.

PEACHES (*pausing in her task*). Say, Zuzu, how do you tell when dough is done?

ZUZU (*not looking up from paper*). I don't tell.

PEACHES. Well, gee whiz, I don't know what to do. Miss Reeves asked me if I was wise to the bread making thing. I fourflushed and said yep. I know you knead the dough, all right—

ZUZU (*looking up from paper*). Sure I need the dough. If I didn't I'd be far, far away. I paid the rube landlord six days board for the four of us, and now I'm all in but my shoestrings.

PEACHES. Oh, I don't mean coin. I mean this dough gag here. (*Punches dough.*) I've slapped it, uppercut it, swung on it with right and left swings, and I'm a rummie if I know any more than when I started.

ZUZU (*crosses to table, stands looking wisely down at dough*). I don't see but what that's real nice looking dough—beautiful. (*Jabs his fingers into it.*)

PEACHES (*shoving him away*). Stop that! Who do you suppose will want to eat this after you've had your hands in it?

ZUZU. Well, you've got yours in it. Besides, after it is baked it won't make any difference.

PEACHES. Baked? Gee whiz, has it got to be baked?

ZUZU (*laughs*). Certainly, you mutt.

PEACHES. Oh, gosh, I didn't know that.

ZUZU. Nobody could eat it like that. But say, where is everybody?

PEACHES. Jerry Barker's gone up to the postoffice, Miss Annabelle's gone to give orders to some of the farm hands, and Mother Rickie's gone to the drug store to get a prescription filled.

ZUZU. Yes, and I'll bet I could fill that *prescription* myself—with my eyes shut, too.

PEACHES. Oh, well, what's the difference. It's her only fault.

ZUZU. Sure. (*They both mix dough vigorously for a few seconds without speaking.*)

PEACHES. Say, I guess this Miss Annabelle ain't some nice girl, eh?

ZUZU. Well, I guess.

PEACHES. Say, the minute she gets wise that our bunch is broke, she says to me come over and play in my yard—and as long as you want to.

ZUZU. Well, at that you ain't no charity guest. You work at something. Look at the way you are working right now.

PEACHES. That's right, too—look. (*She kneads dough in silence.*)

GEORGE *is seen at window, stands for an instant looking in, then enters door in flat, stands inside, smiling at them.*

ZUZU. Wonder what became of that fellow with the cannon? Clay, I think his name is.

PEACHES. Say, I'll bet he's running yet. That fellow from Boston is sure a nervy cuss.

GEORGE. Ahem! (*They turn quickly in surprise.*)

PEACHES. Oh, how de do, Mr. Worthington.

GEORGE (*coming down to table with outstretched hand*). I'm very well, thank you. Really I am.

PEACHES (*has handful of dough, which she slaps into his hand as she shakes it*). Glad to hear it.

ZUZU (*dough in hand, grabs GEORGE'S other hand and shakes it*). Me, too. (*PEACHES and ZUZU notice what they have done and begin to apologize. GEORGE laughs good naturedly while they wipe the dough from his hands.*)

PEACHES (*after wiping GEORGE'S hands*). Say, on the dead level; I wouldn't have done that for a dollar forty cents. I was knocked in a twister when I see you breeze in here.

GEORGE. You'll excuse me for coming in unannounced, but—

PEACHES. Oh, that's all right. You can go as far as you like around this joint.

ZUZU (*to* GEORGE). Say, maybe you know something about making bread. You're a pretty wise kind of a guy.

GEORGE. I? How to make bread?

ZUZU. Sure. The kid here is up against it. The dough has been hammered to a pulp. Now what's the next thing to slip over?

GEORGE. Really, you know, I don't believe I am in a position to advise you. Have you never read up on the subject of bread manufacture?

PEACHES. Nope.

ZUZU. Nix for me likewise.

GEORGE. Well, well, it's really too bad. A person nowadays should have *every* knowledge at his fingers' ends. One never can tell when that particular knowledge may play a useful part in one's daily routine. I shall make a mental note of the subject of bread manufacture and read up on same, and then will be in a position to impart said knowledge to you.

PEACHES. Are we supposed to stick around here while you grab said knowledge from some book, say in a couple of years or so?

GEORGE. Oh, dear, no. It may perhaps only take me a matter of two or three weeks to find the proper authority on the subject.

PEACHES. Oh, is that all? For three weeks we get no bread, Zuzu.

ZUZU. Well, I'll take pie then.

GEORGE. Or in the absence of bread, why not toast?

ZUZU. Yes, why not?

PEACHES. Well, you're a couple of nifty boneheads. How are you going to have toast without bread?

ZUZU. Oh, piffle! (*Kicks himself.*)

GEORGE. I'm sure I spoke without due deliberation.

PEACHES (*to* GEORGE). Ain't seen anything of that Clay chap, has you? (*Busy with dough.*)

GEORGE. You are referring to the gentleman whom Mr.

Zuzu prevented from striking me a couple of days ago, I presume?

PEACHES. Gentleman? Say, if he's a *gentleman* I'm a trained sea lion, believe me. (*Pounds dough.*)

ZUZU. And say, don't try to slip any hero decorations onto my breast when I ain't looking. He made me roll over, play dead and jump through all right, but when *you* popped in, he was an angel child forthwith.

PEACHES. Yes, you sure got his number. (*Business with dough.*)

GEORGE. Really, you know, I can't accept any credit for the part I played. The man was somewhat intoxicated, and—

ZUZU. Well, you want to look out for him. He makes a noise like a very bad boy. He threatens to do things to us all. But I'll get him some time for what he did to me—watch me, folks.

PEACHES. Forget it, Zuzu, and leave him alone. I can't spare you. Besides, flowers cost money, which I ain't got a plenty of right now.

ZUZU. Say, ain't you massaged that stuff about long enough, Peaches?

PEACHES. Maybe I has and maybe I hasn't—you can search me. But I think I'll take a chance and dump it in the oven just to see what'll happen. (*GEORGE crosses to chair, R., sits and begins to read book.*)

ZUZU. I'll help. (*Gets scoop shovel and broom from corner and comes back to table.*)

PEACHES. You always was a great help to your mother, Zuzu.

ZUZU. Well, I guess. (*Holds shovel on table and gives broom to PEACHES.*) Sweep her in, kid, and don't leave any behind.

PEACHES (*getting up on table and sweeping everything from it onto shovel*). Leave it to me, young man. Leave it to me.

ZUZU. Say, get this:

“You can't eat your cake,”

They say, “and have it, too.”

And since I took an ocean trip
I believe the saying's true.

PEACHES. Zuzu, you're a bum poet. Come on now to the bake oven and let's see what kind of a baker you are.

ZUZU (*with shovel full of dough, etc.*). All right, but the Lord only knows what this junk is going to be when we get through with it.

PEACHES and ZUZU *exit door R., leaving GEORGE immersed in his book. Then ANNABELLE appears at window, looks in, discovers GEORGE, gives a start of surprise, smiles and a moment later enters door L. in flat. She wears a garden hat which she removes upon entering.*

ANNABELLE. Why, Mr. Worthington. Good morning.

GEORGE (*rising quickly, then looks about in surprise*). Really, you know, you quite startled me. I supposed Miss Peaches and Mr. Zuzu were here. They were a moment ago.

ANNABELLE (*laughs*). They find it hard to remain in one spot very long, Mr. Worthington. However, it doesn't matter—that is, I'm glad you found time to drop over.

GEORGE (*bashfully*). Thank you. You see, Miss Reeves, I came over to—to see if—to bring you this book. (*Taps it.*) I'm quite sure you would enjoy reading it. (*Extends it.*)

ANNABELLE (*taking book*). Oh, isn't it pretty! Such a lovely color, and gold binding, too.

GEORGE. Um! Really, Miss Reeves, I don't believe I noticed the *exterior* of the volume. It was the interior I wished to call your attention to. But perhaps you have already read the book. It is the life of Carneades.

ANNABELLE. No, I have never read it.

GEORGE. No? Then you will thoroughly enjoy it, I'm sure. Carneades was a Greek philosopher, born in Cyrene in Africa, about 213 B. C.

ANNABELLE (*aside*). Oh, gracious! He's started again. (*Looking about nervously.*)

GEORGE. Carneades studied logic at Athens under Diogenes, but became a partisan of the Academy, and an enemy

of the stoics. But, of course, you are familiar with the great philosopher, and I am boring you—

ANNABELLE. Oh, no; not at all. I'm sure it is very interesting. (*Aside.*) I do wish he'd talk about somebody that I know.

GEORGE. Well, after you have read the volume, we will discuss it at length. Carneades had some very peculiar views, but none but what were thoroughly practical, especially in these times. Tomorrow perhaps you may be finished with it and then—

ANNABELLE. I'm afraid I shall hardly be able to— to read much today. I—I—

GEORGE. Oh, really, you know, there is no hurry. Any time you find it convenient. (*Picks up hat.*)

CLAY *appears at window; spies on them with scowling face.*

ANNABELLE (*as GEORGE picks up his hat*). Surely, Mr. Worthington, you are not going so soon. You have only just come.

GEORGE. My errand is completed. (*Laughs.*) I have no further excuse for remaining. (*Fumbles awkwardly with hat.*)

ANNABELLE. Yes, but this being your first visit to Golden Rod, you should see more of the place. Would you care to walk with me, and—

GEORGE (*eagerly*). I could walk with you forever and ever—(*recovering quickly and laughing nervously*). That is to say, I should be delighted—but some other time, Miss Reeves. I expect a box of books by express, and I must go to the station for them.

ANNABELLE (*displeased*). Oh, very well. I suppose some other time will do. (*Turns from him.*)

GEORGE (*seizes her hand*). Stay! I'm afraid I have offended you. Really, you know, I—

ANNABELLE (*smiling again*). No, no; I appreciate how you enjoy your books—how valuable they are. By all means go and look after them. But you must surely come again, you know.

GEORGE. I surely will—perhaps tomorrow. If the books come in this morning, I shall make a careful selection and bring some over to you. You *do* enjoy my books so much. (*At door in flat turns.*) Until tomorrow, Miss Reeves. (*Bows and exits, but not passing window.*)

ANNABELLE. Oh, dear. He thinks more of his old books than he does of me. Oh, what am I saying? Of course I don't mean that. (*Sighs.*) But what a *man* he is.

CLAY *leaves window, enters door in flat, advances to table, takes off hat and slams it angrily on table.* ANNABELLE *turns, startled at the sound.*

CLAY. What's that fellow doing here?

ANNABELLE (*coldly*). I don't know what you mean.

CLAY. Yes, you do—he's your lover.

ANNABELLE. Stop! How dare you. You know that is not true. Mr. Worthington is a gentleman, which is more than can be truthfully said of you.

CLAY (*sneeringly*). Oh, it is, eh? Well, who's to blame for it? You are. You promised to marry me, and then threw me over.

ANNABELLE. That also is an untruth, Mr. Clay. I never promised to become your wife.

CLAY. Well, maybe *you* didn't; but it was always understood between your folks and my folks that some day we would marry. And how do you carry out that understanding? I'll tell you how, young lady. By flirting with every Tom, Dick and Harry that crosses your path—that's how.

ANNABELLE. I don't propose to be talked to in this manner. This is my own house. Nobody invited you to come here—go! (*Points to door in flat.*)

CLAY (*mocking laugh*). Oh, I can do that all right, all right. And I can come back again, too. (*At door.*) Let me tell you this, fair Annabelle. You are not the only shell on the seashore. There's another one about here that looks mighty good to me. She's for me, understand?

ANNABELLE. You miserable wretch—

CLAY. Go as far as you like with the hard names—I

don't mind. (*Laughs mockingly.*) But you know me. What I go after I usually get. I want that circus girl, and—(*snaps fingers*) that for you! I'll see you later. (*Exit door in flat, laughing in mocking manner, then appears at window, bows to her with mock politeness and disappears, R.*)

ANNABELLE. Peaches must be warned. He's an unscrupulous wretch. (*Exits door, R.*)

MOTHER is heard singing in a maudlin voice off L., then after a bit she appears at window, glances in, then enters door in flat. She is much the worse for drink and carries a flask wrapped in paper in one hand. Comes down to table and sits in chair, takes paper off bottle.

MOTHER. Mother Rickie, you're no nice lady. I am of the opinion that you have—have taken a decided fall off the old water wagon. (*Hic.*) A most decided fall, too. (*Holds up bottle.*) But it ain't your fault, Mother Rickie. That there druggist made a mistake in filling your prescription—that's what he done. He put gin in this bottle instead of whiskey. (*Hic.*) And gin is something I hate. Oh, how I hate gin. (*Takes a long drink.*) That druggist ought to be pinched. He'll poison somebody some day. He don't understand the wink signals. (*Hic.*) When I winks for whiskey, I don't mean gin. And vicie versie. (*Rises unsteadily, walks back to cupboard, opens door.*) I'll put my medicine in here. But just a little sip first before I say farewell to it. (*Raises bottle to lips, then her eyes light on the stuffed animal or horns on cupboard. She slowly lowers bottle while she falls back a couple of steps with eyes fixed in horror on animal.*) Well, for the love of Mike, who let you in here? (*Stares at it from different angles.*) Mother Rickie, who's your friend? (*Rubs hands over eyes, then looks at it again.*) Is it there, or is it me? I'll be doggone if I know. I'm pretty sure the thing wasn't there a while ago. (*Makes motion at it.*) Shoo! Drat you, shoo! (*Pause with business.*) Oh, Lord! It's me. I've got 'em agin—I got 'em agin. (*Yells.*) No more gin for Mother Rickie—no more.

Enter JERRY, door in flat.

JERRY. Say, what the blazes is the matter with you? What you yellin' so for?

MOTHER (*grabs his arm*). Say, do me the favor of your life, will you?

JERRY. Nix. I ain't got a blamed cent.

MOTHER. I don't mean a touch. Look around the room and tell me just what you see—take a *good* look, too.

JERRY (*looking all about room*). Well, I see a table, a couple of chairs, a cupboard, and (*names different articles but does not mention the animal on cupboard*).

MOTHER. Are you sure that's all, Jerry?

JERRY (*looks up, then*:) Dead sure. I don't see another mortal thing but what I said.

MOTHER (*groans*). Oh, Lord! I knew it! I knew it! It's me! I got 'em—I got 'em. But I'll swear it's the first time I ever had those kind of animals.

JERRY. Say, what's the matter with you, anyhow?

MOTHER. Matter? I got animals, Jerry Barker—that's what's the matter.

JERRY. You got animals? (*Puzzled.*)

MOTHER. Them's the words I spoke—animals. I had snakes a couple of times, but I can see my finish now. Any time you get as far as animals—good night!

JERRY (*laughs*). Oh, come out of it—come out of it. You ain't got animals.

MOTHER. Don't tell me I ain't got something when I say I have. Look there! What's that? (*Points at cupboard top.*)

JERRY (*looks, then laughs*). Get away with that noise. That's only a stuffed animal—that's all.

MOTHER (*grabs his arm excitedly*). Do you—do you see it, too?

JERRY. Sure I do—plain as a pass in a bunch of paid tickets.

MOTHER (*breathes a deep sigh*). Thank the stars for that. Then in that case I guess just another little drink won't hurt me any. (*Takes drink*)

JERRY (*snatching bottle*). That'll do you, Mother. You've had too much. You keep on and the first thing you know you'll have a whole menagerie.

MOTHER (*takes bottle from him again, goes to cupboard, puts bottle on shelf and shuts door*). I know when I gets enough, Jerry Barker.

JERRY. Sure you know when you've had enough. When you've had enough is when they stop making it forever.

MOTHER. I know my business all right. (*Hic.*) Say, how you feelin', anyhow?

JERRY. Oh, I'm O. K., I guess.

MOTHER. Get any mail?

JERRY. Nope. Not even the scratch of a pen. Doggone funny I don't hear from his nibs. I wires him that we was stuck up and couldn't move unless he came through with twelve hundred bucks. But the bloomin' tightwad don't even make a peep to show that he's alive.

MOTHER (*with a heavy sigh*). Well, I swear to gracious I don't know what's to become of us after we've stayed out them six days Zuzu paid for at the tavern.

JERRY. Well, it's all Peaches' fault. This Reeves gal offered to slip me the coin, but Peaches says nix, and—there you are. Peaches plays the high and mighty and says as how she will work her finger ends to the bone before anyone can slip her any money. Humph! I never could see this hoity-toity pride stuff. To be proud is one thing and to be foolish is another. Some women can be too all-fired proud.

MOTHER (*comedy pose*). Well, and what if we be?

JERRY (*laughs*). Say, you ain't in that class—

MOTHER (*indignantly*). Don't you cast any reflections on me, Jerry Barker. I'm a real lady, I am.

Enter CLAY, door in flat.

JERRY. Oh, I ain't. You've got wings spoutin' on your back, Mother.

CLAY (*coming down*). Just the people I want to see. (*MOTHER and JERRY turn to him in surprise.*)

JERRY (*aside*). And the villain still pursues us.

MOTHER (*to CLAY*). Well, we don't want to see *you*. We're very particular who we talk to.

CLAY (*laughs*). Well, I'm not—that's why I'm going to talk to you.

MOTHER. I got no mortal use for a drunken person, nohow.

CLAY. Then in that event you surely must *hate* yourself.

JERRY. Say, if you want to talk, talk. But be careful what kind of talk you talk—see!

CLAY. Don't get angry. I'm here for your own good. You're broke and your circus is tied up. Now I'm a good-hearted sort and I'm going to help you out.

MOTHER (*suspiciously*). Oh, you are, eh? Well, what have *we* got that *you* want?

JERRY. Now, Mother, don't get peevish. Listen to what the gentleman has to say.

MOTHER. Humph! (*Shrugs shoulders in contempt.*)

CLAY (*to MOTHER*). I'm glad you put your question so direct. What I want is, I firmly believe, in your power to give me. (*Impressively.*) I—want—Peaches!

MOTHER. What!

JERRY. For the love of Mike!

CLAY. And to get her I will cheerfully pay off the entire indebtedness of the show and give you a handsome sum besides.

MOTHER (*sarcastically*). Oh, you will, eh? Why, say, you ain't got money enough to look cross-eyed at that gal.

JERRY. Why, Mother, the gentleman means all right.

CLAY. Certainly I do. I love her madly.

MOTHER. Go away with that stuff. I've heard that before—most every town we ever played in, some guy would throw that at me. Take it from me, you'd better take your playthings and go home. There's nothin' doin' around here, kiddo!

CLAY. Come, come; you're only standing in your own light. Help me win the hand of Peaches and everything is rosy for you. Refuse me your assistance and you stay here, tied up, bag and baggage.

JERRY. That's so, mother. The gentleman is right.

CLAY. And I'll tell you one thing more. I'll get the girl.

anyhow, so you might as well agree and get some money to boot.

MOTHER (*going to CLAY, drawing herself up, proudly and looking him steadily in the eyes*). That'll be about all for you, Mister Man. I've seen a few like you before in my young life. You think because we are circus folks and are down and out that you can come along and make us dizzy with your money—so dizzy that we'll fall for you. Nothin' doin'. I may like my little drink now and then, but that's as far as I go—just as far as I go. I had the bringin' up of Peaches, and I want to say right here and now that when she gets ready to take unto herself a husband, it would be no man that resembles you. How do you like *that* monologue, eh?

CLAY (*angrily*). I'll show you. There's more than one way to kill a cat. (*At door in flat.*) Sometimes there's two or three ways. (*Exit, angrily, door in flat.*)

MOTHER (*crosses to cupboard*). He's a bad actor, that guy. He left a bad taste in my mouth. (*Brings out bottle and takes a swallow.*) Um! That's better—much better.

JERRY. Bah! You make me sick!

MOTHER. Then run along to a doctor and leave me alone.

JERRY (*disgustedly*). First it's Peaches with her high falutin' ideas, the Lord knows where she gets 'em—

MOTHER (*interrupting*). She gets 'em from me—see!

JERRY. She refuses money to get us out of this hole, and now *you* put on the high and mighty, and—oh, I'm sick—sick of the whole business. I'm going out doors where there's plenty of space and kick myself black and blue. (*Strides angrily to door in flat and exits.*)

MOTHER (*calling after him*). Waita minute, Jerry, and I'll go along and help you. (*Exits same door.*)

Enter PEACHES and ANNABELLE, R.

ANNABELLE. I'm awfully glad you told me that you could do all those clever things. It will be just the thing for my lawn party tonight.

PEACHES. Then we'd better rehearse here and now. I'm

also tickled to death that you put me hep to that Clay person. If he comes monkeying around me, I'll fix his clock so it won't keep good time any more, believe me.

ANNABELLE. I believe you would at that.

PEACHES (*imitation of circus barker*). Now, then, remember the show is not yet half over. The grand concert takes place immediately after this performance, and the gentlemanly ushers will pass among you with the tickets, which are for sale at ten cents each. Oh, you concert! Stick for the big show, ladies and gents.

(*Introduce specialty by PEACHES and ANNABELLE, after which both exit, R. Specialty may be omitted if desired.*)

Enter ZUZU, door in flat.

ZUZU. Wonder where everybody is. I have been chasing all over the place, and everybody just there ahead of me and gone. (*Calls.*) Oh, Peaches!

Enter MOTHER, door in flat.

MOTHER. Hell, Zuzu. How do you feel, anyhow?

ZUZU. Like a two-year-old in a ten-acre pasture. How's every little thing?

MOTHER. Say, I'll tell you something. That Clay guy was here.

ZUZU. Did he have his artillery with him?

MOTHER. No. Say, I called him to a fare-thee-well. I looked for him to pull a gun every minute, but he didn't.

ZUZU. Good reason. He ain't got any. I got it. But what's the noise, anyhow?

MOTHER. He offered Jerry money to lift the show—

ZUZU. And you balled him out for that? Shame on you, Mother Rickie.

MOTHER. Is that so. Wait till I tell you what he wanted and then see if I'm in bad. He wanted Peaches, Zuzu.

ZUZU (*slowly and impressively*). He wanted Peaches? He wanted our Peaches?

MOTHER. He sure did.

ZUZU. What for? He ain't got no circus.

MOTHER. Circus? Who mentioned circus? He thought he had money enough to—oh, don't you understand, Zuzu?

ZUZU (*slowly dawning on him*). Well, of all the low-down, white-livered—

MOTHER. Oh, go ahead and swear good and plenty. I don't care.

ZUZU. Where did he go? I want to take a punch at him.

MOTHER. Don't worry. I think you'll have a chance. He said he'd be back. Now, Zuzu, listen to me. You and Peaches has got to get married—

ZUZU. Get what?

MOTHER. Married was the word I used. Tied together with the tightest doggone knot that can be tied. She likes you and you like her—what's to prevent?

ZUZU (*bewildered*). Gee whiz, Mother, Peaches is my pal. I never thought of her as anything else. Gosh all Friday, I don't want to get married.

MOTHER. Say, it ain't going to hurt you any.

ZUZU. Well, I'd rather have a tooth pulled.

MOTHER. Then have one pulled if you like it better, but marry her you shall—after that tooth pulling; anything so you're satisfied.

ZUZU. I wonder what Peaches will say?

MOTHER. She'll say yes, like a sensible gal. But anyhow, she's got to have a husband's protection, I can see that more every day. I'll go send her in here, and then you get busy and make a noise like a near bridegroom—understand? (*Exit R.*)

ZUZU (*nervously looking about*). Gosh, I don't know how to ask a gal to be my wife. I'll have a fit and three cases of pip besides. I got to get out of here and get my courage up. I'll sneak away for a few minutes and rehearse a proposal speech. (*Exit, door L., declaiming as he goes:*) Peaches, I love you. Will you be my husband—I mean, wife.

Enter CLAY, door in flat.

CLAY. I never saw a girl in all my life like Peaches—she's going to be mine or there's going to be a heap of trouble.

Enter PEACHES, door R.

PEACHES (*as she enters*). All right, Zuzu, I'm coming. (*Starts back in surprise as she discovers CLAY.*) Oh, I thought Zuzu was here. Excuse me. (*Turns to exit, R.*)

CLAY (*pleadingly*). Just one moment, please.

PEACHES (*comes back*). Well, what's the idea?

CLAY. It's something for your own good, Peaches. Listen: A few moments ago I made an offer to supply money enough to move the circus. Do you know why I made the offer?

PEACHES. Yes. You're crazy.

CLAY. Well, maybe I am—crazy over you.

PEACHES (*surprised*). Eh? Crazy over me?

CLAY. Exactly. I am perfectly serious and mean to do the honorable thing by you, for never in my life have I ever met before a girl I thought I could give up every vice and be content to call her my wife. My heart cries out for you, Peaches. Ever since I first saw you your face has been before me—sleeping or waking—

PEACHES (*interrupting*). Say, what are you doing, reading one of them yellow novels?

CLAY. No. I'm trying to tell you how much I love you—worship you.

PEACHES. Well, I'll tell you something in a minute and it won't be how much I love you. I'm just about half wise to you, so you'd better not linger longer expecting to be invited to stay to supper.

CLAY. So you throw me down, do you? Well, you're a little fool. Look at what I could do for you—everything. And what have you got now? *Nothing!*

PEACHES. Oh, as for that, I've got Mother Rickie and Zuzu and Jerry Barker. I ain't a bit lonesome for company—especially yours.

CLAY. All right, I'll go. But before I do I'm going to have a kiss.

Enter ZUZU, L. Stands for an instant.

PEACHES (*soberly*). I wouldn't do that, if I were you, Mister Man.

CLAY (*suddenly grabs her and is just about to kiss her when ZUZU forces his way between them, raises his face toward CLAY and is kissed by the latter before he realizes his mistake*). Bah! You'll be sorry for this—you fool!

ZUZU (*laughs*). I'm sorry already. (*Wipes lips vigorously.*)

CLAY (*goes to door in flat*). You think you're a cute lot. But I'm not through yet. When there's no other way to move your show, come to me. You'll find me a good sort. (*Exit door in flat.*)

PEACHES. Zuzu, you was right on the job again, wasn't you?

ZUZU. Yes, I'm there like a duck. (*Pause.*) Say, Mother Rickie told me to do something, and darn me if I know what it was anymore.

PEACHES. Go to the drug store for her.

ZUZU. Nope.

PEACHES. Postoffice?

ZUZU. Nope—that wasn't it.

PEACHES. Get a pail of water?

ZUZU. Nope—water? Water for her? Nix.

PEACHES (*thinks*). Oh, I know. Get a bucket of coal.

ZUZU. No, no; nothing like it.

PEACHES. Say, what is this? A guessing contest?

ZUZU (*scratches head thoughtfully*). Oh, now I got it.

PEACHES. Did you have to scratch your head to find it? You'll get a splinter in your finger sometime, scratching that wooden head of yours, Zuzu.

ZUZU. Don't talk. I'll forget it again. Oh yes. Mother Rickie wanted me to ask you—to ask you. (*Bashful business.*)

PEACHES. Well, some on, come on.

ZUZU. Say, don't rush me. It's bad enough without being rushed, you know.

PEACHES. It must be awful, whatever it is.

ZUZU. Oh, it's worse than that. Say, I guess I'll wait till tomorrow.

PEACHES. Nix. Slip it to me now.

ZUZU (*draws long breath*). Well, Mother Rickie said for you to be my wife—

PEACHES. What's that?

ZUZU. And she said if you didn't she'd give you something you couldn't get in a grocery store.

PEACHES. Do you mean that she wants you and me to get married?

ZUZU. Sure—that's the gag.

PEACHES. Well, how about you? Do you want to tie up with me?

ZUZU. Gosh all Friday, ain't I been sweating blood here for an hour trying to put you wise?

PEACHES. Then ask me in the proper manner.

ZUZU. How in blazes do I know the proper manner?

PEACHES. You must kneel down, clasp you hands and then look the silliest you ever looked, then say: "Peaches, I love you with all my heart. Will you be my wife?"

ZUZU. Have I got to do that?

PEACHES. Sure. I read that in a book once, and I never forgot it. Now come on. Slip it to me, the kneeling biz, clasped hands and foolish look.

ZUZU. Well, I'll be the Patsie. Here goes. (*Drops on knees and does as she told him, then rises to feet.*)

PEACHES. That was very well done, Zuzu. I believe you've been through with that stuff before, you do it so good.

ZUZU. Never. Cross my heart. But come. What do you say now?

PEACHES. Me? (*Thinks.*) Oh, yes. I remember now. Oh, Zuzu, this is so sudden!

ZUZU. Does that mean yes?

PEACHES. Bet your boots!

ZUZU *grabs her, kisses her, and just as he does, MOTHER appears in door, R., ANNABELLE at door, L., JERRY at window and GEORGE opens door in flat and looks in. ZUZU and PEACHES remain clasped in each others' arms long enough to have the other people withdraw from view, after showing surprise at the scene. They are not discovered by ZUZU and PEACHES.*

ZUZU. (*holding PEACHES at arm's length*). Gosh, that was a heap better kiss than I had a while ago.

PEACHES. Well, I should hope so.

ZUZU. Just think. That's the first time I've kissed you in all the years I've known you.

PEACHES. I should hope so again.

ZUZU. Gosh, I'm happy. You know it ain't so bad as I thought it was going to be.

PEACHES. You ain't married yet.

ZUZU. Oh, Lord—that's so! (*Groans dismally.*)

PEACHES (*laughs*). Oh, it won't be as bad as all that. (*Sighs contentedly*). I'm happy now, Zuzu. (*Pauses, then after a moment.*) That is—almost. If we was only back with the circus again—gee, wouldn't it be great!

ZUZU. Say, Peaches, I can smell the sawdust now. Can't you. (*Music cue for orchestra to start playing softly a dreamy waltz, gradually working to a faster tempo, then changing to a fast circus gallop as PEACHES does the riding business on kitchen table. Music dies away to the dreamy waltz as she delivers the tag speech just before the curtain falls.*)

PEACHES (*excitedly, as if she were really back inside the big tent and was living again the excitement of the circus*). Yes, yes, and I can see the crowd coming into the tent. I can hear the butchers yelling "Peanuts, Popcorn and Lemonade!" Now the band begins to play—it's the overture, Zuzu—it's the overture! Are you all ready? It's the overture, I tell you! Hark! Listen to that crowd out there. It's a big one today, and we got to work our heads off to please 'em! We must hurry, Zuzu. It's our turn now to get some of that applause—our turn now. Here's my horse! (*Alongside of kitchen table.*) Isn't he a beauty? Get your whip, Zuzu. Get your whip! We're all ready—all ready! (*Jumps on top of kitchen table.*)

ZUZU (*grabs whip from corner and cracks it, then shouts*). Come on, Peaches; come on, Queen of Bareback Riders! (*Cracks whip while orchestra is now playing fast and furious.*)

PEACHES (*yelling excitedly*). Come on, Zuzu, King of

Clowns. We'll give 'em an act today that'll show 'em all up.

(ZUZU cracks whip and walks about the table imitating the actions of a ring master, while PEACHES, on top of table, imitates a circus rider to lively music by orchestra. Make this a lively, exciting scene, but not too long. Music ceases abruptly, PEACHES jumps to floor, stares about in a dazed manner as if just awaking from a deep sleep, then drops into a chair by the side of the table)—

PEACHES (slowly and sadly). No, it ain't real circus, Zuzu. I thought it was—but it ain't. (She buries her head in arms on table and sobs aloud, repeating, "It ain't real circus, Zuzu—it ain't real circus.") ZUZU stands alongside in sorrowful attitude, stroking her head with his hand and gazing sadly down on her, to —)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE: Same as Act I. Time is late afternoon and early evening. Lights are gradually dimmed from ten minutes after the opening to near finish of act. Very dim at end to give better effect to the illumination of tent.

As curtain is well up, enter JERRY, L. U. E., followed by CLAY. JERRY comes down to bench and sits down, fanning himself with hat. CLAY sits on an arm of bench, takes out cigarette, lights it and smokes.

CLAY (offering JERRY cigarette). Have one, Mr. Barker?

JERRY (shortly). No—don't smoke 'em.

CLAY (shrugs shoulders, then puts box in pocket). Oh, all right. (Takes several puffs before speaking, while JERRY continues fanning face with hat.) Why didn't you stop when I called you down the road back there?

JERRY. Stop? What for?

CLAY. I wanted to talk to you and didn't care about chasing way down here to the tavern—to be seen by everybody.

JERRY. Well, if you don't want anybody to look on your manly face and form, beat it. I ain't stopping you.

CLAY (*cool and calm voice and manner, after three or four more puffs on cigarette*). Mr. Barker, you're a blame fool!

JERRY (*starting to his feet angrily*). I'm a what?

CLAY (*laying a hand on JERRY's shoulder and forcing him back in seat*). Don't get riled. I meant no offense.

JERRY (*growlingly*). You'd better not mean anything.

CLAY (*smoothly*). Mr. Barker, a few days ago, when I last had the pleasure of conversing with you and Miss Rickie—you remember?

JERRY. Yes, I remember. What's the answer?

CLAY. You seemed to think rather favorably of a certain proposition I made. Miss Rickie did not think so well of it.

JERRY. And she bawled you proper. (*Chuckles.*)

CLAY (*shrugs shoulders*). I have forgotten that days ago. Since our last interview I have tried to see you alone, but—(*throws cigarette away, then looks all about*) I understand the landlord is clamoring for more money and threatens to put you out unless some is soon forthcoming. Right?

JERRY. You're right. Zuzu paid him in advance all the money he had, and now—well, I suppose we got to get out.

CLAY. Exactly. And you have had no word from the owner of the circus?

JERRY. Narry a word. (*Moodily turns hat in his fingers.*)

CLAY. What's going to become of you?

JERRY (*gives despondent shrug of shoulders*). Ain't routed that far ahead, pardner.

CLAY. After tonight Cyrus Skinner will get still more peevish and tomorrow—say, it's a mortal sin to let that circus lay here and rot. You'll be held responsible for it by everybody. All these folks here will have no place to lay their heads or anything to eat. As manager you should not allow anything in the nature of a golden opportunity to pass without making an attempt to grab it. Am I talking sense?

JERRY (*still twirling his hat in his hands nervously and evidently thinking seriously of what CLAY has been saying*). Yes—it listens good.

CLAY (*pleased*). All right—you're a sensible man. Now then, I'm coming to the point. You have an idea of what I want—and that is—(*pauses*) Peaches!

JERRY (*looks up, letting hat fall to ground*). Peaches?

CLAY. Yes, I still have not given up hope. I have made up my mind, and—but I need your assistance. I have a plan, Mr. Barker, and the very second you agree to help me carry it out, I will place in your hands two thousand dollars.

JERRY (*as if dazed with offer and repeats*:) Two thousand dollars.

CLAY. Yes. *Real money, too. Here. (Takes roll of bills from pocket and shoves it under JERRY's nose.)* Real money, I repeat—and that's the kind that talks. It's yours—take it. (*JERRY stares at money.*) Don't hesitate. Think of what this money will do. Release the show, make everybody happy, and—why, man, there's no end of all the things you can do with it. It practically means that you'll be the sole owner of the outfit. Think, man, what that means. Come. Will you take it, or not?

JERRY (*slowly reaching one hand towards money, then lets arm fall as his fingers touch it.*) No! I'll be darned if I will! (*Rises to feet and faces CLAY sternly.*) I almost fell for your dirty money, but I ain't as bad as that. (*Picks hat from ground, points to tent on drop.*) That outfit will stay there till hell freezes over if I have to do what you want. And that's some long period of time, providin' I have the proper dope on the place you're goin' to play more than a one night stand in some day. And also get this, Mr. Clay. If this here ground was my circus lot, I'd muss it up with your carcass. But as it don't happen to be under my gifted management, I don't feel at liberty to do so. In such a case I'll bid you good night. (*Crosses to steps and on porch turns.*) And I sure do hope you choke! (*Exits into house.*)

CLAY (*gazes after him a moment, then laughs mockingly*). Mr. Barker, you're a—well, what I called you a while ago, and also several things besides. (*Turns, takes*

out box of cigarettes.) I thought I had him. (*Lights cigarette.*) Oh, well, I shall have to do without his help. (*Starts slow walk to back center.*)

Enter GEORGE from house, reading book. Comes down to bench, sits down, eyes on book.

CLAY (*turns as GEORGE sits on bench, takes two or three puffs on cigarette, comes slowly down to bench, leans on back, looking over GEORGE's shoulder.*) This is quite a pleasant evening, isn't it? (*Sarcastic tone of voice.*)

GEORGE (*looking up—quietly*). Yes, it was before you came. (*Resumes reading.*)

CLAY (*clenching fist and makes as if to strike him*). Say, it wouldn't take much to put you in the hospital. And a little bit more to put you in the morgue.

GEORGE (*not looking up from book*). Really, you know, you're very disagreeable—positively rude. I am deeply interested in this work, you know. It's a treatise on Central Forces. The forces whose action is to cause a moving body to tend toward a fixed point. (*Lays book on bench and stands up.*) Now, for an illustration. We will presume that *you* are the moving body. Over yonder (*points to L. U. E.*) is a fixed point. Now, science teaches us that by applying a certain force—say the toe of my boot—to any moving body, which means yours, the latter may be hurled with considerable force towards the said fixed point. Shall I experiment or—

CLAY. You are a very clever person. (*Starts toward back, C., turns and faces GEORGE.*) Perhaps entirely *too* clever. Perhaps the next time we meet I shall be in a position to say something equally as clever. Perhaps even more clever—who knows? (*Gives GEORGE an insolent look, exits R. U. E., turning at exit and looks again at GEORGE.*)

GEORGE (*stands quietly looking at CLAY during his speech and until CLAY is well off, then sighs and sits down.*) Dear me. What a very ill-natured person he is. I shall be sorry very soon that I never made an exhaustive study of the science of manly art: (*Resumes reading.*)

Enter ZUZU, L. U. E. He has a large bunch of flowers in one hand and comes on in excited manner. Is about to enter house when he discovers GEORGE. Whirls about and comes down to bench.

ZUZU. Hello, Mr. Worthington. How are you?

GEORGE (*looking up, then rises with outstretched hand*). Mr. Zuzu—delighted, I'm sure. (*Shakes his hand cordially.*) Really, you know, I haven't seen very much of you of late.

ZUZU (*trying to get his hand loose*). Yes, I know, but would you mind giving me back my hand? I might want to use it again sometime.

GEORGE (*releasing his hand*). Oh, how thoughtless of me, to be sure. You'll forgive me, but I was *so* glad to see you.

ZUZU (*feeling of fingers*). I guess they're all there yet. Say, but you got some grip. I wouldn't think it to look you over.

GEORGE. Really, you know. I wasn't aware of the fact.

ZUZU. I was. (*Feeling fingers again.*)

GEORGE. What a beautiful bunch of flowers. You surely must have a good, pure soul, Mr. Zuzu. Flowers! Ah, how I love them. (*Smells them.*) They represent all that is pure and—

ZUZU. Yep. I'm dead stuck on 'em. Flowers are some hit with me all right. But didn't you hear about it?

GEORGE. I? Hear of what, Mr. Zuzu?

ZUZU. I'm going to do it.

GEORGE. Going to do it? Really, you know, I am thoroughly mystified. Kindly elucidate.

ZUZU (*puzzled*). E—luce—i what?

GEORGE. Please explain, if you please.

ZUZU. Oh! Me and Peaches are going to be—oh, you know. We're going to be married.

GEORGE (*pleased*). Is it possible! Why, I am *so* glad to hear that.

ZUZU. Yep. I've been rushing around today, trying to get everything ready for the big doings. But I can't locate Peaches, and old Skinner's gone fishing. Just as soon as I

find Peaches and Mr. Skinner, the thing's going to be pulled off. Got the flowers all right. Can't have no wedding without flowers—I should say not.

GEORGE (*laughs*). Well; hardly. And so Miss Peaches is going to become Mrs. Zuzu!

ZUZU. Yep.

GEORGE. Well, I want to be among the first to congratulate you, Mr. Zuzu. You surely will get a most charming young lady for your life's companion. (*Puts out his hand.*)

ZUZU (*putting right hand behind his back*). Yes, but I'll take your word for it, if it's all the same to you.

GEORGE (*laughs*). Oh, come now. I want to shake your hand. I insist.

ZUZU (*slowly putting out his hand*). Well, go easy, then, old scout. (*They shake hands.*) Now you'll have to excuse me. I got to go in and dig up some kind of wedding clothes. I want to look nice, 'cause I don't get married every day, you know. (*Turns to go into house.*)

GEORGE. My wardrobe, such as it is, is entirely at your disposal, Mr. Zuzu. If you won't be offended at my offer.

ZUZU (*at steps*). Offended? Say, I ain't in the habit of getting offended at anything like that. And—say, you're a prince, old scout. They don't make 'em any better than you.

GEORGE. I try to be the right sort—

ZUZU. And you certainly are. Now just for that you get a special invite to the wedding.

GEORGE. I thank you—really I do.

ZUZU. If I get stuck up for a clean collar—what size do you wear, and can I borrow one?

GEORGE (*laughs*). Everything I possess is at your disposal, and welcome.

ZUZU. Thanks. So long, and be sure and stick around for the large proceedings. Ta-ta; see you later. And if you see one of your collars around my neck, don't make any exclamation of surprise, will you? I don't want the wedding guests to get next. (*On porch.*)

GEORGE. Surely not.

ZUZU. Thanks again. See you quite soon. (*Exit into house.*)

GEORGE (*laughs quietly*). Bless their simple souls! And I hope they get everything in the way of happiness, and more than their share of peace and joy. (*Sighs.*) Ah, me! I wonder what it would seem like to love and be loved! (*Turns quickly, goes to bench, sits down and picks up book.*) The only sweetheart I have ever known—a good book! (*Becomes immersed in book.*)

Enter ANNABELLE, L. U. E. She is handsomely dressed in afternoon walking gown. Comes in rapidly and down stage and is about to mount porch steps when she discovers GEORGE. She hesitates, then comes tip-toeing down to bench.

ANNABELLE (*leaning over back of bench*). And what is the gentleman from Boston absorbing now?

GEORGE (*startled*). Really, you know. (*Drops book, takes off hat in rising, then drops it to floor again, reaches down for it and picks up book instead of hat, tries to put book on head, discovers mistake and allows book to fall to floor, at same time extending his hand to her.*) Annabelle—Miss Reeves, I mean—beg your pardon. Really, you know. This is so unexpected.

ANNABELLE (*hand in his for an instant*). I never intended to startle you.

GEORGE. Startle me? Not at all. I was—was just thinking of you. Wasn't that strange?

ANNABELLE. Yes, quite strange, considering the fact that you were also wrapped up in your book. (*Shy laugh.*)

GEORGE. Really, you know. I was thinking of you. True, I was looking at the pages of my book, but was entirely unconscious of the fact. Do you believe in mental telepathy, Miss Reeves. (*Now getting up and standing at back of bench, bending over her shoulder.*)

ANNABELLE (*seated on bench*). I don't know. Why do you ask?

GEORGE. Because mental telepathy is a most wonderful thing. I was thinking of a certain person a short time ago,

and wishing with all my heart and soul that that certain person were here. And lo, and behold, that certain person comes—here.

ANNABELLE (*hanging head*). And who was the person—Zuzu?

GEORGE (*hesitatingly*). No—it was *you*.

ANNABELLE (*laughs teasingly*). Why, Mr. Worthington, mental telepathy had no part in my coming whatsoever. I came to the wedding.

GEORGE. Ah, perhaps—perhaps. But you shall not spoil my theory. I have made rather an exhaustive study of mental telepathy—in fact, have delivered several lectures and written papers on that most absorbing subject. (*Stops, clears his throat and gets ready to continue.*)

ANNABELLE (*aside, nervously*). Goodness! I don't want to hear any lecture.

GEORGE (*assuming oratorical pose and voice*). Telepathy is the power of communication between one mind and another by means unknown to the ordinary sense organs, and usually called thought transference. Scientific work on thought transference began systematically in England in 1882, when the society for—

Enter ZUZU from house.

ZUZU. Mr. Worthington—oh, beg pardon. I thought you was all alone. Good evening, Miss Reeves. (*ANNABELLE smiles and bows.*) Could I speak with you just a second, Mr. Worthington?

GEORGE. Certainly, Mr. ZUZU. (*To ANNABELLE.*) You'll pardon me, won't you? (*She bows.*)

ZUZU (*drawing GEORGE to one side, whispers in his ear*). If it ain't asking too much, you know.

GEORGE. Not at all, Mr. Zuzu. I have several pair in my trunk. Help yourself. (*ZUZU whispers in his ear again.*) Oh, no; they're not heavy. I wear the same weight the year around.

ZUZU (*smiling broadly*). Much obliged, Mr. Worthington. Any time you get married I'll do as much for you. (*Turns and goes to steps.*) You got good taste, Mr. Worth-

ington. Go to it. I can tell she likes you. (*Exits quickly.*)

ANNABELLE (*turning head—bashful business*). Oh, dear me!

GEORGE (*taking off glasses and wiping them to cover his confusion*). Really, you know, Mr. Zuzu interrupted our conversation. What *were* we talking about?

ANNABELLE. I'm sure I don't remember. Wasn't it something about—

GEORGE (*bending over her*). No, it wasn't anything of importance. (*Pauses, then tenderly.*) Did you hear what Mr. Zuzu said?

ANNABELLE (*misunderstanding purposely*). No. He whispered in your ear. How could I?

GEORGE. I refer to the words he spoke just before he entered the house.

ANNABELLE. And I would like to know what secret he whispered in your ear.

GEORGE. He wanted to borrow—ahem—something I can't discuss with you.

ANNABELLE. Oh! (*Hangs head.*)

GEORGE. And now that I answered that question, answer mine. Did you hear what he said.

ANNABELLE (*softly*). Yes—I heard.

GEORGE. And—and—(*bending tenderly over her.*)

ANNABELLE (*rising quickly*). Oh, Mr. Worthington, I had almost forgotten something. Peaches asked me if I would sing a song at her wedding tonight, and—and—I—I would like to sing it now for you so that you can give me your opinion as to whether it would be suitable for the occasion or not.

GEORGE (*sighs*). Really, you know, I'm not a good judge of—however, I should be delighted, I'm sure. (*He sits on bench. She stands back of him and sings song to him. GEORGE after finish of her song, rises from bench, takes her hand and is about to grow sentimental again, when—*)

Enter PEACHES, L. U. E. She is dressed in somewhat fancy costume, gotten up extravagantly for the wedding ceremony. She comes in with a rush and down to C. stage.

GEORGE (*as she comes in—aside*). Really, I could almost swear at this interruption. Confound it all. There, I did.

PEACHES. Gee whiz! Hello, folks. Am I late for the big doings? (*Trying to catch her breath.*)

ANNABELLE (*laughs, then:*) Oh, no, I think not.

PEACHES. Say, I didn't spoil nothing by my buttin' in so sudden like, did I? (*Glancing from one to the other.*)

GEORGE (*confused*). Why—why, of course not, Miss Peaches. We are *delighted* to—to have you with us, I'm sure. Aren't we, Miss Reeves. (*Shows disgust.*)

ANNABELLE. Oh, yes, of course. (*Aside.*) She's knocked everything in the head.

PEACHES. Say, folks, pipe the glad rags. How do I stack up, eh? (*Turns around several times for their inspection.*)

ANNABELLE. Peaches, you look charming. (*Kisses her.*)

GEORGE (*extending hand*). Miss Peaches, I want to congratulate you. (*Grasps her hand.*) I'm sure you are going to be happy. You could not find a better hearted man than your own Mr. Zuzu, and he will make you a devoted husband. (*Releases her hand.*)

PEACHES. Say, you said something then all right, all right. They never made 'em any better than him. When they made him they lost the pattern. (*GEORGE laughs.*)

ANNABELLE (*to PEACHES*). I wish you would permit me to have my way in a certain little matter, dearie.

PEACHES. And what's the certain little matter?

ANNABELLE (*to GEORGE*). I want to make Peaches a small wedding present, but she's *so* stubborn.

GEORGE. I'm afraid I can't advise you. I am not "wise," as Peaches would say.

ANNABELLE. I have pleaded with her, and—

PEACHES. Say, cut that kind of noise right now. (*To GEORGE.*) She's been coaxing me to hold out my mitt while she slips a wad of coin into it, so's I can "lift" the circus out of here. But I won't stand for it—no, sirree. I ain't passing no hat around, believe me. (*ANNABELLE takes PEACHES' hand and entreats with her in pantomime conversation, while GEORGE delivers his speech.*)

GEORGE (*drawing to one side—aside*). By Jove! I was almost on the point of asking Annabelle to become my wife, forgetting that she was rich and I—I have nothing to offer in return. (*Dejected attitude.*)

PEACHES (*to GEORGE*). Cheer up, Mr. Worthington. It may not be true.

GEORGE (*sadly*). It is true—too true.

ANNABELLE (*to him*). She won't be won over. What am I to do?

GEORGE (*earnestly*). Give her all your money—every cent. Then I—(*catching himself quickly.*) Really, you know, I don't know what to say.

PEACHES. I never saw two people sorry before because they couldn't give away their money. Gee-whiz! Forget it—both of you.

GEORGE (*aside*). I only wish I could!

Enter MOTHER from house, excited manner. She has also made an attempt at dress-up.

MOTHER. Hello, folks. Say, Peaches, I thought you never was coming. How do you feel, anyhow? And you, too, Mr. Worthington and Miss Annabelle.

PEACHES. Fine as silk.

ANNABELLE. Very nicely. Thank you.

GEORGE. And I—I—really, you know, I don't believe I ever enjoyed better health in all my life. (*Sighs loudly and dejectedly.*)

MOTHER (*looking closely at him*). Humph! Take it from me, you don't *act* the part. (*To PEACHES.*) Well, we got the bride, and we got the groom. All we need now is Mr. Skinner to do the splicing job. He ain't got back from fishin' yet.

ANNABELLE. Was he informed that his capacity of justice of the peace would be required this evening?

MOTHER. I should say he was informed. I ain't knockin' him, you understand, but I think he'd rather go fishin than marry folks any day. He's got a grouch agin marriage anyhow. And I can't say as how I blame him at that.

PEACHES. Say, nix. Didn't you frame up this thing between Zuzu and me?

MOTHER. Sure I did. But here's the idea. A doctor can write out a prescription, but he doesn't take the dose, does he? No, sir. (*They all laugh.*) And marriage is O. K. for some folks—don't hurt 'em a bit. For instance, you and Zuzu ought to team up great. Also Mr. Worthington there and Miss Annabelle—

ANNABELLE (*interrupting*). Why, the very idea. (*Turns away to hide her confusion.*)

GEORGE (*confused*). Really, you know, you are presuming too much, I 'm afraid. I—

MOTHER. Well, maybe; but I'd like to see you two sign contracts for a life season together. It would be *some* act, and, believe me, I'd have a front seat or know the reason why.

PEACHES. Cut it, Mother. Can't you see your chatter is making 'em nervous?

MOTHER (*laughs*). Yes, kid; and I can see further than that. I can see another wedding between two people, but of course I ain't a-goin' to mention no names. (*Looks meaningly at GEORGE and ANNABELLE.*)

Enter JERRY, L. U. E. Rushes on, waving telegram in one hand. They all turn in surprise toward him.

JERRY (*coming down and taking center*). I got it! I got it folks! (*Waves telegram.*)

PEACHES. What's the big noise, anyhow?

MOTHER. Yes, let us all in on it. Somebody bought you a drink?

JERRY. You're a bunch of rummies. Can't you guess? It's from his nibs. He's telegraphed the coin, and—

PEACHES. Oh, gee! I knew it. I knew he'd come clean. (*Dancing about.*)

MOTHER. Hold me, somebody—I'm going to faint. (*Staggers, discovers nobody is going to catch her, then takes out bottle and takes a drink.*)

ANNABELLE. Oh, I'm so glad.

GEORGE. I am delighted at the good news.

JERRY (*earnestly*). Say, folks, listen. You don't none of you know what this means to me—none of you. I ain't slept any for more than a week past; but I can sleep now. Say, and won't I work my head off to make this show *clean up* from now on—well, I guess. Where's Zuzu? I got to slap somebody hard on the back: Bring him out.

PEACHES (*going to steps and calling*). Zuzu! Oh, you Zuzu! Come out here!

ZUZU (*inside*). Just a minute—just a minute.

Enter ZUZU from house. He is dressed in clown costume, but without the facial make-up, wearing a black coat over clown clothes and has a large flower in buttonhole.

ZUZU (*coming down steps in comedy manner*). Well? What's loose, children?

JERRY (*rushing to him and slapping him hard on back two or three times*). Read this, you scamp. The circus is goin' to move. (*Slaps him again.*)

(*Lights now commence to grow dimmer.*)

ZUZU (*gasping for breath*). For the love of Mike! Have a little pity.

PEACHES (*throwing her arms about ZUZU*). Oh, you Zuzu. Ain't you glad?

ZUZU (*shoving JERRY and PEACHES away and carefully arranging disorder in dress*). Yes, I'm tickled to death; but don't muss up my trous-so.

MOTHER. I knew this wedding would bring good luck. I told you so. (*Takes a drink. GEORGE and ANNABELLE walk slowly to L. and stand together in pantomime conversation.*)

JERRY. Gosh all Friday! I never was so happy before in all my life. Hooray! (*Turning briskly.*) Of course, folks, sentiment is all right in its way, but business is business, and that's the main trick from now on. You must not forget that we give a performance at prompt 8:15, featuring our own Peaches, Queen of all Bareback Riders. Also there will be with us Zuzu, most celebrated of all clowns. Also there will be—

PEACHES. Say, what is this, anyhow? What's the bally-hooing for?

MOTHER. Why, he just couldn't help it. He had to get that out of his system.

JERRY. That's the idea exactly, Mother. Now, folks, we must all get busy. We got to pull off this marriage thing and then hike for the Great Wonderland Circus and Menagerie. So chase yourselves.

PEACHES. I'll go and see about the eating part.

MOTHER. Me, too, Peaches gal. (PEACHES and MOTHER exit into house. ZUZU draws JERRY to one side and whispers in his ear.)

JERRY (*nods head vigorously*). Sure thing—you bet your boots. (*Pulls out a card and pencil and hastily scribbles on card, then extends card to GEORGE*). Here, young man—with the sincere compliments of the management of the Great Wonderland Circus.

GEORGE. What is it, please?

JERRY. Pass for two.

ZUZU. That's how you stand with this show trick.

GEORGE (*drawing back*). Why, really, you know, I will pay my way and very cheerfully, too.

JERRY. Oh, shut up. If you don't take this pass, you don't get in—savvy? (*Extends card*.)

ANNABELLE. Take it, Mr. Worthington. He means just what he says.

GEORGE (*takes card*). Very well. If it pleases you to refuse my money, I shall have to accept this.

JERRY (*turns and goes to steps, then turns to GEORGE*). I reckon I don't need to ask who the other party will be, eh? (*Jerks thumb significantly in ANNABELLE'S direction*.) Well, I don't blame you. She's some gal, believe me. (*Laughs and exits into house. ANNABELLE and GEORGE turn away from each other to hide their confusion, then ZUZU goes to GEORGE and whispers in his ear*.)

GEORGE. Oh, really; no thanks are necessary. But how do they fit you?

ZUZU. Immense, but I got to be careful when I sit down or I'll start a scandal. (*To ANNABELLE*.) You'll excuse

me, Miss Annabelle—wasn't talking about you at all. And you'll *both* excuse me, won't you? (*Turns toward steps.*) I got two big performances to pull off this evening. See you later. (*To GEORGE.*) And don't forget the pass for two. (*Laughs and exits into house.*)

ANNABELLE (*taking step or two toward house*). I must go in and help, Mr. Worthington. I hope you won't get lonesome. (*Bows and exits into house.*)

GEORGE (*gazing after her, then sighs profoundly; solus*). Lonesome? I'm afraid I shall never be anything else. Ah, me! I came here for rest and quiet. But this is not the place for me—not the place. The sooner I leave, the better it will be. I shall go at once—this is not the place for me. Not the place. (*Walks slowly into house.*)

Enter CLAY, L. U. E.

CLAY (*glancing all about*). If they think they're going to make me hunt for cover, they're mistaken. I'm going to have a word or two with that girl or know why not. (*Starts for house.*)

Enter ZUZU from house, blocking CLAY'S entrance.

ZUZU. Hold on, mister man. You ain't invited to be among those present here this evening. Beat it.

CLAY (*sneeringly*). Oh, I'm not, eh? (*Makes threatening motion.*)

ZUZU (*pulls revolver and shoves it under CLAY'S nose*). No, you're not. (*Forces CLAY back.*) I've invited everybody to my wedding that I care to invite, and I'm darn sure I didn't invite you. Now listen to your Uncle Dudley. I never killed a man in all my life, and whenever that happens to me I get peevish—See!

CLAY. Put that gun down, you fool!

ZUZU. Say, don't call me names. I'm getting more peevish every minute. But I'm glad I met you. I want to laugh and you've got to make me—see. Now make me laugh. (*Gun business.*)

CLAY. I shall do nothing of the kind—

ZUZU. Oh, yes, you will. (*Gun under CLAY'S nose.*)

I'm running this circus now. I don't care how or what you do so long as you make me laugh—so start in. But, remember—make me laugh and laugh good.

CLAY. Say, I can't do anything funny. I'm no clown.

ZUZU. Oh, yes, you can. (*Gun business.*)

CLAY (*sullenly*). Well, what'll I do?

ZUZU. As Shakespeare said: "I had rather have a fool to make me laugh than experience to make me sad." Go ahead. Tell me a funny story. And be darn sure that it is funny, too.

CLAY (*seeing there's no escape for him*). Well, I'll do it, but I'll get you for this some time.

ZUZU. Say, that's pretty funny; but I ain't laughing yet. Get busy, mister. (*Gun business.*)

CLAY. Well, why does a chicken with a sack of flour on its back cross the street?

ZUZU. Hold on, hold on. You can't slip any "why does a chicken cross the street stuff" over on me. Besides, what's the idea of the sack of flour?

CLAY. Oh, I put that in to make it harder. Don't you think that's funny. (*Anxiously.*)

ZUZU. No. You're a bum comedian. Stand on your head.

CLAY. I shall not—

ZUZU. Stand on your head, I say. (*Gun business.*)

CLAY. Oh, all right. (*Gets down on hands and knees and tries to get up on head, but can't.*)

ZUZU. Very good. Now on your feet again—quick.

CLAY (*rising—anxious*). Did you laugh yet?

ZUZU. Not yet. Now, cry like a baby. And be sure that you give a correct imitation.

CLAY. Say, I can't do that—

ZUZU. Oh, yes, you can. (*Gun business.*)

CLAY. Two can play at this game, Mister Clown—remember that.

ZUZU. I do remember it; that's why this performance. Now you be the fool—cry like a baby.

CLAY (*gives cry like a baby*). How's that? That suit you?

ZUZU. Rotten. Positively the worst I ever heard. Now I'll give you just one more chance—just one, understand? I want you to walk out of this yard and give a correct imitation of a man that's never coming back again to trouble anybody. And be sure your imitation is good, or—(*gun business*) I'll hiss you plenty besides.

CLAY (*hesitates, then scowls, turns and walks to back C.*). I know when I'm beaten, Mister Clown. But perhaps we shall meet again, and then—

ZUZU. If we do there's a couple of more imitations you'll have to do for me, Mister Bad Boy. One will be that of a man stopping a bullet. Now get. (*Gun business.*)

CLAY. You bet. (*Exits rapidly, L. U. E.*)

Enter PEACHES, from house.

PEACHES. Why, Zuzu, what you doing?

ZUZU. Nothing. It's all done.

PEACHES. What is?

ZUZU. Why, that horrid Clay person was here and I got back at him for what he did to me the other day—that's all. By gosh, you know I was so angry that I'd a shot him—only for one thing.

PEACHES. And what was that one thing?

ZUZU. The darn gun wasn't loaded. (*Laughs, then snaps hammer several times to show gun is empty.*) But, say, I clean forgot something. I got something awful pretty for you. Wait a second. (*Runs quickly into house to get flowers.*)

PEACHES. Gee, I'll wait longer than that for something pretty.

Re-enter ZUZU, carrying the large bouquet.

ZUZU (*making low bow and extending flowers*). It ain't much, Peaches, old pal, but—

PEACHES (*taking flowers*). Oh, Zuzu. (*Buries face in them.*)

ZUZU. I'm glad you like 'em, Peaches. I'd a bought you three or four diamonds and a touring car, but I mislaid my check book.

PEACHES (*throwing her arms about him*). I know, you old Zuzu. I understand. Your heart is jewel enough for me.

ZUZU. Nix. Where's the pawnbroker that would take my heart.

PEACHES. Right here. I'll be your pawnbroker.

ZUZU. Gee, I'll always have my heart in soak with you. Come on. Let's take a walk, kid. And we'll talk about the moon, and the stars, and—and other things.

PEACHES. All right. Let's. (*They exit arm in arm, R. U. E., pantomime conversation.*)

Enter GEORGE from house, carrying suitcase. Walks to back center and is about to exit L. U. E., when ANNABELLE enters from house and stops him as she calls.

ANNABELLE. Why, Mr. Worthington, where are you going?

GEORGE (*facing her*). I—I—was just going to the village on an errand. (*Nervous manner.*)

ANNABELLE. Why, you'll miss the wedding, sir.

GEORGE (*still at back*). Really, you know. Miss Reeves, I—

ANNABELLE. Mr. Worthington, I'm very skeptical. Come here and tell me what we have done to drive you away.

GEORGE (*coming down to bench, sets grip down*). We haven't done anything. It's you.

ANNABELLE. I? I don't undrestand. (*Shy attitude.*)

GEORGE. Oh, I can't explain, Miss Reeves—I have not the right. Can't you make it easy for us both and let me go my way?

ANNABELLE. No. I insist on knowing your reason.

Enter ZUZU and PEACHES, R. U. E., arm in arm. Discover other two and come softly down stage and stand listening.

GEORGE. Very well, if you must. (*Suddenly grows bold and kisses her.*) There's my reason. I love you. Now scold me.

ANNABELLE (*surprised, but pleased*). You—you love me and was going away? Surely that's a very strange thing to do.

GEORGE. No, no. Can't you understand? It's your money, Annabelle.

ANNABELLE. My money? Again I don't understand.

GEORGE. Yes—your money. You are rich and I—I have nothing. It wouldn't be right—really it wouldn't, for me to—to—marry you.

ANNABELLE. You don't know what you are saying—

GEORGE. Oh, yes, I do. I'm a poor college professor, and you are one of the richest girls in Kentucky. What would everybody call me? Nothing more or less than a fortune hunter, a thief and all sorts of hard names. No. I was mad to even think of daring to aspire to your hand. Come. We will say goodby. (*Grasps her hand, holds it for an instant, then picks up grip and turns to go.*)

PEACHES (*intercepting him*). Hold on, mister man. You don't "blow" yet, you know.

GEORGE (*drawing back in surprise*). Blow?

ZUZU. Oh, she means "beat" it—to make it plainer.

PEACHES (*to GEORGE*). That ain't no nice way to do. There's going to be a wedding and you're invited—see!

GEORGE. But—but, my dear young lady. You don't understand.

PEACHES. Sure, I do. You kissed the girl there. I saw you do it. And you want to break her heart by blowing the town. Nothing doing. You stick here, pal.

ZUZU. Most certainly. You ain't going to break no hearts—not while Peaches and yours truly are on the job. (*Takes GEORGE by the arm and leads him in direction of ANNABELLE.*) Come this way, please.

GEORGE (*holding back*). No, no; besides, Miss Reeves has something to say in the matter.

PEACHES (*taking ANNABELLE by the arm and forcing her towards GEORGE*). She's going to say "Yes." I can see it popping out of her rosy lips. (*To ANNABELLE.*) Ain't you, Miss Annabelle?

ANNABELLE (*shyly*). Yes—I *would* say yes.

GEORGE (*groans*). Oh, I wish she didn't have any money.

ZUZU. Put her in the circus business and she won't have a cent in six months. Now clinch and be quick about it. (*PEACHES and ZUZU draw ANNABELLE and GEORGE together and then embrace and kiss.*)

Enter CYRUS, L. U. E.

CYRUS (*as he comes down, then stops and sees them embrace*). Gosh—excuse me. I reckon I ain't wanted here. (*Starts to go.*)

PEACHES (*to CYRUS*). Stop. You sure are wanted. I want you to marry me to Zuzu, and—well, look at them folks there. They'll be doing it next. You'll have a job there pretty soon, all right.

CYRUS (*to ANNABELLE*). Well, I'll sure do a good job of work, Miss Annabelle, when I marry you—satisfaction strictly guaranteed. Excuse me just a minute, folks, while I get some marriage license blanks for Miss Peaches and Mister Zuzu. (*Starts for house.*)

GEORGE (*to CYRUS*). How did the fish bite, Mr. Skinner?

CYRUS. Fish didn't bite nothing extra, but I bet I fed a million mosquitoes. (*Exit into house.*)

PEACHES. We'll all have to hurry. We got a performance pretty soon, now.

ANNABELLE (*to PEACHES*). Dear girl, why not give up that life. Stay here with me. Everything I have is yours for the asking.

PEACHES. What! Give up my circus life? No. It's too dead in these diggings. On the square, I'd die of lonesome disease if I stuck around here another week. Why, I love the circus, with the big white tent, the crowds, the horses, the glitter of the lights, the music, all the excitement of the applause. The ever moving on, and on. And you ask me to give up the circus? Nix. You might just as well ask me to give up my very life—for the circus is life itself to me. No, Miss Annabelle, I thank you—oh, so much, but I belong up there—there's my home. Not any place on earth else either. (*Points to tent.*)

ZUZU. Me, too, Peaches.

ANNABELLE (*kisses her, then sighs*). God bless you, Peaches—for what you've done for me, and you shall never need a friend. (*She turns and extends her hand to GEORGE.*)

GEORGE (*takes her hand*). And so say I.

Enter CYRUS from house.

CYRUS. Doggone the luck, anyhow. Say, I ain't got a marriage license in the house. Ain't got nothing but dog licenses—doggone it, anyhow.

ZUZU. Well, you can't marry me with a dog license. I won't stand for that.

ANNABELLE. What's to be done?

Enter MOTHER and JERRY from house. They are both dressed for a journey and carry bundles.

JERRY. Say, this marriage thing has got to be postponed. And I got the swell idea. We'll pull the thing off in the big tent, immediately after the big performance.

MOTHER. Yes, and we got to get a move on, too. They just telephoned for us to get a wiggle on. Say, how you all feel, anyhow? Well, I'm off. Come on, folks. (*Starts for back, C.*)

JERRY (*to CYRUS*). You get a move on, too, my worthy justice of the peace, policeman, constable, sheriff, hotel keeper, and so on down the list. Dig up a marriage license somewhere. So long, folks. See you all later. (*MOTHER and JERRY exit, hurried manner, R. U. E.*)

ZUZU (*to GEORGE*). Better hike along, Mr. Worthington. And don't forget you got a pass for two. (*Winks knowingly.*)

PEACHES. Yes, and that pass is good for the big show afterwards—don't forget that.

GEORGE. Really, you know. This has been quite an eventful period in my life, these past few days. I came here for rest and quiet, and I found—a sweetheart, likewise a wife. (*Takes ANNABELLE'S hand.*)

ANNABELLE. Come, dear; we'll miss some of the performance. (*ANNABELLE takes GEORGE'S arm and they exit R. U. E., in conversation.*)

CYRUS. Well, it's up to me to make good now. (*Starts for back C., then faces them again.*) It's a funny world, ain't it? A few days ago I attached the whole darn circus, and now I got to attach you two folks. So long. (*Exit R. U. E.*)

PEACHES (*pointing at tent, the lights in which are now bright*). Look, Zuzu! Gee, ain't that great!

ZUZU (*kisses her*). Yes—but this is greater, Peaches pal. (*Kisses her again. They stand with backs to audience, pointing at circus tent, till—*)

CURTAIN.

The Man from Nevada

By CHARLES ULRICH.

Price, 25 Cents

Comedy-drama, 4 acts; 9 m., 5 f. **Scenes:** Easy to set, all interiors. **Characters:** Harrington, a member of Congress from Nevada. Col. Fitzallen, a war veteran. Count de Santeau, a French adventurer. Von Gruyter, a German. Jimmy Lester, a West Point cadet. Senator Shaw. Johnston, a rich broker. Manning, a cowboy valet. Boxton, a butler. Madeline Sylvester, emotional lead. Marie Wentworth, de Santeau's accomplice. Alice Saintsbury, a girl with a temper. Mrs. Shaw, a Washington matron. Lucy, a maid.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—The ball. The fortification plans. The false count exposed. The accusation. "The most daring card sharp in France." "This woman is his accomplice."

Act II.—The tea party. The love of a true man rejected. A woman's heart trampled upon. A villain's advice, "Don't fish for titles." The theft of the necklace. "He is my husband." The oath, "I swear to bring him to justice."

Act III.—Matrimonial complications of a German. Woman true to woman. A wife's confession. The rifling of the writing case. "No, I will stake my life upon his innocence."

Act IV.—Lovers' quarrels. Harrington as peacemaker. Story of the false marriage. "I love you." Villainy at bay. The attack. Manning to the rescue. Love rules the world. The shots. "I plugged him, boss." The triumph of love.

The Bank Cashier

By W. C. PARKER.

Price, 25 Cents

Melodrama, 4 acts; 8 m., 4 f. If desirable one man can play three parts and one woman can double. Time, about 2 h. **Scenes:** Not difficult, 3 interiors, 2 exteriors. **Characters:** Templeton, the bank cashier. Kingston, the paying teller. Ichabod Slick and Jacob Sharp, Jew lawyers, detectives, etc., who are out for the "stuff." Blinkey, poor but romantic. Sinclair, a wealthy miner. O'Hara, "one of the finest." A detective. Edith Sinclair. Lucy, her maid. Susan, who means well. Bidy, who scrubs well.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—The village home. Lucy and Blinkey come to an understanding. Susan and her gossip. The warning. The fatal letter. Ikey outwitted. The shattered prospects.

Act II.—The troubles of Bidy. The bank cashier at business. Ikey wins his point. The unsuspecting miner. The trap. Paul tries to save him. The murder. Father and daughter. "The receipt or I'll choke you."

Act III., Scene I.—The loving partners. Both on the same case. The law firm splits up. Scene II.—Blinkey bids Lucy "Good-bye." The warning and offer of protection. Paul again to the rescue. The enemies at bay.

Act IV., Scene I.—Ikey bewails his loss. The precious coat-tail. Hurrah for Blinkey. Scene II.—The frosty welcome of Blinkey. The robbery. Burning the papers. The accusation. Retribution. The penalty. The reward of merit.

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On the Little Big Horn

By CHARLES ULRICH.

Price, 25 Cents

Western comedy-drama, 4 acts; 10 m., 4 f. Time, 2½ h. **Scenes:** 2 interiors, 1 exterior. Easy to set. **Characters:** Ludlow, a cavalry officer. Winston, a West Pointer. Carleton, an Indian agent. Graham, commandant of Ft. Winslow. Dakota Dan, a scout. O'Rafferty, an Irish sergeant. War Eagle, a Sioux Indian chief. Hop Sing, a Chinese cook. Hanks, a telegraph operator. Martin, a trooper. Beryl Seymour, the belle of the garrison. Rose-of-the-Mist, a pretty Indian maiden. Sue Graham, a soubrette. Mrs. Spencer, a talkative widow.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—The Major's suspicion. Rose reveals a secret. News of the Indian uprising. "This is what love has brought me to." The abduction. A soldier's oath. "To the rescue—then justice."

Act II.—"The Indians are coming." A scared Chinaman. "Save Hop Sing's pigtail." Rose offers to give herself up to Spotted Face to save the palefaces. The avowal of love. "We will fight and die together." The rescue.

Act III.—A message from the President. The wire is cut. "This is the work of Carleton." "The testimony is perjured and the documents are forgeries." "I believe you innocent." "You are to be shot at sunrise." Beryl to the rescue. Beryl at the telegraph key. The reprieve.

Act IV.—A scout's experience with a Chinaman. "I love ye, Rose." "We talk to parson." Saved by an accident. "We will surprise mamma and papa." Hop Sing goes on strike. Carleton in disguise returns. "I will kill you and have my revenge." Rose shoots Carleton. The reunion. "It is God's way."

An American Hustler

By WILLIAM S. GILL.

Price, 25 Cents

Comedy-drama, 4 acts; 7 m., 4 f. Time, 2½ h. **Scenes:** Laid in Idaho and Chicago. Easy to set, 1 exterior, 3 interiors. **Characters:** Major Bob, editor of the "Eagle's Scream." Rawdon, a gambler. Steve, a young miner in hard luck. Old Joe, a miner who doesn't mine. Duxum, a lawyer. Binks, his clerk. Servant. Amelia, Old Joe's daughter. Priscilla, principal of a young ladies' seminary. Annie, a deserted wife. Mary, the maid.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—In Paradise. The Major says something.

Act II.—Law office in Chicago. The Major learns something.

Act III.—Miss Fagg's Seminary. The Major tells something.

Act IV.—Apartment in Major's house. The Major introduces something.

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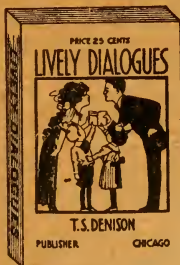
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Recruiting Office, 15 min.	2	2
Sham Doctor, 10 min.	4	2
Si and I, 15 min.	1	1
Special Sale, 15 min.	2	2
Stage Struck Ducky, 10 min.	2	1
Sunny Son of Italy, 15 min.	1	1
Time Table, 20 min.	1	1
Tramp and the Actress, 30 min.	1	1
Troubled by Ghosts, 10 min.	4	4
Troubles of Rozinski, 15 min.	1	1
Two Jay Detectives, 15 min.	3	3
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