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H. P. Powell



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A Strong List From Which to Select Your Next Play

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THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

YOU'RE IT

A Comedy Sketch in One Act

erbert By
Preston
H. P. POWELL
Author of "Uncertain Silas"



PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1918

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You're It

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YOU'RE IT

CHARACTERS

ELLEN ELLSWORTH - - - - *an up-to-date wife*
EGBERT ELLSWORTH - - - - *her husband*
LIZETTE - - - - *their "French" maid. Known to her intimates as "Light Fingered" Lizzie Rooney*
MICKEY MULHOLLAND - *known also as Señor Venustiano Vlaz, creator of the famous "Vlaz Valse"*

TIME.—Thirty minutes.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Egbert Ellsworth sells an old picture for fifty thousand dollars, and telephones the glad news home to his wife, Ellen. Lizette, Ellen's "French" maid, overhears this and 'phones her crook friend, Mickey Mulholland, known as Senor Vlaz, creator of the "Vlaz Valse." Mickey steals Egbert's car and arrives. Lizette hides Mickey. When Egbert comes he is unhappy. "You haven't lost the money?" "No, but somebody swiped our automobile." Egbert puts his wallet in the safe, and he and Ellen depart for a lesson at Mickey's studio. Mickey opens the safe, but still hangs around. "You've got everything you need in your head but brains." Egbert and Ellen return unexpectedly, and catch the thieves. Egbert offers them their liberty in return for a free waltz lesson. Mickey captures Egbert's revolver. "You're it." Lizette gets the wallet and the thieves escape. And then it turns out that Mickey wasn't so smart, after all.

COSTUMES, ETC.

EGBERT. About thirty. Business suit, hat and light overcoat.

ELLEN. About twenty-seven. At first entrance wears a handsome kimono or other loose house dress. At second entrance wears handsome evening gown, unfastened. Afterward puts on evening coat or wrap, and hat, gloves, etc.

MICKEY. About thirty. Evening dress.

LIZETTE. About twenty. Maid's costume of black dress, small lace cap, small apron.

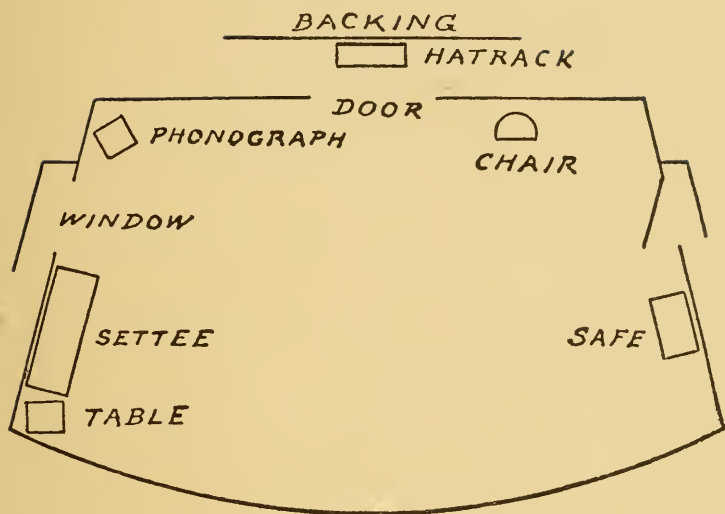
PROPERTIES

FOR EGBERT: Envelope containing card. Two wallets, similar in appearance, both containing bills. Pistol. Flashlight.

FOR MICKEY: Phonograph, records, needles.

OTHER PROPERTIES: Telephone on table. Hat-rack. Two bells to be heard off stage—one supposed to be door-bell, the other telephone bell (or buzzer).

SCENE PLOT



SCENE.—Room in Ellsworth home. Door c. discloses a hall, with hat-rack. A large French window, covered with heavy draperies, r. Another door l. A phonograph up r. A small iron safe l. This may stand on floor or may be supposed to be concealed in a cabinet, the wooden door of which opens toward the audience, hiding the iron safe door with its combination knob, etc. Telephone on table down r. A low settee r. Chair up l., and other furnishings to give impression of a well-to-do home.

You're It

SCENE.—*A room in the ELLSWORTH home. Doors c. and l. French window r. Phonograph up r. Settee and table with telephone r. Small safe l. Chair up l.*

(Curtain rises on empty stage. The 'phone rings. LIZETTE appears in hall, coming from l. She enters c. door, comes down r., and answers 'phone.)

LIZETTE. Meestaire Ellsworth's r-r-r-residence.
.....Oui, M'sieur Ellsworth, I veel call to ze madam.

(She crosses to door, l., and knocks thereon.)

ELLEN *(off stage)*. What is it, Lizette?

LIZETTE. M'sieur Ellsworth is onto ze,—what you call heem?—telephone, madam.

(Enter ELLEN, l. She goes to 'phone. LIZETTE busies herself about the room.)

ELLEN. Hello, honey. *(Pause.)* I'm well, thank you, how're you? *(Pause.)* That's good. *(A longer pause.)* No! Oh, you can't be serious! Oh, I can't believe my own ears. Do you mean to say that some feeble mind has given you fifty thousand In God We Trust, E Pluribus Unums for that absurd old picture we had hanging in the kitchen, covering up the hole in the chimney? You say it was a genuine Velasquez. Well, hubby dear, I may not be a judge of art, but I've this to say, Rube Goldberg could deal Mr. Velasquez a royal flush in hearts and still take the pot, according to my notion. *(Pause.)* Well, I admitted I wasn't

much on the high-brow stuff. (*Pause.*) Yeh, the lower the brow, the easier it is for me to look 'em in the eye. (*Another lengthy pause.*) Oh, don't do it, honey. Don't do it! Please don't bring all that money home with you (*LIZETTE pricks up her ears at this.*) You say the banks are all closed? Well, you just sit on the steps of one of them until it opens up in the morning. (*Pause.*) Well, of course, you know best, but—— (*Pause.*) Oh! will you? Honestly? Goody! Yeh, I've just been dying to take a lesson from the wonderful Senor Vlaz himself. Just to think,—having that expensive arm around my waist. It makes me feel frivolous. (*Pause.*) Yes, I agree with you perfectly,—he's a robber, all well and good,—but I'd rather have him teach me the Vlaz Valse than to have a tooth pulled. (*Pause.*) Yes, I'll be ready in five minutes. (*Pause.*) Yes, I will. No, I won't. Yeh, I'll be ready. No, I won't say a word. All right. Good-bye.

(*She hangs up receiver, and waltzes around room in high spirits.*)

LIZETTE. Madam is happy to-night.

ELLEN. Lizette, you've put your finger right on the trouble.

LIZETTE. M'sieur Ellsworth, he make what you call ze gr-r-r-ran' coup d'état?

ELLEN. If that's complimentary, I agree with you. He sold that old chromo we had hanging over the chimney hole in the kitchen for fifty thousand dollars, and he's going to leave the money there in the safe, and we're going to the wonderful dancing master, Senor Vlaz, for a lesson to-night. But don't you breathe a word of it to a soul, Lizette!

LIZETTE. You may trus' me, madam!

ELLEN. I must change my dress,—I want you to hook me up in a minute.

(*Exit, L.*)

(*LIZETTE closes the door, after her, listens at it in-*

tently for a moment, and then crosses over to the 'phone, and the following monologue ensues in a subdued though audible tone.)

LIZETTE. Broadway 6542. Yes. (*Pause.*) I wish to speak to Senor Vlaz, immediately. (*Pause.*) Hello, that you, Mickey? Listen to me carefully. The boss just called friend wife on the 'phone and told her he's gonna bring fifty thousand bucks here to-night and leave 'em in a rickety old safe while they beat it to your studio for a dancing lesson. (*Pause.*) Right you are. Put an assistant on to the lesson and you make this address as fast as an auto can bring you. (*Pause.*) Geewhilikins, what's the matter with your brain? New York full of other people's automobiles and you tell me you haven't anything to ride in! Steal one! For goodness' sake,—swipe one! (*Pause.*) Yes, I'll get hold of the combination of the safe, all right. Good-bye; somebody's coming.

(She hangs up 'phone. ELLEN enters, L., dressed in handsome evening gown, with back unhooked.)

ELLEN (C.). Lizette, hook me up, please. (LIZETTE goes to work and ELLEN rambles.) Lizette, take my advice, and if ever you find a man as clever as my hubby, marry him even if you have to give his wife poison to make him available. Honestly, Egbert is the smartest man I ever married—I mean, of course—I mean that—oh, you know, I never was married to any one else—but honestly, Lizette, this man of mine owns and operates the most plausible tongue this side of William Jennings Bryan. Really, I believe that he could talk an Esquimo out of his last sealskin under-shirt on the coldest day in January. (*Laughs.*) Yes, he certainly can make the English language do things in his favor. Compared to him the ordinary spell-binder looks like a wooden nickel in a hatful of real money. Take me, for instance. I was engaged to be married to an entirely different but thoroughly satisfactory human man, and was of the honest opinion

that there was him and me and nobody else in the wide wide world, when lo and behold, I met Egbert at a dance one night, and you may well imagine my surprise upon awakening the next morning to learn that my name had changed to Mrs. Egbert. He sure does work fast. Now, I ask you, what chance does money stand in a radius of five miles of such a man?

LIZETTE. Oui, madam.

(The bell rings.)

ELLEN. Doggone it, somebody at the door! Tell 'em Mr. Ellsworth is in jail and that I've run off with the chauffeur.

(Exit ELLEN, L., and LIZETTE goes through door c. into hall, returning a moment later, followed by MICKEY, who is dressed in super stylish evening togs.)

LIZETTE *(dropping her dialect)*. Quick work, son. Found a car after all, did you?

MICKEY. Yeh, daughter, and believe me, when I stepped on the engine irritator of that caboose it talked back at me with all twelve cylinders. *(Pauses and then adds plaintively.)* I sure did hate to sell that car.

LIZETTE. Do you mean to say that you copped a de luxe flivver, drove it here and sold it, all inside of five minutes?

MICKEY. Sure, I sold it to the motorcycle cop that was chasin' me for speedin'.

LIZETTE. Come, kiss mama. You ain't so dumb as you look. *(He kisses her lightly, and door-bell rings again.)* Gee, there's the boss. Make yourself invisible behind that curtain.

(Exit LIZETTE, c., turning off to r. MICKEY steps into French window, and pulls the curtains to. Enter EGBERT, c., followed by LIZETTE. He gives her his hat and coat, which she places on hat-rack. He enters room, she follows.)

EGBERT. Has Mrs. Ellsworth dressed yet, Lizette?

(ELLEN enters, L., and drops to floor in curtsy.)

ELLEN. Mrs. Ellsworth has dressed. (EGBERT smiles, helps her to her feet, and kisses her. They sit down on settee, his arm about her waist, her head on his shoulder.) Lizette, you may get my wraps, please. (LIZETTE, with a glance at the curtains, exit L.) So you sold Mr. Velasquez's nightmare for fifty thousand dollars. Honestly, honey, you must have been born with a horseshoe in your mouth.

EGBERT (*glumly*). Yes, I'm as lucky as Belgium.

ELLEN (*raising her head from his shoulder*). Gee, you sound worse than a letter with a black border. (*In sudden terror*.) You haven't lost the money, have you?

EGBERT. No, but doggone it, some flat-footed, dog-eared, wall-eyed son of a sea-cook swiped our automobile.

ELLEN. Oh, you poor benighted poached egg, do you mean to sit here and confess that some inhuman barbarian threw that car into gear while you weren't looking?

EGBERT. Honey, you've figured it out, just like a detective.

ELLEN. Did you notify the police?

EGBERT. I should say not.

ELLEN. Why should you say not?

EGBERT. If somebody swiped your hat, would you be liable to brag about it to some guy who'd probably make you give up your coat, pants and suspenders? No, ma'am. One robber per night is copious for friend husband.

ELLEN (*admiringly*). My, but you're brainy.—But tell me, where did you lose the car, dearie?

EGBERT. I called you up from Senor Vlaz's Dansant Castle, and while I was waiting to make an appointment for our lesson the deed was did.

ELLEN. Well, there's no use crying over a spilt automobile, especially when you've just sandbagged some poor fish for ten times what it cost you.

(Enter LIZETTE, L., with ELLEN'S wraps. ELLEN rises and LIZETTE places cape over her shoulders and hands her her gloves. EGBERT crosses over to safe, takes a card from an envelope and opens safe with combination which is printed on the card. LIZETTE gets his hat and coat, while ELLEN puts on her gloves. EGBERT takes wallet from his pocket, removes a sheaf of bills from it, which he riffles in ELLEN'S face.)

EGBERT. Fifty thousand unadulterated dollars!

ELLEN. Believe me, dearie, that's the richest breeze that ever fanned my troubled brow. (EGBERT laughs and places wallet in safe, which he then closes and locks. LIZETTE crosses to him L., holds his coat, and he puts it on. LIZETTE hands him his hat, and while he is putting it on he slips the envelope containing safe combination in his pocket nearest LIZETTE. ELLEN, R.) Aren't you gonna doll up in your "soup and fish"?

EGBERT (L.). Do you want me to be taken for a waiter?

(LIZETTE slips the envelope from his pocket during this conversation, removes the card, which she sticks in her waist, and places envelope back in EGBERT'S pocket.)

ELLEN. You need not wait up for us, Lizette.

LIZETTE (L. C.). Oui, madam.

(MICKEY, behind curtains, sneezes violently. Everybody starts.)

ELLEN. Egbert, there's somebody behind those curtains!

(EGBERT crosses to table down R., takes pistol therefrom and goes L., keeping face to R.)

EGBERT. I'm going to count five, and then I'm gonna set this roman candle off in the direction of that

window. (*He pauses and levels pistol at curtain.*
LIZETTE, *terrified, edges toward the window, R.*)
One—two—three—four—fi —

(LIZETTE, *with a cry, dashes the curtains aside, revealing—nothing! The window is open but empty.*
EGBERT *dashes out through window.* LIZETTE *and ELLEN huddle together up c.*)

ELLEN. Oh, Lizette, I'm so glad you did that. I just know I'd have collapsed in a chunk if Egbert had fired that cannon.

LIZETTE. Oui, madam—I was zat—what you call heem?—ter-r-r-rified.

(*Enter EGBERT through French window.*)

ELLEN } (*in chorus*). Did you find him?
LIZETTE }
EGBERT. Nope, he made a clean get-away.

(*He closes window and pulls curtains to.*)

ELLEN. I guess we'd better not go out now, had we, honey?

EGBERT. Why not? That yegg is at the other end of Manhattan Island by this time. Lightning won't strike here again to-night.

ELLEN. Lizette, won't you be afraid to stay here by yourself?

LIZETTE. Oh, oui, madam. I shall be fright—what you call heem?—steef. But I will lock ze doo-r-r-r-rs, get quick in ze bed and pull ze covair way up ovair my—what you call heem?—nut!

(EGBERT *and ELLEN laugh heartily, and exit through hall, C. and to R., followed by LIZETTE. In a moment a door slams and LIZETTE returns alone. She goes to French window and peers out of it. She closes curtains and goes L. MICKEY enters through window R. and goes up C.*)

MICKEY. Ain't the moon bright to-night?

(LIZETTE utters a startled cry, turns, and on seeing MICKEY, runs and pulls curtains over the window.)

LIZETTE. Gee, Mickey, honey, that was so close, I could just naturally see you doing the lock step.

MICKEY. My poor cheild, when will you learn? I pulled that sneeze stuff just to start a little excitement. I do so hate a dull evening.

LIZETTE. Mickey Mulholland, one half of you is nut, one half is jackass and the other two-thirds is just plain old fool. Where were you?

(MICKEY laughs and kisses her lightly on the cheek.)

MICKEY. Oh, I was so close he couldn't see me. Now for the little problem in arithmetic. (LIZETTE hands him the combination to the safe.) I gotta little praise to waft in your direction, kiddo. You can frisk a guy as easy as a prohibitionist can say mean things about booze. (He opens safe, L., removes wallet, which he places in his pocket.) Cribs cracked with neatness and dispatch.

LIZETTE. That would look swell on a sign. Come on, and let's beat it while the beatin's worth mentionin', for this guy Ellsworth is just as liable to double back on his tracks as he is to have grapefruit for breakfast.

MICKEY. Good for Egbert, an' just to show that I'm just as good a sport as he is, I'll hang around a while an' wait for him.

(He goes to phonograph and begins looking over records; selects one and puts it on machine.)

LIZETTE. No other man I ever loved had your talent for huntin' trouble. When you can't find it on the groun', you climb a tree to look for its nest. You got everything in your head that you need but brains.

MICKEY. Aside from these few trifles, may I have the next dance?

LIZETTE (hopelessly). Yes, if you'll promise to beat it after one record is finished.

MICKEY (*mockingly*). Your gratitude overwhelms me.

(*The machine is started, and MICKY and LIZETTE, who should be particularly clever dancers, interpolate a specialty. Toward the end of the dance the door-bell rings. They stop dancing and MICKEY dashes to machine and stops it.*)

LIZETTE. There now!

MICKEY. Can the "I told you so" stuff, turn out the light and follow me.

(*LIZETTE turns switch up c. The stage is darkened, and MICKEY and LIZETTE move over to the French window, R. They sweep the curtains aside, only to be confronted by EGBERT, flashlight in one hand, playing on them, and pistol in other hand, doing likewise.*)

EGBERT. Hands up, quick! (*MICKEY and LIZETTE silently raise their hands over their heads and back slowly into the room, followed by EGBERT and ELLEN, who is nervous and frightened. EGBERT, R.*) Ellen, turn the lights on.

(*ELLEN goes to switch up c. and stage is flooded with light.*)

MICKEY (L.). Come right on in, Eggy; we've been expectin' you for some time.

EGBERT. I hope we didn't keep you waiting.

MICKEY. Your apology is accepted.

EGBERT. I assure you we consider it quite an honor to entertain the renowned Senor Vlaz in our humble home, don't we, Ellen?

ELLEN. Y-y-y-yes—s-s-shall I c-c-call the p-p-p-police?

EGBERT. No, I rather think I can handle Senor Vlaz's case personally. (*To MICKEY.*) I'm going to turn you loose on two conditions.

MICKEY. Tabulate!

EGBERT. - The first is that you are to give us each a lesson in your famous dance absolutely free of charge.

(MICKEY, L., *grins and lowers his hands*, LIZETTE, L. C., *doing likewise*.)

MICKEY. You're a regular guy, I'll say you are—and as to the lesson, you're on for the very best I know.

EGBERT. I thank you; and secondly —

MICKEY. I am to turn over to you a wallet containing somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty thousand shekels.

EGBERT. You're a perfect mind reader.

(MICKEY *tosses the wallet on the floor and EGBERT picks it up and slips it into his inside coat pocket. He slips the revolver into his outside overcoat pocket and takes the coat off, laying it on settee, R. front. LIZETTE helps ELLEN off with her wraps, which she lays on chair up L.*)

MICKEY. You teach Mr. Ellsworth, Lizette, and I'll request the honor of Mrs. Ellsworth's partnership.

(LIZETTE *crosses over to EGBERT; MICKEY starts the phonograph and both couples dance—this time the dance being frankly instructive in character. Time should be allowed for the ELLSWORTHS to learn the step, and then MICKEY intentionally guides ELLEN into the settee on which EGBERT'S coat is lying. He releases ELLEN and slips his hand into the pocket containing the revolver. ELLEN sees this move.*)

ELLEN (*frantically*). Quick, Egbert, quick!

(EGBERT, L., *releases LIZETTE and dashes for MICKEY, who, however, has the revolver waiting for him, and EGBERT sensibly stops short, C. MICKEY, R. C., taps him on the shoulder with the revolver.*)

MICKEY. Tag, you're it. (*To LIZETTE, up L.*) Get the wallet out of his pocket, Liz. (*LIZETTE removes wallet from EGBERT'S pocket and gives it to MICKEY, who kisses it and drops it into his pocket. LIZETTE takes ELLEN'S wraps from chair up L. MICKEY and LIZETTE back toward the French window, R., covering the ELLSWORTHS with revolver. At the window MICKEY halts.*) Mr. Ellsworth, you've been strictly on the square with me, an' so it's only fair of me to warn you that anybody who comes out of this window for the next five minutes is very liable to be perforated with a sudden attack of bad luck. Do you get me?

EGBERT (*soberly*). I get you.

MICKEY. Then, au revoir.

(*Exit LIZETTE, R., followed by MICKEY, who quickly draws the curtains. ELLEN rushes c. to EGBERT, who devotes his attention to calming her, as she is extremely nervous, and when he succeeds he walks over to the window, throws the curtains back, showing that LIZETTE and MICKEY have disappeared.*)

ELLEN. I don't mind the money or the wrap so much, but I sure hate to lose Lizette. She was the best maid I ever had.

EGBERT. Lizette is undoubtedly lost to you forever, honey, but you need lose no sleep over the fifty thou. Gaze hither.

(*He removes a second wallet from his hip pocket, takes out another set of bills and riffles them in ELLEN'S face.*)

ELLEN (*with religious fervor*). Oh, revive me again!

EGBERT. That little roll that Senor Vlax took traveling with him can be bought for one dollar a thousand pieces at any toy and novelty store. I never trusted that girl.

ELLEN. And we got our lesson for nothing, didn't we?

EGBERT. Precisely, and I claim that is remarkable enough to deserve celebrating, so put in another needle.

(A new needle is placed in the machine, the music is started and as the ELLSWORTHS commence to dance, the curtain slowly falls.)

CURTAIN

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JONES VS. JINKS. A Mock Trial in One Act, by EDWARD MUMFORD. Fifteen male and six female characters, with supernumeraries if desired. May be played all male. Many of the parts (members of the jury, etc.) are small. Scene, a simple interior; may be played without scenery. Costumes, modern. Time of playing, one hour. This mock trial has many novel features, unusual characters and quick action. Nearly every character has a funny entrance and laughable lines. There are many rich parts, and fast fun throughout. Price, 15 cents.

THE SIGHT-SEEING CAR. A Comedy Sketch in One Act, by ERNEST M. GOULD. For seven males, two females, or may be all male. Parts may be doubled, with quick changes, so that four persons may play the sketch. Time, forty-five minutes. Simple street scene. Costumes, modern. The superintendent of a sight-seeing automobile engages two men to run the machine. A Jew, a farmer, a fat lady and other humorous characters give them all kinds of trouble. This is a regular gatling-gun stream of rollicking repartee. Price, 15 cents.

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