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Rugbee's Popular Plays

Priscilla's

Room

BY

Louise Latham Wilson

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The Willis N. Bugbee Co. SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE CO., SYRACUSE, N.Y.

Priscilla's Room

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

BY

Louise Latham Wilson

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THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE CO.

SYRACUSE, N. Y.

Priscilla's Room

CHARACTERS

A senior, white middy blouse and dark skirt Mrs. Mary Ann O'Leary

The scrub lady, faded work dress and apron

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Priscilla's Room

SCENE: Room in a students apartment house. Entrance L, windows L and R, and double doors or archway, half concealed by portieres, C., presumably leading to another room in same apartment. Curtain rises disclosing empty stage.

MICHAEL O'TOOLE enters C, whistling, carrying large printed sign—"THIS APARTMENT TO LET—NONE BUT STUDENTS NEED APPLY," which he places in the window.

MICHAEL. "None but students need apply!" Begobs, if I was runnin' this house, I'd turn it inside out and make it read "All but shtudents need apply!" Sure, it'd be aisier on me, for I'm the janitor. I often think of thim plisant days whin I was stokin' coal on the liner Oceana. Faith, what wid keepin' three stories of shtudents widin the limits of the law, I'm that tired I cud go to slape walkin' if I cud only shtand shtill long enough. (*Bell rings off L.*) Yis, there's me bell, as usual. (*Calls.*) Peter! Peter!

(Enter Peter L.)

Peter, I'm called away. It may be fer years, and it may be foriver. If I don't git back for an hour, and if there's any shtudents inquirin' for rooms, show 'em this. If ye rint this apartment, while I'm gone, it's a quarter I'll give you.

PETER. All at once?

MICHAEL. Yis, me lad, cash down.

PETER. It's a bargain. Me for an ice cream soda!

(MICHAEL goes whistling off L.)

Now for a long an' happy hour with this here book, "John, the young hero, or, Captured by the Bandits."

(Seats himself in the corner with volume—is soon oblivious to everything. Bell off L. rings and rings. Enter PRISCILLA BARNES, L.)

PRISCILLA. Dear, dear! The janitor of this building must be very hard of hearing, for I rang and rang. However, I've seen the agent, paid my rent and engaged this apartment; and it is, fortunately, unlocked. I can take possession at once. (opens suitcase and places one or two photographs) I am so anxious to be settled, so I can give that little spread. This place will be lovely when I have unpacked my pillows and pictures. The girls think I am so brave to live in an apartment all alone, but when you are a Senior you aren't afraid of anything. O, I am so happy! (*Does little dance.*)

PETER. (who has gradually come to life, and enjoyed the dance very much, clapping)—Say, lady, that was a real treat! Do it again!

PRISCILLA. (with a little scream) O, what does this mean? What are you doing in my room?

(Bell)

PETER. (evasively) There's the telephone bell—I'd ought to be answerin' it.

(Exit Peter, L.)

PRISCILLA. That is very singular: I must ask for keys at once. If I had not been a Senior, I might have screamed. Think of Pris Barnes screaming!

(Enter Peter, L.)

PETER. There's a party on the phone inquirin' for the lady in No. 3, Miss House.

PRIS. This is No. 3, but I am not Miss House.

PETER. Well, then, Miss Shed.

PRIS. I am not Miss Shed.

PETER. Miss G'rage—no, that aint right either. Say, what is your name, lady? I've mentioned all the buildin's I know, 'cept the public school.

PRIS. Could have been Miss Barnes?

PETER. That's it! That's it! I knew it was something like that. Hurry, they're waitin'. (Exit PRIS, L.) No wonder I fergot it, a back number name like that. Barns is absolutely out of date. (Takes book from pocket.) Where was I? O yes-(reads) "John was entirely alone, surrounded by twelve savage bandits. The light rifle that he carried looked inadequate beside the guns carried by his captors. How he managed to overcome such a number and leave them dead upon the field, is a matter that he does not remember. Suffice it to say, when the first days of the morning sun painted the gray sky with crimson, John was freefree, but filled with an awful thirst for vengeance that could be quenched in no way but one. Stealthily he crept forward on (Bell has been ringing during the reading. It finally all fours. catches PETER's attention. He listens as it rings one more violent peal, and then pocket's his book in deep disgust.) Can't they let a feller have no chanst to improve his mind? (Opens door L.) Hello!

(Enter MR. JASPER HOLMES, who looks every inch a senior.) MR. HOLMES. Hello, my man! I am looking for the janitor. Are you him—he?

PETER. On three a week? Not me. Mike's gone out.

MR. H. Well, who are you?

PETER. Andrew Carnegie. Did you come fer a lib'ry?

MR. H. (With the dignity of 21 years.) Here, boy, do not be impudent. This is my apartment, and I have come to take possession.

PETER. All right I'll tell your wife when she comes back.

MR. H. (aside.) My wife! Really, that boy is rather clever. Noting my moustache (takes small mirror from pocket and examines something fuzzy on upper lip.) Yes, noting my moustache, he has evidently taken me for a family man. I'll just say nothing. (aloud.) Here, boy, ahem—take this (hands PETER a dime) and run away.

PETER. Tipped! by a student! (falls fainting from room.)

MR. H. Really, this will be a very pleasant bachelor apartment when I have unpacked my pipes and steins. A little expensive, but I feel that as one of the Seniors, I have the reputation of the college at stake. And as I am going to give a stag party for the new glee club, I want things just so. Hark!

VOICE OF PRIS. In that room? (She is greatly excited.)

VOICE OF PETER. Yes, in there. And I says, just like that, I'll tell your wife when she comes up, jest like that I told him, and he give me this, A hull dime. I didn't have no change so I kep' it all.

MR. H. Ah, that must be the chambermaid to whom he is talking so familiarly. I want to see her. (*Hurriedly smoothes moustache. Enter PRIS and PETER, L.*)

MR. H. Ah—er—Katie, so here you are. Please be so good as to run and get me some clean towels.

PRIS. What? I'll do nothing of the kind! Who are you? How dare you order me?

PETER. Yes, I'm a good guesser—that's his wife, all right. I've heard them married conversations before.

(Enter MRS. O'LEARY, C.)

MRS. O'L. (in a tired voice.) How de do, lady. I come to clean up, lady. Where shall I begin?

PRIS. I'm sure I don't know. I didn't send for you.

MRS. O'L. Perhaps your husband could tell me, lady. Shall I look to him?

(MR. H. strokes upper lip.)

PRIS. You've made a mistake, I tell you! I don't want you here at all.

MRS. O'L. All right, lady. My orders was to come. Goodbye, lady.

(Exit Mrs. O'LEARY, C. PETER also moves toward door, L.)

PRIS. Peter, Peter, don't desert me—help me to put this man out!

PETER. Not me! I don't care to hear no reasons why Marriage is a Failure.

(Exit PETER, L.)

PRIS. Sir, if you are a gentleman, you will leave at once!

MR. H. Really! And why, pray, should I leave my apartment?

PRIS. Your apartments, sir!

MR. H. Certainly. And now get those towels, that's a good girl.

PRIS. O, dear! Can't I move the man? Must I remain here to be insulted?

MR. H. Dear me, no. Go, any time you like, but returnwith towels.

PRIS. Once and finally, will you go away?

MR. H. Once and finally—no, Katie.

PRIS. Very well. I will simply sit here and wait for the janitor. I dare say you can understand nothing but brute force.

(Seats herself in chair, R, and folds arms.)

MR. H. Ah well! The girl does not know who I am.

(Seats himself in chair, L, and folds arms.)

PRIS. (rising and dashing away a tear.) Sir, I do not understand this matter, but my fighting blood is up. I am going down to see the agent, to report your shameful conduct. (Powders nose, adjusts hatpins, hastens out, L.)

MR. H. Well, now what do you think of that? I never treated a house maid with more respect in my life! Maybe it's what I didn't do! Sometimes a slight osculation. No, she didn't look that kind. Mighty well dressed, too.—but here. that girl may go down to the agent and say something to ruin my reputation! I think I'll just look the man up myself!

(Exit MR. H., L.)

(Bell rings. Enter Peter and Lester Wells, C.)

PETER. Yes, I'm rentin' this apartment. Mike, he said he'd gimme a quarter if I found a promisin' tenant. (aside.) Guess I've earned 75 cents, already.

MR. WELLS. (rather carelessly dressed, carries an old suit case.) All right, old sport. I'll take 'em. Nothing too good for a Junior. Open up that suit case, son, and hand me the glorious banners of 19—, dear old 19—. Handle 'em reverently, kid.

PETER. (gives MR. WELLS the banners, holds up a pair of very gaudy socks.) Is these yours, too?

MR. W. You bet. Nifty, aren't they? Nothing too good for a Junior.

PETER. Do you wear 'em?

MR. W. Yep, on cloudy days.

PETER. Well, I'm goin'. They hurt my ears.

(Exit PETER. MR. W. tacks up pennants and the photo of a girl taken from his vest pocket. He is half concealed by portiere. Enter PRISCILLA, L.)

PRIS. Well, I had a breathless run, but victorious! Beat a Senior if you can! 'The agent has promised to look after that impudent man who was here, and teach him a decided lesson. Now for a little quiet. O, the work I've got to do! (MR. W. peeks cautiously from behind curtain at her—she sees him, smothers a scream.) (aside.) Dear, dear, another scare! Anyone but a Senior would have screamed! Who is he? I musn't let him think I am afraid, at all events. (Aloud.) Sir, who are you and what are you doing in here?

MR. W. (Coming down C.) Doing? Putting the room to rights, to be sure.

PRIS. (Aside.) Why, of course—he is the janitor. (Aloud.) Well, I am glad I have seen you. You will stand by me, won't you?

MR. WELLS. (Admiringly.) I sure will. When?

PRIS. O, I'll let you know if I need you. (She calmly settles herself at table, with books, to the amazement of MR. W.) Now hurry, my good man, get through, as I have a lot of work to do in here.

(MR. W. gasps, stares and gasps.)

(Enter MRS. O'LEARY, C.)

MRS. O'L. How de do, lady. I got orders to come back again. I should of ben here yistiddy to clean the windows and fix up nice, but my husband he was—er—sick, and Johnnie he aint big enough to do nothin' much, and Willie he couldn't miss his school, he's workin' fer a prize, Willie is. He's a smart boy, Willie is. The rest of 'em takes more after their father. And Jennie she got a job in the store last week. PRIS. Yes, yes-what do you want of me now?

MRS. O'L. I look to you to tell me what to do, lady.

PRIS. Dear me, I don't know. Ask that man.

MRS. O'L. O, very well, I'll look to your husband for orders after all, then—It's him I shall look to, is it, lady? Why, he aint the same one I seen here the last time, is he, lady?

PRIS. Woman, that individual is the janitor!

MR. W. Me? Do I look like a janitor? Me? A Junior? Where are you trying to get off? I'll never take that, even from the housemaid!

PRIS. Housemaid! And the second time! What do you mean, sir?

MR. W. I mean you! You came in my room and said you had work to do! And then you take me for a—for a—say, we're getting all balled up here, aren't we?

PRIS. Well, you said you were fixing things up in here. Who, but a janitor, would be doing that, in my room?

MR. W. Now see here, sister, you're sure in the wrong place somehow. I rented this room from a freckled little kid, about ten minutes ago. Probably you got the wrong floor.

MRS. O'L. Stolidly. Which'll I look to, lady?

PRIS. O, I don't know—only stay with me, stay! Tell that man to leave! This is my room, and he has no right to be here:

MRS. O'L. Yes, lady. I thought when I seen him he wasn't the same one I seen when I first seen you the other time.

MR. W. Come, now, my good woman-

MRS. O'L. I aint your good woman. Stand back, young feller. I never seen the man yet that was stronger than me.

PRIS. (Wildly.) O, they're all trying to get my room! Why can't they look somewhere else? I don't understand it!

(Enter MICHAEL, C.)

MICHAEL. Here, now, what's the matter wid ye all? Nothin' serious, I hope? I've jist been quietin' considerable of a fracas amongst the students on the sicond flure, and it's winded I am intirely. Faith, but those shtudents are shtrong! (*rubs* shoulder ruefully.)

PRIS. (Facing him, angrily.) Are you the janitor? Now don't tell me you are specializing in Botany and these are your rooms.

MICHAEL. Sure, I'm the janitor. I'd own to anything rather than be took for a shtudent.

PRIS. Then whose rooms are these? Answer me that.

PRISCILLA'S ROOM

PETER. (Who has entered, L, unobserved.) Gosh, that's more'n I could tell anybody.

(Enter MR. HOLMES, L.)

MR. H. What, are we giving a little party? Come, come, my good people, this joke has gone too far. I have had'a troublesome afternoon, and I entreat you now to leave me in peace and quiet in my apartments. You've surely finished all the necessary work by this time. As a Senior, I demand that you withdraw. Hold-(spies banner of 19-) What's this? Is my room to be polluted with the colors of 19-? Kindly take them out when you go.

MR. WELLS. Don't you touch 'em. I'm right here to fight for that flag!

MR. H. And what, pray, are you doing here? MR. W. Doing, confound you—this is my room

Doing, confound you-this is my room!

MR. H. O, no, my good fellow, it's mine.

PRIS. And I say-it is mine! Mine alone!

MICHAEL. Now, all of ye, state your claims, state your claims. We'll sift this matter to the bottom, begobs!

MR. W. I paid my rent in advance down at the office. That's the word of a Junior and a gentleman.

MR. H. I engaged it this morning, myself. And that is the word of a gentleman and a Senior.

PRIS. I rented it this very day from the agent! And I am not only a Senior, but a Woman.

PETER. Gee! That settles it.

MICHAEL. Sure, a mixup! What shall we be doin' whin shtudents disagree?

MRS. O'L. (To PRIS.) Shall I sail into any of 'em for you, lady?

PRIS. O, dear, no, it is bad enough now. Wait! Gentlemen, I have an idea! Let us all go to the agent, and have this matter settled peaceably. Who reaches the office first may first state his claim, and will doubtless get the room.

MR. WELLS. Gee, a fine sporting proposition. I'm on.

MR. HOLMES. I also am willing.

MICHAEL. Foine! It lets me out, begobs.

PRIS. Being a woman, I am sure you will allow me a little bit of a start in this race. I will start from the entrance and you from your present positions.

MR. W. It's hardly fair to you folks. I won the first prize for sprintin' last season.

MR. H. And I ought to warn you all. I'm the crack hurdle racer of my college.

MICHAEL. Sure, he'll go over strate-cars and all!

PRIS. Perhaps it is a hopeless task, but all I ask is a little start. Be ready to start when you hear a whistle. Come on. Peter, do the whistling for me.

PETER. Shall I clear the street?

PRIS. Wait. If I see the agent first, the room is mine?

MR. W. and H. O, yes, certainly, (They smile meaningly.)

(MRS. O'LEARY, who has been wiping window, drops work and stands anxiously awaiting results. PRIS. passes out L, a door is heard to slam. MR. H. and MR. W. assume positions, all ready for racing, each fearful lest the other have an inch more start than he. Shrill whistle is heard. They make a violent start, run through L entrance, then a mighty bump is heard. Then pounding, and then the two racers return, rubbing heads.)

MR. W. and MR. H. (Solemnly.) The door was LOCKED. On the outside.

MICHAEL. Gee!

MR. H. We're trapped, by Jove.

MR. W. The window! The window!

MRS. O'L. (*Blocking window*.) No you don't. No cheatin' in this game.

MR. W. (Wrathfully.) Cheating! That's past praying for! MRS. O'L. Never you mind. I'm goin' to guard the interests of my sex.

MICHAEL. Well, I'll be blamed if you don't have to watch a woman! They'll bate ye ivery time.

MRS. O'L. You might as well give in, for sure as my name is O'Leary, Jones that was, you'll never get out till you do.

PRIS. (Sweetly, off L.) Gentlemen, I have just been talking with the agent. I met him in the hall. Are the rooms mine?

(Silence.)

PRIS. I do hope you're not offended, for if you are, I can't unlock you. And Peter is in a hurry. Perhaps you noticed I took him out with me. I suspected he had a key—and he had. Is the room mine, gentlemen?

(Silence.)

MRS. O'L. (*Brandishing mop-rag.*) Speak up now. There's two of us agin you.

MR. H. Well, I don't care for these rooms, anyway. Too small.

MRS. O'L. Spoken like a man. (Looks threateningly at MR.)

MR. W. Well, I'd just as soon be nearer the college. Too slow out here.

MRS. O'L. Spoken like a—prevarycator. There's little difference.

MICHAEL. Unlock the dure, lady. Sure, it's all yer own way. PRIS. (*Enters L, radiantly.*) Thank you so much, gentlemen. And now let me tell you a secret. It may be valuable in the future. When a Senior, and a Woman, says it's her room, why, that's just whose room it is! I hope I haven't inconvenienced you?

PETER. Inconvenienced 'em. Gee!

MICHAEL. (Takes down sign.) Come on. It's all over.

PRIS. Goodnight, gentlemen. I hope you will find delightful apartments.

PETER. Come on, everybody, all together with a tiger. (Shouts.) Whose room is this?

MR. W. That's right, be sports, everyone. Now — whose room is this?

ALL. (Pointing to Pris.) HERS! HOORAY!

CURTAIN.







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