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No. 365

BUNK

OR

The Show Down Shown Up

A MELLOW-DRAMA

IN ONLY ONE ACT (THANK GOODNESS)

BY

HENRY CLAPP SMITH

(WITH APOLOGIES TO THE ACTORS' FAIR, LONDON,
JULY, 1916.)

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BUNK

CAST

LADY AGATHA ALLROPE.....*Miss Pringle*
SIR GERALD.....*Mr. Prentiss*
BARON BADMANS..... *Villain*
OFFICER, (And PROMPTER)
MR. IVOR WAITINGROUND
GEORGE
JOE

BUNK

COSTUMES

MISS PRINGLE. Gorgeous evening dress, the more daring the better, gaudy colors preferred. When she first enters she has over this a rather smart cloak of some kind, preferably an opera cloak.

THE BARON. Has a black tousled wig, a thin black moustache turning up at the ends, and much better than a real one; make this moustache with a stick of black grease paint turning the ends like watch springs. Low deep black eyebrows and bright pink cheeks. He wears a black coat, bright checked trousers, fancy four-in-hand tie, carries a riding crop and smokes a cigarette.

GERALD. Dresses like the "Man in White," white sporting shirt, immaculate white flannel trousers, white shoes. When he first enters and asks for his trousers he puts a rain coat or big bath towel around his waist so it is not noticeable to the audience that he already has his trousers on. His hair must be immaculately combed and brushed. He is the matinee hero.

THE PROMPTER. Wears an ordinary business suit. If it is hot he can take his coat off, but if he has a big officer's coat to put on over his own coat the effect is much funnier. The old New York policeman's coat with a gray helmet and a red wig is most satisfactory; and the moustache should be made with a wire that holds it to the nose so it

can be quickly adjusted and taken off in plain sight of the audience.

MR. WAITINGGROUND. Should be dressed in immaculate full dress suit, silk hat, eye glass or monocle, white gloves and an Inverness cloak or cape, thrown back so as to disclose his white shirt front, a large bunch of violets, real or artificial, which he usually holds in front of him with both hands.

GEORGE and JOE. In ordinary shirts, minus collar and tie, and the neck band unbuttoned, pair of light blue and white striped overalls.

BUNK

(Scene on and off the stage.)

SCENE: *Curtain rises disclosing two-thirds of left of stage hidden by curtain which is down and known as A section. B section is the remaining section stage right. It is "off" scenes and shows wind machine, drum, tin crash lightning, etc. Three camp-stools, doors L. and R.*

Setting: Section A. table left center with telephone on it, a chair back of it, another chair, small chair, down right. Another small chair up center. One window right of center is made of architect's drawing cloth outlined like window panes, and a solid piece of cardboard in back with forked lightning cut out so electric light suddenly lit behind it shows a very obvious streak of lightning. The setting is most any interior, a gaudy one of course is more amusing, and a flat ceiling if possible.

Section B: Looks best if the back of flats are used and there are odds and ends of braces and other stage paraphernalia showing. Furniture and effects described later in text.

NOTE: In all action in B. Section which is "off stage" the characters must be very natural and be entirely different from the parts they assume in the play. Lady Agatha chews gum, talks through her nose, and is decidedly tough. Sir Gerald is happy go lucky, and might almost be termed fresh. The Baron is rather

conceited and stupid, and he and Sir Gerald are really quite chummy "off stage."

The Prompter is very abusive in his handling of the stage hands, rather bored with the actors and quite evidently stuck on the leading lady. When the Prompter becomes the Officer he is more or less the usual comedy policeman. Mr. Waitingground is nervous and is always thoroughly interested in the show, and goes through all the emotions in pantomime "off stage" that the leading lady goes through on the stage. George and Joe are stupid and bored and never smile.

GEORGE. Well! I wants to tell you about a dog.

JOE. What kind of a dog.

GEORGE. Well, that's the story! This were a dog——

OFFICER. (*Entering c.*) Stage set? Effects ready? (*Comes down right breezily, stands by door R.*)

GEORGE and JOE. Yuss.

OFFICER. Where's Miss Pringle?

GEORGE. She ain't here yet.

JOE. She's allus late.

OFFICER. Now, boys, you're sure you understand when she says: "Be it that which is," you——

GEORGE. Gives her thunder. (*Doing so*)

OFFICER. No! No! No!

JOE. That's what's we did larst rehearsal!

OFFICER. And it was all wrong, you blockhead. The thunder comes when she says I'm a ruined woman for the third time.

JOE. I got yer governor on the "which is" we touches off the lightning. (*Does so*)

OFFICER. No, no! I'll tell you when. You just forget everything you know—that ought to be

easy and I'll say light—then you give me lightning and thunder for thunder—do you see?

GEORGE and JOE. Yuss.

(In the "off-stage" section there are two seats side by side center. GEORGE sits left, JOE right. Between them is the electric switch for the lightning and the other lights. The red and green lights are side by side back of the window in Section A.; only one can be lit at a time. Lightning shows in this same window—any big bulb will do. All lights are controlled by JOE. Back of them is the wind machine with a handle so that JOE can work it. On the floor in front are the horse-feet and other necessary traps. Down left against the partition leading to Section A. is the chair the PROMPTER uses. On it is the policeman's coat, under it the belt and stick and helmet, false moustache and wig. Against the front of it leans a Bass drum in easy reach of GEORGE'S left hand for the thunder. If possible up left beyond the door leading to Section A. a piece of tin is hung for the crash thunder, which GEORGE also works with his left hand, in this case hitting the drum with the right hand. PROMPTER exits to Section A through door left. MISS PRINGLE enters C.—is followed immediately by WAITINGROUND, who holds violets and stands in the way of others and after she goes R. into dressing-room, sighs and looks love sick.)

GEORGE. I was telling yer about this dog——

(PROMPTOR enters from A. through door left with camp-stool or stage brace catching MR. WAITINGROUND in the back.)

OFFICER. (*To WAITINGROUND*) We're ringing up in a minute if you wouldn't mind!—

GERALD. (*Enters with towel around him*) Has any one seen my trousers the tailor promised to return—

GEORGE. Hey, Joe, you're sittin' on them.

(*GERALD grabs package and exits sputtering. Package should be flat and very rumpled.*)

WAITINGROUND. Is Miss Pringle's cold better?

JOE. Well, yes and no—but be careful of them flowers Mr., she's got hay fever she has. A rose cold I think she call it.

WAITINGROUND. Oh!!

GEORGE. I was telling you about this dog—

VILLAIN. I'm ready—go ahead—watch us to-night in the stabbing scene. I'm not sure of my lines—"On Africa's sunny slopes," etc.

OFFICER. I'll watch yer.

VILLAIN. Where's Miss Pringle? Why don't we begin! I'm ready.

OFFICER. Just a minute. Just a minute. What's the idea, something new? Ain't you going to wear a necktie in this scene?

VILLAIN. Bah! (*Exits c.*)

GEORGE. Well, about this dog I was telling you—

MISS PRINGLE. All right. (*Entering r.*) Mr. Parsons did any of the boys find some of my diamond and ruby bracelets to-day. I must have left them on the stage last night—Oh, Mr. Waiting-round, how nice of you. (*Converses in whispers up-stage*)

GEORGE. Well, this dog Joe was—

OFFICER. Now, Boys, don't forget lightning. First thing the crash then the rumble, and when I say "strong" make it strong; don't be afraid to make it heavy—and watch me do you hear?

GEORGE and JOE. Yuss.

GEORGE. And this dog was about——

VILLAIN. Don't hold it. I'm here. (*Sees MISS PRINGLE. Paces back and forth like a VILLAIN*)
Come, come the public can't be kept waiting.
Ready! Ready! Call! (*Cough*)

MISS PRINGLE. (*Comes down, gives VILLAIN one withering look—silencing VILLAIN*) Now, we're all here, we might begin.

OFFICER. Clear! (*MISS PRINGLE goes L. on stage*) Curtain cue. (*JOE hits floor with hammer 3 times. OFFICER raises curtain*)

MISS PRINGLE. (*In great emotion sitting by the table*) Oh! where is Gerald and will he fail me at this moment. What shall I do if the Baron comes! What shall I say? (*More emotion*) Was ever woman tortured like this before, and such a night—this terrible storm——

(*Nervous groan should accompany the text.*)

OFFICER. Storm!

(*GEORGE and JOE business. The OFFICER gives his commands the same as a Sergeant would drill men in a manual.*)

PRINGLE. And lightning.

OFFICER. Lightning.

(*GEORGE and JOE business.*)

PRINGLE. (*With emotion*) Oh! Why am I but a frail woman!

OFFICER. Storm! Lightning! Storm! (*Business*)

PRINGLE. Oh! Oh! And think of Gerald—If the yacht should miss the harbor opening—Ah! The

rocks, (*Listens*) the lighthouse horn. (*Shudders*)

OFFICER. Horn!

(*GEORGE and JOE business. PRINGLE shudders—horn—shudders.*)

(*Noise of horn is made by whistling and singing a deep note; at the same time GEORGE and JOE led by the PROMPTER make this as wailing as possible. When they stop MISS PRINGLE shudders. Action is repeated. MR. WAITING-ROUND who has become interested tries the noise by himself, and as the others have stopped he finds to his embarrassment he is making this sound alone, and the others glare him into silence.*)

PRINGLE. If Gerald's lost I'm a ruined woman. (*Sinks on table*)

OFFICER. "Ruined woman," FIRST time.

(*This speech should be said clearly and evenly as a Sentry calls Corporal of the Guard to post number 1. GEORGE and JOE repeat the "Ruined woman First time" one after the other.*)

VILLAIN. (*Enters—stands by door—curls mustach. Low cough*) And art thou lonely without me?

PRINGLE. (*Looks up slowly*) You! (*Said on the ascending scale and drawn out to intense length*)

VILLAIN. Yes. (*Ditto, except descending scale*)

PRINGLE. Oh! (*Ditto, descending in tones lower*)

VILLAIN. Ah! (*Ditto, a horrible gurgling shiver*)

PRINGLE. Ughhh!

VILLAIN. And where is Gerald? Ha! Ha!

PRINGLE. Don't, Baron! Don't! He's coming, I tell you, he's coming.

VILLAIN. On a night like this!

(The word night is accentuated, so it is apparent to the audience that he has called the stage hands' attention to it.)

OFFICER. Storm.

(GEORGE and JOE business.)

VILLAIN. The yacht will never make the harbor. I have changed the channel signals. Do you notice the green light yonder? 'Tis the channel buoy, which I will have me minions change from green to red so Gerald's yacht will founder on the rocks.

(Pantomime "founder on the rocks" by imitating a boat, with the right hand, a rough sea, coming up against the left hand fist closed.)

VILLAIN. Are ye there, me minions?

GEORGE, JOE and PROMPTER. Aye!

VILLAIN. And will ye do me bidding?

GEORGE, JOE and PROMPTER. Aye!

VILLAIN. Then hie ye to the channel buoy and change the signal light from green to red so Gerald's yacht will founder on the rocks and all on board be lost.

GEORGE, JOE and PROMPTER. Aye!

VILLAIN. Away and do me bidding.

(GEORGE, JOE, PROMPTER and WAITINGGROUND walk lock-step in circle—stamp loudly and growl until back to original positions, gradually lessening sounds to simulate crowd going away.)

PRINGLE. You fiend! You devil incarnate. Why is it me fatal beauty attracts such men as you.

VILLAIN. Lady Agatha how can you reproach me with such terms and class me with those scurvy Knaves who dare aspire your hand. Am I not fair to look upon?

PRINGLE. 'Tis but a disguise—you Snake.

VILLAIN. Madame, I do not offer apples—I offer you my heart and hand. (*Creep to her on knees*) Only let me kiss the hem of your garment—let me see the fire die from your eyes—that fire which kindies on my mere approach and wrongs me for I am but a slave to your desires, your nimble loafer.

OFFICER. Noble lover. (*This is prompted through the door in a hoarse whisper*)

VILLAIN. Noble lover—

PRINGLE. (*Conveys bright idea*) Baron! You stoop to kiss my skirt (*Takes off receiver of 'phone*) and yet my heart cries out (*To the 'phone*) Help! Help! Assistance quick (*Hangs up 'phone*) it cannot stand your ardent wooing.

VILLAIN. Agatha!

PRINGLE. I'm a ruined woman.

OFFICER, GEORGE and JOE. Ruined woman *Twice*. (*This is repeated by all the same as formerly*)

VILLAIN. Me soul mate. Me heart's desire. (*Takes her in arms*) Ah!

(*GEORGE and JOE business. JOE lights the red light here and he and GEORGE keep continual thunder and lightning going, but not too loud but what the people can be heard.*)

PRINGLE. I'm a ruined woman.

OFFICER. Ruined woman *Third* time. Storm, turn on red light—whistle, thunder.

PRINGLE and VILLAIN. The red light. (*Wrestle from side to side*)

(As the villain and heroine embrace they rock from side to side, to and from the audience, and their lines are alternately said each time their heads are toward the audience. They count audibly between each statement, "1, 2, 3, the Red Light!" Then the other repeats. Then "1, 2, 3, Oh!" then repeats, and then MR. WAITINGROUND "off stage" says "Oh!" in an anxious voice in keeping with the former "Ohs!")

PRINGLE. Oh!

VILLAIN. Oh!

WAITINGROUND. Oh!

OFFICER. Strong.

(The PROMPTER is very intent on all this and puts his right foot up on the chair which has the drum leaning against it. GEORGE cuts loose and hits thunder drum. Hits MR. WAITINGROUND on shirt's bosom and OFFICER on his foot on the chair.)

OFFICER. *(Dance with pain)* Keep it up.
(GEORGE hits him again)

OFFICER. Not you—Blockheads—wrestle. *(JOE here turns red light into green light)* *(To VILLAIN and PRINGLE)* Don't drop it. Stop thunder—green light.

(GEORGE and JOE—Green light.)

PRINGLE. Ah! Saved! Saved!

VILLAIN. Foiled again. *(Pushes PRINGLE into chair)* I'll call on Marchmont. *(Takes 'phone)* Hello—hello, etc.

PRINGLE. *(Takes paper knife—stabs VILLAIN in back. Wails)* "Oh!" *(Screams)* What have I done? I've broken my paper knife.

(GEORGE and JOE—noise of horse feet.)

PRINGLE. The body! The body! Oh for a chaise longue. (*Picks up VILLAIN, obviously helped by VILLAIN; folds him up on floor throws rug over him, puts tea cosy on top so it looks like an ottoman—puts lamp by it on the floor—listens to horse-feet. If in decorating the stage you haven't a lamp or tea cosy, etc., a table cover will be sufficient*) My God, Gerald! (*Sits on floor leans on ottoman by lamp and opens Town Topics*)

(GEORGE and JOE—Horse now close when motor horn blows.)

OFFICER. Stop it, idiots—the horn not the horse—ready, Mr. Prentice.

GERALD. (*Enters. Before entering carefully sees that his trousers are perfectly creased, and puts on the expression of an Arrow Collar Advertisement*) Agatha!

PRINGLE. (*Sweetly*) Ah, Gerald. No rubbers this stormy night.

GERALD. How can you speak of rubbers at a time like this—My God what a night. (*As GERALD speaks, GEORGE and JOE match coins, and pay no attention to GERALD'S cue "what a night." So GERALD repeats it in a louder and more emphatic voice yelling it at them through the doorway. The OFFICER calls them down in dumb pantomime, makes the thunder noise himself and then begins to put on his officer's coat and wig, etc.*) What a Night.

PRINGLE. The yacht. Oh! (*Rising*) Tell me, Gerald. You look distressed.

GERALD. I am—I must have eaten something—but never mind Agatha. (*Embraces—looks up, sniffs*)

PRINGLE. What's the matter?

(This scene is played with great emotion on both sides, both in voice and action.)

GERALD. I sell 4711—cologne.

PRINGLE. What of that.

GERALD. The Baron has been here, and kissed you!

PRINGLE. No! No!

GERALD. Yes! Yes!

PRINGLE. You must be mistaken.

(In this speech GERALD pantomimes all the action which is followed intensely by MISS PRINGLE.)

GERALD. I'm not, I tell you. I've not been on the yacht. I'm in secret service and I've been tracing the Baron Badness. I've traced him by the 4711—Into the Waldorf east to 34th Street and then he went into the subway and I lost the scene. And he's here I tell you. *(Grabs her)* Confess. *(Smells her neck)* Unmistakable evidence.

PRINGLE. Gerald do you doubt me?

GERALD. Not when you look like that.

PRINGLE. And all the time I've been waiting and watching and longing for your return. *(Vampirish)*

GERALD. There's some catch in this.

OFFICER. Horn.

(Instead of horn you can substitute sound of a motorcycle if GEORGE or JOE can make the noise.)

GEORGE and JOE. Horn.

GERALD and PRINGLE. *(Grab each other)* What's that? What's that?

OFFICER. *(Footsteps. Opens door and leaves it open)* I've been sent for, I believe. Whadda you want.

PRINGLE. Sent for. (*Said with great surprise and annoyance*)

GERALD. Sent for. (*Said with incredulity*)

OFFICER. Yes, a 'phone call to the station-house. I'd been here before but I had a job on the corner.

GERALD. Oh! (*Accompanies the "Oh!" with pantomime of drinking and a smile. OFFICER disgusted*)

OFFICER. Some kids were monkeying with the Drug-store lights. Can't you see the green one now? (*Points to window. Accent the word "green"*)

PRINGLE. Ah! h! h! (*Faints on ottoman who groans*)

GERALD. Quick officer! (*They pick her up and also pull off covering on BARON*)

(*The OFFICER helps GERALD lift MISS PRINGLE and the cover, and as soon as he sees the BARON, the OFFICER is frightened and makes for the exit. OFFICER tip-toes to door.*)

GERALD. (*Holding PRINGLE in one arm*) Stop!

(*OFFICER nearly falls down with fright.*)

GERALD. Hold this. (*Passes over PRINGLE. Picks up face of BARON*) Ah. The Baron—the reward is mine.

PRINGLE. (*Suddenly revived*) Reward? (*As she stands up straight she knocks off the OFFICER'S helmet*)

GERALD. Yes, for the capture of Baron Badness, dead or alive, a reward of Twenty-five Thousand Dollars is offered by the evening Tribune.

PRINGLE. The reward's mine.

(*These next lines are said very conversationally.*)

GERALD. No, dear, mine.

PRINGLE. Mine, I say.

GERALD. I'm sorry, dear, it's mine.

PRINGLE. I tell you it's——

GERALD. Officer, call a cop.

OFFICER. Stop—I wish to say—(*Forgets lines, looks around door to prompt book. OFFICER has left the prompt book on his chair "off-stage" so he can stand in Section A. and quite visibly, to the audience, poke his head through the door into Section B. and read his lines from the prompt book and withdraw his head and make the speech*) Anything you say will be taken in evidence against you. Good-night. (*Exit*)

(*GEORGE and JOE Horsefeet off. GEORGE and JOE who start horsefeet before OFFICER exits from the room.*)

OFFICER. Hush.

PRINGLE. Gerald.

GERALD. Agatha. Twenty-five Thousand Dollars to buy a square meal with.

PRINGLE. Twenty-five Thousand Dollars to buy Liberty Bonds with.

GERALD. What do you wish to tell me, love.

PRINGLE. The child is still in London.

(*GERALD embraces MISS PRINGLE, and they stand there with spotlight on them, if you have it in the true position with all melodrama heroes and heroines in the play. The words should be said with a very rich and unctuous voice.*)

OFFICER. Hold it—take your call—Curtain.

(*The OFFICER gives the cast as many curtain calls The OFFICER gives the cast as many curtain calls as the real audience demands*)—once again—whew. (*The BARON has risen and is very much alive, and*

stands stage left. MISS PRINGLE center. GERALD stage right. They bow to the audience and to each other. Then as the BARON and GERALD exit to Section B, GERALD says, "Will you have a Fatima, Mike," and the BARON says, "Thank you Gus," and the two go up and off pleasantly together. PROMPTER sits in camp-chair)

(BARON and GERALD exit and walk off. PRINGLE comes last, smiles sweetly at WAITINGGROUND and says)

PRINGLE. "Oh, Mr. Waitingground, I'm sorry not to have supper with you to-night but my husband and I must hurry home. All four kiddies have the whooping cough! Good-night!"

(WAITINGGROUND now comes down right so he stands almost in front of MISS PRINGLE'S dressing-room door, and she, taking the center of the "off-stage" section, makes her speech. She does it in a very society voice and tremendous manner, and says "good-night" with a charming smile and elegantly sweeps off into her dressing-room. WAITINGGROUND gazes after her in dismay, and with disappointment on his face, looks from her dressing-room door over toward the PROMPTER who is sitting on the chair with his wig off holding his helmet and fanning himself with a prompt book. Then he bows his head slowly and suddenly sees the flowers which enrage him, and very suddenly so as to be a complete surprise he throws them at the OFFICER and exits quickly, as the OFFICER turns suddenly and has his back to the audience, GEORGE speaks the last line of the play.)

GEORGE. Now about this dog!

Quick Curtain.

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