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Dent's Office Boy

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THE COMIC DRAMA



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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

DENT'S OFFICE BOY

By
CHARLES M. STUART

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CHICAGO
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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CHARACTERS.

Mr. Dent, in business for all he can get out of it.
Jimmie, Dent's office boy, for all he can get out of him.
Jack Burnett, a nervous individual, in love with Edith
Dent.

TMP96-007194

DENT'S OFFICE BOY

SCENE: *Dent's office. Desk L. with papers, etc., scattered on it. Photo of his daughter, Edith, shows prominently. Box of cigars in drawer. Chairs ad lib. Doors, R, L and C. Telephone in L wall, near desk. Other fixtures and furniture ad lib. [At rise of curtain enter JIMMIE, whistling. He carries a broom and at once makes a great show of sweeping up, burlesque, then blows the supposed accumulation of dirt aside and places broom aside.]*

JIMMIE. Gee! Dis manual labor is gettin' wearisome. Th' boss'll have t' supply me wid an assistant.

VOICE. [*Outside.*] Mail!

JIMMIE. Now what d'ye think of that? Dey ought to get a mail chute wot works upwards.

VOICE. [*Outside.*] Say, are you comin' fer this mail?

JIMMIE. Ah, close yer valve; yer steam's escapin'.

[*Goes off and returns after a second with package of letters.*] Bills! Bills! Bills! [*Comes across a blue envelope.*] Whee! Say, dis one is right dere wid de aroma all right. Marked "Personal," too. Th' old man must be gettin' sporty in his old age. [*Scratches his head.*] Looks as though it might be important. [*Pause.*] Well, as private secretary of th' concern it's me sacred duty to get wise to all perticklers. Guess I'd better open it and see wot it says. Th' boss might get a hot chimney if I didn't. [*Opens letter and reads silently. Business—facial.*] Well, say. Get into the booth and listen to dis. [*Reads.*] "My dear Mr. Dent: If you will have a few moments to spare tomorrow

morning, I shall take the liberty of calling to see you on a matter of vital importance and possibly of mutual benefit. I have a proposal of great interest to lay before you. Very truly yours, Jack Burnett." [*Replaces letter and seals envelope.*] Important business! Well, I should smile a few broad ones. I know him all right. Wants to see his Nobs about Angel Face wot sits on the top of the desk, I'll bet me week's wages. He's stuck on her. [*Phone rings. He takes up receiver.*] Hello. [*Importantly.*] Yes, dis is de General Manager. [*Pause—change of tone.*] Oh, is dat you, Miss Dent? [*Listens.*] No, he ain't been here yet. [*Pause.*] All right. Good-bye. [*Mad.*] I knew it! I knew it! How did she know dat sap-faced mut wuz comin' here today. She's sent him, dats what it is. [*Scratches head.*] I'm wise all right. Little Jackie is comin' to see th' old man about marryin' Miss Edith. [*Downcast.*] Just my luck! Here I've been slavin' every day from ten to t'ree fer th' old man, hopin' some day to be taken into de firm—den wid me roll in me hand, I'd lay siege to th' heart of the fair Edith meself. Now it's all over. Dis mut comes along and cuts me out. It's me fer th' muddy waters. [*He gets this off in a burlesque, serious manner, drops into Dent's chair L. in a despondent mood, lights a cigarette stump and gazes lovingly at the photo of Edith on the desk. DENT enters quickly.*]

DENT. Jimmie! [*JIMMIE immediately loses his sad expression and becomes wide-awake.*]

JIMMIE. Yessir!

DENT. What time is it?

JIMMIE. [*Turning hands of clock on desk.*] Quarter to eleven, sir.

DENT. Run over to J. P. Morgan's office and tell him I want to buy the fence around the earth.

JIMMIE. [*Starts off.*] Yessir!

DENT. Jimmie. [*JIMMIE stops short.*]

JIMMIE. Yessir!

DENT. Have you opened the mail this morning?

JIMMIE. Yessir.

DENT. What for? I told you often enough not to do that. You're fired.

JIMMIE. All right. [*He starts off slowly.*]

DENT. Where are you going?

JIMMIE. Hunt annoder job.

DENT. You stay right here. What in blazes do you think I'm paying you for? Never mind the fence, I may want the earth this afternoon. Come here. [*Writes telegram.*] Take this telegram to the office and send it.

JIMMIE. Pay it, sir?

DENT. No—collect.

JIMMIE. Correct. [*Exit quickly. Above work very rapidly.*]

DENT. Now, let's see what's around here this morning. [*Picks up correspondence.*] Bills, bills, bills! Jimmie ought to know better than to keep those things around here. He knows I never pay them.

[*Throws bills in waste-basket. Sees blue envelope.*] Hello, what's this? [*Smells it.*] Perfumed. Wonder what it is? [*Reads silently.*] Now, what in thunder does a man want to write on perfumed paper for? Coming to see me about a proposal, eh? All right, I'll trim him, if there's anything in him to trim. [*Telephone rings.*] Hello. Yes. [*Pause.*] All right, I'll be over in a minute. Good-bye. [*Hangs up receiver. Enter JIMMIE.*] Jimmie, I want you to stay here and keep guard. I'm going over to Reburn's office for a couple of minutes.

JIMMIE. [*Matter-of-fact tone.*] Sure, go ahead. Leave it to me. Runnin' th' shack is right in me line.

DENT. If any one calls, keep them here. I'll be back directly. [*Exit.*]

JIMMIE. Th' boss is gettin' to have great confidence in me. He likes me—lets me do anything I wants ter. Don't believe he'd say a word if I took one of dose Christmas cigars wot his wife gave him. [*Takes cigar from box, lights it and puffs. Puts feet on desk.*] Pretty much to the mazuma. Think I'll take one home to th' old man. [*Takes another cigar and puts it in his pocket. Telephone rings.*] Hello. What do you want? Th' boss? Right here talkin' to you. What's the game? Sure, I'm on. All right. Have a cigar? Wait a minute. [*Takes another cigar and puts it in pocket.*] Dere, I think you'll find dat de best smoke you've had in a month. Yep, I'll be on der job all right, all right. So long. [*Hangs up receiver and returns to desk.*] Well, business is boomin' a little, but not enough to keep me busy. Guess I'll sing me a new song 'till somethin' turns up. [*Introduce specialty. At end of song, JACK enters.*]

JACK. I say, sonny, is Mr. Dent in his office?

JIMMIE. Dis is his layout.

JACK. You don't perceive the drift of my remarks.

JIMMIE. Float in; float in! What's your game?

JACK. Is Mr. Dent in?

JIMMIE. No.

JACK. Do you know when he will be in?

JIMMIE. No.

JACK. Don't you know anything?

JIMMIE. Not on ——. [*Day of the week.*]

JACK. You seem to be a very perverse young individual.

JIMMIE. Hully gee! Listen to his face slippin'.

JACK. I should like to say a few words privately to Mr. Dent without any further idle conversation with his subordinates.

JIMMIE. [*Dumfounded at the words used—then quickly.*] Naw, he ain't been in fer a week. What cognomen shall I present to his nibs?

JACK. My name is Burnett. Jack Burnett.

JIMMIE. Aha! Me hated rival! Now fer de bloody work. [*Aloud to JACK.*] Sit down and keep yer feet quiet. You make me nervous. Th' boss'll be back in a couple of days. Meanwhile, excuse me, cause I got work to do. [*He crosses to door on L. with burlesque dramatic stride and business, speaking as he does so.*] Curses! Curses! Curses! If I but had 'im in me power. But me time will come and when it does [*loudly*] BEWARE! [*He goes off. JACK is startled at the voice and turns nervously.*]

JACK. That office boy is a cure. But I can handle him all right, but I wish I could get over my nervousness when I think of Edith's father. But I must ask him for her hand in marriage. I almost wish I was dead. [*Has been walking about stage, comes opposite Edith's photo and stops.*] Ah, dear girl, would that you were here to give me couragè to ask your father, then——. [*Enter JIMMIE suddenly, carrying an armful of truck. In his excitement, JACK sticks photo under his belt and at the same time sweeps everything from top of desk; they strike the packages JIMMIE is carrying and DENT, entering at that moment, gets the benefit of it.*]

DENT. What in thunder are you trying to do there? Pick up that stuff and put it where it belongs. [*Then to JACK.*] Do you want to see me, sir?

JACK. Why——er——er——that is——you see——.

DENT. Yes, just so. Excuse me a moment. [*Sits down and signs papers. JIMMIE misses the photo from the desk.*]

JIMMIE. Now, where did dat photo flicker to? I'll bet

dat dub wid de Little Eva face copped it dead. I'll keep me eye on him fer fair. [*Exit with packages.*]

DENT. Now, then, sir.

JACK. [*Abstractedly starts.*] Eh?

DENT. [*Hitching his belt.*] Now I'm ready for you.

JACK. Good Heavens! He's going to fight me. Oh, I wish I had a little more nerve.

JIMMIE. [*Appearing in door C, suddenly.*] Say, boss, de druggist down-stairs wants to know if you want any more nerve tonic.

DENT. [*Savagely.*] No!

JACK. Ah—I'll take a dozen bottles, please. [*JIMMIE exit.*] Er—that is, you see, Mr. Dent, I am not sure—that is—my name is Burnett—I'm not sure you—

DENT. Just a minute. [*Picks up letter.*] Yes, it's all right. Your name is Burnett.

JACK. Well, the fact is, I wrote to you—I wrote to you—I wrote—

DENT. Yes, I think you did. Here is your letter.

JACK. Oh, goodness, what shall I say. He's got me all flurried up in a bunch.

DENT. Sit down, please.

JACK. Ah, yes, thank you, I shall—. [*Attempts to sit down. Photo has wcrked to seat of his trousers.*] That photograph! I can't sit down now. What shall I do?

DENT. Well, Mr. Burnett, may I ask the nature of your business with me?

JACK. Yes, that's just what I came to see you about—the nature of my business. You see I have a proposal to make and—er—

JIMMIE. [*Suddenly appearing.*] Say, boss, Mulligan wants to know what to do with that load of sand.

DENT. Bring it here. This fellow needs some sand. [*JIMMIE disappears.*]

JACK. There he goes again. He's a ferocious beast. I wish I was out of here, and——.

JIMMIE. [*Entering.*] Say, boss, how about de North Pole——.

DENT. Oh, that's Cooked. Get out. [*JIMMIE disappears.*] Well, well, let's get down to business now. Are you in trouble?

JACK. [*Hands on seat of trousers.*] Yes, deep-seated trouble. It makes me restless. I can't stand up and I can't sit down. I can't eat and I can't sleep——I——.

JIMMIE. [*Appears.*] Say, boss, dere's a lunatic escaped in de buildin'.

DENT. That's all right, Jimmie, I've got him safe. [*JIMMIE disappears.*]

JACK. Now he thinks I'm a lunatic. I've got to get straightened out some way.

JIMMIE. [*Appears.*] Say, boss, Martin says he's puzzled——.

DENT. So am I, Jimmie. Get out. [*JIMMIE disappears.*] Now, then, Mr. Burnett, try and collect yourself and state your business. I have an important engagement today——.

JACK. That's just the idea—engagement. I'd like to have one, you know, I——.

DENT. Sorry. I don't need any more office help at present.

JACK. [*Stumbles over chair and falls to floor.*] This is the last straw!

JIMMIE. [*Appears.*] Say, boss, me grandmudder died and I want to get off dis afternoon to go to de funeral.

DENT. All right, Jimmie. And when the undertaker gets through with her, send him up here. There'll be another job soon.

JIMMIE. Yessir! [*Disappears.*]

JACK. Mr. Dent, I want to speak to you about—do you think Bryan will be the next president? No?

DENT. No, sir. And I don't think you'll live to vote for him. I've no more time to waste with you. I've got to go to the photographer's to have an enlargement of my daughter's picture made and—. [*Notes absence of photo.*] Now, where the devil did that photo get to? [JACK puts hands behind him suddenly. JIMMIE appears.] Jimmie, where is that photograph of Edith?

VOICE. [*Outside.*] Going down!

JACK. [*Hands behind him suddenly.*] No, thank heavens! Still there.

JIMMIE. Don't know, sir. It was dere before dis mut came in and started to raise a racket in de shack.

DENT. Young man, did you take that photo?

JACK. I—oh, no—sir—.

DENT. Don't lie to me, sir. I see it in your eye.

JACK. It isn't in my eye, it's in—that is—I don't know anything.

DENT. I didn't ask anything about your education. What I want is that photograph and I want it quick. [*Bangs fist on desk.*]

JIMMIE. [*Same business.*] Yes, and we wants it quick, see?

DENT. Jimmie!

JIMMIE. Yessir!

DENT. Subside! [*JIMMIE sits.*]

JIMMIE. Yessir.

DENT. Jimmie!

JIMMIE. Yessir!

DENT. Get in back of that fellow, we've got to capture him by force. [*Music. General chase and mix-up, during which telephone rings. DENT goes to phone. JIMMIE guards JACK.*]

DENT. Hello! Hello! Yes, this is Dent's. What do you want? Hello, Central, what's the matter with this wire? Give me a better connection. There, that's better. Hello, who is this? Oh, Edith. Well, what do you want? (*At mention of EDITH, JIMMIE sneaks in back of Dent.*) You WHAT! Who is? Going to marry WHO!! JACK BURNETT!!! Yes, he's here. For the love of Mike, come and take him away before he does any more damage. All right. Just a second. [*Turns to JACK.*] Here, you, come and talk to my daughter—and when she gets through with you, I want to have a nice fatherly chat with you.

JACK. [*At telephone.*] Ah, there, Edith, my dear. [*He loses all trace of nervousness and talks in a straightforward tone of voice.*] Yes, everything is all right, dearest. No, I didn't have the slightest trouble in the world. It was the easiest proposition ever. Yes, he was a little violent at first, but I put a couple of clamps on his framework and went at him with a mallet and he came around in good shape. No; he's all right now. All right, love, I'll be with you shortly. Yes, indeed, dearest. All right, honeybunch. Good-bye, dear; good-bye. [*JIMMIE and DENT have business during speech. JACK has taken the photo out during his phone talk and now turns to DENT.*] Ah, governor, fine girl that. I hope you and I will get along all right. Do you know, I think I'll come to like you some day, if you behave decent. By the way, here's the photo you raised such a fuss about. I was going to have an ivory miniature made from it, but I can let it go for a couple of days. [*Going.*] And say—before I forget it—tell Edith I'll be out to take dinner with you this evening—I may bring four or five friends with me, so have a good set out ready. You won't mind, will you? Drop in and see me at the office once in a while. Strangers cordially invited. Seats free. Well, so long; see you later.

Day-day, daddy-in-law-that-is-to-be. Au revoir, Buttons.
[*He goes off.*]

DENT AND JIMMIE. Well, what the ——!

CURTAIN.

Or the act can be finished by song and dance by the three persons.

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SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS

ACT I—Drawing-room, Arlington, Washington—1860

"Whom first we love, you know, we seldom wed;
Time rules us all: and life indeed is not
The thing we planned it out, ere hope was dead,
And then, we women cannot choose our lot."

In fetters—The rivals—North and South—The coy widow—A noted duelist—An old affection—The dismissal—The rivals meet—"You shall answer for this"—Farewell.

ACT II—Same Scene—1860

"Who might have been—Ah, what, I dare not think!
We are all changed. God judges for the best.
God help us do our duty, and not shrink,
And trust in Heaven humbly for the rest."

Broken ties—A Vassar girl's idea of matrimony—A Washington savage—Schooling a lover—Affairs of honor—The Northern fire-eater—The missing challenge—Betrothed.

ACT III—Drawing-room in New York Hotel—1861

"With bayonets slanted in the glittering light
With solemn roll of drums,
With starlit banners rustling wings of night,
The knightly concourse comes."

To arms! To arms!—Stand by the flag—A woman's duty—A skirmish in the parlor—On to Richmond—Reunited—The passing regiment.

ACT IV—Confederate Camp at Winchester 1864

"No more shall the war cry sever, or the winding river be red;
They banish our anger forever, when they laurel the graves of our
dead."

A cowards' armor—A hand to hand struggle—Hugh captured—Sentenced to be shot—A ministering angel—Harold King's revenge—The attack on the camp—Death of King—After the battle—Won back.

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..... Character heavy
MARK, his son, a promising young rascal..... Straight heavy
GORDON GRAY, a popular young artist..... Juvenile lead
UPSON ASTERBILT, an up-to-date New York dude.....
..... Character comedy
IKE, the hired man. "I want ter know!"..... Eccentric
BUB GREEN, a comical young rustic..... Low comedy
BILL TAPPAN, a country constable..... Comedy
MILLICENT LEE, "the pretty school teacher"..... Juvenile lady
MRS. MARTHA BUNN, a charming widow.... Character comedy
TAGGS, a waif from New York..... Soubrette
Time—Mid Autumn. Place—Vermont.

Time of playing—Two hours and a quarter.

SYNOPSIS

- ACT I. The Old Homestead. Uncle Rube arrives.
ACT II. The Constable's office. The plot to ruin Uncle Rube.
ACT III. Evening at the old farm. Uncle Rube is arrested.
ACT IV. The Constable's office again. The old farmer wins!

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CHARACTERS

CAPT. ROBERT RACKET, one of the National Guard. A lawyer when he has nothing else to do, and a liar all the time.....Comedy lead

.....Comedy lead

.....Comedy old man

.....Juvenile man

.....Eccentric

.....Utility

.....Comedy lead

.....Old woman

.....Soubrette

.....Props.

SYNOPSIS

Act I. Place: Tim's country home on the Hudson near New York. Time: A breezy morning in September. The Captain's fancy takes a flight and trouble begins.

Act II. Place: the same. Time: the next morning. How one yarn requires another. "The greatest liar unhung." Now the trouble increases and the Captain prepares for war.

Act III. Place: the same. Time: Evening of the same day. More misery. A general muddle. "Dance or you'll die." Cornered at last. The Captain owns up. All serene.

Time of playing: Two hours.

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OR

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Scenery—City street, showing R. R. Station; rocky pass, with set cabins; a wood scene, and two plain interiors. Costumes of the day. Time of playing, two and a half hours.

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS

ACT I—Entrance to Railroad Station.

Looking for a victim—Joe Ruggles—"Them galoots is worse than grizzlies"—"Morning papers"—Madge and Bess plying their trades—"Can't you sing Joe a song?"—Hamilton and his pal confer—Tom Howarth gains important information—"Don't you dare to lay hands on us!"—Hamilton tries to maintain his authority—"Who? Old Joe!"

ACT II—Doomsday's Hotel, Dare-devil's Gulch, California

The landlord secures a guest—Hans disappointed—"Dot is a mis-dake"—A ghost story—The "Kid and his sister"—"Did I hurt your highness?"—Hans and Doomsday have another talk—Kate Laurel meets the young miner—"Yah, dot vas vot I t'inks"—Madge's disguise penetrated—She recognizes an old enemy—"Now, George Smith, take your choice"—Joe Ruggles as a tramp—"Ef yer think yer can pick on me because I'm han'some ye'll find me ter hum"—Hamilton appears—"Those two youngsters are mine"—The tramp takes a hand.

ACT III—Wood Scene

A lively ghost—Hamilton and Smith plan more villainy—Old Joe thinks of turning Detective—Kate Laurel again—"There is a secret connected with my life"—Kate's confession—"What do you mean, sir?"—Tom Howarth once more—"Vos you looking for a hotel?"—Planning an abduction—Old Joe as an Irishman—"Phat does yez want wid me?"—Undertakes to be a detective—Takes a hand in the abduction—"Do it at your peril."

ACT IV

Hans hears, and tells, the latest news—"I nefer pelieved dot spook peesness"—Kate Laurel astonished—Hamilton attempts flight—"De poys haf got Mr. Hamilton, und dey vill gif him a neckle barty"—Arrest of Smith—"Get out mit my vay, I vas de United States Mail"—Tom meets his old friend under new circumstances—"Do you want me, Tom?"—Old Joe gives consent—A happy ending.

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