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# A Pair of Cracker-Jacks

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BOSTON

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# A Pair of Cracker-Jacks

68

A Farce Comedy in Three Acts

By  
SCOTT BYRNES

*Professionally produced at Bay Shore, L. I., New York,  
August 22, 1904*

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# A Pair of Cracker-Jacks

## CHARACTERS

(As originally produced at Davis' Opera House, Plymouth, Mass., November 25, 1901, with the following cast:)

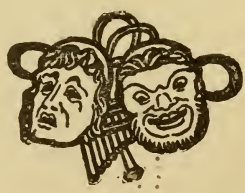
JACK CRACKER . . . . .	<i>William N. Snow.</i>
JACK CRACKER, 2D, . . . . .	<i>Arthur M. Bradford.</i>
JUNIUS BRUTUS BANG . . . . .	<i>J. Russell Clarke.</i>
COFFEE . . . . .	<i>Alvin A. Hall.</i>
MRS. JACK CRACKER . . . . .	<i>Bertha Clarke.</i>
ESTELLE CLAYTON . . . . .	<i>Hester M. Cook.</i>
FLO. ATKINS } . . . . .	<i>Mabel N. Simmons.</i>
KATRINA VON HOOT }	

SCENE.—Cracker's apartments in New York City.

TIME.—The Present.

## SYNOPSIS

- ACT I.—Afternoon. Exhortations.
- ACT II.—The same afternoon. Complications.
- ACT III.—The same evening. Congratulations.



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# A Pair of Cracker-Jacks

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## ACT I

SCENE.—JACK CRACKER'S *apartments*. *A parlor, handsomely furnished.* MRS. JACK CRACKER *discovered busily writing at desk. She rings bell.*

*Enter* COFFEE.

COF. Did you ring, Madjam?

MRS. C. Did I ring! Are you deaf?

COF. No, Madjam, only a little hard er hearin', dat's all.

MRS. C. See that this does not occur again.

COF. Yes, Madjam. (*About to go.*)

MRS. C. And Coffee —

COF. Yes, Madjam.

MRS. C. Has the new cook arrived?

COF. No, Madjam, but I specs her right along ebery minute.

MRS. C. Send her to me as soon as she comes.

COF. Yes, Madjam. (*About to go.*)

MRS. C. And Coffee —

COF. Yes, Madjam.

MRS. C. Have you attended to the ordering of the luncheon?

COF. Yes, Madjam.

MRS. C. The salads at the Italian restaurant?

COF. Yes, Madjam.

MRS. C. And the ices from Delmonico's?

COF. Yes, Madjam, de ice-water from de wooly cows.

MRS. C. (*rising, passes letters to COF.*). Telephone for a messenger. Have these delivered at once.

COF. Yes, Madjam. (*Outside ring.*) [*Exit* COF., C. D.]

MRS. C. (*crossing to mantel. Seated*). A whole year of wedded life gone. Just a year ago to-morrow I married the

best fellow alive, except — Ah, but I have promised Jack not to speak of that again, and he has been too good a husband for me to break my word now.

*Enter COF. and FLO. ATKINS, the latter disguised as a German girl.*

COF. Frou Katarina Sissiges. [*Exit COF., c. d.*]

MRS. C. (*rising, goes to FLO., c. d.*) Why, it must be the new cook. How do you do? By the way, what did he call you?

FLO. Katrina Von Hoot, Matam. I vas no sissiges.

MRS. C. Oh, very well, we will call you Katy for convenience. Now, Katy, your letter of recommendation read very nicely and I trust you will suit me.

FLO. Yah, I hope I vill suid you, Frau Crackers.

MRS. C. You will please address me as Madam.

FLO. Yah, dat vas goot, I vill, Matam Crackers.

MRS. C. You seem very young. How old are you?

FLO. I don't tink I vas twendy.

MRS. C. You don't think. Don't you know?

FLO. Nine.

MRS. C. Nine, why you must be older than that.

FLO. Ha, ha, ha! you don't understood yourself. Ven I say nine you would say "I don't tink."

MRS. C. Oh, I see. Now, why did you leave your last position?

FLO. Because der vomans I vorks fer, she vas oud mit her second stories. (*Taps her forehead.*) She vas what you call a lunatics. She vas a very funny lunatics, too. She vas yust the obboside to vat odder lunatics vas. Ven it vas her turn to laugh she would kry, and tings like dot. I do some tings to bleases her, and she gets mit a passion and flies off der handlesticks, and the more I vas bleases her the more she flies off der handlesticks, and finally I do my best der bleases her and she makes one grand fly-off and dips me oud.

MRS. C. Very well. (*Rings.*) We will see. (*Enter COF., c. d.*) Coffee, show Katy to the kitchen; I will join you presently. (*Exeunt COF. and FLO., r. i. e.*) A most opportune arrival. Now, my little anniversary will surely be a success. (*Enter JACK, c. d.*) Jack!

JACK. Bess, darling! (*They embrace.*)

MRS. C. Why, you're an hour early.

JACK. I know, Bess, but it was horribly dull at the office this afternoon; besides, this is the anniversary of our marriage, you know, and I really felt entitled to an extra hour in your sweet company.

MRS. C. You flatterer! A year's married life hasn't deprived you of that accomplishment.

(JACK has removed coat and hat. MRS. C. brings smoking-jacket and holds it for him. JACK seated before fire. MRS. C. lights his cigar.)

JACK. Now, I say, this is too bad. After declining a half dozen invitations to the theatre, as many more to dinner—Why, by Jove, I even threw up an invitation to go up in a balloon.

MRS. C. You stupid! I thought you said you wanted to rise in your profession.

JACK. Good girl, have a bonbon?

(Passes box of candy.)

MRS. C. (eating). Jack?

JACK (smoking). Yes, sweetheart.

MRS. C. Just think, we've been married a whole year.

JACK. And it seems like twenty.

MRS. C. Jack Cracker!

JACK. Days, my dear, twenty days.

MRS. C. Is that a compliment?

JACK. Why, of course; unless you are absolutely happy and contented, married life is sure to drag, and time with it. But when, as I say, a year is brought down to the limits of a paltry three weeks, why, you can just imagine me as the happiest fellow alive.

MRS. C. I am sure you are right—and, oh, Jack, I almost forgot, a telegram for you. (Crosses to writing-desk.)

JACK (jumping up). Great Scott! When did it come?

MRS. C. This morning, just after you left.

JACK. Then, why in the name of all that's stupid didn't you send it to the office?

MRS. C. Why, is it so very important?

JACK. Important! Why, woman, somebody's life may have paid the penalty for not receiving an answer in five minutes, and here it is eight hours. (Opens telegram.) No, it's all right. (Seated.) It's from that country niece of mine,

Flo. Atkins. You remember we invited her down to spend a week.

MRS. C. And you have never seen her?

JACK. Not even her photograph. Now, what in thunder does this mean? (*Reads.*) "Uncle Jack, expect me to-day; also a surprise."

MRS. C. Now, Jack, as this is the anniversary of our wedding, I have a surprise for you.

JACK. A surprise from you? Then what in the old boy are you telling me for?

MRS. C. Oh, I had to tell you so you could be ready, you know. Now, guess what it is.

JACK. A smoking-jacket?

MRS. C. No, not a present.

JACK. Seats at the opera?

MRS. C. No, no, no; something right here at home.

JACK. Been cooking something? Oh, I know, another short-cake.

MRS. C. Now, Jack Cracker, you're just as hateful as you can be. Just because I made a failure of the short-cake, you fling it in my face every chance you can get.

JACK. What, the short-cake? Heaven forbid! Oh, I know.

MRS. C. What?

JACK. A few friends and a spread.

MRS. C. Yes. However did you guess? At eight to-night. Won't it be jolly?

*Enter COF., C. D. Hands card to JACK. Exit, C. D.*

JACK (*reading card*). Dear old Redmond —

MRS. C. Redmond!

JACK. No, no, that's wrong. (*Reads.*) "Dear old Cracker. By merest luck have located you. Will call this afternoon. Bang." (*Terrific noise outside.*) Coffee! (*Enter COF., C. D.*) What's that racket?

COF. Der new cook jus' fell down der cellar stairs, sah.

[*Exit, C. D.*]

MRS. C. Why, I had forgotten all about her. The new cook has arrived, Jack. An awfully sweet little German girl. I know you will like her.

JACK. If she can cook, I shall adore her. But can she?

MRS. C. Well, of course, I don't know, but she seems very willing.

JACK. That settles it. Pay her off and let her go.

MRS. C. But we haven't tried her yet, you goose.

JACK. No, but we've tried fourteen others just like her, and that's enough. What I want is a good square meal such as mother used to make.

MRS. C. (*arms about his neck*). Jack, dear, I'll dismiss Katy and do the cooking myself. Will that suit you?

JACK. My darling, that will be the last resort. Give the Dutch girl a trial and trust to heaven. (*Exit* MRS. C., R. I E.) Now, who the dickens is this Bang? (*Reads*.) "My dear Redmond." (*Speaks*.) I came very near putting my foot in it that time, no mistake. Bang,—Bang. Can it be one of the old Adelphi Stock boys? By Jove, if it is and he comes here there will be trouble sure. Bess will never forgive me for deceiving her.

*Enter* MRS. C., R. I E.

MRS. C. Oh, Jack, Katy is perfectly lovely. She is making the sweetest, cutest little cookies for our luncheon, and ——

*Enter* FLO., R. I E., *daubed with stove-blackening, flour, etc. Tin basin of dough under left arm. Cook-book in right hand. Points to book.*

FLO. Vat you galls dat?

JACK. Is this it?

MRS. C. Jack, this is our new cook.

JACK. There's no need of an introduction; she carries her trade-mark.

MRS. C. Katy, you should not come here; if you want me you must ring.

FLO. Yah, I reccommember. You eats dese kakes mit Limberger?

MRS. C. Why, no, child; why do you ask such a question? I told you they were to be eaten with ice-cream.

FLO. Vell, if you eats them mit Limberger, like me, I puts a half a glass of lager beer mit mine dough, but if you eats them mit ice-creams, vell, I don't know, but I tinks I put in a half a glass of ice-water.

(*Outside ring.*)

MRS. C. The postman!

[*Exit*, C. D.]

JACK (*to* FLO.). So you're the new cook?

FLO. Yah; who you vas?

JACK. My name is Cracker.

FLO. Oh, you vas belongs here?

JACK. Yes, I live here. (*Aside.*) By Jove! she's not so bad-looking. Katy, come here. Sit down. (FLO., *seated.*) What is your name?

FLO. Katrina Von Hoot.

JACK. Von Hoot? Why, I must know your father. Is he not a janitor?

FLO. Nine! Nine! Mine fadder he vas no shanitor. He vas a sweeber-oud. You vas okquainted mit him?

JACK. Yes, he takes care of my office.

(*Passes coin to FLO.*)

FLO. Vat for dis?

JACK. That's a tip.

FLO. A vat?

JACK. A tip.

FLO. Vat, you dips me owd?

JACK. No, no; that's to encourage you to serve Mrs. Cracker well. (*Looks about.*) And perhaps I might want to steal a kiss some time.

FLO. Oh, is dot so?

JACK. I said I might.

FLO. Vell, I don't tink, Mr. Crackers. I hired mineself owd as a cook, and I vant you to distinctly understood I vas no kissin'-boog, and you may shust take back your dips and dot vid it.

(*Slaps JACK'S face; throws down money and exits, R. I E.*

MRS. C. *has entered C. D., and overheard last speeches. She seats herself, weeping.*)

JACK. What's the matter, dear, bad news?

MRS. C. Don't speak to me, you monster.

JACK. Well, I like that. Now, Bess, you're going it a little strong, aren't you, calling your husband a monster for joking a little with the cook?

MRS. C. (*rising; furious.*) Joking, joking! Do you call insulting your wife a joke, you deceiver?

JACK. Now, darling, don't get nervous. What if I should kiss the cook—which I didn't—all the fellows do that, you know.



MRS. C. Oh, they do, do they? Well, let me tell you, Mr. Jack Cracker, that you will never do it but once to my knowledge. I have still a mother. (*Seated; weeping.*)

JACK (*drinking*). Oh, I know, mother-in-law is all right; don't drag her in. I'm not finding any fault with her. Now, Bess, calm yourself and let's talk sense. You can't expect your husband, simply because he is your husband, to deny himself the privilege of kissing a pretty girl now and then in a friendly way, you know, and particularly his own cook; and that's just the point, she is the cook. I am surprised! Jealous of your own cook. (*Exit* MRS. C., C. D., *weeping violently.*) Oh, well, I suppose it had to come sooner or later. (*Seated at desk, R.*)

*Enter* COF., C. D.

COF. Junius Brutus Bang.

*Enter* BANG, C. D. *Exit* COF., C. D.

BANG. Jack, me old friend Jack, at last we meet again. Like Damon and Pythias we are reunited. As our idol the immortal Shakespeare so beautifully expressed himself, "Two souls with but a single thought; two hearts that beat as one."

JACK. Oh, come, cut it out. Who are you, and what do you want?

BANG. See, he knows me not. Like poor old Rip, I return to the friend of me childhood, to the companion of me youthful struggles, and he tells me to cut it out. Ah, those days,—immortalized now. An iridescent dream, ne'er to be blotted from life's memory. Don't you remember, Jack, those happy, happy nights, when shoulder to shoulder we charged with those mad, howling Roman mobs? Don't you remember, Jack, the dim lights, the eager, breathless throng in front, and our own glorious leader crying in stentorian voice, "Lay on, Macduff, and damned be he who first cries hold, enough."

JACK (*rings*. *Enter* COF., C. D.). Coffee, show this fellow out.

BANG. Stop! "Touch but a hair of yon gray head, and you die like a dog, march on," he said.

[*Exit* COF., C. D., *à la military.*]

"All day long through Frederick Street,  
Sounded the tread of marching feet;  
All day long that free flag tossed  
Over the heads of the Rebel host."

Ah, Jack, heartless boy, would you drive me out like this? Like our old friend Rip, into the darkness and storm. And is this the reward I get for running you past the stage door at the dear old Adelphi so many, many nights?

JACK (*rising*). Who are you?

BANG. Junius Brutus Bang, doing heavy leads in the Fly-by-Night All Stars. I was Jimmie Galvin, keeper of the stage door at the old Adelphi.

JACK. What, not Jimmie?

BANG. Yes, me boy, I'm Jimmie.

JACK. My, but you have changed.

BANG. For the better? (*Crosses.*)

JACK. Well, certainly not for the worse. Why, you are every inch an actor.

BANG. Thanks, Jack, thanks. That was me ambition, you know. Don't you remember when we used to stand in the wings and watch that glorious leader, now dead and gone?

(*Seated.*)

JACK (*seated*). Yes, don't I? I used to come in just to help out in the mob scenes. What fun!

BANG. Yes, and to escort the pretty girls home, eh, old fellow?

JACK. Why, of course I couldn't be so brutal as to allow them to go home alone, especially stormy nights.

BANG. Not to be thought of, me boy; and all the time you were supposed to be at——

JACK. The Night College. Ha! Ha! I used to tell some whoppers at home. Yes, but that's all over now. I'm married and settled down.

BANG. What! Not married?

JACK. Why, of course. What did you think?

BANG. That these were your bachelor apartments, to be sure. How long?

JACK. A year.

BANG. I wish you joy. But you must come and see us.

JACK. Where are you?

BANG. At the Standard, just for three weeks. The girls would have me hunt you up. But, I say, Redmond.

JACK. Hush! For heaven's sake, don't mention that name here on your life. So the ladies asked you to hunt me up, eh?

BANG. You sly dog, you know they would.



JACK. By Jove, they're awfully kind, but I'm afraid it's no go this time.

BANG. Well, I am struck dumb. You're getting awfully good. Why, it's only a little spread on the stage after the performance.

JACK. Yes, I know, Jimmie, but the fact is I've got through with that sort of thing entirely. You see, my wife has a perfect horror of the theatre and anything connected with it, so, of course, I want to please her.

BANG. Shades of Shakespeare! Is this the handsome young collegian who could discount the favorite comedian in his most popular song? Who used ——

JACK. Hush, Jimmie, she may hear you.

BANG. Who?

JACK. My wife.

BANG. What! Is she in? My dear boy, I shall be delighted.

JACK. All right, Jimmie, I'll introduce you; but mind you, not a word of theatricals. [Exit JACK, C. D.]

*Enter FLO., R. I E., with pan of cakes.*

BANG. Shades of Shakespeare! What is it?

FLO. Ha! Wee Getz, mine frient. How you vas, eh? Vat's de matter mit yourselves; don't you hear somedings? Have a snap? Oh, I forgot, dey vas raw. Vere's de Matam Crackers? She toles me to rings, and I tinks I call her up mit der delaphones, but no Matams. And so, I comes mynself. Say, vat makes you stood like dot? You makes me tink of a freaks at der Dimes Museum. Say, vat makes you talk so much? You vas as sociable as a —— (BANG drinks.) Here's to your goot health, and your families, and may dey live long and broswer. (Discovers box of candy on table.) Open your eyes, and shut your mouth, and I'll gibe you somedings to remember me by.

(Business. FLO. crams dough in BANG'S mouth and exits, R. I E.)

*Enter JACK and MRS. C., C. D.*

JACK. Bess, this is the Rev. Mr. Bang, an old school chum of mine. Mr. Bang, my wife.

MRS. C. Mr. Bang, I am pleased to meet you and bid you welcome to our home.

BANG. Mrs. Redmond — (*Business. JACK pulls BANG across stage and tells him by signs not to use that name. Gives him his card.*) Mrs. Red—Cracker, I thank you, such hospitality warms the heart; believe me, it is inspiring, Mrs. Redmond. (*Business repeated.*) Jack, you're a lucky dog. She is positively charming.

MRS. C. So you are studying for the ministry, Mr. Bang?

BANG. I—I—I beg pardon.

JACK. Oh, yes, Bang. I knew my wife would be so inquisitive as to inquire of your profession, so I informed her in advance.

BANG. Ah, yes—I see—very kind of you, I'm sure. Yes, Mrs. Red—Cracker, I hope some day to be "The Little Minister." (*Seated.*)

MRS. C. (*seated*). How nice! And do you expect to become as popular as the hero of Barrie's charming story?

BANG. Perhaps; who knows? Ah, Mrs. Redmond, do you know, that character is the height of me ambition?

MRS. C. I do not quite understand. Do you mean that he is your ideal of what a minister should be?

BANG. Yes, that is me meaning. Have you seen the dramatic production of the book?

(*Business. JACK drags BANG across stage, as before, and in dumb show endeavors to dissuade him from talking dramatics.*)

MRS. C. Oh, no, I never attend the theatre.

BANG. Indeed, I rarely go myself, but I could not resist the temptation to witness so moral and instructive a sermon as this play has proven itself to be.

MRS. C. Do you know, Mr. Bang, I have never visited the theatre?

BANG. Is it possible?

MRS. C. Yes, it is quite true. My father was a clergyman, you know, and always looked upon the theatre as a wicked, sinful place, something to be avoided. When do you get your call?

BANG. Well, I'm not in the first act, so I don't generally get it before nine o'clock. (*Business. JACK pulls BANG across stage and explains in pantomime.*) Oh, yes, me call to the Rostrum. Some time in the remote, dim future. I am modest, Mrs. Red—Cracker, therefore, I do not anticipate.

MRS. C. Father used to say that modesty was a rare virtue. Where are you?

BANG. At the Standard, just for three weeks. (*Business as before.*) Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought you referred to me hotel, I mean me theatre. I am studying at the — (*Business.* BANG goes to JACK. JACK whispers to him.) At the Theological College of Arts and Sciences, Mrs. Red—Cracker.

*Enter FLO., with pan of cakes.*

FLO. Matam Crackers, would you like for der ice-cream cakes to be rare or vell done?

MRS. C. Mr. Bang, you will excuse me?

BANG (*bows.* *Exeunt* MRS. C. and FLO., R. I E.). How was it?

JACK. Great! You're a born actor.

BANG. Thanks! It was very awkward, though. That was a great idea of yours. I hardly expected to be called upon to play the little minister at so short a notice. Got any cigars?

JACK. Of course. (*Passes decanter.*) Have a drink?

BANG. I don't know. Do ministers drink?

JACK (*seated*). By the way, Bang, have you seen Miss Clayton since she made her *début*?

BANG. Oh, yes. She is now soaring among the stars. After you disappeared. (*Business.*) She is with us.

JACK. No!

BANG. Yes, she is doing leads and is head over heels in love with a rich iron monger's son, who travels about with us.

JACK. Ah! Who is he?

BANG. His name is — (*Business.* Takes JACK's card from his pocket.) Ha! Ha! Ha!

JACK. What's the joke?

BANG. Ha! Ha! Ha! Well, I'll be —

JACK. Hush.

*Enter* MRS. C., C. D.

MRS. C. A letter, Jack.

JACK. Ah!

MRS. C. In a lady's handwriting.

JACK. Read it. You see, Bang, my wife and I have a contract whereby we read each other's letters whenever they chance to be in the handwriting of the opposite sex. Saves trouble.

BANG. And sometimes makes it. I once knew of a similar

case and it worked like a charm till the wife happened to read a letter from her husband's old sweetheart, and then,—well, they didn't open each other's letters after that.

JACK. By the way, Bang, we are to have a little anniversary to-night. Can't you manage to come?

BANG. I should be only too delighted, my boy; but you know I am due at the—the (*business*)—at the Theological Lecture at seven (BANG *stares at* MRS. C., *who is much agitated over her letter*), and I guess I had better be going.

[*Exit* MRS. C., *after dropping letter*, C. D.]

JACK. Don't hurry, old man. Bess will sing something for you. (*Discovers* MRS. C.'s *absence*.) Why, this is strange. When did she go?

BANG. A moment ago. She seemed upset by your letter. Well, good-bye, old fellow. You're sure you can't join us to-night?

JACK. Impossible. Now, don't be offended. I'd like to come; you know that, but I've sowed my wild oats and —

BANG. — settled down like a good, dutiful husband. Ah, Cupid, Cupid, thy wonders never cease.

JACK. Good-bye. Coffee. (*Enter* COF., C. D. *Exeunt* BANG and COF., C. D.) Now what the dickens sent Bess off in such a hurry? That new cook, I suppose. She'll keep her bobbing in and out like a shuttle. What's that Bang said about her being upset? Ah, she's left it behind. (*Picks up letter and reads*.) "Mr. Jack Cracker, Sir:—This is to inform you that at last your true character has become known to me, and if there is law to uphold a defenseless woman's rights, then you shall pay dearly for your dastardly insults. You coward, your double life of falsehood and deceit stands at last revealed. I will call upon you at four for the purpose of returning your stock in trade and to show you that at least one woman is capable of resenting the insults of cowardly curs like yourself. Estelle Clayton." (*Speaks*.) Estelle Clayton! Great heavens, what does this mean? (*Reads*.) "Your true character stands at last revealed." (*Speaks*.) She must refer to our former attachment. Why, it is three years since I have seen the woman. Can it be that she is coming to ruin my happiness? No, it cannot be. I never cared for her,—after I saw Bess. (*Reads*.) "Return to you your stock in trade." (*Speaks*.) She must refer to the diamond I gave her. What shall I do? If she sees Bess I am lost. Bess will never forgive me. An actress, too. (*Rings*.) Coffee!

*Enter COF., C. D.*

COF. Did you ring?

JACK. Did I ring! Are you deaf?

COF. No, Massa, only a little hard o' hearin', dat's all.

JACK. Now, Coffee, I want you to pay strict attention to what I am about to say, as it is very important.

COF. Yes, Massa Jack, I'll be very strict attention.

JACK. Listen. A lady will call here this afternoon.

*(Seated at desk.)*

COF. I see. A lady gwine to call, and you don't want your wife to know nothin' tall about it. Is dat it?

JACK. Silence, you rascal. Who told you that?

COF. A little bird.

JACK *(handing card)*. If a lady of that name calls, don't allow her to enter. If she inquires for Mrs. Cracker or me, tell her we are out of town. Anything,—only get rid of her. Do you understand?

COF. Oh, yes, I understand. *(Holds out hand.)*

JACK. Well?

COF. Hush money.

JACK. Not a cent. You get your wages. Now go. And Coffee, don't forget my instructions. *(Exit COF.; JACK drinks.)* Fool! Fool! Why, a man who allows his wife to open his correspondence is little short of an idiot. What must she think? That I am guilty, of course. Shall I disclaim all knowledge of the woman? No, no, that would never do. Better make a clean confession and trust to luck. I am innocent of any actual wrong to Bess; but the actress part of it she would never forgive, never.

*Enter FLO., R. I E.*

FLO. Vere vas de Matam?

JACK. Didn't Mrs. Cracker tell you not to come here again?

FLO. Yah, dot's vat she tole me.

JACK. Then get out. *(Throws cushion.)*

FLO. I vant to know if you tinks der ice-cream gakes—

JACK. Damn the ice-cream cakes. Get out! *(Throws cushion; exit FLO., C. D.)* Of all the stupid blockheads.

*Enter JACK CRACKER, 2D.*



JACK 2D. I beg pardon.

JACK. Get out. (*Throws cushion.*) Ah, by Jove, I beg a thousand pardons; I thought——

JACK 2D. Ah, don't mention it, my dear fellow—no harm done. I met the object of your wrath as I was coming in. Your daughter?

JACK. My daughter! If she was I'd have her cremated.

JACK 2D. Oh, I beg pardon, my sight is slow. Deuced pretty girl just the same. Pardon me, but your name is Cracker, is it not?

JACK. It is.

JACK 2D. Jack Cracker?

JACK. The same.

JACK 2D. By Jove, that's deuced singular, so is mine. (*Hands card; JACK does same; they laugh and shake hands.*) A common occurrence, I am told, but still rather awkward in some cases, I fancy.

JACK. Yes, particularly when the parties are neighbors.

JACK 2D. That's just the point. We are neighbors. My apartments are on the flat above, and I imagine the dickens will be to pay. I have already opened three of your letters—they are Greek to me. (*Passes three letters.*) I just learned that a party of my own name was located here, and took the liberty to call.

JACK. Yes, these are mine. Fortunately business letters. Nothing of a private nature.

JACK 2D. Indeed! I only skimmed them over; but it is very annoying to have your private correspondence made public by such an awkward predicament as our own.

JACK. Yes, I imagine it might be.

JACK 2D. By the way, you haven't received any strange letters, have you?

JACK. No, oh, no—that is—not that I am aware of. There is my afternoon mail; you may look it over if you like.

(*Looks at letter.*)

JACK 2D (*laughing*). By Jove! here is one—my tailor. I would know this writing among a thousand.

JACK (*aside*). Great heavens! an idea! Can it be possible this letter belongs to him instead of to me?

JACK 2D. Ah, another. Devilish ridiculous position, opening each other's letters to find the proper owner. This letter is from a lady. Do you know the handwriting?

JACK. No.

JACK 2D. The lady's name—know her?

JACK. No.

JACK 2D. I thought not. You are satisfied the letter does not belong to you?

JACK. Perfectly.

JACK 2D. Thanks; then I'll claim it. By Jove, what have you there? (*Takes letter.*) This letter is mine.

JACK. Are you sure?

JACK 2D. Am I sure? Would you know your own wife's writing?

JACK. She is not your wife?

JACK 2D. Not yet, dear boy, but I am in hopes she will be soon. By Jove, it's been opened.

JACK. Why, of course, I thought it was mine.

JACK 2D. And you read it?

JACK. Yes—no—that is—I just skimmed it over.

(*Laughs.*)

JACK 2D. Well, of all the impudence. How dare you?

JACK. What?

JACK 2D. Open my private correspondence.

JACK. Why, I thought it was mine.

JACK 2D. You should have known by the handwriting that it was not yours. You had no right to open it, sir.

JACK. I didn't open it.

JACK 2D. Did not open it?

JACK. No.

JACK 2D. Who did then?

JACK. My wife.

JACK 2D. What?

JACK. Yes, and the funny part of it was she thought it was mine too.

JACK 2D. And read it?

JACK. Every word of it, my boy.

JACK 2D. I call this an insult.

JACK. Call it what you please—I call it a huge joke. But say, are you sure this is your letter?

JACK 2D. Am I sure? What do you mean?

JACK. Why, you haven't read it yet.

JACK 2D. It isn't necessary, sir.

JACK. No, I suppose not. Say, this is great. Why, I'm

nearly tickled to death. Do you know, Cracker, my wife really be ——

JACK 2D. Mr. Cracker, let me tell you that you are making light of a very serious subject.

JACK. And let me inform you that you are making a fool of yourself. Why don't I flare up and get mad because you read my letters?

JACK 2D. Because they are of an entirely different nature, sir.

JACK. How do you know? You haven't read yours yet. (*Aside.*) And when he does ——

(JACK 2D reads letter ; business.)

JACK 2D. Zounds, sir! What does this mean?

JACK. Mean?

JACK 2D. This is some of your work. This is a trick.

JACK. A trick?

JACK 2D. I know nothing of this.

JACK. Great heavens, man, don't say that! (*Aside.*) Oh, Lord, it's mine after all. (*To JACK 2D.*) Mr. Cracker, I assure you this is no trick. I am innocent of any knowledge of this. There must be a mistake.

JACK 2D (*walking rapidly about*). Mistake.

JACK. Why, of course, there must be. You know nothing of it. I know nothing. (*Aside.*) Oh, I wish I didn't. (*To JACK 2D.*) Calm yourself, Mr. Cracker; let's try and straighten this thing out. Is she really your wife?

JACK 2D. No!

JACK. Your fiancée?

JACK 2D. No—yes—none of your business.

JACK. Good. Now, of course you are innocent of the charges she brings against you?

JACK 2D. Innocent! Innocent! Do you mean to insult me?

JACK. No, I don't want to insult anybody. I only want to get at —— (*Enter FLO. JACK throws book at her. Exit FLO., R. I E.*) Get out—this horrible mystery. Now it may be possible that she has mixed you up with me.

JACK 2D. Mixed up?

JACK. Yes—that is—I mean she may have read something in the newspapers, or, a friend may have told her something for a joke.

JACK 2D. Joke!



JACK. Why, of course. The temptation would be great—so easy, you know—our both living in the same house.

JACK 2D. By Jove, I hadn't thought of that. Come to think of it, I did notice something was wrong last evening.

JACK. Of course you did. (*Aside.*) I begin to breathe again.

JACK 2D (*reading letter*). "Your double life of deceit and falsehood stands at last revealed." (*Speaks.*) By Jove! she thinks I am you.

JACK. And are living here with your wife.

JACK 2D. At the same time making love to her. (*Laughs.*) That explains it.

JACK. Of course it does. (*Aside.*) If it only did.

JACK 2D. Ha—ha—ha! Why, this is the richest thing I ever heard. (*Looks at letter.*) And she is coming here this afternoon.

JACK. So she is. (*Aside.*) Oh, I had forgotten all about that.

JACK 2D. Ha—ha! To return my stock in trade.

JACK. Yes, my stock in trade.

JACK 2D. No, not yours, mine.

JACK. Yes, yes, I mean yours. (*Aside.*) I'd give a thousand dollars if they were his.

JACK 2D. Now, Cracker, I mean to carry this little pleasantry just as far as I can; in fact, I'm going the limit. It isn't often that a fellow gets a chance like this.

JACK. No—quite right—carry the joke to the limit (*aside*), and the limit will be four o'clock. (*Looks at watch.*) Five minutes of four now. Wretched man, your time has come.

JACK 2D. Now, Cracker, I will receive Miss Clayton when she arrives, and, with your permission, in your apartments.

JACK. What! Mine?

JACK 2D. Why, of course; this lady is my promised wife. She will come here unattended. You can readily see the impropriety of my receiving her in my own rooms. Besides, to carry out the joke, I must see her here; I am you, you know.

JACK (*aside*). Oh, Lord, I wish he was, or some one else. (*To JACK 2D.*) Why, of course, that's so; I didn't think of that. (*Laughs faintly.*)

JACK 2D. Ha—ha, devilish funny joke, isn't it?

JACK. Awfully funny. Why, I really think it is the funniest thing I ever heard. I suppose by this time my wife has taken action for a divorce. (*Rings.*)

JACK 2D. I wouldn't be at all surprised. (*Clock strikes four.*) By Jove; time she was here. I must get into another rig. Come up-stairs and I'll show you my quarters.

[*Exit, C. D.*]

*Enter COF., C. D.*

JACK (*to COF.*). Coffee, if that woman gets into this house I am a lost man.

[*Exit, C. D.*]

*Enter MRS. C., L. 2 E., in street costume.*

MRS. C. Coffee.

COF. Yes, Madjam.

MRS. C. (*handing envelopes*). Have the messenger deliver these at once.

COF. Yes, Madjam. (*Starts to go.*)

MRS. C. And, Coffee —

COF. Yes, Madjam.

MRS. C. You will countermand the orders for the salads and ices.

COF. What, you ain't goin' to gibe up the party?

MRS. C. Do as I bid you.

COF. Yes, Madjam.

MRS. C. I am going away. If Mr. Cracker should inquire for me, tell him that I have gone to my mother's.

COF. Yes, Madjam. (*About to go.*)

MRS. C. And, Coffee —

COF. Yes, Madjam.

MRS. C. I shall not see you again. Accept this as a token of my appreciation of your services. (*Hands bill.*)

COF. Tanks, Madjam. (*Aside.*) I can see where Cracker's a lost man, 'deed I can.

(*Puts money in large pocketbook; card drops to floor.*)

MRS. C. *picks up card.*)

MRS. C. Where did you get this?

COF. 'Deed, Madjam, dat's private.

MRS. C. Answer me.

COF. I'd like to but I daresn't.

MRS. C. Mr. Cracker gave you this?

COF. I'm afraid he did.

MRS. C. For what purpose?

COF. Excuse me, Madjam.

MRS. C. He told you this lady was to call here this afternoon? Did he not?

COF. For de Lor—how'd you know dat?

MRS. C. And that you are to refuse her admittance. Am I not correct?

COF. You're a powerful good guesser, Madjam. (*Ring.*)

MRS. C. Attend the door. (*Exit COF., C. D.* MRS. C. seated, writing. *Enter COF., with card; business.*) Show the lady in!

(*Exit COF.; reënters with ESTELLE CLAYTON, C. D.*)

ES. I beg your pardon: I believe these are the apartments of Mr. Jack Cracker.

MRS. C. They are. You have called to see my husband.

ES. How do you know that?

MRS. C. I read your letter.

ES. What!

MRS. C. Accidentally, or, I should say, at his request. Do not imagine for a moment that I am in the habit of prying into my husband's correspondence. He evidently was not expecting anything of the kind.

ES. My business is with Mr. Cracker.

MRS. C. And my business is at present with you. I am very glad you called. Pray be seated. (*Business.*) Before I carry out my present plans, Miss Clayton, I demand an explanation of your insinuation.

ES. The letter explains everything.

MRS. C. From its contents I would infer that my husband has been paying you his attentions.

ES. Your husband is a consummate scoundrel.

MRS. C. Miss Clayton, I am about to take action for a separation. I command you to speak.

ES. (*business.*) What do you wish to know?

MRS. C. How long has this been going on?

ES. Three years. (*Business.*)

MRS. C. He gave you to understand he was unmarried?

ES. The villain—yes.

MRS. C. He was regular and constant in his attentions?

ES. Both.

MRS. C. Your term "stock in trade" refers to gifts received by you from him, does it not?

ES. It does.

MRS. C. Would you object to informing me as to what extent your relations with each other have proceeded?

Es. (*holding out hand*). My engagement ring.

MRS. C. Thank you very much. That is all. I will send Mr. Cracker to you.

*Enter COF.*

COF. Mr. Jack Cracker.

(MRS. C. *exits* L. 2 E., *not looking at* JACK 2D, *who enters* C. D.)

JACK 2D. By Jove, she evidently takes me for the other fellow. Ah, Estelle, this is indeed an unexpected pleasure.

Es. Don't approach me, sir. Don't speak to me, else I be tempted to do something desperate.

JACK 2D. Well, I like this. Ah, I see, just a line or two from your new part. Now, please don't!

Es. You are a villain.

JACK 2D. And you are an angel.

Es. Will you be serious?

JACK 2D. I never was more so in my life.

Es. I have found you out.

JACK 2D. That's funny; I thought you found me in.

Es. Your jests, sir, are in decidedly bad taste.

JACK 2D. Thanks.

Es. You have been playing a bold game, Jack Cracker.

JACK 2D. I know it, but it's all right so long as I'm ahead of it.

Es. That lady was your wife.

JACK 2D. Well, what of it?

Es. What of it? Fiend in human form! Then what am I?

JACK 2D. I just told you,—an angel.

Es. You think to frighten me with your senseless jesting, but I am not to be frightened.

JACK 2D. Bravo! I always said you were a brave little woman.

Es. (*throwing jewels at his feet and crossing*). Take back your tawdry trinkets, false, like your own black heart.

JACK 2D (*aside*). Isn't this rich? (*To Es.*) Thanks. They may come in useful in the future.

Es. Do not flatter yourself, sir; you have deceived one woman, but the last, Jack Cracker, the last.

JACK 2D. Indeed, and how do you propose to stop it?

Es. By the power of the press. I will publish you and your cowardly practices throughout the length and breadth of the land.

JACK 2D. Spoken like a patriot and a soldier. What good will that do? I can change my name. (*Aside.*) I've reached the limit. (*To Es.*) By Jove, I'll have to change it anyway. Do you know, my dear, it's my confounded name that has brought about all this trouble?

Es. You are a fool.

JACK 2D. I have been, but now, I am really serious. I was only joking.

Es. A ghastly joke.

JACK 2D. No, I don't mean that. I mean since you came in. There is another fellow in this house bearing my name, and you've got him mixed up with me.

Es. You are a beautiful falsifier.

JACK 2D. No, but I am in earnest, Estelle. That's the truth. Why, these are his apartments. He's married, and the lady you just saw is his wife.

Es. His apartments?

JACK 2D. Yes.

Es. And where are yours?

JACK 2D. On the flat above.

Es. Then how came you here?

JACK 2D. It's a long story. First, let me ask you one question. What prompted you to write that letter? (*Es. hands newspaper clipping. JACK 2D reads.*) "Mr. and Mrs. Jack Cracker will observe the first anniversary of their marriage at their apartments, 224 Sixty-second Street, on Thursday, April 1st." (*Speaks.*) Ha, ha! Well, this is an April Fool. You knew my rooms were here, and imagined the rest —

Es. And now, sir, let me ask you a question.

JACK 2D. A thousand.

Es. Who was that woman?

JACK 2D. Why, I just told you, the other fellow's wife.

Es. And what were you doing here in her apartments?

JACK 2D. Why, I obtained permission from her husband to receive you here. How could I do otherwise?

Es. She informed me that she was about to take action for a separation.

JACK 2D. I know, because she read your letter and thought it was intended for her husband.

Es. Jack Cracker, are you telling me the truth?

JACK 2D. You can easily prove it by calling Mrs. Cracker.

*Enter* MRS. C., L. 2 E.

MRS. C. I beg your pardon. I heard my name mentioned.

ES. Yes, Mrs. Cracker, my—this is my—my lawyer, and we are anxious to see your husband as soon as possible.

MRS. C. I will inform the servant and ascertain if he is in the house.

JACK 2D. Now, are you satisfied?

ES. Perfectly. (*Embraces him.*)

*Enter* JACK, C. D.

JACK. Have you seen my wife?

JACK 2D. And here's the original Cracker, the cause of it all. Mr. Cracker, allow me the pleasure of introducing an old friend of mine, Miss Estelle Clayton. Estelle, this is —

ES. Jack Redmond!

(JACK *collapses.* *Enter* FLO., *with pan of burning cakes*, R. 1 E.; MRS. C. *at* L. 2 E.; COF. *at* C. D.)

CURTAIN



## ACT II

SCENE.—*The same. FLO. discovered at piano. COF. at desk. Both making themselves very much at home.*

COF. Kat-a-ri-na!

FLO. Vell?

COF. Has de new cook arrived?

FLO. Vat, vas dere a new cooks?

COF. Send her to me as soon as she comes.

FLO. Yaw.

COF. And Kat-ri-na.

FLO. Vell?

COF. Hab you attended to the ordering ob de luncheon?

FLO. Vat, you means der ice-cream cakes?

COF. And de ice-water from de wooly cows.

FLO. Yaw—yaw—I tends to everyting. (*Ring.*)

COF. And Kat-a-ri-na.

FLO. Vell?

COF. Attend de summons. (*FLO. goes to door.*) And Kat-a-ri-na, if it's de ice man tell him we don't care fo' no mo' ice. Dere's a cold wave struck this yere domicile dat'll make all de frost we want. De missus gone home to her mudder and Mars Jack a-scouring round for her.

*Enter FLO., with packages and cabbage.*

FLO. Der dinners—corned beef and cabbage, ant sour kraut.

COF. What's dat? Sour kraut. Who tole you to order saur kraut, chile?

FLO. Und vy not? You tinks I hire oud mynself without mine sour kraut? Vell, you shust don't know us Sherman gals.

COF. Put it in de refrigerator.

FLO. And vere's dat? (*COF. points to piano.*) Vat, dot? (*COF. nods.*) Vy, I dot dat vas a music box. (*Lifts up cover.*) Oh, ho, I see mineself somedings. It vas a music

box in der front door and a ice house under der roof. Vell, vell, you Yankees do beat der Dutch.

(*Puts package in piano.*)

JACK (*outside*). Coffee! (*Business. Exit FLO., R. I E. Enter JACK, C. D.*) Not there—hadn't been there—knew nothing about her. All that wild goose chase for nothing. (*To COF.*) And you are the cause of it all. How dared you allow that woman to come in here?

COF. 'Deed, Mars Jack, I didn't allow her to enter. She—she demanded admittance.

JACK. Demanded fiddlesticks.

COF. No, she didn't demand no fiddlesticks. She said she was in de Secret Service and I was alarmed.

JACK. Secret Service be —— She was an impostor.

COF. No, she didn't say she was a bill poster, she said she was a Russian Spy and I was scared.

JACK. You are a fool.

COF. Yes, I know it. You've told me dat befo'.

JACK. Did she see my wife?

COF. Oh, yes, indeed. She saw de missus. Dey had a nice social chat.

JACK (*aside*). Social chat!

COF. Yas, but I don't think she'd a seen her at all if de missus hadn't been such a powerful good guesser.

JACK. What do you mean?

COF. Why, she accidentally got hold of dat card wid de lady's name on it.

JACK. What!

COF. Yaas! And do you know, Mars Jack, she guessed eberyting you tole me. (*Laughs.*)

JACK. And you acknowledged it?

COF. Why, I had to. Don't you see I knew 'twas all a conundrum to her and she guessed it right, so what was I to do?

JACK. Do, get out of my sight. (*Ring outside.*) Stay! By Jove, that's my wife's ring; I'd know it in a hundred.

COF. A lady at de doe, sir.

JACK. My wife?

COF. Can't see, sir, her face is in mourning.

JACK. Show her in. (*Exit COF., C. D.*) I'll straighten this beastly affair out in less than two minutes. (*Enter COF.*)



and Es., the latter veiled. She raises veil. Exit CoF.)  
Great Scott, you!

Es. Now be calm, my dear Jack; don't excite yourself; I simply couldn't stay away. Is your wife at home?

JACK. No, nor never will be again, and all through you.

Es. Through me?

JACK. That devilish letter.

Es. But the letter was not intended for you.

JACK. Not intended for me?

Es. Why, no, it was for my own Jack. I thought the rascal had been deceiving me.

JACK (*aside*). Fool! Idiot! (*Business.*)

Es. But to think of meeting Jack Redmond here!

JACK. For heaven's sake, don't mention that name again.

Es. All right, I won't, Jack; but—but your reception is not very cordial for an old friend like me. Can't you set out a bottle and a rarebit—just for old times' sake?

JACK. Much as I would like to, Miss Clayton, I dare not. Hereafter I mean to tread the straight and narrow path.

Es. Bravo! Brave boy!

JACK (*laughing*). So that letter really belonged to the other Cracker, eh?

Es. Yes.

JACK. Well, I'm glad you've found him out. I didn't like the cut of that fellow.

Es. Don't you dare say one word against him.

JACK. Why, didn't you call him a villain?

Es. Yes.

JACK. And isn't he?

Es. No.

JACK. Well, I'm —

Es. (*passing newspaper clipping*). Read that.

JACK (*after reading*). Ha, ha! And you wrote that letter on the strength of this?

Es. I did.

JACK. And you've made it all right with him?

Es. Oh, yes!

JACK. Then where do I come in?

Es. I do not understand.

JACK. Why, my wife has gone for a divorce.

Es. Impossible! Why, I didn't think she meant it.

JACK. Meant what?

Es. Why, she told me she was to take action for a separation.

JACK. Great heavens! Did she say that?

ES. Didn't you know it?

JACK. No.

ES. But you just said you did.

JACK. I only imagined it. She left word that she had gone to her mother's, and I went there and, not finding her, imagined the worst.

ES. (*laughing*). This is dreadful.

JACK. It is horrible. I'm disgraced forever. The newspapers will get it and follow it up with an account of how it all happened, then rehash it and I'll be the laughing-stock of the whole city. (*Es. laughs.*) What are you laughing at?

ES. I can't help it; you look so funny. Never mind, Jack, I'll fix it all right for you. I know every reporter in the city who would be likely to work on a case like this. In my professional duties I have naturally made the acquaintance of them all. Now, I will hunt them up to-night and nip the affair right in the bud.

*Enter JACK 2D.*

JACK. And you will do this? (*Business.*)

ES. For the sake of old times—yes.

(*Leans head on his shoulder; exit JACK 2D.*)

*Enter COF., C. D.*

COF. Mr. Jack Cracker.

JACK. } Great heavens!  
ES. }

JACK. More trouble—I knew it.

ES. If he sees me he will be furious. He is horribly jealous for my calling you Redmond.

JACK. Hush! You've got to hide.

ES. But if I am discovered; suppose your wife returns?

JACK. You'll be no worse off than me. We're both in the same boat.

[*Exit ES. JACK seated writing.*]

*Enter JACK 2D, C. D. in a rage.*

JACK 2D. Well, sir!

JACK. Why, my dear Cracker, I am delighted. Sit down. Smoke?

(*Offers cigar. JACK 2D knocks it from his hand.*)

JACK 2D. You double-faced villain! I have a half mind to kill you on the spot.

JACK. What!

JACK 2D. Where is Miss Clayton?

JACK. I haven't the slightest idea.

JACK 2D. You lie!

JACK. Thanks. That's a strong word.

JACK 2D. She was here in this room not a moment ago.

JACK. Really, that's funny; where was I?

JACK 2D. Seated on that sofa with your face a d——d sight nearer hers than it had any right to be, sir!

JACK. You don't say! So you saw us, eh?

JACK 2D. I did, and demand satisfaction.

JACK. Good; you'll get it. (*Laughs.*)

JACK 2D. Your levity, sir, is ill-timed.

JACK. Oh, no, dear boy, this is my time to laugh. Why, do you know, Cracker, this house will become famous as the fountain-head of mistaken identities?

JACK 2D. There is no mistake this time, sir!

JACK. No? Well, that's where we differ. Ha—ha—ha! So you thought the lady was your promised bride, eh?

JACK 2D. I know it, sir!

JACK. You are mistaken, Cracker; that was my daughter.

JACK 2D. What! Do you think I cannot recognize Miss Clayton when I see her?

JACK. You most certainly cannot if you say that was she.

JACK 2D. And I repeat, you lie, sir!

JACK. And I repeat, that's a strong word.

JACK 2D. And I demand satisfaction.

JACK. And, as I said before, you'll get it. What is it, swords, pistols or dynamite?

JACK 2D. You shall hear from me, sir!

JACK. That's right, drop me a line.

JACK 2D. You are a coward, sir!

JACK. Thanks! Call again. (*Exit JACK 2D, C. D.*) By Jove, here's a nice mess. He'll have a bullet or a sword through me before sunrise.

*Enter ES., L. I E.*

ES. Has he gone?

JACK. Yes, and the devil take him, say I.

ES. Isn't that lovely?

JACK. Very—considering the fact that I'm as good as a dead man.

ES. What do you mean?

JACK. He saw us with your head on my shoulder.

ES. No!

JACK. Yes, and he has challenged me to mortal combat.

ES. Oh, dreadful! What shall I do? This will separate us forever. (*Weeps.*)

JACK. There—don't cry. I'm so nervous now that I don't know where I'm at. I told him you were my daughter.

ES. What!

JACK. I had to tell him something; but he knew better.

ES. Of course he did.

JACK (*aside*). I'd give a thousand dollars to get back where I was two hours ago. (*To Es.*) Don't cry!

ES. I guess you'd cry, were you in my place.

JACK. Well, I don't think my own position is a great improvement over your own. By the jumping horn spoon! An idea!

ES. Ah!

JACK. That hat! (*Points to Es.'s hat.*)

ES. Hat?

JACK. That jacket. (*Points to her jacket.*)

ES. Jacket?

JACK. My wife's got one just like them.

ES. Well—well?

JACK. Well, you're saved, that's all.

ES. But how?

JACK. Oh, I don't know yet. I've got to work it out. But you let me alone. I've got as much at stake as you and I'm desperate.

ES. Yes, yes.

JACK. And desperate diseases require desperate remedies.

ES. So they do. You're a genius if you smooth this over.

JACK. The next time you meet him he'll greet you with open arms.

ES. Glorious! Do you think so?

JACK. I know it. Now you get away from here while the coast is clear, and if you run across my wife, just explain that letter and send her home, will you?

ES. I'll do anything; only satisfy Jack.

JACK. I'll fix him, never fear.

ES. And there won't be a duel? I hate duels,

JACK. So do I. I'll make that all right, and I hate to send you away, but —

COF. (*outside*). Mars Jack!

JACK. Well?

COF. Lady and gent coming up de front walk.

JACK. Who is it?

COF. Looks like Mrs. Cracker, sir.

ES. (*screaming*). I am lost. What shall I do?

JACK. Do? Be a woman and don't act like a fool. Go into that room.

ES. But if I am discovered?

JACK. Then you will be found out. Coffee!

COF. Yaas.

JACK. Who is the man?

COF. Looks like de slap Bang chap what was here a while ago, Mars Jack.

JACK. Oh, ho, I see she comes under escort, eh? Estelle, you stay right here.

ES. No, no, I dare not.

JACK. You're right! Quick. They're coming. (*Exit ES., L. I E. Enter BANG and MRS. C., C. D.*) Bessie!

MRS. C. Stop, sir! The right to utter that name is no longer yours, sir.

BANG. No longer yours, sir.

JACK (*to BANG*). What the devil have you got to do with it?

MRS. C. As my spiritual adviser, he has everything to do with it.

BANG. As her spiritual adviser I have everything to do with it, Mr. Redmond.

MRS. C. I was drifting on an unknown sea of despair and doubt. You came like a harbor of refuge.

BANG. Ah, beautiful sentiment, I will preserve it for me new drama. (*Writes in book.*) "He came like a harbor of refuge."

JACK. Harbor of fiddlesticks. Why, this fellow is —

MRS. C. The Rev. Mr. Bang, whom you were pleased to make known to me and to whom I shall cling in this my hour of trouble. (*Embraces BANG.*)

BANG. And to whom she will cling in this her hour of trouble, Mr. Redmond.

JACK. Oh, this is the last straw. Ha! Ha! Ha! (*To BANG.*) The Little Minister, I suppose.

BANG. Oh, not so little.

JACK (*aside*). If I thought I could I'd kick him into the street. No, I'll explain everything to Bessie, and she'll order him from the house. Now, dearest —

MRS. C. Sir!

BANG. Sir!

JACK. This is all a joke.

MRS. C. Ah, would that it were.

BANG (*aside*). Not —

JACK. That letter wasn't mine.

MRS. C. Wretched man, I know it was yours.

BANG. Unhappy wretch, we knew it was thine!

JACK. I said it wasn't mine.

MRS. C. Your sinful fabrications but add to your lost manhood.

BANG. Thy sinful falsifications but add to the depths of thy degradation. Repent, unhappy mortal; repent, ere it is too late.

JACK. Say, if you utter another d——d word, I'll brain you on the spot.

BANG (*aside*). Shades of Shakespeare! What a situation for me new drama. (*Writes.*) "I'll brain you on the head."

(MRS. C. *attempts to enter room with Es.*)

JACK. Stop! What would you do?

MRS. C. Enter my own apartments, sir!

BANG. Stand aside, sir!

JACK (*striking him with cane*). You keep quiet. Bessie, you cannot go in there.

MRS. C. I believe, sir, these are my rooms.

JACK. They were, but the moment you took the first step toward a divorce, they became mine.

MRS. C. Divorce?

JACK. That's what I said.

MRS. C. And would you have me?

JACK. I don't care a rap what you do; I'm desperate. You won't listen to me and that settles it. These apartments are mine. There's the back parlor. Take your little minister in there, and be hanged.

MRS. C. You'll be sorry for this, Jack Cracker!

JACK. I'll take my chances on your having as much to be sorry for as me.

BANG. You are a lost man.

JACK. And you'll be a dead man if you don't keep quiet.



MRS. C. Wasn't that letter really yours?

JACK. Never mind! (*Aside.*) I've got to get Miss Clayton away from here somehow. (*Speaks.*) These are my apartments! I wish to be alone.

MRS. C. Oh, Jack!

BANG. Courage, my child, courage.

[*Exeunt BANG and MRS. C., C. D. to back parlor.*]

JACK. By Jove, now I've got to work quick. The other Cracker's liable to show up at any minute.

*Enter ES., L. I E.*

ES. Have they gone?

JACK. Quiet! Don't speak above a whisper. (*Points; goes to MRS. C.'s room, L. I E.*) Great Scott! She's packed them up.

ES. What?

JACK. The hat and jacket.

ES. What hat and jacket?

JACK. My wife's. I have it. I'll use yours.

ES. Mine?

JACK. Why, of course. It will only be a matter of a few minutes' longer stay for you.

ES. But what do you want with them?

JACK. I want to save my life, and your happiness.

ES. I don't understand.

JACK. No, of course not. But you will. (*Rings.*) Come, off with them. (*ES. takes off hat and jacket. Exits, L. I E.*) *Enter COF., R. I E.* Send up the cook. (*Exit COF., R. I E.*) Now, then, to play my last card.

*Enter FLO., R. I E.*

FLO. Did you ring?

JACK. Katy, come here!

FLO. Oh, you vas goin' to dip me oud.

JACK. Keep quiet! (*Drags her to sofa.*) Now, Katy, I want you to save my life.

FLO. Vat, vas you sick?

JACK. No, but I'm in a devil of a scrape.

FLO. Oh, I see, you vas having a scrap mit der dyvel.

JACK. That's it; and I want you to get me out.

FLO. What, me beat der dyvel? Oh, no, dot beats even der Dutch.

JACK (*showing bill*). Do you see that?

FLO. Mine gracious! Five tollars.

JACK. Yes. Katy, that's yours. (*Gives money.*)

FLO. Mine! Mine!

JACK. On conditions.

FLO. And who vas he?

JACK. That you consent to be my daughter for five minutes.

FLO. Your daughter?

JACK. That's the game.

FLO. Not your nieces?

JACK. My daughter.

FLO. Vat, vas dis a shoke?

JACK. That's it,—a joke on a friend of mine. You put on this hat and jacket; he'll come in, and I will introduce you as my daughter. Then you take off the hat and jacket, throw them into that room (*points*), and go about your business.

FLO. And is dot all?

JACK. That's all.

FLO. And dis vas mine?

JACK. That's yours.

FLO. Five dollars for being your little adoption daughter for five minutes. Say, Mr. Crackers?

JACK. Well?

FLO. You wouldn't like to have me for your liddle adoption gal all der dimes, vould you?

JACK. Hardly! (*Rings. Enter COF., R. I E.*) Coffee, not a word of this. (*Hands bill.*) You understand?

COF. I'll be as dumb as a can ob oysters.

JACK. Go up to the flat above. Inform Mr. Cracker that Miss Clayton wishes to see him in my apartments at once. (*Exit COF., C. D.*) Now, Katy, you mustn't mind if I am a trifle affectionate.

FLO. Oh, nine, I von't mind, only blease don'd be a kissin' bugs.

*Enter JACK 2D. JACK embraces FLO.*

JACK 2D. Hah! Villain! Again! (*Draws revolver.*) Now say your prayers, both of you.

JACK. Hold on, Cracker! Don't shoot! First let me introduce you to my daughter. Katy, my darling, allow me to present my dear friend, Mr. Jack Cracker.

FLO. Vat! Anoder Cracker-Jack! Vell, dot vas funny.

JACK 2D. Charmed to know you, Miss Cracker. Your face seems familiar.



JACK. Yes, you met her when you first came in.

JACK 2D. But you gave me to understand that she was —

JACK. My daughter.

JACK 2D. No, sir! Your servant.

JACK. There you go again. More mistaken identities.

JACK 2D. But she speaks with a foreign accent!

JACK. Yes, she's Dutch. I adopted her. Correct form, just now, don't yer know.

JACK 2D. I never was more astonished.

JACK. How about Miss Clayton now, eh, Cracker?

JACK 2D. Ha, ha, capital joke.

JACK. With the laugh on you this time.

(*Business.* FLO. removes hat and jacket and throws them by mistake into the room occupied by MRS. C. and BANG. MRS. C. enters with hat and jacket and goes to room in which ES. is concealed. BANG accompanies MRS. C. The ladies scream. Men drink.)

JACK 2D. What's that?

JACK. What's what?

JACK 2D. A cry. It sounded like a female in distress.

JACK. Compose yourself, my dear Cracker; it's only my servant,—she has fits.

*Enter BANG, pushing large Morris chair, upon which are MRS. C. and ES. in a swoon.*

JACK 2D. Ha, scoundrel! Now what have you to say?

JACK. I say the jig's up. Let's go into the back parlor and have it out.

JACK 2D. A gay deceiver!

JACK. I can explain all. (*Drinks.*)

JACK 2D. You shall have that pleasure, sir, after I have filled you full of bullets.

JACK. I prefer filling up on something else. (*Drinks.*)

JACK 2D (*presenting pistols*). Choose!

JACK. I've no choice in the matter. I've gone the limit.

JACK 2D. I will kill you at the first shot.

JACK. That's right, Cracker, polish me off quick. (*Kisses MRS. C.*) Good-bye, Bessie!

JACK 2D. Come!

JACK. Like a lamb to the slaughter. (*Enter COF.*) Coffee, stand guard! See that we are not disturbed. Under no conditions allow the ladies to enter. [*Exit.*

COF. I see. A quiet little game.

*Enter JACK from back parlor kicking BANG.*

JACK. Now I shall die happy!

*(During above, FLO. works over ladies.)*

FLO. My, but dey vas habing a nice long sleebs togedder. I vonder vas dey making believes.

*(Es. sits up, followed by MRS. C.)*

ES. Ah! Where was I? Oh!

MRS. C. Wretched woman, you have wrecked my home and my happiness. *(Weeps.)*

ES. The dear little thing. What shall I say?

JACK 2D *(outside)*. So—back to back. Walk five paces—turn and fire.

ES. Why, what was that?

MRS. C. Coffee, who is in that room?

COF. Only de man come to measure for de new carpet, Madjam.

ES. Mrs. Cracker, this is all a cruel mistake.

MRS. C. If it only were.

ES. Read that! *(Passes clipping.)*

MRS. C. Our anniversary. And we were to have been so happy!

ES. And you shall be happy, if you will but listen and believe me.

JACK *(outside)*. I object, sir! I prefer the old-fashioned method of dropping the handkerchief.

MRS. C. Why, that is Jack's voice.

COF. Oh, no, Madjam, dat ain't Mars Jack, dat's de carpet man; just lost his handkerchief, dat's all.

ES. Mrs. Cracker, listen! The gentleman you saw with me in this room was Mr. Jack Cracker.

MRS. C. Alas! My husband.

ES. But you did not recognize him as such.

MRS. C. Oh, you mean the strange gentleman; your lawyer.

ES. Exactly. They are both of the same name. The unfortunate letter you read was for him.

MRS. C. I see it all—and Jack got it. You saw this notice ———

ES. And thought my Jack was deceiving me.

MRS. C. Oh, horrible. Jack will never forgive me.

ES. Oh, yes, he will; don't you fear.

*(During the above JACK comes to door back, whispers to COF., passes him handkerchief. COF. drops same. Two shots heard.)*

COF. Don't be scared, Madjam, it's only Mars Jack shootin' cats in de back yard.

MRS. C. You are deceiving me.

COF. 'Deed, Madjam, I never deceived nobody, indeed I didn't.

MRS. C. Why do you stand there?

COF. 'Cause he don't wish to be disturbed, Madjam.

MRS. C. The upholsterer?

COF. Oh, no, he's gone long ago. De actor chap's in dere now writin' a poem!

MRS. C. The Rev. Mr. Bang?

COF. Yes, Madjam. De little preacher.

ES. Now, you know all.

MRS. C. Not yet! How came you in that room?

ES. I called to see you, your husband was here, and when he saw you coming he became frightened and forced me in there.

*(JACK repeats handkerchief business. Shots heard as before. Ladies scream.)*

MRS. C. Again!

ES. I see it all. They are fighting a duel.

MRS. C. A duel?

ES. Yes, your husband told me that Jack had challenged him to mortal combat.

MRS. C. Dreadful! Horrible! Coffee, stand back!

COF. Berry sorry, ladies, but you can't go in. De free list am entirely suspended.

*(Rapid firing heard. Ladies scream.)*

*Enter JACK and JACK 2D arm in arm. They bow to each other and shake hands.*

JACK. Are you satisfied?

JACK 2D. Perfectly. You are a dead shot.

JACK. And you shoot like a Boer.

MRS. C. }  
ES. } What does this mean?

JACK 2D. It means, ladies, that we have just settled a little affair of honor.

JACK. To our mutual satisfaction.

MRS. C. }  
ES. } And so have we.

JACK. }  
JACK 2D. } What, everything?

MRS. C. }  
ES. } Everything.

JACK 2D. Not yet. What were you doing in that room?

ES. Ask Mrs. Cracker.

MRS. C. If I am satisfied, Mr. Cracker, surely you should be.

JACK 2D. I would hardly be a gentleman, were I not.

MRS. C. And you, Jack?

JACK. Well, if you've got this infernal mess straightened out I'm the happiest fellow alive.

*Enter FLO., wearing Es.'s hat and jacket.*

MRS. C. Katy, what does this mean?

JACK. Just a little masquerading, my dear; that's all.

FLO. Oh, no, Matam Crackers, dis vas no masqueradings. Dis means I vas your leedle adoptions gals.

MRS. C. What?

JACK 2D. Yes, Mrs. Cracker. She is quite right. Your husband has introduced me to your daughter, and I assure you she is a most charming girl.

MRS. C. My daughter!

FLO. (*throwing arms about JACK's neck*). Papa Crackers, von't you buy you liddle adoption gals some automobubbles?

(MRS. C. *faints*. ES. and JACK 2D *on sofa laughing*. JACK *crushed with FLO.'s arms about his neck*.)

CURTAIN

### ACT III

SCENE.—*The same. Evening.*

(MRS. C., JACK and COF. discovered. JACK *packing grip*. COF. *folding clothes and passing to him*. MRS. C. *sewing*. COF. *passes coat*.)

JACK. And I say that settles it!

(*Throws coat into grip violently.*)

MRS. C. As you please, Jack Cracker; but remember this is all your own doing; you have proclaimed this girl as your own daughter and your daughter she shall be.

(COF. *passes trousers.*)

JACK. You talk like a fool.

MRS. C. And you have acted like one, and I only hope it will teach you to be more careful in future.

JACK. But it was only a joke.

MRS. C. Which you dare not explain.

JACK. No explanation is required.

MRS. C. I'm not asking any. You have acknowledged the adoption of the girl. Well and good; let the matter rest right there. I am perfectly satisfied.

JACK. But I am not, Mrs. Cracker. I am not satisfied to have a bologna guzzling Dutch bog trotter under my feet, and, what's more, I won't!

MRS. C. Very well, then you may go.

JACK (*throwing trousers into grip*). And that settles it.

MRS. C. I really cannot see your objections. She is a most charming young person.

JACK. You are an idiot if you say so.

MRS. C. Oh, thank you; you are making yourself most agreeable on your wedding anniversary.

JACK. Well, if it hadn't been for your crazy notions, we could have carried out our plans and had a nice social evening.

MRS. C. Pray do not disturb yourself, Mr. Cracker; my plans will all be carried out to the letter, I assure you.

JACK. What! You don't mean ——

MRS. C. But I do mean to do exactly as I had planned, with the possible exception of yourself; so, sir, if you will kindly hurry your preparations for departure, I shall be pleased, as it is nearly time for my guests to arrive.

JACK. Your guests! Are you losing your senses? Didn't you inform them that you had given it all up?

MRS. C. I did, before I knew what I know now. I have issued fresh invitations.

JACK. To whom?

MRS. C. To my dear friends Miss Clayton, Mr. Jack Cracker and Mr. Bang.

JACK. Your dear friend Miss Clayton? Do you know who she is?

(COF. *passes hat.*)

MRS. C. I know who she was—an old friend of yours; and your friends should be mine.

(*Outside ring. Exit COF., C. D.*)

JACK. She is an actress.

MRS. C. I understand. She is a student of the great dramatic masters. Mr. Bang informs me that she is very clever in her chosen profession.

JACK. Well, I'll be —

(*Throws hat in grip, jumps in and stamps on it.*)

*Enter COF., C. D.*

COF. Miss Clayton! Mr. Bung!

*Enter ES. and BANG, C. D.*

MRS. C. So good of you to come early. (COF. *takes hats and wraps.*) Sit down. Mr. Cracker will be down presently. Oh, don't mind my husband. His house has ordered him on a business trip West, and he is trying to catch the 9:23 Express. Isn't it horrid? At first he really threatened to resign his position, but, of course, he thought better of that, and now he is hurrying his departure and so cross that you really must excuse him, and I'm sure one cannot blame him.

ES. Blame him! Why, it is positively an outrageous shame.

BANG. Outrageous! It is monstrous.

(JACK *glares at BANG and secures cane.*)



MRS. C. And so you succeeded in stealing a night off?

ES. Yes, my understudy has been very anxious to play my part, and I couldn't allow this delightful opportunity to slip, so I feigned to be seriously indisposed, was driven to my hotel, and fortunately, Mr. Bang, being out of the cast to-night, volunteered to bring me over.

MRS. C. How good of him!

BANG (*gazing at JACK*). Poor unfortunate man—I do pity him.

MRS. C. Yes, it is a most annoying occurrence. Why, do you know he hasn't spoken to me all the evening. I am in hopes he will thaw before he goes.

(*COF. passes collars.*)

BANG. Are we to have the pleasure of your charming daughter's company this evening, Mrs. Cracker?

(*JACK glares at BANG, throws a lot of collars into grip, and jumps upon them, dragging COF. into grip.*)

MRS. C. Oh, yes, she is dressing. She wears a new gown to-night for the first time. You must excuse her tardiness. We will call this her informal *début*. And so you weren't the little minister after all, Mr. Bang.

BANG. What! Has yonder fellow without speech disclosed my secret?

MRS. C. Oh, no! He tried to tell me, you know, but I wouldn't believe him. Miss Clayton is the guilty party.

ES. Mr. Bang, it really wouldn't do, you know.

BANG. And I am forgiven?

MRS. C. Oh, yes, there is nothing to forgive. It was only a little practical joking on your part, for which my husband was wholly to blame.

BANG. Ah, you are an angel:

'Angels, ever beautiful, ever fair,  
Thy home in blue ethereal space.  
Forgiving, thy misty form floats on air.  
Take me to thy home in grace.'

One of mine. Would you like to hear the rest? There are only fifty-seven verses.

ES. Not now, Mr. Bang, wait till a little later.



MRS. C. I shall be delighted. Oh, by the way, did you secure the seats for the Saturday matinée?

ES. Yes, dear Mrs. Cracker, I have arranged it all.

MRS. C. You are very kind. And do you think you could coach me during your spare time in town? I am thinking of giving some amateur theatricals.

ES. Indeed! I should be only too delighted; but really, coaching is quite out of my line. But Mr. Bang is a most delightful coach.

BANG. Yes, I have coached the Plum Pudding Theatricals for seven seasons.

MRS. C. Really! I am so glad. Would it inconvenience you to come, Mr. Bang, say from two to four in the afternoon during the balance of the week?

BANG. I shall be only too delighted. Do you know, my dear Mrs. Cracker, I have always thought you would make an admirable Ophelia.

MRS. C. Oh, you flatter me, Mr. Bang. Do you really think so?

BANG. Yes, the classic contour of thine expressive features, the hidden fire of thy beautiful orbs, stamp you at once as a living, breathing exponent of the unhappy Dane's unfortunate Princess.

*(Quotes from "Hamlet." As he concludes, JACK rushes at him.)*

JACK. That's enough; if you're not out of the house in thirty seconds, I shall do murder.

MRS. C. So, my dear, you've come to your senses?

JACK. And you're gone out of yours.

ES. Ha, ha, my dear Mr. Cracker, he is only acting.

JACK. Acting! Acting! Well, if that's acting, God help the public.

BANG. This, sir, is an insult to the profession.

ES. To which he is bound by most tender ties.

JACK. Ties be blowed. All the ties he knows anything about are in a railroad track.

BANG. Ha! Villain! This is more than human blood can stand.

*(They clinch. BANG runs, jumps over sofa and hides behind it. Enter COF. with punch-bowl full of lemonade.*

*JACK seizes it and standing on sofa pours contents on*

BANG'S head. JACK drops bowl, slams down grip cover and drags it to C. D. Enter FLO., C. D. Exit COF., R. I E.)

FLO. Why, Uncle Jack, how do you do? Don't you know me? I am your niece, Flo. Atkins, come to pay you a visit.

JACK. How long have you been here?

FLO. Oh, I just arrived.

MRS. C. Now, Flora, you shall not tease him any longer. My dear Jack, allow me to introduce your niece, Miss Flo. Atkins.

JACK. What, the Dutch cook?

MRS. C. The new cook no more.

FLO. I told you I'd surprise you, uncle.

JACK. You've done it all right. What do you mean by such actions?

FLO. Why, you see, uncle, I belong to the Woodville Dramatic Association, and they're going to put on a new play, and I'm cast for a Dutch servant girl, and when you sent for me to come here I thought 'twas mean to lose my rehearsals, so I thought I'd try my part on you and see how it worked.

JACK (to MRS. C.). And you knew this all the time?

MRS. C. Oh, no, my dear, not until you adopted her. Then she came and told me all about it, and I thought it about time for me to have a little fun.

JACK. Where's Bang? I want to apologize. (Enter BANG, with bits of lemon sticking to his hair.) Jimmie, my boy, I was a brute, forgive me.

BANG. Don't mention it, old chap; I only blame you for wasting so much of the needful. Was there a stick in it?

JACK. I'm afraid there was, Bang.

(MRS. C. rings.)

BANG. "'Tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis, 'tis true." "As You Like it," Third Act, Second Scene. Jack, me boy, I've taken many a bath in rose water, but that's me first experience with lemonade.

Enter COF., R. I E. Exit FLO., C. D.

MRS. C. Coffee, remove Mr. Cracker's grip.

JACK. Yes, Coffee, I've postponed my departure.

(COF. starts to exit, C. D.)

MRS. C. And, Coffee —

COF. Yes, Madjam.

MRS. C. Mix another bowl of lemonade.

BANG. And, Coffee —

COF. Yes, Mr. Bung.

BANG. Bang !

COF. (*loudly*). Bang !

(*Heavy noise outside. Exit COF., C. D.*)

JACK. What's that devilish racket ?

*Enter FLO., C. D.*

FLO. Der new cook. She vas fall down der cellar stairs.

MRS. C. And now for an evening of pleasure. I am really glad this has happened, for it has really taught me a lesson.

ES. Then you've really decided that the profession contains ladies —

BANG (*bowing low*). And gentlemen.

*Enter COF., C. D.*

COF. Mr. Jack Cracker.

*Enter JACK 2D, C. D.*

JACK. Cracker, you're just in time. Allow me to present my niece, Miss Atkins.

JACK 2D. Delighted to meet you, Miss Atkins. Why, by Jove, she bears a striking resemblance to your daughter.

JACK. So I've been told.

FLO. You vas means his leedle adoption daughter, Mr. Cracker-Jack.

JACK 2D. I see it all ! You little rogue ! You've been masquerading.

FLO. Oh, no, dis vas no masqueradings.

ES. Mrs. Cracker, won't you sing ——— for me again ? I do so want Jack to hear it.

JACK. What, me ? Why, I've heard it till I'm dead—in love with it.

ES. Sir ! I referred to this gentleman. (*Enter COF., with punch-bowl. Specialties. At close, clock strikes eleven.*) Gracious, so late ! I really must go.

MRS. C. We have enjoyed your company so much ; and yours also, Mr. Bang. You will come again—promise me.

ES. If possible, yes.

BANG. I shall come to-morrow to coach for the amateur theatricals.

MRS. C. Oh, Mr. Bang, that was only a joke for my husband's benefit.

JACK. I knew it! And how about the tickets for the matinée?

Es. Why, I have secured them.

MRS. C. Never fear, Miss Clayton, I shall be there.

JACK. Great Scott! What next?

(*General leave-taking.*)

BANG. Good-night, Ophelia. (*Business.*) "Ah, see, she lays her cheek upon her hand. Would that I were a glove upon that hand that I might kiss that cheek." "Romeo and Juliet," Act Two, Scene Five.

JACK. Bang, you're quite a tragedy man. Have a farewell nip.

BANG. No, enough, me boy; I've gone the limit.

JACK 2D. Good-night. I hope the fact that I am the unfortunate possessor of a name will not deprive us from meeting often.

JACK. Not at all, my boy; run in any time. If you can talk as well as you can shoot, we shall get on famously.

*Enter COF., C. D., with letter.*

COF. An important letter for Mr. Jack Cracker. Special delivery. I signed de deff warrant.

JACK (*to JACK 2D*). Do you recognize the handwriting?

JACK 2D (*aside*). By Jove, my tailor. (*Passes letter to JACK.*) No!

JACK (*comparing letter with the one on table; aside*). I thought so. Now here's where I get even with him. (*To JACK 2D.*) Then you are satisfied that the letter does not belong to you?

JACK 2D. That depends. I can tell better after reading it, don't you know.

Es. How very funny! Ah, I have it, an idea.

ALL. Glorious! Out with it.

Es. Why, simply draw lots.

JACK 2D. Absurd! Why, the letter may be mine.

JACK. Preposterous! I am satisfied the letter belongs to me.

BANG. Ah, in that case it is—well, it is yours.

MRS. C. Happy thought. Idea number two.

ALL. Bravo!

BANG. Speak! Fair one, disclose thy hidden secret.

JACK. Now, Bang, don't get flowery.

MRS. C. I will read the letter aloud, and the owner, of course, will at once claim it.

ALL (*applauding*). Bravo! Happy thought! Etc.

(JACK 2D *objects ; business.*)

MRS. C. (*reading letter*). "Mr. Jack Cracker. Sir:" (*Speaks.*) My, it begins just like the other one; let some one else read it. (*Reads.*) "Your bill at this establishment, amounting to \$328.30, has been placed in the hands of Fogg & Bogg for collection. An early settlement will save lawyers' fees, etc., etc. Yours truly, Cut & Slash, tailors. P. S. If the company you now dazzle by the immaculate tone of your apparel were aware of the fact that its cost was included in the above named amount, we imagine the effect would be considerably lessened." (*Laughter.*)

JACK. Cracker, you're welcome to it.

JACK 2D. And so are you. (*Angrily.*)

JACK (*imitating JACK 2D ; looking at letter on desk*). Ah, here is one from my tailor. I'd recognize his handwriting among a thousand. (*General laughter.*)

BANG. Cracker, you've gone the limit. Order up a case of Extra Dry, and we'll forgive you if Cutem and Slashem don't.

(*Note. The three dialogues given below are carried on simultaneously.*)

JACK 2D. And I repeat, the letter is not mine.

JACK. What! You dare insinuate?

JACK 2D. I dare anything, sir, when in the right.

JACK. The letter is yours by your own confession.

JACK 2D. And I say you——

JACK. Have a care, Cracker.

JACK 2D. —— Are mistaken, sir.

JACK. Didn't you acknowledge——

JACK 2D. Nothing, sir! I acknowledged nothing.

JACK. Well, I'm——

JACK 2D. Do you imagine for a moment that I would perjure myself for a paltry \$328.30?

JACK. You have already done it, sir.

JACK 2D. And I repeat, you ——

JACK. Cracker, be careful ——

JACK 2D. —— Are mistaken, sir.

*(Spoken simultaneously with the above by BANG and FLO.)*

FLO. Mr. Bung, who's your tailor?

BANG. I beg pardon.

FLO. Your tailor, who is he?

BANG. I have six—little ones.

FLO. Do you know, Mr. Bung ——

BANG. Bang!

FLO. Ah, I forgot. Do you know, Mr. Bang, I think you are awfully handsome?

BANG. Ah, fair flatterer, say not so, lest you bring flushes to ——

FLO. But I can't help it, because you really are, Mr. Bung.

BANG. Bang!

FLO. Ah, yes, what a sweet name.

BANG. Say those sweet words again, maiden fair.

FLO. Such a name as yours conjures up only the sweets of life.

BANG. Fair damsel, speak not thus lest my heart be riven by Cupid's arrow driven straight from the bow of yonder curving cherry lips. Ah, nectar! To sip from thy honeyed depths would be a draught compared with which the Elixir of Life would be flat and tasteless.

*(Spoken simultaneously with the above by ES. and MRS. C.)*

MRS. C. Ha, ha, how very remarkable!

ES. What is very remarkable?

MRS. C. Why, that I should again be the first to read a letter intended for Mr. Cracker.

ES. Which Mr. Cracker?

MRS. C. Why yours, of course.

ES. Mrs. Cracker, you forget ——

MRS. C. In what way, pray?

ES. You are casting reflections.

MRS. C. I was not aware of it.

ES. It is very evident the letter was intended for ——



MRS. C. Mr. Cracker.

Es. Exactly; or your husband.

MRS. C. What! My husband? My Jack?

Es. There is no other conclusion.

MRS. C. Pardon me, Miss Clayton, I ——

Es. And pray pardon me, Mrs. Cracker, I ——

MRS. C. —— Was about to observe ——

Es. —— I claim the privilege ——

MRS. C. —— And I, also, of being heard.

*(Curtain; all characters talking and gesticulating violently.)*



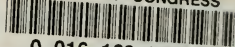












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