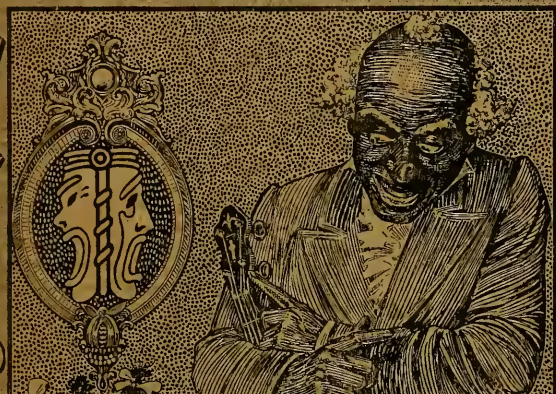


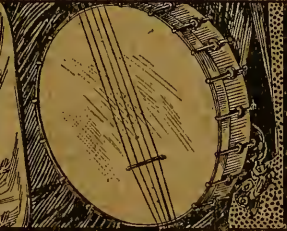
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Kiss Me, Camille!



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KISS ME, CAMILLE!

OR

THE STAGE-STRUCK DARKY

A BLACKFACE NOVELTY

BY

WADE STRATTON

AUTHOR OF

"Almost An Actor," "An Awful Appetite," "The Barber's Bride,"
"A Burnt Cork Barrage," "Cash Money," "Fu'st Aid
to Cupid," "Hitting the African Harp,"
"When Cork is King," Etc.



CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

KISS ME, CAMILLE!

CHARACTERS

LUCINDA LEE.....*A Stage-Struck Cullud Gal*
HORATIO HAMBONE.....*A Reg'lar Actor Felluh*
LUKE McFLUKE.....*He Loves Lucinda Too*

SCENE—*The Servants' Reception Room.*

PLACE—*Where Lucinda Works at Housework*

TIME—*The End of a Perfect Day.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Twenty Minutes.*

TYPES AND COSTUMES

All three characters are to be played by men, and all are made up blackface.

LUCINDA—Wears an outlandish gown of bright colors, that is meant to be stylish. The skirt is very short, and she wears big shoes; “fuzzy-wuzzy” or “Topsy” wig.

HORATIO—A dressy colored man, very swagger and pompous, with the manner of a tragedian and a romantic lover combined. May wear frock or cutaway coat, plaid pants, white spats, patent-leather shoes, silk hat; plain negro wig.

LUKE—Another stylish darky, but his costume is “sporty” to contrast with HORATIO’s more formal attire; plain negro wig. He looks formidable, but his voice and manner are quite dainty, until the finale, and he generally acts rather dense.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *R. D.*, right door; *L. D.*, left door, etc.; *up stage*, away from footlights; *down stage*, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

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OCT 10 1921

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KISS ME, CAMILLE!

SCENE: *A plain interior, with door C. in flat, and another R. or L. Tables, chairs and other furniture ad lib. (Note: This sketch may be produced on any platform, as scenery is not essential, and music cues may be disregarded, if desired.)*

MUSIC: *Lively ragtime to raise and lower curtain.*

As the curtain rises, LUCINDA enters from side, carrying in one hand a feather duster, and in the other several sheets of typewritten paper, clipped together like a theatrical "part."

LUCINDA. Thar now, thank goo'ness Ah got mah day's work done (*throws feather duster aside*) an' Ah kin git busy with mah career. Lenme see, whar' was I? (*Looks at paper.*) Oh, yes. (*Reads.*) Six weeks has came an' went since Ah received his letter, an' though Ah knows it word fo' word, hahdly a hour collapses that Ah don't give it the once ovalh to see what it's all about. Oh, if Ah could but live till spring! Ah will! Will Ah? Ah'll say Ah will! Ah must—yes, Ah posolutely *must*—see him befo' Ah dies. (*Pretends to look in mirror.*) Oh, how changed Ah is! So pale, so ghastly pale! Not one touch of coloh in dis hyah damaged cheek. If Ah could but see him! If Ah could but heah his voice! (*Crash off-stage.*)

HORATIO (*speaks off-stage*). Dawg-gone that coal scuttle!

LUCINDA (*forgetting to act*). That's him! (*Calls.*) Come awn in, Ho-ra-shee-o.

HORATIO (*off-stage*). Lead me, lead me, ye virgins, to that kindly voice. (*Enters C., strides to LUCINDA and embraces her.*) Camille!

LUCINDA. Armand!

HORATIO. Camille! Camille! Camille!

LUCINDA (*throws him off*). Armand, Ah has swohn to hate an' to despise you. But no, no! Ah kain't, tha's all. Ah kain't.

HORATIO. Angels was painted fair to look like thee. Kiss me, Camille!

LUCINDA. Go on, man, quit yo' kiddin'.

HORATIO (*rubbing his shin*). Dawg-gone near busted mah shin ovah yo' ol' coal scuttle.

LUCINDA. Horatio, Ah is mighty glad you dropped in.

HORATIO. Dropped in what—the coal scuttle? Well, Ah didn't git no amusement out of it maself.

LUCINDA. Ah is glad you come to help me with mah play-actin'.

HORATIO (*cautiously*). Whar's all the folks?

LUCINDA. Missus' gone out; cook's busy; laundress is ironin'. Ah ain't got nothin' on mah mind but mah hair ribbons. Horatio, you reckon Ah kin git to be a reg'lar actress like you?

HORATIO. Ah ain't no actress. You is mixed in yo' janitors.

LUCINDA. Ain't in love with no janitor; only with a actor.

HORATIO (*suspiciously*). How 'bout this hyer Luke McFluke?

LUCINDA. Well, what about him?

HORATIO. Nothin', only Ah don't like his manifestations.

LUCINDA. Don't let Luke botheh you, Horatio.

HORATIO. Ah won't, if Ah kin help it. Luke McFluke is some tough coon. Well, how 'bout yo' lines?

LUCINDA. Mah lines? Look me ovah, kiddo, look me ovah!

HORATIO. Ah ain't speakin' figgeratively, but dramatorologically. Does you know yo' paht?

LUCINDA. Ah reckon Ah does. Whar does we start to begin to commence?

HORATIO. Fifth ac'. "Spring will soon be hyah," et cetry.

LUCINDA (*dramatically*). Spring will soon be hyah, an' Ah has et celery!

HORATIO. That ain't it. "Spring will soon be hyah, an' Ah does so love the spring."

LUCINDA. Oh, yes, Horatio, now Ah is cranked up Spring will soon be hyah, an' Ah does so love the spring. No frown upon her brow fo'bids the humblest floweh to hope. She smiles on all alike—the camellia an' the cow-slip, the sunfloweh an' the dandyline. May I not hope that she will smile on me?

HORATIO. Smile on you? Woman, she'll bus' herse'f wide open with laughin'. Sunfloweh an' dandyline! How come you to say them words?

LUCINDA. Well, it was some kind of vegetables.

HORATIO. Ah reckon we ain't ready fo' ac' five yit. Le's try ac' one, whar Ah axes you does you love me, an' you says Go bump yo' haid, man, Ah ain't got no time to waste on a amachoor.

LUCINDA. A'right, Horatio.

HORATIO. Go ahead an' shoot.

LUCINDA. Ah, Monsoor Armand, is it you?

HORATIO. Camille, you is killin' yo'self. Ah would Ah had the right to save you fo' mahself—I mean from yo'self.

LUCINDA. It is too late, Armand. Yo' bright idea ain't come soon enough.

HORATIO. But, Camille—what kin Ah do?

LUCINDA. Go into the nex' room with Gaston an' them otheh frogs. They has got a crap game goin', an' this is maybe yo' lucky night.

HORATIO (*scratching his head*). Don't sound lak the play—but sounds mighty-natural. Camille, has you got a heart?

LUCINDA. Armand, why does you ax me that?

HORATIO. If you ain't got a heart, Ah kin git along with a gizza'd an' a drumstick.

LUCINDA (*angrily*). Look hyah, man. Ah kin play Camille, but Ah ain't gwine to impersonate no chicken frica-see! Them words ain't in the play.

HORATIO. No, but they is powerful in mah mind.

LUCINDA. You ain't gwine to eat till we has got all practiced up.

HORATIO. Eatin' is one thing fo' which Ah don't require no practice.

LUCINDA. You is learnin' me fo' to be a actress. Don't fo'git that.

HORATIO. Yes, an Ah's dawg-gone hungry. Don't fo'git that!

LUCINDA. You gits paid fo' mah lesson when mah lesson am lessoned. C. O. D. Git that?

HORATIO. Yas'm. C. O. D. sounds fishy to me.

LUCINDA. Go home an' to bed.

HORATIO. What you mean, gal? We ain't done yit.

LUCINDA. Ah is play-actin'.

HORATIO. That's different.

LUCINDA. Dream all night of some dear gal, mo' worthy of yo' love than what Ah is. Choose from a holier spear than this the woman which you would love. Then seal that love upon the halter: Take her to yo' bosom fresh with a parent's blessing. If she ain't got no parents, you is lucky.

HORATIO. Camille, has you evah loved?

LUCINDA. Nevah.

HORATIO. You is a dawg-gone liah, but you is a cute li'l rascal. Kiss me, Camille.

LUCINDA. Horatio, the kisses is like the chicken fricasee—C. O. D. Go ahead with yo' play-actin'.

HORATIO. Madame, did you send fo' me?

LUCINDA. Ah did, Armand. Ah would speechify some language with you.

HORATIO. Then spill the beans, Camille.

LUKE *enters C. unobserved.*

LUCINDA. Oh, do not squish me with reproach! See how Ah is bowed befo' you, pale an' tremblin'. Listen to me without haste, an' hear me without payin' attention. Say that you will fo'get the past, an' give me yo' hand.

HORATIO. Away, woman. You ain't been true to me!

LUCINDA. Ah alone is to blame, an' Ah alone mus' suffeh. Armand, you is got to leave town.

HORATIO. What? You counsel me to play the coward's paht? Aha, you trembles fo' yo' loveh! (*Points toward LUKE without seeing him. LUKE is taking all this in with fascinated interest.*)

LUCINDA. Ah trembles fo' yo' life!

HORATIO. Ah will not die until Ah has saw these words wrote in the blood of the man what has wronged muh! He shall not live, fo' Ah has swohn it! (LUKE *shows fright.*)

LUCINDA. Oh, you wrong him. He ain't done nothin' a-tall! (LUKE *shakes his head violently in assent.*)

HORATIO. He loves you, madame. That is his crime—the sin he must answer fo'! Why is you his, an' why is you here—the plaything of his vanity, the trophy of his gold? (LUKE *stands looking stupidly at HORATIO, open-mouthed.*)

LUCINDA (*seeing LUKE for the first time*). Oh, Horatio!

HORATIO. Fo' the time bein' mah name is Armand.

LUCINDA. Fo' the time bein' yo name is M-u-d. Look who's hyah.

HORATIO (*seeing LUKE when she points*). Luke McFluke!

LUKE (*to LUCINDA*). Lucy, honey, how come this big black baboon make all this hyah foolishment, huh? (*He is very mild-mannered, and asks in a tone merely of idle curiosity.*)

LUCINDA. Oh, Luke, don't kill him! Don't kill him!

HORATIO (*placatingly*). That's right, Luke. Listen to Lucinda.

LUKE. All right, Lucy, I won't right now. (*To HORATIO.*) Stand by, boy; yo' life is spared.

LUCINDA. Luke, this hyah is mah gen'lman frien', Mistah Horatio Hambone. He is a acto'.

LUKE (*tipping his hat slightly, to HORATIO*). Much 'bliged to meetchuh, Mistah Hambone. Ah thought you had done went crazy an' took Lucy along with you.

HORATIO (*nervously edging away*). Well, Ah—Ah got to go.

LUCINDA. No you ain't, Horatio. Luke, Mistah Hambone has been learnin' me fo' to be a actress. How would you like fo' to be a actress too? (*To HORATIO.*) Go ahead an' learn 'im, Horatio.

HORATIO. Well then, Mistah McFluke, was you evah on the stage?

LUKE. On the stage? Ah used fo' to drive one.

HORATIO. Ah is makin' reference to the stage Shakespeare tells about holdin' the mirror up to nature.

LUKE. Ah got one in mah room, seven-by-nine.

HORATIO. Keep yo' min' on what Ah is tryin' fo' to percolate through yo' intellect. What does you know about Camille?

LUKE. Camille? Ah don't smoke them cigarettes.

HORATIO. Nevah worked so hard fo' a chicken fricasee befo' in all mah bohn days.

LUCINDA. Give him a play-actin' lesson, Horatio, an' Ah'll git you up a nice bite in the kitchen. (*Starts out side door.*)

HORATIO. Faihwel, pale lady of the camellias.

LUCINDA. Kin this be love, o' is it madness? Why has you come acrosst mah path?

HORATIO (*holding out his arms*). Kiss me, Camille!

LUCINDA (*fanning her hand at him*). Quit yo' kiddin'!
(*Exit side door.*)

HORATIO. Now, Mistah Luke McFluke, you is gwine fo' to learn how to ac'.

LUKE. How shall Ah ac'? Natural?

HORATIO. This hyah is gwine fo' to be tragedy, not comedy. What kind of a voice has you got fo' tragedy?

LUKE. Oh, delicious; delicious.

HORATIO. Well, supposin' Ah was to step up to you, slap you on the shouldeh an' call you a villain an' a traitor to the state, what would yo' say to me?

LUKE. Ah reckon Ah'd remind you that yo' language was very ungen'manly.

HORATIO. No, you big block of bituminous ignorance. You should say "Liah!" Is you ready?

LUKE. Ah reckon Ah is.

HORATIO (*striding over and slapping him on the back*). Thou art a villain an' a traitor to the state!

LUKE (*very meekly*). Liah.

HORATIO. Kain't you tell a better lie than that? Come over here and call me a villain.

LUKE. You want me fo' to call you what you done called me?

HORATIO. Sure Ah does. Kin you do it?

LUKE (*walking over and tapping him gently on the arm*).
Thou art a villain an' a traitor to the state.

HORATIO (*fiercely*). Liar!

LUKE. Ah—Ah didn't mean it.

HORATIO (*with a hopeless gesture*). Oh, what's the use!
Say, Luke, didn't you neveh see no shows?

LUKE. Oh, Ah seen a couple.

HORATIO. What did you see?

LUKE. Well, Ah seen —— an' —— (*popular motion picture comedians*).

HORATIO. Ain't you neveh saw Macbeth?

LUKE. Yassuh. Ah done seen Macbeth.

HORATIO. What do you think you could play in Macbeth?

LUKE. Lady Macbeth.

HORATIO. That's a lady's paht. We gotta play somethin'.
What'll we play?

LUKE (*enthusiastically*). Let's play tag.

HORATIO. No, Ah mean some piece.

LUKE. Ah could have a lot of fun with a piece of apple
pie.

HORATIO. Ah got it! We'll play Damon an' Pythias.
Ah'll play Damon, an' you'll play Lucimicus.

LUKE. Ah'll play if Ah kin use mah own dice.

HORATIO. We ain't gallopin' the dominoes. We's play-
actin'.

LUKE (*weakly*). Oh, all right.

HORATIO. What's the fust words you say when you comes
on the stage?

LUKE. Come on, Macduff.

HORATIO. Ah got to 'splain it to you. You see, Ah is
Damon, an' Ah got pinched fo' knockin' oveh a peanut stand,
an' they put me in the hoozgow. Ah got a friend, name
Pythias. Pythias says he's gwine stop in jail fo' me while
Ah goes out to —— (*nearby town*) fo' to see mah wife an'
child.

LUKE. G'wan, man. You ain't got no wife.

HORATIO. Ah's only playin' like Ah got a wife.

LUKE. If Lucy ketches you playin' it, good night Mistah Actoh man!

HORATIO. Ah goes into the country an' takes you with me—

LUKE. In a tin lizzy.

HORATIO. In a tin— (*checking himself*). No, of course not. In a tin lizzy! The idea! We goes into the country. If Ah ain't back to the jail by sunrise, Pythias is gwine git shot, 'stid of me.

LUKE. An' if you gits back by sunrise—?

HORATIO. Then Ah saves his life, an' gits shot mahself.

LUKE. An' you gwine hurry back to git shot?

HORATIO. Ah is.

LUKE (*disgusted*). You deserves to git shot.

HORATIO. While Ah is in the house, biddin' mah wife and chillen goodby—

LUKE. You means while you is in the basement biddin' yo' homebrew goodby.

HORATIO. While Ah is in the house, you is out in the bahnya'd, an' you kills mah hoss.

LUKE. Shot at sunrise. He gits killed without havin' to go back to jail.

HORATIO. Yes, he— Not at all!

LUKE. You ain't got no hoss, anyways.

HORATIO. It's in the play.

LUKE. Like yo' wife?

HORATIO. Exactly.

LUKE. Yo' hoss is 'zactly like yo' wife?

HORATIO. Yes, my— Say, what are you talking about? I come from the house and ask you fo' my hoss, an' you say, "Fo'give me, massa, I slew yo' hoss!"

LUKE. That's mah paht, is it?

HORATIO. Yes. Now get over there.

LUKE (*crossing stage and repeating the line over several times to himself*). Fo'give me, massa, I slewed yo' hoss.

HORATIO. Is that the way to stand? You ought to tremble. (LUKE *trembles*.) That's it. Keep up that shimmy. (*Goes out C. door and immediately rushes in again.*)

Dramatically:) 'Tis o'er, Lucimicus. Bring fo'th mah hoss! Ah has stayed too long, an' speed mus' leave the winds behin' muh! By Zeus an' all his fambly, the sun is gallopin' down the West—

LUKE. Let 'er gallop!

HORATIO. Why dost thou stand there? Bring fo'th mah hoss!

LUKE. Ah—Ah is fo'got mah paht!

HORATIO. Slave!

LUKE (*belligerently*). You call me a slave again, an' Ah'll bust yo' head open!

HORATIO. Why didn't you say, "Massa, fo'give me, Ah slew yo' hoss?"

LUKE (*ready to fight*). Don't you call me no slave!

HORATIO. Try it ag'in. Shake yo'self, boy, shake yo'self.

(LUKE *trembles*.) (HORATIO *goes off and returns as before*.) Be swift of speech, varlet!

LUKE (*about to strike him*). Who's a varmint?

HORATIO. Ah says "varlet," not "varmint." Be swift of speech, varlet! Whar is mah hoss?

LUKE. Massa, fo'give me, yo' hoss went back to the jail to git shot at sunrise.

HORATIO. Aha! Ah's standin' hyah—

LUKE. We is both standin' hyah.

HORATIO. To see if the powers of Olympus will, with their lightnin's, execute mah prayer upon thee.

LUKE (*slyly drawing big razor from hip pocket*). Don't pray fo' me, black boy. Pray fo' yo'self.

HORATIO (*not seeing the razor*). But be thy punishment mine, Ah'll tear thee all to pieces! Come!

LUKE. Whah to?

HORATIO. To the eternal riveh of the dead. The way is shorteh than to Syracuse or Utica. (*Creeping forward toward LUKE as if to spring upon him*.) With one swing Ah'll—

LUKE (*grabbing HORATIO by the collar with one hand, and brandishing razor over him with the other. Comic struggle*.) To the eternal riveh of the dead! The way is

shorter than to —— or —— (*nearby towns*). With one swing Ah'll throw thee to the dogcatchers, an' follow after thee!

LUCINDA *enters by side door, unobserved by the others. She carries a tray of dishes, covered with a cloth, and when well on stage, stands fascinated, watching the fight.*

LUKE (*dragging HORATIO to C. door*). Come, Pythias' red ghost beckons me! Come, craven, come! (*Throws HORATIO'S limp form out of C. door. At the same time LUCINDA drops the tray with a crash. HORATIO sticks his head back in the doorway, with flour or white powder thrown over his face. LUKE extends his arm romantically toward LUCINDA.*) Kiss me, Camille!

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