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No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

TEDDY

or, The Runaways

A Comedy in Three Acts

By

WALTER BEN HARE

*Author of "A College Town," "A Rustic
Romeo," "Savageland," etc.*

NOTE

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BOSTON
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Teddy, or, The Runaways

CHARACTERS

(As originally cast at the Waldorf-Astoria, New York
City, February 16, 1912.)

JEAN MACLEAN, *Little Miss Fixit* . . . Miss Gladys Lane Benlow.
MRS. JUNIPER, *a Young Wife* . . . Mrs. Webb C. Gill.
VICTORIA, *the Girl in the Taxi* . . . Miss Nell Schuyler.
TEXANA, *the Girl of the Golden West* . . . Mrs. Mary A. Bullard.
MAX JUNIPER, *the Perplexed Husband* . . . Mr. Webb C. Gill.
ALONZO WILLING, *the Fortune Hunter* . . . Mr. Jeffreys Conover.
TED KEEGAN, *the Man on the Box* . . . Mr. Tom Van Ess.
SHERIFF JIM LARRABEE, *Officer 666* . . . Mr. Austin Lee Johnstone.
Two Deputy Sheriffs

PLACE.—The Tau Cross Ranch between San Antonio and
Houston, Texas.

TIME.—The present.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Living room at Max Juniper's house on a Texas ranch.
Spring time.

ACT II.—Same as Act I. The great diamond robbery.

ACT III.—Same as Acts I and II. The thunderbolt.

The action of the play is continuous, each act beginning where
the preceding act ended.

MARRIAGE IS STRANGER THAN FICTION!



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CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

JEAN MACLEAN.—A bright, vivacious young lady of about nineteen. She moves quickly and speaks decisively. The hair is worn low on the neck and skirts are walking length. On her first entrance she wears a light tan summer riding suit trimmed with white, an unstarched white sunbonnet and carries a crop. She makes a quick change to a pretty summer dress of light material and, later, a lingerie hat. Her description of the ride in Act I should be given with great animation. Use plenty of rouge in make-up and on first entrance carry a very large bunch of wild roses and blue-bonnets or bluebells. In scenes with Alonzo and Jim in Act I she assumes a very demure manner, rather foreign to her real nature.

MRS. JUNIPER.—A pretty young wife aged about twenty or twenty-one. Naturally she speaks rather slowly with a slight drawl and her normal movements express repose, but in her more dramatic scenes in Act III she must rise to almost hysterical expression. On her first entrance she wears a pretty morning gown of some fluffy material, trailing, and trimmed with lace, with pretty breakfast cap to match. This is changed on her entrance to greet Alonzo to a summer dress similar to Jean's but of contrasting color and longer. Large summer hat. On her first entrance in Act III she wears a white morning dress similar to her first costume. Hair dressed high and face rather pale in Acts I and II and noticeably pale in Act III. Her dominant characteristic is love for her husband. Little by-play, not indicated in the text, may be invented;—such as following him with her eyes and pronouncing his name with a peculiar, loving inflection.

VICTORIA.—A rather stately, self-assertive girl of about twenty-five. She is used to having her own way and shows it. A certain languid affectation is most noticeable at times. She moves quickly, quietly, almost stealthily; and by certain quick turns of the eyes gives the impression of being pursued. Her letter scene in Act II must be carefully played, working from calm indifference to passionate hysteria. On her first entrance she wears a very elaborate ball gown, silver spangled. Hair dressed for a ball with brilliants and pink roses. Over this and completely concealing it is a long gray auto coat, gray auto bonnet and veil. Gauntlets and gray bag containing the jewel box. In Act II she makes an act change to a simple white dress and white sunbonnet. May use a cluster of pink wild roses. Glasses may be worn or omitted at the discretion of the actress.

TEXANA.—A slow, stupid country girl of about eighteen. An awkward walk, manner, and frequent pauses in speech aid in the delineation of this part. It may be costumed in "Sis Hopkins" style with wired pig-tails and hair combed straight back. White, ill-fitting dress rather short and trimmed with pink bows. Funny apron with pockets trimmed in pink. White stockings and boy's shoes. The dress longer behind than in front. For her auto ride she wears a funny green hat with four yards of bright green

cheese-cloth as a veil. The actress who completely sinks her individuality in this part cannot fail to make it stand out strongly. An attempt to render the part in the pert soubrette style will ruin the character.

MAX JUNIPER.—A decisive young business man of about thirty. Neat light suit, tan boots, black Windsor tie, and moderate sombrero. Riding gloves. Speaks quickly and decisively. In Act I he shows the audience that he loves his wife, but with the air of the year old husband. The climax in Act II must be worked up loud and fast.

ALONZO WILLING.—A nervous city man of good education. New straw hat with red band, bright yellow gloves, red tie, and rather elaborate summer suit. He shows that he is much impressed with his own importance. The handcuff scene must be carefully rehearsed with real handcuffs. Quick, erratic gestures. May be played with blond crop wig and small blond moustache.

TED KEEGAN.—A slangy, good-natured boy of about twenty-two. Always quick in movement and speech. Never at a loss for a word or an idea. Auto costume complete with cap, coat, goggles, gloves, putes. At finale of Act II he makes a very quick change to a torn and dusty coat, collar half off, tie awry, face very dirty, and nose bloody. Hair disarranged.

JIM LARRABEE.—A big man of thirty or thereabouts. Typical Western costume. Long black leather boots, blue shirt, sombrero, spurs, riding gloves, holster and pistols. Costume covered with dust. May be played with black wig, eyebrows and drooping moustache. Speaks with a deep, gruff voice.

The **DEPUTY SHERIFFS.**—Similar to Jim. One a blond to correspond to Texana's description.

LIST OF PROPERTIES

Table-pad, table-cloth, flower bowl, three plates, six knives, six spoons, three forks, three cups, three saucers, tile for the coffee-pot, sugar bowl, milk pitcher, three bread-and-butter plates, small breakfast bell. Pink wild roses and bluebells. Yellow bunch lights at C. D., for sunlight. Tray. Large dish of fancy fruit, grapes, etc. Coffee service. Platter of bacon and eggs, garnished with parsley. Covered dish of toast. Three plates of cakes with syrup. (The food in Act I should be kept hot on chafing dishes as the actors must each eat heartily.) Bound novel for Jean. Riding gloves for Max. Green bottle for Max. Writing material, letter and envelope in desk. Banana for Texana. Bouquet and two boxes for Alonzo. Fancy work for Jean. Platter of sandwiches and small cakes. Pitcher of milk and two glasses. Guns for Jim and two deputies. Hatchet, hammer and nails for Texana. Double handcuffs and sheriff's badge for Jim. Smelling salts for Texana. Glass of water for Max. Telegram in envelope for Alonzo.

Teddy, Or, The Runaways

ACT I

SCENE.—*A well-furnished, tastily decorated room finished in some dark color. Heavy dull red hangings and draperies of Indian blankets. Red rugs down, varied with several dark fur rugs. Trap-door (practical) in the center of stage, covered with rug. A fireplace may be down R., with large dark screen in front of it, but this is not essential. Large, black leather couch in front of screen. Upright piano with Indian scarf up R. Library desk, small, up L. Small table in the upper L. corner. Oblong dining table down L. Two rocking-chairs and four dining chairs. All furniture black mission style. Several palms or cactus plants in mission bowls add to the general effect. Red, unlighted candles in black holders on mantel-shelf, piano and desk. Indian baskets, blankets, moccasins, arms, pottery and bead-work help the scene. On the small table is a smoker's set, two magazines and a filled book-rack. Center entrance should be a black wooden door, rather to R. C. To L. C. is a window with dark red silk draperies. Entrances up R., and down L. and up L. Note: If the trap-door is impracticable a flight of steps leading up R. and off may be used, and the word "cellar" changed in every instance to "attic." The setting may be much simplified, if necessary dark mission screens may be used in place of scenery. The time is morning and the lights are on full throughout the play. Back of C. D. have a yellow calcium or strong bunch of yellows for sunlight effect through C. D. and window. Music to take up curtain, "Home Sweet Home" played very loud and fast.*

(After the curtain is well up, there is a slight pause, then enter TEXANA from L. with table pad in her arms. She is singing.)

TEX. "Oh, promise me that some day you and I
Will take our love together to some sky ——"

(*Crosses to C., hugs pad ecstatically and, putting cheek against it, repeats dreamily.*)

"Will take our love together to some sky ——"

(*Hold position a moment, her mood changes, and she crosses to table at L., briskly singing and arranging pad on table.*)

Clear the table, put on the pad,
Arrange it nice and pat it neat,
Then you'll git two kisses sweet.

(*Exit L., and returns immediately with table-cloth singing.*)

Get the table-cloth so white,
Put it on—that's out o' sight!
Get a bowl to hold the flowers, (*Comes C. with bowl.*)
Then you'll—you'll ——

(*Speaks.*) Powers, lowers, bowers, sours. Oh, fiddle, can't
make no rhyme to flowers. Us poets do have a awful time.
(*Sings.*)

"And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I would lay me down and dee."

(*Speaks as she brings articles mentioned from L.*) Three plates,
two knives apiece, two spoons apiece, but only one fork apiece,
'cause there ain't goin' to be no pie ner 'ysters. Three cups
and three sassers. And there you are! (*Sings.*) "When
other lips and other hearts their tales of love do tell, You great
big beautiful doll!" (*Speaks.*) Tile fer the coffee-pot, sugar
bowl and milk pitcher. And there she's sot! Wonder if any-
thing's missin'. (*Counts.*) Flower bowl, plates, knives, forkses
and spoons, cups, sassers, coffee-tile and sugar bowl. And
milk pitcher! Forgot the bread-and-butter plates. Three
of 'em. (*Brings them.*) And there you are! (*Sings.*)
"Dearie, my dearie, nothing's worth while but dreams of
you ——" (*Speaks.*) Now the little breakfast bell. (*Sings.*)
"Awake, my love, awake!" (*Crosses up to small table and
rings small twist bell, then crosses to door up R., and sings.*)
"And sweetheart, if you talk in your sleep—boom, boom—
don't mention my name!" (*Raps on door.*) Miss Willy Bud,
please mam, breakfast is done sot.

MRS. JUNIPER (*off R.*). In a moment, Texana.

TEX. Landsy Lena, I done forgot the chairs. (*Places three chairs at table, one facing audience for MRS. J., one at her right for MAX JUNIPER, and one at her left for JEAN MAC-LEAN. Sings.*) "Tell me that you love me, look into my tender eyes of brown —"

Enter MRS. J., from R.; she comes down R. C., yawning.

MRS. J. Good-morning, Texana.

TEX. (*grinning and bobbing*). Mornin', Mis' Willy Bud.

MRS. J. (*surveying table from R. C.*). Everything looks lovely this morning. You certainly are improving.

TEX. (*at L. C.*). Yes, mam, I think I am too. An' then this is Thursday, so I sot it extry nice to-day.

MRS. J. Extra nice on Thursday! What for?

TEX. (*grinning*). Don't you know?

MRS. J. No.

TEX. We might have comp'ny this mornin'. I reckon like as not Mr. 'Lonzo'll come courtin' long o' Miss Jean.

MRS. J. The idea! You shouldn't get such notions, Texana.

TEX. Can't help it, Mis' Willy Bud, mam. There's nothin' in the world like love, sweet, love.

MRS. J. I suppose one of the boys will be stealing you some day.

TEX. Which one?

MRS. J. Let me see; it is Ike, isn't it?

TEX. Ike? *Ike?* I don't hone none to have *him* hankerin' round.

MRS. J. Maybe you are right about Mr. Willing. Was he here last Thursday?

TEX. Yes, *mam*, he sure was—and the three Thursdays afore that.

MRS. J. Is Jean up yet?

TEX. More'n two hours ago. She's out takin' a mornin' ride on that sorrel.

MRS. J. (*yawning*). I can't see why she gets up so early. The day is long enough as it is, with nothing to do but to get up, eat three meals, and go to bed again. I certainly wish we lived in San Antone. There they have parties and bridge, and masquerades and —

TEX. Masquerades? Please, mam, what's them?

MRS. J. Why, dances with costumes on.

TEX. Dances! My Landsy Lena, I thought it was to drink like lemonade or limade and them things.

MRS. J. It's a party. But here on the ranch there is absolutely nothing to do. Nothin' ever happens. I am dying of *ennui*.

TEX. You better take a good dose of cactus bitters.

MRS. J. (*paying no attention*). It's depressing, depressing.

TEX. Yes'm, it shore is; but it ain't so bad when it's done down.

MRS. J. If it weren't for Max I couldn't exist. (*Crosses to door R. Raps.*) Maxie, Maxie man!

MAX (*inside, R.*). Hum?

MRS. J. (*sweetly*). Breakfast is ready.

MAX (*inside—loudly*). Where in thunder is my collar button?

MRS. J. Did you look in your collar?

MAX. I had it, but it rolled on the floor.

MRS. J. I'll find it for you.

[*Exit, R.*]

TEX. (*singing*).

“ For you know that I am married,
And I know you're married, too,
But sweetheart, if you talk in your sleep,
Boom—boom,
Don't mention my name.”

Enter MRS. J. and MAX from R. MRS. J. comes down C., and MAX down R.

MRS. J. Sit down, Max, breakfast is all ready.

MAX (*sitting R.*). Where's Jean?

MRS. J. Do you see anything of her, Texana?

TEX. (*crossing to window up stage*). I see somebody ridin' by the Cottonwood Clump. They're ridin' like wild-fire. It's her, it's her!

MRS. J. (*crossing up to window*). That sorrel will fling Jean some day.

MAX (*crossing up and looking over his wife's shoulder*). Don't worry about that. She sticks on like a Cossack.

MRS. J. (*excitedly*). Look at her ride! Look at her ride!

TEX. Down the hill in a cloud of dust.

MAX. Now she's turning in.

TEX. Sorrel sure can go. He shore can.

MRS. J. (*waving hand*). Oo-oo-oo!

JEAN (*outside C.*). Oo-oo-oo!

MRS. J. Breakfast is ready.

JEAN. I'm coming with a three-days' appetite. (*Center door flung open and JEAN discovered with her arms full of pink wild roses and Texas blue-bonnets, the strong yellow sunlight upon her.*) Good-mornin', ladies and gentlemen, the top of the mornin' to yez all. (*All come down; JEAN, C.*) See what I found in Saba gulley. Texas beauties sparkling with Texas dew. Aren't they gorgeous?

One for the mistress, the man and the maid,
And one for the little girl who rode in the shade!

(*Gives each a rose, and puts rest in bowl on table.*) Texas beauties; roses and blue-bonnets.

MAX. And Texas beauties in morning dress and sun-bonnets.

JEAN. Don't you wait for me, but sail right in. (*Crosses to L. 1 E.*) I'll be with you in a jiffy. It won't take me two minutes. [*Exit, L.*]

MRS. J. (*crossing to MAX and pinning flower on his coat*). Try to keep in the shade as much as you can to-day, Max; it's going to be hot. Tex, tell Lize to take up the breakfast.

TEX. Yes'm. (*Crosses to L. 3 E., singing.*) "Call me up some rainy afternoon. Angel eyes, are you wise? Good-bye." [*Exit, L.*]

MAX (*sitting at table*). I've got three new Greasers to break in this morning, and will have to ride to the Forks this afternoon. Maybe I won't be back till night.

MRS. J. (*standing by his chair, arm over back of chair*). Gone all day! I wish you didn't have to work so hard.

MAX. This is our busy season. Next month things will begin to slack, and —

MRS. J. And then you and I can have our honeymoon all over again. Won't that be nice?

MAX (*preoccupied*). I guess so.

MRS. J. (*aghast*). Guess so? (*Comes c.*) Don't you know?

MAX. Of course, Willy Bud. I was thinking about those three Greasers.

MRS. J. (*hurt; crossing to her place at table*). Oh, excuse me.

Enter TEX. from L., with fruit. She serves it.

MAX. You won't be lonesome, will you?

MRS. J. Oh, no. Jean and I can contrive to make the time pass somehow. (*Enter JEAN, L.*) Did you enjoy your ride, Jean?

JEAN (*taking place at table*). It was glorious. (*With animation.*) Old Sorrel certainly can go. Up hill and down dale, flying like a wild duck on a long slant o' north wind. We galloped over miles of prairie, racing with the breeze. It was aerial, ecstatic! Over the state road like a sky-rocket, past the old school, past the willow clump, past the ranch-house. Sorrel set his own pace, and the wind tugged at my hair till it flew like the horse. Tony, the cook, yelled "Hi!" I yelled "Hi!" and tore away like a tornado. The air was cool and scented with a million wild roses and blue-bonnets, the sun not two hours high, the sky dappled with clouds. Oh, Willy Bud, there's no place on earth like Texas on a cool morning in May. [*Exit TEX., L.*]

MRS. J. Did you see any one you knew?

JEAN. A bunch of ki-otes, a bevy of quail, and two black-snakes. Also Tony, the cook. The boys were all out on the range.

MRS. J. We'll drive over this afternoon and take them some fruit. It will help break the monotony of the day.

Enter TEX., with coffee service.

JEAN (*eating fruit*). It's the monotony I love. There's nothing like it.

TEX. (*at her elbow*). Yes'm, it sure is good. 'Specially with milk and sugar. I'll be willin' to bet a pretty that you-all'll have comp'ny to-day.

MRS. J. Texana, you mustn't speak until you are addressed.

TEX. Dressed? I *am* dressed, Mis' Willy Bud. An' I got on my new pink ribbons Miss Jean give me.

MRS. J. Bring the bacon and eggs.

TEX. Yes'm. (*Crosses L.*) "When other lips and other hearts, their tales of love do tell." [*Exit, L.*]

MAX. I'm sorry you find it so monotonous here, Willy Bud.

MRS. J. It would be monotonous anywhere without you.

MAX. Looks like it's going to be a warm day.

MRS. J. (*frozen*). Yes, it does.

JEAN. I hope the amorous Alonzo won't take it into his head to go riding this morning.

MAX. He sure will. He hasn't missed a Thursday since you've been here.

JEAN. Thursday always *was* my Jonah day.

Enter TEX., with platter of bacon and eggs garnished with parsley.

TEX. (*setting platter on table with a flourish*). And there you are! Got some cream toast, too.

MRS. J. Bring it in.

TEX. In a minute. (*Crosses to L., singing.*) "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, lift up thy gates and sing."

(MAX *serves* bacon.)

JEAN. Where on earth does she learn all those songs?

MAX. From the phonograph at the ranch-house. The boys sing all day and play rag-time all night.

TEX. (*at L. C.*). And it's the grandest phonygraph. They got the "Chowder Rag" and the "Holy City" on the same record. And you sure ought to hear the lady sing, "Cuddle Up a Little Closter, Baby Mine!" She goes like this (*singing*): "Oh, cuddle up a little closter, baby mine!"

MRS. J. Texana, I told you not to sing in here.

TEX. Yes'm, but I'd done forgot.

MRS. J. Bring the toast.

TEX. Yes'm.

[*Exit, L.*

MAX. I'll take you and Jean out to the ranch-house to-morrow night to hear this wonderful phonograph.

MRS. J. And you must sing for the boys, Jean.

MAX. Sure. I want to hear you myself. Remember in Junior week how you used to sing "Australian Girls Are Very Fine Girls"? My foreman is a Cornell man, too.

MRS. J. He'll appreciate, "One—two—three—four, all fall in line!"

MAX. And then when the lights burn dim you must sing, "Far Above Cayuga's Waters." We've got a mixed crowd, but every cowboy in Texas loves music like he does his saddle.

Enter TEX., with covered dish of toast. She sets it down with a flourish, takes C. and makes sweeping bow.

MRS. J. What's the program for this morning, Jean?

JEAN. I'm going to write letters. My correspondence has accumulated with accelerated velocity.

TEX. (*-serving toast*). Celery velocipede! My Landsy Lena!

MAX. Be sure and give Tom my regards.

JEAN. Tom's not on the list.

MAX. Well, Steve Morann, Doc Carleton, Hal Tidd and the lieutenant.

JEAN. Only four? There's luck in *odd* numbers, says Rory O'More.

MRS. J. Oh, yes, and the widower; don't forget the widower.

JEAN. You're all wrong. I'm going to write to Pops, and a regular bushel-basketful to Fluff and Molly—but not a single letter to a single man.

MAX. Better not write to the married ones.

MRS. J. You must write to Bertie and thank him for the candy.

JEAN. I don't feel thankful. He knows I shouldn't eat candy, and is just trying to tempt me.

MRS. J. Shouldn't eat candy! Why, you ate pounds and pounds yesterday.

JEAN. I know it. I couldn't withstand the temptation. If he keeps on sending bitter chocolates I'll be like the fat lady in the side-show. I *won't* thank him.

MRS. J. Well, if you don't thank the lieutenant for those books and magazines, I'll do it myself.

JEAN. Go ahead. I shouldn't read that frothy kind of literature. It spoils my taste for more serious things.

MRS. J. Yesterday you read "The Girl Who Loved," and the day before you spent hours over "Cupid's Playthings."

JEAN. I know it. If I'd had Todd's Astronomy and Kant's Philosophy I would have read them, but I didn't. So I just *had* to read the cute, comfy, lovey books he sent.

MRS. J. Well, there's nothing else to do but read.

MAX. Tex, bring the cakes.

TEX. Yes, sir. (*Crosses L., sings.*) "Everybody's doin' it now." [*Exit, L., with toast, meat dishes and plates.*]

JEAN. Tex is fast becoming used to city ways. She's learned all the songs from the phonograph, and yesterday she asked me where to send for some false curls, a fascinator, and a wavy front. She certainly is becoming the city lady.

MAX. She'll want her dresses cut a-la-carte next. (*Enter*

TEX., *from L., with plates of cakes. She serves them.*) Tex, if you're a good girl, I'll take you with us over to the ranch-house to-morrow night.

TEX. (*with closed lips*). Um-um-um. I'll be so good you-all won't know me. And will you have 'em play the phony-graph, Mr. Max?

MAX. Sure. As much as you like.

TEX. I'm jest plumb crazy about that "Cuddle up a little closter, baby mine." And one of them cowboys winked real cute at me the last time I was out. The little one what's cross-eyed in one eye.

JEAN. You better leave Tex at home to-morrow night, Max. Some of these days she'll be eloping with one of the cowboys, and then what will Willy Bud do?

TEX. No, *mam!* I sure ain't goin' to 'lope with no man. When I get married I want a white sating dress with yellow beads and orange blossoms, and a cake, and a ring and presents. I ain't goin' to 'lope, I sure ain't. (*Crosses to L., and sings.*) "When other lips and other hearts, their tales of love do tell." [Exit, L.

MAX (*rising*). Well, I must be off.

MRS. J. (*rising*). Come home as soon as you can, Max.

MAX (*carelessly*). All right.

JEAN (*crossing to desk, picking up novel, reading title*). "The Mystery of the Broken Wedding Ring." (*Drops it.*) Mrs. Davidson's detective fiction. I wonder if any of these exciting hairbreadth escapes ever happen in real life.

MAX. Never. Real life is just humdrum every-day plain existence. The heroes all are old and ugly.

MRS. J. (*sadly*). And the little god Love hides in the garret and is lost after the honeymoon.

MAX. Well, after the honeymoon, old man Work rules the house.

MRS. J. And poor little frightened Love is ashamed to be seen.

JEAN. Nonsense. Old man Work and little boy Love are the best of chums. They are never truly happy unless they rule the house together. Without Work little Love would shiver and grow thin and sigh himself away; and without Love old man Work would run away to more pleasant quarters. But when they are together Poverty and Doubt and Care and Jealousy all fly away, and Work and Love bring true Happiness.

MRS. J. That's only in the story book.

JEAN. Yes, and it's in the Book of Life. Good-bye, Max. I'm going to invite Pops to come out to the ranch.

MAX (*putting on riding gloves*). Sure thing. I haven't seen the Governor for a year. Good-bye.

JEAN. Did you see anything of my fountain pen, Willy Bud?

MRS. J. It's on your desk.

[*Exit* JEAN, L. I E.

MAX. Well, keep out of mischief while I'm gone.

MRS. J. (*sighing*). I only wish there was some mischief to get into.

MAX (*taking her hands*). Lonely out here, ain't you, Bud?

MRS. J. It's not the loneliness I hate, it's—it's—oh, Max, you *do* love me, don't you?

MAX. Of course I do. But one would suppose we had been married a week instead of a year. Is there any more of that saddle oil down cellar? I promised Larry to bring him out a pint.

MRS. J. It's in the green bottle on the hanging shelf. (MAX *crosses to trap-door in c. of stage, lifts rug, lifts door, and descends.*) Texana, clear the table.

TEX. (*outside L.*). Yes'm. (*Enter L., singing.*) "And the star spangled banner in triumph shall wave, O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave." (*Clears dining table. Places dishes, cloth and pad on tray. Puts Indian cloth, books, magazines and large work-basket on table. Exit with tray singing.*) "The hours I spent with thee, dear heart, Are as a string of pearls to me, And for bonnie Annie Laurie I would lay me down and dee." [*Exit, L.*

MRS. J. (*who has been assisting TEX. with table*). Each day he seems to be growing colder. (*Repeats sadly.*)

"Oh, memories that bless and burn,
Oh, barren gain and bitter loss,
I kiss each bead and strive at last to learn,
To kiss the cross, sweetheart, to kiss the cross."

MAX (*coming up through the trap*). I'll take the whole bottle. By-bye, Willy Bud. (*Starts to exit c.*)

MRS. J. Before we were married you never used to leave me like this.

MAX. How like a woman. Well, we're old married folks now, and not supposed to act like a couple of kid lovers. Don't be lonesome.

[*Exit, C. D.*

MRS. J. (*standing motionless for a moment—hurt*). A couple of kid lovers. And I thought my romance would last forever. He's tired of me. Tired of me already—and we've only been married a year. (*Sinks in chair L.*) He doesn't love me—and I—(*sobbing*) I think the world of him. I wonder if he regrets our marriage. Oh, he can't—he can't. (*Sobs.*)

Enter JEAN, L. Comes to MRS. J.

JEAN. Why, Bud, what's the matter?

MRS. J. (*drying eyes hastily*). Oh, nothing. That is, nothing of any consequence.

JEAN (*sitting on arm of MRS. J.'s chair, her arm around her*). You were crying!

MRS. J. No, I wasn't.

JEAN. Bud!

MRS. J. Well, just a little!

JEAN. It's Max.

MRS. J. How did you know?

JEAN. It's the way he's been treating you.

MRS. J. No—he's as generous as a king.

JEAN. Yes, I know; but his manner—

MRS. J. (*impulsively*). Jean, no man on earth is the same after his honeymoon.

JEAN. Of course not. There's no use baiting a trap after you've caught the mouse.

MRS. J. The—mouse—sometimes—gets—away, Jean. I'm so lonesome and so—so miserable.

JEAN. Do you know what Max needs? Just a good dose of the Clint Madison treatment.

MRS. J. The Clint Madison treatment?

JEAN. You remember Clint and Dorothy Madison?

MRS. J. Of course. But I thought they were as happy as the sandboy in the proverb.

JEAN. At present, yes; but you should have seen them a year ago. Dorothy tired of Clint and neglected him shamefully. Parties, bridge, golf, teas, the balls, the opera! She did everything and went everywhere—but never with her husband.

MRS. J. Poor old Clint!

JEAN. He kept on adoring her in his big clumsy way, never dreaming that there was only one thing on earth she needed, and that he was the only person to give it to her.

MRS. J. What was that?

JEAN. A double dose of her own medicine. Spare the rod and spoil the husband. Now, Max ——

MRS. J. Do you think that that's what Max needs?

JEAN. Metaphorically, yes. I went to visit the Madisons about the time when things were at their worst. Dorothy was madder than ever in her folly hunt, and Clint was desperate. Divorce threatened. I summed the whole thing up in a nutshell, administered the cure, and now Dot adores Clint and Clint adores Dot, and they are the ideal young married couple.

MRS. J. (*taking JEAN'S hands impulsively*). And how did you bring it about? What was this wonderful cure?

JEAN. The simplest thing in the world. Dot was busy flirting with others, so I simply made Clint flirt with me.

MRS. J. But Dot, what did *she* say?

JEAN. Oh, it made her furious. Clint took me everywhere. Dot became jealous. Her interest in her husband awakened, —her love rekindled. Slow music, red fire, tableau and little Miss Fixit joining their hands and saying, "Heaven bless you, my children!"

MRS. J. But if Max flirted with *you*, that wouldn't arouse his interest in *me*.

JEAN. Of course it wouldn't. *You* must do the flirting.

MRS. J. I?

JEAN. That's the answer.

MRS. J. Oh, I couldn't. I never could do that!

JEAN. Easiest thing in the world.

MRS. J. But whom could I flirt with?

JEAN. I hadn't thought of that.

MRS. J. Mr. Willing wouldn't do.

JEAN. Alonzo? (*Laughs.*) He'd think you were in earnest and want to elope at once. That's his hobby—elopement. He's proposed it to me six times already.

MRS. J. And to-day's Thursday.

JEAN. Yes, I suppose this will make seven. Think of some one else. Alonzo is out of the question.

MRS. J. There's no one else here.

JEAN. I might import a man.

MRS. J. Oh, do!

JEAN. No, I won't do that. I don't want to spoil my vacation. (*Suddenly.*) I have it, Willy Bud, you must write. Write a love letter ——

MRS. J. (*hesitating*). Oh, Jean, what would Max say?

JEAN. That's just the point! What *will* Max say? You

must make him jealous—furiously jealous. It's the only way.

MRS. J. But isn't it dangerous?

JEAN. Of course not. There'll be a grand reconciliation and a brand new honeymoon for both of you, with me posing as a Texas cupid in a shirt-waist.

MRS. J. I don't know any one to write to.

JEAN. So much the better. You must have a sort of imaginary lover. Tell him that he must cease his attentions to you and that, in spite of your husband's neglect, Max is all in all to you. It'll tickle Max to death.

MRS. J. But how will he get it?

JEAN. Leave that to me. I'll fix the whole affair, and if we don't corner him, lasso him, throw him and bring him to his knees, I'm not from Texas.

MRS. J. (*excitedly rising and crossing to table*). Let's write it now.

JEAN (*crossing and sitting at table*). All right. Let's strike while the iron's hot. Now, what name shall we use?

MRS. J. (*with writing material*). Suppose we address it to Tom. You remember Tom Miller, and how he used to like me?

JEAN. No, don't address it to any one you know. This must be a mystery, a deep, deadly mystery. You don't want Max to punch the head of an innocent man, do you?

MRS. J. Address it to Edward—that's such a cute name.

JEAN. Too dignified.

MRS. J. Well, Ned, then.

JEAN. Ned? No, Ted! That's cute and comfy. We'll write our love letter to Teddy.

MRS. J. (*ready to write*). How shall I begin?

JEAN. No preliminaries. Wade right in and write, "How dare you persist in addressing me! Don't you realize that your attentions may annoy me? The past is dead."

MRS. J. (*writing rapidly*). "Past is dead." That sounds good. So romantic! The past is dead. Go on.

JEAN. "You have no right to send me such letters. Even if I did once love you, that was long ago. Now I am Max Juniper's wife, and he is all the world to me."

MRS. J. That's just grand. Jean, where did you learn to write such letters?

JEAN. Never mind. It's my vivid imagination. Now for a little touch to make Max furious. Write, "I must not see

you again; but oh, Teddy boy, Max is so cold, so indifferent, and I do miss you so." Underline that—"I do miss you so."

MRS. J. Go on, go on.

JEAN. "Try to forget me as I must try to forget you." Now we must round it up with a little poetry.

MRS. J. Something from "Forgotten," or "The Rosary," or "Maud Muller."

JEAN. Maud Muller's just the thing. Write, "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are, It might have been!" That don't mean much, but it sounds good. Now, if that letter don't bring Max Juniper to his senses, I'll buy you a box of chocolates.

MRS. J. (*delighted*). He'll be as jealous as a bear. He used to rave if a man looked at me.

JEAN. I'm going to hang out my shingle, "Little Miss Fixit, Specialist for Self-Satisfied Husbands."

MRS. J. "And Neglected Wives." Jean, you're an angel.

JEAN. I know it. I can feel a halo sprouting around my head this minute.

MRS. J. Now, how will we get him to see it?

JEAN. Leave it on the desk. (*Puts letter on desk.*) Lie there, thou concentrated balm for wounded affections! And when thy deadly work is done, Two severed hearts shall beat as one. Shakespeare. (*Laughs.*)

MRS. J. To think that I have to arouse his jealousy to keep his love. He told me once that he adored me. Love must be a transient thing.

JEAN. Not at all. The ardor of engagement days may be transient, but the love flame ever burns. If it begins to flicker a little, that's only natural, and a little jealousy will always quickly fan it into flame.

MRS. J. When I married I thought our match would be ideal.

JEAN. That's what every bride thinks; but when my fatal hour comes I'll know better. There is no such thing as the ideal marriage. The nearest approach I ever saw was when a grass widow married a vegetarian; that would have been ideal, but all their children suffered from hay fever.

MRS. J. Jean, are you never serious?

JEAN. Only on the 31st of February. Now, no more sentimentalism. To-night you must put on your best, most girlish dress, then let Max read the decoy and be all ready for a grand reconciliation.

MRS. J. But suppose it doesn't work? Suppose he doesn't get jealous?

JEAN. Oh, he will; they always do. Come on. I want to read you a chapter from Schopenhauer.

(They go out R., JEAN'S arm around MRS. J.)

Enter TEX. from L., eating a banana.

TEX. *(singing)*. "Casey Jones, got another papa, Casey Jones ——" *(Speaks.)* First thing I'm a-goin' to buy when I git married is a phonygraph. Then me and it will sing duets all day long. I jest love to sing a duet with Mr. Caruso. He does the singin', and I go "La, la, la," jest grand! If Mr. Max takes me over to the ranch-house to-morrow night I'm goin' to wear my new yellow skirt and my pink silk waist, and with my red shoes and stockings I guess I'll make them cowboys set up and take notice. *(Sings.)* "Casey Jones, got another papa, Casey Jones ——" *(Knock on door c.)* Comp'ny! I'll bet a pretty it's Mr. 'Lonzo come a-courtin' Miss Jean. *(Peeks out of window cautiously.)* It's him, it's him! And he's got two boxes of candy. Ain't that just grand! *(Arranges hair, apron, etc., in front of mirror.)* Wisht he'd come a-courtin' me. He sure has got genteel manners. *(Peeks again.)* He's all dressed up. *(Giggles.)* Looks slicker'n a grasshopper on a goober vine. Wonder if he'll notice my new pink ribbons? He's just the cutest man!

(Knock at door c. repeated. TEX. crosses to door and opens it with a flourish, discovering ALONZO WILLING, very nervous in a palpably new suit, red tie, bright yellow gloves, straw hat in hand, also bouquet of flowers and two small parcels wrapped in paper. He stands bowing. TEX. makes a grand bow.)

ALONZO. Ah, good-morning, Texana.

TEX. *(giggling)*. 'Morning, Mr. 'Lonzo. I'm sure glad to see you. Come in and set.

(ALONZO comes down c.)

ALONZO. Is Miss Jean in this morning?

(Gives her his hat. She hangs it up.)

TEX. Yes, sir, she's in; she's been looking fer you.

ALONZO. How extraordinary! She didn't know I was coming.

TEX. We all kind o' 'spicioned it. This bein' Thursday. You've druv over every Thursday mornin' since Miss Jean's been here. She says Thursday always *was* her Jonah day.

ALONZO. Jonah day? How extraordinary! I wonder what she meant by that?

TEX. I'll tell her you're here. (*Crosses to door R. Raps.*) Miss Jean, Miss Jean, he's come!

JEAN (*off stage, R.*). Who is it, Texana?

TEX. It's your Mr. 'Lonzo Willing.

JEAN. I'll be there in a moment.

TEX. I'm always as happy as a 'possum in a 'simmon tree when you come, Mr. 'Lonzo.

ALONZO (*smiling*). Indeed! And why?

TEX. 'Cause Miss Jean always gives me some of the candy you bring her.

ALONZO. Then you'll be glad to-day. I've got a nice box here.

TEX. Oh, goody! Looks like you got *two* boxes.

ALONZO. No—only one. The other is a box of—a box of—articles I've been purchasing for myself.

TEX. Box of articles?

ALONZO. Yes.

TEX. What's articles?

ALONZO. Never mind. There'll be plenty of candy for you.

TEX. To-morrow night Mr. Max is goin' to take all o' we-uns over to the ranch-house to hear the phonygraph. Maybe he'll take you. It's the grandest phonygraph. A lady sings (*imitating*) "Cuddle up a little closter, baby mine!"

Enter JEAN from R.

JEAN. That will do, Texana.

TEX. (*crossing L.*). Yes'm; I was just a-goin'.

JEAN (*shaking hands with ALONZO*). So glad to see you, Mr. Willing.

TEX. (*at door*). Miss Jean, he's got a monstrous big box of candy an' a box of articles. Please, mam, can I have a article?

JEAN (*at R. C.*). Texana, I'm astonished.

TEX. Yes'm, so am I.

[*Exit, L.*]

JEAN (*putting fancy work in chair R.*). Mr. Willing, you must excuse Texana.

ALONZO. Oh, that's all right.

JEAN. I'm so glad you came over.

ALONZO. Thank you, Miss Jean, thank you. You see, Miss Jean, I drove over this morning to (*bashful business*)—to tell you—you see this being Thursday, Miss Jean, I drove over to tell you—(*pause—he swallows*) to tell you—that is to ask you—I mean I wanted to say—I'm afraid I don't make myself clear.

JEAN. You drove over? You must be tired. Won't you sit down?

ALONZO. I brought you this little bouquet of flowers!

JEAN. Oh, thank you. They are beautiful. (*Smells them.*)

ALONZO (*crossing R. ; JEAN at C.*). That's why I brought them to *you*. The flowers are not the only beauties here. I know one beneath this roof who is fairer than any flower —

JEAN. You must mean Texana.

(*Places flowers in vase and crosses L.*)

ALONZO. Texana! How extraordinary! Do you know, Miss Jean, that I rode over this morning with a definite purpose. I have a question I want to ask you. You know I have known you but a short time —

JEAN. Won't you sit down, Mr. Willing?

ALONZO. Thank you. (*He places packages on floor and sits in chair where JEAN placed her work. He is supposed to sit on needle.*) Ouch! (*Jumps up.*)

JEAN. Why, what's the matter? (*Rises.*)

ALONZO. How very extraordinary! I have an aching tooth. (*Rubs hip.*) And every once in a while it throbs like anything. (*Rubs hip.*)

JEAN. Isn't that too bad?

ALONZO (*coming toward her*). Miss Jean, I want to tell you this morning the true state of my feelings toward you —

JEAN. Oh, Mr. Willing, I'm sure your tooth is paining you. Can't I get you some nitric acid or something?

ALONZO. No, thank you, it's better now. (*Crosses toward her.*) As I was saying —

JEAN. Sit down. You don't seem comfortable.

ALONZO (*speaking, and unconsciously backing toward same chair*). I came over, Miss Jean, this being Thursday, to ask you a question, one that may seem unimportant to you, but to me

it is of great, I might say of paramount, interest. I've known you but a short time, but a short time, Miss Jean (*JEAN shows that she is nervous*), and in spite of that fact, I think it is better to come to the point at once. So in order to come to the point — (*Sits—jumps up.*) Ouch!

JEAN. Why, Mr. Willing!

ALONZO. It's that tooth, the awfulest pain! (*Rubs hip.*)

JEAN. I must get you something.

ALONZO. No, thank you.

JEAN. Oh, but I insist. At least take a cup of coffee.

(*Rings bell.*)

ALONZO (*crossing to her*). But I have something important to say to you. My whole future depends upon your answer. I only want to have you respond to me, to look into your eyes and hear you say —

Enter TEX., from L., singing.

TEX. "It's a bear, it's a bear, it's a bear!"

JEAN. Texana!

TEX. Yes'm. I thought I heard the bell ring.

JEAN. Bring Mr. Willing a cup of coffee.

TEX. Cup of coffee? Yes'm. (*Exit L., singing.*) "Everybody's doing it now."

ALONZO. Now, Miss Jean, in spite of interruptions, I came over this morning with the decided purpose of asking you to —

JEAN. I wonder what has become of my fancy work!

ALONZO. Your fancy work?

JEAN. Yes; I'm making the dearest little doilies for Willy Bud, all embroidered in blue forget-me-nots.

ALONZO. I don't think I've seen it.

JEAN (*crossing to R.*). Why, here it is. I'm afraid you've been sitting on it.

ALONZO (*rubbing hip*). Yes, I'm afraid I have.

JEAN. Isn't it pretty—and don't you think that I'm industrious?

ALONZO. It isn't half as pretty as you are. Do you know, Miss Jean, what I was trying to say? I wanted to tell you—to tell you —

Enter TEX., from L., singing.

TEX. "Go tell Aunt Sally her old gray goose is dead."

ALONZO. How very extraordinary!

JEAN. Now sit down here and have some coffee with me.

(TEX. *places coffee service on table and exits humming.*)

ALONZO. Just a moment. I knew that you were fond of sweets, and so I brought you over a little box of candy. Sweets to the sweet, you know. (*Sits at table.*)

JEAN. It's so good of you.

ALONZO. I thought you would be pleased. I wanted —

JEAN (*crossing back of table and pouring coffee*). I'm afraid your coffee will get cold. Did you drive over? Willy Bud will be glad to see you. We generally find the mornings so lonesome.

ALONZO. Now, Miss Jean, I'm a straightforward man, and want to get to the point at once.

JEAN (*holding up fancy work*). Again?

ALONZO. No, not that! You must know that I want to ask you to —

JEAN (*nervously*). Have some sugar?

(*Crosses c. with box.*)

ALONZO (*absent-mindedly putting seven or eight lumps of sugar in his coffee*). I've got a nice ranch just three miles out from town, about three hundred acres, and nearly eight hundred head of cattle, and a new house; and so I thought that maybe I—I mean that maybe you—I mean that maybe we —

(*During preceding speech JEAN has been opening the fancy box.*

On the words "that maybe we," she holds up a pair of gray woolen socks, and drops the box in astonishment. As she does this, ALONZO, whose hand is in the sugar bowl, extends his fingers, and clamps the bowl on his hand.)

JEAN (*astonished*). Why, Mr. Willing!

ALONZO (*crossing to her, the bowl still on hand*). Miss Jean, I—they're mine! That is—how very extraordinary!

(*Looks at sugar bowl. Pause.*)

JEAN (*laughing*). Here, let me help you.

(*Removes bowl and places it on the table.*)

ALONZO. I'm afraid I gave you the wrong package.

JEAN. Yes, I'm afraid you did!

ALONZO. I got those over to the store. Here is the right package.

JEAN. Thank you.

ALONZO. Do you know, Miss Jean, that you have made a decided impression on me. You're so honest and outspoken.

JEAN. How nice of you to describe me as honest. I'd rather be honest than pretty.

ALONZO. Well, you are both.

JEAN. Oh, I know that. And I'm good, too. Just because it's my nature to be.

ALONZO. There's no one knows it better than I, and so I've come to the conclusion that I'd ask you to —

Enter MRS. J., from R.

MRS. J. (*coming down*). Why, it's Mr. Willing. How are you this morning?

ALONZO (*shaking hands*). Quite well, thank you. I don't need to ask you.

MRS. J. Nothing ever troubles me but ennui. (*Rings bell.*)

ALONZO. I just drove over this morning to show you all my new horse. He is surely a speeder, but so tame that any lady can drive him. (*Looks significantly at JEAN.*) He's the famous Emperor Charles.

MRS. J. From the Gibson stables?

ALONZO. Yes, the pride of the lot.

JEAN. Oh, let's go down and see him.

MRS. J. (*going R.*). I'll get your hat.

JEAN. He won the two-mile last year, didn't he?

ALONZO. He surely did.

Enter TEX.

JEAN. Tex, we're going down the lane to look at Mr. Willing's horse.

TEX. Yes'm. (*Hums softly.*)

Enter MRS. J. from R. with white sunbonnets.

MRS. J. It's a little warm this morning.

(MRS. J., JEAN and ALONZO go out C., talking. When she is alone TEX. bursts into song.)

TEX. "I'd leave my happy home for you, For you're the nicest man I ever knew!" (*Looks at coffee.*) Humph, didn't drink none after all. Wonder if he give her the candy yet? He sure does bring good candy. The man what gets me'll have to bring candy, too. When they come a-courtin' me I'm goin' to keep 'em danglin' on the string and a-bringin' me presents and treatin' me nice. That's the way Miss Jean does, and the newspapers say that she's the belle of Texas. And she can keep half a dozen goin' at once, and nary a one ever suspects but what he's the whole fireworks. (*Sings.*) "Casey Jones, got another papa, Casey Jones ——" (*Loud knock on door c.* TEX. *peeks out of the window.*) My Landsy Lena! What on earth's a-rappin' at our door? I'll bet a pretty they're burglars. Got eyes like a bullfrog with the mumps.

(*Louder knock.* TEX., *frightened, goes to door and opens it a little way.*)

VICTORIA (*out c.*). Is the lady of the house in?

TEX. No'm, we don't wanter buy nothin'. We've got plenty of 'em now.

VIC. I want to see your mistress!

TEX. Who—Mis' Juniper?

VIC. Yes.

TEX. (*opening door*). Come in.

Enter TED KEEGAN and VIC., with large auto coats, caps, goggles, and gauntlets.

VIC. Thank you.

TEX. Take a seat and make yourself at home. Mis' Juniper'll be here in a minute. Just look at them eyes!

TED (*removing goggles and cap*). Say, cutie, we're in an awful fix out here.

TEX. My name is Miss Gump. (*Giggles. Then aside.*) Ain't he jest perfect!

TED (*coming down l.*). You see, our benzine buggy got locoed about quarter of a mile down the dusty, so I says to my lady friend, says I, "Let's beat it back to that house we just passed and hit 'em fer some choo-choo water and a wrench to tickle the carbuteer." Get me?

TEX. (*down c.*). Huh? (*Meaning "What?"*)

TED. I said, did you get me—my spiel—my lingo?

TEX. Your what?

TED. My line o' talk. Don't you understand?

TEX. (*frightened; pausing, then brightening up and saying*). Yes, sir; I understand your talk all right, but I don't just know what you're saying.

TED. It's English—can't you understand English?

TEX. Who—me?

TED (*shouting*). Yes, you! Gee, if this ain't a tall timber Jane fer fair!

VIC. (*down R.*). One moment, Ted. She doesn't understand you.

TED. Don't understand me! What does she want me to do—talk with me fingers?

VIC. Did you say that your mistress' name was Mrs. Juniper?

TEX. Yes'm. I'm her hired girl. Miss Texana Gump.

(*Giggles.*)

VIC. (*grandly*). And where is Mrs. Juniper, my good girl?

TEX. She and Miss Jean's gone down the lane to look at Mr. Willing's new horse. And it's the finest horse! Name of Emperor Charles from the Gibson stables. Won the two-mile heat last year.

VIC. (*opening cloak and revealing elaborate ball gown*). Would you mind finding her for us?

TEX. (*staring open-mouthed at the gown*). Yes, mam. (*She backs L. and runs into TED, turns and makes him a bow.*) 'Scuse me, please, mam.

TED (*elaborate bow*). With the greatest of pleasure, my lady.

TEX. Ain't he just perfect! (*Sings.*) "Oh, you beautiful doll, you great big beautiful doll, I'd leave my happy home for you." [Exit, C. D.]

VIC. (*sinking in chair*). What time is it, Ted?

TED (*looking at watch*). Nine o'clock.

VIC. We've driven all night.

TED. Tired?

VIC. With all this excitement? Never. I'm sure those men we passed are after us. Did you see the way they looked as we whirled by?

TED. We passed 'em like a streak of lightning; they couldn't have recognized us. You ain't scared, are you?

VIC. Of course not. (*Nervously.*) Do you think they were officers?

TED. I couldn't see. Have you got the box all right?

VIC. Yes. (*Shows hand-bag.*) Here it is.

TED. Easy picking so far. We've got a good hour's start. This thing is going to pan out big, Vic.

VIC. We must get away from here. Do you think you can repair the car?

TED. Surest thing you know. But I got to get some gasoline and a wrench. The old gray car sure did good service.

VIC. Why didn't you get enough gasoline when we started?

TED. Well, I couldn't think of everything.

VIC. This looks like a nice place. I tell you, Ted, a good country breakfast wouldn't go bad, would it?

TED. We'll have to grab what we can get, till we reach Houston.

VIC. Suppose they haven't any gasoline?

TED. Luck's been with us so far, so let's keep on trusting.

Enter MRS. J., JEAN, ALONZO and TEX. *from* C. D. MRS. J. *comes down* C.; JEAN and ALONZO *up* R. C.; VIC. *rises down* R.; TED *down* L.; TEX. *near door* L.

TEX. Here they are, Mis' Willy Bud.

MRS. J. (*to* VIC.). Good-morning. I'm Mrs. Juniper.

VIC. We're two unfortunate tourists from San Antone. We were going at full speed, and about half a mile past your house something broke and the gasoline gave out—and here we are stranded.

TED (*coming* L. C.). You see, we was hittin' it up de pike when —

VIC. (*interrupting*). We walked back here to see if we could buy some gasoline and borrow some repairing tools.

MRS. J. I'm afraid I haven't any gasoline, but you're welcome to the tools. But won't you let me give you some breakfast first?

TED. Breakfast! Surest thing you know.

VIC. You are too kind.

MRS. J. Excuse me a moment. Come, Texana.

[*Exit* L., *followed by* TEX.

JEAN (*coming down* C.). Didn't you find it rather dusty driving?

VIC. (*drawling*). Rather!

TED. And thoisty. Believe me, that was some drive. All the way from San Antone with full steam on. We got to make Houston by to-night.

JEAN. The roads are rather bad.

VIC. Simply frightful. American roads usually are.

TED. The roads don't make no difference. We simply *got* to get there. You see, it's this way——

VIC. Maybe the young lady isn't interested in our trip.

JEAN. Interested? Of course I am. I wish you the best of luck.

ALONZO. It's all right for about eight miles, then you strike sand.

VIC. I hope we can get some gasoline.

Enter MRS. J., with large platter of sandwiches and cakes, followed by TEX., with pitcher of milk and two glasses on a tray.

TED (*drinking milk*). Say, that hits the right spot all right, all right! (*Takes five or six sandwiches.*) But I got to go and fix that car if we're ever goin' to reach Houston.

MRS. J. Alonzo, you and I will take the gentleman to the stable and Uncle Amos will find what he wants.

TED. Much obliged. Want to come, Vic?

VIC. No, I'm so tired that I simply won't walk another unnecessary step. (*To JEAN.*) You see, we've been riding all night.

JEAN. All night?

[*Exit TEX., L., with tray, flirting with TED.*]

VIC. Yes, and there wasn't even a moon. (*To TED.*) If you get the car fixed drive back here for me. That is—if I may stay. (*Glances at MRS. J.*)

MRS. J. Why, of course you may! (*Goes to C. D.*) Come with me, Mr.—Mr.——?

TED. Theodore Keegan, ma'am—known to me friends as Ted.

MRS. J. } (*gasping*). Ted!

JEAN

TED. Yes'm. This lady is—is—my sister, Miss Keegan.

MRS. J. This is Mr. Willing, Mr. Keegan. (*Men shake hands.*) And this is my guest, Miss MacLean.

TED (*crossing to JEAN and shaking hands*). Pleasure is all mine, all right—all right!

JEAN (*distantly*). Thank you.

VIC. (*sharply*). The lady is waiting for you, Ted.

TED. Oh, that's all right. I'm on.

[*Exeunt* MRS. J., ALONZO and TED, C. D.]

JEAN. You must sit here and rest now. Let me take your coat and hat.

(*Removes them showing VIC. in full ball costume. JEAN gasps.*)

VIC. (*sinking in easy chair*). This is a strange traveling dress, isn't it? You see we were at a ball last night when Ted suggested this terrible fly-by-night ride! We just had time to slip on our motor coats and caps, and away we ran!

JEAN. You ran away?

(*Puts VIC.'s cloak and hat on table.*)

VIC. (*confused*). I mean—we—took a ride. I *do* hope Ted will be able to fix the machine. We must be in Houston to-morrow morning.

JEAN. I hope you'll make it. Is your brother skillful in repairing a car?

VIC. (*off her guard*). My brother!

JEAN (*innocently*). Yes—he is your brother, isn't he?

(*Sits.*)

VIC. Oh, yes, of course. I think he can repair the car.

JEAN. Why don't you spend the day and night here, and start for Houston in the cool of the morning?

VIC. Oh, we wouldn't dare! That is (*confused*), it is of the utmost importance that we reach there to-morrow. But it's awfully sweet in you to ask us.

JEAN. We're rather lonely here. You see we're off the main road and it's such an out-of-the-way place.

VIC. I hadn't thought of that. It is out of the way, isn't it? Ted and I took the wrong turn from the main road, and got lost in your lane. I don't see how you can be lonely here, it's so delightful. I love the country—so quiet and far off and—safe! Away from the heartaches and cruelties of the city! I'll speak to Ted. Probably we shall accept your invitation after all.

JEAN. I hope you can.

VIC. Do you know your face seems strangely familiar to me. I wonder if we haven't met before!

JEAN. I've been in San Antone and Houston frequently.

VIC. I am sure I've seen you somewhere. I remember now—you are Miss MacLean, the governor's daughter.

JEAN. Yes. I'm the power behind the throne.

VIC. It must be grand to be the power behind the governor's throne. What a world of good you can do. Think of the miserable wretches in prison that a single stroke from your father's pen would liberate, would release them from their darkness, their despair, and give them freedom and the sight of the blessed sun once more. I would give the world if I were the governor's daughter!

JEAN. It's a big responsibility. Justice must rule as well as mercy.

VIC. I have heard of your kindness to the poor and the—unfortunate. It was you who caused your father to release Dan Knellman. I read it all in the papers.

JEAN. Poor Knellman—and I'm afraid he was guilty. But that's just like me, rushing right in where angels fear to tread!

VIC. It was the act of an angel. It is a pleasure and an honor to have met you. Perhaps you can help me——

JEAN. Perhaps I can. Perhaps I can help you both.

VIC. Both? Oh, you mean Ted?

JEAN. Of course. That's my specialty, helping lovers in distress.

VIC. Yes, but you see we are not——

JEAN. Oh, I'm sure you are. You see, I have guessed your secret.

VIC. You mean——?

JEAN (*leaning toward her*). That young man isn't your brother at all.

VIC. Ted? Yes—you have guessed our secret. He isn't my brother.

JEAN. I knew it; I knew it. You're eloping. Isn't it romantic! An eloping couple at the 'Tau Cross ranch! But is there any one after you?

VIC. (*nervously*). I don't know. But they shan't take me. I'll never go back—never!

JEAN. That's the way to talk.

VIC. You see I met Ted at the Floral Ball last night.

JEAN. And they'd been keeping you apart!

VIC. Yes. I hadn't seen him before for months. And I was so miserable——

JEAN. They want you to marry some one else?

VIC. Yes. A man old enough to be my father, a man I hate and despise.

JEAN. It's just like a play.

VIC. He's middle-aged and pious and rich! But I'll never marry him—never—never—never!

JEAN. Hurrah for you!

VIC. You see I am an orphan and my brothers are my guardians. They watched my every move. But last night at the ball we gave them the slip. We double crossed 'em, hurried from the ballroom, got in a taxi, rushed to my hotel, got my ready money and jewels! Ted brought his car—one leap and we were off!

JEAN. You're a heroine!

VIC. We drove all night long. I suppose my father is searching all over San Antone for me.

JEAN. Your father! I thought you were an orphan!

VIC. I mean the man who wanted to marry me; I always called him father. Maybe they're after us! But they shan't take me back. (*Rises and speaks dramatically.*) They shan't separate us! I'll never marry that man, never!

JEAN. My, how I admire your courage. I wish we had a parson here, then he could tie the knot, and all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't get you back from Houston again.

VIC. You are so good. (*Looks out of window nervously.*) I wonder if he has fixed the car.

JEAN. This is the most exciting thing I've ever seen. A runaway match! Maybe with villains in hot pursuit.

VIC. They must not catch us—they mustn't! You see, I'm under age, and they could force me back home, and I mightn't see Ted again for ages and ages.

TEX. (*out L.*). Miss Jean, Miss Jean — (*Enters L., breathlessly.*) Oh, Miss Jean, a bunch o' men is at the top o' the hill riding down here like a house afire.

JEAN (*rushing to window*). I can see three of them.

VIC. They're after us!

JEAN. The villains!

TEX. And the villain still pursued her!

VIC. (*looking out*). My brothers! Hide me, hide me. Here, take my jewels; they'll be safe with you.

(*Gives JEAN the bag.*)

JEAN. Where can I hide you? ("*Hurry*" music.)

TEX. Put her down cellar. (*Lifts trap.*) You just squeeze down in here —

JEAN. That will be the first place they'll look.

(*Puts bag on desk.*)

TEX. (*excitedly*). Put her up the chimbly—put her up the chimbly!

JEAN. No. (*Points L.*) Go in there in my room. Get into the wardrobe.

TEX. (*at window*). They're ridin' up the lane. Three of 'em.

JEAN. I'll meet them and throw them off the scent. Leave it to me, I'll fix it. I've handled brothers before. A romance is just my element.

TEX. Just my elephant, too.

VIC. I trust you. (*Kisses JEAN'S hand.*) My fate is in your hands. [*Exit, L. I E.*]

TEX. Oh, Miss Jean, they're ridin' in the gate.

(*Noise of galloping.*)

JEAN (*dragging rocking-chair on trap and sitting*). Isn't this exciting, Texana?

TEX. It shore is. I'm teetotally skeered plumb to death. Are they villains like you read about in the novel books? What'll I say to 'em? I don't know how to talk to a villain!

JEAN. Don't say a word—not a look—not a whisper—don't even breathe! (*Funny, awkward pose by TEX.*) Be as dumb as an oyster.

TEX. Deef and dumb?

JEAN. Yes, the very thing! Talk this way.

(*Dumb bus. with fingers.*)

TEX. (*working fingers rapidly*). Is that the way?

JEAN. Yes, that's right.

(*Loud knock, C. D.*)

TEX. I'm skeered.

(*JEAN talks deaf and dumb bus. to TEX., who answers same grotesquely.*)

JEAN (*whispering*). Act as though you were foolish. Like Lizzie Rook. (*Funny pose by TEX.* SHERIFF JIM LARRABEE

outside knocking on door with revolver.) Leave 'em to me.
Open the door.

TEX. (*frightened, trembling, whispering*). I dassn't!

JEAN. Open the door!

(TEX. *trembling opens door and discovers JIM and two supers dressed as cowboys, dust-covered and armed. End music.*)

JIM (*removing sombrero*). Mike, you watch the front yard and Tompkins the back. If any one tries to make a get-away use your ropes!

JEAN (*rising and standing on trap*). Good-morning.

JIM (*coming down c.*). Mornin'.

(TEX. *down L., funny pose.*)

JEAN. Can I do anything for you?

JIM. Have you seen anything of a man and a woman in a large gray touring car?

JEAN (*thinking*). A large gray touring car?

JIM. Seven passenger.

JEAN. Why, no, I haven't seen any seven-passenger touring car.

JIM. But have you seen a runaway couple?

JEAN. A couple passed the house about an hour ago. Mrs. Juniper saw them. This is her house; I am her guest.

JIM. Mrs. Max Juniper of the Tau Cross ranch?

JEAN. Yes. Won't you sit down and have a glass of milk?

JIM. No, thanks; I'm after my game.

JEAN (*sitting in chair on trap*). After them? What for?

JIM. Never you mind. I want 'em, and I'm goin' to get 'em.

JEAN (*sweetly*). Are you?

JIM. Yes, I am. I know they passed this way, and I think they might have had a breakdown.

JEAN. How very unfortunate.

JIM. I reckon they'll find it very unfortunate.

JEAN. Have they been breaking the speed laws?

JIM. Speed laws! They've been breaking bigger laws than the speed laws.

JEAN. Is it possible! But how can I help you?

JIM. We traced that touring car right here to this place, and then —

JEAN. Then you lost the trail?

JIM. Yes, we did. But we'll find 'em. The girl had on a gray auto coat and hat, and the man — (*Sees VIC.'s coat and hat.*) Jupiter, they're here! I knew it. The very hat.

JEAN (*quickly*). That's mine.

JIM (*sarcastically*). Yes, I reckon. I suppose that's what you use when you go out in the car on the ranch.

JEAN. You needn't twit me on not owning a car. I guess I've got a right to have an auto coat, if I want one. When you order cottage cheese for dinner you don't expect to have the cottage thrown in.

JIM. I'll search the house. (*Points to kitchen and speaks to TEX.*) Where does that door lead to?

JEAN (*quickly*). She can't understand you. She's deaf, dumb, and a little foolish. Don't you see how she acts? (*TEX., toes in, extends fingers wide apart stiffly and stands with mouth open.*) Go with her if you want to and search the house.

JIM. How do you get down cellar?

JEAN. You can't go down cellar.

JIM. I can't? And I'd like to know why not!

JEAN. Because—because—well, because I've got a setting hen down there. That door leads to the kitchen.

JIM. A settin' hen, eh? (*Calls to men, who enter C. D.*) Mike, you and Tompkins watch this room. I'll look in the kitchen.

(*JEAN speaks dumb language to TEX., who answers vigorously. JEAN points L. 3 E., and TEX. exits L., followed by JIM.*)

JEAN. Gentlemen, don't mind me. Make yourselves right at home. (*The two men draw large revolvers. JEAN sits on trap and rocks.*) Pleasant weather we're having, although a little cool for May.

Enter JIM from L., followed by TEX., who stands at rear and looks at the two men, frightened at their guns.

JIM. Boys, we've got the fish. They're in this house, and they can't escape. I'm going down cellar. (*To TEX.*) How do you get down?

JEAN. You're *not* going down cellar. I tell you there's no one down there.

JIM (*laughing*). No one but a couple of settin' hens. Well, I'm just the feller to rob their nest of their golden egg and

carry them away to the State Poultry Farm at Austin. Come on now, let me down.

JEAN. If you dare! (*Nervously.*) Honestly, that setting hen mustn't be disturbed.

JIM. Have I gotta use force?

JEAN. Won't you believe me when I tell you they're not down there?

JIM. It's agin the law to believe any one.

JEAN (*to the men*). Gentlemen, I appeal to you.

JIM. That'll do now. I got to see. Let me raise the trap.

(*"Hurry" music.*)

JEAN. I will not!

JIM. I'm an officer of the law, and I'm goin' to do my duty!

JEAN. Your duty! A pretty officer you are! You want to take that poor girl back to San Antone, but she'll never marry him. Never, never, never!

JIM. Come on, boys, they're in the cellar. Guns ready.

(*Men flourish guns. TEX., much frightened, trembles.*)

JEAN. You shan't go down.

JIM. Oh, yes I will. There's only one way—and this is it.

(*Lifts JEAN, still in chair, off the trap.*)

JEAN. Don't you dare disturb my setting hen.

JIM (*descending*). It's as dark as pitch. Come on, boys.

(*Men descend.*)

JEAN (*springing up*). Quick, Tex, the hatchet and hammer and nails. (*TEX. rushes out L. and returns immediately with hatchet, hammer, and nails. JEAN and TEX. nail trap down. JIM pounds on under side. TEX. sits on trap, nailing it down. JEAN runs to L. I E.*) Come, quick! (*Enter VIC.*) The coast is clear. Now run for life—and liberty—and love!

(*Exit VIC., C. D. JEAN stands in door waving auto scarf after her. TEX. sits on trap talking dumb fashion. JIM pounds on under side of trap.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as Act I. As the time is continuous, TEX. and JEAN are discovered in the positions held at the end of Act I.*

JEAN. I simply can't stand this suspense. I've just got to see if he has fixed that touring car. Then they can escape. Isn't it exciting, Tex? I'll leave the villains in your care.

TEX. I'm skeered, Miss Jean. (*Slowly.*) Them there men might shoot right up through that there door—and then where would I be at?

JEAN. Don't sit on the trap,—but guard it,—(*dramatically*) guard it, Texana, as you would your life.

(*Laughs, and exits C. D., with VIC.'s bag.*)

TEX. Yes'm, I heard what you said. (*Rises.*) I shore never did see such goings-on in all my born days. Shootin' guns an' runnin' away in automobilees—and villains in the cellar! An' all Mis' Willy Bud's preeserves down there, too! It's a shore-enough novel book. Maybe I'm dreaming all this—at home in bed and ten minutes to gettin' up time. (*Loud thump on trap.*) Nope, that ain't no dream. And Miss Jean said, "Guard 'em like you would your life." (*Gets poker from off L.*) Well, I reckon I gotta guard 'em thataway. I'll get the carvin' knife. (*Gets it from L.*) What if them villains steal Mis' Willy Bud's preeserves—er suppose they was to capture me. My Landsy Lena, suppose they was to capture me! They'd carry me away to their secret cave in the mountings, where they keep their di'monds an' captive females an' things like that! Well, if they *do* capture me, I shore hope it'll be the light-complected one with the turnover nose. He's good-lookin' even if he *is* a villain.

(*Loud thump on trap.* TEX., *very frightened, begins to talk dumb, moving fingers rapidly—also assumes funny pose of Act I.* TED *looks in at window.*)

TED (*at window*). Oh, you jolly Josie Jolly! (TEX. *trembles and talks with fingers rapidly.* TED *enters C. D., and*

comes down c.) Aw, lose it—lose it. (TEX., *with chin down, cocks head upward and looks at him.*) The lady told me to come up here and get a horse and ride to the ranch-house for some gasoline. (TEX. *holds position.*) Nix on the funny business with me. Say, come out of it! I say I gotta get a horse. A horse! Horse! (Gallops around like a horse.) Horse! Say, what's the matter with youse, anyway? (Pause.) Come on, Daffy-down-dilly, be a good pal and get me the key to the stable. (TEX. *still holds funny pose, but talks rapidly with fingers.*) Well, of all the locoed skirts I ever saw in my life, youse is de limit. I'm in a hurry, too. Come on, gazape, don't be a wall-eyed woozer!

TEX. (*indignantly, unable to hold in any longer*). All them things that you say I are you be!

TED. I knowed all the time you was tryin' to string me. Now, little Cutie Cutup, where's that key?

TEX. (*pointing to kitchen*). In there. But I can't get it.

TED. Can't get it! Why not?

TEX. I'm on guard. I'm guardin' 'em as I would my life.

TED. Guardin' who?

TEX. I dunno. The villains. They're after you and your girl. Some men. Three of 'em.

TED. Is some men after us?

TEX. *Is they?* Well, I reckon they is. One of 'em's light-complected with a turnover nose.

TED (*nervously*). Where are they?

TEX. Down cellar.

TED. Why don't they come up?

TEX. Can't *git* up. They're nailed down; and I'm guardin' 'em like I would my life.

TED (*examining trap, then laughing*). Well, you're all to the good, all right, all right. You're some sweet damson plum, kiddo!

TEX. Who, me?

TED. Little Miss You. Take it from me, kid, you're the only only.

TEX. (*slowly smiling, then speaking bashfully*). Now, you stop making up to me.

TED. You're sure one fine little girl all right, all right.

TEX. That's what Hennery used to say.

TED. Who's Hennery?

TEX. He's my steady comp'ny back home. Then I got one here, too. Name o' Ike. Ike ain't as good-lookin' as

Hennery. Only one trouble with Ike ; he's made like a clothes-pin.

TED. A clothes-pin ?

TEX. Yes, mam. Legs branches right out from under his arms. But you know you're real cute lookin', Mr.—Mr.—say, what's your name ?

TED. Little Ted Keegan. The girls who like me call me Ted. *You can call me Ted.*

TEX. Who, me ?

TED. Surest thing you know. Now tell me where the key to the stable is.

TEX. It's the big one hangin' over the sink in the kitchen.

TED. *In a minute.*

[*Exit, L.*]

TEX. Ain't he just perfect ?

Enter TED from L.

TED. I got it. So long, sugar. (*Comes down to her, grasps her wrist, and leads her L., mysteriously.*) Guard them as you would your life, and when the battle is over—ah, when the battle is over, Josephine, I shall return. (*Crosses to C. D.*) Remember ! Guard them ! With your life !

(Melodramatic exit, C. D.)

TEX. (*standing still a moment, relaxing, smiling.*) Ain't he just perfect ! Them villains is shore quiet down there, (*Crosses to trap and listens.*) Maybe they're gone to sleep. But they can't escape. Texana Gump is on guard. Only over my dead body can they get away. (*Starts L., turns suddenly toward trap, stabs with carving knife.*) Back, villain, take that—and that—and that ! (*Pause,—smiles.*) I reckon I could do 'em thataway. (*Pause.*) I shore wish Miss Jean er some of 'em would come back. 'This bein' on guard with three unknown villains in the cellar is a skeery job. (*Crosses to desk. Sings.*) "Tell me, pretty maiden, are there any more at home like you ? You great big, beautiful doll, Let me put my arms ——" (*Sees letter on desk.*) Somebody's left a letter right out here where it might get read. (*Picks it up.*) Ain't no name on the outside, nuther. How can anybody tell who it belongs to ? Maybe one of them fellers is a-tryin' to correspond to me. (*Opens it.*) And it's writ with ink ! (*Smells it.*) Hm, ain't that grand ! smells like cologne water er hair oil. I wonder if I darst to read it. (*Reads.*) "How dare

you p-e-r per s-i-s-t sist persist, How dare you persist in address-ing me? Don't you re-a-lize that your at-tent-ions may annoy me? The past is dead." The past is dead. Ain't that sweet! (*Reads.*) "You have no right to send me such letters. Even if I did love you ——" (*Speaks.*) Oh, goody, goody, it's a lovin' letter. (*Reads.*) "If I did love you, that was long a-go. Now I am Max Juniper's wife, and he is all the world to me." (*Speaks.*) My Landsy Lena, somebody's been writin' lovin' letters to Mis' Willy Bud. Ain't that just scandalous! (*Reads.*) "I mustn't see you again—but oh, Teddy boy, Max is so cold ——" (*Speaks.*) Teddy boy! Ted! It's him, it's him. And he come here to slope with Mis' Willy Bud in his automobeel. This is more excitin' then the villains in the cellar. And him makin' love to me! Heavens, what us women do suffer! Ain't he the deceitful man, though? Some men is borned deceivers, I reckon, just like some is borned with bow legs. (*Reads.*) "Max is so cold, so i-n in d-i-double-f diff e-r er e-n-t ent, in-diff-er-ent." (*Speaks.*) He shore is! (*Reads.*) "And I do miss you so. Try to for-get me as I must try to for-get you." (*Speaks.*) Ain't that pitiful! (*Reads.*) "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the sad-dest are it might have been." (*Speaks.*) And he's in love with Mis' Willy Bud and was only funnin' with me. And then that gal in the one-story dress, I wonder who she is! (*To audience.*) Ain't men just born flirts—every last one of 'em? No matter how many fish they've done caught, they're always a-anglin' and a-eyein' round for more. And that shore is the truth—I know!

Enter MRS. J., ALONZO, and JEAN, C. D. TEX. *drops open letter on desk.*

MRS. J. (*coming down c.*). Texana, where are those men?

TEX. (R. C.). Down cellar. I'm guardin' 'em with my life. They shore are powerful quiet; reckon they've gone asleep.

MRS. J. We'll leave them here, and Alonzo will drive us over to the ranch-house. Then Max and the boys can come back and release them.

TEX. Did them others git away?

JEAN. Yes, they fixed the car and got some gasoline, and will be miles away before the men get out from the cellar.

TEX. (*to* MRS. J.). Did that Mr. Teddy go too?

MRS. J. (*carelessly*). Was that his name?

TEX. His name! Yes'm, he was Ted.

MRS. J. Hurry and get your hat and cloak, Texana. We'll stay at the ranch-house until Max lets those men out.

TEX. Don't you reckon I'd better stay here and guard 'em with my life?

MRS. J. Don't be ridiculous! Come, make haste!

TEX. (*getting hat and putting it on*). Yes'm.

ALONZO (*listening at trap*). I don't hear a sound.

TEX. (*removing apron and putting on cloak*). Maybe they're smothered themselves to death! Wouldn't that be just awful? One of 'em's right good-lookin' too. Kinder light complected with a turnover nose.

MRS. J. Hurry, Texana. We've no time to waste.

TEX. Yes'm, I'm coming.

[*Exeunt ladies, c. d., followed by ALONZO.*]

(*After a marked pause TED'S head appears in the window. He looks cautiously around and then enters c. d., followed by VIC.*)

TED. Of all the crazy things I've ever done for you, this is the limit.

VIC. That will do. I gave my bag with the box of jewels to that girl. Do you suppose I want to leave *that* here on a ranch?

TED. Why didn't you hang onto it when you had it?

VIC. That's what I should have done. But those three men were right onto us. I was afraid there would be a search and, if there was, I wanted the jewels found on her instead of me.

TED. Vic, you're a wonder!

VIC. Well, we're not out of the woods yet. We're a long way from Houston.

TED. With those men safe in the cellar we've got time to burn.

VIC. That girl surely is clever. The way she got those men in the cellar—I couldn't have done it better myself.

TED. Is she sure enough the governor's daughter?

VIC. Of course she is. Haven't you heard of Little Miss Fixit? Well, she's the original. And the governor—*pouf*, she can twist him round her littlest finger.

TED. And you met her, did you?

VIC. Of course. Maybe I'll have to go to her some day

with tears in my eyes to intercede for you, when the big iron bars loom black.

TED (*shuddering*). Cut the comedy, Vic, cut it!

VIC. Go outside and watch.

TED. I'm on. (*Crosses to C. D.*) Work quick!

[*Exit, C. D.*

VIC. (*making hasty search for her bag*). It's not here on the table. Nor here. She's left it in her room. I wonder if she'd object to my borrowing one of her simple little dresses? This ball costume is a little too *outré* for a Texas ranch. I'll put on one of those linens and a gingham sunbonnet and be a little country girl once more.

[*Exit, L. I E., into JEAN'S room.*

(*After pause enter JIM from R., crawling on hands and knees. His face and clothes are very dirty.*)

JIM. They've gone. If any one was to tell me that a little slip of a girl could hoodwink Jim Larrabee like that, it would be fighting talk. Yet she did. "Don't you dare disturb my settin' hen." I reckon we did all the settin' that was done. It must be a whole gang of diamond thieves. I'm sure she isn't the one who came in the car. (*Looks from window.*) The machine is still here! I reckon they think we're still in that cellar! (*Crosses to R., and speaks off R. stealthily.*) Sh! boys, lay low. We'll round up the whole gang in a minute. It's a good thing I found that rotten board at the wood-hole. If I hadn't, we'd been down there for a week, living on preserves. Some one's out there on the gallery! (*Looks out window.*) It's the kid. Funny a person can always tell a crook when he sees him. And to think I'm going to land 'em—the slickest pair of diamond thieves in Texas. (*Crosses R.*) Quiet, boys, quiet. [*Exit, R.*

Enter ALONZO from C. D., cautiously.

ALONZO. It's all right. Everything is quiet here.

(*JIM appears at R., unseen by ALONZO.*)

Enter TEX., C. D., looking cautiously around.

TEX. Are they still down cellar?

ALONZO. I reckon so.

TEX. I hope they don't smother theirselves to death. One of 'em's real good-looking.

ALONZO. I think they're all right.

TEX. That was a fine ride, Mr. 'Lonzo. Your horse shore can go.

ALONZO. That horse is a winner.

TEX. Well, I got to get lunch ready. I can do that and guard them men at the same time.

ALONZO. Max and I will let them out when he comes.

TEX. Take a chair and set down. The others'll be right back.

ALONZO (*crossing to window; JIM disappears*). That gray car is still out here.

TEX. It is! My Landsy Lena, they'll get caught, shore. I thought they was miles away.

ALONZO. There's the young man out there now.

TEX. (*at window*). Hello, you.

Enter TED, C. D.

TED (*coming down c.*). Hello, little Joy Face!

TEX. (*down l. c.*). You're the funniest man. (*Giggles.*)

ALONZO (*down r. c.*). We thought you'd gone.

TED. Not yet, but soon.

ALONZO. Did you get the car repaired?

TED. It'll last us to Houston. We stayed to look for the package my lady friend left with that young lady.

TEX. Miss Jean's got it now. I saw it in her hand over at the ranch-house. A little bag?

TED. That's it. I'll spin over there and get it. Want to take a ride, Josephine?

TEX. Who, me?

TED. You're elected.

TEX. (*delighted*). In the automobeel?

TED. Sure.

TEX. My Landsy Lena! (*To ALONZO.*) Ain't he the elegantest thing going? Wait just a minute till I get my automobeel hat and veil. [*Exit, L. 3 E.*]

ALONZO. Those men in the cellar seem pretty quiet.

TED. They can't be too quiet for me.

ALONZO. Asleep, I presume.

Enter TEX. from L. 3 E., with bonnet and green cheese-cloth veil, very long.

TED. Ready, sister?

TEX. Betcher. Good-bye, Mr. Willing. (*Affectedly.*) Give my kindest regards to all the folks.

[*Exit, C. D., followed by TED, laughing.*]

ALONZO (*examining trap*). How very quiet they are! I hope they're not dangerous. They might make a concerted attack on the trap while I'm here by myself. (*Gets hatchet and nails.*) I must keep them down there. They might overpower me. (*Nails trap down.*)

Enter JIM and men from R., quietly, with drawn guns. They surround ALONZO.

JIM (*suddenly*). Throw up yer hands!

(ALONZO *complies.*)

ALONZO. How extraordinary—how very extraordinary!

JIM. Got you at last, eh? See, boys, he was trying to nail us down.

ALONZO. But there's a mistake. You're not after me.

JIM. I don't want no back talk. I'm sore, do you hear, sore!

ALONZO. Yes, sir.

JIM. I'm going to round up this bunch, if it takes all night.

ALONZO. But my name is —

JIM. Take him in there, boys, and watch him close. (*They seize ALONZO.*) He was the one who helped nail us in the cellar. (*Men drag ALONZO out L. 3 E., roughly, he protesting.*

JIM, *at C.*) We've winged the pigeon. Now for the lady-bird. (*Enter VIC. from L. 1 E., in JEAN'S dress and sunbonnet. JIM meets her C.*) Good-morning. I reckon you're jest the little lady we want to see.

VIC. (*looking at him steadily*). Good-morning. I am Mrs. Juniper.

JIM (*sarcastically*). Yes, you are! I've been fooled once to-day and I'm not in the humor for a joke.

VIC. (*calmly*). I don't understand you.

JIM. Will you go quietly with me, or must I use the cuffs?

VIC. I don't like your manner, sir. If you have any business here in my house, be good enough to tell me what it is.

JIM. *Your house?*

VIC. (*positively*). *My house.*

JIM. I will tell you what my business is. I'm Jim Larra-

bee, the sheriff of this county, and I'm after two diamond thieves, a man and a woman.

VIC. A man and a woman?

JIM. Does it startle you?

VIC. (*innocently*). Were they thieves? Oh, it's impossible—she seemed so innocent.

JIM. Oh, you've seen them, then?

VIC. Yes. A couple passed in a gray touring car about an hour ago. They stopped. The lady was ill. She fainted in this very room. A light-haired girl in a print dress. (*Describes TEX.*) I had the horse and buggy brought, and drove over to the ranch-house for medicine. I had just returned when you met me.

JIM (*nonplussed*). Then you *are* Mrs. Juniper?

VIC. (*proudly*). Do you think that *I* look like a diamond thief?

JIM. Well, we've got the man, anyway. And the woman can't escape.

VIC. She appeared to be such a nice little thing, too. Have you ever seen her?

JIM. I think so, once. I was a little bold, and she sat on me.

VIC. She might be hiding about the place now.

JIM (*crossing L. 3 E.*). Mike, bring in the kid. (*Enter MIKE with ALONZO bound.*) I guess this is the man all right, all right!

VIC. Yes, that's the one. He came in the car with the girl.

JIM. You and Tomkins hunt around the lot and see if you can find the girl.

VIC. (*looking out of window*). There she is now. She's in the auto.

JIM (*looking*). The one who pretended that she was deaf and dumb. I might have known. Take him in the kitchen and don't let him out of your sight. They're a slick pair—as slippery as eels. [*Exit MIKE with ALONZO, L. 3 E.*]

VIC. Don't be too hard on the poor girl. She looks so young and innocent.

JIM. I've a double score to settle with that young lady.

VIC. A double score?

JIM. Yes. A trap she once led me into. Let us step in there (*pointing R.*), and see what she does.

[*Exeunt JIM and VIC., R.*]

Enter TEX., C. D., with bag of jewels.

TEX. That automobile is the grandest thing. It don't need a horse or a mule to pull it. Just twist a little wheel and give it a kick, and there you are!

Enter JIM, R. He seizes her by both wrists.

JIM. I got ye.

TEX. (*astonished*). What you got me fer?

JIM. Deef and dumb, ain't you? (TEX., *foolish pose; talks with fingers*.) Too late. I've caught you. Pretty slick, too—but you can't fool your Uncle Jim.

TEX. Now, you let go o' me, now!

JIM. You can't fool me again. You're the slickest confidence woman in the state.

TEX. Who, me?

JIM. Yes, you. We've got your pal, too.

TEX. My what?

JIM. Your pal. Light-fingered Lin. He's in there. A pretty pair you are!

TEX. (*slowly smiling*). Do you think I'm pretty?

JIM. That'll do now. I've had enough of that country girl business.

TEX. You-all better let me go. I got this yere whole place to clean up. Everything comes at once. Look at all the mussin' you-uns done brung in. It'll take me a whole week o' red Tuesdays to get this place slicked up. Lemme go, hear! You-all better quit pesterin' me.

JIM. If you do any cleanin' up, you'll do it in jail. You're a prisoner.

TEX. You're heat-struck! Don't you call me no prisoner.

JIM. You can't get away this time, you diamond thief!

TEX. I'll bet a pretty you better take heed callin' me them names.

JIM. You can act the innocent all right—just like you did deaf and dumb, but it don't go, see! Jim Larrabee don't often make a mistake. I suspicioned you from the very first, my lady. Diamond robbery in Texas means a good ten years for you.

TEX. Do you think I'm a robber?

JIM. You'll find out when we get to San Antone.

TEX. Do you think I got a cave full of jew-els and di'monds and them?

JIM. Cut it out. I know you. That's enough.

TEX. You *don't* know me. I'm Mis' Willy Bud's hired help.

JIM. Why, look there! (*Snatches the bag and opens it.*)

TEX. That belongs to the other lady.

JIM (*taking out jewels*). You're right, it *does* belong to the other lady; that is, it did before you lifted it.

(*Puts case in bag, and all in pocket.*)

TEX. I didn't lift it. She give it to Miss Jean, and Miss Jean give it to me to keep for her.

JIM. Boys, bring in the other one. (*Exeunt men, L. I E.*) Now the best thing you can do is to confess the whole business. We've got you all rounded up. I didn't know there was such a gang.

Enter men, dragging in ALONZO.

TEX. My Landsy Lena, they've 'rested Mr. 'Lonzo.

JIM. I guess there'll be a big reward fer you two all right. Not to say nothing of the rest of the gang. It ain't every county sheriff who can round up such big game!

ALONZO (*at L. C.*). But, my dear sir, I reiterate, you've made a mistake.

TEX. (*R. C.*). Yes, sir, I reiterate, too. You shore have.

JIM. Boys, get ready to start! Got you at last, have we, Light-fingered Lin?

(*Puts handcuff on ALONZO'S right wrist.*)

ALONZO (*struggling weakly*). Here, you take that thing off of me. I protest, sir, I protest!

TEX. (*who is being held by MIKE*). Yes, sir—so do I!

JIM. If you've any protestin' to do, you'll have to do it to the chief of police at San Antone.

(*Puts handcuff on TEX.'s left wrist.*)

TEX. You-all better take that thing off'n my wrist. You hear me? You're breedin' trouble, shore as you're born.

JIM (*crossing to L. I E.*). Oh, I reckon I know what I'm doing.

TEX. (*following him and dragging ALONZO, who trips and nearly falls*). You let me go now. You let me go! I ain't done nothin'. (*Struggles with JIM.*)

ALONZO. My good girl, not so much violence.

TEX. (*crying*). Mr. 'Lonzo, please, sir, make him lemme go. I ain't no robber, honest I ain't. I'm only Texana Gump, Mis' Juniper's hired girl. (*Cries softly.*)

JIM (*as TEX. cries on his shoulder*). That'll do now. I don't want no hysterics. (*Crosses to R. I E.*)

ALONZO (*following him, dragging TEX., who trips and nearly falls*). You'll be sorry for this, Mr. Sheriff. I'm no criminal. My name is Alonzo Willing, and any one on this ranch can identify me.

JIM. I reckon I know how Willing you are.

ALONZO. Call Mrs. Juniper.

JIM. I'm beginning to think this whole ranch is a bunch of desperadoes.

TEX. I ain't no desperado, please, sir, I ain't no desperado.

(*Cries.*)

JIM. I'll bring out a posse and round up the whole bunch.

ALONZO. But I insist, sir. Call Mrs. Juniper.

TEX. I insist, too.

JIM. I guess I know who you all are all right. But I'll do as you say and ask Mrs. Juniper. (*Raps at door R.*) Mrs. Juniper, please, mam —

VIC. (*out R.*). Yes, what is it?

JIM. I got the two of 'em. They say you can identify 'em. Could you come here a minute, please, mam?

VIC. Why, of course. (*Enters R.*) So you have them safe at last?

(VIC., R. C. ; JIM, C. ; TEX. and ALONZO, L. C. ; *men at L.*)

JIM. Yes, mam, and there ain't two slicker criminals in the state of Texas.

TEX. I ain't no criminal. Please, mam, I'm Texana—you know—Mis' Juniper's hired girl.

VIC. My poor girl! I hope that now you see the error of your way.

JIM. I'm just waiting around to catch that gal who locked me down cellar, then we won't bother you no more.

ALONZO. This lady is not Mrs. Juniper.

VIC. Sir! How dare you!

JIM. This girl was tryin' to bluff me into thinkin' that she worked for you.

VIC. The idea! Why, I never even saw her before to-day.

TEX. I don't work fer her. I'm Mis' Juniper's hired girl.

JIM. Didn't you just hear her say that she never saw you before?

ALONZO. I think I understand. That lady——

JIM. That'll do fer you.

TEX. (*shouting*). She ain't Mis' Juniper!

VIC. Take them away, please, Sheriff. My nerves are all unstrung. I don't think I can stand it much longer.

JIM. All right, mam. We'll wait in the kitchen. I can't leave until I get that gal who shut me in the cellar. I tell you it's a bad bunch. Boys, take 'em in there. (*Points L.*) Sorry to have caused you all this trouble, mam. Sorry.

(*Men drag TEX. and ALONZO out L.*)

VIC. Oh, it's your duty, I suppose.

JIM. Yes'm, it shore is. And I always try to do my duty.

[*Exit, L.*

VIC. (*with a sigh of relief*). Safe! What fools these sheriffs are! Any woman can hoodwink them for all they're worth. And this is the law. Wait till the suffragists have women sheriffs! (*Looks around.*) Now, if I can only find that jewel case. She didn't leave it in her room. And she couldn't have taken it with her. It must be here. (*Crosses to desk, sees letter open. Reads.*) "How dare you persist in addressing me!" What's this? (*Reads silently; pause.*) "The past is dead." (*Pause; reads silently.*) "Oh, Teddy boy, Max is so cold!" (*Looks up.*) "Teddy boy! It's Keegan. Some one is writing to Keegan. (*Reads letter silently.*) So, he's playing a double game, is he? That's why he wanted me to come this way. He wanted to see *her*! That's why the machine broke down right in front of her door! That's why—— Oh, I've been a fool; silly, trusting fool! He's been trying to persuade her to elope with him. And I have been his dupe—his dupe. And we've only been married a month. Oh, wait till I see him. I'll get a divorce. I'll leave him forever. I'll go back to mother. (*Cries.*) I'll never see him again. And I trusted him so—I trusted him so. I might have known men are all alike. And we were so happy, so happy!

(*TED heard singing out C. D.*)

TED (*out C. D.*). "And for bonnie Annie Laurie, I would lay me down and dee!"

VIC. He's coming. Wait, just wait! (*At R. C.*)

Enter TED, C. D.

TED (*coming down L. C.*). Hello, Vic.

VIC. You dare to speak to me!

TED. What's the matter?

VIC. The matter! Oh, there's nothing the matter. Nothing at all. Only that I have found you out!

TED. Found me out?

VIC. Go to her! Go to her! Max is so cold and indifferent! Oh, I never want to lay eyes on you again. I hate you!

TED. Say, this excitement has been too much for you.

VIC. How dare you speak to me!

TED. But what's this row all about?

VIC. I've seen the letter.

TED. What letter?

VIC. From her! This letter!

TED. Give it to me.

VIC. Never! (*He crosses to her.*) Don't you dare to touch me! You shan't have it!

TED. But who is it from?

VIC. I know everything.

TED. Let me see it. (*Tries to get letter.*)

VIC. That's right—strike me—strike me!

Enter MAX, C. D.

MAX. Excuse me, is anything wrong?

VIC. Is anything wrong? Everything is wrong. I'll expose you, Ted Keegan, if it's the last thing I ever do.

TED. Vic!

MAX. I am Max Juniper. Can I be of any help to you, ma'am?

VIC. Max Juniper! Help to me! Yes, you can. This man is trying to elope with your wife.

MAX. Trying to elope with Willy Bud?

VIC. (*giving MAX letter*). Read that. Then give him what he deserves. (*Crosses to R.*) The coward! And we've only been married a month. [*Exit, R.*]

MAX (*reading letter*). "How dare you persist in addressing me?"

TED. Say, what's all this about, anyway?

(*Tries to exit, but MAX holds him by collar.*)

MAX. Hold on a minute. I've got a little score I want to settle with you, sonny!

TED. Cut out the rough business. I don't know you.

MAX. You're going to know me soon.

TED. Say, let me go. I gotta get out o' here.

MAX. Not so fast. You're the Ted, are you?

TED. My name is Ted Keegan.

MAX. That's all I want to know. (*Throws off coat.*)

Now you can go, and I'll go with you.

TED. Say, what's the matter with you? Is this whole house crazy? What did I ever do to you?

MAX (*furiously*). Do to me? *Do to me?* Oh, nothing at all. Trying to elope with my wife is nothing, I suppose. Well, I'll just take a hand in this elopement. You'll get yours!

TED. Elope! I never tried to elope with no one!

MAX. Right here's the letter! Trying to break up my home, were you? You sneaking coyote, I'll show you! (*Collars him.*) If you're any man at all —

TED. But it's a mistake. Help! Help!

MAX (*dragging him off C. D.*). I'll help you!

[*Exeunt, C. D.*]

Enter TEX. from L., dragging ALONZO. "Hurry" music.

ALONZO. What's the matter?

TEX. He called fer help! I'm goin' to rescue him!

ALONZO. Hold still. Hold still.

TEX. Come on. (*Drags him to window.*) My Landsy Lena! Mr. Max is a-being killed—Mr. Max is gettin' killed!

Enter MRS. J. from C. D.

MRS. J. Oh, help, help! Max is being murdered. Outside there — (*Faints in ALONZO'S free arm.*)

Enter JIM from L., and VIC. from R.

TEX. (*at window*). Come on! Help, help! Mr. Max is killing that man.

VIC. They're fighting? (*Faintly.*)

TEX. He's killed! Mr. Max has killed him!

VIC. Ted is killed. Oh! (*Faints in JIM'S arms at L.*)

TEX. Mis' Willy Bud! He's killed!

(*Faints in ALONZO'S other arm.*)

*Enter MAX, C. D., with TED. Both ragged and bloody.
Clothes all torn and dirty.*

MAX (*throwing TED in front of MRS. J.*). There he is!
There's your Ted!

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Same. Characters discovered in positions held at the end of Act II.*

JEAN (*outside, calling musically*). Oo-oo-oo!

TEX. (*recovering quickly*). That's Miss Jean. Thank goodness!

ALONZO. Miss Jean! (*Places MRS. J. in chair.*)

MAX. It's Jean!

(VIC. *recovers and rises. TED sits on floor, rubbing his bruises and sniffing audibly.*)

VIC. (*faintly*). I think I'm better now.

Enter JEAN, C. D.; she surveys tableau a moment, then crosses to MRS. J.

JEAN (*kneeling by MRS. J., and taking her hands*). Bud, Bud, what is it? Texana, get the smelling-salts in my room. Quick!

TEX. Yes, mam! (*Rushes out L. I E., dragging ALONZO.*)

JIM. Keep your eyes on 'em, boys. [*Exit L., with men.*]

JEAN. Max, some water. From the kitchen! (*Exit MAX, L. 3 E.*) Open the door, she must have air!

(VIC. *opens C. D.*)

MRS. J. (*slowly recovering*). Max! Where is he?

JEAN. Bud, are you better now?

MRS. J. I feel weak—and dizzy. Oh, I remember now! Max is dead! That man killed him. (*Hides face in hands.*)

JEAN. Don't, Bud! Max is here. He's all right.

MRS. J. (*looking up and speaking faintly*). And he isn't dead?

JEAN. Of course not. You've been dreaming!

MRS. J. I thought there was a fight.

TED (*aside*). I know darn well there was.

JEAN. Can you rise, Willy Bud? You must go to your room.

MRS. J. (*rising feebly, supported by JEAN*). I must have fainted.

JEAN. Come, lean on me. You must lie down.

MRS. J. Is Max here?

JEAN. Of course. Max is all right. He's in the kitchen.

Enter TEX. from L. 1 E., dragging ALONZO, and followed by JIM.

TEX. (*rushing to MRS. J.*). Here's yer smelling-salts.

JEAN (*taking it*). Thank you. Try this, Willy Bud.

MRS. J. (*smelling salts*). Let me lie down.

[*Exit R., with JEAN.*]

TEX. (*sitting in chair vacated by MRS. J.*). I'm most dead.

(*Lies back in chair.*)

Enter MAX from L. 3 E., with glass of water.

MAX (*rushing to TEX.*). Is she better now?

(*Throws water over TEX.*)

TEX. (*jumping up*). My Landsy Lena!

MAX. Texana! Where's Bud?

TEX. In there. (*To ALONZO.*) Come on, I got to find a towel. [*Exit L. 1 E., with ALONZO, followed by JIM.*]

MAX. I can't meet her now. I never want to see her again. "So cold and indifferent!" And she wants to go back to her first love. I'm going to get away from here and let her go to him. [*Exit, L. 3 E.*]

TED (*rising*). Let me get away from this joint.

VIC. Ted, do you feel better?

TED. Woman, how dare you speak to me! Oh, yes, I'm better. I feel about as gay as an angel on a marble tombstone.

VIC. It's your own fault. Why did you ever bring me here?

TED. Why did *I* bring you? You brought me!

VIC. And to think we were so happy. Go to her; she's probably fainted again.

TED. Go to her? I got troubles enough of my own.

VIC. I'm done with you. Take her if you want to.

TED. I *don't* want to. I never saw her before.

VIC. I read that letter.

TED. I never wrote no letter. That's all a bluff.

VIC. A bluff?

TED. I tell you I never saw that lady before.

VIC. Why did she write to you and call you Ted?

TED. She must have been writing to another Ted. I don't even know who she is.

VIC. Have I misjudged you? Oh, Teddy!

TED. Back—don't speak to me!

VIC. But I'm so sorry.

TED. Look at me. I feel like I'd fit loose in a gas-pipe.

VIC. The car is there. Come, now is our chance.

TED. But the jewels?

VIC. Let them go. Your safety is worth more than all the jewels in the world. Come!

TED. Can't leave this place too soon for me. Come on.

(Exeunt TED and VIC., C. D. A moment later the car is heard to leave, the noise of the engine finally dying away in the distance.)

Enter JIM from L. I E.

JIM (*speaking off L.*). Watch 'em close, boys. I'll get the others myself. I'll bet it's a regular band of criminals. A knock-down fight, a couple of diamond thieves, and that girl who locked me in the cellar! Whew, this has been an exciting morning. I'm going to round up the whole bunch.

Enter JEAN from R.

JEAN. She's feeling better.

JIM. Here she is now!

JEAN (*suddenly turning to JIM*). Now, sir, I'm ready for you. How did you get out of the cellar?

JIM (*at L. C.*). I crawled out, on my hands and knees. I *crawled* out! That's how I got out. Through a rotten wood-hole.

JEAN. We must have the rotten wood-hole fixed to-morrow!

JIM. I reckon you'll have other things to 'tend to to-morrow. You're going back to San Antone with me!

JEAN. I am?

JIM. Yes, you are. You'll find locking me in that cellar wasn't the lark you thought it was.

JEAN. I never thought it was a lark. It was hard work.

JIM. Yes, and you'll be sorry you ever tried to do it.

JEAN. Tried? I think I did do it.

JIM. Yes, you did. I reckon you'll have plenty of time to think it over when we get to San Antone.

JEAN. So you insist on taking her back?

JIM. I insist on taking you *all* back.

JEAN. You should be ashamed of yourself! Have you no heart? No sympathetic brotherly feeling? It's abominable in you forcing her to give up the man she loves and to marry a man twice her age, just because he's rich.

JIM. I don't know what you're talking about.

JEAN. You should be ashamed—ashamed! She loves this man she ran away with,—loves him! And that's worth more than all the money in the world. What if he is poor? Just because you happen to be her brother doesn't give you the right to make her miserable for life.

JIM (*desperately*). Make *who* miserable?

JEAN (*at R. C.*). Your sister.

JIM. I haven't got a sister!

JEAN. Oh, then you're the other one?

JIM. What other one?

JEAN. The rich man who wants to marry her and separate them.

JIM. I don't want to marry no one.

JEAN. Then why not let them go? Why not let them seek their own road to happiness?

JIM. Let 'em go? Well, I reckon not. I'm an officer of the law, and I'm going to do my duty.

JEAN. But she loves him.

JIM. Well, it ain't my fault.

JEAN. Then why are you going to force her back to San Antone?

JIM. Because it's my duty to do it. You needn't think that just because she loves him that I'm goin' to let 'em escape. I'm going to take you, too.

JEAN. You say that you are an officer of the law; what officer?

JIM. I'm Jim Larrabee, the sheriff of this county.

JEAN. Let me see your badge.

JIM (*showing it on vest*). There you are!

JEAN. Did her brothers send you after them?

JIM. I don't know nothin' about no brothers. I want 'em for that diamond robbery last night at San Antone.

JEAN. Diamond robbery?

JIM (*sarcastically*). Oh, I suppose you don't know anything about it?

JEAN. Of course I don't.

JIM. Then why did you try to let 'em escape by locking me in the cellar?

JEAN. Because she said that you were her brother. She said you were trying to force her back to town to marry a man she hated.

JIM. Said *I* was! Why, I never saw either of 'em before to-day.

JEAN. Neither did I. Not till they came in the gray touring car.

JIM. Well, I got 'em now, anyway.

JEAN. What a fool I was! They took me in completely. I thought they were eloping.

JIM. I reckon they *was* eloping. With about twenty thousand dollars' worth of Mrs. Dawson's diamonds!

JEAN. They don't look like criminals.

JIM. You can't always tell. They're a slick pair. She tried to make me believe she was the hired girl here.

JEAN. How did they get the diamonds?

JIM. Mrs. Dawson had a party last night. Some one got in who wasn't invited and hid themselves. In the night they made a big haul.

JEAN. Is it possible!

JIM. It shore is. Every sheriff in Texas got a telegram this morning telling them to look out for a big gray touring car with a suspicious lookin' couple. And to think I made the catch. It's my first big case. I was only sworn in last week.

JEAN. And she didn't look like a thief at all.

JIM. You'll have to come with me to San Antone.

JEAN. *I* will?

JIM. Yes, mam. You'll have to explain to the police why you locked me in that cellar.

JEAN. I won't do it.

JIM. You'll *have* to. You obstructed my arrest!

JEAN. I know I did, but you see I didn't know who you were.

JIM. That don't make no difference.

JEAN. You see, I am Mrs. Juniper's ——

JIM. You're Mrs. Juniper? You, too? That's what they *all* say!

JEAN. I was about to say that I am Mrs. Juniper's guest. I'm Miss MacLean—Jean MacLean!

JIM (*astounded*). The governor's daughter?

JEAN. Yes, the governor's daughter.

JIM. Honest, are you?

JEAN. Honest—I am. Here's my name on my watch. (JIM *examines it.*) And if that's not enough, Mr. Juniper can identify me.

JIM. And I thought you was one of them diamond thieves!

JEAN. I fear you've been reading Mrs. Dawson's detective stories.

JIM. Yes, mam, I have, and they're shore great!

JEAN. And she is the lady who lost the jewels?

JIM. Yes, mam. And I'm the man who captured the thieves. Maybe she'll write it up in a detective story. Here's her jewels.

JEAN. So you got them?

JIM. Got 'em safe and sound.

JEAN. Where are your prisoners?

JIM. There in the kitchen. My deputies are guarding them.

JEAN. I'd like to see them again. How that woman did impose on me. And to think she is a diamond thief!

JIM (*going L. and calling*). Boys, bring 'em in here. This lady wants to see 'em.

Enter men, with TEX. and ALONZO handcuffed.

JEAN (*looking at them, pausing, then laughing heartily*). Ha, ha, ha! Why, it's Mr. Willing—and Texana!

JIM. They're a slick pair.

JEAN (*still laughing*). Sheriff, I think you've made a big mistake.

JIM. A mistake?

JEAN. This gentleman is Mr. Alonzo Willing, a neighbor of ours, and this girl works for Mrs. Juniper.

TEX. (*indignantly*). That's what I told him. I told him I was Texana Gump. He ain't got the sense of a saddle-tinted long-horn, he shore ain't. Take these things off o' my wrist!

JEAN. The couple who came in the touring car were here a moment ago. The girl wore a ball dress and the man an auto coat and cap.

JIM. Them! I've been buncoed! They've escaped.

JEAN. Their car?

JIM (*rushing to window*). Is gone. After 'em, boys. Maybe there'll be another breakdown. We'll catch 'em yet.

(*Men start to C. D., and JIM to follow them.*)

TEX. (*intercepting JIM*). You unlock this thing on my arm!

JIM (*releasing her*). There you are. I'm shore sorry I made a mistake.

TEX. Yes, sir; I'm shore sorry, too.

JIM. Come on, boys. [*Exit, c., with men.*]

JEAN. I certainly feel that we owe you an apology, Mr. Willing.

ALONZO. Don't mention it. It was a little inconvenient, I'll admit, but for your sake I'd endure even greater inconveniences. You see, I came over this morning —

JEAN. Texana, hadn't you better see about lunch?

TEX. Lunch? Lunch? With all this excitement I done forgot that there ever was such a thing as eatin'! I shore got a misery in my wrists where that thing was. Ain't this been an excitin' morning? (*Sings.*) "When other lips and other hearts —" [*Exit, L.*]

ALONZO. Now, Miss Jean, my dear Miss Jean —

JEAN. Why, Mr. Willing, that sounds just like a letter.

ALONZO. You've surely guessed what I want to say to you. I came over this morning —

JEAN. This being Thursday.

ALONZO. To ask you an important question. I haven't known you long, Miss Jean, but you have made an impression on me, an ineradicable impression.

JEAN (*nervously*). Don't you think it's rather cool in here?

ALONZO. Cool? I'm burning up! The first day I saw you you dropped one of your gloves from the buggy. I picked it up. I have treasured that glove ever since. My first souvenir of you! I always keep it here (*gesturing*), next my heart!

JEAN. How sentimental!

ALONZO. You see, it represents you. I'm never without it. Inseparable! (*Searches.*) You see, here it is!

(*Fails to find it.*)

JEAN. Where is it?

ALONZO. No, it's not. How unfortunate; that inseparable article is in my other coat pocket.

JEAN. Why, Mr. Willing, how unfaithful. In your other coat! The idea! And I thought you said that you were never without it.

ALONZO. Your image is enshrined in my heart. Do you think that you could ever enshrine *my* image in *your* heart?

JEAN. I'm afraid I never could, Mr. Willing.

ALONZO. I want a wife—I need a wife. I have a fine ranch and a true heart. It's a little weak, it's true, but capable of the most sincere affection. And then I can refer you to my bank, the First National, at San Antone, and my physician, Dr. ——

JEAN. It's not necessary, Mr. Willing.

ALONZO. Then you are content? I may hope! You're going to make me the happiest of men?

JEAN. I'm afraid I can't, Mr. Willing.

ALONZO. Can't? How extraordinary!

JEAN. I'm so sorry, if you really care. I've promised Pops that I won't even fall in love until I'm twenty. At that rate I can't marry for three years yet.

ALONZO. But I'd make you a good husband.

JEAN. Too good for me, I fear. I'll tell you what to do, Mr. Willing; you come to see me some time in Austin and I'll pick you out a nice little soft-hearted, domestic, fluffy blonde kind of a wife.

ALONZO. No, if I can't have you I'll live and die a bachelor.

JEAN. As Texana said, hasn't this been an exciting morning?

ALONZO. It's one I shall never forget. Arrested and refused in the same morning!

JEAN. It's all for the best. We never would be compatible, I am sure. Just between you and me, I've got an awful temper.

ALONZO. How extraordinary!

JEAN. And extravagant! Pops says I spend more money than the legislature.

Enter TEX. from L. 3 E., singing.

TEX. "And the band played Annie Laurie." Miss Jean, can I ask Mis' Willy Bud about what to have for lunch?

JEAN. Yes, I think she is better now.

ALONZO. Well, I must be getting back home.

JEAN. Oh, won't you stay for lunch, Mr. Willing?

ALONZO. I'm afraid if there's any more excitement to-day I'll be prematurely gray. I must get back. Important business, I assure you.

JEAN. So sorry.

ALONZO (*shaking hands*). And your answer is irrevocable?

JEAN. I'm afraid it is.

ALONZO. Well, the best of luck to you. We'll always be friends.

JEAN. Of course. The best of friends.

ALONZO. May I come next Thursday?

JEAN. I'm afraid it is useless.

ALONZO. Well, good-bye.

[*Exit, c. d.*]

TEX. And ain't he comin' no more?

JEAN. I reckon not, Texana.

TEX. No more boxes of candy?

JEAN (*picking box up from desk*). You may have this one.

TEX. All of it?

JEAN. Yes, all.

TEX. Thank you, mam. Maybe he'll come over to see me. You see, we was handcuffed together—and we might have been took to jail together! I shore wish't he'd come a-bringin' me boxes of candy and articles.

Enter MRS. J. from R., slowly.

MRS. J. Where's Max?

JEAN. In the kitchen.

MRS. J. Oh, Jean, he's seen that awful letter!

TEX. How many chairs'll I set for lunch, Mis' Willy Bud?

MRS. J. Don't worry me, Texana. Lunch! I never can eat again!

TEX. I don't know whether it's to be chairs for three or chairs for seven.

MRS. J. (*nervously and impatiently*). Leave the room.

TEX. (*astonished*). My Landsy Lena! (*Crosses to door L.*) I won't put no chairs at all, and then see what you'll have to set down on.

[*Exit, L. 3 E.*]

JEAN. Willy Bud, you mustn't excite yourself.

MRS. J. I'm afraid he's seen that letter. See, it's gone!

JEAN. So much the better.

MRS. J. He'll be furious. I wish we had never written it.

JEAN. Leave it all to me. I'll fix everything. You come in my room and lie down and be sick.

MRS. J. But I don't want to lie down and be sick.

JEAN. You have to. Make him feel sorry for you. That's woman's best weapon.

MRS. J. What shall I do?

JEAN. Play on his sympathy. Have anything from a lost friend to a case of the mumps. Your fainting spell was just the thing.

MRS. J. But I *did* faint.

JEAN. Of course you did. That will make it all the easier. Hysterics would have been better. What chance has a jealous husband against a case of hysterics? That's psychology.

MRS. J. Are you sure that you can fix it all right?

JEAN. Did you ever know me to fail?

MRS. J. (*doubtfully*). All right. I'll go in your room.

JEAN. Tie a wet towel around your head and lie down. And groan; don't forget to groan. I know how to tame a husband. I'll pull down the shades.

[*Exit, L. 1 E., followed by Mrs. J.*]

Enter MAX from L. 3 E.

MAX. I'll pack my grip, ride over and catch the train and leave her forever. And we were so happy!

Enter JEAN, L. 1 E.

JEAN. Hush, not so loud—your poor wife.

MAX. What's the matter with her?

JEAN. She's ill—very ill.

MAX. Bud ill? Let me go to her.

JEAN. No, you can't see her now. It's a nervous breakdown.

(MRS. J. *appears in door L. 1 E.*)

MRS. J. (*weakly*). Max!

JEAN (*crossing to her*). Try and pull yourself together, Bud. [Exit, L.]

MRS. J. Max!

MAX (*at R.*). Say what you please. When I am far away, no one can reproach me with the taunt that I refused to listen to you.

MRS. J. Far away? Why, where are you going?

JEAN (*in door L., unseen by MAX*). Don't weaken, don't weaken. (*Disappears.*)

MAX. I don't know where I'm going, and I don't care. To the dogs, I reckon.

MRS. J. (*coming a little c.*). You've seen that letter?

MAX. And I trusted you so—and loved you. Ever since I first saw you there has been only one woman in the world for me.

MRS. J. That letter was all a mistake. A joke.

MAX. A joke! When you tell this—this (*with visible effort*) Ted—that you still care for him. When you call him “Oh, Teddy boy,” and intimate that you'll love him forever.

MRS. J. I didn't. Besides, there isn't any Ted.

MAX. There's not much. But I reckon I left enough of him for you.

MRS. J. But I don't want him—I don't know him—I never saw him before.

MAX. That letter?

MRS. J. Jean and I wrote it (*sobbing*) because I thought that you didn't love me any more (*sobbing*), and Jean said that I should try and make you jealous. (*Sobs.*) And it was all her fault. And I love you better than anything in the whole world. And you shan't go away! You shan't!

MAX (*hesitatingly*). But this Ted?

MRS. J. There never was any Ted. This man is only a coincidence.

MAX. Then it was a trick?

MRS. J. Yes. (*Sobs.*) Can you ever forgive me?

MAX. Can you forgive *me*? I doubted you—you, the truest of all women. Bud! (*Takes her in his arms.*)

MRS. J. Max!

Enter JEAN from L. I E.

JEAN. Red fire and grand tableau. I told you how it would turn out.

MRS. J. (*turning to her*). Jean, you're an angel.

JEAN. I know it. Don't you think so, too, Max?

MAX. I wish your mother were here to settle you.

JEAN (*lightly*). You talk as if I were an obstreperous cup of coffee, and mother a well-meaning but absent egg.

MRS. J. She is an angel, Max.

JEAN. You know I am.

MAX (*pausing*). Well, maybe you are.

(Noise of the automobile heard approaching.)

JEAN. It's the sheriff and the diamond robbers!

MRS. J. I'd forgotten all about them.

JEAN. He's bringing them here.

MAX. What's he bringing 'em here for?

JEAN. The chase started here, and I want to be in at the finish.

MRS. J. And to think that wretch's name happened to be Ted.

Enter JIM, followed by VIC. and TED, guarded.

JIM. Watch 'em close, boys. They can't get away again.

VIC. But I tell you it's all a mistake.

JIM. I've heard that so much to-day that I'll dream about it to-night. (*Rap heard on C. D.*)

Enter TEX., from L. 3 E.

TEX. (*singing as she crosses to the door*). "Cuddle up a little closter, baby mine!" (*Opens C. D.*)

Enter ALONZO, C. D.

ALONZO. I met old Jeffreys coming up the hill with a telegram for you, Miss Jean. I knew I could get here quicker'n he could, so I brought it. (*Hands JEAN telegram.*)

JEAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Willing.

(MAX at R. ; MRS. J. at R. C. ; JEAN at C. ; VIC. and TED, L. C. ; JIM at L. ; ALONZO near JEAN but a little up stage ; TEX. extreme L. ; men up stage.)

(JEAN reads telegram, puzzled, then smiles, looks at VIC., finally laughs and gives telegram to MRS. J., who reads it slowly, smiles and laughs. MAX reads it over his wife's shoulder and laughs loudly. The rest very curious. JEAN gives it to VIC., who reads it rapidly and smiles, and gives it to TED, who puzzles over it and then gives it to ALONZO, who reads and laughs. TEX. and JIM much worried. ALONZO passes it to JIM who reads—pauses—frowns—then smiles.)

JIM. Well, I'll be damned!

ALL. Oh!

JEAN. But isn't it funny? (*All except TEX. laugh.*)

TEX. (*timidly crossing to JEAN*). Please, mam, is it a joke?

JEAN. Joke! I reckon it is a joke. This lady and gentleman aren't robbers.

TEX. Not robbers! Why?

JEAN. Because there never was any robbery.

TEX. Whose di'monds is them, then?

JEAN. They belong to the celebrated writer of detective fiction, the lady who wanted to be arrested —

JIM. The lady who *was* arrested.

JEAN. This is the lady who lost the diamonds, and this is the lady who stole her diamonds —

VIC. And this is the lady who'll write the story of how her diamonds were recovered. Everything turned out gloriously. I wanted a new situation for my next detective story, so I robbed myself and was captured by this gentleman.

TEX. My Landsy Lena!

VIC. I thank you all, and when the story comes out I'll send you all copies. And I'll dedicate it to —

(Pauses and looks around.)

JIM. I caught the diamond robbers.

TEX. I got handcuffed and rode in a automobeel.

ALONZO. I came very near getting arrested.

TED. I came very near losing my life.

MAX. And I nearly lost my temper!

MRS. J. And I nearly lost my husband.

JEAN. And I—I fixed it! I shut the sheriff in the cellar and helped him find the real culprits.

VIC. I'm going to dedicate it to Jean (*pausing*) and Texana.

TEX. Who, me? My Landsy Lena!

JEAN. And what are you going to call your story?

VIC. Call it? Why, after this experience there's but one name.

ALL. One name?

VIC. The Runaways. (*All laugh.*)

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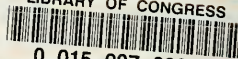
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