

The Little Boss

A Comedy Drama in Four Acts

By FRANK L. BIXBY



The Play

This play is set in Tennessee, where there were a lot of different races living in the area. Those even slightly familiar with American history would know that there would be African Americans as well as whites, but there were also many Irish and Jewish immigrants. There were a few different waves of immigrants from Ireland to America, some came before the potato blight, but a lot came after the fact as the economy was rapidly changing. When the Irish came to America, there weren't a ton of jobs for them and they would usually work as laborers. When the civil war happened, they would have to start competing with the freed black slaves for those labor jobs, and that created some tension in the community, but it didn't last forever.

This play highlights the role that stereotypes play in the media. Whether it's plays, books, or TV shows, authors will put in stereotypes so that people have an understanding of who these characters are and makes them easier to develop and the story easier to follow.

Since this play was written 100 years ago, there were some things that the author put in and we won't understand exactly why or have the intended interpretation. It took some real digging to find answers, but there are still some things that I'm not sure I found the right answers for. The different accents are a big part of the historical significance of

the play, but in some cases, those accents made it harder to tell what word or meaning the author was trying to convey.

Part of why this play is important is that it gives us a snapshot of history. There is so much diversity of the characters and their background, and it gives us an example of how they interact with each other in the early 20th century. We get a glimpse of what people thought about Jews, the decorum when talking to colored folks, and even how a stutter affected communication with others. This story isn't really about trying to catch counterfeiters, it's about looking past differences, or if not looking past them, finding ways to collaborate despite those differences. It's about people coming together in good and bad ways. This play is definitely not on the same level as Shakespeare, but it still has value in our society as we ask the same questions on how to work and deal with people even though they are different from us.

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Frank Bixby was an American Broadway actor and playwright, better known as the former than the latter. Active on Broadway from 1900 to 1921, Bixby appeared with such notables as Warner Oland (later Hollywood's Charlie Chan) and William Hart (later Hollywood's first cowboy superstar.) There is no evidence that Bixby was in that league, or that any of his plays were ever produced on Broadway. His last role was as "a Mexican cook," in *The Bad Man*, filmed for Wallace Beery in 1941. Bixby ended playing the kind of dialect-talking stock character so typical of *The Little Boss*.

THE TEXT

The text of this edition was drawn from the published edition printed in Boston by Walter H. Baker & Co. in 1919. It was converted by OCR and then proofread and corrected.

The original publication specified that performance rights had to be secured from Dore Davidson, care of American Dramatists' Club, Townsend Building, Twenty-fifth Street and Broadway, New York City.

In my efforts to make this script flow and be more readable to people 100 years after it was written, but still uphold the integrity of the piece, I changed some of the outdated grammar, but made sure that the meaning stayed the same. For example, I changed "to-day" to "today," and took out some dashes and replaced them with commas. There are some words that still have dashes in them, "Halle-lujah!" for example. When I left them in, it was because I felt that there was distinct emphasis placed on the words, and I was trying to keep that style in. When it came to the different accents and how they were written, I didn't want to change anything, and of course the hyphens that demonstrate stuttering remain.

Hallee Garfield
Mount Liberty College, September 2020

The Little Boss

CHARACTERS¹

CHIP WHITSELL (<i>CHIP.</i>)	.....<i>Soubrette.</i> ²
ALICE WENTWORTH (<i>ALICE.</i>)	.....<i>Lea or juvenile.</i>
ANN BLAKE (<i>ANN.</i>)	.....<i>Heavy.</i> ³
MAMMY CAROLINE (<i>CAR.</i>)	.....<i>Character comedy, negro.</i>
HARRY WOODSON (<i>HARRY.</i>)	.....<i>Lead or juvenile.</i>
JOHN LYDECKER (<i>LYD.</i>)	.....<i>Heavy.</i>
MOSES SIMONS (<i>MOSES.</i>)	.....<i>Character heavy, Jew.</i> ⁴
WARD SYLVESTER (<i>SYL.</i>)	.....<i>Character juvenile, stutters.</i>
TERRY DONOVAN (<i>TERRY.</i>)	.....<i>Irish comedy.</i> ⁵
SILAS WHITSELL (<i>WHIT.</i>)	.....<i>Character, old man.</i>

THE SCENES.

ACT I. Whitesell's farm in the Tennessee Hills. "A Disappointed land buyer."

ACT II. Alice Wentworth's room, City Hotel, Rushville, Tenn. "A pair of sixes."

ACT III. Scene 1 On the road to Bryan's Rock.

Scene 2 The counterfeiter's den in the mountains. "Taking the men red-handed."

ACT IV John Lydecker's room, Rushville, Tenn. "Joining hands."

¹ *CHARACTERS.* The words in italics by the names are types of stock characters. By Chip's name, you see 'Soubrette' which indicates what type of character she would be. The tradition of having stock characters that are stereotypical figures date back even to Ancient Greek plays. Although stock characters are usually flat and one-dimensional, they are easy for the audience to recognize and they cover many different social classes and demeanors.

² *Soubrette.* This is a specific stock character that is indicative of a mischievous, lighthearted, coquettish girl.

³ *Heavy.* The Heavy is the character or characters as is the case in this play, that provides the most conflict in the story. They're the antagonist. Often the Heavy character has more lines than even the main character, and they're called the Heavy because their script is the heaviest. (TV Tropes)

⁴ *Jew.* Up through the twentieth century, Jews have been misrepresented in American literature. Often Jewish characters were portrayed in negative ways through stereotypes. "They were depicted as money-obsessed, vulgar, and pushy social climbers," (Wikipedia.) These biased and stereotypical views were coming primarily from Christian standpoints.

⁵ *Irish comedy.* Since colonists began coming to America, there were Irish settlers in their midst. Since then there have been a few different times that many people came from Ireland to the New World, and one of those waves was from 1855-1921. Those that made the journey were influenced by the high-paying jobs in America and so there were more opportunities than there were in the changing rural economy back in Ireland. There have always been strong stereotypes associated with the Irish, especially that they're heavy drinkers.

ACT I

SCENE. Mountain drop in 4. Set cottage at R. 2, E., with window to audience. White picket fence crosses at 3 with center gate open. Old farm tools, etc. Make the scene as picturesque as possible, but with a general air of neglect about it.

CHIP. (outside, calling.) Daddy! Oh! Oh, Daddy!

SILAS WHITSELL. (inside cottage, dozing by window.) Ugh!

CHIP. (outside, singing.) “Dis is de way we allus do—meet my daddy in de mornin’. Kase you love me an’ I love you—meet my daddy in de mornin’.” (*Runs to c. behind fence.*) Well, I may meet him in the morning, but—(*calling*) O-oh, daddy!

WHIT. (inside, rousing up.) Yes, yes, coming, Chippy, I’m coming. (*Rises slowly.*)

CHIP. So is the day of judgment. (Runs down to door of house; sings.) “Oh the June bug loved a bumble bee—meet my daddy in de mornin’.”

WHIT. (enters from cottage.) Why, Chippy, child?

CHIP. Yes, that’s me, your child, your for true, onliest child. (Laughs.)

WHIT. Wherever have you been?

CHIP. Been huntin’, don’t you see? (Shows gun; puts it against cottage.)

WHIT. You have?

CHIP. Yes, I have, Daddy. (Kisses him.)

WHIT. And you—

CHIP. Yes, I did. How’d you know? I killed a great whoppin’ wild turkey gobbler.

WHIT. You did?

CHIP. ‘Deed I did. Dead as a doornail, and I think that’s purty nigh the deadest thing there is.

WHIT. No ‘tain’t, Chippy. Times is deader ner that roun’ here.

CHIP. Well, anyhow, that old gobbler is dead enough to be too heavy for me to carry. (TERRY starts to cross at back.) Hey, there!

TERRY DONOVAN. (stops.) Is it me ye’re callin, hay?

CHIP. Yes, before it’s cut.

TERRY. Listen to that, now? It’s grass I am.

CHIP. Oh, no; only the color of it.

WHIT. Chippy! Chippy!

CHIP. Oh, Terry don't mind me, do you, Terry? Say, where you goin'?

TERRY. To Rock Canyon powder house fer a kag o' powder.

WHIT. The company keeps a big supply of it in that house.

TERRY. Indade, yis. Enough to blow up the whole county to wanst⁶.

[WHITSELL *exit to cottage.*]

CHIP. Well, before she goes up, I want you to do me a favor.

TERRY. (*comes down, takes off his hat.*) Indade I will.

CHIP. Say, Terry. Why do they call you Terry? Because you are a tarrier?

TERRY. Sure, Terry's not me name—it's a condinsation.

CHIP. What kind of a sation?

TERRY. It's an abrevature.

CHIP. Oh, yes. An abrevaturesation.

TERRY. No, no. It's an abrevature of Terrence O'Neil Scallan McHugh—

CHIP. Clip it off there.

TERRY. Hinnissey O'Regan—

CHIP. Stop it! Stop it!

TERRY. Donovan.

CHIP. I really believe, Terry, you're Irish.

TERRY. Yis, I am. who towld ye?

CHIP. Oh, I measured you.

TERRY. Ye did? Whin?

CHIP. Oh, just now.

TERRY. I didn't see ye. what wid?

⁶ *Wanst.* It could be an eye dialect for 'wasn't' or even once, but that doesn't totally make sense in context. He could have been saying that there was enough powder to blow up the whole county to wasn't--like to nothing, as if it wasn't ever there.

CHIP. That 17th of March name of yours.⁷

TERRY. Luk at that now.

CHIP. Smart, ain't I? But I didn't tell you what I want. I want you—

TERRY. Do ye now? Well, I niver thought that before; but ye might do worse.

CHIP. To get my game—

TERRY. It's game yer makin' o' *me*, I'm thinkin'.

CHIP. Yes, a big wild turkey gobbler.

TERRY. Howld on, now, howld on. Ye may call me hay and grass, but whin ye call me a turkey, why—

CHIP. I might just as well say, Terry, you're a bird, hey?

TERRY. Ye might.

CHIP. Yes, sir, an owl from the owl'd sod.⁸

TERRY. Arrah, would ye listen to her; but I must be goin'.

CHIP. Wait. I want you to bring up the turkey gobbler you'll find hanging on a branch, about a hundred yards this side of Bryan's rock.

TERRY. Hung was he? What for?

CHIP. For gobblin' his own gobble. (*Laughs.*)

TERRY. Thin I'll bring him up, an' ye can cook him wid that owl ye spake about. (*Laughs and exit through gate and off L.*)

MAMMY CAROLINE. (*in cottage.*) Whar she is? Dat's what I wan' ter know.

WHIT. (*in cottage.*) Outside, aMmmy, I told ye outside.

CAR. (*in cottage.*) Been gallopin' an' rompin' roun', huh? Wait 'til I done lay my han's on dat chile.

CHIP. Oh, but Mammy Car'line is takin' on.

CAR. (*at door.*) Dar yo' is—jus' lafin' an' caperin' afore my very eyes, an' me dat worriet 'bout yo'.

⁷ *That 17th of March name of yours.* St. Patrick's Day. This alludes to Terry being Irish.

⁸ *an owl from the owl'd sod.* Owl'd sod (old sod) is a way of referring to one's native country. Chip saying that Terry is an owl from the old sod could be meant as an insult since owls make loud noises, but unless you're a small animal, you don't really have much to fear from them. Although owls are usually regarded as wise animals, they also are associated with magic and mystery in celtic lore, so she might be saying he's mysterious.

CHIP. Worried about *me*? That's funny.

CAR. (*starts at her.*) 'Deed 'tain't funny, 'tain't funny one bit. Wait 'til I git my han's on you, dat's all.

CHIP. Goin' to beat me?

CAR. Yas I is, I—

CHIP. (*coquettishly.*) Wha-t?

CAR. (*stops and looks at her.*) Well, I declar' ef my baby chile ain't de pootiest thing I evah did look at. Whar yo' bin?

CHIP. Oh, down yonder. (*Points L.*)

CAR. Has, huh? An' yo' po' ole Mammy, dat's done rais' yo' up fum a baby, evah sence yo' po' ma die, worriet haf to def.

CHIP. You do look badly, mammy.

CAR. Who does? Yo' don' come in de hous' dis minit. Dat fried chicken all git burn to nothin' waitin' fo' yo'. I nevah did see sich good fer nothin' no 'count chile as yo' is.

CHIP. That's right, Mammy. That's what everybody says.

CAR. Sez what?

CHIP. That I'm no 'count. Just like Daddy. A chip of the old block.

CAR. I jus' lak to hyar dem say it, dat's all. Dey fine dey's got in waspuses nes' hard an' fas', dat's what. Who say dat—come tel' me who say it?

CHIP. Why, let me see . . . um—

CAR. Huh! Don't go an' talk no mo' sich foolishnis lak dat to me. Come in dis house I te' ye dis berry minit.

CHIP. And get a beating?

CAR. Who's gwine to beat yo', I lak to know?

CHIP. Why—

CAR. Huh! I jus' lak to see any livin' bein' tech my chile, dat's all.

CHIP. Except you, Mammy.

CAR. Well, yo' does aggerwate me mos' awful.

CHIP. I'm a bad worrisome child, I know.

CAR. No, ye ain't. Yo' is my sweet baby lam', dat's what yo' is. How offen mus' I tell yo' dat? Come in de hous', sweetie. (*takes her hand.*)

CHIP. Here goes for the fried chicken.

[*CHIP and CAROLINE exeunt to cottage.*]

JOHN LYDECKER. (*enters at L. 3, followed by MOSES.*) I hope we will find the old fool at home. This thing must be closed up quick.

MOSES SIMONS. The quicker the better, ain't it, Jackie? Ve vant de money, huh?⁹

LYD. That's nothing new for you. I never saw you when you didn't want money.

MOSES. Who, me? Vat a scantal on the name of Simons.

LYD. It's a pity about you.

MOSES. Ain't it? Put vat are ve do do, Jackie tear, now ve're here?

LYD. Do? Why get this land.

MOSES. Oh, I see. Do dear old Mr. Vitsell, hybnotize him, ain't it? Get the lant for a song.

LYD. That's the idea.

MOSES. A crate itea, Jackie tear, crate. Put I can't sing, hafen't my nodes.

LYD. Oh, yes, you have, plenty of them—and some of them are counterfeit too.

MOSES. Sh-ssh! For de lof of hefen, not so lout.

LYD. Oh, no danger of them in this deal. Now mind, don't try to shove any of the queer stuff this time. Use good money, and we will turn it all into gold. This land is full of it.

⁹ *Ve vant de money, huh?* As mentioned above, Jews were highly stereotyped, and the way that Moses Simons talks is indicative of that. The author was trying to imitate a heavy Eastern European accent. 'T's are pronounced as 'D's and vice versa, 'P's for 'B's, 'F's for 'V's, and 'V's for 'W's. In this line, we also see that Moses is obsessed with money, which is also a very prevalent stereotype. In the Middle Ages, Jews were restricted from many professions, leaving them only a few options. Among those options was money-lending and tax-collecting. Since they were limited to handling money, Christians would tell stories and spread rumors that they loved money and were cheats.

MOSES. (*looking at ground.*) Ant olt Vitsell ton't know it. Ain't id peautiful, Jackie, ain't it peautiful?

LYD. It will be if we get the land. Now here's the idea—Whitsell is hard up, needs some money, ain't very bright anyhow. I'll do the talking; be careful you don't chip in, and spoil the trick.

MOSES. I'm as dumb as an oyster, so helb me.

LYD. There's someone coming. Let's walk down the road, until they are gone, and we can catch old Whitsell alone.

MOSES. Ant sing him a song for his lant. Ain't it peautiful?

[MOSES and LYDECKER *exeunt* R. 3.]

WARD SYLVESTER. (*enters L. 3, with shawl, cloak, sun umbrella, cane, etc. He stutters.*) G-g-good g-gracious! (*Lays down wraps.*) G-g-good g-gracious! Did I s-s-say good g-g-gra-cious? Y-y-es, I d-d-did.

CHIP. (*enters from cottage; aside.*) Jiminy! Look at the swell.

SYL. Ah, y-y-young l-l-lady?

CHIP. If it troubles you, don't say it. But don't start your deal with young lady. I'm only a girl—plain everyday g-i-r-l.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. Yes.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. You said that before.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. If you say ah, y-y-yes to me again, you'll get in trouble.

SYL. Ah, y-yes. I m-m-mean I'm in tr-tr-trouble now.

CHIP. Yes, I've noticed it. Too bad, ain't it? Were you born that way?

SYL. N-n-no! M-m-mean, yes. But th-that's not my tr-tr-trouble.

CHIP. No? I thought it was. What is it—got chilblains? You seem uneasy on your feet.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. There you go again. You give me the fidgets.

SYL. Ah, y-y-

CHIP. Stop.

TERRY. (*runs on L. 3.*) I will thin.

CHIP. Hello, Terry. Look at that. (*Nods at SYLVESTER.*) And say, wait ‘til you hear him say Ah, y-y-yes.

TERRY. I’ve no time to wait. I just run to tell yees a young woman had sprained her leg down below, an’ Mr. Woodson’s helpin’ her up the hill.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes. (*CHIP starts at him.*) That’s my tr-tr- trouble.

CHIP. I think it’s the young lady’s.

TERRY. Yes, an’ Mr. Woodson said would I run ahead an’ give yees the word.

CHIP. You’re a good fellow, Terry, and Harry’s a brick.¹⁰

SYL. Ah!

CHIP. Will you *please* keep quiet?

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. Head off that calf, will you, Terry? (*At door.*) Mammy! Mammy! Daddy!

CAR. (*enters from cottage, followed by WHITSELL.*) What’s de mattah, honey lam’?

SYL. Ah!

CHIP. There! Oh, Mammy, a young lady has sprained her ankle down the path—

CAR. Whar she is? I don’ run down an’ see. (*Starts.*)

WHIT. I better go an’—

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. Stop! Of all the lunatics. Mammy, run and bring out an easy-chair! Daddy, get the camphor! (*To SYLVESTER, who is bustling around.*) You stand still, will you? Terry, run down and help Harry.

[CAROLINE and WHITSELL *exeunt to cottage.*]

TERRY. I will. (*Exit L. 3*)

¹⁰ *Harry’s a brick.* Brick was slang for a good person. ([A Historical Dictionary of American Slang](#))

CAR. (*rushes on.*) Which cheer yo' want, honey?

CHIP. Any one that's comfortable.

CAR. Yas-sum. (*Starts to exit, runs into WHITSELL.*) Um! Ugh!

WHIT. (*coming from cottage.*) Can't find no camphor, Chippy, but here's the caster ile.

CHIP. Castor oil? Ugh! It makes me sick to look at it.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

WHIT. Anything else I can get?

CHIP. Lord, no. You might bring the Bible and frying-pan next. I'll get the camphor. (*WHITSELL exits to cottage.*) Say, you stay right where you are. Don't move. (*Exit to cottage.*)

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes. D-d-deuced f-f-ine girl, full of l-l-life. (*CAROLINE rushes to c. with chair; CHIP follows with camphor bottle.*)

WHIT. (*rushes on with bottle in one hand and bundle of herbs in the other.*) Here's some turpentine an' pennyr'yle.¹¹

CAR. Yo' pa's mighty fine han' wid sick fokes, honey. 'Deed he is.

CHIP. Ain't he?

TERRY. (*enters L. 3.; throws down turkey.*) There's the burrud.

CHIP. That old thing? Why, where's the young lady and Harry?

TERRY. They're comin'.

CHIP. Why didn't you stay and help him?

TERRY. Oh, he's doin' quite well, I'm thinkin'; he don't need any help. (*Exit R. 3.*)

HARRY WOODSON. (*enters L. 3, chatting pleasantly with ALICE.*) Here we are, and the folks all at home.

ALICE WENTWORTH. Quite a rustic spot.

¹¹ *turpentine an' pennyr'yle.* Turpentine is a fluid that you get by distilling resin from living trees. It is sometimes used to thin paint, but it also has healing properties. It can treat toothaches, muscle pain, and spains. (footnote continued on next page) It even reduces thick secretions due to bronchial diseases when the vapors are inhaled. ([Vitagene](#)) 'Pennyroyal' or *Hedeoma pulegioides*, the American pennyroyal, is a plant that people used in domestic medicine.

HARRY. Allow me to introduce you, Miss Wentworth, this is Mr. Whitsell and his daughter. (*ALICE bows.*)

CHIP. Which one was it?

ALICE. Which one? I don't understand.

CHIP. Which leg did you sprain?

ALICE. (*laughs.*) Neither, thank you. I saw Mr. Woodson coming. I intended stopping at your house, and, oh, well, I knew how Mr. Sylvester would hurry to tell you I was coming, if he thought he could be of service to me.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

HARRY. So you invented a sprained ankle. Mr. Sylvester hurried, met Terry here, and between them, you are prepared for an invalid.

WHIT. Reckon I'll take these things in the house? (*Exit to cottage.*)

CAR. An' I don' tote back de cheer.

CHIP. No, mammy. Leave the chair for the lady.

CAR. Yes-sum.

SYL. G-g-good gracious! I've lost my c-c-cigarette holder.

CHIP. What a pity. How you must suffer.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. I will see no one suffer pain. I'll run down the path and look for it. (*Exit L. 3.*)

SYL. If y-y-you don't o-o-object, Miss W-W-Wentworth, I'll g-g-go with her.

ALICE. By all means do, Mr. Sylvester.

HARRY. It must have been some distance down, Mr. Sylvester.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes. (*Exit L. 3.*)

ALICE. You don't know how glad I am to see you, Mr. Woodson.

HARRY. Are you indeed glad?

(*LYDECKER and MOSES appear at back*)

ALICE. Now, ain't you mean? To seem to doubt by sincerity?

MOSES. Stranchers! Holy Moses! They're after the lant.

LYD. Shut up, you fool and listen.

HARRY. It's been some time since we met.

ALICE. Yes, you cruel man, and you surely can't blame me for it.

HARRY. Um, not exactly—

ALICE. I should think not. Well, then, who is at fault?

HARRY. I can't say that any one is, but—

ALICE. Stop. I'll not listen. I know what you are going to say, that my good fortune and so forth. I know. Pshaw, Harry Woodson, to think that you would feel that my having fallen heir to a fortune would make any difference in me.

HARRY. Well, you see, Miss Wentworth—

ALICE. Don't be so chillingly formal. It used to be Alice and Harry.

HARRY. I know, but—

ALICE. Of course you do, and ought to be punished. Come, now, down on your knees and sue for pardon.

HARRY. I am certainly sorry that—

ALICE. You made a goose of yourself? There, that settles it. Now, bring that chair—no, let's sit on this bench. (*They sit with backs to MOSES and LYDECKER.*) Now, tell me all about it. What are you doing here? When did you come? How long are you going to stay? How have you been? And—

HARRY. Wait—wait! One thing at a time.

ALICE. Well, sir, begin with number one. What are you doing here?

HARRY. I think I can answer all of your questions in a few words. I'm in the Secret Service. There is a bad gang of counterfeiters somewhere in these old Tennessee mountains, and I've been sent here to locate them.

MOSES. (*starts to go.*) A dedecdiver! I'm hybnotiset.

LYD. (*catches him.*) Stop, you damned idiot.

ALICE. Rather a dangerous undertaking.

HARRY. Yes. But then our business is always so. I've only been here a few days, and I think I've found—

MOSES. Sufferin' Moses, he's caught us!

LYD. If you don't shut up, Moses will suffer.

ALICE. I thought I heard a noise?

HARRY. It was in the house, I think. But you haven't said a word why I find you here among the hills.

ALICE. So I haven't, but being a woman, my curiosity had to be satisfied first, of course. Now for yours. You see riches bring troubles. I had some money and didn't know just what to do with it by way of investment.

HARRY. You are quite a business woman now.

ALICE. Indeed I am, and chuck full of speculation. My bankers couldn't advise me just what to do, so I took forty thousand dollars, turned it into drafts, packed my trunk, and came to Tennessee, as they say gold has been discovered here, and that money can be made in lands.

HARRY. And you are prospecting?

ALICE. Yes. Ain't it funny? I made up my mind to see for myself, act for myself, and if I saw a good chance, to buy for myself.

HARRY. So here you are.

ALICE. Here I am, all by myself, with good stout shoes, lots of determination, and drafts for forty thousand dollars sewed up in my corset.

LYD. Forty thousand dollars!

MOSES. Isn't it peautiful?

HARRY. And if you find the right lands, you'll be a Tennessee real estate owner?

ALICE. That's it, exactly. *(They rise.)*

LYD. Forty thousand dollars in sight!

MOSES. Isn't it peautiful, Jackie?

[MOSES and LYDECKER *exeunt* R. 3.]

CHIP. *(enters L. 3, laughing, followed by SYLVESTER.)* Well, if you had as much trouble walking as you do talking, you'd be a cinch in a running match.

SYL. W-w-wouldn't I, though?

HARRY. Did you find it?

CHIP. Oh, no. Whoever thought you could?

ALICE. Oh, Mr. Woodson, I forgot to tell you that Mr. Sylvester is a friend of my father's. He is also looking for some mining property; I met him, by accident, in Knoxville.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. I don't want to be rude, but do, please, say "Ah, no," once in a while, for a change.

HARRY. Well, as you are both looking for gold lands, I don't believe you will have to go far. This land right under our feet is said to be valuable.

CHIP. Who says so? Humph! Reckon they don't know. Why, it's nothing but rocks, and wouldn't raise punkin vines.¹²

HARRY. Probably not. But if what I hear is true, it will be worth a fortune to the man who owns it.

CHIP. Gosh! That's good. Why dad can't even pay the interest on the mortgage.

ALICE. And is it of value, really?

HARRY. Prospectors have been secretly at work here—

CHIP. What's prospectors?

ALICE. Men who dig holes, here and there, to try to locate gold.

CHIP. Dig holes? Now I know what them fellers was doin' down yonder, two weeks ago. I thought they was diggin' fish worms.

HARRY. On your father's land?

CHIP. Well, rather. But come down, I'll show you the place.

HARRY. You can put your forty thousand right in the ground here

Alice. Don't laugh. I'm in earnest.

Harry. And so am I.

Chip. Come on, miss, and you, too, Harry. Excuse me, miss, for callin' him Harry, but I knowed him afore you did, I reckon.

Harry. Yes. We were neighbors years ago.

¹² ...wouldn't raise punkin vines. Pumpkins grow on every continent but Antarctica, and they are fairly easy to grow.

Syl. Ah, y-y-yes.

Chip. Say. If you do buy land, and settle round here, I'll move. (*Picks up gun and exit L. 3, followed by HARRY, ALICE, and SYLVESTER.*)

Lyd. (*enters R. 3, followed by MOSES.*) They're gone. There's no time to be lost, Moses.

Moses. Ve musd sing the song quickly for Mr. Vitsell, ain't it?

Lyd. Yes, there is no question about it. There's a fortune buried in this farm. We will pay him a bonus today, and he can make the deeds tomorrow. See if he is at home.

Moses. (*crossing to cottage.*) Suffering Rebecca, isn't it peautiful? (*Knocks on door.*)

Car. (*comes to door.*) Howdy; no, we doan wan' ter buy nothin' terday, sah.

Moses. She dinks I'm a beddler, ain't it?

Lyd. Auntie,¹³ we want to see Mr. Whitsell.

Car. Yas, sir. Won' yo' all done come in?

Moses. No, my goot laty, ve vill enchoy de sunshine.

Car. Luk hyar? I'se decent cullud 'ooman, I is. Doan yo' go pokin' no fun at me. (*Exit to cottage.*)

Lyd. Now you keep your tongue between your teeth, and let me work him.

Moses. Put subbose he von't sell?

LYD. He will, if we pay enough.

MOSES. Put vere is all de money?

LYD. You have five hundred with you, you told me?

MOSES. Yes.

LYD. That will bind the bargain. You can dig up some more, I know, if that ain't enough. Besides, you heard that girl say she had forty thousand dollars about her?

MOSES. Apout her, put nod apout us, Jackie, tear.

¹³ *Auntie.* When a white person was talking to an unfamiliar black woman, they addressed them as "Auntie" or "girl." They would never call them "Miss" or "Mrs." ([Racial Etiquette](#))

LYD. No, but it will be about us, if we need it. We must keep watch over that woman and her forty thousand dollars. Ssh! Here comes Whitsell.

WHIT. (*enters from cottage.*) Good day, neighbors. What kin I do fer ye?

MOSES. (*aside.*) Oh, he's a bigeon.¹⁴ Isn't it peautiful?

LYD. I'm looking around for a piece of high land, for a consumptive brother of mine.¹⁵ Do you want to sell this place?

WHIT. Wal, now-sometimes I reckon I do, an' then agin I reckon I don't.

LYD. How many acres have you?

WHIT. Wal, um—thar's 'bout one hundred and sixty less a fraction, nigh as I can calc'late.

LYD. What's it worth?

WHIT. Wal, um, that de-pends on what you want it fer.

MOSES. (*aside.*) De chay¹⁶ von't sell. Ditn't I said it?

LYD. What is it worth to you?

WHIT. Wal—I kinder reckon 'tain't wuth much nohow.

LYD. How much? Come on-what's your price?

WHIT. Wal, now, mister, I hain't got no price. Now ef Chippy wus here—

MOSES. (*to LYDECKER.*) Ton't wait for de girl, he'll nefer sell if you do.

LYD. Shut up.

MOSES. I'm a clam, ain't it?

WHIT. Or per'aps old mammy might have an idee. (*At door of cottage.*) Say, mammy!

CAR. Wha' yo' all wan' wid mammy?

LYD. Mr. Whitsell said you were smart at figures, and might have an idea what this farm was worth.

¹⁴ *Bigeon.* (Pigeon) A gullible person. ([A Historical Dictionary of American Slang](#))

¹⁵ *consumptive brother of mine.* "Consumption" now known as Tuberculosis, is a disease that generally affects the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body. Symptoms include chronic cough, fever, and weight loss--they called in consumption because of the weight loss.

¹⁶ *chay.* Of uncertain meaning. Possibly Moses' mispronunciation of "jay."

CAR. 'Tain't wuth nuthin', dat's what 'tain't.

WHIT. Oh, yes, mammy, I calc'late 's wuth a little som'thin'.

CAR. Who you all anyhow? 'Sessor men what says erbout taxes?¹⁷

LYD. Oh, no.

CAR. Yas, yo' is. Dat's why yo' all wan' me to say 'bout de lan'. 'Tain't wuf a cent.

WHIT. No, mammy, these men wanter buy the farm. Reckon we better wait fer Chippy ter come home. Come in an' set down.

LYD. I have an important engagement at the village, and must be going.

CAR. Yas, wha' you wan' ter wait fer dat chile fer? Wha' she know erbout lan' anyhow?

WHIT. Wal, mister, what'd ye calc'late ye'd pay? That is, what'd ye take ef yew wus me?

MOSES. (*aside to LYDECKER.*) Ovver him a huntert tollars.

LYD. I am willing to pay a fair price. What do you say to five thousand dollars?

MOSES. (*aside.*) Forty-nine huntert tollars drown away for notting.

CAR. Whoo-e-e! Dat's a heap o' money, hain't it?

WHIT. Yas' 'tis, but I reckon I won't sell the old place nohow.

MOSES. (*aside to LYDECKER.*) Vat dit I dold you.

LYD. There's a mortgage on the place, isn't there?

WHIT. Tha's so. I didn't think o' that dad-blamed old morgige, as has worritted the life outer me. Say? Wha' d'ye wan' this place fer, anyhow?

LYD. For my consumptive brother, as I told you.

WHIT. Honest, is that all?

LYD. That's all.

WHIT. Then I calc'late, ef you'll give me four thousand dollars right in my hand, an' pay the dern'd morgige fer a thousan', ye can have her.

¹⁷ 'Sessor men what says erbout taxes. Mammy refers to assessors, who value the land for its taxation value. They would assess as high a value as possible, where a buyer would like as low a valuation as possible.

CAR. Fer yer 'sumtive brudder?

LYD. Yes, of course. I'll tell you what we'll do, we will pay you five hundred dollars now, and the balance tomorrow when the deed is signed.

WHIT. All right. Shy's yourn on the terms I said.

(Laughter heard outside.)

MOSES. I'fe got de money here, all fresh from te pank. Oh, Mr. Lytecker, wy to you drow away such goot money on your brother, who's as goot as det now.
(Counting money to WHITSELL.)

LYD. Just sign this little receipt to bind the bargain.

ALICE. *(enters L. 3, followed by HARRY and SYLVESTER; they are all laughing.)* She's too much for you, Mr. Sylvester.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes. F-f-funny to ser her r-r-run back to catch the c-c-calf.

HARRY. Hope we don't intrude, Mr. Whitsell?

WHIT. Oh, no. I've jus' bin sellin' my farm.

HARRY. Selling your farm? Impossible.

WHIT. Yas, sir, sold the farm outright. *(CHIPPY appears at back.)* What's this bit o' paper you wanted me ter sign?

LYD. Here it is, and my pen.

CHIP. *(rushing down between them.)* Hold on, dad. Who's sold the farm? And who's bought it?

WHIT. I sold it, Chippy, an'—

LYD. And I—John Lydecker—bought it.

CHIP. But you haven't got it, and you can't have it.

WHIT. But, Chippy, I've got this much money on it from him. *(Points to MOSES.)*

CHIP. *(snatching money.)* Then give it back to him. *(Throws money in MOSES' face.)*

MOSES. *(scrambling for money.)* Put ve pought de lant—vair and square. Ve'll haf de law—

CHIP. *(cocking gun.)* Ye will, hey? Now you two make tracks, fer on this farm I am the law and the gospel too. *(Presents gun.)*

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE. ALICE WENTWORTH's apartment at City Hotel, Rushville, Tenn. Plain Chamber in 3. Doors c. and R. and L. 2. Plain furniture. Supposed to be a sitting- room.

ANN BLAKE. (*discovered, putting room in order.*) I can't see, for the life of me, the good of living if you're poor. But I intend to live, and what's more, I don't intend to be poor. Look at this Miss Wentworth, with all her fine clothes—ain't I as good-looking as she is? But then I am a chambermaid at the City Hotel, and she's the fine lady, if you please. Humph.

ALICE. (*enters L. 2.*) Are you almost through, chamber- maid?

ANN. Yes, miss, entirely through. Is there anything else you want?

ALICE. Not now. I am going out presently, then you can tidy up my bedroom a bit.

ANN. Yes, ma'am. (*Aside.*) I'm just as good as her any day.

[*Exit R. 2.*]

ALICE. Now, for my letters. (*Sits at table c. Knock uc.*) Come.

HARRY. (*opening door.*) It's rather early for a call, but this is purely one of business.

ALICE. So you only come on account of business? Thank you, Sir Gallant¹⁸. (*Rises.*)

HARRY. No, it isn't that, but this is important.

ALICE. And you don't consider a friendly call of any importance? Come in. Let me take your hat. (*Goes to him.*)

HARRY. Oh, no. I haven't a moment to stay.

ALICE. Oh, yes you have, several of them. Now, come—be real nice, and sit down like a good fellow. What's on your mind?

HARRY. Lots.

ALICE. Good. Now tell it all to me.

¹⁸ *Sir Gallant.* Gallant has a few different definitions. One is a brave and heroic man, another is a man who pays special attention to women and is respectful and chivalrous to them.

HARRY. Everything?

ALICE. Yes, sir, everything.

HARRY. I wish I could.

ALICE. That's a brave speech for a daring Secret Service man who hopes to win fame, catching bold, bad counterfeiterers. Afraid of a woman.

HARRY. Yes, I know, but you see men—

ALICE. Are easier to catch than women. (*Laughs.*) That's what you wanted to say.

HARRY. Not exactly, but something like it. You see, a fellow may be as brave as a lion among men, but frightened to death at a woman.

ALICE. And I am a horrid bugaboo¹⁹ of a woman?

HARRY. Indeed you are.

ALICE. What?

HARRY. No, I don't mean that—I mean you are just the best woman I ever knew, and—

ALICE. Well?

HARRY. Alice, did you really mean it yesterday, when you said you were glad to see me, and that money hadn't changed you?

ALICE. (*giving him her hand.*) You should know me better than to ask.

HARRY. I'm so glad—you don't know how glad—for I really-and truly— (*Knock at door.*)

ALICE. Oh, pshaw! Come.

ANN. (*enter c.with card.*) The gentleman is waiting, ma'am.

ALICE. Tell him I'm engaged. Do you know him, Harry? (*Shows card. ANN bows and starts to exit.*)

HARRY. I think so. (*To ANN.*) Wait. (*Aside to ALICE.*) I am very anxious to study this fellow. Let him come up—listen to him—humor him.

ALICE. Certainly, if you wish it. (*To ANN.*) Show the gentleman up.

ANN. Yes, ma'am.

¹⁹ *Bugaboo.* "Something that causes fear or distress out of proportion to its importance." ([Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#))

[Exit c.]

HARRY. I have every reason to suspect that this is one of my men. May I just step in that room, and close the door?

ALICE. Certainly, but I warn you—the room is in fearful disorder. (*Knock c.*)

HARRY. Never mind the room.

[Exit L. 2.]

ALICE. Come in.

[ANN opens door, ushers in MOSES and exit.]

MOSES. I drust I haf de distinguishet honor of powing low to the peautiful vasinating Miss Ventvorth?

ALICE. I am Miss Wentworth, sir.

MOSES. I'm hybnotiset vid telight, my tear Miss Ventvorth—I am, pelieve me.

ALICE. Won't you be seated, sir?

MOSES. Oh, Miss Ventvorth, how could I pe so fulgar, as do zit in your bresence?

ALICE. You are Mr. Simons?

MOSES. Moses Finklestein Simonts, commission proker, ant Infestor's Achent, my tear Miss Ventvorth—Infestor's Achent, Miss Ventvorth. Dot's vy I make my gall.

ALICE. Indeed?

MOSES. Yes, Miss Ventvorth. I haf hert you haf a vew huntert tollars to infest in lant.

ALICE. (*laughs.*) A few hundred? Oh, if I can find the right lands, I'll invest several thousands.

MOSES. Dousands? Oh, isn't it peautiful? To you vish farm lants or mining broberdies?

ALICE. Gold lands. And as I will pay cash—

MOSES. Oh!

ALICE. Sir?

MOSES. Oxcuse me, my tear Miss Ventvorth, put I haf heart tisease. Oh, you will bay cash? Isn't it peautiful? I've just the blace you vant—just the blace, put it dakes a lot of money, Miss Ventvorth.

ALICE. How much?

MOSES. Oh, Miss Ventvorth, this Is the richest golt lant in Dennessee, put dey vant so much money. Dink of it—forty dousant tollars! Put id is vorth vifty dousant, my tear Miss Ventvorth, it is, pelieve me.

ALICE. If the property is what you say, I'll look at it, and if I like it, buy it.

MOSES. Oxcuse me, Miss Ventvorth, oxcuse me—dot's vy I callt. Do ask you if you yould only look at the lant. (*Takes out large pocketbook, lays it on table, after taking map out of it.*) Isn't dot a peautiful map. Dot's de broberthy.

ALICE. I can't tell anything from a map. I'll look at the land itself.

MOSES. Ven vill you to it, my tear Miss Ventvorth, say ven, Miss Ventvorth?

ALICE. Today, this afternoon.

MOSES. Oh, Miss Ventvorth, I am so habby do pe your slafe.

ALICE. I will call at your office.

MOSES. Oh, Miss Ventvorth. Oxcuse me. I'll sent a carriage do de hodel for you, my tear Miss Ventvorth—say at dree o'glock?

ALICE. That will be satisfactory.

MOSES. You sait cash money, Miss Ventvorth? Isn't id peautiful? I bit you goot-morning, my tear Miss Ventvorth—goot-morning. (*Bows out c.*)

HARRY. (*enters L. 2, imitating MOSES.*) Isn't it peautiful? I notice he has left his pocketbook—pardon my professional curiosity. (*Opens pocketbook, takes out notes.*) I was right. Coney²⁰ every one of them. That's one of my men. I'll just keep these as evidence. (*Pockets notes.*)

ALL. You don't mean?—

HARRY. Yes, I do. That gentleman is one of my counterfeiters. I'll shadow him.

ALICE. And he was so polite. Lucky I didn't go with him to look at the land.

HARRY. Just the thing you must do, to help me. I must work up this case, and catch the others.

²⁰ Coney. A coney is a rabbit; by extension, compared to a mink, a fake fur.

ALICE. Do you really mean I must go with that horrid counterfeiter?

HARRY. I certainly do. But I don't like the idea of your making these tours alone, so I have taken it upon myself to hire a strong honest Irishman named Donovan—the one you met at Whitsell's yesterday—to accompany you. I will be too busy, and besides I mustn't appear too much in evidence.

ALICE. Then I must really go?

HARRY. Yes. Donovan will be here, to report to you shortly.

ALICE. You are very thoughtful, Harry.

HARRY. No more than any man should be for—for—

ALICE. Yes?

HARRY. Say, I've got to go now. If I drop in tonight and finish what I was saying when your "Infestor's Achent" called, (*picks up his hat; at c.*) what do you think you would say?

ALICE. I don't think, I know.

HARRY. You do? If I told you the whole story, then you would say—?

ALICE. Do you mean everything you have on your mind?

HARRY. Yes.

ALICE. Then that would be my answer. (*Kisses her hand to him; runs off L. 2.*)

HARRY. Harry Woodson, you are the happiest man in the State of Tennessee this minute.

[*Exit c.*]

ALICE. (*enters L. 2 with hat and wrap.*) He's gone, the dear old boy. I don't care, I just couldn't help making him say it. (*Rings bell on table. ANN, enters c. n.*) Ann, I am going out. If anyone calls, say that I am out on business, and ask them to wait.

[*Exit c.*].

ANN. If I only had her money. Oh, dear, it's a crime to be poor. (*Knock at c.; she opens it.*)

TERRY. Good morning to ye, miss.

ANN. Well?

TERRY. I'm the man, darlin'.

ANN. I see you're a man. What of it?

TERRY. Pfwat²¹ of it? Didn't Mr. Woodson tell yees?

ANN. I don't know such a person.

TERRY. Worse luck to ye. Do ye mane he didn't tell ye?

ANN. I've told you I don't know him.

TERRY. Ye did.

ANN. And I've been told nothing.

TERRY. Do ye b'long in the place?

ANN. I do.

TERRY. Thin Miss Wintworth shud give ye warnin', fer yer timper.

ANN. Miss Wentworth has nothing to do with me.

TERRY. She hasn't, now? Well! Well! I was thinkin' ye was her gurrul, darlin'.

ANN. Don't be so familiar. I belong in this hotel, and look after these rooms.

TERRY. Oh, ho! That's the milk in the cocynut. Do ye mind spakin' wid Miss Wintworth, an' tellin' her Mr. Dono-van's come.

ANN. Miss Wentworth is out.

TERRY. She is, now?

ANN. She said if anyone called, they could wait.

TERRY. I'll doit. (*Starts to sit.*)

ANN. You can wait in the office downstairs.

TERRY. I can that same. Axin' yer pardin, Miss Stuck-up-in-the-air, or I kin wait in the road, or fly away to the moon—who knows?

[*Exit c.*].

ANN. Such impertinence, all because I am por, and have to work. (*Goes up to c, opens it and meets LYDECKER.*) Jack!

LYD. What are you doin' here?

²¹ *Pfwat*. This was the author's way of writing out how an Irishman would say "what." You can see the same word used in George Lydston's *Over the Hookah: The Tales of a Talkative Doctor*. Instead of "what" he uses "pfwat." ([Over the Hookah](#))

ANN. Oh, Jack, I couldn't help it. I had to work.

LYD. That don't answer my question. What are you doing here?

ANN. Why, Jack, I told you I had to go out to work. You wouldn't give me any money, or help me. So I had to take this place as chambermaid in the hotel.

LYD. Do you work here now?

ANN. Yes.

LYD. Isn't this Miss Wentworth's room?

ANN. Oh, Jack, you haven't come to see her just because she's rich?

LYD. That's just why I have come.

ANN. You don't love her, do you, Jack?

LYD. Love her? Bah! I don't love anybody.

ANN. Not even me? Oh, Jack, you said you did.

LYD. (*laughs.*) Oh, well, that was some time ago. Where's this Miss Wentworth?

ANN. (*crying.*) She's gone out.

LYD. Has, hey? Then I'll go myself. Hold on, what did you say you did here?

ANN. I'm the chambermaid.

LYD. 'Tend to these rooms, do you?

ANN. Yes.

LYD. Now stop your sniveling, and crying. I've got an idea. I was just bluffing to see if you really did love me.

ANN. And you do care for me, Jack?

LYD. Of course I do. I'll kiss you in a minute. Look here, how would you like a lot of money?

ANN. Better than anything but you, dear.

LYD. Then listen. This woman Wentworth has got a pile, and it's in cash, too.

ANN. Yes, I know. I listened at the door, when Moses Simons was here.

LYD. Has that damned Sheeny²² been here?

²² *Sheeny.* A slur for Jew.

ANN. Yes, just a little while ago. He is going to sell her some land, and she said she would pay cash for it.

LYD. Damn him, he's trying to throw me; but I'll do him and her too. Where'd you say she'd gone?

ANN. Gone out, but she said if anyone called to see her, to tell them to wait.

LYD. Well, I want to see her, so I'll wait. Now I tell you—help me get hold of her money, and I don't mind giving you, say—a hundred dollars.

ANN. What am I to do, Jack?

TERRY. (*outside.*) That's the dure, Miss, I'll not go in meself, I might meet that Miss Fly-away-high agin.

CHIP. All right, Terry. I'll have a shy at her myself.

LYD. Hush, someone is coming. Say nothing, the hundred's yours, if you help me.

CHIP. (*at door.*) Hello! I'm looking for Miss Wentworth. I've been in half a dozen rooms down the hall. Gosh! If it isn't the land buyer.

LYD. How do you do? Fine day.

CHIP. Reckon it is. Haven't noticed. Been too derved mad.

LYD. Indeed? (*To ANN*) You needn't wait; Miss Wentworth will soon be in, I'm certain.

ANN. Thank you, sir.

[*Exit c.*].

CHIP. Hope she will. I'm just bilin' over.

LYD. I trust there's nothing serious, miss.

CHIP. Don't Miss me. I'm just Chip—Chip Whitsell—no account, just like my dad.

LYD. Ah, I remember you.

CHIP. Yes, and I remember you, too. Gosh! But I'm mad.

LYD. Not at me, I hope?

CHIP. No, not exactly; but say, did you ever have a derved fool old dad?

LYD. Why, I—

CHIP. No, I suppose ye didn't. You're too smart to have a dad with no more sense than a grasshopper.

LYD. If you are angry about that land deal—

CHIP. That's it. You hit the bull's eye square.

LYD. Oh, that's all over, you know. Of course, when I found you objected—

CHIP. Oh, yes, I know, you pulled in your horns, that is what I call it. But dad's worse than ever. He's just pestered the life out o' me ever since yesterday.

LYD. That's too bad.

CHIP. Yes, sir. Bound to sell the land or bust: Derved old woodchuck. I call him a woodchuck, mister, 'cause they got the least sense o' anything in the world.

LYD. You don't say?

CHIP. Well, he's just bustin' to sell the land, and wouldn't give me no rest 'til I come over to see Miss Wentworth, if she'd buy it.

LYD. Do *you* want to sell?

CHIP. Now don't you get frisky. You can't buy it with your measly old five thousand dollars. If the farm's got to go, I'll get money fer it, ye can bet yer eyelashes on that.

CAR. (*outside.*) Whar' dat chile is? Good Lawd, dis wurl done turn sum'set²³ sence yisterday.

CHIP. Dern me, if mammy hasn't follered me. (*Goes to c.*)

CAR. (*at c.*) Dar yo' is. I don'' knowed yo' was hyar 'long this lane somewhar's.

CHIP. Come in here. What ever made you come trapseing along after me, anyway?

CAR. (*in door.*) 'Tain't no use to go an' git huffy at yo' po' old mammy, dat's don' bring yo' up fum weeny, teenty little baby so big. Dat's what 'tain't.

CHIP. Who's huffy at you, mammy? I ain't and you know it, but dad's such an all-fired idiot.

CAR. Reckon dat's what he is, honey. 'Kase he don' pester de life outer me yo' go away. He say he mus' come, an' he say I mus' come wid um.

CHIP. I'm glad my dad ain't twins.

²³ Sum'set = somersault, sometimes written somerset.

CAR. Yas, sir. An' he fuss an' fuss, an' bimeby I hat ter say I'd come wid 'im.

CHIP. Well, didn't he come?

CAR. 'Cose he did.

CHIP. Where is he?

CAR. He's down in de road. He say, mammy, yo' don' go fine her fus', an' jus' wodden' budge er step, but jus' stick to hit I mus' come in de hous' an fine you.

CHIP. Just like a mule, mister. That's what he is.

CAR. He was wusser dan a mule, I tell ye.

CHIP. Well, go bring him up. We got to wait fer Miss Wentworth, now we're here.

CAR. Yas-sum.

[Exit c. D.]

LYD. It's a big job to sell a farm, ain't it?

CHIP. No. Sellin' the farm's nothin'. It's havin' a daddy that bothers me.

CAR. (*outside.*) She right down dis-away.

WHIT. (*outside.*) Did she sell it yet?

CAR. Doan' reckon she did. (*CAROLINE and WHITSELL at c.*)

CHIP. Well, you're here?

WHIT. Yes, Chippy. Hain't ye glad?

CHIP. Tickled to death.

WHIT. Why, Chippy, this is the man that wanted ter buy the farm yisterday. Howdy, neighbor. Fine day.

LYD. (*shakes hands.*) Yes, very fine.

CHIP. Well, sit down, all of you. We've got to wait.

(*All sit but CHIPPY.*)

LYD. I suppose you have got your price fixed on the land?

CHIP. Well, dad ain't exactly settled in his mind. Said to ask ten thousand dollars; if I couldn't get that, to take nine; if she wouldn't give that to take eight, and to let the

thing go fer seven thousand dollars, if I couldn't get any more; but I want to tell you right now. I've made up my mind that the farm don't go fer less than twenty-five thousand dollars, dad er no dad.

WHIT. Chippy's kinder good at figgers, neighbor.

LYD. So it seems. Here is a deck of cards. What do yo say to a little social game while we are waiting?

WHIT. Wal, I calc'late I hain't much at keerds. I play old sledge now an' then. An' me an' Chippy plays muggins, an' now an' agin a game o' euchre.²⁴

LYD. Then we'll have a little game of euchre. Cut for deal. (*They play cards.*)

ANN. (*shows SYLVESTER to door.*) This is her room, sir.

CHIP. There's "Ah, y-y-yes," by Jiminy. Howdy?

SYL. Why h-h-how are you? D-d-d-d—

CHIP. Delighted to see me. I know.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. Say, don't begin that again, or I'll have a fit. I'm half wild, now.

SYL. Ah, n-n-no.

CHIP. (*grabs his hand.*) Good, you've changed your luck; thank you, that's great.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

WHIT. Jerusha! When I was in the army and played poker—

LYD. Then you do play poker?

WHIT. Use ter, some.

SYL. I was l-l-looking for Miss W-W-Wentworth.

CHIP. Needn't look. She's out.

SYL. Ah!

CHIP. Don't say it, I'll go on. She will be back after a while. Any one that calls is to wait—you called—you wait.

SYL. D-d-delighted to w-w-wait with y-y-ou.

²⁴ *old sledge*. . . *muggins*. . . *euchre*. These are all card games that were popular or at least common in the 20th century.

CHIP. Say, if you'll promise not to talk, tell you what I'll do. I'll sing you a song.

*(Specialty.)*²⁵

LYD. That was excellent.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CAR. Lawdy! But I'se gettin' tired. *(Dozes off.)*

WHIT. Jemimah! If we wus playin' poker, now, I'd bet my pile on that hand.

LYD. I don't believe you would dare.

WHIT. Ye don't, hey? By gum, there's two dollars I've got the best poker hand.

LYD. *(takes out roll of counterfeit bills.)* There's ten better you haven't.

WHIT. That don't skeer me, neighbor. Not a bit. *(Goes in pocket and takes out bag of coin.)* There's yer ten, an' there's a twenty-dollar gold piece I hev got the best hand. Do ye flop?

LYD. Hardly. *(During the above he has slipped two cards from his sleeve, and discarded two.)* I like a little excitement. I'll raise ye a hundred, yes, I'll try your nerve, I'll make it two hundred. *(CHIP and SYLVESTER at back of table.)*

CHIP. Don't you take a bluff, Daddy. We didn't come here fer this, but don't take water.

WHIT. I hain't got no more money about me.

CHIP. Good Lord! You've got to lay down.

LYD. Then I'll take the money.

SYL. W-w-wait. I g-g-got two hundred dollars. *(Hands money.)* S-s-see what he's g-g-got.

CHIP. Stay with him, Daddy. Don't lay down, or I don't sell the farm.

WHIT. There's your two hundred, and I'll bet the farm at a thousand—

LYD. There's an even thousand dollars in that package. What have you got?

WHIT. Three aces.

LYD. Sorry for you. There's three kings and a pair of fives, I win fairly.

²⁵ *Specialty.* The script would have included the sheet music for this number. It was common for there to be musical numbers in plays, and there are still examples of it.

CHIP. Oh, no, you don't.

LYD. Who says so? Why?

CHIP. (*two revolvers on him.*) I do, 'cause Dad's got a pair o' sixes besides.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE 1. *Landscape as in Act One.*

TERRY. (*enters R.*) Be the powers, Terry, ye are a Man ov importince. If ye kape on ye'll be prisident of these United States of America, wan of these fine days, and it's a fine prisi-dent ye'll be makin'. (*Struts about.*) Sure, I'd say to thim sinitors, "Here, now, make thim laws up, an' don't be soldierin' at yer work; don't ye see I'm lukin' at ye?"

CHIP. (*enters L.*) Hello, Terry, have you seen Harry Woodson?

TERRY. Have I seen Mr. Woodson? I have that.

CHIP. When? Where? Tell me quick; I must find him.

TERRY. Which do ye want to know first? When I saw Mr. Woodson, or where I saw the gentleman?

CHIP. Both. Be quick, can't you?

TERRY. I can. Sure there's not a man in the county can be quicker than I can.

CHIP. Will you tell me what I ask you?

TERRY. I will, indade. Have I refused to do it?

CHIP. No.

TERRY. Thin I'll tell ye.

CHIP. Be quick about it. I am in an awful hurry.

TERRY. And ain't I that same? Let me see, ye axed me had I seen Mr. Woodson. I have.

CHIP. When?

TERRY. Yisterday mornin', at yure house.

CHIP. Terry, you're an idiot.

TERRY. I am?

CHIP. Yes, you are. Don't you suppose I knew all the time you saw him yesterday?

TERRY. Uv coorse I do, but I thought ye wanted to prove it by me. There, I can't be palaverin' wid ye, I must run along. Miss Wintworth 'II be lukin' fer me. Do ye remimber owld Sammy Miggles, that lived alone, down by Bryan's Rock?

CHIP. Yes, I know him well.

TERRY. "Well, ye won't know him long, thin, unless ye go to the other wurruld.

CHIP. Is he dead?

TERRY. No, but he's awful sick. Goodbye, I'm off.

CHIP. If you see Harry Woodson—

TERRY. I suppose I'll get abused fer tellin' ye about it.

[Exit L.]

CHIP. Now, I don't know what to do. That land buyer got out so quick he forgot some of his money this morning, and I just picked it up, but I don't want to keep it unless I won it fair. Dad he reckons he don't know 'bout it. Mammy she was asleep, and the day of judgment would get round before that stutterin' feller could tell what he thinks. I got to see Harry Woodson. (*Starts R.; meets HARRY.*)

HARRY. (*enters R.*) Ah, Chip, you seem in a hurry?

CHIP. Say, where did you come from? I've been looking all over for you.

HARRY. I just come—

CHIP. Never mind, that's all right. You're here, that's all I want to know. Say, if you was playin' a game of poker —

HARRY. But I never play poker.

CHIP. I didn't say you did, smarty! I said if you was playin' a game of poker, and the other feller sneaked two cards out of his sleeve, and didn't have as good a hand as you did until he sneaked them cards, what would you do?

HARRY. I should object.

CHIP. That ain't what I mean. Any old fool would object. What would you do about the money?

HARRY. That depends.

CHIP. Look here! See that money. (*Shows bills.*)

HARRY. (*looking at bills.*) Is this the money you are talking about?

CHIP. That's it.

HARRY. Then I shouldn't worry about it a minute. It isn't worth it.

CHIP. I don't see why? I want to know whether I shall keep it?

HARRY. No.

CHIP. Why not?

HARRY. Because it's counterfeit. Where did you get it?

CHIP. That settles it. Dad's a bigger fool than I thought.

HARRY. He hasn't been dealing in this stuff?

CHIP. Lord, no! But he just put up his farm agin it in a game of draw. Bettin' the farm agin counterfeit money! Say, if we don't sell that farm, we'll be in jail, or mebber get hung.

HARRY. Where did you get this?

CHIP. Didn't I just tell you? Dad bet the farm agin it with that land buyer, that was at our house yesterday.

HARRY. John Lydecker?

CHIP. That's the man.

HARRY. Then I am right. Chip, you must help me.

CHIP. Lick that fool dad o' mine?

HARRY. No, catch these counterfeiters. Listen. I have found out they have a meeting place down near Bryan's Rock. An old fellow named Miggles has charge of it. I've evidence enough now to arrest both Lydecker and Simons, but I want to catch them at work, and get the plates.²⁶

CHIP. Old Miggles don't eat off plates, he's too stingy; he uses tin pans, they won't break.

²⁶ *and get the plates.* To make counterfeit bills, people would have to engrave plates to use on a printing press. These plates took nearly a year to finish and they would be very expensive. ([Crystal Caudill](#))

HARRY. No, you do not understand.

CHIP. I know dad bet the farm, anyhow.

HARRY. That's all right, but I want the plates these notes were made from. Come, you must go down to that place with me.

CHIP. Want me to go with you down to old Miggleses?

HARRY. Yes, and we must be cautious, not to be recognized.

CHIP. Why old Sammy Miggles'd know me in a minute. There ain't a girl round here he knows any better than me.

HARRY. I have it. He knows you as a girl, but not as a boy. You shall go as a boy.

CHIP. What, me? Well, I suppose it's all right, but I have no . . . no— (*Points to legs.*)

HARRY. Never mind the clothes. I'll fix all that. Come. (*Starts L.*)

CHIP. All right. I'll help you get their plates, or cups and saucers, or anything, but, don't you say a word to dad, 'cause he don't know enough to water a goose.

[*They exeunt L.*]

SCENE 2. *Dark wood in 4. Hut rough, but strong, looking, half across stage 2 to 3. Door in hut R., with practical lock. Side of hut to audience to be painted scrim.*²⁷

LYD. (*enters L. I.*) I'll bring that Hebrew to terms, or my name's not Black Jack. Oh, ho! I thought my message would fetch him. (**MOSES enters L. 3.**) Well?

MOSES. Ah, Jackie tear, you see how quick I come, ain't it? Ant I hat an encagement with a laty, doo.

LYD. What an infernally gay dog²⁸ you are.

MOSES. Ain't I peautiful? Put Jackie, dis vas pisness.

LYD. Am I in on it?

MOSES. Vy, Jackie, tear poy, how can you tout me? Id preaks my heart.

LYD. Stop your cant.²⁹ You deal squarely with me, and don't try any side cuts, or I'll do worse than break your heart—I'll break your head.

²⁷ *scrim.* In theatre a scrim is a piece of gauze cloth that appears opaque until lit from behind. ([Dictionary](#))

²⁸ *gay dog.* Someone who is given to licentious self-indulgence. ([Merriam-Webster](#))

²⁹ *cant.* When someone expresses or repeats conventional or trite sentiments, especially insincere use of pious words. (Merriam-

MOSES. Vy, Jackie, you hybnodise me. Vat to you mean?

LYD. What have you been trying to do on the sly with this Wentworth woman?

MOSES. No, not on the sly, Jackie. Tidn't I dold you, I hat an encagement? Tidn't I hurry here do dell you all apout id? How can you pe so gruel, ven you know I haf heart tisease?

LYD. Well, what's the game? I guess you are trying to do the right thing.

MOSES. Dot's peautiful of you, Jackie, peautiful. I've vixed an eighteen carat, all-vool-ant-a-yart-vite scheme.³⁰ Oh, it's peautiful.

LYD. Out with it.

MOSES. (*takes out letter, fancy colored stationery.*) See dot, Jackie, ain't id peautiful? Smell id, Jackie, aind dot a peau-tiful liddle ledder, such a berfume.

LYD. What damned nonsense is this? What do I want to go smelling letters for? I've no time for such idiocy.

MOSES. Oh, Jackie, ton't say dot. (*Goes to left and looks about.*) Dake another smell, Jackie. Oh, id's peautiful—dere's an odor of forty thousand dollars apout id.

LYD. What do you mean?

MOSES. Tidn't I said id? Miss Ventvorth, the sharming peautiful younk vooman—oxcuse me, Jackie, younk laty.

LYD. Well, what of her?

MOSES. Vait, Jackie. (*Smells letter.*) Oh id's such a peautiful itea.

LYD. (*catching him by collar.*) If you don't stop this monkey business, and tell me what you mean, I'll shake your clothes off.

MOSES. Ton't to id, Jackie, ton't to id. Dis suit cost me three forty-nine ad a fire sale. Ton't shake so hart, you gif me a shill.

LYD. Then talk sense. what do you mean?

MOSES. Vell, in the first blace, ve vill divite de forty thousand dollars equally, Jackie, after my oxbenses are baid, ain't id?

LYD. Expenses?

Webster)

³⁰ *all-vool-ant-a-yard-vite scheme* (all wool and a yard wide scheme.) The way that all wool and a yard was used when it was a common idiom was to say that something was sincere and honourable. "All wool, in the sense of something first-class dates from the American Civil War period." But in this context, it's a scheme, so they're trying to make it seem real and valuable. ([World Wide Words](#))

MOSES. Yes, Jackie. I hat do puy dis new suit, tidn't I dold you, do gall on Miss Ventvorth; then I'fe baid for a carritche.

LYD. All right. Go on.

MOSES. Miss Ventvorth is lofely, such a vine younk laty. She is do co vith me do look ad some lant doday. Ain't id peautiful?

LYD. I begin to see. You get her in a nice lonely place, and then you'll rob her of the forty thousand dollars.

MOSES. Oh, ton't say you'll, Jackie—say *ve'll*. Ve'll, nod you'll, Jackie. Say ve'll oxchanche some goot adfise for de fordy dousand.

LYD. But what has that letter to do with it?

MOSES. Ah, dot is a node from de peautiful Miss Ventvorth saying, would I sent de carritche ad vour o' glock instead of dree. (*Shows note*) See her peautiful name?

LYD. (*looks at note.*) "Yours, Alice Wentworth." I'll keep this for the present. (*Pockets note.*) Now, what's the scheme?

MOSES. A peautiful itea, Jackie—so peautiful. Ve ged de younk laty town here, do dis nice quiet blace. De younk laty vaints, mebbe, ven ve vant her peautiful money. Den ve bud her quiedly in dis nice liddle house, ve light a liddle vuse, dot runs do a keg o' powder in de house.

LYD. But there isn't any powder or fuse here?

MOSES. Dot's gospel druth, so helb me. Put, Jackie, tear, dere's lods in de Rock Canyon bowder house, ain't id?

LYD. That's so. I never thought of that.

MOSES. De liddle vuse is lighded, ve dake a quick valk, de younk laty vont know anything apout id. Viss—viss goes de vuse, den pang goes der bowder, ant vere's de effidence acains't us? Isn't id peautiful—de boor younk laty gommited suicide. (*Cries.*)

LYD. What are you crying for?

MOSES. I'm crying to think she should have killed herself.

LYD. Mo, you're all right. I didn't think you had the nerve to commit murder.

MOSES. Oh! Oh!

LYD. What's the matter?

MOSES. Ton't say murter, Jackie, ton't. I'fe god heart tisease. Id isn't murter do lide a liddle pit of a vuse, ant valk away is id?

LYD. Oh, no. But come, we are fooling away our time. Stop, old Miggles may give us some trouble.

MOSES. Oh, no, Jackie, he's sick. He sent me de key do de hud. I'll unlock id. (*Goes to hut.*) Ve musd leaf id oben, so de peautiful younk laty vont suspect.

LYD. Moses, you're a wonder. You get the girl, and I'll get the power and fuse. But how do I get in the power house?

MOSES. De key is unter de steb, Jackie. Unter de bowder house steb. I saw de man locking id yesterday.

LYD. All right, I'll get the powder and fuse. This is a big trick, Mo, if we can only turn it. But are you sure she has the money?

MOSES. Tidn't you heart her said yesterday, she hat id sewt ub in her gorsed? Oh, isn't id peautiful?

LYD. I'll be waiting for you, when you get here, with everything prepared for business. (*Exit L. 3.*)

MOSES. Now, I'll co for de peautiful younk latey. (*Exit L. 3.*)

HARRY. (*enters R. 2, with CHIP who is in boy's clothes.*) Ah, ha! They are up to some mischief. We are just in time.

CHIP. Gosh! I think we're just too late. They're both gone.

HARRY. Patience, my dear girl. Patience. We must watch them. You say that's the shanty?

CHIP. That's it, and I'll bet a dollar that's where they hatch up all their devilment.

HARRY. Then that's our trap. They will come back, and we must catch them red-handed and at work, mind.

CHIP. Right smack in the house, hey, grindin' out this kind o' money? (*Shows bills.*)

HARRY. That's the idea; but we will need help. Donovan is big and strong—find him, and bring him here. I'll follow this fellow, and see what he is up to. (*Points R.*) But remember, we must catch them in the house, and at work, to make sure of the plates.

CHIP. All right, I'll remember. And when we do catch them, we'll break up their whole chiny closet. Got a gun?

HARRY. I am always armed, but you?

CHIP. Ain't heeled?³¹ Now, what do you take me for? Didn't I tell you I'd been selling our farm?

HARRY. (*laughs.*) So you did. Remember, catch them in the house at work. [*Exit R. 3.*]

CHIP. I'm a regular sure enough detective. This beats sellin' a farm, but I can't boss this job like I can that one. Oh, well, here goes for Donovan. Then to catch the counterfeiter men, and their dishes.

[*Exit L. R.*]

SYL. (*enters L. 3 with WHITSELL, both made up as near like MOSES and LYDECKER as possible.*) D-d-deuced lonesome p-p-place.

WHIT. I calc'late 'tis a little sorter quiet like. Hope mammy don't tell Chippy that I sent her home, an' come off with you, er Chippy'd be follerin' me up.

SYL. She's d-d-deuced s-s-smart.

WHIT. Who, mammy? No, she hain't.

SYL. N-n-no, your d-d-daughter.

WHIT. Oh, Chippy? Reckon she is, but then she com' by it honestly. I hain't no slouch meself when it comes to smart.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

WHIT. An' I'm ded set ter ketch that ar land man.

SYL. You're s-s-sure this is the p-p-place?

WHIT. Wal, I calc'late I've seen him roun' hyar. Let's look in the house. Dern him, I'd jus' like ter take a fall outer that feller, an' his bogus money. (*Starts to hut.*)

SYL. W-w-wait. Are y-y-you armed?

WHIT. Me? No, are you?

SYL. N-n-o. Besides it's t-t-too l-l-light yet. W-w-wait 'til it gets darker.

WHIT. That's a derned good idee, mister, not thet I'm afeered. I'd face a regiment if they all had guns. No livin' bein' could make me knuckle.

³¹ *Ain't heeled?* “‘Being heeled’ is tied to the term ‘well-heeled,’ which means having plenty of money (wearing quality shoes was a sign of prosperity.) In the Old West, at least in theory, a person was better off carrying a firearm—and thus he (or she) was ‘heeled.’” ([Marshall Trimble](#))

SYL. I k-k-know you're a b-b-brave man. B-b-but don't let's r-r-run any r-risks.

WHIT. Calc'late yer right, but jus' let me get er sight o' one uv them bogus bill men. I'll show them what fight is, by gum.

SYL. (*pointing R.*) W-w-where does that p-p-path lead to?

WHIT. That goes down t'ward Si Pilchard's hill paster.

SYL. L-l-let's look the g-g-ground over.

WHIT. All right. Come on. (*Crosses.*) But I'm jus' akin' ter ketch up with one uv them fellers in that shack over there.

[*They exeunt R. I; stage grows gradually dark.*]

ALICE. (*enters L. 3, followed by MOSES.*) I'm afraid we started too late, Mr. Simons. It's growing dark.

MOSES. Dot's only a clout ofer de sun, my tear Miss Ventvorth, only a clout. (*Aside.*) I vonder has Jackie got de bowder?

ALICE. Rather a heavy cloud. However, you said this was part of the land? (*Crosses to R.*)

MOSES. Yes, Miss Ventvorth, isn't it peautiful, an' joost town dere (*pointing R. 3*), is vere dey mate deir virst obening on der broberdy.

ALICE. Yes, I see some little mounds of earth, just below.

MOSES. Aind dey peautiful, Miss Ventvorth, led me show you.

[*They exeunt R. 3.*]

LYD. (*enters R. 2, with powder keg and fuse; watching off R. 3.*) He's caught the bird. (*Laughs.*) I might say the golden bird. Now to hide this material, and wait developments. (*Crosses up behind hut.*)

ALICE. (*enters R. 3, followed by MOSES.*) It's all very nice, Mr. Simons—

MOSES. Aind id peautiful, Miss Ventvorth?

ALICE. But this is a transaction involving considerable money. I can't decide hastily tomorrow.

MOSES. Oh, Miss Ventvorth. Ton't drow away sooch a peautiful shance.

ALICE. I certainly shall not, but it's rapidly growing dark. I will return to the carriage, and think the matter over tonight.

MOSES. (*aside.*) She's running away wid our money. (*Sees LYDECKER, who motions him from behind hut.*) Put ve musd seddle dis pnis donight.

ALICE. I can see no hurry. Besides it's growing late, the place is dark and lonesome.

MOSES. Put see vat a peautiful cane I haf, Miss Ventvorth. I will brodecd you.

ALICE. I can protect myself, thank you. Come.

MOSES. You mustn't go my tear Miss Ventvorth.

ALICE. (*turns to him quickly.*) And why not?

LYD. (*seizing her from behind.*) Because you have money and we want it.

ALICE. (*screams.*) Help! Help! Thieves!

LYD. (*hand over her mouth; size struggles.*) Stop that damned noise, you infernal cat! Lay hold there, Mo.

MOSES. (*with bottle and handkerchief.*) Oh, you don't know how she kicks, Jackie. There! (*Slaps handkerchief over ALICE'S face; she gradually sinks to ground.*) A liddle chloroform, Jackie, is so soothing do a female vooman. Isn't id peautiful?

LYD. The powder and fuse are there behind the hut. Fix them quick, while I look after the money. (*Stoops over ALICE; fumbles with dress.*)

MOSES. I ton't abbrofe of laties using bowder, except in a gase like dot. (*Crosses behind hut.*)

LYD. The devil. A woman can hide a thing in her clothes to defy—ah, here we are. (*Pulls out drafts.*) One, two, three—

HARRY. (*enters L. 3, hurriedly.*) I thought I heard a woman scream. Ah, ha! (*Down quickly behind LYDECKER.*)

LYD. Quite a neat haul. (*Pockets drafts.*) Quite neat.

HARRY. (*revolver in his face.*) Ain't it?

LYD. Hell!

MOSES. (*sneaks round to front of hut.*) De dedecdife, an' I can't run away.

HARRY. You miserable cur.

LYD. My sister has fainted.

HARRY. Your sister, hey? Throw up your hands. I want you, Mr. John Lydecker.

LYD. (*throwing up hands.*) This is tough. To be robbed, just as your sister has fainted.

HARRY. I'll attend to your sister. (*Snaps handcuff on LYDECKER'S right wrist; as he does so ALICE groans; he turns quickly, kneels over her.*) My God! It's Alice! Alice! Alice, dear! Speak to me—it's Harry!

MOSES. (*has sneaked from behind house up behind HARRY; hits him on head with cane. HARRY starts up, drops pistol; MOSES hits him again; he falls, just as LYDECKER is about to strike him with the handcuff.*) Ton't hid a Man ven he's town, Jackie—vight vair always.

LYD. By God, that was a narrow escape. That fellow is on to us, he has followed us to the place yonder.

MOSES. Led's bud dem poth in de hud den vizz! Poom! Ah! Jackie.

LYD. It won't do. He evidently had his plans laid to pinch us. This place is under suspicion.

MOSES. Ve can't leaf de peautiful younk laty ant her loffer here?

LYD. No, the Rock Canyon powder house! There's enough powder there to blow them into atoms. (*Picks up ALICE.*)

MOSES. Pe sure you ton't loose any of te money, Jackie. Oh isn't id peautiful?³²

[*Exeunt R. 3, with ALICE.*]

CHIP. (*enters L. 3 followed by TERRY; stage quite dark.*) Now understand, Terry. There may be a fight. Here, take this gun.

TERRY. (*speaking loudly.*) An Irishman's better in a fight wid his fists.

CHIP. Sh! Sh! Don't talk so loud. They may be in the house now. Let's look. (*Sneaks don to door.*)

TERRY. Are they there, darlin'?

CHIP. No, but the door's open. They're round here some- where. Duck down there in the dark, that side of the house. I'll scrooch up here.

TERRY. I'm wid ye.

³² In the script this speech is given to Lydecker, but it clearly belongs to Moses. The stage direction following has also been changed from "exit" to "exeunt."

CHIP. Keep yer eye peeled, and yer ears open. S-sh! There's someone now. Lay low. Gosh, we'll get 'em before Harry gets back.

(WHITSELL and SYLVESTER enter R. 3, sneak cautiously down to door of hut without a word; as they do so, TERRY from L. side of hut and CHIP from R., crawl around on hands and knees, coming to door just after WHITSELL and SYLVESTER have entered.)

WHIT. (in hut in muffled voice.) Light!

(SYLVESTER strikes match and lights candle; they both grope about the floor of hut.)

CHIP. (at door.) That's them. We've got 'em! Where the dickens is Harry?

TERRY. I can't be sayin'.

WHIT. (makes noise of plates rattling together.) Hist? (SYLVESTER goes to WHITSELL.)

CHIP. (as plates rattle.) Plates! By thunder! It's them, an' the trail's hot. Jewhillikins! We can't wait all day for Harry! What'll we do?

TERRY. I'll run an' find him.

CHIP. You're an idiot. Now's the time to catch them, an get dishes an' all.

TERRY. Le's lock the dure.

CHIP. Not by a derved sight. Harry said we must catch 'em red handed, an' I'm going to do it. Come on. (Size strikes against door.) Ouch!

WHIT. Hist! (SYLVESTER blows out light.)

CHIP. Now you take the farthest one over, when I throw open the door. I'll grab the other feller. Got the lantern I give ye?

TERRY. I have, an' the rewolwer.

CHIP. Then come.

(She dashes in, seizes WHITSELL, who wilts. TERRY catches SYLVESTER, who also wilts. As the rush is made, TERRY fires the revolver two or three times; there is a hurried scramble, CHIP drags WHITSELL through the door to c. followed by TERRY with SYLVESTER.)

CHIP. (in assumed voice.) Throw up your hands! (WHITSELL at R., throws up hands. SYLVESTER on knees L.)

TERRY. We got 'em (Flashes lantern in WHITSELL'S face; lights up.)

CHIP. Good Lord! I've arrested dad.

CURTAIN

ACT IV.

SCENE. JOHN LYDECKER's room in 3; c. and doors R. and L. 2, chairs, table, etc. Fancy box lounge at L. c. with large rug thrown over it. Screen about six feet high at L. of C.

LYD. (*discovered.*) That wasn't a bad bit of work. Heavens! What an explosion that powder house made last night. It's roused the neighborhood, and the whole town's gone out today to look at the ruins. Humph! I don't think they will find enough of that woman, and the clever Secret Service man, to give an excuse for a funeral. (*MOSES enters c.*) Now (*lights cigar*) I'll just practice a little on the charming Miss Wentworth's signature, put it on the back of these, (*takes out drafts*) get them cashed and—³³

MOSES. (*over his shoulder.*) Ve'll divite the poodle, aind it, Jackie?

LYD. The devil!

MOSES. No, Jackie, it's me, your peautiful bardner, hey?

LYD. Yes, you are a beautiful partner.

MOSES. Aind I? Co on vid your writing, Jackie. Co on. You are sooch a peautiful writer. Ant de peautiful money—ven to ve ged de peautiful money?

LYD. You're in a devil of a hurry. (*Writing.*)

MOSES. Can you plame me, Jackie? Tidn't I earned id?

LYD. Perhaps. But we haven't got it yet. I've been waiting for the bank to open. What time is it?

MOSES. Nine o'clock.

LYD. Well, I'll just take these down to the Merchants' Bank, and see if I can negotiate them. (*Rises.*) You wait until I get back.

³³ *put it on the back of these [drafts]-get them cashed--* These drafts are like checks that we use, but there are differences. They're used most often with large payments because the payment is guaranteed to a greater extent than personal checks. Bank drafts combine the convenience of cash with greater security than a check. That's because rather than the money being drawn from an individual's bank account, it comes from the bank itself.

MOSES. Hattent I petter co vith you, Jackie. Some pat dief might rop you of de peautiful money.

LYD. Damn it! Don't you trust me?

MOSES. Oh, Jackie. How can you say id? I only vant do brodecde de peautiful money.

LYD. Yes, I know. Getting leery you won't get your bit. (*Aside.*) You're lucky if you do.

MOSES. Vat vas id, Jackie?

LYD. Oh, nothing. I said that's just like a Jew. Come on.

MOSES. Pe gareful vid de peautiful trafts.

[*They exeunt c.*].

ANN. (*enters L. 2, hat and wrap on.*) His room is all in confusion, everything packed up, and his trunk locked. This looks suspicious, Mr. John Lydecker. Going to give me the slip again, after promising, only last night, that you would marry me right away, and settle down here comfortably. He's up to some of his tricks! I'll go out the back way and watch him, and if he tries to shake me again—Humph! Well, he better not, that's all.

[*Exit L. 2.*]

WHIT. (*at c., slightly drunk.*) I calc'late they may all say what they like, but I'm after thet derved skunk of a bogus man, an' when I git after a thing, it generally comes, right frum th' roots. This here's his room, but he hain't here. Don't make no difference, I'm jest goin' ter hunker down here, an' wait fer him; an' when he comes, I'll give him the dad-burnedest lickin' he ever had; then I'll make him shell out Miss Wentworth's money. Purty fine sort o' place. Wonder where he keeps that counterfeit money? 'Tain't on the table, ner under the table, ner—(*at couch*) bet he's got it stuffed away in thet sofy. (*Pokes about couch.*) 'Tain't there. I'll jest turn the derved thing over. (*Goes to lift couch; raises lid.*) Wal, b'gosh, it's a box. Who'd a thought it.

CHIP. (*outside.*) You're puffin' like a porpoise, mammy.

WHIT. Halle-lujah! There's Chippy. She'll skin me erlive fer drinkin'. I'll skedaddle. (*Starts.*) Dern it all! I don't kno' whar to go. I kno' what'll do. I'll git in the sofy. (*Gets into couch, and closes lid.*)

CHIP. (*enters, followed by ALICE.*) This is the place, but he's gone. Jumped the game.

ALICE. I don't think so. He does not suspect that I am alive, and well—thanks to you.

CAR. (*enters c. D., puffing.*) Land-ee! Dem's de steepes' steps I evah did see in all mah life. I'se tired as a dog. (*Sinks on couch.*)

CHIP. Too bad, Mammy, but you would come.

CAR. 'Deed I hain't goin' ter stay at home 'lone no mo', when all de fussin's goin' on. No, indeedy!

ALICE. That's right, Mammy Caroline.

CAR. (*rises.*) Cose hit is. Luk hyar, wha' yo' think I goin' ter do, ef anythin' happen ter dat chile? (*WHITSELL raises lid of couch slightly.*)

SYL. (*at C.*) I-i-it's too I-I-late, Miss W-W-Wentworth. (*Out of breath.*)

ALICE. Have they cashed the drafts?

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. I don't believe that feller can say anything else.

ALICE. This is serious. I had hoped to stop payment.

SYL. I h-h-hurried to the b-b-bank f-f-fast as I could. Mr. Whitsell d-d-don't walk very b-b-b--

CHIP. Beautiful?

SYL. B-briskly.

CHIP. Where is the old katydid, anyhow?

SYL. D-d-don't know. Asked me to w-w-wait 'til he saw Higgins.

CHIP. That settles dad.

ALICE. Anything serious?

CHIP. Oh, no, not killin'! Higgins keeps the saloon. Dad wanted ter get a drink o' licker.

(*CAROLINE is nodding off to sleep.*)

ALICE. We must find Harry, and tell him about the drafts. (*CAROLINE drops asleep, falling full length on the couch.*)

CHIP. That's right. Come ahead. No, you and Mr. Sylvester go; I'll stay here with mammy.

ALICE. There is no time to be lost. Come, Mr. Sylvester.

SYL. Ah, ye-e-s.

[*They exeunt c.*]

CHIP. ‘Tain’t no harm to jus’ peek round a little. Wonder where that goes to. (*At R. 2.*) I’m going to see.

[*Exit R. 2.*]

CAR. (*snores; goes to turn over, and falls off the up stage side of cot; sits up.*) Golly! Who hit me? Whar I is, anyhow? I know, dot chile don’ push me outer bed. (*Rises.*) No, ‘tain’t—we’s lookin’ fer dat lan’ man, an’ dey’s don’ gon’an’ lef’ me. I foller ‘em, dat’s what I do. (*Exit c.*)

CHIP. (*enters R. 2.*) Can’t find nothin’ in there. Guess I’ll try this door. (*Crosses to L. 2; WHITSELL makes a noise in couch.*) What’s that? Why, mammy’s gone! (*WHITSELL groans.*) Lordy! This house is haunted. (*WHITSELL hits top of couch.*) Look at that thing move! Somethin’s wrong in this place. (*Lid raises.*) ‘There it goes agin. (*She goes round in front of couch; down on her knees; peeping.*) No, sir, it’s the bogus man, and he’s hidin’ in there. Oh, if I only had a stick. I’d poke him out fast enough. (*Turns away from couch; WHITSELL lifts lid; she turns back facing him.*) Dad! By thunder!

WHIT. (*rising.*) Why Chippy, it’s you, ain’t it?

CHIP. The fool killer’s dead in this district.

WHIT. Yo’ ain’t mad, er ye?

CHIP. No, but I will be, if I keep fallin’ over you every time I turn round. Come, now, get out er here quick.

WHIT. Why, I come her—

CHIP. Never mind your past history. Get out. I’ve got business on hand, an’ you’d spoil any settin’ of eggs in the world. (*Pushes him toward c.*)

WHIT. I calc’late I kno’ a thing er two.

CHIP. Well, nobody suspects you of it. (*Pushes him out c. D.*)

HARRY. (*at c. disguised with beard, etc.*) Chip?

CHIP. Little familiar, ain’t you?

HARRY. Chip, don’t you know me?

CHIP. Harry! Well, I’ll swan to Moses! What are you doing like that?

HARRY. I didn't want them to know in town that I was alive, so I disguised myself. Lydecker and Simons are coming here. They've drawn the money on the drafts, and have just left Simons' place. Come, they mustn't find you here.

CHIP. Well, I reckon they will. That's what I came for.

HARRY. No, no! Not yet. We must recover the money, but it will take strategem.

CHIP. Well, I'd take a club or a gun.

HARRY. That's all right, at the proper time, but not yet.

CHIP. All right. You're bossing this detective job, but I'd rather stay. (*Starts to c. D.*)

HARRY. No, no, not that way; we might meet them. This door leads out the back way.

CHIP. It's bad luck to go out another way from what you come in, but all right.

[*They exeunt L.*]

LYD. (*enters c. D.*) I've got the money and given the Hebrew the shake. Now to get a few things in my room, and get out for New Orleans. (*Starts to L., meets ANN, who enters L. 2.*) Oh!

ANN. Surprised, ain't you?

LYD. Why, yes, that is, no. I was just going to look for you, my dear.

ANN. You lie, Jack Lydecker.

LYD. What?

ANN. Yes, and you know it.

LYD. Why, Ann, dear, you're excited.

ANN. No, I'm not, but I'm not such a fool as I have been. You've lied to me for the last time. You've got your things packed, and are going to jump.

LYD. (*starts.*) Who says so?

ANN. I say so, and I know you. You're trying to shake me, but you can't. You'll marry me, and take me with you, or you'll not go. That's all.

LYD. Now, what would you do?

ANN. Stop you with this. (*Shows knife.*)

LYD. Oh, come. I promised you some money. Here. (*Takes out money.*)

ANN. Oh, you can't do that any longer

LYD. Damn you, get out of my way. (*pushes her aside; she seizes him.*)

ANN. I'll die first!

LYD. (*snatching knife; stabbing her.*) Then die, damn you! (*She falls.*) You might have saved me all this trouble, if you had stood out of the way. (*Throws rug over her.*) Another little encumbrance disposed of.

[Exit L. 2.]

MOSES. (*enters c. D.*) He's gone, ant all de peautiful money. Vat shall I to, vat shall I to? I'fe pin rob't. Oh de peautiful money. (*He stumbles against ANN.*) Vat is dot? (*throws off rug.*) A vooman, an' she's asleeb! (*Kneels.*) No-no-she's tead! Tead! Vat's dis? (*He gets blood on his hands.*) It's blood! She's pin murteret! Here is a knife. (*Picks up knife.*) She's pin murteret! Who shall say who dit id?

LYD. (*enters L. 2, with grip and overcoat.*) I will, that you did!

MOSES. Vat?

LYD. I am sorry to have caught you, Mo. Such an old friend, too. However, I am going away. If they don't catch you before I go, I won't have to testify.

MOSES. Coing away! Coing away! Put de peautiful money, Jackie, de peautiful money?

LYD. Will all go with me.

MOSES. Oh, Jackie! Jackie, you ton't mean id?

LYD. Yes. It would be too bad to make two bites at a cherry,³⁴ my boy. Besides, I'll have to be paid for my silence about that. (*Points to ANN.*)

MOSES. Oh, de peautiful money!

LYD. You're all right, Mo., if you did kill the woman. Tell you what I'll do, I'll help you get rid of her, seeing that you give your consent for me to keep the dust.

MOSES. Put I ton't gonsend do nodding. (*LYDECKER points to ANN.*) Ton't! Ton't! Keep de money.

LYD. I thought so. Come, catch hold.

[They carry ANN off L. 2.]

³⁴ *make two bites at a cherry.* Although commonly this idiom means to make two attempts at something, especially a small task, another way this could be interpreted is a cherry is too small to take two bites out of to enjoy—Lydecker thinks that even half of the amount of money is too small to share with Moses.

CHIP. (*enters c.*) This here detective business keeps a feller hustlin'. Sellin' a farm an' ketchin' counterfeiters an' robbers is business. (*She conceals herself behind screen, behind which there is a chair.*)

LYD. (*enters L. followed by MOSES.*) She's all right in there 'til night.

MOSES. Oh, Jackie, Jackie, ton't leaf me.

LYD. Didn't I tell you I'd do the square thing by you? Sit down. (*They sit at table.*)

MOSES. Vat shall I to? Vat shall I to?

LYD. Shut up. See here, Tonight I'll help you toss that in the river. Mind, I'm doing you a great favor, putting off my little trip until tomorrow.

Mo. Put de peautiful money—de peautiful money?

LYD. Here. I'm going to be liberal with you. (*Takes out a roll of bills.*)

CHIP. (*behind screen.*) Oh, why can't I reach that table?

MOSES. Isn't it peautiful?

LYD. There! There's a hundred dollar note. (*Pockets balance of money in right hand coat pocket.*)

MOSES. Is dot all?

LYD. Oh, no. But I keep the rest.

MOSES. Put, Jackie?

LYD. All right, then. (*Rises; crossing L.*) I'll tell about that. (*Points L.*)

MOSES. (*jumping up, running to him.*) I'll dake de huntert tollars.

LYD. (*up close to screen; picks up his hat.*) Good! Then tonight, we close up that little matter (*points L.*) and I say nothing.

MOSES. Sveal id, Jackie—sveal id! (*Close to LYDECKER on his right side.*)

LYD. All right. I swear.

MOSES. Holt up your right hant so. (*Puts up his left hand close in front of screen.*) Ant svear—so helb you—nefer do say a vort—

LYD. (*holds up his right hand close to MOSES' left.*) There you are. I swear.

CHIP. (*quickly snapping handcuffs on both their wrists.*) I should think you would. (*Comes from behind screen.*)

LYD. What's that?

MOSES. Ve're binched. (*They struggle.*)

CHIP. Couldn't help it. Jewelry becomes you.

LYD. The jig's up. (*CHIP blows whistle.*)

HARRY. (*enters c, followed by ALICE and CAROLINE.*) We are just in time.

CHIP. Bet you are. (*To LYDECKER.*) Here, shell out— 'scuse me, your right hand's busy. (*Takes money from his pocket, giving it to ALICE.*) There.

ALICE. She has saved the money, and handcuffed the men.

CAR. Good Lawdy! Dat chile done it all by hersef.

WHIT. (*enters c, followed by SYLVESTER.*) By gum! She's goin' ter buy th' farm.

SYL. Ah, y-y-yes.

CHIP. (*to ALICE.*) Did you say it?

ALICE. (*giving her hand to HARRY.*) Ask Harry.

CHIP. Jiminy! Think I've had a heap to do with joinin' hands all round. Come here, Dad. (*He crosses to her.*) I forgive ye, but the next time ye want to sell a farm, let me know ahead o' time. Ye see what it's led to.

(*Points to ALICE and HARRY, LYDECKER and MOSES.*)

CURTAIN.