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Little Boy Blue

A pantomime

Paul Reakes

Samuel French — London
www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk

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CHARACTERS

The Town Crier
A Cat
Halloweena, a wicked witch
Bessie Blue, the town hall cleaner
Johnnie Blue, her son
Susie, the Mayor's daughter
Sidney Sidebottom, the Mayor of Merrydale
Fit, a footman
Mabel, a maid
Willard "Wiggles" Wigglesworth, a hot air balloon man
Squawker, Halloweena's feathered familiar
The Yeti, an abominable snowman
A Woman
A Girl

Chorus of: **Townsfolk**, **Stallholders**, **Street Dancers**, **Wildlife**, **Demons**, **Himalayans**, **Zombies**.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

SCENE 1 Merrydale Town Square
SCENE 2 Lovers' Lane
SCENE 3 The Grand Fête
SCENE 4 The Witch's Lair
SCENE 5 Up in the Air

ACT II

SCENE 1 Somewhere in the Himalayas
SCENE 2 The Witch's Lair
SCENE 3 The Swamp on the Witch's Island
SCENE 4 Back Home Again
SCENE 5 The Grand Finale

Time — Pantotime

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MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

No 1	Song and Dance	**Townsfolk**
No 2	Comedy Song and Dance	**Bessie**
No 3	Romantic Song	**Johnnie** and **Townsfolk**
No 3a	Reprise of No 3	**Susie**, **Fit** and **Mabel**
No 4	Song and Dance	**Wiggles**, **Bessie** and **Townsfolk**
No 5	Romantic Duet	**Johnnie** and **Susie**. **Wildlife** (Optional)
No 6	Song and Dance	**Townsfolk** and **Stallholders**
No 7	Dance	**Street Dancers**
No 8	Song and Dance	**All**
No 9	Dance	**Demons**
No 9a	Reprise of No 9 (Optional)	**Demons**
No 10	Song and Dance	**Cast** and the **Audience**
No 10a	Reprise of No 10	**Cast** and the **Audience**

ACT II

No 11	Song and Dance	**Himalayans**
No 12	Romantic Duet and Dance	**Johnnie** and **Susie**
No 13	Song and Dance	**Cat**, **Fit**, **Mabel** and **Himalayans**
No 13a	Reprise of No 13	**All**
No 13b	Reprise of No 9 (Optional)	**Demons**
No 14	Comedy "Evil" Song and Dance	**Halloweena** and **Squawker**
No 15	Song and Dance	**Zombies**
No 16	Song and Dance	**All**
No 17	Community Song	**Fit**, **Mabel** and the **Audience**
No 18	Finale Song or Reprise	**All**

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

The Town Crier must obviously have a loud, clear voice. He wears the full regalia and has a handbell and scroll.

A Cat (Female/Child's part) This is indeed a miraculous cat. She can understand human speech, communicate with people and even instigate dance routines! Despite these amazing attributes, she still has all the mannerisms and characteristics of an ordinary moggy. Ear and whisker cleaning, with the occasional bout of scratching, would not be out of place. Agility is needed, and above all, the ability to make the animal lovable to the audience. A good cat costume with mask or facial make-up. A cat collar with what appears to be diamond studs.

Halloweena (Baddie) is, as she keeps telling us, the wickedest witch in the world! She is a very unpleasant individual who revels in her own villainy. She never misses an opportunity of stirring the audience into a frenzy of boos and hisses. This is strong character part and must be able to give as good as she gets. She should not be portrayed as the "old crone" variety of witch. She can even be attractive in a macabre way. A small amount of singing and dancing is required. With her bizarrely spectacular costumes, make-up and headdresses, she is the personification of fashionable evilness.

Bessie Blue (Dame) is the town hall cleaner. She is a buxom, blousy "lady" who changes her mood at the drop of a hat. Motherly and mirthful one minute, sarcastic and cynical the next. She can also be comically seductive and sexy. Whatever her mood, you can't help liking her. She is always on friendly and confidential terms with the audience and never misses a opportunity of involving them. Singing and dancing ability is an advantage, but good comic timing is essential. It goes without saying that all her costumes, hair-dos and make-up are ludicrous and funny. A gaudy overall and turban for her cleaning job and a fancy outfit for the fete in Act I Scene 3. She will need a quick change costume that displays her recently acquired wealth in Act II Scene 4. An outrageous wedding dress for the Finale.

Johnnie Blue (Principal Boy) and **Susie** (Principal Girl) Johnnie is Bessie's son. A handsome, likeable young man. Susie is the Mayor's daughter. A pretty, likeable young woman. Singing and dancing ability is needed for both these roles, as well as good camaraderie with the audience. They are deeply in love with each other. But as Johnnie is from a poor family, the Mayor has forbidden them to see each other.

And this is not their only problem. After befriending Halloweena's cat, the witch takes her revenge by putting a curse on them — turning them completely blue! Skin, hair, clothes! The lot! I'm sure your excellent costume and make-up departments will have their own ideas on how to achieve this bit of magic! Obviously it means that blue duplicates of their costumes are required. These should be made so that only the minimum of flesh requires blue make-up. (Please make sure that you use a tried and tested body paint) Legs should be concealed by tights or leggings. In both cases wigs can be used, but for Johnnie, I suggest that his hair be completely hidden under a cap or hat. Magnificent wedding costumes for the Finale.

Sidney Sidebottom is the Mayor of Merrydale. He is full of self-importance and a snob. The personification of parochial pomposity. This makes him a figure of fun and ridicule. Especially with Bessie, who enjoys reminding him of his lowly origins. He refers to her and her family as riff-raff. However, when they become rich he soon changes his tune and wants to make Bessie his wife! Ideally, he should be a short man and corpulent. Singing and dancing ability is not required. He wears his mayoral chain all the time. He probably sleeps in it! For the opening of the fête, he wears his official robe and hat. This is worn for the Finale.

Fit and **Mabel** (Comedy Duo) Although not overburdened with brains, they are a very likeable couple. They can be ridiculously "lovey-dovey" with each other at times. Mostly they are just plain goofy! Singing and dancing ability is an advantage, but good rapport and camaraderie with the audience is essential. They are involved in plenty of comic business and audience participation. Ideally, Fit should be tall and skinny, while Mabel is petite and buxom. He wears footman's livery that is too small, and she wears a maid's uniform that is too ... Well, short would be the understatement of the year! For the Finale, Mabel adds a wedding veil and carries a bouquet. Fit adds a fancy hat and huge button hole.

Willard "Wiggles" Wigglesworth is the owner of a hot air balloon. He is an urbane gentleman of the old school. Rather vague and detached, but very pleasant and courteous. The poor man becomes Bessie's love interest without being aware of it! A small amount of singing and dancing is required. He joins Bessie in plenty of comic business and audience participation. He wears overalls, an old-fashioned leather flying helmet, goggles, a scarf and boots. Wedding outfit for the Finale.

Squawker (Male or Female part) is a giant bird! It is the witch's feathered familiar. It has perfect understanding of human speech and can talk, albeit with an awful, rasping croak. It is not essential to be able to fly for this role, but appearing to do so is necessary! This mainly applies to the scene in which it attacks the hot air balloon. Mostly it just hops about, flapping its wings and squawking. Even amongst the audience! A small amount of singing and dancing is required. Comically repulsive to look at, this oversized oddity should be a costume designer's dream — or nightmare!

The Yeti is the abominable snowman. It is huge, hideous and hairy. It is completely white, has claws and fangs and a tremendous roar. Unless you have a real Yeti in captivity, this part will have to be played by a tall male actor in a shaggy white costume! No singing or dancing is required. Just the ability to behave fiercely until it meets the Cat and becomes friendly with everyone. It only appears in Act II. A fancy hat and bow tie for the Finale.

A Woman and **A Girl** are the Yeti and the Cat after the witch's curse has been lifted. The woman is a white witch who only uses her magic for good. The Girl is her daughter and apprentice. They had been transformed by Halloweena. Graceful movement and pleasant speaking voices are necessary for these two roles. Their ethereal appearance and diaphanous costumes leave us in no doubt that they are from another dimension. The Girl wears a duplicate of the cat's diamond studded collar. They only appear in Act II.

The **Chorus**, **Dancers** and **Children** appear as **Townsfolk**, **Stallholders**, **Wildlife**, **Street Dancers**, **Demons**, **Himalayan Natives** and **Zombies**. All participate in the action and musical numbers. The Townsfolk should be a mixture of gentry and peasantry and costumed accordingly. The Stallholders are clothed in picturesque homespun, and the Street Dancers are colourful and gypsy-like. The Wildlife (optional) are fluffy rabbits and squirrels, etc. The little Demons are in red with facial make-up or devil masks. The Himalayan Natives wear fur-trimmed outfits with hoods, mittens and snow boots. The Zombies are dressed in a variety of rotting rags, with matted hair and decomposed complexions.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The pantomime offers opportunities for elaborate staging, but can be produced quite simply if funds and facilities are limited.

There are four full sets:

Merrydale Town Square
The Grand Fête
Somewhere in the Himalayas
Swamp on the Witch's Island

There is one half set:

Up In The Air

These scenes are interlinked by tabs, or two front cloths:

Lovers' Lane
The Witch's Lair

There can be a special Finale setting, or the Town Square set can be used with added decorations.

STAGING

Merrydale Town Square is surrounded by picturesque shops and buildings. On one side, steps lead to the pillared entrance of the town hall. In the distance is a field with tents and stalls ready for the forthcoming fête. There is also a hot air balloon. (See Distant Balloon notes) The Grand Fête shows a field with colourful tents and stalls. There are flags and bunting. At the back is a small rostrum. Among other signs, there is one reading BALLOON RIDES! THIS WAY. A view of sky and countryside in the distance. Somewhere in the Himalayas is a mountain pass, edged by snow-covered rocks and boulders. At the back is a large boulder which conceals the Yeti. In the distance there are huge snow-capped mountains and glaciers. The scene has a bleak, but clean and sparkling beauty. Swamp on the Witch's Island is a complete contrast. Gnarled and twisted trees overhang the steamy swamp. Dense undergrowth and tangled creepers abound. In the distance can be seen the rest of the volcanic island under a strange, multi-coloured sky. Lovers' Lane is a front cloth representing a picturesque country lane. The Witch's Lair is another front cloth showing the interior of a spooky cave with bizarre wall paintings. These cloths are used to interlink the full set scenes. If this is not practical, tabs can be used.

Up In The Air (Act I Scene 5)
In this scene our intrepid adventurers are seen travelling by hot air balloon in search of the evil witch. The following are only suggestions of how to create this effect. I am sure individual directors and set designers will have their own excellent ideas. This is a half set. The backcloth shows blue sky with fluffy white clouds. The side wings represent sky and clouds. A ground row of clouds extends across the stage from wing to wing. In the centre, behind the ground row, is the basket of the balloon. This can be made from actual basketwork or a light construction painted to represent a basket. Whatever is used, it needs to be bottomless. Ropes are attached to each corner of the basket. The other ends of these ropes are secured up in the flies. This will give the impression that they are attached to the actual balloon which is out of sight. The basket should be suspended above the stage by about eight inches. (The gap is covered by the cloud ground row) This will allow it to swing freely from side to side. Standing inside the basket, the cast, by holding the edges or the ropes, can simulate its movements in the air. This will be particularly effective during the giant bird's attack and the storm sequence. Another method would be to have the basket on castors. The ropes can be kept rigid by winding stiff wire around them. If facilities make any of the above impractical, the basket can be stationary with the ropes wired and disappearing into the flies.

Distant Balloon (Act I, Scenes 1 and 3. Act II, Scenes 1 and 3)

In these scenes the hot air balloon is viewed in the distance. Act I Scene 1 is the easy one. As it is seen to be stationary in a field it can be painted on the backcloth. In the other scenes it's on the move! This is always at the back of the stage, close to the backcloth. It appears to float into view from one side, drift across the sky, and float out on the other side. In Act II Scene 1 it is seen to be tossed about in a mighty storm. The simplest method of "flight" is by running a model or painted cut-out on lines or wires. Once again, this is only a suggestion. I'm sure your director or set designer will achieve another minor miracle.

Lighting

Bright general lighting for the Town Square, Grand Fête and Lovers' Lane scenes. Romantic lighting changes are required for all the love songs and duets. The lighting for the Witch's Lair should be dark and spooky. Sinister lighting change for Halloweena's entrances. Flashes of lightning are frequently used, particularly in the spectacular storm sequence at the end of Act I. The scene in the Himalayas requires a

falling snow effect at the opening. This is followed by a short storm sequence, and then the effect of sunlight on snow for the rest of the scene. The Swamp should be a complete contrast. A reddish glow lights the scene, illuminating the twisted trees and tangled creepers. This will help to create a hot and steamy atmosphere. Also, there are dark shadows in which anything might be lurking! A thoroughly unpleasant place altogether. It's even more creepy when the repulsive zombies come looking for their dinner! Several complete black-outs are required as characters "magically" appear and disappear. Further use of follow spots for entrances, musical numbers and audience participation, etc. is left to the discretion of the individual director.

Effects

All the usual elements are required for a tale of magic and adventure. Blinding flashes and black-outs as characters appear and disappear. Weird and unearthly sounds to accompany the Witch in her evil doings and incantations. A tempestuous storm scene with thunder and lightning, howling winds and lashing rain. A blizzard of snow and ice. A steamy swamp with swirling, but well controlled, ground mist. An off stage microphone is required so that the Witch's voice and evil laughter can be heard coming out of the air. Any other effects to enhance the production may be added at the director's discretion.

The time is Pantotime. This means that the style of settings and costumes can be a fantastical mixture of all periods. Enjoy!

Paul Reakes

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Old Mother Hubbard
Robinson Crusoe and the Pirates
Santa in Space
Sinbad the Sailor
Tom Thumb

Plays

Bang, You're Dead!
Mantrap

ACT I

SCENE 1

Merrydale Town Square

Full set. The side wings represent picturesque shops and buildings. On L *are steps leading to the pillared entrance of the Town Hall. The backcloth shows a distant field with tents, stalls and a hot air balloon. (See Production Notes) Entrances* R *and* L *and at the back*

When the CURTAIN *rises, the Chorus, as Townsfolk, are discovered going about their business. This develops into a lively song and dance*

Song 1

After the number, a bell is heard ringing

The Town Crier, in full regalia, enters from R. *He moves to* C, *finishes ringing his bell and reads from a scroll*

Town Crier (*in a loud clear voice*) *Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!* Today, at two of the clock, the grand fête of Merrydale will be opened by His Worship the Mayor! *Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!*

Ringing his bell, the Town Crier exits L

The Townsfolk gather and show their excitement

1st Townsperson I can't wait for the fête to open!
2nd Townsperson Neither can I. I'm dying to have a ride in that hot air balloon!
Others Oh, yes! Same here! (*Etc.*)

They all turn upstage to look at the balloon in the distance

A large female Cat bounds on from R. *She pauses at* C *to clean her ears and whiskers*

She then catches sight of the audience, and with a meowed greeting, waves her paw at them. The Townsfolk turn and see the Cat. The Children move down to stroke and pet the animal

Halloweena (*off* R, *yelling angrily*) Cat?! Where are you?! Come to me at once! CAAAAT!!!

Terrified, the Cat runs out L

The lighting becomes dark and sinister. All react

Halloweena sweeps on from R. *She is weirdly dressed and terrifying in appearance*

(*Still calling*) Cat! Where are you? Just wait till I get my hands on you! I'll —— (*She sees the Children*) Oh! What have we got here? (*She approaches them and snarls*) Grr! It's children! Nasty, smelly children! (*Snarling at them*) Tell me, you little brats, have you seen my cat?

Children No!
Halloweena (*to Townsfolk*) Have you?
Townsfolk No!
Halloweena Oh, yes, you have!
Children
Townsfolk } (*together*) Oh, no, we haven't!
Halloweena Oh, yes, you have!

The Children and Townsfolk encourage the audience to join them. This continues ad-lib

Halloweena (*snarling at the audience*) Who invited *you* to join in anyway? Who are you? *What* are you? Are you the annual outing of the ugliest uglies? (*She gives an evil cackle*) Hee! Hee! Hee! Oh, no! I can see more nasty, smelly, revolting children! Grr! I hate children! You're horrible little maggots! What are you?

By-play with the audience

Be warned! I am Halloweena! The wickedest witch in the world! Any more insults and I will be forced to use my magic powers on you! Oh, yes, I will!

Routine with the audience

Grr! Enough of this! (*Sweeping to exit* L) I'm going now! But don't think you've seen the last of Halloweena! The wickedest witch in the world! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Laughing her evil laugh, she sweeps out L, *amid boos and hisses*

The lighting returns to normal

Loud, atrocious singing is heard coming from inside the Town Hall

The rear end of Bessie Blue appears in the entrance. She is on her knees and is scrubbing the floor using a brush and pail. Singing at the top of her voice, she makes her way down the steps. She continues scrubbing across the stage and ends up polishing the shoes of one of the Townsfolk

Bessie (*peering at the shoes*) Eh?! (*She looks up and sees the crowd*) Oh! (*She stands up; brightly*) Mornin' all!
Townsfolk Morning, Bessie!
Bessie (*to the owner of the shoes*) That'll be two pounds, please. For an extra fifty pence I'll polish yer teeth as well. (*Holding out her hand*) Come on, whip 'em out and 'and 'em over!

Bessie laughs, but the other is stone-faced

All the Townsfolk and Children exit in various directions

(*To the audience, absently*) No sense of humour! Must be from [local place]! (*Suddenly aware of the audience, she reacts*) *Crikey!!* It's a plot of leeple! (*Coming forward and greeting the audience*) Hello!

There are a few replies

Oh, come on! There's no need to be shy. (*Loudly*) *Hello!*

They call back

That's better. Well, it's nice to see all of you. (*To a male*) Not that I can see all of you, young man, but I'm sure it's very nice! My name's Bessie. Bessie Blue. I'm the cleaner at the town hall. It's my job to keep the dust at bay and give all the knobs a good rub. My mother had the job before me, an' her mother had it before her. So you could say I come from a long line of old scrubbers! You were waitin' for that one,

weren't yah? And here's something else you've all been waiting for. Another chance to hear me sing. Oh, yes! And if you don't clap I'll sing it six more times! (*She throws or kicks the brush and bucket into the town hall. To Conductor/Pianist*) Take it away, Sir Andrew!

Song 2

A comedy song and dance for Bessie

(*After the song*) I'm a widow too, by the way. (*She sighs*) Ahh! (*She encourages the audience to sigh*) No, I've been a widow for much longer than that. I'm not completely on me own though. I've got a lovely son. And he's so good to his old mum. His name's Johnnie. Johnnie Blue. He's always been called Little Boy Blue. I can't think why. He's not so little anymore. In fact ... (*She looks to off* R) Oh! Here he comes now. You can see for yourselves.

Handsome young Johnnie Blue enters from R. *He is distracted and keeps looking towards the town hall*

(*Going to him*) Hello, Johnnie!

No response

Johnnie?

Johnnie (*not listening and looking towards the town hall*) Huh?

Bessie I'll give you *"huh"!* I said hello.

Johnnie (*as before*) Huh?

Bessie (*pulling his head round to face her*) Look at me when I'm talkin' to yah!

Johnnie Oh! Hello, Mum.

Bessie That's better.

She releases him and he looks at the town hall again

There's some nice people 'ere I'd like you to meet.

Johnnie Huh?

Bessie (*to the audience*) Tch! Kids! Who'd 'ave 'em! (*To Johnnie*) Now, look 'ere ...

Johnnie walks straight past her and goes to the foot of the town hall steps. He looks up at the entrance, longingly

Johnnie Blue! Don't be so flippin' rude! (*She marches over to Johnnie and turns his head as before*)
Johnnie Hello, Mum. Are you here again?
Bessie Course I am! Stop showin' me up in front of all these people.
Johnnie What people?
Bessie (*turning his face to the audience*) *Them* people!
Johnnie Oh! (*To the audience*) Hello!
Audience Hello!

Bessie releases him and he goes straight back to gazing at the town hall entrance

Bessie Where will they think you was brung up? Didn't they teach you any manners at [local school/college]? I said, didn't they —— (*She turns and sees him gazing at the entrance*) Johnnie!
Johnnie (*looking at her*) Hello, Mum. Is there something wrong?
Bessie I'll say there is! All you seem interested in is the town hall. What's so fascinatin' about that old dump? You've seen it hundreds of times before.
Johnnie I'm waiting for someone to come out. Someone special. (*All dreamy*) The girl I love! (*With a big sigh*) Susie!
Bessie And who's (*copying the sigh*) Susie?
Johnnie Susie Sidebottom.
Bessie (*aghast*) Susie Sidebottom! You don't mean Mayor Sidebottom's daughter?!
Johnnie Yes. (*Rapturously*) I love her with all my heart! (*He gives an even bigger sigh*)
Bessie (*to audience*) Crikey! He's got it worse than [TV soap character]!
Johnnie And Susie reciprocates.
Bessie (*making a wry face*) Does she? I think you can get a cream for that.
Johnnie I mean she feels the same way about me. We want to be married.
Bessie (*scoffing*) And I wanna be [current beauty]! Does old Sidebottom know about this?
Johnnie Well ... he knows we've been seeing each other and he's not very happy about it.
Bessie Why not?
Johnnie Well, he is the Mayor. And I'm only a poor boy from a poor family. (*He sadly hangs his head*)
Bessie (*sighing*) Ahhh! (*She encourages the audience to join in. Finally, she puts her arm around Johnnie*) We may be poor, Johnnie, but we're respectable. Our family's got nothing to be ashamed of. Better not mention yer Uncle Cynthia.
Johnnie Uncle Cynthia?

Bessie I said not to mention him. Listen to me, son. If you really love Susie Sidebottom you go after her. Never mind what her father thinks.

Johnnie (*brightening*) You're right, Mum. Like that old saying — love levels all ranks!

Bessie (*inspired*) Yeah! And a watched pot never lays all its eggs in one basket! (*She strides to the exit* R, *and then turns to give Johnnie a "thumbs up"*) Go for it, my son!

Johnnie Thanks, Mum!

Bessie (*to the audience*) Isn't he a lovely lad? Smashin' legs too. They run in our family, y'know! Like big noses! Bye! See you later!

Bessie gives the audience a wave and exits

Johnnie turns to look at the hall entrance

The Townsfolk drift on from various directions

Eventually, Johnnie turns to face front

Johnnie (*with a sigh*) Where on earth can Susie be? She told me to meet her here this morning. I hope her father hasn't stopped her coming out. Oh, I can't wait to see her again. I love her so much, you see.

Song 3

A romantic song and dance for Johnnie and the Townsfolk

After the number, Johnnie moves to the hall and sits on the steps

The Townsfolk drift out in various directions

After a while, Johnnie gets despondently to his feet and addresses the audience

I don't think Susie's coming out, do you? What shall I do? I can't hang about here. Her father may come along and cause a fuss. I know! I'll go to our secret meeting place. Lovers' Lane. Will you do me a favour, folks? If you see Susie will you tell her I'm waiting for her in Lover's Lane? You will? That's great! Thanks!

With a wave, he exits R

After a slight pause, pretty young Susie Sidebottom appears in the hall entrance. She looks about cautiously

Susie (*calling, softly*) Johnnie? Are you there? ... Johnnie? (*She comes down the steps and searches the deserted square*) Johnnie? ... Johnnie? ... Oh, no! ... He's not here! I wonder ... (*She spots the audience*) Oh! (*She greets them with a very pleasant smile*) Hello ... Hello. How d'you do. I'm Susie Sidebottom. The Mayor's daughter. Oh! You've heard of me? Well, I'm not surprised with a name like Sidebottom. But *how* have you heard of me?

"From Johnnie!" etc.

From Johnnie! Then you've seen him? Do you know where he is now?

"Lovers' Lane" etc.

Lovers' Lane! Is he waiting there for me? Oh, good! I'll go there straight away. Thank you very much.

Susie runs to the exit R

Suddenly, the corpulent figure of the Sidney Sidebottom, the Mayor, appears in the town hall entrance. He is wearing his mayoral chain

Mayor (*calling to her, loudly*) Susie!
Susie (*stopping in her tracks and turning*) Oh! Hello, Daddy.
Mayor (*coming down the steps*) Where are you going to in such a hurry?
Susie Nowhere.
Mayor It didn't look like it. I hope you're not running after that good-for-nothing, Little Boy Blue.
Susie I do wish you wouldn't call him that.
Mayor Why not? That's what he's called, isn't he? (*Contemptuously*) *Little Boy Blue!* Huh! Stupid name for a fully-grown lad, if you ask me.
Susie It's just a nickname from when he was a little boy. Besides, I wasn't referring to that. I wish you wouldn't call him a good-for-nothing.
Mayor Well, that's what he is. And a *penniless* good-for-nothing to boot. His whole family's as poor as church mice. Bessie Blue, that mother of his, works for us as a cleaner. And I know how poor *she* is because I pay her wages. (*Pompously*) As Mayor of this town I have a reputation to maintain. I can't have my only daughter associating with a family of riff-raff.
Susie (*angrily*) Oh, Daddy! How can you say that? You were born in the same street as Bessie Blue! You went to school with her!

Mayor Yes, I did. But *I* made something of myself. I dragged myself out of the sleazy slums and ascended to the sparkling heights of local government and commerce. I rose to become (*striking a pompous pose*) His Worship, the Mayor of Merrydale!

Susie (*to the audience*) That's what happens if you read/watch too many Catherine Cooksons.

Mayor (*to Susie*) Now, get inside where I can keep an eye on you.

Susie (*defiantly*) I won't! I'm going to see Johnnie whether you like it or not.

She marches towards the exit R

Mayor (*grabbing her by the arm*) Oh, no, you don't! (*Yelling towards the hall*) Oi! You two! Fit and Mabel! Get out here at once!

Fit, the Footman, and Mabel, the maid, appear in the town hall entrance. They come down the steps and stand gaping at the struggling couple

(*Seeing them and yelling*) Don't just stand there, you couple of clowns! Grab hold! ... GRAB HOLD!!

Comic business as Fit and Mabel rush across and grab hold of the Mayor

(*Yelling at them*) Not *me!* ... Not *me*, you dozy dunderheads! Miss Susie! Grab Miss Susie!

Fit and Mabel let go of him and take hold of Susie. She doesn't struggle. The Mayor sorts himself out

I haven't got time for this nonsense. I've got a hundred and one things to do before I open the fête this afternoon. Fit and Mabel!

Duo Yes, Your Worship?

Mayor I've got a special job for you.

Duo Yes, Your Worship!

Mayor I want you to keep a close watch on Miss Susie. Don't take your eyes off her.

Duo Yes, Your Worship! No, Your Worship!

Susie (*protesting*) Father!

Mayor Quiet! (*To Duo*) And above all, don't let her have anything to do with Little Boy Blue. (*Sternly*) Is that clear?

Duo Yes, Your Worship!

Susie Father, you can't do this!

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