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THE GOOD COMPANIONS

A Play in Two Acts

BY

J. B. PRIESTLEY

AND

EDWARD KNOBLOCK

(From the Novel by J. B. PRIESTLEY)

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THE GOOD COMPANIONS

Produced at His Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket, London, on May 14th, 1931, with the following cast of characters:

Mrs. Oakroyd	*Beatrix Feilden-Kaye.*
Sam Oglethorpe	*Frank Pettingell.*
Jess Oakroyd	*Edward Chapman.*
Leonard Oakroyd	*Clive Morton.*
Albert Tuggeridge	*Jack Clewes.*
Elizabeth Trant	*Edith Sharpe.*
Landlord at Tumbleby	*William Heilbronn.*
Effie (Barmaid)	*Ellen Pollock.*
Inigo Jollifant	*John Gielgud.*
Mr. Fauntley	*Deering Wells.*
Susie Dean	*Adele Dixon.*
Morton Mitcham	*Lawrence Baskcomb.*
Mrs. Tarvin	*Constance Anderson.*
Mr. Tarvin	*Mark Turner.*
Joby Jackson	*Alexander Field.*
Professor Miro	*Max Montesole.*
Linoleum Man	*William Heilbronn.*
Envelope Man	*Larry O'Brien.*
Summers	*James Stadden.*
Policeman at Ribsden	*Nat Lewis.*
Jimmy Nunn	*Edwin Ellis.*
Elsie Longstaff	*Ellen Pollock.*
Joe Brundit	*Bernard Dudley.*
Mrs. Joe Brundit	*Viola Compton.*
Mrs. Maunders	*Margaret Yarde.*
Jerry Jerningham	*Jack Clewes.*
Lady Partlit	*Margaret Yarde.*
Mr. Dulver	*Gerald Hornby.*
Waiter (at the "Royal Standard," Rawsley)	*Clive Morton.*
Photographer (at Gatford)	*Max Montesole.*
Reporter	*Deering Wells.*
Landlord (of the "Crown," Gatford)	*Mark Turner.*
Ridvers	*William Heilbronn.*
Mr. Pitsner	*Alexander Field.*
Ethel Georgia	*Dorothy Seacombe.*
Monte Mortimer	*Nat Lewis.*
Mr. Gooch	*Deering Wells.*

Market people at Ribsden. Guests at Gatford.
Audience and roughs at Gatford.

The Play produced by Julian Wylie.

SCENES

ACT I

SCENE 1.—Living-room in Oakroyd's House, Bruddersford.
SCENE 2.—Entrance at the "Oak and Apple," Tumbleby.
SCENE 3.—Schoolroom at Washbury Manor School.
SCENE 4.—A Country Road in the Midlands.
SCENE 5.—Market-place, Ribsden.
SCENE 6.—A Wayside Road.
SCENE 7.—The Stage of the Assembly Rooms, Rawsley.
SCENE 8.—Dining-room of the "Royal Standard," Rawsley.

ACT II

(Six months later)

SCENE 9.—Lounge—"Crown Hotel," Gatford.
SCENE 10.—Office at Felder & Hunterman's, London.
SCENE 11.—Behind the scenes, Gatford Hippodrome.
SCENE 12.—Dressing-room at the Hippodrome.
SCENE 13.—Miss Trant's Sitting-room at the "Crown," Gatford.
SCENE 14.—Subway at Gatford Railway Station.
SCENE 15.—Living-room in Oakroyd's House, Bruddersford.

THE GOOD COMPANIONS

ACT I

SCENE 1

SCENE.—*Living-room at Oakroyd's house, Bruddersford.*

TIME.—*It is early evening in autumn.*

Back R.C. *door to street.* L.C. *window to street. In* L. *wall,* C. *fireplace with a great many clothes in front of it on a clothes-horse.* R. *wall, up stage, door to scullery; down stage, door to upstairs. In the* C. *of the room is a table, part of which is occupied by tea-things and the rest by clothes, iron, etc.*

(*See Photograph of Scene. Small set.*)

As CURTAIN *rises,* MRS. OAKROYD, *a hard woman of forty-five, is discovered behind clothes-horse with left hand on kettle and poking to make kettle boil. She lifts kettle back on to hob* L. *of fireplace, and places poker in corner* R. *of fireplace, and comes out from behind clothes-horse. She then wipes her hands on her apron, picks shirt off horse and crosses to table* C. *as* LEONARD *shakes spoon. She shakes out the shirt, puts it on table and goes on with dialogue.*

OGLETHORPE, *a stout, good-natured man of fifty, neat and respectable, is seated at the table* R. *Also* LEONARD, *twenty-one,* L.

As CURTAIN *rises* LEONARD *pours himself out a cup of tea, takes spoon out of sugar-basin, stirs his tea with it, shakes the moisture off and wipes it on tablecloth, and replaces it in sugar-basin.*

MRS. OAKROYD (*behind table* C.). Have you got all you want, love?

LEONARD (L.). Yes, I think so, mother.

MRS. OAKROYD. Nay, you haven't. I've a nice bit o' pasty in there for you. You'd like that, wouldn't you, love?

(*Goes out up* R., *taking plate with kipper bone from table.*)

LEONARD. I expect you've had your tea, haven't you, Mr. Oglethorpe?

OGLETHORPE. Aye, long since. I've been up to t' Quack Market and sold a few pullets. They tak' too much rearing up yonder. I thowt I'd look in to see your father. He's late.

(MRS. OAKROYD *returns from up* R. *with pasty and comes to* C.)

MRS. OAKROYD. Late! I should think he *is* late. I've had his tea ready nearly an hour and a half. Can't think what's keeping him. Some piece o' silliness, I'll be bound. Here's your pasty, love. (*Places pasty on table before* LEONARD.)

OGLETHORPE. 'Ar's your Jess going on, Mrs. Oakroyd? Is he wanting to go on his travels ageean—down south, eh?

MRS. OAKROYD (*arranging shirt on table*). He's like t' rest o' you men. He's pinin' for summat, but he doesn't knaw what. (*Holds iron to cheek.*) An' don't you go puttin' onny wrong ideas in his head. (*Points at* OGLETHORPE *with iron and crosses to fireplace to change iron.*)

OGLETHORPE. Me? Na, nay. You don't catch me puttin' onny ideas o' onny kind in onnybody's head.

(MRS. OAKROYD *returns to table and goes on ironing.*)

MRS. OAKROYD. I'll tell you this much. . . . If it wasn't for our Leonard here, I don't know where I'd be. Makking more money nor his father now.

OGLETHORPE. Aye, shavin' t' nobs, aren't yer now, lad?

LEONARD. That's right. Just started at Gregson's.

MRS. OAKROYD. And how much did you mak' in tips to-day, love?

LEONARD. Eight and threepence.

MRS. OAKROYD. There you are. What d'you think o' that, Mr. Oglethorpe? His father'll have to tak' back seat after this. (*Puts iron down and moves* L.C. *of table.*)

OGLETHORPE. Aye, maybe.

(*Enter* ALBERT TUGGERIDGE, *a silly youth of twenty, up* R.C., *with a dilapidated suitcase and box under his arm.*)

ALBERT (C.). Hello, hello, hello, there! Here we are! The old firm. Good evening, Mrs. Oakroyd. I've come.

(LEONARD *rises and goes up* L.C.)

MRS. OAKROYD (L.C.). My word, you have an' all.

ALBERT (C.). I've brought all my stuff round but the gramophone. Do you think it'll be all reight?

LEONARD (L.C.). Of course it'll be all reight. Won't it, mother?

ALBERT. Does your *father* know I'm coming? Have you told him?

MRS. OAKROYD. He doesn't know yet. He's not back from his work. He's late. This is summat he's going to learn.

LEONARD (L.C.). Put your things down there, Albert. (*Pointing to corner under gas* L.)

ALBERT. You're sure it'll be all reight? You see, I thought it was settled. (*Crosses and puts bags down in corner* L.)

MRS. OAKROYD (*comes down to table,* L.C.). Well, if it isn't now it soon will be. If he tries to make a fuss, I'll tell him straight.

You're our Leonard's friend, and he wants you here. And so do I. We've room. Ever since our Lily got married and went off to Canada, that room up there's been empty and doing nowt—just because his lordship won't have onnybody else in the house. Well, he'll have to think different now—that's all—or t' fat 'ull be in t' fire. (*Goes back to shirt on table* C.)

ALBERT (*down* L.). Not so nice, though, when the fat is in t' fire. It burnt me a bit, last time.

OGLETHORPE. An' 'ar's your Lily and her husband goin' i' Canada ?

MRS. OAKROYD (C.). Oh, you mun ask her father about our Lily. She writes to him, not to me. (*Folds shirt up and puts it down on* R. *of table by the iron.*)

ALBERT. Look here, I'll just pop back. (*Crosses* LEONARD *to* L.C.) I've got to get the gramophone, anyhow—and no doubt you'll have settled it before I get back.

MRS. OAKROYD (*listening, then going up to window* L.C.). He's coming. I know his step.

ALBERT (*crossing* MRS. OAKROYD *and going to door* R.C.). Here, I'm off. I can just slip down the other way. Toodle-oo.

(*He hurries out off* R.C., *followed by* LEONARD.)

MRS. OAKROYD (*picking up teapot and crossing to the fireplace*). Well, he won't be any too pleased with his kipper. It's been shrivelling up steady for t' last hour. (*Fills pot from kettle.*)

(*Enter* JESS OAKROYD, *door* R.C., *from street* L., *carrying a bag of tools. He is a stocky, shrewd, kindly man of forty-seven. He leaves the door open.*)

OGLETHORPE. Na, Jess lad.

OAKROYD (*going to sofa* L.C.). Na, Sam. (*He flings down his bag of tools on the sofa* L.C.)

OGLETHORPE. And where have you been till this time ?

OAKROYD (L.C.). Been on to t' Union Office.

(LEONARD *returns, smoking cigarette. He closes the door and stands by it* R.C.)

MRS. OAKROYD. Whatever for ?

OAKROYD. 'Cos I've been stopped.

(LEONARD *stops. Suddenly looks at* OAKROYD.)

MRS. OAKROYD (L.). You've been what ?

OAKROYD (L.C.). Stopped, sacked, paid off, kicked aht, whativver you want to call it. (*Throws down Insurance card and some money on the table.*) Higden's has finished wi' me, and me wi' them. (*Puts cap on sofa.*) There's a week's money there. Mak' most of it. My tea ready ? (*Sits behind table,* C.)

MRS. OAKROYD (L.C., *giving him his tea in teapot and placing kipper on table*). But what 'a' you been doing ? (*Stands* L. *of table.*)

OGLETHORPE. Nay, Jess lad.

OAKROYD. Aye, Sam, it's a poor do. Hello, what's this? (*Examines kipper.*) By gow, you've given this a bit o' fire, haven't you? It's nobbut like a lead pencil. (*Pushes plate away.*)

MRS. OAKROYD. Happen it's t' last you'll see for a bit, at any rate. What you gotten stopped for?

OAKROYD. For nowt. Nowt at all. For being a man and not a damned monkey. (*Pours himself out a cup of tea.*) This morning I hadn't a waggon in and were doing nowt for a bit, so Simpson, t' under manager—you knaw, Sam——

OGLETHORPE. Aye, lad, I do.

OAKROYD. He says, "Here, Oakroyd, you're doing nowt. Give 'em a hand with that gutter on that temporary shed over yon." (*Puts teapot down, picks up milk.*) So I takes a length o' gutter and starts fixing it up.

OGLETHORPE. Same as onnybody might 'a' done.

OAKROYD. Aye, but owd on a bit. A feller comes up, one o' t' shop steward, d'you see. He says to me, "You're a joiner; you don't belong to t' Plumbers' Union; this here's a plumber's job. You keep off it, comrade," he says. Comrade! My God! (*Puts sugar in tea and pushes sugar basin away.*) But I had to keep off it.

OGLETHORPE. Course you had.

OAKROYD. Well, I were doing nowt again, then, and I saw old Thorley, t' manager, and he begins talking about some of us older 'uns being worse nor t' young 'uns, idling abart instead o' setting an example. That was enough for me. (*Puts teaspoon in saucer.*) I ses summat I shouldn't ha' said——

OGLETHORPE. And you did reight, lad.

OAKROYD. So he says, "Pay him off and give him his card; he's finished wi' Higden's for good and all." So *I* told him what he could *do* wi' Higden's.

MRS. OAKROYD. Aaaa, dear, all that comes o' not keeping a civil tongue in your head, Jess Oakroyd. I've warned you afore now.

OAKROYD. What d'you think I'm *made* of? When a chap's called a blackleg i' t' morning an' an idler i' t' afternoon, he's got to say summat.

OGLETHORPE. And what did you say to him, Jess?

OAKROYD. What? "Oh, you go to hell!" I ses, and marches out.

OGLETHORPE. And you did reight, lad.

MRS. OAKROYD. Oh, did he? Well, I'm t' best judge o' that, Sam Oglethorpe. We 'aven't all come into a bit o' money, like you. (*To* OAKROYD.) And what are you going to do now, then?

OAKROYD (*pushing aside his cup, bitterly*). I don't knaw. Line up for t' dole till another job turns up. (*He takes out his pipe and fills it.*)

MRS. OAKROYD. And how long 'ull that be?

OAKROYD. Don't ask me. You knaw what it is nar.

OGLETHORPE (*shaking his head*). Aye, trade's bad i' Bruddersford.

(LEONARD, *who has been standing by the door smoking his cigarette, comes forward to* R. *of* OAKROYD.)

LEONARD. Who says trade's bad? *I* don't. And if you're out o' work, I know a way we can knock so much off the rent every week!

MRS. OAKROYD (*crossing behind* OAKROYD. *Quickly to* LEONARD). Not now! Not now! 'Elp me with the tea-things like a good lad.

(*She hands him the teapot and indicates the scullery.* LEONARD *takes the pot and goes off up* R. *She takes up the other things from the table.*)

OAKROYD (*meanwhile, suspiciously*). What's all this palaverin' behind my back?

MRS. OAKROYD. Nowt! Nowt! Don't you worry your 'ead about that.

(*Exits up* R.)

(*To* LEONARD, *in scullery.*) Tha great gawmless gobbin, what did you want to speak abaht it now for! (*Slams door.*)

OAKROYD. They're hatchin' summat between 'em. As usual. Thick as thieves. I'm nobbut i' t' way i' my own house. It wor different when our Lily was here. Aa, I do miss t' lass. It's nivver been t' same since her left. I *do* miss her. (*Finishes filling his pipe.*)

OGLETHORPE. I can see that, lad.

OAKROYD. If she'd nobbut say t' word, I'd be off out there, like a shot, I would. But she nivver does. Not a word.

OGLETHORPE. Nay, you'd nivver go to Canada, would yer, Jess? It's a long way off, and nowt to sup, they tell me, and snaw months and months on end.

OAKROYD. I'll tell tha what it is, Sam. (*Strikes match and lights pipe.*) I've gotten fair sick o' Bruddersford lately. I'd like to knock up and down a bit, and see what there is to see afore I'm too old and daft to tak' onny notice.

OGLETHORPE. Well, tha's been down south once, lad. Tha'd six months theer, i' what's it—Leicester. Tha's seen summat already, Jess.

OAKROYD. Nowt much.

OGLETHORPE. Nay, look at me. I once went for a day to Southport to see t' sea, but I nivver saw it, not a drop. That were a reight take-in, that wor.

OAKROYD. I'd like to go down south again. I'd like to have a look at—oh, well—Bristol. I'd like to see—yer know—some o' *them* places—Bedfordshire.

OGLETHORPE (*shaking his head*). I nivver heard tell much o' that place; is there owt special i' Bedfordshire, Jess?

OAKROYD. I don't knaw. But it's summat to see.

(*The room has grown dark.*)

We'll 'ave a bit o' light on t' subject. (*Rises, pushes chair in close to table. Crosses down* L. *and lights the gas by the fire—he sees* ALBERT'S *bag and box.*) Here! Who's is them?

OGLETHORPE. I fancy them belongs to "Hello, hello, hello, there!"

OAKROYD (L.). Hello, there? (*Steps forward to* L.C.) You don't mean that gurt silly squawking Albert?

OGLETHORPE. He was 'ere a minute afore you come '*ome.*

OAKROYD (L.C.). So that's it, is it? Comin' 'ere as a lodger, eh? An' I told 'em, I told 'em. Whose house do they think this is?

(OGLETHORPE *rises.*)

We'll see about that. (*Picks up bags. Turns and sees* OGLETHORPE *rising and throws bags in corner again.*) You're not off, are yer?

OGLETHORPE (*goes towards door* R.). Well, I want to see our Ted. He's off down south to-night wi' a load from Merryweather's—on his lorry.

OAKROYD (*staring speculatively*). He is, is he? To-night, eh? (*Down* L.C.)

OGLETHORPE. Aye, an' our Ted 'ull give onny friend o' mine a lift onny time. (*Comes* C. *behind table.*) An' I'll tell thee another thing, lad. Thee and me's been mates a long time, and I've had what bit o' luck's been goin' and tha hasn't. Well, there's a pound or two—happen fower or five—here this minute 'at's doing nowt, and tha's only to say t' word and it's thine till tha's ready to pay.

OAKROYD. Thanks, owd lad.

OGLETHORPE (*going to door* R.C.). I'll be off, then, to see our Ted. So if you want me, Jess, you'll knaw where to find me. (*Turns and takes hat from sewing machine,* R., *puts it on.*) Behave thi-sen, lad.

(OGLETHORPE *goes out on to street and turns* L. OAKROYD *goes nearer the fire and stands staring at it.* MRS. OAKROYD *comes out of the scullery up* R. LEONARD *stands in the scullery doorway.*)

MRS. OAKROYD (*behind table* C.). Well, me and Leonard's talked it over—and that settles it.

OAKROYD (L.). What settles what?

MRS. OAKROYD. Albert comes here.

OAKROYD. Settled that afore, hadn't you? Nar I've warned you. If Albert comes here, I go.

MRS. OAKROYD. Don't talk so soft. It was bad enough before, but now you've gotten yourself out of work you've no room to talk at all.

OAKROYD. You might ha' let me off this one night, onnyhow. I've had bother enough to-day.

MRS. OAKROYD. It's got to be settled.

OAKROYD. Well, I've told yer. If he comes, I go.

MRS. OAKROYD (*in a sudden rage*). Well, go then, go on, go on. Go an' live at t' Midland Hotel on your dole money. Go on. Go.

OAKROYD (*crossing towards door down* R.). All right. Say no more. Say no more.

(*He goes off by the door down* R.)

LEONARD (*going down* R.). What's the matter with him, mother?

MRS. OAKROYD (C.). I don't know and I don't care. You might think they'd just made him manager instead o' stopping him. But it's no good him getting on his high horse now. If he doesn't like Albert being here, he'll ha' to do t'other thing, that's all. My mind's made up. (*Crosses to fireplace* L.)

(ALBERT *puts his head round the* R.C. *door from* R.)

ALBERT. Is it all right?

MRS. OAKROYD (L.). Yes, course it is. Come in, Albert, an' mak' yourself at home.

(*Enter* ALBERT *with gramophone, which he places on* R. *end of table.*)

ALBERT (C.). That's the style. All merry and bright, eh? What do you think o' the old gramophone, eh?

MRS. OAKROYD (L.). Looks nice, Albert. An' we'll be able to have a bit o' music at night.

ALBERT. Have some *now*, if you like. Cheer us all up. The old firm, eh? There she goes.

(*He starts gramophone and sings, and* LEONARD *joins in. During song* ALBERT *crosses to* R., *leaving* LEONARD R.C. OAKROYD *enters down* R. *He is looking grim and carrying a small basket trunk, which he pitches down on the sofa beside his bag of tools, up* L.C. *Then, with a flick of his finger he sends the needle of the gramophone across the record with a scratch. The gramophone stops.*)

OAKROYD (C. *above table*). Makking yourself at home, aren't yer, Albert? Are yer stopping here like?

MRS. OAKROYD } (*together*). { Yes, he is.
LEONARD } { That's right.

OAKROYD. Then, I'm off. (*Goes for cap on sofa* L.C.)

LEONARD (C.). Where to? You can't go like that, pa.

MRS. OAKROYD (L.). Never mind, never mind. Let him go. Trying his tricks. He'll be in a different frame o' mind very soon, when he comes back.

OAKROYD (*up* L.C., *puts cap on*). Yer can do what you like wi' t' place now—it's your own. (*Pointing to money on table.*) There's a week's money there—happen you'll manage.

MRS. OAKROYD (*going up* L. *of* OAKROYD). Manage! Think we

will manage. Nivver better off, thank you. You've been wanting a lesson for some time. Go on. Off you go.

(OAKROYD *prepares to go.*)

LEONARD (*picking up from table and holding out Insurance card*). Here, half a minute, pa. You'll have to have this.

ALBERT (*up* R.). That's right. Must have your Insurance card.

OAKROYD (*taking the card from* LEONARD *and staring at it for a second,* L.C.). Aye, suppose I owt—— (*Pauses.*) Oh, to hell wi' t' card. (*Tears it up and flings the pieces down; then picks up his bags.*)

ALBERT. Now you've done it. You *have* done it now.

(OAKROYD *crosses to door* R.C.)

LEONARD. Where yer going?

OAKROYD (*at door*). Down south.

(*Exits* R.C. *and off to* L.)

(*Triumphant music from the gramophone.*)

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 2

SCENE.—*Front entrance of the Oak and Apple Hotel, Tumbleby.*

TIME.—*Morning.*

A small car is drawn up at L.C. *of door.* MISS TRANT, *a charming woman of thirty-five, comes out of the hotel,* C. LANDLORD *is down* L. *below motor-car.*

(*See Photograph of Scene. Front cloth.*)

LANDLORD (L.). Your bags are inside the car, Miss Trant. I think you'll find everything all right.

MISS TRANT (C.). Thank you. (*Comes down* C.)

LANDLORD (L.). You're going to have a nice day for a run. Going far, miss?

MISS TRANT. I'm supposed to be going to Liverpool, to see the new cathedral.

LANDLORD. Tidy way from here to Liverpool. I did it once.

MISS TRANT. Do you know the road?

(LANDLORD *crosses to* R.C.)

(L.C.) I'm afraid I'm hopeless at maps. (*Produces map from motor-car seat and places it on bonnet of car.*) It looks such an awful muddle. Not that it matters very much. I'm only wandering about for fun.

LANDLORD (R.C.). Beg pardon, miss. But do you think it's

quite safe for a nice lady like you to wander about the country all by your lonesome? Don't you think it's a bit risky?

MISS TRANT (C.). But that's exactly what I'm out for—the risk—the adventure. For the first time in my life I'm free of all responsibilities and—well, I want to see something of the world—enjoy myself in my own particularly harmless way—somehow.

LANDLORD. Well, as long as you don't come to grief, miss.

MISS TRANT. Oh, I shan't come to grief! In fact, if all the men I fall in with are no more dangerous than you, I shall be seriously disappointed.

LANDLORD. Well, miss, (*laughing*) I'm afraid I'm a very poor 'and at frightening ladies.

MISS TRANT (*laughing*). I'm afraid so, too. (*Turning to the map.*) Now, as to the road——

LANDLORD. Now, look here, miss. (*Comes* C. *to* R. *of* MISS TRANT.) If you make for Melton Mowbray and then take that turn—(*pointing at place on map*)—you see.

MISS TRANT (*pointing*). You mean, I turn there. What's the name of the place? Rawsley.

LANDLORD (*very solemnly*). That's it. (*Turns away* R.C.) And that's a funny thing, too. We had a telegram came here, only yesterday, from that very place. Came for one of our staff—Effie, the girl in the bar. (*Calls her through door* C.) Effie! Effeee!

(MISS TRANT *goes down* L. *and puts map in car.*)

EFFIE (*appearing at door* C.). Did you call, Mr. Bootle?

(EFFIE *is a peroxided typical barmaid. She has a tumbler and glass-cloth in her hands.*)

LANDLORD (R.C.). I was just telling this lady—didn't you get a telegram yesterday from Rawsley?

EFFIE (C.). Yes, our Elsie sent it. That's my sister, you know. She's on the stage. She's playing at Rawsley with the Dinky Doos. (*Blows glass.*)

MISS TRANT (L.C., *bewildered*). With the what?

EFFIE. The Dinky Doos. That's the name of the Concert Party. Yes, and it's a shame—they're having an awful time—oo, awful. Are you going that way, miss?

MISS TRANT. I think so.

EFFIE (*making a slight move down*). Well, if you are—I don't like asking——

MISS TRANT. Why, what is it? (*Goes up to* L. *of* EFFIE.) Something about your sister?

EFFIE. Yes. You see, miss, she sent me a telegram yesterday, asking me to send on her other basket, with her spare costumes in, y'know. And it's all right saying "Send it at once," but you've got to get it there, haven't you? I thought if you was going that way—well——

Landlord (r.c., *rather severely*). You've no right to ask, Effie. (*With a broad smile at* Miss Trant.) But perhaps the lady wouldn't mind?

Effie (c., *wildly*). I wouldn't ask, Mr. Bootle, only I'm sure you understand, don't you, miss? I know our Elsie's having an awful time, else she wouldn't be wanting her basket. And I know if you took it, she'd get it safe all right.

Miss Trant (l.c.). Oh, I'll take it, certainly. (*Looking round at car.*) It's not very big, is it?

Effie. Oh no, you'd get it on the back or in the inside easily. I'll go and get it.

(*Hurries indoors,* c.)

Landlord (r.c.). She's had her sister on her mind ever since she got that telegram. That's what it's like on the stage, y'know—up this week and down next—here to-day and gone to-morrow. Effie here tried it for a bit, but she's better off where she is and she knows it. When you're behind a bar you do know where you are, don't you?

Miss Trant (l.c., *amused*). I don't think I should.

(Effie *re-enters* c. *with small theatrical basket.*)

Effie (c.). If you wouldn't mind, miss. It's got the name and address on, see? (*Showing label fixed on basket handle.*) Miss Elsie Longstaff, care of the Dinky Doos, Assembly Rooms, Rawsley.

(*The* Landlord *takes the basket from* Effie *and crosses and puts it on the back of the car,* l.)

If you wouldn't mind asking for her at the hall there.

Miss Trant. Very well. (*Comes round to downstage door of car.*) I'd rather like to see the—the Dinky Doos. And you say they're having an awful time? Poor Dinky Doos.

Effie. Thank you ever so much, Miss Trant. And, Miss Trant, when you see our Elsie, will you please tell her I'm writing to her—and would you please give her this? Tell her it's all I could manage. (*Holds out pound note.*)

Miss Trant (*down* l.c. *in front of car and taking it and looking first at the note and then at* Effie, *then smiling as if rather moved*). I see. Do you always trust strangers—like this?

(Landlord *opens door of car and stands* l.)

Effie. No fear. Not me. But—well, you're different. (*Goes into doorway.*)

Miss Trant. Thank you. (*Gets into car.*) I'll find your sister as soon as I can—though you never know with this car. (*Starts car up.*) Good-bye.

Effie.
Landlord. } Good-bye.

(*Car goes out* r. *and they look after it.*)

LANDLORD (*going* C.). How did you know what her name was?

EFFIE (C.). I looked on the label of her bags.

LANDLORD (L.C.). Now then, what about them glasses?

(*Exits into hotel as lights fade out.*)

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 3

SCENE.—*The Schoolroom at Washbury Manor School.*

TIME.—*It is late evening, about nine, and the lights are on.*

It is a fairly large, dreary-looking room, the walls covered with old maps, etc., several bookcases filled with school books; and one small chair; desks and forms placed near the walls, leaving the C. *of the room almost clear. Door up* L. *Practicable French window* C. *To the* R., *in a prominent position, is an upright piano, of the type used in schools. Window curtains are closed.*

(*See Photograph of Scene. Large set.*)

When the CURTAIN *rises,* INIGO JOLLIFANT, *twenty-three, good-looking, keen, and* FAUNTLEY *are discovered with whisky and soda. Both characters have obviously had some drinks already, but they are not drunk.* FAUNTLEY, *a heavy, middle-aged man, is almost purple in the face and speaks rather too carefully for complete sobriety; and* INIGO *is rapidly arriving at the hilarious and reckless stage.* INIGO *is seated at the piano playing, a drink before him on the piano.* FAUNTLEY *is sitting* C. *with legs across chair, with his arms resting on back.*

INIGO (R., *breaking off with a loud chord*). Fauntley! I haven't had such fun on the piano for weeks! (*He crashes a few chords in rapid succession.*)

FAUNTLEY (R., *rising*). I wonder what our worthy head, Mr. James Tarvin, and his still worthier spouse, Mrs. Gorgon Tarvin, would say if they could hear you now? (*Crosses to chair* L.)

INIGO. Well, they can't hear me. (*Chord. Gets up, goes* C.) They're a good safe seven miles away, dining heavily with the vicar. (*Goes up* R., *gets glass from piano and comes down* C.)

FAUNTLEY (*sitting* L.). And may they get stuck on the road coming back and have to spend the night in a ditch! Cheerio!

(*They drink.*)

INIGO (C.). She thinks by keeping us on a low diet—to crush our spirits, but she won't succeed. (*Comes over* L. *behind* FAUNTLEY *to desk* L. *with drinks on.*) Do you know, Fauntley, we've had shepherd's pie three times this week and prunes four times——

FAUNTLEY. Have we? I never notice. I've stopped eating during term.

Inigo (*at desk* L. *of* Fauntley). Quite.

(Fauntley *reaches for bottle.*)

You only drink, Fauntley. No, not just now. (*Takes bottle.*) I'm going to take sandwiches and (*comes* C.) chocolate down and eat them in front of her, right *at* her. (C.) It isn't that I care about food. (*Stands with one foot on chair* C., *with bottle upraised.*) My soul, Fauntley, my soul is like a star and dwells apart—absolutely. (*Drinks, then sits* C.) But I ask you! Can you worthily instruct the young, day after day, on prunes? No, it can't be done, and twenty thousand Cornishmen shall know the reason why. (*Puts bottle down at* R. *side of chair.*)

(*The clock, off* L., *strikes nine.*)

Fauntley. Hello! Nine o'clock? It doesn't look as if your friend is turning up. By the way—who is he?

Inigo (*seated* C.). He's an actor chap I met in the "Red Lion" last night. He struck me as an amusing cove.

Fauntley. D'you think he *will* turn up?

Inigo. There's time yet. He looked as if he'd be glad to turn up anywhere, particularly if there were any free drinks going. I hope he does. I'd love to see him with the Tarvins.

Fauntley (*rising and going* L.C.). Well, Jollifant, having drunk your health several times on this, your twenty-sixth birthday, I will now proceed to give you——

Inigo (C.). Not a present, Fauntley. Don't say you've bought me a present.

Fauntley (L.C.). I will now proceed to give you—a little good advice. Get out of this place. You don't like it, and I don't think it likes you.

Inigo. I'm quite sure it doesn't.

Fauntley. Mind you, whatever you may say about prep. schools, a gentleman can still teach in 'em. Don't forget that. These are the only places left (*hiccough*) for a gentleman.

Inigo. No doubt. But it's pretty ghastly being a (*hiccough*) gentleman, isn't it?

Fauntley. It's nearly played out—like this drink. Pass the bottle, Jollifant.

Inigo. Oh Lord, there you are. It's not at all good for you. (*Passes bottle.*)

Fauntley. It's devilish dry work giving good advice. (*Pours drink into glass.*)

Inigo (*drinks and goes to piano. Putting glass on piano*). It's just as dry taking good advice. (*Sits at piano and plays.*)

Fauntley (C.). You ought to do something with this piano stuff of yours. You're damn clever at it. That thing you were playing just now.

Inigo. Oh, I've got a better one than that. A little thing I was

polishing up on Saturday night when the Tarvin woman came in and turfed me out. It's called "Going Home." I finished it this morning. Sit down and see what you think of it. (*He plays "Going Home" chorus.*)*

(*After playing chorus through, he starts it again. And voice is heard off soon after start of second chorus, then a banjo joins in. He begins playing and singing very softly. As he continues, first picking up a few notes, then gradually finding the tune. Then a girl's voice joins in softly.* INIGO *stares at* FAUNTLEY, *then suddenly stops. The banjo stops, too. In the sudden silence that follows, the girl laughs.*)

(R.C.) Gosh! Did you hear that? Come in. (*Goes to* R. *of window and pulls the curtain back.*)

(SUSIE DEAN, *a delightful girl of twenty, enters* C. FAUNTLEY *rises.*)

Oh, I say!

SUSIE (C.). Oh, do you? Good evening.

INIGO. Er—good evening. How d'you do? What a wonderful night—I mean, day—it is—it was—it has been—I mean to say—jolly good of you to come. And—er—how are you?

SUSIE. You mean, who am I? (*Turns round, goes up* C., *calls through window.*) Hurry up, uncle, or they'll think I'm a burglar. (*Comes down* C.)

INIGO (R.C.). We don't care if you are, do we, Fauntley?

FAUNTLEY (R.). Not a bit.

INIGO. If you'd like to burgle, help yourself. Have a map. Have a globe. Help yourself to a desk. Have a drink?

SUSIE (L.C.). No, thanks.

INIGO. Oh, do have something. Do have a drink.

(*Enter* MORTON MITCHAM, *a regular old actor of fifty-five, through window* C. *Comes down* C. *between them.*)

MITCHAM (C.). Certainly, I'll have a drink, my boy. A-ha, here we are, then. Susie, this is my dear old friend—er—Mr.—er—Mr.—er——

INIGO (R.C.). Jollifant, Inigo Jollifant. Ridiculous name, isn't it? How d'you do? (*Shakes hands again enthusiastically, across* MITCHAM.)

MITCHAM (C.). This is my niece, Miss Susie Dean, who's just joined forces with me and is—I don't mind telling you—the most promising little comedienne *in* concert party work or *out* of concert party work to-day. And I'm Morton Mitcham. Twice round the world. Round the world.

(*Passes between them and comes down* R. *to* FAUNTLEY, *who introduces himself and takes him over to chair* L. *for a drink.* MITCHAM *sits in armchair;* FAUNTLEY *on desk.*)

*See note on page 2.

Susie (c.). But tell me, where *did* you get that marvellous new number from?

Inigo (r.c., *puzzled*). Number?

Susie (c.). Yes, number.

Inigo (r.c.). Wait a minute. You don't want me to think of a number and then double it—or anything like that, do you? I mean—I'll do it—I'll do anything for you—absolutely——

Susie (c., *severely*). Are you trying to be funny? Because if you are, let me tell you—yours is a rotten *act*, and I'm funny for a living and I know.

Inigo. I assure you, Miss Dean, I do assure you——

Susie. Oh, stop assuring me. I mean, that number you've just been playing.

Inigo. Oh, that. Simply a little thing of my own. I make them up to amuse myself, you know. You've got to do something in this school, I can tell you. Look at it. (*Waves his hand.*) But did you like it really?

Susie. Loved it. Do you really invent them yourself? Have you done any more? Play that one again.

Inigo. I will if you'll sing it for me. I bet you've got a grand voice. (*Goes to piano.*) Look here, there's nobody in; we can make as much row as we like—this is great fun. Ready? Right. Here are the words.

(r. *of piano, she reads words of verse to the music, then sings chorus.*)

Mitcham (*spoken through verse, seated* l., *tapping banjo*). More a little hobby of mine than anything else, you know. This and conjuring. But it's made the evening go, all over the place. Guest nights at Residencies, you know, and that sort of thing. By the way, you're not related to old Sir Elkin Fauntley, by any chance, are you?

Fauntley (l. *of desk*). Distantly, very distantly. Second cousin—or fourth uncle—something of that sort. Why? Do you know him?

Mitcham. Knew him well in the old days—out East. He was Governor then. Wanted me to give him banjo lessons. "Damn it all, Mitcham," he said to me, "you'll have to teach me to play that thing." "Very proud, Sir Elkin," I told him, "but it can't be done!" "Damn it all," he said, "it must be done!" "It would take years," I told him. "Then you'll have to stay here years," he said. "I'll have you kept here, Mitcham, kept here—damned if I won't!" "Can't be done!" I told him. "I'm catching the next boat up to Bangkok." And he had to give in. Ha, ha, ha!

Fauntley. Ha-ha-ha! Nobody can say you've not travelled, can they?

Mitcham. Three times round the world.

Susie (*comes over to* Mitcham, l.). Never mind about that old gag. Listen to this, uncle. It's a marvellous little number. And he says he's got another one that's better. Listen. I've learned

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