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SF PERUSALS

The Babes in the Wood

A pantomime

Book and additional lyrics by
John Crocker

Music and lyrics by
Eric Gilder

Samuel French — London
New York - Toronto - Hollywood

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CHARACTERS

BARON STONEYHEART DE STONEYBROKE	The Sheriff of Nottingham
MAID MARION	His ward
MUDDLES	His handyman
POLLY FLINDERS	
FAIRY NIGHTINGALE	
DEMON CATBANE	
SAMMY, SUSAN	The Babes
WUFFLES	The Dog
NURSE JEMIMA BLOGGS	
ROBIN HOOD	
HORRIBLE HERBERT, FRIGHTFUL FRED	The Robbers

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

PART ONE

SCENE 1	THE VILLAGE OF MERRYDOWNDERRY
SCENE 2	ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL
SCENE 3	NURSE BLOGGS' ACADEMY
SCENE 4	ON THE WAY HOME
SCENE 5	THE NURSERY
SCENE 6	OUTSIDE STONEYBROKE HALL
SCENE 7	THE LAND OF TOYS

PART TWO

SCENE 8	NOTTINGHAM GOOSE FAIR
SCENE 9	NOWHERE IN PARTICULAR
SCENE 10	THE DEPTHS OF SHERWOOD FOREST
SCENE 11	STONEYBROKE HALL
SCENE 12	THE NURSERY
SCENE 13	GOOD AND BAD
SCENE 14	THE EARL OF HUNTINGDON'S WEDDING RECEPTION

Running time: approximately two hours thirty-five minutes.

PRODUCTION NOTE.

Pantomime, as we know it today, is a form of entertainment all on its own, derived from a number of different sources - the commedia dell'arte, (and all that that derived from), the ballet, the opera, the music hall and the realms of folk-lore and fairy tale. And elements of all of these are still to be found in it. This strange mixture has created a splendid topsy-turvy world where men are women, women are men, where the present is embraced within the past, where people are hit but not hurt, where authority is constantly flouted, where fun is poked at everything including pantomime itself at times, and, above all, where magic abounds and dreams invariably come true. In other words, it is - or should be - fun. Fun to do and fun to watch and the sense of enjoyment which can be conveyed by a cast is very important to the enjoyment of the audience.

Pantomime can be very simply staged if resources are limited. Basically a tab surround at the back, tab legs at the sides and a set of traverse tabs for the frontcloth scenes, together with the simplest of small cut-out pieces to suggest the various locales, (or even just placards with this information written on them), will suffice. Conversely, there is no limit to the extent to which more lavish facilities can be employed.

The directions I have given in the text adopt a middle course and are based on a permanent setting of a cyclorama skycloth at the back, a few feet in front of which is a rostrum about two feet high, running the width of the stage. About two thirds of the depth downstage is a false proscenium, immediately behind which are the lines for a set of traverse tabs. Below the false proscenium are arched entrances left and right, with possibly one foot reveals to the proscenium. A border will be necessary at some point between the false proscenium and the cyclorama to mask lighting battens and the top of the cyclorama. Lastly, there is a set of steps leading from the front of the stage into the auditorium, which I have referred to as the catwalk. I have imagined it to be set stage left, but it is unimportant whether it is left or right.

Into this permanent setting are placed various wings left and right, (I have catered for one a side set on a level with the border, but a greater depth of stage may require two a side for masking purposes). Cut-out ground rows set on the front or back of the rostrum complete the full sets. On smaller stages these cut-outs seen against the cyclorama give a better impression of depth than backcloths. The frontcloth fly lines come in behind the traverse tabs. Cloths can, of course, be tumbled or rolled if flying space is limited. It is a good tip always to bring in the traverse tabs when a cloth has to be lowered, then if any hitch occurs the lights can still come up and the actors get on with the scene. Similarly, I have indicated where the traverse tabs should be closed in frontcloth scenes so that there is plenty of time for the cloth to be flown before the end of the scene. The quick flow of one scene into the next is important if a smooth running production is to be achieved.

The settings and costumes should preferably be in clear bright colours to give a story book effect. Early mediaeval is obviously the best period to strive for in this pantomime, but, of course, deliberate anachronisms should be introduced into some settings and some of the comics' costumes.

Pantomime requires many props and often they will have to be home made. Instructions are given in the prop plot about any of the more awkward seeming ones. Props should also be colourfully painted and in pantomime most props should be much larger than reality. It is also wise for the property master to examine carefully the practical use to which a prop is to be put - it is very painful to be hit with a Giant's club of solid wood, one of material filled with foam plastic is far gentler!

I have not attempted to give a lighting plot as this entirely depends on the equipment available, but, generally speaking, most pantomime lighting needs to be full up, warm and bright. Pinks and ambers are probably best for this, but a circuit of blues in the cyclorama battens will help nightfall and dawn rising effects.

Follow spots are a great help for this kind of show, but not essential. But if they are available, it is often effective in romantic numbers to fade out the stage lighting and hold the principals in the follow spots, quickly fading up on the last few bars because this can help to increase the applause! They can also be used for the Fairy and Demon to give them greater freedom of movement than with fixed front of house or spot-bar spots.

Flash boxes, with the necessary colour and flash powders, can be obtained from the usual stage electrical suppliers.

The music has been specially composed so that it is easy for the less musically accomplished to master, but it is also scored in parts for the more ambitious. If an orchestra is available well and good, but a single piano will suffice. It is an advantage, however, if there can be a drummer as well. Not only because a rhythm accompaniment enhances the numbers, but also because for some reason never yet fully fathomed slapstick hits and falls are always twice as funny if they coincide with a well timed bonk on a drum, wood-block or whatever is found to make the noise best suited to the action. A drummer can also cope with the "Tings" noted in the directions though if necessary they can, of course, be done offstage on a triangle.

Pantomime demands a particular style of playing and production. The acting must be larger than life, but still sincere, with a good deal of sparkle and attack. Much of it must be projected directly at the audience, since one of pantomime's great advantages is that it deliberately breaks down the "fourth wall". The actors can literally and metaphorically shake hands with their audience who become almost another memb- of the cast; indeed, their active participation from time to time is es ntial. A word of warning, though, on this - the actors must always remain control; for instance, if a Demon or villain encourages hissing he must nake sure it is never to such an extent that he can no longer be heard. The roducer should see that the story line is clearly brought out and treated with respect. There is always room for local gags and topical quips in pantomime, but they should not be overdone. Most important of all, the comedy, as any comedy, must never appear to be conscious of its own funniness.

Characterisation should be very clear and definite. I prefer the traditional use of a man to play the Dame and a girl to play the Principal Boy. In the case of the Dame, anyway, there is a sound argument for this - audiences will laugh more readily at a man impersonating a woman

involved in the mock cruelties of slapstick than at a real woman. For this reason an actor playing a Dame should never quite let us forget he is a man, while giving a sincere character performance of a woman; further, he can be as feminine as he likes, but never effeminate. The Nurse is sincerely devoted to her charges. Her manner is good-humoured and tolerant and reflects a boisterous enjoyment of life.

A Principal Boy also requires a character performance, but, of course, with the implications reversed! An occasional slap of the thigh is not sufficient. Robin should be thought of as a young man of great vitality, charm and determination.

Principal Girls can be a bore, but only if they are presented as mere pretty symbols of feminine sweetness. Maid Marion has a mind and a will of her own and is not afraid to use either.

The Babes revel wholeheartedly in whatever life offers. They are naturally mischievous at times, but not unbearably so. Sammy should seem a very typical boy with lots of guts and gusto and Susie a very feminine little girl with that well-developed maternal streak of little girls. This comes out most noticeably in her affection for Fred.

Wuffles, like the Nurse, is also devoted to the Babes. He is often baffled by the human standards to which he is asked to conform, which usually seem quite senseless to him, but he tries to oblige, nevertheless.

In outlook, Polly Flinders is essentially artless, the subtle approach is not for her, and though her intentions are always excellent, the results can sometimes be a little overwhelming. And behind all her strength is a very soft heart.

Muddles just muddles along, most of the time successfully. His jaunty disposition enables him to bounce back again quickly after any little setbacks.

The Baron indulges in villainy as a way of life. He enjoys it for its own sake even though the results are seldom up to much.

The Demon has a more fanatical devotion to villainy. He is very devious in all his dealings, in contrast with the Fairy, who is very straightforward. They should be united in one thing - the relish with which they play out their struggle.

Herbert and Fred also have an interest in villainy, though they are very inexpert at it, as they are at most things except disaster. Their intentions are dishonest enough, it is achievement that is their stumbling block. Herbert blusters more than Fred but is really just as inefficient.

I have made provision for six members of the Chorus, but naturally the number used will depend on how many are available.

John Crocker.

MUSIC 1. Overture.

PART ONE

Scene One - THE VILLAGE OF MERRY-DOWNDERRY.

(Fullset. Cut-out ground-row of a village pond in the middle of a village green along back of rostrum. Steps down in C. of rostrum. House wing L. Wing R. as a forge with sign - "P. FLINDERS, BLACKSMITH" above a practical barn door the top half of which is set open.)

(CHORUS as VILLAGERS discovered singing and dancing Opening Chorus.)

MUSIC 2. "MERRYDOWNDERRY"

CHORUS: This is the village of Merrydownderry,
Where men are so handsome and girls are so very
Much ruddier than the proverbial cherry,
In this lovely part of Old England.

We are the villagers, neighbours adore us,
And even our enemies cannot ignore us;
There's no one against us and ev'ryone's for us,
In this lovely part of Old England.

(Dance)

This is the village of Merrydownderry
In Nottinghamshire in Old England.

BARON: (calling off L.) Muddles! Muddles!

1st CH: Look out! Here comes the Baron!

2nd CH: He'll try to make us give him all our money.

3rd CH: Quick! Hide!

(They run to hide behind wings. MUSIC 3. Enter BARON U.L. on rostrum)

BARON: (calling back off L.) Muddles! (turns) Has anyone here seen - ? That's funny, half the village was here just now. I wonder why that always happens when I come along? Well, I know how to get 'em back. (raising his voice and feeling in pocket as if to bring out a note) Anybody want a pound note?

CHORUS: (running on and crowding round him eagerly) Yes, please!

BARON: Ah, I thought that would re-populate the place. Of course, you all know what a pound note looks like?

CHORUS: Of course. (each produces a note and holds it out) Like this.

BARON: (bagging the lot) That's right.

CHORUS: Oh! Boo! Boo!

BARON: Now, now, none of that. I have my position as Sheriff of Nottingham to keep up and that takes money.

CHORUS: (gloomily) Yes - ours.

BARON: Well, my latest proclamation will give you a chance to earn some more. (brings out a scroll) Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! Ohno, Ohno, Ohno. This is me last week's laundry list. (throws scroll off and brings out another) This is it. Oyez, Oyez, Oyez - it is hereby proclaimed that the onetime Earl of Huntingdon, now known as the Outlaw, Robin Hood, is wanted for larceny, petty larceny, big larceny and medium-sized larceny. Any person delivering the said outlaw to the Sheriff of Nottingham will receive a reward of one hundred crowns. Signed Me, p.p. Richard Lionheart. There - and talking of money, that reminds me; there's an old friend of mine just gone on one of these Crusade things and he's appointed me his daughter's guardian.

4th CH: You mean Maid Marion.

BARON: That's right. Well, her father's asked me to find her a husband and as she'll get a very handsome dowry I don't want her falling in love with some village lad and wasting her lolly on him. I have - er - other plans for her. So while she's staying with me you will all refrain from talking to her.

CHORUS: Why should we? It's not fair. Etc.

BARON: Enough! I have spoked. Now I must put this proclamation up. Anybody happen to have a hammer and nail on them? No? How odd. I must find Muddles then. (going L.) But remember, no talking to Maid Marion. Muddles! Muddles! (exit L.)

5th CH: Well, that's not going to be easy, is it?

6th CH: No, we'll just have to try and avoid her. Come on.

(They start to move R.)

1st CH: Too late! Here she comes now.

(MUSIC 4. Enter MAID MARION U.R. on rostrum.)

MARION: Hullo, boys and girls.

2nd CH: Hullo, Maid -

OTHERS: Ssssh!

2nd CH: Oh no.

(CHORUS divide into groups and pretend to take no notice of MARION)

MARION: Oh no? How odd, everyone was friendly enough yesterday, now nobody seems to want to talk to me.

(CHORUS almost relent then intensify their efforts to ignore her. She sighs)

I shall talk to myself then. Lovely day, isn't it, Marion? Yes, lovely. Do you like it here, Marion? Well, it's a nice place, but the people are awfully snooty.

CHORUS: Oh, it's not fair, we're not snooty.

3rd CH: But the Baron said we mustn't talk to you.

4th CH: Because he said he didn't want you to fall in love with anybody in the village.

MARION: But that's my business, not his. Why shouldn't I fall in love with somebody if I want to? In fact, I will - I'll fall in love with the very next man I meet.

5th CH: But you don't know what he'll be like.

MARION: That might make it all the more exciting.

MUSIC 5. "MY MAN"

I'd like to fall completely for a truly handsome lad,
And even plain good-looking wouldn't be so very bad.
The fellow in my dreams was just as handsome as can be -
But I don't really mind as long as he loves me.

The man with looks and nothing more
Need never wait before my door,
But if his love's a thing apart
Then he has the key to my heart.

MARION & CHORUS: I'd/She'd like to fall, etc.

(Exit MARION R, with CHORUS. Enter BARON L, carrying proclamation)

BARON: Oi! you lot, come back here! You were talking to Maid Marion. Come back here! Oh, three naughty swear words, they've gone. Well, I'll deal with them later. I still haven't dealt with this. Where can that new man of mine be? Muddles! Muddles!

(Loud hooting off R.)

Ah, at last.

(MUSIC 6. Hooting continues as MUDDLES enters backwards R, holding a steering wheel to which is attached a bulb horn on which he is hooting. He bumps into BARON)

MUDDLES: Oops, sorry, Baron.

BARON: What do you think you're doing?

MUDDLES: Driving the right way the wrong way round.

BARON: Driving the right way the wrong way round. Why?

MUDDLES: 'Cos this is a one way street. (starts moving again)

BARON: Come back here. Where's my car? I told you to collect it from the garage where it was being repaired.

MUDDLES: I did. This is it. (offers steering wheel to BARON)

BARON: (taking it) What do you mean? There was lots more of it than this. There was all that nice bit in front and that lovely bit behind.

MUDDLES: I know. They took all those to pay for repairing them.

(BARON sighs and throws wheel off)

Oh, by the way, this letter came for you. (takes letter from pocket an gives it to BARON)

BARON: A letter? (opening it) Not another bill, I hope. (reads) Great heavens! Little Sydney! He's dead!

MUDDLES: Oh dear, I am sorry. Still, it's nice of him to write and let you know.

BARON: He didn't, you fool. This is from little Sydney's lawyer.

MUDDLES: Oh. Who is little Sydney then?

BARON: He was my brother. (greatly affected, leaning on MUDDLES' shoulder) My only brother.

MUDDLES: There, there.

BARON: And now he's gone. What a pity I never liked him, becaus now - (breaking down altogether) - I never will.

MUDDLES: There, there, there.

BARON: But at least his two poor orphan babes are coming to live with me.

MUDDLES: Oh, good.

BARON: Yes, it says so here - what! It does too. Two snivelling brats coming to live in my house.

(Throws down letter. MUDDLES picks it up)

Two more mouths to feed, two more backs to clothe. Where's the money coming from, eh?

MUDDLES: It says here they've inherited their father's fortune.

BARON: Eh? (snatches letter back) So they have! What splendid kiddiwinks! When are the rich little darlings coming to their loving nunky-wunky? (reads) Arriving with their Nurse on Wednesday.

MUDDLES: Wednesday?

BARON: Wednesday.

BOTH: Wednesday!

BARON: That's today! We'll never be ready in time. Muddles, go and get the spare room ready.

MUDDLES: (running L.) Right.

BARON: No.

(MUDDLES marks time)

I must meet them. Nip to the blacksmith and see if my horse is ready.

MUDDLES: (running R.) Right.

BARON: No!

(MUDDLES marks time)

I'm forgetting the proclamation. Nail it up somewhere. (gives it to MUDDLES)

MUDDLES: (stops, panting) Right.

BARON: Well, don't just stand there. Do something and hurry!

(Exit BARON L)

MUDDLES: Oh dear, he's got me so mixed up I don't know what I'm doing. Well, I'll see about the horse first. (he crosses R to forge, starts to knock, realises top half is open and kneels down to knock on bottom half of door) Mr. Blacksmith!

POLLY: (off R.) Oh, fiddlesticks!

(Large prop horseshoe sails over MUDDLES' head and lands with loud orchestra crash. He rises and picks it up)

MUDDLES: Hm, lucky.

POLLY: (off) And fiddledee!

(Large prop sledgehammer flies out of forge and lands at MUDDLES' feet, with louder orchestra crash)

MUDDLES: Hm, unlucky.

POLLY: (off) And likewise fiddle-faddle!

(Large prop anvil flies out and lands with still louder crash. MUDDLES backs L. MUSIC 7. Enter POLLY FLINDERS from forge. She wears a leather apron with pockets & carries a horseshoe in her upstage hand)

I'm fed up.

MUDDLES: So am I. Chucking things about like that. A bloke like you ought to be - eh? Coo, what a pretty blacksmith.

POLLY: But I don't like being a blacksmith. (kicks anvil) I never have liked being a blacksmith - (kicks anvil again) - And I never shall like being a blacksmith. (kicks anvil once more)

MUDDLES: Doesn't that hurt?

POLLY: No.

MUDDLES: Well, don't you be a blacksmith, then. (kicks anvil) OW! (clasps foot in pain)

POLLY: Just because my father didn't have a son to take over from him I don't see why I should have to. I'm no good at it, anyway. Look.

(She holds up horseshoe. It is square)

MUDDLES: Hm, very original. All you need is a square horse.

POLLY: Square horse! Pah! (snaps horsehoe in two and throws it off) All I need is a man to take over my job. Here, how about you?

MUDDLES: Me? Oh no, I'm not a man - I mean, I'm not the right sort of man. Anyway, I've got a job. I'm Muddles, the Baron's new handyman.

POLLY: I'm Polly Flinders. Pleased to meet you. (shakes his hand vigorously)

MUDDLES: How do you - aah! (extricates hand, which is completely limp) Um. Funny, it's more flexible with the bones broken.

POLLY: I suppose you've called for the Baron's horse. Well, it's not ready.

MUDDLES: Ah, I expect it had the wrong shaped feet. Never mind, perhaps you could lend me a hammer and nail to put this notice up.

POLLY: Certainly. Here's a nail. (gives him large nail from apron) And here's the hammer. (picks up sledgehammer and passes it to him lightly)

MUDDLES: (drops it on his toe and dances round holding foot) Ow!

POLLY: Shall I do it for you?

MUDDLES: No, I'll manage, but you hold these in place for me.

POLLY: Righto. (takes nail and proclamation and holds them against house wing L.)

(MUDDLES drags hammer over and tries to lift it. Eventually he manages to raise it a few inches from ground)

MUDDLES: (puffing) I - er - I think it's a bit high. Bring it down a bit.

(She lowers it)

A bit more.

(She does)

More still.

(She does. It is on ground level)

That's it. Hold it there.

POLLY: But nobody'll see it here. Look, I'll do it. You hold these up. (takes hammer and gives him proclamation and nail)

MUDDLES: All right. (miserably holds them against wing with outstretched arms and tight-shut eyes)

POLLY: It's difficult to see the nail, isn't it? (turns away and swings hammer)

MUDDLES: (opens eyes and moves head to look and covers nail with head) Is it?

(POLLY swings hammer and hits MUDDLES on head)

(turning) Well, I can see it all right. Oooh.

(He falls straight forward rigidly. The notice remains up. (Hole in wing to receive nail into which he has pushed it))

POLLY: Oh, Muddles, are you all right?

MUDDLES: (sits up rubbing head) Well - Ooh! I think you ought to find a job where you don't have hammers.

POLLY: I wish I could. I'm sick of hammers.

(She throws it off R. EFFECT 1. Crash of falling metal)

And of anvils.

(She throws anvil off. EFFECT 2. Glass crash)

MUDDLES: (rising) Careful. I say, I've had an idea. The Baron's ward, Maid Marion, has just come to stay with him. I'll see if I can get you taken on as her maid.

POLLY: Oh, Muddles, you darling! (hugs him)

MUDDLES: Ooh! Aah! Ooh! Could I just come up for a little air?

(POLLY releases him. He falls)

I said up, not down. (rises) I can see there's a few things I'll have to teach you if you're going to be a lady's maid.

POLLY: I can't think of a nicer teacher.

MUDDLES: And I can't think of a nicer pupil.

MUSIC 8. "A WONDERFUL LESSON".

POLLY: Teach me, teach me, teach me something new.

MUDDLES: One and one and one and one and one are two.

POLLY: How I wish that I were quite as smart as you,

BOTH: 'Cos that's a wonderful lesson.

POLLY: Teach me, teach me, teach me something more.

MUDDLES: Two and two and two and two and two are four.

POLLY: I always thought that school was such an awful bore.

BOTH: But that's a wonderful lesson.

POLLY: Love's a subject I would try;
I'd like to know the reasons why.

MUDDLES: But that's a most important i-
-tem you must never guess on.

POLLY: Teach me, teach me, teach me how to kiss.

MUDDLES: It's just a sort of kind of sort of thing like THIS!

(Kisses her)

POLLY: Now I know it, now I know it! Ah, what bliss!

BOTH: And that's a wonderful lesson.

(Dance)

POLLY: Love's a subject very new to me.

MUDDLES: Put your arms around me and then we'll see.

(They clinch)

POLLY: Now I'm sure of honours in my G.C.E.

BOTH: 'Cos that's a wonderful lesson!

(They exit L. BLACKOUT. WHITE SPOT UP R. MUSIC 9. Enter FAIRY NIGHTINGALE R.)

FAIRY: Good morrow, mortals. Nay, don't fear,
No harm shall come while I am here.
The Fairy Nightingale's my name
And I seek one of evil fame,
Who tries with never ceasing zest
My fairy pow'r from me to wrest.
But always with much sly pretence
That he has none save good intents.

(MUSIC 10. Looks off L.)

Lo! Here he comes. I'll hide a while
And mayhap learn his newest guile.

(She waves wand. WHITE SPOT OUT. BLUE SPOT UP L. DEMON CATBANE peers on D.L.)

DEMON: Ah! Is't safe? Aye, the coast is clear.
(creeps on stage stealthily)
That foolish fey my plans can't hear.
She doth o'er birds and fairies reign
And e'en to ruling me doth feign.
But I'll fullsoon expose this sham
For I the Demon Catbane am!
My scheme's a simple one indeed,
For those two babes who hither speed
She doth as Fairy Guardian fend.
But I their uncle's mind shall bend,
Till he their death shall bring about
And thus the Fairy's pow'r rout!

(He laughs fiendishly. FAIRY waves wand. WHITE SPOT UP)

FAIRY: Laugh not too soon. Thy scheme shall fail!

DEMON: (aside) Tarnation! Fairy Nightingale!
I must dissemble, soothe the sprite.
(to her) Methinks ye did not hear aright;
'Twas but a jest to pass the time.

FAIRY: Seek not to hide from me thy crime.
I warn ye, evil one, beware!
Harm not the babes by but one hair.

DEMON: (sighs) It grieves me much that you should still
Fear I would do the Babes some ill.
Why, I their lives do cherish so
My mind no other thoughts doth know.
(aside) That's true, at least. But 'tis their end
Not their survival I intend.

FAIRY: Thy true thoughts are but all too plain.
But deeds not thoughts will vict'ry gain.
So I will rouse up all my might
To guard the Babes against thy spite.

(Exit FAIRY R. WHITE SPOT OUT. DEMON bows mockingly after her. FADE UP GENERAL LIGHTING TO HALF)

DEMON: Aye, do, it may afford some sport,
Though in the end 'twill win thee naught.
(looks off L.)
For here I sees the very man
I need to carry out my plan.
I'll step aside his thoughts to hear.

(DEMON moves upstage. Enter BARON L. studying letter and dabbing eyes with handkerchief)

BARON: Oh dear, and yet again, oh dear.
Those two poor Babes make me heartsore -
'Cos they're so rich and I'm so poor.
Poor mites, how can they squander much
On toffees, ginger pop and such?
Perhaps the answer to the riddle
Would be to work a little fiddle;
In such a way that nothing's miss'd.
But how?

DEMON: I'll tell thee, hist! Hist! HIST!

BARON: (sniffing) I trust the gas pipe's not eroded.

(DEMON stamps and points to L. of floats. BLUE FLASH)

Ah, help! It is! The main's exploded!

DEMON: (moving down and bowing to BARON)
Your pardon, 'twas mere ectoplasm.

BARON: I see - it gave me quite a spasm.

DEMON: Well, rest assur'd, there's naught to fear.
I chanc'd your thoughts to overhear.

BARON: Oh dear, I trust they were not rude,
Sometimes my thoughts are rather crude.
I'd no idea they'd sprung a leak.

DEMON: 'Twas of the Babes that ye did speak.
I felt that I could help, perchance.

BARON: (holds out his hat)
Why, thank you, just a small advance -

DEMON: What? Oh, in bigger ways than that.

BARON: How nice. I'll get a bigger hat.

(He starts to go. DEMON stops him)

DEMON: Nay, list. I would a scheme unfold
To win thee all thy charges' gold.

BARON: Splendid! But how? It's in a trust
So watertight it can't be bust.

DEMON: I think it can, one way I spy,
For just suppose they were to die -
What then?

BARON: The money comes to me,
Their only kin, but I don't see -
Oh, wait a minute, yes, I do!
But it's dishonest, naughty, too -
Oh, blow all that, I need the lolly.
Such sentiments are merely folly.

DEMON: Thou must not do the deed thyself.

BARON: No, no, I'd lose the lovely pelf
If I were charg'd with foul intent.
Besides, in some ways I'm a gent;
I must employ some underling.

DEMON: (producing a business card)
I thought perhaps -

BARON: (taking it) The very thing!
(reading) "Horrible Herbert, Frightful Fred,
Enemies done for, friends cut dead."
I'll send for them without delay.
Ta ever so.

DEMON: (bowing) Farewell.

BARON: (raising hat) Good-day.

(Exit BARON L. MUSIC 11. FADE LIGHTS TO BLUE SPOT)

DEMON: Full well he's play'd into my hand,
Soon naught my power shall withstand,
For, lo! unwitting of their doom,
The Babes come running to their tomb!

(Laughs fiendishly and exits L. BLUE SPOT OUT, LIGHTS UP TO FULL. MUSIC 12. SAMMY runs on R, shortly followed by SUSAN)

SAMMY: Come on, Susan. I'm sure we're nearly there.

SUSAN: All right, I'm here, Sammy.

SAMMY: Where's Nurse?

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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