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GIMME THEM PAPERS!

SOME SYNCOPATED SOB STUFF

BY

FREDERICK G. JOHNSON

AUTHOR OF

The Footlight Revue," "The Fun Revue," "At Harmony Junction,"
"Foiled, By Heck!" "Good Morning, Teacher,"
"Such Ignorance!" "How to Stage a
Minstrel Show," etc.

"To make me laugh, you must play tragedy."



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GIMME THEM PAPERS!

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GIMME THEM PAPERS!

CHARACTERS.

HARRY HAMME.....	<i>The Handsome Hero</i>
WILLIE WYNNE.....	<i>The Wicked Willain</i>
CHERUB CHUBB.....	<i>The Cherished Child</i>
PATRICIA PUNQUE.....	<i>The Perfect Peach</i>
VELMA VAIL.....	<i>The Vicious Vamp</i>

SCENE—*Oh, Here and There.*

TIME—*Decidedly Raggy.*

PLACE—*The Crool, Crool World.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Twenty Minutes.*

NOTE TO DIRECTOR.

These directions are for production in a theatre with good scenic equipment. The play can be effectively presented, however, on any platform, with no scenery whatever. In that case the stage should be set as for "Act Two," with a table, a chair or two, and a rug. The changing of the easel signs tells the story.

Whether or not scenery is used, there should be no waits between the "acts." The action is continuous from start to finish.

If printed programs are used, do not indicate the "acts" thereon. The easel signs are intended to get a laugh as they are shown from time to time, and must therefore not be revealed beforehand.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

HARRY—A fashion-plate hero; rather ruddy make-up; eyelashes beaded, cupid's-bow mouth; wears handsome business suit, of blue serge or other informal material, and neat straw hat; or he may affect the cheap ultra-swell, and wear loud checked suit with immense panama hat having a gaudy band; hair pompadoured and sleek always, except for "rough-house" scene in "Act Two."

WILLIE—An old-time villain; thin face, pale make-up, small black moustache; wears—of course!—evening clothes, silk hat, caped overcoat (optional); smokes cigarettes incessantly.

CHERUB—Preferably played by a stout man with a deep voice; long, curly wig and romper costume; large clumsy shoes; a thorough mixture of clumsy kid and tough guy; or can be played by a thin man in silly rube style of make-up and costume; the more absurd the better; is always gawky and incongruous; shouts all his lines.

PATRICIA—Pretty girl, preferably a blonde; wears beautiful clothes, but affects "simple country" style; may wear hair in a braid, with large ribbon; beautiful scarf for driven-from-home scene.

VELMA—Pretty girl, preferably a tall, slender brunette, with Spanish type of make-up; wears a gorgeous evening gown, snaky and clinging, typical vampire style; affects all the sinuous and sinister mannerisms of the type.

 PROPERTIES.

HARRY—Pistol; long rope.

WILLIE—Handful of paper snow; cigarettes; matches; pistol; two money bags, filled.

CHERUB—Cigarette; matches; bottle.

PATRICIA—Large handkerchief for gag.

VELMA—Clothes tree with lantern.

STAGE PROPS—Easel and five signs; hammer on table; toy train and string laid across stage; crash box and wood splintering effect; train effect; table, two chairs, rug, hat tree, red lantern.

NOTE TO PLAYERS.

First of all, learn your lines thoroughly, and be familiar with your cues, so that you can pick them up promptly. A second's delay in keeping the dialogue going along in its peculiar meter will put the whole thing out of tempo and destroy the raggy rhythm which is the keynote of the piece. This does not mean that the lines should be delivered in a sing-song style, but that the syncopated *motif* must be maintained.

Deliver your lines colorfully, and enter into the spirit of your part. Make the action real, and work for big melodramatic value. The audience should be left to do all the laughing. Forget the absurdity of the play. Take it in all seriousness. Rehearse it until it no longer seems funny. Have at least one rehearsal with spectators who have not read the play, to learn to guard against laughing when the audience does.

Some of the lines are long, and others are short. These are, respectively, "cut-time" and "long-time" lines. The first few rehearsals will serve to show how these lines should be delivered in order to keep in the tempo. These changes in meter and beat contribute largely to the humorous syncopated effect of the piece.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

Up stage means away from footlights; *down stage*, near footlights. In the use of *right* and *left*, the actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

GIMME THEM PAPERS!

SCENE: *The full-stage set is a parlor, with doors center and right, or optional. A parlor table center, half-way down stage. Carpenter's hammer on table. Rug on floor, with one corner unencumbered. Chairs, etc., ad lib.*

In front of the parlor set, street drop is lowered "in one" (narrow stage).

Wood drop is hung in or near first groove, so that when lowered it will mask parlor set.

Toy train is set off stage and down left, attached to string which lies across stage and down as near footlights as possible. Free end of string is off right.

Play opens on apron, in front of stage curtain, before rise.

MUSIC: *"Old Zip Coon," fast and loud, with lots of rag, once through.*

As soon as music starts, a Stage Hand places, at extreme right, in front of curtain, an easel carrying five cardboard signs. The one which is visible announces—

PROLOGUE A LA MODE.

As music stops, VELMA enters in front of curtain.

VELMA.

When Shakespeare wrote scenarios
To put upon the stage,
It seems that crime and sudden death
Were then, as now, the rage.

PATRICIA enters.

PATRICIA.

The persecuted maiden fair
Was very much *au fait*,

And her old-fashioned troubles
Are much the same today.

WILLIE. *WILLIE enters.*
The villain still pursues her
As in the days of yore.
How is it, then, that those old plays
Are such a beastly bore?

HARRY. *HARRY enters.*
If Shakespeare came to earth today
He'd get the merry razz.
Because he never wrote a play
With jazz—jazz—jazz!

PATRICIA (*to WILLIE*).
Well then, let's do a ragtime show.

WILLIE (*to VELMA*).
Gimme Them Papers!

VELMA (*to HARRY*).
How's that, Bo?

HARRY.
Good enough to start with—

ALL (*shouting*).
Let's go!

(All do break step.)

Exeunt HARRY and VELMA. WILLIE removes first easel sign, revealing second card, which reads: "ACT I. TURNED OUT TO DIE," and exits. PATRICIA puts scarf about her head, a la little-old-red-shawl, as front curtain rises, revealing street drop "in one."

PATRICIA (*tragically*).
Father's turned me out to die!

Enter WILLIE, right.

Wouldn't even tell me why.

(WILLIE throws paper snow over her.)

"Begone forever!" he said, and then,

(Exit WILLIE, right.)

"Never darken my door again!"

WILLIE *enters right.*

WILLIE (*to himself*).

Aha! A maiden in distress!

PATRICIA (*to herself, grieving*).

Disowned—without an evening dress!

WILLIE (*to himself*).

A pretty nifty chicken, too!

Does she look good? I'll say she do!

She's on the rocks, that's plain to see.

PATRICIA (*noticing WILLIE*).

Now is that creature watching me?

He'd speak to me if I was willin'.

I am pursued—and by a villain!

He has a wicked looking face!

VELMA *enters right, and watches WILLIE from behind easel.*

WILLIE (*addressing PATRICIA, freshly*).

I know you, kid. Your name is Grace.

PATRICIA (*frigidly*).

I do not do such things as flirt!

VELMA (*aside*).

It's Willie with another skirt.

He treats me just like I was dirt!

(*Does break step, and exits right.*)

PATRICIA.

Father turned me out to die.

WILLIE.

Did he, really? My, my, my!

(*Puts arm around her.*)

Well, then, come along with me.

PATRICIA (*insulted*).

Never! Villain, leave me be!

Enter HARRY, left.

PATRICIA.

Alone, and in this wicked city!

Won't nobody have some pity?

HARRY.

Unhand that girl! Why, gosh durn you,
That ain't no nice thing to do!

WILLIE (*biting his finger nails*).

Foiled already! Who are you?

HARRY (*does first part of break step, thus: "Rat, tat-a-tat, tat—"*).

Handsome Harry!

WILLIE (*drawing PATRICIA closer*).

Handsome Harry, do your worst!
The girl is mine. I saw her first!

HARRY (*drawing a pistol*).

Go, or you'll get filled with lead!

WILLIE (*releasing her*).

I'm worth more alive than dead.

PATRICIA (*to HARRY*).

He pestered me beyond endurance!

(HARRY *points gun at WILLIE*.)

WILLIE (*raising his hands above his head*).

Oh, please don't shoot! I've no insurance!

HARRY (*threatening him with gun*).

Begone, foul fiend in human form!

PATRICIA (*to HARRY*).

Don't you suppose he might reform?

HARRY.

I fear he'll go from bad to worse.

WILLIE.

Curses!—How I love to curse!

(*Exits right.*)

HARRY.

Now tell me how you came to land
In that there wicked monster's hand.
A maiden of such grace and charm
Should ought to be back on the farm.

PATRICIA (*tearfully*).

Oh, sir, I have not words enough—

HARRY (*to orchestra*).

Soft music, please, for this sob stuff.

(Orchestra plays one loud chord, then glides into "Old Zip Coon," playing it slowly and very softly. The following dialogue is spoken, not sung, in tempo with the music. The familiar "break" is substituted for the last line of the refrain.)

PATRICIA.

Well, father turned me out of the door,
And said that I wasn't to come back no more.
I didn't have a suit-case, I didn't have a trunk.
He just went and chucked me out—ker-plunk!

HARRY.

The old man chased you off of the place?

PATRICIA (*nodding*).

Said I was responsible for his disgrace.

HARRY (*clenching his fist*).

I'd like to slam that bird in the face!

(*Both do break step.*)

PATRICIA.

So here I am, and I haven't got a cent.

HARRY.

Well, I'm not broke, but I'm badly bent.

PATRICIA.

Then along came the villain, and he started to pursue.
Now I ask you what on earth there was for little me
to do!

HARRY.

Well, you've got me—

PATRICIA.

And you've got a gun!

HARRY.

So we'll try very hard to get the villain on the run.
'Cause the show isn't over—

PATRICIA.

Why, it's just begun!

(*Both do break step. Music stops.*)

At the break, WILLIE enters right, and stands behind easel.

WILLIE (*aside*).

Curse him for a rapid lover!

Enter VELMA, right.

VELMA.

Look out, kid!

(Exits right.)

WILLIE (*indicating easel*).

I'm under cover!

HARRY (*to PATRICIA*).

Now come along with me, and we'll see what we can do.

PATRICIA.

I can't do that. I don't know you.

HARRY.

I'm Harry Hamme, the silk hat kid.

PATRICIA.

Gee, but that's a nifty lid!

HARRY.

Well, I've told you, now you tell me
Your particular variety of fam'ly tree?

PATRICIA (*modestly*).

I'm Patricia Punque, the perfect peach.

HARRY (*taking her arm*).

Let's beat it, Patricia, side by each.

(HARRY and PATRICIA exeunt left, VELMA enters right.)

WILLIE.

Curses! I'm foiled! But by and by
I'll get the damsel, or I'll know why.

VELMA (*pleading*).

Listen, Willie, leave her be.

Look what a mess you made out of me.

WILLIE (*angrily*).

Cut out those sentimental capers!
That girl has got the fatal papers!

VELMA.

What papers, Willie?

WILLIE (*shrugging his shoulders*).
 I don't know,
 But "Gimme Them Papers" is the name o' this show.
 So I've got to chase the papers
 As a proper villain should—

VELMA.
 And I'm going to vamp the hero,
 'Cause the author said I could—

WILLIE.
 What? You're going to vamp the hero?

VELMA.
 And I'm going to vamp him good!
 (*VELMA does break step, omitting last two beats.*)

WILLIE.
 Some vamp!
 Well, the act is nearly over,
 So what do you propose?

VELMA.
 It seems to me that gen'rally
 In melodrama shows,
 The villain steals the hero-ine
 And threatens her with blows—
 (*WILLIE does break step, omitting last two beats.*)

VELMA.
 Some villain!
 WILLIE (*pointing off left*).
 Now Harry took Patricia into
 Yonder swell cafe.

VELMA.
 Let's give the hero knockout-drops
 So he won't get so gay!

WILLIE.
 And then we'll grab the hero-ine
 And take her far away!
 (*Both do break step, omitting last two beats.*)

BOTH.
 Act two!

(Exit WILLIE right. VELMA changes easel sign to read "ACT II. IN THE SPIDER'S WEB," and exits after him. Street drop rises, showing parlor set, full stage.)

Enter WILLIE, center, dragging after him PATRICIA, who is gagged.

WILLIE (removing gag).

And now, me haughty beauty,
I've got you in me clutch!

Enter VELMA, right.

PATRICIA (bewildered).

I do not know what place I'm in,
Except that I'm in Dutch!

VELMA.

Will you give up the papers?

WILLIE (eagerly).

Or would you rather die?

PATRICIA.

I haven't any papers,
You know as well as I.

WILLIE.

Well, that don't cut no ice with me,
The papers I must get!

PATRICIA.

My beau will have your life for this!

WILLIE.

Ha-ha! Then that's a threat?

VELMA (to PATRICIA).

Kick in with the papers, or you'll wish you had!

PATRICIA.

Rave on, wicked vampire, you can't make me mad!

WILLIE (hissing into her ear).

Now gimme them papers, or I will reveal
Your terrible secret! Then how will you feel?

PATRICIA.

I've no guilty secret to gnaw at my heart.

Why argue the matter? I think I'll depart.

(Starts for center door.)

WILLIE (*leaps in front of her*).

Not so fast, me proud beauty! Do you think I'm
silly?

PATRICIA.

She can't pull that rough stuff on us, can she, Willie?

WILLIE (*to VELMA*).

We're losing ground!

VELMA.

To bring our game up,

I think we'll have to fix a frame-up.

WILLIE.

What shall her guilty secret be?

VELMA.

I'll think a minute. Let me see—

PATRICIA.

I never did a single thing

That to my cheek a blush would bring.

You think that you can get me riled—

VELMA (*inspired*).

I have it! Quick! Bring on the child!

WILLIE.

Ha-ha! 'Tis well! Why didn't I

Think of the child before? (*Exits right.*)

VELMA.

We'll thrust the child upon her, and

We'll throw 'em out the door!

PATRICIA.

You'll throw me out the door?

VELMA.

We'll throw you out the door!

PATRICIA (*laughing heartily*).

You make me think of father.

He did it once before.

Enter WILLIE, right.

WILLIE.

Gone!

VELMA.

Gone?

WILLIE.

Gone!

VELMA.

That's queer!

WILLIE.

And so is half a gallon of
Our very precious beer!*(VELMA and WILLIE exeunt hastily, right.)**Enter CHERUB, clutching a beer bottle, center.*

CHERUB.

Hail!—Hail!

The gang's all here!

(Does break step, omitting last two beats.)

Some baby!

PATRICIA.

Come here, you darling infant.

Whose little child are you?

CHERUB.

Well now you've said a mouthful.

I only wish I knew!

PATRICIA.

I wish that I did, too.

But mercy, how you grew!

CHERUB.

I guess I'm kind of oversized *(lifts bottle)*,
They raised me on home brew.

PATRICIA.

But tell me what you're doing here,

For I would like to know.

CHERUB.

I guess that you had better ask
The guy that wrote the show.

PATRICIA.

The guy that wrote the show?

CHERUB.

You surely ought to know.
It takes the papers and the child
To make the drama go.

PATRICIA.

It's going kind of slow.

CHERUB.

Cheer up! Your cup of woe
Will soon be overflowing.

Believe me, kid—I know!

Enter WILLIE, right, with a money bag in each hand.

WILLIE (to PATRICIA, extending one bag).

I have a million dollars here.

It's all for you—for you, my dear!

(*Extends other bag.*)

And here are rubies! Diamonds! Pearls!

The junk that makes a hit with girls!

I'll doll you up like any queen

If you'll be mine—

PATRICIA (*majestically*).

Nay, nay, Pauline!

A man like you I'll never marry.

I've pledged my heart to Handsome Harry!

WILLIE (*furiously*).

So, you would scorn my untold wealth?

CHERUB (to PATRICIA).

He'll get you yet, by crafty stealth!

WILLIE (*making a lunge at CHERUB*).

You, beat it, while you've got your health!

(*CHERUB scampers off right, clumping with his heavy shoes to execute the preliminary "rat, tat-a-tat, tat—" of the break, and disappearing just in time for a final "slam-bang!" with crash box off stage.*)

WILLIE (*imperiously*).

Now, haughty one, you're in me power!

You'll be me bride within the hour!

PATRICIA (*scornfully*).

I'll never fall for that cheap stuff!

WILLIE.

Woman, look out! I'll treat you rough!

Down on your knees, and show your terror!

PATRICIA.

Fool! You've made a social error.
Remove your hat when under cover!

WILLIE.

Never! I'm a caveman lover!
Gimme them papers!—

PATRICIA.

No, not I!

Enter VELMA, right.

WILLIE.

Then you had best prepare to die!
I'll hurl you into yonder river!

PATRICIA (*indifferently*).

I'll get all wet, but I should shiver.

VELMA.

She's some tough nut, I'll tell the world.

WILLIE.

Curses! I'm foiled, by a slip of a girl!

(Loud knock on center door, in break time.)

PATRICIA.

Hark! What's that?

VELMA.

They've come to pinch the flat!

WILLIE.

The cops will never get me,
Though I'm cornered like a rat!

PATRICIA.

My strength is nearly spent.
Where has my lover went?

VELMA.

Perhaps it's just the landlord
Who's come to get the rent.

Loud knocks on center door in march time, thus: "Bang! Bang! Bang-bang-bang!" CHERUB enters right, doing first part of break step, thus: "Tap, tap-a-tap, tap—" with two more knocks on center door for final "Bang! Bang!"

WILLIE (*to VELMA*).

I have no cash, have you?

VELMA.

I haven't got a sou!

WILLIE.

Oh, dear—

PATRICIA.

Dear—

CHERUB.

Dear!

ALL.

What are we going to do?

(Knocking is repeated on door, in break time, "Rat, tat-a-tat, tat,—tat, tat.")

PATRICIA.

Who is it?

WILLIE.

I don't know.

VELMA.

I wish that they would go.

CHERUB.

I guess they're knocking just because
We've got a rotten show!

(Terrific noise off stage with crash box, rattle, thunder sheet, wood splintering, etc. Music, grand chord.)

Enter HARRY, center, with coat gone; badly disheveled, hair ruffled, shirt torn, face and arms streaked with blood.

WILLIE.

It's Harry, for a fact!

PATRICIA.

You're late. What kept you back?

HARRY.

I'm not supposed to enter till
The finish of the act.
This is no place for you.

PATRICIA.

Well, what was I to do?

VELMA (*lifting corner of rug*).

Open up the trap door

And we will drop them through!

WILLIE.

That wouldn't do at all.

They'd get a nawsty fall.

CHERUB.

I wonder if we're good enough

To get a curtain call.

HARRY (*to PATRICIA*).

What are you doing here?

PATRICIA.

Search me. Oh, dear, oh, dear!

We're trapped within the spider's web!

HARRY.

That much is very clear!

But how can we get out?

WILLIE.

Don't dare to raise a shout!

HARRY.

We might go down the fire escape—

PATRICIA.

Or climb the water spout!

WILLIE (*to VELMA*).

That hero is a shine!

VELMA.

I have a scheme!

WILLIE.

That's fine!

VELMA (*pushing CHERUB toward PATRICIA*).

Go, take your child—

HARRY (*aghast, to PATRICIA*).

Is that your child?

PATRICIA.

He is no child of mine!

HARRY.

So I have been deceived!

WILLIE.

And I am much relieved.

HARRY (*to PATRICIA*).

That you would own a brat like that
I wouldn't have believed!

PATRICIA (*pleading*).

Now, Harry, listen here.
They're shoving me the queer.

WILLIE.

Ha-ha! The plot is thickening!

CHERUB (*calling off*).

Hey, Eddie, make mine beer!

HARRY.

Women are all alike.

PATRICIA.

Well, for the love of Mike!

HARRY (*pushing her away*).

Go, take your brat, and get your hat—

CHERUB (*to PATRICIA*).

We've got to hit the pike.

PATRICIA (*going*).

My heart is just like lead!

(*Exeunt PATRICIA and CHERUB, hand in hand, center.*)

HARRY (*calling after her*).

My love for you is dead!

VELMA (*to WILLIE*).

Perhaps *he* has the papers!

WILLIE (*picking up hammer*).

I'll soak him on the head!

(*Raps on table, "Rap, tap-a-tap, tap—Tap! Tap!"*)

VELMA.

I've got a better scheme.

HARRY (*sighing despondently*).

Farewell, O love's young dream.

VELMA (*to WILLIE*).

The silly calf sure makes me laugh—

WILLIE.

Yes, isn't he a scream!

VELMA (*whispers in WILLIE'S ear*).

We'll tie him on his back,
Right on the railroad track.

HARRY.

Hot stuff. Let's change the scenery
And do another act!

(*Wood drop "in one" is lowered. WILLIE changes easel sign to read: "ACT III. THE JAWS OF DEATH." Exit WILLIE, right. VELMA brings on from left a clothes tree on which hangs a red lantern. She places it left of center. Exit VELMA, right.*)

Enter PATRICIA and CHERUB, hand in hand, right.

PATRICIA.

The villain still pursues me,
The papers for to get.
I haven't any papers—

CHERUB.

Oh well, then, you should fret!

PATRICIA.

Those papers drive me nutty!
Let's rest beneath the shade.

CHERUB (*taking cigarette from his pocket*).

Oh never mind the papers,—
I smoke 'em ready made. (*Lights cigarette.*)

PATRICIA.

Alas! Alas! I wish that I
Had jumped into the lake!

CHERUB.

Get off the railroad tracks, old dear,
Or you'll be hamburg steak.

PATRICIA (*agitated, points off right*).

Look, Cherub, look! What do you see
Approaching up the road?

CHERUB.

It's Wicked Willie, soused again.
Oh, Baby! What a load!

PATRICIA.

If he goes on pursuing me
He'll run me off my feet.

CHERUB.

Come on, we'd better fade away,
And fade away toot-sweet.

(Exeunt CHERUB and PATRICIA, hand in hand, left.)

Enter WILLIE and VELMA, right.

WILLIE *(looking off left)*.

Curses! I'm foiled! That woman knows
That I pursue where'er she goes!

VELMA.

Well, stop pursuing for a minute.
We've work to do, so let's begin it.

WILLIE.

I never tire of pursuin'.
Why, girl, I *live* on wreck and ruin!

VELMA.

Come on! It's dangerous to tarry!

WILLIE.

All right.

VELMA.

Good night!

Where's Handsome Harry?

WILLIE.

You mean that he is lost?

VELMA.

Then we've been double crossed!

WILLIE.

We've got to find the hero,
Or the show will be a frost!
You gave the boy the dope?

VELMA *(nodding)*.

And tied him with a rope!

WILLIE (*looking around*).

Then he is surely near at hand,
We mustn't give up hope.

VELMA.

We'd better have a look.

Enter HARRY, right, with yards of rope coiled around him.

HARRY.

Where is the girl, you crook?

WILLIE.

You'll find her lifeless body
Floating yonder in the brook!

HARRY.

You wretch! You know you lie!
She is too good to die!
It's just a half an hour ago
I saw her walking by.

WILLIE (*seizing him*).

Ha-ha! Your hour has come!

HARRY (*struggling*).

And you've been drinking rum!

VELMA (*catching HARRY'S hands back of him*).

Come on, let's do the dirty work
And put him on the bum!

(They struggle from center to one side and back, swaying cabaret style and keeping time to "struggle music" played in rag tempo. Music finishes with break, and HARRY falls at center, with head left by clothes tree, and feet toward right. He times his fall to coincide with the final "Thump! Thump!" of the break. WILLIE and VELMA tie him to imaginary track. Tremolo music, very soft.)

(If light effects are available, darken stage at this point, and use green spot light on the group. When HARRY says "Good night!" restore all lights and kill the spot.)

WILLIE (*leaning over and gloating*).

Prepare to die!

HARRY (*with bravado*).

You make me snicker!

WILLIE.

Don't taunt me when I'm full of licker! (*Turns away.*)

VELMA (*kneeling beside HARRY*).

Honest, I hate to see you there.

HARRY (*rises on one elbow and recites tragically*).

A fool there was, and he made a prayer

To a ragtime vamp—

VELMA (*enthusiastically*).

Gee, kid, you're *there!*

HARRY.

The ragtime vamp made the fool forget

That the simple country maiden was his one best l

She lured him on, in her ragtime way—

VELMA.

Gimme them papers and I'll let you get away!

HARRY.

Never, wicked vampire!

But I'll give you something worse!

Before I die I'll give to you

A rag—time—curse!

(*Music stops.*)

WILLIE.

What's that I hear? A curse?

VELMA.

In syncopated verse!

WILLIE (*peevishly*).

He hadn't ought to do it,

It's the villain's job to curse.

VELMA.

The train is nearly due.

HARRY.

I'm catching cold—ker-choo!

WILLIE.

Oh, never mind, you're going where

You'll never catch the flu.

VELMA.

He's tied up good and tight.

WILLIE.

We'd better take to flight.

(Exeunt WILLIE and VELMA, stealthily, right.)

(Locomotive effect for first part of break, thus: "Chug, chug-a-chug, chug—")

HARRY.

Good night!

(Music agitato, and train effect, both beginning very soft and working up very loud.)

Enter PATRICIA and CHERUB, hand in hand, left.

CHERUB.

It's Harry, for a fact!

PATRICIA.

They've tied him to the track!
I'm going to save my lovin' man
Or else I'll break my back!

(She kneels by him and pulls at ropes.)

I've got to save his life!

CHERUB *(slapping his trousers pockets).*

I haven't any knife!

PATRICIA *(desperately).*

Well I have got to hurry,
Or I'll never be his wife!

CHERUB *(pointing).*

Oh, see the pretty lamp!

PATRICIA *(embracing him).*

Your darling little scamp!
We'll throw the switch and save him from
The vengeance of the vamp!

(Music and train effect are now very loud. PATRICIA and CHERUB are clinging to pegs of clothes tree, attempting to turn it, when toy train is drawn across from left to right. They turn tree, as though by great effort, just before train

reaches tree, and it continues past HARRY and off stage. Quick fade-out of train effect. Music stops.)

CHERUB.

You're looking kind of peak-ed.

PATRICIA.

Oh, dear! I'm out of breath!

HARRY (*getting up*).

And many thanks. You saved me from
The very jaws of death.

PATRICIA.

Oh, did they hurt your back?

HARRY.

I thought my bones would crack.

CHERUB (*going to easel*).

Well, hurry up and beat it, 'cause
We've got another act.

(CHERUB *changes sign to read*, "ACT IV. VIRTUE TRIUMPHANT." *Exeunt ALL, right, HARRY taking clothes tree off. Drop rises to parlor set.*)

Enter WILLIE and VELMA, center.

WILLIE.

We didn't get the papers.

VELMA.

The child is missing, too.
Of all the villains I have met
The very worst is you!

Enter HARRY, PATRICIA and CHERUB, center.

HARRY.

And now to see the villain
And defy him in his den!

PATRICIA.

We've brought your little Cherub back—

WILLIE.

Ah! Curses! Foiled again!

PATRICIA.

Are we too late for breakfast?

HARRY.

I hope you've kept it warm!

VELMA.

There's nothing in a life of sin—
I'm going to reform!

WILLIE (*taking out revolver*).

The game is up! And now to put
A bullet through my cheek! (*Points revolver at face.*)

CHERUB (*grabbing it*).

Hey! Watch your step! And don't forget—
(*To audience.*)

We play "East Lynne" next week!

(HARRY and PATRICIA hold hands and look at each other languishingly. WILLIE smokes a cigarette furiously and looks baffled. VELMA folds her hands and assumes a virtuous look. CHERUB pulls easel back of curtain line.)

(*Music, very loud, first notes of Wedding March, and ending with break. All do break step and bow to audience, standing in line.*)

FAST CURTAIN.



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