

# SHUFFLE ALONG

(1921)

Book by Flournoy Miller & Aubrey Lyles

Music by Eubie Blake

Lyrics by Noble Sissle

# Characters

JIM WILLIAMS, *proprietor of the Jimtown Hotel*

JESSIE WILLIAMS, *his daughter*

RUTH LITTLE, *her chum*

HARRY WALTON, *candidate for Mayor*

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

GROCERY CLERK

MRS. SAM PECK, *suffragette*

TOM SHARPER, *political boss*

STEVE JENKINS, *candidate for Mayor*

SAM PECK, *another candidate for Mayor*

JACK PENROSE, *detective*

RUFUS LOOSE, *war relic*

STRUTT, *Jimtown swell*

MAYOR'S DOORMAN

UNCLE TOM

UNCLE NED

OLD BLACK JOE

SECRETARY TO MAYOR

FOUR HARMONY KINGS

PORTER

*dancing and singing* CHORUSES *referred to as*  
JAZZ JASMINES, HAPPY HONEYSUCKLES, *and* SYNCOPATING SUNFLOWERS

TIME: Election Day.

PLACE: Jimtown in Dixieland.

# Act 1

*Scene 1: [A Street in Front of the Jimtown Hotel]*

*OPENING CHORUS[: "Election Day"]*

CHORUS.

Election Day, Election Day,  
That's the day when everybody's happy,  
That's the day when everybody's glad.  
Election Day, Election Day,  
That's the day when you forget  
All the aches and pains you have had.

You gather at the election polls,  
And there you stand in line.  
Although the day be dark and cold,  
Still you never mind.

You are thinking of the politicians whom last year you trusted,  
And when they got into positions, promises they busted.

You will try not make the same mistake—

This Election Day. Hooray!

Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

*(looking to stage right)*

*(Enter supporters of Steve Jenkins right.)*

JENKINS SUPPORTERS.

We stand for everything that we can get.

Our man is for the country going wet.

We'll bring back the whiskey, beer, and gin.

We know that Steve Jenkins will win.

CHORUS.

The gang of Steve Jenkins, a lame and hungry bunch,

They're going to bring back the five-cent beer and lunch.

If he's elected, it sure will be a sin.

We hope that he'll never, never win.

*(following Steve Jenkins supporters as they exit right)*

*(looking towards left)*

Hooray! Hooray!

What crowd is this a-coming . . .

Hooray! Hooray!

With whistling fife and drumming?

Let's clear the way for a great big demonstration.

They will carry the day with a riotous consternation.

*(Enter left Mrs. Peck and Mr. Peck's supporters. Onions is one supporter and carries a drum.)*

PECK SUPPORTERS.

Me, him, and she,  
She, him, and me,  
We're the ones who will elect  
For our Mayor, we will have Sam Peck.  
You will agree that me, him, and she  
Will take 'em, make 'em, shake 'em, break 'em,  
Just we three.

CHORUS.

Gee, but they are funny,  
"She, him, and me."  
It's worth lots of money such a sight to see.  
Poor Cox's Army ain't  
One, two, three.  
With a bunch of hecks like old Sam Peck's  
"Me, him, and she."

*(The two stanzas above repeat. Mrs. Peck and supporters exit.)*

*(Enter Harry Walton's supporters right.)*

HARRY SUPPORTERS.

We're for Harry Walton, here we come.  
We'll vote for Harry Walton, our favorite son.  
And with banners blowing, we will soon be showing  
(If we keep step with the *hep hep* and rattle of the drum),  
Honor is our motto, bright and grand.  
Justice is the platform on which we stand.  
And since we are in it, we are going to win it.  
Harry Walton is the man.  
He is the man for whom we all will stand.

*(Mr. Williams appears on hotel step.)*

CHORUS. *(addressing Mr. Williams)* Speech! Speech!

JIM WILLIAMS. Friends and citizens of Jimtown.—It is useless for me to attempt to tell you what kind of a man Harry Walton is and that he *is* the right man for the Mayor, for no doubt you all know him as well as I. In fact, we have watched him grow from boyhood.

CHORUS. (*interrupting*) He is the man!

JIM WILLIAMS. (*continuing*) His honesty, integrity, and efficiency make him the logical man for the office, and it is the solemn duty of each and every citizen of Jimtown to vote for him, for he's all right.

CITIZEN. What's the matter with Harry Walton?

CHORUS. He's all right!

JIM WILLIAMS. Who's all right?

CHORUS. Harry Walton's all right! Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

We're for Harry Walton, here we come.  
We'll vote for Harry Walton, our favorite son.  
And with banners blowing, we will soon be showing  
(If we keep step with the *hep hep* and rattle of the drum),  
Honor is our motto, bright and brand.  
Justice is the platform on which we stand.  
And since we are in it, we are going to win it,  
Harry Walton is the man.

*(The chorus repeats the stanza above. Dance. The chorus exits.)*

JESSIE. (*following father center stage*) Father, your speech was brief but to the point, and you are right. Harry is the man.

JIM WILLIAMS. Well, daughter, no doubt some may say that my efforts in his behalf are prompted by the fact that he is to become my son-in-law, but my only motive is to see the right man in the right place.

JESSIE. And Harry is the right man.

JIM WILLIAMS. Well (*laugh*), I trust my daughter is looking at it through unbiased eyes and not because she is to become the future Mrs. Harry Walton.

*(Ruth Little approaches.)*

JESSIE. (*rebuking*) Oh, Father!

JIM WILLIAMS. Oh, did I tell on you?

*(He exits slowly into hotel.)*

RUTH. Oh, I see after Harry is elected there seems to be a certainty that there is going to be a little wedding.

JESSIE. Oh, no, Ruth.

RUTH. Oh, that's all right. I have known it right along. But—*(very independently)* none of that wedding stuff for me, kid.

JESSIE. Why not, Ruth?

RUTH. Because I'm simply too full of jazz.

*(Jessie follows father into the hotel.)*

SONG: "I'm Simply Full of Jazz"

RUTH.

Everybody thinks I'm crazy.  
They say I've gone plum mad.  
Everybody thinks I'm crazy,  
Lost all the sense I ever had.

When they see me shake, it makes them shiver.  
When I do a break, it makes them quiver.  
But I'm not insane. I'm not to blame.  
The cause of it all isn't in my brain.

*(Jazz Jasmines enter and assist in song and dance.)*

Just because I like to do a wiggle  
In a regular Salome style,  
Just because I like to do a li'l wriggle,  
Like on the Hawaiian isle . . .

'Cause I kick like a donkey, jump way back,  
'Cause I act like a money, and ball the jack,  
And like Miss Minnie, I do the shimmy,  
Keep my shoulders shaking until you hear them crack . . .

Just 'cause you see my feet a-shufflin'  
Just because I act like a razz,  
'Cause I seem a little hazy, I ain't crazy.  
I'm just full of jazz, jazz, jazz,  
Simply full of jazz.

*(Enter right Harry Walton followed by Onions. Mr. Williams appears on hotel step.)*

ONIONS. I want to see you.

HARRY WALTON. *(stopping short center stage)* What do you want?

ONIONS. What I want to explain to you is—that simply because I happen to be working for Jenkins and Peck in that grocery store—ain't no sign that I got to vote for neither of them.

HARRY WALTON. What can I do about that?

JIM WILLIAMS. (*interrupting*) Just a moment, Harry. Possibly I can enlighten the gentleman.

HARRY WALTON. I hope you can.

ONIONS. Proceed with the illumination.

JIM WILLIAMS. A vote, my friend, is every citizen's sacred right and should be cast conscientiously using, of course, your best judgment as to the man who stands for the best principle.

HARRY WALTON. Exactly.

ONIONS. And for the one that we feels is to benefit us the most.

JIM WILLIAMS. Why certainly.

ONIONS. (*to Harry*) There you is. I knows you heard dat.

HARRY WALTON. Why of course I heard that.

ONIONS. Well, I figgers that for \$5.00 you is the best man.

HARRY WALTON. (*perplexed*) What do you mean?

ONIONS. Well to make it plain, if you give me \$5.00, I knows you is the best man. Therefore, I votes for you. You can't beat that.

HARRY WALTON. I don't care for your kind of a vote. Thank you.

ONIONS. (*picking up basket and making hasty exit to hotel*) I done asked that man for too much money. I can see dat right now. (*meets Jessie on step*)

JIM WILLIAMS. Harry, how is the election coming along?

HARRY WALTON. Glad to say it is coming along quite well.

JIM WILLIAMS. That's fine and dandy. My boy, it behooves you to win, for if you are beaten by either of those ignoramuses, Steve Jenkins or Sam Peck, who would run our town just as they run their grocery store, I shall never consent to you becoming my son-in-law.

*(Jessie listening.)*

HARRY WALTON. *(reproachfully)* Why, Mr. Williams!

JIM WILLIAMS. *(walking to hotel)* That's final. *(goes into hotel)*

JESSIE. *(making sure father has gone, then crossing to Harry)*—Harry, you can't lose. Jenkins or Peck beating you, why the idea is absurd.

HARRY WALTON. *(down-heartedly)* I know, Jessie, but suppose . . .

SONG: "Love Will Find a Way"

JESSIE.

Come, dear, and don't let our faith weaken.  
Let's keep our love fires burning bright.

HARRY WALTON.

Your love for me is heav'nly beacon,  
Guiding me through love's darkest night.

JESSIE.

Don't start minding or fault-finding,  
No matter how dark one's path may grow.

HARRY WALTON.

Fate won't hurry. Well, don't worry.  
We'll just keep our hearts aglow.

BOTH.

Love will find a way, though skies now are gray.  
Love like ours can never be ruled.  
Cupid's not schooled that way.  
Dry each tear-dimmed eye.  
Clouds will soon roll by.  
Though fate may lead us astray,  
My dearie, mark what I say:  
Love will find a way.

*(They repeat the chorus and exit right.)*

TOM SHARPER. Good morning, Mrs. Peck.

MRS. PECK. Good morning.

TOM SHARPER. Have you any influence over your husband at all?

MRS. PECK. Why, of course. I am his wife.

TOM SHARPER. Why don't you get him to withdraw from this race then?

MRS. PECK. I will have him withdraw only on one condition.

TOM SHARPER. And what's that?

MRS. PECK. And that is if Steve Jenkins does.

TOM SHARPER. (*annoyed and excited*) Now ain't that ridiculous? Steve Jenkins was nominated by the political machine, and your husband Sam Peck is running on an independent ticket. Can you beat that? An independent ticket.

MRS. PECK. Oh, well my husband was always independent.

TOM SHARPER. Well, I know, but it looks to me that he would help Steve Jenkins to win inasmuch as they are partners in Jimtown's most prosperous store.

MRS. PECK. No, jest "store." Not "prosperous."

TOM SHARPER. (*pleading*) Well, can't you see he is only splitting the ticket, and he hasn't got a chance to win? So why don't you get him to give up?

MRS. PECK. I don't want him to give up.

TOM SHARPER. And why not?

MRS. PECK. (*proudly*) Because if he is elected, then I would be the First Lady of the town.

TOM SHARPER. Oh, I thought there was a catch to it. Well, don't worry. He will never be elected.

MRS. PECK. (*loudly*) And why not?

TOM SHARPER. Because Tom Sharper is the political boss of Jimtown, and *my* candidate, Steve Jenkins, will be the next Mayor.

MRS. PECK. (*emphatically*)—Never. You have asked me two or three times to have my husband withdraw, but I'll wager you never asked Mr. Walton to do so.

TOM SHARPER. Oh, that lovesick bird. He is the least of my worries.

MRS. PECK. I suppose so.

UNCLE NED. (*emerges from hotel*) Good morning, Sister Peck.

MRS. PECK. Good morning, Uncle Ned.

UNCLE NED. You sure looks like a flapper this morning.

*(Mrs. Peck snickers and exits right.)*

TOM SHARPER. Good morning, Uncle Ned. How are you feeling this morning?

UNCLE NED. Oh, jes' tol'ble.—Jes' tol'ble.

TOM SHARPER. I'm glad to hear that. How are you figuring on voting?

UNCLE NED. Well, not for Steve Jenkins or Sam Peck.

TOM SHARPER. Sam Peck is out of the question. But why not for Steve Jenkins?

UNCLE NED. 'Cos every time I goes into dat grocery store, one of dem low-lifed rascals tries to rob me. Dey ain't got no chance of gitting elected nohow. No more chance den a one-legged man has in a kicking match and someone done stole bof his crutches.

TOM SHARPER. Well now, Uncle Ned, I am really sorry to hear you say that, because I figured that an old village patriot of your standing, your vote would be worth just a brand new \$10 bill. *(showing money)*

UNCLE NED. Oh, dat's diff'rent *(taking bill)*—dat's diff'rent.

TOM SHARPER. That's what I thought.

UNCLE NED. Whyn't you axe me dat at first? *(walks away)*

TOM SHARPER. Don't forget now. Steve Jenkins to win.

UNCLE NED. Fergit? *(looking at money)* How's I'm gwine to fergit son? *(pauses—and turns back)* Look here, Tom.

TOM SHARPER. What's the matter now?

UNCLE NED. Take dis here money right straight back, boy. I never sold a vote in my life. I come up in dem good old bandana days when honesty was the best policy.

TOM SHARPER. Bandana days?

UNCLE NED. Dat's what I said.

*SONG: "Bandana Days"*

UNCLE NED *and* TOM SHARPER.

Why, the dearest days of my life were bandana days,

Bandana days, though filled with turmoil, trouble, and strife.  
Dearest mem'ries will live always. . . .

In those dear old bandana days,  
Cane-and-cotton-ne'er-forgotten bandana days . . .  
And in those quaint old bandana ways,  
When our dads were courting our dear mammies,  
They were sure some bashful sammies . . .

And in all their bandana plays:  
Banjos strummin', they'd be hummin' bandana lays,  
And in the pale moonlight  
They'd swing left and right  
In those dear old bandana days.

*(Enter Sam Peck and Steve Jenkins from right having a heavy argument. Sam carries a soapbox.)*

SAM PECK. I don't want to hear dat now.

STEVE JENKINS. I'm a man what knows everything. You ain't got no business being no Mayor, and you knows you ain't. What you talking about, being Mayors—?

SAM PECK. *(interrupting)* I got jes' as much right to be Mayors of Jimtown as you is—and—mucher 'fers that's recernd. What you talkin' 'bout, I ain't got no right to be Mayors of Jimtown?

STEVE JENKINS. *(loudly)* It takes brains to be a Mayor. You ain't got brains enough to have a decent headache. You jes' runnin' against me 'cos you jealous of me—dat's all you is. Me en' you runnin' a grocery store togeder, too. Minute you think I got a chance of gitting elected, you splits the ticket. Dat's what I git fer taking you in the grocery store as my partner. Ought never to have taken you in der in the first place. *(crosses left)*

SAM PECK. *(following)* Now here listen. Wait a minute. Lemme git you straightened out about dat der grocery store. I put jes' as much money in dat store as you did, and maybe a li'l more. I dunno.

STEVE JENKINS. You ain't put no more into it.

SAM PECK. Well, I mout a good deal more.

STEVE JENKINS. No you ain't out.

SAM PECK. Yes, I mout. *(loudly)*—Don't tell me I moutr't. But when it comes to politics, that's where the friendship ceases, right der and den. And den here's

another thing.—I ain't gwine to let you run for Mayors of Jimtown, and I be's the common folks. So git dat right out of yo' haid while you is at it. (*crosses right*)

STEVE JENKINS. (*following*) There you goes talkin' like dat. I tol' you when I first started runnin'—I sez,—Sam, if I gits elected Mayors of Jimtown, I'm gwine to make you the Vice Mayor.

SAM PECK. (*with surprise*) The Vice Mayor???????

STEVE JENKINS. Sure, it's a good job for you.

SAM PECK. Why don't you offer me a job that amounts to something? The Governor of the County or something like dat. What kin I do with the Vice Mayor's job?

STEVE JENKINS. To show you dat you ain't got no business bein' nothing. You ain't even voted for yourself yet.

SAM PECK. I can't vote for myself.

STEVE JENKINS. Anybody what's runnin' for de office kin vote for derself.

SAM PECK. No dey can't.

STEVE JENKINS. Don't tell me dey can't—for I done voted for myself fo' times dis mornin'.

SAM PECK. Yeh, but I is placed in a ver' reculiar redition. I is a Republican runnin' on de Independent ticket, and I ain't gwine vote against the Old Party.

(*Enter Tom Sharper right, followed by citizens.*)

TOM SHARPER. Steve, I've been looking all over town for you to make a speech. You need every vote you can get, so make a good one.

STEVE JENKINS. Go ahead, Tom, reduce me. Reduce me.

TOM SHARPER. (*standing center stage beside Steve*) Fellow citizens, I take great pleasure in introducing to you Mr. Steve Jenkins, the people's candidate for mayor. Hear ye him!

SAM PECK. (*standing on soapbox, right of crowd and Steve*) And hear ye me. I is runnin' jes' as well as he is, and I is the bes' man.

CITIZEN [RUFUS LOOSE]. (*a Civil War veteran*) That's right. That's right.

SAM PECK. Here we is. Take your choice.

STEVE JENKINS. (*hat in hand, with the characteristic pose of a politician, in all seriousness*)  
Ladies—Gentlemenses—Peopleses—and Folkses—

SAM PECK. You ain't left out nobody. I'll give you credit for dat.

TOM SHARPER. Go ahead, Steve, don't pay any attention to him.

STEVE JENKINS. As I stand befo' you, gazin' into each and every one of yo' eyes, the question that rizzes in my mind *is*: What do you think of me?—

SAM PECK. Don't tell him.

CHORUS. Don't tell him??????

SAM PECK. No, don't tell him.

TOM SHARPER. Can you imagine that guy, disturbing this crowd? (*to Sam*) This is my candidate. (*to Steve*) This is your crowd—not his.

SAM PECK. Oh, this is anybody's crowd. Go lay down.

STEVE JENKINS. (*resuming posture*) I may not be bedecked with jewels and diamonds rare—

UNCLE NED. You is not.

STEVE JENKINS. I may not wear watches and chains—but I have worn—

SAM PECK. Balls and chains.

(*Tom grabs Uncle Ned's cane to rush at Sam but cannot get it away.*)

UNCLE NED. (*to Tom, beside him*) Clam yourself, son. Clam yourself.

STEVE JENKINS. Ladies, gentlemenses, folkses, and peopleses—When I first entered this race for Mayors of Jimtown, I had not the least redea—

UNCLE NED. That's language.

STEVE JENKINS. —that there was a dark horse in the race.

(*Chrous snickers. Sam looks around for a brick.*)

STEVE JENKINS. Surprised I was, I must say, ver' much heap surprised I was when I found dat dat dark horse was my own business parter.

TOM SHARPER. (*to Sam*) Now say something.

SAM PECK. Well, I maght be de dark horse, but you (*pointing to Steve*) ain't gwine never be no black Mayor.

STEVE JENKINS. (*peevd, loudly*) Listing to me, folkses. Listing to me. We will pay no more attention to my reponent. We will “ignose” him and talk on matters of heap much more reportance.

TOM SHARPER. Get down to the point, Steve.

STEVE JENKINS. F'rinstance,—look at the redition of your city today. I say look at the redition of Jimtown today. We have no lextrive lights here.

CITIZEN. You said it, Steve.

STEVE JENKINS. Statistics (*at this Uncle Ned has a stroke of apoplexy, and Tom is finally able to bring him to*) will show you dat dey ain't been no lextrive lights in Jimtown—not—since—before—

SAM PECK. (*disgustedly*) Oh, dey ain't been never none here.

STEVE JENKINS. And dey wahn't any here befo' den, neither. What we need is lextrive lights.

CITIZEN. Plenty of them.

STEVE JENKINS. Look how dark it is here o' night? (*looking at Sam*)

CHORUS. Who?—Oh.

SAM PECK. What you all looking at me for?

STEVE JENKINS. So dark here o' nights that if you light one match you got to light another one to see if the first one is lit. Make me your Mayor,—

TOM SHARPER. How about it boys?

STEVE JENKINS. I'll see dat everybody in Jimtown gits lit up. I'll do more den dat—I'll see dats you all gits 'lectrocuted!

*(Waiter enters with tray of food and stops in front of Sam. Sam takes some and makes hasty exit, attracting the attention of Steve, who follows.)*

TOM SHARPER. What's the matter now? Don't pay any attention to Sam, Steve. Let him go.

STEVE JENKINS. You make the speech, Tom.

TOM SHARPER. Oh, I can't make—

*(Entire crowd leaves right.)*

SONG: "Uncle Tom and Old Black Joe"  
[*may have appeared in Act 2, directly following "If You Haven't Been Vamped by a Brownskin"*]

UNCLE TOM *and* OLD BLACK JOE.

I'm Uncle Tom, and I'm Old Black Joe.  
I came up from the time long ago.  
My name's in history. Everyone sings of me.  
Though three score and twenty, we have pep aplenty.  
Now we are going right down to the square,  
And we will be showing the Mayor  
Where he shall start to build a City Hall  
And tell him when we're coming to call.

We are electioneers, Jimtown electioneers,  
And since '61, Old Black Joe and Uncle Tom,  
At election time, whether rain or shine:  
    We're down at the polls when they call the roll;  
    We have elected every president since '63;  
    The last one that we elected was old Booker T.  
If you want to know who makes Jimtown go,  
It's Uncle Tom and Old Black Joe.

*(Dance. Exit left. Enter Steve from right, dejected looking, followed by Tom.)*

TOM SHARPER. Ain't you a fine candidate for Mayor? I spend one half the morning trying to get that crowd together and the other half walking them up one street and down the other to find you to make a speech, and when you get to the most important part of it, you do a bonehead trick like that.

STEVE JENKINS. Looka here, Tom, I wonder if dat was baked or fricasee'd chicken what he had on dat tray. Did you notice?

TOM SHARPER. Listen here, Steve, do you know this is Election Day and you are running for Mayor? Do you realize that?

STEVE JENKINS. 'Course I know. What you always asking me dat for?

TOM SHARPER. Because at the last minute you followed a tray full of food round here and lose those votes when I told you you needed them.

STEVE JENKINS. Looka here, Tom. Ain't Sam runnin' for Mayor same as I is? Didn't he follow dat man same as I did? What you talking about?

TOM SHARPER. I know, but you can't compare yourself to Sam.

STEVE JENKINS. How come I can't? We're partners runnin' a grocery store together, ain't we?

TOM SHARPER. I know, but Sam is spending twice as much money in this election as you—

STEVE JENKINS. Spending twice as much money???

TOM SHARPER. —Yes, and he's away ahead of you.

STEVE JENKINS. (*questioningly*) I wonder where he's gittin' the money from??

TOM SHARPER. Didn't you just say that you and Sam were partners in the same grocery store?

STEVE JENKINS. (*pondering*)—Yes, and that's jes' what I am thinking 'bout, too. We're partners.

TOM SHARPER. And your profits are the same?

STEVE JENKINS. Well, dey ought to be. Mebbe dey ain't.

TOM SHARPER. Yet you wonder why he's got twice as much money to spend as you?

STEVE JENKINS. See here, Tom, you don't mean Sam is stealing from me. Do you?

TOM SHARPER. Yes. That's just what he is doing, and he has been stealing from you ever since you have been in business with him.

STEVE JENKINS. (*rather puzzled*) What am I gwine to do about it?

TOM SHARPER. I have taken matters in my own hand.

STEVE JENKINS. (*rejoicing*) Well I'm glad of dat, 'cos you kin catch him. I can't. You is slicker den I is.

TOM SHARPER. Quite right. I have sent to New York for Keeneye, that great colored detective. You jes' leave Sam to me. I'll fix him.

STEVE JENKINS. (*disappointedly*) No, no. If you done sent for a reetective, you is gwine to fix me. Dat's what you're gwine to do.

TOM SHARPER. (*impatiently*) Listen, Steve, you don't understand.

STEVE JENKINS. I understands better 'n you do. You is the man what don't understand. I understands flooency myself.

TOM SHARPER. Ain't there stealing going on in the store?

STEVE JENKINS. *(drawing it out)* Y—e—s, and he'll come down here and catch the wrong stealer. That man ain't gwine to come down here and jes' watch Sam. He is gwine to lock up the first man he catches stealin'.

TOM SHARPER. Why, of course.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, I can't take no chances like dat, Tom.

TOM SHARPER. You can't???

STEVE JENKINS. No, no, no.

TOM SHARPER. Say, listen Steve, I am hiring this detective to watch Sam, not to watch you.

STEVE JENKINS. *(rejoicing)* Oh, he is gwine to watch the man what you wants him to watch.

TOM SHARPER. Why, of course. Ain't he our detective? But listen, its going to take plenty of money to do this thing.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, if he comes down here and watches Sam and keeps his eyes off me, you can have all the money you want.

*(Three groups of two boys each enter from opposite sides, meet, and listen to the conversation.)*

TOM SHARPER. Fine. That's all I want to hear you say.

STEVE JENKINS. All I want you to do is to git me elected, and if you do, I'm gwine to dance at your wedding.

TOM SHARPER. And there's going to be a wedding, just as soon as you are elected.

STEVE JENKINS. *(surprised)* Looka here, Tom. Who are you gwine to marry?

TOM SHARPER. Why, Emaline!

STEVE JENKINS. Who's she?

*(Half of the six boys stand on one side of Steve, and the other beside Tom.)*

SONG: "In Honeysuckle Time"

TOM SHARPER.

Everybody loves Emaline,  
She's the gal that all the fellows hang around.  
Everybody knows Emaline,  
Why she's the pal of ev'ry other gal in town.  
But e'ry pal and gal will soon be singing the blues,  
When they hear the latest news:

[*Chorus of Happy Honeysuckles enters to assist in song and dance.*]

In honeysuckle time, sweet Emaline  
Said she'd be mine, and in the wedding line  
There'll be no hesitating  
For the preacher will be waiting.  
When the knot am tied  
With Emmy by my side,  
All the fellows will be jealous,  
And feeling kind-a-rough,  
When I come along with Emaline a-struttin' my stuff.  
Hot dog, my soul, goin'-a knock 'em cold.  
I'll be worth my weight in gold  
In honeysuckle time,  
When Emaline said she'd be mine.

(*Curtain.*)

*Scene 2: Possum Lane*

*(Enter Mrs. Peck and Mr. Peck arguing right.)*

MRS. PECK. How dare you give me an argument?

SAM PECK. *(Following wife center stage)* Now, honey, listen. I knows what I'm doing.

MRS. PECK. Never mind, I don't want you to stand around talking to these girls.

SAM PECK. I got to talk to the women-folkses in order to get their votes. Ain't I?

MRS. PECK. I'll solicit the women's votes. You get the men's.

SAM PECK. No, if I can't talk to de women-folkses, den I'se sorry that I'se runnin' for de office.

MRS. PECK. Well, I'm not. Because if you are elected, then I can run the town.

SAM PECK. *(surprised)* If I'm elected, *you* kin run the town??

MRS. PECK. Of course! Ain't you my husband?

SAM PECK. Yeh, I'm your husband.

MRS. PECK. Well, ain't I yo' boss??

SAM PECK. My *boss*???

MRS. PECK. *(making a motion towards him)* Ain't I? Ain't I??

SAM PECK. *(running away)* Yeh!

MRS. PECK. Well, if you run the city and I run you, don't that make me run everything?

SAM PECK. Den all de power that I gits, dat jes' adds to yo' power.

MRS. PECK. Imagine me the leading light of the city, running things to suit myself. Why, the first law I'll pass will be to close up Jim Green's Bevo parlour.

SAM PECK. *(reprovingly)* For what? The man ain't done nothing to you.

MRS. PECK. Oh, he's making too much money, and his wife is wearing such fine clothes, why she's snubbing everybody. But, you wait. My time is coming. I'll show her. I'll fix her. I'll *show* her.

SAM PECK. Yeh, but I ain't elected yet—and Steve, he's gittin' jes' as many votes as I is.

MRS. PECK. Well, you know why? 'Cause he's buying them, and you know where he's getting the money from: right out of the cash register in your store.

SAM PECK. Out of the cash register????

MRS. PECK. Why, of course.

SAM PECK. You mean he's stealin' the money.

MRS. PECK. He has been stealing from you ever since you have been in business with him—

SAM PECK. (*tremendous surprise*) Is that so????

MRS. PECK. Yes. But he is through stealing now.

SAM PECK. When did he die?

MRS. PECK. Sam,—

SAM PECK. Yeh?—

MRS. PECK. I forgot to tell you—

SAM PECK. Yeh, go ahead—

MRS. PECK. I sent to New York for that great colored detective.

SAM PECK. (*walking away slowly*) No, no, honey.

MRS. PECK. Yes, dear, Keeneye is his name, and he's wonderful. He's wonderful, dear.

SAM PECK. No. We don't need no reetective hanging 'round dat store.

MRS. PECK. He's stealing from you. Isn't he?

SAM PECK. Dat's all right. I'll catch him.

MRS. PECK. Well, shouldn't he be watched?

SAM PECK. Honey, let the man stay in New York. Now I knows what I'm talkin' 'bout.

MRS. PECK. Oh, well now, never mind. I have sent for him, and he'll be here today.  
So you keep a lookout for him, and for heaven's sakes, keep your mouth shut.

*(Jessie and Ruth enter right. Sam walks toward them smilingly. Mrs. Peck spies them.)*

Say, Sam, come on down here to the corner where there are a lot of men. We can get some votes down there.

SAM PECK. *(to girls, whispering)* I'll be with you all in jes' a minute. *(to wife, who is walking stage right)* You go on down there, honey, and get them all together, and I'll be there in jes' a minute. *(walks back to girls)*

MRS. PECK. *(following him)* Is that so? I think you'll go this minute. Sam! Sam!

SAM PECK. Yes, yes. I'se comin'—

*(Exit together left.)*

SONG: "Gypsy Blues"

JESSIE.

I was talking to a gypsy,

RUTH.

And what did she have to tell you?

JESSIE.

When my palm she read,  
I asked her when I would wed,  
And she shook her head.

RUTH.

And then what did she say?

JESSIE.

I don't know, because I ran away.

JESSIE.

Now I've got the gypsy blues.

RUTH.

And you're sorry that you did refuse—

JESSIE.

To wait and listen to her gypsy news.

RUTH.

Maybe she was just in doubt.

JESSIE.

An' some line was trying to figure out.

RUTH.

And tryin' to find what it was about.

JESSIE.

I would give all my weight in gold  
To know what she was about to tell me.

RUTH.

But if she had a-said that your sweetie you'd lose,  
They'd had to bury you.

JESSIE.

(Rather than to start a ruse.)

RUTH.

Why you ran away and you got your dues.

BOTH.

That's why {you/I} got those ipsy kypsy blues,  
Gypsy blues.

*(They are assisted by Henry Walton in a second chorus.)*

*[Curtain opens.]*

*Scene 3: Jenkins's and Peck's Grocery Store*

*(Onions dozing on flour barrel with duster in hand. Sam enters.)*

SAM PECK. Good morning, Onions.

ONIONS. *(waking up)* Yes, yessir. Good morning. Yessir—well, I see you is late again, as usual.

SAM PECK. *(removing coat)* Yes, but dat ain't none of your business. You ain't no time-keeper here. You is the porter in dis store.

ONIONS. Yessir. You is right.

SAM PECK. You learn dat, and don't tell me about me bein' late no more.

ONIONS. Yessir, rescuse me.

SAM PECK. Never mind the rescusing. Jes' don't done it no more.

*(Opens cash register just as Steve enters.)*

STEVE JENKINS. Ahem!

*(Sam quickly takes chair and lights pipe.)*

STEVE JENKINS. *(watching eccentric dusting by Onions)* Dey ain't no use of you dustin'. You ain't swept up here dis monin'.

ONIONS. I jes' got here.

STEVE JENKINS. You didn't reliver them goods to Miss Jones, neither, did you?

ONIONS. I ain't had my breakfast yet.

STEVE JENKINS. You ain't carried dat barrel downstairs, neither, is you?

ONIONS. I was out voting.

STEVE JENKINS. You gwine to keep on working like dat until one of dese days the police is gwine to come in here and arrest you for vagrancy. Go on, carry dat barrel downstairs, and hurry up. You is lazy, dat's what's the matter wid you. The more we pay you, the less you work. Got to quit paying you, and you'll work better.

*(Onions goes out and a customer enters.)*

Never see the man what was as lazy as you is.

CUSTOMER. I am in a hurry. I would like to get waited on.

STEVE JENKINS. Sam, there's a customer.

SAM PECK. Well, wait on him.

STEVE JENKINS. I waited on the last customer what come in here.

SAM PECK. I waited on the last customer myself.

STEVE JENKINS. Don't tell me. I waited on the last customer.

*(Customer growing more impatient.)*

SAM PECK. I knows who I waits on and whose I don't. What's the matter wid you? You must be losing your mind, ain't you? What do you think I am in de store for if I don't knows who I waits on. You make a man mad wid arguing like dat.— What was the last thing what was sold in here, anyhow?

STEVE JENKINS. Huh?

SAM PECK. I say, what was the last thing that was sold in here?

STEVE JENKINS. Dat shows what you know about it. We didn't have the last thing what was sold in here.

SAM PECK. Well I jes' lit my pipe, and I ain't gwine to quit smoking to wait on nobody.

STEVE JENKINS. I jes' got here, and I'm tired. Look here, what do you want anyhow, mister?

CUSTOMER. I want five pounds of meal.

STEVE JENKINS. You want what?

CUSTOMER. Five pounds of meal.

STEVE JENKINS. Go on behind dat counter there. *(customer crosses to opposite counter)* Counter der. *(pointing)* Nothing gwine to hurt you. Gwine back der. Look in the third barrel marked "LIME." Git yourself a sack and scoop, and git five pounds of meal. Man wants meal, git meal. Come in here arguing 'bout dat old five pounds of meal . . .

*(Customer stoops to get meal.)*

SAM PECK. Yes,—and a man what comes in here and wants all the waiting-on he wants ought to come in when we're standing up.

STEVE JENKINS. *(looking at man who is still scooping meal)* Heah, heah, mister. Straighten up der sometime. What's the matter wid you? Man sends you in der for five pounds of meal, and you gits five tons of it. Come on round from der anyhow. Where you git dat? Come in here and take all the meal we got.

*(Customer approaches with a tremendous bag of flour. Steve eyes it.)*

Sam, do you think he got five pounds all right?

SAM PECK. *(looking at bag)* Well, he ain't missed it much.

STEVE JENKINS. You better weigh dat meal, mister. You'll find de scales over der. *(customer goes in wrong direction)—I said de scales are over der. No, not up der.* You is the dumbest customer ever I saw in my life.

*(Customer finds scales and weighs meal.)*

I ain't never seen the man as dum as what you is.

CUSTOMER. Five pounds exactly.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, all you got to do is pay for it.

CUSTOMER. Well, I was going to pay for it.

STEVE JENKINS. If you take it out of here, you gwine to pay for it.

CUSTOMER. Very well. Here is your money.

STEVE JENKINS. What you got?

CUSTOMER. Dollar bill.

STEVE JENKINS. Dollar bill?

CUSTOMER. Yessir.

STEVE JENKINS. Ain't you got no change?

CUSTOMER. No.

STEVE JENKINS. No change at all?

CUSTOMER. No.

STEVE JENKINS. Say, bring that cash register over here.

CUSTOMER. (*indignant*) What do you think I am?

STEVE JENKINS. You want to pay for it, don't you?

CUSTOMER. Yes, but I'm not the porter 'round here.

STEVE JENKINS. Sam, keep down the argument. Make change for the gentleman.

SAM PECK. Come here, son.—What'd you git?

CUSTOMER. Five pounds of meal.

SAM PECK. (*has legs crossed; uncrosses them and re-crosses them other way*) Ahem! Five pounds of meal. Hit 20¢ on the register. Git out your change. Got it? Now leave your name and address in case the register is short when we checks up tonight.

(*Customer meets lady as he leaves.*)

STEVE JENKINS. These customers are gitting as lazy as they kin be. (*spies lady and jumps up*)

SAM PECK. O jes' don't pay any attention to them. (*spies lady and also jumps up*)

STEVE JENKINS. Right here, lady, right here. Now sit down, Sam, you wanted to smoke.

SAM PECK. No. Now you jes' got through waiting on the last customer what come in here.

STEVE JENKINS. Dat's all right. I kin wait on 'em all.

SAM PECK. No you can't wait on 'em all.

STEVE JENKINS. How come I can't? It is as much my store as it is yours.

SAM PECK. Yeh, it's as much my store as it is yourn, too.

BOTH. What'll you have, lady?

CUSTOMER. A large sack of flour.

STEVE JENKINS. Onions. Bring a basket. We'll give her the best meal in the house.  
*(each places one bag of flour in basket)* Here you is. Right here now. Do you want to  
take them with you or shall—?

SAM PECK. Don't result the customer like dat. We'll reliver the goods. *(puts on coat)*

STEVE JENKINS. Yeh, we'll reliver the goods.

CUSTOMER. Can't you send it C.O.D.?

STEVE JENKINS. Send it who?

CUSTOMER. C.O.D.?

STEVE JENKINS. Oh, he ain't working here no more. I'll take it up der myself if you  
say so.

CUSTOMER. Very well, here's my card. Take it to this address.

STEVE JENKINS. I'll be right there, lady, jes' as quick as I can.

STEVE *and* SAM. *(as Onions picks up basket)* Put the basket down, Onions.

ONIONS. Ain't I working here no more?

STEVE JENKINS. Yeh, you is working here.

ONIONS. That's what I thought.

STEVE JENKINS. Yeh, but you go down-cellar and bring up a barrel of molasses. *(to  
Sam)* What's the matter wid you?

*(Sam and Steve grab basket and are leaving when Tom Sharper enters.)*

TOM SHARPER. Just a minute Steve. What are you going to do now?

STEVE JENKINS. A lady jes' came in here and bought this flour, and I'm gwine to take  
it up to de house.

TOM SHARPER. *(angry)* You are going to take it up?

STEVE JENKINS. I ain't gwine to let him take it up. *(both tugging at basket)*

TOM SHARPER. Can you beat that? You, the candidate for Mayor, to be seen on  
Election Day with a basket in your hand.

STEVE JENKINS. Yeh, but you ain't seen the lady.

TOM SHARPER. (*disgustedly*) What's that got to do with it? Leave that to common folks and errand boys, not for big men like you.

STEVE JENKINS. (*conceitedly*) Say, I is a big man, ain't I? (*to Sam*) Go on take it up der.

SAM PECK. I could have been up der wid it while you is arguin'.

(*Mrs. Peck enters and Sam immediately drops basket.*)

*Onions!—Onions!*

ONIONS. (*rushing in*) You called me. I knows dat.

SAM PECK. Yeh. Reliver the goods to the lady. Hurry up. She is waiting for dem.

ONIONS. (*puzzled*) Look here, the goods you jes' told me to put down there?

SAM PECK. (*angry*) Yeh, yeh. Will you reliver dem goods, or will you won't?

(*Onions leaves with basket*)

(*to wife*) I'll be with you in jes' a minute, honey.

TOM SHARPER. (*standing with Steve, right*) Has Keeneye arrived yet?

STEVE JENKINS. No. That reetective hasn't come here yet, and you said he was gwine to be here dis morning.

TOM SHARPER. Positively said he would be here today. Say, I got to have some more money.

STEVE JENKINS. I can't git to it right now.

TOM SHARPER. Ain't this your store??

(*Mrs. Peck asks husband for money. Sam opens register and gives money to her.*)

STEVE JENKINS. (*referring to Sam*) He lives in that cash register.

MRS. PECK. Has Keeneye arrived yet?

SAM PECK. No, he hasn't 'rived as yet.

MRS. PECK. Well keep a lookout for him. He will be here within the hour.

SAM PECK. Oh, if he gits here, I'll see him.

MRS. PECK. (*going to door*) I'm going downtown to do a little shopping. Be home early, won't you dear?

SAM PECK. (*escorting her to door*) Yeh, honey. (*waves goodbye, returns and goes to telephone, right*) Hello!—Hello!

*(Tom and Steve go to cash register. Tom stands at counter, and Steve opens register just as Tom throws can of baking powder to floor. Sam looks around for cause of the confusion. Steve passes money to Tom.)*

STEVE JENKINS. Say, I want you to buy some votes with dat money. Do you hear?

TOM SHARPER. You don't doubt me? Do you?

STEVE JENKINS. Well, I can't say that I doubts you, but as much money as I done give you, I ought to be elected four times before now.

TOM SHARPER. Now listen here, Steve. To prove to you that I'm on the level, I am going to take you right around the corner and let you see me spend every cent of this money in your interest. Now, you can't beat that, can you?

STEVE JENKINS. And to shows you that I trusts you—

TOM SHARPER. All right . . . (*walks to door*)

STEVE JENKINS. —I'm gwine wid you.—Sam, I'm gwine 'round the polls here wid Tom.

SAM PECK. Go ahead.

STEVE JENKINS. When I gits back, I wants to find some of the store here. I know I ain't gwine to find it all, but be as easy wid me as you kin. You know, jes' leave 'nough 'round here so as I'll know where de place was anyhow.

SAM PECK. And while you is out, better go 'round to the telephone people here. I couldn't git dis last number. I expects we owe dem a little something.

STEVE JENKINS. You carried the last money 'round der yourself. Didn't you?

SAM PECK. Sure.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, I knows we owes 'em den. (*goes out with Tom*)

*(Detective Jack Penrose enters and addresses Sam, who is sitting stage left.)*

JACK PENROSE. —Good morning.

SAM PECK. Good morning.

JACK PENROSE. Whom have I the pleasure of addressing?

SAM PECK. Well, you is talking to Sam Peck, one of the owners of the store here, and I am also runnin' for de Mayor of de town. What kin I do for you?

JACK PENROSE. (*presents card*) My card.

SAM PECK. (*after studying it*) Oh yes. You is the reetective that my wife sent for?

JACK PENROSE. Yes. I received Mrs. Peck's letter, so here I am on de grounds ready fer business.

SAM PECK. And you is on the right grounds, 'cos all de stealin' dat is gwine on, is gwine on right in here, and what me and my wife wants you to do is to jes' catch my partner stealin'. Catch him wid de goods on him so that I kin rescue him.

JACK PENROSE. I suppose he is in your way.

SAM PECK. Well relittically speakin'—yes.

JACK PENROSE. You know, Mr. Peck, it is always customary to pay something in advance in all professional engagements of this kind.

SAM PECK. Yes, naturally I knows dat. Now, how much does you want for dis case.

JACK PENROSE. As this is a very important case, I should judge about \$100 ought to take care of it.

SAM PECK. (*surprised*) \$100 ought to take care of you *and* de case!

JACK PENROSE. Well, that is very reasonable, sir.

SAM PECK. Yes, you is right. And it is worth every penny of it if you catch my partner stealin'.

JACK PENROSE. Worth every penny of it.

SAM PECK. (*going to safe*) Money gwine out of here, and don't nobody knows where it is gwine.

JACK PENROSE. It must be stopped.

SAM PECK. It's got to be stopped. Man can't run no business like dat. (*opens safe*) Anytime a man gits to runnin' business,—\$100 was it?

JACK PENROSE. \$100, sir.

*(Sam gives money to detective and puts rest in his own pocket.)*

SAM PECK. Here you is. Now you understands everything, so jes' go ahead and catch my partner.

JACK PENROSE. *(putting hand over pocket where Sam has just put money)* Oh, I got you, old boy.

SAM PECK. *(with a look of scorn)* No, not me. Catch my partner. I knows I'm stealin'. I didn't send for you to tell me dat.

*(Steve enters.)*

STEVE JENKINS. Sam, I stopped next door over to the telephone company—

SAM PECK. *(jumping up and going to telephone)* Good, now I kin get dat number.

STEVE JENKINS. Yeh—and dey tol' me to tell you dat before you tries to call up, to call 'round.

*(Sam hangs up receiver and returns to chair stage right.)*

JACK PENROSE. Good morning. Mr. Jenkins, I presume.

STEVE JENKINS. Yes, Jenkins is my name.

JACK PENROSE. I was telling your partner that I represent the cashmere people in Chicago.

STEVE JENKINS. Is dat so? I'm sure glad to hear dat.

JACK PENROSE. I am expecting a consignment of goods in a few days and hope to do business with you.

STEVE JENKINS. Sure, bring your goods up here and lemme look at dem.

SAM PECK. *(taking coat)* I'm gwine 'round to de post office here. I'll be right back. *(goes out)*

STEVE JENKINS. *(delighted)* Yes. Stay as long as you like, Sam. Wait for de last mail while you is at it. *(to detective)* Say, rescuse me jes' a minute.

*(Steve runs to door to see that Sam is safely gone, then to cash register and gets some money. Mr. Penrose follows Steve to the door and to the register. Steve is just putting roll of bills in pocket.)*

Now, Mr. Cashmere, I can talk wid you about dem goods, 'cos I heard dat you all had some very good goods.

JACK PENROSE. (*presenting card*) My card.

(*Steve takes off hat, puts money back, fans head, walks away.*)

Quite warm?

STEVE JENKINS. I hope it gits no warmer.

(*Mr. Penrose shuts register, and Steve, hearing the bang, turns around.*)

Say, you didn't see Sam come back in here, did you?

JACK PENROSE. No, I didn't.

STEVE JENKINS. You ain't wid de cashmere people of Chicago like you said, is you?

JACK PENROSE. No. I just said that to throw your partner off.

STEVE JENKINS. (*rejoicing*) I'm sure glad he don't know who you is, 'cos you never would catch him if he did. You know he is kind of sly.

JACK PENROSE. I received Tom Sharper's letter, so here I am on the grounds, ready for business.

STEVE JENKINS. All I want you to do is to stop all money from gwine out of here dat I don't carry wid me.

JACK PENROSE. You will have to pay something in advance in this case.

STEVE JENKINS. I knows dat was coming. Now how much do you want in dis case?

JACK PENROSE. Well \$50 to start with.

STEVE JENKINS. \$50 to start with?? How much is it gwine to stop you?? Dat's what I want to know. (*goes to safe*) 'Course you see where I'm gitting this money from?

JACK PENROSE. I'm looking at you.

STEVE JENKINS. (*covering combination with hat*) But that ain't none of your business. You are not here to watch me. You are here to watch my partner. \$50 did you say?

JACK PENROSE. \$50, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, here's two brand-new \$25 bills. All I want you to do is to catch my partner stealing.

JACK PENROSE. I'll catch him. I never failed.

SAM PECK. *(returning)* Got almost down there to dat post office, and clear forgot my letter. *(opens register and takes money)*

STEVE JENKINS. *(as Sam reaches door)* Sam—Sam. Is dat where you keep your mail all de time now?

SAM PECK. Dat was a ver' reportant letter, and I thought I would leave it in a safe place.

STEVE JENKINS. Yeh, but dat letter was so reportant dat it done turn to dollars since you put it in der.

SAM PECK. *(looking in pocket)* Turn to dollars??? What you talkin' 'bout?? *(discovers money, laughs)*

STEVE JENKINS. Is I right or wrong? Dat's all I want to know.

SAM PECK. You is right. Reachin' in der right quick, I thought I had the letter. *(puts money back)*

STEVE JENKINS. Yeh, yeh.

*(Sam removes coat and sits down.)*

Now you ain't got no place to go. Is you?

JACK PENROSE. Well, gentlemen, you will have to excuse me. I am going down to see about that consignment of goods.

SAM PECK. Yes, yes. Don't be gone long.

*(Onions enters.)*

STEVE JENKINS. Sam, I am gwine to tell you something. You better learn one thing and learn it quick.

*(Onions opens register and begins to dust counter vigorously, knocking box to floor. Sam and Steve go after box. Onions opens register again. Steve goes over to register as Onions dusts safe.)*

This here cash register is beginning to be a regular main thoroughfare. I'm gwine to pass some laws 'round here—

*(Onions opens safe.)*

—*O-N-I-O-N-S*, come 'way from dat safe.

ONIONS. I was just dusting it off, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. Doing what?

ONIONS. D-u-s-t-i-n-g it off.

STEVE JENKINS. You'll be dustin' it out in a minute. Come 'way from der, anyhow.

*(Onions comes to left to Steve.)*

There's gwine to be passed some new laws 'round here. From now on, anybody what gits anything in here, dey got to pay cash for it—

ONIONS. From now on??

STEVE JENKINS. —That goes for everybody. If Sam's wife gits anything here—she got to pay cash for it—

ONIONS. *(snickering)* From now on??

STEVE JENKINS. —Yeh, and dem li'l things you been carryin' out of here, you leave some change here for dem. Do you hear?? If I catch you letting anybody take anything out of here on credicks,—out you go!

ONIONS. From now on??

SAM PECK. No, you is gwine den.

*(Onions begins to dust behind counter.)*

STEVE JENKINS. Sam, I was down to the polls, and Harry Walton ain't got a chance in the world to win dis election.

SAM PECK. Oh, I knows dat.

STEVE JENKINS. Either me or you is sure gwine to win—

SAM PECK. 'Course we is.

STEVE JENKINS. —And I was thinkin', if I wins, I'm gwine to make you the Chief of Police—dat's providing you wins, it you gwine to make me the Chief of Police.

SAM PECK. You can resider yourself 'pinted.

STEVE JENKINS. What you talkin' 'bout??

*(Onions opens register.)*

*(angry)* Onions, from now on, don't you dust anything but dem scales over der.—  
I'm the man what's gwine to win dis election.

SAM PECK. What will you bet?

STEVE JENKINS. If you wins, I'll ride you all over town on my back like any other horse.

SAM PECK. If you wins, I'll ride you all over town on mine.

STEVE JENKINS. *(rising)* Is dat a bet?

SAM PECK. Sure is.

STEVE JENKINS. Come on. Let's shake hands, 'cos I'se sure gwine to win.

*(Mrs. Peck enters and approaches Onions.)*

MRS. PECK. Onions, I want a large box of baking powder.

ONIONS. *(looking on shelf)* A large box of baking powder. Now let me see. A small box wouldn't do??

MRS. PECK. *(impatiently)* No, I want a large box. *(pointing to box on counter)* Here it is. Here it is.

ONIONS. Oh, yes, der you is. Now wrap it right up.

MRS. PECK. Why don't you wrap it up?? Do you expect me to go through the streets—?

ONIONS. Help yourself, madam.

*(Mrs. Peck wraps it up and goes to door. Onions stops her.)*

ONIONS. Wait a minute. Jes' a moment.

MRS. PECK. *(puzzled)* What *is* the matter with you??

ONIONS. I must have the money for the baking powder.

MRS. PECK. Why, the perfect idea??? You surely don't know who I am?

ONIONS. I don't care who you is.

MRS. PECK. This is exasperating. *(walks to husband)* I shall tell my husband about this. Sam, I have been grossly insulted by Onions.

SAM PECK. *(surprised)* Do tell.

MRS. PECK. He wants me to pay for this baking powder.

SAM PECK. Oh, well, honey. Der has been some new rules passed since you been in here.

MRS. PECK. Yes, but ain't this your store?

STEVE JENKINS. *(sitting placidly at opposite side of room)* No, ma'am, this is *our* store.

MRS. PECK. Say, Sam, I haven't any money.

SAM PECK. *(rising and going to register to get money)* Whyn't you say dat when you first come in here? *(gives her money)*

*(Sam expresses independence, but Steve is alert to every bang of the register.)*

There you is. Go on and pay for de goods. Do business right.

MRS. PECK. *(after giving money to Onions)* Well???

ONIONS. *(misconstruing question)* Yes, pretty well, thank you.

MRS. PECK. My change please?

ONIONS. *(flabbergasted)* How much did you give me?

MRS. PECK. I gave you \$10.

ONIONS. *(looks in pocket)* \$10???. *(discovers mistake)* You is right. You is right. *(presses register vigorously a number of times)*

STEVE JENKINS. Onions, Onions, dat ain't no typewriter.

*(Mrs. Peck drops bill as she leaves. Onions picks it up, and Sam takes it from him. Steve jumps up, opens register, and takes roll of money. Sam spies him and does likewise to safe. They both leave the receptacles open. Steve stops short in door.)*

Sam! *Sam!* Put dat back.

SAM PECK. Well, put dat back?

STEVE JENKINS. Get to putting.

*(Both put money back, and crowd enters, including Jessie, Harry, Tom, Uncle Ned, and Ruth Little to congratulate Steve.)*

TOM SHARPER. Steve, old boy, the next Mayor of Jimtown!

STEVE JENKINS. *(proudly)* I knows I was gwine to git elected! I knowd it. I knowd it.

HARRY WALTON. Accept my congratulations, old boy.

STEVE JENKINS. Sorry you lost, Harry. Glad I won. Come on, Sam, ride me all over town on your back.

*(Sam and Steve exit followed by Tom. Enter Mr. Williams hastily seeking Harry Walton.)*

*ACT 1 FINALE and REPRISE: "Love Will Find a Way"*

JIM WILLIAMS.

Young man, I'm sorry to inform you  
That you cannot claim my daughter's hand.  
But don't be dejected, since you are not elected,  
But by my word, I'm bound to stand.

CHORUS.

Jim Williams is a man  
Who always by his word must stand.

RUTH.

But why make them both unhappy  
When they love each other tenderly?

JIM WILLIAMS.

*(rather peevishly)*

My word, I have pledged, I will never hedge.  
Come, Jessie,—come with me.

CHORUS.

His word is pledged, he'll never hedge.  
But with him we all do not agree.

CITIZEN.

*(interrupting Mr. Williams in his endeavor to secure Jessie)*  
Just suppose that *you* were a lad once again.

CHORUS.

*(Once again.)*

2ND CITIZEN.

*(interrupting, likewise)*

And you were disposed of by your sweetheart's dad.  
Well, what then?

CHORUS.

(Well, what then?)

JIM WILLIAMS.

It is true what you say, but my word it must stay.  
Come, Jessie, bid Mr. Walton good day.

JESSIE.

Harry, my heart is with you.  
Please do not give up in despair.

HARRY WALTON.

All hope seems to be in vain, dear,

CHORUS.

Try to win your lady fair.  
True love will always find a way.

RUTH.

*(consoling Jessie)*

The darkest hour is before the dawning.  
Where there is a will, there is a way.

JESSIE.

Listen to your heart's true warning,  
Listen and you will hear it say:

COMPANY.

Love will find a way, though skies now are gray.  
Love like ours can never be ruled.  
Cupid's not schooled that way.  
Dry each tear-dimmed eye.  
Clouds will soon roll by.  
Though fate may lead us astray,  
My dearie, mark what I say:  
Love will find a way.

*(Curtain. End of Act I.)*

## Act 2

### *Scene 1: Calico Corners*

*(Traffic officer center stage working a semaphore. Civil War veteran [Rufus Loose] enters left with girl.)*

RUFUS. No use talking—

GIRL. Why didn't you start dancing with me?

RUFUS. Because I told you to shimmy. You turned around and did the cootie.

*(Exit right.)*

UNCLE NED. *(enters right, walks around semaphore)* Good morning, officer. When did you get out of jail? Say, look here. How much you gets a week for dis job? Dat's what I would like to know.

OFFICER. *(impatiently)* Shuffle along.

*(Uncle Ned exits right.)*

SONG: "Shuffle Along"

TRAFFIC OFFICER *and* CHROUS.

Everyone in town is always singing this song:  
"Shuffle Along"—"Shuffle Along."  
Doctors, bakers, undertakers, do a step  
That's full of pep and syncopation.

"Shuffle Along,"  
Oh, "Shuffle Along."  
Why, life's but a chance, and when times comes to choose,  
If you lose, don't start a-singing the blues,  
But just you shuffle along,  
And whistle a song.  
Why, sometimes a smile will right every wrong.  
Keep smiling and shuffle along.

*(Jessie enters left. Tom enters right. Meet center stage.)*

TOM SHARPER. Well, Miss Williams, tomorrow Steve Jenkins takes his chair as the Mayor of Jimtown. My candidate. Oh, but by the way, I heard that your father objected to your marrying Harry inasmuch as he lost in the election, and I am truly sorry for that indeed.

JESSIE. (*independently*) Well, that will never make any difference with Harry and me.

TOM SHARPER. And I hope not.

JESSIE. Never in the least.

TOM SHARPER. That's fine.

*SONG: "I'm Just Wild About Harry"*

JESSE.

There's just one fellow for me in this world.  
Harry's his name,  
That's what I claim.  
Why for ev'ry fellow there must be a girl.  
I've found my mate  
By kindness of fate.

*(Chorus of Syncopating Sunflowers enters to assist with song and dance.)*

I'm just wild about Harry,  
And Harry's wild about me.  
The heav'nly blisses of his kisses  
Fill me with ecstasy.  
He's sweet just like choc'late candy  
And just like honey from the bee.  
Oh, I'm just wild about Harry,  
And he's just wild about, cannot do without,  
He's just wild about me.

STEVE JENKINS. (*enters right followed by three citizens*) Here's what I wants to know: Who got elected Mayor, me or you all?

CITIZEN. You got elected, of course—but we elected you.

STEVE JENKINS. (*boastingly*) And I'm going to run the town, too. I don't care who elected me. I ain't been augmented yet. Wait until I take my seat tomorrow. I'm gwine to show you how to run the town.

1ST CITIZEN. Don't forget your promises.

STEVE JENKINS. What did I promise you?

1ST CITIZEN. You promised to make me the Tax Collector.

STEVE JENKINS. Who?

1ST CITIZEN. The Tax Collector?

STEVE JENKINS. What's dat? Dat's the man what handles all de money, ain't it?

1ST CITIZEN. Of course.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, there ain't nobody gwine to handle money in dis town from now on, but me!

1ST CITIZEN. How come?

STEVE JENKINS. I'm the Mayor. I handles all de money.

2ND CITIZEN. Look here, Steve, what you figgers on making me?

STEVE JENKINS. Since when?

2ND CITIZEN. What you figgers on makin' me?

STEVE JENKINS. Just what you is—nothing.

3RD CITIZEN. Steve, I want a job keeping the streets clean.

STEVE JENKINS. Want a job doing what???

3RD CITIZEN. Keeping the streets clean.

STEVE JENKINS. (*sarcastically.*) Well, stay off of dem, then.

(*Sam enters right followed by a trainer and runs around the stage with boxing gloves on.*)

STEVE JENKINS. Wait a minute, Sam. (*stopping him*) What do you mean runnin' up and down the street like dat? Ain't you got no sense at all?

SAM PECK. I'm trainin' for the Chief of Police.

STEVE JENKINS. (*questioningly*) Who?

SAM PECK. The Chief of Police.

STEVE JENKINS. Where?

SAM PECK. Here in Jimtown.

STEVE JENKINS. Whose gwine to appoint you?

SAM PECK. You is.

STEVE JENKINS. Is I? (*chuckles*)

SAM PECK. (*explaining*) Now wait a minute. Don't you remember der in the grocery store jes' before the election? You said if you was elected Mayor, you was gwine to appoint me the Chief of Police. Don't you remember dat?

STEVE JENKINS. Oh, I said dat before I was elected.

SAM PECK. Der you is.

STEVE JENKINS. If you ain't got no better sense den to pay any attention to dem election promises, you ain't got sense enough to be no Chief of Police. I'll tell you now.

SAM PECK. So that be's the case?

STEVE JENKINS. Dat am the case. You ain't gwine to be nothing here in Jimtown.

SAM PECK. (*to trainer*) Is I fit?

TRAINER. You bet your life you're fit.

SAM PECK. Can I whip anybody here?

TRAINER. You can beat anybody in the bunch.

SAM PECK. No one is resepted.

TRAINER. You can lick anyone that's over there.

SAM PECK. (*referring to Steve*) Give him dem gloves.

CITIZEN. I'm gwine to leave here—

2ND CITIZEN. Oh, stick around—

STEVE JENKINS. (*putting on gloves*) You is gwine to fight me for the job, is dat it?

SAM PECK. Well, if the job is worth me having, it's worth me fighting for.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, if you whips me, den I'm gwine to make you the Chief of Police.

SAM PECK. (*curtly*) You don't have to worry about dat. If I whips you, I'm gwine to *be* the Chief of Police.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, you better send word home dat you ain't gwine to be der for dinner. I'm gwine to arrange for you to pass right on by yo' door.

SAM PECK. (*practicing*) Well, you knows I'm a man that was born wid boxing gloves on.

TRAINER. That's the boy.

STEVE JENKINS. And it sure looks like you gwine to *die* dat same way.

CITIZEN. (*at semaphore*) Are you ready?

SAM *and* STEVE. Yeh.

CITIZEN. Let's go.

*COMIC BALLET: "Jintown's Fisticuffs"*  
*(Steve and Sam)*

*(Curtain.)*

*Scene 2: Possum Lane*

*SONG: "Sing Me To Sleep, Dear Mammy (With a Hush-A-Bye-Pickaninny Tune)"*

HARRY WALTON.

Mammy, I'm feeling tired and weary.  
My heart is heavy-laden, too.  
Mammy, there's only one who can cheer me,  
And that only one is you.

So won't you sing me to sleep, dear Mammy,  
With a "Hush-a-Bye-O-Pickaninny" tune  
Just like you did in Alabama?  
Mammy, let me hear you croon,  
"Go to sleep, ma honey.  
Sandman's coming soon.  
He's watching you up yonder in the moon."  
Then when I fall to sleep in your dear arms,  
I know I'm safe from earthly harms.  
If you will sing me to sleep, dear Mammy,  
With a "Hush-a-Bye-O-Pickaninny" tune.

*(Mr. Walton exits left and re-enters left with a telephone in his hand. Jessie enters on right with telephone also.)*

*SONG: "Everything Reminds Me of You"*

*[may have appeared later in Act 2, following a similarly displaced "Uncle Tom and Old Black Joe"]*

HARRY WALTON.

Hello, dearie, I'm feeling kinda blue.

JESSIE.

Hello, dearie, I'm feeling lonesome, too.

HARRY WALTON.

But I'm trying with all my energy  
To be the strong-hearted boy you want me to be.

JESSIE.

But, dear, you must resist each growing sentiment.

HARRY WALTON.

How can I exist, and without you be content?

When in the blues of the skies  
I see the blue of your eyes . . .  
In the trilling song of a bird

Your voice is heard . . .  
It thrills me, stills me,  
With love's anguish fills me.  
In the white fleur-de-lys,  
An emblem of your purity . . .  
And when the bee sips the vine,  
I feel your lips touch mine . . .  
The breath from the rose,  
Your perfumed tresses disclose. . . .  
Everything reminds me of you, you.  
Everything reminds me of you.

*(Jessie joins in the second chorus.)*

*[Curtain opens.]*

### Scene 3: Mayor's Office

*(Large table center, on which there are four typewriters, at which four stenographers are working. Secretary is opening mail at left of table, and office boy is dozing at the latter's left. Office boy wakes up and reads newspaper in his lap.)*

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. *(enters quickly with duster in hand, approaches office boy)* Say, what do you think this is, a reading room? Look at this office.

OFFICE BOY. Well look at it, you ain't blind.

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Now, listen. Let me tell you something. You better get to dusting and dusting quick.

OFFICE BOY. Why?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Because if you don't, when the Mayor arrives, I will see that you get your walking papers.

OFFICE BOY. *(independently)* You don't have to tell me when to work, because I knows just when I wants to work.

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Well, get to work.

*(Gives him duster and exits left. Office boy does acrobatic dance.)*

[DANCE: "Syncopated Stenos"]

*(Mr. Williams and Mr. Penrose enter.)*

JIM WILLIAMS. *(addressing Mr. Penrose)* See here, young man, do you mean to tell me that this Steve Jenkins is the type of a man that you advocate for the Mayor of Jimtown?

JACK PENROSE. Mr. Williams,—

JIM WILLIAMS. Well, I'm surprised! A man with your standing . . .

MRS PENROSE. *(endeavoring to pacify him)* Now, Mr. Williams,—

JIM WILLIAMS. *(indignantly)* Oh, dry up, young man. Dry right up. Don't you try to tell me my business. I'm one of the oldest citizens of Jimtown, a taxpayer, and have a perfect right to know why the city's money is being so foolishly spent. Who in the world ever heard of a city paying for the Mayor's valet? What right have we to pay for these five stenographers? And look at this office. Look at this office! *(stamps*

*foot impatiently*) Does it *look* like a Mayor's office? I should say not. It looks like some old woman's home!

JACK PENROSE. But, you must admit, Mr. Williams, that the Mayor has some very beautiful stenographers.

JIM WILLIAMS. Beautiful and minus ability. Why, every one of them would have to have their fingers cut off before they could write shorthand. Steve Jenkins, a Mayor. He's no Mayor. He's a nightmare. See here, he hasn't been elected Mayor three days when he's bought an automobile, engaged six chauffeurs, and we, *we*, the city have got to pay for it.

JACK PENROSE. I don't blame you, Mr. Williams, for thinking that way. The whole election is a fraud. At the right time and at the right place I will prove to the whole of Jimtown that Harry Walton is the rightful mayor.

JIM WILLIAMS. *You* will prove it? And who are you?

*(Detective shows badge.)*

Oh, I see.

JACK PENROSE. My position here is a very peculiar one. Tom Sharper hired me to watch Sam Peck. Mrs. Peck hired me to watch Steve Jenkins. And when I got here, I found them robbing each other, and worst of all, my best friend Harry Walton being cheated.

JIM WILLIAMS. Cheated?

JACK PENROSE. Yes, cheated. As I said before, at the right time and at the right place I will expose all. For the present, we better not be seen together. I would advise that you leave the office at once and leave everything in my hands.

JIM WILLIAMS. I guess you are right, Mr. Penrose, for I don't care to come in contact with Steve Jenkins to begin with. Steve Jenkins, the Mayor of Jimtown! Some joke.  
*(exits left indignantly, banging door)*

DETECTIVE. Good morning, Miss Secretary.

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Good morning, sir.

DETECTIVE. Is the Mayor in?

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. No, sir, not yet. May I take your name?

DETECTIVE. No, thank you. I'll call later.

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Very well, sir.

DETECTIVE. Good morning.

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Good morning.

*(Detective exits right.)*

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Attention, his Honor the Mayor of Jimtown.

*(Steve enters dressed most flashily, followed by Onions, who has two pipes in his mouth. Stenographers stand and salute Mayor.)*

STEVE JENKINS. What you waitin' on?

ONIONS. The hat.

STEVE JENKINS. Reach up der and get it.

*(Onions takes hat from Mayor's head and exits right.)*

At ease, ladies. At ease.—Secretary!

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Oh, yes, sir, your honor.

STEVE JENKINS. Secretary!

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. *(running towards Steve)* Oh, yes, sir, your honor.

STEVE JENKINS. Any mail for the Mayor this morning?

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Oh, yes, sir, and there's one very important letter this morning.

STEVE JENKINS. Important letter?

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Oh, yes, sir, your honor.

STEVE JENKINS. Who is it from?

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. From the President.

STEVE JENKINS. Who?

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. The President.

STEVE JENKINS. Oh, you mean Warren. Yes, yes, yes. What did he have to say?

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. He wants to make a speech here one night next week.

STEVE JENKINS. Wants to make a speech here one night next week??

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Yes, your honor.

STEVE JENKINS. Now, let me see. Next week's my busy week. I can't see him.—Any more mail?

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Oh, yes, sir. There's a lot of mail this morning.

STEVE JENKINS. Did you read it yet?

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Not yet, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. That's strange. Take the stenographers to the next office. Have them answer it. The Mayor don't care to be resturbed.

SECRETARY TO MAYOR. Attention.

*(Stenographers stand at attention.)*

Forward march. Halt. Right flank march.

*(Stenographers and secretary exit right. Steve walks around office, scratches his head, brings chair center, then replaces chair.)*

STEVE JENKINS. *Onions!*

ONIONS. Yes, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. Bring me that chair.

ONIONS. Now, you will find the chair right over there.

STEVE JENKINS. I knows where *it* is. I want *you* to go where *it* is and bring it where *I* is. You understand? Bring the chair *here*.

*(Onions brings chair center.)*

Now be went. Get to wenting.

*(Onions exits right, and Steve deliberately replaces chair to its first position.)*

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Chief of Police to see you, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. *(excitedly)* Huh?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Chief of Police to see you.

STEVE JENKINS. Chief of Police to see me?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Yes, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. Did he have any papers in his hand?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Yes, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. (*growing more excited*) Did you tell him I was here?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Yes, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. What did you want to do that for? You had no business telling that Chief of Police I was here. Why didn't you come in here and axe me if I was here or not? (*walking up and down*) Where is he? Out there at the front door?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Yes sir.

STEVE JENKINS. (*frightened*) He's liable to be 'round at the back door now. I don't know how to get out of here. What did you want to tell him I was here for anyhow?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. He said he wanted to see the Mayor.

STEVE JENKINS. Said he wanted to see who?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. The *Mayor*????????

STEVE JENKINS. (*amazedly*) I'm the Mayor, ain't I??

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Yes, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. (*independently*) Tell him to come in here. What do I care anyhow?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. This way, officer. His Honor the Mayor.

(*Sam enters as Chief of Police.*)

SAM PECK. Well, well, it dooz me proud, it dooz me proud.

STEVE JENKINS. Make yourself right at home, Sam.

SAM PECK. (*sitting down*) Now, how is you runnin' things on the inside here?

STEVE JENKINS. (*sitting down*) Oh, man, I'm the mayorest Mayor that ever mayored anywhere. Make yourself right at home, Sam. That's all you got to do. Go ahead and make yourself right at home.

SAM PECK. Don't worry about me. I'm all right.

STEVE JENKINS. Der ain't nothing in here you kin steal. I got these typewriters all counted. (*he counts the four typewriters*) Yes, there's eight of them. Say, look here, Sam.

SAM PECK. Yes?

STEVE JENKINS. Is you arrested anybody yet?

SAM PECK. (*slowly*) Now that's what I come down here to see you about.

STEVE JENKINS. (*frightened*) How come you got to come down here to see me about it?

SAM PECK. Well, you will either have to make room in this office for the rest of the prisoners or build me some more rooms to the jail.

STEVE JENKINS. (*surprised*) Jail all filled up already?

SAM PECK. There ain't room enough down there for another man no matter how small he may be.

STEVE JENKINS. I didn't know there was dat many criminals in town.

SAM PECK. Well, this ain't exactly a matter of criminals. You knows I gits fifty cents a head for every man I locks up.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, there's one man I will give you fifty dollars if you lock him up—that's that Slippery Jim. He's the worst man in town.

SAM PECK. Oh, he's a bad character, no doubt.

STEVE JENKINS. *Bad!* He's *so* bad, I'm scared to pass a law against him.

SAM PECK. And I made up my mind yesterday to lock him up.

STEVE JENKINS. You made up your mind—?

SAM PECK. Yes, yes.

STEVE JENKINS. —Dat's 'bout as fer as you got, too,—to make up your mind.

SAM PECK. And for three solid hours yesterday, I was chasing him.

STEVE JENKINS. Didn't he catch you?

SAM PECK. I was chasing him.

STEVE JENKINS. I just wanted to know if you was the party of the first part or not.

SAM PECK. No, I was the necessary after the crime. You see, in the first place, I chased him everywhere.

STEVE JENKINS. (*interested*) Chased him everywhere?

SAM PECK. And then I chased him everywhere else. For three solid hours yesterday, me and Slippery Jim was just like this here (*making motions with hands*) all over town.

STEVE JENKINS. Is dat a fact?

SAM PECK. Yes.

STEVE JENKINS. What do you know about dat?

SAM PECK. And finally he tripped up and fell right in front of me.

STEVE JENKINS. (*becoming excited*) Fell in front of you???????

SAM PECK. Right in front of me.

STEVE JENKINS. There was your chance right then. When he fell, that was your chance.

SAM PECK. And I knowed it. And I said to myself, "I'm gwine to unveil myself of this retunity."

STEVE JENKINS. Yeh, yeh.

SAM PECK. And just as I reached over der to get him,—

STEVE JENKINS. Just as you were gwine to get him,—

SAM PECK. Just as I reached over there to get him, a black cat run right 'twixt us, and I had to turn around and come back.

STEVE JENKINS. (*hitting desk with hand*) I'm gwine to pass a law to get rid of all the black cats right now.

SAM PECK. There you is!

STEVE JENKINS. Black cats is bad luck anyhow.

SAM PECK. Course they is.

STEVE JENKINS. Whenever they commence conferring with the law, they got to go.  
Dat's all.

SAM PECK. There you is.

STEVE JENKINS. A black cat run right 'twixt you and duty.

SAM PECK. Ain't done nothing else.

STEVE JENKINS. (*taking pencil*) Here's the first law I'm gwine to pass since I've been the Mayor. "Black cats must go." "Black c c c c . . ." Say, look here, Sam, how do you spell "cat" anyhow?

SAM PECK. What do you mean? One of dem jes' plain, everyday, walkin' 'round cats?

STEVE JENKINS. No, jes' "cat." Any kind of a cat. I don't care what kind of a cat it is.  
Spell the easiest one. You can't pass a law unless you kin spell "cat." You know dat, don't you?

SAM PECK. (*puzzled*) Lemme see now,—“cat.”

STEVE JENKINS. Looks like to me anybody ought-to-could spell “cat.”

SAM PECK. Well, if dey kin spell anything at all, dey kin spell “cat.”

STEVE JENKINS. Der ain't but six letters in it.

SAM PECK. Is you sure of dat?

STEVE JENKINS. Well, I bet my money der ain't *over* six. I know dat.

SAM PECK. Well, I kin bring dat down to five 'cos I knows the “L” is silent, so dat leaves you only five letters for to deal wid.

STEVE JENKINS. Yes, but I got to know what dey is and how to rotine dem.

SAM PECK. Dat's right, too. Well, I've been away from my 'rithmestic so long, I'm a little rusty on it now.

STEVE JENKINS. Ha! Ha! I got it. You can't stick the Mayor you know.

SAM PECK. Course you can't.

STEVE JENKINS. (*proudly*) You know what I'm gwine to do?

SAM PECK. What's dat?

STEVE JENKINS. I'll draw one. *(draws a cat on the paper)* Yes, and dat don't look like a cat.

SAM PECK. Well, dat's all right. You kin read your own writin'.

STEVE JENKINS. No, I guess I better call them stenographers in here and let them write dat law out. I'll let dem go to dinner, though, first.

SAM PECK. Sure.

STEVE JENKINS. *Stenographers!* This way.

*(Stenographers enter.)*

Now you all been so smart today, and to show you that I appreciates it, I'm gwine to let you go to dinner.

STENOGRAPHERS. *(full of ecstasy)* Oh, that's lovely.

STEVE JENKINS. I'm gwine to give you five minutes, and I want you back in four. So resider yourself rescued.

STENOGRAPHERS. Come on, girls.

*(Stenographers start to leave in a hurry.)*

STEVE JENKINS. *(standing up)* Heah, heah! What kind of a way is dat for you all to leave the presence of the Mayor? How often have I told you, whenever you leave the Mayor's office, you wants to slam the Mayor. I'm the Mayor, you know. I got to be slammed.

*(Girls salute him.)*

SAM PECK. *(rising and turning to instruct girls)* You might as well learn dis now as to learn it later on, 'cos you got to do it every day here. Whenever you all is—

STEVE JENKINS. Sam, . . .

SAM PECK. *(to Steve)* Wait 'till I git 'em told. *(to girls)* Whenever you all is—

STEVE JENKINS. *(motioning to him)* S-A-M,—you is the same as dem, so come on down wid 'em. Dey ain't but one power. I'm it. *(referring to stenogs)* You all kin went now. You all kin went.

SAM PECK. (*crossing to Steve and raising Billy club*) Now, here, lemme tell you something. You got to make some amendments to dat order. The next time dat I slams you, it is gwine to be wid dis. Now don't let dat li'l job git you all recited. (*goes back to chair*)

STEVE JENKINS. I was jes' thinkin', Sam. In gitting rid of dem cats, how we gwine to do it? Shoot 'em?

SAM PECK. Well, dat's 'bout as good a way as any, I guess.

STEVE JENKINS. You'll have to lemme see your gun, 'cos I got to draw that, too.

SAM PECK. (*with a sour look*) You didn't have to stand no kind of an examination to get dis job. Did you?

STEVE JENKINS. I got to see your gun anyhow, ain't I? The city furnishes you wid de gun, don't it?

SAM PECK. Yeh.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, it's the duty of the Mayor to suspect it.

SAM PECK. Oh, de gun's all right.

STEVE JENKINS. I know. But I got to know it's all right so I kin report to de Board of Aldermen that de gun's all right.

SAM PECK. Jes' go ahead and report to de Board of Aldermen dat Chief of Police's gun's all right.

STEVE JENKINS. I know, Sam. But I got to *know* it's all right.

SAM PECK. Dat's jes' what I'm telling you. The gun's all right.

STEVE JENKINS. How do you know it is?

SAM PECK. Well I got \$20 on it in pawn.

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. Some gentlemen from New York to see you, sir.

STEVE JENKINS. Some gentlemen from where?

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. New York.

STEVE JENKINS. (*to Sam*) Where's dat??

SAM PECK. I dunno. Dat ain't on my beat.

STEVE JENKINS. Tell them to come on in here.

MAYOR'S DOORMAN. This way, gentlemen. His Honor the Mayor.

*(Enter three of the Four Harmony Kings.)*

FIRST. How are you, your Honor? We want to see you about a concert in the town hall.

STEVE JENKINS. Well, you see, since I've been elected Mayor, I've appointed myself the Census Bureau. Therefore, I got to know the nature of the entertainment.

FIRST. It is a singing concert.

*(Enter fourth Harmony King.)*

FOURTH. Your Honor, I used to sing with the gentlemen—

STEVE JENKINS. Git away?????????

FOURTH. I assure you we shall be pleased to sing for your approval.

STEVE JENKINS. *(as Sam makes a hasty exit left)* Go right ahead. I'll be in the next office listening to you. *(exits)*

*INTERLUDE: Selections by Four Harmony Kings*

*[Here the Four Harmony Kings performed a number of songs from their standalone repertory, including:*

*SONG: "Goodnight, Angeline"*

*(music and lyrics: James Reese Europe, Noble Sissle, Eubie Blake)*

FOUR HARMONY KINGS.

Hear that old town clock a-striking, Angeline?  
S'pose it's time I should be hiking, Angeline.  
Surely hate to leave you, dearie.  
'Deed I do.  
Honey-chil', when you aren't near me  
I feel blue.

Goodnight, my Angeline.  
Farewell, my gal so fine.  
Leavin' time  
Is grievin' time.  
I hate to part with baby mine.  
Nighttime

Was made for lovin'.  
It's the right time  
For turtledovin'.  
Kisses taste much finer,  
Hugging seems diviner,  
But I must leave you, honey,  
'Cos my heart feels funny.  
Goodnight, Angeline.

*This was usually then followed by:*

*ENCORE: "Ain't It a Shame?"  
(music and lyrics: traditional)*

Ain't it a shame to steal on Sunday,  
Ain't it a shame to steal on Sunday,  
Ain't it a shame to steal on Sunday,  
    Ain't it a shame?  
Ain't it a shame to steal on Sunday,  
When you got Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,  
Thursday, Friday, Saturday, too?  
    Ain't it a shame?

Ain't it a shame to drink hootch on Sunday, *etc.*

Ain't it a shame to shimmy on Sunday, *etc.*

Ain't it a shame to gamble on Sunday, *etc.*]

*(Steve and Sam enter at the same time from opposite directions.)*

STEVE JENKINS. Here, Chief, come on and tell dem 'bout old Deacon Birch and dat  
brownskin vamp down de court de other day. Dey ain't heard no scandal.

*SONG: "If You've Never Been Vamped By a Brownskin (You've Never Been Vamped at All)"*

SAM PECK.

Deacon Birch of Mt. Zion Church  
Was hailed up into court.  
He was brought in by his wife, I think,  
And charged with non-support.

A sealskin brown with jet-black hair  
Caused Deac' to lose his head.  
And when the judge called Deac' to speak,  
Dese am the words he said:

If you've never been vamped by a brownskin,  
You've never been vamped at all,  
For the vampingest vamp is a brownskin.  
Believe me now, that ain't no stall.  
A high brown gal will make you break out of jail,  
A choc'late brown will make a tadpole smack a whale,  
But a pretty sealskin brown, I mean one long and tall,  
Would make the silent Sphinx out in the desert bawl.  
If you've never been vamped by a brownskin,  
You've never been vamped at all.

*[“Uncle Tom and Old Black Joe” and “Everything Reminds Me of You” may have been performed here.]*

*Curtain.]*

*[Scene 4]: Spencer's Lane*

*(Sam enters right with lighted lantern in his hand. Tom enters from left.)*

TOM SHARPER. Hey, Sam, is that you?

SAM PECK. Yes, Tom, is that you?

TOM SHARPER. What are you doing out here this time of night? Are you on the night force now?

SAM PECK. I'm all the force.

TOM SHARPER. Who are you looking for?

SAM PECK. Slippery Jim.

TOM SHARPER. *(surprised)* Slippery Jim???? Is he out already??

SAM PECK. Never been locked up yet.

TOM SHARPER. I thought that was the first man you locked up when you got the job.

SAM PECK. No, Tom, I wasn't *thinking* about locking him up.

TOM SHARPER. *(disgustedly)* Ain't we got some fine protection?? What's that you got in your hand?

SAM PECK. That's a lamp.

TOM SHARPER. Next to Aladdin's lamp, that's the oldest-looking thing I ever did see.

SAM PECK. Aladdin's Lamp???? What is Aladdin's lamp?????

TOM SHARPER. *(amazed)* You never heard of Aladdin's lamp.

SAM PECK. No, Tom. I never heard tell of it.

TOM SHARPER. Well, that was the old lamp they found, and when they rubbed it, a genie came up, and any question you would ask him, he would answer it, and any wish you would make, he would grant it. You see, if that was Aladdin's lamp and you rubbed it, and a genie would come up and you asked him where Slippery Jim was, he would tell you exactly where to find him.

SAM PECK. No, Tom, I don't want that—

TOM SHARPER. Oh, but it was a marvelous lamp.

*SONG: "Oriental Blues"*

If I only had an oil lamp like Aladdin,  
With its mystic power from its mystic bower,  
I'd call old genie to my side.  
Precious stones nor riches would not be my wishes,  
But on bended knee, I would implore old genie,  
To let my conscience be his guide.  
I'm so lonely and there's only  
One place that will ease my mind.  
It's that land where gentle Oriental maidens you will find.

I've got those Oriental blues,  
I've got those Oriental blues.  
I like to take a trip across the China Sea  
To old Shanghai.  
Sip a cup of China tea  
With poor Butterfly,  
Then spend a day at old Bombay  
Watching those Hindoo maidens sway . . .  
With a night's repose  
Where grows the Persian rose,  
At dawn on an Arabian steed  
At an Arabian speed,  
Let me whirl with a Bedouin girl.  
Then in Cairo town  
I'd like to settle down.  
Oh, I've got those mysterious, doggone delirious,  
Oriental blues.

*(Enter Mrs. Peck from right and Mr. Penrose from left.)*

MRS. PECK. Oh, you are just the man I'm looking for.

JACK PENROSE. At your service, madam.

MRS. PECK. Mr. Penrose, you've been here a long time and you haven't reported to me as yet. You were in the store and you must have found Steve stealing. That's how he was elected. But still you haven't caught him.

JACK PENROSE. Oh, I caught him all right.

MRS. PECK. Well, why didn't you report it? He should have been arrested at once. The idea of him robbing my poor husband . . . He's nothing but a common thief, that's what he is!

JACK PENROSE. I caught your husband robbing Steve.

MRS. PECK. (*dumbfounded*) Huh! You caught my husband robbing Steve? Well, now, who hired you, me or Steve?

JACK PENROSE. Can you keep a secret?

MRS. PECK. Of course I can. I'm a woman.

JACK PENROSE. Tom Sharper hired me to watch your husband.

MRS. PECK. Well, Tom Sharper's too smart.

JACK PENROSE. Not as smart as he thinks he is. When I got here, I found Steve robbing Sam, Sam robbing Steve, and Onions robbing the both of them. And I in turn robbed all three of them.

MRS. PECK. Oh, this is dreadful.

JACK PENROSE. (*giving her roll of money*) Here is the money. Give it to your husband and Steve, and tell them to be in the store tomorrow morning ready to run business on the level.

MRS. PECK. Oh, that's impossible. They have to be at the Mayor's office tomorrow morning.

JACK PENROSE. No, not tomorrow morning. Harry Walton shall be at the Mayor's office tomorrow morning.

MRS. PECK. (*puzzled*) Well, I don't understand this, Mr. Penrose.

JACK PENROSE. Well, come with me Madam, and I will explain.

(*Walk off stage left, together.*)

SONG: "*I'm Craving for That Kind of Love*"

RUTH LITTLE.

I'm wishing, and fishing, and wanting to hook,  
A mankind like you find in a book.  
I mean a modern Romeo,  
I do not want a phoneo.  
He may be the baby of some vamp . . .  
Oh, babe, at vampin' and lampin' I'm the champ.  
And if I once get him, I'll just set him,  
Beneath my parlor lamp—and let him:

Kiss me, kiss me, kiss me with his tempting lips  
(Sweet as honey drips),  
Press me, press me, press me,  
To his loving breast,  
While I gently rest,  
Breathe love's tender sighs, while I gaze into his eyes,  
Eyes that will just hypnotize.

Then I know he'll whisper, whisper, whisper to me soft and low,  
Something nice, you know:  
"Honey, Honey[, Honey]"  
When there's no one near.  
My baby dear  
Will huddle me, cuddle me, sing to me, cling to me,  
Croon to me, spoon to me, sigh to me, cry to me.  
I'm craving for that kind of love.

*[ENCORE: "Daddy, Won't You Please Come Home?"]*

I feel dejected, sad and blue.  
I've been neglected, lonely, too.  
My daddy went away and quit me cold.  
Believe me when I say he ruined my very soul.

I surely miss his loving smile.  
His hugs and kisses set me wild.  
Today he called me on the phone,  
And when he said "hello" you should have  
Heard me moan:

Oh, Daddy, Da-Da-Da-Daddy,  
Daddy, won't you please come home?  
Daddy, Da-Da-Da-Daddy,  
Now how long are you going to roam?  
Why, since you went away,  
Both night and day,  
"Daddy, Daddy, Daddy, Daddy's"  
All I can say.  
Oh, Daddy, Da-Da-Da-Daddy,  
Daddy, won't you please come home?

*Curtain opens.]*

[Scene 5]: *Ballroom of the Jimtown Hotel*

[INTERLUDE: "A Few Minutes With Sissle and Blake"]

*Here Eubie Blake left the pit to join Noble Sissle onstage to lead selections from their standalone performance repertory, especially songs from their military band days. The individual numbers and their order could change nightly, but "Gee, I'm Glad That I'm from Dixie" usually opened this set, and "On Patrol in No Man's Land" usually closed it. Of the other songs here, "Pickaninny Shoes" and "The Low-Down Blues" were included most frequently.*

SONG: "Gee, I'm Glad That I'm from Dixie"

Conductor man, wave your hand.  
Start this train a-movin' for old Dixieland.  
I can't wait, don't hesitate.  
Tell that engineer to hit his fast escape.  
Time for me to bend the knee,  
Standin' in that door waiting there to see,  
Down at the station  
There'll be a demonstration  
Of Southern hospitality.

Gee, I'm glad that I'm from Dixie,  
Down where the Swanee River's flowing.  
That's where this choo-choo am a-going.  
I hope you make a bee-line through old Virginia,  
Cross the Carolinas into Alabam',  
Then give me time to send a telegram  
That I'se comin',  
Yeah comin'.  
So weep no more, my lady.  
Oh gee, I'm glad that I'm from Dixie,  
So I can get a Dixie welcome home.

POSSIBLE SONG: "Serenade Blues"

POSSIBLE SONG: "Ain'tcha Coming Back, Mary Ann, to Maryland?"

In a country town in Maryland,  
Lived a little girl, the village pride.  
Ev'rybody called her Mary Ann,  
She was the pet of all the countryside.  
When Mary Ann left Maryland  
Just for a week, why everybody sighed:

Ain'tcha coming back,

Ain'tcha coming back,  
Ain'tcha coming back,  
Mary Ann, to Maryland?  
Since you went away, things ain't half so gay.  
Ev'ryone wants Mary Ann.  
The birdies miss you, too.  
Their little songs are blue,  
Since they found you have left us, Mary Ann.  
We all are yearning for your returning,  
Now, ain'tcha coming back, Mary Ann, to Maryland?

In that country town in Maryland  
Also lived a handsome blushing lad,  
And to win the hand of Mary Ann  
He gave up all the other girls he had.  
Since Mary Ann wears a wedding band,  
We never have to sing that song so sad:

Ain'tcha coming back, *etc.*]

*SONG: "Low-Down Blues"*

My heart is achin', it's 'bout to break in two.  
My head is reelin', and I am feelin' blue.  
I feel just like a fish without a fin,  
And for the want of sleep, I'm getting thin.  
If you don't think I'm sinkin',  
Look what a hole I'm in.

I've got the low-down, the lowest of the low-down blues.  
Seems just like my crown is sinkin' through my shoes.  
It's not because I'm broke with all my clothes in pawn,  
But since that morn I woke and found my sweetie gone,  
With that mournful news, I got the lowest of the low-down blues.—

Believe me now, that fellow never told no lie  
Who said you'll never miss the water 'till the well runs dry.  
The one who took my sweetie'd better leave this shore,  
Or there will surely be some crepe a-hangin' on his door.

I've got the low-down, the lowest of the low-down blues.  
Seems just like my crown is sinkin' through my shoes.  
I lost my weight in gold and never even sighed,  
But when my sweetie quit me cold, I nearly died,  
With that mournful news,  
I got the lowest of the low-down blues.

[SONG: "Pickaninny Shoes"]

NOBLE SISSLE.

*(holding a pair of prop baby shoes)*

Southern scenes unfoldin',  
A darky sat a-holdin'  
His pickaninny shoes.  
From silent meditation  
He started conversation  
With pickaninny shoes.  
In these "Rock-a-by-O-Baby" ways,  
He talks of "Rock-a-by-O-Baby" days:

Pickaninny shoes,  
Pickaninny shoes . . .  
How well I remember when I was a lad.  
You were the only true pals that I had.  
When boys would chide me,  
You'd always guide me  
Safely back home  
A-yellin' for dad.

Pickaninny shoes,  
You saved me a many a bruise,  
And though you musty and dusty  
And wrinkled and worn . . .  
Though you graceless and lace-less  
And tattered and torn . . .  
Yet if I had to choose,  
I'd rather a fortune to lose  
Than my pickaninny shoes.

*POSSIBLE SONG: "Kentucky Sue"*

*POSSIBLE SONG: "Mirandy"*

*(music and lyrics: James Reese Europe, Noble Sissle, Eubie Blake)*

The darktown dude of Jacksonville  
Is a jaspar nicknamed Sandy.  
This dusky dude of Jacksonville  
Has a gal they call Mirandy.  
She's a long, tall, sealskin brown  
With a loose and careless way.  
If you ask Sandy about Mirandy,  
You will hear him say:

There ain't no gal as sweet as my

Mirandy,  
Why 'lasses candy  
Is like a big round ball of bitterness.  
When you taste those lips of sugar sweet  
(Oh, boy!) I say you'll fall down at her feet and weep.  
You know the whole world's jealous of me and  
Mirandy.  
I'm her dandy.  
I'm only waiting for the time  
When the village bell will chime that old rhyme,  
For I've bought that wedding band  
From an expensive jewelry man  
For Mirandy, that gal o' mine.

*POSSIBLE SONG: "How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm"*  
(music: Walter Donaldson – lyrics: Sam M. Lewis, Joe Young)

How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm  
After they've seen Paree?  
How ya gonna keep 'em away from Broadway,  
Jazzin' aroun'  
And paintin' the town?  
How ya gonna keep 'em away from harm?  
That's a mystery!  
They'll never want to see a rake or plow,  
And who the deuce can *parlez-vous* a cow?  
How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm  
After they've seen Paree?

*SONG: "On Patrol in No Man's Land"*  
(music and lyrics: James Reese Europe, Noble Sissle, Eubie Blake)

What's the time? Nine.  
All in line.  
All right, boys, now take it slow.  
Are you ready? Steady! Very good, Eddie.  
Over the top, let's go!  
Quiet, quiet, else you will start a riot.  
Keep your proper distance, follow 'long.  
Cover, brother, and when you see me hover,  
Obey my orders and you won't go wrong.

There's a Minenwurfer coming—look out!  
Hear that roar? There's one more.  
Stand fast, there's a very light.  
Don't gasp, or they'll find you, all right.  
Don't start to bombing with those hand grenades.

There's a machine gun, holy spades!  
Alert! Gas! Put on your mask.  
Adjust it correctly, and hurry up fast.  
Drop! There's a rocket from the Boche barrage.  
Down! Hug the ground, close as you can, don't stand.  
Creep and crawl. Follow me, that's all.  
What do you hear? Nothing near. Don't fear.  
All is clear!  
That's the life of a stroll when you take a patrol  
Out in no man's land. Ain't it grand?  
Out in no man's land.

*At this point, Blake returned to his baton to conduct the remaining numbers.]*

*SONG: "Baltimore Buzz"*

[TOM SHARPER *and* COMPANY.]

There have been a thousand raggy, draggy dances  
That are danced in ev'ry hall.  
And there have been a thousand raggy, draggy prances  
That are pranced at ev'ry ball.  
But the best-est one that wuzz  
Is called the "Baltimore Buzz."

First you take your babe and gently hold her.  
Then you lay your head upon her shoulder.  
Next you walk just like your legs are breaking.  
Do a fango like a tango,  
Then you start the shimmy to shaking.  
Then you do a raggy, draggy motion,  
Just like any ship upon the ocean.  
Slide—and then you hesitate.  
Glide—oh, honey, ain't it great!  
You just go simply in a trance,  
With that "Baltimore Buzz"-ing dance.

[*SONG: "African Dip"*]

*ACT 2 FINALE*

*(Curtain.)*

**The End**