

# **THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES**

John Galsworthy

## Table of Contents

<u>THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES</u> .....	1
<u>John Galsworthy</u> .....	1
<u>SCENE I</u> .....	1
<u>SCENE II</u> .....	9
<u>SCENE III</u> .....	13

# THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

John Galsworthy

This page copyright © 2002 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

- SCENE I
- SCENE II
- SCENE III

## CHARACTERS

THE LITTLE MAN.  
THE AMERICAN.  
THE ENGLISHMAN.  
THE ENGLISHWOMAN.  
THE GERMAN.  
THE DUTCH BOY.  
THE MOTHER.  
THE BABY.  
THE WAITER.  
THE STATION OFFICIAL.  
THE POLICEMAN.  
THE PORTER.

## SCENE I

Afternoon, on the departure platform of an Austrian railway station. At several little tables outside the buffet persons are taking refreshment, served by a pale young waiter. On a seat against the wall of the buffet a woman of lowly station is sitting beside two large bundles, on one of which she has placed her baby, swathed in a black shawl.

**WAITER.** [Approaching a table whereat sit an English traveller and his wife] Two coffee?

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Paying] Thanks. [To his wife, in an Oxford voice] Sugar?

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** [In a Cambridge voice] One.

**AMERICAN TRAVELLER.** [With field-glasses and a pocket camera from another table] Waiter, I'd like to have you get my eggs. I've been sitting here quite a while.

**WAITER.** Yes, sare.

**GERMAN TRAVELLER.** 'Kellner, bezahlen!' [His voice is, like his moustache, stiff and brushed up at the ends. His figure also is stiff and his hair a little grey; clearly once, if not now, a colonel.]

THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

**WAITER.** 'Komm' gleich'!

[The baby on the bundle wails. The mother takes it up to soothe it. A young, red-checked Dutchman at the fourth table stops eating and laughs.]

**AMERICAN.** My eggs! Get a wiggle on you!

**WAITER.** Yes, sare. [He rapidly recedes.]

[A LITTLE MAN in a soft hat is seen to the right of tables. He stands a moment looking after the hurrying waiter, then seats himself at the fifth table.]

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Looking at his watch] Ten minutes more.

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** Bother!

**AMERICAN.** [Addressing them] 'Pears as if they'd a prejudice against eggs here, anyway.

[The ENGLISH look at him, but do not speak. ]

**GERMAN.** [In creditable English] In these places man can get nothing.

[The WAITER comes flying back with a compote for the DUTCH YOUTH, who pays.]

**GERMAN.** 'Kellner, bezahlen'!

**WAITER.** 'Eine Krone sechzig'.

[The GERMAN pays.]

**AMERICAN.** [Rising, and taking out his watch blandly] See here. If I don't get my eggs before this watch ticks twenty, there'll be another waiter in heaven.

**WAITER.** [Flying] 'Komm' gleich'!

**AMERICAN.** [Seeking sympathy] I'm gettin' kind of mad!

[The ENGLISHMAN halves his newspaper and hands the advertisement half to his wife. The BABY wails. The MOTHER rocks it.]

[The DUTCH YOUTH stops eating and laughs. The GERMAN lights a

## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

cigarette. The LITTLE MAN sits motionless, nursing his hat.  
The WAITER comes flying back with the eggs and places them  
before the AMERICAN.]

**AMERICAN.** [Putting away his watch] Good! I don't like trouble. How much?

[He pays and eats. The WAITER stands a moment at the edge of  
the platform and passes his hand across his brow. The LITTLE  
MAN eyes him and speaks gently.]

**LITTLE MAN.** Herr Ober!

[The WAITER turns.]

**Might I have a glass of beer?**

**WAITER.** Yes, sare.

**LITTLE MAN.** Thank you very much.

[The WAITER goes.]

**AMERICAN.** [Pausing in the deglutition of his eggs affably] Pardon me, sir; I'd like to have you tell me why  
you called that little bit of a feller "Herr Ober." Reckon you would know what that means? Mr. Head Waiter.

**LITTLE MAN.** Yes, yes.

**AMERICAN.** I smile.

**LITTLE MAN.** Oughtn't I to call him that?

**GERMAN.** [Abruptly] 'Nein Kellner'.

**AMERICAN.** Why, yes! Just "waiter."

[The ENGLISHWOMAN looks round her paper for a second. The DUTCH  
YOUTH stops eating and laughs. The LITTLE MAN gazes from face  
to face and nurses his hat.]

**LITTLE MAN.** I didn't want to hurt his feelings.

**GERMAN.** Gott!

**AMERICAN.** In my country we're very democratic but that's quite a proposition.

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Handling coffee-pot, to his wife] More?

THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** No, thanks.

**GERMAN.** [Abruptly] These fellows if you treat them in this manner, at once they take liberties. You see, you will not get your beer.

[As he speaks the **WAITER** returns, bringing the **LITTLE MAN'S** beer, then retires.]

**AMERICAN.** That 'pears to be one up to democracy. [To the **LITTLE MAN**] I judge you go in for brotherhood?

**LITTLE MAN.** [Startled] Oh, no!

**AMERICAN.** I take considerable stock in Leo Tolstoi myself. Grand man grand-souled apparatus. But I guess you've got to pinch those waiters some to make 'em skip. [To the **ENGLISH**, who have carelessly looked his way for a moment] You'll appreciate that, the way he acted about my eggs.

[The **ENGLISH** make faint motions with their chins and avert their eyes.]

[To the **WAITER**, who is standing at the door of the buffet]

**Waiter!** Flash of beer jump, now!

**WAITER.** 'Komm' gleich'!

**GERMAN.** 'Cigarren'!

**WAITER.** 'Schon'!

[He disappears.]

**AMERICAN.** [Affably to the **LITTLE MAN**] Now, if I don't get that flash of beer quicker'n you got yours, I shall admire.

**GERMAN.** [Abruptly] Tolstoi is nothing 'nichts'! No good! Ha?

**AMERICAN.** [Relishing the approach of argument] Well, that is a matter of temperament. Now, I'm all for equality. See that poor woman there very humble woman there she sits among us with her baby . Perhaps you'd like to locate her somewhere else?

**GERMAN.** [Shrugging]. Tolstoi is 'sentimentalisch'. Nietzsche is the true philosopher, the only one.

**AMERICAN.** Well, that's quite in the prospectus very stimulating party old Nietch virgin mind. But give me Leo! [He turns to the red-cheeked **YOUTH**] What do you opine, sir? I guess by your labels you'll be Dutch. Do they read Tolstoi in your country?

## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

[The DUTCH YOUTH laughs.]

**AMERICAN.** That is a very luminous answer.

**GERMAN.** Tolstoi is nothing. Man should himself express. He must push he must be strong.

**AMERICAN.** That is so. In America we believe in virility; we like a man to expand. But we believe in brotherhood too. We draw the line at niggers; but we aspire. Social barriers and distinctions we've not much use for.

**ENGLISHMAN.** Do you feel a draught?

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** [With a shiver of her shoulder toward the AMERICAN] I do rather.

**GERMAN.** Wait! You are a young people.

**AMERICAN.** That is so; there are no flies on us. [To the LITTLE MAN, who has been gazing eagerly from face to face] Say! I'd like to have you give us your sentiments in relation to the duty of man .

[The LITTLE MAN, fidgets, and is about to opens his mouth.]

**AMERICAN.** For example is it your opinion that we should kill off the weak and diseased, and all that can't jump around?

**GERMAN.** [Nodding] 'Ja, ja!' That is coming.

**LITTLE MAN.** [Looking from face to face] They might be me.

[The DUTCH YOUTH laughs.]

**AMERICAN.** [Reproving him with a look] That's true humility . 'Tisn't grammar. Now, here's a proposition that brings it nearer the bone: Would you step out of your way to help them when it was liable to bring you trouble?

**GERMAN.** 'Nein, nein!' That is stupid.

**LITTLE MAN.** [Eager but wistful] I'm afraid not. Of course one wants to There was St Francis d'Assisi and St Julien L'Hospitalier, and

**AMERICAN.** Very lofty dispositions. Guess they died of them . [He rises] Shake hands, sir my name is [He hands a card] I am an ice-machine maker. [He shakes the LITTLE MAN's hand] I like your sentiments I feel kind of brotherly. [Catching sight of the WAITER appearing in the doorway] Waiter; where to h-ll is that glass of beer?

**GERMAN.** Cigarren!

**WAITER.** 'Komm' gleich'!

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Consulting watch] Train's late.

THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** Really! Nuisance!

[A station **POLICEMAN**, very square and uniformed, passes and repasses.]

**AMERICAN.** [Resuming his seat to the **GERMAN**] Now, we don't have so much of that in America. Guess we feel more to trust in human nature.

**GERMAN.** Ah! ha! you will presently find there is nothing in him but self.

**LITTLE MAN.** [Wistfully] Don't you believe in human nature?

**AMERICAN.** Very stimulating question.

[He looks round for opinion; **GERMAN.** Wait! You are a young people.

**AMERICAN.** That is so; there are no flies on us. [To the **LITTLE MAN**, who has been gazing eagerly from face to face] Say! I'd like to have you give us your sentiments in relation to the duty of man .

[The **LITTLE MAN**, fidgets, and is about to open his mouth.]

**AMERICAN.** For example—is it your opinion that we should kill off the weak and diseased, and all that can't jump around?

**GERMAN.** [Nodding] 'Ja, ja!' That is coming.

**LITTLE MAN.** [Looking from face to face] They might be me.

[The **DUTCH YOUTH** laughs.]

**AMERICAN.** [Reproving him with a look] That's true humility . 'Tisn't grammar. Now, here's a proposition that brings it nearer the bone: Would you step out of your way to help them when it was liable to bring you trouble?

**GERMAN.** 'Nein, nein!' That is stupid.

**LITTLE MAN.** [Eager but wistful] I'm afraid not. Of course one wants to—There was St Francis d'Assisi and St Julien L'Hospitalier, and——

**AMERICAN.** Very lofty dispositions. Guess they died of them . [He rises] Shake hands, sir—my name is—[He hands a card] I am an ice-machine maker. [He shakes the **LITTLE MAN**'s hand] I like your sentiments—I feel kind of brotherly. [Catching sight of the **WAITER** appearing in the doorway] Waiter; where to hell is that glass of beer?

**GERMAN.** Cigarren!

**WAITER.** 'Komm' gleich'!

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Consulting watch] Train's late.

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** Really! Nuisance!

[A station **POLICEMAN**, very square and uniformed, passes and repasses.]

**AMERICAN.** [Resuming his seat—to the **GERMAN**] Now, we don't have so much of that in America. Guess we feel more to trust in human nature.

**GERMAN.** Ah! ha! you will presently find there is nothing in him but self.

**LITTLE MAN.** [Wistfully] Don't you believe in human nature?

**AMERICAN.** Very stimulating question.



## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

[He looks round for opinions. The DUTCH YOUTH laughs.]

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Holding out his half of the paper to his wife] Swap!

[His wife swaps.]

**GERMAN.** In human nature I believe so far as I can see him—no more.

**AMERICAN.** Now that 'pears to me kind o' blasphemy. I believe in heroism. I opine there's not one of us settin' around here that's not a hero—give him the occasion.

**LITTLE MAN.** Oh! Do you believe that?

**AMERICAN.** Well! I judge a hero is just a person that'll help another at the expense of himself. Take that poor woman there. Well, now, she's a heroine, I guess. She would die for her baby any old time.

**GERMAN.** Animals will die for their babies. That is nothing .

**AMERICAN.** I carry it further. I postulate we would all die for that baby if a locomotive was to trundle up right here and try to handle it. [To the GERMAN] I guess you don't know how good you are. [As the GERMAN is twisting up the ends of his moustache—to the ENGLISHWOMAN] I should like to have you express an opinion, ma'am.

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** I beg your pardon.

**AMERICAN.** The English are very humanitarian; they have a very high sense of duty. So have the Germans, so have the Americans. [To the DUTCH YOUTH] I judge even in your little country they have that. This is an epoch of equality and high-toned ideals. [To the LITTLE MAN] What is your nationality, sir?

**LITTLE MAN.** I'm afraid I'm nothing particular. My father was half-English and half-American, and my mother half-German and half-Dutch.

**AMERICAN.** My! That's a bit streaky, any old way. [The POLICEMAN passes again] Now, I don't believe we've much use any more for those gentlemen in buttons. We've grown kind of mild—we don't think of self as we used to do.

[The WAITER has appeared in the doorway.]

**GERMAN.** [In a voice of thunder] 'Cigarren! Donnerwetter'!

**AMERICAN.** [Shaking his fist at the vanishing WAITER] That flash of beer!

**WAITER.** 'Komm' gleich'!

**AMERICAN.** A little more, and he will join George Washington ! I was about to remark when he intruded: In this year of grace 1913 the kingdom of Christ is quite a going concern. We are mighty near universal brotherhood. The colonel here [He indicates the GERMAN] is a man of blood and iron, but give him an opportunity to be magnanimous, and he'll be right there. Oh, sir! yep!

[The GERMAN, with a profound mixture of pleasure and cynicism, brushes up the ends of his moustache.]

**LITTLE MAN.** I wonder. One wants to, but somehow—[He shakes his head.]

**AMERICAN.** You seem kind of skeery about that. You've had experience, maybe. I'm an optimist—I think we're bound to make the devil hum in the near future. I opine we shall occasion a good deal of trouble to that old party. There's about to be a holocaust of selfish interests. The colonel there with old-man Nietch he won't know himself. There's going to be a very sacred opportunity.

[As he speaks, the voice of a RAILWAY OFFICIAL is heard at the distance calling out in German. It approaches, and the words become audible.]

**GERMAN.** [Startled] 'Der Teufel'! [He gets up, and seizes the bag beside him.]

[The STATION OFFICIAL has appeared; he stands for a moment casting his commands at the seated group. The DUTCH YOUTH also rises, and takes his coat and hat. The OFFICIAL turns on his

## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

heel and retires still issuing directions.]

**ENGLISHMAN.** What does he say?

**GERMAN.** Our drain has come in, de oder platform; only one minute we haf.

[All, have risen in a fluster.]

**AMERICAN.** Now, that's very provoking. I won't get that flash of beer.

[There is a general scurry to gather coats and hats and wraps, during which the lowly WOMAN is seen making desperate attempts to deal with her baby and the two large bundles. Quite defeated, she suddenly puts all down, wrings her hands, and cries out: "Herr Jesu! Hilfe!" The flying procession turn their heads at that strange cry.]

**AMERICAN.** What's that? Help?

[He continues to run. The LITTLE MAN spins round, rushes back, picks up baby and bundle on which it was seated.]

**LITTLE MAN.** Come along, good woman, come along!

[The WOMAN picks up the other bundle and they run.]

[The WAITER, appearing in the doorway with the bottle of beer, watches with his tired smile.]

CURTAIN

THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

SCENE II

A second-class compartment of a corridor carriage, in motion. In it are seated the ENGLISHMAN and his WIFE, opposite each other at the corridor end, she with her face to the engine, he with his back. Both are somewhat protected from the rest of the travellers by newspapers. Next to her sits the GERMAN, and opposite him sits the AMERICAN; next the AMERICAN in one window corner is seated the DUTCH YOUTH; the other window corner is taken by the GERMAN'S bag. The silence is only broken by the slight rushing noise of the train's progression and the crackling of the English newspapers.

**AMERICAN.** [Turning to the DUTCH YOUTH] Guess I'd like that window raised; it's kind of chilly after that old run they gave us.

[The DUTCH YOUTH laughs, and goes through the motions of raising the window. The ENGLISH regard the operation with uneasy irritation. The GERMAN opens his bag, which reposes on the corner seat next him, and takes out a book.]

**AMERICAN.** The Germans are great readers. Very stimulating practice. I read most anything myself!

[The GERMAN holds up the book so that the title may be read.]

**"Don Quixote"—fine book.** We Americans take considerable stock in old man Quixote. Bit of a wild-cat—but we don't laugh at him .

**GERMAN.** He is dead. Dead as a sheep. A good thing, too.

**AMERICAN.** In America we have still quite an amount of chivalry.

**GERMAN.** Chivalry is nothing 'sentimentalisch'. In modern days—no good. A man must push, he must pull.

**AMERICAN.** So you say. But I judge your form of chivalry is sacrifice to the state. We allow more freedom to the individual soul . Where there's something little and weak, we feel it kind of noble to give up to it. That way we feel elevated.

[As he speaks there is seen in the corridor doorway the LITTLE MAN, with the WOMAN'S BABY still on his arm and the bundle held in the other hand. He peers in anxiously. The ENGLISH, acutely conscious, try to dissociate themselves from his presence with their papers. The DUTCH YOUTH laughs.]

**GERMAN.** 'Ach'! So!

**AMERICAN.** Dear me!

**LITTLE MAN.** Is there room? I can't find a seat.

**AMERICAN.** Why, yes! There's a seat for one.

**LITTLE MAN.** [Depositing bundle outside, and heaving BABY] May I?

**AMERICAN.** Come right in!

[The GERMAN sulkily moves his bag. The LITTLE MAN comes in and seats himself gingerly.]

**AMERICAN.** Where's the mother?

**LITTLE MAN.** [Ruefully] Afraid she got left behind.

## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

[The DUTCH YOUTH laughs. The ENGLISH unconsciously emerge from their newspapers.]

**AMERICAN.** My! That would appear to be quite a domestic incident.

[The ENGLISHMAN suddenly utters a profound "Ha, Ha!" and disappears behind his paper. And that paper and the one opposite are seen to shake, and little squirls and squeaks emerge.]

**GERMAN.** And you haf got her bundle, and her baby. Ha! [He cackles drily.]

**AMERICAN.** [Gravely] I smile. I guess Providence has played it pretty low down on you. It's sure acted real mean.

[The BABY wails, and the LITTLE MAN jigs it with a sort of gentle desperation, looking apologetically from face to face. His wistful glance renews the fore of merriment wherever it alights. The AMERICAN alone preserves a gravity which seems incapable of being broken.]

**AMERICAN.** Maybe you'd better get off right smart and restore that baby. There's nothing can act madder than a mother.

**LITTLE MAN.** Poor thing, yes! What she must be suffering!

[A gale of laughter shakes the carriage. The ENGLISH for a moment drop their papers, the better to indulge. The LITTLE MAN smiles a wintry smile.]

**AMERICAN.** [In a lull] How did it eventuate?

**LITTLE MAN.** We got there just as the train was going to start; and I jumped, thinking I could help her up. But it moved too quickly, and—and left her.

[The gale of laughter blows up again.]

**AMERICAN.** Guess I'd have thrown the baby out to her.

**LITTLE MAN.** I was afraid the poor little thing might break.

[The Baby wails; the LITTLE MAN heaves it; the gale of laughter blows.]

**AMERICAN.** [Gravely] It's highly entertaining—not for the baby. What kind of an old baby is it, anyway? [He sniff's] I judge it's a bit—niffy.

**LITTLE MAN.** Afraid I've hardly looked at it yet.

**AMERICAN.** Which end up is it?

**LITTLE MAM.** Oh! I think the right end. Yes, yes, it is.

**AMERICAN.** Well, that's something. Maybe you should hold it out of window a bit. Very excitable things, babies!

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** [Galvanized] No, no!

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Touching her knee] My dear!

**AMERICAN.** You are right, ma'am. I opine there's a draught out there. This baby is precious. We've all of us got stock in this baby in a manner of speaking. This is a little bit of universal brotherhood. Is it a woman baby?

**LITTLE MAN.** I—I can only see the top of its head.

**AMERICAN.** You can't always tell from that. It looks kind of over-wrapped up. Maybe it had better be unbound.

**GERMAN.** 'Nein, nein, nein'!

**AMERICAN.** I think you are very likely right, colonel. It might be a pity to unbind that baby. I guess the lady should be consulted in this matter.

## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** Yes, yes, of course——!

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Touching her] Let it be! Little beggar seems all right.

**AMERICAN.** That would seem only known to Providence at this moment. I judge it might be due to humanity to look at its face.

**LITTLE MAN.** [Gladly] It's sucking my' finger. There, there—nice little thing—there!

**AMERICAN.** I would surmise in your leisure moments you have created babies, sir?

**LITTLE MAN.** Oh! no—indeed, no.

**AMERICAN.** Dear me!—That is a loss. [Addressing himself to the carriage at large] I think we may esteem ourselves fortunate to have this little stranger right here with us. Demonstrates what a hold the little and weak have upon us nowadays. The colonel here—a man of blood and iron—there he sits quite calm next door to it. [He sniffs] Now, this baby is rather chastening—that is a sign of grace, in the colonel—that is true heroism.

**LITTLE MAN.** [Faintly] I—I can see its face a little now.

[All bend forward.]

**AMERICAN.** What sort of a physiognomy has it, anyway?

**LITTLE MAN.** [Still faintly] I don't see anything but—but spots.

**GERMAN.** Oh! Ha! Pfui!

[The DUTCH YOUTH laughs.]

**AMERICAN.** I am told that is not uncommon amongst babies. Perhaps we could have you inform us, ma'am.

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** Yes, of course—only what sort of——

**LITTLE MAN.** They seem all over its——[At the slight recoil of everyone] I feel sure it's—it's quite a good baby underneath.

**AMERICAN.** That will be rather difficult to come at. I'm just a bit sensitive. I've very little use for affections of the epidermis.

**GERMAN.** Pfui! [He has edged away as far as he can get, and is lighting a big cigar]

[The DUTCH YOUTH draws his legs back.]

**AMERICAN.** [Also taking out a cigar] I guess it would be well to fumigate this carriage. Does it suffer, do you think?

**LITTLE MAN.** [Peering] Really, I don't—I'm not sure—I know so little about babies. I think it would have a nice expression—if—if it showed.

**AMERICAN.** Is it kind of boiled looking?

**LITTLE MAN.** Yes—yes, it is.

**AMERICAN.** [Looking gravely round] I judge this baby has the measles.

[The GERMAN screws himself spasmodically against the arm of the ENGLISHWOMAN'S seat.]

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** Poor little thing! Shall I——?

[She half rises.]

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Touching her] No, no——Dash it!

**AMERICAN.** I honour your emotion, ma'am. It does credit to us all. But I sympathize with your husband too. The measles is a very important pestilence in connection with a grown woman.

**LITTLE MAN.** It likes my finger awfully. Really, it's rather a sweet baby.

**AMERICAN.** [Sniffing] Well, that would appear to be quite a question. About them spots, now? Are they rosy?

**LITTLE MAN.** No—o; they're dark, almost black.

**GERMAN.** Gott! Typhus! [He bounds up on to the arm of the ENGLISHWOMAN'S Seat.]

**AMERICAN.** Typhus! That's quite an indisposition!

## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

[The DUTCH YOUTH rises suddenly, and bolts out into the corridor. He is followed by the GERMAN, puffing clouds of smoke. The ENGLISH and AMERICAN sit a moment longer without speaking. The ENGLISHWOMAN'S face is turned with a curious expression—half pity, half fear—towards the LITTLE MAN. Then the ENGLISHMAN gets up.]

**ENGLISHMAN.** Bit stuffy for you here, dear, isn't it?

[He puts his arm through hers, raises her, and almost pushes her through the doorway. She goes, still looking back.]

**AMERICAN.** [Gravely] There's nothing I admire more'n courage . Guess I'll go and smoke in the corridor.

[As he goes out the LITTLE MAN looks very wistfully after him. Screwing up his mouth and nose, he holds the BABY away from him and wavers; then rising, he puts it on the seat opposite and goes through the motions of letting down the window. Having done so he looks at the BABY, who has begun to wail. Suddenly he raises his hands and clasps them, like a child praying. Since, however, the BABY does not stop wailing, he hovers over it in indecision; then, picking it up, sits down again to dandle it, with his face turned toward the open window. Finding that it still wails, he begins to sing to it in a cracked little voice. It is charmed at once. While he is singing, the AMERICAN appears in the corridor. Letting down the passage window, he stands there in the doorway with the draught blowing his hair and the smoke of his cigar all about him. The LITTLE MAN stops singing and shifts the shawl higher to protect the BABY'S head from the draught.]

**AMERICAN.** [Gravely] This is the most sublime spectacle I have ever envisaged. There ought to be a record of this.

[The LITTLE MAN looks at him, wondering. You are typical, sir, of the sentiments of modern Christianity. You illustrate the deepest feelings in the heart of every man.]

[The LITTLE MAN rises with the BABY and a movement of approach .]

**Guess I'm wanted in the dining-car.**

[He vanishes. The LITTLE MAN sits down again, but back to the engine, away from the draught, and looks out of the window, patiently jogging the BABY On his knee.]

CURTAIN

THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

**SCENE III**

An arrival platform. The LITTLE MAN, with the BABY and the bundle, is standing disconsolate, while travellers pass and luggage is being carried by. A STATION OFFICIAL, accompanied by a POLICEMAN, appears from a doorway, behind him.

**OFFICIAL.** [Consulting telegram in his hand] 'Das ist der Herr'.

[They advance to the LITTLE MAN.]

**OFFICIAL.** 'Sie haben einen Buben gestohlen'?

**LITTLE MAN.** I only speak English and American.

**OFFICIAL.** 'Dies ist nicht Ihr Bube'?

[He touches the Baby.]

**LITTLE MAN.** [Shaking his head] Take care—it's ill.

[The man does not understand.]

**III—the baby—**

**OFFICIAL.** [Shaking his head] 'Verstehe nicht'. Dis is nod your baby? No?

**LITTLE MAN.** [Shaking his head violently] No, it is not. No .

**OFFICIAL.** [Tapping the telegram] Gut! You are 'rested. [He signs to the POLICEMAN, who takes the LITTLE MAN's arm.]

**LITTLE MAN.** Why? I don't want the poor baby.

**OFFICIAL.** [Lifting the bundle] 'Dies ist nicht Ihr Gepack'—pag?

**LITTLE Mary.** No.

**OFFICIAL.** Gut! You are 'rested.

**LITTLE MAN.** I only took it for the poor woman. I'm not a thief— I'm—I'm—

**OFFICIAL.** [Shaking head] Verstehe nicht.

[The LITTLE MAN tries to tear his hair. The disturbed BABY wails.]

**LITTLE MAN.** [Dandling it as best he can] There, there—poor, poor!

**OFFICIAL.** Halt still! You are 'rested. It is all right.

**LITTLE MAN.** Where is the mother?

**OFFICIAL.** She comet by next drain. Das telegram say: 'Halt einen Herren mit schwarzem Buben and schwarzem Gepack'. 'Rest gentleman mit black baby and black—pag.

[The LITTLE MAN turns up his eyes to heaven.]

**OFFICIAL.** 'Komm mit us'.

[They take the LITTLE MAN toward the door from which they have come. A voice stops them.]

**AMERICAN.** [Speaking from as far away as may be] Just a moment!

[The OFFICIAL stops; the LITTLE MAN also stops and sits down on a bench against the wall. The POLICEMAN stands stolidly beside him. The AMERICAN approaches a step or two, beckoning; the OFFICIAL goes up to him.]

## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

**AMERICAN.** Guess you've got an angel from heaven there! What's the gentleman in buttons for?

**OFFICIAL.** 'Was ist das'?

**AMERICAN.** Is there anybody here that can understand American?

**OFFICIAL.** 'Verstehe nicht'.

**AMERICAN.** Well, just watch my gestures. I was saying [He points to the LITTLE MAN, then makes gestures of flying] you have an angel from heaven there. You have there a man in whom Gawd [He points upward] takes quite an amount of stock. You have no call to arrest him. [He makes the gesture of arrest] No, Sir. Providence has acted pretty mean, loading off that baby on him. [He makes the motion of dandling] The little man has a heart of gold. [He points to his heart, and takes out a gold coin.]

**OFFICIAL.** [Thinking he is about to be bribed] 'Aber, das ist zu viel'!

**AMERICAN.** Now, don't rattle me! [Pointing to the LITTLE MAN] Man [Pointing to his heart] 'Herz' [Pointing to the coin] 'von' Gold. This is a flower of the field—he don't want no gentleman in buttons to pluck him up.

[A little crowd is gathering, including the Two ENGLISH, the GERMAN, and the DUTCH YOUTH.]

**OFFICIAL.** 'Verstehe absolut nichts'. [He taps the telegram] 'Ich muss mein' duty do.

**AMERICAN.** But I'm telling you. This is a white man. This is probably the whitest man on Gawd's earth.

**OFFICIAL.** 'Das macht nichts'—gut or no gut, I muss mein duty do. [He turns to go toward the LITTLE MAN.]

**AMERICAN.** Oh! Very well, arrest him; do your duty. This baby has typhus.

[At the word "typhus" the OFFICIAL stops.]

**AMERICAN.** [Making gestures] First—class typhus, black typhus, schwarzen typhus. Now you have it. I'm kind o' sorry for you and the gentleman in buttons. Do your duty!

**OFFICIAL.** Typhus? Der Bub—die baby hat typhus?

**AMERICAN.** I'm telling you.

**OFFICIAL.** Gott im Himmel!

**AMERICAN.** [Spotting the GERMAN in the little throng] here's a gentleman will corroborate me.

**OFFICIAL.** [Much disturbed, and signing to the POLICEMAN to stand clear] Typhus! 'Aber das ist grasslich'!

**AMERICAN.** I kind o' thought you'd feel like that.

**OFFICIAL.** 'Die Sanitatsmaschine! Gleich'!

[A PORTER goes to get it. From either side the broken half-moon of persons stand gazing at the LITTLE MAN, who sits unhappily dandling the BABY in the centre.]

**OFFICIAL.** [Raising his hands] 'Was zu thun'?

**AMERICAN.** Guess you'd better isolate the baby.

[A silence, during which the LITTLE MAN is heard faintly whistling and clucking to the BABY.]

**OFFICIAL.** [Referring once more to his telegram]

''**Rest gentleman mit black baby.**'' [Shaking his head] Wir must de gentleman hold. [To the GERMAN] 'Bitte, mein Herr, sagen Sie ihm, den Buben zu niedersetzen'. [He makes the gesture of deposit.]

**GERMAN.** [To the LITTLE MAN] He say: Put down the baby.

[The LITTLE MAN shakes his head, and continues to dandle the BABY.]

**OFFICIAL.** You must.



## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

[The LITTLE MAN glowers, in silence.]

**ENGLISHMAN.** [In background—muttering] Good man!

**GERMAN.** His spirit ever denies.

**OFFICIAL.** [Again making his gesture] 'Aber er muss'!

[The LITTLE MAN makes a face at him.]

**'Sag' Ihm': Instantly put down baby, and komm' mit us.**

[The BABY wails.]

**LITTLE MAN.** Leave the poor ill baby here alone? Be—be—be d—d to you!

**AMERICAN.** [Jumping on to a trunk—with enthusiasm] Bully!

[The ENGLISH clap their hands; the DUTCH YOUTH laughs. The

OFFICIAL is muttering, greatly incensed.]

**AMERICAN.** What does that body-snatcher say?

**GERMAN.** He say this man use the baby to save himself from arrest. Very smart he say.

**AMERICAN.** I judge you do him an injustice. [Showing off the LITTLE MAN with a sweep of his arm.]

This is a white man. He's got a black baby, and he won' leave it in the lurch. Guess we would all act noble that way, give us the chance.

[The LITTLE MAN rises, holding out the BABY, and advances a step or two. The half-moon at once gives, increasing its size; the AMERICAN climbs on to a higher trunk. The LITTLE MAN retires and again sits down.]

**AMERICAN.** [Addressing the OFFICIAL] Guess you'd better go out of business and wait for the mother.

**OFFICIAL.** [Stamping his foot] Die Mutter sall 'rested be for taking out baby mit typhus. Ha! [To the LITTLE MAN] Put ze baby down!

[The LITTLE MAN smiles.]

**Do you 'ear?**

**AMERICAN.** [Addressing the OFFICIAL] Now, see here. 'Pears to me you don't suspicion just how beautiful this is. Here we have a man giving his life for that old baby that's got no claim on him. This is not a baby of his own making. No, sir, this is a very Christ-like proposition in the gentleman.

**OFFICIAL.** Put ze baby down, or ich will gommand someone it to do.

**AMERICAN.** That will be very interesting to watch.

**OFFICIAL.** [To POLICEMAN] Dake it vrom him.

[The POLICEMAN mutters, but does not.]

**AMERICAN.** [To the German] Guess I lost that.

**GERMAN.** He say he is not his officier.

**AMERICAN.** That just tickles me to death.

**OFFICIAL.** [Looking round] Vill nobody dake ze Bub'?

**ENGLISHWOMAN.** [Moving a step faintly] Yes—I—

**ENGLISHMAN.** [Grasping her arm]. By Jove! Will you!

**OFFICIAL.** [Gathering himself for a great effort to take the BABY, and advancing two steps] Zen I gommmand you—[He stops and his voice dies away] Zit dere!

**AMERICAN.** My! That's wonderful. What a man this is! What a sublime sense of duty!

[The DUTCH YOUTH laughs. The OFFICIAL turns on him, but as he does so the MOTHER of the Busy is seen hurrying.]

**MOTHER.** 'Ach! Ach! Mei' Bubi'!

## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

[Her face is illumined; she is about to rush to the LITTLE MAN.]

**OFFICIAL.** [To the POLICEMAN] 'Nimm die Frau!'

[The POLICEMAN catches hold of the WOMAN.]

**OFFICIAL.** [To the frightened WOMAN] 'Warum haben Sie einen Buben mit Typhus mit ausgebracht?'

**AMERICAN.** [Eagerly, from his perch] What was that? I don't want to miss any.

**GERMAN.** He say: Why did you a baby with typhus with you bring out?

**AMERICAN.** Well, that's quite a question.

[He takes out the field-glasses slung around him and adjusts them on the BABY.]

**MOTHER.** [Bewildered] Mei' Bubi—Typhus—aber Typhus? [She shakes her head violently] 'Nein, nein, nein! Typhus!'

**OFFICIAL.** Er hat Typhus.

**MOTHER.** [Shaking her head] 'Nein, nein, nein!'

**AMERICAN.** [Looking through his glasses] Guess she's kind of right! I judge the typhus is where the baby' slobbered on the shawl, and it's come off on him.

[The DUTCH YOUTH laughs.]

**OFFICIAL.** [Turning on him furiously] Er hat Typhus.

**AMERICAN.** Now, that's where you slop over. Come right here .

[The OFFICIAL mounts, and looks through the glasses.]

**AMERICAN.** [To the LITTLE MAN] Skin out the baby's leg. If we don't locate spots on that, it'll be good enough for me.

[The LITTLE MAN fumbles Out the BABY'S little white foot.]

**MOTHER.** Mei' Bubi! [She tries to break away.]

**AMERICAN.** White as a banana. [To the OFFICIAL—affably] Guess you've made kind of a fool of us with your old typhus.

**OFFICIAL.** Lass die Frau!

[The POLICEMAN lets her go, and she rushes to her BABY.]

**MOTHER.** Mei' Bubi!

[The BABY, exchanging the warmth of the LITTLE MAN for the momentary chill of its MOTHER, wails.]

**OFFICIAL.** [Descending and beckoning to the POLICEMAN] 'Sie wollen den Herrn accusiren?'

[The POLICEMAN takes the LITTLE MAN's arm.]

**AMERICAN.** What's that? They goin' to pitch him after all?

[The MOTHER, still hugging her BABY, who has stopped crying, gazes at the LITTLE MAN, who sits dazedly looking up. Suddenly she drops on her knees, and with her free hand lifts his booted foot and kisses it.]

**AMERICAN.** [Waving his hat] Ra! Ra! [He descends swiftly, goes up to the LITTLE MAN, whose arm the POLICEMAN has dropped, and takes his hand] Brother; I am proud to know you. This is one of the greatest moments I have ever experienced. [Displaying the LITTLE MAN to the assembled company] I think I sense the situation when I say that we all esteem it an honour to breathe the rather inferior atmosphere of this station here

## THE LITTLE MAN. A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

Along with our little friend. I guess we shall all go home and treasure the memory of his face as the whitest thing in our museum of recollections. And perhaps this good woman will also go home and wash the face of our little brother here. I am inspired with a new faith in mankind. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to present to you a sure-enough saint—only wants a halo, to be transfigured. [To the LITTLE MAN] Stand right up.

[The LITTLE MAN stands up bewildered. They come about him. The OFFICIAL bows to him, the POLICEMAN salutes him. The DUTCH YOUTH shakes his head and laughs. The GERMAN draws himself up very straight, and bows quickly twice. The ENGLISHMAN and his WIFE approach at least two steps, then, thinking better of it, turn to each other and recede. The MOTHER kisses his hand. The PORTER returning with the Sanitatsmaschine, turns it on from behind, and its pinkish shower, goldened by a ray of sunlight, falls around the LITTLE MAN's head, transfiguring it as he stands with eyes upraised to see whence the portent comes.]

**AMERICAN.** [Rushing forward and dropping on his knees] Hold on just a minute! Guess I'll take a snapshot of the miracle. [He adjusts his pocket camera] This ought to look bully!

CURTAIN