

# **THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock**

A Play in Five Acts Based on a novel by Robert Hichens

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# THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

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- ACT I

- Scene I. A drawing room in Mrs. Verulam's mansion in London, in the 1890s.

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- ACT V

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Etext by Dagny

### CHARACTERS:

Mrs. Verulam

Marriner, Mrs. Verulam's maid

Mrs. Van Adam

Mrs. Verulam's butler

Mr. Hyacinth Rodney

Bun Emperor (Mr. Lite)

Empress (Mrs. Lite)

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Harrison, the Empress' butler  
Mr. James Bush  
Mr. Ingerstall  
Duchess  
Duke  
Lady Pearl  
Mr. Bliggins  
Jacob Minnick

## ACT I

### Scene I. A drawing room in Mrs. Verulam's mansion in London, in the 1890s.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, Marriner! Oh, Marriner how terribly hot it is.

**Marriner**

The heat is severe, ma'am, for this season of the year.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I am as pale as Pierrot.

**Marriner**

I beg pardon, ma'am?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Pierrot, Marriner, is the legendary emblem of but it is too hot for history. (spying roses) What is all that?

**Marriner**

From Mr. Hyacinth Rodney, ma'am. They are remarkably fine specimens, ma'am. I often think

**Mrs. Verulam**

Yes, Marriner, what do you think?

**Marriner**

That we are like flowers, ma'am. We fade and die so soon.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Dear me, Marriner, what original thoughts you have.

**Marriner**

I can't help them coming, ma'am. They seem to take me like a storm, ma'am.

**Mrs. Verulam** (examining a tray of cards)

Oh, more cards. What curious names people are born with! Why will so many people call?

**Marriner**

I think they wish to see you, ma'am.

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**Mrs. Verulam** (glumly)  
That is the problem.

**Marriner**  
I love problems, ma'am.

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Then solve this one. Why do people with immortal souls spend their lives leaving tiny oblong cards on other people with immortal souls whom they scarcely know, and don't care a straw about? Why do they do it, Marriner?

**Marriner**  
Might I speak, ma'am?

**Mrs. Verulam**  
I ask you to.

**Marriner**  
I don't feel convinced their souls are immortal, ma'am. I have my doubts, ma'am.

**Mrs. Verulam**  
You're certainly in fashion. But, what makes it all the more strange if we have only one life, why should we waste it in leaving cards?

**Marriner**  
Very true, ma'am.

**Mrs. Verulam** (rising dramatically from her seat)  
Marriner, we are fools! That is why we do it. That is why we do a thousand things that bore us and other people. Give me all those notes.

(Marriner brings the notes.)

**Mrs. Verulam** (after opening several)  
Oh, I can't open any more! Heavens! Are we human, Marriner? Are we thinking, sentient beings, that we live this life of absurdity? Thus do we deliberately complicate our existence already so complicated, whether we will or no. Ah, it is intolerable. The season is a disease. London is a vast lunatic asylum.

**Marriner**  
Oh, ma'am!

**Mrs. Verulam**  
And we, who call ourselves civilized, are the incurable patients. Give me something to read. Let me try to forget where I am and what I am.

(Marriner brings a journal.)

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Marriner, why do you give me this to read?

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**Marriner**

I thought you had not seen it, ma'am.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Leave me, Marriner.

(Marriner curtsies and exits.)

**Mrs. Verulam** (turning to her squirrel in its cage)

Tommy, listen to me. Do you know that you are like me? Do you know that I, too, am in a cage that I, too, am revolving in a prison, where everything must go round and round? I am so tired of it, Tommy, so tired of my cage and yet, do you know, half the world is trying to get into it? And cannot! Isn't that absurd?

(Reenter Marriner, followed by Mrs. Van Adam.)

**Marriner**

Mrs. Van Adam!

**Mrs. Verulam**

Dearest Chloe!

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Darling Daisy!

**Mrs. Verulam**

Marriner, say not at home this afternoon.

**Marriner**

Yes, ma'am. (exits)

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, Chloe But, why is your hair cut so short?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Oh, it is so hot in Florida that I wanted to have as little about me as possible.

**Mrs. Verulam**

It makes you look just like a man!

**Mrs. Van Adam**

I'll grow it again.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Have you brought a maid?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

No.

**Mrs. Verulam** (indicating a seat beside her)

Come and sit down. It's so strange for us to be together again. How many years is it?

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**Mrs. Van Adam**

And now, you're a widow and the darling of London!

**Mrs. Verulam**

And you By the way, how is Mr. Van Adam?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

I am told he is quite well.

**Mrs. Verulam**

You are told! You are told!

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Your house is delicious! Florida is lonely. It was cool of me to cable you I was coming. But, you don't mind?

**Mrs. Verulam**

I am delighted. I've been wanting you to come for so long.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

And the season is just beginning?

**Mrs. Verulam** (sighing)

Yes. It's just beginning.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

It's perfect.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Chloe, when I was in Paris, I was a little fool.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

You think I'm still pretty, don't you?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Lovely, with that short hair.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

And immensely rich. Give me London to play with.

**Mrs. Verulam**

But, my dear

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Yes. You can do it. You are the pet of society.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Nonsense.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

If you only knew how I long to get into it!

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**Mrs. Verulam**

If you only knew how I long to get out of it!

**Mrs. Van Adam** (looking at the salver What a heap of invitations.

**Mrs. Verulam** (bored)

Today's.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

May I look at them?

**Mrs. Verulam**

If you like. They're stupid.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Stupid! To have the honor to meet the Prince and Princess of (hugging her) Oh, you darling! Take me with you oh, do take me with you.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Where?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

To see the Prince and the Princess.

**Mrs. Verulam**

You will find it terribly dull.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Dull? Never!

**Mrs. Verulam**

You don't understand things. You don't know what London society is for a woman.

**Mrs. Van Adam** (rapturously)

Heaven!

**Mrs. Verulam**

Purgatory. We have to talk when we have nothing to say. We have to be made love to

**Mrs. Van Adam** (delighted)

Ahh

**Mrs. Verulam**

Eat when we are not hungry. Stand like sheep in a pen for hours at a stretch.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Yes, but the other sheep!

**Mrs. Verulam**

All sheep baa in the same way.



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**Mrs. Van Adam**

Mercy, darling! You a farmer!

**Mrs. Verulam**

No. It was James Bush who taught me all about sheep.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

James Bush?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Yes.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Is Mr. Bush in society?

**Mrs. Verulam**

He? Never!

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Oh, then, don't let's talk about him any more.

**Mrs. Verulam**

All right. But, you must know I have come to a great resolution.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

What is it?

**Mrs. Verulam**

That this season is my last. I intend to leave town by the first of July.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

The first of July. Oh, by that time, I shall know everybody, and

**Mrs. Verulam**

Be as weary as I am.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Be able to manage for myself. Besides, darling, society won't let you leave it.

**Mrs. Verulam**

That's the terror which pursues me night and day. I have made many attempts. Once, I lost all my fortune

**Mrs. Van Adam**

What?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Gave out that I had, you know.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

And, what happened?

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**Mrs. Verulam**

It was dreadful. Everybody rallied round me. Have you ever been rallied round?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Never.

**Mrs. Verulam**

It's most fatiguing. It's worse than the Derby. I believe there's only one way in which I could do it.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

What way is that?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Compromise myself seriously.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

How?

**Mrs. Verulam**

I could be divorced.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Divorced! Would that help you much?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, it would save me. I should be out of everything! Alas, I was born respectable. And besides, my husband is dead, so I cannot divorce. But, tell me about Mr. Van Adam. Why isn't he with you?

**Mrs. Van Adam** (evasively)

Well, you see his oranges

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oranges?

**Mrs. Van Adam** (hurriedly)

Yes, he grows them on a gigantic scale, and they can't be left.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Chloe, remember, we were in school together.

**Mrs. Van Adam** (brazening it out)

But, it is true. Oranges require a great deal of looking after.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, well, if you prefer to keep me in the dark, I won't say another word.

**Mrs. Van Adam** (owning up)

You're right. It's not the oranges.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Of course not.

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**Mrs. Van Adam**

Mr. Van Adam and I have parted.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Parted!

**Mrs. Van Adam**

We are separated.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Legally?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Divorced, actually.

**Mrs. Verulam**

You divorced him already?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

How rapidly you jump to conclusions.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Jump! But

**Mrs. Van Adam**

I did not say I divorced him. Now, did I? Did I? Oh, I do dislike these implications.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I hope HE divorced you for something American.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Now, what do you mean?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, disliking Thanksgiving, or clams, incompatibility I think you call it.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

No, it was an English action I was divorced for.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Than, it was for something bad?

**Mrs. Van Adam** (hotly)

No, not at all! He is one of those men with a temperament if he loves you and he did love me.

**Mrs. Verulam**

A temperament! Now, please, don't abuse a man for being deformed. I'm afraid you've done something dreadful.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

No, no. At first, we were fashionably unhappy together. I liked his fury, but there was no variety in him at all. And, one does look for variety in a man.

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**Mrs. Verulam**

Or, in other men.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

When we were in New York, it was all right. I like a man angry in public. It shows he's really fond of you.

**Mrs. Verulam**

You always were a bit perverse.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

But then, we went to Florida. And I meant him to be good-tempered, for we were quite alone. But, he couldn't stop.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, dear.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Then, B. B. Rockmetteller came to visit.

**Mrs. Verulam**

B. B. Rockmetteller?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

His dearest chum. He was to sympathize with my husband. That's why he was invited. But, as soon as he arrived, my husband became furiously jealous of him. And then, Huskinson, that's my husband, attacked B. B. It was my duty to say B. B. was harmless.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Certainly.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

But my doing so brought him to the verge of madness. Huskinson went away for a week.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Leaving B. B.?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Yes. And then he came back, and said we had deceived him while he was away.

**Mrs. Verulam**

How unreasonable! If he hadn't meant you to deceive him, he shouldn't have gone.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

While B. B. was in the billiard room arguing with my husband, I was locking up the revolvers and packing my trunks. So, I went off. Next thing I knew, he was suing me for divorce.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Dreadful!

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Why dreadful? It was all done very quietly. Nobody will hear of it over this way. Besides, I am innocent.

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**Mrs. Verulam**

Then, why didn't you defend it?

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Because I was in the right!

**Mrs. Verulam** (agreeably)

Of course.

**Mrs. Van Adam** (picking up the paper and starting to read it)

Ah, this is your great paper! I want to see my name in it some day. (reading, shocked) Yoiks I do!

**Mrs. Verulam**

What is the matter? Are you ill?

**Mrs. Van Adam** (reading aloud)

A considerable sensation has been caused in Florida, by the Van Adam divorce etc. etc. which caused him to condemn not only his wife, but his trusted friend.

**Mrs. Verulam** (grabbing the paper and reading)

Dearest, you can never get into the cage now.

**Mrs. Van Adam** (bursting into tears)

Is it quite impossible?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Quite. If you were a man, that paragraph would open doors for you.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Oh, why am I not a man?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Marriner my maid she's marvelously well-informed about everything. Marriner might know. I cannot tell.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

And, I used to be a man.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Chloe, dear, collect yourself. Don't deceive yourself for a moment. You have always been what you are now a woman.

**Mrs. Van Adam** (doggedly)

No, on. Everybody said so.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I think you had better lie down quietly.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

It was at a masquerade ball. I dressed in a tweed suit. I still have it. It reminds me of happy days.

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**Mrs. Verulam**

I'm afraid you love B. B. I mean your husband.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

No, no.

**Mrs. Verulam**

You should have come over as a man, dear. Then London would have been at your feet.

**Mrs. Van Adam**

Suppose I should? Are you at home this afternoon?

**Mrs. Verulam**

No, not to anyone.

Ms. Van Adam Good. Let me go upstairs and change. Then, I want to talk to you ever so much. Oh, that horrible, wicked paragraph.

(Mrs. Verulam rings a bell and Marriner enters.)

**Mrs. Verulam**

Marriner, this is Mrs. Van Adam. I want you to take great care of her.

**Marriner** (to Mrs. Van Adam)

I trust the oranges are doing well, ma'am?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Marriner will show you to your room, dear.

(Exit Marriner with Mrs. Van Adam.)

**Mrs. Verulam**

Providence has at last heard my cry.

(Enter butler.)

**Butler**

Mr. Hyacinth Rodney.

**Mrs. Verulam** (a little puzzled, since she gave orders she was not at home)

But

(Enter Mr. Rodney.)

**Mrs. Verulam**

Thank you for your roses, a thousand times.

**Rodney**

I did not come to be thanked for giving anyone pleasure. I come to bring glad tidings.

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**Mrs. Verulam**

I shall think of you as a herald angel.

**Rodney**

Flying ever to my heaven.

**Mrs. Verulam** (a little uneasy)

But, your tidings?

**Rodney**

My mission has been successful. The house is yours.

**Mrs. Verulam**

What house?

**Rodney** (astonished)

Surely, you have not forgotten that you commissioned me to get you Ribton Marches for the race week?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, now I remember.

**Rodney** (pained)

Only now? I opened delicate negotiations weeks ago. One false step would have been instant destruction.

**Mrs. Verulam** (touched)

My dear Mr. Rodney

**Rodney**

Instant destruction! Owing to the temper of the owner, Mr. Lite, the Bun Emperor.

**Mrs. Verulam** (nonplussed)

The Bun Emperor!

**Rodney**

So he is known to all the children in the British Isles to whom he caters, as the saying goes.

**Mrs. Verulam** (not having realized she was dealing with such an exalted personage)

Dear me.

**Rodney**

Mr. Lite is a man of very peculiar proclivities. I made a minute study of them in order to carry out your instructions.

**Mrs. Verulam**

It is most good and industrious of you. (aside) Whatever shall I do with this house?

**Rodney**

Oh, I shrink from nothing in such a cause. He's a man of violent temper devoted to home life and extremely suspicious of strangers.

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**Mrs. Verulam**

What a terrible combination of idiosyncrasies.

**Rodney**

Precisely. There were moments when despair seized me, and I could have cried aloud like an Eastern Pilgrim Allah has turned his face from me.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I am quite ashamed to have given you so much trouble. But, how did you succeed?

**Rodney** (rising)

Well, I found there was only one string I could play on his love of titles. I I ventured to make a promise on your behalf.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Indeed!

(Mrs. Verulam walks about in agitation.)

**Rodney** (guiltily)

I said that you would use your influence with Lady Sophia.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Mamma!

**Rodney**

With regard to the buns. Did I go too far?

**Mrs. Verulam**

And, what is poor Mamma to do? I cannot ask her to eat a bun, Rodney, I really can't do that!

**Rodney**

Such a shocking notion would never have occurred to me. No, no, Lady Sophia must only say a word in praise of his buns. (pulls out paper) It reads thus: I beg to say your buns look very inviting, they should be nourishing. Your influence on the digestion of English children, I feel almost certain, will commend itself to historians of the national diet. Lady Sophia Tree. I think Mr. Disraeli could scarcely improve upon that.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Mamma has only to sign that?

**Rodney**

Merely to sign, I assure you.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, then she will do it. She likes to see herself in print. And, you did this for me?

**Rodney** (clearing his throat twice and twitching respectfully as if he were about to receive a Knight of the Garter from the Queen) Yes, ma'am.

(Enter butler.)



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**Butler:** Her Grace the Duchess of Southborough and her daughter.

(Enter the Duchess.)

**Duchess**

So glad to find you at home. We quite thought you would have been out on such a lovely day. (butler whispers in her ear) What do you say what? Not enough! An extra sixpence? Certainly not! Tell him to go. (exit butler) (resuming, to Mrs. Verulam) But, I know you are quite independent of weather. In that respect, you are quite like Southborough he always says (butler reenters and resumes whispering to her) What? What do you say? He won't go? No, I shan't. Tell him so. Not another penny. We only took him from Whitely's. It isn't more than two miles. (more whispering) No, no! Certainly not!

**Rodney**

Can I be of any service?

**Duchess**

Oh, thank you, Mr. Rodney. It is only an extortionate cab man. Send him away.

**Rodney** (going out with butler)

Certainly.

**Duchess**

Southborough always defies the weather. He is heroic in that regard. He is like

**Rodney** (returning)

It is quite right. Lord Birchington is gone.

**Duchess**

Birchington? You don't mean to tell me the fellow was my brother?

**Rodney**

Er, yes.

**Duchess**

Oh, I fancied I knew his face. That quite accounts for the attempt at extortion. Birchington is always in difficulty and I dare say cab driving doesn't pay too well. I hope, I hope, Mr. Rodney, you didn't give in to his demands?

**Rodney**

Well, really he seemed so convinced. Just a sixpence, you know.

**Duchess**

That is the way to become poor, Mr. Rodney. You ought to take more care of your money, and not let my worthless brother prey on you.

**Butler** (entering)

Mr. Van Adam.

(Enter Mrs. Van Adam, dressed in a tweed suit.)

**Mrs. Van Adam** (aside to Mrs. Verulam)

Introduce me as my husband.

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**Mrs. Verulam**

The Duchess of Southborough Mr. Van Adam.

**Rodney**

I had no idea, no notion at all, that you knew Mr. Van Adam.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, yes.

**Rodney**

Besides, I fully understood he was in Florida.

**Mrs. Verulam**

That makes that paragraph in the World all wrong.

**Rodney**

I wrote it.

**Mrs. Verulam** (frightened)

You!

**Van Adam**

An invitation lured me from my orange groves.

**Duchess**

Oh, then you are staying with Mrs. Verulam?

**Van Adam**

Yes.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, yes. (feebly) Oh, yes, yes.

**Duchess** (in a hard voice)

Might I ask for a coup of tea, Mrs. Verulam?

**Mrs. Verulam** (uneasily)

Certainly. (pouring tea carefully, but putting in fifteen lumps of sugar) You don't take tea with sugar I think?

**Duchess** (speaking to Mr. Van Adam)

Gouty? Ah, you and Pearl would sympathize. Let me introduce you to my daughter. Mr. Van Adam Lady Pearl McAndrew.

**Van Adam** (bowing)

Charmed.

**Pearl**

I am not gouty, mother, I am only melancholy. And that is because I cannot, I will not blind myself to the actual condition of the world around me.

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**Duchess**

Oh, my dear, Carlsbad would cure you. (to Mr. Van Adam) But, unfortunately, I cannot afford to send her there just at present.

**Rodney**

I believe that in the climate of Florida gout is practically unknown. My friend Lord Bernard Roche, Lord Bernard Roche, now in New York City, tells me so.

**Van Adam**

Oh, yes. Lord Bernard, oh yes, certainly.

**Rodney**

Lord Bernard is a man to go confidently into any trouble.

**Van Adam**

Oh, certainly. Most undoubtedly, yes.

**Duchess**

But, in London, you must forget all your troubles. London is the most cheerful place imaginable.

**Pearl** (distraught)

Oh, mother!

**Duchess**

Yes, Pearl, for a healthy person. No doubt you are staying for the season.

**Van Adam** (after looking at Mrs. Verulam)

Yes.

**Duchess**

Well, then, you will soon be quite cheerful again. I'd warrant you have been over before, I suppose.

**Van Adam**

Paris, not London.

**Pearl**

London is horrible. The Bois de Boulogne makes me sick.

(Enter butler)

**Butler**

Mr. Ingerstall.

**Ingerstall** (entering on Pearl's last line)

Paris is the only place in the world.

**Pearl**

Really!

**Ingerstall** (getting tea from Mrs. Verulam)

Really. There is no art except in Paris. No possibility of dining out of Paris. No good dressmaker beyond the

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limits of Paris. No perfect language except the perfect language of Paris. No gaiety, no verve, no acting, no dancing, no love-making worthy of the name, except in Paris.

**Duchess**

Then, Mr. Ingerstall, why on earth do you always live in London?

**Ingerstall**

Because I find more caricatures here. (to Mrs. Verulam) Please introduce me to that gentleman.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Mr. Ingerstall Mrs. . . . Mr. Van Adam.

(They bow to each other.)

**Ingerstall**

You know Paris?

**Van Adam**

Yes, quite well.

**Ingerstall**

You agree with me, then?

**Van Adam**

Certainly.

**Ingerstall**

There, your Grace, you see: there are others of my opinion.

**Duchess**

Ah, but Mr. Van Adam doesn't know London yet.

**Rodney**

Oh, he must.

**Ingerstall**

Then, I'll show it to him! Oh, I'll show it to him. Oh, I'll show Mr. Adams London!

**Rodney**

Van Adam.

(Ingerstall looks puzzled at first.)

**Ingerstall**

Mr. Van Adam, London. Will you come with me?

**Van Adam**

Thank you very much.

**Ingerstall**

That's settled then! And then, we'll see, Duchess, whether this gentleman doesn't swear by blessed Paris to the end

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of his life.

**Duchess**

Really, Mr. Ingerstall, you ought to go to the morgue instead of heaven when you die! (turning to Mrs. Verulam)  
What are your plans for the season, Mrs. Verulam? Are you going to Ascot?

**Mrs. Verulam**

I haven't thought much about it yet.

**Rodney** (sternly)

Mrs. Verulam has secured through me

**Ingerstall**

You really ought to run across the Channel to Longchamps for the races

**Duchess** (ignoring Ingerstall and addressing Rodney)

Indeed! Which house do you mean?

**Rodney**

Ribton Marches.

**Duchess**

The Bun Emperor's palace! Mrs. Verulam, you are a public benefactor. Is Mr. Van Adam to be of your party?

**Mrs. Verulam** (helplessly)

Yes.

**Duchess**

Ribton Marches is a palace. It would hold a regiment.

**Rodney**

Oh, I scarcely thing Mr. Lite would care to entertain a

**Duchess**

I know Mr. Lite very well a most worthy generous man. He has given me thousands of buns.

**Ingerstall** (maliciously)

Does your Grace eat so many? If you want a really perfect bun, go to the maison

**Duchess** (sharply)

For the poor children. All we have had to do is let the good man use our name in his advertising. Have you made up your house party yet?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Not yet. The house is

**Duchess**

Palace.

**Mrs. Verulam**

scarcely settled yet.

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**Rodney**

I'll settle it tonight!

**Duchess**

If your party is not made up, Mrs. Verulam, I am sure the Duke and I and Lady Pearl will be most happy to join it.

**Pearl**

Indeed, mother, I do not wish

**Duchess**

My dear, nonsense; it will do your gout a deal of good, breathing pine laden air if Mrs. Verulam can find room for you.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I shall be delighted.

**Duchess**

Then that is settled. (rising) It will be an advantage to you to have me at Ribton Marches, because I know all the ins and outs of the place. Well, really, we must be getting on. Come, Pearl.

**Pearl** (rising and winking at Mr. Van Adam)

Come and see us.

Mr. Van Adam Many thanks.

**Pearl**

Come tomorrow. Mrs. Verulam will give you our address.

**Van Adam**

With pleasure.

**Pearl**

Goodbye, Mr. Ingerstall. Perhaps you won't mind just coming out with us to hail a cab?

(Ingerstall rises. Exit Pearl and the Duchess.)

**Ingerstall** (to Mrs. Van Adam)

I'll come tomorrow morning to show you London. (exiting)

**Mrs. Verulam** (hoping to get rid of Mr. Rodney)

You mustn't forget your engagement, Mr. Rodney.

**Rodney**

I am not likely to forget any detail of my service to you. But we do not dine till half past eight.

**Mrs. Verulam**

The trains are slow on your line, I believe.

**Rodney**

Still, they do not take three hours to do six miles.

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**Mrs. Verulam** (closing her eyes and whispering)  
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want

**Rodney** (craftily)  
I have heard much of you, Mr. Van Adam.

**Van Adam**  
Indeed?

**Rodney**  
Yes, I have even had the pleasure of writing a little word about you.

**Van Adam**  
May I ask where?

**Rodney** (tapping the paper)  
Here.

**Van Adam**  
Indeed!

**Mrs. Verulam**  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures

**Rodney**  
May I have the pleasure of showing you. You will notice a slight mistake at the close. It would not have crept in had I known that we were to have the unexpected pleasure of welcoming you to London. I shall be glad to rectify my error next week.

**Van Adam**  
I am obliged to you.

**Rodney**  
In the meanwhile, anything I can do to render your short stay among us agreeable, I shall be only too happy

**Mrs. Verulam**  
My cup runneth over.

**Rodney**  
Mitching Dean, my home, is entirely at your disposal. Mitching Dean has an admirable rose garden.

**Van Adam**  
Roses! Ah, English roses are exquisite. I have some dark red ones in my room here.

**Rodney**  
Dark red roses in your room? (surveying the room, then turning to Mrs. Verulam in horror) My train! I must catch it! I must go! I must indeed! (low to Mrs. Verulam) Betrayed! Traitor! (aloud) My train! Goodbye.

(Mr. Rodney exits hurriedly in some disorder. After a moment Mrs. Van Adam bursts into tears and Mrs. Verulam into laughter. They are both in hysterics.)

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**Mrs. Verulam**  
Chloe!

**Mrs. Van Adam**  
Daisy!

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Oh, oh, oh.

**Mrs. Van Adam**  
Ah, ah, ah.

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Don't, or I shall begin again. (pause) But, how could you?

**Mrs. Van Adam**  
But, why did you say nobody would be let in?

**Mrs. Verulam**  
I told Marriner. She must have forgotten to tell James.

**Mrs. Van Adam**  
Oh, Daisy, I wonder if it would be possible

**Mrs. Verulam**  
No, no!

**Mrs. Van Adam**  
Oh, yes, yes!

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Poor Mr. Rodney. They were his roses I put in your room, Chloe.

**Mrs. Van Adam**  
But Marriner

**Marriner** (appearing suddenly)  
Yes, ma'am.

**Mrs. Van Adam**  
Marriner will keep the secret.

**Marriner**  
With my very best blood, ma'am! With my very best blood!

CURTAIN

## ACT II



**Scene I. Ribton Marches, the palace of the Bun Emperor. The Emperor follows the Empress in. The Empress is evidently upset and is crying.**

**Emperor**

My dear! My dear!

**Empress**

What's the good of my dear this and my dear that! It's done and it can't be undone.

**Emperor**

I can't go back on my word, Henrietta.

**Empress**

Then, why give it? All for a bit of publicity that won't sell half a million buns.

**Emperor**

I think you underrate Lady Sophia Tree's influence. She will have very great weight in infant circles.

**Empress**

Well, even if she sells a million, it ain't worth it!

**Emperor**

Is not, Henrietta, is not.

**Empress**

Bother! I said ain't.

**Emperor** (trying to placate her)

If I had not secured Lady Sophia's endorsement when I had the opportunity, it would have haunted me the rest of my life. Go for the names. That's always been my motto. Go for the names.

**Empress**

Yes, go for the names and go out of our home!

**Emperor**

Don't my dear, don't.

**Empress**

To be turned out in the streets at this time of our lives! And these Londoners Oh, what will they do to the place? (sobbing) I can't bear it.

**Emperor**

Do to the place? Let them try it. Mr. Harrison has his orders.

**Empress**

Orders to do what?

**Emperor**

Ah, let them try it. Let them only try and they will repent it, Henrietta, to the last day of their lives.

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**Empress**

What are you going to do?

**Emperor**

My duty!

**Empress**

What then? These 'ere Londoners ain't coming?

**Emperor**

Are not, my dear, are not. Yes, come they must. But Mr. Harrison has orders to keep an eye on them morning, noon, and night.

**Empress**

Night what the ladies?

**Emperor**

Only till they retire, of course. If they damage the bedrooms, they shall answer for it.

**Empress**

Ah, what a man you are!

**Emperor**

They shall find out what sort of a man I am if they try their tricks here. If so much as a bit of wood is chipped off, or so much as one parrot is missing, they'll repent it to their lives' end, they will.

**Empress**

Having it out of them won't make it up to us for all we have to go through.

**Emperor** (sighing)

It's only for six days.

**Empress**

It will seem six years. And the cottage. Why was it only made to hold a fisherman?

**Emperor**

My dear, the house in Camberwell was small.

**Empress**

And so were we, then. But we're a bit bigger now.

**Emperor**

I do believe I've been a fool.

**Empress**

You've never spoken a truer word. All I say is don't let that Mr. Rodney come near me. Do they bring their own linen?

**Emperor**

I'm afraid that we have to provide everything but the food.

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**Empress**

Oh, Perry, Perry, that it should come to this!

**Emperor**

Still, Mrs. Verulam is

**Empress** (interrupting)

A silly sounding name!

**Emperor**

She's the one who pays the rent.

**Empress**

Mr. Van Adam. I call that a low name. I never could abide Bible names. Never trust a man with a Bible name.

**Emperor**

The Duchess of Southborough.

**Empress**

She's better.

**Emperor**

Yes, her Grace does know a good bun.

**Empress**

Mr. Hyacinth Rodney! Fiddle! Foul breath! Mr. Ingerstall. What do you think of him?

**Emperor**

Sounds like one of those nasty fellows that go worming themselves about in places where they've no business. He'd better not let Mr. Harrison catch him worming himself about when he's here! Henrietta, even if I have to turn them all out, neck and crop! Mr. James Bush. Bush, James Bush. Well, Henrietta?

**Empress**

I don't know what to think of it. It's not a name to marry.

**Emperor**

Is it a name to have in our home? A name to have sleeping in our beds?

**Empress**

Ah, is it?

**Emperor**

I have my doubts. Shall we ask Mr. Harrison, my dear? We can always rely on him. He can judge of a name on first hearing.

**Empress**

We might do worse.

**Emperor** (calling loudly)

Harrison!

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**Harrison** (the butler enters after a moment)

Yes, sir.

**Emperor**

Mr. Harrison, I believe you are a man of the world.

**Harrison**

I am, sir.

**Emperor**

You can judge of a name at first hearing, I presume?

**Harrison**

Sir?

**Emperor**

You can tell what you think about a name the first time you hear it?

**Harrison**

Oh certainly, sir! Oh, most certainly!

**Emperor**

Very well then. Now, give me your attention, if you please. I have here the name James Bush. James Bush.

**Harrison**

Indeed, sir, indeed.

**Emperor**

Well, Mr. Harrison? Well?

**Harrison**

Not at all, sir. Oh, dear no; not at all. By no means.

**Emperor**

And, what do you mean by that, Mr. Harrison?

**Harrison**

James Bush, sir, oh dear, no, sir! James bush, not at all, by no means, on no account whatever!

**Emperor**

There, Henrietta! There! You see what Mr. Harrison thinks of him. A feller like that! A feller like that! Mr. Harrison, we depend upon you entirely in this affair! Keep your eye on him!

**Harrison**

Sir!

**Emperor**

I say, keep your eye especially on that feller James Bush.

**Harrison**

Certainly, sir.

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**Emperor**

Don't let him be too much for you, Mr. Harrison. He may have ways, there's no knowing. But, I hold you responsible.

**Harrison**

I shall see to him, sir. Depend upon me.

**Emperor**

We do, don't we, Henrietta?

**Empress (sobbing)**

Mercy knows, we do.

**Harrison**

I shall not disappoint you, madame. I shall know how to act.

**Emperor**

I believe that. And, I may add that, if you should cop If you should catch this feller James Bush at any of his games you understand.

**Harrison**

Certainly, sir.

**Emperor**

And, if you should be one too many for him, we shall not forget it. You will have no reason to regret hereafter any steps you need to take. You understand?

**Harrison**

Quite so, sir. I shall take them, sir. You may depend.

**Emperor**

Mr. Harrison.

**Harrison**

Sir.

**Emperor**

Remember, they are not to feed the parrots. On no account are they to tamper with the parrots.

**Harrison**

Certainly not, sir.

**Emperor**

If you see any symptom to do anything of that kind, you are to check it, Harrison.

**Harrison**

If I see any symptom I am to check it.

**Emperor**

If a single parrot goes wrong, my wife will hold you responsible, Mr. Harrison. You understand that? (Harrison bows in affirmation) The pup we shall take with us, Mr. Harrison.

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**Harrison**

The pup you will take

**Emperor**

Don't echo me, Mr. Harrison, don't echo me. I will not allow myself to be echoed.

**Harrison**

Certainly not, sir. Oh, by no means.

**Emperor** (seeing a long telescope)

Pack that telescope. With that I shall be able to command a considerable portion of the grounds. If I see anything going on here of which I disapprove, I shall summon you by telephone. You will hold yourself in readiness.

**Harrison**

I shall, sir.

**Emperor**

Each morning, you will be round by eight o'clock with your report.

**Harrison** (pained)

By eight, sir?

**Emperor**

Well, seven if you prefer it. I shall be up. I shall be ready.

**Harrison** (eagerly)

Oh, eight will be fine, sir. I shall be round by eight.

**Emperor**

Be careful to omit nothing from that report. Make it ample. I shall have damages out of these people if they dare exceed in any way or behave in an unseemly manner. You have your own idea of what is unseemly, Mr. Harrison?

**Harrison**

Oh, decidedly so, sir.

**Emperor**

Then, I shall hold you responsible. Henrietta?

**Empress**

Darling.

**Emperor**

Are you ready?

**Empress** (dejected)

Oh, is it time?

**Emperor**

Mr. Harrison.

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**Harrison**  
Sir?

**Emperor**  
Is it time? Have you the paper? (Harrison nods twice) Read it out.

**Harrison**  
Arrivals, Monday, June 10th at 12:30: Mrs. Verulam, Mr. Rodney, Mr. Van Adam with Mrs. Marriner, maid. At 3:15: Mr. James Bush.

**Emperor**  
Enough, Mr. Harrison. I give you warning!

**Harrison** (stupefied) Give me warning, sir! Am I to go, sir? (faints)

**Emperor**  
Mr. Harrison! Get up! Get up from the floor, sir. Come, come, Mr. Harrison. Rise. Be a man. A glass of water, my dear.

**Empress** (runs about and returns with water)  
Here.

**Emperor**  
There, there you're spilling it. You mistook my meaning.

**Harrison** (weakly)  
Sir?

**Emperor**  
I meant that I give you warning that we will hold you responsible for Mr. Bush.

**Harrison** (recovering)  
Oh, certainly, sir! I beg pardon! Oh, by no by all means.

**Emperor**  
The time has come when we must leave you. We go with breaking hearts.

**Empress**  
We do, we do.

**Emperor**  
Do your duty, but don't be put upon. Don't be a slave.

**Harrison**  
Hear, hear!

**Emperor**  
Mr. Harrison!

**Harrison**  
Sir!

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**Emperor**

Is the pony cart at the door?

**Harrison**

It is, sir! Oh, most decidedly.

**Emperor**

Goodbye.

(The Empress faints.)

**Emperor**

Mr. Harrison.

**Harrison**

Sir!

**Emperor**

Help me with the missus. Prepare for the Londoners.

(Lights dim, then go up. The Londoners begin to arrive. Enter Mrs. Van Adam, dressed as a man, with Mr. Rodney, Mrs. Verulam, etc.)

**Van Adam**

Oh, what an enormous house. We shall be lost in it!

**Rodney**

I assure you, it is quite cozy.

(Harrison comes forward, observing them like a Bobby guarding against the theft of the crown jewels.)

**Harrison**

I am Harrison.

**Mrs. Verulam**

What a very remarkable looking man. He seems anxious. Is he ill?

**Rodney**

Oh no, I think not. I fancy he superintends the servants.

**Van Adam**

He appears to me like a detective who hasn't mastered the first principle of his profession.

**Rodney** (blandly)

And, may I ask what that is?

**Van Adam**

Not to look like one, old chap.

Parrot voices Hallelujah. Polly dreadful drunk. What's o'clock, Polly?

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(Sound of corks popping.)

**Rodney**

Pray, don't be alarmed.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Is it the same man?

**Rodney**

No, no. They are only the Bun Emperor's talking parrots.

(Rodney, Mrs. Verulam, and Van Adam exit. After a moment a phone bell rings.)

**Harrison** (going to the phone)

Yes, sir. Yes, sir. (pause) I was in the hall watching. (pause) Not much to look at, sir. (pause) I didn't take particular notice. (pause) Rely on me, sir. (pause) The parrots shall not be tampered with. (pause) Mr. Bush, sir. (pause) I will indeed. (pause) He shall not, sir. (pause) Oh, most decidedly, sir.

(Reenter Van Adam and Mrs. Verulam.)

**Van Adam**

Mr. Rodney's getting very officious, almost as bad as that horrid little Mr. Ingerstall. He wants Harry to shave me!

**Mrs. Verulam**

Don't let him, Chloe. Don't be shaved!

**Van Adam**

My dear, is it likely? I told him I always did it myself.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I wonder Mr. Rodney hasn't more tact. I keep forgetting you're a man. When shall I remember?

**Van Adam**

Perhaps when you get no more invitations.

**Mrs. Verulam**

The goal is in sight.

**Van Adam**

Well, you are the most extraordinary creature. Daisy, the Duchess means mischief.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I know.

**Van Adam**

I'm surprised she came.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I'm not. She is a woman of courage and resource. In spite of all, she has hopes for you and Lady Pearl. And besides, she hasn't got another invitation for Ascot.

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**Van Adam**

Lady Pearl is rather a shame. Still, I've cured her of the gout.

**Mrs. Verulam**

He'll be here soon. I'm so excited.

**Van Adam**

He! Oh, of course, Mr. Bush. Now, don't spoil everything by flirting with James Bush instead of with me.

**Mrs. Verulam**

James Bush never flirts. He doesn't know the meaning of the word. (spying Rodney) Oh, here you are, Mr. Rodney.

**Rodney** (suspiciously)

Yes, here I am.

(A loud noise off.)

**Rodney**

What's all this? What the devil is it all?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Dear me! Can this be Mr. Bush already?

**Rodney**

I fancy so.

(Enter Bush.)

**Van Adam**

By Jove, Bungay Marshes to the front.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, Mr. Bush, I am so glad to see you. Let me introduce you to Mr. Rodney and Mr. Van Adam. The rest of the party comes later.

**Bush** (to Harrison, who is peering from behind a plant)

What are you after?

**Harrison** (emerging)

Oh, nothing, sir, not at all, by no means.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Really, Mr. Rodney. That man is becoming very unnecessary. Can't you keep him in order?

**Rodney**

I will endeavor. I will certainly endeavor.

**Mrs. Verulam** (to Bush)

Would you like to go to your room, or will you rest a little first?

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**Bush** (pointing to a chaise lounge)  
I'll rest there. I'll have a lie down. A good lie down.

(Bush and Rodney go out.)

**Mrs. Verulam** (eagerly)  
Well, dear, well?

**Van Adam**  
Well

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Isn't he simple straightforward natural?

**Van Adam**  
Oh, quite, quite natural.

**Mrs. Verulam**  
After all the shams and hypocrisies of society, what a contrast, what a relief!

**Van Adam**  
Yes.

**Mrs. Verulam**  
I knew (kissing Van Adam) you would agree with me.

**Van Adam**  
Daisy, don't!

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Oh, heavens! Could anyone have seen?

**Van Adam**  
No, it's all right. I believe Mr. Bush is the largest human being I have ever seen.

(Van Adam and Mrs. Verulam exit. After a moment, enter Mr. Ingerstall, the Duchess, the Duke, and Lady Pearl from another direction.)

**Ingerstall**  
I think the French way of doing things is by far the best. A Frenchman marries not with the intent of resigning his freedom, but of gaining it.

**Duchess** (icily)  
The French point of view is scarcely a suitable subject of discussion.

**Duke**  
Gaining his freedom, ha, ha !

(The Duke and Ingerstall wander out. Lady Pearl retires, leaving the Duchess with Mr. Rodney.)

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**Duchess** (icily)

She has been going too far, Mr. Rodney. She has disgusted London.

**Rodney**

Disgusted London? Oh, no, impossible!

**Duchess**

You think nothing could, but you are wrong. There is a limit, even in our world, and she has overstepped it. You will see tomorrow in the Enclosure. Martha Sage intends to cut her.

**Rodney**

Impossible.

**Duchess**

Nothing is impossible to Martha Sage. I assure you, it is fact.

**Rodney** (passionately)

It must be prevented. It must, it shall!

**Duchess**

I don't see how it can be. You don't know Martha Sage.

**Rodney**

But, indeed, I do. She has often dandled me in her arms.

**Duchess** (amazed)

What, recently?

**Rodney** (distractedly)

Yes, yes. Often.

**Duchess**

Possibly you may have some influence over her then. And, if what you say is true, I hardly think Martha has the right to take the initiative.

**Rodney**

When I was a little boy.

**Duchess**

Oh, that's nothing. She dandled everybody. But she doesn't allow anybody to influence her decisions.

**Rodney**

Then, Mrs. Verulam must be kept out of the Enclosure. She must and shall!

**Duchess**

That will only delay the matter. In fact, Mr. Rodney, and this I tell you in the strictest confidence, if I don't observe a very great change in Mrs. Verulam's behavior during this week, I am very much afraid that I shall be obliged to agree with Martha. And now, it is tea time.

(Exit the Duchess and Mr. Rodney. Enter Marriner and Mrs. Verulam from a different direction.)

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**Marriner**

Oh, ma'am!

**Mrs. Verulam**

Why do you say "Oh, Marriner? What should you have to say "Oh" about?"

**Marriner**

Many things, ma'am, many things.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Have many more thoughts taken you like a storm?

**Marriner**

They have, indeed, ma'am.

**Mrs. Verulam**

If you think so much, you ought to keep a life boat about you.

**Marriner**

Might I speak, ma'am?

**Mrs. Verulam**

You may, certainly.

**Marriner**

Ma'am, I've heard a dreadful thing.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Dreadful! What about?

**Marriner**

About you.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Who from?

**Marriner**

From Mrs. Crouch, ma'am, her Grace's woman.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Indeed.

**Marriner**

Oh, ma'am, she says, ma'am, that Lady Sage is

**Mrs. Verulam**

Don't break down, Marriner.

**Marriner**

She says that, oh, that Lady Sage is going to have nothing at all to do with you in the Enclosure tomorrow, ma'am. Oh dear, dear me! Oh, ma'am, don't go don't go there. We should not place ourselves between the feet of our

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enemies, ma'am; no, no, we should not.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Dear me

**Marriner**

There is worse, ma'am. There is treachery, indeed, and there is treason, ma'am

**Mrs. Verulam**

Really, one would think that Guy Fawkes was staying in the house.

**Marriner**

No, ma'am. Indeed, it is not him.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Then, who is it?

**Marriner**

The Duchess.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Really?

**Marriner**

And it is all because of Mrs. Van Adam. Oh, do please tell them, ma'am.

(Enter Rodney.)

**Rodney**

Could I have a word with you?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Certainly.

(Exit Marriner, weeping.)

**Rodney**

Where do you think of watching the races tomorrow, may I venture to ask?

**Mrs. Verulam**

The Enclosure, of course.

**Rodney**

Shall we sit down for a minute? (they sit) The Enclosure! Don't you think it likely to be excessively hot?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Why especially hot in the Enclosure?

**Rodney**

Well, you know, it is so much more crowded than any other part of the course. Don't you think so?

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**Mrs. Verulam**

Where else shall I go?

**Rodney**

I have ventured to take a couple of excellent boxes. You see one or two of our party Mr. Ingerstall and Mr. Bush have not got cards for the Enclosure.

**Mrs. Verulam**

It is very good and thoughtful of you. Still, I think I shall go to the Enclosure. Mr. Van Adam is anxious to see what it is like.

**Rodney** (stiffening)

Indeed.

**Mrs. Verulam**

And then, there are all my friends, especially Lady Sage and

**Rodney**

Lady Sage grows a little wearisome, I fancy.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Do you think so? Oh, I love her recollections.

**Rodney**

I think her too historical for hot summer weather, I confess and then, her insatiable appetite for dates.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, surely she wouldn't eat dates in the Enclosure.

**Rodney**

The dates of battles, dear lady, not dried fruits. Really, if you prefer to go to the Enclosure, I strongly, very strongly advise you to avoid Lady Sage. She is agreeable in a drawing room, but very Crimean, I do assure you, on a race-course. Do give me your word. I cannot bear to see you bored!

**Mrs. Verulam**

You are all kindness. I must go to the Enclosure. But I shall probably not see Lady Sage.

**Rodney** (aside)

Thank God!

(Reenter the Duke with Bush and several others.)

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, Mr. Bush.

**Bush**

You've got nice company here!

**Mrs. Verulam**

What?

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**Bush**

Well, I'm blowned! You've got nice company.

**Mrs. Verulam'** I hope so, indeed.

**Bush**

Mad, I suppose. Mad as Moses!

**Mrs. Verulam**

Ah, Mr. Bush, you mustn't make joke of so serious a subject as madness.

**Bush**

Joke! There's no joke! Where's the joke of being potted at like a rook in January? Joke, indeed joke!

**Mrs. Verulam**

A rook in January?

**Bush**

Ah, if I'd have stayed, he'd have had me. I wasn't eight paces off him.

**Duke**

Unless the man's a remarkably poor shot, I must say, I think Mr. Bush stood in some slight danger. Did you not stay then?

**Bush**

Stay? Not I! I just ducked down on all fours and came back like a beast through the rhododendrons.

**Duke** (pleasantly)

A very sensible posture and mode of exit under the circumstances. (to Mrs. Verulam) Who's your sportsman?

**Mrs. Verulam**

I have no idea. Oh, Mr. Bush, I can scarcely tell you how grieved I am, how horrified I am, that you should have been so nearly murdered and so soon after your arrival, too.

**Bush**

I should think so! A nice thing to happen to a respectable man!

**Mrs. Verulam** (bitterly)

Mr. Rodney, you never told me there was a murderer living in this neighborhood!

**Rodney**

I never knew it. (to Bush) Where did this incident occur?

**Bush**

I was walking in the garden looking at the mistakes the gardener here's been making.

**Rodney**

Yes, yes?

**Bush**

Presently, I came to a bit of a pond, with flowers afloat on it.



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**Rodney**

Ah and a cottage on the farther side?

**Bush**

Ay, where he fires from.

**Rodney**

The Bun Emperor.

**Duke**

Very unsportsmanlike to shoot from cover. Game haven't got a chance.

**Bush**

You're right there, chum, they haven't. Not unless they're as quick at dropping on all fours as I am.

**Rodney**

But, did you do anything?

**Bush**

No. I saw a fattish, smallish feller and a fattish, smallish woman by his side, staring out.

**Rodney**

The Empress, too. Well?

**Bush**

I didn't take any great account of them at first. I put my stick across the water to lay hold of some of the lilies, when, what does the fattish man do, but shout out: If you do it, I'll skin you. I didn't choose to notice his nonsense, and I just got hold of a lily when what do I see, but him with a gun at his shoulder about to fire away. So away I came, like a beast through the bush.

**Rodney**

The Bun Emperor is very touchy about his property.

**Duke**

A defender of the rights of property. A good conservative.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Still, he goes too far. Mr. Rodney, I must ask you to be kind enough to tell the Bun Emperor that I cannot have my house party shot at. Make it perfectly clear, please. As a hostess, I cannot, and will not, permit anything of that kind.

**Rodney**

Certainly, certainly. I see your point of view.

BLACKOUT

SCENE II. When the lights go up, Rodney is explaining the situation with the Bun Emperor to Mr. Bush and Mrs. Verulam.

**Rodney** (to Bush)

You are perfectly safe; you will not be hurt, I can promise you. Nobody will attempt to injure you.

Scene I. Ribton Marches, the palace of the Bun Emperor. The Emperor follows the Empress in. The Empress is

THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

**Mrs. Verulam**

You have persuaded him then? I knew you would have weight with him.

**Rodney**

My dear lady, I am happy to say that you have been totally misinformed as to the circumstances.

**Bush** (growling)

What? What?

**Rodney** (standing his ground)

Totally and absolutely misinformed.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Really, Mr. Rodney, what are you saying? Mr. Bush has been shot at.

**Rodney** (blandly)

I beg your pardon. I beg your pardon.

**Bush**

If I hadn't dropped, I shouldn't be here now.

**Rodney**

I assure you, my dear Mr. Bush, that you are laboring under an entire delusion. You might, with perfect safety, have retained an upright posture. It's true that Mr. Lite made use of some hasty, inconsiderate words about skinning

**Bush** (triumphantly)

There! (roaring) What did I say?

**Rodney** (aside)

Of which I entirely approve. (aloud) But, the words were rather metaphysical. As to the firing, however, you are quite mistaken. What you took for a gun was merely a large telescope. When you thought you were being shot at, you were merely being looked at.

**Bush** (indignant, he knows what he knows)

Telescope, indeed! Telescope, I dare say.

**Rodney** (smugly)

There is an appreciable difference between the two operations. I think you will allow that. So, you see, Mr. Lite can hardly be blamed at all.

**Mrs. Verulam**

He should be more careful the way he looks at people!

**Duke**

Well, well, it's good it's all settled. It's going to be a long day at Ascot tomorrow, and a top hat is not very comfortable in the heat.

**Bush**

Top hats are rubbish. I've only brought a straw.

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**Rodney** (flabbergasted)

But

**Bush**

I shan't wear naught but a straw tomorrow.

**Duke**

I hate to be overdressed.

**Rodney**

I beg your pardon. (trembling) I beg your pardon, but I must venture to say that I feel certain Major Clement will turn a straw hat off the lawn.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I quite agree with Mr. Bush, a straw hat is much more sensible.

**Rodney** (in anguish)

Merciful heavens

**Mrs. Verulam**

But, sometimes custom must be adhered to. Don't you think so, Mr. Bush?

**Bush** (surprised)

Eh?

**Mrs. Verulam** (reasonably)

Every man will be wearing a top hat tomorrow.

**Bush**

I've hoed and I've planted in a straw hat for thirty years.

**Rodney** (quickly)

There's no hoeing and planting on a race-course.

**Duke**

It would make the going a bit heavy.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I fancy, Mr. Bush, that as you will not have an opportunity of hoeing tomorrow, you will find it really pleasanter to be as everyone else is.

**Bush**

I haven't a-brought one. I say, I've only brought a straw.

**Rodney**

We must send a man to Windsor. (to Harrison who is passing by) Kindly bring us a yard measure.

**Harrison**

Oh, sir, oh, on no account.

CURTAIN

Scene I. Ribton Marches, the palace of the Bun Emperor. The Emperor follows the Empress in. The Empress is

## ACT III

### Scene I. Same as in Act II. It is late the next night.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Where is Mr. Bush and Mr. Ingerstall?

**Rodney** (lazily)

I can't imagine.

**Duchess**

I dare say Mr. Bush is on a roundabout (merry-go-round). You say he is fond of being rustic, Mrs. Verulam?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Yes, but not in that way, I hope.

**Duchess**

It all goes together, love for the country and a passion for riding wooden horses to the sound of music. Depend upon it, Mr. Bush is on a roundabout.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Dear me! Mr. Rodney

**Rodney**

If Mr. Bush is fond of horse exercise, I think he should be permitted to enjoy it in all freedom.

**Duke**

There's a great deal of knack in sitting a wooden horse. Some people never acquire it. I knew a very excellent clergyman who was thrown three times by a deal cob which his cook rode perfectly the very first try.

Miss Bindler You ought always to give a horse of that material its head. If you try to hold him, you're done.

**Pearl**

Do you like Ascot, Mr. Van Adam?

**Van Adam**

It's heavenly. Like a dream.

**Pearl**

Have you nothing of the kind in America?

**Van Adam**

How can we when we have no aristocracy? Oh, I should like to make it my life's mission to create a grand aristocracy. I would begin by getting baronets they should be the thin edge of the wedge and everything else would follow.

**Duke**

To Burke instead of battle an army of armorial bearings!

THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

**Duchess** (to Mrs. Verulam)

Is Mr. Van Adam to be much longer with you?

**Mrs. Verulam**

I am afraid not in London. But we may go to Paris together in a week or two.

**Duchess**

Indeed! (furiously) Indeed!

**Mrs. Verulam** (coolly)

Or on the continent.

**Rodney** (to himself)

Is she mad?

(Enter Mr. Bush and Mr. Ingerstall. Bush's top hat is askew, and he has coconuts under his arm.)

**Ingerstall**

I would give one year of my life to take Mr. Bush to Montmartre. How he would appreciate it. He understands the exquisite poetry of vulgarity. He knows the bizarre effect of the roundabout he

**Duchess**

The roundabout? Didn't I say so?

**Duke**

You've been riding? Good exercise. Did you get a decent horse?

**Bush**

Haw!

**Ingerstall**

Splendid animal. I rode a pink, he a delicate green. I really never enjoyed Ascot so much never!

**Mrs. Verulam** (delighted)

How original you are and how bravely simple.

**Rodney** (aside)

She is mad!

**Mrs. Verulam**

Should we not all learn to find pleasure in what nature provides us? Instead of creating artificial amusements to titillate our baser appetites?

**Van Adam** (musing)

Does nature provide apple green horses?

**Rodney** (quivering with indignation)

Nature? Nature is scarcely decent!

**Duke**

And all the better for that!

ACT III

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**Mrs. Verulam**

The true path of pleasure lies where we never seek it, far, far from the conventions with which we surround ourselves. Oh, why, why are we so blind?

**Rodney**

I beg your pardon, I can see perfectly well and

**Mrs. Verulam**

You think you can see as the blind man does when he mistakes men for trees walking.

**Rodney**

I never made any such mistake. I never in my life supposed that I saw a tree taking active exercise. Really, I must protest.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Your very protestations prove your sad condition. But I, at least, will be blind no longer. Mr. Bush has opened my eyes. Mr. Bush stands to me for virtue.

**Duchess**

And what does Mr. Van Adam stand for?

**Mrs. Verulam** (sweetly, slyly)

Oh, everything. (to the Duchess) Mr. Bush, you must know, is full of maxims.

**Duchess**

Dear me! Is he related to a copy book?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh no! Not maxims of that kind. His are founded upon observation of the world of the earth. Aren't they, Mr. Bush?

**Bush**

There's naught like pea-poddin.

**Mrs. Verulam** (wonderingly)

Yes yes.

**Bush**

Look after the sheep and the sheep'll look after you.

**Duchess**

I don't know that I should care to be looked after by a sheep. I don't consider a sheep to be an efficient animal.

**Bush**

They wont a deal of mendin, a deal of mendin.

**Duke** (yawning)

Because they have no minds!

**Mrs. Verulam**

It's what we bring to a thing, isn't it?

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**Duchess**

What would you bring to a sheep?

**Bush**

Swedes to a sheep. Swedes. The stick to a woman.

**Duke** (delighted)

You believe in the rights of man, Mr. Bush? Eh? Eh? You stick to the old dispensation the walnut tree cure? What? What?

**Pearl**

I should be very sorry for the man who laid a finger on me. Very!

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh, Mr. Bush is only joking.

**Duchess** (staring straight at Mrs. Verulam)

A great many women would be the better for a whipping these days.

**Bush**

Never give a bullock sulfur never do it, or you'll repent of it.

**Duke**

And how about the bullock?

**Bush**

Let the bullock alone, and the bullock'll let you alone.

(Bush falls asleep, or appears to.)

**Rodney** (aside)

The Lord is my Shepherd

**Ingerstall**

He's asleep, isn't he?

**Duchess** (startled)

Asleep? Who?

**Ingerstall** (pulling out a sketchbook and rapidly sketching the sleeping giant)

Yes, he is. I've got something to show you.

**Mrs. Verulam** (hastily tugging up her skirts)

What is it? Is it alive?

**Ingerstall**

I fancy it is. Look at that!

**Duchess**

It's very like. Very true to life. Don't you think so, Mrs. Verulam?

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**Mrs. Verulam** (looking)  
Is it a bullock?

**Ingerstall** (pained)  
A bullock! It's Bush!

**Bush** (startled)  
Bush! Who's a-wanting me? Is it time to begin hoeing? (silence) Who wants Bush, eh?

**Ingerstall**  
I do. I ask you is that a bullock, or is it you? Come, come, I ask you? Is that a bullock, or is it you?

**Bush**  
Me! Me! What d'yer want?

**Ingerstall**  
What I say! What I say!

**Bush** (getting up and bending over Ingerstall's chair, holding both its arms in his gigantic paws)  
This, me!

**Duke** (egging him on)  
Go it!

**Bush** (bellowing at Ingerstall)  
I ask you, is this here a bullock, or is it me?

**Ingerstall** (frightened, after a pause)  
It's a bullock.

**Bush** (looking around triumphantly)  
That's all right.

(Mrs. Verulam and Mr. Van Adam exchange a smile.)

**Duchess** (aside, intercepting the glance)  
They're using Pearl. (getting up) Good night! (exit)

**Bush**  
The Duchess is very quick on her pins. Did she enter a walking race?

**Duke**  
Not since I married her.

**Bush**  
She should. She'd stand a ten to one chance.

(Bush falls back to sleep. After a bit of mimed conversation, the others go out. The light dims, then an old-fashioned telephone bell rings, repeatedly and wakes Bush.)



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Bun Emperor's voice Are you there? Damn you! Are you or aren't you there? Damn you! Are you there? Did I or did I not tell you you was to watch all night and be at the tube at three o'clock? Did I tell you or didn't I? If you aren't at the tube in another five minutes, tomorrow you shall be turned into the streets as surely as you are a living man! Into the streets you shall go, bag and baggage! Do you hear?

(Bush, waking up, lights a candle and looks around. He finally finds the telephone, but has obviously never seen a telephone before. More furious ringing!)

Bun Emperor's voice Are you there? Where are you? Where the blazes are you? Damn you, are you or aren't you there? What do you mean by it? Did I or did I not tell you to be there at three o'clock? Did I or did I not?

**Bush**

No!

Bun Emperor Oh, you're there at last, are you? I wonder you have the impudence to come. Keep me dancing here for an hour and more!

**Bush**

Keep on dancing! Keep it up!

Bun Emperor What do you say?

**Bush**

Dance away and be damned!

Bun Emperor Tomorrow I'll skin you! D'ye hear what I say? Tomorrow when you come round with your report, I'll skin you!

**Bush**

I shan't come round.

Bun Emperor (cannot believe his ears)

What?

**Bush**

Got to blazes!

Bun Emperor Why, damn you

**Bush**

Keep your hair on!

Bun Emperor You, you

**Bush**

There's naught like pea-poddin.

Bun Emperor I'll, I'll

**Bush**

Look after the sheep and the sheep'll look after you.

ACT III

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Bun Emperor Damn, damn. Double damn!

**Bush**

Never give a bullock sulfur, or you'll repent of it. Keep on dancing. Go to blazes, go! How's yourself? Has the dancing done for yer? Would you like to skin me now? Come on, I'm waiting to be skinned. Yes, I am. I'm ready for it. Come and skin me, come!

(Bush, greatly satisfied with himself laughs and goes out. After a minute a sleepy Harrison comes in. The telephone bells rings again.)

Bun Emperor If you don't come round, as sure as you're a living man, at the end of the week, I'll tear you limb from limb.

**Harrison** (frightened)

Sir!

Bun Emperor If you don't come round I say by eight

**Harrison**

But, sir, I shall be round. Depend upon me; I shall be there to the moment. Oh, most decidedly.

Bun Emperor Oh, you're coming, are you?

**Harrison**

Oh, most certainly, sir. Could you doubt it?

Bun Emperor Then, as soon as you come, I'll skin you!

**Harrison**

Sir!

Bun Emperor At eight, I'll skin you to to the moment, I will; and Mrs. Lite says exactly similar.

(Harrison faints.)

BLACKOUT

**Scene II. The Bun Emperor's cottage the next morning. Harrison approaches a little bridge leading to the cottage. The Emperor spots him and comes out ready to do battle.**

**Emperor**

Come on!

**Harrison** (not budging an inch)

Sir!

**Emperor**

Come on, or you'll repent of it to the last hour of your mortal life, you will.

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**Harrison**

Oh, by all means, most certainly. Oh, most decidedly yes. Oh, indeed rely on

**Emperor**

Make haste!

**Empress**

Oh, you wicked, ungrateful man!

**Emperor**

Come in, this moment! (Harrison does not move) Come in! Do you defy me?

**Empress**

Wicked, wicked man!

**Harrison**

Let me explain, sir. Oh, indeed, I will explain.

**Emperor**

Coward! You know I can't come out to get at you! You know I've given my word to that fiddle-faced feller!  
Coward.

**Empress**

Cowardly custard!

**Harrison**

I will not come in to be skinned. No, I will not! No, I will not, if I stay here till the Doomsday, no, indeed!

(The Empress and Emperor hold a whispered imperial conference.)

**Emperor** (furiously)

You'd better come in.

(Harrison does not move, and this precipitates another whispered conference.)

**Emperor**

I'll keep my hands from you, but come in you shall!

**Harrison**

Sir!

**Emperor**

Come in, I say, and I'll keep my hands off you.

**Harrison**

And the missus, sir? She will not attempt to injure me? Oh, dear, no, no, on no account whatever.

**Empress** (grudgingly)

I won't either.

## THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

Narrator Mr. Harrison's fear was extreme, so extreme that his mind became brilliant, and he formed a plan of campaign.

### **Harrison**

Lord, sir, Lord. The doings of the Londoners. Their goings on! Their manners with the telephone! Their tamperings with the parrots. Their proceedings of a night time. Lord, sir, Lord! I am driven mad. It is no wonder, oh no, indeed! By no means. On no account whatever!

### **Emperor**

The worst has come, Henrietta, the worst has come along.

### **Harrison**

And worse than that, sir, you may depend upon me.

### **Empress**

Our little home. They are breaking up our home. What did I say? What did I always and ever say?

(The Emperor and Empress weep.)

### **Harrison**

It began yesterday. It began with them throwing me from one of your hammocks in which I was concealed to watch, according to your orders. Throwing me out on my face, sir, flat and laughing at what they had done.

### **Empress**

The brutes! The inhuman things! The brutes!

### **Harrison**

It was Mr. Rodney what done it with his own hands and Mrs. Verulam standing by and laughing to split her sides.

### **Empress**

Hussy! Thieving hussy!

### **Harrison**

But there was worse to come. I was watching Mr. Bush according to your directions at the telephone, punctual to the moment when her ladyship came down dressed only in a shawl and then Mr. Bush took me from behind, sir, like a coward, and if I escaped with my life, it is a wonder. Oh most decidedly, a wonder!

### **Empress**

And only in her shawl!

### **Emperor**

My dear, my love, remember the presence of Mr. Harrison.

### **Empress** (low to the Emperor)

I'll skin you when he's gone!

### **Emperor**

Mr. Harrison, I was mistook. You have done your duty, and myself and Mrs. Lite shall not forget it. You will receive those perquisites which are your bounden due. Though, whatever you meant through the telephone, mercy only knows.

Scene II. The Bun Emperor's cottage the next morning. Harrison approaches a little bridge leading to ~~50~~ the cottag

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**Empress**

Yes, mercy knows.

**Harrison**

Through the telephone, sir. I was mad, sir. They had drove me mad most decidedly, yes they had.

**Emperor**

Was you mad when you says dance away and be damned?

**Harrison**

Sir?

**Emperor**

Was you mad when you says to Mrs. Lite, Go to blazes. ?

**Harrison**

Oh, most decidedly, oh undoubtedly I was, sir.

**Emperor**

And when you tells me to give a bullock sulfur?

**Harrison**

Did I, sir?

**Emperor**

Mr. Harrison, you did. And I was to keep my hair on, look after the sheep, and again be damned, Mr. Harrison.

**Harrison**

It was madness, sir. It was indeed. It must have been, oh, not a doubt of it! There can be no question a bullock sulfur dance and be damned. Oh dear! Oh dear! It was madness, oh most certainly.

**Emperor**

Enough, Mr. Harrison, enough! Mrs. Lite and me, believing that you was driven mad will overlook the expressions which should not have come from you to such as us. Enough, Mr. Harrison, enough.

BLACKOUT

**Scene III. Ribton Marches, later that afternoon. The Duke, the Duchess, Lady Pearl, and Mr. Bush are in the gardens.)**

**Duchess**

Dear me, what an influx of gardeners. It gives the grounds a crowded appearance. This must be a terribly expensive place to keep up.

**Bush**

If they keep on as they're keepin' now, there won't be a bloomin' flower within fifty miles of this place tomorrow.

**Duke**

If those men were my gardeners, I should have them up before the nearest magistrate for damaging my property. (to a waiter who offers tea) No tea, thanks. A whisky.

Scene III. Ribton Marches, later that afternoon. The Duke, the Duchess, Lady Pearl, and Mr. Bush are in the gardens.

THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

**Pearl**

How self conscious they look!

**Duchess**

Gardeners always do. They think themselves the only artistic people among the wage earning classes. Silly!

(Enter Mr. Rodney, dripping wet.)

**Duke**

Wet? Much better to take your liquids internally.

**Rodney**

Wet? I am saturated! I am drenched! These liberties are really unpardonable. I must change. (exit)

**Duchess**

How very strange. They all appear to be watching us. Are they a party of mesmerists, do you think? Really, it can scarcely be mere idle curiosity.

**Pearl**

That one chap looks to me like a third rate detective.

**Duke**

They all look like third rate detectives.

**Van Adam** (shocked)

Detectives! (aside, glancing around warily) Do they know?

**Duke** (aside)

Must be after me, again. Been shadowed for forty–five years. (drawing Bush aside) See those men?

**Bush**

What?

**Duke**

See those men who watered Rodney?

**Bush**

Ha, ha. Rodney'll be sprouting. Rodney'll be sprouting.

**Duke**

They are detectives.

**Bush**

What are they a–doing? What are they here for?

**Duke**

I'll let you into a secret. They're here for me. You're a bit of a dog yourself. You want watching, too, what? The husband who would trust you would soon find himself in Queer Street what? (goes off, laughing)

**Bush** (aside)

Here's a go. The Duke must have set them on me. The Duchess must be mad for me. Here's a bit of fun. I'll have

Scene III. Ribton Marches, later that afternoon. The Duke, the Duchess, Lady Pearl, and Mr. Bush are on the ga

THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

me a lie-down.

(Bush sits and falls asleep. Reenter Rodney in a dry suit.)

**Pearl**

I hope you are none the worse for your immersion?

**Rodney**

I fear I cannot hope to escape rheumatic fever. To do so would indeed be foolish optimism.

**Duke**

It's not every man who can say, with truth, he's been followed by detectives almost five and forty years.

**Van Adam**

It is not every man who can say anything at all with truth.

**Duke**

Do you doubt my word?

**Van Adam**

I'll believe yours, if you'll believe mine.

**Duke**

What? Then, you're followed by detectives, too?

(Lady Pearl comes up to Van Adam and the Duke.)

**Pearl**

Do you think it right to be happy, Mr. Van Adam? Do you think we are meant to have any joy here?

**Van Adam**

Oh dear, no. No, no! When we think all is going well, we are sure to see the gardeners. The gardeners are certain to come upon us.

**Pearl**

Do you think the misery of the world is caused by gardeners?

**Van Adam**

I do, indeed. I am perfectly certain of it.

**Pearl**

How strange! Why is it?

**Van Adam**

Because we are all gardeners. Do we not garden each others' souls?

**Pearl**

How exquisitely thoughtful you are!

**Duchess**

Well, Mr. Bush, how do you like the great world?

Scene III. Ribton Marches, later that afternoon. The Duke, the Duchess, Lady Pearl, and Mr. Bush are 58 the ga

THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

**Bush** (waking)

Eh? (glancing suspiciously at the Duke) Eh?

**Duchess**

Do you find it very different from your marshes? I suppose there are only frogs there?

**Bush**

When I catch a frog, I go for it.

**Duchess**

When? And where does the frog go?

**Bush**

Not far, not far!

**Duchess**

Dear me! I am afraid you're a bloodthirsty person like most men. But you're all the same; you must kill something. One man stalks a deer, another a frog. You shoot, I suppose?

**Bush**

No, I don't. Frog shootin' wouldn't pay. They go too slow.

**Duchess**

Heavens! The gardeners are all waiting at table. That creature with the sauce boat was clipping the hedge and

**Bush**

Hush, give over!

**Duchess**

Why? They

**Bush**

Give over, I tell yer!

**Duchess**

What is it?

**Bush**

They ain't gardeners.

**Duchess**

What! They are really footmen?

**Bush**

They ain't footmen!

**Duchess**

Not footmen! Then, what sort of servants are they?

**Bush**

They ain't servants. Give over. Don't talk so loud.

Scene III. Ribton Marches, later that afternoon. The Duke, the Duchess, Lady Pearl, and Mr. Bush are ~~54~~ the ga



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**Duchess**

Not servants! Then what are they here for?

**Bush**

They're here for us.

**Duchess**

For us?

**Bush**

You and me me and you!

**Duchess**

Me and you!

**Bush**

Ay, it's a go, ain't it?

**Duchess**

But, what on earth are they? Not no not dentists?

**Bush**

They're coppers! Don't holler!

**Duchess**

Coppers!?

**Bush**

Police. Private dicks.

**Duchess**

Private dicks?

**Bush**

A—watching of you and me detectives! Give over, now; here's one a—coming.

(The detective servant hands some tea clumsily.)

**Duchess**

But, who put them to watch us?

**Bush**

It's his doing.

**Duchess**

The Duke?

**Bush**

He thinks you and me is a—going on together.

(The Duchess faints.)

Scene III. Ribton Marches, later that afternoon. The Duke, the Duchess, Lady Pearl, and Mr. Bush are ~~55~~ the ga

CURTAIN

## ACT IV

### Scene I. Same as last scene in Act III. The next evening. The Duke accosts Mr. Bliggins, head of the gardener/detectives.

**Duke** (affably)  
What's your name?

**Bliggins**  
Bliggins, sir.

**Duke**  
Very well, Bliggins. Can you keep a quiet tongue in your head?

**Bliggins**  
I can be dumb, sir, when necessary.

**Duke**  
How nice to command your infirmities at will. You don't go blind when you go dumb, what?

**Bliggins**  
I can prevent it, sir, if I am induced.

**Duke**  
Do you know which of the gentlemen is Mr. James Bush?

**Bliggins**  
Ain't he the thin gent as Smithers set to and soaked?

**Duke**  
Hmm?

**Bliggins**  
Beg pardon, sir?

**Duke**  
Can you serve two masters, Mr. Bliggins?

**Bliggins**  
I can, sir, if I am induced paid in a proper manner, as you might say.

**Duke**  
Very well. First, let me say, I know you. You're a detective, and you've been put here to watch me. Be quiet man! (hushing Bliggins' protests) I ought to know a third rate detective by this time, considering that for five and forty years But, that is no matter. Lord Arthur Kempton's your employer, no doubt, or Sir John Morton. Hold your tongue! I've no time to hear your lies. Watch me as much as you like but keep an eye on the man with the red beard.

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**Bliggins**

Him as was talking so loud with the Duchess when she fainted.

**Duke**

The very man. James Bush watch him!

**Bliggins**

I will, sir.

**Duke**

Day and night.

**Bliggins**

The charge for night duty (the Duke presses money into his hands) I will, sir day and night.

**Duke**

Now go away, and get dumb.

(Exit the Duke and Mr. Bliggins in different directions. After a moment, enter the Duchess, Mrs. Verulam, and Mr. Van Adam.)

**Duchess**

I have known you for a long time, Mrs. Verulam. I remember you as a toddler.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Thank you.

**Duchess**

Not everyone can say as much.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I dare say not. No.

**Duchess**

Those were innocent days.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Toddlers are generally innocent, I suppose.

**Duke**

Innocent and open hearted.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Yes.

**Duchess**

In after life, it is different. The respectability of childhood becomes impaired.

**Mrs. Verulam** (innocently)

Does it?

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**Duchess** (staring pointedly at Mrs. Verulam and Mr. Van Adam)  
Does it not?

**Mrs. Verulam**  
I don't know.

**Duchess**  
I should have thought you did.

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Why?

**Duchess**  
Let me give you a piece of advice.

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Oh, I like advice.

**Duchess**  
Get rid of Mr. Van Adam. I speak as a true friend.

**Mrs. Verulam**  
Why should I get rid of him?

**Duchess** (turning purple)  
There are many reasons.

**Mrs. Verulam**  
I know of none. Poor boy. He needs me in his loneliness.

**Duchess**  
Good gracious! Gracious heavens!

**Mrs. Verulam**  
We ought to be kind to those whom the world has treated cruelly. Poor Mr. Van Adam. Poor, dear fellow.  
(sighing)

**Duchess**  
I am very ill. I am much upset.

(The Duchess exits. As she leaves, the Duke peeps in; he is watching for any sign or signal between the Duchess and Mr. Bush. Van Adam approaches Mrs. Verulam, and Mr. Rodney darts in to prevent any possibility of a tete-a-tete.)

**Van Adam**  
I do so want to tell you something. Have you read the World ?

**Mrs. Verulam**  
No; but I have something to Oh! Good night, Mr. Rodney; I hope your rheumatic fever will be better in the morning.

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**Rodney**

You are very good to say so, but I am thoroughly prepared for the worst.

(Rodney obstinately stays put. Van Adam clenches her fists. Bush ambles up to say good night.)

**Mrs. Verulam**

Good night, Mr. Bush. I must tell you what an impression your conduct at dinner made upon me.

**Bush**

Go along with yer! Rubbish! She's a deal too old.

(Bush goes out and sits with the Duke who has been peeping in.)

**Mrs. Verulam** (puzzled)

Now, what did he mean by that?

**Ingerstall**

Damn it, there's no absinthe. In Paris, one is not deprived of necessities as one is in England. Why don't I live in Paris? (to Bliggins) Where the devil's the absinthe?

**Bliggins**

Beg pardon, sir.

(Bliggins indicates to the Duke that he has been watching Bush.)

**Ingerstall**

Ventrebleu! Where is the absinthe, man? Haven't I told you that I don't drink those Scotch and Irish abominations?

**Bliggins**

Certainly not, sir, certainly not.

**Ingerstall** (recognizing Bliggins)

It's a gardener.

**Duke** (overhearing)

A gardener, Ingerstall! What nonsense!

**Ingerstall** (stubbornly)

It is. I observed him this afternoon. I remember his nose like a teapot, his eyes like marbles, his retreating chin, and protruding forehead, perfectly. His arms are too long for his body, and his legs too short for his height. He would make an admirable cartoon, admirable. I remember thinking so.

**Bliggins** (weeping)

Oh, sir.

(Exit Bliggins in tears.)

**Ingerstall** (calling after him)

You're a beautiful subject, beautiful.

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**Duke** (viciously)

You've frightened the fellow. Why didn't you leave him alone?

**Ingerstall**

Leave a monstrosity alone! Leave a human grotesque in ignorance of his superb infirmity! I'll draw him this minute.

(Exit Ingerstall in great determination.)

**Mrs. Verulam**

Would you mind fetching my fan, Mr. Rodney? I believe I left it on the table in the magenta boudoir.

**Rodney** (determined not to leave)

Forgive me if I send a servant for it. I can scarcely walk this fever seems increasing upon me.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Dear, dear. Then you must not dream of going to the races.

**Rodney**

The fresh air will do me good.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Mr. Van Adam can escort me. You must be wrapped at once in cotton wool and put in a darkened room with the temperature at least eighty.

**Rodney** (fiercely)

I consider it my duty not to spoil your week by giving way (looking at Van Adam) to illness, perhaps even to death.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Mr. Rodney! I have been thinking a cooling draught would do you good.

**Rodney** (hysterically)

It is most good of you, but I am perfectly cool perfectly cool. Nothing is more dangerous to a rheumatic than a thorough draught.

**Pearl**

It would be fatal, simply fatal. It would carry him off in the twinkling of an eye.

**Van Adam** (aside)

If only something would.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I meant a drink, not a breeze. Marriner could mix it for you, Mr. Rodney.

**Rodney** (wildly)

You are too kind, but I never take medicine. I prefer to put my trust in Providence and hope for the best.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I think that even the bishops and clergy would say that we Christians ought to assist the operation of Providence with appropriate medicine.

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**Van Adam** (aside) Castor oil, for my money.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Mr. Rodney, your fever makes you act very strangely.

**Rodney**

Yes, I suppose it does. You are not going to retire so early, Mr. Van Adam?

**Van Adam**

I am dead beat.

**Rodney** (clutching at Van Adam)

Then a smoke will do you good! You must have a cigar, you must! A drink, my dear Van Adam a long drink, a strong drink.

**Duke**

Hullo Van Adam, sitting up! Bravo!

**Van Adam** (shrugging helplessly to Mrs. Verulam)

Well

**Duke**

Have a light? (giving a cigar which Van Adam holds diffidently) Won't it draw?

**Van Adam**

No, I don't think it will. I'll I think I'll have a cigarette, thanks.

**Bush**

A pipe's the thing a pipe and a fistful of Bristol Bird's Eye.

**Van Adam**

Oh no, not a pipe.

**Duke**

Come and sit here. Now the women are gone, we can say what we like, what?

**Van Adam**

Yes, we can I suppose.

**Rodney**

A very good cigar, this.

**Duke**

I dare say it is when it's lighted.

(Rodney goes red from embarrassment, then lights eight to ten matches at the same time.)

**Duke**

Well done, Rodney! Set the place on fire! Tell us a good story, Rodney one of your rorty ones.

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**Rodney** (shriveling)

I fear I fear I am scarcely in the rorty vein tonight. Tomorrow, the next day, perhaps.

**Duke**

Well, then you tip us one, Van Adam. Go ahead.

**Van Adam**

Some girls in Florida do such lovely needlework.

**Duke**

Lovely needlework! That's a funny beginning for a pink 'un. Well?

**Van Adam**

They sit all day in the sun

**Duke**

Damned silly girls! Spoil their complexions. They should go into the shade, what? What? What?

**Ingerstall** (peeping in abruptly) I knew a grisette once who lived on the fourth floor in the Rue des Martyres.

(Ingerstall disappears suddenly when all stare at him.)

**Van Adam** (clearing throat)

They sit in the sun and work for their living.

**Duke**

Deuced tiresome, what Rodney?

**Rodney**

I confess I should prefer to be under the trees.

**Duke**

Well, go on, Van Adam, go on.

**Van Adam**

Well er well that's all.

**Duke**

All! Oh, come, I say, hang it, you're pulling our legs!

**Van Adam**

Oh, no. Why should I do such a thing?

**Duke**

But, hang it, your story'd do for a school treat or a grandmother's meeting. That's not the sort of thing Rodney cares for, what Rodney? (digging Rodney in the ribs and causing him to knock over a vase) Smashing up the furniture now, after trying to set the whole place on fire?

**Rodney**

An accident! Merely an unlikely accident, Duke. I shall make it good to Mr. Lite.



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**Duke**

If you don't, he'll probably skin you.

**Rodney**

Oh, really, really, I should not submit for a moment to an indignity of that nature.

**Duke**

Well, I dare say, even a moment of being flayed would inconvenience a chap. But, come, give us a limerick.

**Rodney**

I don't know any. I've never been to Ireland.

**Duke** (puzzled)

Ireland? What's Ireland got to do with it?

**Rodney** (innocently)

Everything, I should suppose.

**Duke** (disputing)

Anyone would think we were a lot of damned old women. We might as well be Sunday school teachers at a Methodist funeral.

(Bush snores loudly.)

**Rodney** (frightened)

What's that?

**Duke** (sneeringly)

Oh it's only Mr. Bush, asleep!

**Rodney**

He sleeps very loud for decent society.

**Duke**

He does sleep very loud. (whispering to Rodney) Does anything occur to you, Rodney?

**Rodney**

I beg pardon.

(Van Adam takes the chance and exits.)

**Duke**

Does anything occur to you with regard to this damned uproarious sleep?

**Rodney**

No, nothing at all. What should occur to me?

**Duke** (contemptuously)

Oh, Lord, I don't know. I don't know.

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**Rodney** (realizing Van Adam has eluded him)

Why, where the deuce is Van Adam? He's gone he's Does anything occur to you, Duke?

**Duke**

What?

**Rodney**

I say, does anything occur to you, Duke?

**Duke**

What about?

**Rodney**

About Van Adam's sudden going off in this strange manner?

**Duke**

No, except he's like some damned old woman. Americans are such puritans. What should occur?

**Rodney**

Oh, dear nothing, nothing at all. I I Good night.

(Exit Rodney, hurriedly in some confusion.)

**Duke**

Well, of all the sniveling, psalm singing, non-conformist Salvation Army sets of fellows that ever I met in my life this one takes the (Bush snores) That fellow's as broad awake as I am and broader! But, I'll be even with him, crafty as he is! (poking Bush in the ribs) Nice and quiet here. (Bush starts) I say, nice and quiet here. Nobody about.

**Bush** (waking)

What if there isn't?

**Duke**

I beg your pardon?

**Bush**

I say, what if there isn't anybody about?

**Duke**

Oh, nothing nothing! I was only thinking what games might be carried on in a big house like this and nobody the wiser.

**Bush**

Was you?

**Duke**

Midnight revels, what? What? What? (digging him in the ribs) You're a dog!

**Bush**

Give over! I ain't a dog!

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**Duke**

Yes, you are. I know you. I know all about it. Lady Drake's a fine woman a damned fine woman!

**Bush**

Lady Drake, she's all right go along with yer! She knows a thing or two. She's as downy as a goat in autumn, she is!

**Duke**

You like 'em downy, what? You like a crafty one? What?

**Bush**

Rather! Rather!

**Duke**

Because you're a downy one yourself? I know you!

**Bush**

Look after Lady Drake and she'll look after you.

**Duke**

And did you look after her in the hall at three o'clock, Mr. Bush? I saw you, I saw you both. I know all about it. (aside) I knew she was lying to me. I knew the fellow as a regular demon.

**Bush** (laying a big paw on the Duke's arm, confidentially)

She's a rascal.

**Duke**

Lady Drake?

**Bush**

She's a rascal! Set the gardeners on to her! She wants a-watching.

**Duke**

You're right. The gardeners should direct their attention to her. Shall I give them a hint to that effect?

**Bush**

Ay! Ay! Set them on to her! She wants a-watching!

**Duke** (aside)

Exquisite villain. Monument of evil. (aloud) I'll take your advice. I'll set them on to her.

(Bush relaxes and the Duke starts to leave, but runs into Bliggins.)

**Duke**

Watch that red bearded rascal! Watch him! Never let him from under your eyes.

**Bliggins**

But, it's the black gent with the specs as is the dangerous one, sir.

**Duke**

This red bearded villain he's the man. He's the fiend, I tell you. Dog his footsteps. Creep after him. Run him

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down! You shan't repent of it. Hush, not a word!

(Bliggins conceals himself and starts to watch Bush who has dozed off again.)

**Harrison's voice** After setting fire to the 'ouse oh, most decidedly, sir! Mr. Rodney is now smashing up furniture, Mrs. Lite, Chinese vases, sir. Oh, indeed, sir! And the Duke, ma'am, was splitting his sides with laughter while he done it. Oh, I'm keeping an eye on him. (bumping into Bliggins who is crawling around) Mrs. Bliggins, you were hired to watch, oh indeed!

**Bliggins**

I was watching, Mr. Harrison, sir. The red bearded man he's the fiend! Stalk him! I was doing it.

**Harrison**

Mr. Bliggins them was no words of mine oh, dear no, on no account whatever! My words to you was: Watch the lot. Oh, most certainly.

(Bliggins and Mr. Harrison go out, the lights go very dark. Bush continues to snore. Then Van Adam and Mrs. Verulam steal in.)

**Mrs. Verulam's voice** Now oh!

**Van Adam**

Shh! Be quiet, Daisy. It's only me. They're all asleep. Don't wake them.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I thought it was a ghost.

**Van Adam**

Can we sit down? (sitting) EEK! It's a cactus.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Over here. Now, I must tell you

**Van Adam**

And, I must tell you

**Mrs. Verulam**

Mrs. Rodney has heard from New York that your husband

**Van Adam**

And I have heard from Sherlock Holmes, a detective I employ, that my husband

**Together**

Is in England.

**Van Adam**

In Yorkshire. He may come to Ascot at any moment.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Do you want him back?

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**Van Adam**

Back! What do you mean?

**Mrs. Verulam**

He wants you back. That's why he's come. He's discovered that you never you know

**Van Adam**

So. He's learned his lesson.

**Mrs. Verulam**

But you can't remarry him in trousers.

**Van Adam**

I shall take them off. At once.

**Mrs. Verulam**

But, if you do, what will happen to me?

**Van Adam**

To you?

**Mrs. Verulam**

My reputation will be restored. I shall be ruined.

**Van Adam**

Then I must disappear and take off my trousers.

**Mrs. Verulam**

And give up society?

**Van Adam**

I feel as you do, now. I don't care any more. Love is the only thing. You were right.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Did I say that? Dear me!

**Van Adam**

You certainly did! What about Mr. Bush and Bungay Marsh?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Bungay Bungay your trousers.

**Van Adam**

Bungay my trousers! Surely, it would spoil them?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Listen. You want to change them, don't you? That's the place to do it. No one will look for us there. Let us go.

**Van Adam**

When?

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**Mrs. Verulam**

Now!

**Van Adam**

In the middle of the night?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Yes.

**Van Adam**

How will we get there?

(Enter the Duchess above with a weak light.)

**Duchess**

Who dares to take off his trousers in this house?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Run!

(Exit Mrs. Verulam and Van Adam. The Duchess slips while coming down the stairs. Enter the Duke.)

**Duke**

I've caught you at last, have I?

**Bush** (waking)

What? What?

**Duke** (jumping over the Duchess to get at Bush)

You shall not escape me! Your blood I'll have it!

**Bush** (running off quickly)

Catchin' comes before hangin'!

(The Duke follows Bush in hot pursuit. Enter Lady Pearl at the head of the stairs. She has a revolver.)

**Pearl**

This sort of thing won't do. It's time someone taught these robbers a lesson. (firing her pistol six times) Thieves!  
Thieves!

(Lady Pearl exits to reload. Enter Harrison.)

**Harrison**

If so much as the house is set afire, or the furniture is broke to pieces

(Harrison bumps into the Duke who is returning. The Duke attempts to strangle Harrison, but is beaten off and then goes to Rodney's door.)

**Rodney's voice** Don't dare to enter! I shall certainly kill the first man who enters.

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**Duke**

Rodney, Rodney! Let me in, Rodney.

**Rodney**

If I sell my life, I shall sell it dearly. I will not be slain without a struggle.

**Duke**

Rodney, don't be a fool. Don't be an ass, Rodney.

**Rodney**

I will! Nothing shall prevent me, nothing on earth. I will, I will.

(The Duke finally enters and pulls Rodney out.)

**Rodney**

I will die here! I will not be killed in the open! I will die here.

**Duke**

Come out of it, Rodney. You must act for me in this affair.

**Rodney**

No, no. I will not come out.

**Duke**

Come out you shall.

**Rodney** (woebegone)

Do it mercifully, then. Why It's you, Duke. I thought you were my friend.

(Lady Pearl, having reloaded her revolver, appears briefly on the stairs, firing again.)

**Duke**

Rodney, you're an ass. But, fool or ass, you must act for me in this affair. I've been trying to strangle that fellow Bush.

**Rodney**

Did you? Did you succeed in doing so, Duke?

**Duke** (bitterly)

He managed to get away from me. Just as I was on the point of choking the life out of him.

**Rodney** (with great feeling)

What a pity!

**Duke** (delighted)

Then, you will act for me?

**Rodney**

Yes, yes, with the greatest pleasure.

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**Duke** (with good humor)

You're a man after all! We'll kill him yet, between us. This sort of business makes a man think.

**Rodney**

It does, it does, indeed!

**Duke**

Then it's settled! I shall search for the fellow first. If I find him here, I'll just finish him off. If not, he'll make a beeline for Bungay. We'll follow him there, force a duel on him and bury him in his own cabbage patch!

CURTAIN

## ACT V

Scene: Bungay Marshes. A small farm house with out buildings. Jacob Minnick is hoeing.

**Jacob**

Darn it all. If it ain't 'im back already.

**Bush**

How's the vegs?

**Jacob**

Mortal spoilt by rain darn 'em. What's brought you back so soon?

**Bush**

What's that t'yer? Why don't yer get to hoeing?

**Jacob**

Why don't ye get to them as drew ye from hoeing?

**Bush**

Shut yer head; I've done with 'em.

**Jacob**

Oh, I dessay. But, who's seen arter the mushrooms? Who's a-cared for them there mellins while ye was with 'em?

(A noise of horses off.)

**Bush** (hearing the noise)

What's that?

**Jacob**

'Osses.

**Bush**

Stand before me! Cover me up! Throw sprouts on me. Throw sprouts on me.

(Bush falls to the ground and tries to conceal himself. Enter the Duke and Rodney.)



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**Duke**

You've pulled a hamstring in that horse, Rodney. Why the devil didn't you give him his head?

**Rodney**

Because I didn't dare, because I cannot I

**Duke** (seeing Jacob)

Here you, my man, can you tell me the way to the farm Bungay Marshes?

**Jacob**

Heh?

**Duke**

I want the farm, Bungay Marshes.

**Jacob**

What d'ye want 'un for?

**Duke**

What the deuce is that to you? Well, my man, don't you know where the farm is?

**Jacob**

Yes, I knows.

**Duke**

Where, then?

**Jacob**

'Ereabouts.

**Duke**

I know that.

**Jacob**

What did you arst me fer, then?

**Bush** (whispering)

Shovel the sprouts over me, d'ye hear? Cover me over!

**Duke**

I'll give you a taste of my whip if I have any more of your impudence. Tell me where the farm is, this moment.

**Jacob**

I have told ye.

**Duke**

Where is it?

**Jacob**

'Ereabouts.

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**Duke**

Where the devil's hereabouts?

**Jacob**

Where yer standing!

**Duke**

Where I'm standing? Why didn't you say so?

**Jacob**

I did say so.

**Duke**

Where's your master? Is he back?

**Jacob**

Heh?

**Duke**

Where the deuce is your infernal master?

**Jacob** (coolly)

'Ereabouts.

**Bush** (whispering)

Cover me up, damn you.

**Duke**

Where the deuce is that?

**Jacob**

Where I'm standing.

**Duke** (seeing Bush)

You rascal you infernal rascal! Then, I didn't strangle you after all?

**Bush** (rising)

Eh?

**Duke**

I didn't strangle you. But I will.

**Rodney**

Take a little time to think it over.

**Duke**

Rodney, hold your tongue. I thought I'd killed you.

**Bush**

You never touched me! I went too quick fer yer.

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**Duke**

I strangled someone. Who could it have been?

**Rodney**

Perhaps a detective.

**Duke**

Bliggins, perhaps. Never mind. What does matter, is that I'm going to kill you. Do you hear, sir?

**Bush**

I ain't deaf.

**Duke**

Right here.

**Rodney**

I implore you to be calm. Don't make a scene. If you must kill him, do so quietly.

**Duke**

Choose your weapon.

**Bush**

Eh?

**Duke**

Choose your weapon. What do you generally fight with here?

**Bush**

Hoes. Allus fight with a hoe and never repented of it.

**Duke**

Hoes! Well, if you like but I've never done so. I shall have to practice. That's only fair.

**Rodney**

Yes, yes. Take a week.

**Duke**

A week! An hour will be enough. Very well. Let it be hoes. Where can I get one?

**Bush**

At the Elephant and Drum.

**Duke**

Where the deuce is that?

**Bush**

The inn to Bungay. Down the road.

**Duke**

The very place, the very place. How far is it?

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**Bush**

Half a mile.

**Duke**

I shall be back in an hour or two, then. Cheerio. Come, Rodney. If you try to get away, I'll follow you to the ends of the earth. This way, Rodney.

(Exit Duke purposefully and Rodney hesitantly. Bush and Minnick grunt at each other and resume hoeing. After a moment the noise of a carriage.)

**Bush**

Whatever's that?

**Jacob**

A kerridge a-comin'.

**Bush**

What should a carriage come for?

(Noise of carriage stopping. Enter the Duchess.)

**Duchess**

Oh, Mr. Bush, Mr. Bush.

**Bush**

What's brought you a-here?

**Duchess**

Oh, Mr. Bush, you've ruined me! You have undone me, Mr. Bush.

**Bush**

Get along with yer!

**Duchess**

You have indeed! You must make reparation. You must go to the Duke, Mr. Bush. You must go to him and tell him how innocent I am.

**Jacob**

Innercent does she say?

**Duchess** (clasping Bush's knees)

Oh, Mr. Bush! Do me justice. Set me right. Go to my husband and tell him what a true wife I have always been to him.

**Bush**

Give over! Give over now!

**Duchess**

I will not give over! I have followed you here, for you alone can tell the Duke there's nothing between (sound of carriage) Oh, hide me! Hide me! There's a carriage coming! Oh, if I am seen here, I am lost forever.

THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

**Bush**

Give over! Where can yer a-hide?

(The Duchess runs into the mushroom house.)

**Jacob** (protesting)

Not the mushroom house! She'll a-treadle dow the spawn! She'll do a mischief on the mushrooms!

(Bush and Minnick resume hoeing. Mrs. Verulam and Van Adam enter, arm in arm.)

**Mrs. Verulam**

How very peaceful it is! Here all is rest and happiness.

**Van Adam**

Quite so, dear.

**Mrs. Verulam**

It is like heaven.

**Van Adam**

By now everyone at Ribton Marches knows of our flight.

**Mrs. Verulam** (amused)

I wonder what the Duchess is saying.

**Duchess's voice** (from the mushroom house)

Oh, I shall be suffocated! The smell of of

**Van Adam**

No doubt she is taking away your character.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I hate large respectable women. Mr. Rodney will be terribly shocked at my running away like this.

**Van Adam**

Poor Mr. Rodney.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Why do you say poor? He's very rich.

**Van Adam**

Because Oh, Daisy, you know quite well! At any rate, society will never have any more to do with a hostess who leaves a Duke and a Duchess stranded in the middle of Ascot week. You might get over murder more easily.

**Mrs. Verulam**

I suppose the Duke is furious.

**Van Adam**

It can't be helped if he is. There doesn't seem to be anybody about.

(Van Adam looks everywhere but at Bush and Minnick who continue hoeing.)

THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

**Mrs. Verulam**

Let's go in. I can't wait to see you without your trousers.

**Duchess**

Little hussy!

**Van Adam**

I look ever so much better without them.

**Duchess**

Oh, I am going to faint at such talk. Ahh the smell revived me.

**Van Adam**

Ah, ah, ah

**Mrs. Verulam**

What is it?

**Van Adam**

There's someone coming down the road. Daisy, come, come! Two men are coming down the road.

(Mrs. Verulam and Van Adam go into the house.)

**Jacob**

They're gone into the house.

(A moment later Van Adam and Mrs. Verulam appear in an upper story window.)

**Van Adam**

It's my husband, I know it, I know it. What shall I do?

**Mrs. Verulam**

No! Good heavens! It's the Duke and Mr. Rodney carrying hoes.

**Duke**

I shall kill him without a doubt.

(The mushroom house door opens and shuts immediately.)

**Rodney**

Indeed, I fervently hope so. Still, we can never tell in these matters. You have made a will, I hope?

**Duke**

By Jove! Lucky you reminded me. Give me some paper.

**Rodney**

Paper?

**Duke**

Paper, so I can disinherit that false woman.

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**Duchess's voice** Ahh I faint.

**Rodney**

Let me intercede.

**Duke**

Not a word.

**Rodney**

I don't have any paper.

**Duke**

Never mind. You will report my dying words, if it comes to that.

**Rodney**

Don't you think you'd better put it off a few hours? He's lying about in his garden.

(Bush continues to hoe.)

**Duke**

I intend to lay him out. Mr. Bush! Are you deaf, sir? Are you deaf and blind, sir?

**Bush**

Give over!

**Duke**

How dare you speak to me like that, sir? How dare you do it, sir? Do you suppose that because you have me out here in the country you can intimidate me, sir?

**Bush**

Get along with you!

**Duke**

I shall do nothing of the kind, sir. Take a hoe, sir take a hoe, and stand to your defense this instant!

**Rodney**

Don't make a scene!

**Duke**

Rodney, you are an egregious ass! Take a hoe do you hear me, sir?

**Bush**

Pull up the weeds, Jacob and lay down a bit v'morl along the sparrow grass. (aside) Lock her in, d'yer hear? Lock her in and lose the key!

**Duke**

Lock her in, d'you say? You villainous ruffian! So, you've trapped some other wretched creature into your clutches. Can't even stand by your partner in crime. I dare say that house is positively swarming with degraded females at this very moment.

(Van Adam and Mrs. Verulam abruptly disappear from their window.)

ACT V

THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

**Rodney**

I scarcely think the house is swarming

**Duke**

I am not addressing myself to you. I have nothing to say to you. My business is with this gentleman. Stop digging this moment, or I shall not wait for you to fight. I shall kill you without further parley!

**Jacob**

Where d'ye wish it laid?

**Bush**

Along the sparrow grass, I tell yer. Then, get to mulching.

**Duke**

Marl and Mulching be damned! (presenting hoe)

**Rodney** (to Bush)

Save yourself.

(Bush backs off.)

**Duke**

Rodney, how dare you interfere?

**Rodney**

Duke, I am your second. Fight if you must, but fight like a man. Don't murder a man in his bean sprouts.

**Duke** (wildly)

I'll murder him where I choose. Will you be killed or will you fight?

**Bush**

I won't be killed.

**Duke**

Then, stop mulching, and get your second to come out on the grass and we'll have it out fairly.

**Bush**

Jacob, Jacob

**Jacob**

What der yer want?

**Bush**

Give over, Jacob.

**Duke**

Take your hoe and follow me.

**Mrs. Verulam** (appearing at the window)

What are they doing? Why is the Duke so angry?



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**Van Adam**

I expect Mr. Bush is going to show him how to hoe the garden.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Well, but what's the Duke doing now? He's measuring the ground with a pocket handkerchief.

**Van Adam**

No, how am I going to change my trousers?

**Duke**

Come on, nothing will save you!

**Duchess** (feebly, from the mushroom house)

Help! Help! Murder! Murder!

**Rodney**

Whatever's that?

**Duke**

I know that voice.

**Duchess**

Help, help!

**Jacob**

An innocent lady in the mushroom house.

**Duke**

In there! An innocent lady in such a hole as that! (pushing by Bush and going to the mushroom house) You scoundrel! It's locked! It's bolted! Where's the key? Rodney, why don't you fetch the key?

**Rodney**

Because I don't know where it is.

**Duke**

And you call yourself a man. She'll be dead in another minute.

**Rodney**

Try your hoe, Duke, try your hoe.

**Duke**

By Jove, I will. (breaking open the door) CLEOPATRA!

(The Duke turns towards Bush with murder in his eye. Bush drops his hoe and runs towards the house. Enter the Bun Emperor accompanied by Mr. Harrison and Bliggins.)

**Harrison**

Here's your man, oh most certainly, by all means.

**Emperor**

Arrest him! Arrest him!

ACT V

THE LONDONERS By Frank J. Morlock

**Duke**

Let me kill him! Let me kill the scoundrel!

**Emperor**

Not till I've skinned him for stealing my property.

**Rodney**

For heaven's sake, don't make a scene before the ladies.

**Harrison**

Rely on me, oh, indeed, most certainly, in all circumstances, rely on me.

**Jacob**

The innercent lady she ain't stifled.

**Duchess**

Yes, I am an innocent lady. Oh, Southborough! He wouldn't speak for me, he fled, the base one fled. He's not a man.

(Enter Mrs. Van Adam.)

**Van Adam**

No more am I.

**Mrs. Verulam** (protesting)

Chloe!

**Van Adam**

It's all over, Daisy. We couldn't keep this up forever.

**Rodney**

The gentleman's a lady?

**Duchess**

This man, a woman? But then, you are, you are

**Mrs. Verulam**

Respectable!

**Duchess**

Then, I shall have to send Lady Pearl to Carlsbad this summer. Unless Mr. Ingerstall Southborough, come away.

**Mrs. Verulam** (to the Emperor)

Now, you must release Mr. Bush this is all a mistake.

**Emperor**

Let him go, Mr. Harrison. Let the ruffian go!

**Harrison**

Rely on me, sir.

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**Emperor**

We do, Mr. Harrison, we do.

(Bush, released, goes back to his hoeing.)

**Mrs. Verulam**

Mr. Bush, goodbye.

(Bush continues to hoe.)

**Duke**

Goodbye, Mr. Bush.

**Bush**

Get on with yer!

(Mrs. Verulam turns away and takes Rodney's arm.)

**Rodney**

You will not leave society.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Perhaps perhaps not! I must think. I must ponder.

**Marriner** (coming up)

Ma'am, may I speak?

**Mrs. Verulam**

Certainly, Marriner. What is it?

**Marriner**

With your permission, ma'am. I desire to enter into matrimony.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Indeed! With whom?

**Marriner**

Mr. Harrison.

**Mrs. Verulam**

Oh.

**Marriner**

I feel that I can rely on him, ma'am.

CURTAIN