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Babes on Broadway

By Fred F. Finklehoffe

Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye.
Ladies and gentlemen,
this station has the honor to present...
...a weekly report on the New York scene
by Alexander Woollcott, The Town Crier.
This is Woollcott speaking.
This evening, instead of reporting to you
on the new plays along Broadway...
...I want to say a word about
the swarm of young hopefuls...
...who arrive in New York each year...
...determined to make good on the stage
if it takes a leg.
I have here over 1000 letters
from such young people...
...asking what to do, where to start.
Every one of these people...
...thinks that he has more talent
than 90 percent of the actors on Broadway.
Broadway. They call it
"The Great White Way. "
But it shines with a radiance
no electrical company can inspire.
It comes from the likes of you.
One word of advice,
take what you can get.
Grab the chances as they come along.
Act in hallways, sing in doorways...
...and if you have to, dance in cellars.
Hello, everybody. How do you do?
We're gonna do a song and a dance
and all for you.
Never seen a better crowd at any place.
We just wanna see you
have a smile on your face.
So here comes our bag of tricks.
We turn on the show.
Drop the nickel in, Nicky,
and here we go.
Hey! Hey!
New York, New York
Fascinating city
Magic castles rising in the air
Wall Street, Broadway

Guys are sittin' pretty
Every window hides a millionaire
So when defeatists holler
"There's no chance"
Just tell them this
But with a dirty glance
Once Mr. Woolworth
Didn't have a dime
And Irving Berlin
Didn't have a rhyme
And Thomas Dewey
Didn't have a crime
But anything can happen in New York
Once Rockefeller
Didn't have that oil
And Tiffany
He didn't have a pearl
And Ziegfeld
Didn't even have a girl
But anything can happen in New York
You, too, can be that big ball of fire
You, too, can have your name
In Who's Who
You, too, can climb up higher and higher
Until you reach that Rainbow Room
The Wall Street bankers
Didn't have a trust
The Automat
It didn't have a crust
The Hall Of Fame
It didn't have a bust
But even you can be one in New York
Yes, sir
You can be one in New York
You, too, can be that big ball of fire
You, too, can start from scratch
And get rich
You, too, can climb up higher and higher
Like Lord & Taylor, Bonwit Teller
Gimbel, Macy, Rockefeller
You can even be an Abercrombie Fitch
Once Mr. Morgan
Didn't have a yacht
And Joe DiMaggio

Didn't have a swat
The pot of gold
Didn't have a pot
But anything can happen in New
Don't mean innuendo
We mean only in New York
Yes, sir! Hey, hey, hey!
That's the show! Hey, hey!
Hey, that's us. Feed the little kitty, folks.
We take anything.
Hey, all the way.
Well, Nick, you got the armored car
outside for us tonight?
- Boys, I've got bad news for you.
- What's the matter?
I want you to resign.
You mean,
you want us to quit working here?
Oh, no, sir, Nick. We love you too much.
We wouldn't let you sit in this cellar
all by yourself every night, would we?
Then I got to fire you.
- Fired?
- Why?
Look, I got the business, yes?
I got the wife, I got the three kids...
...I got myself, I got you, yes?
- Yeah.
But I only got three customers
eating my spaghetti.
So, I've got to go out of business.
That's too bad, Nick.
Don't worry, Nick.
Spaghetti will come back someday.
Hey, what's this? Five bucks.
Wait a minute.
Who put this money in there?
- Five dollars?
- Yeah.
It couldn't be that icky from Waterbury,
could it?
I don't get it.
She probably thought it was a buck.
I'll have to give it back to her.

Hey, you're not gonna cast that nice,
fresh folding money back on the waters.
I hate to do it, fellas,
but things aren't that tough.
And I better do it quick,
before my stomach talks to my willpower.
Hey, wait a minute. Just let me hold it.
Goodbye, Mr. Lincoln.
Excuse me, lady,
but I think you made a mistake.
- I found that in the kitty over there.
- Anything wrong with it?
- It's a 5.
- The kitty says you take anything.
You mean?
Gosh, that's an awful lot of admission
just to watch us...
...when you can see the top shows
on Broadway for \$4.40.
I think your show is as good
as some I've seen on Broadway.
You do? You do?
Oh, gosh, thanks.
We kind of think we're pretty good too.
The straw hats around here
won't even listen to us...
...and the out-of-town trade
very seldom gets down this way.
Where are you from?
What part of the country?
- I was born in Wisconsin, but I...
- Wisconsin?
Well, that's funny.
My mom was born in Wisconsin.
- You like New York?
- I get tired of it sometimes...
Wait til you start swinging out.
You know something?
You talk just like my mom.
She said that God made New York...
...just so that the good people
would enjoy Wisconsin.
Your mother
might have something there.

No place like it.
That's what I tell her in every letter.
Where else can a fellow
shoot out of a firetrap like this...
...into a top spot on Broadway?
Sure, it happens every day.
Fellow comes in, sees something he likes.
Says, "That's it. "
Your name goes up in lights.
- You're a hit overnight.
- Really?
- Sort of like Horatio Alger, isn't it?
- Yeah, yeah.
Only it hasn't happened to us
like that yet.
The roof caved in on us tonight.
This bin's gonna close up.
But we're on the upbeat.
When we become headliners, we'll send
you tickets, get your money's worth.
- You do that. I'll give you my address.
- Swell.
- There.
- Well, thank you very much.
Miss Jones from Wisconsin.
You've been darn swell to us.
If you need a couple of fellows to
show you the city or anything like that...
Well, here, I'll give you one of our cards.
There you are.
Which of the Three Balls of Fire are you?
I'm the one you can't get any insurance on.
Tommy Williams.
You can phone me at Pitt-Astor Drugstore.
I'm there all the time.
It's kind of like an actors' clearing-house.
I'd like to show it to you sometime.
That's very nice, Tommy.
- I'm much obliged.
- Why, not at all.
You liked our act, didn't you?
You give a fella a lot of heart.
You know, the last person that made me
feel this good was my mother.

That's a nicer compliment than I paid you.

You'll hear from me.

You just drop your hat

and I'll come running.

Oh, and thanks again for this fiver.

You know, you made Santa Claus

seem like a schoolboy.

It won't seem so much when you split it

three ways and deduct the income tax.

- Goodbye.

- Goodbye.

- Hello.

- Hello.

- Hi, Tommy, Hammy.

- Hi, ladies.

- Tommy, I got that part.

- Swell, Sally.

- Wonderful.

- Great.

- Hi, sexy boy.

- Oh, hello, fellas.

- Been making the rounds?

- And how.

- Anything new?

- Yeah, did you have any luck?

I saw 14 producers,

but nobody's producing.

Oh, dear. That's...

Hi, Bert. Keep those sidewalks

hot enough nowadays, don't they?

- Stop looking at that 85c dinner.

- Boys, what will it be?

- Steak, medium.

- Chicken, fried.

- Squab, broiled.

- Yeah, I know.

- Three hams on rye and heavy on the ham.

- Oh, that's very funny.

- There was a call for you guys.

- Call for us?

- Yeah, the Thornton Reed office.

- Thornton Reed's office.

- Thornton Reed?

- Easy, buddy.

Don't you think it's too warm for jokes?
I don't know, but she says Thornton Reed
Productions wants you before 6:00.
How can we lose? We've been turned down
by every producer.
Look here, Shorty, if this is a gag,
you've seen your last banana split.
Hey, excuse me, ma'am.
This may sound crazy to you,
but did you call us?
Well, who are you?
Well, we're the Three...
- Balls of Fire.
- Balls of Fire.
Right in there, please.
Well, go ahead. It's only a doorknob.
Well, hello.
But, miss, I thought that you were...
In Wisconsin?
I'm afraid not, not for 20 years.
- But, Miss Jones, I...
- Hey, you're not Jonesy?
Not the famous Jo... Holy...
Well, aren't you going to sit down?
Oh, yeah.
And I was gonna show you New York.
Maybe you will someday.
You know, I've never really seen it all.
Now, boys, to get down to business.
Mr. Reed is producing
a new musical revue.
I have spoken to him about you.
- About us?
- Thornton Reed?
This is getting to be like
Alice in Wonderland.
So if you'll be at the old Amsterdam
tomorrow morning at 11:00...
...I may be able to get him
to watch your act.
But please, you mustn't tell a soul.
This is a very private audition.
Mr. Reed doesn't like actors.
Well, do you think you can make it?

- Make it?
- Right now, we've been there for hours.
Hello. Oh, yes, Thornton.
See you tomorrow morning
at the theater.
- Thank you very much.
- Yes, Thornton.
You don't know what you've done.
What did you say, Thornton?
I mean, what did you say, Thornton?
Oh, I don't know.
I don't see any objection to Philadelphia.
Read that, please. Read that.
- Thanks very much. Goodbye.
- Bye.
Sorry. Come on.
- Hammy.
- Hiya, Jenny.
You look as if you swallowed
the Academy Award.
I'm really riding.
Thornton Reed has just asked us
to come over to a little audition tomorrow...
...at the old Amsterdam.
- Thornton Reed?
Listen, you better come over.
You never can tell.
- Thanks. That's one I owe you.
- But you better keep it quiet.
- Don't forget kids, 11:00 sharp.
- Thanks, Tommy.
That's all right. Shorty, remember those
ham sandwiches we ordered?
Trade them in for top sirloins.
- How do you want them?
- On a plate with a lot of potatoes.
I'm not kidding. Tomorrow at the old
Amsterdam. Don't forget to tell Eddie.
Keep this under your hats, kids.
Thornton Reed's new musical,
the old Amsterdam, tomorrow.
Actors working, yeah!
Wait a minute, Shorty.
That's kind of quick, isn't it?

- Pitt-Astor's super service.
- What did you do, send out for it?

This is what I've been telling you fellas about, eating acting.

- Yes.
- Yeah.

What's that?

Excuse me, I'll be back in a minute.

- Hey, you can't do that.
- Go away.
- What are you crying about?
- None of your business.

All right, come on, come on, break it up.

You've gotten your laugh.

I don't think I like you.

- Thank you.
- You're welcome.
- Now that we know each other...
- But we don't.

My name is Williams, Tommy Williams.

What's yours?

It doesn't matter. I'm just a failure.

Oh, well, I was a failure yesterday.

Now look at me today.

You mean,

you even looked worse yesterday?

I'm sorry, I didn't mean that.

But I was a success yesterday.

You mean,

you even looked better yesterday?

Oh, I worked and I slaved.

There were only three words in the part, but, oh, they were such beautiful words.

"I love you"?

No.

"The telephone, madam. "

I never got past "the telephone. "

I just haven't got any talent.

Well, you cry awfully pretty.

- You think so?
- Yeah, no question.

And I wouldn't worry

about three tired little words.

You have talent.

Why, you're steaming with it.
It's coming out all over you.
And don't say you can't act,
because you can act.
You're not unhappy,
you're only making yourself believe you are.
And that's acting.
And that's why it's wonderful.
You mean I don't really feel badly at all?
Oh, of course, you do.
Of course, you do. Excuse me.
But those are 14-karat tears
and you don't wanna waste them...
...because someday, they'll come in awfully
handy at the curtain of the second act.
But don't you have to feel better
to be able...?
Sure you do,
but you don't want to let them touch you.
Why, I'll bet right at this minute
you have more talent than Katharine Cornell.
I'll bet at this minute
I've got more talent than Barrymore.
That's what you've got
to keep dreaming and thinking.
And when things get so bad
that you just wanna holler murder...
...that's when you sell yourself
a bill of goods.
And if you can do it then,
you can sell anybody.
I guess I'm getting to be
quite a speechmaker.
You know,
you don't talk like an actor at all.
Oh, but I act like one.
You're through with that?
- Oh, yeah, here.
- Thanks.
Well, now that I've straightened
your life out, what's your name?
- Penny.
- Penny, just like that?
- No puns.

- All right, one-cent.
- Where do you live?
- I live down that way.
- Would a nickel swing it?
- No, but two might.

All right, I'm declaring myself a partner.

- Come on.
- All right.
- Hey, where you going?
- I'm gonna fly this little sparrow home.

Well, stay out of the stratosphere,
Cock Robin. We've got an act to rehearse.

- You live far from the subway?
- I practically live in it.
- Hiya, Mary.
- Hello, Penny.
- Hello, Johnny. How's your mother?
- Much better.
- Thanks for the cake.
- Okay.

Well, here we are.

- How are you on steps?
- Terrific.

Hello, Papa. Papa.

Oh, hello, dear. Oh, hello, hello.

- Papa, this is Mr. Williams.
- How do you do?
- How do you do? I hope we didn't interrupt.
- No, not at all.

Barbara Jo is late again.

Penny, if she comes,
you tell her she's a bad girl.

You know, every time I have an orchestra
rehearsal for those children, why, I'm late.

- Goodbye, young man. Glad to know you.
- Bye-bye, sir.
- Oh, my.
- I hope I didn't drive him out.

He was just afraid I was gonna ask him
if he collected from Mrs. Mulligan.

He just won't ask for money.

Boy, I'll bet this piano has played
a lot of empty stomach music.

Yeah. Would you like a piece of cake?

- Cake? Did you bake it?
- No, but I bought it.
- Oh, bring it on then.
- All right.

Where's Papa Morris? I'm late.

Well, excuse me.

Are you taking a lesson?

No, no, I'm just tuning the piano.

You mean I won't be able
to take a lesson?

You certainly won't. Where've you been?

This is the third time in a row...

- It's wonderful, wait till you hear.

- What?

They got the thing passed.

We're all going to the country.

Two weeks, for free.

Isn't that marvelous?

- All the kids?

- The whole settlement house.

Mr. Stone just told me.

And I'm president of the whole thing.

- Congratulations.

- This is Barbara Jo. This is Mr. Williams.

- Pleased to meet you, Mr. Williams.

- Mr. Williams is an actor, you know.

- A real actor? On the stage?

- Well, I...

Here's your cake. Here, Barbara Jo.

Gee, you don't look like an actor.

That's what most of the producers think.

- Won't you sit down, Mr. Williams?

- Thank you.

You know, Mr. Williams, there's a couple
of things I don't understand about acting.

Only a couple of things?

When you're on the stage...

...you have your arms around the girl

and say:

"I love you more than
anything in the whole world. "

- Yeah?

- Do you really mean it?

Well, that depends upon the girl.
Yeah, I suppose so.
But, gee, when Robert Taylor says it,
he makes me believe it.
You know, Penny's gonna be an actress.
She's always acting.
- Eat your cake, darling.
- Well, I am eating it.
Oh, well, got to be going.
Big meeting tonight.
Wait until the kids
find out they're really going.
Some of them
never even seen the country.
- Tell Papa I couldn't help it.
- I'll tell him, but you better practice.
Why, Penny, you know I love to practice.
Goodbye, Mr. Williams.
Sure like to see you act sometime.
Well, thank you.
Bye, Penny.
- Won't you sit?
- Won't you sit?
Here we are, just as if we had planned it.
Yeah, you mean just as if we didn't.
You know, I have a feeling that you're
gonna be that unknown quantity in my life.
What's that?
Something
that brings a fellow good luck.
The springboard. The inspiration.
The thing that everything adds up to.
Gee, that's quite an assignment.
Not with what you have.
Just what have I, Mr. Williams?
Well, it's a combination.
A combination of something sweet
and warm.
Plus a quality
that's far away from everybody.
Reflection of talent, that's what it is.
There's something special
lighting everything around you.
- I didn't know I had that.

- Sure, that's what you have.
And as soon as I see
Thornton tomorrow...
...why, I'm gonna tell him
to take a good look at you.
Before you know it, we'll be dancing
on top of the world, together.
Oh, gee, that would be fun,
if it ever came true.
As soon as I get through
with the audition...
...why, I'll come back over here
and you'll see how true it is.
Well, just so you won't get lost.
I'll be at the settlement house
filing envelopes.
And you can park your dream boat
right outside the entrance.
- Now, will you do something for me?
- Lf I can.
- Will you sing me a song?
- How do you know I can?
Because you sing when you talk,
when you walk.
Why, you're eyes are...
Why, they're singing right now.
They are?
Well, I'll be darned.
When a girl meets boy
Life can be a joy
But the note they end on
Will depend on
Little pleasures they will share
So let us compare
I like New York in June
How about you?
I like a Gershwin tune
How about you?
I love a fireside
When a storm is due
I like potato chips
Moonlight and motor trips
How about you?
I'm mad about good books

Can't get my fill
And Franklin Roosevelt's looks
Give me a thrill
Holding hands in the movie show
When all the lights are low
May not be new
But I like it
How about you?
I like Jack Benny's jokes
To a degree
I love the common folks
That includes me
I like to window shop on 5th Avenue
I like banana splits
Late supper at the Ritz
How about you?
I love to dream of fame
Maybe I'll shine
I'd love to see your name
Right beside mine
I can see we're in harmony
Looks like we both agree
On what to do
- And I like it
- And I like it
- How about you?
- How about you?
I'm so delighted
I've ignited the spark within you
Let me continue to make it burn
With you, I will be like a Trilby
So let's not dally
Come on, Svengali
I've lots to learn
When you're arising
Start exercising daily
For example
Just a sample
Bend and touch the floor
Fifty times or more
A fine start
To be a Bernhardt
A dictionary's necessary
But not for talking

It's used for walking
The Ziegfeld way
Is this okay?
That's the trick
You're catching on quickly
Should I take a bow?
Oh, let me show you how
- Just like partners on the stage
- Yeah.
If you can use a partner
I'm the right age
Hey, don't go under there.
The way our luck's been running,
I wish it was Friday the 13th.
- Oh, no, you don't.
- Wait a minute, what's the idea?
- This happens to be Friday.
- And the 13th.
It is?
- Yeah.
- Yeah.
Strange. Well, here we are.
Remember, this Thornton Reed is big-league.
This is a private audition.
No mugging, no pressing.
- Don't look anxious.
- All right.
Quiet! Quiet! Quiet!
Look's like
somebody's been reading our mail.
Easy, folks. Easy, folks. Do you realize
you're getting on Mr. Reed's nerves?
Mason, where's the boy
with my sandwich?
He'll be here.
I think he got lost in the crowd.
- I can't even get a 10c sandwich.
- Thornton, remember your headache.
Don't rub me down.
You're the cause of all this.
You and your discoveries.
I don't want to discover anyone.
I give you my word.
This time, I only told three boys.

Where, in Yankee Stadium?

This is wonderful.

Every actor in New York will love you.

I don't want every actor in New York
to love me. I want my wife to love me.

- Drink this.

- I don't want it, I want my sandwich. I'm...

Mason, you've got to keep them back.

- Please, please, please.

- I'm keeping them back.

People, you must stop this nonsense.

All I'm doing is a little intimate musical,
not the Passion play.

- Quiet, quiet, quiet!

- Listen, we want to give everyone a chance.

But unless you line up so I can see you,
I'll have to call the whole thing off.

- Come on, Jenny. Let's get in.

- Get in, Helen.

- Quit shoving back there, you pig.

- What's the big idea?

Mr. Reed, you don't know us, but
we just closed the Tip-Top Inn in Albany.

Yeah, we're the Four Hot Licks.

- May...

- Ray...

- Fay...

- And Kay.

Oh, sextet from Madam Lucia

Oh, sextet

I love you, yeah

Please, please, some other time.

Mason, have them pass by in one line
so we could get through with this.

Mr. Reed will see you.

- Keep in one line, keep moving.

- No, I'm sorry.

- Make it snappy.

- Yes, I could use you.

- Yes, no, too small.

- Just keep on going.

- No, too short. No, boys.

- No.

- What do you mean, no?

- But, Thornton...

- I mean no, I can't use you.

- Well, how do you know?

- How do I...?

- You haven't seen us do anything.

We're the Three Balls of Fire.

Once we get started, you can't put us out.

But I can put you out
before you get started. Mason.

Thornton, wait. These are the boys I've
been telling you about. They're tremendous.

In three years,
they'll be greater than Astaire.

Then bring them back in three years.

I'm sorry, lad, some other time.

- Not now, that's all. I'm sorry.

- Mr. Reed, I...

All right, keep them going.

- Just keep on going.

- No, no, no, I'm sorry.

No, I can't use you.

No, no children. No, no children.

Wait, wait,
don't send my brother to the chair.

Don't let him burn.

Please, please, warden, please.

Mr. Reed, I have some clippings here.

This is Maxine when she was a little girl...

Mason, Mason.

Maybe we ought to change our name
to the Three Puffs of Smoke.

Private audition.

How do you like her, giving us that?

It's not her fault.

It's those producers. They're all the same.

Just send out nonchalantly for 1000 actors
every time they get lonesome.

Well, I guess we're cooked, fellas.

Yep, on both sides.

What do we do now, Tom?

I've been pedaling that hocus-pocus
about talent and ambition.

They don't want talent. They wouldn't know
talent if it was wrapped up in the mailbox.

I guess it's back to the bulrushes.
Maybe I don't belong in show business.
I don't know.
It's all right, I'll do something else. Drive
a truck, dig ditches, sell shoes, anything.
Take it easy, Tommy.
You know you're not serious.
We'll be back
making the rounds again tomorrow.
- Something will turn up.
- Not me, brother.
What are you trying to do,
split up the axis?
How long you gonna go
through life singing?
How long are you gonna
keep yourself in hock to producers?
Until you become a producer yourself.
Until you become a producer yourself.
That's very funny.
Until you become a producer yourself.
Sure. Why not?
There's nothing magic to it.
All you need is a little courage,
taste, money.
Yeah, and we're loaded
with courage and taste.
We've got lots of talent.
So why don't we sign ourselves up?
Four months ago, when we came to this
city, we devoted our lives to the theater.
Here comes the Gettysburg Address.
We got the brush
from the New York producers.
Living or dead.
We've got a satchel full of talent
and no place to display it.
So we'll build our own showcase.
- Have you forgotten about money?
- Or are you planning to win a raffle?
Money? Well, anybody can
put on a show with money.
Let's not be corny about this thing.
Oh, certainly, can't be corny,

so let's forget about money.

What do we use instead?

Well, anything. We can use...

Well, you know... like a... a cause.

- A what?

- A what?

A cause.

A great, big beautiful cause.

Something that'll tug at their heartstrings...

...make them dig down in their jeans

and bring tears to their eyes.

You better stop eating that salami.

Don't you realize that America

is cause-crazy?

Why, they give shows for everybody.

China, the Red Cross, Bundles for Britain.

There must be some place

they haven't thought of.

Right here.

Now you're talking.

How about a cause for eatless actors?

Actors? No, nobody cares about actors.

It's gotta be something solid.

- Like widows, orphans, dogs.

- How about mailmen or motormen?

- No, no, glamour.

- How about ball players?

They've all got chicken farms.

- Hey, I got it. I got it.

- Well, what is it?

How about chorus girls?

Well, how about them?

I'm sorry, Hammy.

I guess I'm just blowing bubbles again.

If only I hadn't written

that big buildup to Mom...

...promised the city hall to everybody.

Hey, where are you going?

I'm gonna get a little air. I'm a little flat.

What's your claim?

Look, look,

things can't be as bad as all that.

You don't know what happened.

Something awful happened to me,

but I'm not crying, look.
You're a boy.
You know, you cry awfully pretty.
- I do?
- Sure, you cry beautifully.
Why, if I thought I looked that pretty,
I'd be crying my eyes out all the time.
You know what?
I'm gonna make you my official crier.
Well, and as soon as things get tough...
...why, I'll give you the signal
and you can turn it on.
Why, everybody can cry
if they're unhappy themselves.
It's not me so much. I've seen it.
But some of the other kids,
they never even been there.
- And those old trustees...
- The who?
The Board of Trustees.
They promised we were going to the country
for two whole weeks.
And now they tell us
they can't give us the money.
Well, don't you worry about it.
You're still young.
You have lots of time to go to the...
Hey, what did you say?
We were gonna see cows and brooks
and milk them and everything.
You mean, they backed out on you?
Why, I've never heard of such a thing.
Why, how dare they do that?
- Come on, we'll go see about it right now.
- See about what?
These kids have never seen the sunlight,
babbling brooks, blade of grass...
...a bluebird flitting from tree to tree.
What has happened to the milk
of human kindness? Where is he?
- Where's who?
- The whatchamacallit, the number one guy.
- The superintendent? He's inside.
- That's our man.

Why, the idea of these people,
these children...
So all you have to do is give us the word
and we're ready to go.
I like your enthusiasm.
I'm afraid it's a much bigger job
than you imagine.
No, it isn't.
You see, Tommy's a professional.
Yes, I know, but where are you
going to get all the talent?
Talent?
Why, the world is riddled with talent.
You can shake it out of trees.
It's right here.
This girl right here, she's
the greatest singer of songs I ever heard.
You've got the greatest crying act
in show business.
And as for myself, well...
And if that isn't enough, I can
walk into a drugstore on 44th street...
...throw a rock, hit more talent
than on any Broadway show.
Well, that takes care of the talent.
Now, where do you propose
putting this show on?
In the auditorium?
They couldn't seat over
100 people there.
No, this has gotta be big.
This isn't gonna be any amateur night.
It's gotta be gigantic.
Like the World Series or the Aquacade.
This is Rose Bowl stuff.
Why, it looks as if
you'll need a whole city block.
Yeah.
City block. Yeah. Sure, that's it.
Right in the neighborhood.
We'll rope it off.
Everybody will come to it.
We give them a sample, then pass the hat.
With the money we take, we'll hire the hall.

Put on a show for half a buck
that'll send those kids to the country.
Well, I must admit
you have a wonderful platform.
- Couldn't we, Mr. Stone?
- Please, please?
Well, in the face of all this enthusiasm,
what can I say?
But I'm not guaranteeing
that Mr. Busch will be swept off his feet.
Mr. Busch? Who's Mr. Busch?
The district leader. He's the only one
who can give you a permit for a block party.
- Tough customer?
- A very tough customer.
Come on, we'll go there, see if we
can cut him down to our size. Bye.
- Thank you.
- That's quite all right.
So here's this character sitting there,
Simon J. Busch.
Typical ward heeler.
Heater sticking out the side of his mouth,
big black derby with heart to match.
So I go to work on him. I say:
"Mr. Busch, if you donate this city block,
it'll send you to Congress. "
He keeps on smoking.
I try to appeal to his sense of chivalry.
He can't even spell it.
I talk to him about his school days.
He never went.
Things are desperate
and Barbara Jo was crying so hard...
...she looks like a road show edition
of the Johnstown flood.
So I slide right into the theme song.
"Mr. Busch, you're not gonna keep
these starving kiddies away...
...from the babbling brooks,
and the birds that sing...
...and the vitamins A, B, C, and D.
You're not gonna be responsible
for young America growing up with rickets.

Oh, no, not you, Mr. Busch.

Not you. Not a man who reminds me
so much of Thomas Jefferson. "

Then I had tell him who Jefferson is.

I tell you, he folded up
like a wet tent.

He started to cry, tears came
as big as Ping-Pong balls.

He just couldn't resist the cause.

It's the sucker shot of the century.

If we play our cards right,
use those kids right...

...we'll land right in the middle of Broadway
with four-forty written all over us.

And all the time, Mr. Busch just kept
sitting there, smoking that smelly old cigar.

And just when I was sure
he was gonna say no...

...Mr. Williams got right on top
of the desk...

...and he told him
what wonderful kids we were.

And if we didn't all get sunshine
and fresh air, we'd wind up with pickets.

- With what?

- Pickets.

Darling, you mean rickets.

Well, anyway, he was wonderful,
and Mr. Busch finally said he'd go it.

- And you know what, Penny?

- What?

All I could think of was...

...was Abraham Lincoln
freeing the slaves.

I'm gonna tell him you said that.

- He'll like that.

- Oh, I wish you would.

- Gee, he's exceptional.

- Yeah.

Too bad he isn't better-looking.

Why, Barbara Jo, he's fine-looking.

He's got character in his face.

You know he turned down an opportunity
in a Broadway show just to do this?

- Honest?

- Yes.

And you'll never know
what that meant to him.
I couldn't have done it,
not even my three little words.
Gosh, he never stops
to think of himself.
But he'll be paid back.
You know, Penny, if it was
anybody else but you, I'd be jealous.
If it was anybody else but him,
you could have him.

- Is it all right?

- Yeah.

- Let's get it on the pole.

- Okay.

- How's that?

- Swell, Tony.

The tempo's perfect. Just right.

I know my dance all right.

Can I go now?

Sure, Ronnie. Sign your name over here.

- I'll have to take the children.

- Right. Thank you, Mrs. Crainen.

- Come on, children.

- Jenny, give me that.

Everybody, can I have
your attention please?

After you get through with your work...

...whether painting a sign,
practicing a song or dance, you can leave.

Other performers are coming in.

They have to rehearse too.

After your work, sign one of these cards
before you go out. Thanks, everybody.

Oh, Penny, get your costume on.

We're gonna do our skit.

- All right.

- Will you come and see my costume?

I have no time now.

All right, everybody,
let's have it quiet, please, quiet now!
Everybody, take those signs

and banners and posters...
...and put them in the anteroom.
Move that piano here in this corner.
Hurry up, now!
All the rest of you,
come on down here by the stand here.
Come on, right up close to the platform.
That's it. Now let me have
your attention please! Quiet!
Now, look, we're gonna do the number first,
so all of you get in your aprons and overalls.
Come on, now, let's move.
And don't forget, give us lots of zambo.
Go ahead, take it, Johnny.
When our grandmas and our grandpas
Were just girls and boys
They seemed to have
A lot more fun than we
Their party clothes were calicoes
And homemade corduroys
And a big event
Was called a husking bee
A banjo and a fiddle
And a big old-fashioned barn
Was all the preparation that they made
And if they tell you otherwise
Dismiss it as a yarn
Refreshments were confined to lemonade
Now, you may say it's corny
And I guess I must agree
But it was good enough for grandma
It was good enough for grandpa
And it's good enough for me
Hoedown
The country's gone hoedown
It's puttin' its toe down
And kickin' its heel
Hoedown is really a rare dance
A pioneer square dance
But with a new deal
One, two
Swing your partner lightly
While you hold her ever so tightly
Hoedown

And bring your best beau down
We're facing a showdown
And gotta make hay
'Cause hoedown's on its way
Stand in line and do the turkey
Like a Yankee Doodle Dandy
When you turkey, do it jerky
That's the trick
Now you're hoein' on down
Sashay, sashay, sashay around
While you're hoein' on down
Form a circle in the middle
Everybody allemande
Boys keep tempo with the fiddle
And your gal in the calico gown
Hoe on down with your calico gown
Do-si-do around
It's very romantic
Do-si-do
Do-si-do some more
And maybe she'll fall
Now it's time to do your honors
Then when you've gone
Through your honors
Promenade the hall
Hoedown
The country's gone hoedown
Its puttin' its toe down
And kickin' its heel
Hoedown is really a rare dance
A pioneer square dance
But with a new deal
One, two
Swing your partner lightly
While you hold her ever so tightly
Hoedown
And bring your best beau down
We're facing a showdown
And gotta make hay
'Cause hoedown's on its way
Hey!
Hoedown
And bring your best beau down
We're facing a showdown

And gotta make hay

So hoedown

Showdown

Hoedown on its way

- Mr. Stone, you sent for us?

- Yes, I did.

I just received this letter

from the Board of Trustees.

I'd like to read it to you.

Oh, here we are.

"We are sending you 20 refugee youngsters
from the British war relief...

...on the Fourth of July.

We want you to entertain them...

...and show them what a real

American Fourth of July is like. "

This is a great honor for us.

"A shortwave broadcast

has been arranged...

...and the English children

will talk to their parents in London...

...directly from the settlement house. "

The only difficulty is that the broadcast
is scheduled for 3:00.

But that's the time that the block party
is scheduled for.

Yes, I know, and I'm very sorry, Tommy.

But can't you postpone the block party
till the following week?

- No, that's no good.

- We'll never get a permit again.

Wait a minute.

You say they're gonna broadcast, huh?

Well, why not hook up the broadcast
with the block party?

From the sidewalks of New York,
straight to the Lambeth Walk, huh?

Tommy, that's an excellent idea.

I'll speak to the board about it.

- But, Tommy...

- Wait a minute.

- You do that, will you?

- I will.

And I'll take care of everything.

Now, go on. Go on, now.

- I don't get it.

- Neither do I.

Those Bundles from Britain will
be a fine act for us to follow.

- I hope they're a sensation.

- What?

- Don't you get it?

- No.

Three Balls of Fire.

Flashlights, newsroom, radio.

Kids torn from their mothers,
thrown into our laps...

...and an international hookup.

- I never thought of the publicity angle.

What a showcase.

This is the cause we've been looking for.

We've been worrying about kids

that nobody cares about to the country.

We don't need them anymore.

Penny, it'll be no time until we'll be dancing
right up on top of the...

Penny, what's the matter?

Did you say we don't even need
those kids anymore?

Penny...

Why didn't you guys shut me up?

Penny, I...

If you'll only...

What's the matter,

did you run out of speeches?

You know, you make me

feel pretty awful.

Well, you shouldn't.

You're getting everything you wanted.

First, you wanted a cause.

Well, you got it.

Then you wanted a showcase.

Well, you got that too.

Then you wanted to get to Broadway.

Well, you're gonna get there.

Of course, you may knock down
a few people and climb over them...

...but you'll get there.

You're gonna be a big success.
You ought to be very happy.
Penny. Gee, you said that
as if you hated me.
That's silly. I don't hate you.
I think you're wonderful.
- Your talent, your ambition...
- Well, then, what's the matter?
Nothing.
I just don't think
you're Abraham Lincoln anymore, that's all.
Go on, there's your cue.
No, no. This is your party.
Ladies and gentlemen...
...I think it's wonderful the way
you've turned out for our block party.
The purpose of this was to give you
a sample of what you're gonna see later on.
And of course, to collect enough money
to hire a theater.
We're gonna pass the hat now.
Everything we collect will go
towards putting on our big show.
And we hope to raise enough money
from that...
...to send the settlement house kids
to the country.
And now, there's someone that
Mr. Stone feels that you ought to meet.
And nothing would have been possible
without him.
Ladies and gentlemen,
I give you Mr. Tommy Williams.
You really gave me away.
Ladies and gentlemen, thank you.
Thank you very much.
I, well...
Well, in the face of all this,
there's just nothing I can say.
For the first time in his life.
Ladies and gentlemen,
we have a big surprise for you.
As our special guest today...
...we have a group of young people

all the way from London, England.
In a few moments, their mothers
and fathers will be with us too...
...by way of shortwave
transatlantic hookup.
I now take great honor
in presenting to you at this time...
...our little cousins from across the sea.
- Hello. Hello, Mrs. Downing.
- Yes, this is Mrs. Downing.
We have your daughter here.
All right, Elinor.
- Hello? Mommy? Is that you?
- Hello, darling. Yes. How are you?
Oh, splendid, Mommy.
I've gained 5 pounds.
How's Daddy and Rex?
Daddy's fine.
Rex is wagging his tail right now.
- How are you getting along, dear?
- Oh, hunky-dory.
- What did you say?
- Hunky-dory. That's American for "okay. "
Okay, Elinor.
Hello, Mr. Phillips. Come in, Mr. Phillips.
- Hello?
- Hello, son. How are you, old boy?
Fine. I... I...
Is that all you have to say for yourself?
How do you like America?
Fine little place. Only they drive
on the wrong side of the road.
Anything you want me
to tell Grandmother?
Oh, yes. Tell her to change the mark
on the kitchen wall.
I've grown a whole inch taller.
Good enough. Keep growing, Robert.
We'll be seeing you soon.
Righto, governor.
Oh, tell Billy Hammond
I'm learning to roller skate.
Thank you, Robert. That was swell.
And now, London, I want to introduce

little Barbara Jo Conway...
...who is acting as official hostess
to all your children...
...at the Fourth of July celebration
down here on the East Side of New York.
Hello? Hello, London? Can you hear me?
Gosh, it's wonderful
to have your children here.
We really wish you were here too.
And now we've got a special song for you
and Penny Morris is gonna sing it for you.
Really, folks, I wish you could see her.
She's beautiful.

From the dark cafes of Paris
From the streets of Amsterdam
From the homes of old vienna
To the shores of Uncle Sam
Wherever freedom's hope is true
Each heart cries out to you
Don't give up, Tommy Atkins
Be a stout fella
Chin up! Cheerio! Carry on!
Keep a stiff upper lip
When you're in doubt, fella
Chin up! Cheerio! Carry on!
Oh, the sun's sure to smile
On your tight little isle
So hang on to your wits
And you'll turn the blitz on Fritz
There's a whole world behind you
Shoutin', "Stout fella!"
Chin up! Cheerio! Carry on!
Don't give up, Tommy Atkins
Be a stout fella
Chin up! Cheerio! Carry on!
Keep a stiff upper lip
When you're in doubt, fella
Chin up! Cheerio! Carry on!
Oh, the sun's sure to smile
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Chin up! Cheerio! Carry on!
Keep a stiff upper lip
When you're in doubt, fella
Chin up! Cheerio! Carry on!
Oh, the sun's sure to smile
On your tight little isle
So hang on to your wits
And you'll turn the blitz on Fritz
There's a whole world behind you
Shoutin', "Stout fella!"
Chin up!
Cheerio!
Carry on!
Carry on!
I knew I never should have
opened this show.
Thornton, don't let these
small-town critics get you down.
Oh, a Boy Scout could tell
what's wrong with this turkey.
It's tired, it's stale, it needs air.
All we need is
a couple numbers and jokes.
Jokes? I expected someone
to come out and say:
"Who was that lady
I seen you with last night?"
Mason, call New York.
Get Jonesy on the phone.
I'll make a show of this yet.
Get me New York, Plaza 66601.
Say, how about changing the costumes
on that hotel number?
Sure, only we'll change the costumes
and the music and the backdrop...
...and the actors,
every mother's ham of them.
- What are you gonna do, close?
- Thornton Reed never closes.
- Hello? Hello, Jonesy?
- Give me that. Jonesy.

Oh, yes, Thornton.

Yes, I've seen the notices. Yes, Thornton.

We need a new first-act finale
and a new number in the second act.

Call every agent in New York,
if you have to.

But be here tomorrow night sure...

...and bring some performers with you
that can sing and dance.

Yes, and for the love of Philadelphia,
don't bring them in wheelchairs.

Get Marelli. See if he can get
Lane and Abbot for Mr. Reed immediately.

- Excuse me.

- Well, Tommy.

Have you seen your pictures
in the papers?

Yeah, say, how about that?

- Look, look. Oh, I've got more too.

- I suppose you'll send them to your mother?

Yeah, she'll think I'm running
for president.

All hokum aside, Jonesy,
how did you like us last night?

I was really impressed.

Well, if you like us,
then we're on our way.

We got \$42 last night
and with your contribution, it makes 67.

All we need is a theater.

You find out about the old Duchess?

Yes, and Mr. Reed still owns it.

But I'm afraid it won't be any good
to you, Tommy.

- Why not?

- Well, it hasn't been occupied in years.

Hasn't even any seats in it.

Well, it has a stage, hasn't it?

Yes, but it's a warehouse.

Oh, we don't care. We'll take it.

Here, I got the bread right with me. Here.

- Sixty-seven dollars.

- No, Tommy. I'd have to ask Mr. Reed.

And I can't bother him now.

He's having so much trouble.
Hello? Oh, hello, Marelli.
Did you get them?
But Mr. Reed will give them 1500
and feature billing.
All right, Marelli. Yes, I know you tried.
Thank you.
Don't see why he wouldn't let us
have it for one night.
We'd fix it up and everything.
The Duchess? No, no, Tommy.
That's completely out of the question.
Poor Thornton.
I don't know what I'm going to do.
Look, you don't happen
to know of an act...
...a good group that could be spotted
a couple of times in Mr. Reed's show?
- Sure, I do.
- Who? Where?
- Right here. The Three Balls of Fire.
- No, no, Tommy, I need a big act.
Twelve, 15 people, and a singer.
What about our group and Penny?
How about the act we did yesterday?
- It stopped traffic. You said so yourself.
- I wonder...
No, no, no. Thornton wouldn't...
I don't know why not, though.
Look, could you get that wonderful girl?
What's her name?
- Penny. Penny Morris?
- Yes, could you get her?
Your gang from the drugstore.
Get them together and rehearse.
Do the number tomorrow afternoon at
a matinee exactly as you did it last night.
You mean that? You mean?
You mean it? We're gonna...?!
Yes, for Mr. Reed's show tomorrow
in Philadelphia.
Tomorrow. Sure, why not?
All right. Get them all together.
Be here in my office at 5:00.

We're taking the 6:00 train for Philadelphia,
and may heaven have mercy on my soul.

Six o'clock, 5:

We'll be here. Okay!

All aboard for Philadelphia!

Don't move! Stay where you are!

Stop me if I sound crazy...

...but tonight, you, me, and all the kids from
the drugstore are leaving on the train...

...and tomorrow in Philadelphia,
we open in Thornton Reed's new show!

You think I'm crazy, but I'm not.

We're going tonight.

No luck, eh? Hallelujah.

Truth will out, talent will tell!

- Now, wait...?

- I can see it now.

Tommy Williams, Penny Morris,
the Balls of Fire in lights as big as coconuts!
Success! Success, in three easy lessons.

Now what do you think of Williams?

- I think Williams is still Williams.

- What?!

You're going to Philadelphia?

Without me, because...

Without you? Penny, are you crazy?

This is it. What are you talking about?

The same thing.

Those little kids we promised...

That was before.

Thornton Reed, he's in trouble.

If we can save this show,
we can land our own ticket.

What about Hammy, Ray,
all the kids at the drugstore?

They waited all their lives
for a shot like this.

But Reed's got a million dollars.
And you and I and Hammy and Ray
can hang on till we get another chance.

- But, gosh, those little kids...

- No.

Oh, Tommy, don't you see?

It's not the two weeks in the country
that's gonna cure them.
It's giving a kid something
he's dreamed about...
...so maybe he won't feel like
there's nothing left to go on for later.
Gosh, I wanna go to Philadelphia
just as much as you do.
But if I did it, it would be just like stealing
their stockings off the Christmas tree.
I can't do that. I just can't, that's all.
You don't get the point at all.
I'm talking about the lives and careers
of 15 people. Artists.
I'm talking about Tommy Williams
and Penny Morris, the performers.
That has nothing to do with kids
getting to the country.
Let's get to be stars first
and then we can...
Never mind, don't bother.
You haven't heard anything I've said.
- Don't make me do anything I regret...
- Go on! Go to Philadelphia!
I hope you stop the show!
Well, all right, then.
I'll get it fixed!
Mr. Williams! Mr. Williams! Mr. Williams,
I've been looking for you all morning...
- I'm sorry, I'm awfully busy.
- Please, it's awfully important.
Everybody's waiting in the auditorium.
Well, all right, hurry up,
I've got an appointment.
Thanks a lot. It'll only take a minute.
Hey, what's this all about?
- What do you want?
- Come on.
- Look, here he comes! Here he comes!
- Here he comes!
- Yeah.
- Come on!
Well, Mr. Williams,
all the kids and myself...

...we had a meeting
of the executive committee...
...and we were talking about how you
gave up a big Broadway show...
...to do all this for us
and we weren't doing anything for you.
Well, that's not right.
There's been a lot of talk around this place
about getting us to the country.
But nobody ever did anything about it
except you.
You just walked right in
and didn't listen to anybody.
And now we're going.
After all the promises, we're really going.
Well, well, we just wanna say thank you.
But with 50 kids to do it,
it would take an awful long time.
We know you're a busy man.
So we all chipped in and
bought you a present, and here it is.
You shouldn't have.
You shouldn't have done this, because I...
Don't you like it?
Sure, sure I like it.
It's swell. In fact, it's one of
the nicest presents I've ever seen.
You shouldn't have spent the money
on me, though.
But I'm glad you did,
because every time I look at this watch...
...I'm gonna see every one of your faces...
...and gonna remember
what a swell gang you are.
Honest, you'll never know
what it means to me.
All I can say is that
I haven't even started to earn it.
But I will.
And after it's all over with
and all through...
...I hope that you'll be glad
that you gave it to me.
And you don't have to worry

about the country...

...because you're not only going,
but you're gonna go first class too.

Penny. Penny.

- Hello, Mr. Stone.

- How do you do?

Oh, excuse me. Is Penny here?

- I think she's up on the roof.

- Oh, thanks.

Penny...

You better hurry.

You're gonna miss that train.

I just have one more speech to make
and I have to make it.

You don't have to listen
if you don't want to.

Go ahead, I'm listening.

All my life, I've been rehearsing myself
to be a big man...

...and it's taken me just five minutes
to find out that I'm only a heel.

Bunch of little kids chip in
their nickels and dimes...

...to buy me a \$5 watch
marked down to 3.50. There it is.

And I'm so ashamed at myself
that it took a bunch of 6-year-olds...

...to make me realize that there's more to
life than just a song, a dance and an encore.

And that there's more to people than just
sitting out front, being an audience.

Well, it's half past 1
and that's the end of my speech.

Oh, Tommy, that's a wonderful speech.

And life begins at half past 1.

Penny, I've got a couple of words
I wanna say to you...

...just this time, sitting down.

Only a couple?

Well, really three.

Well, go ahead and say them
and get them over with.

Oh, I could say "I love you"
just like all the rest of them.

That's still good, you know.

But it wouldn't tell you
what I really mean.

I'll settle for it.

Oh, no, you're not gonna talk me
out of my love scene.

Were you ever in a rainstorm...

...and you felt like you were the only person
in the world that wasn't getting wet?

Did you ever look up
and see a full moon and...

...well, it only looked like
a half a moon to you...

...because you were
looking at it all alone?

Penny, did you ever find someone and...

...and all of a sudden, you felt like
you were taking off, right out into space...

...like a propeller going round and round
and round, 30,000 revolutions a minute...

...and there wasn't any landing fields
left in the world?

I've had that feeling.

And it all started in a drugstore.

- Penny.

- Yeah?

Tommy.

Oh, isn't it wonderful what you can find
these days in drugstores?

- Yeah.

- Oh, gosh.

And that's about all there is to it.

I know, it even sounds crazy to me,
but that's the way it has to be.

Well, I guess I'll have to send
these railroad tickets back, then.

Gee, I hate to have you do that.

- Maybe if I...

- Tommy.

I hope you don't think we're ungrateful,
Miss Jones...

...because you've
been simply wonderful...

...but this is the way Tommy and I

have decided to do it.
Isn't it, Tommy?
Yeah, yeah, that's what we've decided.
You're giving up this great opportunity
to help a bunch of kids you hardly know.
Helping people's hard work, isn't it?
Don't you worry.
You'll find it's worthwhile at
the oddest times and the strangest places.
How soon can you get
your show together?
Our show? Oh, in about 10 days.
Yeah, our only problem
is getting a theater.
Well, there's no problem now.
- You mean we can have the old Duchess?
- Yes.
No, put your bread away.
If the theater's any good to you...
...you can have it as
Thornton's contribution to the cause.
He doesn't even have to know.
It's on Gilmore Street, about seven
blocks from the settlement house.
- How about that?
- It's wonderful, I don't know what to say.
Don't say anything.
Just get your show started
and make it good.
Thornton doesn't know it,
and he won't until I'm ready to tell him...
...but he's gonna see your show
in his theater from the front row.
- Oh, you see, Tommy?
- Yeah.
But Miss Jones,
won't Mr. Reed be angry?
Very likely.
That's why it's got to be good.
Otherwise, I'll find myself in the country
with the rest of the kids.
Gosh. Isn't it beautiful?
It's kind of run-down, isn't it?
It's wonderful.

Well, maybe after we clean it up
and brighten it a little...
...but right now,
it's giving me the creeps.
- It does?
- It's kind of like a haunted house.
Penny, every theater is a haunted house.
Ghosts with greasepaint...
...ghosts that sing and dance
and laugh and cry.
You should think of all the shows
that have been in this theatre.
Flops, successes, bad shows,
great shows.
You can't tell me that that ever dies.
It's all around us right now,
all the laughter and applause, cheers.
Why, it's on every inch
of this old stage up here.
- Do you see what I mean?
- Yeah, I see what you mean.
Then when new ones come along,
kids like us...
...that love the theatre
just as much as they did...
...they're glad and they're rooting for us.
They're saying, "This is your chance.
Go on out there, we've had ours,
now it's your turn.
There's your audience.
They're waiting for you. "
Can't you just see it now?
Look.
The leader taps his stand with his stick.
The music starts.
The footlights gradually come up.
This is that one breathless moment when
everything in the world comes to a stop.
Over in the wings, the light man
at the board reaches for the switch.
Now the hands that pull the curtain
are on the rope, waiting for the cue.
The curtain rises slowly.
I never saw them, but I feel as though

I'd been here watching them every night.
Richard Mansfield in Cyrano de Bergerac.
I know just how he felt,
standing there, waiting for his cue.
Your nose is rather large.
- Have you quite finished, sir?
- I should say that is sufficient.
You humdrum dolt.
How dare you insult a splendid nose
with such meager, piddling words?
Let me show you what you might
have said had you had an ounce...
...yes, even an ounce of imagination
or wit.
To wit, insolent.
What do you do with that nose
when drinking?
Does it go above the glass or below
the glass, for surely, it does not fit inside.
Descriptive. It's a rock.
It's a mountain.
What am I saying, a mountain?
It's a peninsula. Eloquent.
What is that dazzling thing, sir?
Is it a torch? A bonfire? A volcano?
Stamp it out before it blinds my eyes.
- Buffoon.
- Who, me?
So be it.
Prepare to die exquisitely.
- Poet.
- Yes, poet.
Swordsman, take your choice.
No, wait. You shall have both.
For while I fight with you,
I shall compose a ballad...
...and with the last line of my poem,
my sword shall run you through.
Swiftly, my hat is tossed aside.
Slowly, my cloak is allowed to fall
over my left free arm.
And to draw and we stand on guard.
Lunge, and my sword is met with yours.
Dancers of steel that dazzle the eye.

Back you go, in time to my verse.
And then, when I have finished my song,
you die.
Pray now, while you still have life.
Prince, pray, with your final sigh.
Stay, look sharp, I've run out of verse.
And now, as I finish my song,
you die
For it is Mary, Mary
Plain as any name can be
But with propriety
Society will say "Marie"
But it was Mary, Mary
Long before the fashions came
And there is something there
That sounds so square
It's a grand old name
But it was Mary, Mary
Long before the fashions came
And there is something there
That sounds so square
It's a grand old name
For she's my Daisy
My bonnie Daisy
She's as sweet as sugar candy
And she's very fond of Sandy
And I worry for my dearie
I would rather lose my kilt
Than lose my Daisy
For I would rather lose my kilt
Than lose my Daisy
Sure, I've got rings on my fingers
And bells on my toes
Elephants to ride upon
My little Irish rose
So come to your nabob
On next Patrick's Day
Be Mistress Mumbo-Jumbo
Jij-Ji-Bo J. O'Shea
Sure, I've got rings on my fingers
And bells on my toes
Elephants to ride upon
My little Irish rose
So come to your nabob

On next Patrick's Day
Be Mistress Mumbo-Jumbo
Jij-Ji-Bo J. O'Shea
I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy
Yankee Doodle do or die
A real live nephew of my Uncle Sam
I was born on the 4th of July
I've got a Yankee Doodle sweetheart
She's my Yankee Doodle joy
Yankee Doodle came to London
Just to ride the ponies
Say, I am a Yankee Doodle Boy
He's a Yankee Doodle Dandy
A Yankee Doodle do or die
A real live nephew of his Uncle Sam
Born on the 4th of July
I've got a Yankee Doodle sweetheart
She's my Yankee Doodle joy
Yankee Doodle came to London
Just to ride the ponies
I am a Yankee Doodle boy
- Come in.
- Oh, Tommy, they're beautiful.
- Maybe I should have got a dozen more.
- No, one would have been enough.
Once, you told me I was
gonna be dancing on top of the world...
...and tonight, I'm all filled up with things
I've been saving to say...
...but now that the time is here,
I guess I'll just go on and say them, huh?
But, Tommy... oh, no, don't go.
I want to thank you too.
You've done so much and...
...I guess I'll never be happier
than I am tonight.
- Hey, Tommy, your mother's here.
- Oh, Mom! How are you?
Wait a minute. What are you doing,
working your way through college?
I bought them all on the train.
I was saving them for you.
You've grown a little, haven't you?
Mom, I'd like you

to meet some of my friends.

No, no, no. Don't tell me.

This is Penny, of course.

I'm awful glad to meet you.

How'd you know it was me?

Tommy writes

such wonderful descriptions.

- And of course, this is Hammy.

- No, Mom, that's Ray.

In back of you, that's Hammy.

- Of course, the one with the blank verse.

- That's him.

- Fifteen minutes.

- I've got to go.

Excuse me. I'll see you after the show.

And here. This is for recognizing me.

You go on out and get your seat now.

See you after the show.

You come back, if you'll talk to me.

Here it is, son, this wonderful minute,
just as we talked about it so many times.

Yeah, sort of jumped up
on top of us, huh?

Yes, and the funniest thing is

I'm not the least bit nervous.

No, no, of course, you're not.

Of course, you're not. Here.

Give me a kiss for good luck, huh?

- You got your tickets?

- Yes.

- I'll see you after the show. Bye.

- All right.

Gosh, what a peach of a mom, huh?

- I wish Jonesy and Reed would get here.

- Don't worry, Jonesy won't let us down.

- You think he'll go for us?

- He'll go for us.

I hope they don't leave
before our big number.

With Jonesy on one side and mom on the
other, I'm taking the short end of the bet.

- Ten minutes.

- Hey, we'd better hurry.

I'm gonna go out front and

see the house, huh? Be right back.

- Mr. Williams, how do I look?

- You look swell, Barbara Jo.

- Good luck to you.

- Thanks.

Tommy Williams. My boy.

Acting since he was that high.

- Tommy. Hey, Tommy.

- Yeah?

- She's here. Jones.

- Oh, swell. Excuse me, Maria.

Jonesy, am I glad to see you.

Where is he?

- He's not here, Tommy.

- Not here?

I'm terribly sorry, Tommy.

Does that mean he's not coming?

You promised us...

I know I promised you, Tommy,

but I just couldn't ask him.

The poor guy is going crazy

in Philadelphia.

The show isn't doing any business.

They're rewriting, recasting.

On top of all that, he twisted his ankle.

I had to sneak out of town myself.

Never mind, we'll put the show on,

it'll be great and he'll hear about it.

- Won't he, Jonesy?

- Overture's in.

Come on, Tommy, you're gonna be late.

Hurry up.

Everybody, come here for a minute.

Come on around me.

Come on. Wait a minute.

I got something to tell you.

This is the first time in years that

the curtain's gone up in the old Duchess.

Let's make them glad

they didn't tear it down, huh?

What do you say?

Come on, places, everybody!

- Run for your lives!

- Stay where you are!

- Make a lot of noise!

- Keep still!

A bombshell just fell over Brazil

- Lay down your arms

- Run up your flags

You'll surrender to this jill

This bombshell that fell over Brazil

Her contribution

To the art of elocution

Is apt to start a revolution

Among the ladies at the Ritz

In Rio de Janeiro

When she sings "Mamae Eu Quero"

Every local caballero

Admits that it's a blitz

So give up the ship

Throw in the sponge

Get ready for a great big thrill

For here comes

That bombshell from Brazil

Hey, Ma!

- How was it?

- Sensational.

- You murdered them.

- Come on, we only got a minute to change.

I was nervous.

I forgot the second chorus.

- You were great. Keep on being nervous.

- Don't forget...

- Who's Tommy Williams?

- I am.

I'm Inspector Moriarity.

Who are these two apples?

- They're my partners.

- Your partners?

What do you think you're doing?

We're in the middle of a number.

We're on stage in a minute.

- Come back around...

- Slow down, Mr. Ziegfeld.

- You ain't putting on any show.

- What do you mean?

- We're not putting on a show?

- Who says?

State of New York, City of New York,
board of health, and fire commission.

Shall I go on?

We're putting on a show. People
bought tickets. They're out in front now.

That's what I'm talking about.

You can't lock people in a firetrap.

This theatre's been condemned
for 15 years.

- I don't believe it.

- It's a plot.

Mr. Moriarity, you can't stop the show.

Please, don't stop it.

- Fifty little kids that never saw the sunlight.

- With rickets.

We've worked day and night like dogs,
like slaves. My mother, she...

I know all about the kids
and I've got a mother too...

...but if that audience isn't out of there in
15 minutes, I'll have to call the 8th Precinct.

- Mr. Moriarity, couldn't you...?

- I'm sorry, fellas, I know how you feel.

I almost was in a show myself once.

- Tommy. Tommy!

- Come in.

Come on. The orchestra's played
your cue three times.

Aren't you coming out on the stage?

Yeah, I'm coming out.

Bet I get a million laughs too.

Ladies and gentlemen...

...I'm terribly sorry,
but something unexpected has come up...

...and we will not be able
to continue the show.

It's some fire regulation or something
like that, something we knew nothing about.

And I'm awfully sorry that
we can't give the show...

...because it's really a wonderful show
and I'm sure that you would have all liked it.

Anyhow, we want to thank each and
every one of you for coming here...

...and having faith in us and trying to help the send the kids to the country. Everybody did their best. So if you will stop by the box office on your way out...
...why, your money will be cheerfully refunded. Thank you. Tommy, don't eat your heart out. You did the best you could and we're awful proud of you. Yeah. Everybody did their best and where did it get us? Right out in left field. No, don't help yourself, help everybody else. Be a Santa Claus, make sacrifices. If you can do that for the rest of your life...
...you'll be a big success, when you're about 165 years old.
- Tommy, you don't mean that.
- You can bet I do. Where did it get us? No money for the kids, no show...
...chance with Thornton Reed blown right out of the window. Tommy, you mustn't let it make you bitter, please. Faith, hope and charity. Take those kids and wrap them in cellophane and give them back to the Indians. From now on, it's the old rules for me. I'll get a chance again. When I do, look out. Because I'm gonna take anything from anybody, at any time, any place.
- Tommy, I...
- No. Mr. Williams. They didn't take it. They didn't take it.
- Didn't take what?
- Come on, you tell him, Mr. Stone, tell him. Tommy, it's amazing. Everybody went right by the box office.
- They wouldn't take their money back.

- Some of them gave money besides.
Seven hundred and forty dollars.
Isn't it wonderful?
We got all the money to go to the country.
Now there's no need for putting
on a show at all.
Yeah. You're right.
There's no need in putting
a show on at all.
Tommy.
Mr. Stone, there's something
I'd like to say.
I know that the main purpose is getting
Barbara Jo and the kids to the country...
...but there's something else
that we have to take into consideration.
Tommy and his friends gave up
a lot more than most of you know about.
Getting this show on to them
is just as important as going to the country.
So I think that it would be fair...
...if we let him decide if he wants
to use this money to hire a theatre...
...and get his chance
to put the show on.
And they can go to the country later on,
maybe next year.
Well, I don't know what to say.
What do you think, Josephine?
Well, I suppose if it's fair.
Sure, we can go later on.
You'd give this to me?
Sure, if it's fair.
No, Jo.
You're not only going to the country,
but you're leaving tomorrow morning.
- Mr. Williams.
- Splendid.
Where are they? It's ridiculous, fantastic
fabulous. I absolutely can't believe it.
I want to find how anyone
could do a thing like this to me.
- Where are they?
- Thornton. It's Thornton.

- Mr. Reed? I thought he was in Philadelphia.

- Run, don't walk, to the nearest exit.

Who'd...? There you are!

I knew you had a hand in this fiasco.

Now, Thornton, don't get excited.

We only...

I've got a \$ 100,000 turkey

in Philadelphia and what do I get?

Fire commission, board of health,
police department, warrants for my arrest!

Thornton, I'm terribly sorry, it's all my fault.

But there's no harm done.

No harm done? They bring me back to town
as though I were a criminal!

I thought they were crazy.

A show in my own theatre
and I don't even know it.

Thornton, unravel. There isn't any show
and there isn't going to be one.

Wait a minute, maybe...

Mr. Reed, will you listen to me
for just a minute?

Mr. Reed, I'm so glad you're here.

It's against the law
to put our show on for an audience.

There's no law against putting it on for you.

You didn't buy a ticket!

Now she wants to sell me a ticket!

- Mason?

- Yes, sir.

No, no, Mr. Reed, dear Mr. Reed,
we spent weeks and weeks.

We gave up everything.

All we want you to do is just sit down.

I've got trouble enough
without amateur...!

- Quick, Tommy, get them ready.

- Yeah.

Bring the curtain down. Mr. Morris, hurry.

Get the orchestra in the pit.

Please, just watch this one number,
especially Tommy Williams.

And I give you my word of honor,
it won't hurt a bit.

Come on, Daddy, the overture.
Here we are, six characters
Depressed and melancholy
Here we are, six characters
In search of a finale
We've racked our brains
And taxed our minds
To find a trick that's new
But still we haven't got
The slightest idea what to do
We might try a Russian ballet
But a ballet might disclose
That I am more athletic
Than aesthetic on my toes
Say, how about a circus?
We could all go acrobatic
Now, here's a trick I learned in school
To strengthen my sciatic
We could all go South American
And cut a South American rug
But I'd never arrive
I ain't hep to their jive
I'm just a Brooklyn jitterbug
Hold everything... I've got it, pals
Let's do an aquacade
It's true that I can't swim a stroke
But you ought to see me wade
What's wrong with doing something old?
Something tried and true
Well, how about a minstrel show?
Does that appeal to you?
A good old-fashioned minstrel show
- That suits us
- Well, then let's go!
Go and tell New York
To grab a piece of cork
And join that blackout over Broadway
Everybody's gonna be dancin' on air
When they hear them
Playing "Swanee River" in Times Square
Every southern lass
Is gonna cook with gas
And boy, that southern cookin's okay
And when you hear that moan

On the slide trombone
You'll wanna black up
For that blackout over Broadway
Go and tell the town
They ought to come on down
And join that blackout over Broadway
You'll see Andrew Jackson Brown
Straight from the south
And if he don't entertain you
You can shut my mouth
There'll be so much fun
That long before we're done
Those angels up in heaven will say
"Ain't got no time to stall
Spread your wings, you all
And start to black up
For that blackout over Broadway"
Every southern lass
Is gonna cook with gas
And boy, that southern cookin's okay
And when you hear that moan
On the slide trombone
You'll wanna black up
For that blackout over Broadway!
Gentlemen, be seated.
Mr. Tambo, Mr. Tambo
How do you do?
And incidentally, how do you feel?
Well, now, I feels just like a stovepipe
Nothing else, buddy
You feels just like a stovepipe?
Yeah, sooty
Now, Mr. Bones, Mr. Bones
It's good to see you
And incidentally, Mr. Bones
How do you feel?
How does I feel?
Well, man, I feels just like
A fireplace here of late
You say you feels just like a fireplace?
I said it, I feels grate
We all expect some dancing
When the minstrels come to town
So now may I present to you

Mr. Rufus Rastus Jefferson Davis Brown
By the light of the silvery moon
I want to spoon
By the light of the moon
To my honey, I'll croon love's tune
Honey moon, keep a-shinin' in June
The month of June
Your silvery beams
Will bring love's dreams
We'll be cuddlin' soon
Oh, make it soon
By the silvery moon
By the silvery moon
By the silvery moon
Oh, Mr. Interlocutor
Could there be something wrong?
We are waiting just
To hear Mr. Tambo do his song
Mr. Tambo
Do you feel good and strong?
Then get right up and show the folks
How you can sing that song
I hear tell there's a stranger
In the Jones household
- Yes, sirree, yes, sirree
- That's what I'm told
I hear tell there's a new arrival
Six days old
- Yes, sirree, yes, sirree
- Worth his wait in gold
Come right in
And meet the son
Christening's done
Time to have some fun
- Yes, sirree, yes, sirree
- Yes, sirree
Yes, sirree, yes, sirree
It's a big holiday everywhere
For the Jones family
Has a brand-new heir
He's a joy, heaven-sent
And we proudly present
Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones
When he grows up

He never will stray
With a name
Like the one that he's got today
When he walks down the street
Folks will say
"Pleased to meet
Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones "
What a smile
And how he shows it
He'll be happy all day long
What a name
I'll bet he knows it
With that handle
How can he go wrong?
And the folks in the town all agree
He'll be famous
As famous as he can be
How can he be a dud
Or a stick-in-the-mud
When he's Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones?
Go to sleep, my baby
And maybe you'll balance the budget
By and by
Oh, you're a lucky baby
With Franklin D. For your name
Mrs. Jones' baby boy
Is a welcome resident
Give him a fishing rod for a toy
He's the future president
When this rascal goes to school
ABC's won't matter
Teach him plain old 'rithmetic
And of course, some fireside chatter
My friends, my friends
Let's all shout hooray!
It's a big holiday everywhere
For the Jones family
Has a brand-new heir
We'll be proud to affirm
When he serves his fourth term
- Just you wait and see
- Yeah!
- He'll make history
- Yeah!

'Cause he's Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones!
Oh, ring, ring the banjo
For Franklin Roosevelt Jones
But when you hear the banjo
It's played by Mr. Bones
Way down on the levee
In old Alabamy
There's Daddy and Mammy
There's Ephraim and Sammy
On a moonlight night
You can find them all
While they are waitin'
The banjos are syncopatin'
Oh, what's that they're sayin'?
Oh, what's that they're sayin'?
While they keep playin'
And hummin' and swayin'
It's the good ship Robert E. Lee
That's here to carry the cotton away
Watch them shufflin' along
See them shufflin' along
Go take your best gal
Your real pal
Go down on the levee
I said to the levee
And we'll join that shufflin' throng
Hear that music and song
It's simply great, mate
Waitin' on the levee
Waitin' for the Robert E. Lee!
We're babes on Broadway
We're goin' places
When our new faces appear
It's a wonderful street
For babes like us to be on
We're here because
We want our names in neon
We left Topeka
We left Eureka
And came to seek a career
Oh, we're milkin' applause
Instead of milkin' a cow
'Cause we're babes on Broadway now!