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Cabin in the Sky

By Joseph Schrank

Good evening, Lily. How are you?

Glad to see you.

- Hello, boys. How are you?

- Good evening, Reverend.

- Good evening. Glad to see you.

- How do you do?

- Good evening.

- I see you brought the twins too.

They had to come out.

I hope they stay awake.

- Hello there, Jean.

- How are you?

Come on in, now. Take your hats off, boys.

Take your hats off.

You see, Reverend?

It ain't every Wednesday night a scamp
like Little Joe comes back to the fold.

- Petunia dragged him in yet?

- He's coming of his own free will.

Well, I'll believe that

when I sees him stand up and confess.

Maybe he's let Petunia
down again, Reverend.

You better step over
to the house and make sure.

If he done backslid,
he wouldn't pay no mind to a deacon.

- You better go yourself.

- Perhaps you're right.

Petunia felt so sure of him this time.

- Now, we don't wanna be late, darling.

- Just a minute, Petunia.

Oh, the Lord won't mind if you
ain't wearing a necktie, Little Joe.

- I found the tie.

- Then what you worried about, honey?

Right now

I'm wrestling with the devil.

While I was looking for the necktie
in the bureau drawer...

...I also found two calamity cubes.

And I ain't thrown them away yet.

If I been redeemed, why ain't

I pitched them right into the stove?

The fact you told me you found them
shows you are trying to be good, Little Joe.

- Evening, Petunia.

- Evening, Reverend.

Bring them along

so Reverend Green can burn them up.

- Burn what up, Petunia?

- Oh, Little Joe found some dice...

...and he thinks the devil's
got a toehold on him again.

But don't worry,

we'll be to the meeting tonight.

Hurry up, Little Joe.

Reverend Green's here.

I'll be there in just a minute, honey.

I don't think any man could be very bad
with you to take care of him.

Oh, I reckon he knows I love him.

Yes, he knows I love him

better than anything in this world.

And he also knows now, when he gambles,
he ain't never gonna win.

How did you convince him of that?

I just showed him he can't win
when I ask the Lord to make him lose.

Is that why his luck's
always been so bad?

That's the only reason.

He just naturally got a talent for gambling.

Little Joe would've won every two bits
in this town if I hadn't told the Lord...

...I didn't want us

to make money that way.

You're a wonderful woman, Petunia.

Only last week he bought
an Irish Sweepstake ticket.

Got stuck up there in the mirror,
worshipping it every day.

"Guaranteed by two dream books
and a fortuneteller."

But I've been talking to the Lord about that.

It ain't gonna win either.

What made Little Joe realize
the power of your faith?

I'll tell you, Reverend, it's like this.

I've been praying every day
for Little Joe to get a job.

This morning he got one.

And that's finally convinced him
the Lord's in my corner.

- Good evening, Reverend.

- Evening, Joseph.

I hear you've started to work.

Yes, sir. From now on,
you can address me as "mine host."

- I've gone into the hotel business.

- That's fine.

He means he's got a job
down at that new hotel downtown.

Yes, sir. I'm operative in charge
of elevator number two.

That's gonna be nice for Little Joe.

That hotel's air-conditioned.

You know, honey,
when I get rich in the elevator game...

...maybe I'll air-condition our residence.

This one's already air-conditioned
with half the roof gone.

Well, it's about time
to start the services.

- You'll hurry along, won't you?

- We'll be there.

Reverend, when you call on
the sinners to confess...

...you'd better assign me
the rest of the evening.

Oh, you're not that bad, Joseph.

Now, those who wish to start out
on this pilgrim journey...

...we all will sing and join in singing
the song of invitation.

'Tis the old ship of Zion

Come on, children. Come on, children.

Go ahead, now, Little Joe.

Go on, honey.

- Amen. Praise the Lord.

- Little Joe's joining up, Lily.

That's nice.

Wasn't a minute too soon, neither.
Don't whistle at me
through a church window, gentlemen.
- Can't you see I'm busy getting saved?
- Now, wait a minute.
Wait with that "getting saved" business
until you pays the money you owe.
- And you owes me more.
- You owe me more than that.
And you'll all be paid.
- Good evening, gentlemen.
- Wait a minute.
You can pay us now.
Domino Johnson's back in town.
Domino Johnson?
- You in fast company.
- Yeah, he's over to Jim Henry's caf now.
Loaded with money.
- Give him my congratulations.
- He's raring for action.
- He won't play with any of us.
- And he won't play with me.
I got an appointment with repentance.
Wait a minute. This is your chance.
Your last chance to make yourself
change before you gets repented.
Domino Johnson don't know you.
No, but you do.
And you know how unlucky I am.
- But this time, you'll play with our money.
- And with our dice.
And Georgia Brown
will be over there tonight too.
Look, please let me go.
- Be yourself. You coming along with us.
- I gave up gambling for Petunia's sake.
Didn't you say you wanted Petunia...
...to have those nice things
she didn't have before?
- Yes.
- All right, then, here's your chance.
Your last chance
to make it the easy way.
Why, man, you can clean up big tonight.

Yeah, but they're waiting
for me back in there.
Oh, you can get saved any day.
An opportunity like this only comes once.
Well, maybe I better cut down
on my gambling gradual.
- What can I do, Petunia?
- Come on.
Come on, children.
Come on to the Lord. Peace.
Lily.
- Little Joe ain't there.
- Ain't he?
- Well, he was here when the others got up.
- Maybe he's a little shy.
He must be waiting outside.
Come with me, Lily. I'm scared.
Little Joe?
Little Joe?
- He wouldn't go to...
- Well, you know that Little Joe.
No. He wouldn't do that.
He must have gone home.
Come on, Lily.
But, Petunia...
Little Joe? Little Joe?
Little Joe!
He ain't here.
Lily, something awful's happened
to Little Joe.
Petunia.
I got in a little trouble again, honey.
Little Joe!
I think he'll pull through.
We'll know in the morning.
- But can I go in, doctor?
- Yes, you may, Petunia.
But don't try to talk to him,
because he'll be out of his head.
Lord.
A fool.
Fool.
No, no. No.
Lord...

...please don't take Little Joe from me.
I know how sinful he's been lately,
but I love him.
And please forgive me
for loving him so much.
But Little Joe ain't wicked.
He's just weak.
And if he dies now,
the devil's going to get him sure.
And he don't deserve to be in a mess
like that. Little Joe ain't that bad.
So if you'll just let him
get well again...
...I promise you he'll mend his ways
and give you no more trouble.
Amen.
Those ain't my dice.
He's got a... He's got a gun.
Who's there?
Don't let him in here. I don't know you.
Get him out of here.
Little Joe...
...rise up from that bed
and report for duty.
Report? Report where?
Now, where do you suppose
you'd be reporting?
A shiftless no-account like you is.
- Get up.
- I can't get up from this bed.
- I'm a very sick man.
- Little Joe, you ain't sick no more.
You are dead.
What are you doing here, Lucius?
What's that you called me?
Ain't you my old friend Lucius Ferry?
Lucius Fe...
You are speaking to Lucifer Jr.
Joe, the asbestos chariot is awaiting.
- Come on, grab him and let's get going.
- No, no!
- Come on.
- I ain't dead. I don't feel dead.
If you ain't...

...who is that laying in that bed?
That's me.
That's right.
Then who do you think you are?
I don't know.
I ain't never been twins before.
And you still ain't twins.
You's the spirit of that body, Little Joe.
And you're the one we've come for.
Petunia.
Petunia, don't let them get me.
Petunia can't hear you now.
Boy, you is gone.
Here I is, Petunia.
Don't look at him. Look at me.
How you expect Petunia
to see your spirit?
To her, you just a hunk of thin air.
- Little Joe, your hands is cold.
- Course they is. I'm dead.
Oh, Lord, something's wrong
down here. I feel it.
- You ain't gonna let him die, are you?
- That's right, Petunia, pray.
Pray harder. You's a faithful servant.
If Little Joe dies,
I ain't got nothing left to live for.
Don't let up, Petunia.
Keep plugging. Keep plugging for me.
I know you hear me.
If you save him on earth for me...
...I'm gonna save him
for you up in heaven.
That is terrific praying.
Come on, grab this rascal.
Let's get him out of here.
- No!
- Get that leg. Take him on out of there.
Get the legs, number four. Pull him around.
Don't let him switch up on you like that!
What's going on here?
I'm in an awful mess.
Reverend?
Who gave you orders

to incinerate this man?
We got our orders direct from
the hot seat, from the big boss hisself.
And you better keep out of this.
- You're Lucifer's boy, aren't you?
- I am.
Look like old Lucifer
been jumping the gun again.
Oh, no, he haven't either. Little Joe here's
been 1 -A on our list for a long time.
You've had lots of souls
that you didn't get.
Yes, I knows that, but Little Joe never did
do any repenting until after he was dead.
That don't count and you knows it.
What are you doing down here?
Answer me that.
I'll tell you.
We received a powerful prayer
from Petunia here.
It was the most powerful
piece of praying...
...we's heard up there in a long time.
- I was afraid of that.
Now, if you coal-heavers don't lay off
while we investigate...
...you gonna have
some explaining to do.
You don't have to check up on me,
Reverend. You know I been reforming.
I know very little about you, Joseph.
Ain't you the reverend in our church?
I am a soldier of the Lord.
And nothing must be done
till I look into this case.
Don't let him bluff you.
We've been wanting to tangle
with them birds for a long time.
Now wait a minute here.
What's the reason we can't talk
this thing over sensible-like?
Now, what does your boss want
with a no-account like Little Joe?
- You knows by rights he belongs to us.

- No, I don't, general.
And I thank you
for letting me come with you.
Wait a minute, Joseph. Not so fast.
I was told to investigate,
not to bring you up there.
But you won't be taking no chances, sir.
I can be a very handy man up there.
I can run the elevator...
...going up, tune harps
and mind cherubs, or anything.
First thing you know, you'll have a bunch
of dice-shooting angels on your hands.
Don't listen to him. Listen to Petunia.
- She knows how hard I been...
- Quiet.
I am listening to her.
Lord, if you just let him
get well again...
...I promise you I'll get him back
in the fold.
- But I promise you...
- Hold on here.
How come Petunia there knows
what we're talking about?
I don't know.
Petunia's always been
in pretty close touch with the Lord.
But this is a new one on me.
Looks like the Lord
is letting her in on something.
That's strictly against the rules
for human beings down here.
This is a problem.
Sergeant Fleetfoot.
- Yes, sir.
- Better zoom up...
...and get a firsthand judgment
from the Lord.
Yes, sir. I won't be a minute, general.
- No stunting, now.
- Oh, no, sir.
Now, what for you wanna go
through all this rigmarole?

You just messing up the bookkeeping.
I tell you what I'll do.
- I'll shoot you for him.
- Okay, you're faded.
Oh, no, Little Joe. Not you, him.
- You're a lot of trouble to us, Little Joe.
- Trouble?
Just wait until your boss starts checking up
on his carryings-on with Georgia Brown.
Maybe you didn't know
she's my pappy's favorite child.
We know all about
that Georgia Brown affair.
- It's a long black mark against you.
- Little Joe just weak.
He was trying to get away
from that old Georgia Brown...
...but she just overpowered him.
This coaching from the sideline
has gotta stop.
That's dirty pool and you knows it.
Petunia's right, sir.
I was trying to get rid of that woman.
And I was making headway too.
Why, only last week
I says to her... I says:
"Georgia, we can't go on like this.
Why, it's grieving
poor Petunia something fierce."
Oh, Little Joe, careful, now.
Well, that's what I thought anyhow.
Don't forget, we can read
your thoughts up there too.
Well, that's what I ought to thought.
Little Joe, we's gonna have
Georgia Brown with us before long.
You are, sure enough?
Makes no neverminds to me.
No, sir.
That's right where she belongs.
Little Joe, that thought that weaseled
through your soul just now...
...convinces me that you're not fit
to associate with our folks up there.

It's just too dangerous.

Oh, my.

I'm just about the most miserablest person
what ever died.

Boy, you ain't half as miserable
as you gonna be.

Petunia!

Petunia, help!

Little Joe, you ain't breathing.

- Lily, Lily!

- I heard you, Petunia.

Oh, Lord, you ain't gonna let him die.

You ain't forsaken me, have you?

Lily! Little Joe ain't breathing.

- I'm afraid it's all over now, Petunia.

- Don't say that.

The Lord's not taken Little Joe from me
so I won't see him again.

You better come get some rest.

If it wasn't for the best, the Lord
never would've let this happen to you.

No.

Lord, I've heard your voice.

And I'm hanging on to my faith in you,
no matter what happens.

- But don't take Little Joe from me.

- Okay. It's all right.

Don't take him.

You certainly have been
a heartache to her, Little Joe.

General, I'm a rat.

Sergeant Fleetfoot,
you made good time.

The flying was good, general.

- Tail wind all the way.

- What's the Lord's verdict?

The Lord said Little Joe
ain't no fit company for our folks.

Oh, me. The jig's up.

But you ain't heard
the whole thing out yet.

- There's a proviso.

- A what?

Quote, "On account

of Petunia praying so hard...
...the Lord done give him leave to stay
on this earth for six months more.
If he whitewash his soul
in that time...
...he makes the grade with heaven."
- And what if he don't?
"Lucifer Sr.
Gets permanent control," unquote.
- You know Little Joe's never gonna change.
- Oh, yes, I can.
I done changed already. Yes, sir.
I'll spread the light
and preach the word. Hallelujah.
Wait a minute, Little Joe.
There's one catch in this.
You're not gonna remember anything...
...when you wake up
and become alive again.
- I ain't?
- No, you're not.
You see, your human mind
is gonna be blank about all this.
Your human mind is over there
in your human body.
How am I gonna reform
if I don't remember...
...what a mess I was in when I was dead?
- It's gonna be like this, Little Joe.
We're gonna be around telling
your conscience the right thing to do.
Of course, you won't see us,
but we'll be there.
And is he gonna be around telling
my conscience the wrong thing to do?
Oh, I'll be there, all right.
You can depend on that.
That's bad.
Well, I'll be seeing you, Little Joe.
So long.
We'll give him a fight.
Go back, Little Joe, to your human body.
I hope that in this second life...
...you fight a good fight.

I'll be in there pitching, general.

Good luck, Little Joe.

- Petunia! Petunia!

- Great day in the morning.

Here I am, darling.

- Little Joe.

- Petunia.

- You're alive.

- Oh, Lord. This is sure enough a miracle.

- I'll get the doctor.

- We don't need the doctor.

Tell the reverend, tell everybody.

Little Joe's all right.

Lord, I thank you. And right now

I'm so happy, I can't talk.

But I know you understand.

- Petunia.

- Don't move.

Be quiet.

Good morning, Petunia.

You're looking

mighty happy this morning.

I was till this minute. What you

and Dude coming here for, Jim Henry?

We is devotees of good singing.

But you ain't here

because you're music lovers.

We was just wondering

how Little Joe's getting along.

Oh, Little Joe just getting along fine.

Doc Jones says he'll be up and about soon.

I'm seeing to it he don't get mixed up

with you and your crowd again.

That suits us. But there's a little business

matter we'd like to take up with him.

We didn't want to bother Little Joe

till he got better...

...but it's been over a month now.

Very thoughtful of you.

I suppose this business matter is money?

Yes. As a matter of fact,

I has the IOU right here for...

- Four dollars. And you?

- Six.

Well, Jim Henry...

...you being such a bigtime sport...

...you wouldn't take advantage

of somebody like me...

...who don't know

nothing about gambling?

- No, no.

- Well, I tell you what.

Suppose we shoot your dice for,

I think the phrase is, "double or nothing"...

...for that money Little Joe owes you.

- That sounds fair enough.

And to show you that we mean you good,

we gonna let you roll them.

You mean I can throw them

down there on the ground?

- Yeah, sort of out of the way.

- I see.

- Now, look, I can practice a little bit?

- Oh, that's perfectly all right.

- A one and another one.

- That's snake eyes.

- Is that bad?

- It ain't good.

- A two and a one. What's that?

- That's bad news again.

Look here. Ain't there

no good news on these things?

Oh, yes, the number's there

if you is lucky.

Something tells me I ain't lucky.

Let me see you roll them, Jim Henry.

Anything to pleasure a lady.

You got your money, ain't you?

- Why, of course.

- Well, all you have to do...

...is to lay your money on the ground.

Well, coming at you.

Your announcer is Jim Henry.

Big natural, dice.

- What's the matter?

- I done changed my mind.

- I think I'll roll them myself.

- But you passed the dice to me.

I know, and now I'm passing
the dice back to me.

- And these the same dice I had before?

- Oh, yes.

- All right...

- You don't wanna tire yourself out.

Oh, ladies first, Jim Henry.

Never forget your manners.

This time it's for keeps.

Seven.

Ain't that funny how my luck
done changed all of a sudden?

I guess I'm just dumb and lucky.

That takes care of you business,
little Jim Henry.

Now, put your money down here
so I can take charge of you, son.

I... I... I think I'm gonna let mine ride.

You must have thought that
I didn't hear myself speak.

- Read it.

- Eleven.

Correct. Switch dice on me, will you?

That's the stuff you been pulling off
on Little Joe. Get out of here, you two.

If I catch you here again,
I'll set the law on you.

Oh, Lord.

Please forgive me for backsliding.

But sometimes

when you fight the devil...

...you got to jab him
with his own pitchfork.

- You know something, Petunia?

- What?

When I gets recovered...

...I ain't gonna let you break your back
working for me.

Oh, I don't mind, sugar,
long as it's you I'm working for.

Well, I'm gonna be good to you
from now on.

I'm gonna buy you
electric washing machine.

You ain't gonna do
nobody's scrubbing but your own.
Sure enough? Little Joe, you just about
to kill me with kindness.
Oh, Petunia, you know I ain't never
done nothing for you before.
Why you've worked your fingers to the bone
to see that I had a pleasant recuperation.
You snatched me from the clutches
of all those hoodlums I ran with.
I tell you, I feel like a new man.
And that's just the way
you gonna continue to be.
How do you know that?
Oh, the Lord gives me proof in here.
How do you mean?
Little Joe, when you're good...
...something in here starts singing.
And the Lord seems to say,
"Petunia...
...all my angels
are playing beautiful music...
...because they feel so happy for you.
Can you hear it down there?"
And I listen.
And sure enough I hear it as plain
as if I was up in heaven myself...
...and they were teaching me
their prettiest tunes.
Then I realize that's the Lord's way
of telling me to be happy.
Petunia, how many tunes
do you suppose the angels know?
Well, nobody can say that down here.
But if you just keep on being good...
...me and you gonna hear
them together someday.
You mean way up there in the deep blue?
- You suppose they'll let us be together?
- Of course they will.
If we do the job right here,
they won't let us down...
...when we're finally ready to go home.
Do you reckon the angels know

any of the songs you sing?

They sure do.

Oh, I suppose they do sing awful pretty.

But I'd rather hear you any day.

Boogie!

Oh, boogie, boy.

Hey! Stop that noise!

What's going on around here?

Is this what you calls
office efficiency?

- You imps is supposed to be working.

- Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Well, boys, we's on the spot.

Pappy said we gotta get Little Joe, or I ain't
gonna be the head man around here.

You know that means there's gonna be
a shakeup in the Idea Department too.

Why is Lucifer so doggone bent
on getting that Little Joe?

Pappy's gotta make a test case
out of this one.

He won't let the Lord get away
with breaking the rules...

...by giving Little Joe another chance.

If the Lord gets pigheaded
about this case...

...I don't know how we gonna win out.

We never has yet.

Boys, we's got to pull something big.

We's got to get a colossal idea.

Like the time we got

King Pharaoh of Egypt...

...to force the children of Israel
to make bricks without straw.

- Do y'all remember that one?

- Do I remember that one?

- Wasn't I the one who thunk it up?

- That's right, you was.

- Wasn't the Lord burned up about that one?

- He was that.

I didn't do so bad myself.

I was the one that thought up...

...flies.

- And you ain't had an idea like that since.

You's going stale. All of you.
Ideas like them only come
once in a million years, Junior.
One of you better get an idea quick.
Or you all gonna be out there
in your old jobs...
...heaving coal in the boiler room.
It's gonna be kind of tough
on you boys...
...after this nice, cool,
air-conditioned office.
Now, that's gratitude for you.
That's gratitude for you.
After all the wickedness we done
promoted for the big boss...
...ever since Eve got Adam
to nibble on that apple.
There's a great idea.
Who thought that one up?
Oh, I know you did. Don't tell me.
- Man, that's how I started my career.
- Yeah.
And here we are watching it finish.
If I could just get that
psalm-singing Petunia out of the way.
Doggone it, she's in my horns
at every turn.
Hey, chief.
How about setting Petunia up
in a love nest with a rich racketeer...
...and then getting the joint raided?
- That is the most awful idea!
- I'm sorry.
The whole trouble is, I's stuck
with a bunch of B idea men.
All the A boys is over there in Europe.
Say...
...how about...?
- No.
- No?
Let me see, now.
I've got it!
I've got something terrifical.
Listen to this. Why can't we flood

Little Joe with money?
Barrels of money.
Make him rich and watch him
come down here quicker than that.
- I don't know.
- It's awful good.
Think of all the success we've had
with rich souls up there.
Give a man money, watch him act funny.
It ain't bad, Junior.
Now, how you figure
you're gonna make Little Joe so rich?
- How about a sweepstake ticket?
- Well, ain't that a little corny?
Oh, no, man.
Ain't Little Joe always buying chances
on some kind of ticket that don't pay off?
Yeah. I just remembered,
he's got one right now.
Well, all right.
If Lucifer can fix it
for that ticket to pay off...
...then we'll call in a girl
that we know is gonna help us.
- Miss Georgia Brown.
- The same.
We as good as got Little Joe
on the broiler right now.
- Sounds better than the apple gag to me.
- Oh, I guarantees it personally.
Boys, maybe we's in again.
Wait a minute. I'm gonna pull
this one on the big boss.
- Get me Lucifer Sr.
- Just a minute.
I just got an idea.
How about taking Little Joe
and making him rich?
Boy, where have you been?
Hello.
Hello, Pappy.
I think we just cracked
that Little Joe case.
Oh, yes, sir. I just thought up

an idea that's a natural.
Came to me just like that.
Can you fix it so Little Joe can
cash in big on his sweepstake ticket?
You can?
Then he's just as good
as in the bag already.
That's right. We make him rich...
...and with the cooperation
of one of your favorite daughters...
Yes, sir. Yes, sir, that's the one.
Then all we does is just sit back
and watches the fun.
Okay, then, Pappy.
You just tend to that ticket
and leave the rest to me.
Oh, yes, sir. Thank you, Pappy.
How's Mammy?
So you still in the doghouse, huh?
Well, so long, Pappy.
Boys, he's crazy about it.
Now, all we's got to do
is to sell Georgia Brown the idea.
She'll know what to do
with that Little Joe.
My, my.
You sure are a pretty thing, Georgia.
Yes, sir, you certainly
are a sight for the eyes.
Now, just look at yourself.
There's no doubts about it.
You just about
the prettiest girl in town.
That's enough. Get going.
Oh, it's such a beautiful day.
Mostly anything could happen to a girl
on a pretty day like this.
Wearing her best dress,
her best perfume.
Your best perfume.
I wonder what Little Joe's
doing right now.
He never could resist you.
And you kind of like him too, don't you?

Yes, sir. That little man
certainly had something.
Wouldn't do no harm to sort of...
...mosey over and see
how he's doing, huh?
Go on.
Just mosey.
Hey, hey! Hey, be careful.
Where you want this put, Mr. Jackson?
Just take it around
to the rear entrance to my residence.
I guess he means the back porch.
- Petunia?
- Right here, honey.
- What you doing?
- Trying to keep your lunch warm.
- You're a little late today.
- I had to stop off at a couple of places.
Joe, you're up to something.
What you hiding behind your back?
A little gift for you.
Oh, Little Joe, you shouldn't.
And ain't they pretty.
Not pretty enough for you, Petunia.
There ain't no flowers pretty enough
for my Petunia's birthday.
Birthday. Oh, Joe, this is the first time
you've remembered my birthday in years.
Oh, it ain't nothing. I'm aiming
to remember all of them from now on.
- What's on the ice?
- Oh, a nice cold pitcher of lemonade.
Oh, yes.
Just what the doctor ordered.
Look at you.
Standing all covered with God's good dirt
and all the devilishness sweated out you.
My, but you a handsome sight.
Look at them muscles.
Ain't they killing?
- About to pop out of my sleeve.
- I bet you the strongest man on that job.
Oh, I toss them sacks around
like they was full of nothing.

Why, the boss say if I don't slow down he's
gonna have to unemploy a couple of men.
Joe, just what on earth are you doing?
Now comes the grand surprise.
Come on.
Come on, come on.
Have some refreshments
on the house, boys.
What'll you have for a chaser?
How you like it?
Now all we need is some electricity
so we can run it.
Come on.
Oh, honey.
Not on your birthday.
There ain't nobody got no right
being happy as I am.
Well, come on. Smile, then.
Come on. That's it.
Now, you wanna do something
to make me happy?
Sing us a little song.
- Oh, come on, Miss Jackson.
- Sure.
- The one you sang the first time we...
- Joe.
Oh, you know the one I mean.
Petunia!
Six o'clock already.
How come you so spry, Little Joe?
Oh, you can't wear out a man filled with
the spirit of the Lord.
Which one of y'all
is Little Joe Jackson?
- What do you want with him?
- Is you him?
Maybe I am. That all depends
on who you are.
Well, I got a cablegram for him.
What's a cablegram?
- Something good?
- Well, sometimes it's good...
...and sometimes it's bad.
Well, how about this one?

Is it good or bad?

Well, I wouldn't know about that.

- Well, in that case, I don't want none.

- Oh, so you is Little Joe Jackson.

- You got to receive it.

- What do you mean, I got to receive it?

- This is a free country, ain't it?

- This is special for you.

There's your name right on it.

See there?

Looks like just a ordinary letter to me.

It is, except that it come
from under the ocean.

Just sign right there.

Is this gonna cost me something?

We usually gets a little
something for our services.

Of course, that's up to you.

Well, that's settled.

What you doing? Voting?

That's my signature

when my secretary ain't around.

I'm a very busy man.

Clear out of here, will you?

Maybe I'd better read it to you, huh?

You trying to tell me I can't read?

Now, go on, beat it,

while I look over my correspondence.

Okay. I was just trying to be helpful.

What in the world

is all this about anyhow?

So that's it.

That's what you've been cooking up
in your fire, you smoke-eating mole.

I told Pappy this was gonna
take you by surprise.

What do you mean by fixing it
for him to win the sweepstake?

- You're not gonna get away with this.

- This'll buy him a ticket to the boiler room.

This is the dirtiest double-cross
since Lucifer's been in business.

Why, thank you, general.

You're rather flattering today.

Can't make heads or tails
out of this thing.

- Must be an ad, I guess.

- Joseph.

That paper might lead you
into temptation.

- Throw it away.

- No, no, don't you do it.

You wouldn't want Petunia
to know about it.

Don't believe him.

Petunia would love to know about it.

- Throw it away!

- Hang on to it!

Maybe you'd better step in, Lord.

- Still here, Joe?

- I was just going.

- Going to the picture show?

- No. Me and Petunia's going...

...to a prayer meeting.

- Okay, deacon.

- I'll walk down with you.

- Okay.

Good evening, Junior.

- Does Little Joe Jackson work here?

- You just missed him, lady.

He went home.

Oh, my!

I guess we'll use the frying pan after all.

Petunia!

Honey! Petunia!

Oh, Petunia?

Where are you, Petunia?

Oh, Lily? Where'd Petunia go?

She said she's going to the store
to get you some clothes.

Oh, yeah.

Doggone, I ought to fix that roof.

That would be a fine thing to do, Little Joe.

The main idea is to keep busy, you know.

Oh, I'm too tired.

I'll fix it in the morning.

General, you ain't seen nothing yet.

Just take a look over yonder.

Hello, Little Joe.
This is bad business.
Georgia Brown.
Wha...? What are you doing here?
I just wanted to say hello
and see how you been.
Ain't no harm in that.
Is there?
Well, there ain't no harm
in passing the time of day. I guess.
It's nice to know
you're getting well again.
I hope you ain't forgot me.
Oh, I ain't forgot you.
Then maybe you'll be coming round
to Jim Henry's place to see me.
- I tell you, Georgia, it's like this.
- Yeah?
It's like this.
It seems the last time I was there,
I got into a little bit of trouble.
Oh, that. Oh, the guy
that caused all that trouble...
...that Domino Johnson, he's in jail now.
I know, but that ain't it.
Well, what is it, then?
Look at me, Little Joe.
Is you happy without seeing me?
- Well, the truth is...
- Of course you're happy.
Tell her to get away from here
before you spoil all your chances.
Tell the truth, I has been trying
my best not to think of you lately.
You has, sugar?
Why, you lying rascal. You know
you never could get her out of your mind.
Go ahead and tell her that.
Of course, I ain't saying
I altogether forgot you.
You ain't easy to erase from the mind...
...once a man gets
to know you good-like.
Why does you want

to forget me, sugar?
Well, it seems there was
a lot of reasons why...
...but for the life of me, I can't seem
to think of one of them now.
Of course, if you don't care
about me no more.
Georgia, don't talk like that.
Why, you know I'd never do anything
to hurt your feelings.
Oh, honey.
- And there goes his passport to heaven.
- Get her out of here.
Oh, this is the best fight
we've won in a long time.
Go ahead, Little Joe.
Kick over the traces.
Now, stop that, Little Joe.
Think of the consequences.
Little Joe, cut that out!
Georgia, this has got to stop.
Little Joe, you ain't fooling me none
with that there religion stuff.
I know you better than that.
You're just playing hard to get.
And I know why too.
- What are you talking about?
- This. This is what I'm talking about.
- You dropped it down at the mill.
- Oh, that's just a little old ad.
An ad? Did you read it?
You gonna be filthy with money.
- How filthy?
- Why, you big ignoramus...
...this here piece of paper says you've
drawn the horse in the Irish Sweepstake.
- Say that again, slower.
- Listen to this:
"Mr. Joe Jackson.
Dear sir, we are happy to learn...
...that you drew the horse Runaway
in the forthcoming Irish Sweepstakes...
...and that he is the favorite to win.
We hereby offer you a sum equal

to \$50,000 for your interest in..."
I'm gonna be rich!
I don't know whether
I'm dreaming or not.
I'm gonna be rich.
This must be the payoff.
This must be my reward
for being a good husband.
Petunia was right. The Lord
is wonderful! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
No, no! That's not the way
it's supposed to work out.
Wait till Petunia hears this. Hallelujah!
Not quite the way you planned it, eh?
What are you gonna do
with all that money, Little Joe?
Buy Petunia all the things
she's never had.
Wait till she gets here.
But, Georgia, I wouldn't have known
about this if it hadn't been for you.
I'm gonna show you how grateful I am.
I'm gonna buy you
a diamond bracelet and a fur coat...
...maybe even
your own nightclub too.
- It's all right, Petunia.
- Oh, Little Joe...
...I love you so much more now
than I ever did.
This is the most wonderful thing
that's ever happened to me.
Little Joe!
Petunia.
You double-crossing snake.
Sneaking that woman in my house
the minute my back is turned.
- But, Petunia, you're all wrong. Listen...
- Listen for what?
Ain't I seen and heard enough already?
You gonna buy her a bracelet
with the money you earned.
What's the matter? You gone
out your mind? You gone crazy?

Yes, I'm going crazy.
And if I stand here looking at you
another minute, I'll kill you both!
Listen, let me explain something.
Joe, for the last time,
get out of my sight!
Oh, no.
Petunia.
You didn't even give him a chance.
Lord...
...why you let me love him so much...
...so he can hurt me so bad?
Why?
Hey!
Look who's present.
Knock me down
if it ain't Domino Johnson.
- When'd you get out?
- Tonight.
- Only had six months' lease on that cell.
- Welcome home.
- Glad to be with you.
- Hey, big boy.
- Hi, y'all, babes.
- Domino!
- Easy, honey, easy.
- Hello, Domino.
- Hello there, Jim Henry.
- Hi, Domino.
- Hi, Dude!
- Nobody I'd rather see than you.
- Come on, have a little drink.
- Thanks. My, my.
Things sure look prosperous.
Last time, one of the
characters tried to operate...
...with a pair
of imperfect dice, remember?
I don't think Little Joe
knew they were loaded.
- Well, he found out.
- What'll it be, Domino?
- A little rye.
- It's on the house. A little rye.

Duke Ellington's band.

Where'd all this prosperity come from?

As a matter of fact, most of the
bankroll came from Little Joe.

Yeah, he's just loaded down with money.

He give me this 20

just for shining his shoes.

You better keep him away from me.

- You don't intend to start trouble with him.

- That's up to him.

As a matter of fact,

I'm here entirely for social purposes.

Suppose you tell Miss Georgia Brown
that her old friend...

...Domino Johnson is back in circulation.

- I'm not sure she'll be in this evening.

- Still working here, ain't she?

Yeah, when she feels like it.

If she gets in at all, it won't be till late.

Then I'll stick around.

Got a game going upstairs?

- Yeah, a little stud poker.

- Well, I'll stroll up and take a few hands.

But don't forget to let me know
when Georgia gets here.

We certainly won't.

If he sees her with Little Joe...

This time I ain't gonna use the door,
I'm going out the window.

- Well, look who's here!

- Domino!

Welcome home, baby.

- You gonna do any shooting tonight?

- Yes, sugar, but only with dice.

- My, you do look sharp tonight.

- Yeah?

Quiet. Which one of you kids
is gonna mind my tires tonight?

I am!

Well, I guess I better let you all do it.

Here's a little change for you.

Catch it. Come on.

You better pick us up

about 4 in the morning.

Very good, sir, and hot dog.
May I, madame?
Great day!
Joe, that's the
bestest-looking raiment...
...since they first invented clothes.
My, my, look at that jewelry.
It ain't nothing at all.
Wait till you see what
I spring on you next Saturday.
Now, if you'll all just step over
to the bar and be my guests.
Georgia, that dress
will be ahead of fashion...
...a hundred years from today.
- Yeah, yeah.
You ain't seen nothing yet.
The accessories are even cuter.
Georgia. Georgia.
- Remember, you're a lady now.
- I know it, sugar.
I'm just trying to impress them
with that fact.
Hey.
You wanna see something swell?
Lookie there. Genuine silk.
I got a dozen of them.
Dude!
Tell the band to play Georgia's number.
Domino!
Hello, Little Joe.
How you doing these days?
I'm still alive and kicking,
but that ain't no fault of yours.
Still cheating the boys
with those one-way dice of yours?
Cut that stuff out.
Georgia, what are you doing
hanging around with small fry like that?
Better than hanging around
with a gambler like you.
- I won't take that from you.
- Look out, he'll go after you again.
That's all right. Let him.

- Only this time, I ain't running, see?
- Come on, boys. Break it up.
This is a social gathering.
You trying to get back in that jail?
Good evening, riffraff.
Hello, Jim Henry.
Thought I'd just drop round...
...and give your joint the once-over.
Why, Petunia.
- Is this really you?
- But not the same me...
...you used to break her back
busting suds over a tub for you.
Why, you...
You're beautiful, Petunia.
Save that sugarcoated talk
for your girlfriend.
Where'd you get the clothes?
Don't you worry about that.
The main point is you paying for them.
Of course. Of course I'll pay for them.
I didn't realize...
And that ain't all I'm collecting
before I'm through.
Don't talk like that, Petunia.
You know I still love you.
Now, you just be a little more careful...
...what you say to your wife
in front of me.
Georgia, you keep out of this.
- I'm speaking my mind.
- And I ain't heard a sound.
Little Joe, are you so dumb
you can't see what she's after?
We're both after the same thing, but
I'm still the wife and got the inside track.
Petunia, don't talk like that.
Why, I was coming around to see...
Don't strain yourself.
I'm sending my lawyer round to see you...
...and he'd better find you in.
- What for?
- Money. What you think?
And if you ain't saved my half,

brother, start sprouting wings.
- What's wings?
- That's one way of getting out of jail.
I know all about
that sweepstake money...
...and I'm solid collecting my half,
cash on the line.
Well, I don't know
if I got that much left, Petunia.
No? Then you're just
in the correct suit to be laid out in.
I'll shoot you for a drink, Jim Henry,
with your own dice again.
No. Might as well give you the drink
and pass up the formalities.
What'll it be, Miss Jackson?
- You may give me a double King Kong.
- Boy. Coming up.
Petunia.
Pardon me, but ain't you the gentleman
that used my ex-husband...
...for target practice six months ago?
Yes, I had that pleasure.
Then permit me to buy you a drink
for that good deed.
Oh, no, ma'am. The drinks is on me.
You know, Mr. Johnson,
I usually don't drink with strangers...
...but we have so much in common.
We both dislike the same people.
Brown! Ain't it about time
for you to get into that cooch dance?
Ladies. Georgia, remember,
when you in the presence of a lady...
...you got to act like one.
- I guess she's just jealous...
...because she ain't got what I got.
Quit kidding yourself.
Not only have I got everything you got...
...but a whole lot more.
- Well, you ain't got Little Joe.
And that's the main thing
you got I don't want.
And if I run across any more

secondhand junk...

...I'll pass that on to you.

- Petunia, you can't act like this.

- Oh, can't I?

Why, Jim Henry, I see you've worked yourself up with an orchestra.

- Yeah.

- Ask the boys to put me in the mood...

...so I can give out.

- With pleasure, Mrs. Jackson.

I suddenly feel a musical urge.

Mrs. Jackson, to your musical urge.

- Give up, general?

- Certainly not.

Well, you might as well.

You haven't forgotten that Little Joe's six-months' trial period is up tonight?

In fact, I think he has

just 10 minutes left.

That's a lot of time

when we're on the job.

And it looks like he's not

coming down there alone.

Why, it looks like he's gonna bring

Petunia right on down there with him.

Little Joe!

Little Joe!

Look out!

- Hey there, what you think you're...?

- Get out.

Lord, do something about this.

Hear my prayer.

Send down your wrath

and destroy this wicked place.

No, don't!

Little Joe, don't! He'll shoot you!

No! Little Joe! It's Little Joe!

Little Joe.

Little Joe?

This feels familiar.

Oh, me. I'm in for it again.

Little Joe, you got a funny feeling?

I got a feeling, but it ain't funny.

You know, I don't feel no pain now.

Of course you don't.
You're a ghost now, Petunia.
A ghost? You mean we're both dead?
We got killed in that ruckus.
I'm scared of what'll happen
in the next couple of minutes.
How do you know what's gonna happen
in the next couple of minutes?
Oh, Lord, I know I ain't got no right
asking for forgiveness.
But I was doing all right
until I had that falling out with Petunia.
Little Joe, you didn't throw me over
for Georgia Brown, did you?
Excuse me just a moment, Lord.
How come you understand
all that now?
Oh, I see it plain now.
Georgia Brown come around trying...
...to take you from me,
but you resisted her.
Ain't this a fine time
to be getting some sense.
Oh, honey, I'm sorry. But then,
I was only human. I didn't understand.
I wonder if the general's
gonna see it that way.
General? What on earth
you talking about now?
I ain't talking about nothing on earth.
I just hope he gets here before
Lucifer Jr. Comes busting in on us.
- Lucifer Jr.? Who's he?
- I ain't got time to explain that now.
General? You coming, general?
- General!
- Little Joe. Stop that shouting.
Yes, sir, general. Yes, sir.
Petunia, we've just balanced
the books on you...
...and find you're eligible
to enter the Pearly Gates.
We're discounting this little setback
tonight because we know...

...you were just acting up
to get Little Joe back.
Oh, thank you, sir. Little Joe
coming along with me too, ain't he?
No, I'm afraid not.
Oh, me.
Little Joe,
we've just finished your ledger.
- I'm afraid you're in the red again.
- I am?
Yes. Our records show
that Georgia Brown...
...got about half the sweepstake money.
The other half was spent at Jim Henry's
and other places like that.
You mean, you kept track
of how he spent that money?
Yes, it's all down here.
I'm a dead pigeon.
Little Joe, you've heard the final report.
Your account is closed up.
But we've opened...
...a brand-new account for you,
you rascal.
Little Joe, come along to Papa.
And what if I refuses
to budge off this here spot?
Oh, we likes it when souls
needs a little prodding.
- Give me my pitchfork.
- I was only asking, that's all.
- Come on, let's get going.
- No, wait.
- Pappy...
- Junior, sir. Pappy wants to see you.
Georgia Brown
has just give herself to the Lord.
Georgia Brown? Why, that's impossible.
Why, she's the best sinner we've got.
She was, but she just repented
all of her sins...
...and, boy, there sure was
a mess of them.
We can't afford to lose her.

Georgia's first act of atonement
was to hand over...

...all of her worldly belongings
to the Church.

The Church?

That's bad.

Pappy's gonna burn about this.

You know, that's just
what Pappy said about you.

He also told me to take charge
of the Little Joe case.

In fact, you is demoted.

Demoted?

Why, Pappy can't do this to me.

Why, I put the... Oh, Pappy!

So long, Junior.

They come and they go.

Yeah, they come and they go.

Georgia Brown atoning?

- Why, this is a great day for us.

- Just a minute, general.

Don't Little Joe get credit in the heavenly
ledger for all that money she took from him?

I must. Let's see.

A fur coat and a diamond bracelet...

According to my figures, that just
puts me under the wire by a nose.

In fact, I'm 2 cents to the good.

Well, it was a tight squeeze,
but I made it.

Little Joe. You ought to know
you can't bargain with the Lord.

You're attempting to take advantage
of a technicality.

- I am?

- For shame, Little Joe.

Are you trying

to rouse the ire of the Lord?

The voice of the Lord.

Yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. That's about the way
things stand, Lord.

Yes, Lord.

Come, Petunia.

The golden chariot's waiting for you.
No.
Oh, Lord, please be patient
and listen to me again.
I'm not asking you to take Little Joe
to heaven if he don't belong there.
And, Lord, getting to heaven
has been the main thought in my life.
But somehow it never crossed my mind
I'd be going there without Little Joe.
And as I am to blame for all this,
I can't leave him.
I just can't leave him, Lord.
- Long climb, ain't it?
- It ain't much farther.
I'm feeling kind of funny.
You think I can make it?
Sure, you can make it.
Yes, you can make it.
I'm getting kind of weary.
- Can I make it?
- Yes, you can make it.
Do you think I can make it?
Petunia.
Can I make it?
Can I make it, Petunia?
Can I make it?
Petunia.
Are you all right, Petunia? Petunia.
- Petunia. Are you all right?
- Of course.
They didn't get you.
Doctor, do something.
- Lay him down.
- Lay down, dear. Quiet.
Do something.
Why, the fever's way down.
He's going to be all right.
All he needs now is plenty of rest.
And he's likely to be hungry pretty soon.
Oh, I'll take care of that.
Don't you worry about him, now,
and I'll call in again later on.
And you'd better get some rest yourself.

Oh, I don't need any rest.
I got new strength now.
What's the matter, darling? You in pain?
No, I just remembered something.
Kind of a dream I had, I guess.
Oh, Petunia.
- Oh, Petunia.
- Now, Joe.
Petunia, get me that sweepstake ticket.
And them dice too.
They're on the bureau.
Now burn them.
Burn them up, right away.
All right, darling.
Put these in the stove, Lily.
Joe, what made you
think of that right now?
Petunia, you was right.
You was right about me gambling
and the bad company I was keeping.
I almost didn't get into heaven
on account of it.
Get into heaven?
What are you talking about, Joe?
I had a narrow escape, I'll tell you that.
- And if it hadn't been for you, Petunia...
- Oh, well, let's not talk about that now.
Let's talk about how happy you've
made me now that you've come back.