Potash & Perimutter Film Company

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"POTASH AND PERLMUTTER FILM COMPANY"

A Play in Three Acts

by

Montague Glass and Jules Eckert Goodman.

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and
Jules Eckert Goodman.
ACT ONE

Office and Projecting Room of the Potash & Perlmutter Film Co.

ACT TWO

Scene I: Studio of the Potash & Perlmutter Film Co.

Scene 2: A House near Pelham.

ACT THREE

Same as Act One.

The Action takes place today, in and around New York City.
CAST OF CHARACTERS:

ABE POTASH
MORRIS PERLMUTTER
ROBERT BLANCHARD
SAMUEL FEDER
SAM PEMBERTON
KEITH MACDONALD
RITA SISMONDI
ROSIE POTASH
RUTH PERLMUTTER
MISS COHEN.

Bits

In act One:

Lionel Brandon
Victor Curzon
Ralph Nevill
An Actor

In Act Two:

Character Woman (Mrs. Timson)
Heavy (Ralph Nevill)
Ingenue (Vivian Haig)
Leading Man (Richard Partington)
Harry (Camera)
Casey) men
Electricians
J.J. Crabbe, Automobile Salesman
Chauffeur of taxi cab.

In Act Three:

Motorcycle policeman
ACT ONE

SCENE: Projecting Room of the Potash & Perlmutter Film Co.

When the curtain rises, the stage is in absolute darkness, only a white screen at the Center back is dimly visible. Seated upon the stage, though not visible in the darkness, are ABE, MAWRUS, RUTH, ROBIE; also KEITH MacDONALD, a young man who writes the scenarios for the company.

KEITH
(In the darkness)
All right, Harry. Let her shoot!

(The screen in the back lights and the following appears:

Potash & Perlmutter Film Company, Inc.,

Presents

"THE FATAL MURDER"

Featuring Irma Potash, America's Favorite Moving Picture Actress

Directed by Sam Pemberton. Under the personal supervision of Messrs Potash and Perlmutter.

Passed by the National Board of Censors.

"Clarice Walpole, the beautiful stenographer, is annoyed by the attentions of her employer. James Boyd, a wealthy stock broker and man-about-town."

Clarice Walpole ........ Miss Irma Potash.

"She is protected from insult by young Philip Merivale, the book-keeper."

Philip Merivale....... Boris Andrieu

"She breaks the news of her discharge to her mother."

Mrs. Walpole........... Rose Potash.

"The wife of the stock broker is jealous of her husband's stenographer."

Mrs. Genevieve Boyd.... Ruth Perlmutter
ABE
(Xes, picture of stock broker is shown)
Mr. MacDonald, did you write this scenario, too?

MAC

Yes, Mr. Potash.

ABE

Why does that actor always play millionaires? The first thing you know he'll be striking us for a raise. Am I right or wrong, Mawruss?

MAWRUSS

In moving pictures, you could always get someone to play millionaires cheap. It's the poor working girls that draw the big salaries.

(Silence while the picture goes on)

ABE

(As picture of Mrs. Walpole is seen in close-up)
Listen, Rosie, why do you wear a diamond sunburst when you are supposed to be poor?

ROSIE

They ain't genuine diamonds, Abe.

ABE

Ain't they? Well, I bought 'em for genuine...

MAWRUSS

Abe is right. It don't look nice for you to be wearing diamonds when your daughter is working as a stenographer.

MAC

It's all right, Mr. Perlmutter. She pawns them later in the film.

MAWRUSS

She should have pawned them before the film started. Then it wouldn't have been necessary for her daughter to have gone to work at all.

ABE

(As Ruth's picture appears in close-up)
Say, Mawruss, ain't that our old style 4022 Ruth is wearing?

RUTH

That's imported!
MAWRUSS

Our style 4022! Mistakes a Paris model for a twenty-two dollar and fifty cent garment.

ABE

What are you talking nonsense! Our style 4022 sold to some suckers as high as twenty-four fifty.

MAWRUSS

Not when you sold 'em, Abe.

ABE

I sold just as many garments as you ever sold, Mawruss - more even.

MAWRUSS

When I sold 'em, I sold 'em. When you sold 'em, you practically gave them away...

(Ad lib row, in the midst of which the lights are turned on disclosing Abe and Mawruss in dispute close to each other with IRMA and BORIS, ROSIE and RUTH about them. The lighted stage disclosed, besides the screen, two desks, one at right front and the other at left front. The center and back are taken up with chairs, their backs toward the audience and arranged as in a projecting room of a moving picture concern)

MAC

(As Abe and Mawruss quarrel, calls:

All right, Harry... Cut.

(The lights go on, and picture stops. The quarrel continues for a moment and then stops. There is a slight pause)

MAWRUSS

What's the matter, is it finished?

MAC

What's the use of wasting current - you people aren't paying attention.

MAWRUSS

He's right, Abe. Forget you was in the garment business... you're now in the moving picture business.

ABE

Did I say I wasn't?

MAWRUSS

Well, then, what is the use of wasting time over arguments?
ABE
Arguments? Who is giving arguments now?

MAWRUSS
You are, Abe. Ten cents a kilowat hour it costs us to hear you talking about old times. We are out of the garment business, thank God.

ABE
Why thank God? Is it such a disgrace to be a cloak and suiter? We always made a living in the garment business, didn't we?

RUTH
Certainly we made a living, Abe. But we're going to make a fortune now.

ABE
How a fortune...

ROSIE
Try to be a optician, Abe -- look on the bright side of things.

MAC
You're going to make a lot of money out of this film, Mr. Potash.

ABE
Anyhow, we ain't spending much.

MAWRUSS
And what we are spending, we're keeping in the family.

RUTH
Did anyone ever suspect we had such a splendid actress as your daughter, Abe?

MAWRUSS
And what's the matter with you, Ruth?

MAC
They're all fine, particularly your son-in-law, Mr. Potash.

ABE
And to think that six months ago he was a book-keeper.

MAC
A sort of double-entry Jack Barrymore, what?
RUTH
You think our picture is good, then?

MAC
Splendid. It's so different. Not at all like any other picture I've ever seen.

ABE
You hear that, Rosie?

RUTH
Did you make up the story out of your own head, Mr. MacDonald?

MAC
It's entirely original, no matter what anyone says.

RUTH
Original?

MAC
Certainly. The play upon which it is based hasn't been performed in years... and it was French, anyway.

ABE
So long as the film sells, MacDonald, we should worry where you steal your original ideas.

MAWRUSS
It will sell all right. Wait till Pemberton comes back from the Continental Exchange. Them people handle films for all the big concerns.

RUTH
But we're not a big concern.

MAWRUSS
Never mind. They know a good thing when they see it. They'll handle "The Fatal Murder" all right.

MISS COHEN
(Comes in)
Mr. Blanchard of the Koscuusko Bank is outside.

ABE
What's Blanchard want with us now, Mawruss?

MAWRUSS
He comes to snoop again. He always wants to find out what we're upto
I don't like that man Blanchard coming here all the time.

MAWRUSS

He's got a right to come here. He's the Vice-President of the bank and it's their money we're working with. He's a nice man, too.

ROSIE

Yes, a nice man. His wife divorced him only last month. When I read the evidence in the newspaper, I quick threw it in the fire.

(Looks at Abe)

Lots of good husbands get pointers that way.

MAWRUSS

Listen, Rosie, what a business man does out of business hours is his business.

ABE

All we got to do with Mr. Blanchard is that he is lending us money, Rosie, and money ain't got no bad habits.

MAWRUSS

And if you keep him waiting out there any longer he's liable to call in our loans on us.

ABE

Come Rosie, ... come Ruth -- go into the shop.

MAWRUSS

You mean studio.

ABE

Studio - shop - what's the difference? We'll let you know when we're through.

(All except Abe, Mawruss and Mac go out)

MAWRUSS

(To Miss Cohen)

Tell Mr. Blanchard to come right in.

(Miss Cohen goes out) (Mac starts also)

ABE

Don't go, MacDonald, till we tell you to.

MAWRUSS

(Hands him papers)

Here, take these second-hand furniture catalogues --
(Abe and Mawruss sit down at their desks and feign to be very busy)

ABE

(As BLANCHARD comes in)
Yes, Mr. MacDonald, we like these designs of yours very much.

MAWRUSS

Designs -- You chommer.

ABE

I mean these scenarios. Have six of them ready by next week -- and
(Apparently notices Blanchard for the first time)
Oh, how do you do, Mr. Blanchard?

MAWRUSS

Why, Mr. Blanchard, this is a pleasure.

BLANCHARD

Good afternoon, Potash. How are you, Perlmutter?
(He pauses, and looks at Mac)

MAWRUSS

This is the manager of our scenario department, Mr. MacDonald.

ABE

And send Pemberton to us as soon as he comes in, MacDonald.

MAC

Certainly. And I shall report on these -- er -- scenarios tomorrow.
(Out)

BLANCHARD

Well, boys, how are things going?

MAWRUSS

 Couldn't be better, Mr. Blanchard.

BLANCHARD

I'm glad to hear it. I take a personal interest in you boys, although it is the bank's money you are using.

MAWRUSS

We will take just as much care of it as though we borrowed it from a relation.

ABE

A relation! Relations nothing, Mawruss. We're going to pay this money back!
BLANCHARD

I hope so.

MAWRUSS

There is not a doubt about it, Mr. Blanchard.

ABE

Why certainly, Mr. Blanchard, with the style of goods we are turning out here, all fresh up-to-date stuff, elegant and new creations and everything....

MAWRUSS

Creations! Abe!

ABE

Well, models...

MAWRUSS

Models. Come out of the cloak and suit business, Abe. He means fillums, Mr. Blanchard. You got to excuse my partner, Mr. Blanchard, he ain't got a very wide vocabulary.

ABE

Is that so? Well, I could get along without one... I eat reasonable, Mawruss, I don't make a hog of myself over my food... like you do.

BLANCHARD

Now, boys, get down to business. What have you been doing here?

MAWRUSS

Well, Mr. Blanchard, we have just finished up our first fillum.

BLANCHARD

Is it a good one?

ABE

Is it a good one? When my wife seen it for the first time yesterday, she cried so terrible we had to send out to a drug store for ten cents mathematic spirits of ammonia.

MAWRUSS

I don't care if it's moving pictures or a theatre, Mr. Blanchard, if you want people to have a good time, you got to pretty near break their hearts.

BLANCHARD

How is it selling?
Selling? Say, we only finished it day before yesterday.

BLANCHARD

Well, isn't that pretty slow work, boys? Three months ago when you went into this business, you got a loan of fifty thousand dollars at my bank. You said then that you would clean up in three months.

ABE

We thought we could do it, Mr. Blanchard, but business don't go go quick in the moving picture trade as it does in the garment trade.

MAWRUSS

Anyway, Abe, if you make one sale in this business, it's like a whole season in the garment business.

BLANCHARD

But our president, Mr. Feder, is a little uneasy.

MAWRUSS

Why should he be uneasy?

ABE

We're good for it, ain't we?

BLANCHARD

Mr. Feder is very conservative, and while I am in full control at the bank, I have to defer to him in some things.

MAWRUSS

Mr. Feder knows us, Mr. Blanchard. We done business with him for years and we always cleaned up our loans...

ABE

Eventually.

BLANCHARD

Mr. Feder asked me to come around and see you and find out where you stand. We don't want to press you, but we want to see results.

ABE

And you're going to. Our director, Mr. Pemberton, is over at the Continental Fillum Exchange now. He ought to be back any minute...

MAWRUSS

And when he comes back if he wouldn't have sold them people a big order of that fillum, I'll eat it -- and I got difficulty digesting bread, let alone celluloid.
You seem pretty confident, Perlmutter.

**MAWRUSS**

It's a very remarkable film, Mr. Blanchard. The story is from a loafer in the stock exchange business, y'understand, which he treats his wife like a dog, understand, me, and at the same time he's got working for him a stenographer, which she lives alone with her poor mother, and she...

**ABE**

It's all right, Mawruss; Mr. Blanchard will take your word for it.

**MAWRUSS**

I'm just explaining to Mr. Blanchard that it's a story from real life.

**ABE**

Sure it is. I myself seen the thing actually happen in the National Theatre in Houston Street.

**MAWRUSS**

You saw it at a Theatre! Why the thing happened to my wife's sister a cousin. She worked for years for a fellow and I don't know how many times she thought he was going to insult her, and finally she got fired for coming down late, and I seen it would make a good moving picture, so I --

**ABE**

You seen it would make a good moving picture?

**MAWRUSS**

Well, I suggested it first, didn't I?

**ABE**

Nothing of the kind. It was me that suggested it.

**BLANCHARD**

What's the difference who suggested it? Is it a good picture?

**ABE**

It ought to be, we put a lot of your money into it.

**BLANCHARD**

And how soon do you expect to get our money out of it?
Right away, Mr. Blanchard. Business will jump for us with this picture. We are going to get the name for putting out a high grade line of up-to-the-minute pictures, which, believe me, if someone should have it in the cloak and suit business, he could even act independent to Marshall Fields.

Mawruss

Take my word for it, Mr. Blanchard, our first piece of work is aces -- it's a sure fire winner.

(Enter Pemberton, angry and disgusted)

Abe

Well, Pemberton, how about it?

Pemberton

It's just what I expected.

Mawruss

Good!

Pemberton

Good? Two months work gone to hell, and he says good!

Abe

Quit your swearing. What you think this gentleman is, an actor?

Mawruss

Stiegen, Abe. We'll see you later, Pemberton, we're busy with Mr. Blanchard.

Blanchard

That's all right, Perlmutter. Let him go ahead.

Abe

Sure. We got no secrets from Mr. Blanchard.

Pemberton

Mr. Blanchard, eh? Well, he's bound to hear it sooner or later because this thing can't go on any longer.

Blanchard

What's the matter?

Pemberton

We've spent four months on a film and it's time and money wasted. Nobody will handle it.
BLANCHARD

What's the matter with it?

PEMBERTON

It's acted wrong. We've got a bunch of people working here, Mr. Blanchard, and they ain't actors, they are just relations.

MAWRUSS

Your relations, Abe. From the first day I went into partnership with you, it's been the same way. All my life I've been running an orphan asylum for the benefit of your family.

BLANCHARD

Then can them.

MAWRUSS

But Mr. Blanchard...

BLANCHARD

Pemberton is your director and what he says ought to go. You two have had no experience in this business.

ABE

Every business experience is experience for the moving picture business. People is going into moving pictures out of all kinds of business, from soap and perfumery to delicatessen.

PEMBERTON

But not from the cloak and suit business.

MAWRUSS

Is that so? Adolph Zukor of the Famous Players was in the cloak and suit business. William Fox, too. Carl Lemele of the Universal run a clothing store....

ABE

Everybody nowadays has got two businesses - his regular business and the moving picture business.

PEMBERTON

That's what you think.

ABE

What is there to the moving picture business anyhow? A couple of cameras - some electric lights - a few hundred dollars second-hand furniture, and right away you can start manufacturing.
BLANCHARD

So that's what you think of the moving picture business?

ABE

But, Mr. Blanchard...

BLANCHARD

You boys have got to wake up. This isn't the garment trade, where every greenhorn has a chance. You're in competition with the keenest brains of the country, men of resource and talent. Making a successful moving picture requires more than the ordinary business experience. It's an Art.

PEMBERTON

These gentlemen, Mr. Blanchard, don't appreciate the technique of the moving picture. In balance of composition, in perfection of detail, light and shade, in subject and theme, it must appeal to the eye and touch the heart as much as any picture by Rubens or Raphael.

ABE

Did Rubens and Raphael also go into the moving picture business?

PEMBERTON

I am speaking of Rubens and Raphael, the painters.

ABE

Oh, painters. I thought you meant Rubens and Raphael in the pants business. You remember them, Mawruss?

PEMBERTON

What's the use of talking to you two about art?

ABE

Say, how should we know there was a firm of painters by the name of Rubens and Raphael?

MAWRUSS

We ain't personally acquainted with the entire city directory.

BLANCHARD

Go on with your story, Pemberton.

PEMBERTON

Well, it's like this: you boys want to make money in moving pictures, don't you?
ABE
No, Pemberton, we are like Rubens and Raphael, we are in this for the love of art.

MAWRUSS
We don't want to make any money, Pemberton, but explain it to us as though we did.

PEMBERTON
All right. The first requisite for a moving picture is a good story.

ABE
What's the matter with the story of "The Fatal Murder?"

PEMBERTON
What's the matter with it? Why, it's rotten, that's all.

ABE
Well, what can you expect when Mawruss has got a cousin works for years as a stenographer and he suggests it as a story yet.

MAWRUSS
I suggested it? Didn't it happen to you in real life at the National Theatre? I told you it was a rotten story.

ABE
You told me? Didn't I say we should get something with swimming in it like "Neptune's Sister?"

PEMBERTON
You neither of you suggested it. MacDonald dug it out of an old play "The Romance of a Working Girl."

ABE
A working girl, Mawruss - and we're paying that loafer thirty-five dollars a week.

MAWRUSS
Fire him!

PEMBERTON
Fire him nothing! Him and I are the only practical men you got around here. He was with me in the Distinctive Feature Film Company and he's writing the kind of stuff we can produce. You ought to raise his salary.
Afraid or not afraid, Mr. Blanchard, I am content to do anything so long as my Rosie will quit being a moving picture actress and go home and attend to the house. I ain't had a decent cup of coffee in months.

PEMBERTON

Then it's agreed we hire new actors?

ABE & MAWRUSS

Yes.

BLANCHARD

Now, Pemberton, how much is it going to cost?

PEMBERTON

Well, you can get a pretty good leading man or leading woman for five hundred dollars.

ABE

A year?

MAWRUSS

Yow a year. You wouldn't get off so easy as all that. Five hundred dollars a month he means.

PEMBERTON

I mean five hundred dollars a week.

ABE

Five hundred dollars a week, Mawruss!

PEMBERTON

What's five hundred dollars a week? Mary Pickford gets seven hundred and fifty thousand a year; Charlie Chaplin six hundred and seventy thousand; Douglas Fairbanks, not quite so expensive - six hundred thousand....

ABE

Only six hundred thousand....nebiech.

MAWRUSS

Maybe he sells clothing on the side.

PEMBERTON

Of course, these are high-priced actors.
What we want is a high priced actor marked down as a special.

BLANCHARD
What you want is competent people. You can't go on with a lot of amateurs any longer. Now how many real salaried people do you need?

PEMBERTON
Well, we need a leading man, a leading woman, and a vamp.

ABE
A vamp - what's a vamp?

PEMBERTON
A vampire.

MAWRUSS
Don't you know what a vampire is?

ABE
Sure - a fellow that gives a decision like five strikes and out!

MAWRUSS
You are thinking of an empire, not a vampire. A vampire is in moving pictures where a fellow and his wife ain't getting on well together on account the fellow is running around to theatres and restaurants with a lady and -- that's a vampire.

ABE
And we should have such a woman working in our place?

MAWRUSS
Why not?

ABE
Why not? Do you think my Rosie would stand for such a thing?

MAWRUSS
Listen, Abe: suppose we do have a woman playing a vampire around here, that doesn't mean she is a vampire, does it?

ABE
Never mind, Mawruss, a married man couldn't take it too particular. If I am in the moving picture business it's enough that I got to stand for actresses but I draw the line at vampires.

BLANCHARD
Nonsense, Potash, a woman who plays a vampire can be perfectly
PEMBERTON

That's the way to talk, Perlmutter. I think we ought to go the limit.

ABE

Seemingly in this game there is no limit. Table stakes and our bank roll is nearly gone.

BLANCHARD

There is no room for a piker in the moving picture business, Potash. Now tell us, Pemberton, have you anyone in mind for this vampire?

PEMBERTON

Well, there are lots of vampires who might do, but there's just one in this business who makes every other vampire look like a Guardian Angel.

(Holds up photograph)

There she is, gentlemen! For six hundred and fifty dollars a week, a regular Kipling vampire!

ABE

Regular or not regular, for six hundred and fifty dollars she could kipple somewhere else.

(Blanchard looks at the photograph and whistles)

PEMBERTON

Isn't she a pippin?

MAWRUSS

(Looks over Blanchard's shoulder)

What a beautiful woman -- unberufen.

ABE

Let me in on this, too, Mawruss, ain't I a partner here?

(Tries to look at photo)

MAWRUSS

(Hands him the photo)

Well?

PEMBERTON

Isn't she a winner?

ABE

T-Phoo-see.

MAWRUSS
We don't want her.

A beautiful lady like her?

I got enough trouble now explaining to Rosie how I put in my time. With a woman like that working around here, I would have to go home every night with two disinterested witnesses to prove an alibi for me.

(Looking at photo)
Isn't that Rita Sismondi?

Right you are the first time, and in a class by herself.

You bet she is.

Why, do you know her, Mr. Blanchard?

I met her the other night at a dinner at the Ritz.

Isn't she a wonder?

That's the girl you want. Get her.

I'll go telephone her.

Wait a minute. We can't afford to pay six hundred and fifty dollars a week.

Now, look here, boys, you are indebted to my bank fifty thousand dollars. I'll confess that I came here after a conference with Mr. Feder prepared to call in that loan, but since this talk with Pemberton, I think you boys have got a chance. Now, you get Miss
ABE

But, Mr. Blanchard, how can we stand such a salary - even if you do extend the loan?

MAWRUSS

Our capital is very limited, Mr. Blanchard.

BLANCHARD

All right. I'll tell you what I'll do. You get Miss Sismondi and I'll not only extend your loan, but I'll back you boys with the bank's money until you put over a big success.

(Looking at the picture)

Is that fair?

PEMBERTON

It's more than fair.

BLANCHARD

All right. Now get this woman - at once - From now on I want you boys to show me results and I'll back you to the limit.

(Looks at picture and then throws it down)

Well, goodbye, and good luck to you.

(Out)

PEMBERTON

That's a smart fellow, Mr. Potash.

MAWRUSS

You see now, Abe, what kind of a business you're dealing with?

ABE

Yes, I see now, Mawruss, although even before this I had my suspicions already.

MACDONALD

(Enters)

Pemberton, there're a couple dozen assorted Douglas Fairbanks waiting outside.

PEMBERTON

Mac, I got great news for you.

MAC

Am I going to get a raise?

ABE

For what? For being rotten? We should pay you money to steal your ideas from the French? From now on we want original stuff,
PEMBERTON

You'll get it. Mac, we're going to do your vamp story - "The Guilty Dollar."

(As he makes a gesture of protest)

No, we're going to do it right. We're going to engage real people, arrange a first-class production and hire for the principal part Rita Sismondi.

MAC

What's that?

PEMBERTON

That's right - Rita Sismondi.

MAC

Nothing doing.

PEMBERTON

Now see here, Mac, I know there was something between you and Rita over at the Distinctive Film, but you've got to admit that she is the greatest in the business -- isn't that so?

MAC

Yes, but --

PEMBERTON

Well then, keep your private life and business separate. I'm going to phone her...

MAWRUSS

Just a minute... How about all the people waiting out there? Maybe there is someone out there who would do?

PEMBERTON

You look 'em over, and if there's any young Jack Barrymores or Dave Warfields, hold him till I can see him.

(Off)

MAC

Mr. Perlmutter, is it true you are hiring Rita Sismondi?

MAWRUSS

We're making her an offer anyway.

MAC

All right then, I resign.
MAWRUSS

Resign?

MAC

If she comes here I go.

ABE

You see, Mawruss, even a young bachelor like MacDonald wouldn't stand for a woman like that.

MAC

A woman like what?

ABE

How should I know what she's like? I never met the lady.

MAC

Well, I have; and no one can say anything against her.

ABE

Did I say anything against her?

MAC

No, and you're not going to.

(As Mawruss starts to speak)

No - nor you either.

MAWRUSS

Listen, MacDonald, me and my partner does all the scrapping that's necessary around here. Now what's the matter with this lady?

MAC

There's nothing the matter with her.

MAWRUSS

Then why don't you want to work her with her?

MAC

That's my business.

MAWRUSS

All right, then, we'll get somebody in your place.
ABE

Now, listen, MacDonald, I am an old fellow and my fighting days is over. If you don't respect me and my partner, respect your job. A fine young fellow like you, a gentleman with brains, and a good education, don't stand much show in business nowadays. Take it easy and sit down.

MAC

I'm sorry, Mr. Potash, but that's the way it stands: if she comes, I go.

(Goes out)

ABE

(Looks at photograph)

I couldn't understand it - a nice young fellow like that...

MAWRUSS

Say, what are you worrying your head about MacDonald? Scenario writers is like clothing salesmen, if you advertise for one, they got to call out the reserves to keep you from blocking the street.

ABE

She's got a good face, too. In a way, when she was a girl my Rosie looked something like her.

MAWRUSS

Yow, your Rosie looked like her. If your Rosie looked like her, she never would have married you.

ABE

Is that so? When I got married I didn't look like this.

MAWRUSS

I should hope not.

ABE

What I am today ain't no criterion. Worry done it, Mawruss. John Drew should be in partnership with you, Mawruss, and I give him six months to look like a physical wreck.

MISS COHEN

(Enters)

Listen, Mr. Potash, I can't stand those comedians any longer. They are giving imitations of prominent actors something terrible.

ABE

Well, send them in here. Do we pay you to listen to imitations?
MISS COHEN

Believe me, Mr. Potash, it's no treat to me. I never seen Harry Lauder, except in a phonograph, but the way those boys are killing his stuff, I don't never want to neither.

(Goes out)

MAWRUSS

Now look here, Abe, you never hired actors before, did you?

ABE

No, Mawruss and neither did you, so go ahead and give me some pointers.

MAWRUSS

Well, in the first place, treat him like a salesman. Let him show us his samples. If he's a comedian make him act comic, and if he's a tragedian make him act tragic.

ABE

I'm agreeable.

MAWRUSS

But don't let on you like him. No matter if the fellow is a regular G.H. Sothern, you must got to make him think you are very unfavorably impressed by him.

ABE

Say, for my part, I shall act disgusted.

MAWRUSS

That's the idea. Make him think if you couldn't get nobody better than him, you might as well give up.

ABE

I wouldn't let on anything except they're rotten.

MAWRUSS

Miss Cohen, send them in - one at a time.

(Business for Abe and Mawruss)

LIONEL BRANDON

(Enters)

My name is Lionel Brandon. You may have heard of me, possibly...

MAWRUSS

Anything is possible, Mr. Brandon, in this business. Take a seat.

ABE
(As Brandon clears his throat to speak)
Well, Mr. Brandon, why did you leave your last place?

BRANDON
My last engagement was with Mary Pickford.

ABE
We should worry who you were engaged to. We wouldn't give you a wedding present even if we hired you.

MAWRUSS
Excuse me, Abe, let me do the talking.

ABE
Well, what have we got to do with his family affairs?

MAWRUSS
He means he worked for her.

ABE
Then why don't he say so?

BRANDON
There, Mr. Perlmutter, would you please read that.

MAWRUSS
(Reads)
"Mr. Lionel Brandon's work is very re-elastic and shows fine imagination and gift of expression. In our opinion Mr. Brandon is an artist."

ABE
An artist -- I thought he was an actor?

BRANDON
I am an actor.

ABE
Then why do you put in an advertisement that you're an artist?

MAWRUSS
This isn't an advertisement -- it's a recommendation.

ABE
We don't care anything about recommendations, what we want is...
BRANDON

Why, what do you mean, Mr. Potash?

MAWRUSS

It means go ahead and act a little something.

ABE

Me and my partner will treat it strictly confidential.

BRANDON

Very well then. I assume you gentlemen know Dave Warfield?

ABE

Only through the ticket speculators.

BRANDON

Have you ever seen him in "The Music Master?"

ABE

Is that where he takes the part of an old soldier who runs a second-hand clothing store and he dies and comes back to earth again or some such nonsense?

BRANDON

No.

ABE

Well, that's all I remember from Dave Warfield so get ahead and tell us about it.

BRANDON

In "The Music Master," Warfield plays the part of Herr Von Barwig. Before the play opens his wife has run away with a millionaire...

ABE

Evidently she wouldn't take any chances with the play not being a success.

MAWRUSS

Abe, for Heaven's sake, give the fellow a show, can't you? Go on, Mr. Brandon.

BRANDON

Barwig comes to this country to follow his wife up because she took his only child with them.
ABE

She took the child with her?

BRANDON

His only daughter...

ABE

(Clucking tongue)
Do you hear that, Mawruuss - his only daughter - nebich --

MAWRUSS

Say, Abe, couldn't you keep quiet? What's the matter with you? Go on, Mr. Brandon.

BRANDON

For years he struggles to make a living and to find some news of his wife and daughter. One day he gets a new pupil, a young girl who is kind to him and in giving her a lesson he discovers she is his own daughter.

(Abe wags his head from side to side and makes noises through his nose, indicating his distress and pity, almost weeping)

MAWRUSS

Abe, um Gott est willen, what is the matter with you?

ABE

Never mind - wait till you got a daughter - of your own --

(To Brandon)

What did he say to her?

BRANDON

Nothing. He finds that she thinks the millionaire is her own father - that she is happy - and that if he tells her the truth he will make her miserable.

ABE

And he doesn't tell her that he is her own father?

BRANDON

No.

ABE

(Groans and takes out handkerchief)

Ah - tsuris...

MAWRUSS
MAWRUSS

(Glowers at Abe and then walks disgusted away muttering to himself, ad lib)
That's a chommer... damn fool...

BRANDON

Then comes the big scene of the play -- Von Barwig's daughter has become engaged to the son of a millionaire, and Von Barwig is told if he once lets it be known that he's the girl's father, the match will be broken off....

ABE

(Groans)
Oo-see -

(Mawruuss disgusted, looks at him)

BRANDON

He is told:" If you reveal yourself as her father, they won't take her." The scene then runs as follows:
(Begins to act, imitating Warfield)
"Then if they don't take her, I take her. If they don't want her, I want her. I'm selfish -
(Bangs piano with hands)
I'm tired of waiting, tired of starving for the love of my own..I -
(Bangs the piano)
want her - I want her - I'm going to have her - I'm going to have her!"

ABE

(While the above speech has been delivered has sat in his chair rocking to and fro, now he wipes his eyes, overcome)
Ai-tzuris.

BRANDON

It's a very affecting scene, Mr. Potash.

ABE

And I must say you do it very well, Mr. Brandon.

MAWRUSS

(Slaps head in despair)
Abe!

(To Brandon)
Of course, Mr. Brandon, I don't say it ain't a fair imitation of Warfield, but --

BRANDON

You're mistaken, Mr. Perlmutter. My interpretation of this scene is very different from Warfield's. To my mind it ought to be played as I have indicated it - a little more restraint, a little
MAWRUSS

Say, listen, Mr. Brandon, you wouldn’t gain nothing by knocking a competitor like this here Warfield.

BRANDON

I'm not knowing. The best of us are open to criticism. Personally, I welcome it.

MAWRUSS

All right. Then let me tell you something: Don’t jolly yourself you are better than Warfield, because my partner behaves this way. All any schlimel of an actor has got to do is to holler a little something and he cries like a baby.

ABE

Well, what do you want me to do? Should I laugh when a poor fellow has got to give up his only daughter after his wife runs away from him? Seemingly such things to you are jokes, Mawruss.

(To Brandon)

Tell me, Mr. Brandon, did the father bust up the match?

MAWRUSS

Abe, what do you think this is? Something that took place in the newspapers? This is only a play we are talking about.

ABE

Never mind, such a thing could easy happen. A feller could give his wife every luxury, till her hair hung with diamonds, yet and she turns around like a snake in the grass and bites the hand that feeds her.

BRANDON

Very true, Mr. Potash.

ABE

And I must say, Mr. Brandon, if you acted everything like you acted this here Warfield, with the same re-alastic way and everything, all I can tell you is —

(As he sees Mawruss signalling to him fantastically)

What's the matter? Could n't I open my mouth?

(Ad lib)

MAWRUSS

It's all right, Mr. Brandon, leave your name and address with the stenographer outside.

BRANDON

Wouldn’t you like to know my salary?
MAWRUSS

After the way my partner acts, no!

BRANDON

Well, good-day, gentlemen.

(Goes out)

ABE

That's a very elegant actor, Mawruss.

MAWRUSS

Murderer. What do you mean by it?

ABE

What do you mean what do I mean?

MAWRUSS

Didn't I tell you you should let me do all the talking?

ABE

Well, did I say something?

MAWRUSS

Cries like a baby over a lot of nonsense.

ABE

That's a heart you got, Mawruss, like a brick.

MAWRUSS

That's all right. Somebody's got to have a hard heart around here if we're ever going to hire any actors.

(Goes to door and calls)

Miss Cohen, send in another.

(To Abe)

And when this feller comes in don't you show no sympathy if he gives an imitation of a Mormon who has got ten wives eloping on him.

ABE

Is it my fault I got a soft heart, Mawruss?

MAWRUSS

It don't make any difference what troubles the fellow has got, laugh in his face because if you show them suckers any sympathy the least they'll ask you is five hundred dollars a week.

(Enter VICTOR CURZON, the exact opposite in type to Brandon. His manner is hurried and business-like)
CURZON

(Speaks very fast, hands Mawruss his card)

Good morning, gentlemen. My name is Curzon - Victor Curzon - two years Lobengrin Film Company, three years with the Celebrated Players, year and a half with the Polygon people - specialty character parts.

MAWRUSS

With us, Mr. Curzon, past performance is nix...

ABE

Yes, mister, we are hiring people on a strictly sample basis.

MAWRUSS

Abe, what did I tell you?

ABE

That's right, mister - er - my partner is doing all the talking around here. Go ahead.

CURSON

Go ahead what?

MAWRUSS

Show us - show us! Give us an idea of what you can do.

CURSON

All right. Where's your camera? You can test me out.

MAWRUSS

With moving picture film at ten cents a foot my partner and me decided to do our own testing. So go ahead with your narrischkeit. My partner wouldn't interrupt you.

CURSON

(Walks up and down)

Well, let me see. You gentlemen no doubt have heard of David Warfield --?

ABE

Mawruss...

MAWRUSS

Stiegen.

CURSON

Perhaps you gentlemen are familiar with the story of "The Music..."
ABE
"The Music Master, Mawruss.

MAWRUSS
Let him alone.

CURZON
You probably recollect the scene in Stanton's home --?

ABE
Stanton? Who's Stanton?

MAWRUSS
What's the difference who Stanton is?

ABE
Couldn't I ask a simple question?

MAWRUSS
Go on, Mr. Curzon.

CURZON
Stanton is the millionaire who has run away with Von Barwig's wife.

ABE
Oh, that's the feller's name? Stanton. A fine roscher, Mawruss.

CURZON
I see you know the story. You recall then Von Barwig's scene with Stanton...?

ABE
You mean where they tip him off he shouldn't let on he is in the music business otherwise his daughter couldn't marry the millionaire?

CURZON
It isn't the music business they object to.

ABE
Well, you couldn't blame them if they did. What for a dowry could a music dealer give his daughter? Am I wrong or right, Mawruss?

MAWRUSS
Abe, for heaven's sake, shut up your mouth. We are wasting the whole morning here. Never mind the story, Curzon, go ahead with
CURZON
Very well. I'll go right into the scene. Here's Stanton, here I am, and here is the piano.

MAWRUSS
Oh, that is the piano. Excuse me.
(Takes off all the things from desk)
All right, Mr. Curzon.

CURZON
Stanton has just said to Von Barwig "If you disclose that you are this girl's father, the parents of her intended will break off the match."

ABE
(Again affected)
Oo-ee.
(Mawruss looks at him and he laughs nervously, moves around in his chair very uncomfortably)

CURZON
This is no laughing matter, Mr. Potash. This man is in torment struggling desperately between his duty toward his daughter and the yearning of his father's heart....

ABE
A1 - ts...ts...tss
(Mawruss looks at him)

CURZON
Then he cries out in anguish: "Then if they don't take her, I take her. If they don't want her, I want her. I'm selfish --
(Bangs table)
I'm selfish. I'm tired of waiting - tired of starving for the love of my own...I....
(Bangs table)

MAWRUSS
(As he bangs table)
Kush -- what are you trying to do -- smash our desk on us?

CURZON
This is part of the scene..

MAWRUSS
I don't give a damn what it is. If you want to act -- act reasonable

ABE
MAWRUSS

Interrupt him? Interrupt nothing. We ain't insured against actors. Seemingly an actor can do more damage to the furniture than a removal.

CURZON

Shall I go on where I left off, or shall I start over again?

MAWRUSS

Don't trouble yourself on our account.

CURZON

Maybe you'd like to see me do something else?

MAWRUSS

We've seen enough. We want an actor, not a baggage smasher.

ABE

But, Mawruss....

MAWRUSS

Suppressing Abe with a gesture)

Good-day, Mr. Curzon.

ABE

(As Curzon is about to leave)

Excuse me one moment, Mr. Curzon -- (Curzon stops)

I'd like to ask you something - a question --

CURZON

Well?

ABE

This here music dealer, you were talking about, did his daughter marry the millionaire or not?

CURZON

You can find out all about it at the Belasco office. Good-day. (Goes out.)

ABE

That's a fine crank for you. Gets mad over nothing.

MAWRUSS

Serves you right. What is it your business if the millionaire marries the music dealer's daughter?
ABE

Never mind, Mawruss, a music dealer is a human being the same like anybody else. I got just so much sympathy for...

(Enter RALPH NEVILL, a short, stout man with Irish accent)

NEVILL

Good morning, gentlemen. I come from the Cadillac theatrical agency. They told me you were on the lookout for a good heavy.

MAWRUSSE

For good heavy what?

NEVILL

Actor, of course.

ABE

What's the difference how heavy an actor is, you don't get paid by the pound?

NEVILL

An actor gets paid according to his ability, and I can deliver the goods.

MAWRUSSE

All right. Show us.

ABE

Let's take a recommendation from this fellow -- we wasted enough time with samples.

MAWRUSSE

Please let me attend to this, Abe. Go ahead, Mister...er --

NEVILL

Nevill - Ralph Nevill. In my time I have supported some of the most prominent leading women in America.

MAWRUSSE

Supported actresses? We ain't interested how you sowed your rolled oats, Mr. Nevill.

ABE

If you had saved your money instead of spending it that way, you wouldn't now be looking for a job as a moving picture actor.

NEVILL
MAWRUSS

We don't want to. Go ahead and act for us a little something and if we like it we wouldn't mention your past life.

NEVILL

All right.

(Walks up and down a minute)

Gentlemen, I am going to give you what I consider to be one of the finest scenes in all dramatic literature - a scene that tests the ability of any actor; a scene that has become a classic, and which I flatter myself receives at my hands a performance which I think you will admit does justice to its extreme demands upon the talents of the actor.

(Pauses)

ABE

(To Mawruvs, who is walking up and down)

Sit down, Mawruvs, I want to listen to this.

(Mawruvs sits down)

NEVILL

Thank you. There are few such moments as this in the whole range of the drama, few scenes so grip the auditor with the sense of human anguish. The scene takes place in the sitting room of a fashionable New York house. A young girl, reared in the lap of luxury, falls in love with one of her own class. Her father...

ABE

Her what --?

NEVILL

Her father is a poor music teacher.

MAWRUSS

Abe-- "The Music Master!"

ABE

Wiedermal Warfield.

NEVILL

He comes to her house to give her a lesson and --

(As Nevill starts to speak, Mawruvs starts to clear off his desk)

ABE

Wait a minute -

(Crosses to iron safe)

Before you begin, this is the piano --
NEVILL

I see you know the scene.

MAWRUSS

Know it? We know it backwards. Go ahead from where he says—
we take her and you take her and they take her—

NEVILL

Very well.

(Recites in marked Irish accent)
Then if they don't take her, I take her, if they don't want her, I want her. I'm selfish — I'm selfish —

ABE

Don't holler! What do you think this is — a bar-room?

NEVIL

Naturally the man speaks loud, the poor fellow is in agony.

ABE

Let him be in agony, what do we care?

NEVIL

But Mr. Potash —?

ABE

For such an old fool I ain't got no sympathy at all. ..tries to bust up a match between his daughter and a millionaire... he ought to go to jail for such a thing...

NEVILL

But gentlemen...

MAWRUSS

We don't want to hear no more about it. Go on out of here!

(Pushes him out of door)
Miss Cohen, send in the next one. That's your fault — for crying over such a schlismel.

ABE

My fault? Did I beg you you should take a recommendation from the fellow?

MAWRUSS

Such a soft heart, he's got it!

ABE

Did I know the fellow was going to imitate Abe Warfield?
MAWRUSS

You ought to have known it - everybody imitates Abe Warfield.

(They quarrel ad lib - in the midst of which enter an actor dressed as David Warfield in "The Music Master)

ACTOR

Excuse me, gentlemen...

MAWRUSS

Out of here, you Warfield imitator you...

ABE

Out - out, you loafer!

(They push him out)

MACDONALD

(Enters)

What's the trouble?

MAWRUSS

The trouble is I got a sympathetic partner, MacDonald. So you stay and hire actors with him. It's getting too damp for me around here.

(Goes out)

ABE

MacDonald, let me give you a piece of advice. If ever you go into business for yourself, and it gets too much for one man to handle, take a manager, take a tonic, take dope, take schnapps, but don't take a partner.

(Out)

(MacDonald left alone on the stage laughs first and then grows serious as he sees the picture of Rita Sismondi. He picks this up and is staring at it when MISS COHEN enters)

MISS COHEN

Where the bosses?

MAC

What's the matter with you -- this place on fire?

MISS COHEN

Who do you think is outside?

MAC

Lillian Russell -- I'm a mind reader -- who is outside?
MISS COHEN

Rita Sismondi.

MAC

Rita Sismondi.

MISS COHEN

She says she has an appointment with Mr. Perlmutter. Where is he?

MAC

I'll find him. You send her in here.

MISS COHEN

Oh, Mr. MacDonald, is she coming to work here?

MAC

Go on. Tell her to come in.

MISS COHEN

I think she's grand! I seen her last week to the Regent in "The Crimson Talon" and she sent the cold shivers up and down my spine bone. My God, she was ruthless!

MAC

Miss Cohen, will you kindly tell that young lady to come in here.

MISS COHEN

You needn't be so polite, I didn't say nothing out of the way.

(Out)

(Mac takes up photograph on the table and looks angrily at it. Enter RITA SISMONDI, a girl of about twenty-two or twenty-three. Typical vampire)

RITA

(To Miss Cohen, outside)

Please tell my chauffeur to be sure and wait.

(Sees Mac)

Why hello, Mac!

MAC

Hah, starting right in with the Rolls-Royce stuff.

RITA

It's the only way. Make 'em think you're running an expensive car and they've got to give you six hundred dollars a week. It's only common decency, Mac.

MAC

Are you coming to work here?
RITA

Well, I wasn't till Pemberton said you were here, and that settled it

MAC

Hah --

RITA

It hasn't been the same at the Feature Film Company since you left. I'm lonesome...

MAC

For what?

RITA

For you, Mac.
(He sniffs)
I'm really very fond of you, Mac. I've missed you terribly.

MAC

Missed me?

RITA

I've missed that broken-hearted stuff you pull. I've grown stale Mac. You don't know how it helps an artist to have near her someone whose life she has ruined.

MAC

Always the vampire, eh?

RITA

Only during business houses. In my private life I am the simple, correct and conventional lady as you see me now.
(Takes out vanity bag and starts to make up)

MAC

You correct and conventional?

RITA

That's the penalty of playing vampire parts. Now do you know what the ambition of my life is?

MAC

Sure... to get more money than Mary Pickford.
RITA

It's to leave all this - to settle down in some quiet little place just two of us - a cozy little home - far from the sky-signs and the cabarets - a quiet corner of our own where we can breathe fresh air and see blue sky...

MAC

By Jove, Rita, wouldn't it be great? A little cottage, say in the foothills of the Adirondacks?

RITA

Well, we don't want to go too far uptown. I was thinking of 85th street and Central Park West.

MAC

(Disgustedly)

Huh! that just about your idea of the country. The nearest you'll ever come to raising your own vegetables is on a windowbox outside your room - in The Claridge.

RITA

You think they'd let me do that, Mac? It would make a great press story, Mac. "It is not generally known that Rita Sismonda, the well known vampire, is passionately devoted to vegetable gardening. She is to be seen every morning in a Callot Soeurs negligee arranging her pet artichokes in her window box outside her room at The Claridge." Mac, we'll pull that stuff when I come to work here.

MAC

Well? Well it takes two to make a we. When you come to work here, I quit.

RITA

Now there you go again queering my little day-dreams.

MAC

Well you queered mine all right. You know I was fool enough to think when you spoke a moment ago about a cosy little home for two that you really meant it.

RITA

I did mean it, in a way. Oh, Mac, dear, I'm so tired of this Times Square life. The people are so false. One day you slip a head waiter a dollar and the next he don't know you.

MAC

Look here, Rita, how long have I been hanging around you?
RITA

Three years ago last March was the fateful day, Mac. I remember it distinctly for it was my first chance to play vamp and I practiced on you.

MAC

Three years. Well, it has come to the place where we stop.

RITE

What—going away again?

MAC

I have left place after place because as soon as you came to work there I was the joke of the studio. You made me jump through hoops and sit up and bark, didn't you?

RITE

I was very fond of you, Mac.

MAC

Yes you were. Then here's your chance to show it.

RITE

How?

MAC

I am perfectly willing to perform for you and do any nice little tricks you teach me, provided...

RITE

Yes?

MAC

Provided you marry me.

(Rashe starts back)

Well?

RITE

Really I couldn't think of it, Mac.

MAC

Because I haven't enough money?

RITE

That's one of the reasons?
RITA

The others don't matter.

MAC

That's all the reasons. If I had what that bunch you go with have if I could take you to the Knickerbocker every evening and blow you off to flowers and wine, it would be different. Why, for what it costs to take you out to dinner, Rita, we could live for a week.

RITA

In one room and a kitchenette.

MAC

Well, what of it?

RITA

Kitchenettes are so cramping to a personality like mine. I would wither in a kitchenette, Mac.

MAC

Yes, you like the fine, free open country -- of 42nd street and Broadway. Don't kid yourself, Rita, there isn't one of those orchid-buyers who cares a hang about you.

RITA

No; and that's the delightful part of it.

MAC

Delightful - huh!

RITA

They let me alone. They are tickled to death with my work and my success -- while you....

MAC

I'm offering you something better than success. I'm offering you a home....

RITA

Oh, poor, homeless little me. Nowhere to go but the Knickerbocker!

MAC

Oh, you can make fun of it if you like.

RITA

No, I can't -- you won't even let me do that. Now, be reasonable, Mac. I have the chance of making the biggest name in America in
my line. I'm young yet... I like fun... and I don't mind orchids.

MAC

That's all right now. But in ten years...

RITA

In ten years -- you come around and ask me again -- and I'll marry you, Mac.

MAC

Marry me now, Rita.

RITA

It can't be done, Mac. I've got to keep faith with my public. Nobody would ever trust a vampire who was happily married on the side. Wait a while, Mac.

MAC

(With conviction)

Not on your life.

RITA

Now, Mac, you're not going to disappoint me after all these years? I couldn't get along without you. You're the only broken heart in my collection. Promise you'll come around in ten years.

MAC

Never. I'm through.

RITA

You're not going to quit me cold - jilt me?

MAC

(Comes up to her seriously)

Rita, I'm in earnest.

RITA

You wouldn't spoil a good vamp to make a bad wife, Mac?

MAC

For the last time: which is it to be - me or your career?

RITA

Just give me ten years...
(Grasps her hands)
Quit joking. Now then -- which?

But, Mac...

Which?

Now be sensible, Mac. Put yourself in my place. Would you give up a position of five hundred a week to live in a Harlem flat with you on forty a week? Would you, Mac?

All right. That's settled. I'll never ask you again.

Oh, don't say that. I love to have you ask me. I'd miss it terribly. Promise me you'll ask me again to marry you.

(Solemnly)
Never again. I swear it.

You mean it?

Doesn't it look it.

Now you know, Mac, you couldn't resist -- that's the most charming thing about you -- you are so delightfully weak...

Goodbye.

So, you're going after all? Don't trust your firm resolution after all, do you? Afraid to stay here with me?

I'll stay.

But don't you think it will make any difference this time.
RITA

(Sidles up to him)

No, not the slightest, Mac.

(Looks down at him)

MAC

I told you...

RITA

(A Looking lovingly at him)

Yes, I know you did, Mac... and you said it very well, too.

(Abe and Mawrus are heard quarrelling outside before they enter)

ABE

(Outside)

Always kicking, Mawrus, always kicking. You kick if I do do it, and you kick if I don't do it.

MAWRUSS

(Outside)

Don't do it if you don't want to do it.

ABE

(Coming in)

If I don't want to do it, you make me do it. You ain't a partner, Mawrus, you're a policeman

MAWRUSS

(Sees Rita as he enters)

Abe -- Abe --

ABE

You ride rough-necked over everybody.

MAWRUSS

Abe, what's the matter with you? Don't you see there's a lady here?

MAC

Miss Sismondi, this is Mr. Perlmutter -- and Mr. Potash.

ABE & MAWRUSS

How do you do, Miss Sismondi?

RITA

Now let me get this straight - the tall handsome gentleman is Mr. Perlmutter?
(Mawruss bows)
And Mr. Potash is - the short - distinguished looking gentleman?

ABE
Much obliged.

MAWRUSS
(Overdoing the gentleman)
Won't you take a seat, Miss Sismondi?

RITA
(Acts up to Mawruss)
Thank you.

MAWRUSS
Isn't it beautiful weather we're having?

RITA
(Smirking at him)
Yes, quite spring-like. I had to leave my sables home today.

MAC
(Disgusted)
Huh -- sables...

ABE
Well, that's where people make a big mistake, changing too soon. I wear heavyweights right up to Decoration Day.

MAWRUSS
Abe!
(To Rita)
You got to excuse my partner, Miss Sismondi, he's got a good heart, but he's a black diamond.

RITA
(As Abe is about to reply)
I'm sure he has a good heart...he has such a kind face.

MAWRUSS
And now, Miss Sismondi, let's get down to business.

ABE
That's right, Mawruss. Now listen, miss - er - we got an opening here for a first class A number one high-grade vampire.

MAWRUSS
Abe, couldn't you keep still for a minute? What are you, William H. Bryan ® or something?
Is this a way to talk to your partner?

MAWRUSS

Forget you're a partner and try to act like a gentleman.

(Graciously to Rita)

Now, Miss Sismondi, we would like to ask you just a few questions to begin with.

ABE

Yes, Miss Sismondi, what experience have you had as a vampire?

MAWRUSS

Abe....

RITA

(Breaks in to mollify them)

That's all right, Mr. Perlmutter. He's interested in me, aren't you, Mr. Potash?

(Draws up her chair to Abe)

Now I want to tell you all about myself.

ABE

(As Rita starts to ogle him, grows very uncomfortable and finally gets up)

Well, Mawruss, after all, maybe you'd better talk to this lady.

MAWRUSS

I'm glad you come to your senses, Abe.

(To Rita)

Now, Miss Sismondi...

RITA

Well....

ABE

Excuse me a minute.

(Turns to Mac)

Say, MacDonald, would you mind going outside and seeing where Mrs. Potash is?

MAC

Certainly.

ABE

(To Mac, as he goes out)

Tell her that Mr. Perlmutter and me will be engaged for a few minutes.
(To Abe)
I'll do my best for you, Mr. Potash.

(To Rita)
Lambs to the slaughter -- lambs to the slaughter!

(Abe goes to the door, looks out and comes back)

ABE
That's a very smart young feller... half the time I don't know what he's talking about.

RITA
He's a clever boy. When I was West he wrote some of my most successful scenarios.

ABE
I don't doubt it.

MAWRUSS
Well, we ain't interested in his, miss, we're interested in you.

RITA
Now isn't that nice! You know I can't believe that I've known you gentlemen such a short time. You know I've got the funniest feeling I've met both of you before.

ABE
Maybe my partner -- but not me.

MAWRUSS
I don't have to prove no alibis to you, Abe. If I had met this young lady before, I am certain I would have remembered it.

RITA
Isn't that sweet of you? I'm sure we are going to get along famously together.

(Mawruss, hadn't we better get through here. I've got to go to lunch soon.

MAWRUSS
My partner is a regular pedicure -- he thinks only of his stomach.

RITA
Well, I haven't had my lunch, either.

(Waits a second for an invitation)

(Abe looks at Mawruss and then turns away)
ABE

After all, we've got lots of time. What was it you were going to say, please?

RITA

As if suddenly remembering

Oh, now I know who you remind me of -- my mother's favorite brother, Reginald. He used to visit me often when I was in finishing school.

(She pauses impressively.

(Abe and Mawruss exchange glances. Abe is about to speak but Mawruss stops him with a gesture)

Only the other day Uncle said to me, "Well, Rita, so the little boarding school girl has turned out to be a great star, getting a thousand dollars a week. Who would think it?"

ABE

I wouldn't, for one.

RITA

I can hardly believe it myself sometimes, yet this very week I have had three offers at that figure, with an iron clad contract and a guarantee of ten thousand dollars, to go to the Coast.

MAWRUSS

The Overland Limited leaves Chicago every day at half past two. Don't miss it on our account.

RITA

But I don't want to go to the Coast.

ABE

Well, if those are your lowest Pacific Coast figures, what is your rock-bottom salary on the Atlantic seaboard?

RITA

Seven hundred and fifty a week.

MAWRUSS

Excuse me, Miss Sismondi, me and my partner didn't go to no finishing school, but just the same if we hire you, I can see our finish.

RITA

I earn my salary, Mr. Perlmutter. I'm not like the others. I never fake my stuff. I don't care what you ask me to do: ride on locomotives, dive off bridges, walk barefoot on ice... I got nerve enough for anything.
ABE

I don't doubt it.

MAWRUSS

Say, why should we want you to walk barefoot on ice?

RITA

I can do the finer things, too. That's where I made my reputation. You remember me in "The Crimson Talon," Mr. Potash?

MAWRUSS

If he does he's forgotten it.

RITA

It was a wonderful part. I played a famous actress with all Paris at my feet. One day I'm sitting in my boudoir, and a former sweetheart of mine from my home town in Corsica comes to see me. He is sitting in a chair opposite me... just like you are now, Mr. Perlmutter. See? Now, my manager who runs the theatre where I perform is terribly infatuated with me, see -- and-- Come over, Mr. Potash, I want to show you how this goes.

(Abe comes over)

And this rube sweetheart hasn't seen me for a long time on account of my leading this fast life in Paris and everything, and I ain't been in touch with the news of my home folks in Corsica. See? Now we'll say that you're the sweetheart, Mr. Perlmutter.

(Draws her chair up near him)

I'm sitting here and you're sitting there and my lover comes in -- this theatrical manager -- just as you're telling me that my old mother is dangerously sick with gall stones or something, see? Well, naturally that breaks me all up and I faint dead away on this rube's shoulder, like this!

(Faints on Mawruss's shoulder)

Can you imagine this theatrical manager? He's crazy! He don't know nothing about this fellow and naturally he thinks I'm double crossing him. Now

(Turns to Abe)

We'll say you're the theatrical manager, Mr. Potash. You jump forward and grab me by the throat. Now I just want to show you how this goes. Grab my throat with your right hand, Mr. Potash. Don't be afraid of hurting me. Hold it hard! Now, after you do this... I --

(Abe is holding Rita by the throat and she leans with her head on Mawruss's shoulder, when there enters MAC, ROSIE and RUTH)

ROSSIE

(hauntered at the picture which she sees)

Abe, what is the meaning of this?
RUTH

Why, Mawruss, what are you doing?

MAWRUSS

She's showing us how she acts like a vampire.

ABE

Watch this, mama, it's supposed to be in Paris.

ROSIE

In Paris? Ach Gott!
(Sits in chair and fans herself)

MAWRUSS

Listen, Rosie, don't carry on so. This is business. This is Miss Sismondi. She wants to get a position. She is showing us what she can do.

ROSIE

With her head on your shoulder?

MAWRUSS

You don't believe I am doing this for enjoyment, do you, Ruth?

RUTH

I don't know anything at all about it.

RITA

Well, I'll explain it to you, Mrs. Perlmutter.

ABE

It ain't necessary, Miss Sismondi. Miss Sismondi is giving us a sample of her work because me was thinking of giving her a job here.

ROSIE

You ain't positively going to do nothing of the kind.

MAWRUSS

But Rosie...

ROSIE

The sample was enough for me, Mawruss.

ABE

Rosie, is right, Mawruss. If this is a sample of what's going
to happen when this lady works here, she'd better find a job somewhere else.

Mawruss

Nothing of the kind, Abe. If your wife don't trust you you got my sympathy, but I'm not going to let it stand in the way of our business. You understand this, don't you, Ruth?

Ruth

Why yes - it's a rehearsal, isn't it?

Rita

Sure it is. I was giving them the big scene from "The Crimson Talon." You don't suppose I act that way in private, do you?

Rosie

I wouldn't put it beyond you, with them curtain rings in your ears.

Rita

Mac, what are you standing there like that for? Why don't you explain to these people? He's known me for years.

Mac

Mrs. Potash, you haven't anything to fear from Miss Sismondi. All she is interested in is her career. Nothing else means anything to her.

Mawruss

Well, that ain't such a bad thing either, MacDonald. What we want here are people who are onto their jobs and are going to stick by it till the whistle blows.

Rosie

Abe!

Abe

I think we'd better look for somebody else, Mawruss.

Mawruss

Miss Sismondi is the person we are looking for, Abe, and if you don't mind leaving us for a few minutes, Ruth, I would like to talk terms with this lady.

Rosie

Ruth, are you going to let your husband do this?
"POTASH AND PERLMUTTER FILM COMPANY"

ACT TWO
ACT TWO

Scene: Studio of the Potash & Perlmutter Film Company.

The stage is set for the taking of a moving picture. At right and center a small set, showing an interior of combination bedroom and sitting room, such as is used in a moving picture studio. This is supposed to be a room of the house shown in exterior of the next scene.

AT RISE:

PEMBERTON is seen finishing with the rehearsal of a scene. Electricians and camera men are at their places. In the set and about it are the actors, who are as follows:

Character woman...Mrs. Timson
Heavy.............Ralph Nevill
Ingenue...........Vivian Haig
Leading man.......Richard Partington

Three months are supposed to have elapsed since the preceding act.

(As rehearsal stops)

That's fine! Now all remember what I told you. You, Miss Haig, don't forget you're an ingenue and not a leading lady. You, Mrs. Timson, lay on the mother stuff thick like I told you. Nevill, you're a heavy, don't attempt the impossible and try to be a gentleman. You, Partington, forget you're a leading man and be human.

(Turns to electricians)

Now, you boys, give them all the light you can...It'll stand all you can put on it.

(Turns to company)

That's all we can do till Miss Sismondi comes. You're dismissed for ten minutes.

CAMERA MAN

Huh, she's got a pipe!

(Goes out)

NEVILL

No wonder she ain't here. I seen her dancing at the Claridge at two o'clock with that - now - National Bank - Blanchard...
CHARACTER WOMAN

I should think she'd get enough being a vampire on the screen without working it over time.

INGENUE

(Sarcastically)

Bankers are fearfully fatiguing. A girl never has any time to herself. Banking hours are so short.

LEADING MAN

Now, I suppose you're just pestered to death with bankers, aren't you, sweetheart?

CHARACTER WOMAN

Ain't it terrible to be such a millionaire hater.

INGENUE

That's all right, I hold my job on my merits, not by having a drag with one of the backers of the concern.

(During the above they all wander off as ABE and MAWRUSS enter)

ABE

(Seeing the lights still on)

What is this -- the Great White Way?

PEMBERTON

We are waiting for Miss Sismondi.

MAWRUSS

Wait by daylight. Who do you think we are -- the Consolidated Gas Company?

(He and Abe turn off lights)

ABE

There will never be no profit for a moving picture manufacturer till the actors get paid piece work. They wander in here any old time and go off when they please.

PEMBERTON

You can't make a star punch a clock, Mr. Potash.

MAWRUSS

Why not? We are giving Miss Sismondi fifteen hundred dollars a week, two hundred and fifteen dollars a day for two working hours.
John D. Rockefeller should be a vampire and make some real big money.

Listen, Pemberton, is there no end to this film at all?

You can't make a seven reel film in a short time.

Well, can you make it in a lifetime?

We're shooting the last interiors now. It will be finished as soon as Miss Sismondi comes.

Miss Sismondi - all the time Miss Sismondi -- three months ago you said if we hired Miss Sismondi, we would have a big future...

And we've still got it.

Three months ago you said Miss Sismondi was going to make a fortune for us, and all she made for us is trouble.

She doesn't make any trouble here.

She don't hey? Well, what do you call it when you got someone working for you - and all day long down town everybody is asking: "What is she going to do next?" And all night long uptown everybody is asking: "What did she do last?" I'm sick and tired of hearing about Miss Sismondi.

Miss Sismondi is going to be a sensation in this film.

Going to be ain't good enough! She's got to be a sensation! And quick, too, otherwise it will be too late. Why, Pemberton,
on the strength of what we were going to do with Miss Sismondi, we borrowed money from the bank and tomorrow the first fifty thousand falls due. Blanchard is coming round here this morning and if we can't show him results, he'll shut down on us -- that's all.

ABE

So you see, Pemberton, why it's so important we should finish that film at once... today yet.

PEMBERTON

It will be finished today. We've got a few scenes to shoot here and this afternoon I'm going up to Pelham. We've got the house all ready there, she's soaked in kerosene, the boys are waiting there. All we've got to do is rush Sismondi up there, touch a match to that house and shoot the scene.

MISS COHEN

(Enters)

Mr. Pemberton, you're wanted on the phone.

(Goes out)

PEMBERTON

All right.

(Starts away and then stops)

I'll guarantee that picture will be finished by tonight and you can tell Blanchard so.

(Goes out)

MAWRUSS

If he does finish the film, then Blanchard will renew the loan anyhow.

ABE

That ain't what's troubling me.

MAWRUSS

Ain't it? Well, it ought to trouble you.

ABE

Not so much as something else. I want to see that film finished and everything fixed up, right, and then...

(Pauses)

MAWRUSS

Nu, and then?

ABE

Then we'll fire Miss Sismondi.
Fire Miss Sismondi? Are you crazy! Miss Sismondi is all right.

Abe

Certainly she is.

Mawruss

If she leaves here today tomorrow a dozen moving picture would snap her up.

Abe

Let 'em snap.

Mawruss

She's a wonderful actress.

Abe

Did I say she wasn't?

Mawruss

And a perfect lady, too.

Abe

Sure she is, and I like her.

Mawruss

I know you do.

Abe

What do you mean you know I do? I know you do.

Mawruss

I do?

Abe

Sure you do, and that's the trouble.

Mawruss

Listen Abe, I like Miss Sismondi and you like Miss Sismondi, but if you mean that I like Miss Sismondi like you mean I like her, you're making a big mistake.

Abe

Well you don't think I like her that way, do you?
MAWRUSS

I'm your partner, not your wife. How should I know how you like her? And furthermore, if you think I'm going to fire her to oblige your Rosie...

ABE

I didn't say nothing about Rosie...

MAWRUSS

You don't have to. I know what you mean.

ABE

My Rosie would trust me anywhere, and besides she threatens every day to come down here. Only this morning...

MAWRUSS

That's enough! I don't want to hear no more about it.

ABE

All right, Mawruss, do as you please. I've warned you.

MAWRUSS

You've warned me? The warning's on the other foot.

(Enter RITA and BLANCHARD)

RITA

Good morning, Mr. Perlmutter.

(To Abe)

Good morning, Chief.

ABE

Tell me, Miss Sismondi, why must you be always punctually half an hour late?

RITA

I'm so sorry. Is it really late?

MAWRUSS

Yes, it's really late, even in the moving picture business.

BLANCHARD

It's all my fault, boys. I met Miss Sismondi on the way over here and persuaded her to take breakfast with me at the Claridge.
At the Claridge. Miss Sismondi, why don't you buy a commutation ticket at the Claridge...five dollars and fifty cents worth of food for five dollars...

MAWRUSS

We are waiting for you, Miss Sismondi, to run this scene.

RITA

I'll go dress as quickly as possible.

ABE

As quickly as possible...another hour wasted.

RITA

I won't be ten minutes, chief.

ABE

Call my partner chief, Miss Sismondi. He's the Indian of this concern.

RITA

All right, chief.

(Goes out)

BLANCHARD

Now, boys, the three months is up tomorrow and your first loan of fifty thousand dollars falls due. How about it?

MAWRUSS

Well, you've seen how things are going. You've been around here practically every day.

BLANCHARD

Of course you know why I've been keeping an eye on your studio, don't you?

ABE

We ain't blind exactly.

MAWRUSS

Abe, don't interrupt Mr. Blanchard.

ABE

I ain't interrupting him. Mr. Blanchard asked us if we knew why he is all the time hanging around here and I said we did know.
MAWRUSS

Well, what is that your business? As a favor to us, Mr. Blanchard is keeping an eye on this place and we appreciate it very much indeed.

BLANCHARD

I should hope you did. I have extended your original loan and made you two additional loans, in all a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and I think you ought to clean up your first fifty thousand tomorrow.

MAWRUSS

But, Mr. Blanchard...

BLANCHARD

Perlmutter, the loan committee of the bank meets today. They will take up the matter of your loan and I want to be able to tell them that you will be able to pay the first note tomorrow.

ABE

But I thought you were the boss at the bank.

BLANCHARD

I have full authority.

MAWRUSS

Then do us a favor, Mr. Blanchard. Extend it for ten days - or a week even. We are going to finish up our first big filmum today. This afternoon Miss Sismondi goes up to Pelham and we burn down an old house we bought up there for a final scene. In a week or ten days at the outside we ought to market this filmum and clean up our loan sure.

ABE

We are absolutely good for it, Mr. Blanchard, and when we get finished up with this filmum we are going to turn over a new leaf here. We are going to cut down expenses all round. Why, right now we made up our minds to fire Miss Sismondi.

BLANCHARD

What!

MAWRUSS

That's right. We was both talking it over when you came in.

ABE

We agreed we must go to economize.
And the first thing we do is to discharge Miss Sismondi.

BLANCHARD

You'll do nothing of the kind.

ABE

But, Mr. Blanchard...

BLANCHARD

I loaned you the money only on her account.

MAWRUSS

Why certainly! Are you crazy, Abe? Did you ever hear such a thing -- wants to fire our biggest star?

ABE

You loaned us this money on Miss Sismondi's account?

BLANCHARD

Because she's such a splendid actress, and all that....you know what I mean Perlmutt?

MAWRUSS

Sure I know. She's our one big asset.

ABE

And our chief liability.

MAWRUSS

Abe, can't you keep still?

ABE

But you yourself said...

MAWRUSS

Never mind what I said -- we are going to keep her and we expect to do bigger films with her - so on her account, as well as ours, give us just a week, Mr. Blanchard!

BLANCHARD

You're sure that film is going to be finished today?

MAWRUSS

Sure.
BLANCHARD

All right. Can I use your telephone?

ABE

Certainly.

BLANCHARD

I'll tell them to hold off till I get downtown and explain things.

(Goes into office)

MAWRUSS

What are you trying to do -- spoil everything? We ain't blind. Sghter -- we know why he came here. Why don't you tell him to his face he's a loafer?

ABE

Well, ain't he a loafer? Lends us a hundred thousand dollars on our prospects with Miss Bismondi. Suppose she gets sick on us? Suppose she gets hurt in an accident? Is that good banking?

MAWRUSS

What do you care what kind of banking it is? We're going to pay back them loans ain't we?

ABE

Just as quick as we can, Mawruuss, and when the last note is paid, I don't care what you say, Mawruuss, Miss Sismondi can be some other's concern's big asset, because the biggest asset I've got is my peace of mind.

(Enter ROSIE)

Aha, endlich.

MAWRUSS

I'll settle this Abe.

(To Rosie)

Good morning, Rosie.

ABE

Well, mommer, what brings you downtown?

ROSIE

As if you don't know.

ABE

What do you mean...as if I don't know. You could come downtown for any number of things.
At Altman's there is a sale of sport suits today.

Sport suits I leave to Miss Sismondi.

Aha, now it comes out.

Every suit that woman wears is a sport suit.

Rosie, you got a very mistaken idea about Miss Sismondi.

She ain't a sport. She's a very hard working woman.

She must be. She keeps very long hours, Abe, Here in the studio all day and who knows what she does afterward?

Now listen, Rosie, you can't talk that way about Miss Sismondi. She's a perfectly respectable woman.

You should know.

What do you mean he should know?

When it comes to finding out what a woman's character is, every man is an expert.

(Thinking Rosie is referring to him)

Ach Gott!

Wait, Abe, leave this to me.

But, Mawruss....
MAWRUSS

Never mind, Abe. I don't claim to be an expert about women, Rosie, but I do know men and if you think for one moment that Abe Potash is interested in Miss Sismondi except as a moving picture proposition you are entirely mistaken.

ROSIE

Now that will do, Mawruss. Don't you pass no such remarks about my husband. It's bad enough that he stands for you without you should insinuate him this way. That's a snake in the grass for you...buries his head in the sand and thinks nobody can see him at all.

ABE

Rosie, for heaven's sake, what are you driving into?

ROSIE

I ain't driving into anything. For my part he could do what he pleased. He ain't my husband...thank God, and if he was I would oser eat my heart out for him the way Ruth is doing.

MAWRUSS

What is this you are talking nonsense!

ROSIE

It ain't nonsense at all. Night after night she is sitting home wondering what her husband is up to, and when a woman starts in to wonder what her husband is up to, it don't make no difference what he's up to, it couldn't be worse than what she's wondering.

MAWRUSS

But why didn't she tell me about this? She never said nothing to me.

ROSIE

You she would rather die than tell anything to. But naturally she comes to me for comfort.

ABE

To you for comfort? Mawruss, take my advice, go right home and square yourself with Ruth.

MAWRUSS

Square myself for what?

ROSIE

As if you didn't know. Where was you last night? Out having
Well, what of it? It was a business matter. I had supper with Miss Sismondi and Blanchard. I charged it up to the expense account this morning—twenty dollars and fifty cents. Abe knows all about it, don't you, Abe?

Abe

I know you charged up twenty dollars and fifty cents, but whether you spent it or not, that I don't know.

Rosie

You haven't been home one night this whole week.

Mawruss

I've got to attend to my business, haven't I? We've been doing night work here.

Rosie

Yow, night work! Why has Abe come home?

Abe

I come home because my partner is good enough to do the work for both of us and, besides if I didn't come home I would never hear the end of it from you.

Rosie

That's right, stick up for your partner. Don't give him away. You are both members of the Married Men's Union. Probably he's got something on you, too!

Abe

Now listen, Rosie, you can say what you please about me because I'm your husband and I got to stand for it, but you can't talk that way about Mawruss Perlmutter.

Mawruss

I can speak for myself, Abe.

Abe

You don't have to, Mawruss. You know what Rosie is: she thinks every good looking woman is a competitor, and just so long as Miss Sismondi works here we could expect trouble like this.

Rosie
ROSE

Trouble like this ain't a marker to the trouble you can expect if you keep her here. I advise you to fire her.

MAWRUSS

Now look here, Rosie, once and for all, Miss Sismondi is a perfect lady and it ain't her fault she's good looking.

ABE

And furthermore, Rosie, if you want to run things uptown that's your business. But if you want to run things downtown, that's our business, and I don't care what you say to me when you get me home nights.

(PEMBERTON comes in)

ROSIE

But I tell you....

ABE

Stiegen...somebody's coming.

MAWRUSS

Well, Pemberton?

PEMBERTON

They've made a mess of it again. I'm afraid we won't be able to shoot that scene up at Pelham until tomorrow.

ABE

Why not?

PEMBERTON

I've got to go up there myself and straighten things out.

ABE

Well, go up there now and straighten them out. For heaven's sake, we've got to finish that picture today. We promised Blanchard.

MAWRUSS

You don't seem to realize how important this is. This film must be finished today.

PEMBERTON

Well, if I go up there, who is going to shoot this scene here?
I will shoot it.

You will shoot it?

Yes. For three months - morning, noon and night I've seen nothing, heard nothing - read nothing but "The Guilty Dollar." It's as familiar to me as a pinochle deck. I could direct it backwards.

Me, too, and what he forgets I could remember.

So hurry up and go up there, Pemberton, and straighten this out.

All right - there's the scene.

I've rehearsed it thoroughly. All you've got to do is to run through it once with Sismondi and then shoot the scene.

Don't worry. The way I feel now I could shoot the scene and shoot the actors and blow up the studio.

As soon as Sismondi is through here, rush her right up to Pelham. I'll be ready for her. We can't lose a minute if we're to finish this today.

Claps his hands and calls

Now then, ladies and gentlemen - everybody in the set.

Miss Sismondi --

Miss Sismondi...

†To Rosie, who has been sitting in the set)

Rosie, if you don't mind please....
(Coming down)

Now listen, Mawruss, I want to tell you something. I come down here to do you a favor. Ruth told me to meet her here and I arrived ahead of time to give you a chance, because if Miss Sismondi ain't fired before your wife comes...

MAWRUSS

Please, Rosie, I haven't got any time for such nonsense now. Take a seat and watch the rehearsal. This is business....

(Actors have come on stage, also electricians and camera men. The actors are all talking and laughing)

ABE

(Comes back)

Kush, what is this? A coffeeklatch?

(There is silence)

Now, actors and ladies, pay some attention will you please. Mr. Pemberton is gone up to Pelham and me and my partner are going to do the directing this morning. So if you would please stay quiet for a few minutes we would....

MAWRUSS

Abe, did anyone ask you to make a speech here?

ABE

But I just wanted to explain to our operators that our foreman...

MAWRUSS

Operators? Foreman? What do you think this is - a sweatshop?

ABE

But Mawruss...

MAWRUSS

Don't interrupt, Abe. I am the president here and I will do the directing, and if I need your assistance I will call on you....

ABE

But I just wanted to say...

MAWRUSS

That's enough, Abe. Go and sit down and watch this. Maybe you will learn something. Now, in the first place I want to say....

ABE

Wait, Mawruss, you ain't got a quorum - Miss Sismondi ain't here
MAWRUSS

(Calls)
Miss Sismondi -- Miss Sismondi...
(Ad lib)

RITA

(Without)
Yes --?
(Comes in -- dressed in very tight fitting vampire dress)

MAWRUSS

Come, Miss Sismondi, the quicker we get through the sooner
we are finished.

RITA

I've got to dress, haven't I?

ROSIE

(Who has been gazing at Rita's costume)
In them clothes? It ain't necessary.

MAWRUSS

Stiegen, Rosie.
(To Rita)
Miss Sismondi, please try to be on time, won't you?

RITA

There's a hundred and eighty-two hooks in the back of this
gown. A hundred and seventy-nine of them are all right, but
there are three hooks where I got to hold my breath for ten
minutes.

ABE

Must we stop work while you are holding your breath?

MAWRUSS

Miss Sismondi is right, Abe. She can't jump into those clothes.
She's a vampire, not a fireman.
(Business Rosie and Abe)
Now, Miss Sismondi, Mr. Pemberton has gone to Pelham and has
asked me I should direct this scene.

ABE

And we want you to put your whole temperature into it.

RITA

Temperature?
Na, temperament - what's the difference - temperament - temperature - so long as you're acting a vampire!

ROSIE

I bet you.

ABE

And also, Miss Sismondi, you got to make allowance for my partner because he ain't exactly Jacob M. Griffith, you understand.

MAWRUSS

Abe, shut up your mouth. What's the matter with you?

(To company)

Now ladies and gentlemen - this is the story: Miss Sismondi is the wife of Nebich.

ROSIE

Nebich.

MAWRUSS

But, Miss Sismondi, you are also very much in love with that fellow over there - what's his name?

PARTINGTON

Partington.

ABE

You can never remember that name, Mawrus... call him Goldstein.

MAWRUSS

Abe, let me run this. Now Miss Haig, you are engaged to this here fellow...

ABE

Goldstein.

MAWRUSS

And he is boarding with you and your mother... that's you Mrs. Timson. Now, Miss Sismondi, you are jealous and you have told your husband that Partington has made love to you....

ROSIE

That's a nice bekovet family
Afterwards you're sorry you told your husband because he carries on so. So you hurry to this house in Pelham, which this is the inside of it, because you want to tell Goldstein he should look out for your husband. While you are up there, your husband finds you there and he sets fire to the house. Now that's the story.

ROOSIE
And you're going to stand for this, Abe?

ABE
Rosie is right, Mawruss. She is a married woman and she is supposed to be in love with this young fellow Goldstein? T-phoo-ee!

ROOSIE
Why not have a respectable story for a change?

RITA
It's perfectly respectable, Mrs. Potash. I go crazy, shoot Nevill and then kill myself.

Mawruss
Now what more do you want, Rosie? You see, she kills herself.

ROOSIE
I am satisfied.

Mawruss
All right. Now we will do the scene where Miss Sismondi sees this here Goldstein with Miss Heig in his arms.

(To Partington)

Now, mister, come over here.

(Goes into set)

You're in this chair and you're supposed to be sick.

ABE

(As Partington takes chair and acts sick)

He don't look sick.

PARTINGTON

I can't look any sicker than this.

ABE

Yes you can, you can look real sick. You ain't got no contract with us and we can fire you at any moment. Now look sick.
MAWRUSS

(As Partington's expression changes).
That's better. Now hold that!
(Directing)
Now, Miss Haig, you come through here. You have a medicine bottle in your hand and you pour it in a glass.

ABE

(As Miss Haig pours)
Is that a way to handle a bottle of medicine? You look like you was trained in a cabaret show instead of a hospital.

MAWRUSS

Pour it slow, drop by drop. Imagine it cost five collars a quart without the revenue stamp.

MISS HAIG

You know I can't feel this scene.

ABE

Can't feel it? Just suppose he's your husband. He's very sick and he don't carry no insurance. Now feel it.

MAWRUSS

That's better - a whole lot better. Now, Miss Sismondi, this is where you get in on this...Stick your head in at the door -- you're snooping, you understand?

RITA

I get you...I will now register snooping.
(She registers)

MAWRUSS

Now ready, Mrs. Timson, come on the minute he kisses her. Now then, Miss Haig, you love this feller -- you're crazy about him -- well, look crazy about him -- that's it - now then kiss.

ABE

No, that ain't it at all...it's nothing like it.

MAWRUSS

Is that so? When was you such a cricket of kissing?

ABE

Never mind. That ain't no love kiss. Engaged couples kiss that way two hours before the match is broken off.
All right, Mr. X.Y.Z. Bushbaum, show us how it's done.

ABE

(Starts for the set)

All right, I will.

ROSIE

You wouldn't positively do nothing of the kind. Let Mawruss do it...that's right in his line.

MISS HAIG

I think I know what you mean, Mr. Potash. You want a real passionate kiss, one of those Olga Nethesole kisses - like this. (Kisses Partington passionately)

ABE

That's it -- that's what I mean!

ROSIE

Abe!

MAWRUSS

Now, Abe, perhaps you'll let me go ahead. Now, Miss Sismondi when you see this kiss - no matter what kind of a kiss...you find out this woman is a competitor of yours.

RITA

I get you. I register jealousy.

MAWRUSS

Now we try it over again. That's it -- that's right - Now, Miss Sismondi, the jealousy...

ABE

Wait!

MAWRUSS

Nu, what's the matter now?

ABE

That ain't jealousy.

MAWRUSS

No? Well, if I'm an expert on kisses, you ought to be on jealousy.
RITA
I guess I ought to know how to register jealousy.

ABE
I didn't say you didn't -- but that ain't it.

MAWRUSS
Well, what is it?

ABE
It's like this.
(He goes up to the door where Rita was and acts her part)
What you did was this --
(Makes a face)
That's fear. What you should do - is this --
(Makes another face)
That jealousy!

MAWRUSS
That's acute indigestion. Now, Abe, do me a favor and keep still.
(To company)
Now, ladies and gentlemen, let us finish this thing up. Now, Mrs. Timson, as soon as they kiss you come on. When you see this you get a terrible schreck...

MRS. TIMSON

(Acting it)
You mean like this: "How dare you behave this way to my daughter?"

ROSIE
You see, Abe, even that old woman there wouldn't stand for it.

MRS. TIMSON
Are you addressing me, madam?

RITA
Well, for the love of time, how long do you expect me to stand here registering jealousy and hate? Say, who's directing this rehearsal?

MAWRUSS
She's right, Abe. Since when was you such a tickler for etiquette? If you don't like the way these people behave, no one compels you to stay here.

ABE
I got just as much right to stay here as you, Mawruuss.
MAWRUSS

Nothing suits you. She don't handle the bottle right; he
don't act sick right; they don't kiss right - she ain't
jealous right. Who are you, Moscha Belasco or somebody?

ABE

I wouldn't argue with you, Mawruss. In the cloak and suit
business arguments don't cost you nothing. But in the moving
picture business, if we have for five minutes an argument, it
costs for vampires twenty dollars, for lights fifteen dollars
for heavies ten dollars, und Gott weisst wehr nichts! I
wouldn't argue with you, Mawruss; it's too expensive.

MAWRUSS

All right. Now that's settled, Abe. We'll shoot this. Is
the lights already?

ELECTRICIAN

All ready.

MAWRUSS

(To Camera man)

Now Harry.

CAMERA MAN

All right.

MAWRUSS

In the chair, Goldstein...now ready everybody -- ready -- action--
camera -

(As the scene progresses)

Hold that sick look...

ABE

Sicker -- sicker -- more sick yet!

MAWRUSS

Now, Miss Haig come in with the medicine. You're sorry for
him, now pour the medicine...

ABE

Close to the glass -- don't try to put a bead on it.

MAWRUSS

Now, Miss Sismondi, open the door -- in a little farther --
gives you a schreck - that's right -- now you're mad as hell...
ABE
Jealous like I told you. Look... look at Mrs. Potash...

MAWRUSS
Now then, Goldstein - look at her - take her in your arms - now kiss.

ABE
That's the idea!...

ROSIE
T-phoc-se!

MAWRUSS
Now, Mrs. Timson, come on in -- Now surprise, Mrs. Timson -- could knock you down with a feather - you never dreamed of such a thing...

MRS. TIMSON
(Acting)
How dare you behave this way to my daughter?

MAWRUSS
Now then, Goldstein!

PARTINGTON
(Acting)
Mrs. Timson, I want to marry your daughter.

MAWRUSS
Now change, Mrs. Timson... delight...

ABE
Register a good shidduch....

MAWRUSS
Now, Miss Sismondi, poisonous - you're a snake...

(BLANCHARD enters)

ABE
Give her some of them tigerish looks.

BLANCHARD
Immense, Rita -- very fiaa indeed!
MAWRUSS

(To camera man)
All right, Harry -- cut. Everybody dismissed.

ABE
Well, Miss Sismondi, you got that jealousy stuff down very fine, I must say...

ROSIE
Abe...

ABE
It's very natural. Pretty near the real thing, believe me.

RITA
Well, you ought to know.

MAWRUSS
Miss Sismondi, don't take off your make-up. In a few minutes I am going to take you up to Pelham.

ROSIE
In a few minutes your wife will be here.

MAWRUSS
But, Rosie, this is business. I've got to take Miss Sismondi up to Pelham.

ROSIE
You positively would do nothing of the kind.

ABE
Well, Miss Sismondi, will go up there alone -- what's the difference?

RITA
Why none at all. I'd just as leave go alone.

ROSIE
Then go alone -- for a change.

ABE
Stiegen, Rosie -- what's the matter with you?

RITA
Why, what is it, Mrs. Potash?
(Forestalling Rosie, who is about to speak)
It's nothing, Miss Sismondi. I'll tell you about it afterwards.

ROSIE

Nothing! Is it nothing to come between husband and wife? Is it nothing to keep a man away from his home, spoiling his prospects, ruining his digestion...?

ABE

Be quiet, Rosie.

ROSIE

I won't be quiet. What business has he got buying suppers for other women? Since last January Ruth Perlmutter has lost over twenty pounds. It's breaking her heart....

RITA

But who has done all this?

ABE

Nobody...Don't pay any attention to her, Miss Sismondi. Come on, Rosie....

RITA

Say you don't mean me, do you?

ROSIE

You know well enough who I mean, and...

ABE

ROSIE...

(Point to office)
Go in the office.

(To Rita)
You must excuse my wife, Miss Sismondi. Her intentions are very good but her way of showing them is something terrible.

(Goes out with Rosie)

RITA

I'm very sorry, Mr. Perlmutter, if I have caused any trouble.

MAWRUSS

It's all right. It ain't your fault. My wife would never dream of such a thing if it wouldn't be for Rosie Potash. That woman is so conscientious she don't care how many homes she breaks up.

(Goes out)
RITA

Well, that's a new one on me, Bob.

BLANCHARD

Surprises you, eh?

RITA

It sure does.

BLANCHARD

Well, what did you expect? You've been going out to suppers and lunches with him...

RITA

Purely business.

BLANCHARD

You're sure it was?

RITA

He had a perfect right to stall off a raise by blowing me to food once in a while.

BLANCHARD

And that's all there was to it?

RITA

Of course.

(As she sees him looking queerly at her)

Why, what do you mean?

BLANCHARD

You're the sort of girl that turns a man's head, Rita.

RITA

Mr. Perlmutter's?

BLANCHARD

Perlmutter's... mine...

(With change toward intensity)

You've seen, Rita... you must have seen...

RITA

Seen what?
Ever since you've been here I've been hanging around this place I have even neglected my business. You are a clever girl and you know how things are.

RITA

No. How are they?

BLANCHARD

Why, Rita, there's nothing I wouldn't do for you. I never saw a woman like you. You just say the word and you can have anything you want.

RITA

That's a rather large order, Bob.

BLANCHARD

Just try me, Rita... why I have this thing all figured out. I can show you the prettiest little home you ever looked at and it's furnished, Rita, furnished - not only with furniture but with every security a woman can ask for. You can have everything that money can buy.

RITA

How about the things money can't buy?

BLANCHARD

What's that?

RITA

Well, foolish things - silly and absurd things that no sensible girl in my business has any right to think about - much less to wish for.

BLANCHARD

I don't understand.

RITA

(Hesitates)

Well, I have an older sister living over at Greenpoint. She's married to a boss plumber. Sometimes I go over there Sunday mornings and when I see Kitty, in her old wrapper with her boss plumber and all their chubby babies smeared up with molasses candy, I'd just as lief someone would pinch my jewelry and wardrobe and leave me in their place...What do you think? Babies, Bob - just babies - my babies -- dirty babies and clean babies! That's me, Bob. Now isn't that a hellovaway for a vampire to talk?
(Forestalling him)

Wait a minute. I want to get this out of my system. I want to be on the level with you. I don't love you, Boh...I do like you a lot...I couldn't help but like you...but I don't love you.

BLANCHARD

I don't ask you to.

RITA

(Surprised)

What's that?

BLANCHARD

I've always known just how you felt about me...but I know this too: you trust yourself to me and I'll make you love me, Rita. If you want to stay on here and work you may. If you want to stop, do that. Only give me the chance....say you will, Rita I'm mad about you...mad...

(Suddenly clasps her in his arms and kisses her)

BLANCHARD

(Angry)

Bob!

BLANCHARD

(Letting her go)

Forgive me -- I couldn't help it. Please forgive me! I promise you it will never happen again -- never...

(As Rita smiles)

There that's better. Now then, don't give me your answer now. Give me another chance...I'll tell you what we'll do. What time do you have to be in Pelham for that picture?

RITA

In about an hour.

BLANCHARD

You come with me and we'll have lunch at the Ivanhoe Inn.

RITA

No...no, I can't.....
BLANCHARD

I can fix it with the boys here. Please, Rita, I promise you on my word of honor, you have nothing to fear and -- Let's talk things over then. Now you get ready. I'll go out and telephone up to that Inn - I stand in up there and I'll promise you the greatest little lunch you ever ate...

(Comes up to her as MAC enters)

You'll come? You'll give me my chance?

RITA

Yes, I'll come.

BLANCHARD

All right. I'll be back in a few minutes.

(Goes out)

RITA

(Look after him a moment, then turns to confront Mac)

Why Mac...

MAC

I saw...Is it so, Rita?

(As she looks questioningly at him)

I mean...you and Blanchard?

RITA

I don't know, Mac... I wish I did. All my life I've taken chances and they've landed me where I am. If I go on taking them, they'll land me where I started: salesgirl in a department store - and I might be lucky at that. Here's something handed right out to me, and...

(Sees Mac)

I suppose you think I'm an awful rotter?

MAC

No.

RITA

Then why don't you? You should.

MAC

I think I understand.

RITA

Well, if you do, it's more than I do. I ought to be tickled to death and instead I'm pretty near miserable. Yes, and if you stand there looking at me that way I'll cry!
Poor old Rita.

(RITA)

(Angrily)
Stop it!
(She cries)

Now I -- I have to put my make-up on again.
(She looks up at Mac)
Well, go on...say it out...I'll stand it...

MAC

But I haven't anything to say.

RITA

What -- not even "Mark my words, you'll regret this"?

MAC

I think you are doing just right.

RITA

What?

MAC

It's something that doesn't come to a girl once in a lifetime. It's your Big Chance. Take it.

RITA

(Astonished)
You advise me to?

MAC

I do.

RITA

Why, Mac....?

MAC

Blanchard is a fine man - a man of reputation and position. Don't make any mistake, Rita.

RITA

(More and more astonished)
You haven't anything to say against me? You're not sore at me?

MAC

good luck to you, Rita. I hope you'll be happy.
RITA
My, but you make it hard. If you'd only jump on me — say something nasty to me — I'd feel ever so much more comfortable.

MAC
You'd better hurry. He'll be back soon.

RITA
(Offering Mac her hand)
You're a good sort, Mac...the best in the world.

MAC
The same to you, Rita; and many of them
(Rita goes out)
(Mac drops disconsolately into a chair)
(There is a pause for a minute and then ABE and MAWRUSS can be heard quarrelling outside)

ABE
(Without)
I done it on your account, Mawruuss.

MAWRUSS
Why should your wife get sore at you on my account?
(They enter)

ABE
What's the difference on whose account Rosie gets sore at me? She gets sore at me once or twice a week anyway

MAWRUSS
Well, anyway, when she comes back with Ruth, you tell them I...

ABE
Sh-sh...
(Indicates Mac)

MAWRUSS
What's the matter with him? Did you say something to him?

ABE
I say something to him?

MAC
(With sudden determination)
Mr. Perlmutter, I've got something to tell you. I'm leaving.
Leaving? Abe, couldn't you let this young feller alone? Why must you always be picking on somebody?

ABE

I picking on him? Listen, MacDonald, don't pay no attention to what my partner says. If you want ten dollars more a month, why don't you come to me?

MAC

It isn't that, Mr. Potash.

ABE

Then if you don't like to work Saturday afternoons, don't talk to him - ask me. I'll let you go.

MAC

That's not it either. You've been very good to me.

MAWRUSS

Say, good to you! You worked hard, MacDonald, and we appreciate it, and if my partner gets a little cranky once in a while, that ain't his fault. He is used to dealing with greenhorns -- that's all he knows.

MAC

No one could have treated me any better than you, Mr. Potash.

ABE

Then what the devil's the matter with you? You're treated well, you get good wages... we like you... and you want to throw up your job. Are you crazy?

MAWRUSS

What more do you want? You admit we act like gentlemen to you. Don't be a damn fool.

MAC

It's a personal matter, Mr. Perlmutter. I'll stay until you get someone else... then I'm going.
ABE
Then you ain't going to give us no reason?

MAC
Well, what's the use? I don't want to worry you with my personal troubles.

MAWRUSS
Personal troubles -- aha, Miss Sismondi!

ABE
That woman is back of everybody's personal troubles in this place.

MAWRUSS
Now don't be foolish, Mac. You have had quarrels with Sismondi before and you'll have 'em again, please God! Next week she will give you one look and you wouldn't swap jobs with Dovid W. Griffith.

ABE
Don't get discouraged Mac. My Rosie turned me down a dozen times before she accepted me. At last I said to her, I would never ask you again....this is the twelfth time and the last...

MAWRUSS
Thirteen is your lucky number, Abe.

ABE
She's a fine girl, Mac. She's worth waiting for.
MAWRUSS

You couldn't get a better wife anywheres.

MAC

It's no use. She's going to marry Blanchard.

ABE & MAWRUSS

What?

MAC

He asked her here not half an hour ago.

ABE

Well -

(Pause)

I think you had a lucky escape.

MAWRUSS

I doubt very much if she could cook a potato even.

ABE

She was no wife for you, Mac. For Blanchard yes....it would cost a fortune to keep that woman in hooks and eyes alone.

MAWRUSS

Come, come, MacDonald, cheer up. Broken hearts are like composition notes; they run thirty, sixty and ninety days.

ABE

And after that, you forget you ever had 'em.

MAWRUSS

Besides, you can't blame the girl. She's making a good match....a man like Mr. Blanchard ain't to be had every day. You can't blame her.

MAC

(Almost breaking)

I don't blame her. I told her just now that I didn't blame her. I told her she ought to do it, and for her sake, I'm happy....very happy.

(Goes out almost crying)

ABE

Happy.....nebich.
MAWRUSS

If that boy feels happy, he's got a good poker face. I hope he won't do nothing rash.

ABE

Well, we'll raise his wages twenty-five dollars a week.

MAWRUSS

I said I hoped he wouldn't do nothing rash...not us.

ABE

Twenty-five dollars a week wouldn't break us, Mawruss.

MAWRUSS

Schmoos, Abe. If it got around we raised that fellow because his girl went back on him, everybody in the place would be coming to us with a broken heart.

(Enter MISS COHEN)

MISS COHEN

Mr. Potash, you ain't in to no one who wants to sell an automobile, are you?

ABE

What do you want to ask a question like that for? Certainly, I ain't.

MAWRUSS

Wait a minute. Is it an automobile to ride in or an automobile to run over a cliff?

MISS COHEN

Well, I guess you could run it over a cliff if you wanted to. It cost four thousand dollars...F.O.B. Detroit.

ABE

Tell him we're gone for the day.

MISS COHEN

It's an elegant car, Mr. Potash....sixty horse power, upholstered in genuine walrus.

MAWRUSS

Tell him Mr. Potash and me has been called away to the coast.
ABE

As a favor to you. Is he splitting his commissions with you?

MISS COHEN

Well, he said he'd run me out to Long Beach next Sunday, if I'd show him in.

MAWRUSS

All right....show him out and take the Long Island Railroad. (MISS COHEN goes out)

ABE

Cutzpah. We should waste our time with an automobile canvasser so that girl could go joy riding.

MAWRUSS

You should have her nerve, Abe, then you could call yourself a business man.

ABE

I don't need nerve when I got a partner like you, Mawruss. Twenty dollars and forty cents he spends on Miss Sismondi and Blanchard and he talks about nerve yet.

MAWRUSS

Blanchard is our backer, Abe.

ABE

Suppose he is our backer, do we have to schenk him table board?

MAWRUSS

You're worse than Rosie.

ABE

Rosie is right. Before her I stood up for you, but I can tell you what I think just the same. You got no right to be seen running around the streets with a good looking woman like Miss Sismondi. I know it's business and she knows it's business, but what kind of business do friends think it is?

MAWRUSS

That girl is going to make us, Abe.
Yes, and she'll ruin us, too.

MAWRUSS

Well, I'm doing my best to keep her salary down.

ABE

Say, keep her salary down. What's the difference whether she earns it or eats it?

(Ad lib. row during which BLANCHARD enters)

BLANCHARD

Could I interrupt you for a moment?

ABE

You ain't interrupting me. I ain't said nothing. I couldn't get a word in edgewise.

MAWRUSS

Come right in, Mr. Blanchard. This is nothing private.

ABE

You bet it ain't private. When my partner talks business, it ain't private for five blocks around. What could we do for you, Mr. Blanchard?

BLANCHARD

I wanted to tell you that Miss Sismondi will perhaps be a little late reaching Pelham this afternoon.

MAWRUSS

Why sure that's all right, Mr. Blanchard.

BLANCHARD

I've asked her to take lunch with me at the Invahoe Inn.

ABE

Why certainly Mr. Blanchard, we could make allowances for Miss Sismondi on a day like this.

MAWRUSS

And drink a bottle of wine on us, Mr. Blanchard.

BLANCHARD

I see, you boys are on all right. Who put you wise?
MAWRUSS

We ain't saying.

BLANCHARD

Well, it's a nice little place the Ivanhoe Inn. Small private dining rooms...discreet service...always knock before they come in...just the place to take your girl.

AEB

And on a day like this, Mr. Blanchard, I don't blame you.

MAWRUSS

Me and my partner want to congratulate you, Mr. Blanchard. We think you are doing the right thing.

BLANCHARD

You do, eh? Well, it's good to have the seal of approval of two such connoisseurs.

AEB

Say, me and my Rosie have been married for twenty-five years and we've been very, very happy ninety percent of the time...anyhow eighty-five percent.

MAWRUSS

Miss Sismondi is a splendid woman. I admire her more than I can tell you.

BLANCHARD

You don't have to tell me, Perlmutter. I know you admire her.

AEB

And we're going to show it too, Mr. Blanchard. We only heard the good news this morning and ain't had much chance to look around us, but don't go buying no silver soup ladle, till you hear from us.

BLANCHARD

WHAT!

MAWRUSS

Silver soup ladle. I'm surprise at you, Abe. Why don't you say a beer opener and be done with it?

AEB
I don't care what it is, Mawruss. For Mr. Blanchard and Miss Sismondi we would go the limit.

Say, what the Hell are you two talking about.

We heard.

Heard what?

About you and Miss Sismondi getting married and....

Married! Say, have you two gone crazy?

Mawruss, maybe, there's some mistake.

Say, Mr. Blanchard, maybe you don't want it announced yet, so we wouldn't say no more about it.

Sure not, but we can congratulate you anyhow, Mr. Blanchard.

Rubbish, Potah. Do you think I'd marry Rita Sismondi.

Why not?

Why not? You know what kind of a woman she is.....?

Certainly we know what kind of a woman she is.

She's been working here now for some time, Mr. Blanchard, and we got a pretty good line on her.
BLANCHARD

Then quit your bluffing, Perlmutter. You know this game as well as I do.

ABE

And you are going to take her up to this nice, little place... these little private rooms where the waiters knock before they come in.

(Pause. To Blanchard)
And you're not going to marry her?

BLANCHARD

No! What do you think I am.

ABE

We don't think......we know what you are.

MAWRUSS

You would take a decent respectable girl to a place like that. Do you suppose she would go there with you if she knew?

ABE

That's a low life......a tramp.

BLANCHARD

That'll do, Potash.

ABE

You ought to be in jail....loafer!

BLANCHARD

Now see here, Potash, you can't talk this way to me.

ABE

Why not? Because you're the backer of this concern...because it's your money we're working with?

MAWRUSS

Abe.

ABE

Do you think you can buy us to stand still and let you do this thing? Ain't we got hearts? Ain't we got consciences? Call in your loarns. Take your money.
BLANCHARD
All right, I will.

MAWRUSS
Abe...Abe...

ABE
I would run a push cart and live in a cellar...me and my Rosie together...before I would take money from this dawg...

BLANCHARD
Dog. Take that back - you little runt. (Goes menacingly toward him)

ABE
Don't you come near me...you crook, you...you murderer.

BLANCHARD
(Takes him by the throat)

MAWRUSS
Blanchard...Abe...for Heaven's sake. (Stage business, while they struggle around the stage. Mawruss follows them around, and as he sees Abe getting the worst of it, he seizes a heavy book and hits Blanchard over the head. Blanchard drops unconscious)

Abe...Abe...are you hurt?

ABE
(Rubbing his neck where Blanchard has grasped him)
Mawruss, what have you done? (They both bend over Blanchard)
My God, they can electrocute you for this. He's dead.

MAWRUSS
Yow, dead. You couldn't kill a tough customer like that with a meat-axe. Get hold of his feet. (They carry him to bed in movie set)
He'll be all right in a few minutes.

ABE
I can't hear him breathe. Listen, Mawruss, you must get away from here now, at once. No one must know of this till you're gone. (Sismondi and others are heard outside)
MAWRUSS

Sismondi.

ABE

Go up to Pelham. Take Sismondi with you in a taxi. Pretend that Blanchard had to go back to the bank and will meet her there. I'll get Dr. Eischendorfer and if Blanchard don't come to, I'll let you know.

MAWRUSS

But suppose he does come to, he'll have me arrested anyhow.

ABE

Only Blanchard should get we'll, Mawruss and I don't give a damn if they send you to jail for ten years.

(Mawruss looks annoyed)

Just so long as they don't electrocute you. Now go, go, Mawruss, do what I tell you.

(RITA comes in with ingenue and character woman, and MISS COHEN)

RITA

And you're all coming to the wedding, aren't you?

INGENUE

You bet we will, Rita.

CHARACTER WOMAN

I'll wear that ivory satin I wore in the number seven Fair and Warner Company. We closed after two weeks. It's as good as new.

MISS COHEN

You'd look swell in ivory satin.

MAWRUSS

Oh, Miss Sismondi, Mr. Blanchard had a sudden business call. He asked me to take you up to the Ivanhoe Inn. He will meet us there.

ABE

Miss Cohen, will you please get a taxi... get a fast one.

(MISS COHEN goes out)

Come, Miss Sismondi... come ladies.

(Shoos out the women)
Goodbye, Abe.

MAWRUSS

Now don't you worry, Mawruss, if the worst comes to the worst, I'll say I done it and that'll give you a good start.

MAWRUSS

No...no, you mustn't do that.

Abe

Tch... Tch... Tch.

MAWRUSS

No, Abe, I'm your partner, and if we killed that sucker, we'll go fifty fifty on it.

(Goes out)

(A at telephone)

Hello... 290 W Madison Square... Hello, Hello, is this Dr. Eisendiendorfer's office? What?... Well, where can I get hold of him... Oh, this is his assistant? Well, could you come over to the Potash and Perlmutter Film Company right away...

(RUTH and ROSE come in)

Someone is very sick here... his head hurts him... not a headache....

(Looks up and sees Rose and Ruth)

Who is it? What's the difference who it is? He was wrestling with somebody. I'll tell you about it, when you come.

Goodbye.

(Making believe as if he saw Ruth and Rosie for the first time)

Oh, hello, Ruth... back again, Mama? One of the men got injured in the studio... nothing very much... little bump on his head..... It's nothing.

RUTH

(Severely)

Where's Mawruss...?

Abe

Mawruss? Oh, Mawruss... he stepped out for a minute.

RUTH

He knew I was coming.
ABE
He had some very important business. He said you shouldn't wait.

ROSIE
Aha, afraid to face you.

RUTH
Abe, this thing can't go on any longer. I've come to the end of my patience... I've shut my eyes long enough and...

ABE
Listen, Ruth, you and Rosie go into the office and I'll join you in a minute.

ROSIE
Don't you do it, Ruth. I know him. He'll sneak out of it too.

ABE
Rosie... Rosie, do as I tell you.

RUTH
Now, no more doging, Abe. I want to know the truth. Where is Mawruss?

ABE
Now, listen to me, Ruth, you are all wrong about this. You know me. Do you suppose for one moment that if Mawruss was up to anything crooked, I would stand for it?

ROSIE
(Sarcastic)
Oh, no.

RUTH
Abe, I want to know where Mawruss is...

ABE
Now, calm yourself, Ruth, Rosie has got you all worked up about this.

RUTH
Where is Mawruss?
Abe

Well, if you want to know where Mawruss is, I'll tell you. He went over to the bank with Mr. Blanchard and --

(BLANCHARD groans from the back and Abe stops short)

Rosie

What was that?

Abe

Now, Ruth, you, Rosie and I will go into the office and....

(Tries to push them out with him as Blanchard stumbles off the bed and groans)

Ruth

Listen.

Abe

That's nothing...just the fellow who was hurt.....and...

Ruth

(As Blanchard stumbles forth)

Look.

Rosie

Mr. Blanchard.

Blanchard

Where is he? Where's Perlmutter?

Ruth

Mr. Blanchard....you've had an accident.

Blanchard

Accident, nothing. Your husband did this.

Ruth

Mawruss did?

Blanchard

He tried to kill me. After all I've done for these men...the money I've invested...the time I've spent...he throws everything overboard...his partner, his business and his wife for that woman.
Abe

Well, if you want to know where Mawruss is, I'll tell you. He went over to the bank with Mr. Blanchard and --

(BLANCHARD groans from the back and Abe stops short)

Rosie

What was that?

Abe

Now, Ruth, you, Rosie and I will go into the office and...

(Tries to push them out with him as Blanchard stumbles off the bed and groans)

Ruth

Listen.

Abe

That's nothing...just the fellow who was hurt...and...

Ruth

(As Blanchard stumbles forth)

Look.

Rosie

Mr. Blanchard.

Blanchard

Where is he? Where's Perlmutter?

Ruth

Mr. Blanchard...you've had an accident.

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Accident, nothing. Your husband did this.

Ruth

Mawruss did?

Blanchard

He tried to kill me. After all I've done for these men... the money I've invested...the time I've spent...he throws everything overboard...his partner, his business and his wife for that woman.
MISS SISMONDI?

AEE

Nothing of the kind.

BLANCHARD

He's mad about her, I tell you. He thought she was going out to lunch with me and he went stark crazy with jealousy.

AEE

Don't believe a word of it, Ruth. This man is a crook.

BLANCHARD

I am, hey? Well, where did he go?

AEE

Never mind where he went.

BLANCHARD

You daren't say. He's gone, Mrs. Perlmutter, and Sismondi is gone with him.

AEE

It ain't so.

BLANCHARD

Sismondi and he are together and this fellow knows where they are.

AEE

They are not together. I know where he is and I am not going to tell. If you want to arrest somebody, arrest me. Nobody wants to murder you more than I do.

ENTER MISS COHEN

MISS COHEN

Mr. Potash...

(Sees Blanchard)

Mr. Blanchard, are you here? Mr. Perlmutter has just taken Miss Sismondi up to the Invannoe Inn to meet you. I heard him say so.

BLANCHARD

What?
ROSIE

Ruth.

ABE

He ain't gone up there. He's gone to Pelham where we take a picture.

MISS COHEN

No, Mr. Potash, he was going to Pelham afterward. He said for you to let him know by messenger there, how things were going.

ELANCORD

Well, they're going damned bad for Perlmutter.

(Turns to Ruth)

Mrs. Perlmutter, do you want any further proof?

ROSIE

I don't.

ABE

It ain't so. He's up at Pelham, I tell you.

ELANCORD

All right, if they aren't at the Ivanhoe Inn, we'll catch them at Pelham. My car's outside....run you up there in half an hour. We'll be there before them and we'll watch and see what happens.

(Turns to Potash)

Huh, preach the ten commandments to me, will you? Well, here's where I show up....you damned Pharisees.

(He goes out)

ABE

Don't go, Ruth, let me explain.

RUTH

I've heard enough explanations from you, Abe. Mawruss will have to do the explaining now.

(Goes out)

ABE

(Appeals to Rosie)

Rosie, for Gawd's sake, listen to me...don't let Ruth do this.

ROSIE

I WANT her to do it. If it was MY husband, I wouldn't rest
ROSIE (Cont)
till I had him in Sing Sing. Loafer.
(Goes out)

ABE

Miss Cohen, for Gawd's sake, is there any way we could reach that house in Pelham? Ain't there no 'phone there or nothing?

MISS COHEN

Not within two miles.

ABE

I got to warn my partner somehow. I sent him up there with Miss Sismondi and if Mrs. Perlmutter ever catches him, it'll ruin him for life. And I done it.

MISS COHEN

Well, the only thing you can do now is to go half on the alimony for you couldn't beat that car of Blanchard's with an aeroplane.

(Exits)

ABE

(Falls in a chair)
Alimony...divorce. Uch Gott!

(As he sits dejectedly in his chair, there enters JAMES, J. CRABBE. He is an automobile salesman. His manner is brisk and business-like. He wears duster and cap upon which are goggles)

CRABBE

Good morning, Mr. Potash.

ABE

Oh, this is the doctor. You're too late, Doctor, your patient got better on you.

CRABBE

I ain't a doctor. Crabbe is my name....James J. Crabbe. I represent the Twinplex Motor Car Company.

ABE

Well, I ain't in the market for an automobile right now.

CRABBE

A great many people have that same idea, Mr. Potash. They
think winter is coming on and they would rather wait for Spring, but we can make immediate deliveries of our car and you'll have it to use all through the fall touring season.

AEE

Ach, don't bother me.

CRABBE

I won't take five minutes of your time, Mr. Potash. I just want to give you a few figures. Now, instead of making broad general claims for the Twinplex Car, we give you definite specific features in which the Twinplex stands alone among cars. Our eight cylinder motor develops seventy-seven horse power and is geared to pick up from a mere walk to sixty-five miles an hour in five car lengths. This enables us to make wonderful time in city driving. Why, the other night I went from Columbus Circle, through the Park, up seventh avenue by way of the concourse and Pelham Parkway in twenty-one and a quarter minutes to the Ivanhoe Inn.

AEE

What?

CRABBE

Those are the figures. ...twenty-one and a quarter minutes from Columbus Circle to the Ivanhoe Inn. You know where the Ivanhoe Inn is, don't you?

AEE

I've heard of it. It's on the way to Pelham.

CRABBE

Well, I can beat the time of any other car for that distance by seven minutes.

AEE

You mean to say that if we started now for Pelham, and somebody else started three minutes ago, that we could get there before them?

CRABBE

Get there before them? Why, my friend, not only would we beat them to it, but I'd have time to buy you a couple of drinks at the Ivanhoe Inn on the way up.
ABE

Is your car in front of the door right now?

CRABBE

It is.

ABE

You get me to Pelham in twenty-one and a quarter minutes and I'll buy the drinks.

("As they rush out, there falls

THE CURTAIN.

************
ENTRE ACT.

BETWEEN SCENES ONE and TWO. ACT II.

It is proposed to show by means of moving pictures between the first and second scenes of act two, the following story:

Abe gets into Crabbe's car and they start off. On the concourse they pass Blanchard's car, which is stalled by the side of the road because of a blowout of one of the tires. Crabbe's car hurries on, Abe urging Crabbe to greater and greater speed. Its pursuit by motorcycle police may be shown. They pass the city limits and are in Pelham. They turn into Split Rock Road. Show sign on side of road, property of Potash & Perlmutter Film Co. Keep off. This Means You. At, or near this sign, show Crabbe making quick turn to avoid running into a taxicab in which are Mawruss and Rita. Crabbe's car is ditched. Show Mawruss and Rita helping Abe into taxicab. Show taxicab turning into lane with sign reading Property of Potash & Perlmutter Film Co. as above. Somewhere above, show Blanchard's car stopped at sign on road Ivanhoe Inn. Drive In. Show attendant with sign on cap, Ivanhoe Inn. Show conversation between Blanchard and attendant. Have you seen a Black and White taxicab drive into the Inn. Attendant points up road toward Pelham. Taxicab went that way fifteen minutes ago, etc.
ACT TWO

SCENE TWO: The House at Pelham. Stage shows front of small frame house. End of lane beside the house. Background and sides a few trees and shrubs. Other properties as desire.

(When Curtain goes up, the stage is found deserted. Then there is heard the sound of an automobile which approaches. A taxi drives in. The chauffeur gets down and opens the door)

CHAUFFEUR

Get out first, lady.

(Helps Rita out)

AEE

(From interior taxicab, groans)

Oo-ee.

CHAUFFEUR

Now then, grab him under the arms and put him on my shoulders.

AEE

(As he puts his arms around Chauffeur and is lifted out the cab pick-a-back)

Oo-ee.

CHAUFFEUR

Up she comes. That's the idea.

(MAWRUSS steps out of the cab)

RITA

Easy....please....easy.

MAWRUSS

(As Abe groans)

Does it hurt you so bad as all that, Abe?

AEE

I'm all right, Mawruss. Just leave me here. I would be all right in a few minutes.

MAWRUSS

Rest your hand on my shoulder and put your feet down gently.
I feel if I put my right leg down, it will kill me.

MAWRUSS
Well, put it down and see.

RITA
Bring him over to the porch.
(They take him over to the porch)

(Abee...Abee...where does it hurt you?)

(Abee)
(Recovering himself)
It don't hurt me nowhere...Now go, Mawruss, go...quick before they come.

MAWRUSS
And leave you?

Abee
I'm all right, Mawruss. What are you hanging around here for. I'm all right, I tell you.....Nothing hurts me at all.

CHAUFFEUR
That's bad.

MAWRUSS
Bad? What do you know about it?

CHAUFFEUR
I drove a Bellevue Ambulance for ten years, and when they raised Hell, there was nothing the matter with them. It's only when they don't suffer no pain that it's dangerous.

Abe

Oo-ke.

RITA
Go and get a doctor, Mr. Perlmutter.
AEE
I tell you there's nothing the matter with me.

CHAUFFEUR
I know...I know. I've taken in cases by the hundreds what claimed they didn't suffer nothing, felt like going right back to work and everything and within a couple of hours we was giving 'em oxygen.

AEE
Ai...I wish my Rosie was here.

MAWRUSS
I'll go and get a doctor right away...

AEE
But don't you come back, Mawruss, promise me you won't come back.

MAWRUSS
Why not? You think I'm afraid to face Blanchard, and all them people?

AEE
Listen, Mawruss, he'll have you arrested.....he told me so. He'll make Ruth believe anything......Why do you suppose I risked my life to come here with that speed maniac? Please, Mawruss for my sake, go.

MAWRUSS
Well anyhow, Abe, I'll send the doctor.....and I'll be somewhere near by. Now, keep up your courage, Abe. (Puts his arm around Abe and pats him on back)

AEE
Ai, if my Rosie was only here....she'd know what to do.

MAWRUSS
The doctor will fix you up in a minute...

CHAUFFEUR
(As Mawruss comes up)
Your staying here won't do a bit of good, so don't you worry, Mr. Perlmutter. If he's going to croak, he's going to croak. (He drives off in cab with Mawruss)
(Head out of cab)
Goodbye Abe....the doctor will be here in a few minutes...

Abe

It's all right, Mawruss....all right.
(Then as Mawruss goes, he starts to get up and cannot)
Ooph. Ooph.

Rita

What's the matter?

Abe

I think every rib in my spine is broken.

Rita

(Putting her arm about her and petting him)
The doctor will be here soon.

Abe

(Groans)

Oo-ooa.

Rita

Just rest against me. Put your head back on my shoulder.
(Puts his head on her shoulder)

Abe

Ai, this is more than I can stand.

Rita

(Rubbing his hair)
There....there.

Abe

Ah, I wish my Rosie was here.
(An automobile horn sounds in the distance.
Abe immediately straightens up)

Rita

What's the matter?

Abe

Did you hear that horn there? That's Blanchard's car.
They mustn't see me here.
Now keep calm, Mr. Potash.

Keep calm? If Rosie finds me here like this, she'll kill me.

Now that's all right. You leave them to me. There's an old couch inside. Go and lie down. Here, I'll help you.

As Abe starts to get up

No, lean on me... lean more heavily.

But, listen, Miss Sismondi, you don't know what to tell them. Not only I ain't here, but Mawruss wasn't here either.

I understand.

You ain't seen him since he left the store.

I understand everything.

(Going out, leaning on Sismondi)

Moving pictures... that's a business for a married man.

(Goes into house with Rita)

(There's a slight pause and vacant stage, then Pemberton, camera men and helpers arrive)

Now then boys, get your cameras placed, where we marked them this morning. Harry, you're over here.

(Indicates place down front)

Casey, over by the window and -

(Rita comes out. She has taken off her duster and is ready to "Go on").

Hello, Rita, all ready?

I want to speak to you a minute, Sam.

Casey, can you see the dummy from where you are?
CASEY

(At the window of the house)
The dummy is on the couch all right.

PEMBERTON

Now in with you, Rita, and see if he gets you.

RITA

(Comes down to Pemberton)
Just a minute? Do you hear something?
(They all stop to listen)
A machine?

PEMBERTON

Well, what of it?

RITA

That's Blanchard's car. He's coming here and I don't want to see him.

PEMBERTON

Why not?

RITA

Never mind, Sam, as a favor to me, don't let him in that house. Start in taking the picture and keep on taking it as long as he's here. I don't care if you use up a thousand feet of film. I'll pay for it.

PEMBERTON

Why, we haven't that much with us.

RITA

Well, keep on cranking as though you had. Do this for me, Sam, and I'll square it with Potash and Perlmutter, and I'll square it with you too, Sam.
(Goes in the house)

PEMBERTON

I don't get you, Rita, but you're on.

RITA

Here they are. Now don't let anyone in this house.
(Goes in)

PEMBERTON

Now Casey, ready with your camera and keep on shooting till
PEMBERTON (Cont.)

I tell you to stop.

CASEY

I only got about seventy-five feet.

PEMBERTON

Well, crank it along just the same, till I tell you to stop.

(Calls as Blanchard, Ruth and Rosie come in)

RITA

(From within)

Ready.

- BLANCHARD

Wait a minute. Who's inside that house?

PEMBERTON

What's that your business?

BLANCHARD

I'll show you...

(Starts toward the house)

PEMBERTON

(Stopping him)

Here, you can't go in there.

(Calls to camera man)

All right, Casey, shoot.....

BLANCHARD

Hold on there.

PEMBERTON

What's the matter?

BLANCHARD

Sismondi and Perlmutter are in that house.

PEMBERTON

Nonsense! We're taking a moving picture. What would Perlmutter be doing in there? Go on, shoot, Casey.

(They shoot picture)
BLANCHARD

Now you can't put anything over on me, Pemberton.

PENBERTON

Keep away from there.

ROSIE

They came up here in a taxicab. We followed them. They're in that house now.

PENBERTON

There's nobody in that house but Miss Sismondi and a dummy.

RUTH

I knew you were mistaken, Mr. Blanchard.

BLANCHARD

I'm not mistaken at all. He's squared this fellow.

PENBERTON

You're crazy. Keep on shooting, Casey. We've spoiled enough film on this thing already. Mrs. Perlmutter, this is a scene from "The Guilty Dollar". You know that Blanchard.

BLANCHARD

Sure I do. This is the scene where you burn down the house, isn't it?

PENBERTON

That comes later.

BLANCHARD

All right, we'll stick around and watch it.

PENBERTON

We've decided not to do it till tomorrow.

BLANCHARD

Oh, have you? Well, I've decided to do it right now.

(With a quick movement, steps over and sets fire to the house)

PENBERTON

Put out that fire.
HELPER
Can't do it. The whole house is soaked in kerosine.

PEMBERTON
All right, we'll have to shoot it then.
(To other camera men)
Go on, Harry...
(Shouts)
Rita... come on, Rita... the house is on fire... We're going to shoot it.

RITA
(With shrieks)
Oh, my God... Save him... somebody.
(Comes to the door terrified)
Save him... somebody... help me...

PEMBERTON
Good business, Rita... now start to drag him out...

RITA
Don't you understand... he's in there.

PEMBERTON
More intense, Rita... more reality... put your whole soul in it, Rita... now go drag him out.

RITA
For God's sake... help me somebody.

PEMBERTON
Now that's enough. Drag him out now.

(RITA goes in)
Get every bit of this, Harry, it's going great...

(MAWRUSS rushes in)
This is the real stuff, Mr. Perlmutter...

RUTH
(Rushes toward him)
Mawruss.
MAWRUSS

(Brushes her aside)

Where is he?

(RITA appears with Abe, who has taken off his coat, vest and collar. He has his arm about her neck)

ROSIE

Abe!

ABE

Mama, I'm hurt.

ROSIE

Don't you come near me...you loafer.

CURTAIN.

* * * * * * *

* * * * * *

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ACT THREE

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ACT THREE

SCENE: Same as Act One. Office and Projecting room of the Potash & Perlmutter Film Co.

When the curtain goes up, ABE is sitting at his desk, one foot on a soap box, and propped up in a box chair.

MISS COHEN enters with can of coffee, and carries heavy lunch room cheap cup and saucer and bag of crullers.

MISS COHEN

Here's your breakfast, Mr. Potash.

ABE

Thank you, Miss Cohen, put it on the desk.

MISS COHEN

How do you feel now?

ABE

My back hurts me something terrible.

MISS COHEN

(Handing him cup of coffee which she has poured out)

Well, you drink this nice fresh-made hot cup of coffee.

(As Abe drinks it and makes a face over it)

Now isn't that good?

ABE

Say, Miss Cohen, where did you get this stove polish?

MISS COHEN

Simon's Busy Bee Lunch Room. It's the same we all drink.

ABE

That's what it is not to have a home. After twenty-five years, Miss Cohen, my wife walks out on me. I sat up till half past twelve waiting for her to come home and she didn't show up. Six times I rung up her sister's house; she wouldn't even come to the phone.

(Takes another drink of coffee and groans)
MISS COHEN

What is it? Does it hurt you so much?

ABE

Hurt me? It strangles me. I think it's got ammonia in it. Say, Miss Cohen, do me a favor, ring up her sister's house. Maybe she'll talk to you.

MISS COHEN

I did ring her up.

ABE

Did you ask her where she put the chloroform linament?

MISS COHEN

I did.

ABE

What did she say?

MISS COHEN

She said any communications you got to say to her should be made through Fixburg & Fixburg, Attorneys and Counsellors at Law, 51 Chambers Street, right opposite the County Court House.

ABE

The County Court House. Ai, gewalt.

MISS COHEN

Will you have another cup of coffee?

ABE

Do you want to poison me? Throw it out.

(Enter MAWRUSS)

Well, Mewruss?

MAWRUSS

Miss Cohen would you please step out for a moment; I would like to talk to my partner.

ABE

(As MISS COHEN starts out, indicates coffee)

And, Miss Cohen, will you please take this disinfectant away with you. I can't bear the smell of it.

(MISS COHEN, takes coffee, etc. and goes out. He groans)
MAWRUSS
Well, Abe, I'm afraid we're up against it.

ABE
I thought so, Mawruss. She didn't come home at all. She stayed all night with her sister and she wouldn't even talk tome over the phone.

MAWRUSS
Listen, Abe, forget Rosie for a minute. You got worse troubles than that, believe me. It's already all over town that we had a split with Blanchard. Tomorrow is the first of the month. We got rent to pay, electric light bills coming due, bills for fillum, and a payroll like an ammunition factory. What are we going to do about it?

ABE
(MAfter a pause)
Maybe if you talk to her, Mawruss, you could do something.

MAWRUSS
Abe!

ABE
She's been made at me lots of times, Mawruss, but she never acted like this before.

MAWRUSS
What are you worrying your head about Rosie for? I suppose you know that Blanchard insists we pay that fifty thousand dollar note that is due today.

ABE
This is the start of our finish, Mawruss.

MAWRUSS
This is what comes of being so brave, Abe. "Call in your loans...take your money." Seemingly moving pictures have went to your head, Abe. Such behaviour is only good for fifty feet in a five reel fillum; but in business it lands you in bankruptcy.

ABE
I don't care if it lands me in jail, I'd say it to him again. You ain't sorry you hit him on the head, Mawruss?

MAWRUSS
(Hesitatingly
MAWRUSS (CONT)

No...I ain't sorry...exactly.

ABE

What do you mean exactly? He was pretty near choking me to death.

MAWRUSS

Sure I know, but if I went to that Roscher today and said to him, 'Look-a-here you pretty near choked my partner to death and now you got to extend those notes for us,' that would be anyhow an argument, wouldn't it?

ABE

Well, what do you want me to do, Mawruss?

MAWRUSS

Try to think...suggest something...

ABE

Maybe Ruth could talk to her.

MAWRUSS

Kush, you're driving me crazy. Suppose Rosie does stay away over night? What is it? She'll get over it.

ABE

She's going to sue me for a divorce.

MAWRUSS

Nonsense, Abe. She couldn't do nothing to you for what you done. What do you think any judge or any jury is going to believe that a fine looking woman like Sismondi would fall for a schlieman like you?

ABE

A schlieman like me?

MAWRUSS

And besides you got witnesses...me, Miss Sismondi, the taxi driver. You're worrying yourself about nothing Abe.

ABE

Nothing. Is it nothing that me and my Rosie is married
twelve five year s and never spent a day apart. Mawruss, not one day.

MAWRUSS

Well, it's time you had a vacation.

(Enter MISS COHEN)

MISS COHEN

There's a man outside wants to see you.

ABE

Ai, gewalt... someone from the lawyers office, going to serve me with papers, I bet you.

MISS COHEN

No, it ain't... It's Mr. Feder of the Kosciusko Bank.

ABE

Thank God.

MAWRUSS

What the devil do you mean... thank God. He's coming to tell us that the bank is through with us and he thanks God yet.

ABE

Ask him to come in, Miss Cohen.

(MISS COHEN goes out)

MAWRUSS

Now listen, Abe, forget your domestic troubles while Mr. Feder is here. Put up a bold front. Ain't you got no back-bone?

ABE

You should have my back-bone.

(Groans)

MAWRUSS

Don't groan. What is this? A hospital?

ABE

You got a heart like a submarine.

MAWRUSS
MAVRUSS

Abe, for Heaven's sake... you're going to see the president of the bank in a minute... how do you think he's going to give you an extension, if you look like you're going to die on him any moment. Brace up. Look healthy. Remember if I'm a submarine... he's a torpedo.

(As FEDER comes in)

Why how do you do, Mr. Feder?

FEDER

How do you do, Perlmutter? How are you Potash?

ABE

How do you, Mr. Feder. You must excuse me. I don't get up. I hurt my back in an accident.

MAVRUSS

Abe. (To Feder) It's nothin'... nothing, Mr. Feder.

ABE

Nothing. It is nothing to him that I'm riding an automobile seventy-five miles an hour and am thrown out on my back.

MAVRUSS

You should have been thrown out on your neck.

(Turns to Feder) Excuse me, Mr. Feder. Won't you sit down? This is very kind of you to come up here and see us. Why didn't you ask us to come down to the Bank?

FEDER

I can do my business with you boys much better up here.

MAVRUSS

You mean you want to see our books?

FEDER

I want to talk to you boys without Blanchard knowing it. You have a loan at our bank... a hundred and fifty thousand dollars... fifty thousand due today and the rest in one and two months from today. Is that right? Now I want you to be perfectly frank with me. Was there any reason why Blanchard loaned you this money, aside from ordinary business reasons?

ABE

Ordinary business reasons or moving picture business reasons?
MAWRUSS

Why do you ask, Mr. Feder?

FEDER

Because this loan was made without my knowledge as president of the bank, and without the knowledge of the executive board. In fact Blanchard loaned this money entirely on his own initiative.

MAWRUSS

But, Mr. Feder, we got the money and we used it in our business.

ABE

Sure. It was a legitimate loan.

FEDER

Sometimes legitimate loans are made for illegitimate reasons. Now, the truth, boys, what is there between Blanchard and this Miss Sismondi.

ABE

Wiedermal...Miss Sismondi.

MAWRUSS

We've had troubles enough on account of that lady, Mr. Feder, and I wish you would excuse us.

FEDER

Let me explain. The Kosciusko Bank is not one of your Wall Street banks. We handle the funds of a lot of poor people over on the East Side. Those people have a right to expect that the men who are responsible for their money are decent reputable citizens. You can see yourselves we cannot afford to have practically at the head of our institution a man who risks a hundred and fifty thousand dollars of the bank's money promoting a moving picture actress.

MAWRUSS

But the money was loaned to us.

FEDER

The first fifty thousand was, but even with a liberal credit policy you were not entitled to the other hundred thousand. There was only one reason for it. So I want you to tell me what you know about Blanchard and this lady.
ABE

We know enough, Mr. Feder. The fellow has acted like a loafer around here.

MAWRUSS

Abe.

ABE

Mr. Feder ought to know it. Day and night that fellow has been neglecting his business on account of Miss Sismondi.

MAWRUSS

What are you talking nonsense. Miss Sismondi is a respectable woman.

ABE

That ain't Blanchard's fault.

FEDER

Thank you gentlemen, you've told me what I wanted to know.

MAWRUSS

But, Mr. Feder, it's none of my partner's business what Blanchard is or how he acts.

ABE

It ain't eh? Well, I make it my business.

MAWRUSS

Excuse me, Abe, I'm doing the talking. Mr. Blanchard ain't the only man who has lost his head over a good looking woman. Now, Mr. Feder, we don't want to antagonize Mr. Blanchard.

ABE

But we don't want to antagonize Mr. Feder either. We got no secret from Mr. Feder and it's our duty to tell him all we know about Mr. Blanchard.

FEDER

I'm glad you feel that way about it, Potash and I'm much obliged to you for the information. Good day, gentleman.
MAWRUSS
But, Mr. Feder, about that note that is due today.

FEDER
I'm sorry but it will have to be paid.

MAWRUSS
But, Mr. Feder...

FEDER
This is a dirty business, Perlmutter, and the quicker it's cleaned up, the better for the bank.

(Out)

MAWRUSS
Well, Abe, I hope you're satisfied. You seen your duty and you cut your throat with it.

ABE
Well, what do you want me to do, stick up for Blanchard?

MAWRUSS
I wanted you only to keep your mouth shut.

ABE
What are you, a judge or something? Every time I open my mouth you move to strike it out.

MAWRUSS
Must you tell everything you know about Blanchard?

ABE
I was telling Feder what he wanted to know. I was jollying him. If you would let me alone, in a minute I was going to tell him something which he would have given us the extension and maybe made us another loan too.

MAWRUSS
Sure you would...you're a regular secretary McAdoodle...I know you.
ABE
If you wouldn't stop me it would have been all right.

MAWRUSS
And, how are you going to pull off this financial miracle?

ABE
"The Guilty Dollar." That's our one big asset, Mawruss and you never even mentioned it to the fellow.

MAWRUSS
You didn't give me a chance.

ABE
You mean you didn't give me a chance.

MAWRUSS
All you could think of was to knock Blanchard.

ABE
That was only the start. My ideas was first to knock Blanchard. Then I was going to tell him about how stuck he was on Sismondi, because she's such a beautiful woman, such a great actress and everything and from that I was going to boost the fillium and finally was going to ask him for the extension, when you butted in on me.

MAWRUSS
What am I... a mind reader? I should know when you start to talk, what the finish would be.

ABE
You got to break them things easy, Mawruss.

MAWRUSS
Well, it ain't too late yet. Let's go over and see the fellow and explain it to him.

(Gets his hat)

ABE
Wait, I'll go with you.

(Groans as he gets up)
MAWRUSS

Only one thing, do me a favor, Abe, if you are going to do the talking and ease into this touch, give me an inkling of what is coming. Start on something neuter like prepara-

(Enter PEMBERTON)

PEMBERTON

Well, chief, we're in bad again.

MAWRUSS

Tell us something new, Pemberton.

PEMBERTON

We shot three thousand odd feet of film in and around that rotten house; then she burns down on us and in five seconds the whole three thousand feet is gone to hell.

ABE

(Resignedly) (After the first surprise)

Take off your hat, Mawruss and stay a while.

MAWRUSS

Nonsense. Why do we lose the whole three thousand feet?

PEMBERTON

Well, I'll leave it to you. All the way through the picture we've got that house right in the middle of the screen. The spoiling of that last hundred feet spoils the entire film.

MAWRUSS

Couldn't you doctor it up somehow?

PEMBERTON

All right, we'll see.

(Goes to inter-office phone and presses button, then talks in it)

Hello...hello...say, tell Harry to bring in the last two hundred feet of the "Guilty Dollar."

(Puts down phone and turns to Abe and Mawruss)

We'll just run it off here and see.
Maybe you could re-touch me out of it or something.

You had no business to be in it.

(To Abe)
If you had stayed in that house ten seconds longer, chief,...

I'd have burned to death.

Yes, but you'd have saved the picture.

That man don't give a damn for anybody but his own selfish carcase.

(HARRY enters)

Well, Harry, let's have her.

Tain't there, Boss.

Tain't where?

Tain't nowhere. Me and Casey has been looking high and low for that last two hundred feet ever since yesterday afternoon and we can't find it anywhere.

What!

It's been mislaid...that's all.

Mislaid nothing. That film's gone I tell you.
ABE
Gone...where did it went to?

HARRY
It ain't been seen since last night.

PEMBERTON
It's got mixed up with something else.

MAWRUSS
We can't market that film without it. Go look for it, Pemberton.

HARRY
You can look but you won't find it.

ABE
Suppose we can't find it, what are we going to do?

MAWRUSS
You've got to find it. This thing means thousands of dollars to us. Go...go, Pemberton.

PEMBERTON
(Going out with Harry)
You fellows never knew where you put anything. You'd lose a locomotive in a round house...you couldn't find a motor truck in a two car garage.

(HE and HARRY go out)

MAWRUSS
Well, what next, Abe?

ABE
This is the last hair. That was our only hope, Mawruss...that we should be able to sell that filmum.

MAWRUSS
I think, Abe, we'd better see a bankruptcy lawyer.
ABE

Only a bankruptcy lawyer? You need a criminal lawyer...I need a divorce lawyer and an accident lawyer....and when our actors and camera men and vampires get busy, we will both need a gross of assorted up-to-the-minute good all round lawyers.

(Enter MISS COHEN)

MISS COHEN

Miss Sismondi is outside.

ABE

Aha, the mourners is beginning to arrive.

MAWRUSS

What are you talking about? She was paid the day before yesterday.

ABE

I know it but two days of her salary ain't to be sneezed at either. Tell her to come in, Miss Cohen.

(MISS COHEN out)

MAWRUSS

She probably wants to know if we're going to live up to our contract.

ABE

It's got eight months to run.

ABE

To run...it'll have to swim if it wants to reach us...We are sunk, Mawruuss.

MAWRUSS

And who sunk us? Sismondi.

ABE

Well, you wanted her...you got her...now get rid of her.
I will. I'll give her a piece of my mind. What I am going to say to her I wouldn't ease into by way of the constitution of the United States, and the ten commandments. I would come right to the point.

(Enter RITA)

RITA

Good morning, Mr. Potash, how's the back?

ABE

With what is going on here today, Miss Sismondi, a backache ain't a needle in a hay-stack. Nu, Mawrus, commence.

MAWRUSS

Excuse me, Miss Sismondi, won't you take a seat.

RITA

Thank you.

MAWRUSS

Take your coat off, Miss Sismondi.

(She takes off coat)

Now what can we do for you?

RITA

Well, boys, I hardly know how to begin.

ABE

Let me help you...it's about your contract.

RITA

That comes later. First I want to thank you for what you did for me yesterday.

ABE

Don't mention it. What we did for you, ain't a marker on what you done for us.

RITA

I've done what any other performer would do with my talent, but what you boys did for me was something wonderful. If you seen it in a scenario you'd want to cut it out as being too sweet. You acted like gentlemen.
MAWRUSS

I will. I'll give her a piece of my mind. What I am going to say to her I wouldn't ease into by way of the constitution of the United States, and the ten commandments. I would come right to the point.

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(She takes off coat)

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RITA

I've done what any other performer would do with my talent, but what you boys did for me was something wonderful. If you seen it in a scenario you'd want to cut it out as being too sweet. You acted like gentlemen.
We acted like lunatics.

Mawruuss

Abe!

Somebody has got to come to the point here, Mawruuss. Let us make no more compliments. Business is business, Miss Sismondi. So we may as well tell you right now, Miss Sismondi, that no matter how sweet we acted yesterday, things look awful sour for us today.

Mawruuss

We're broke, Miss Sismondi.

Rita

What!

Abe

Busted and your friend Blanchard did it.

Rita

But how could Blanchard do that?

Mawruuss

He has called in his loans.

Rita

Because of what happened yesterday?

Mawruuss

What's the difference what the reason is; he will close us up tomorrow anyway.

Abe

And then? Miss Sismondi, you can have that contract of yours framed as a souvenir of the time when you used to get a thousand dollars a week... by the Potash & Perlmutter Film Co. olav hasholem.

Rita

It's all my fault.
MAWRUSS
We don't blame nobody but ourselves, Miss Sismondi.

RITA
Why the whole thing was because of me. If it hadn't been for what happened yesterday on my account it never would have occurred to Blanchard to do this...

(Starts for the door)
I am going to see Mr. Blanchard.

ABE
You wouldn't do nothing of the kind, Miss Sismondi. You stood enough from this fellow.

MAWRUSS
And besides, the chances is he wouldn't see you anyhow.

RITA
Oh, wouldn't he? He's telephoned me three times this morning?

ABE
What did he say?

RITA
I don't know. I told the switch boy to tell him I was out. But I'm going over now to see him and when I do I'll tell him a few things. You just wait till I get through with that gentleman. I'll put over some vampire stuff on him that'll make my work in "The Guilty Dollar" look like Marguerite Clark in "Snow-White."

(Enter BLANCHARD)

ABE
Mawruss...Blanchard!

MAWRUSS
What do you want here, Blanchard?

BLANCHARD
I'll tend to you, later. I want to talk to this lady alone.

RITA
Anything you've got to say, you can say right here.

BLANCHARD
You want witnesses, eh? So that's your game, is it?
ABE

What do you mean... game? Do you think everybody is a crook like you?

MAWRUSS

One moment, Abe, you don't gain nothing by calling a crook a crook. Out of here, loafer, before I throw you out.

BLANCHARD

I'm going to say a few words to this girl first.

MAWRUSS

You ain't going to say nothing to nobody. You've done enough damage around here.

BLANCHARD

I've only just begun. Tomorrow morning, Perlmutter, there'll be deputy sheriff in this place and...

RITA

Tomorrow morning is twenty-four hours away. Lots of things can happen in that time.

ABE

Don't talk to him, Miss Sismondi, let him go.

RITA

I've been the cause of all this trouble and I mean to fix things and fix them right. You are trying to ruin these men, aren't you?

BLANCHARD

They're ruined already.

RITA

Are they? Well in that case we'll all go down together.

MAWRUSS

Miss Sismondi.

RITA

I wasn't raised on a farm. I've lived in New York all my life. If you've got promissory notes on them, I've got a few promissory things on you. Now you let up on these two
RITA (CONT)

boys or I'll jump right down to a lawyer's office and I'll start something that'll get you and me all over the front page of every home paper in town.

BLANCHARD

Blackmail.

ABE

Nothing of the sort. Why, Miss Sismondi, do you think we would let you do anything like that?

MAWRUSS

You mustn't talk that way, Miss Sismondi. If this man is a loafer you are doch a young lady and you couldn't do this thing.

ABE

And even if she could, we wouldn't stand for it. So, if that's all you came to find out, you're perfectly safe, Blanchard.

BLANCHARD

I'll look out for that. I came here to talk to Miss Sismondi alone, and I advise you not to stop me.

MAWRUSS

We don't need your advice.

BLANCHARD

Rita, there's just one way out of this whole thing... Now you'd better speak with me alone.

ABE

Don't do it... don't do it, Miss Sismondi.

MAWRUSS

He ain't to be trusted.

BLANCHARD

(Intensely to Rita)

It's the one chance, Rita.

RITA

All right. Come along.

(Starts out with him)
ABE
No, you see him here.

MAWRUSS
Yes, Miss Sismondi, we will be out in the studio. If you want us just holler.

ABE
And this time we will come back not with a book, but with an axe.

(ABE and MAWRUSS go out)

RITA
Now then.

BLANCHARD
Now, Rita, what's the use of all this? If I've done anything, I'm sorry for it and I apologize. I am willing to make any amends I can.

RITA
Do you suppose you can square yourself with me. I'm not sore at you for what you've done to me. I'm sore at myself for ever having fallen for that bluff of yours.

BLANCHARD
It was no bluff, Rita. Everything I've done here has been for you. Why do you suppose I invested a hundred and fifty thousand dollars of the bank's money in this business? For Potash & Perlmutter. It was for you, Rita, and you know it.

RITA
And do you think that excuses you?

BLANCHARD
No, it doesn't, Rita. You can't believe any worse of me than I do, but there's this much to it, I haven't done you half as much injury as I've done myself.

RITA
What are you trying to do... work on my sympathy?
BLANCHARD

I'll let you judge for yourself, Rita. I am going to make a clean breast of it to you. I'm in a fix. As vice-president of the Kosciusko Bank, I've loaned the bank's money and fooled away the bank's time...for what? For you, Rita.

RITA

Is that my fault?

BLANCHARD

They've found it out...er they think they have and my reputation...my position in the financial world depends upon my proving this is not so.

RITA

And you want me as a witness for you?

BLANCHARD

I do.

RITA

Well, that's a good one. Want me to save your reputation. Why, I'd be willing to lose mine if I could wreck yours...

BLANCHARD

Yet, I think you'll help me.

RITA

Help you. Why, I'd see you behind bars first.

BLANCHARD

Nevertheless you'll do this for me.

RITA

What makes you think so?

BLANCHARD

You've got to do it.

RITA

Got to do it?
Yes. You said just now you were the cause of all the trouble in this firm. You want to save Potash & Perlmutter, don't you? Well, here's your chance. We are all in the same boat. If I go down...they go down. If I am saved...they are saved.

RITA
This is some trick.

BLANCHARD
It's the God's truth, Rita. You and you alone can save me and if you save me, you save them.

RITA
But I don't understand...

BLANCHARD
I'll agree to extend their notes. I will even get more capital for them if I can, for they are on the road to success. If they can last out another month they will make a fortune. I'll do all this for them; I'll make them and you...if.... (he hesitates)

RITA
If what?

BLANCHARD
If you'll save me.

RITA
Save you...how?

BLANCHARD
Mr. Feder, the President of the bank is coming here this morning. I have sworn to him that there is nothing in these rumors. I want you to do the same.

RITA
He wouldn't believe it.

BLANCHARD
He will if....if you back me up when I make my accusation.

RITA
Accusation! What accusation?
BLANCHARD

Potash was seen with you at that house...his picture was taken with you in that house...his wife is threatening to sue him for divorce...

RITA

You don't mean that I...

BLANCHARD

I shall accuse Potash, and you will confess.

RITA

Never...never in the world...

BLANCHARD

It's only just for Feder. I will arrange everything afterward. I'll tell Potash why you did it. I will tell his wife...

RITA

I won't do it, I tell you...

BLANCHARD

You will...

RITA

I won't...

BLANCHARD

You will—er—so help me God, I'll ruin them and myself. Now which is it to be, Rita, a harmless confession which will do no damage to anybody and which can be remedied a half hour after it's spoken or ruin...ruin for me...for them, for all of us? Now it's up to you, Rita, you alone. Which is it to be?

RITA

Let me get this straight. You mean to say that if I clear you by putting Mr. Potash in bad, you will extend these notes?

BLANCHARD

I will.
RITA

Are you on the level in this?

BLANCHARD

I've got to be on the level, Rita... it means pretty near life and death with me.

RITA

What happens to you doesn't interest me...

BLANCHARD

Then for their sake?

RITA

I'll do it.

BLANCHARD

Great. I know you do it. Now then, I'll go over and get Feder and be back here in ten minutes.

(Rita starts for door)

Where are you going?

RITA

To tell Mr. Potash-

BLANCHARD

He mustn't know a word of this.

RITA

(Suspiciously)

Why not?

BLANCHARD

They'd never stand for it... they'd queer the whole game. Not a soul must know of this but you and me... till after it is over.

RITA

What shall I tell them?

BLANCHARD

Tell them that you have intimidated me... or won me over... that I am going to try to get an extension for them. Now remember...
BLANCHARD (CONT)
(Starts for door)
See you in ten minutes.

RITA

Mr. Blanchard...

BLANCHARD
(Stops)
Well?

RITA

I just want to say one last thing.
(Pauses while she looks steadily at him)
I'm willing to make a holy show out of myself if I can save these boys, but don't you try to put anything more over on me.

BLANCHARD

But, Rita...

RITA

Go. Let's get this over quick.
(Blanchard goes)
(Rita stands for a moment thinking and then goes to the door and calls)
Mr. Potash. Mr. Perlmutter.
(ABE and MAWRUSS are heard outside)

MAWRUSS

(Outside)
Nu, go in, Abe.

ABE

(Outside)
You go in first...you get the hammer.
(They enter) (Very warlike)
(Mawruss with hammer and Abe with book)

MAWRUSS

Now look-a-here, Mr. Blanchard...
(When he finds Blanchard gone)
Where is he?

RITA

Gone.
MAWRUSS

Gone? Abe, put that book back on my desk. When we want it again we won't be able to find it.

ABE

We won't want it again. I betcher after what Miss Sismondi said to him, he won't dare to show his face any more. Ain't that so, Miss Sismondi?

RITA

Mr. Potash, I'm going to do my best to help you, but I want you to remember one thing...whatever I do and how I'm doing it -- I am doing it all for you.

(Goes out)

MAWRUSS

That's a fine girl, that Miss Sismondi... doing all this for us.

ABE

Yes, but what is she doing?

MAWRUSS

What is the difference what she is doing? She couldn't save us anyhow. Now listen, Abe, we have still got time to make up for the fall trade a popular-priced line of skirts, so tomorrow morning, you should go down to East Broadway and look around for a loft to manufacture in.

ABE

How much a month rent could we pay... fifty dollars maybe?

MAWRUSS

Fifty dollars. Are you crazy? Fifty dollars a month rent for a popular price skirt business?

ABE

But we are paying here fifteen hundred dollars a month for a moving picture business.

MAWRUSS

Moving pictures ain't a business, Abe; it's a dissipation. It's like pinochle or poker. We bet Miss Sismondi a thousand dollars a week that in six months we could make more profits than she could salary... and we lost.
ABE
We ought to have made her put up a hundred dollars a week for a kitty, Mawruss.

MAWRUSS
Never mind the post-mortems, Abe. For a starter we could get five skirt operators, a presser and a finisher and we would keep our whole payroll down to a hundred dollars a week.

ABE
A hundred dollars a week for our whole payroll and here we are paying a thousand dollars a week to one vampire alone.

MAWRUSS
Operators ain't vampires. If vampires made garments, a pair of overalls would cost a million dollars.

ABE
Didn't I beg you -- you shouldn't pay that woman all that money?

MAWRUSS
What is the use of counting your chickens after they are dead.

ABE
They would have been still alive and laying golden eggs if it wouldn't have been for you.

MAWRUSS
What is verbein is verbein.

ABE
Blows her to supper for thirty-dollars, and next week we will be eating down on East Broadway...regular dinner twenty-five cents.

MAWRUSS
We won't even have a pretzel if we don't get busy right now. I tell you that. Now what customers can we count on?

ABE
Well, there's Marks Pasinski. He ought to buy goods from us.
MAWRUSS

What makes you think so?

ABE

He promised he would. When I told him we was starting in the moving picture business, he said, he bet me that in six months he would be buying goods from me again.

MAWRUSS

Write and tell him he wins. Now who else?

ABE

The Busy Bee store in Jersey City also predicted we'd go broke...

MAWRUSS

Good. Ring 'em up and tell 'em I'll be around to see them the day after tomorrow with a full line of samples.

ABE

Maybe some of these moving picture millionaires that used to was in the cloak and suit business will give us a recommendation to their old customers?

MAWRUSS

Don't count on it. With the salaries they're paying, I give them cloak and suit moving picture fellows six months, and they'll need all their old customers they can find.

ABE

That's a business...the moving picture business. Today, you're here...tomorrow you're there...and the day after, where are you?

(Enter MISS COHEN)

MISS COHEN

(Excitedly)
Mr. Potash...Mr. Potash, where's Miss Sismondi?

MAWRUSS

She's out in the studio.

MISS COHEN

Thank Gawd.
(Starts out)
What is it?

MISS COHEN

Mrs. Potash and Mrs. Perlmutter is coming.

ABE

Mawruss.

MISS COHEN

I seen 'em through the window.

ABE

You see her, Mawruss. I'll go in the studio.

MAWRUSS

You go into the studio? You'll stay right here. Miss Cohen, you find Miss Sismondi and wherever she is, keep her there. Don't let her come in here.

(MISS COHEN goes out)

ABE

(Groans)

OO-oo

(Sits down)

MAWRUSS

That's right, Abe, get real sick. It's too bad you ain't got a broken leg to show her or something.

ABE

How am I going to face her Mawruss?

MAWRUSS

Face her? Why you ain't done nothing.

ABE

That's the trouble, Mawruss. If I had done something I could ask her to forgive me, but I ain't nothing and I ain't got no excuse for it.

(Enter RUTH followed by ROSIE)
RUTH
Well, Abe dear, how do you feel?

ABE

(Looks cautiously at Rosie and groans)
Co-no...

RUTH

Where does it hurt you, Abe?

MAWRUSS

How he stands it, I don't know.

RUTH

Has he seen a doctor?

MAWRUSS

(As Abe starts to say, "No.")
Yes, and the doctor says he's a very sick man and he should go right to bed.

RUTH

Why don't you go home, Abe dear?

ABE

(Looks appealing at Rosie)

MAWRUSS

How can he go home? He's got nobody there to attend to him.

ROSIE

Why don't he ask Miss Sismondi to attend to him?

RUTH

Now, Rosie, don't talk that way. I explained the whole thing to you, didn't I?

ROSIE

Grump's fairy tales.

MAWRUSS

Is this a way to act, Rosie, when your husband gets injured like this in an automobile accident?
ROSIE

Joy riding.

(Abe looks accusingly at Rosie)

MAWRUSS

I'm surprised at you, Rosie. You've been married to Abe for twenty-five years...

ROSIE

That makes it worse. After twenty-five years when you find a man out, you don't know how long it has been going on.

MAWRUSS

Schmoos, Rosie, he can explain everything.

ROSIE

That's what I come down for. Why don't he then?

(Turns to Abe)

ABE

Ai, Rosie, I'm a sick a man.

ROSIE

I should think you would be. At your age to have to make explanations to your wife. Ain't you got no excuses nor nothing?

ABE

What's the use? You wouldn't believe them.

MAWRUSS

He ain't got no excuses because he ain't done nothing.

ROSIE

He ain't done nothing!

ABE

No, mommer, and if you forgive me this time I'll never do it again. Only come home with me, mommer leben, that's all I ask.

ROSIE

First I got a right to know what happened up at that house there.
BLANCHARD

(Turns to Potash and speaks with meaning)
Now see here, Potash, I want to save trouble for all of us. Your wife is here and I don't want to say anything in front of her...unless I have to.

ABE

I got nothing to hide from my wife.

MAWRUSS

Whatever it is, Blanchard tell it, it couldn't be worse than what Rosie is thinking.

BLANCHARD

This is your last chance, Potash. I want you to tell Mr. Feder that you were mistaken in what you said this morning.

ABE

You mean that I lied?

BLANCHARD

Just say you were mistaken and we'll let it drop.

MAWRUSS

We'll let nothing drop. What my partner said this morning was only half the truth. Ask me, Mr. Feder and I'll tell you the rest.

BLANCHARD

All right...

FEDER

(Stopping Blanchard)

Just a moment. I don't think it is necessary for these ladies to remain.

RUTH

Come on, Rosie.

ROSIE

I'm going to stay right here.

ABE

I want you to stay, mama. I want you to hear what this fellow has got to say.

MAWRUSS
MAWRUSS

No more bluffs, Blanchard. Tell us what you've got to say and then get out of here...

BLANCHARD

I will.

FEDER

(Forstalling Blanchard)

I will do the talking, Mr. Blanchard. Now, Potash, please don't let us go into this before your wife.

ABE

Do you think I'm scared of this man's lies?

BLANCHARD

Lies...why you...

FEDER

Take it easy, Blanchard. Potash, what you told me this morning places this man in a terrible position. He not only denies it but he accuses you of the very thing of which you accuse him.

MAWRUSS

What, Miss Sismondi and my partner.

FEDER

He has the strongest kind of evidence against you, Potash.

ROSIE

Abe.

ABE

It's all lies, Rosie...all lies...

MAWRUSS

He's trying to get even with us.

ROSIE

(To Feder)

You mean to say he claims my husband is carrying on with this woman?
BLANCHARD
I do.

ROSIE
And you can prove it?

BLANCHARD
I certainly can.

ROSIE
I don't believe it.

ABE
Rosie!

BLANCHARD
But, you yourself accuse Potash.

ROSIE
That's none of your business. Do you suppose for a moment if I thought he had ever done such a thing I would have accused him of it?

MAWRUSS
Well, Blanchard, your first witness goes back on you. What other evidence have you got?

ABE
Nothing, Mawruss, only bluffs.

FEDER
(Takes tin case from bag)
Well, what about this?

ABE
What's that?

BLANCHARD
That's the picture that was taken up at Pelham yesterday.

ABE

ABE
Mawrus, "The Guilty Dollar."

MAWRUSS
So, Blanchard, you are not only a liar you are a thief as well.

ABE
Give me that film.

MAWRUSS
That's our property.

BLANCHARD
Take it if you want... I've got the negative.

FEDER
(Indicating film)
Now gentlemen, here is something upon which there can be no two opinions. Here are facts.

MAWRUSS
All right. If these are the facts let's have a look at them.

ABE
Sure I done nothing up there that I'm ashamed of.

(Goes to door and calls)
Harry! Harry!

(Comes back)
Now you will see who is telling the truth here.

(Harry comes in)
Harry, take this film and run it right off for us and run it from beginning to end... I don't care what's in it.

(HARRY goes out)

MAWRUSS
I'll betcher it's as clean as if it was passed by the Natural Board of Censors.
ABE

Well, anyhow it's a genuine first-run.

ROSIE

I wish they'd hurry and get it over...
(The lights go out and the screen begins to light up)

ABE

You don't doubt me, Rosie?

ROSIE

Never for a minute, Abe. I am satisfied that you and Miss Sismondi acted like employer and employee.

MAWRUSS

You can bank on that, Rosie.

ROSIE

I knew you done nothing up there, Abe, you wouldn't be glad to have me see.
(On the screen there is shown a picture of the interior of house in preceding scene, with Abe, lying on couch and Rita rubbing his head and bending over him)

Oh, my God!

MAWRUSS

Abe, what are you doing?

ABE

What do you mean...what am I doing?

MAWRUSS

Get off that sofa. Are you crazy?
RUTH

Abe, Abe, what is this?

MAWRUSS

Abe, Abe...for Heaven's sake, get away from that woman.

ABE

I didn't do this...I swear I didn't do this.

BLANCHARD

Doesn't look like it, does it?

ABE

Rosie, you don't believe this, do you?

ROSIE

It's a case of employer and employee. Ai, gewalt.

ABE

But I didn't do this, Rosie.

ROSIE

Business...only business...funny business...monkey business.

(The lights go on)

MAWRUSS

Abe, why didn't you tell me you done this thing?

ABE

I didn't know I did it. I was a sick man.

ROSIE

Even when he is sick, he behaves this way.

ABE

But I didn't know what I was doing. I was in agony, mama, and when she rubbed my head, for the minute I thought it was you.

ROSIE

You - you thought it was me? You ain't patted my hand like that in twenty-six years. Come Ruth.

ABE
I don't want to hear Miss Sismondi.

BLANCHARD

Wait, Mrs. Potash. Let us all hear what Miss Sismondi has to say. I want to be absolutely fair. I want to give this man all the chance in the world. If Miss Sismondi gives him a clean bill of health, I'll take back everything I say.

You mean that?

BLANCHARD

I do.

You mean that if Miss Sismondi says that this isn't true, you will take back what you said?

BLANCHARD

Every word and apologize too.

(RITA enters)

Miss Sismondi, I want you to tell all these people everything about you and me.

(With meaning to Rita)

He means, Miss Sismondi, that some question is raised here in regard to your relations with Mr. Potash and myself. Now I want you to answer me candidly. Who, around this place, has been showing you any particular attention...Potash or me?

(As she hesitates)

Go on...go on...tell them, Miss Sismondi.
BLANCHARD
Now truthfully....which is it....Potash or me?

RITA

Mr. Potash!
(There is a general commotion)

AEE

What....why, Mawruss....Rosie....Miss Sismondi you can't mean this.

MAWRUSS

And to think I've been partners with him for fifteen years.

AEE

Mawruss, you don't believe this?

MAWRUSS

For fifteen years, he's been living an alibi on me.

AEE

(Goes appealingly toward Rosie)
But Rosie....

ROSIE

Don't you come near me....

AEE

But, listen to me, Rosie....

ROSIE

To think that this has been going on for six months and I only suspected it last week. Uch Gott.
(Falls in a chair and weeps)

AEE

Don't be foolish, Rosie. Do you think for one moment I was going to act this way at my time of life?

ROSIE

But there it is in moving pictures and she admits it.

AEE

What do I care if she admits it? Suppose John Drew or Douglas Fairbanks comes to me and says you and him have
AEB (Cont.)

been carrying on together, would I believe it? Not if they showed me a five-reel film of it.

ROSIE

But why should she accuse you of it, if it ain't so?

AEB

I don't know, mommer, but I got my suspicions. Her and Blanchard was here alone this morning and they're trying to put something over on me.

BLANCHARD

Nothing of the sort.

AEB

He must have made some inducements to her.

MAWRUSS

(As if suddenly getting the idea)

You're right. That's exactly what happened. Why, look at them, Mr. Feder. Would such a beautiful lady fall for an old fossil like that?

AEB

Me—an old fossil?

MAWRUSS

Certainly you are. You got one foot in the grave and you flatter yourself that I'm going to believe a story like this.

AEB

You did believe it.

MAWRUSS

Only for a minute, Abe. You might fool these people here but you couldn't fool me/such nonsense.

(Turns to Rita) with

Now, Miss Sismondi, what are you driving into? What is the scheme between you and this crook?

BLANCHARD

Be careful what you say, Perlmutter.
MAWRUSS
But, Mr. Feder, for God's sake, give us just a little time.

FEDER
I can't do it, Perlmutter.

MAWRUSS
Just a couple of weeks or so.

FEDER
Sorry, but I can't extend these loans a day.

RITA
What!

BLANCHARD
Come on, Mr. Feder.

RITA
Wait. Is this straight, Mr. Feder... about these loans not being extended?

FEDER
Yes.

RITA
And Mr. Blanchard has no authority to extend them?

FEDER
None whatever.

RITA
Well, what do you know about that.
(She breaks out laughing)

MAWRUSS
But, Miss Sismondi...

RITA
That's a hot one, that is.
(Laughs on)

FEDER
Look she laughs, she is ruining my life and she laughs yet.
MAWRUSS
Let us in on this too, Miss Sismondi. What's all the simcha?

RITA
Well, Blanchard, you certainly put one over on me. (As BLANCHARD starts for the door, she rushes to it and stands with her back against it)
No you don't, Mr. Blanchard.

BLANCHARD
You let me out of here.

RITA
You'll stay right here till I finish with you.

MAWRUSS
What is the meaning of this, Miss Simondi.

RITA
This whole thing is nothing but a plant.

OMNES
A plant!

RITA
I was trying to do you a favor.

ABB
A favor. Thank God, you weren't trying to do me an injury.

MAWRUSS
What kind of a favor is this...to bust up a man's home?

RITA
It was a deal between Blanchard and me. I was to save his reputation and he was to extend your loans.

FEDER
You mean you take back what you said about Potash?

RITA
I do. Why, the whole thing was made up from beginning to end. You ought to know that without my telling you.
RITA (Cont.)

I look upon Mr. Potash, almost as a father. So you imagine for a moment I could act otherwise to a nice little old man like that?

ABE

What do you mean - a nice, little, old man?

MAWRUSS

Well, what are you...a college student?

ABE

Never mind, if the truth was known, I ain't no older than Blanchard...only I worked harder.

MAWRUSS

What's the difference how old Blanchard is...he's a crook anyway.

BLANCHARD

This is a lie made up out of whole cloth...a lie.

RITA

Is it? Well, I can prove it.

(Opens door and calls)

Mac...come here.

(Turns to the room)

You thought it was your word against mine, but here's one man who will corroborate what I've said.

(MAC enters)

Mac, I want you to tell these people what Blanchard asked me to do this morning. Go on...tell them.

MAC

You told me to keep it secret.

RITA

You can tell it now.

MAC

Blanchard asked you to....

RITA

Yes...yes...go on.

MAC
MAC

He asked you to clear him and blame Potash.

RITA

Exactly.

AEE

So, MacDonald, you are in this, too? She tells him...he tells her...they tell the others, and I am the goat.

MAC

We meant to clear you afterward.

MATRUS

After what? After he got divorced? After he loses his home? Want to see my partner turned out in the street...an old man like that?

AEE

I heard enough of that old man stuff. I'm sick, tired and disgusted with the whole business.

BLANCHARD

And so am I. I've told you my story. You can believe it or not. You can do what you want, Feder. I'm going.

FEDER

You're going to stay right here.

BLANCHARD

Am I? Who's going to stop me.

RITA

(Calls Mac)

Mac.

MAC

(Jumps toward the door)

No, you don't...Sit down and take it easy Blanchard.

BLANCHARD

You let me out of here....

MAC

Not until you tell these people the truth.
What have you got to say about it?

MAC
Just this. I'm going to marry this lady and you can put anything like this over on her.

(Enter CRABBE and BICYCLE POLICEMAN)

POLICEMAN
Crabe, hold that door....don't let no one out this room till I tell you.

Mawrus
Is that so. Who are you?

POLICEMAN
I'm a polis-officer.

Abe
A policeman. What have we done now?

POLICEMAN
Now then, Crabe, which is the guy?

CRABBE
(Indicating Potash)
That little old man there...

Abe
All right, I wouldn't argue with you. At least being old is no crime. Now what's the matter?

You know this man?

Abe
That's that automobile fellow. Now, I remember you.

CRABBE
You ought to remember me. You put a brand new, thirty-five hundred dollar car out of business on me yesterday. I've driven some speed maniacs in my time, but I've never met the beat of you. You ought to ride on a bolt of lightning and try to pass shooting stars.
POLICEMAN

Why did you ask him to went that fast for?

MAWRUSS

He didn't ask him.

CRABEE

Oh no, he didn't ask me. Here on the Pelham Parkway when I was letting her out to seventy-five miles an hour, he said: "What's the matter, ain't she working good?"

POLICEMAN

Well, that settles it. Here's a summons for Thursday morning. This'll teach some of you guys that it don't pay to try to make honest axi drivers break the law, because you got a date with some dame.

CRABEE

(Who is still standing by the door, as Blanchard tries to get away)

Here, you can't get out of here till the officer tells you.

POLICEMAN

It's all right, Crabbe. Let him go.

FEDER

Wait a minute.

(To Crabbe)

Stay by that door there.

(To policeman)

Officer, I am president of the Kesciuske Bank. This man was my Vice-President. He has made unauthorized loans of the bank's funds and has misappropriated the bank's money.

BLANCHARD

What.

FEDER

We've got men working on the books right now, Blanchard and we've got proof enough now to put you in jail. Now, officer are you empowered to arrest this man without a warrant?

POLICEMAN

I can arrest anybody for anything, see.

FEDER
FEDER
Then go ahead and take this man, I'll go with you.

POLICEMAN
(To Blanchard)
Come on, Mister.

BLANCHARD
Feder, for God's sake...

FEDER
You brought this on yourself, Blanchard.

AEE
Ain't there no other way but this, Mr. Feder? Give him a chance, Mr. Feder.

LAWRUSS
Yes, Mr. Feder, we don't want to see anyone go to jail on our account.

FEDER
Blanchard, you've ruined these men financially. You can at least make reparation for the other wrongs you've done them. Confess that you lied.

BLANCHARD
I'll see them in Hell, first.
(Goes out with officer)

OFFICER
(As he goes out with Blanchard)
Now that kind of stuff won't get you nothing. You're in bad as it is, and...
(Goes off talking)

FEDER
I'm very sorry, gentlemen. I apologize.
(Starts away)

RITA
You won't extend their loans?

FEDER
Sorry, but I can't.
(Goes out)
MawruSS
I hear it, Abe, but there's a twist in it somewhere.

Pemberton
Why I could have sold a hundred thousand dollars worth of state rights on the spot, but for one thing...

MawruSS
Aha, now it comes out.

Abe
Well, what is it?

Pemberton
It's just a simple thing. We've got to retake that last reel....

MawruSS
And that will cost?

Pemberton
Well, figuring the rebuilding of the house and everything... ten thousand dollars....at most twelve.

MawruSS
Now listen, Abe, tomorrow morning, you go down to East Broadway and look up a loft for not more than thirty dollars a month.

Pemberton
What, you boys going to let this thing slip through your fingers for the matter of ten thousand dollars?

Abe
Listen, Pemberton, if we was offered the Singer Building for ten thousand dollars, we couldn't pay for the door mat.

MawruSS
We are broke, Pemberton, we haven't got a cent.

Rita
Yes, you have. I can raise ten thousand dollars, yes and fifteen too. You can have every cent of it and I'll work here for nothing for you.
MAWRUSS

We couldn't take it from you, Miss Sismondi.

RITA

You've got to. Don't see that this will give you a chance to complete the picture and with these offers that Pemberton has, you can stave off the bank, and get on your feet again?

PEMBERTON

Yes, and with Sismondi, vamping here, makes this the biggest concern in the business.

MAC

Why, it's only a loan, you've got to take it.

RITA

You will take it, won't you? I've got no use for this jewelry. Mac and I are going to housekeeping in four rooms and a kitchenette.

MAC

Somewhere in the country, up around a Hundred and Tenth street and Broadway.

ROSIE

Miss Sismondi, what can we say to you? We've all been vampires and you've been the only lady.

ABE

I've been telling you right straight along Rosie, a vampire is a lady and it was a lucky day for us, Mawruss, when I hired her.

MAWRUSS

You hired her.

ABE

Well, I wanted her...

MAWRUSS

What are you talking nonsense. You didn't want her. I wanted her. You didn't take her. I took her. I was selfish... I was tired of waiting... I was going to have her, etc.

(During speech there falls

THE CURTAIN.)