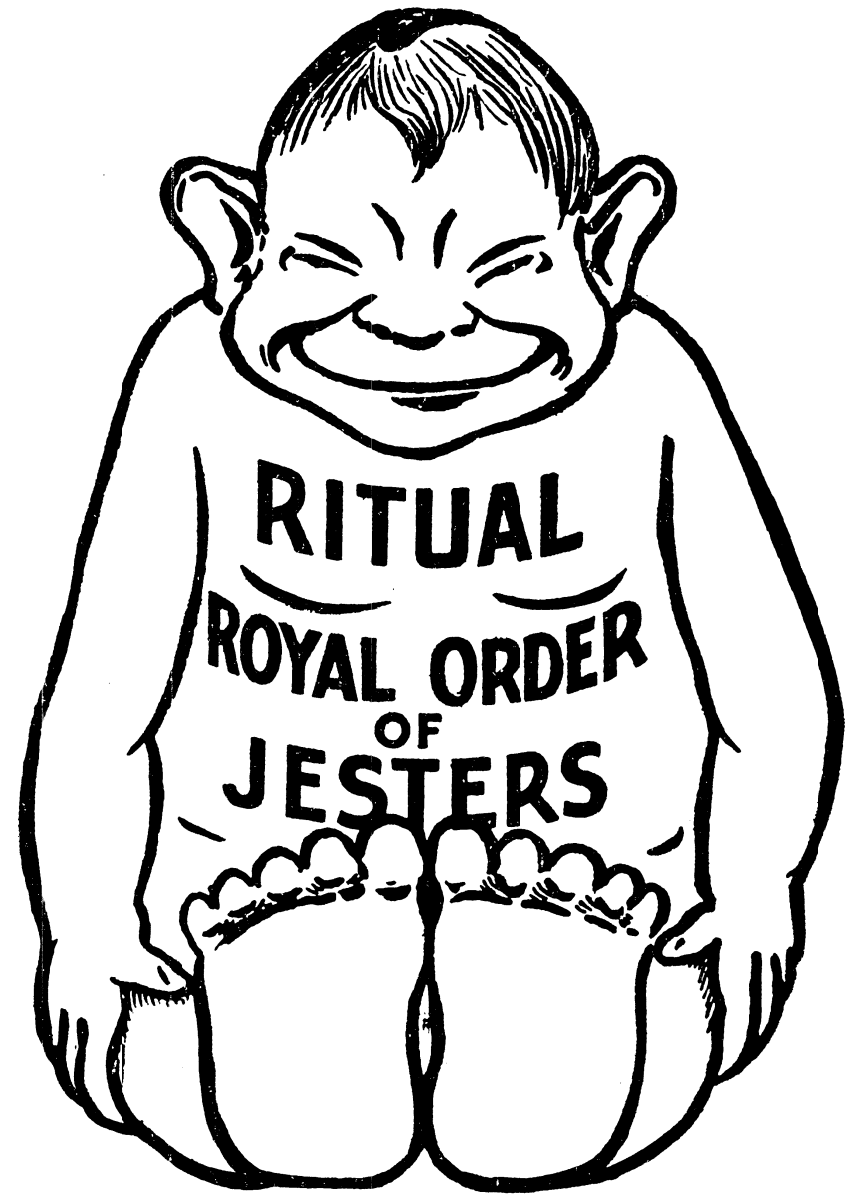




RITUAL No. _____

of

Royal Order of Jesters

As Revised and Approved by

The RITUAL COMMITTEE

1928

"MIRTH IS KING
LONG LIVE THE KING"

By

EUGENE LEMOYNE CONNELLY

THE ROYAL JESTERS

CAST—

DIRECTOR
LEADING MAN—(LAUGHTER)
TRAGEDIAN
IMPRESARIO
TREASURER
STAGE MANAGER
LEADING LADY
HEAVY MAN
LIGHT COMEDIAN
SOUBRETTE
SERIO COMIC
CHARACTER MAN—(CONSTABLE)
PROPERTY MAN

This Ritual is the property of the National Court, Royal Order of Jesters, and as such is, at the rate of SIX DOLLARS each assigned to, and carried against the subordinate Court on the records in the office of the Royal Impresario.

The Impresario will obtain receipt for this Ritual and account for it in his Annual Report, by number, charged against the Jester to whom it is assigned.

It must be returned upon demand.

SUPPLEMENTAL PLAYERS—

PROLOGUE
JOY
GLOOM
LIFE
LILT
OMAR
THE JESTER
THE JUDGE
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
THE CRITIC
MUSICIANS, ITALIANS, VILLAGERS, ETC.

The Director may appoint an assistant to help him in his work.

SCENIC EXPLANATION

The hall is to be divided by an opaque travelling curtain, which, by means of ball-bearings, slides to both sides, parting in the center, Right and Left. Technically this curtain is called a "Traveller."

This will permit change of scenery and stage settings in halls not adapted for theatricals.

The scenes should be painted in oil, on canvas, and may be hung against the back wall, one on top of another so that each may be quickly removed.

Members of the court not in the cast, seat themselves. Passage way or runway is left for the Cast and Candidates to enter.

Candidates are brought in before the play and are seated in the front seats, right and left.

It is left to the Stage Manager, as in all well regulated performances, to instruct the Players in their parts, in the dressing and make-up of the characters, as well as to direct the settings and the business of the play.

At the discretion of the Stage Manager, any business of the play indicated in this book, may be altered to fit varying conditions of the room in which the ceremony takes place.

Prologue comes from behind the curtains, which part in the center, and close after he has emerged. The stage is thus concealed. He is dressed in clown's polka dot, with pointed cap and wide flowing sleeves.

BUSINESS OF THE PLAY

The Prologue Scene is all before and outside the closed curtain.

ACT I—SCENE:

Judge's bench, up stage, center. Prosecuting Attorney beside the bench. Jury box, witness box, chairs, upstage, right and center. Troupe, after entrance, is assembled right and left, and may be seated, each member rising as he speaks. Troupe exits left.

ACT II—SCENE:

Interior of Opera House.

The stage shows a grotesque drop curtain depicting "Court of Mirth."

Up stage C—Against back wall, a king's chair, with jeweled crown upon upright back of chair, a scepter laying against back opposite side.

Before the king's chair, a high inclined table or desk to hold the BOOK OF FATE, from which the Director reads.

Down stage C—A large round table about which the cast is seated at rise of curtain. Novices assemble in front rows in charge of impresario and assistants. Impresario has presented petitions to members of the class, and now places them on the table before the cast, who carefully scrutinize them and nod assent or dissent.

At the beginning of the Prologue the music subdued, starts outside the hall, and is interrupted by sounds of loud wild quarreling.

JOY rushes in, hotly pursued by GLOOM.

They come pell mell through the audience, GLOOM, left center, discharging a pistol (with blank cartridges), at the fleeing JOY, right center, who shows his mirth in spite of GLOOM's menace. As they reach the curtain, the CONSTABLE steps from behind curtain and between JOY and GLOOM, putting GLOOM in shackles.

Prologue appears between the opening in the curtain, at first only head showing, but as he proceeds to speak he steps out and away from the curtains.

PROLOGUE:

Good Jesters, all, I am Prologue.
As the sun doth herald break of day,
I, forsooth, forcast the Coming Play.
Mayhap your fancy to beguile
By arts and artifices to win your smile,
Our Jester Players promise you,
Their very damndest they will do!
Should you be glum and sad, my men,
We'll turn you over to Joy, who then,
With Life and Lilt and Laughter, too,
Gay thoughts and hapiness will woo.
And if foreboding Gloom should rise,
Trust Joy to swat him in the eyes.
So with the play let's now begin,
The Jester cast I'll usher in.
Let Joy be unrefined!

EXIT PROLOGUE—Curtains still closed.

The Prologue Scene is all before and outside the closed curtain.

At the beginning of the Prologue the music, subdued, starts outside the hall and is interrupted by sounds of loud wild quarreling.

JOY rushes in, hotly pursued by GLOOM.

They come pell mell through the audience, GLOOM, left center, discharging a pistol (with blank cartridges), at the fleeing JOY, right center, who shows his mirth in spite of GLOOM'S menace. As they reach the curtain, the CONSTABLE steps from behind curtain and between JOY and GLOOM, putting GLOOM in shackles.

CONSTABLE: (to Gloom!)

Stop! Stop this homicidal wrangle
Thou Jackal! In irons thou shalt languish. Who
art thou—bloodthirsty assassin

GLOOM: *In foreboding, sepulchral tones.*

I am Gloom, sir,
Dark, foreboding, menacing Gloom.
Demoniacal laugh.
I wouldst kill Joy,
I hate him and all his kind.
I'd crush him like a toy.
And in Wrath's Mill his bones I'd grind.
I hate him, girl or boy.
Sex, to Gloom, matters not at all,
Nature's fairest I would allice—
And o'er the world I'd cast my pall,
If I could but kill Joy,
For I — I — I am GLOOM.
Growls and grinds his teeth.

CONSTABLE:

Fie upon thy foul purpose.
And thou, fair boy,
Art thou, in truth, our JOY?

JOY: *In festive mood.*

Wisely hast thou spoken, sir,
For I, forsooth, am JOY!
My mission is to blithely stir
Young and old and grave and gay
Their sorrows and their woes to lose
In pursuit of the gladsome muse,
Whate'er betide thee, night or day,
'Tis I thou must embrace—unfettered JOY.
In my train you'll ever see
LIFE, LILT and LAUGHTER free,
Companions of unbridled mirth,
To them the gods have given all the earth—

From outside the hall, enter LIFE, LILT and LAUGHTER—arm in arm—three cronies.

LIFE is robust, strong, an athlete. LILT is a girl, singing gaily, ad lib. LAUGHTER is a buffoon—laughing immoderately all the while. He is attired as a King's Jester, Cap and Bells, and carries a human skull.

LIFE:

Royal Jesters, list to me,
'Tis I that gives you brain and muscle,
'Tis I that fits you for the tussle,
'Tis I that girds you for the strife—
For I am, I am—damn it all, I'm LIFE.

LILT:

Lilt is my name,
Song is my aim,
Up stage, down stage,
Always the same,
I sing, I dance,
I play, I prance,
LILT is my name.

LAUGHTER:

Ha ha, ha ha, ha ha!
My name is Mister LAUGHTER.
He haw, he haw, he haw,
It's you (*pointing*) and you I'm after.
Ho ho, ho ho, ho ho!
From morn till night I grin,
 Ha ho, ha ho, ha ho!
Though I never, never sin,
He haw, ho ho, ha ha!
I'm Mister LAUGHTER, Mister LAUGHTER,
Mister LAUGHTER, Ha!

CONSTABLE:

Who's dome of thought is't thou carryeth in
thine arms, that wraith thou dost fondle to thy
breast, good friend Laughter? Who is't, I ask,
that like the sheeted dead, comes back in such
unseemly company, where naught but mirth and
merriment doth reign? Who is't that leaves the
grave tenantless to usurp our time and place
and fill our minds with fearsome wonder? Speak,
Good Laughter, Speak!

LAUGHTER:

Here sat the Court of Intellect, here ruled the
sapient sovereign of the mind. Ha, ha, ha, ha, he
ho, he haw!

CONSTABLE:

Who is't, I pray you, whose calcined corse
should now repose in peace inside the sepulchre,
yet comes to harrow our souls and trick our
consciousness to deeds foul done or left undone?

LAUGHTER:

This is the ghost of all man's greatness, the
inevitable, immutable wreck of earth made
plans, for 'tis written:

“Man proposes but God disposes.”

“Here hung his eyes,” sayeth Hamlet, “which,
faster than his tongue didst make offense, didst
heal it up again.”

Mark what their sight hath seen, say I, friend
Constable. The Glory of the visible world.

The mountains high, the canons deep,
The friends that now in death do sleep.
The rivers silver stream aflow,
The sun's bright beams at morning glow.
(*Laugh*)

The greenclad fields across the meer,
The snow capped hills of Yester ye'r.
The beauteous creatures of Eve's fair sex,
Whose charms no imagery hath reck'd.
(*Laugh*)

Sweet children's chubby faces gently kiss'd,
Ah, many a golden chance we all have miss'd.
The trees, the flowers, the rocks, the rills,
Fond picture that your fancy thrills.
(*Laugh*)

The templed brow, so broad and loft'
An' here these lips that I've kiss'd so oft.
Mayhap some woman's soft to his were pressed,
A sweetheart's ruby red, you've guessed.

(Laugh)

A mother's fond and firm caress,
No doubt to that we'll all confess.
Gone tongue! Hath tasted sweets I ween,
Drank wine that sparkled like a sheen.

(Laugh)

Spoke words of wrath, to kindness turn'd,
And unholy friendship sharply spurn'd.
Here, too, the noble nose that oft hath smelt,
Perfume of flowers on field and veldt.

(Laugh)

And here the ears that lister'd tense,
Alike to folly and good sense.
Music of master's rhythm—roll'd,
In cascades of cadence softy toll'd.

(Laugh)

The dramas' thickening plot,
Great writer's deftly wrought.
The opera's mellow score,
The circus lions roar.

(Laugh)

Words of wisdom free discuss'd,
By wise men long since turn'd to dust.
Alas, alack, aday, this Life is only play,
And you and I must someday turn to clay.

(Laugh)

Exeunt Constable.

Laughter steps aside R.

From one side suddenly appears Laughter, from the other T. Ale Bearer,—The King's Jester. He and Laughter are exactly alike in every respect so that the audience may not know which is which. Discovering each other suddenly, they look each in the mirror, which reflects both faces exactly alike. They are bewildered. Much humorous pantomime here is possible. Finally, facing each other, arms akimbo, and then in stooped attitude, hands on knees, looking into each others face, they laugh immoderately. Every gesture is timed identically with clock-like precision. They point at one another, laugh again in unison uproariously, and in the same voice at the same time, speak the exact words.

LAUGHTER AND T. ALE BEARER: *(In unison)*
Prithee, Good Friend, who art thou, whither
comest thou, and whence goest thou?

LAUGHTER:
I am *(Laughs)* I am *(Laughs)* I am Mister
Laughter, Mister Laughter, Mister Laughter, he-
haw ho. It's you and you *(pointing to the other
Jester and also to himself)* I am after—*(Laughs)*.

T. ALE BEARER:
I am, forsooth, Mister T. Ale Bearer *(Laughs)*.

LAUGHTER:
T. Ale Bearer—*(Laughs)* Talebearer, what tale
beareth thou now?

T. ALE BEARER:
I am, in sooth, me master's Tale Bearer.

LAUGHTER:
And your master,—who is he, prithee?

T. ALE BEARER:
(S-SS-SS-h-) He is *(finger to nose)* He is the
King.

LAUGHTER:
The King? *(Laughs)* The King. What King is
he, thou Knave.

T. ALE BEARER:

Hist, not so high-tempered an' loud spoken, brother. He is King Momus, the King of Mirth.

OMNES: (*Heads together*)

Long Live the King! (*Whispered*)

T. ALE BEARER:

And hark ye, Good Friend Laughter, the King is distraught.

LAUGHTER:

Distraught!

T. ALE BEARER:

Aye, distraught. (*Looks furtively about*). Come thee in proximo, where the mob can't hear us discussing our betters. (*Almost whispered*) The King is in durance vile.

LAUGHTER: (*Surprised*)

Durance vile?

T. ALE BEARER:

Yea verily, Brother in the hoosegow, the booby-hatch,—the town lock-up—and all his merry band with him is bound in irons. Only I escaped 'cause in these buskins, I look not like the troupe.

LAUGHTER:

The Troupe?

T. ALE BEARER:

I'll tell the cock-eyed world—the Troupe. They are presently to be brought in and tried for—tried for, for murder.

LAUGHTER:

For murder?

T. ALE BEARER:

Yea, murder! They murdered William Shakespeare (*Both laugh immoderately*) and then tried to escape from the town hotel without paying for their eats and sleeps. And now they are to be tried by a jury of their peers.

LAUGHTER:—(*Laughs*)

Their peers! They have no peers.

T. ALE BEARER:

In sooth, thou speakest wisely, Friend Laughter, but presently thou shall see and hear them put to the rack for murder most foul, most awfully foul and smellfully (*Holds nose*) rotten. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

LAUGHTER:

But prithee, Good Friend, if the King be your master, you are in sooth—

T. ALE BEARER:

I am, in sooth, the King's Jester. Ha, ha, he, he, haw, haw, ho, ho!

LAUGHTER:

The Kings' Jester! That too, am I, by me—by me cap an' bells. (*Laughs*)

T. ALE BEARER:

By my holy ancestors—each of the male line from Darwin down to me, hath ape—d the manners of the Court and made sunshine for our betters. In cap an' bells we are Royal Jesters. (*Laughs*) Me brother, Laughter!

LAUGHTER:

Me thinks you are my glass and not my brother. I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth. Will you walk in to hear the Court pass sentence upon these assassins of Will Shakespeare?

T. ALE BEARER:

Not I sir, you are my Elder.

LAUGHTER:

That's a question. How shall we try it?

T. ALE BEARER:

We'll draw cuts for the senior; till then lead thou first.

LAUGHTER:

Nay, then thus:

We came into the world like brother and brother;

And now let's go hand in hand, not one before the other.

Both laugh immoderately, take each other's arm and exeunt as the curtains, which have closed during the above colloquy, part to admit them "behind the scenes." Time has been given to remove the cheval mirror and the stage is now disclosed for the first time.

Prologue comes before the curtains again, precisely as in Scene I.

PROLOGUE:

Good Jester friends, I come once more,
In motley as before—

No doubt you are surprised to see

Amidst this unseemly melee, me,

I merely have a plan to show you here,

Another phase of Royal Jester career,

Know ye, a special privilege this means,

For we now shall let you peep behind the scenes,

Tho' "all the world's a stage," still you all know

You did not come to see a puppet show.

This is rehearsal time. The actors they—

Are not themselves, but just the parts they play.

Their motley's on, their faces smudged with
paint,

Yet oftimes the sinner plays the saint.

I pray you, judge among them, mark them well,

Some you may consign to Heaven,
Others send headlong into Hell.

I leave to you to cast the die,

Mine's not to ask the reason why—

So let the curtain quickly rise,

The play is ready for your eyes.

CURTAIN RISES.

ACT I—SCENE:

Judge's bench, up stage center. Prosecuting Attorney beside the bench. Jury box, witness box, chairs, upstage, right and center. Troupe, after entrance, is assembled right and left, and may be seated, each member rising as he speaks. Troupe exits left.

ACT 1

(Curtains part).

SCENE:—Court room, tables, chairs, books, judges bench, witness chair, jury box, etc.

CONSTABLE:

Oi yez, Oi yez, Oi yez! Know ye every dam one of yez by these presints that the Court here is now assembled for the trial of a lot of play-actors for the murder of Will Shakespeare.

JUDGE: *(To Constable)*

Bring in the prisoners. *(The troupe).*

The Cast, except Property Man, is brought in by Constable and his deputies. They are handcuffed in pairs and squads. Each wears a linen duster over his costume. The two Italians trail after them. The band precedes them playing "Hail, Hail, the Gang's all here" Any-Cast desiring to omit the Band or the Italians or both, may do so at the Director's discretion. As they are brought into the Court the prisoners' handcuffs are removed and they are seated.

Candidates marched in to "Do Re Mi" song and seated front of stage.

Candidates are now called by name, and examined ad lib. by the prosecuting Attorney for jury service. Each takes his seat in the Jury Box as his examination is completed.

The Prosecuting Attorney proceeds to examine the candidates ad lib., the dialogue being based upon information about the several candidates gathered in advance and rehearsed by him and the Judge. This information should be intimate, but widely known, though not offensive-

ly personal; facts concerning the public, private and social lives of the respective candidates. This entire scene depends upon the quick wit of Judge and Prosecutor and they should be carefully picked for their parts. They should habitually ask the questions "WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SHAKESPEARE." Candidate must quote the line of Shakespeare already handed him.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

"HAVE YOU CONSCIENTIOUS SCRUPLES AGAINST CAPITAL PUNISHMENT."

Interruptions from the audience are conducive to much wholesome humor, and are susceptible of enlargement and embellishment.

It is suggested that several members of each court should be "made up" to look like the most prominent visitors expected to be present at the ceremony. Get photographs of the important widely known visitors, select members of your own court who resemble them physically and have a good "make up" artist make them up to resemble the visitors.

Then let them interrupt the trial at intervals by calling upon the Judge—singly, of course. The Judge recognizes each in turn, and garrously discourses on timely topics.

JUDGE:

You are summoned into Court, Royal Jesters, on the charge of having violated the Penal Code, Statute XIII, Section XXIII, Volume III—XI—XXXIII.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

The warrant charges that on or about a certain date, you all and each of you did unlawfully, with malice prepense, premeditation and literary and histrionic perfidy, lay violent hands and still more violent tongues, upon the plays of one William Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-Avon, and by butchery most foul, did'st do him to death.

The state expects to prove that you are each of you and severally guilty as indicted.

Constable, call the witness.

CONSTABLE:

William Winter (*use name of prominent local dramatic critic*) Cricket of the Evenin' Journal, come forth and take the witness chair. But don't take it home with you; we need it in the kitchen.

The Critic comes from the audience. He is typical of the arts, long-haired, flowing tie, large horn-rimmed spectacles, sombre garb.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

Your name, sir?

THE CRITIC:

William Winter, Sir.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

If your Honor please, I shall confine the State's case to this one witness, and restrict his examination to but three questions.

JUDGE:

Go to it.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

You are, Mr. Witness, Dramatic Cricket of the (*Name of local newspaper*)

THE CRITIC:

Critic—C-R-I-T-I-C, Sir, not cricket; Cricket is a bird, I might say, a Game Bird—ha! ha! ha! ha

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

No levity and no puns in this Court, sir. You saw these actors "do." Will Shakespeare to death in a play called Hamlet, didn't you?

THE CRITIC:

Saw them murder Shakespeare and Hamlet both in the same evening—that I did sir.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

And you know these defendants?

THE CRITIC:

Egad, I do—every mother's son—and daughter of 'ern.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

And you say you were a witness to the crime with which they stand charged?

THE CRITIC:

I saw the foul deed with mine own eyes. They ruthlessly slew my beloved Shakespeare, (*sobs*) stabbed him in the midriff—Egad, in the very vitals with the jaw-bones of several asses, and, laying hold upon his immortal plays (*sobs*) did'st rend them to tatters. The pity 'tis true, 'tis pitiful, 'tis true.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

You are sure these are the assassins, Sir, who did our noble bard to death?

THE CRITIC:

Sure. Egads, could any other actors have done it with such finesse! They "finished Hamlet," "Othello," "Shylock," "Romeo and Juliet," "Richard III" and all the others in one foul evening and the next day had Bacon for breakfast.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

Bacon? Cannibals, too?

THE CRITIC:

Gozooks, Egads, and O Ho, sir, they ate Bacon like the Fiji Islanders eat Missionaries.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

Your Honor, please, the state rests its case and asks for these culprits the extreme penalty which the law provides for histrionic and literary homicide—the gibbet.

JUDGE:

Before the jury is called for its verdict, prisoners, have you anything to say why you should not be hung?

DIRECTOR:

May I have the privilege of asking the witness a few questions?

JUDGE:

First tell the court who and what you are.

DIRECTOR:

We are Royal Jesters, sir, and the salt of the earth.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

What the Hell's a Royal Jester?

DIRECTOR:

Like the shade of a great tree in the noon day heat is a Jester. Like the home port, with your country's flag flying, after long journeys, is a Jester.

JUDGE:

Come, come, now, none of this political buncombe, what is a Jester?

HEAVY MAN:

In our lexicon the words are synonymous with "True Friend" and "Good Fellow." A Jester is a person who is "for" you always, under any circumstances.

TRAGEDIAN:

He never investigates you.

SOUBRETTE:

Anybody can stand by you when you are right.
A Jester stands by you even when you are wrong.

DIRECTOR:

In behalf of my fellow players, your Honor, I request that the Jesters be permitted to show the members of the Jury samples of our histrionic art, and I therefore, suggest that the Court adjourn to the Town Hall for the supreme test of our skill as mummers. It is only fair, I protest, that we shall be given opportunity to refute the vile slanders of this nincompoop critic.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:

As counsel for the people as well as attorney for the State, your Honor, I join in this prisoner's plea and suggest that you grant his petition.

JUDGE:

The motion is granted, and Court will adjourn to the Opr'y House, where the prisoners will give us samples of their histrionic talents.

CONSTABLE:

Court's adjourned! (*Curtain*).

ACT II—SCENE:

Interior of Opera House.

The stage shows a grotesque drop curtain depicting "Court of Mirth."

Up stage C—Against back wall, a king's chair, with jeweled crown upon upright back of chair, a scepter laying against back opposite side.

Before the king's chair, a high inclined table or desk to hold the BOOK OF FATE, from which the Director reads.

Down stage C—A large round table about which the cast is seated at rise of curtain. Novices assemble in front rows in charge of impresario and assistants. Impresario has presented petitions to members of the class, and now places them on the table before the cast, who carefully scrutinize them and nod assent or dissent.

ACT II

Racket at back of hall interrupts proceedings.

Enter Constable with PROPS—; commotion:

DIRECTOR:

What means this interruption, officer,
Whom have you there in charge?

CONSTABLE:

A stranger found beneath the entry stairs.

DIRECTOR

Stand him forth and I'll examine him.
(To Props) Whence came you, sir?

PROPERTY MAN:

From the land of make believe
Where plots abound
Wherein are "wings" and "sets" and "flies"
Surmounted by a grid.

DIRECTOR: (to cast)

He speaks most familiarly of our craft.
(To Props) What came you here to do?

PROPERTY MAN:

To help these actors stage their play.

DIRECTOR:

Thy working tools?

PROPERTY MAN:

A hammer, a saw,
A bit, a brace.

DIRECTOR: (to Cast)

An artisan.
(To Props) And cans't thou show a Union card?

PROPERTY MAN:

No Union can claim me, Sire.
Gazooks, I have a Jester's card. I am universal.
(shows card).

DIRECTOR:

'Tis true and can thou give the greeting words?

PROPERTY MAN:

Sure, "Mirth is King."

DIRECTOR:

'Tis well, thou art welcome here, but what's thy name?

The Property Man should carry with him on a small wheeled platform all the paraphernalia necessary to make all the effects heard and seen on the stage. These are easily obtained, are not a great burden, and could be introduced very humorously. You'll get the idea from the rime. One of the two following methods may be employed in the use of the effects. They may be worked outside the curtain by the Property Man or behind the scenes by some supernumerary. In the latter case, the Property Man would not have to bring them in, and the effects could be operated wrongly as if a mistake were being made) i. e., rain effect for snow, automobile horn for horse, etc., ad infinitum.

PROPERTY MAN:

I'm the guy behind the scenes, I am!
Perhaps I'll have to tell you what that means,
P'rhaps!

Props is me name
An' realism is me aim.
Effects are me stock in trade
No matter where the plot is laid,
Nor when, nor how,
In the Then or the Now!
I'm the Drama's weather man, I am!
I don't live in Medicine Hat,
But I'm on the job at that,
That I am!

If the plot should call for rain,
Or the villain cries with pain,
I'm the gink that has to do it,
Though the heroine may rue it,
By ye gods!
What the odds!
Here's the drum that fakes the thunder,
Beats thunder drum.

An' the rain that makes you wonder.
Whence it came
Rolls shot inside drum.

Is the same
That gives realistic notion
Of the dashing, splashing ocean.
Rolls shot like splash of waves.

But the vivid Jovian bolt
With its sudden nervous jolt,
Would be nil
If the bill
Hadh't yet a flash o' lightnin'
Just to make the scene more frightnin'
Electric Flash.

On the level
Beats the devil
How effects can make you sob
When old PROPS is on the job.
When old Bor—e—as is a blowin'
An' "th beautiful's" a-snowin'
Rocks snow cradle.

In the skies
From the "flies"
Or the wind is howling wild,
As the hero saves the child.
Blows wind effect.

In the "wings"
With these things,
I'm the Bozo, lean and humble
Makes the choo choo snort and rumble
Puff and roar,
Sneeze and snore.
Railroad effect.

If an auto's in the story,
Or a horse rides on to glory,
Effect of hoofs.

It's me
Not he
That makes the noise you've heard
Though I ne'er may speak a word,
In the play
Of today.
You must know that I am here,
With my prop effects so queer.
Jester Friends, my moral's plain,
In the sunshine or the rain,
Things are never what they seem
Though with facts the plots may teem
Most of life is just pretending,
So my story must be ending.

DIRECTOR:

A worthy Jester—be seated with our cast.

(Takes seat at table vacated by Director.)

Director rises from table and ascends the King's Chair. Laughter places crown upon Director's head and T. Ale Bearer hands him the scepter.

LAUGHTER R—T. ALE BEARER L—

Stand at each side of Throne Chair

LAUGHTER:

He, he, ho, ho, ha, ha, haw, haw!

Sir! behold, Mirth is King, and we are all his subjects. Ope' now the Book of Fate *(opens book, points finger to open page)*

LAUGHTER AND T. ALE BEARER (Omnes):

Ha, ha, he, haw, ho-ho! Yon Actors, Sire! Let them rant and prate, we are ready to hear our fate.
Ha, ha, he-ho—haw-haw!

DIRECTOR: *(Now in King's Chair—Introducing Tragedian)*

We have within the confines of this Court tonight
A great Tragedian Jester
Stand forth Sir Thespis, and summon thou,
In old school style—the Tragic Muse.

TRAGEDIAN:

The old school; Zounds! There is but one school
—the school of the immortal bard. Wilst know
who I am, then I shall “a tale unfold?”

Now, by the rood, as Hamlet said, it grieves me
sore to say

The stage is not as once it was when I was wont
to play.

'Tis true that Southern, dear old chap, still gives
a goodly show,

And John Drew and young Barrymore really act
the best they know.

'Tis true Marlow and Maud Adams—for we
mustn't be too hard—

Are very fair for women, though, of course, they
ought to guard

Against some bad art tendencies, but as for all
the rest

There's hardly one—I may say none—who
stands the artist's test.

True artists are a rare, rare breed. There were but
two, forsooth,

In all MY time, the stage's prime, and the
OTHER ONE was Booth.

I liked Ed. Booth, for he was such a royal-
hearted fellow,

We never had a jealousy. When we put on
Othello,

His lago was much like mine; likewise his stage
direction,

But what cared Ed. what critics said, since I
made no objection?

Ah, me, that day is past; the play has lost its
honored station.

Who reads aright! Sorrow, fright, or tragic
desolation?

Aye, who can reach to Hamlet's speech, “To be
or not to be,”

Or wild Macbeth's cry, “Never shake thy gory
locks at me!”

Or Lear's appeal, “Oh, let me be not mad, sweet
heaven, not mad!”

Or Shylock's rage: “I'll have me bond!” Ah,
me, it makes me sad,

To think it all, and then recall the drama of
me youth,

When there were TWO who read lines true, and
the OTHER ONE was Booth.

Applauding.

Bravo! Bravo!

DIRECTOR:

Light Comedian, tell the assembled multitude
how vain is vaulting ambition.

(Introducing Light Comedian)

LIGHT COMEDIAN:

"The worldly hopes men set their hearts upon
Turn to ashes—or they prosper, and anon,
Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,
Lighting for a little hour or two, then gone."
So friend, forsake this vain pursuit,
This chasing rainbow's gaudy gold;
Find happiness in Service to Mankind,
Remove the stones from out a brother's path;
Lift up his load of sorrow and of care,
Let it be said by those who follow on:
"The way of Life is better than before,
A man has gone his way along this road
And smoothed the path for those of us who
come."

So be perplexed no more with human or divine,
Tomorrow's tangle to the winds resign,
And lose your senses in the mirth-provoking
Royal Jest sublime.

DIRECTOR: *(Introducing Heavy Man)*

Boldly I dare say:
There has been more, by us in some one play
Laughed into wit and virtue than hath been
By twenty tedious lectures drawn from sin
And foppish humors.
Hence the cause doth rise
Men are not won by the ears
As well as by the eyes,
Look upon our Heavy Man.
Let's fall into admiration
Of his good parts
And give him careful heed.

HEAVY MAN:

I, sir, have played by "Command" of crowned
heads, bald heads, and dead heads. Gazooks, sir,
I may now be out of luck, and 'tis true I have been
forced at times to demean me dignity by dining on
pork and beans—

VILLAGERS:

Pork and Beans, Ha, Ha, Ha! (derisively.)

HEAVY MAN:

Does this unseemly levity besmear the fair
'scutcheon of that famous delicacy, Beans?
You may laugh at pork and beans
When you've money in your jeans,
And you've got a healthy job and place to sleep in,
But when you're not a-workin'
And the hunger comes a-jerkin'
You'll hie yourself to where the beans are steepin'.
In Boston's changeful clime,
Where I used to spend me time,
A-dodgin' work both strenuous and mean;
Of all the meals I've bot,
Was the just a-dime-a-plate—Old Boston Beans.
It was beans, beans, beans,
You luscious, inexpensive Boston Beans.
Hi, there, sleepy Dick,
Plate of beans and bring 'em quick,
You ketchup-loving rascals, Boston Beans.
I shall ne'er forget the day
When I lost me eats and hay,
And all I'd left was just a hunger keen.
Some cheaper workin' Jester
Had swiped me last piaster,
And left me with a hunger long and lean.
I fasted for a time,
Then I bummed a single dime
To try and fill me innards lean.

I shunned the swell cafe,
 For right before me lay
 A place where steamed the ever welcome bean.
 It was Beans, Beans, Beans,
 Your last resort in hunger—Boston Beans.
 Though I've knocked you and I've flayed you,
 By the living God that made you,
 You've saved many an actor's life—
 Old Boston Beans.

DIRECTOR: (*Introducing Soubrette*)

Direct your gaze dear Jesters
 Upon our saucy naive soubrette,
 Her beauty makes this room
 A feasting presence full of light.
 Our own Mamzelle (*Name of actor*)
 What say you sweetest one
 Of the mysteries of our entrances and exits
 On Life's great stage.

SOUBRETTE:

Yesterday this day's madness did prepare,
 Tomorrow's silence, triumph or despair.
 Laugh, for you know not whence you came nor
 why.
 Laugh for you know not why you go nor where.
 Think of this world's stage,
 Whose portals are alternate night and day
 How Jester after Jester with his mirth
 Played out his destined hour and went his way.

DIRECTOR: (*Introducing Omar*)

Omar, may we hear from you, the Tentmaker's
 philosophy of life?

OMAR THE TENTMAKER:

Oh, threats, of Hell and hopes of Paradise,
 One thing at least is certain,
 This life flies,

One thing is certain and the rest is lies,
 The Royal Jest once freed

Never, never dies.

Let's make the most of days we yet may spend,
 Before we, too, into dust descend;
 Dust unto dust, and under dust to lie
 Sans wine, sans song, sans Jesters
 And sans shrine.

For if we're thoroughbreds here,
 We'll be thoroughbreds there.

DIRECTOR: (*Introducing Leading Lady*)

Oh, lovely Leading Lady—
 Garmented in light from your own beauty
 Whose form beguiles to love
 Sweet as the cooing of an unseen dove.
 Speak: The assembled unbelievers
 Wouldst know from you
 How inexorable and immutable
 Are our entrances and exits
 On life's great stage.

LEADING LADY:

The world's a stage—as Shakespeare said one
 day,
 The stage—a world—was what he meant to say.
 True wit has seen its best days long ago:
 It ne'er looked up since we were dipped in show.
 When sense, in doggrel, rhymes and clouds, was
 lost
 And Dullness flourished at the actor's cost;
 Nor stopped it here—when tragedy was done
 SATIRE and HUMOR the same fate have run
 And comedy is sunk to trick and pun.
 "We are no more than a moving row
 Of magic shadow shapes that come and go
 Round with the sun illumined lantern held at
 Midnight by the Master Jester of the Show.
 But helpless pieces of the game he plays

Upon this checkerboard of nights and days—
Hither and thither he moves—and checks—and
plays
And one by one back in the closet lays.”

DIRECTOR: (*Introducing Serio Comic*)
And last of all, but by no means least,
To hear our summons,
Is our dainty Half and Half,
The Serio Comic.
What message sentimental one,
Hast thou in mind for us?

SERIO COMIC:
Gentlemen, perchance you wonder at this show
But wonder on till truth makes all things plain
If we offend, it is with our good will
That you should think, we come not to offend
But with good will to show our simple skill
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come, but in despite
We do not come as minding to content you
Our true interest is, all for your delight.
We are not here that we should here repel you;
The actors are at hand and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.
So, waste not your hour in vain pursuit
Of This and That, nor in Endeavor which dis-
turbs;
Better be jocund with the mirthful jest
Than sadden after none, or bitter words, while
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
And the leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

DIRECTOR:
You’ve listened graciously
To our Knights and Ladies,
Sock and Buskin garbed
For which we thank you heartily,
But what about our Veniremen?

Shall they, unlettered in our mystic art,
Be left to chart their course,
On life’s uncertain, fitful sea
Without the compass of our craft?
Or shall we guide them gently
O’er shoal and shallow,
Rock and reef?

OMNES: (*The Cast*)
No! Not that.

DIRECTOR:
Then we await the Jury’s verdict, your Honor!

JUDGE:
The Jury has returned an unsealed verdict. You
all and severally are found **NOT GUILTY**—and
are released from the custody of the Court with the
blessing of the bench. God have mercy on your
souls.

OMNES:
The Charge; The Charge!
Good Sire, the Charge!

DIRECTOR:
The Charge! So,
You have willed
So be it—the Charge!
If mem’ry serves this Jester right,
On earth, a Potentate doth reign supreme,
And takes delight most fiendish
In swaying his domain.
But now’s the time the table’s turned.
To me is given the power
To dictate harsh or gentle terms
Within this Jester Court.
It cannot, must not be
Then stand these Candidates forth

That they may hear and heed the charge
 Inspired by banquets past.
 Good Heavy Man, proceed!

(Heavy Man steps down stage and delivers the charge).

HEAVY MAN:

Nuptial powers hath fixed thy lot,
 Thy wedding knell hath tolled. Forget it not,
 And thou art done unto a rich brown state
 Thy wife and mother-in-law control thy fate.
 Hereafter that thou with us may not meet,
 They'll either chide or guy, cajoling, sweet.
 But, "Hark ye not, lest thou should lose,
 A "Jester's" banquet—minus booze,
 Mayhap our Steward has in mind
 A feast that pleases all mankind
 You Jesters worship at the "Shrine" of Food,
 Be there first at the door, or you're no good
 The dark skinned savage who adores the sun
 And scalps his victim with no sign of fear
 Has nothing on a Jester in a run for food that's
 free

He'll kill without a tear.

The old guard, pats the stewards on the back
 Whispering sweet nothings, fearful lest the
 smokes

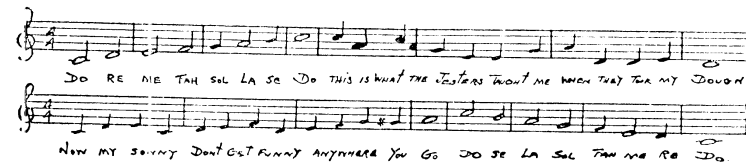
Should get first to the candidates or visiting folks,
 Their wily fingers circling three or four,
 They change their seats that they may capture
 more.

You veteran Jesters, crossed the heated sand,
 To strains from the sweet Chanters Band,
 Then did thy gentle nature's sudden change
 To "Food Hounds," knife and fork in hand.
 Thou now dost talk the earth in fiendish glee
 Devouring Banquets, (where the food is free)
 Thy wife at home alone, in surly mood

Will curse the ravenous Jesters and their food
 But thou wilt perish faithful.
 Girl: with thick cutlets, chops and loins of beef,
 Will not these compensate thy martyred grief?
 Sniff now the censer's ravishing perfume sweet,
 List to the sensuous music, sad, monotonous,
 deep,
 Appealing to the ear, to soul, to sense,
 To appetite so knowing and intense,
 Compelling all to follow as our Director drones,
 "Allah is God—virtuous love atones,"
 Stir thy sluggish souls, the food hounds path
 begin,
 Arouse ye, or forever starve,
 Go forth, and let the steward fill thy skins.

TROUPE:

Do, re, me, fah, sol, la, se, do.
 This is what the Jesters taught me when they
 took my dough.
 Now, my sonny, don't get funny,
 Anywhere you go,
 Do-se-la-sol-fah-me-re-do.



DIRECTOR:

Having heard our actors in their several master-
 pieces, do the candidates care to proceed further
 and connect themselves irrevocably with our wan-
 dering troupe?

All Candidates answer, "I Do."

Members of the Royal Cast, what shall you say
 to these Tyros nominations?

ENTIRE CAST

Let them be recorded.

DIRECTOR:

Candidates, you have sought parts in our cast.

Your papers have been found free from blot, hence the Members of our Jester Cast are willing that you should be instructed in the fundamentals of our theatric craft and the tenets of our faith.

You will be prompted in our oral pledge, which you will ever retain fresh in your mind, and always help your brothers to act in accordance with its precepts.

Candidates will be hoodwinked, and ~~kneeling on left knee,~~ will in unison, repeat the following pledge as the DIRECTOR pronounces it to them;

"I do hereby accept and acknowledge this contract and pledge with the Royal Jesters and members of the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine:

"I promise never to select or propose any Noble whom I know to be weak or vacillating, or of unknown, or doubted, loyalty, or integrity, morality, or temper.

"Furthermore, I do by this obligation, elect myself an Evangel of the Gospel of Mirth, accepting from my Fellow Jesters a mission, to lighten the burdens of all whom I know to be of the Initiate, and for them will I always hang the latchstring without the portals of my true heart.

"In witness whereof, I do place my right hand upon my Heart, and bind the covenant we have made amongst us, pledging my faith and honor as a man, that I will not reveal to any person, not a member in good standing of the Royal Jesters, any part, word or action of the ceremonies which have

been enacted here, are now being enacted, or are to be enacted hereafter, during this or any other session of this or any other Court of Royal Jesters."

The Impresario lifts the Billiken from its pedestal, and presents it to each candidate in succession to be kissed on the rear portion.

The hoodwink is removed after each one salutes the Billiken and they rise, one at a time, and remain standing in line facing the Director and Cast.

DIRECTOR:

You will now listen to the Creed.

TRAGEDIAN: To the Candidates.

Laugh and the glad World laughs with you
Weep and the sad World will sigh!
Mirth is our life's true Elixir;
It shows "You're a regular Guy!"
There's nothing so banishes worry nor puts such
a big crimp in sin
Nor Smooths out the wrinkles of trouble like
a jolly old Jester-man's grin!
It rolls off the years from your shoulders
You'll forget that you've grown to be men!
Your youth turns once more to embrace you
For you've grown to be school-boys again!
So if you've got grouches, don't bring 'em
It's your laugh and your joke that we need;
For Mirth is the Doctor of Trouble
And Laughter the Jester-man's Creed!

DIRECTOR:

Now that you have heard the Creed of our most Royal Realm, do you still wish to journey our way, partake of our fleshpots when the skies are fair, or tread the crosssties and carry the burdens of your weaker fellow-players when an unappreciative world frowns upon us?

All Candidates answer, "I do."

DIRECTOR:

Then you will be enlightened in the business and lines of your respective parts.—Impresario, assisted by your staff, you will instruct these Low Comedians in their several characterizations.

The Director declaims the meanings, and the Impresario and assistants perform the necessary action. Any ad lib. stage business here to add to the comedy of the situation.

DIRECTOR:

ACT I—The Wall-Eyed Popika, or Cat (Business) closing right eye. Blind to players' shortcomings and faults.

ACT II—The Three-Legged Ilio, or Dog (Business) eating a frankfurter. Typifying friendship and loyalty as Dog for Master.

ACT III—The Dry Papaia, or Biscuit (Business)—eats soda cracker, then whistles "America," typifying cheerfulness even over small things.

ACT IV—The four drops of Okolehao or Champagne (Business)—four drops of near-beer. Typifying Moderation, Temperance, with the Good Things of Life.

ACT V—The Green Pipi, or Rear Action Snake (Business)—closing left eye, rub crown of head with right hand and pat stomach with left hand; then reverse the motions, pat head and rub stomach. Typifying always a level head and satisfaction over the most humble repast, if taken with Jesters and mirthful spirits.

ACT VI—The Gifts of Mother Nature. This act is to determine one of the most essential qualifications of a true Royal Jester. The eyes are given us to see, the ears to hear, and the lips to taste, but above all these ranks the sense of smell. This great gift was only slightly manifested to you when you saluted the Royal Charter. Ob-

servation, however, has convinced us of your eligibility and worthiness to be admitted to our realm. Here we typify the value of a scent. The signs of this realm are the actions of the Fifth set in their order; the words of greeting are "Mirth is King," and the response is, "May it ever be." The secret words are "Aloha," meaning a friendly greeting and love, and the answer is "Pau Pilikia," meaning the trouble is over, done. The Impresario will now adorn our members with the insignia of our fellowship.

Impresario now confers the emblems.

DIRECTOR:

Property Man, bring forth the flowing bowl.

Property Man draws foaming near-beer into trick flagon, and hands it to Director.

Takes flagon from Property Man, holds it aloft and delivers the following toast:

DIRECTOR:

Now that you have learned the lessons of The Realm of Royal Jesters, I propose to all of you fellow players on life's stage a toast to Goodfellowship—

Here's to all good fellows in this world and the next—

I drink to you a toast tonight—Goodfellowship's my text—

Not the chap who takes your hand in an idling hour, you know,

Not the chap who slaps your back as long as the high balls flow;

But the chap who speaks a kindly word when all the world seems wrong,

The chap who grips your hand like a vice and tells you life's only a song—

What if the fellow lies—what if he knows it too,
 There are times in life when the chap that lies, is
 the only friend that's true,
 So cavil and rant ye prudes who will, of the
 evil of wine and gin,
 But somehow the real true things we feel leak
 out when the wine flows in
 A fool is a fool—a cad is a cad, whichever God
 meant him to be;
 But a man that's a man won't forget he's a man
 even if out on a spree.
 So I drink this toast to you, my friends,
 From a heart to a heart let it run,
 Here's to Good Fellows, all over the world,
 And God bless them, every one.

MIRTH IS KING.

LONG LIVE THE KING.

Troupe in unison and vociferously repeat.

*Tableau — Entire Troupe has quietly and unseen
 picked up canes from table. Draw them from their left
 sides like swords, rise on toes of left foot, right foot a step
 forward, striking the attitude with the canes pointed to
 Heaven “—Long Live the King.”*

MUSIC (*Do Re Mi song*)

*The Fool's Prayer may be introduced here at direction
 of the Director.*

Exit Troupe.

END

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The Fool's Prayer

The Royal feast was done; the King
 Sought some new sport to banish care,
 And to his jester cried, “Sir Fool,
 Kneel now, and make for us a prayer.”

The Jester doffed his cap and bells,
 And stood the mocking court before;
 They could not see the bitter smile
 Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
 Upon the monarch's silken stool;
 His pleading voice arose, “O Lord,
 Be merciful to me, a fool.

“No pity, Lord, could change the heart
 From red with wrong to white as wool;
 The rod must heal the sin; but Lord,
 Be merciful to me, a fool!

“Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
 Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
 'Tis by follies that so long
 We hold the earth from heaven away.

“These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
 Go crushing blossoms without end;
 These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
 Among the heart strings of a friend.

“The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
 Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
 The word we had not sense to say—
 Who knows how grandly it had rung?

“Our faults no tenderness should ask,
 The chastening stripes must cleanse them all:
 But for our blunders—Oh, in shame
 Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

“Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
 Men crown the knave, and scourge the fool
 That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,
 Be merciful to me, a fool!”

The room was hushed; in silence rose
 The King, and sought his gardens cool,
 And walked apart, and murmured low,
 “Be merciful to me, a fool!”

