

LUCINDA:

Stop, you terrible child.

(Little Joe takes ornament off table).

LUCINDA *hops up*:

My, but you're a little imp. I do nothing but hop up— Put that down! (Sitting down) No one seems to know anything bad in his past life and he has lived on Long Island since he was a young man.

JANE:

Maybe Larz don't know, eh?

LUCINDA, *with womanly curiosity aroused*:

Has he told you all about it, Jane? (To little Joe) Come and sit on aunty's lap, dear. Go on, Jane. Has he told you all about it?

JANE:

Larz never told me in so many words—men never tell on one another and each other— (Little Joe slips off Lucinda's lap and takes wheels out of clock. Larz sneaks around and look through the window).

LUCINDA, *castfallen*:

No. "Not in so many words. The suspicious Swede.

JANE:

Didn't you discharge me to have him all to yourself? Now, true and honest, isn't that so?

LUCINDA:

Don't insinuate— I have been housekeeper for Mr. Mann nearly twelve years, and no man could be more of a gentleman. He is the most modest— Look! what he has done to the clock. (Lucinda takes clock from little Joe).

LITTLE JOE:

Mamma, make her give me the wheels.

(Little Joe runs around upsetting everything in his path).

LUCINDA:

Let's go to the kitchen where that little imp won't have anything more perishable than pots, pans and kettles to destroy.

JANE:

No. I'm going— Gee, I wish Joe Mann was here. On the level, I don't like this job, but—

LUCINDA:

You're a tough one, Jane.

(Larz who is waiting for Jane, sneaks around and glances in as Jane and little Joe are going toward (R) door. Jane catches a glimpse of him. She stands and looks desperate).

JANE:

(O God! Can I stand him off another day?). So long—

LUCINDA:

Come this way and go out the back door.

JANE:

It's unlucky to come in one door and go out another— It might bring you company. Or, more likely, burglars. So long... (They exit).

(Lucinda packs Joe Mann's suitcase. (L) door. Enter Joe Mann, and Larz who has been drinking).

JOE MANN:

You are the most rabid— (Giving money to Larz). Oh, get my watch at Ford's. And tell him to warrant that mainspring for at least twenty-four hours.

LARZ, *taking money*:

Aa skoll toll ham to do tha all right (with a wink), Messter Mann. (Larz puts the bill in his trousers' pocket, but it falls on the floor as he withdraws his hand. (Exit Larz).

JOE MANN, *glances up from desk where he is writing, sees the bill*:

Larz—hey, Larz—come back here, you benighted bonehead.

(Joe Mann picks up the bill and follows Larz. (R) door bell rings. Lucinda opens door. Enter Mrs. Strange-Ade and Inez Holland).

INEZ:

We should like to see Mr. Mann. Is he in?