

PUPPET
PLAYS

WEAVER DALLAS

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PAUL MCPHARLIN

P. McP.

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De Courtin' Couple

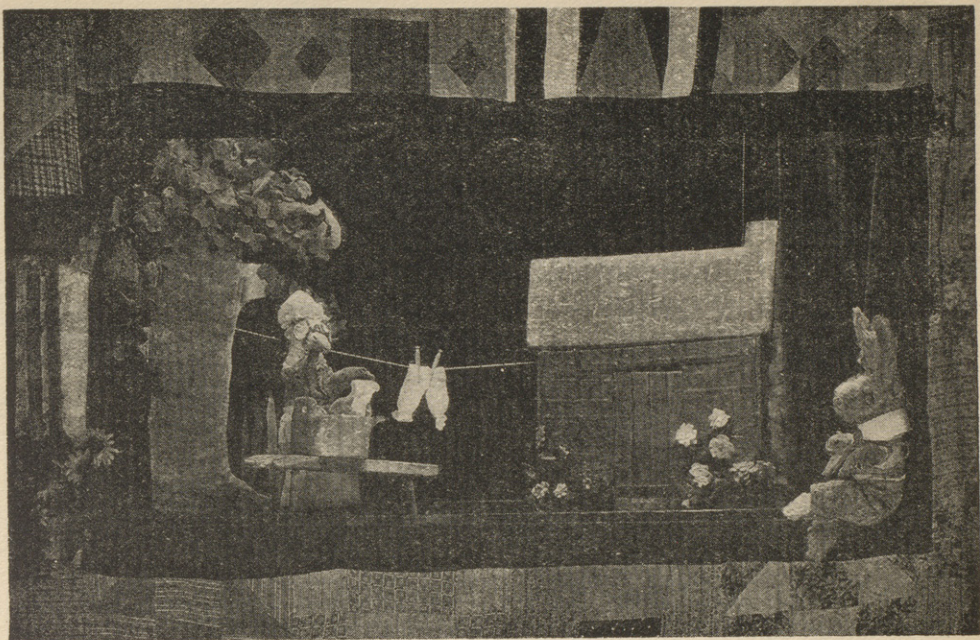
1 Scene, 4 Characters, Plays 25 Minutes

Suited to Puppets or Marionettes

As played by The Rag-Bag Alley Puppets

1931

Printed in Detroit



SIS GOOSE AND BRER RABBIT

DE COURTIN' COUPLE*
A ONE-ACT COMEDY FOR PUPPETS
Adapted from Folklore of the Southern Negro
by WEAVER DALLAS

Characters:

SIS GOOSE, "*a likely lookin' gal wid des er leedle biddy dab er sense.*"
Wears large spectacles, a gingham dress, mob cap and white apron.

BRER FOX, "*a no 'count schemy brag.*" *Is dressed "fancy" in a claw-hammer coat, stovepipe hat, lavender breeches and bright colored vest.*

BRER RABBIT, "*ready to show BRER FOX jes' how smart he ain't.*"
Blue coat, red tie, carefully patched pants.

BRER DOG, "*a plain ole one and sixpence*" *in love with SIS GOOSE.*
Wears grey shirt and homespun pants held by red galluses.

* NOTE. This play may not be produced by any amateur or professional without written permission from the author, Miss Weaver Dallas, 12 Alvin Place, Upper Montclair, New Jersey, or Thomaston, Georgia. From Puppet Plays, 155 Wimpleton Drive, Birmingham, Michigan, may be rented a Producer's Manuscript, giving complete directions for constructing and staging this piece.

Scene: In Front of SIS GOOSE'S House.

Wash-bench with tubs, under a large tree, stage right. House at back, stage left. Beside the doorway grow prince's feather and a few late zinnias. Stretched from house to tree, a clothesline on which hangs a pair of long drawers and other articles of a more or less intimate nature fastened securely by clothespins. Stage front is the Big Road.

SIS GOOSE is discovered washing clothes. She sings as she scrubs:

Oh, went down in de valley ter pray, Ah went down in de valley ter pray!

Oh, went down in de valley ter pray- Mah soul got happy an Ah stayed all day.

All mah sin's done taken a-way-ay, done taken a-way!

SIS GOOSE (*after finishing song and humming a few extra bars, pauses in her work and begins poking about in tub as if looking for something— which she doesn't find.*) 5

Law, ef Ah ain't done forgit eber las' one er dem dirty dish towels! (*Drying her hands on her apron.*) An' ef dey don't soak in dese heah suds er spell Ah'll mos' likely w'ar 'em plumb out er tryin' ter git 'em clean wid dat battlin' stick— 'Spec's Ah better go in de house right dis minute an' git 'em. (*Exit into house.*)

(BRER FOX *comes up Big Road, stage right. He pauses for a moment and looks about him.*)

BRER FOX (*musingly*). Wonder does Sis Goose still lib heah . . . Mighty fine lookin' premises—

(*Enter BRER RABBIT from other end of Big Road, stage left.*)

BRER RABBIT. Good ebenin', Brer Fox.

BRER FOX. Ebenin', Brer Rabbit.

BRER RABBIT. How is you gettin' on dese days, Brer Fox?

BRER FOX. Des middlin' peart, Brer Rabbit, and how is you?

BRER RABBIT. Puddy toler'ble, puddy toler'ble.

BRER FOX (*indicating house*). Who lib heah, Brer Rabbit?

BRER RABBIT. Why . . . Sis Goose . . .

BRER FOX. Dat right? (*As if feeling his way on uncertain ground.*)

6 Has she got any close kin or relations?

BRER RABBIT (*nudges* BRER FOX). Ah ain't 'zackly know, but to heah tell, she's keepin' company wid Brer Dog.

BRER FOX. Gooses sho am er delicate meat.

BRER RABBIT (*chuckling*). But dey ain't so easy ter ketch. Dey ain't only got legs, dey's got wings, too.

BRER FOX (*with a sly nod*). Dey's more ways ter choke er cat dan ter feed him butter, Brer Rabbit. Who's de mo' handsomer man, me or Brer Dog?

BRER RABBIT. Well, Ah'd say you had mo' style, Brer Fox, but—(*thoughtfully*). But grass ain't sheep 'twel hit gits inside one. (*Chuckles.*)

(*At this point SIS GOOSE appears in doorway with an armful of towels. Seeing the two men, stage right, she rushes at once to clothes line—in her haste and embarrassment, scattering the towels in every direction. BRER FOX and BRER RABBIT nudge each other but pretend not to see her.*)

SIS GOOSE. Oh dear, oh dear! Look at dem gentlemen, and me wid all dis heah washin' on de line—oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!

BRER RABBIT (*to* BRER FOX). Well, Ah's got ter be gittin' erlong. Little Susie Rab wuzn't feelin' so well dis mawnin' and mah wife sont me ter town ter git her some physic. Drap by ter see us sometime, Brer Fox.

BRER FOX. Thanky, Brer Rabbit, Ah'll be doin' dat very thing. 7
Good-bye.

BRER RABBIT. Good-bye. (*Exit right.*)

(SIS GOOSE *makes a last frantic effort to remove drawers from line, then stands in embarrassment before them as BRER FOX turns.*)

BRER FOX. Good eben', lady.

SIS GOOSE. Er— Er— Good ebenin', suh—

BRER FOX. Is you de Miss Goose Ah's heerd so many nice things about?

SIS GOOSE. Well, dat *is* mah name. An' you is—?

BRER FOX. Brer Fox, des plain Brer Fox. Ah's mighty glad ter meet you, Sis Goose. (*Kisses her hand.*)

SIS GOOSE (*giggling*). Ah's proud ter mek yo' 'quaintance . . . He he . . . He he he!

BRER FOX. Dese sho am splendiferous lookin' premises you got heah.

SIS GOOSE. Youer monstus perlite, Brer Fox. Dey ain't so fine, but dey's comfortable.

BRER FOX. You libs heah all by yo'se'f?

SIS GOOSE (*wiping her eyes on her apron*). Eber since Pa died.

BRER FOX (*aside*). Ah ha! Des ez Ah'd hoped. (*To SIS GOOSE.*)
Don't you get mighty lonesome?

8 SIS GOOSE. Well, sometimes Ah does, Brer Fox, (*cooly*) 'specially on de nights when Brer Dog has ter work.

BRER FOX. Aw now, Sis Goose, you don't mean ter tell me youer wastin' yo' time keepin' company wid Brer Dog. Cose he's er mighty deservin' man but he can't hol' er candle ter er puddy 'oman lak you—

SIS GOOSE. Go long, Brer Fox. Youer des tryin' ter fool me wid all dat sweet talkin'.

BRER FOX. Why, Sis Goose, youer dat lubly you'd mek de man in de moon blink. Sight er you good fer sore eyes and sound er you good fer weak chist. Ah's des been honin' fer you since de minute Ah laid eyes on you an' Ah's gwineter come back ter see you de very fust night you'll let me— Des you say when—

SIS GOOSE (*drawing deep sigh of happiness*). Well, Brer Fox, tonight is one ob de times Brer Dog has to work.

BRER FOX. Dis very night?

SIS GOOSE (*nodding*). Uh-huh!

BRER FOX. Den Ah'll be back des as soon as de sunset goes down.

SIS GOOSE. All right, Brer Fox, Ah'll be 'spectin' you.

BRER FOX (*kissing her hand*). Good-bye.

SIS GOOSE. Good-bye. (*Exit BRER FOX.*) Oh dear, Ah wuz so mortified—all dis washin' on de line. (*Trips over dish towels, which she picks*

up.) An' dese dirty dish towels— Gracious! (*Collects the rest of them, 9 pauses, center stage.*) But he's sech er elegant gentleman he ain't let on! (*Performs a sort of dance as she takes towels over to wash-tub.*) An' to think he's comin' to see me tonight! (*Deposits towels in tub as BRER DOG enters from Big Road, right.*)

BRER DOG. Sis Goose, who you been confabbin' wid? Ain't dat Brer Fox Ah met comin' away from heah?

SIS GOOSE. An' whut ef hit wuz, Brer Dog?

BRER DOG. Well, he ain't de kind uv man Ah laks fer de lady Ah pays court ter, ter be hangin' 'roun' wid! Low-down trash—er bamboozlin' you wid his flattersome words.

SIS GOOSE. He's get er long sight tastier manners dan whut you is—

BRER DOG. Manners? Manners ain't mek de man. Ah des tells you right now, Brer Fox ain't meanin' no good by you an' your'n. An' ef you'll tek mah advice you won't neber let him come on yo' premises again. (*SIS GOOSE turns away.*) Please, Sis Goose, ef you loves me de way you been sayin' you does—

SIS GOOSE (*turning away*). Ah 'spec's he may be 'roun' dis very night. We had er mighty interestin' talk dis ebenin'.

BRER DOG. Talk? Dat man ain't gwine wid you fer yo' conversation. Er high-filutin' gentlemen lak Brer Fox ain't gwine wid no goose

10 fer her *brains*. He's gwine wid you 'case youer fat an' juicy! (*Catches SIS GOOSE by the arm, roughly.*)

SIS GOOSE (*slaps BRER DOG with free hand and pulls away*). Ah thank you ter keep yo' han's an' yo' tongue outer mah business, Brer Dog. (*Turns toward house.*)

BRER DOG. But Sis Goose, ah wuz des doin' hit fer yo' own good—

SIS GOOSE (*following BRER DOG, stage right*). Mah own good? Huh! Youer always talkin' erbout mah good. Youer des tryin' ter drag me down to yo' lebel, Brer Dog, dat's whut youer tryin' ter do. Ah ain't got nothin' mo' ter say ter you dis ebenin', Mr Biggity. 'Sposin' you try tendin' ter yo' own bizness fer er spell. (*Switches suddenly; exit into house.*)

BRER DOG (*following*). But, Sis Goose, Sis Goose— (*Turns back as door slams in his face.*) Ain't dat des lak er 'oman? Turnin' down er good hones' workin' man lak me fer er suit er go-ter-meetin' clo's on er meddlin' smarty lak dat. (*Muttering to himself.*) Ah ain't nebber seed de beat of hit since Ah been er chawin' victuals. (*Exit right.*)

SIS GOOSE (*pokes her head out of door*). Is dat dog gone? Ah guess Ah kin finish mah washin' den. (*Takes clothes out of tub, places them on bench and proceeds to beat them with a long wooden paddle, singing as she works:*

Oh, went down in de valley ter pray,
 Ah went down in de valley ter pray,
 Oh, went down in de valley fer ter pray-ay,
 Mah soul got happy an' Ah stayed all day-ay—
 All mah sin's done taken away.

(BRER RABBIT *runs in from Big Road, left.*)

BRER RABBIT. Sis Goose! Sis Goose! (SIS GOOSE *not hearing him, he calls more loudly.*) SIS GOOSE!

SIS GOOSE (*turns toward him, drying her hands on her apron as she does so*). Why, howdy, Brer Rabbit. 'Pears lak youer in er hurry.

BRER RABBIT. Ah is, Sis Goose, Ah's got news fer you.

SIS GOOSE. Whut is hit, Brer Rabbit?

BRER RABBIT. Brer Fox is comin' ter see you dis ebenin'.

SIS GOOSE (*simpering*). How'd you know?

BRER RABBIT. He tole me so hisse'f.

SIS GOOSE. Ain't hit jes' wonderful, Brer Rabbit? Brer Fox is sech er mannersable man—an' so han'some!

BRER RABBIT (*interrupting*). Sis Goose, you fair knock me back on mah tail wid astonishment at de way youer carryin' on. (*Sits back on tail.*) You oughter be down on yo' knees er sayin' yo' pra'rs—

SIS GOOSE. Why, what does you mean?

12 BRER RABBIT. Brer Fox ain't comin' heah on no sociable call. He's comin' ter eat you up!

SIS GOOSE (*throwing up her hands in horrified astonishment*). Dat can't be! Dat can't be!

BRER RABBIT. Hit's eber word de truf. He's done ax in er lot er de neighbors ter dinner termorrow an' tole de las' one er dem dat he wuz gwineter hab roast goose!

SIS GOOSE (*wringing her hands and running up and down stage excitedly*). Whut in de name er goodness is Ah gwineter do, Brer Rabbit? Brer Dog warned me er dis but Ah wouldn't lis'en ter him— Whut is Ah gwineter do? Oh, oh, oh!

BRER RABBIT. Well, Sis Goose, Ah ain't in de habit er meddlin' in udder fo'kes' mixes, 'case fo' hit's all ober youer mo'n likely be kickin' de bucket fer yo' pains.

SIS GOOSE (*continuing frantic cries*). But, Brer Rabbit, you'll jes' hatter help me— Youer sech er smart man an' Ah'm er po' lone 'oman, an' Ah thought Brer Fox wuz er gentleman! (*Her sobs overcome her.*)

BRER RABBIT. De diffunce 'tween Brer Fox an' er gentleman is de diffunce 'tween er rattlesnake an' er watch.

SIS GOOSE (*between sobs*). Dat's de Lawd's truf! (*Breaks down again.*) Oh, Brer Rabbit, can't you think er somep'n? You des mus' he'p me! Oh, oh, oh! (*Sobbing reaches a climax.*)

BRER RABBIT. Well, Ah'll he'p you ef Ah kin. But fust thing, you'll 13
hatter shet up some er dat noise so's Ah kin heah mah min' work.

SIS GOOSE (*crying a little less loudly*). All right . . . A - a - all r-right . . .

BRER RABBIT (*scratching head thoughtfully*). You go in de house, Sis
Goose, an' git er pillow an' dress hit up des same as if hit wuz you.

SIS GOOSE. Git er pillow an' dress hit up jes' lak hit wuz me?

BRER RABBIT. Yeh, put one uv yo' wrappers on hit, an' is you got
anudder cap lak dat 'un you got on yo' haid?

SIS GOOSE. Yeh, Brer Rabbit.

BRER RABBIT. Well put hit on top of de pillow.

SIS GOOSE. All right, Brer Rabbit, Ah'll do des ez you says. (*Exit
into house.*)

BRER RABBIT (*laughing*). Dis is one time Brer Fox is gwineter git
his come-uppance, sho.

SIS GOOSE (*from inside house*). Dis heah Mother Hubbard keeps
slippin' off, Brer Rabbit.

BRER RABBIT. 'Sposin' you tie one of yo' ap'ons on hit.

SIS GOOSE. All right. (*Re-enters with dummy.*) You sho is got er heap
er sense, Brer Rabbit. Ef fokes wanter git erhead er you dey hatter git
up so early dey ain't no time ter go ter bed. Tee hee hee! (*Holds out
dummy.*) Is dis all right?

14 BRER RABBIT (*chuckling in delight*). Hit sho is. (*Takes dummy, looks at it with approval, then returns it to SIS GOOSE.*) Dat's fine. Now, Sis Goose, you tek hit in de house an' put hit in yo' rockin' cheer in front of de fiah—

SIS GOOSE. All right. (*Exit into house.*)

BRER RABBIT (*laughing*). Ef she puts dat scarecrow in her rockin' cheer by de time fus' dark come dere ain't no fox in de NUnited States er Georgy'll know but whut hit's Sis Goose herse'f.

SIS GOOSE (*reappearing*). Now, whar Ah'm gwineter stay, Brer Rabbit?

BRER RABBIT. Ah wuz des wonderin' erbout dat. 'Cose you could go home wid me only de doctor's skeerd little Susie got some kind er ketchin' rash.

SIS GOOSE (*interrupting*). Oh, Ah wouldn't wanter leab de premises.

BRER RABBIT (*looking about thoughtfully*). You wouldn't wanter leab de premises . . . Well, Ah'll tell you whut, Sis Goose, 'sposin' you fly up dere (*pointing to tree-top*) in dat tree.

SIS GOOSE. Dat's er good idea, Brer Rabbit. Dat's des whut Ah'll do. (*She flies into tree.*) Kin you see me up heah?

BRER RABBIT. Not 'less'n Ah knowed you wuz dere. Brer Fox'll neber see you in de roun' worl'. (*Looks about him with satisfaction.*)

Well, ef dere ain't nothin' else ah kin he'p you do, 'spec' Ah'd better 15
be gittin' erlong 'fo' de dark ketches me. Good-bye, Sis Goose.

SIS GOOSE. Good-bye, Brer Rabbit. Sho am much obleeged ter you,
suh, an' Ah hopes little Susie'll be better.

BRER RABBIT (*goes off, stage left, laughing*). Thanky, Sis Goose.
Good-bye.

(*The stage has gradually become almost dark. No sound is heard but
an occasional bird call. Enter BRER FOX back stage right from under
tree, goes front stage right, looking all around. SIS GOOSE shakes with
fright.*)

BRER FOX (*smacking his lips*). Ha, ha! Nice fat goose fer dinner
termorrer—Ha, ha! (*Pauses for a minute's satisfied contemplation.
Then opens a tiny crack in door.*) Ha, ha! Jes' as Ah 'spected. R'ared
back in er rockin' cheer in front of de fiah. (*Exit into house.*)

(*A minute later BRER FOX returns bearing the dummy. BRER DOG
jumps from other side of house, stage left and attacks him.*)

BRER DOG. Bow wow! Aho, aho! Bow wow! (*Exit left, chasing
BRER FOX, who drops bundle of clothes in his haste.*) Drop dat goose!
Drop dat goose!

SIS GOOSE (*flies from tree, calling frantically.*) Brer Dog! Brer Dog!
Brer Dog—

16 BRER DOG (*re-entering*). Why, Sis Goose (*in great relief*) Ah thought Brer Fox wuz er carryin' you off.

SIS GOOSE (*picking up bundle*). Dat wuz des dis bundle of clo's, Brer Dog. Brer Rabbit come and tole me all erbout hit—how Brer Fox—

BRER DOG. You wouldn't lis'en ter me when Ah tol' you.

SIS GOOSE. Well, you acted so rough, Brer Dog, Ah jes' 'lowed ez how all whut you said wuz 'case you wuz jealous . . . Ain't you gwine ter fergive me?

BRER DOG (*turns away*). No! Not 'twel kingdom come, Sis Goose.

SIS GOOSE (*sobbing*). Ain't you gwineter fergive me? Boo hoo! Boo hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!

BRER DOG (*taking SIS GOOSE in his arms*). 'Cose Ah is, Sis Goose . . . 'Cose Ah is.

Curtain.

PUPPET PLAYS *Edited by* PAUL McPHARLIN—a List

1 ● THE WOLF AT THE DOOR, by Grace Dorcas Ruthenburg, author of the *Gooseberry Mandarin*, *Linocut illus. by Paul McPharlin*. How a poet worsts a wolf and pens an ode to the moon. 2 characters; 10 minutes; for puppets, marionettes or shadows. ● 25c

2 ● LINCOLN AND THE PIG, by Edgar Caper. Woodcut mask of Lincoln by Pablo Parlando. Wherein Abe Lincoln is altruistic and his horse Ned isn't; from the well-known legend. 3 characters; 10 minutes; for marionettes or shadows. ● 25c

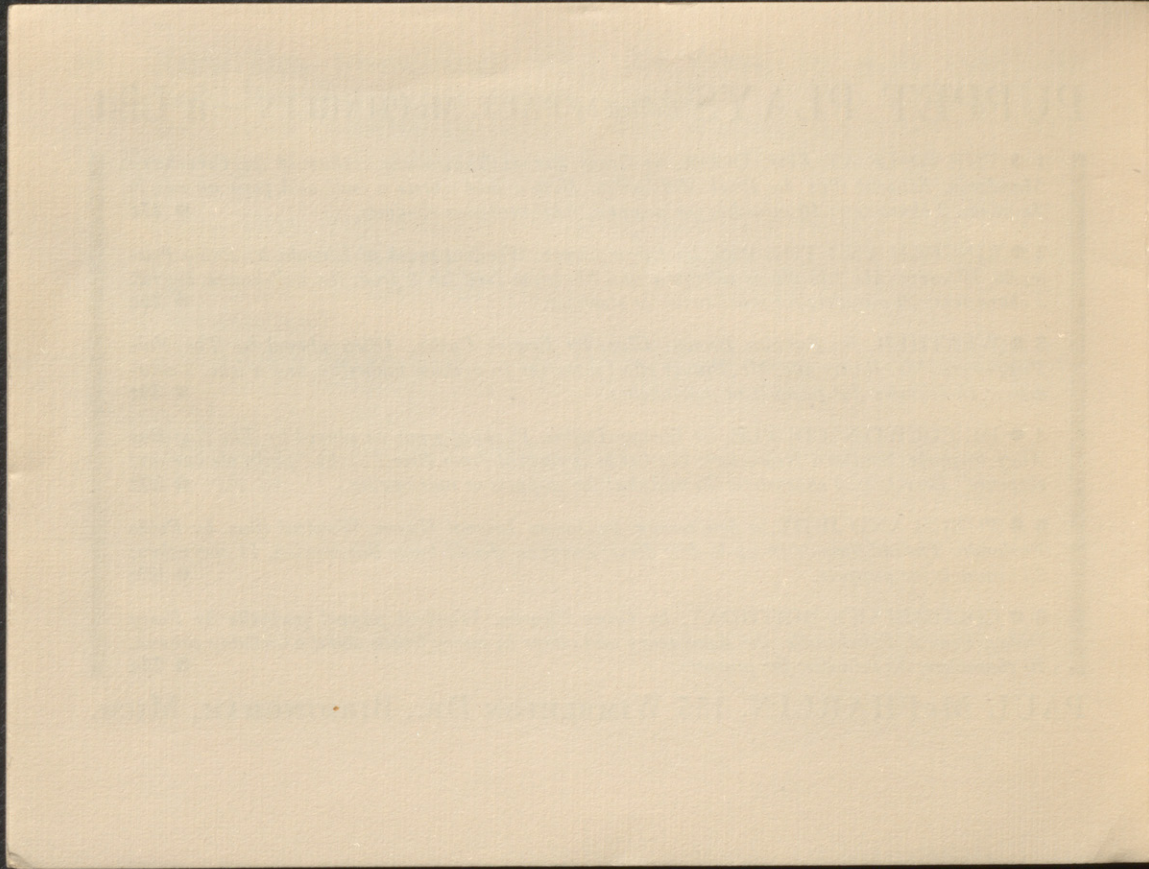
3 ● WEATHER, by Forman Brown. *Illus. by Bewick Cutter*. Often played by *The Yale Puppeteers*. Mr. Rainy and Mr. Sunny effect a merger in making umbrellas and bricks. 2 characters; 15 minutes; for puppets or marionettes. ● 30c

4 ● DE COURTIN' COUPLE, by Weaver Dallas. Photo of scene as played by *The Rag-Bag Alley Puppets*. Southern Negro lore; Sis Goose is rescued from Brer Fox by "plain ole one and sixpence" Brer Dog. 4 characters; 25 minutes; for puppets or marionettes. ● 50c

5 ● PUNCH AND JUDY, a new version by James Juvenal Hayes. Woodcut *illus. by Pablo Parlando*. The old favorite in up-to-date dress; everyone should know this version. 11 characters; 25 minutes; for puppets. ● 50c

6 ● COLUMBINE'S BIRTHDAY, by Grace Stearns. Woodcut puppet portraits by Perry Dilley. *Pierrot, Polichinelle, the Apothecary and others in merry fracas about a birthday present*. 10 characters; 35 minutes; for puppets. ● 75c

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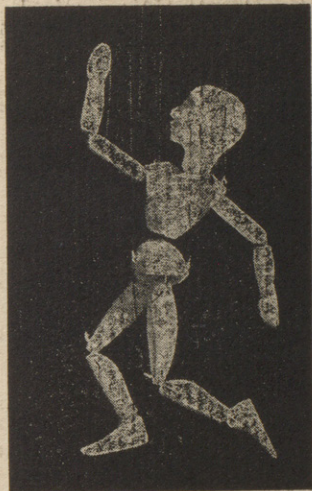
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