

Heather Lynn

Based on the comic opera *La Guida di Braggia* by Lewis Carroll

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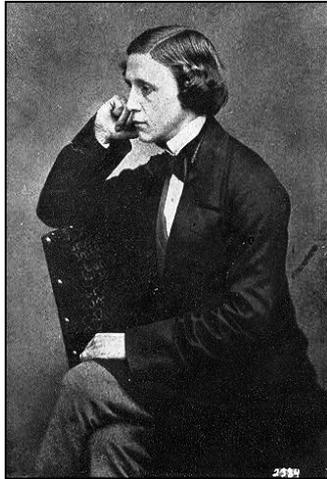
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BIG DOG PUBLISHING
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Spooney and Mooney

FARCE WITH MUSIC. Based on the comic opera/puppet play *La Guida di Bragia* by Lewis Carroll. After losing their jobs as courtiers to King John, Spooney and Mooney are hired as railway officials. At the railway station, they encounter a host of mad characters racing about losing their luggage and missing trains. This witty play features Carroll's fondness for whimsical wordplay and his love for satire. Includes parodies of the songs "There's no Luck About the House," "Ten Thousand Miles," and "Auld Lang Syne."

Performance time: Approximately 30 minutes.



Charles Lutwidge Dodgson
(1832-1898)

About the Story

English author Lewis Carroll is best known for his novels *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and its sequel *Through the Looking-Glass*. Carroll was born Charles Lutwidge Dodgson and grew up in a large family headed by his father, a country parson. At a young age, Carroll wrote poetry, short stories, and puppet plays to entertain his younger siblings. *La Guida di Bragia* is the only puppet play that has survived. Carroll's writing style is famously known for its use of wordplay, fantasy, and logic. In addition to writing and photography, Dodgson was a mathematician, logician, and deacon.

Characters

(1 M, 2 F, 6 flexible, opt. extras)

(With doubling: 1 M, 2 F, 4 flexible)

MOONEY: Disgraced courtier of King John and newly appointed railway official; flexible.

SPOONEY: Disgraced courtier of King John and newly appointed railway official; flexible.

MRS. MUDDLE: Railway passenger; female.

ORLANDO: Character from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*; male.

SOPHONISBA: Orlando's wife; heroine and daughter of a Carthaginian general; female.

LOST: Train passenger; flexible.

FOREIGNER: Incomprehensible train passenger; flexible.

MR./MRS. WEBSTER: Serious theatrical actor; flexible.

MR./MRS. FLEX MORE: Serious theatrical actor; flexible.

EXTRAS (optional): As Railway Customers.

Options for Doubling

WEBSTER/FLEX MORE (flexible)

FOREIGNER/LOST (flexible)

Setting

Railway station platform.

Set

Countryside. There is a backdrop of country scenery.

Railway station platform. There is a hanging sign that reads, "To Platform" and another hanging sign that reads, "To Booking Office."

Synopsis of Scenes

Prologue

ACT I

Scene 1: Countryside.

Scene 2: Railway station platform.

ACT II

Scene 1: Railway station platform, a short time later.

Scene 2: Railway station platform, a short time later.

ACT III

Scene 1: Railway station platform, a short time later.

Scene 2: Railway station platform, a short time later.

Epilogue

Props

2 Lanterns

Pen

Carpetbag

Piles of luggage

Sign that reads, "To Platform"

Sign that reads, "To Booking Office"

Money

Ticket

Sound Effects

Tick-tock

Sound of birds singing

Engine roar

Train whistle

Train approaching

Train departing

Music

NOTE: The use of music is optional.

"There's Nae Luck About the House," 18th-century Scottish ballad. Sheet music or music file: www.8notes.com.

"Fare Thee Well, My Own True Love" or "Ten Thousand Miles" Sheet music or music file: www.8notes.com.

"Com'e Gentil" from the opera *Don Pasquale*

"Casta Diva" from Bellini's opera *Norma*.

"Auld Lang Syne" Music and score: www.8notes.com.

"Long, Long Ago," a ballad by T. Haynes Bayley. Sheet music: <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sh eetmusic/id/28120>.

**"Oh, dear! Whatever am I to do?
Dear, whatever am I to do?
Here's all my luggridge is gone,
I haven't the least idea where to!"**

-Mrs. Muddle

Prologue

(AT RISE: Webster, a serious theatrical actor, enters.)

WEBSTER: *(To audience.)*

Shall soldiers tread the murderous path of war,
Without a notion what they do it for?
Shall merchants drive a roaring trade,
And sell the stuffs their hands have never made?
And shall not we, in this our mimic scene,
Be all that better actors e'er have been?
Why can't we have, in theatres ideal,
The good, without the evil, of the real?
To you and your applause
In humbler confidence we trust our cause.

(Blackout.)

ACT I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: In the countryside. There is a backdrop of country scenery. The stage is dark. Spooney and Mooney enter, carrying lanterns.)

MOONEY: (To Spooney.) Who's you?

SPOONEY: Why, me.

MOONEY: Nonsense, it can't be. What's your name?

SPOONEY: Oh, that's quite another question. I shan't tell.

MOONEY: Yet there is something familiar in those tones...something which recalls to my memory visions of earlier and happier days. Speak, speak! Are you not my long-lost friend...my Spooney?

SPOONEY: My Mooney! (Spooney and Mooney embrace.) Ah! The joy of this meeting. This does indeed repay me for hours of howling, days of despair, and nights of gnawing sorrow, for weeks of wailing—and, I may add—for fortnights of frowning and months of making faces. Mooney, I am happy! My friend!

MOONEY: My Spooney, there are moments—

SPOONEY: Yes, yes, Mooney! It's quite true!

MOONEY: Nonsense, Spooney! How can you talk so? I said "moments." Let me proceed...there are moments, my dear friend, when I find it impossible to express my horrid feelings!

SPOONEY: Yes, I feel it so, too! It's the same with me! There are moments when I find it impossible to press on my orange peelings!

MOONEY: Oh, Spooney, Spooney, in the gravest and saddest moments, how can you thus intrude your absurd remarks? Be sensible, Spooney!

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SPOONEY: Mooney, I will! Believe me, believe me, I will! Why do I meet you here? Have you left the King, that best and dearest of monarchs?

MOONEY: I have, my friend, yet not willingly. He dismissed me.

SPOONEY: But whatever for?

MOONEY: A mere pleasantry...an innocent joke, which a friend would have pardoned, and even he would have done so, if—. (*Slight pause.*) Spooney, did you observe lately in our dear sovereign a conspicuous alteration?

SPOONEY: I did, Mooney. I know what you allude to: his hair. Yes, Mooney, his hair became as white as...as...as... (*Can't think of anything.*) ...white.

MOONEY: True, but I did not mean his hair. Mark me well.

SPOONEY: I will.

(*Spooney takes out a pen and makes a mark on Mooney's arm.*)

MOONEY: (*Annoyed.*) The King lost his luggage, as you are aware, Spooney.

SPOONEY: (*Nods.*) He did.

MOONEY: And with his luggage, Spooney, he lost his temper!

SPOONEY: Woe is me! Woe is me! Are you sure of it?

MOONEY: It happened thus: The King was sitting, surrounded by his courtiers, as usual, and was remarking in his own light way, "My clothes, my good friends, are not yet returned. They are all gone to the wash." I, standing a short distance away, remarked in an undertone, "And much they needed it." You know my habit, Spooney, of making amusing remarks.

SPOONEY: No, indeed, Mooney. You never made one yet in my recollection.

MOONEY: Well, the King turned upon me—and in a voice a pig tied by the hind leg might have envied—said, "Traitor, be gone! I renounce ye!"

SPOONEY: No! Did he really? And did you go?

MOONEY: Didn't I just!

SPOONEY: Well, I never! How very unfortunate! Do you know I was passing by the door at the moment and overheard your remark, and I thought it so good that I resolved to repeat it?!

MOONEY: You weren't such an idiot as that, were you?

SPOONEY: I was, my dear Mooney, I assure you! I went in immediately after and said, "Your Majesty has lost your luggage, have you not?" "Yes," said the King, in accents of deepest sadness, "I lost it all when...when I went to the wash." "Did your Majesty go to the wash?" I enquired. He answered, "I did." Whereupon I remarked with a smile, "And much you needed it!"

MOONEY: I never heard anything half as foolish! And what did the King say?

SPOONEY: Why, sir, he turned upon me and said in a voice that...that a pig's hind leg might have envied, "Traitor, begone! I [*pronounce*] ye!" [*"renounce"*]

MOONEY: I don't believe a word of it!

SPOONEY: But I assure you he did, and I went away immediately!

MOONEY: And since that day you have been, I suppose, adrift?

SPOONEY: Yes, my dear Mooney. But, you...what have you been doing these many years?

MOONEY: Oh, I've been... (*Sings or recites.*)

"Wandering through the wide world, seeking of my fortune;
But as I couldn't find it, I was forced to do without it.
And if you'll believe me, there was no one would receive me;
But as I never told you a lie, you've got no cause to doubt
it."

SPOONEY: How particularly nicely you do [*sing*], my dear Mooney! What kind of voice do you call yours? [*or recite*]

MOONEY: Oh, don't you know, Spooney? Why it's an alto-soprano-mezzo-tinto-basso-relievo—

SPOONEY: But is it all that, really?

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MOONEY: As sure as you're standing there.

SPOONEY: Well, that's very curious. I shouldn't have thought it.

MOONEY: Well, but now, Mooney, we must devise some plan to make our living and put an end to this... *(Sings or recites.)*

"Wandering through the wide world, seeking of my fortune;
But as I couldn't find it, I was forced to do without it.
And if you'll believe me, there was no one would receive me;
But as I never told you a lie, you've got no cause to doubt
it."

SPOONEY: Let me think awhile.

(Pause as Spooney thinks. Tick-tock is heard. Lights down. Lights up. Sound of birds singing.)

MOONEY: See, the morning breaks!

SPOONEY: Mooney! I've an idea!

MOONEY: Have you really? In all the years, my Spooney, that we have been acquainted, such an incident has never occurred before.

SPOONEY: The railway station near here has vacancies for stationmaster and for clerk. Let us apply for them. You'd better be stationmaster, as you're not so stupid as I am. You are more foolish than I, you know, my Mooney, but you're certainly not so stupid.

[END OF FREEVIEW]