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*Dramatic Publishing*





A SATIRICAL MELODRAMA

The Wild Flowering of Chastity  
or  
Chaste Across The Stage

by  
DUTTON FOSTER



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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or CHASTE ACROSS THE STAGE)

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THE WILD FLOWERING OF CHASTITY  
or CHASTE ACROSS THE STAGE  
*A Satirical Melodrama*  
For Four Men and Four Women

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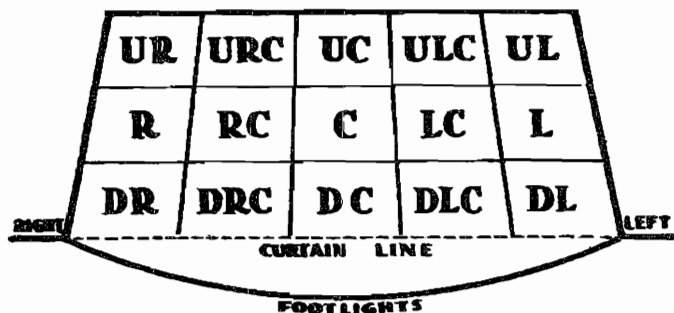
CHARACTERS

AUNT ABSINTHE . . . . . *Chastity's aged aunt*  
CHASTITY WILDFLOWER . . *Innocent young maiden*  
DESMOND DARKACRE . . . . . *The villain*  
HENRY HOMEWARD . . . . *A kindly senile banker*  
MELODY BOPEEP . . . *Chastity's long-lost sister*  
TERENCE TRUELUNG . . . . . *The hero*  
VIOLET NIGHTSHADE . . *Chastity's oldest sister*  
SHERIFF TINFOIL . . . . . *Upholder of justice*

PLACE: *Living room of humble mountain home.*

TIME: *June.*

## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



## STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

**NOTE:** Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

## PROPERTIES

### GENERAL:

Living Room: What-not shelf with large bottle of cough syrup on it, rocking chair, another chair, rug on floor, headlight beam as from a train.

### PERSONAL:

AUNT ABSINTHE: Large bowl and spoon.

CHASTITY: Basket containing flower petals, feather duster, dyed Easter Egg, regular egg.

DESMOND: Hat, section of railroad tracks, several lengths of rope, handkerchief (gag).

MELODY: Bundle of wet blankets to give illusion of a bundled baby.

VIOLET: Pint flask of "whiskey" in handbag.

SHERIFF TINFOIL: Two guns, shiny badge, clump of sagebrush, hat, document.

TERENCE: Belt.

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## The Wild Flowering of Chastity

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SCENE: The humble living room of Aunt Absinthe's home in the mountains. The door leading outside is R, and the door leading to the kitchen is L. There is a rocking chair DC, a window UC, and another chair near the closet door UR. There is also a what-not shelf DR upon which is a large bottle of cough syrup.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: We hear bird noises offstage. AUNT ABSINTHE is sitting in the rocker DC, rocking and stirring with a spoon in a large bowl.)

AUNT ABSINTHE. Chas--tity! (Pause.) Chastity Wildflower! (Pause.) Come hither, child, and hearken unto the songs of the birdies! (Louder bird noises.) Chastity! Chastity Wildflower! Come hither, child, and hearken unto the songs of the birdies! (Raucous bird noises.) Chas--tity! Chastity Wildflower! (Pause.) I'll bust your head if you don't hearken unto these birdies pronto! (AUNT ABSINTHE rocks furiously.)

(Enter CHASTITY R, strewing flower petals from a basket as she crosses to LC.)

CHASTITY. Goodie morning, dear Auntie Absinthe! How healthy you look today! What a relief that you did not pass away in your sleep! (CHASTITY moves DR dusting with a feather duster.)

AUNT ABSINTHE. Nonsense, child, I'm as hearty as the day I---- (Rocks over backward; lies still.)

CHASTITY (not noticing). Your heartiness is my happiness, dear Auntie! For you are all I have left in the world, you know! My dear older sister Violet Nightshade left home to become a--giggle--wicked city woman! And my dear younger sister Melody Bopeep left home to pursue the tall dark stranger who loved her and--sob--left her! (Bird noises.) Hark, hark, a lark! (Crow noises.) Or could it be a little song-sparrow? (Pause.) Can you hear it, dear Auntie? Dear Auntie? Dear Auntie! (Turns.) O gasp! O groan! O gag! Whatever shall become of me now? To whom shall I turn in this cruel world? (Picks up chair and AUNT ABSINTHE, who does not stir, and kneels beside chair.) Oh, may the Powers Above send me a sign! (Pause. AUNT ABSINTHE begins to stir with spoon in bowl.) Oh, she stirs! She stirs! Bless me with a word, dear Auntie!

AUNT ABSINTHE. Cough syrup! Pronto!

CHASTITY. Never fear! I shall fetch it like the wind! Like the wind! (Floats over to what-not shelf DR, and returns with a large bottle.) Shall I pour you a spoonful, dear Auntie?

AUNT ABSINTHE. Spoonful, schmoonful! (Takes a long pull from bottle.) Ahhh! Dash bedder! Tell me, child--hiccup--have you sold enough Easter Eggs to meet today's mortgage payment?

CHASTITY. Alas, dear Auntie, June seems to be another slow month in the Easter Egg business! Although I have dyed my eggs even more gaily than usual--(Shows an egg.)--we nevertheless--to be sure--that is--so to speak--have no



money!

AUNT ABSINTHE. No money! My, my! What a drag! But never fear, our old friend Henry Homeward the Banker will never evict us from our humble premises! Ten times already, he has stumbled in vain up the steep and winding mountain path! Today will be the eleventh, and surely he will once again give us a break!

CHASTITY. Surely, because we are pure, humble, and innocent--not to mention white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant--the Powers Above will bless us all our lives! (Bird noises.) This morning, for instance, the Powers Above have furnished both sunshine and birdies! (Thunderous knocking off R.)

AUNT ABSINTHE. We may have sunshine just now, child, but I hear thunder in the offing!

CHASTITY. Thunder? (Knocking.) Nonsense, dear Auntie, that's only a knock at our humble door! (Knocking.) Who can it be?

AUNT ABSINTHE. Kindly old Henry Homeward, the Banker, never knocks so early! (Knocking.)

CHASTITY. Nor so loudly!

AUNT ABSINTHE. And kindly young Terence Truelung, your intended, never knocks at all, but bursts in like a breath of fresh air!

CHASTITY. Oh, Auntie, must you tease me so about--giggle--dear Terence? (Knocking.) But who can be at the door? Who indeed? Where lies the answer?

AUNT ABSINTHE. The answer, dear child, may well lie outside the door!

CHASTITY. I have an idea! What if I were to fly like the wind to the door, and--gasp--open it?

AUNT ABSINTHE. Do as you think best, child!

(CHASTITY opens door R, half-hiding behind it.)

(Enter DESMOND DARKACRE. He sidles DC, not noticing CHASTITY.)

DESMOND (aside). The plot thickens, heh-heh-heh! (Doffs his hat to AUNT ABSINTHE.) Greetings and salubriations, dear madam! Forgive my untimely intrusion! I was led to believe that an old widow lived here, not a handsome young wench--(Kisses her hand.) --such as you!

AUNT ABSINTHE. You are too kind, dear sir!

DESMOND (aside). How right she is! I can't stand being civil! (To her.) Allow me to introduce myself, madam! Desmond Darkacre, at your service! (Aside.) At my service, I should say, heh-heh-heh!

AUNT ABSINTHE. Do stop mumbling, dear sir, and tell us what brings you to our happy, albeit humble, home on this sunny, albeit partly cloudy, morning!

DESMOND. Us? Our? Did you say our, dear madam? (Spies CHASTITY peeking from behind the door.) Aha! What have we here? What fair flower of spring is this? (Aside.) A flower, I'll wager, ripe for plucking! (Draws her out by the hand.) And what--chuckle--is your name, little girl?

CHASTITY. I am Chastity Wildflower!

DESMOND. I like your last name, my dear!

CHASTITY. I am a fair and innocent young maiden!

DESMOND. Leave everything to me! (Aside.) She makes me writhe with depraved excitement! (To AUNT ABSINTHE.) But I

must come to the point! I am prepared to offer you five hundred thousand dollars for your humble home!

AUNT ABSINTHE. This shack?

CHASTITY. Auntie!

AUNT ABSINTHE. This humble home?

DESMOND. None other, dear lady!

AUNT ABSINTHE. How nice! But why, dear sir, might so elegant a gentleman desire so humble a home?

DESMOND. 'Twas just a passing whim, dear lady! 'Twas just the rustic charm of your little mountain hideaway! (Aside.) 'Twas just my recent discovery of gold, silver, nickel, lead, plutonium, oil, and buried treasure beneath --chuckle--this very room! (To AUNT ABSINTHE.) You appear to hesitate, madam! Would you consider seven hundred grand--er--thousand?

CHASTITY. Oh, Auntie, at last our fortune is made! We shall be rich and wealthy forever! Forever! And Ever! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

AUNT ABSINTHE. Silence, child! Don't you know that old aunties in melodramas never sell the family home to tall, dark strangers?

DESMOND (aside). Curses! Thwarted again! But wait! Since the old fool won't sell, I'm free to use devious means! I love devious means! They make me feel good all over! And now to concoct a master plan of diabolical cunning!

AUNT ABSINTHE. But I must certainly thank you, dear sir, with all my heart!

DESMOND (aside). But I must certainly get rid of you, dear battle-axe, with all due speed!

CHASTITY. You are truly a kindly man!

DESMOND (aside). You are truly a desirable

wench! I must seize you as remorselessly  
as I seize your property, heh-heh-heh!  
(Feeble knocking off R.)

CHASTITY. Goodness, dear Auntie, I detect the  
feeble knock of kindly but senile old Henry  
Homeward!

AUNT ABSINTHE. Alas, he comes in vain for the  
mortgage payment! Let him in, child, lest  
he perish of exposure on the doorstep!  
(CHASTITY opens door R.)

(Enter HENRY HOMEWARD, tottering into room.)

HENRY. Greetings, Absinthe! (Falls headlong  
to floor.)

AUNT ABSINTHE. Greetings, Henry! (Shouts.)  
Did you have a pleasant trudge up the steep  
and winding mountain path?

HENRY (getting up). Pleasant? I damn near fell off!

CHASTITY. Oooooo, my innocent ears! (Swoons  
into DESMOND'S arms.)

DESMOND. Chuckle! Fate is playing into my  
unscrupulous, not to mention well-manicured,  
hands!

CHASTITY (recovering). I dreamt I was Queen of  
the May in my--what? Gasp! Do I perceive  
my frail body in the arms of--a man? Eeeek!  
Shout! Yell! (She continues to caterwaul.  
DESMOND, disgusted, puts her in chair UR.)

AUNT ABSINTHE. Do shut up, child! (Pause.  
CHASTITY shuts up.) Henry, I have sorry  
news for your aged ears! Once again, we  
cannot meet the mortgage!

HENRY. Meat and porridge? Thanks, Absinthe,  
I've already et!

AUNT ABSINTHE. Meet the mortgage!