

Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing



Professor, How Could You!



Comedy
by
Anne Coulter Martens



The Dramatic Publishing Company

© The Dramatic Publishing Company

Professor, How Could You!

Comedy. Cast: 5m., 5w. The Professor has been offered a deanship — if he marries. Everyone tries to help. His friend John offers his curly-headed secretary. She can't spell but she'd make a wonderful wife! Grandma's rather plump candidate makes a great lemon chiffon pie. Vicky backs a southern charmer who makes a fool of every man she meets. As the candidates begin to "console" themselves in other places, the Professor finds... Vicky! *One int. set.*

ISBN: 0-87129-874-0

Code: P39



Printed on Recycled Paper

© The Dramatic Publishing Company

A Farce in Three Acts
by
ANNE COULTER MARTENS

Professor, How
Could You!



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

***- NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalogue and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING
P. O. Box 129, Woodstock, Illinois 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT *THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES*. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication, and reading are reserved. *On all programs this notice should appear:*

"Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois"

©MCMXXXIX by
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY
©Renewed MCMLXVII by
ANNE COULTER MARTENS

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(PROFESSOR, HOW COULD YOU!)

ISBN 0-87129-874-0

Professor, How Could You!

A Farce in Three Acts

FOR FIVE MEN AND FIVE WOMEN

CHARACTERS

KEATS PERRY.....*a young professor*
VICKY RANDOLPH.....*the bane of his life*
GRANDMA PERRY.....*an obliging soul*
GRANDPA PERRY.....*an innocent bystander*
JOHN APPLEBY.....*a helpful friend*
PRISCILLA MORLEY.....*a sweet young thing*
TOOTSIE BEAN.....*a plump spinster*
BUTCHER BOY BEAN.....*her big brother*
VALERIE WHITMAN.....*a Southern charmer*
BOGGINS.....*the sporting butler*
THREE YOUNG CHILDREN.....*extras, who do not speak*

PLACE: *The library of the Perry home in a college town.*

TIME: *The present. Spring.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE: *Eight o'clock on a Thursday evening.*

ACT TWO: *Eight o'clock on a Friday evening.*

ACT THREE: *Eight o'clock on a Saturday evening.*

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

GRANDPA: He is an alert, chipper little man of sixty, with gray hair and a trim little beard. In Acts One and Three he wears dark trousers, a smoking jacket, and house slippers. In Act Two he wears a neat dark suit.

BOGGINS: He is about forty, and inclined to baldness, a respectful servant, but also one who feels that his opinions count. He speaks with an English accent. He wears the conventional black of a butler.

GRANDMA: She is a sweet, white-haired woman of sixty, rather like a fussy little hen. She wears a pretty blue dress and a little shoulder cape in Acts One and Three. In Act Two she may wear a dinner gown.

VICKY: She is about twenty, an audacious, spirited girl, quick in her enthusiasms and in anger. In Act One she wears a sweater and skirt and a sports coat, but no hat. In Act Two she wears an attractive dinner dress, and her hair is arranged in a more grown-up fashion. In Act Three she wears a bright sports dress and coat.

JOHN: He is a clean-cut, likeable young fellow of twenty-five. He has a breezy manner, and goes in for quite a bit of back-slapping and good-natured boisterousness. He is quite confident that he is impervious to the fair sex. He wears a sports suit in Acts One and Three. In Act Two he may wear a tuxedo. As Lulu, in Act Three, he wears a frilly dress, a tight-fitting coat, a black curly wig, a gorgeously beflowered hat perched rakishly on his head, silk stockings, and high-heeled pumps that are too small for him.

KEATS: He is a good-looking young man in his middle twenties. He has been a little spoiled by his grandmother, and by his early success in his profession. He knows much more about history than he does about life, and about women he

knows nothing at all and cares less. In Act One he wears a dark suit. A scarf is wound several times around his neck. In Act Two he may wear a tuxedo. On his first appearance in Act Three he wears a flannel bathrobe, and slippers on his bare feet. Later he wears the same dark suit he wore in Act One.

PRISCILLA: She is a sweet girl of nineteen with a childish, appealing manner. In Act Two she wears a pretty dinner gown. In Act Three she wears a spring suit and hat.

VALERIE: She is about twenty, and pretty in a languid, appealing way. She speaks with a Southern accent. Valerie is a heartless flirt. In Act Two she wears a smart dinner gown. In Act Three she wears a good-looking spring outfit.

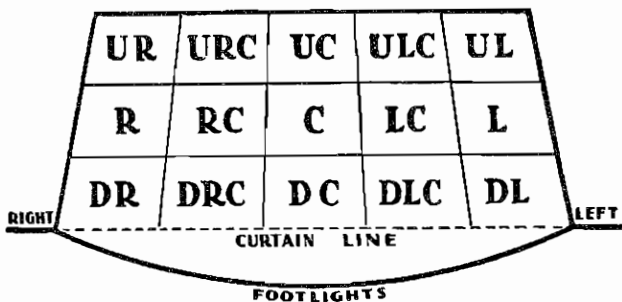
TOOTSIE: She is about twenty-eight, decidedly plump, coy, and giggly. Her greatest fear is that she may be an old maid, and she is overly-grateful for attention from any man. In Act Two she wears a rather frumpy dinner gown. She probably made it herself. In Act Three she wears a print dress, a light coat, and an elaborately decorated hat.

BUTCHER BOY: He is about twenty-two, built on a massive scale, and has a very pugnacious air. He wears a loud suit, a bright necktie and shirt, and a hat too small for his head.

THREE YOUNG CHILDREN: They are eight, seven, and six, or thereabouts. They range like steps, and are attractively dressed. These are just bit parts occurring for one short scene in Act Three. They do not have any specific lines to memorize, and merely ad lib remarks as they go out.

NOTE: It is not necessary to have the characters dress formally for the dinner party in Act Two. The men may wear business suits, while the women may wear informal party dresses.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS

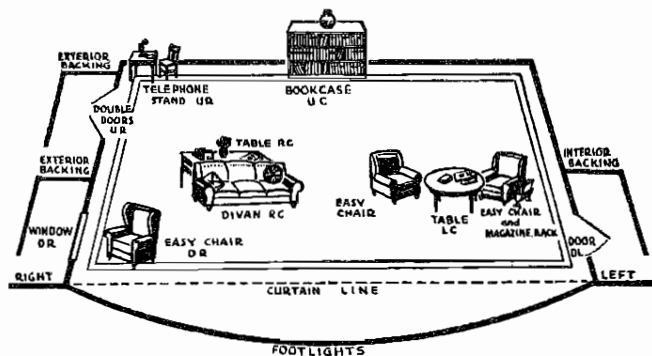


STAGE POSITIONS

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: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, 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 considerable time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

STAGE CHART



PERSONAL PROPERTIES

GRANDPA: Crossword puzzle, pencil, bills in billfold, pad and pencil.

GRANDMA: Workbag containing crochet work.

KEATS: Muffler, towel, suitcase.

BOGGINS: House slippers (Keats's); smoking jacket (Keats's); books, supposedly containing crossword puzzles; bills and change, in pocket; poem on a piece of paper; piece of pie.

VICKY: Wrist watch, bill in purse, handkerchief, evening bag, poem on a piece of paper.

JOHN: Bill in billfold, newspaper.

TOOTSIE: Evening bag, poem on a piece of paper (given to her by Boggins), old-fashioned suitcase, pastry box containing a pie.

PRISCILLA: Evening bag, poem on a piece of paper (given to her by John), small traveling bag.

VALERIE: Evening bag, poem on a piece of paper (given to her by Vicky), small traveling bag.

Act One

SCENE: *The library of the Perry home in a small college town.*

It is attractively and comfortably furnished, a room that reflects the good taste and the intelligence of the people living there. In the R wall, upstage, are double doors opening on to a side porch and a garden beyond. In the L wall, downstage, is a door leading to the rest of the house. There is a nicely-curtained window below the double doors U R. Before the window is a large overstuffed wing chair. Above the door U R, in the U R corner of the room, are a small telephone stand and stool. On the stand are a telephone, pad, and a pencil. Right of C stage is a small divan with a table behind it. On the table are a table runner, books between book ends, various periodicals, and a vase of fresh spring flowers. On the divan are several cushions. Left of C stage is a small round table with easy chairs on either side of it. Left of the chair left of this table is a magazine rack filled with magazines. More books and magazines may be on the table L C. Against the rear wall, U C, is a large bookcase filled with books. On top of the bookcase is a large pottery jar. Several good pictures adorn the walls, and on the floor is a soft, rich rug.]

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *It is eight o'clock on a Thursday evening in spring. GRANDPA PERRY is sitting in the chair right of the table L C doing a crossword puzzle. He is an alert, chipper little man of sixty, with gray hair and a trim little beard. He wears dark trousers, a smoking jacket, and house slippers. Back of the table, peering over his left shoulder, stands BOGGINS, the English butler. BOGGINS is about forty, and inclined to baldness, a respectful servant, but also one who feels that his opinions count. He and GRANDPA are on excellent terms, although BOGGINS always maintains a formal attitude. He wears the conventional black of a butler.]*

BOGGINS [*bending over the puzzle*]. If I may point out, sir, you seem to have struck a snag on number fourteen, sir. A four-letter word meaning Egyptian goddess.

GRANDPA. H'm. Never did have time to get acquainted with those Egyptian girls. I leave that to my grandson.

BOGGINS. If I may suggest, sir, it's Isis. I-s-i-s.

GRANDPA [*writing in the word*]. Bless my buttons, so it is! Now, if we could get this one about the extinct bird, we'd have it done.

[GRANDMA PERRY comes in D L. *She is a sweet, white-haired woman of sixty, rather like a fussy little hen. She wears a pretty blue dress and a little shoulder cape. She carries her crocheting in a workbag on her arm.*]

GRANDMA [*coming to left of the table L C*]. Grandpa, Keats forgot to wear his overshoes! And I reminded him twice before he went out.

BOGGINS. Three times, if I may say so.

GRANDMA. Was it? I declare, I don't know what to do about that boy.

GRANDPA [*half to himself*]. Let me see. An extinct bird. [To GRANDMA.] Now, Grandma, I wouldn't fret about the boy's overshoes. He'll get along.

GRANDMA [*sighing*]. I'm so afraid he'll catch his death of cold. You know how these damp spring days are. [*She is suddenly embarrassed for fear of being misunderstood.*] Dear me, I didn't mean that the way it sounded. [*She crosses R C, sits on the divan, and takes out a tie she is crocheting for KEATS.*] I wonder if he wore his muffler. Did you notice, Grandpa?

GRANDPA. Can't say that I did. [*Concentrating on the puzzle.*] Extinct bird. Extinct bird. H'm.

GRANDMA. Boggins, did you notice if the professor wore his muffler?

BOGGINS. Yes, madam, he did. I made a point of reminding him that you had reminded him of it.

GRANDMA. You know how subject he is to sore throats.

GRANDPA. Keats never had a sore throat in his life. Never had any kind of a pain in his neck. But sometimes he gives one to other people. [*He rubs his own neck ruefully.*]

GRANDMA. What a way to talk about your only grandson! I've always been so careful with him. [*She sighs.*] I suppose you think I'm an old dodo.

BOGGINS [*excitedly*]. That's it, sir!

GRANDPA. What's what?

BOGGINS. Dodo, sir. An extinct bird.

GRANDPA [*gleefully*]. So it is! [*He writes in the word on the puzzle.*] There, we've finished it. Trouble is, they don't come hard enough.

BOGGINS. I sent for a new book of crosswords, sir, and I'll be glad to try them with you. I have it out in the kitchen now.

GRANDPA. I knew you wouldn't fail me, Boggins.

BOGGINS. No, sir. They're pretty tricky, sir.

GRANDMA. Keats ought to be back soon. I wonder what the Dean wanted to see him about.

GRANDPA. Some college affairs, I suppose.

GRANDMA. Dear me, I hope Keats hasn't gotten himself into trouble. You know how quick-tempered he is.

GRANDPA. You forget he's not a little boy any more. The Dean isn't going to spank him.

GRANDMA. Gracious, I should say not, with Keats a full-fledged professor of ancient history. [*Proudly.*] His classes at the college are crowded.

BOGGINS. Mostly by young ladies, madam, so Cook informs me.

GRANDMA [*mildly shocked*]. I'm sure Keats doesn't like that. He doesn't approve of modern girls.

GRANDPA. I wish Keats knew a little more about modern girls and a little less about ancient ones. Now, in my day a young fellow didn't shut himself up between the pages of a history book. No, sir! He got out and raised a little——

GRANDMA [*reprovingly*]. Grandpa!

GRANDPA [*ending a bit weakly*]. Raised a little dust, that's what he did. Kicked up his heels.

BOGGINS. Right you are, sir. I was a dashing cove myself in my young days.

GRANDPA. There's a lot of dash left in the two of us yet, eh, Boggins? [*He gives BOGGINS a sly wink.*]

BOGGINS. You bet your boots there is, sir, if I may use a bit of slang. I've still half a mind to get married, sir, if I ever meet the right girl.

[*The doorbell rings offstage L.*]

BOGGINS. Just a moment, sir.

[*BOGGINS goes out D L.*]

GRANDMA. I'm sure Keats didn't expect any company tonight. I distinctly heard him say he was going to work on his book about Cleopatra.

GRANDPA [*mildly vicious*]. That mummy!

[*BOGGINS ushers VICKY RANDOLPH in D L. She is about twenty, the type of modern girl whom KEATS dislikes, audacious and spirited, quick in her enthusiasms and in anger. She wears a sweater and skirt and a sports coat, but no hat. At the moment she is in low spirits.*]

BOGGINS [*pausing above the door D L.*]. A young person to see the professor, sir.

[*BOGGINS goes out D L.*]

GRANDPA [*rising*]. So you want to see my grandson, do you?

VICKY [*pausing just inside the doorway*]. I didn't say I *wanted* to see him. But I've got to.

GRANDMA. Won't you sit down, dear? We expect the professor back any moment. He has gone to see the Dean.

VICKY [*apprehensively*]. About me?

GRANDMA. Dear me, I don't think so. You're Vicky Randolph, aren't you? I've seen you at some of the college teas.

VICKY. Yes. I'm Vicky Randolph. And I'll stand, thanks. I'm too thoroughly and absolutely mad to sit down.

GRANDPA. Not mad at Keats, are you?

VICKY [*explosively*]. Yes!

GRANDMA. Why, Vicky! Take off your coat, dear. It's warm in here.

VICKY [*taking off her coat and laying it on the back of the chair left of the table L C*]. Even if he is your grandson, I can't help what I think of him. He's the most conceited, arrogant, disagreeable—Oh, what's the use! I said all that to him in class this afternoon. That's why I'm here.

GRANDPA. To say it again? Well, bless my buttons!

VICKY. No. [*She sighs.*] To apologize to him. He said if I didn't apologize before tomorrow morning, I'd have to drop his course. And if I do that I can't graduate this June.

GRANDPA [*with mock sternness*]. So you insulted your teacher, eh, young lady?

VICKY [*righteously*]. He insulted me first. I had written a beautiful theme—perfectly beautiful—proving that Cleopatra was an old, two-timing stick-in-the-mud, and that modern women are so much cleverer, and——

GRANDPA. And he didn't like it? Cleopatra is quite a favorite of his.

VICKY. He said I was a presumptuous little snip, without a sensible idea in my head.

GRANDMA. Keats should be more polite. I must speak to him about it.

GRANDPA. Then you started in with the arrogant, conceited, disagreeable part, I suppose?

VICKY. It was when he said I was showing off because I had an attention complex that I let him have it.

GRANDMA [*vaguely*]. Let him have what, dear?

VICKY [*smiling grimly*]. A bottle of ink—right in the face!

GRANDMA. Gracious me!

GRANDPA. You mean to stand there and tell me you threw a bottle of ink at my grandson and hit him in the face with it?

VICKY. No, worse luck! I missed him.

GRANDPA [*shaking his head*]. Tut, tut, young lady, I'm sorry to hear it.

VICKY. Oh, you are?

GRANDPA [*quickly*]. Sorry you missed him. A little ink in the face might wake Keats up.

GRANDMA. Why, Grandpa!

VICKY. He ducked. [*She sighs.*] Dad would be ashamed of me if he knew my aim was so poor. Dad's the fastest trigger man in northern Montana—where I come from. [*There is a slight pause.*] When did you say you expected the professor back? [*She crosses nervously back of the table and over to the double doors U R and glances out into the garden.*]

GRANDPA. Any time now.

[*The doorbell rings again offstage L. There is a pause.*]

BOGGINS [*offstage L*]. How-do-you-do, Mr. Appleby?

JOHN [*offstage L*]. Never mind, Boggins, I'll announce myself.

BOGGINS [*offstage L*]. But it's not customary, sir, if I may say so.

[*JOHN APPLEBY enters D L, followed by a protesting BOGGINS. JOHN is a clean-cut, likeable young fellow of twenty-five. He has a breezy manner, and goes in for quite a bit of back-slapping and good-natured boisterousness. He is quite confident that he is impervious to the fair sex. He wears a sports suit.*]

JOHN [*slapping BOGGINS on the back*]. Don't bother, Boggins, old boy! I'm already in.

[*BOGGINS coughs, winces, and steps out of JOHN'S reach as quickly as he can.*]

BOGGINS. Very good, sir.

[*BOGGINS goes out D L again.*]

JOHN [*breezily, coming C stage*]. Greetings and salutations, Mrs. Perry!

GRANDMA. Good evening, John.

JOHN [*turning and beginning to pump GRANDPA'S hand vigorously*]. How are you, Mr. Perry! How are you!

GRANDPA [*tenderly manipulating the hand JOHN has shaken*].

Glad to get my hand back in one piece. [*He sits as before.*]

JOHN. Keats around?

GRANDMA. Keats is at the Dean's office, but he'll be back soon.

[*Nodding toward VICKY.*] This young lady is waiting to see him.

VICKY [*coming D R.*]. John and I are old friends. Our dads went to school together.

JOHN. So—Vicky Randolph! Calling on dear teacher, are you?

[*In a mocking singsong.*] Vicky loves her tea-cher! Vicky loves her tea-cher!

VICKY [*indignantly*]. I think he's poison, and you know it. But

I've got to apologize because I threw a bottle of ink at him.

[*She turns abruptly and gazes out the window D R.*]

JOHN. Sissy! I thought you told me it was a dictionary. [*He perches on the left arm of the divan.*]

VICKY [*whirling about*]. That was last week, after school. He

just walked away and pretended not to notice. But this afternoon he got good and mad, so I've got to apologize.

JOHN. Serves you right, my sweet. Keats is too swell a guy to have a little snip like you——

VICKY [*through her teeth*]. Now, my pet, don't you start in on me. I've stood enough. [*She turns abruptly to face the window.*]

JOHN. Am I glad I make my humble living in an office and not in a classroom! One afternoon with you and I'd turn gray.

VICKY [*sweetly*]. No, you wouldn't, John. I'd like to have you

for a teacher. But Professor Perry hates me. [*Quickly, as she glances out the window.*] He's coming up the walk now! [*To*

GRANDMA.] Do you mind if I go in the garden while John gets him into a good humor? If I do apologize, I want to make sure it works.

GRANDMA. Of course. Dear me, I do hope Keats hasn't got his feet wet.

[VICKY hurries out U R. KEATS PERRY comes in D L. He is a good-looking young man in his middle twenties, conservatively dressed. He has been a little spoiled by his grandmother, and by his early success in his profession. He knows much more about history than he does about life, and about women he knows nothing at all and cares less. He wears a dark suit. He has evidently removed his topcoat and hat, but his muffler is wound several times about his neck.]

KEATS [*in an annoyed tone, coming c*]. I won't do it! I won't! He should have known better than to ask me. [*He takes off his muffler and throws it on the divan.*]

GRANDMA. Won't what, Keats dear? And don't you see that John is here?

KEATS [*perfunctorily*]. Hello, John. Glad to see you.

JOHN [*rising, slapping him on the back*]. Hi-ya, old man! What's on your mind? The Dean bawl you out?

GRANDMA [*rising, hovering near KEATS like a fussy little hen*]. Keatsie dear, are your feet damp? You forgot your overshoes, and I told you— you know I did——

KEATS [*impatiently*]. My feet are all right, Grandma. [*To JOHN.*] Of course he didn't bawl me out. But I told him I won't do it. Why, the whole idea is preposterous. Simply preposterous.

GRANDPA. What idea?

KEATS. Dean Smithers is retiring this month.

JOHN. What's preposterous about that? He's an old man.

KEATS. The idea is, he says the board is considering me as the new Dean.

GRANDMA. Isn't that marvelous! I always knew they would appreciate how clever you are.

GRANDPA. Too smart for his own good, I sometimes think.

GRANDMA [*reprovingly*]. Grandpa! [*To KEATS.*] Sit down, Keatsie dear, and take your shoes off. I'm sure your feet are wet.

[KEATS *allows* GRANDMA to guide him to the divan, where he sits down. Then GRANDMA hustles out D L.]

JOHN. Say, that's great news, old man. You'll accept, of course?

KEATS. No! You haven't heard all of it yet.

GRANDPA. A string or two attached, eh?

KEATS. Decidedly.

JOHN. Let's hear it. Maybe I can straighten things out for you.

[GRANDMA comes in D L, followed by BOGGINS. BOGGINS carries a pair of house slippers. They cross to KEATS on the divan.]

KEATS. He said it's quite unusual to select a man of my age, but they think I'm steady and dependable.

GRANDMA. So you are, dear, if only you would remember your overshoes. [To BOGGINS.] Take off his shoes, Boggins, and put on his slippers. I declare, he can't do a thing for himself.

BOGGINS. Very good, madam.

[BOGGINS kneels beside KEATS and begins to remove his shoes. KEATS ignores him and goes on talking.]

KEATS. Of course, he knows that some of the girls in my classes have been a little silly, writing me notes and leaving flowers, and such. Little fools! Not that he blames me in the least.

BOGGINS [*having put on one slipper*]. Now the other foot, sir.

KEATS [*holding out his other foot*]. Well, the upshot was, he says they want a married man for Dean, and I can have the job if I get myself a wife.

JOHN. What!

KEATS [*bitterly*]. Imagine that! Me—with a wife. He knows what I think of modern girls. I told him I positively will not consider getting married.

JOHN. Hey, now wait a minute! You didn't turn him down?

KEATS [*firmly*]. I did. But he said he felt sure I'd change my mind. So they're keeping the offer open for three days.

BOGGINS [*standing up*]. There you are, sir.

GRANDMA. And now get his smoking jacket. Boggins. I want him to be comfortable.

BOGGINS. Very good, madam.

[BOGGINS goes out D L with KEATS'S shoes.]

GRANDPA. What's so difficult about getting married? Can't find a girl who'll say yes, is that it?

GRANDMA. Why, Grandpa, you know the girls all like Keatsie. They'd all marry him if he asked them.

GRANDPA. Serve him right if they all did. [He chuckles.]

JOHN. Now, look here, Keats. You're a fool if you refuse this offer. Why not be sensible, pick out some nice girl, and settle down?

KEATS. Never!

JOHN. Why not? You're the type. You like a woman to fuss over you. You just lap it up.

KEATS [indignantly]. I do not!

JOHN [laughing]. Oh, no? How about this slipper episode? Your feet were no more damp than mine are. Now—me—I'm just the opposite. The girl doesn't live who can outsmart me. I'm a wary old fox, I am. I can get along without 'em! [He smiles confidently.]

KEATS. I tell you, no woman is going to complicate my life. [He rises and walks over to the window D R.] I have my work to think of, my book to finish. A modern girl would drive me crazy. What do they think of? Permanents and powder puffs! [His tone grows more heated.] They titter and giggle if a man so much as looks at them. Or else they're bad-tempered, spoiled little brats.

GRANDPA. Tut, tut!

KEATS [angrily]. If I had my hands on one little devil I'd shake her till her teeth rattled. What do you suppose she did today? Threw a bottle of ink at me! At me, the professor!

GRANDPA. But you ducked.

KEATS. Yes. [Quickly, surprised.] How did you know?