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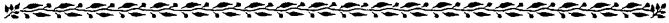
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*Dramatic Publishing*



A PLAY IN ONE ACT

O. HENRY'S

# The Cop and the Anthem

adapted for the stage

by

MARK BUCCI



*THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY*



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(THE COP AND THE ANTHEM)

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**for Dorothy Bachmann**

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**THE COP AND THE ANTHEM**  
*A Play in One Act*  
**For Five Men and Eight Women\***

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**C H A R A C T E R S**  
(In order of appearance)

**LEMUEL T. THWACKBUSHER**  
**HEAD WAITRESS**  
**SALESLADY**  
**STREET CLEANER**  
**TOUGH BOY**  
**MAN WITH UMBRELLA**  
**MOTHER**  
**LITTLE GIRL**  
**TWO WOMEN**  
**FLORABELLE**  
**OLD LADY**  
**COP(S)**

**PLACE:** New York City.

**TIME:** Just before winter, 1908.

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\*More or less, as desired. See Production  
Notes, page 33.

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## The Cop and the Anthem

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LEMUEL T. THWACKBUSER, a somewhat seedy-looking man of indeterminate age, is lying on a park bench, a newspaper blanketing him against the chilly evening. A few leaves have fallen on the bench; one is perched on his nose. He stirs, takes hold of the leaf and rises to a seated position, achieving some degree of tatty dignity. (NOTE: This role may be played like W. C. Fields, or not.)

LEMUEL (looking at the leaf). Ah, yes, one of those annual calling cards. It says--("Reading" the leaf.)--"When wildgeese honk high in the night and when women without fur coats grow kind to their husbands, then, Lemuel T. Thwackbuser, make ready to leave your park bench, for the rigors of winter are upon you. Sincerely yours, Jack Frost." (He wryly tosses the leaf aside and, stirring uneasily, fiddles with his newspaper blanket.) All right, where to? A Mediterranean cruise . . . drifting in the Vesuvian Bay? Lolling under Florida skies? Or perhaps South America? (A brief Latin pose, arms up, fingers snapping.) But every year at this time, I consider how "gauche" it would be to follow the "nouveau riche" on their ostentatious trips planned to impress one another. And every year I look forward to my favorite winter resort, right here in New York. Ah, yes, Blackwell's Island. Some call it a prison, but to me it's three months of bed and board, safe from the two things that

mar this otherwise perfect city; namely the winter cold and the police. (Somewhat conspiratorial.) But the Law is an integr<sup>l</sup> part of my yearly plan, for since the police are ever anxious to make arrests and judges determined to pass sentence, all I do is commit a simple misdemeanor and afford them the eager pursuit of their duties. *Voilà*, in a trice, I'm *vvv* booked for three months on Blackwell's Island. No travel bureau could provide faster service! (Gets up, starts folding newspaper.)

And the best part is that my self-esteem remains unsullied. For by a simple arrest, I earn my winter vacation. No charity ward for Lemuel T. Thwackbusher. Besides, the Law is more benign than Philanthropy. The gifts of municipal charity are paid for in humiliation of spirit. (Throughout the following, he takes a short cigar butt from his jacket and, sticking a toothpick through it as a cigar holder, lights it.) As Caesar had his Brutus, every loaf of bread has its compensation of personal inquisition and every charity bed its toll of a bath. Obviously it's better to be a guest of the Law which, though conducted by rules, doesn't meddle unduly with a gentleman's private affairs. (He puts the newspaper on the bench and rolls the bench completely offstage R.)

Now then, how do I get arrested? The pleasantest way is to dine luxuriously at some expensive restaurant, and after declaring insolvency, be handed over quietly to a policeman. An accommodating magistrate will do the rest.

(He walks slowly in a broad circle, as if saunter-

ing into a more elegant neighborhood.)

LEMUEL (briefly feeling his chin). Clean-shaven, decent coat--(Fingering his tie.)--and this barely used gift from the Salvation Army. (Looks down at pants, which are a bit the worse for wear.) If I could be seated quickly, my top half might give a reasonable impression of affluence. A brief look at the menu and I'll order a roasted mallard duck, with a bottle of Chablis. And then Camembert, a demi-tasse and a cigar. Such a small repast won't provoke undue revenge from the management; yet it will leave me filled and happy for the journey to my winter refuge. Three months on Blackwell's Island!

(A HEAD WAITRESS, a formidable and imposing woman bristling with frosty hauteur, comes forth stage L, reservation tablet in one hand. In the other, she carries a tall potted plant, placing it left of C, and stands downstage of it. Possibly there's some tepid trio music playing softly in the background. Smoothly approaching this area, LEMUEL removes his hat, mimes entering this elegant restaurant, and approaches the HEAD WAITRESS.)