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**MRS. WIGGS  
OF THE  
CABBAGE PATCH**

**Or, A Page from the Book of Life**

**A Heart-Rending Melodrama in 3 Acts**

**by**

**TIM KELLY**

**(Based on the story by Alice Hegan Rice)**

**Dramatic Publishing Company**

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TIM KELLY

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(MRS. WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH)

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## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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“Produced by special arrangement with  
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### STORY OF THE PLAY

Here’s a riotously funny old-fashioned melodrama adapted from one of America’s classics. “Sometimes I think I’m too good to be true,” says Mrs. Wiggs as she goes about spreading sunshine to the appreciation of her neighbors and the disgust of snarling villains like Aristotle Flint, the meanest man in town, and Serafina Crumm, his partner in treachery.

A lonely but cheerful widow, Mrs. Wiggs prides herself on giving her daughters “geographical” names—Asia, Australia, Europa. Flint, for motives too nasty to reveal here, plans to throw her out into the snow for non-payment of rent. Pride prevents Mrs. Wiggs from accepting any form of assistance. Oh, what will become of her?

Can she save the unsuspecting heiress, Miss Lucy, from Flint’s evil? Will she discover Serafina’s wicked scheme for the Cabbage Patch before it’s too late? Will she save Young Richard from the lure of the bottle? Will love bloom in the patch, or only cabbages?

*Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* as a novel has delighted readers for years. The story has been turned into four movies, including one which starred W. C. Fields and Zazu Pitts. Early in this century six road companies toured a stage version for years.

Young audiences and adults will enjoy this fast-paced, laugh-a-minute version by Tim Kelly.

# MRS. WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH

## *CAST OF CHARACTERS*

(In Order Of Appearance)

ASIA, Mrs. Wiggs' daughter

AUSTRALIA, another daughter

MRS. WIGGS, too good to be true—but she is

MISS HAZY, looking for a husband—as always

ARISTOTLE FLINT, he makes an impression—when he stands on your  
foot

SERAFINA CRUMM, clever, but no heart

MISS LUCY, lovely girl, a do-gooder

ROBERT, newspaperman, in love with Miss Lucy

EUROPENA, another daughter of Mrs. Wiggs

BILLY, Mrs. Wiggs' son—coughs a lot

MRS. SCHULTZ, a neighbor

BELLE, her unruly daughter

DICK WILLIAMS, victim of John Barleycorn

BONITA, needs schoolin'

STRANGER, from out of the night

CITIZENS OF CABBAGE PATCH (optional)

(OLIO ACTS, if and as desired)

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## *SYNOPSIS OF SCENES*

Mrs. Wiggs' humble cottage, located in a spread of land known as the  
Cabbage Patch

### ACT I

Morning, years and years and years ago

### ACT II

Some days later

### ACT III

Later the same day

# MRS. WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH

## ACT I

*[SETTING: We are in the humble kitchen of Mrs. Wiggs' ramshackle cottage. Down Left is a rocking chair. Down Right is a cot or small bed with pillow and blanket. Right Center is a table with three chairs or stools. On the table, in a bowl, are three small heads of cabbage. Up Right Center is a small stove. (Consult Production Notes on suggestions to simplify stove if it should prove a problem.) Left of the stove is a basket or box containing more heads of cabbage. Up Left Center is a cabinet or utility table with cups, plates, pots, etc. Also pen, ink, paper, eyeglasses. Entrance into the kitchen from outside is Left. Exit from kitchen into other tiny rooms of the cottage is Right.]*

*AT RISE: Voices of ASIA and AUSTRALIA from Offstage Left]*

ASIA. Ma! Ma!

AUSTRALIA. It's going to be a good Thanksgiving after all, Ma!

ASIA. She's got turkey and cranberry sauce and everything! *[ASIA and AUSTRALIA hurry in from Left]* Ma, ain't it glorious news!

AUSTRALIA. Real turkey!

ASIA. Gooble, gooble, gooble.

*[Both ASIA and AUSTRALIA are young teenage girls, dressed in humble fashion. MRS. WIGGS enters from Right. Like her daughters, she's dressed in humble fashion—but neat. She wears an apron, holds a broom. Mrs. Wiggs is blessed with incurable optimism]*

MRS. WIGGS. Land sakes, daughters! What's all this hollering and excitement? *[She leans the broom against the upstage wall by the stove]*

ASIA. You ain't forgot what day this is, Ma?

MRS. WIGGS. 'Course I ain't, Asia. It's Thursday.

AUSTRALIA. Oh, Ma, this ain't no time for making jokes. It's Thanksgiving Day.

MRS. WIGGS. Your mother ain't likely to forget something as important as that. *[She plucks a cabbage from the basket by the stove]* We got a heap to be grateful for. Like this cabbage, for instance. *[With the cabbage in her grip, she steps downstage, addresses audience]*

“When upon life’s billers you are tempest tossed,  
 When you are discouraged **thinkin’** all is lost,  
 Count your many blessings, name them one by one,  
 And it will surprise you what your hope has done.”

ASIA. We surely do love it, Ma, when you talk pretty.

AUSTRALIA. Even if we don’t understand what you’re talking about.

MRS. WIGGS. We can’t mope around in idleness all day. We’ve got our Thanksgiving dinner to prepare.

ASIA. That’s what we’ve been trying to tell you about, Ma.

MRS. WIGGS. Asia, get the bucket and fetch in the water. I’ll set this cabbage to boiling.

ASIA. Oh, Ma, you’re not listening.

MRS. WIGGS. Do as I say, Asia. The bucket. [*Reluctantly, ASIA crosses Right*]

ASIA. Cabbage soup for breakfast, cabbage soup for lunch, cabbage soup for supper. [*She’s out. MRS. WIGGS calls after her*]

MRS. WIGGS. Count your blessings, Asia. We’re mighty fortunate to be living in a Cabbage Patch.

AUSTRALIA. Is that what we’re going to have for Thanksgiving—cabbage soup?

MRS. WIGGS. Get a pot and put it on the stove. [*MRS. WIGGS moves to the table, sits. With a small knife she finds on the table top, she begins to cut up the cabbage*]

AUSTRALIA. Sometimes I think I’m going to turn into a cabbage. [*She gets the pot from the cabinet or utility table and puts it on the stove top*]

MRS. WIGGS. I’ll flavor the soup with that lamb bone your brother found last week. I’ve been saving some turkey feathers. We’ll spread them around the table and make it a real holiday. Won’t that be nice?

AUSTRALIA. Ma, wouldn’t you rather have a real turkey on the table instead of just the feathers?

MRS. WIGGS. There’s nothing wrong with cabbage soup for our dinner. There’s millions and millions of folks who’d think it was a regular banquet.

AUSTRALIA. [*Aside, to audience*] I ain’t one of them. [*Steps to her mother*] Being poor ain’t the greatest thing in the world, is it, Ma?

MRS. WIGGS. We ain’t poor, Australia. When a person’s got love in the heart she don’t need money in a purse.

ASIA. [*Returns carrying a bucket*] . . . And pumpkin pie and sweet potatoes and candy pieces wrapped in colored tissue paper . . .

MRS. WIGGS. Asia, what's gotten into you?

AUSTRALIA. There's a do-gooder in the Cabbage Patch. It's Miss Lucy.

ASIA. She's giving out Thanksgiving baskets to the needy.

MRS. WIGGS. If that ain't the nicest thing I ever heard! Too bad we ain't needy. We've got our cabbage soup. [*ASIA and AUSTRALIA exchange a weary look, sigh*]

MISS HAZY'S VOICE. [*From Offstage Left*] Yoo-hoo, Mrs. Wiggs. Yoo-hoo!

MRS. WIGGS. Sounds like Miss Hazy. She promised to spruce up Europa's old dress. It's got so many patches you can't tell the original material.

ASIA. I wonder if Miss Hazy's thinking about getting a turkey.

AUSTRALIA. Miss Hazy spends most of her time thinking about getting a husband. [*ASIA and AUSTRALIA giggle*]

MRS. WIGGS. Hush up, you two.

[*MISS HAZY, a neighbor, enters. She wears a foolish-looking hat. She pretends to be years younger than she is*]

MISS HAZY. I hope I ain't interrupting nothing important.

MRS. WIGGS. [*Stands*] How nice to see you, Miss Hazy. Set yourself down. Take the rocker. It's more comfy.

MISS HAZY. Don't mind if I do. [*Crosses to rocker, sits*] I wonder if we might have a word, Mrs. Wiggs. [*Looks to girls*] It's what you might call "private."

MRS. WIGGS. You girls run along. Miss Hazy and me is going to converse some.

ASIA. Aw, Ma, can't we stay and listen?

AUSTRALIA. If Miss Hazy is going to talk about getting a husband we want to hear.

MISS HAZY. [*Embarrassed*] Oh, dear.

MRS. WIGGS. You're embarrassing Miss Hazy. Do like I tell you. Asia, fetch that water for the cabbage.

ASIA. Aw, Ma.

AUSTRALIA. Aw, Ma. [*They exit. MRS. WIGGS moves toward the rocker*]

MRS. WIGGS. This Thanksgiving holiday has got the children in a whirl. All they can think about is eating turkey.

MISS HAZY. I 'spect they get weary of eating cabbages.

MRS. WIGGS. *[To audience]* I do the best I can on the little money my son Billy brings home. He sells firewood from door to door. Up-town. Where the rich folks live.

MISS HAZY. I've gotten another letter from my admirer.

MRS. WIGGS. From the matrimonial agency?

MISS HAZY. *[She produces an envelope, holds it out]* They sent it on. *[MRS. WIGGS takes it]*

MRS. WIGGS. I'll fetch my glasses. *[She crosses to utility table and finds her glasses, crosses back to the table, sits. She puts on the glasses and takes a letter from the envelope]*

MISS HAZY. Must be a great comfort to know how to read and write and cook and keep house.

MRS. WIGGS. Mr. Wiggs taught me how to read and write. He was a great scholar.

MISS HAZY. How long since he left you and the children, Mrs. Wiggs?

MRS. WIGGS. How you talk, Miss Hazy. Mr. Wiggs didn't leave me and the children. He went out into the world to stretch his horizons. That's what he said he had to do—stretch his horizons. Any day now he'll be standing outside that door—*[Points Left]* All stretched out and happy to be home. *[Checking letter]* My, my, this does look promising. He says he's pleased to know you're a woman of property.

MISS HAZY. *[Worried]* You don't think you over-did it a bit? I mean, my property is only one-fourth acre in the Cabbage Patch.

MRS. WIGGS. I didn't go into details. Property is property.

MISS HAZY. If you say so, Mrs. Wiggs.

MRS. WIGGS. I've noticed menfolk are very attracted to women of property. Fetch me paper, pen and ink, Miss Hazy. We must answer your admirer—*[Checks signature]* "Bullmoose." *[MISS HAZY stands, moves to utility table and gets a bottle of ink and a pen, crosses to table and sets them down. Then she returns to utility table and gets a sheet of paper and an envelope, returns to table, sits. Dialogue through this blocking]* Mighty peculiar how the agency don't want no one to know a real name 'til it's time for signing the marriage contract. I 'spect that's to make sure they get their money.

MISS HAZY. Somehow I never figured I'd have to write to a matrimonial agency to find a husband. A sweet young thing like myself.

MRS. WIGGS. Remember my motto, Miss Hazy. Mr. Wiggs taught it to me. *[Hand up for emphasis]*

“They well deserve to have,  
That know the strongest and surest way to get.”

*[Shift in mood]* You’re not as young as you think, Miss Hazy. If I’m going to catch you a husband I have to bait the trap with something sweet. Property’s a good start. *[The letter]* Hmmmmmm.

MISS HAZY. What’s wrong?

MRS. WIGGS. He wants to know if you’re fifteen or sixteen? *[Long pause]*

MISS HAZY. Tell him I’m pushing eighteen.

MRS. WIGGS. Yes, but from which direction? I’ll make it seventeen. *[Starts to write, looks closely at Miss Hazy]* And a half. *[Looks again]* Three quarters. *[MRS. WIGGS writes away]*

MISS HAZY. I have a feeling this isn’t going to work.

MRS. WIGGS. You need more sparkle, Miss Hazy.

MISS HAZY. I ’spect.

MRS. WIGGS. More self-confidence.

MISS HAZY. True. The only time I walk around the Cabbage Patch with my head up is when I have a stiff neck.

MRS. WIGGS. I’ve writ that you have your own business.

MISS HAZY. A little sewing and mending.

MRS. WIGGS. That you’re a wonderful crook. *[Crosses out the letter “R”]* A wonderful “cook.”

MISS HAZY. Where there’s smoke, there I am—cooking.

MRS. WIGGS. You’ve got to learn how to depreciate yourself more, Miss Hazy. When a woman depreciates herself, men notice.

MISS HAZY. Years ago I could have married any man I pleased.

MRS. WIGGS. Why didn’t you?

MISS HAZY. I never pleased one. Maybe nature intends for me to be an old maid.

MRS. WIGGS. Now, now, Miss Hazy. No sense in you feeling like an oyster at low tide. I’m here to help.

MISS HAZY. You’re about the helpingest person I know. Always seeing what you can do to make someone else’s lot a bit easier.

MRS. WIGGS. Hush, hush, Miss Hazy. I’ll blush.

MISS HAZY. You’re too good to be true, Mrs. Wiggs.

MRS. WIGGS. *[To audience, modestly]* I know. *[Signs letter]* “Your Hopeful Pen Pal—Bunny.” *[Sighs happily]*

MISS HAZY. Don’t forget to address the envelope to the agency so they can send it on to Bullmoose.

MRS. WIGGS. No sooner said than done. [*She quickly addresses the envelope*]

MISS HAZY. I suppose I do have to be honest with myself. I'm shy about telling my true age.

MRS. WIGGS. [*To audience*] About twenty years shy.

MISS HAZY. Oh, let me seal the envelope with my girlish lips. [*MRS. WIGGS hands her the envelope. MISS HAZY kisses the flap with a loud wet smack and then, fast, licks the glue and seals the envelope shut. MRS. WIGGS takes off her reading glasses*]

FLINT'S VOICE. Mrs. Wiggs! Mrs. Wiggs! Mrs. Wiggs, are you home? [*Instantly, the two women freeze, expressions of horror and alarm cloud their faces*]

MISS HAZY. It's Mr. Flint!

MRS. WIGGS. Aristotle Flint!

MRS. WIGGS & MISS HAZY. [*Both women turn to audience*] Meanest man in the Cabbage Patch. [*MRS. WIGGS, distraught, stands. MISS HAZY pockets the letter*]

MRS. WIGGS. If only Mr. Wiggs were here. He'd know what to do.

MISS HAZY. What's troubling you, Mrs. Wiggs?

MRS. WIGGS. Flint will want money. He always does.

MISS HAZY. Mortgage money.

MRS. WIGGS. There's no need to remind me, Miss Hazy.

FLINT'S VOICE. Mrs. Wiggs!

MRS. WIGGS. [*Wringing her hands nervously*] He does sound irritated. [*MISS HAZY stands beside Mrs. Wiggs to supply neighborly strength*]

MISS HAZY. On Thanksgiving Day, too.

FLINT'S VOICE. ARE YOU COMING OUT OR AM I COMING IN!

MRS. WIGGS. If Aristotle Flint ever has to live his life over again I hope he doesn't.

[*ARISTOTLE FLINT swoops into the cottage like a giant winged bat. He's dressed in traditional stage villain garb. A dark suit, string tie, and a flowing cape. He wears a top hat and carries a walking stick. A moustache drips from his upper lip. With a snake's smile he presents himself to the audience with a theatrical flair*]

FLINT. Permit me to introduce myself. Aristotle Flint—banker and patron of the arts. At intermission time you may purchase a signed photograph of myself in the lobby. No need to seek me out. I'm always

up and about—up to trickery and about to deceive. Hee, hee, hee. *[NOTE: At this point there should be some audible audience reaction to Flint—some booing or hissing. If it doesn't happen, have ushers or offstage actors supply it. FLINT immediately lashes out at the criticism with his walking stick. He steps to the edge of the stage and threatens his hecklers, snarling and growling]* Back, back! Back, I say! Ingrates!

MRS. WIGGS. I wish he was a perfect stranger.

MISS HAZY. There's nothing perfect about Aristotle Flint. They say he's so crooked he has to twist his shoes on.

FLINT. *[Sarcastic]* Ah, the lovely Miss Hazy. *[A step toward her, addresses audience]* One time a doctor examined her head—but he couldn't find anything.

MRS. WIGGS. *[Summons courage]* Welcome to my humble cottage, Mr. Flint.

FLINT. Thank you, Mrs. Wiggs. But haven't you got things a little confused?

MRS. WIGGS. Confused, Flint?

FLINT. No, I'm not confused. You are. This is my cottage. At least, it will be if you don't have this year's mortgage money.

MRS. WIGGS. Another year gone so soon?

FLINT. You do have the money? It's due shortly.

MRS. WIGGS. *[Worried]* The money? Ah, yes, the money? Uh, uh, uh.

MISS HAZY. You wouldn't foreclose on Mrs. Wiggs, would you, Mr. Flint?

FLINT. *[To audience]* What hazy Hazy knows about human nature you could put in a thimble and still have room for a bumble bee.

MRS. WIGGS. *[Holds out the bowl]* Have a cabbage, Mr. Flint.

FLINT. Gad! A cabbage. What do you think I am—a goat?

MRS. WIGGS. Only being friendly.

FLINT. Besides, cabbage gives me heartburn. *[To audience]* Or it would if I had a heart. *[To business]* Will you offer me a chair?

MRS. WIGGS. Land sakes, what's become of my manners? *[She puts down the bowl and picks up a chair. She moves toward Flint. He continues to discourse, moving Left, then Right. MRS. WIGGS follows him with the chair, expecting him to stop and sit at any second]*

FLINT. You must understand that I have your best interests in mind. I like to help widows and orphans.

MISS HAZY. *[To audience]* The only thing that keeps him from being a bald-faced liar is his moustache.

MRS. WIGGS. I'm not a widow, Mr. Flint.

FLINT. You might as well be. Wake up, Mrs. Wiggs, and smell the coffee. You've been deserted.

MRS. WIGGS. Mr. Wiggs is away stretching his horizons.

FLINT. He's stretched his horizons so far *you're* about to snap.

MRS. WIGGS. The children look after me.

FLINT. Bah. It's a well-known fact you and your litter eat nothing but cabbage soup. If a chicken fell into your pot, the only thing it would do is drown. [*Angry, MRS. WIGGS plants the chair. FLINT starts to sit.*

MRS. WIGGS pulls the chair aside and FLINT thuds to the floor] Oooooooh! [*MRS. WIGGS puts the chair back at the table*]

MRS. WIGGS. This is still my humble home, Aristotle Flint.

FLINT. [*He gets to his feet with as much dignity as possible, brushes himself off*] But for how much longer? Be sensible, Mrs. Wiggs.

MISS HAZY. Billy sells firewood.

MRS. WIGGS. Uptown.

MISS HAZY. Where the rich folks live.

FLINT. Bah! A few copper pennies. Listen to me. I have found a buyer for this cottage.

MRS. WIGGS. It's not for sale!

FLINT. This buyer will give you some money for your trouble. You could get a new start someplace else.

MRS. WIGGS. Never!

FLINT. Find an onion farm somewhere.

MRS. WIGGS. [*Hands to her ears*] I won't listen.

FLINT. A cranberry bog, a watermelon patch. Have you ever thought of living at the beach with the other poor fish?

MRS. WIGGS. If only Mr. Wiggs were here. [*Distraught, she sits at the table. MISS HAZY comforts her*]

MISS HAZY. There, there.

FLINT. You've got as much chance of paying off the mortgage as—

MRS. WIGGS. As what?

FLINT. As Miss Hazy has of catching a husband.

MISS HAZY. Oh!

MRS. WIGGS. Leave Miss Hazy out of this.

FLINT. That won't be hard. Let me introduce you to the prospective buyer.

MRS. WIGGS. I tell you my humble cottage is not for sale.

FLINT. Meet the woman. [*Steps Left, calls Offstage*] MISS CRUMM!

MISS HAZY. Her name's Crumm?

FLINT. I said it was, didn't I?

MISS HAZY. Whenever you say a thing is so, I think it's best to check. [*FLINT growls*] Oh!

FLINT. I can't wait for *your* mortgage payment to become due, Miss Hazy. [*To audience*] I only hope it's snowing. I'd enjoy tossing hazy Hazy into a blizzard. Hee, hee, hee. [*A boo from usher or an actor back-stage*]

[*SERAFINA CRUMM, a vision in black, sweeps into the cottage. She is obviously not to be trusted. She has a pocketbook or purse*]

SERAFINA. You yelled, Mr. Flint?

FLINT. [*He takes her gloved hand, kisses it*] Ah, the lovely Miss Crumm. My admiration.

MISS HAZY. He's going to get your glove all soggy with his slobbering.

FLINT. Ignore Miss Hazy. She's not the brightest one in the Cabbage Patch.

SERAFINA. Is that a fact?

FLINT. One time she put a sign on her door that said "BACK IN ONE HOUR" and when she got back in 30 minutes she sat down and waited. [*SERAFINA thinks this is terribly funny, begins to laugh. Loud, louder. Caught up with her enthusiasm, FLINT, too, laughs. MRS. WIGGS begins to laugh. Finally, MISS HAZY succumbs and all four are laughing away. Quickly, FLINT recovers*]

FLINT. Cease! [*Instantly, the women fall silent*] I am here on serious business. No time for frivolity. My dear Miss Crumm, may I present Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch. [*SERAFINA approaches Mrs. Wiggs with her hand extended for a shake*]

SERAFINA. My dear woman, I hear you are practically a saint. This is an honor.

MRS. WIGGS. [*Holding out the bowl*] Have a cabbage.

SERAFINA. No, thank you. I've dined.

MRS. WIGGS. It's a waste of your time, Miss Crummy.

SERAFINA. Crumm.

MRS. WIGGS. I ain't selling.

SERAFINA. Do hear me out before you reject my generous offer.

FLINT. Common courtesy.

MISS HAZY. If you've got anything to do with it, it's common.

FLINT. [*Slinks onto the rocker*] The last woman who talked to me like that hasn't been heard from in years.

SERAFINA. Mr. Flint has brought it to my attention that your mortgage is due shortly.

MRS. WIGGS. And I'm afraid I'm short.

SERAFINA. Precisely. [*Pleasantly*] I am looking for a place in the Cabbage Patch.

MISS HAZY. You don't look poor to me. Folks who live here are humble and poor.

MRS. WIGGS. Mostly poor.

FLINT. [*Snarls*] Too few are humble enough.

SERAFINA. You don't understand. This will be a sentimental retreat for me. You see—I was born in the Cabbage Patch.

MRS. WIGGS. When?

SERAFINA. Years ago when I was quite young. A rich woman and her rich husband adopted me. I have made a success of my life, but I have never forgotten my roots.

MISS HAZY. Mrs. Wiggs likes to cook roots with her cabbage on occasion.

FLINT. [*To audience*] I'd say Hazy was a mental case, but that would imply some brains.

SERAFINA. I wish to return. If you sell this cottage to me now, I'll make you a decent offer.

MRS. WIGGS. If I don't?

FLINT. Permit me to answer that, Miss Crumm. [*Leans toward her*] If you don't sell now I'll throw you out when the mortgage falls due. You'll get nothing.

MISS HAZY. I suppose nothing is better than something.

FLINT. If Miss Hazy lost an ounce, it would be a weight off her mind.

SERAFINA. Mr. Flint, please. You're being impolite.

FLINT. Bah! [*He sulks, rocks*]

SERAFINA. I wish to move in as soon as possible.

MRS. WIGGS. I couldn't sell, Miss Crumm. No, never.

SERAFINA. Why not? I understand you have children.

MRS. WIGGS. Asia, Australia, Europena, and Billy.

SERAFINA. Children you can barely support.

MRS. WIGGS. This is the only place Mr. Wiggs will be able to find us. This humble cottage. He's got to have a home when he returns from stretching.

MISS HAZY. Oh, I almost forgot. Give me Europena's dress and I'll set to work.