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A PAIR OF LUNATICS

A DRAMATIC SKETCH

BY

W. R. WALKES



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY.

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A PAIR OF LUNATICS

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(A PAIR OF LUNATICS)**

A PAIR OF LUNATICS

CHARACTERS

HE **George Fielding**
SHE **Clara Manners**

SCENE: A Drawing-room
Easy chair DL
Another chair URC

PROPERTY: A letter for Clara
COSTUMES: Ordinary evening dress

Plays fifteen minutes

FROM THE PUBLISHER...

HE and SHE meet for the first time in a lunatic asylum and each mistakes the other for an inmate. An old stand-by that's always fun!

Every now and then this little farce sells a copy and somehow it has stayed in print since 1885. As part of our ongoing centennial celebration, you can still buy a copy at its original 1885 price... 25 cents!

Back in 1889, it was included in a bill at the Drury Lane Theatre, London, with the following cast:

HE Mr. George Alexander
SHE Miss Maude Millett

A PAIR OF LUNATICS

(HE enters, yawning.)

HE. Well, I've had about enough of this. Of all the dreary entertainments in this world, a dance at a lunatic asylum is the dreariest. What an ass I was to come; Tom Adams said I should find it such splendid fun to listen to the strange delusions of the patients. All I can say is, that if this is his idea of fun he's a duller dog than I thought he was. Gad! they're just about as amusing as old Uncle Timothy's gouty symptoms. What bores me so terribly is their want of originality. They have but a poor half dozen or so of fancies between them, and they copy one another's words and business like a lot of understudies. To all the other horrors of madness they add monotony. Now, let me see. I have danced with no less than three Empresses of China, each of whom offered to share with me the throne of the Celestial Empire; four of my partners announced themselves Queens of the Air, and implored me to go out on the roof, and together wing our flight to the sunny South; while the only one who seemed to have a line of business all to herself, and as yet unappropriated, was my last partner, who flew into a terrific rage directly I approached her, because I had, she said, borrowed her nose to go to an evening party and hadn't returned it. As she manifested a strong desire to regain

possession of her lost property by main force, I thought it best to leave her for a while and seek seclusion here. (*Sits chair L, slightly turned away towards L.*) How refreshing is this quiet after the glare and noise of the rooms below, and the ceaseless babblings of insanity. (*Yawns.*) I feel very tired, quite sleepy, in fact — I'll close my eyes for a few minutes — just for — a — few — min — (*Sleeps; slight pause.*)

(*Enter SHE.*)

SHE. Thank goodness, here's an empty room — (*Throws herself into chair a little UR.*) — where I can rest for a while in quiet. Oh, why did Aunt Maria bring me to this ghastly, gruesome function. My head's in a perfect whirl! Dr. Adams assured me that all my partners would be quite harmless. I suppose he meant by that that they wouldn't try to murder me — and of course that's some comfort — but their insane ramblings make my very flesh creep, and their vacant laughter — oh! (*Shudders.*) it's horrible — horrible! (*Looks around.*) I wonder where I am! Oh! (*Starting up.*) perhaps it's a padded room. (*Looks round.*) No, there's nothing padded but the furniture, but suppose it should be where the violent people are kept in chains — and things. I don't think I'll stay. (*Going towards door, HE snores. SHE stopping suddenly.*) Good gracious! What's that? (*HE snores again. SHE frightened.*) Oh! it's a groan; some poor creature in a strait waistcoat which doesn't fit. Oh, what shall I do? I can't move. (*Sinks into chair a little UR, half fainting.*)

HE (*waking up*). Jove! just beginning to doze! (*Yawns.*) Fancied I heard voices. (*Rises and looks round.*) Hullol!

followed and found out! How d'ye do? (*Nodding. SHE collapses.*) Now, I wonder who this distinguished stranger may be? Lady Macbeth, or the Queen of Cannibal Islands?

SHE (*coming round*). Where am I? (*Aside, seeing HIM.*) He's taken his waistcoat off. Oh, I hope he isn't violent. (*Comes DR.*)

HE (*aside*). I suppose I must address her in the usual humoring fashion. (*Aloud.*) I beg your pardon, but do you happen to be looking for anyone, Alexander the Great, or Hamlet, Prince of Denmark? (*Above her, L.*)

SHE (*aside*). I knew it, he's mad! I must humor him and get away. (*Aloud, timidly.*) Yes, I am engaged to Hamlet for the next dance, have you seen him?

HE. Just this moment left him. We have been sitting for the last six months on the top of the North Pole tossing for chocolate drops and making enamel paint.

SHE. Really!

HE (*sinking his voice, and looking round*). Do you know what it's made of?

SHE. Oh no, I mean yes, yes! No, I mean no.

HE. Then, I'll tell you, but it's a dark and gruesome mystery. Banbury cakes, blacking, bull's eyes, and the declining rays of the evening sun. (*Aside.*) Gad. I've thoroughly mastered the language of the country. (*Laughs, to L.*)

SHE (*aside*). That dreadful insane laughter. How shall I get away? (*Aloud.*) Would you mind accompanying me in search of my partner?

HE (*aside*). Wants to get me down to dance, not if I know it. (*Aloud.*) Pray, excuse me; the fact is — I am expecting a visit from the Queen of Sheba and the Archbishop of Canterbury who are coming to offer me the