

**THE BONDS OF MARRIAGE.**  
**A Romantic Farce in One Act by ALEISTER CROWLEY.**

JOHN SAMPRON (*Jack*) a man of business; age 30.

MARY, his wife; age 25.

SLYMAN SQUIFF, master detective.

(*Sampson's apartment, in any city of the United States.*)

(*Jack is putting on his overcoat with Mary's aid.*)

JACK: Well, good-bye, dear. Remember, I may be a little late for dinner; I'm rushed to death this week, you know, what with four men called to the colors, and three of the girls gone for the Red Cross.

MARY: Good-bye, Jack. Take care of yourself. This is dreadfully treacherous weather, dear, and you with your weakness!

(*While helping him she has dexterously extracted his wallet. She embraces him warmly.*)

Good-bye, darling!

JACK: Good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye!

(*He goes. She immediately searches the wallet. It contains a large number of bills, of which she thrusts a goodly proportion into her stocking, and a memorandum, which she reads, sitting.*)

MARY: Monday L. B. 100, Wednesday L. B. 50, Thursday L. B. 200, Saturday L. B. 200. Oh, God! Oh, God! That it should have come to this!

(*The bell rings sharply. She puts the wallet in the pocket of a second overcoat, and conceals the paper. She then touches the button which releases the door, and begins to put away the breakfast things. Enter Jack.*)

JACK: Darling, I've left my wallet, or it's been stolen. I must be crazy. I could have sworn I had it on me.

MARY: Oh, I guess its in the overcoat you wore yesterday. (*Jack finds it.*)

JACK: So it is! Stupid of me! I must run. Good-bye again, dear girl!

MARY: Good-bye, Jack!

(*He goes. She sinks into the chair.*)

He didn't even kiss me! Oh, the mask's off the viper now! The veil has fallen from the rat! He and his L. B. — the fifties and hundreds he's spending on her — and I haven't a rag to my back. Well, I'll know the worst — and then go back to mother — mother — mother.

(*The bell rings sharply. She touches the button and returns, half fainting.*)

Oh, Mother! come and comfort me! Mother! Mother!

(*Enter Slyman Squiff. He is a tall, pale man. His face and feet are large and flat. He wears huge brown horn spectacles and wide red whiskers, an old battered Derby hat, a frock coat with a pale yellow waistcoat and lavender pants, all cut in the most fashionable style, new patent leather boots, frayed and dirty linen, new white kid gloves. He carries a cane, which can be used as a periscope, gun, or cigar holder. On his entry it is a cigar holder. His flowery language is spoken as if by a rather effete dandy, his slang in tones of cunning and vulgarity. His high notes of protest or affirmation reach the level of a lugubrious bellow. His costume can be varied if any items of it are difficult to obtain, but in any case it should be notably incongruous.*)

SQUIFF: Good morrow, madam! May all blessings flow upon

that dainty dome of thine. Indeed, ahem!

MARY: Good morning, Mr. Squiff! Do sit down! Have you found out anything?

SQUIFF: Say everything, fair lady. What a question to ask of me, the master detective, the man who arrested Edward Kelly! I am indeed delighted to be able to inform you that your humble and devoted servant is now able to vindicate that pledge of confidence which you so amicably honored me by hypothecating — hum! I've got the dope on the slob, madam, permit me to assure you on the faith of a master detective!

MARY: Tell me the worst, quickly, for pity's sake!

SQUIFF: Alas! that these lips should needs profane their sanctity with such a tale of treachery and infamy. Kid, it's the limit, believe me! Yes, madam, I deeply regret to have to inform you that he who pledged his honor to his marriage vows is no better than — ah! how can I frame the phrase without wounding that sensitive soul of yours? — no better than a-a-a-coquette!

MARY: Then you can interpret this? (*She hands him the memorandum.*)

SQUIFF: Madam, I can. What a question to ask me, the master detective, the man who arrested Edward Kelly! L. B. is Laura Brown. Yet not so brown — she is a blonde!

MARY: Heavens above! a blonde!

SQUIFF: A blonde! She is employed in the office itself as a stenog.

MARY: A stenog?

SQUIFF: A stenog. Well may we say og — she is a swine!

MARY: Did you make her confess?

SQUIFF: I wouldn't go near her for a million dollars. Blondes are more terrible than tigers, more ruthless than rattlesnakes, more squamacious than skunks — oh, madam! Ahem!

MARY: I wish I had never been born. Oh, mother! mother!

SQUIFF: But, madam, calm your agitation, I beg of you. Open fire with anti-aircraft guns! What must be done? Ah, what?

MARY: I shall go home to mother.

SQUIFF (*exhibiting alarm*): But not to-day; oh, not to-day, let be beg of you! Trust me! Trust the master detective, the man who arrested Edward Kelly! There is much yet to do. Possess yourself awhile. We must have yet more proof — prehoof! Prehoof's the one best bet!

MARY: Laura Brown! It is for her that he has cut my allowance, moved into this tiny flat, made me turn my old dresses and do my own housework. Laura Brown! I've been starving, Mr. Squiff, literally starving, and he earning fifty a week!

SQUIFF: Indeed, madam, the worst is yet to come. For four months he has been branch manager, at two hundred a week, and three per cent. commission into the bargain.

MARY: Oh, perfidy! perfidy!

SQUIFF: A raw deal, madam, as I live. I am the master detective! I arrested Edward Kelly, and I never heard a tale more pitiable!

MARY: To-night I will confront him.

SQUIFF (*in a hollow voice*): 'Tis well. 'Tis well. Until tomorrow's sun, then, gild the horizon with his rays from the same elevation as at present, I bid you most respectfully adieu. I'll beat it, madam. Beat it! Ahem!