

8 THE MAIL ORDER HAT

CHARACTERS

MR. WATSON *Lowell*

MRS. WATSON *Alice*

MRS. DELMAR *Heidi*

GRANDMA PETERS *Peggy*

MRS. KLUCK *Talita*

DELIA, Mrs. Watson's negro ma'ld *Sonia*

Costumes

The ladies wear summer clothing. Mrs. DELMAR is fashionably dressed. Mrs. Watson wears a pretty afternoon dress. Costumes of MRS. PETERS, MRS. KLUCK, and DELIA should be in contrast to those of the first two ladies, and provide a humorous touch. The hats of the five ladies are identical. They may be made from crepe paper or by trimming old hats. The more absurd the shape, the better, but they must be exactly alike in every detail.

SCENE

The living room of the Watson home. Doors right and left. A mirror hangs on the back wall and a table is prominently placed. When the curtain rises, MRS. WATSON is alone on stage, flitting about and humming gaily.

(Enter Mr. Watson right).

MRS. WATSON: (Rushes toward him, seizes him by shoulder, and propels him toward chair) Oh, John! Darling! I've got the most wonderful surprise for you!

MR. WATSON: (taking off his hat and laying it on table.) Oh yeah? Can't it wait till after supper? I've had some of your surprises before. Believe it or not, I'm tired, and I'd like to relax.

MRS. WATSON: Now, just sit still for a moment. (Rushes from room and rushes back, holding up hat.) There! Isn't it a darling?

MR. WATSON: What is it? A fire shovel or a sugar scoop?

(MRS. WATSON goes to mirror, perches hat on head, and poses in front of glass.)

MRS. WATSON: There! Did you ever see anything so sweet?

MR. WATSON: Well, it's you who has to wear it not me, but I've seen folks put in the crazy for less. How much did that cost me?

MRS. WATSON: Now we're coming to the real surprise. Where do you suppose I got it?

MR. WATSON: At the hardware store. likely.

*Very Good
Woodlawn
Colony*

*5 hats
mirror
table
4 chairs
glasses for 1/2
DEC 22 1931*

MRS. WATSON: I got it by mail-order, from the Simpson Sears Cata-

MR. WATSON: So what?

MRS. WATSON: And what do you suppose it cost?

MR. WATSON: That's what I've been trying to find out.

MRS. WATSON: John Watson, I got this charming creation for only three fifty.

MR. WATSON: That's three twenty-five too much, I'd say.

MRS. WATSON: If I'd got it anywhere in this town, I'd have paid at least fifteen dollars for it.

MR. WATSON: I don't doubt that.

MRS. WATSON: Don't you think it was smart of your little wifie? I just happened to see their catalogue, and the idea came to me just like that. I'll bet there isn't another woman in this town smart enough to think of it. Just look at all I've saved you. And now, I can buy that new velvet bedspread I've been wanting for so long.

Mr. WATSON: With what?

MRS. WATSON: Why, with the fifteen dollars I saved.

MR. WATSON: You're some little penny pincher. Now I'm going upstairs to catch a little snooze, and if anyone should enquire, I'm strictly not in. (Exit left.)

(MRS. WATSON continues to pose before mirror. Door bell rings. She takes hat off, places it on table, and goes to door at right. Enter MRS. DELMAR.)

MRS. WATSON: (effusively) Why, Clara! How too darling of you to call -- and on such a hot afternoon! Do take this chair over here.

(She catches sight of MRS. DELMAR's hat, registers horror, but decides to brazen it out.)

MRS. WATSON: My dear! What a perfectly stunning hat!

MRS. DELMAR: Yes, don't you think it is? (Catches reflection in mirror, and pulls hat further over eyebrow.) I do flatter myself that I've got a becoming one thi time.

MRS. WATSON: It's just too darling for words. Where did you get such a little beauty?

MRS. DELMAR: At Madame Yvonne's. It's a little imported model. And you'll never guess how little I paid for it.

MRS. WATSON: I'm sure you'd pay plenty for such a sweet, distinctive thing.

MRS. DELMAR: My dear, she let me have it for only eighteen dollars.

MRS. WATSON: Well, you were in luck.

(MRS. DELMAR turns, and catches sight of MRS. WATSON'S hat for first time. She registers consternation, but also decides to brazen it out.)

MRS. DELMAR: Of course, the mail order houses have the nerve to copy some of the good models. But a person can always see the difference easily.

MRS. WATSON: One certainly can.

MRS. DELMAR: It is quite easy to spot which are the real ones and which are the cheap imitations.

MRS. WATSON: Yes, isn't it?

MRS. DELMAR: Of course, in my case, no one would ever connect me with a mail order house.

MRS. WATSON: (sweetly) Wouldn't they really, dear? (Doorbell rings.) I'll just see who that is. Delia's busy. (goes to door at right and admits.) Why, it's Grandma Peters. How sweet of you to drop in, and on such a hot day, too. You know Mrs. Delmar, don't you?

MRS. PETERS: (heartily) Her that was Clara Higgins? Sure I do. And knowed her ma before her. She was a ~~big fat girl~~ ^{real hot shot} when we was in school. You take after her, don't you, Clara?

MRS. DELMAR: I couldn't say, really. And, Mabel, darling, I'll just have to be running along.

MRS. WATSON: Not at all, darling. Sit still, and I'll have Delia bring us some tea.

MRS. PETERS: Well, Mabel, how do you like my new hat?

MRS. WATSON: Why - er - I think it's real becoming. Don't you think so, too, Clara?

MRS. PETERS: Mebbe you think it's a mite too young for me. But I always say, what's the use of bein' old before your time.

MRS. WATSON: Why, indeed?

MRS. PETERS: ^(puts on glasses) Why, Clara, now I look at you, seems your hat is a good deal like mine. My sight ain't what it used to be, but that's the way it looks to me. Did you get yours from Simpson Sears Catalogue.

MRS. DELMAR: (Registers great scorn.) What a question!

MRS. PETERS: Well, anyway, it don't set ye very good. You're not ne right shape for a hat like that. Takes a slim body like me to wear na style. (Tilts hat jauntily over one eye.)

MRS. DELMAR: (coldly) Indeed! How interesting!

(Enter MRS. KLUCK left.)

But the girl, she say # 1 better come ...

EGGS.

MRS. WATSON: Why, yes, Mrs. Kluck, come right in. We were just getting bored with each other. Ladies, this is Mrs. Kluck, who provides me with eggs. Mrs. Kluck, this is Mrs. Delmar, and Mrs. Peters.

(all catch sight of MRS. KLUCK's hat, and register various degrees of surprise.)

MRS. WATSON: What a sweet little hat you have, Mrs. Kluck.

MRS. KLUCK: Yaw? My husband he says that the cat brought it in, but I say we got it to be in style yet.

MRS. WATSON: Yes, indeed. And that style seems to be very popular.

MRS. KLUCK: Vell, I got it to be going already.

MRS. WATSON: Oh, no, Mrs. Kluck. Wait and have a cup of tea with us. I'll see what's keeping Delia. (Exit left.)

MRS. DELMAR: (Aside to MRS. PETERS) I do think Mabel must be crazy.

(Enter DELIA and MRS. WATSON left.)

(DELIA) (Hurriedly) I'se sorry, Mis' Watson, but I jest got to go out. My sister over on Poplar Street, done took awful bad, and I got to go over ther quick. So you'll have to finish gettin' the tea yoself! Today. (Takes a look at the hats, giggles.) We -ll' sa - ay! Looks like we pretty near all got the same taste don't it? Well I'se sorry, Mis' Watson, but I jest got to go. (Exit right.)

MRS. DELMAR: (Rising) ~~I've simply got to go, too.,~~ Mabel dear. We'll have tea some other day, when it isn't so crowded. (Exit right.)

MRS. PETERS: What's the matter with her? Seems like she's sorter miff about something. Them Higginases always was sorter queer. Now, I guess I'll be going too, Mabel. Don't bother getting tea just for me. I'll be around again some time. (Exit right.)

MRS. KLUCK: You give me the money, Mrs. Watson, and I'll go too.

MRS. WATSON: Why, certainly, Mrs. Kluck, (Gets money for table.) Good-bye - and I just love your little hat. (Exit MRS. KLUCK right)

(She picks up her own hat, and stands glaring at it viciously. Enter MR. WATSON left.)

MR. WATSON: Well, still lost in admiration?

(MRS. WATSON throws hat on floor, and stamps on it.)

MR. WATSON: ^{Take it easy; Take it easy} Oh, ~~flie flie~~ We could have used it for a fly-trap, or something.

MRS. WATSON: (sobbing) That's what comes of having a husband who's too mean to buy his wife a decent hat. Every Jame in this town, black or white has one like this.

MR. WATSON: Well, doesn't that show it's right in style?

MRS. WATSON: John Watson! You're too mean for words. (Runs from room, slams door.)

CURTAIN
