

THE FORTUNE TELLER

A Splendid Play in Verse for
Amateur Actors

Introducing
HARRY WHARTON & C^o of GREYFRIARS.

How to Make up



Wharton
(Dark Hair)



Nugent



Cherry
Curly Hair, Always
smiling.



Bull



Hurree Singh



Bunter

NOTE.—This play is copy-right, but it may be performed by readers of "The Holiday Annual," without fee, on condition that the words, "By permission of the Editor of 'The Holiday Annual'" appear on the front of all programmes.

Characters :

HARRY WHARTON
FRANK NUGENT
BOB CHERRY
JOHNNY BULL
HURREE SINGH

The Famous
Five of the
Remove.

BILLY BUNTER

The Owl of
the Re-
move.

COKER
POTTER
GREENE

The leading
lights of the
Fifth.

MR. PAUL PROUT

Master of the
Fifth.

GERALD LODER

The Objec-
tionable
Prefect.

WILLIAM WIBLEY

Disguised as
a Palmist.

How to Make up.



Coker



Potter



Greene



Loder



Mr Prout



Wibley.

SCENE.—No. 1 *Study in the Remove passage.*
(*The Famous Five are present, busily engaged in clearing up the study.*)

WHARTON :

The fortune-teller will arrive,
If all goes well, at half-past five.
He'll sit in this armchair in state,
And tell our fortunes while we wait.

CHERRY : My hat ! It ought to be great fun—

NUGENT : Not if your past's a shady one !

BULL :

The moment that he sees my hand,
He'll tell me I'm a sportsman grand.
A mighty man, of skill and vim,
In class, and playing-field, and gym !

ALL : Rats !

HURREE SINGH :

Our fortune-telling friend will be,
A source of much delightfulness ;
But if he treats us fraudfully,
We will impart the smitefulness !

ALL : Hear, hear !

WHARTON (*thoughtfully*) :

We ought to charge a certain sum,
To fellows for admission ;

NUGENT :

Not good enough ! They wouldn't come.
They'd treat us with suspicion.

WHARTON :

All right ; the chaps may come in free—

BULL :

Provided they don't stop to tea !

(*The study door opens. Enter WIBLEY, clad in long, flowing robes, and with a d sky face and a dark moustache. He is also wearing a turban. The Famous Five do not know he is Wibley.*)

WIBLEY :

I give you my salaams, young friends,
Embracing you with kisses ;

WHARTON (*jumping back*) :

No, no ! Reserve such odds and ends
For your devoted missis !

WIBLEY (*seating himself in the armchair*) :

I've travelled many a weary mile,
My thirst is most alarming.
Bring forth some tea ; yes, that's the style !
Those cakes look really charming !

(*The Famous Five bustle around and provide their guest with light refreshment.*)

HURREE SINGH :

What is your name, most honoured sir ?
And do you come from Bhanipur ?

WIBLEY :

Nay, not from India's coral strand,
But from a less inviting land,
Which is not fit for man nor beast—
A dreary desert in the East !

ALL : My hat !

WIBLEY :

My name is Moonshee Wotta Spoo,
Of my great powers I'll give you proof.
In England and in foreign lands,
I've read Crowned Heads—I mean
Crowned hands !

CHERRY (*holding out his hand*) :

You may be simply great, Moonshee !
Please read my merry lines for me.

WIBLEY :

Silence, ye dog ! Go hence, and quake !
Wait till I've tackled one more cake !

(*BOB CHERRY jumps back, startled.*)

(*WIBLEY finishes his tea, and while he is doing so the door opens.*)

(*Enter COKER, POTTER, and GREENE, of the Fifth.*)

COKER :

I hear you've got a palmist here,
A fortune-telling fellow.

BULL :

Look here, old son, you'd better clear,
If you are going to bellow !

COKER : Dry up, young Bull—

BULL : You priceless fool !

COKER : My hat ! I—I'll—

BULL : You make me smile !

WIBLEY :

Silence, ye knaves ! Or I will go
And cancel all the merry show !

WHARTON :

Most honoured Moonshee, we regret
That this should come to pass.
But be a sport—don't leave us yet !
Coker's a silly ass !

WIBLEY :

You need not emphasise the fact ;
I saw at once that he was 'cracked' !

COKER : Why, you beastly nigger—

WIBLEY : Stay ! Whence this fat figure ?

(*Enter BILLY BUNTER.*)

BUNTER :

I say, you fellows,
I happened to hear
A rumour most startling,
Surprising and queer!

CHERRY :

Your bootlace happened to come undone,
Outside the keyhole of Study One?

BUNTER : Oh, really, Cherry—

NUGENT : It's likely, very!

BUNTER :

My information came to me,
From Peter Todd and Dutton—see?
They said a palmist would arrive,
From Courtfield, shortly after five.

(*BUNTER, being short-sighted, has not yet seen*

WIBLEY : *he now observes him for the first time.*)

BUNTER :

My hat! He's been here all the time!
Tell me my fortune, quick, in rhyme!

(*Bunter holds out his hand. WIBLEY examines it.*)

WIBLEY :

You're fat and flabby, have no pluck,
You pilfer other fellows' tuck.
The time you do not spend in spying,
Is taken up with fraud and lying!

BUNTER : Why, you rotter—

WHARTON : Proceed, O Moonshee! This is fine!

CHERRY : It's true, too—all along the line!

WIBLEY (*still holding BUNTER'S hand*):

Your father keeps the "Bunter Arms,"
And samples much strong liquor;
Your maiden aunt has certain charms—
Your uncle is a vicar.

BUNTER :

My uncle's not!
It's tommy-rot!

WIBLEY :

You follow on the new boy's trail,
As grimly as a warder;
And always you unfold a tale
About a postal-order.

COKER :

I say, you chaps, there's something in it!
I'll hold *my* hand out, in a minute!

(*WIBLEY continues.*)

You always boast that every post
Will bring along a fiver,
From so-called titled relatives,
Who haven't got a stiver!

BUNTER : It's utter rot!

CHERRY : Dry up! It's not!

WIBLEY (*dreamily*):

I see the future! Prison bars
Will, in the end, surround you;
Your friends will fret, and much regret
That no one ever drowned you!

BUNTER :

I'm off, you chaps! I've had enough.

I never heard such piffing stuff!

(*Exit BUNTER.*)

COKER : Now tell me mine, you funny freak—

WIBLEY : Ha, ha! I hear a jackass speak!

COKER : Why, you—you—you—

WIBLEY : A jackass from the Zoo!

COKER (*threateningly*):

You cheeky nigger! I shall bump you!

THE FAMOUS FIVE (*intervening*):

Hands off, you idiot, or we'll thump you!

(*COKER simmers down.*)

WIBLEY :

My boot-faced friend, may I continue
To tell the good and bad that's in you?

COKER :

All right, you beauty! Go ahead!
But tell the truth for once, instead!

WIBLEY :

You are the blockhead of your Form;

POTTER (*to COKER*):

My hat, old man, that's rather warm!

WIBLEY :

Among the dunces you are reckoned;
Your place is really in the Second!

COKER (*excitedly*): What?

WIBLEY :

You play at footer, with much pride,
And kick goals—for the other side!

WHARTON :

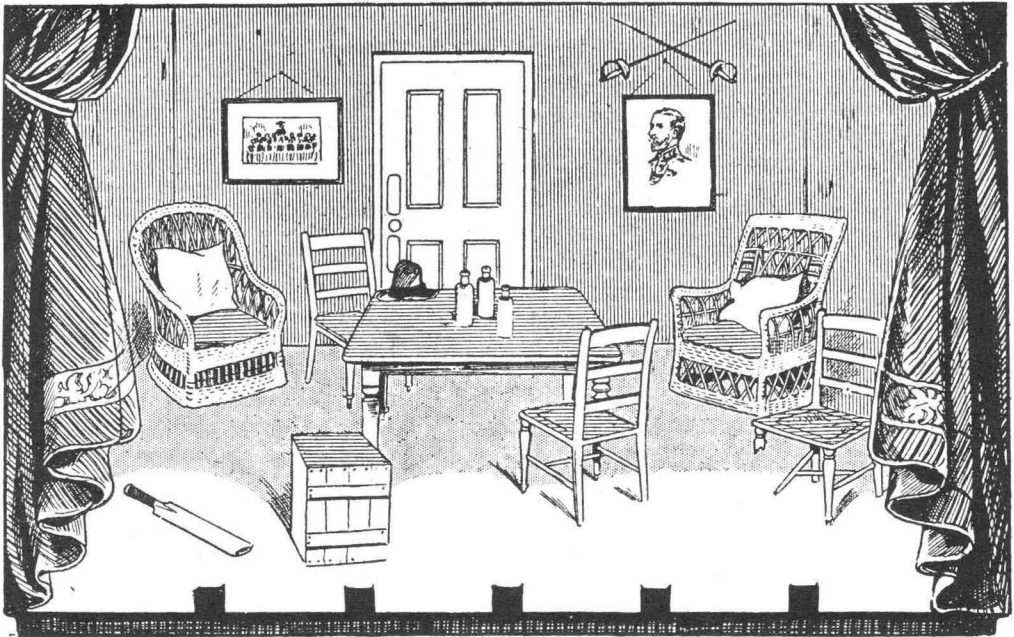
Right on the wicket, every time!
Go on, Moonshee! It's simply prime!

WIBLEY :

You always try to boss the show,
You cherish great ambitions;
You try to rule the blessed school,
You jump at high positions.
Then angry schoolmates jump at *you*!
You see bright stars—and comets, too!

COKER :

This really is a bit too thick;
Come on, you chaps, he makes me sick!
(*Exit COKER, POTTER, and GREENE.*)



HOW THE STAGE SHOULD BE ARRANGED.

No elaborate or expensive scenery is required to stage "The Fortune Teller." If it is not possible to arrange the Study door at the back of the stage as shown, it can be omitted altogether, and the various characters can enter from the side. It will be noted that one chair has only three legs. A broken chair like this may be useful for a little knockabout fun. The concert party should arrange to have a stage manager, and it should be left to him to add anything to improve the scenic effect.

CHERRY :

Your fortune-telling, Wotta Spooof,
Fairly brings down the giddy roof !

ALL : Yes, rather !

CHERRY :

Well, here's my fist. Tell me at once
If I am clever, or a dunce !

WIBLEY :

The line of life is very full,
You use much energy at school ;
Not in the Form-room, sad to say,
But in the Close, where infants play.

CHERRY : My only aunt !

WIBLEY :

But when the world seems upside down,
You never lose your wool, or frown ;
You're always hoping for the best,
And meet misfortunes with a jest.

ALL : Hear, hear !

(Enter LODER.)

WIBLEY :

Who enters this most sacred place ?
Come, answer me, old hatchet-face !

LODER : I will not stand—

WIBLEY : Hold out your hand !

(LODER *reluctantly obeys.*)

WIBLEY :

The line of hate is very firm,
You love to see your victims squirm ;
You're full of boast and bounce and brag ;
You chastise many a harmless fag !

LODER : Of all the cheek—

WIBLEY : Be silent, freak !

LODER : I will report—

THE FAMOUS FIVE : Shut up, old sport !

WIBLEY :

You live a life so mean and base
That you'd be banished from the place
If your headmaster knew that you
Retired to rest at half-past two!

CHERRY : Good old night-bird!

WIBLEY :

The line of caddishness is here ;
You gamble, and it costs you dear.
You're always getting in bad odour ;
Your name, of course, is Gerald Loder!

LODER (*clenching his fists*) :

Your palmistry is utter rot,
And now you're going to catch it hot!

(LODER *is about to rush at WIBLEY, when*

MR. PROUT *enters.*)

MR. PROUT :

Dear me! What's going on in here ?
A most disgraceful scene, I fear!

THE FAMOUS FIVE :

Oh, no, sir!
It's a ripping show, sir!

MR. PROUT :

Who is this man of dark complexion ?

LODER :

A rogue, sir. Order his ejection!

WHARTON :

He'll tell your fortune, sir, if you
Will hold your left hand out to view!

MR. PROUT :

The man knows nothing of my history ;
To him, my past is all a mystery!

WIBLEY :

Hold out your hand, sir, and you'll see
Your life's an open book to me!

(MR. PROUT *holds out his hand.*)

WIBLEY :

You're a marksman of repute ;
When three years old you learned to
shoot ;
And never have you been at fault
With pop-gun or with catapult.

MR. PROUT : Bless my soul!

WIBLEY :

High in the Rockies, far away,
You slew big game, sir, in your day.
But now, alas!—how times do change!—
You'd miss a house at two yards' range!

MR. PROUT : You insolent knave—

WIBLEY : Behave! Behave!

MR. PROUT : Go right away!

THE FAMOUS FIVE :

Oh, let him stay!

WIBLEY :

You have a motor-bike, O king,
A fearful and a hideous thing.
You are a road-hog to the core,
You've murdered chickens by the score!

MR. PROUT :

Fool! Dunderhead! How dare you scoff ?
But stay! *Your eyebrow's coming off!*

(WIBLEY *clutches frantically at his eyebrow. At the same instant LODER strides forward and jerks away the moustache and eyebrows and turban.*

WIBLEY *of the Remove stands revealed.*)

THE FAMOUS FIVE : WIBLEY!

MR. PROUT :

Ha, ha! So I have caught you out ?
I—even I—the great Paul Prout!

WIBLEY :

Oh, dear! Oh, crumbs! Oh, help! I'm
done!

I only did it, sir, for fun!

MR. PROUT :

Cease fooling, sir, and come with me,
You think you're very clever ;
But I will show you that my aim
Is just as good as ever!

WIBLEY :

I've done it now!

MR. PROUT :

You, Loder, will come with us, please,
And hold him while he's yelling ;
He'll feel so sore that never more
He'll take to fortune-telling!

(Exit MR. PROUT, LODER, and WIBLEY.)

CURTAIN