

TWO GAY DECEIVERS

OR

BLACK, WHITE, AND GREY

A FARCE

IN

ONE ACT

BY

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89, STRAND,
(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market.)
LONDON.

TWO GAY DECEIVERS.

As performed at the Strand Theatre.

CHARACTERS.

Apollo Black, a Chemist and Druggist, Inventor of an <i>Infallible Eye-water</i>	Mr. SYDNEY.
Lothario White, a Professor (of course) of Languages	Mr. HOWARD.
Grey, a Policeman, [U U Y].....	Mr. HERBERT.

TIME.—PRESENT.

SCENE.—LONDON.

COSTUMES.—Of the Day.

[This Farce is the property of Thomas Hailes Lacy.]

TWO GAY DECEIVERS.



SCENE.—A Cell in a Police Station. Wooden bench, rude table, pitcher of water—door with grating over it, L. C.

At the beginning of scene, GREY, a policeman, pushes in BLACK. from door in flat, L. C.

GREY. Here you are !

BLACK. Yes, I see I am. (*sighing.*) Oh, dear me! Waiter!

GREY. Waiter ! Officer you mean—you're not at the public house. I say—(*coming closer.*) Who are you ?

BLACK. Apollo Black—a respectable tradesman.

GREY. Psha ! Don't come that here. What lay are you on?

BLACK. Lay !

GREY. Yes; is it an old game, or are you on a fresh 'un ?

BLACK. A fresh lay ? (*GREY nods.*) I don't understand you. I never heard the words " fresh lay," except in reference to eggs at breakfast.

GREY. Ah, I see, you're a reg'lar old 'un. (*giving him a dig in the ribs.*) Come, tell me, you're on the slant, ain't you?

BLACK. On the slant!

GREY. Oh, well, if you're going to keep close, I'm off.

(*going.*)

BLACK. Waiter!

GREY. Officer.

BLACK. Let me have a private cell. I don't wish to be lodged with other vagabonds—I mean with every vagabond. I wish to be alone—I require a deep solitude and a private cell.

GREY. You can have one if you like to pay a bull for it.

BLACK. Pay a bull!

GREY. What a chaffing chap you are ! Well, then, you can have one for five bob.

BLACK. Waiter!

GREY. Officer.

BLACK. Are you conversant with geography?

GREY. C☺ say I am. (*aside.*) Is he a reg'lar prig, or only a hamateur ?

BLACK. Because if you were, you would know that on the vast continent of America, on the other side of the Atlantic—in Australia, on the other side of the Pacific—in Her Majesty's possessions in India—at the Cape of Good Hope—and in some of the Friendly and Marquesas Islands—even at remote New Zealand, they speak the English language.

GREY. Well, what of that?

BLACK. Then, as an Indian chieftain would observe "Why will not my blue brother speak with the tongue of his tribe?"

GREY. Eh?

BLACK. What do you mean by "bob"—"bull?" I have heard of John Bull, and an excellent old comedy it is—but never of Bob Bull.

GREY. Oh, I mean—if you want to be by yourself, you must pay five shillings.

BLACK. Five shillings! now I understand. There, (*gives money.*) now take me to a private cell.

GREY. (*pocketing it.*) Why, here you are.

BLACK. Here!

GREY. Yes—this is a cell.

BLACK. I think it is—but there is no furniture.

GREY. No more there isn't; but all it wants is a carpet and some chairs, and a table—and if you like to have them put in at your own expense, you are at liberty to do so.

BLACK. I dare say I am. Well, a night's soon passed.

GREY. (*putting his lantern on table.*) Do you want anything?

BLACK. NO—yes—I—where's my snuff box—I've left it somewhere; yes, bring me threepenn'orth of snuff.

GREY. Very good! (*ties a knot in his handkerchief.*)

BLACK. What's that for?

GREY. So that I may recollect. Now give me sixpence.

BLACK. What for?

GREY. Three penn'orth of snuff—threepenn'orth is always sixpence here.

BLACK. There. (*gives money.*)

GREY. All right—back in a minute. *Exit door, L. C.*

BLACK. Giving sixpence for threepenn'orth of snuff is certainly paying through the nose. Well, here I am shut up in prison, like a dumb or incarcerated negro—a shut up Black. Me, in gaol!—me, a respectable tradesman! without a spot upon his reputation, and without snuff? Unlucky, was the hour, now a fortnight ago, when I took a chemist's and druggist's business. Having purchased the business, I naturally concluded that I was a chemist and druggist—so I set to work and compounded various medicines, among others an Eye-water. A patient came into my shop who was afflicted with ophthalmia—

I recommended my Eye-water. He bought it, he applied it, and in three days he was completely cured of one eye altogether. The ophthalmia had disappeared, and taken one of his eyes with it. He came to me, said my Eye-water was all my eye and Betty Martin. I told him that I had miscalculated, that I was out—and he interrupted me by saying that his eye was out. I repeated that I too was out—he insisted that his one eye was out too. I was immediately accused of practising medicine without being duly qualified—and here I am, remanded!—but why should I complain? Galileo was not understood by *his* age. What will my wife think of my prolonged absence? She's as jealous as—a woman; now I feel every confidence in her, and therefore have placed a watch upon her every movement. Oh, if I only had my snuff box, it might inspire me with the thought of how to get out of this! I've read Monte Christo and Jack Sheppard—he got out of Newgate with no help but his own fingers and one nail. (*feeling his pockets.*) Have I a nail? No, nothing but a toothpick. (*noise of locks, &c., outside.*) Some one coming—let me conceal my crowbar.

GREY *brings* WHITE on, L. C. D.

GREY. (C.) Here you are!

WHITE. (R.) I see I am.

GREY. Five shillings if you want to have a private cell.

WHITE. There you are. (*gives money—aside.*) Oh, love! love! into how many more scrapes are you going to get me?

BLACK. (*aside to GREY.*) Who is this?

GREY. Oh, a pal of some sort or other—I think he's a manslaughter.

BLACK. But I paid five shillings to be alone.

GREY. So did he.

WHITE. (*seeing BLACK.*) Hollo! here, gaoler!

GREY. Officer!

WHITE. Who's that?

GREY. (*aside to him.*) Oh, he's a first-rate hand—he's a cracksman, a garotter—a housebreaker.

WHITE. But I paid five shillings to be alone.

GREY. So did he.

BLACK. If I only had my snuff-box. Waiter!

GREY. Officer!

BLACK. My snuff.

GREY. Oh, beg pardon—I quite forgot—all right—I'll tie a knot in my handkerchief.

BLACK. But there is one already.

GREY. All right! the second will remind me what the first was about. Back in a minute. *Exit D. L. C.*

(BLACK and WHITE stand at a long distance from each other—a pause.)

BLACK. (L.) Shut up -with a man-slaughterer, without snuff! I'd as leave be left alone with a crocodile. (*aside.*)

WHITE. (R., *aside.*) Alone with a Thug! Me! a teacher of languages.

BLACK. He looks like a man who *would* commit man-slaughter.

WHITE. There's Newgate on his countenance.

BLACK. (*aside.*) If he knows that I'm an honest man, he, perhaps, might garotte *me*. I'd better speak respectfully to him. (*aloud.*) Sir!

WHITE. Sir, I—(*aside.*) When you're in Rome—(*they get nearer to each other—WHITE taps him on shoulder timidly—he returns it.*) Eh, eh, eh ?

BLACK. Eh, eh, eh?

WHITE. Well—friend—eh, eh, eh ?

BLACK. Eh, eh, eh? (*aside.*) He takes me for one of his own class—so be it.

WHITE. (*aside.*) I must, for my own safety, assume to be a ruffian of ensanguined dye. So they've grabbed you at last!

BLACK. Yes, yes! the pitcher that goes too often to the well, you know—eh, eh?

WHITE. (*aside.*) I'll talk slang. (*aloud.*) Is this the first time you've been jugged?

BLACK. Yes—I mean no—no—no! This is the thirteenth time.

WHITE. Thirteen ! (*aside.*) he's a regular old hand.

BLACK. And you—have you—

WHITE. Oh, me ! I've escaped four times from the hulks—

BLACK. Four times!

WHITE. Yes—once on foot—once on horseback—once in a cab, and the last time—

BLACK. In a balloon!

WHITE. No, in my drawers.

BLACK. Capital! splendid life, isn't it ?

WHITE. Stunning!

BLACK. First-rate!

WHITE. First-rate!

BLACK. (*aside.*) What a wretch !

WHITE. (*aside.*) What a monster!

BLACK. Give us your hand.

WHITE. Eh ? (*aside.*) My ring! (*changes ring to other hand.*) Ah, you're a pal.

BLACK. I am!

WHITE. Come to my arms.

(*they are about to embrace, when both suddenly stop.*)

BLACK. (*aside.*) My watch! (*buttons up his coat.*)

WHITE. My pin! (*buttons up to the throat.*) Now—

TWO GAY DECEIVERS.

7

BLACK. Now—(*they embrace.*)

WHITE. (*singing.*)

In a box of the stone jug I was born,
Of a hempen widow the kid forlorn,

Fake away!

And my noble father, as I've heard say,
Was a famous merchant of capers gay,

BLACK. Nix my dolly pals fake away !

BOTH. Nix my dolly pals fake away !

GREY *enters, with two loaves and a pitcher, door L. C.*

GREY. Here's your supper—bread and water.

WHITE. (*with disgust.*) Water!

GREY. Oh, you can have what you like from the hotel
close to.

BLACK. Of course ! let's have a nice supper.

(*taking out purse.*)

WHITE. What! have you got any tin ?

BLACK. (*hiding his purse.*) I forgot—eh? eh?—a little.

GREY. I say, you've not been put down on the sheet yet.

BLACK. No.

GREY. Come along.

BLACK. With pleasure. (*aside.*) If he'd only put me some-
where else away from this horrible—

WHITE. I hope he won't come back again.

BLACK. I shall soon be back, old fellow.

WHITE. I hope so. Don't be long.

Exeunt GREY and BLACK, L. C.

WHITE. Whew ! thank Heaven he's gone ! The idea of my pretending to be a thief!—Lothario White! a respectable teacher of languages! who never in his life took anything—stop ! when I say I never took anything, I'm wrong, for this morning I took an omnibus—or I should say the omnibus took me—for I received a letter from a lady in this neighbourhood, saying she wanted to learn Italian. I had scarcely taken the omnibus for five minutes—or more correctly speaking, the omnibus had scarcely taken me five minutes, before I heard a sweet, melodious voice, that sounded like "the murmurs of lone fountains, that gush forth in the midst of roses," exclaim, "I haven't got my tuppence." I turned round—I looked at her—'twas Julia—*my* Julia, who hadn't got her tuppence. The conductor gave it her—my emotion was easier to be imagined than described—to meet with Julia, to whom I was once going to be married—but her stupid old father married her to somebody else—I say again to meet with Julia—to find her—my first love married, in an omnibus, and wanting her tuppence. She told me that she lived in the neighbourhood. She got out of the vehicle—so did I—she led me

to her house—we entered together—we closed the door—and for the second time that morning, I took a 'bus ; at that interesting and auspicious moment, whose bliss was of linked sweetness long drawn out! the door opened—a man appeared (Julia whispered me he was her husband's friend), he cried " Policeman, I have found that man in the house under suspicious circumstances—I give him in charge. " Policeman advanced, seized me by the collar—and here I am in prison—but by the heavens above us I am as innocent (*kneels melodramatically.*)—of all but having taken an omnibus—without any felonious intent. Little did I think that omnibus would drive me to despair.

GREY *opens door for* BLACK, *who enters.*

BLACK. Ha, ha, ha! I say, I've found you out—I've read the police sheet—you're not a man-slaughterer—I'm glad of it—you're a respectable man—so am I.

WHITE. What then—

BLACK. I was pretending, for fear that you—don't you see ?

WHITE. Oh, yes. (*whispering.*) Then what cause—

BLACK. (*whispering.*) Love.

WHITE. Same here.

BLACK. You don't say so.

WHITE. Yes, we are two gay deceivers.

BLACK. So we are—ha, ha, ha! (*both laugh and sing.*)

" Nix my dolly pals fake away!"

GREY *opens the door, L. C.*

GREY. Now then ! what's all that row for ?

BLACK. Let us sup together. (*unbuttoning.*)

WHITE. With pleasure. Gaoler! (*unbuttoning.*)

GREY. Officer!

WHITE. Some supper—cold fowl, tongue, ham, game pie!

BLACK. And a bottle of sherry.

WHITE. No—champagne.

BLACK. Well, champagne.

GREY. (*tying his handkerchief.*) Wait till I tie a knot.

BLACK. But my snuff—

GREY. (*showing him knot on handkerchief*) All right! there you are, you see. *Exit, L. C.*

WHITE. (*gaily.*) Huzza ! What a lark ! what fun !

BLACK. Y-e-s ! though *I* have a cause for annoyance which you have not.

WHITE. What's that?

BLACK. I am married.

WHITE. So am I!

BLACK. What will my wife say ?

WHITE. And mine ! she'll pull a long face. Ha, ha, ha, ha !

BLACK. Yes—ha, ha, ha, ha! I laugh, though I don't feel well.
 WHITE. Have you any family ?
 BLACK. I don't know—have you?
 WHITE. Not that I am aware of.
 BLACK. (*taking his arm.*) There's a singular sympathy between us.
 WHITE. Remarkable! So you are locked up for a love affair. Is she pretty ?
 BLACK. My wife!
 WHITE. No—the girl you love.
 BLACK. Beautiful! black hair, dark eye'd—
 WHITE. Like my wife.
 BLACK. A nice straight nose!—do you carry a snuff-box.
 WHITE. No!
 BLACK. I'm dying for a pinch of snuff.
 WHITE. Stop! I have a box—I forgot. In the hurry of leaving my lady love, I brought away her husband's snuff-box—here you are. (*offering snuff-box.*)
 BLACK. Wait till I find my handkerchief.
 (*in seeking in his pocket he pulls out a yellow cap with ribbons.*
 WHITE. (*seizing the cap.*) A yellow cap! 'tis my wife's! Wretch!
 BLACK. (*who has taken the snuff-box.*) My snuff-box! Villain!
 WHITE. Infamous rascal!
 BLACK. Despicable scoundrel!
 WHITE. My wife's cap! Sir!
 BLACK. Sir!
 WHITE. You and I are one too many on this earth.
 BLACK. Then leave it.
 WHITE. I could crush you.
 BLACK. I could annihilate you. (*they square at each other.*)
 GREY *enters, L. C. with supper, and receives a blow from each person.*
 GREY. Hollo ! what's up !
 BLACK. (*shouting.*) Waiter! swords!
 WHITE. (*shouting.*) Gaoler! pistols!
 GREY. Pistols! swords! you didn't order 'em for supper. (*laying tray.*) Here you are—cold fowl, and bottle of champagne.
 BLACK. We don't want any.
 WHITE. Not a bit.
 GREY. Will you make a present of it to me!
 BLACK. No—we won't eat it ourselves, but no one else shall.
 GREY. Why, you're like a dog in the manger. *Exit L. C.*
 WHITE. (*walking furiously up and down stage, L.*) No swords—no pistols—not even a single stick.
 BLACK. (*walking up and down stage, R.*) Or a corkscrew.

WHITE. But we shall soon be out of this.

BLACK. I hope so.

WHITE. Great powers! shut up in a cell with one's mortal foe!

BLACK. To breathe same air as the man who—

WHITE. If I only had something to distract my attention—
a philosophic novel, or a cookery book.

BLACK. What can I do to occupy my mind ? ah ! I'll sup—
that will be some consolation. (*sits at table.*)

WHITE. Why, you haven't got the heart to sit down and
sup, have you ? at all events, leave me my share.

BLACK. I'll cut the fowl in two, and I'll take one bottle of
champagne—don't be afraid—I'll not attempt to take your half.

WHITE. But you *have* attempted to take my half— my *better*
half.

BLACK. And you, too—but let me not think of it! There's
your share—o—eg, one wing, and half the breast. Take it
where you like (*putting half fowl on plate.*)

WHITE. (*taking plate.*) Take it where I like! Is the table
more yours than mine, then ?

BLACK. (*drawing table to him.*) I was here first.

WHITE. That's nothing to do with it. (*drawing the table back.*)

BLACK. But I can't sit at the same table with you.

WHITE. Then go somewhere else. (*helping himself.*)

BLACK. Ah, if I wasn't so hungry!—it's an odd thing, but
grief always makes me hungry.

WHITE. Same here. (*eating.*) The fowl is devilish good.
What a depraved thing one's stomach is!

BLACK. The very look of you stifles—chokes me—I must
drink. (*opens his bottle.*)

WHITE. I must drink, too, but not your health. (*opens bottle.*)

BLACK. Sir, I drink with the greatest hatred of you. (*drinks.*)

WHITE. To our eternal enmity. (*drinks.*)

BLACK. May the present moment be the best of your life.

WHITE. Misery to those who make it for others.

BLACK. Here's may the single be wretched, and the married
single.

WHITE. To the girls we don't love. (*both getting drunk.*)

BLACK. Here's may discord reign all over the world.

WHITE. May the wings of friendship moult every d—d
feather. (*cries.*) Ah, the misery you've caused me!

BLACK. (*crying.*) How did I know it was *your* wife ?

WHITE. (*laughing.*) Ha, ha, ha! And how could I know
it was your'n?

BLACK. Oh, I'm so unhappy ! (*crying.*)

WHITE. Why, you're crying. Ha, ha, ha!

BLACK. (*crying.*) And you are laughing.

WHITE. Ha, ha, ha! Our position—our mutual position is

such a devilish odd one! Eh—two married men who—eh ? Ha, ha, ha, ha ! (*laughing.*)

BLACK. (*laughing.*) Ha, ha, ha! Don't make me laugh—I don't want to laugh. Ha, ha, ha!

WHITE. At all events, one can't reproach the other !

BLACK. No, no! (*drinking.*)

WHITE. I am to be pitied—you are to be pitied—I pity you—you pity me. (*they drink.*) It's quite equal.

BLACK. All fair! (*they rise.*)

WHITE. Let us be reasonable. It is perhaps quite as well as it is. If it hadn't been us—

BLACK. It might have been somebody else.

WHITE. At least—we do know each other!

BLACK. We do. (*they shake hands.*)

WHITE. What's your name ?

BLACK. Black. What's yours?

WHITE. White. Curious coincidence, isn't it ?

Enter GREY, L. C.

GREY. Letter for Mr. White.

WHITE. Me? (*opening it.*)

GREY. Sixpence.

WHITE. Tie another knot in your handkerchief. Who the deuce can know—(*reading.*) "Dear sir—My wife, Julia, ha? explained to me the reason of your presence in my house. As it was nothing more than a visit in your professional capacity, I apologise for my rudeness to you. My wife desires me to say that we shall both be happy to see you and arrange the terms upon which she is to study Italian. I am, sir, yours very truly, John Green."

BLACK. John Green ? why that's my friend!

WHITE. Then Julia is not your wife ?

BLACK. No—my wife's name is Susan.

WHITE. Susan ! I don't know any Susan.

BLACK. Oh, I remember—my snuff box; I lent it to Green, yesterday.

WHITE. Green—Julia's husband!

BLACK. Yes, huzza—it's all right, then, my friend! (*going to embrace him.*)

WHITE. (*recoiling.*) Friend!

BLACK. Do you repulse my affection ?

WHITE. With horror and disgust. Julia was not your wife, we are no longer on equal terms.

BLACK. But on equally good terms, I hope, if I did lend my snuff box ?

WHITE. But the cap, (*showing it.*) I didn't lend the cap.

GREY. (*coming down.*) What's that?

WHITE. What's that to you ?

GREY. Why, it's the yellow cap I bought for Sally.

WHITE. Sally!

GREY. Yes, Sally Brown, my sweetheart. I bought it at the Universal Exhibition of caps for every fairer part climate in Oxford Street.

WHITE. That's where my wife deals.

GREY. I know it's the same, as I made a knot in the ribbon to remind me that I had it in my pocket.

BLACK. (*showing it.*) Here it is.

BLACK & WHITE. } (*dancing.*) "Nix my dolly pals, &c., &c."

Exit GREY, L. C.

WHITE. Black!

BLACK. White! (*they embrace.*)

WHITE. Excuse me asking, but are you the inventor of the Patent black eye-water?

BLACK. I am.

WHITE. It's first rate stuff!

BLACK. Do you think so ? (*pleased.*)

WHITE. Sure of it. I put some on my corns and it drew 'em all out by the roots.

BLACK. It was devilish funny wasn't it that we—eh ?

WHITE. Yes. (*BOTH laugh heartily.*) Black!

BLACK. White! Once more ! (*they embrace.*)

Enter GREY, L. C.

GREY. You're both discharged. The prosecution has been withdrawn.

BOTH. Hurra!

BLACK. I'll run home to my wife.

WHITE. And I to mine.

BLACK. And make her happy.

WHITE. And so will I.

BLACK. You and I have both been too gay—henceforth let us renounce that sort of thing.

WHITE. We will.

BOTH. We swear it 

WHITE. No we won't.

BLACK. Why not?

WHITE. For if this night each peccadillo ends,
We shan't again here meet our present friends,
We now mean to reform—

BLACK. Pray, pray believe us!

WHITE. Oh, let us once more be

BLACK. Two

WHITE. Gay

Deceivers!

CURTAIN.