

**AN AWKWARD SQUAD;  
FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY: A  
COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649306640

An awkward squad; For one night only: a comedy in four acts by Robert M. Baker

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**ROBERT M. BAKER**

**AN AWKWARD SQUAD;  
FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY: A  
COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS**



# FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

A Comedy in Four Acts.

*TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.*

BY

ROBERT M. BAKER

AUTHOR OF "AN AWKWARD SQUAD," "MR. BOB," ETC.

---

BOSTON

WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

# FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

---

## CHARACTERS.

---

PROF. MARTIN GOLDWHINNEY.

DR. LEOPOLD NEWMAN, *his son-in-law.*

MR. CHAS. HARKINS.

JACK HARKINS, *his son, whose "nom de théâtre" is Emil Hawkins.*

SPARTAN SPURGIUS SPOTTS, *a theatrical manager, leading heavy, etc.*

MRS. GOLDWHINNEY.

MRS. NEWMAN, } *her daughters.*  
PAULA, }

ROSA, *a maidservant.*

---

COPYRIGHT, 1899, BY WALTER H. BAKER & CO.



# FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

## ACT I.

SCENE. — *The PROFESSOR'S Study. Doors C. R. and L. At the back, L. C., an alcove with portière. In alcove, reclining chair and small table upon which are books; down stage, L., writing-table with books, manuscripts, and papers; down stage, R., a small work-table upon which are books, etc. Behind table, small sofa; bookcases about walls. Curtain raised, discovers ROSA sitting in chair reading paper.*

ROSA (*reads aloud*). "The most respectful undersigned takes the liberty of making the humble announcement to the citizens of the town, that on the 16th of September, there will be a theatrical performance in the town hall. (*Speaks.*) A play! My eyes! won't that be great! (*Reads.*) The undersigned management will do all in their power to surpass any previous performance ever given in the town. All stars. Ten supernumeraries. We are the only combination now on the road not exhibiting living pictures.

Most respectfully,

Your humble servant,

Spartan Spotts, Manager."

(*Speaks.*) As long as the missus stays at the Baths I can go every night to the theatre. If she were at home, I wouldn't get time. I couldn't get out even to see the posters, let alone the show.

(*Enter PROFESSOR GOLDWHINNEY, R.*)

PROFESSOR. What are you doing, Rosa?

ROSA (*rises*). O Professor! I only brought in the books from the third class in history. There are such queer things in them.

PROF. Yes, yes; but never mind them now. Help me off with my coat. (*ROSA helps him.*) Is there any mail for me?

ROSA. No, Professor.

PROF. Not a word from my wife since Monday. Can anything have happened?

ROSA. Don't you worry, Professor. The missus can take care of herself (*aside*) and everybody else.

PROF. Has any one called?

ROSA. Yes, sir. An hour ago a gentleman called.

PROF. Who was he? Did he leave any card?

ROSA. No, sir. He looked like a missionary — smooth face — and had a diamond shirt-stud as large as a strawberry.

PROF. Did he say that he would call again?

ROSA. Yes, in half an hour. (*Gives theatrical poster to PROFESSOR.*) Please sir, can I go?

PROF. What's this? The theatre to open? No, indeed. (*Aside.*) I will write my wife to prolong her stay.

(DR. NEWMAN looks in at door, r.)

DR. NEWMAN. Good-afternoon, Professor. My wife is outside. May she come in?

PROF. Oh, yes, if you think best.

(MARIANA pushes by DR. NEWMAN, closing door upon him.)

MARIANA. Papa, that wretch of a husband of mine is outside. Do you think it wise for him to come in?

PROF. Ha, ha! come in, both of you. You haven't been to see me for days.

(MARIANA opens door; DR. NEWMAN enters.)

MAR. I know it; but we are so happy, and you know that the doctor is away all day, so that when he comes home in the evening, why, we like to stay at home by the fire.

PROF. Oh! naturally.

DR. N. But you should come to see us. What do you do with yourself?

PROF. Oh, I get bored to death.

MAR. It is shameful of mamma and Paula to leave you so long. Is there any news from them?

PROF. Nothing since Monday.

DR. N. The Baths must be doing them good.

PROF. Yes, I hope so. (*Aside to MARIANA.*) And they are costing me a pile of money. So far, it has cost me five hundred dollars. That's a lot of money for me. Why, I have had to draw upon Paula's money in the bank. I must put that back before your mother returns or she will make it interesting for me. I might try a hand at stocks.

MAR. Oh, no, papa.

PROF. Well, lots of people do the stock market successfully.

MAR. Yes, and the stock market does the people quite as successfully.

PROF. But I must have some excitement. I have put my library in order three times, sorted my bills (*aside*), haven't paid any though (*aloud*), read over my manuscripts, and, children, what do you think? (*Takes manuscript from table.*) I found this.



DR. N. Why, that looks like lyric poetry.

PROF. Worse than that. It is a Roman tragedy.

MAR. Horrors!

PROF. You would get them if you read it.

DR. N. Something you have written?

PROF. (*bowing*). Yes; when I was a student. What student has not written a tragedy? Do you know that after reading it again I begin to think that it is not bad. To be sure, it is crude, but it has fire and youth. (*Pats it affectionately.*) Not so bad.

(*Enter ROSA.*)

PROF. Not so bad; is it Rosa?

ROSA. Oh, Professor, it is sublime.

PROF. There you are. She appreciates it. I have read it to her.

MAR. (*laughs*). Read it to Rosa! Ha, ha!

PROF. Laugh away. You don't appreciate the fact that an author must read his works to some one. So Rosa had to stand it.

DR. N. (*aside*). Poor Rosa.

ROSA. I listened so hard. Oh, Mrs. Newman, it is heavenly, but so sad. (*Bursts into tears.*)

PROF. There, there! Don't begin to howl again. (*To DR. NEWMAN.*) You can see the effect it had upon her. What might it not work upon an audience?

DR. N. Well, I should say a stampede.

ROSA. I can't help it. It makes me cry just to see the covers. It's like peeling onions. (*Exit crying.*)

PROF. Now you can see what I do to amuse myself. I read the products of my youthful brain to the domestic.

MAR. (*who has been reading a book, which she has taken from table*). Oh, heavens!

PROF. (*jumping up*). What is it?

DR. N. Are you ill?

MAR. (*comes down between them; holds out book to PROFESSOR*). Papa, can you trust the person who wrote that book?

PROF. (*looking at book*). Balzac. I should say so.

MAR. (*to DR. NEWMAN*). Then, sir, you are a despicable wretch.

DR. N. What — what do you mean, Mariana?

MAR. Read for yourself.

DR. N. (*reads*). "Every bride would, if she should learn of the former life of the bridegroom even upon her marriage day, draw back from the altar."

MAR. There! What was your former life?

DR. N. But, Mariana, this is nonsense.

MAR. Papa, what was his former life?

PROF. Ahem! Well, my child —

MAR. (*mimics them*). "But, Mariana," — "Well, my child." You think that you can hoodwink me, but you shall confess.

DR. N. But, my dear, I have nothing to confess.

MAR. How could Balzac have made such a statement if he had not had good authority?

DR. N. As I never met the gentleman, I don't know how he could. Come, don't be silly, dear.

MAR. (*angrily*). We shall see if you are so brave when we get home. You think that you have papa to protect you here. Good-by, papa.

PROF. But you are not going?

DR. N. Now, do listen.

MAR. If you please, we will discuss this affair in our own home. Come.

PROF. (*nudging him*). My, but you are in for it!

DR. N. (*aside*). Why in thunder don't you keep your Balzac out of sight?

PROF. (*to MARIANA*). Now, my dear, you are always talking about your domestic happiness, but when you come here you fight like a couple of English sparrows.

MAR. Oh, indeed! Of course you will take his part. (*Crying*.) If mamma were only here.

PROF. (*aside*). Thank heaven, she is not!

MAR. When she returns, I shall tell her all, and how you have treated me. (*Goes to door*.)

DR. N. There, dear, don't cry. I am coming with you.

MAR. (*sharply*). No, sir! That is not necessary. (*Exit c.*)

DR. N. (*sharply to PROFESSOR*). I suppose it is none of my business to criticise you, but if I had a daughter, I would bring her up differently. My son-in-law should not be subjected to certain lectures every five minutes. Good-morning, sir. (*Exit c., slamming door*.)

PROF. This shall be a warning; Balzac must be put away. Heavens, if it should fall into my wife's hands. My! but there would be a storm brewing about here with a side order of cyclone for me. (*Exit l., with books*.)

(*Enter R., ROSA and SPARTAN SPOTTS.*)

ROSA. This way, if you please, sir. The Professor knows that you have called.

SPARTAN SPOTTS. So? Capital! Accept my most humble thanks for your attention.

ROSA. I will tell him that you are here, sir.

SPOTTS. Nay, stay but a moment, if you please. (*Takes off coat; strikes attitude. In dramatic tone.*) Bring forth the bob-tail lion!

ROSA. Sir!

SPOTTS. I beg your pardon. That was a "lapsus linguæ." Kindly tell the Professor that Spartan Spotts, theatrical manager, leading heavy and first old man, awaits his pleasure.

ROSA. Great heavens! You are an actor.

SPOTTS. Aye, the very same. You seem astonished. At present I am presenting my compliments to all the notabilities in the town. Tell me, fair maid, doth the Professor hie himself to the theatre many times?

ROSA. Goodness! To the theatre? Since I have been here no one has been allowed to mention it.

SPOTTS. Ah, say not so? And how many moons have you been here?

ROSA. Ten years since Christmas.

SPOTTS. And not in the firm. By the shades of Julius Cæsar, how happens this?

ROSA. The mistress does not approve of the theatre.

SPOTTS. But the Professor. Has he no taste for the drama?

ROSA. Well, I should say that he had. He has written a play.

SPOTTS. So!

ROSA. It is there on the table. It is a play that is a play. Something about ancient history.

SPOTTS. Ye gods! But it doth amaze me. Look you, hath it ever been read to the "oi polloi"?

ROSA. What may that be, sir?

SPOTTS. The people; the common herd.

ROSA. No; I am the only one that knows of it.

SPOTTS. By heavens! But this is nuts for me.

ROSA. What?

SPOTTS. Listen. The Professor is one of the leading men in town?

ROSA. Of course. When he goes along the street all the people salute him.

SPOTTS. So, so! 'Tis well, 'tis well. (*Clasps hands.*)

ROSA. What is the matter with you? Are you in pain?

SPOTTS. Nay, nay; I have an idea.

ROSA. I will call the Professor.

SPOTTS. That is well; do so. (*ROSA exit.*) Spotts, my boy, here is your chance. There was that piece we played in last year that the society leader wrote. Jupiter, but it was rotten! But we packed the theatre, standing room only. If the town knows that the Professor has written a play, every one will go to see it. And they shall see it. Let me see. There are about three thousand inhabitants, and half will go. Spotts, my boy, there is money in it. Ah, he comes!

(*Enter PROFESSOR.*)

PROF. You wished to speak with me, sir?

SPOTTS. I am Spotts, Spartan Spotts, sometimes called Spotty; but that is neither here nor there. I would a word with thee.

PROF. How can I serve you?

SPOTTS. Sir, I beg your pardon for thus intruding upon your "sanctum sanctotum," but I wished to introduce myself to one of