

F. ANSTEY



***THE BRASS
BOTTLE***

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The Brass Bottle

A Farcical Fantastic Play in Four Acts

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UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

Cloth 2s. 6d.; paper covers, 1s. 6d. each.

THE BRASS BOTTLE

A FARCICAL FANTASTIC PLAY

By F. ANSTEY

COPY OF THE "FIRST NIGHT" PROGRAMME AT THE
VAUDEVILLE THEATRE, LONDON

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

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Act III

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THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

THE BRASS BOTTLE

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UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

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THE BRASS BOTTLE

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A FARCICAL FANTASTIC PLAY

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In Four Acts

By F. ANSTEY

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COPY OF THE "FIRST NIGHT" PROGRAMME AT THE VAUDEVILLE THEATRE, LONDON

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THE BRASS BOTTLE A Farcical Play in Four Acts By F.
ANSTEY PERFORMED FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THURSDAY
EVENING, SEPTEMBER 16, 1909

HORACE VENTIMORE	MR. LAURENCE GROSSMITH
PROFESSOR ANTHONY FUTVOYE	MR. ALFRED BISHOP
FAKRASH-EL- AAMASH	MR. E. HOLMAN CLARK
SPENCER PRINGLE	MR. RUDGE HARDING
SAMUEL WACKERBATH	MR. LUIGI LABLACHE

RAPKIN MR. J. H. BREWER

CHIEF OF
CARAVAN MR. A. SPENCER

HEAD
EFREET MR. JOHN CAREY

A WAITER MR. WALTER RINGHAM

MRS.
FUTVOYE MISS LENA HALLIDAY

SYLVIA
FUTVOYE MISS VIVA BIRKETT

MRS.
RAPKIN MISS MARY BROUGH

MRS.
WACKERBATH MISS ARMINE GRACE

JESSIE MISS GLADYS STOREY

ZOBEIDA
(Principal
Dancing
Girl) MISS MABEL DUNCAN

DANCERS. Misses Phyllis Birkett, Florence A.
Pigott, Susie Nainby, Dorothy
Beaufey, Nina De Leon, Cynthia
Farnham



SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

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ACTS I AND II

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HORACE VENTIMORE'S ROOMS

There will be an Interval of Two Minutes after Act I, and Eight Minutes after Act II

Act III

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SCENE I. VENTIMORE'S OFFICE

SCENE II. DRAWING-ROOM AT THE FUTVOYES'

There will be One Minute Interval between Scenes I and II, during which the Audience are requested to keep their seats. After Act III, Eight Minutes.

Act IV

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SCENE I. VENTIMORE'S ROOMS

SCENE II. "PINAFORE" ROOM, SAVOY HOTEL

There will be an Interval of One Minute between Scenes I and II, during which the Audience are requested to keep their seats.

The Scenery painted by WALTER HANN AND SON.

The Play has been Produced (for Mr. GASTON MAYER) by Mr.
FREDERICK KERR.

The Amateur fee for each and every
representation of this play is five
guineas, payable in advance to the
Author's Sole Agents, Messrs.
Samuel French, Ltd., 26 Southampton
Street, Strand, London,
W.C.

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

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HORACE VENTIMORE (a young Architect, aged 28)
PROFESSOR ANTHONY FUTVOYE (an Egyptologist, aged 60)
FAKRASH-EL-AAMASH (a Jinnee of the Green Jinn, age uncertain)
SPENCER PRINGLE (an Architect, aged 32)
SAMUEL WACKERBATH (an Auctioneer and Estate Agent, aged 60)
RAPKIN (Ventimore's Landlord, a retired butler, aged 55)
CHIEF OF CARAVAN
HEAD EFREET
A WAITER (at the Savoy Hotel)
MRS. FUTVOYE (aged 55)
SYLVIA FUTVOYE (her Daughter, aged 21)
MRS. RAPKIN (Ventimore's Landlady)
MRS. WACKERBATH
JESSIE (Parlour-maid at the Futvoyes')
PRINCIPAL DANCING GIRL
CARAVAN SLAVES, MUSICIANS, EFREETS, DANCING GIRLS

ACTS I AND II

VENTIMORE'S ROOMS IN VINCENT SQUARE, WESTMINSTER

ACT III

SCENE I. VENTIMORE'S OFFICE IN GREAT COLLEGE STREET,
WESTMINSTER

SCENE II. A DRAWING-ROOM AT THE FUTVOYES' HOUSE IN
COTTESMORE GARDENS, KENSINGTON

ACT IV

SCENE I. VENTIMORE'S ROOMS

SCENE II. THE "PINAFORE" ROOM AT THE SAVOY HOTEL

THE BRASS BOTTLE

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THE FIRST ACT

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The scene represents HORACE VENTIMORE'S rooms in Vincent Square, Westminster.

The sitting-room is simply but artistically furnished and decorated. Walls with a lining-paper of a pleasant green, hung with coloured prints and etchings. Fireplace at back.

Down left is a large open French window, opening on a balcony, with a view beyond of the open square and some large dull-red gasometers in the distance. Above the window is a small Sheraton bookcase. On the right of fireplace is a door leading to the landing and staircase. Down on the right, another door to VENTIMORE's bedroom. Above this door, a small Sheraton sideboard. Near the window on left is an armchair, and by it a table, with two smaller chairs. [N.B.—Right and Left mean the spectator's Right and Left throughout.]

The time is late afternoon in summer.

When the curtain rises there is no one in the room. A knock is heard at the door on right of fireplace. Then, after a pause, MRS. RAPKIN enters. She is a pleasant, neatly dressed, elderly woman, of the respectable landlady class. She wears a cooking-apron and her sleeves are turned up. She looks round the room, and turns to the door as PROFESSOR FUTVOYE appears.

MRS. RAPKIN.

Mr. Ventimore don't seem to be in, after all, sir. Unless he's in his bedroom. [*She comes down to the door on right, as PROFESSOR, MRS., and MISS FUTVOYE enter from the other door. PROFESSOR FUTVOYE is elderly and crabbed; his wife, grey-haired and placid, bearing with him as with an elderly and rather troublesome child; SYLVIA FUTVOYE, their daughter, is a pretty and attractive girl of about twenty. MRS. RAPKIN knocks at the bedroom door.*] Mr. Ventimore! A gentleman and two ladies to see you. [*She opens the door—then, to the PROFESSOR.*] No, sir, he hasn't come in yet—but he won't be long now.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*By the table.*] Are you *sure* of that, ma'am?

MRS. RAPKIN.

Well, sir, he said as how he'd be in early, to make sure as everythink was as it *should* be. [*In a burst of confidence.*] If you *must* know, he's expecting company to dinner this evening.

[*SYLVIA has moved to the window; MRS. FUTVOYE stands by the table.*

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*Placing his hat and stick on a small shelf on the left of fireplace, and standing by table.*] I'm aware of that, ma'am. We happen to be the company Mr. Ventimore is expecting. Don't let us keep you from your cooking.

MRS. RAPKIN.

[*With another burst of confidence.*] Well, sir, to tell you the truth, I 'ave a good deal on my 'ands just now.

[*She goes out by door at back.*

SYLVIA.

[*After moving about and inspecting the pictures.*] I rather like Horace's rooms.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*Irritably.*] I wish he'd manage to be *in* 'em! I fully expected he'd be back by this time. *Most* annoying!

MRS. FUTVOYE.

[*Resignedly.*] I *thought* you were bringing us all this way for nothing! And when you must be quite exhausted enough as it is, after lecturing all the afternoon!

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

I'm not in the least exhausted, Sophia; not in the least!

MRS. FUTVOYE.

Well, Anthony, if *you're* not, Sylvia and I are! [*She sits in armchair by the window.*] But *why* you couldn't wait till eight o'clock to know how Horace got on at that sale I *can't* think!

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

He ought to have been back *long* ago! I can see *no* excuse for his dawdling like this. None whatever!

[*He sits on right of table.*

SYLVIA.

[*Standing behind table.*] Perhaps he went back to his office?

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*Tartly.*] He's much more likely to have dropped into his club for a rubber of Bridge!

SYLVIA.

Don't you think you're rather ungrateful to grumble at poor Horace like this, after he's given up a whole day's work to oblige you?

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

I was not aware, my dear, that he has, or ever had, a day's work to give up! Correct me if I am wrong—but I am under the impression that nobody has employed him as an architect *yet*.

SYLVIA.

That isn't Horace's fault!

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

Possibly—but it doesn't make him more desirable as a future son-in-law.

SYLVIA.

Horace is sure to succeed as soon as he gets a chance. [*Sitting on table and leaning over the* PROFESSOR.] If you would only say a word for him to Godfather, he might be able to help him.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

Wackerbath? No, my dear, I couldn't bring myself to take such an advantage of our old friendship as *that*! I've no belief in Ventimore's succeeding in life. He *may* have ability—though I'm bound to say I see little *evidence* of it—but, depend upon it, he'll never make any money!

SYLVIA.

How *can* you tell?

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

Because he can't even take care of the little he has! Look at the money he's throwing away on this totally unnecessary dinner to-night!

SYLVIA.

Oh! When it's just a quiet little dinner in his own rooms! If it had been the *Carlton*, now!

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

He proposed to entertain us at the Carlton at first—but I stopped *that*. It all bears out what I say—that he has absolutely *no* sense of the value of—

MRS. FUTVOYE.

[*Interposing calmly.*] There, Anthony, that's enough! Horace is engaged to Sylvia—and the most sensible thing we can do is to make the best of it.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*Rising and moving to the right.*] I *am* making the best of it, Sophia! If Ventimore was like Spencer Pringle, now!—

SYLVIA.

He would never have been engaged to *me*!

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*To SYLVIA.*] Pringle, my dear, is a steady, hard-working young fellow. I've a real respect and liking for *Pringle*. And if I *must* have an architect for a son-in-law, he is the man I should have preferred!

SYLVIA.

Why, he hasn't been near us for weeks and weeks—and I hope he means to stay away altogether! I always thought him a conceited prig.

[*Moving towards door at back.*

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

You may come to think differently, my dear. [*Pulling out his watch.*] Nearly half-past six! Tut-tut! All this time wasted! It's useless to wait any longer for Ventimore. We may just as well go!

[*He goes to get his hat and stick.*

MRS. FUTVOYE.

[*Rising.*] I knew how it would *be*!

SYLVIA.

[*At door.*] Wait! [*Opens door and listens.*] There's Horace coming upstairs! I'm sure it's his step!

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*Stops by table with relief.*] At last! Now I shall know!

[SPENCER PRINGLE *enters. He is a smug, self-satisfied looking man of about thirty-five, smooth-shaven, except for small side-whiskers. He is in a light tweed suit, having just come up from the country.*

SYLVIA.

[*Repressing her disappointment.*] Mr. Pringle!

PRINGLE.

[*In doorway.*] Miss Sylvia! Mrs. Futvoye! [*Shaking hands with the PROFESSOR.*] Professor! Well! this is unexpected.

[SYLVIA *comes down to right.*

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*Graciously.*] Glad to see you, Pringle! You are quite a stranger. Indeed, my daughter was remarking, only a little while ago, that you hadn't been near us for weeks!

SYLVIA.

[*In an indignant undertone.*] Father!

[MRS. FUTVOYE *sits down again.*

PRINGLE.

[*To SYLVIA, flattered.*] Delighted to think I've been missed! But my apparent—er—neglect has been quite unavoidable.

SYLVIA.

[*Laughing.*] So kind of you to relieve our minds, Mr. Pringle!

PRINGLE.

[*Solemnly.*] I assure you it's the fact. I've been away constantly for the last two months, superintending work I'm doing in various parts of the country. [*With importance.*] Hardly a moment to call my own!

[SYLVIA *turns with the intention of sitting down; he places a chair for her.*

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*Taking chair behind table.*] A busy man like *you*, my dear Pringle, has no need to make excuses.

PRINGLE.

[*Fetching a chair for himself.*] I really have been fearfully overworked. Not that I complain of *that*! [*As he sits down between the PROFESSOR and SYLVIA.*] I'd no idea we should meet *here*, though. Is Ventimore a friend of yours?

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

Oh, we know him, yes. As *you* do, it seems.

PRINGLE.

I sublet a room in my offices to him. Rather a good arrangement for him, because he gets experience by looking after any little matters that I've no time to attend to.

SYLVIA.

[*With suppressed resentment.*] And isn't that rather a good arrangement for *you*?

PRINGLE.

It works fairly well—as a rule. But when I returned from the country this afternoon I found he hadn't been near the office all day!

[*He rises, takes SYLVIA's parasol officiously, and places it in a corner, then returns.*]

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*To his wife, but speaking at SYLVIA.*] Not been near the office all day! I *thought* as much!

SYLVIA.

The reason *why* he wasn't able to help you, Mr. Pringle, is because he's been at an auction, bidding for things on father's account.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

I should have attended the sale myself but for an engagement to lecture at the Hieroglyphical on a recently inscribed cylinder.

MRS. FUTVOYE.

And—you'll hardly believe it, Mr. Pringle,—but, the moment the lecture was over, he hurried us off here to find out what Mr. Ventimore had got for him! It's really too ridiculous! As if his study wasn't littered up quite enough already!

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

Women, my dear Pringle, can't understand the feelings of a collector. It's not *every* day, I can tell you, that a collection of such importance comes into the market.

PRINGLE.

I didn't know Ventimore was an expert in such things. I thought you could get brokers to bid for you.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

Of course—of course. But I don't trust brokers—they know too much! And, as I gave Ventimore my own catalogue, with a tick against the lots I want and the limit I'm prepared to go, noted on the margin, he *can't* make any mistake.

PRINGLE.

I suppose not. That is, if he's *accustomed* to auctions.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

What do you mean?

PRINGLE.

Only that if you *aren't*, there's always a liability to lose your head in the excitement, and go beyond the margin. But I daresay Ventimore wouldn't do *that*.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

If he *has*! [*He rises excitedly.*] And he might—he *might*! With his recklessness about money, it's the very thing he *would* do! Letting me in for prices I can't afford! [*Passionately.*] No wonder he is in no hurry to show himself—no wonder!

MRS. FUTVOYE.

[*Rising and attempting to pacify him.*] Now, Anthony, there's nothing to work yourself up into a state for, at present. Do for goodness' sake wait till you hear all about it!

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*Resentfully.*] It seems I shall *have* to wait, Sophia—but I'm tired of waiting *here*. [*He goes to get his hat and stick.*] And evidently he doesn't intend to——

[Turns, as the door opens and HORACE VENTIMORE comes in briskly. HORACE is a pleasant-looking young man, with a cheery and rather boyish manner; he comes down and greets the FUTVOYES without seeing PRINGLE for the moment; SYLVIA has risen, delighted at his arrival.]

HORACE.

I say! This is jolly! *[Shaking hands.]* Wish I'd known you were coming on here after the lecture. *[PRINGLE rises, and waits stiffly for recognition.]* Warm work, wasn't it, Professor, lecturing on an afternoon like this? Do sit down. *[Looks at table.]* Haven't they given you any tea?

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[Irritably.] No, no, no. We want no tea. It's too late for tea. We merely looked in on our way home to——

HORACE.

[Sees PRINGLE.] And Pringle, too! *[Pats him on shoulder.]* How are you, old fellow? You been at the lecture, too?

PRINGLE.

[With implied rebuke.] No, I've only just come round—as you weren't at the office,—to——

HORACE.

I've been engaged all day. Oh, by the bye, do you know Professor and Mrs.——

[Is about to introduce him.]

PRINGLE.

[Stiffly.] I am happy to say, my dear fellow, that I require no introduction. We are old friends.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[Impatiently.] To come to the point, Ventimore, as we are rather pressed for time—about the sale? How did you get on, eh?

HORACE.

Oh, ah—the sale. *[Producing catalogue from pocket.]* Well, I did exactly as you told me.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[Snatching catalogue from him.] Yes, yes. Let's go through it lot by lot. Lot 23, now. Did you get that?

HORACE.

No. Another fellow got *that*.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[Annoyed.] Tssch! Well,—so long as you secured Lot 35. *[Reading from catalogue.]* "Copper bowl, engraved round rim with verse from Hafiz," you know. Come, you didn't miss *that*?

[SYLVIA is listening anxiously.]

HORACE.

I did, though. It was snapped up by a sportsman in the very worst hat I ever saw in my life. He got it for sixteen guineas.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

[*Disgusted.*] What? A rare example of early Persian work like that going for only sixteen guineas! I'd willingly have paid double the money!

HORACE.

But your limit was seven pound ten, sir! And you warned me not to exceed it.

PROFESSOR FUTVOYE.

You should have used your own judgment, sir! Well, well, —which of the lots I marked *did* you get?

HORACE.

[*Going to SYLVIA, who is sympathetically distressed.*] Couldn't get one of 'em. They all fetched record prices.

Professor Futvoye.

[*Violently.*] Upon my soul!... Pringle, you were right! I ought to have employed a broker! [*To HORACE.*] So you've come back with absolutely *nothing*?

HORACE.

Well, no. I did manage to get *one* thing.