

***JEROME
K. JEROME***

***STAGE-
LAND***



Jerome K. Jerome

Stage-Land

EAN 8596547178736

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



TABLE OF CONTENTS

STAGE-LAND.

THE HERO.

THE VILLAIN.

THE HEROINE.

THE COMIC MAN.

He follows the hero all over the world. This is rough on the hero.

THE LAWYER.

THE ADVENTRESS.

THE SERVANT-GIRL.

THE CHILD.

It is nice and quiet and it talks prettily.

THE COMIC LOVERS.

THE PEASANTS.

THE GOOD OLD MAN.

He has lost his wife. But he knows where she is—among the angels!

THE IRISHMAN.

THE DETECTIVE.

THE SAILOR.

STAGE-LAND.

[Table of Contents](#)

THE HERO.

[Table of Contents](#)

His name is George, generally speaking. "Call me George!" he says to the heroine. She calls him George (in a very low voice, because she is so young and timid). Then he is happy.

The stage hero never has any work to do. He is always hanging about and getting into trouble. His chief aim in life is to be accused of crimes he has never committed, and if he can muddle things up with a corpse in some complicated way so as to get himself reasonably mistaken for the murderer, he feels his day has not been wasted.

He has a wonderful gift of speech and a flow of language calculated to strike terror to the bravest heart. It is a grand thing to hear him bullyragging the villain.

The stage hero is always entitled to "estates," chiefly remarkable for their high state of cultivation and for the eccentric ground plan of the "manor house" upon them. The house is never more than one story high, but it makes up in green stuff over the porch what it lacks in size and convenience.

The chief drawback in connection with it, to our eyes, is that all the inhabitants of the neighboring village appear to live in the front garden, but the hero evidently thinks it rather nice of them, as it enables him to make speeches to them from the front doorstep—his favorite recreation.

There is generally a public-house immediately opposite. This is handy.

These "estates" are a great anxiety to the stage hero. He is not what you would call a business man, as far as we can judge, and his attempts to manage his own property invariably land him in ruin and distraction. His "estates," however, always get taken away from him by the villain before the first act is over, and this saves him all further trouble with regard to them until the end of the play, when he gets saddled with them once more.

Not but what it must be confessed that there is much excuse for the poor fellow's general bewilderment concerning his affairs and for his legal errors and confusions generally. Stage "law" may not be quite the most fearful and wonderful mystery in the whole universe, but it's near it—very near it. We were under the impression at one time that we ourselves knew something—just a little—about statutory and common law, but after paying attention to the legal points of one or two plays we found that we were mere children at it.

We thought we would not be beaten, and we determined to get to the bottom of stage law and to understand it; but after some six months' effort our brain (a singularly fine one) began to soften, and we abandoned the study, believing it would come cheaper in the end to offer a

suitable reward, of about 50,000 pounds or 60,000 pounds, say, to any one who would explain it to us.

The reward has remained unclaimed to the present day and is still open.

One gentleman did come to our assistance a little while ago, but his explanations only made the matter more confusing to our minds than it was before. He was surprised at what he called our density, and said the thing was all clear and simple to him. But we discovered afterward that he was an escaped lunatic.

The only points of stage "law" on which we are at all clear are as follows:

That if a man dies without leaving a will, then all his property goes to the nearest villain.

But if a man dies and leaves a will, then all his property goes to whoever can get possession of that will.

That the accidental loss of the three-and-sixpenny copy of a marriage certificate annuls the marriage.

That the evidence of one prejudiced witness of shady antecedents is quite sufficient to convict the most stainless and irreproachable gentleman of crimes for the committal of which he could have had no possible motive.

But that this evidence may be rebutted years afterward, and the conviction quashed without further trial by the unsupported statement of the comic man.

That if A forges B's name to a check, then the law of the land is that B shall be sentenced to ten years' penal servitude.

That ten minutes' notice is all that is required to foreclose a mortgage.

That all trials of criminal cases take place in the front parlor of the victim's house, the villain acting as counsel, judge, and jury rolled into one, and a couple of policemen being told off to follow his instructions.

These are a few of the more salient features of stage "law" so far as we have been able to grasp it up to the present; but as fresh acts and clauses and modifications appear to be introduced for each new play, we have abandoned all hope of ever being able to really comprehend the subject.

To return to our hero, the state of the law, as above sketched, naturally confuses him, and the villain, who is the only human being who does seem to understand stage legal questions, is easily able to fleece and ruin him. The simple-minded hero signs mortgages, bills of sale, deeds of gift, and such like things, under the impression that he is playing some sort of a round game; and then when he cannot pay the interest they take his wife and children away from him and turn him adrift into the world.

Being thrown upon his own resources, he naturally starves.

He can make long speeches, he can tell you all his troubles, he can stand in the lime-light and strike attitudes, he can knock the villain down, and he can defy the police, but these requirements are not much in demand in the labor market, and as they are all he can do or cares to do, he finds earning his living a much more difficult affair than he fancied.

There is a deal too much hard work about it for him. He soon gives up trying it at all, and prefers to eke out an