

The Adding Machine

by
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The Adding Machine

Dramatis Personae

One:

Two:

Three:

Four:

Five:

Six:

Daisy Diana:

The Boss:

Policeman:

Zero:

Mrs One:

Mrs two:

Mrs Three:

Mrs Four:

Mrs Five:

Mrs Six:

Judy O'Grady:

Young Man:

Shrdlu:

Mrs Zero:

A Head

Lieutenant Charles

Joe

Two Attendants

ACT ONE

SCENE 1: BEDROOM

A small room containing an "installment plan" bed, dresser and chairs. An ugly electric light fixture over the bed with a single glaring naked lamp. One small window with shade drawn. The walls are papered with sheets of foolscap with columns of figures.

MR ZERO is lying in the bed, facing the audience, his head and shoulders visible. He is thin sallow, undersized, and partially bald. MRS ZERO is standing before the dresser arranging her hair for the night. She is forty-six, sharp featured, gray streaks in her hair. She is shapeless in her long sleeved cotton nightgown. She is wearing her shoes, over which sag her ungartered stockings.

Mrs Zero: *(as she takes down her hair)* I'm gettin' sick o' them Westerns. All them cowboys ridin' around an' foolin' with them ropes. I don't care nothin' about that. I'm sick of 'em. I don't see why they don't have more of them stories like "For Love's Sweet Sake." I like them sweet little love stories.

The whole of the rest of scene one is one long monologue by Mrs Zero, which I don't intend to type for this example. It end with:

If you was any kind of man you'd have a decent job by now an' I'd be gettin' some comfort out of life --- instead of bein' just a slave, washin' pots an' standin' over the hot stove. I've stood it for twenty-five years an' I guess I'll have to stand it twenty-five more. But dont'you go starton' nothin' with women ----- *(She goes on talking as the curtain falls)*

CURTAIN

SCENE 2: AN OFFICE IN A DEPARTMENT STORE

Wood and glass partitions. In the middle of the room, two tall desks, back to back. At one desk on a high stool is ZERO. Opposite him at the other desk, also on a high stool is DAISY DIANA DOROTHEA DEVORE, a plain middle aged woman. Both wear green eye shades and paper sleeve protectors. A pendent electric lamp throws light upon both desks. DAISY reads aloud figures from a pile of slips which lie before her. As she reads the figures, ZERO enters them upon a large square sheet of ruled

Daisy Diana: (*reading aloud*) Three ninety-eight. Forty-two cents. A dollar fifty. A dollar twenty five. Two dollars. Thirty-nine cents. Twenty seven fifty.

Zero: (*petulantly*) Speed it up a little, cancha?

Daisy Diana: What's the rush? To-morrer's another day

Zero: Aw you make me sick

Daisy Diana: An' you make me sicker.

Zero: Go on. Go on. We're losin' time

Daisy Diana: Then quit being so bossy

(*she reads*) Three dollars. Two sixty-nine. Eighty-one fifty. Forty dollars. eight seventy-five.

Who do you think you are anyway?

Zero: Never mind who I think I am. You tend to your work.

Daisy Diana: Aw, don't be givin' me so many orders. Sixty cents. twenty four cents. Seventy five cents. a dollar fifty. Two fifty. One fifty. One fifty. Two fifty. I don't have to take it from you and what's more I won't.

Etc Etc. This scene ends with

The Boss: You were right. The fact is that my efficiency experts have recommended the installation of adding machines.

Zero: (*staring at him*) Addin' machines ?

The Boss: Yes, you've probably seen them. A mechanical device that adds automatically.

Zero: Sure. I've seen them. Keys --- and a handle that you pull. (*he goes through the motions in the air*).

The Boss: That's it. They do the work in half the time and a high street girl can operate them. Now, of course, I'm sorry to lose an old and faithfull employee -----

Zero: Excuse me, but would you mind sayin' that again ?

The Boss: I say I'm sorry to lose an employee who's been with me for so many years ---

Soft music is heard --- the sound of the mechanical player of a distant merry-go-round. The part of the floor on which the desk and stools are standing begins to revolve very slowly.

The Boss: But, of course in an organization like this, efficiency must be the first consideration -----

The music becomes gradually louder and the revolutions more rapid.

The Boss: You will draw your salary for the full month. And I'll direct my secretary to give you a letter of recommendation -----

Zero: Wait a minute, boss. Let me get this right. You mean I'm canned?

The Boss: *(barely making himself heard above the increasing volume of sound):* I'm sorry --- no other alternative--- greatly regret---old employee---efficiency ---- economy---- business---business--BUSINESS-----

His voice is drowned by the music. The platform is revolving rapidly now. ZERO and the BOSS face each other. They are entirely motionless save for the Boss's jawss, which open and close incessantly. But the words are inaudible. The music swells and swells. To it is added every off-stage effect of the theatre; the wind, the waves, the galloping horses, the locomotive whistle, the sleigh bells, the automobile siren, the glass-crash. New Years Eve, Election Night, Armistice Day and the Mardi Gras. The noise is deafening, maddening, unendurable. Suddenly it culminates in a terrific peal of thunder. For an instant there is a flash of red and then everything is plunged into darkness.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE 1: THE ZERO'S DINING ROOM

END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2: A COURT OF JUSTICE

END OF SCENE 2

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SCENE 1: A GRAVEYARD IN FULL MOONLIGHT

END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2: THE ELYSIAN FIELDS

END OF SCENE 2

SCENE 3: AN OFFICE SIMILAR TO SCENE TWO.

END OF SCENE 3

**END OF ACT THREE
FINAL CURTAIN**