

Jack Benny Meets Sherlock Holmes V1.3

Written by Brad Strickland
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Cast of Characters

- Regular:
 - **Jack Benny** - our star. Vain, musically ungifted, testy, stingy—but in reality very generous, especially about letting others get the laughs.
 - **Rochester** - the announcer. Rotund and jolly and always has a chuckle lurking in his voice.
 - **Don Wilson** - in real life Jack's wife, in the show his gal Friday. She's affectionate but very good at taking Jack down a peg or two.
 - **Mary Livingstone** - in real life Jack's wife, in the show his gal Friday. She's affectionate but very good at taking Jack down a peg or two.
 - **Phil Harris** - the bandleader, a boozier, always cheerful and quick with a corny joke. The voice is the same as in the cartoon JUNGLE BOOK version of Baloo the Bear ("Look for the Bear Necessities"). He also appears as Dr. Jekyll, but he does not do an impression or English accent.
 - **Frank Nelson** - sarcastic "Yesss?" man who is often Jack's nemesis. He doubles as Peter Lorre in the sketch, but if he and the Dennis Day actor want to switch which horror movie str they imitate, that's fine.

- Guest Stars:
 - **Dennis Day** - "the kid," a tenor, very friendly, vague, and easily impressed. He does a Boris Karloff impression in the script (or if he and Nelson want to trade, a Peter Lorre)
 - **Shirley Temple** - a giggly child movie star, especially in the 1930s. She's played young here. You can find lots of YouTube clips of her talking and singing. She also tap dances. Her character's last name is pronounced POSH-per-son, like Jefferson, but with a posh instead of a Jeff.
 - **May West** - a buxom, sharp-tongued woman who has a stereotypically sexy voice and attitude. Her voice is very distinctive, and like Shirley, you can find examples on YouTube. We could also double Shirley and Mae if an actor feels comfortable doing both parts.

2 *MUSIC: opening theme – under for*

3 **Scene 1 – Studio – DON, JACK, MARY, PHIL, DENNIS**

4 DON: From Hollywood, it's the Jack Benny Program,
5 with guest stars Mae West and Shirley Temple.
6 And starring Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris,
7 Dennis Day, Rochester, and yours truly, Don
8 Wilson!

9 *MUSIC: Opening theme up and ends.*

10 DON: Folks, it's been a busy week for our little
11 Jackie boy.

12 JACK: Yes, sir. Work, work, work, that's all I do!

13 DON: In addition to last Sunday's show, Jack gave
14 three benefit performances for the Society of
15 Tone-Deaf Violinists.

16 JACK: And I must say, they *loved* me.

17 DON: So after tonight's show, Jack plans to go
18 straight home and straight to bed for eight
19 full hours of sleep.

20 JACK: Well—I'll probably read a little first.

21 DON: Oh, really, Jack? Are you deep in an
22 interesting book?

23 JACK: Oh, I am, Don, I am. It's an old favorite, and
24 it's called—

25 MARY: "One Can Live as Cheaply as None."

26 JACK: It is not! Oh, Mary! Well, thanks for *finally*
27 showing up tonight. You're running a little
28 late, aren't you?

29 MARY: I couldn't get a taxi, so I walked to the
30 studio.

31 JACK: Walked? All that way? Lookit, why didn't you
32 just call Rochester? He could have given you a
33 lift in the Maxwell.

34 MARY: I made better time on foot.

35 JACK: "I made better time on foot." Listen, sister,
36 for your information, that automobile is a
37 classic.

38 MARY: So is the Parthenon.

39 JACK: Darn right.

40 MARY: It's falling apart, too.

41 JACK: Ya know Mary, one of these days—

42 PHIL: Hello folks, and start relaxin', 'cause Phil's
43 here, Jackson!

44 SFX: APPLAUSE

45 JACK: Dumb but droll, Phil.

46 SFX: DRUM ROLL

47 JACK: I said '*dumb but droll!*' I didn't ask for a
48 *drum roll!*

49 PHIL: Yeah, but you gotta admit the band is on its
50 toes!

51 MARY: Not all of them.

52 PHIL: (*YELLS*) Hey, guys, pick up Remley—he's passed
53 out again!

54 JACK: This is about the poorest excuse for an
55 orchestra since Nero fiddled while Rome
56 burned!

57 PHIL: Hey, ease up. That cat got in some hot licks.

58 MARY: It's official. The corn is as high as an
59 elephant's eye.

60 PHIL: Hey, hey, watch it! Some of my boys are
61 Democrats.

62 JACK: Most of your boys can't even spell it.

63 PHIL: Touchy, Jack. Touchy!

64 MARY: I think you mean touché, Phil.

65 PHIL: Naw, a touché's what Jack wears on his head.

66 JACK: Oh, for—Oh, Don! Don!

67 DON: Yes, Jack?

68 JACK: Do me a favor, Don. Read a commercial.

69 DON: Now?

70 JACK: Well, I need *something* to get me out of this
71 conversation! Read, Don, read!

72 DON: Folks, in tight economic times—

73 JACK: Now you're talking my language.

74 DON: *(beat)* In tight economic times, here's a grand
75 way to stretch a dollar. Dissolve one packet
76 of any flavor Jell-O in a quart of Canada Dry
77 Ginger Ale. Allow to set for one hour. Then
78 carefully fold in a cup of Grape-Nuts Flakes.
79 Shred one pack of Lucky Strikes and top with
80 the tobacco. If your family doesn't agree
81 that's the most tempting dish to come along in
82 years, I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

83 JACK: Ah, Don—Don—excuse me, but that sounds
84 terrible!

85 DON: Just try it folks, and you'll find it keeps
86 you going and going!

87 JACK: Don, something like that could be dangerous!
88 It could even *kill* you!

89 DON: [CHUCKLING] Oh, no, Jack. Why, those
90 ingredients kept *you* going for years!

91 JACK: Hmm. It's gonna be one of *those* shows. Thank
92 you, Don.

93 DON: Oh, Jack, shouldn't I introduce our little
94 guest star?

95 JACK: Oh, that's right! She ought to be able to get
96 this show back on track.

97 DENNIS: A dollar says she can't.

98 JACK: Dennis Day! I thought you were sick. Are you
99 all right, kid?

100 DENNKS: I'm lots better. My mother insisted I come to
101 the studio. But my doctor told me not to
102 strain my voice, so I can't sing tonight.

103 JACK: You—you can't sing? Then why in the world did
104 you even bother to come in?

105 DENNIS: My mother told me I had to. Now she's sick.

106 JACK: Oh, well I—

107 DENNIS: Of me.

108 JACK: Well, it must be going around. Now I'm sick of
109 you, too. Stick around, kid. Don, announce our
110 guest, please.

111 DON: Jack, it's my pleasure to introduce Miss
112 Shirley Temple!

113 *Scene 2 – Studio – JACK, SHIRLEY, PHIL, DENNIS, MARY, DON*
114 *MUSIC: fast dance number, just a few bars*

115 *SFX: rapid-fire tap dancing. this keeps going to line fading out, below*

116 JACK: Well, look at that. Shirley—Shirley—welcome to
117 our show!

118 SHIRLEY: *(giggles)* Hello, Mr. Benny!

119 JACK: I have to say, you've got a lot of energy!
120 We're looking forward to having you join us in
121 the sketch tonight.

122 SHIRLEY: Thank you. I'm positive we'll have a wonderful
123 time.

124 JACK: Uh, you know, you—you can stop tap-dancing
125 now.

126 SHIRLEY: Mr. Mayer told me not to. He said I might need
127 to make a quick get-away.

128 JACK: Well—dance back to your dressing room, and
129 someone will give you your cue.

130 PHIL: We shootin' pool?

131 JACK: *(YELLS)* It's not that kind of a cue!

132 *SFX: tap dancing fades*

133 DENNIS: Mr. Benny? You owe me a dollar.

134 JACK: I owe you a dollar?

135 MARY: Better get him to write that down and sign it.

136 JACK: You keep out of this. Why do I owe you a
137 dollar?

138 PHIL: Fair's fair, Jack. Dennis bet you when you
139 said the show would get back on track.

140 JACK: So?

141 MARY: So it's so far off the track you can't even
142 hear the whistle.

143 JACK: Or, for—here. Here's your lousy dollar!

144 DENNIS: Gee, thanks! Now I can pay the premium on my
145 State Farm insurance.

146 JACK: We did that gag already! Lookit, I'll tell you
147 what. I'm reading a Sherlock Holmes book, OK?
148 We're going into the sketch. No more jokes
149 tonight about my hair, or the Maxwell, or how
150 cheap I am—

151 DON: Or my weight.

152 PHIL: Or my drinkin'.

153 MARY: Goodnight, folks, Jack's out of material.

154 JACK: I am not!

155 DENNIS: Yeah. There's still his violin.

156 JACK: See, smarties? And as it happens, a violin
157 plays a big part in our sketch. Don, set the
158 scene for us.

159 *MUSIC: a few bars of somewhat spooky violin tune*

160 DON: We take you back now many years, to London,
161 England. Outside a thick fog fills the
162 streets. On each corner a gas streetlamp
163 glows. We walk down a cobblestoned way and
164 pause before a handsome Georgian building. On
165 the door brass numerals read two-two-one. This
166 is the famous Baker Street, and from a window
167 in the second-floor apartment—number two
168 twenty-one B—we hear the strains of music—

169 *MUSIC: a tortured, off-key run through the scales, or a mangled Kreutzer etude*

170 DON: —music that tells us the world's first and
171 greatest consulting detective is in—Mr.
172 Sherlock Holmes!

173 *MUSIC: ends*

174 **Scene 3 - 221B - ROCHESTER, JACK**

175 ROCHESTER: That's enough for tonight.

176 JACK: Shall I put the violin away, Holmes?

177 ROCHESTER: Yes, my dear Watson.

178 JACK: *(narration filter)* My name is Dr. John Watson.
179 *(beat)* And you thought I was gonna play
180 Holmes. Tricky, aren't we? Anyway, for many
181 years I was a friend and colleague of the
182 brilliant detective Sherlock Holmes. I was his
183 biographer, and in return, he allowed me to
184 share his apartment and charged me no rent.

185 ROCHESTER: And don't forget the free violin lessons.

186 JACK: *(narration filter)* And he threw in free violin
187 lessons, too. The adventure that I am about to
188 unfold took place on a foggy night in London
189 town.

190 ROCHESTER: Yeah. It had me low. It had me down.

191 JACK: *(narration filter)* I viewed the evening with
192 alarm. When Holmes grew moody, he sometimes
193 thought about charging me rent. I tried to
194 divert his attention.

195 JACK: Oh, Holmes, why don't we visit the British
196 Museum?

197 ROCHESTER: It's lost its charm. Ah, but wait. Watson,
198 what would you say if I told you that a client
199 will come to our door in a few seconds? She is
200 a young lady, quite cheerful, with a great
201 fondness for ships and lollipops.

202 JACK: You couldn't possibly know that Holmes!

203 *SFX: knock on door*

204 JACK: *(narration filter)* Hmm. It was a good thing I
205 hadn't bet him a shilling.

206 ROCHESTER: My dear fellow, if you would be so kind.

207 JACK: Certainly, Holmes.

208 **Scene 4 - 221B - ROCHESTER, JACK, SHIRLEY**

209 *SFX: footsteps, door opens*

210 SHIRLEY: Hello. You must be Sherlock Holmes. I'm in
211 terrible, terrible trouble.

212 JACK: Come in, come in. Let me pull up a chair for
213 you. Sit down, my dear, and tell us all about
214 it.

215 SHIRLEY: Well, Mr. Holmes, I'm in terrible, terrible
216 trouble.

217 ROCHESTER: You've made a little mistake. I am Sherlock
218 Holmes. This is my friend and colleague, Dr.
219 John Watson.

220 JACK: I was about to explain that, my dear. So
221 you're in trouble?

222 SHIRLEY: Oh, Mr. Holmes, Dr. Watson, I'm in terrible,
223 terrible trouble!

224 ROCHESTER: What is it, my dear child?

225 SHIRLEY: I forgot all my lines except that one.

226 JACK: My word! That is terrible.

227 ROCHESTER: And if we don't help her, it's trouble. We'll
228 have to stop without the second commercial,
229 and you won't get paid.

230 JACK: Yipe! Oh, Miss-young lady-what's your name?

231 SHIRLEY: I'm Shirley Poshperson.
232 ROCHESTER: Shirley Poshperson, the Little Princess?
233 SHIRLEY: That's right. And I want you to solve my case.
234 JACK: But what is your case?
235 SHIRLEY: That's the trouble. I don't know! But I'm sure
236 the wonderful Sherlock Holmes and the *(pause)*
237 medical Doctor Watson can help. I'll be in
238 touch. *(kissy sounds)* M-wah! M-wah! G'bye!

239 *MUSIC: fast dance number, just a few bars*

240 *SFX: rapid-fire tap dancing, brief*

241 **Scene 5 - 221B - ROCHESTER, JACK, SHIRLEY, PHIL**

242 ROCHESTER: My, my, my. She may have a rotten memory, but
243 she sure can dance! She must like you, Watson.

244 JACK: How do you deduce that, Holmes?

245 ROCHESTER: She gave you a lollipop. Quickly, Watson, the
246 game is afoot!

247 JACK: Ah—what?

248 ROCHESTER: We have to investigate! Come with me.

249 *MUSIC: silent movie-type chase music, just a few bars*

250 JACK: *(narration filter)* Holmes and I hurried into
251 the streets of the great metropolis. Something
252 flew over, but it was so foggy, I couldn't
253 tell whether it was a bird or a plane.

254 PHIL: *(off mike)* And they say I'm corny!

255 JACK: Phil, you're not even in the script yet, for
256 heaven's sake! Where was I? Oh, yes—
257 *(narration filter)* We stopped at a corner and
258 Holmes said—

259 ROCHESTER: Watson, hail us a hansom cab!

260 **Scene 6- London Street - ROCHESTER, JACK, NELSON**

261 *SFX: clopping of horse, at a walk*

262 JACK: That one seems pretty attractive. Oh, cabby!
263 Cabby!

264 NELSON: Yesssssssss?

265 ROCHESTER: Drive us to the nearest hive of scum and
266 villainy.

267 NELSON: Get in, gentlemen. I'll take you by way of
268 Hyde Park.

269 JACK: Are you crazy? They're working on the street
270 there. It's all torn up.

271 NELSON: Yes, but I want to see how my mother's
272 feeling.

273 JACK: We don't have time to stop at your mother's
274 house.

275 NELSON: Oh, she doesn't live there. She's the foreman
276 on the road gang.

277 JACK: For crying out loud. Does this go on long?

278 NELSON: No, it's just a short cameo.

279 JACK: Well, thank heaven for that! Drive on, cabby.

280 *SFX: clapping of horse, at a walk*

281 JACK: *(narration filter)* We arrived at a low tavern
282 called the Wretched Hive. As Holmes stepped
283 down to the curb, I paid the driver.

284 NELSON: That'll be one bob, sixpence hay'penny
285 farthing.

286 JACK: Let's see. A bob, a sixpence, a hay'penny . .
287 . I don't seem to have any farthings. Can you
288 change a thruppence?

289 NELSON: Change it? I don't even understand it.

290 JACK: Oh, well, here you are, and keep the change.

291 *SFX: terrified horse whinny, a la young frankenstein*

292 JACK: What's wrong with your horse?

293 NELSON: You tipped me. He always shies at something
294 he's never seen before. Tooodle-oo.

295 ROCHESTER: This way, Watson. And be inconspicuous. These
296 are tough, rough characters. I suspect one of
297 them might know something.

298 JACK: Inconspicuous. Right you are, Holmes.

299 *Scene 7– Tavern – ROCHESTER, JACK, MARY*

300 *SFX: raucous tavern ambience, laughter, clink of glasses*

301 MARY: Welcome, gents. What'll you have?

302 JACK: Oh, are you the barmaid?

303 MARY: I ain't the Little Princess. Name your poison.

304 ROCHESTER: I'll have a small gin and tonic.

305 JACK: I'll have a lemonade.

306 *SFX: ambience abruptly stops*

307 MARY: A lemonade? Are you kidding?

308 JACK: No . . . no. I *like* lemonade!

309 MARY: Here you are. One Philhamonic, one Mama's
310 Jade.

311 JACK: But we wanted—

312 ROCHESTER: Remember what part of town we're in, Doctor.
313 It's Cockney rhyming slang. Philharmonic is
314 gin and tonic. Mama's Jade is lemonade. See?

315 JACK: No.

316 MARY: Join the club. That will be ninepence tuppenny
317 farthing—

318 JACK: We did the money already. Here, just take it.

319 *SFX: clatter of coins on counter*

320 ROCHESTER: Miss, could you point out some low, conniving,
321 informer types?

322 MARY: That'll be Table Seven, back in the dark
323 corner.

324 ROCHESTER: Thank you. Doctor, I see three people at that
325 table. You go over and insinuate yourself into
326 their confidence. See if they know anything
327 about Miss Poshperon's case. I will explore
328 other avenues.

329 JACK: That—that table over there? They look a little
330 dangerous. The two men, I mean. Not the woman.

331 ROCHESTER: No, I wouldn't say she looks dangerous.
332 Terrifying, yes, dangerous, no. Quickly, go
333 see what you can learn.

334 JACK: *(narration filter)* I was always pleased to
335 assist Holmes in his inquiries. So I took my
336 lemonade and walked over, reminding myself to
337 be inconspicuous. I decided to adopt a false
338 name.

339 **Scene 8- Tavern – JACK, DENNIS, NELSON, COUNTESS**

340 PHIL: *(off mike)* Like Benny ain't, Mr. Kubelsky?

341 JACK: Oh, shut up—WONGA! Good evening, madam and
342 gentlemen. My name is Company. Do you mind if
343 I join you?

344 DENNIS: *(Boris Karloff impression)* Oh, certainly, sir.
345 In fact you may be just the body we've been
346 looking for.

347 NELSON: *(Peter Lorre impression)* Company? That's a
348 very in-ter-esting name. What's your first
349 name?

350 JACK: May. May Company. *(beat)* My mother wanted a
351 girl.

352 DENNIS: Let me perform the introductions. This lady is
353 Countess Alucard of Transylvania.

354 COUNTESS: *(Mae West IMPRESSION)* Charmed, I'm sure. I
355 always like a man with great big . . . blue
356 eyes.

357 JACK: Well, I'm pleased to meet you, Lady—Alucard,
358 was it? You know, it's funny, but I notice
359 that Alucard spelled backward is—

360 NELSON: Symmmmmmpathy.

361 DENNIS: And my friend here is named M.

362 NELSON: My father wanted an initial.

363 DENNIS: And I myself am Doctor Frankenstein.

364 JACK: That's quite a coincidence. I'm a doctor
365 myself. Look, I won't beat around the bush
366 with you folks.

367 COUNTESS: What a shame. Can't you take a little . . .
368 time?

369 JACK: Well, I—no, I'm looking for any information
370 you may have about a girl named Shirley
371 Poshperson. Anything at all.

372 COUNTESS: The name sounds kinda familiar. I seem to
373 recall she has bright eyes.

374 NELSON: That's right! And she has a curly top.

375 DENNIS: Did she live at one time on Sunnybrook Farm?

376 JACK: Slow down, I'm writing this. Go on, go on!

377 COUNTESS: Lemme see . . . She isn't a poor little rich
378 girl, by any chance?

379 NELSON: I don't think she lived on Sunnybrook Farm,
380 Doctor Frankenstein. Just around the corner.

381 JACK: I hope SOMEBODY'S getting these movie
382 references.

383 DENNIS: Let me confer with my colleagues.

384 *ACTORS: all murmur for a few seconds*

385 DENNIS: Sorry, Dr. Company, we never heard of her.

386 JACK: Oh, well . . . well, thank you anyway. I
387 should be running along.

388 COUNTESS: Nuts to that. Stick around. You may get to
389 like it.

390 NELSON: Yes, if you left now, it might make me very
391 angry and I could do terrible, horrible
392 things. A-heh.

393 DENNIS: We must insist you remain—Doctor Watson!

394 JACK: Oh, you—you know me.
395 DENNIS: Of course we do. Now you're destined to remain
396 here with us.
397 COUNTESS: Oh, take a gander at who just sashayed through
398 the door. [CALLING OUT] Hey, Henry! Over here!
399 NELSON: It's him! It's him!

400 **Scene 9– Tavern – JACK, ROCHESTER, PHIL, DENNIS, NELSON, COUNTESS**

401 DENNIS: Welcome, Henry! We thought you weren't coming!
402 PHIL: What, me miss a party? Nah, my cab got
403 delayed. The pavement's a mess near the park,
404 so we took a detour through that quaint little
405 place. You know the one.
406 JACK: If I have to ask it, I will. "What quaint
407 little place?"
408 PHIL: Doo wah diddy!
409 DENNIS: Well, Dr. Watson, we won't need you after all.
410 Now that Dr. Jekyll is here, we have our
411 fourth for bridge.
412 PHIL: And a fifth, even.
413 JACK: Yeah, you know all about fifths.
414 ROCHESTER: Watson! Come. I've solved the case.
415 JACK: Well, I'm glad SOMEBODY knows what's going on,
416 brother.

417 **Scene 10– 221B – JACK, ROCHESTER**

418 *MUSIC: silent movie-type chase music, just a few bars*

419 JACK: *(narration filter)* On the way back to Baker
420 Street, Holmes refused to say a word. We
421 arrived and went up to our apartment, where he
422 took up the violin.

423 *MUSIC: soft violin*

424 JACK: I WISH I could learn to play that thing.
425 ROCHESTER: So does everybody else. I sent a wire to our
426 client. She should be here soon.

427 JACK: But, Holmes, how did you solve the case?

428 ROCHESTER: You know my methods, Watson. What do you make
429 of it?

430 JACK: Well . . . Miss Poshperson said she's called
431 the Little Princess. We're in England. She's
432 too young to be a daughter of Queen Victoria.
433 The Queen does have nine children, so Miss
434 Poshperson could be a granddaughter. If she's
435 using a false name, that might be because she
436 was struck on the head by a falling brick and
437 has amnesia. Because she didn't know who she
438 was, she might have gone into a library to
439 seek information. She could have picked up one
440 of my books and read about our adventures and
441 then come to ask for your help. Therefore,
442 when she arrives we must . . . hit her on the
443 head with a poker.

444 ROCHESTER: You astonish me, Watson.

445 JACK: Thank you, Holmes.

446 ROCHESTER: No, I mean that's astonishingly stupid. The
447 solution is very simple.

448 JACK: Then I wish you'd explain it to me, Buster!

449 *Scene 10- 221B - JACK, ROCHESTER, SHIRLEY*
450 *SFX: knock at the door*

451 ROCHESTER: Come in!

452 JACK: But you don't need to dance. Everybody know
453 you can do it.

454 SHIRLEY: Gee whillikers, Mr. Holmes, your wire said you
455 know how to solve my problem!

456 HOLMES: I believe I do, Miss Poshperson. The solution
457 is there on the table.

458 SHIRLEY: For me? Oh, golly, thank you!

459 *SFX: pages being turned*

460 HOLMES: I believe it is page sixteen, line four
461 hundred and sixty-one.

462 SHIRLEY: *(reading)* Oh, here it is! I'm so happy! Now I
463 can be a guest on the Jack Benny Program.
464 Thank you, Mr. Holmes.

465 JACK: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Rochester—you
466 just gave her a copy of the script?

467 ROCHESTER: Sure I did. I simply deduced that she
468 accidentally left her copy at home.

469 SHIRLEY: No, at school. I was so awfully excited about
470 being on the radio with Mr. Benny, I just
471 didn't notice. I ran home without my script
472 like a silly little goose! *(giggles)*

473 **Scene 11- Studio- JACK, ROCHESTER, MARY**

474 JACK: Hmm. Folks, I apologize in advance for this
475 one. Hey, Mary, remind me to call a writers'
476 meeting next week to discuss this line!

477 MARY: *(off mike)* I'll make a note, Jack. Wrap it up.

478 JACK: All right. *(deep breath)* Holmes what kind of
479 school did Shirley leave her script in.

480 ROCHESTER: [LONG BEAT] High school, my dear Watson, high
481 school.

482 JACK: Fooled you, didn't we? Thanks to our cast,
483 Mary, Don, Phil, Dennis, and Rochester, and
484 special thanks to our guest stars, Shirley
485 Temple and Mae West. Remember everyone, we've
486 fought wars to keep this country free and
487 united. Please don't let hatred or prejudice
488 ever separate us. And whatever you do—don't
489 make that dish in the commercial, it'll kill
490 you. Goodnight, folks!

491 *MUSIC: end theme*

492 *CREDITS HERE*