Prince, Princess

Prince: Well, my dear, here we are at last – just in time to compel Duke Rudolph to fulfil the terms of his marriage contract. Another hour and we should have been too late.

Princess: Yes, papa, and if you hadn't discovered a means of making an income, we should never have come here at all.

Prince: True. Confined for the last two years within the precincts of my palace by an obdurate bootmaker who held a warrant for my arrest, I devoted my enforced leisure to a study of the doctrine of chances – mainly with the view of ascertaining whether there was the remotest chance of my ever going out for a walk again – and this led to the discovery of a singularly fascinating little round game which I have called Roulette, and by which, in one sitting, I won no less than five thousand francs! My first act was to pay my bootmaker – my second, to engage a good useful working set of second-hand nobles – and my third, to hurry you off to Pfennig Halbpfennig as fast as a train de luxe could carry us!

Princess: Yes, papa, and a pretty job-lot of second-hand nobles you've scraped together!

Prince: *{doubtfully}* No, they are not wholly satisfactory. There is a certain air of unreality about them. *No,* they are not convincing.

Princess: But, papa, where in the world is the Court? There is no one here to receive us! I can't help feeling that Rudolph wants to get out of it because he thinks we are poor. He's a miserly little wretch – that's what he is.

Prince: Well, I shouldn't go so far as to say that. I should rather describe him as an enthusiastic collector of coins – of the realm.

Princess: Papa, I'm sure there's someone over there.

Prince: Then no doubt they are coming. Now mind, you Peers – haughty affability combined with a sense of what is due to your exalted ranks, or I'll fine you half a franc each – upon my soul I will!