

Just from the Kitchen

Informant/Performer:
Group of girls
Eatonville, FL, 1935

Source:
Library of Congress AFS 349 A2
Collected by John and Alan Lomax

♩ = 100

The musical score is written on six staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 100. The score alternates between 'Solo' and 'Group' sections. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words connected by hyphens. The first line of music is a solo line starting with 'Just' and ending with 'loo'. The second line is a group response starting with 'shoo' and ending with 'loo'. This pattern continues for the next four lines. The final line is a solo line ending with a double bar line. The lyrics for the solo lines are: 'Just from the kit - chen, shoo - li - loo', 'With a hand - ful of bis - cuits, shoo - li - loo', 'I know you don't like 'em, shoo - li - loo', 'But you can't do with - out 'em, shoo - li - loo', 'Please, Mis - ter John - son, shoo - li - loo', and 'Fly a - way o - ver yon - der, shoo - li - loo'.

Solo Just from the kit - chen, *Group* shoo - li - loo

Solo With a hand - ful of bis - cuits, *Group* shoo - li - loo

Solo I know you don't like 'em, *Group* shoo - li - loo

Solo But you can't do with - out 'em, *Group* shoo - li - loo

Solo Please, Mis - ter John - son, *Group* shoo - li - loo

Solo Fly a - way o - ver yon - der, *Group* shoo - li - loo

* Entrance of solo overlaps group response throughout song.

Transcribed by Gail Needleman

Game Directions

Children stand in a circle. Leader (teacher) sings solo lines, children sing response.

When a child is named ("Please Mr. or Miss _____), he or she "flies away" across the circle and takes a new place. The children may clap on the offbeat when they have learned to do this.

Background Information

"This is just a little skip. We'd do it in the yard or either in the house if it was raining.

But it means this, you know, that the children would sometimes go to the kitchen and they'd give us some biscuits. At that time, some of the children they didn't have biscuits often.

And when they'd get the biscuits, it was really fun. I think "Shoo li loo" means something like 'I'm really glad!'"

-- Bessie Jones

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Background Information (continued)

Though John Davis maintained that any play taking place in a circle is "ring play", Mrs. Jones insisted on calling "Just from the Kitchen" a "skip," I suspect because it requires no center player. In this play, the lead singer, standing as part of the circle of players, calls out the "real" name of a different child each verse; and the child whose name is sung then skips across the ring with his arms outstretched - "flying away over yonder."

Other kinds of food may be sung about, too; Mrs. Jones gave some of us handfuls of tomatoes, rabbit, meat skins, potatoes, and chitterlings as her imagination dictated. On one occasion she described this as an "after-slavery play":
"He's so glad-he's free and got his own bread so he fly away over yonder He's so glad he got freedom food!"

Bessie Jones and Bess Lomax Hawes, *Step it Down*