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THE PHONE

A FARCE

By
Elizabeth F. Guptill

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Answering the Phone

A Farce

By

ELIZABETH F. GUPTILL

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Answering the Phone

Characters

Mrs. Courtney; Miss Eleanora Courtney, her daughter; Nora Flanagan, the new hired girl.

SCENE I.

The living room of the Courtney home. Mrs. Courtney dressed ready for the street. She gives finishing touches to her toilet before the mirror, then steps to side door.

Mrs. C. If any one calls while I am gone, Nora, say I am out. Make hot biscuits for tea, and open a jar of strawberries. Be sure to answer the phone. The last girl I had didn't know what a telephone was, and ignored it all the afternoon. It made me a lot of trouble, and I had to let her go. I will leave the door open so you can hear it.

Nora. (Without.) I'll answer it, mem, to be sure.

Mrs. C. Very well. I'll be back before tea time, but don't tell any caller so. Just say I'm out. If they ask when I'll return, you don't know.

Nora. Faith an' I do, thin—befoor tay time.

Mrs. C. I mean you must tell them you don't know. Remember, now, and be sure to answer the phone.

(Exit Mrs. C. by other side door. In a minute, Nora appears from kitchen, looks toward that door.)

Nora. Sure an' she didn't lave the outside dure opin, so it must be this dure she was aafter manin'. So the last girl didn't know what a tillyphone was, didn't she? Will, sorra a bit more do I, but I'll answer it if it shpakes to me, civil-like. It must be in this room, for this was the dure she lift open. Now is it a Polly Parrot, or what is it? Begorry, its Nora Flanagan that don't know at all, at all. Come, Tilly, Tilly, Tilly! Come

show yuresilf, and lit me hear the voice av yez. Where in the wurruld doos yez kape yersilf? Come Phony, Phony, Phony! Come, that's a good baste! (She has been looking everywhere. She now seats herself.) Stay where yez are, thin, bad 'cess to yez! I naden't answer yez if yez don't shpake, that's sure! (Phone rings; Nora jumps, with a little scream.) Sure an' I niver heard the durebell sound as near as that! (Exit.) (Comes back muttering.) Bad 'cess to thim byes! A rapping and a ringing and thin whin yez go to the dure, no wan bees there, at all, at all! (Phone rings again. Nora runs out, but comes back to put her head through the doorway.) Faith, an' I'll watch fur 'em this toime, and ketch the crathers! (Exit Nora. Phone rings again. Nora enters, and seats herself.) Sure, and that's a quare thing! That wasn't the durebell at all, at all. I thought it sounded in this room, but there's no bell here, at all, at all! If this house is haunted, its mesilf that won't stay a night in the place. I don't wurruk where there's witches nor ghosts, that's flat. (Bell rings again. Nora looks at phone.) Sure, and I belave it's that little box that's makin' all the noise. Perhaps that's the phone, now. But how can I answer it? There is no dure to open. (Bell rings again.) Shut up, you sassy box! I aint goin' to answer yez. (Bell rings again.) Well, ting-a-ling-a-ling, thin. Doos that suit yez? (Enter Miss Courtney, dressed for the street.)

Miss C. Why Nora, didn't you hear the phone? You should answer it, when we are not here.

Nora. Sure and I did answer it.

Miss C. Who was it?

Nora. Who was it? The Ould Harry himsilf, I belave. He kipt a ringin' and a ringin' but niver a wurrud did he say.

Miss C. That's queer! (Bell rings again, Miss C. goes to phone. Nora watches curiously.)

Miss C. Hello!— Yes— That's too bad— Something wrong with the line, maybe. The girl said she answered— I'm sorry, but I'm just going out, and I must go the other way. Tell her I'll run in tomorrow— Yes— Goodbye. (Hangs up receiver.) Now if it rings again, Nora, answer it. I'll be back to tea, but don't say so to any one. Don't know. Just say I'm out, and that you'll give any message.

Nora. I will do that same. (Miss C. goes out.)

Nora. So that box is the tillyphone, is it? Quare things they have in Americky— little rooms that goes up or down with

yez, pieanny's that play thimselves, trumpets that sing at yez, and boxes that talk to yez! (Bell rings.) There goes the thing again. Well, she put this to her ear, and talked through this. Hello!— It's meself— Sure and it isn't. It's number 12 Maple Avenue, Mrs. Coortney's house— Yis, I'm the gurrul, Nora Flanagan— No, she's not at home, she's gone out, and the young lady too— Sure, and she said she would be home at taytime— Oh, begorra, she said I wasn't to know whin she'd be home. I'll give her a message if yez like— Who did you say?— Oh, yis, Mrs. Donahue— No?— Oh, Mrs. Van Houton? Is that roight? — Yis, I'll tell her yez hollered through the little box, but I'll not tell her yez called, for yez didn't. I niver set eyes on yez. I can lie, if I must, for my mistress, but I shan't lie to her— Yis, goodbye to yez. (Hangs up receiver.) Sure and I did that in foine shtyle. It's Nora Flanagan can learn the Yankee ways. Now where was that woman, I wonder? And how did I hear the voice av her so plain? It's witchcraft, I do belave. Sure, and I'll ask the praste, nixt toime I go to confession, if it's all roight fer a good gurrul to middle with. If not, I shan't answer the crather anny more. (Bell rings.) There it goes again. (Takes down receiver.) Hello!— Yis, it's Nora, sure— No, there's no one ilse here— Sure, it's a good hand yez are at coortin, but how do yez know how pretty I am?— Yis, av coorse it's Nora— Odd? Yis, maybe. Yez own sounds odd, too— Yis, I caught it, but I don't care to have me ears kissed— Do I, now? Well I'm not sure— Yis, I'll tell yez tonight, if yez come— The theayter? Sure I will that same— And a little supper, did yez say, atherwards? I'll be there— No, it's no freak, it's the right voice av me— Yis, I do thin, a little— Well, goodbye thin, me dear— Yis, at eight, goodbye. (Hangs up receiver.) To think I've got me a beau, so soon, and I've niver set eyes on him, nayther. Reginald! It's a pretty name, that it is. Whin did he see me, I wonder? (Primps before glass.) Well there's lots of Yankee gurruls not so good looking as Nora Flanagan. I must hurry up the tay, and be riddy whin me young man gits here. Bedad, I'll be guessing he's the perliceman that told me the way here. He was a foine looking man, to be sure, and Irish, by his look and brogue, but not by the name av him. Reginald! Real foine it sounds! (Exit into kitchen.)

(CURTAIN)

SCENE II.

(Same setting as before. Mrs. C. and Miss C. just being let in by Nora.)

Mrs. C. And did any one call for me while I was out, Nora?

Nora. No mem, a Mrs. Donahue hollered through the telly-phone, and wanted me to say she called, but she niver came near the dure at all, at all. She didn't seem to want nothin' but to know what number this was, and what my name was. Rather sassy, she was, I thought.

Mrs. C. Mrs. Donahue? I don't know any Mrs. Donahue.

Nora. Sure and I thought she didn't know yez, all the toime, mem. She jist wanted to holler through the little bellbox.

Mrs. C. Is tea ready?

Nora. It is, mem.

Miss C. And did any one call for me, at the door or the phone?

Nora. Niver a sowl, Miss. (to Mrs. C.) Plaze mem, may I have me avenin' out tonight, instid av tomorry?

Mrs. C. Why, I don't know. Why?

Nora. It's invited out I am, by me young man, mem.

Mrs. C. But you told me you had no followers.

Nora. No more I did, thin, but I hev one now. He called me on the phone, and I said I'd go. I must, mem, if I lose me place.

Mrs. C. What does he do, Nora?

Nora. He's a perliceman, I belave, mem, and he has a swate way av making love over the phone. Sure, and I didn't know yez could kiss through those little boxes.

Miss C. Oh! But where is he going to take you, Nora?

Nora. To the theayter, and a bit av a supper aftherwards, Miss. May I go, mem?

Mrs. C. But who is he, Nora?

Nora. Me beau, mem.

Mrs. C. What is his name, I mean?

Nora. His Christian name is Reginald, mem.

Mrs. C. His last name?

Nora. I fergit, exactly, mem.

Miss C. (Suspiciously.) Are you sure it was you he called?

Nora. And who else should it be? He called me Nora darlint, and made love over the phone in great shape. Sure, and he's to git his answer tonight, so I must go.

Miss C. Mamma! It was Reginald! He always calls me Nora.

Nora. Is that yez name?

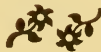
Miss C. It's Eleanora.

Nora. Well, it's meself that don't want yez beau, but nayther kin yez hov moine. I'll tell yez what I'll do. We'll both be riddy at eight, and bedad, he kin choose betwixt us.

Mrs. C. Do you mean to say, Eleanora, that he would dare court you over the phone?

Miss C. Well, he might. See here, Nora, I'll show you my Reginald's picture, and if that's the one that comes, bring him in and call me. If not, you may have him. Is that fair? (Shows photo.)

Nora. Sure and if that's the man, yez kin have him and wilcome. It's no city dude loike that, that Nora Flanagan wants. But bedad, if it is him, yez'll hev to say yis or no this noight, for I promised him through the little phone that yez would. Good luck to yez, Miss, and good luck to me, too. If I've made a mis larrago this toime, mebbe the little bellbox'll bring me a good Irish beau yit. Come out to tay, and thin bedad, we'll both git ready for our beaux, and good luck to the both av us. Sure and it's great fun answering the phone annyhow. (She goes out, followed by the others.)



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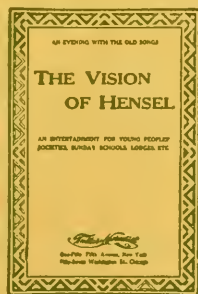
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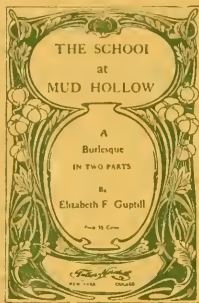
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PART II. Which represents the last day at the school, when the proud parents are present to listen to the final examination of the class by the Supervisor and enjoy the program which is rendered by the pupils. Part II. offers an opportunity for about 60 minutes of the finest fun possible. "The School at Mud Hollow" may be given in one evening, but for those who would prefer to make two evenings of it, or to give only one part, we

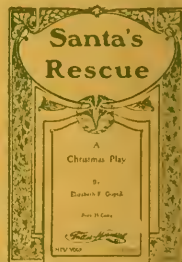
offer the same work announced below under the title of "The New Teacher at Mud Hollow School" and "The Last Day at Mud Hollow School" either of which can be given as a complete entertainment without regard to the other one.

The New Teacher at Mud Hollow School. Being Part I. of THE SCHOOL AT MUD HOLLOW. 6 Males and 14 Females. Time about 1 hour. Price 25 cents.

The Last Day at Mud Hollow School. Being Part II. of THE SCHOOL AT MUD HOLLOW. 8 Males and 19 Females. Time about 1 hour. Price 25 cents.

Santa's Rescue

Two mysterious pieces of paper fall into the hands of the children, one being found by the BOYS and one by the GIRLS. The meaning of the inscription on each remains a mystery until it is discerned that by placing the papers together they have the message that the "Old Witch" of the North has captured "Santa" and holds him in an ice prison at the North Pole. Of course there could be no "Merry Christmas" without their "patron saint", so guided by the "Fairy Godmother" they start for the North Pole to rescue him. The "Old Witch" endeavors to block the rescuers' way by the assistance of "Old Zero" and the "Snow Fairies" but when they learn that the snow drifts they are piling up are to aid in keeping "Santa" from his usual Christmas activities they get the "Sunbeam Fairies" to come to their aid and melt the snow, while they bind with a frozen cord the "Old Witch," who is found indulging in a nap which she takes only once every hundred years. With the "Old Witch" powerless and in their control the Rescue of Santa is an easy matter. Tho' belated somewhat by his enforced stay at the North Pole, the children are glad to become his "aides" in spreading a "Merry Christmas" through all the world. This is a very clever plot, well worked out, and will make a decided hit for the Christmas season. 4 Boys and 5 Girls with any number of Fairies. Time about 1 hour. Price 25 cents.



FARCES



Taking the Census. Mr. Cole, the Census Taker, has a funny experience in an attempt to gather the facts required by the government from Mrs. Almira Johnson, a "cullud lady," and her young son Alexander. Three characters only. Time about 10 minutes. Price 10 cents.

Answering the Phone. Mrs. Courtney and her daughter have a most trying experience with Nora Flanagan, the new "hired girl," who in their absence attempts to carry out the instructions given with special reference to "answering the phone." The final situation in which Nora makes a date with Miss Courtney's "intended" is ridiculous in the extreme. 3 females. Time about 15 minutes. Price 10 cents.

The Twins and How They Entertained the New Minister. They have a delightful and telling family secrets to the "New Minister," who has called for the first time. They explain the necessity of seeing their mother to find out from her if she is "In," for so often she is "Out" when she is "In" and she is "Out." 2 Males and 1 Female. Time about 15 minutes. Price 10 cents.

NO ENTERTAINMENTS SENT "ON EXAMINATION"