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Commuters

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York

THE COMMUTERS

A Comedy in Four Acts

BY

JAMES FORBES

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no. 1.

THE COMMUTERS.

Originally produced at the Criterion Theatre, New York, August 15th, 1911. With the following cast:

NOTE:—The characters are arranged in the order in which they first speak.

LARRY BRICE.....	<i>Orrin Johnson</i>
HETTY BRICE.....	<i>May De Sousa</i>
CARRIE.....	<i>Georgie Lawrence</i>
MRS. GRAHAM.....	<i>Mrs. Pauline Duffield</i>
MR. ROLLISTON.....	<i>George Soule Spencer</i>
MR. COLTON.....	<i>John Cumberland</i>
MR. APPLEBEE.....	<i>E. Y. Backus</i>
SAMMY FLETCHER.....	<i>Taylor Holmes</i>
MRS. JULIA STICKNEY CRANE...	<i>Maude Knowlton</i>
MRS. COLTON.....	<i>Amy Lesser</i>
MRS. SHIPMAN.....	<i>Isabelle Fenton</i>
MRS. APPLEBEE.....	<i>Adelyn Wesley</i>
MRS. ROLLISTON	<i>Lillian Thurgate</i>
BARNES.....	<i>E. Y. Backus</i>

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES.

- ACT I. Dining-room of the Brice home. Saturday morning 7:15.
- ACT II. Living-room of the Brice home. Late afternoon of the same day.
- ACT III. Same as ACT II. 2 A. M.
- ACT IV. Veranda of the Brice home. Sunday morning.

TIME:—*The present.*

PLACE:—*A suburb of New York City*

THE COMMUTERS

ACT I.

SCENE:—*The dining-room of the BRICE home. It is a square room. The walls are panelled to a height of six feet with white painted wood. Above the panelling is a frieze of green and white flowered wall paper. At about R. I E. is a swing door to the kitchen, the backing for this door showing a wainscot of blue and white tile and yellow plaster walls. At R. 3 E. is a high casement window through which is shown an exterior backing in keeping with the drop. The valence and curtains on this window are of green linen. On the sill are pots of blooming plants. Underneath the window is a mahogany sideboard. On either end of it are silver candelabra, in the center are various pieces of silver such as a tea set, cake dishes, compotes, decanters, peppers and salts, a muffinier, and a silver cigarette box for cigarettes. Between the sideboard and the door at R. I E. is a small stand with telephone and a chair. At the rear of the stage are double French windows, recessed, and opening off stage, showing a green and white trellised fence covered with pink Rambler roses. Back of this is a drop representing the tree shaded lawns bordering a typical suburban street. In the recess of the windows is a platform raised one step from the stage. On each end of this platform is a flower stand filled with plants in bloom. Built in the flat back R.*

and L. of these windows are practical cabinets with glass doors. On their shelves an assortment of glasses and gaily decorated china. At L. 2 E. leading into the living-room are double glass doors. Two chairs are placed against the wall above these doors and two below them. At center is a round mahogany table on which is a lace center-piece and a glass bowl of flowers. There is a chair L. of table and one R. of it. All the chairs are of mahogany, alike in design with the seats upholstered in green linen. Simple electric brackets with shades are on the walls L. and R. Before the curtains rises an alarm clock is heard off-stage L.

The curtain rises on an empty stage flooded with early morning light streaming through the casement window.

(Enter LARRY BRICE, carrying alarm-clock. It is ringing. He shakes it furiously.)

LARRY. Oh, keep quiet, will you. (Calls) Hetty! Hetty!

HETTY. (Entering R. with Herald and World) Oh, Larry you're awake at last, are you?

LARRY. Fine chance I'd have to sleep with this burglar-alarm having hysterics. How do you fix the thing?

HETTY. (Gives him papers; takes clock, turns off alarm) I thought that one would get you up. It's a new one I bought yesterday. They call it the Commuter's Joy.

LARRY. The old one was joy enough. (Lays HERALD on table—keeps World)

HETTY. You were so used to that one it was a regular lullaby. LARRY sits L. of c. table—HETTY puts clock on sideboard R.) Now don't putter around. (Down back of table—lays paper on chair R.) It's seven-fifteen. You've just thirty minutes

to catch the 7:46. (*Takes flowers to sideboard*)

LARRY. Thirty-one minutes, pet. (*Reading World*)

HETTY. Just when did you come home last night? (*Down to table*)

LARRY. How late did you sit up?

HETTY. I asked a question. (*Picking up center-piece*)

LARRY. I heard you, dear heart, about ten minutes after eleven.

HETTY. You mean 10 *highballs* after eleven. (*HETTY puts center-piece over back of chair R. and goes to sideboard R. opens drawer*)

LARRY. Now, my dear, I was only——

HETTY. (*Interrupting*) Now don't tell me it was another impromptu alumni dinner. (*Takes out table-cloth*) I know that you were popular at college—(*Brings down table-cloth*) but I never heard of any other college with so many black hand societies. (*Spreading cloth*)

LARRY. Wrong, my love—quite wrong—it was just a little party at Sammy's.

HETTY. (*Still spreading cloth*) Sammy's! Another party at Sammy's. I wish to heaven that Mr. Samuel Fletcher was married, although he is an awful thing to wish on any woman. (*Smoothing cloth*)

LARRY. He always speaks well of you.

HETTY. He doesn't even know me.

LARRY. Perhaps that's the reason.

HETTY. I hate a man to be funny in the morning. (*Picks up center-piece*) The next time you see Mr. Fletcher just tell him for me that women would rather sit up with their husbands than for them. (*Puts center-piece on cloth*)

LARRY. Was his darling little girl lonely?

HETTY. No, his darling little girl wasn't lonely. Doctor Lloyd sat up with me.

LARRY. He did!

HETTY. Don't worry. He won't send a bill. It was a social not a professional call. Fan Rolliston came over. She was bored to tears too—(*Starts for sideboard*)

LARRY. Why?

HETTY. Why? (*Turns quickly and comes down R. C.*) Wasn't Rolliston at Sammy Fletcher's party?

LARRY. Was he? You should have heard him.

HETTY. (*Over to R. of table*) Spare me the reminiscences. I can see, it will be a long moist story and your train *leaves* at 7:46.

LARRY. (*Rises*) Oh, loads of time. (*Puts down World on L. of table and goes up to window C.*)

HETTY. (*Picks up HERALD, puts on R. of table—picking up World and crosses to L. C. looking at paper*) You told me that Mr. Rathborne was sailing at ten, and that you had to see him.

LARRY. Oh, what's the rush. (*Looks off R.*) Old Shipman's on the front porch reading his paper.

HETTY. What page?

LARRY. By his expression, I should say the death notices. (*Looks again*) No, it's the stock reports.

HETTY. (*Puts World on L. of table*) One of these fine mornings this whole street will be late for business. (*Goes to cabinet L. for bread-and-butter plates*)

LARRY. Oh, nonsense—old Shippy's never been known to miss a train, he keeps better time than the town clock.

HETTY. (*Bringing bread-and-butter plates L. of table*) You men are perfectly ridiculous, a lot of sheep. You wait for Shipman, Rolliston waits for you. Colton for Rolliston and Applebee for Colton—(*Puts down plates and goes back to L. cabinet for cups and saucers*)

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) Just think of the sleep I miss in a year by not living further up the block.

HETTY. Oh, no, you'd stay out later. (*Taking two cups and saucers*)

LARRY. (*Looking down at lawn*) I guess I'll have to use mange cure on this lawn. (*Starts excitedly*) Someone's been on it. (*Turns to HETTY*) Were you?

HETTY. (*Coming down to table*) I've a perfect right to, but I never even look at it. (*Putting cups and saucers L.*)

LARRY. (*Coming down-stage to L. c.*) What's the use of my getting curvature of the spine trying to bring this lawn up in the way it should grow if everybody's going to walk on it. (*Picks up World angrily*)

HETTY. It might seem sarcastic but why don't you plant a few keep-off-the-grass signs. (*Laughs—goes to R. cabinet for two glasses*)

LARRY. How do you expect this grass to grow if you're going to laugh at it? (*HETTY comes down to table*) I wish you'd tell that maid of yours to keep off of it.

HETTY. (*Putting down glasses R. and L.*) I've given your positive instructions to Carrie. But, as she never does anything I tell her to—

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) I'll talk to her, where is she? (*Throws paper on chair L. of table*)

HETTY. Late as usual. (*Up to R. cabinet for plates*)

LARRY. (*Down L. a little*) What do you expect, allowing a maid to sleep at home?

HETTY. It's such a relief to have a maid that I don't care where she sleeps. (*Takes plates*) I'd even let her sleep on the lawn.

LARRY. I'd like to see her try it. Why do you keep a girl who's always late?

HETTY. (*R. of table, placing the plates*) Do you suppose I like it? (*Puts down first plate*) I have to take what I can get in the way of servants and be thankful. (*Puts down second plate*) Why

should you grumble? I never say anything. Although it is I who has to be up early every other morning in time to get breakfast—make the fires—
(Starts for sideboard R.)

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) Is there any hot water?

HETTY. You should have stayed at home and shaved last night. You haven't time now. (*Goes to sideboard R. and gets knives, forks and spoons*)

LARRY. I can't go into town looking like this.

HETTY. (*Brings down knives and forks to R. of table*) The men won't mind and any woman who has to take the 7:46 doesn't care what any man looks like.

(LARRY looks at her, starts to speak then exits furiously L. HETTY watches him off laughs then begins placing the knives and forks.)

LARRY. (*Off-stage L., very pleasantly*) Good-morning, Carrie—

(Enter CARRIE L. very leisurely, utterly undisturbed by the fact that she is late, that her mistress is setting the table.)

CARRIE. (*Languidly, standing L.*) Oh, ma'am, is breakfast ready?

HETTY. (*Sarcastically*) I'm sorry it's a few moments' late. (*HETTY pauses momentarily expecting CARRIE to come to her assistance. But CARRIE is removing slowly the hat pins from her hat. HETTY resumes laying the knives and forks, etc. Very sarcastically*) Which excuse is it this morning? Is your mother ill? Did you have the toothache all night? Did you have to get your little brother off to school? (*Up to sideboard R. of muffinier*)

CARRIE. No'm, I just slep' in. (*Taking off hat*)

HETTY. (*Back to table with muffinier*) I'm

sorry you didn't have time to comb your hair. (*Up to cabinet R. for finger-bowls*)

CARRIE. Why, it took me a half hour! Don't you like my Turban swirl?

HETTY. (*Coming down with finger-bowls*)
What's that in your hair?

CARRIE. That's my cap——

HETTY. Where are the ones I gave you? (*Placing finger-bowls L. and R.*)

CARRIE. They ain't becomin'. Don't you like this? I think it's awful cute. It's what I used to wear at Child's.

HETTY. Child's is hardly setting the fashion for Auburn Manor. (*Up to sideboard for salts and peppers*)

CARRIE. If you expect me to wear one of them with streamers, I quits. It's this or none.

HETTY. We'll dispense with caps—(*Coming down to table, puts salts and peppers L. and R.*)

CARRIE. What?

HETTY. Take it off, please——

CARRIE. Oh!

(*HETTY goes up to R. cabinet for sugar bowl and bell.*)

HETTY. And while I think of it, I want you to remember that people calling at this house, company, you understand, must be announced—(*Comes back to table*)

CARRIE. (*Interrupting*) No one gets by me——

HETTY. (*Putting down bowl and bell*) Yesterday, while I was shampooing my hair, you showed in a strange man——

CARRIE. (*Interrupting*) Well, the plumber ain't company, is he?

HETTY. It doesn't matter who they are, they must be announced.

CARRIE. (*Glancing over table*) Ain't you usin' napkins, no more?

HETTY. Thanks—(*Goes to sideboard and gets napkins*) And it isn't necessary for you to entertain my friends either. Mrs. Rolliston called the other day and when I came downstairs I found you sitting in there conversing with her. (*Places napkins R. and L.*)

CARRIE. Well, she was kickin' to me about the way maw done Mr. Rolliston's shirts.

HETTY. Quite right, I must speak to your mother myself. (*Starts for kitchen R.*) She's using altogether too much blueing.

CARRIE. (*Coming c. front of table*) That's what I tell her. My shirtwaists is a sight.

HETTY. (*Stops*) We won't discuss your shirtwaists. (*Starts*) And remember you must not talk with people when they call. (*Goes a little further*)

CARRIE. We cut maw's customers and hurt her trade. I don't want people to think I'm stuck up cause I don't chase their wash to them no more.

HETTY. People, aren't thinking about you. (*HETTY exits R. into kitchen*)

CARRIE. (*c. front of table*) I wish I was back to "Childs'." All the customers so nice and friendly. (*Starts R.*)

LARRY. (*From off L.*) Say, where's my shirt?

CARRIE. How should I know? (*Over near kitchen door. Calls MRS. BRICE*) Mrs. Brice, your husband's yelling for you—(*Exits R.*)

(*HETTY enters R. with two plates with fruit.*)

LARRY. (*Off L.*) Where's my tan shirt?

HETTY. (*Going to table and placing fruit R. and L.*) Aren't you dressed yet?

LARRY. How can I dress without a shirt?

HETTY. Where did you put it?

LARRY. Where I always put it. What did you do with it?

HETTY. I don't wear your clothes. Look on the back of the door. (*Runs up to window*) Did you find it?

LARRY. Yes.

HETTY. You'd better hurry. (*Coming down to R.*) Shippy has finished the front page. (*Exits quickly R. Telephone rings*)

CARRIE. (*Enters with pitcher of water. Telephone is ringing*) Shut up. (*Rings again*) Oh, wait a minute. (*Pouring water in finger-bowls and glasses*) Give a fellow a chance. (*Slams pitcher on table crosses to telephone and snatches off receiver angrily*) Hello, yes, this is Mr. Brice's house. Who? Mrs. Shipman's maid. Are you the new one? Going to stay? yes, Auburn Manor is awful dull. Ain't a moving pitcher show in the place. What? you want me to tell Mr. Brice, Mr. Shipman ain't feeling well—ain't going to town to-day. Aw right. Say, what's your name? Margaret? Mine's Caroline. I've been here three days. I'll come over to-night. Yes, I'll bring my gentleman friend. Good-bye, Maggie—

LARRY. (*Off L.*) Where's my coat?

(*HETTY enters R. with covered dish of toast.*)

CARRIE. (*Down to her*) Now he's yapping for his coat—(*Exits R.*)

LARRY. (*Enters from L. with pair of shoes in hand*) Where's my coat?

HETTY. (*Puts down toast*) Where did you have it last?

LARRY. (*Crossing to R. of table*) Wore it Thursday. I remember I took it off Thursday night when I was watering the lawn. (*Sits R. of table*)

HETTY. Isn't it upstairs? (*Going L.*) ✓

LARRY. Not unless you stuck it away somewhere. (HETTY *exits* L. LARRY *putting on shoes, tying laces*) Can't put anything down in this house, somebody's always picking it up. (CARRIE *enters* R. *with tray with coffee, milk, and cream, places it on* L. *end of table*) Wish my things could be left alone. (*Finishing tying shoes*)

CARRIE. I never touch 'em. (*Exits* R. *with water-pitcher*. HETTY *enters* L. *with* LARRY'S *coat and hat—puts hat on chair above door—brings coat to him above table—he takes it*)

LARRY. Where was it?

HETTY. On the door of the coat closet. (*Crosses to* L. *of table*)

LARRY. You're always hanging everything up. (*Throws coat on back of his chair, fixes his tie and putting in scarf-pin*) This tie looks like the devil with this shirt.

HETTY. (*Pouring coffee*) Oh, don't be fussy. Who's going to look at your tie? Hurry up and drink your coffee. (*Brings it to him front of table*)

LARRY. I will not be hounded to death in my own house. (*Snatches cup from her and places it on table—gets coat on*) No eggs? (*Coat half on and looking at table*)

HETTY. You haven't time for eggs. (LARRY *sits*, HETTY *goes up* L.)

LARRY. Not even scrambled?

HETTY. No.

(LARRY *sits and shoves his plate around*, HETTY *is looking for something*.)

LARRY. Why don't you sit down and eat your breakfast?

HETTY. I can't eat with walking nervous prostration. Don't you realize your boss sailing at ten and you have to see him. Where are your shoes? (*Looking under chairs over* L.)

LARRY. I had them when I came in. (*Putting sugar in coffee, picks up Herald. HETTY looking around for them, sees them on LARRY*)

HETTY. You have them on.

LARRY. You get me so upset in the morning. This commuting business is wearing me out. (*Props up paper against glass*)

HETTY. What about me?

LARRY. (*Shaking sugar out of muffinier on fruit*) Living out here in Yapville when we might be in a cozy Harlem flat having some comforts and an egg once in a while. (*Slaps muffinier down angrily. Fixes paper against muffinier*)

HETTY. Who made my life miserable, wishing he had a little place with a garden? (*LARRY reads paper*) And now that you have it (*Takes up paper from chair, puts it on table*) instead of planting it, you sit up all night with Sammy Fletcher sowing a lovely crop of wild oats. (*Sits L. of table*)

(*Enter MRS. GRAHAM, from L.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Good-morning, children.

HETTY. Good-morning.

(*Rises, goes to her kisses her.*)

LARRY. (*Rises*) Hello, Mater—(*They kiss, he gets chair from L. above door and places it for her at back of table*) Where are you going?

MRS. GRAHAM. To town.

HETTY. What for? (*Sits*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Not a thing. Just shopping. I'm going on the 7:46 and I thought I'd stop for dear Larry. (*Sitting back of table, LARRY takes her coat and hangs it on the back of her chair and goes R.*)

HETTY. You'd better run right along, mother. (*Gets muffinier*) Larry won't make it if he doesn't stop sulking and eat his breakfast.

LARRY. (*Standing R. of MRS. GRAHAM*) I'm not sulking.

MRS. GRAHAM. Come, come, children.

LARRY. Well, she won't give me any eggs.

MRS. GRAHAM. Oh, give the boy his eggs.

HETTY. (*Putting muffinier down*) He hasn't time. Mr. Rathbone is sailing—

LARRY. (*Interrupting in sing-song voice*) At ten and I must see him. (*Sits R. of table. HETTY is eating fruit*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Looking at watch*) There's lots of time. (*Looks at clock on sideboard*) My dear, your clock's crazy. It's ten minutes fast.

LARRY. (*Looking sternly at HETTY*) Can't even keep the clock right. I might have had ten minutes more in bed. (*HETTY still eating fruit*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Poor Larry. (*LARRY rings bell on table*)

HETTY. Poor Larry! No one thinks of me. I've been up since the screech of dawn.

(*CARRIE enters R.*)

LARRY. (*Eating fruit*) Eggs?

CARRIE. How many?

LARRY. About a peck.

HETTY. (*Severely*) How do you wish them prepared?

LARRY. Fried'll do. (*Looking at CARRIE*)

CARRIE. I'll slip you mine—they're frying now—(*Exits R.*)

(*LARRY and MRS. GRAHAM laugh.*)

HETTY. You're spoiling Carrie. I want you to be very severe with her—

CARRIE. (*Puts her head in the door like a Child's waitress*) Two on the pan, sunny side up or sunny side down?

LARRY. What?

CARRIE. Will you have 'em turned?

LARRY. Rare, please——

(CARRIE giggles and exits—LARRY and MRS. GRAHAM laugh.)

HETTY. Is that what you call being severe? You're like all the other men. They kick to their wives but haven't the moral courage to say anything to a servant.

MRS. GRAHAM. Now, Hetty, you mustn't talk like that to Larry. The morning's no time to scold a man.

HETTY. (*Putting aside her fruit plate*) There you go. What's the use of trying to train my husband if my own mother spoils it all by petting him? (*Using finger-bowl*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Now Hetty, you know I never interfere but dear Larry has always been the best of sons to me and a good son, you know——

LARRY. Makes a good husband—(*Hands empty coffee cup to HETTY*)

HETTY. Time was when I was of some importance in my own family. My feelings were considered—(*Pouring coffee*) but, the King can do no wrong—(*Passing coffee to MRS. GRAHAM who gives it to LARRY*) Mother's quite right, of course, and I'm very, very sorry to have asked you to do what you should do without my asking.

(CARRIE enters quickly with covered dish of fried eggs—she places eggs near LARRY, takes up his empty fruit plate—Comes back of MRS. GRAHAM and takes up HETTY's fruit plate and as HETTY is about to take cream pitcher CARRIE pantomimes "No" and takes the pitcher.)

CARRIE. There's just enough cream for Mr.

Brice. (*Crosses back to LARRY and places it for him, smiling at him*)

HETTY. There was half a pint this morning. What became of it?

CARRIE. (*Fruit plate in each hand*) The cat got it.

LARRY. (*Who has started to pour cream—stops*) Milk for mine. (*Puts it down*)

CARRIE. What's the matter with it? Jeannette's a perfectly clean cat. (*CARRIE flounces out of the room R.*)

HETTY. I can't stand this life another minute— (*Turns front in chair—begins to cry*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Why, Hetty!

HETTY. This everlasting servant difficulty's gotten on my nerves. I guess I'm a failure at house-keeping.

LARRY. Well, it's taken you two years to find it out. (*Puts milk in coffee*)

HETTY. (*To MRS. GRAHAM*) How can you sit there like a stoking bottle and hear your child abused? My failure thrown in my teeth.

LARRY. I didn't mean it that way. (*Puts pitcher down*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Passing milk to HETTY*) No, Hetty, he didn't mean it that way.

HETTY. (*Taking up pitcher of milk*) Allow me to understand my own husband. (*Puts milk in coffee*)

LARRY. (*Rising*) Why you're a bully little housekeeper. Mater, haven't I always said she was a corker?

MRS. GRAHAM. Of course, Larry, you have criticised the cooking—

(*LARRY crosses back from MRS. GRAHAM to her L.*)

HETTY. There, you see, you talk about me behind

my back to my own family and—(To MRS. GRAHAM) still you take his part.

MRS. GRAHAM. Larry, do I ever show the slightest partiality?

HETTY. I'm sure I wear my fingers to the bone. (Turning front cries again)

LARRY. (L. of her) Dear little soft fingers— (Puts arm around her)

HETTY. They're not. Look where I burnt myself yesterday cooking your old pudding.

LARRY. We'll kiss it and make it well. (Kisses her finger)

(MRS. GRAHAM rises and starts to tiptoe off R.)

HETTY. (Pouting) I don't care—(She sees her mother tiptoeing out of the room) Mother, what are you doing?

LARRY. Say the word. Hetty, and I'll go out and fire Carrie on the spot. (Goes back of HETTY quickly R. C.)

HETTY. And who'll do the breakfast dishes?

MRS. GRAHAM. (Over R.) Isn't that just like a man? You two finish your breakfast, I'll go out and say a few words to Carrie

HETTY. Oh, mother, be careful, she'll quit if you look at her.

MRS. GRAHAM. Stuff and nonsense! I've had twenty servants since I've lived in Auburn Manor and I've done worse than look at them. (Exits R.)

(LARRY returns to R. of table and sits.)

HETTY. I'm sorry that I was nasty, Larry. But, oh, these servants!

LARRY. (Taking eggs out of dish) Now don't jump on me, but do you think you treat them right?

HETTY. (*Angry, but controlling herself*) What do you mean, dear?

LARRY. You know, after all, they're human beings——

HETTY. (*Turning and speaking quickly*) I try earnestly to remember that. (*Takes a piece of toast*)

LARRY. They must lead rather lonesome lives. (*Takes a piece of toast*) I think you ought to take a little interest in their affairs. Be kind to them. Give them little amusements. There's something wrong somewhere. (*Eating*) Now, we have no trouble with our stenographers. (*Fixing eggs*)

HETTY. Oh, so you take a little interest in them, and give them little amusements. (*LARRY tries to protest with mouth full of food*) Well, I can't go round my house making eyes at my maid, and chucking her under the chin.

LARRY. I don't chuck my stenographer under the chin. There isn't a chin in the office worth chucking. (*Eating again*) Nice way to talk about me. You know I haven't eyes for any woman but you.

HETTY. Then why don't you stay at home and look at me? (*Takes a piece of toast*)

LARRY. Listen to her! You'd think I neglected her.

HETTY. Well, you weren't home, last night, were you?

LARRY. Neither was Rolliston.

HETTY. He's been married longer and it's more excusable.

LARRY. Fan would like to hear that.

HETTY. It's Fan's affair, I've my own troubles. We've been out here only a year and you've stayed in town four nights.

LARRY. Three at the most.

HETTY. Four. I counted them last night. I have them marked on the calendar. *Four red letter nights.* (*Counting on her fingers*)

LARRY. (*Takes up paper and begins to read*)
Do you want a man to give up his men friends?

HETTY. No, but you ought to give up Sammy Fletcher. Four nights! It's terrible. You're getting tired of me. (*Begins to cry*)

LARRY. (*Looks at her—puts down paper*) Oh, Hetty, tired of you. I just live and work for you. You know that. (*Rises and crosses back to her L.*) Why, you're more to me than all the friends in the world. There isn't one in the whole blooming lot that matters along side of you.

HETTY. Not even Sammy?

LARRY. Sammy to the ash-heap.

HETTY. Oh, I wouldn't have you give him up for the world, only you won't see him again for a long time—will you?

LARRY. Not for a month of Sundays. (*Puts arm around her*)

HETTY. Well, you're a real nice boy and you may kiss me. (*LARRY kisses her*)

ROLLISTON. (*Appears at window c.*) Here, here, if you kids want to spoon, pull down the blinds.

LARRY. Say, get off the lawn! (*Running up to L. of c. window*)

ROLLISTON. Lawn: where?

LARRY. You're standing on it, saphead. There are doors to this house, use them.

ROLLISTON. Oh, don't get sore about a couple of blades of grass. (*He disappears around the house R.*)

LARRY. (*Calling after him*) It's easy for you to talk. You haven't watched them like a father. I'll nail this window—(*Coming down to table*)

HETTY. Why, we'll smother.

ROLLISTON. (*Off-stage R.*) Good-morning, Mrs. Graham.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Off-stage R.*) Good-morning, Mr. Rolliston.

(LARRY sits R. of table.)

CARRIE. (*Off-stage*) You can't go in. You gotta to be announced. (*Appears at the door, barring the entrance of ROLLISTON*) Mr. Rolliston's calling.

HETTY. Don't be absurd, Carrie. Come in Rollie.

(ROLLISTON enters followed by MRS. GRAHAM who gets chair at R. brings it down R. C. and sits.)

CARRIE. No matter what you do in this house, you're in bad—(*Exits*)

ROLLISTON. (*Runs up to window and looks off L.*) I hope Fan didn't see me.

HETTY. Why?

ROLLISTON. I started to make the 7:23, missed it. Fan said I would, so I sneaked in here by the back way. I don't want her to have the pleasure of saying, "I told you so."

HETTY. You men are all alike. You'll both miss the 7:46 if you aren't careful.

ROLLISTON. Oh, lots of time. Shippy is on the porch. (*Looks off R.*)

LARRY. (*Takes another piece of toast*) Don't mind Hetty, she's nervous this morning. Had me up ten minutes too soon.

ROLLISTON. Grounds for a divorce. Any jury of commuters will give you a verdict. (*Comes down L. and puts hat on chair L. below door L.*)

HETTY. Mr. Rathborn is sailing at ten and Larry must see him before he goes. (*Turning to ROLLISTON*) What pleasure do you men derive from running for trains?

ROLLISTON. Great for the circulation.

(LARRY, ROLLISTON and MRS. GRAHAM laugh.)

HETTY. I don't think that's a bit funny.

ROLLISTON. What's killed your sense of humor?

HETTY. Early rising. (*Looks at LARRY*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Now, Hetty. (*To ROLLISTON*)
How is Mrs. Rolliston?

ROLLISTON. Well—but some peevish. (*Stroking his face*)

HETTY. I don't wonder, you staying out all night.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Oh, Hetty. (*To ROLLISTON*) How is Rolliston second?

(*LARRY and HETTY glare at MRS. GRAHAM.*)

ROLLISTON. Bobby? (*Coming back of table*)
Oh, he's great. He is certainly one wonder kid.
Heard his latest?

(*LARRY, HETTY and MRS. GRAHAM grow tired.*)

LARRY. Sure, heard 'em all.

ROLLISTON. Not this one, only happened yesterday.

LARRY. (*Resigned*) Fire away!

(*ROLLISTON sits back of table.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. I think we should be going—
(*Rising quickly*)

LARRY. (*Rising, stops her, she sits again*) Oh, mater, let him get this off his chest. (*Goes to side-board R. for cigarette and matches*)

ROLLISTON. The kids were playing baseball. The minister passed. (*He laughs uproariously*) That kid's a wonder—(*HETTY, MRS. GRAHAM and LARRY wear pained expressions*) Bobby goes up to the minister—(*ROLLISTON laugh uproariously again. LARRY interrupting*)

LARRY. (*Offering ROLLISTON a cigarette which he refuses with a gesture*) Is this a serial?

ROLLISTON. It's so funny. Bobby says are you an honest man?—and—the——

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Why, I've never heard a word against the minister, have you Hetty?

ROLLISTON. (*Interrupting*) The minister said I think I am, and Bobby said—(*ROLLISTON laughs uproariously, the others are still tired*) And Bobby said, well, you can hold my bat while I tie my shoe. (*He has spoken the answer through the laugh and it is quite unintelligible—ROLLISTON sees that they are not laughing and is annoyed*)

HETTY. We didn't get the point.

ROLLISTON. Oh! Minister—Honest Man—well, you can hold my bat while I tie my shoe. (*Laughs again*)

(*HETTY and LARRY laugh feebly, MRS. GRAHAM not at all.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. What a thing to say to a minister! The crying evil of this age is the children's utter lack of reverence.

ROLLISTON. Fan's going to send it to the Ladies Home Journal. Don't you think it's funny? (*To HETTY*) Minister? (*To LARRY*) Honest Man?

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) We got you, we got you. (*Sits R. of table*)

COLTON. (*Off-stage L.*) Anybody at home?

HETTY. Oh, come in, Mr. Colton. (*Rises and goes to door L.*)

(*Enter COLTON. In his arms are two boxes. He bows over the top of them to everybody.*)

COLTON. I did ring.

(*HETTY takes his hat and places it on chair above door L.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Good-morning, Mr. Colton.

COLTON. Good-morning.

ROLLISTON. Hello, Colton.

COLTON. Hello, Rollie.

LARRY. Sit down, Willie. (*He sits in chair L. of table and places the boxes on floor beside him*)

COLTON. (*To HETTY who is down L.*) Mrs. Colton sent me over to ask if you could take the Minerva Club this afternoon?

HETTY. Why, yes, if Carrie doesn't object. What's the matter?

COLTON. The lady we live with has left.

HETTY. Not the one that came last night?

COTON. The same—too lonesome.

ROLLISTON. You ought to be more companionable.

COLTON. I offered to, but Mrs. Colton couldn't see it that way.

MRS. GRAHAM. You'd better go right to Mrs. Hackenschmidt. She's on the 6th Ave.—I think it's 629—

HETTY. (*Interrupting*) Oh, mother, I never had any luck there. (*To COLTON*) Go right to Ellis Island.

ROLLISTON. (*Interrupting*) Try Mrs. Polk's Select Domestic Bureau up on 59th Street near the Park. Reduced Gentlewomen. Occasionally you'll meet an interesting Southern widow.

(*Exchange of looks between MRS. GRAHAM and HETTY.*)

COLTON. (*Takes out notebook*) I'll make a note of Mrs. Polk's. (*Drops samples on table*)

ROLLISTON. (*Snatches samples and holding them up*) Larry wouldn't you know he hadn't been married a month? Samples to match.

(*COLTON reaches for them and snatches them out of his hand.*)

LARRY. Can't you see him. "Say, Miss, I want some heliotrope lace on the bias. Gimme enough to trim a waist."

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Laughing*) Larry behave.

ROLLISTON. What's in the package?

LARRY. (*Rising and looking at package*) I'll bet he's going to exchange something.

COLTON. I am not—only going to *credit* a pair of slippers and a shirt waist.

(LARRY and ROLLISTON *laugh uproariously*. LARRY *sits*.)

HETTY. (*Coming above COLTON and between COLTON and ROLLISTON*) It wouldn't hurt either of you to be as obliging. (*To COLTON*) Will you 'phone Mrs. Crane about the club?

COLTON. Yes, I'll attend to it. (*Writes in notebook*)

LARRY. I can see this is going to be your busy day.

HETTY. (*Comes over to MRS. GRAHAM on her L.*) Well I must go out and break it gently to Carrie that I'm going to have a party. Mother will come with me. I need your moral support in this crisis.

(MRS. GRAHAM *rises—goes R.* HETTY *puts MRS. GRAHAM'S chair against wall R.*)

ROLLISTON. Who's Mrs. Crane when she's at home?

MRS. GRAHAM. Mrs. Julia Stickney Crane, a most enlightened woman. She gives us the most instructive little talks on Shaw and Ibsen and Henry James and all those funny men.

LARRY. Highbrow stuff.

HETTY (*L. of mother*) Don't let them tease you, mother. Of course *our* literary pursuits must

seem tame to graduates of Sammy Fletcher's night school for husbands.

COLTON. What's that? Sounds good to me.

ROLLISTON. You're elected.

HETTY. Poor Mrs. Colton!

ROLLISTON. Come now, Hetty, all is not frivolity at our night school. You should have heard Larry last night.

HETTY. I did at 2 A. M.

LARRY. You were fast asleep.

ROLLISTON. We had some debate. Larry, for conjugal bliss and commuting versus. Sammy for bachelor flats and taxicabs. Larry offered to prove his case by bringing Sammy out to spend the day. (MRS. GRAHAM *exits* R.) Why——

HETTY. (*Interrupting*) What! Mr. Samuel Fletcher spend a day in my house. No, thank you. I've had all I want of your Sammy. (*Exits* R.)

ROLLISTON. Say, Larry, what did you do with him?

LARRY. What him?

ROLLISTON. Sammy?

LARRY. Sammy?

ROLLISTON. Why, you brought Sammy out here last night.

LARRY. Oh, what are you talking about?

ROLLISTON. I tell you, you and Sammy were soused to the eyebrows and you insisted on Sammy coming out to sample the commuter's life.

LARRY. Are you crazy?

ROLLISTON. I left you last night at your front gate. You were showing Sammy the lawn. Oh, Colton, they were immense.

LARRY. (*Rising quickly and pointing off L.*) Good Lord! He's upstairs in the spare room, *now*.

ROLLISTON. How did Hetty take it?

LARRY. She doesn't know. I forgot all about him. I must have been pickled. I've got to get him out of here quick. (*Crosses quickly L.*)

ROLLISTON. Here! You better stay home to-day and square yourself.

LARRY. I can't. Rathbone's sailing at ten and if I miss that boat I'll lose my meal ticket. What in blazes can I do?

ROLLISTON. Break it to her gently.

LARRY. (*Crosses to him*) Break it to her gently! You heard her when you merely suggested his coming. What will she say if she knows he's here uninvited? (*Goes L.*)

ROLLISTON. Of course, you know your own wife best. But if it were me I'd tell her.

LARRY. (*Standing L. c.*) And lose my happy home? (*Goes to ROLLISTON*) I've just promised her I wouldn't see him for months. (*Back L. c. again*)

COLTON. And he's upstairs? (*Screams with laughter*)

LARRY. Funny, isn't it?

ROLLISTON. It is, damn funny—(*Laughs*)

LARRY. Don't sit here and laugh. I tell you I've got to get Sammy out of here. Hetty might see him. How can I get her out of the house?

COLTON. Suggest that she go over and tell Mrs. Colton it's all right about Minerva.

LARRY. One on the brow for you. (*Kisses his hand and slaps COLTON on forehead*)

ROLLISTON. Think of that for a young husband new at the game! Shake.

(COLTON and ROLLISTON shake.)

LARRY. (*Between ROLLISTON and COLTON*) Now, business of conversation and hearty laughter while I chase upstairs. (*Starts for door L.*)

ROLLISTON. I'll tell him Bobby's new story.

COLTON. Let me go upstairs—(*Rises quickly and starts to run off*)

LARRY. (*Stopping him and pushing him back*)

into chair) It is awful, Colton. Do this for me and I'll remember you in my prayers. (*Starts for door again*)

HETTY. (*Entering quickly from R.*) Where are you going, Larry?

LARRY. (*Confused*) I've got to get a handkerchief.

HETTY. Finish your coffee. I'll get it. (*Crosses quickly L.*)

LARRY. (*Rushes at her. Stops her*) Oh, no, you've been up so early. You must be tired.

HETTY. (*Suspiciously*) Why this sudden consideration? What have you been doing?

LARRY. Oh, nothing, nothing—(*Brings chair and places it L. C.*) Sit down and rest awhile and talk to the boys. Rolliston is going to tell Colton the story.

HETTY. No, I'd rather go. (*Rises and starts for door*)

COLTON. They're walking out on you, Rollie.

HETTY. There must be some handkerchiefs in the spare-room. (*Turns to go out*)

LARRY. (*Snatching handkerchief from COLTON'S pocket*) Here, I have one. Put it in the wrong pocket. Ha! Ha! (*Goes up to window C.*)

HETTY. (*Sitting in chair L. C.*) I don't want to seem inhospitable but I think you gentlemen had better go.

LARRY. (*Looking out window*) Oh, Shippy's still there.

COLTON. How about the club, Mrs. Brice?

LARRY. (*Down to her quickly*) I think I'd run over and tell Mrs. Colton's it's all right, dearie.

HETTY. Why, I can telephone her later. Do you want to get rid of me?

LARRY. Oh, no—not at all—(*Back of table to R. C.—taking a cigarette from box on table as he passes to R. C.*)

HETTY. Oh, I wish you'd go, Larry. It makes me so nervous.

COLTON. How did Carrie take it?

HETTY. She isn't exactly frantic with joy. My temper was going, so mother suggested that I retire from the scene of war.

LARRY. (*Running quickly across in front of table to HETTY and back of her*) Do you think it's right to leave your mother out there in the kitchen alone to fight your battles? (*Trying to get her out of chair*)

HETTY. Why not? She's enjoying it.

ROLLISTON. (*To COLTON*) Bobby met the minister. (*Grabbing COLTON'S arm. COLTON tries to shake him off*)

LARRY. (*Interrupting—trying to make HETTY rise*) Why don't you put on your hat and walk on ahead with the mater? Do you good to get a little air. Then on the way home, you can stop at Mrs. Colton's.

HETTY. I've had enough exercise for one morning. (*LARRY in despair goes up to window, then down L. C.*)

ROLLISTON. Bobby met the minister—

COLTON. (*To LARRY*) You'd better tell her.

APPLEBEE. (*Appears at window c.*) Anybody hurt?

LARRY. (*Up to window*) Say, get off that lawn!

APPLEBEE. What lawn? Who's hurt?

LARRY. You'll be in a minute.

APPLEBEE. What's the accident?

LARRY. There'll be one if you don't get off that lawn.

APPLEBEE. (*Coming in through window*) Madge saw Rolliston and Colton come in and thought something had happened.

HETTY. Everything's all right.

LARRY. All right!

APPLEBEE. (*Coming down to R. of table*) ✓ I wish

Madge would keep away from the front windows and let a man have his breakfast in peace. (*Sits*)

LARRY. (*Comes down grabs HETTY*) Why, Hetty—get Mr. Applebee a cup of coffee—(*Running her off R.*)

HETTY. I—I——

LARRY. You wouldn't see a man starving in your own house? (*HETTY exits R.—LARRY crosses back to L.*)

ROLLISTON. The kid said to the minister—you haven't heard this, Applebee——

LARRY. (*Coming to ROLLISTON'S L.*) Oh, dry up on that kid. Now listen to me. Rollie you wait for the mater and take her to the train. I'll sneak Sammy out the front way. Tell Hetty I've gone on—see——

(*Enter CARRIE with coffee cup followed by MRS. GRAHAM.*)

CARRIE. Oh, Mr. Brice, Mr. Shipman ain't taking the train to-day. (*Train whistles off L.*)

(*APPLEBEE jumps—dashes through window at back. COLTON grabs boxes and dashes for hat which is on chair at left above door L. He collides with ROLLISTON who is dashing for hat on chair L. below door L. LARRY stands L. of table irresolute. COLTON grabs hat, rushes for window, collides with LARRY who getting out of COLTON'S way bumps into ROLLISTON—COLTON exits through window.*)

LARRY. Damn Rathbone——

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Coming on quickly from R.*) Oh, boys, wait for me——

LARRY. (*Talking over shoulder as he exits*) Tell Mrs. Brice it's all right—Man upstairs—telephone—(*MRS. GRAHAM rushes up to window. ROLLISTON R. LARRY L. of her. They each grab her*)

by the elbow and the three jump out of the window.
As HETTY runs on from R.)

HETTY. There's the train—(Up to window,
stands there at window) Say, get off that lawn—

(CARRIE places cup on table—goes to sideboard R.
with cigarette box. SAMMY enters L. in evening
dress.)

CARRIE. (Turns sees ^{Screams} LARRY. Screams) Help!
Help!

(HETTY turns, sees ^{Screams} LARRY, screams and rushes over
to CARRIE R. They stand there in each other's
arms screaming. LARRY smiling foolishly at
them.) ^{Screams}

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE:—The living-room of the BRICE home.
TIME:—Afternoon of the same day. It is a square
room, the walls being treated in a manner
similar to those of the dining-room, except
that the wall paper is different in design and
color. At R. 2 E. is a window with valence and
curtains. In front of the window is an arm-
chair. Above the window on an angle is a
fireplace with fender fireirons, fire screen and
andirons. On the mantel are vases of flowers,
photograph frames and a small clock. On the
breast of the mantel electric brackets with
shades. At R. of fireplace, between it and the
window is a small round table on which is a tall
vase of flowers, book ends with books, cigarette

box and match stand. On the wall above table is a push button. On the wall below window R. is an electric switch. At right angles to the fireplace a couch with pillows. Back of it a long table on which is a lamp with shade, a desk set, a telephone, writing materials, etc., and two small vases of flowers. Back of this table a small chair. At R. center back are double glass doors leading to a veranda with a low balustrade. On the veranda, on each side of the door, is a pot containing a formal box tree. At R. of door is a small table with a tall vase of flowers. At L. against the stairway, is a narrow consol on which are a parasol, gloves, etc. Underneath the table a large and gaily colored market basket. Starting from the center of the stage and a little L. of C. a flight of stairs leads up and to L. to a balcony. From the balcony are two doors leading from about L. 1 E. and L. 2 E. to the bedroom. These doors have interior backings. In the wall above the landing is a high window with valence and curtains. On the landing is a copper vessel with growing ferns. Underneath the balcony at L. of stage are double glass doors leading to dining-room. The backing for these doors is a part of the first act-set. Above the doors and underneath the stairs is a coat closet in which are coats, etc. At R. of the closet against the wall, is a small table with lamp and shade and vase of flowers. At L. C. is a large square table on which are magazines, a bowl of flowers, and a picture puzzle. There is an armchair L. of table, an armchair R. of table and a small chair back of table. At the rise of curtain at C. of stage is a small round table used by MRS. CRANE for the notes and later placed by HETTY against the wall L. below the doors to dining-room. The furnishings and decorations of this room should

be simple but exquisite in taste. At the rise of the curtain are disclosed standing in the center of the room, MRS. JULIA STICKNEY CRANE—seated facing her from R. to L. are: MRS. SHIPMAN, MRS. COLTON, MRS. GRAHAM, MRS. APPLEBEE, HETTY BRICE, MRS. ROLLISTON—they are listening with rapt attention to MRS. CRANE—MRS. GRAHAM is fanning herself vigorously—MRS. APPLEBEE languidly.

Before rise of curtain MRS. CRANE'S voice—

MRS. CRANE. (*Standing c.*) When we get to the bottom of the question, we find that the lawn-makers want woman to be restricted to one sort of work—(*Curtain rises*) And I say to you, women of the Minerva Association for the—the—(*Consulting notes—All ladies leaning forward*) promulgation of Higher Civic Ideals—woman has been enslaved too long by man, bound in the chains of economic subjection. (*She pauses impressively and then consults notes*)

MRS. COLTON. (*Seated R. end of couch, to MRS. Graham*) What does economic mean?

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Seated L. end of couch, to MRS. COLTON*) My dear, Mrs. Colton, I haven't the *vaquest* idea.

MRS. CRANE. You wives—

MRS. COLTON. (*Interrupting*) Excuse me, Mrs. Crane—what does economic mean?

MRS. CRANE. Why, the economical—

MRS. COLTON. (*Interrupting*) Excuse me, Mrs. Crane I'm very economical. Willie, Mr. Colton is. Willie, says it's wonderful the way I manage with money. You see, I *charge* everything.

(The other women with the exception of MRS. GRAHAM look annoyed at the interruption—MRS. GRAHAM pats MRS. COLTON'S hand)

MRS. CRANE. (*Scornfully*) You wives are merely the subjects of your husband's bounty, strike off those chains. (*Her eye happens to fall on* MRS. SHIPMAN)

MRS. SHIPMAN. (*Seated in chair extreme R. nettled*) Really, if you mean me, I'm not in chains, I'd like to see any man try it.

MRS. CRANE. (*Witheringly*) My dear Mrs. Shipman, the individual must not be confounded with the masses. (*Turns to notes*)

MRS. SHIPMAN. Certainly not. (*MRS. CRANE turns to her*) I've no intention of being confounded with the masses. My mother was one of the Colonial Dames and my father on his step-father's side comes right down from the Mayflower. (*She draws herself up proudly*)

MRS. CRANE. (*Annoyed*) Where was I? (*Consulting notes*) Special sale of French models—no—Woman has been enslaved—Oh, yes, woman has too long been treated as a mere toy—

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*Seated R. of table L. C. Interrupting*) As Byron said: "Woman is the drudge of the universe."

MRS. CRANE. I think that pearl of great price dropped from the lips of our eminent Leader, Mrs. Parkhurst.

MRS. APPLEBEE. Possibly I read so much. As Mr. Applebee says, Madge always has her nose in a book.

MRS. CRANE. Truly as (*MRS. APPLEBEE makes movement as if about to speak*) whoever says it—we needn't go into that—woman is the drudge of the universe. She slaves over all the stoves in Christendom.

FAN. (*Seated L. of table L. C.*) What's she going to do. You can't keep a servant for love or money in the suburbs. Really, the way they object to childern and who could object to Bobby.

MRS. CRANE. That's it. The present economical

treatment of women is inimical to the development of the race. Motherhood is really a profession, the same as that of the butcher, the baker, the——

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*Interrupting*) "The Candlestick Maker." From Dante, I think.

FAN. (*To MRS. CRANE*) It's easily seen, Mrs. Crane, you're not a mother. ✓

MRS. CRANE. My dear, Mrs. Rolliston, while I may have neglected my opportunity in that field of endeavor, nevertheless, one must not narrow life down to the limits of the nursery. It's only by an effort that the average mother remembers that little Lucy's prettiness and little Bobby's precocious prattle are not as engrossing topics to all men as they are to her.

FAN. (*Rising*) Are you being personal, Mrs. Crane? Bobby's a very bright boy for his age, but I never knew before that I *bored* people with his "precocious prattle."

HETTY. (*Rises*) I'm sure, Fan, Mrs. Crane didn't mean your Bobby. (MRS. ROLLISTON *sits*)

MRS. CRANE. I didn't even know that Mrs. Rolliston had a Bobby—we'll call him Sammy—Sammy—(*Consults notes—suddenly SAMMY FLETCHER pokes his head out of the spare room door—he is in his evening trousers, dress shirt, and a red four-in-hand tie—HETTY sees him, and motions him back into room—she sits again*) These interruptions—while showing your keen appreciation of my humble efforts to *illustrate* woman's true place in the world. (*She pauses and looks over notes carefully*)

MRS. COLTON. (*To MRS. GRAHAM*) She said that before.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*To MRS. COLTON*) Hush, my dear, don't let her lose the thread or she'll never get through.

MRS. CRANE. I do not regard women as mere chattels, and when I mentioned earlier in this little

talk about holding all things in common, I did not mean communal ownership of wives.

MRS. SHIPMAN. I should hope not.

MRS. COLTON. I don't think I understand.

MRS. GRAHAM. It isn't proper for you to understand—(*Rises*) Really, Hetty I think we should excuse Mrs. Colton.

MRS. COLTON. I don't want to be excused.

(MRS. GRAHAM *sits again.*)

MRS. APPLEBEE. As Maeterlinck says—"Strong meat for babes."

MRS. COLTON. I'm not a baby—(*Rises and comes to MRS. CRANE'S R.*) I'm a married woman now and can hear anything. (*To MRS. CRANE*) What's communal ownership?

MRS. CRANE. The communal ownership of wives means the joint ownership.

MRS. COLTON. But, I don't want to belong to anyone but Willie. (*She breaks down and cries*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Rises and takes MRS. COLTON'S back to her seat*) I knew this lecture would be too much for her.

MRS. CRANE. (*Very much annoyed, but with acid sweetness*) Ladies, ladies, I cannot restrain my thoughts on these burning issues of the hour to the level of the school girl.

MRS. APPLEBEE. Ah, Mrs. Crane, your thoughts are Art's true expression and all art is immoral.

MRS. CRANE. Exactly—(*Looking at notes*) Why should a woman sit quietly by the domestic hearth. *That* is part of the monstrous waste that goes on in the world. She should step boldly forth and seize her share, her glorious share in its betterment.

FAN. What of her children?

MRS. CRANE. She should not be a slave to her children. (*MRS. SHIPMAN looks at watch and edges to her chair*) for in conclusion—(*Everybody looks*

relieved and sinks back in their seats) I must impress on you the great truth, the wonderful truth which must be borne in mind when you think of devoting your life to your family to the neglect of the suffering humanity. You must remember and ponder on this sublime and immortal truth, that, the youngest child, even if it lives, must grow up. (*She pauses impressively, the women are a little taken back and then applaud*)

(MRS. SHIPMAN *looking at watch rises precipitately and comes R. of C.*)

HETTY. (*Rises and meets her L. of C.*) Oh, you're not going, Mrs. Shipman?

MRS. SHIPMAN. I must, really; it's been so instructive, Mrs. Crane. (MRS. CRANE *who has gone up to table, at back of couch, to get her wrap comes down R. of MRS. SHIPMAN*) I agree with you perfectly. Women must not be tied to the Home Circle but I've a new maid and I'm a little worried about the dinner. (HETTY *takes small stand and places it over L.*) and my husband's so fussy about his food. My! *It's five o'clock.* It's high time the potatoes were on. (HETTY *returns to L. of C.* MRS. SHIPMAN *bows to the ladies and to MRS. CRANE, and exits C and R. hurriedly—HETTY goes to door with her*)

MRS. CRANE. (*Coming C.*) Oh, the passion of discouragement that seizes me when I perceive the utter hopelessness of going on with my great task in a world full of Mrs. Shipmans.

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*Rising and coming to MRS. CRANE*) My dear, do not give up your brave struggle. (*Brings her down to chair from which MRS. APPLEBEE has risen. MRS. CRANE sits, MRS. APPLEBEE stands R. of her*) Continue to scatter your little seeds of discontent (MRS. CRANE *gives*

her her hand) for as Bernard Shaw says: "Great trees from little acorns grow." (HETTY *comes down* R. of C.)

MRS. COLTON. (*Rises and comes to* HETTY R.)
I must be going, Mrs. Brice.

HETTY. Why?

MRS. COLTON. Willie might come home and if I'm not there he'll be so lonesome.

FAN. My dear, take it from an old married woman, begin now as you intend to go on.

HETTY. ✓ (*Leading* MRS. COLTON *to chair down* R. MRS. APPLEBEE *goes up to* R. of C.) Wait, my dear, until you've looked for a husband on the 6:13—and then when you see him dead and mangled—(MRS. COLTON *sits*) he strolls in at 7:45 serene and smiling, and sulks because you're not glad to see him. (*Sits on couch* R. of MRS. GRAHAM)

MRS. GRAHAM. I'm a patient woman but I've seen the time when Hetty's father came home and I was so glad to see him I could have slaughtered him.

MRS. CRANE. (*Rising*) Ladies, before we adjourn this, the last meeting of the season, I should be glad to answer any questions. If my discourses have suggested any of paramount interest.

(*The women sit thinking seriously*—MRS. COLTON *after glancing about.*)

MRS. COLTON. Would you mind giving me the name of your dressmaker?

MRS. CRANE. It's a Paquin model. (*Puts on wrap and turns to show to the best advantage*) That reminds me. Mme. Flanagan is having a special sale to-morrow of French models and while it is an inestimable privilege to open this wider field to your inquiring minds. I must hurry away for she promised me a private view.

(MRS. CRANE goes L., FAN rises and shakes hands with her. HETTY rises and goes up to door c.)

FAN. That's right, go early and avoid the rush.
(Other ladies rise)

(MRS. CRANE turns and meets MRS. COLTON R. of c.)

MRS. COLTON. (*Meets her c.*) It's been so sweet,
MRS. GRAHAM. (*To MRS. CRANE*) A spade—
(*To MRS. COLTON*) I'm sure she's called a spade.

MRS. CRANE. Thank you, so much—(*As she turns to go—MRS. APPLEBEE meets her and shakes hands*)

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*L. of c.*) I shall so yearn for the September meeting—(*Kisses her twice and she exits c., being led to door by MRS. APPLEBEE. MRS. GRAHAM, FAN and MRS. COLTON watch them and laugh. MRS. COLTON crosses back to R. of MRS. GRAHAM, FAN down in front of table L. SAMMY appears on balcony and is motioned back by HETTY who is up c.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Standing front of couch R. c.*) That woman's too glib with her opinions of married life.

MRS. COLTON. (*Standing R. of MRS. GRAHAM*) She ought to know, she's been married three times and divorced twice. (*Sits in chair R.*)

(MRS. GRAHAM sits L. end of couch.)

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*Coming down c.*) As dear Henry James says: "Heaven helps her who helps herself."

FAN. Now, Mrs. Colton, one of her husbands did die. (*Sits L. of table L. c.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. As dear Larry says, that helps some.

MRS. APPLEBEE. (c.) Oh, what matters a few husbands, more or less, to one so intellectual.

MRS. COLTON. Intellectual! Honest I get so tired of being intellectual I could almost die.

MRS. APPLEBEE. Oh, my dear child, to breathe the rarified air of the higher mental plane.

MRS. GRAHAM. It's pretty rare for mother.

(HETTY returns c.)

FAN. Me too—after these prolonged sessions on a high plane with Browning and Ibsen I'm so worn out I can't even appreciate Eleanor Glynn.

(CARRIE enters from L.)

CARRIE. (*Stands up L. c.*) All that wants tea can have it in the dining-room—

(*The women all turn in astonishment at the manner of the announcement. CARRIE is oblivious. HETTY is furious. FAN, to relieve the situation, rises.*)

FAN. (*Rising*) That's very nice.

(MRS. APPLEBEE, FAN, MRS. COLTON and MRS. GRAHAM start to exit.)

MRS. COLTON. (*Coming to c. and meeting MRS. APPLEBEE*) I'd love it if it's iced.

MRS. APPLEBEE. Dear, Mrs. Colton, what a divinely refreshing idea.

(*They exit L. MRS. COLTON staring at CARRIE.*)

FAN. (*Coming up c.*) Speaking of Bobby—
MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Who spoke of Bobby?

FAN. (*Going off together*) I must tell you Bobby's new story. Bobby met the minister——

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Your husband told me.

FAN. And he said, "Are you an honest"——
(*Exeunt L. continuing speech off. Voice dies off as they exit*)

CARRIE. There's a fresh fellow in my kitchen with a pakitch C. O. D. 75 cents.

HETTY. (*Down R. by sofa*) There must be some mistake. I ordered nothing. Find out what's in the package.

CARRIE. What do you know about that? (*CARRIE exits. HETTY starts L., gets C.*)

SAMMY. (*Appears at the door on balcony*)
Hist—hist!

HETTY. (*C.*) Well, you nearly made a nice mess of everything, another moment and you would have been discovered.

SAMMY. Don't jump on me, someone called for Sammy.

HETTY. Mrs. Crane wasn't calling you.

(*SAMMY starts to come downstairs.*)

HETTY. Go back, please—(*Crosses quickly L., and looks off—points to spare room*)

SAMMY. Oh, kind lady, just one breath of fresh air before I die.

HETTY. Aren't you comfortable where you are?
(*Comes front*)

SAMMY. (*On lower part of stairs*) I guess you never slept in your spare room. (*HETTY turns to him*) on a hot May afternoon. I'll do anything to oblige a lady, but my doctor says Turkish Baths are weakening. (*Comes down R. of C.*)

HETTY. I didn't ask you to sit up there. (*Follows him to L. of C.*) Why didn't you go for a walk?

SAMMY. Did you ever try to walk through a suburb on a hot afternoon in patent leather pumps, a silk hat, and an automobile coat? Isn't there a law against collecting crowds? Someone might ask me when the parade began.

HETTY. Have you tried on one of Larry's suits?

SAMMY. Have I tried on one of Larry's suits? Father's clothes will soon fit Willie. Haven't my clothes come?

HETTY. When Larry 'phoned this morning excusing your sudden arrival he said he had sent a suit by a special messenger. (*Goes L.*)

SAMMY. (*Stops her*) Say, have I got to sit up in that steam room until it comes?

HETTY. You can't stay here, the ladies might see you. (*Returning to his L.*)

SAMMY. Introduce me. I like that little blonde, the second from the end.

HETTY. What?

SAMMY. You could explain.

HETTY. Explain! If my friends saw you, I wouldn't have a shred of reputation left.

SAMMY. You flatter me. (*Flicks dust from coat lapel*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Voice off R.*) Hetty, my dear.

HETTY. (*Crosses quickly L.*) In a moment, mother. (*Motions SAMMY to the room*)

SAMMY. (*Up c.*) Please, kind lady, have pity; not, oh, not, the steam room.

HETTY. Well—

SAMMY. (*Interrupting*) I'll be good.

HETTY. I must join the ladies; if you get bored there are some very interesting magazines on the table and a new picture puzzle. (*Takes puzzle from table L. c. and gives it to him c.*)

SAMMY. A Day in the Hay Field—178 pieces. Kindergarten stuff.

HETTY. (*She starts to go L.—stops and turns to him*) Can I do anything else for you?

SAMMY. Yes. Tip me off when those suffragettes are headed this way and I'll do a duck. (HETTY starts to go) Oh—I'd like to send a wire to the office on very important business.

HETTY. Just 'phone to the station. (HETTY exits L.)

SAMMY. (*Crossing to 'phone and taking up receiver*) Hello! (*Pause*) Hello, fair one, give me the station-house. I mean the station agent. Will you take this very important wire? Miss Gracie Lane, Knickerbocker Theatre, New York. "Can't keep date to-night. Kidnapped. It's a long story but am innocent. All my love and all my money, Sammy." Don't forget the money—(*Pause*) Eh—(*Pause*) Charge it to Larry Brice. (SAMMY hangs up receiver, crosses L. and takes off coat and places it on back of chair—he takes up magazines and reads titles) "Country Life in America." "American Homes and Gardens." "The Garden Magazine." Interesting magazines. "Bulbs that Bloom." Rube stuff—(*Picking up another magazine*) Here's a nifty little sheet—"The Ladies Home Journal." (*Reading*) "Cross stitch and crochet." "Fewer frills on French Lingerie"—(*He sits back of table and smiles to himself*)

(CARRIE enters from L. carrying a tray with a cup of tea on it.)

CARRIE. (*Looking over his shoulder*) Oh, Mr. Fletcher!

SAMMY. (*Jumps up quickly, takes coat from back of chair and starts to go upstairs, puts coat on*) Are they coming?

CARRIE. Who, the Minerva? Oh, not for a long time, these lectures is awful dry work. Mrs. Brice ast me to sneak in a cup of nice hot tea.

SAMMY. Thanks, Hebe—(*Comes down c.*)

CARRIE. I ain't Hebe. I'm Carrie. (*Comes to his L.*)

SAMMY. Say, little one, couldn't you get me a nice long one with ice in it?

CARRIE. Oh, I'm on, but this house is temperance, never any liquor except what Mr. Brice carries in. (*Puts cup of tea on table L. c.*) Say, what do you hang around here, for, where you ain't wanted?

SAMMY. I'm hipped on the place. (*Goes up to desk R. c. and sits*)

CARRIE. (*She follows up*) You'd better get out before you get what's coming to you. I'll bet when this hen-party goes, Mrs. Brice wouldn't do a thing to you for coming here soused.

SAMMY. Aren't you the cheerful little party?

CARRIE. (*Pointing to picture puzzle*) What's that?

SAMMY. Picture puzzles.

CARRIE. Have they got you doing that? Thought you were from the city.

SAMMY. Now, Sherlock.

CARRIE. Say, what's a big guy, like you, doing with kid games? I don't blame you. Honestly this place is dead slow. Not a moving picture show in the town. Wish I was back to Childs'. (*She leans over*) There's the piece you want, you ninny. Can't you see it's the man's eye. (*The bell rings off-stage—CARRIE pays no attention to it*) Do you know many people in the city?

SAMMY. I've been out several times on New Year's Eve.

(*Bell rings.*)

CARRIE. Any of your gentleman friends want a girl that's handy around the house?

SAMMY. Quite a few of my friends have one; still the demand is always greater than the supply.

CARRIE. That piece ain't right. That ain't his eye-brow. It's his moustache.

SAMMY. Oh, you've done this one.

CARRIE. I never saw it before but I know a moustache when I see one. (*Knocks a piece off on floor*)

SAMMY. There, you've knocked his ear on the floor.

CARRIE. Get it. I'll hold his face.

SAMMY. (*Rises and picks it up and gets on CARRIE'S L.*) Now, don't break it.

CARRIE. That ain't his ear. It's his foot.

(*They both laugh. SAMMY gets up and stands behind her—SAMMY leans over to put the piece in place—HETTY enters suddenly. She is aghast as it looks as though SAMMY had his arm around CARRIE.*)

HETTY. (*Up L. c.*) Carrie——

(*SAMMY and CARRIE start suddenly and some of the pieces fall on the floor.*)

CARRIE. (*R. near table—wrathfully to HETTY*) Now, you done it.

HETTY. (*L. c.*) What are you doing?

SAMMY. (*c., giggles*) Playing picture puzzles.

HETTY. Leave the room, please—(*SAMMY, thinking HETTY refers to him, starts for the stairs. CARRIE stops him, giggles, then comes in front of HETTY to door L. As soon as CARRIE gets on her L.*) I thought I asked you to see about that package——

CARRIE. It was a mistake. It was a strange suit of clothes, regular hand me down and I sent the feller about his business. (*She flounces out—SAMMY hears this and dashes out of the doors c.*)

HETTY. Why, they were Mr. Fletcher's. (*She turns and sees him flying out of the door. She goes up and watches him off c. doors*)

FAN. (*Enters from L.*) Hetty, I must run along — (*She sees HETTY at the door*) What's the matter?

HETTY. (*Coming down, bringing FAN with her to the couch*) Fan, before that man leaves here I'll be notorious.

FAN. What man? (*Sitting on HETTY's L.*)

HETTY. Sammy Fletcher. *Our* Sammy.

FAN. Sammy Fletcher here? When did he come?

HETTY. Last night. Oh, Fan, what I've been through! Larry brought him home and forgot that he brought him.

FAN. What's he like?

HETTY. Worse than we imagined in our wildest dreams. I caught him just now hugging Carrie.

FAN. What?

HETTY. Playing picture puzzles.

FAN. Huh! Hetty, that man's actions are grounds for divorce.

HETTY. I can't divorce Larry because Sammy Fletcher hugs Carrie. Anyway, I don't want to divorce him.

FAN. Rollie's been pretty bad but he's never turned our house into an all night refuge. I wouldn't stand it for a moment. Of course, I'd have to think of dear little Bobby but if I were in your shoes, I'd walk right out of the house and let Larry entertain his friend.

HETTY. I never thought about dinner. Larry and I always go to the club every Saturday night. There isn't a thing in the house. (*Rises and goes L. of C.*)

FAN. Let them get their own dinner. (*Quoting*) "Woman should not be the drudge of the universe." Now, what's the use of our paying Mrs. Crane for these lectures if we don't profit by them?

HETTY. I don't want to profit by Mrs. Crane's

experiences and have three husbands. One's enough for me.

FAN. Well, if you take my advice, you'll clear out. (*Rises and comes to HETTY'S R.*) I tell you, you come over and dine with me. Rollie isn't coming out to-night until the last train. I'll 'phone Dr. Lloyd and we'll have a game of dummy bridge. If you want to cure Larry you've got to do something devilish.

HETTY. That doesn't sound awfully devilish.

FAN. Do as you like. (*HETTY goes up c. Turns*) But listen to me, Hetty, I'm an old married woman, and if you want to hold a man make trouble for him. (*Exits c. and R.*)

(*HETTY exits to the dining room—A pause. SAMMY enters. He is mopping his brow. He carries a package from which protrudes a shirt, a tan boot and the leg of a pair of trousers. He starts up the stairs wearily. Enter MRS. COLTON, MRS. GRAHAM and MRS. APPLEBEE. MRS. COLTON sees SAMMY and goes off into violent hysterics. SAMMY stands petrified.*)

MRS. COLTON. (*Pointing to SAMMY*) A burglar! A burglar! (*Down extreme L.*)

(*MRS. GRAHAM sees SAMMY and runs after him. SAMMY tries to run up the stairs, trips. MRS. GRAHAM grabs him by the foot.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Caught red-handed. Madge guard the door. (*MRS. APPLEBEE crosses to door up c. To MRS. COLTON*) Stop that yowling and 'phone for the police.

(*MRS. COLTON crosses to 'phone R.*)

SAMMY. I'm not a burglar.

MRS. GRAHAM. No. I suppose you're a friend of the family.

MRS. COLTON. (*She grabs the 'phone*) Gimme a policeman, quick. How do I know what his number is? Oh, Mr. Graham, what's the policeman's number?

MRS. GRAHAM. Don't bother me, I'm busy. (*MRS. GRAHAM dragging him downstairs, SAMMY drops cigarette case on floor c. He picks it up*) Hand that over.

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*Standing behind them holding up parasol threateningly*) At once!

MRS. GRAHAM. What did I tell you. Larry's cigarette case! (*Grabs his arm*)

MRS. COLTON. Central, we have a burglar. Send a policeman right away, to Mrs. Brice's. (*Gets down extreme R.*)

(*MRS. APPLEBEE moves to L. c. as HETTY enters.*)

HETTY. (*Enters*) Why, mother, what are you doing?

MRS. COLTON. Catching burglars.

(*MRS. GRAHAM gives SAMMY a jerk.*)

HETTY. It's Larry's friend, Mr. Fletcher.

MRS. GRAHAM. What?

HETTY. (*Introducing him*) Ladies, let me present, Mr. Samuel Fletcher.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Frigidly*) How do you do.

SAMMY. Pleased to meet you. (*Bows to MRS. COLTON. MRS. GRAHAM hands him cigarette case*) Thanks.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Angrily*) Don't mention it.

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*From L. c.*) Charmed, I'm sure. I hope you're enjoying your visit to our fair suburb.

SAMMY. Oh, yes, very much.

(MRS. GRAHAM *starts to go.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Good-bye, Hetty.

HETTY. Oh, mother, are you going? (*Crosses to her c.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Yes, my nerves are considerably overturned; I need the air. Good-bye.

SAMMY. Good-afternoon—(*She bows frigidly to SAMMY and exits*)

MRS. COLTON. Good-bye, Hetty. (*Shakes hands with HETTY. SAMMY smiles at her. She scorns him and exits with MRS. GRAHAM*)

MRS. APPLEBEE. Good-morning, Hetty, Mr. Fletcher. (*Grabs his hand*) I hope you'll pardon our little error, as dear Shelly says "It's not the coat that makes the man."

SAMMY. No, the vest and trousers help some. (*MRS. APPLEBEE draws back indignantly and exits quickly c. and r. HETTY laughs*) I'm glad I've handed you a laugh. (*Getting over l.*)

HETTY. (*Sits on couch*) I'm so sorry. I don't mean to be rude, but you did look so funny. (*She laughs again—SAMMY joins in and both laugh heartily. SAMMY starts to stairs*)

SAMMY. I guess I'll go before I get in bad again. (*Going up c.*)

HETTY. Oh, you're not going? What will I say to Larry?

SAMMY. Any old thing that comes handy.

HETTY. But, if Larry finds you gone he'll think I haven't made it very entertaining for you.

SAMMY. It's been entertaining all right. I think I'd better leave before any other entertaining thing happens.

HETTY. (*SAMMY starts to go*) Will you tell me one thing? What is the baleful influence you exert over Larry and Rollie?

SAMMY. The "what ful" influence?

HETTY. Baleful was the word. In other words what on earth do they see in you.

SAMMY. (*Coming down c.*) Search me. The idiots both bore me to death. Coming to my flat, drinking up my best Scotch, smoking my choice cigars, smoking, why they eat 'em. All Rollie does is talk about that kid of his and when he gets through Larry begins about you. (*She rises, he stops confused—bows*)

HETTY. My husband may be a bore. I've never found him one, and he may be an idiot. I think he is or he wouldn't spend his time with you. (*Goes R.*)

SAMMY. (*Interrupting*) I told you I'd get in wrong. I'm very sorry all this has happened, because I've been looking forward to meeting you. (*HETTY smiles sarcastically*) Larry has talked a lot about you.

HETTY. Yes, I know, bored you to death.

SAMMY. Don't hit a fellow when he's down. You may not believe it, but I wanted you to like me. (*She laughs*) Oh, what's the use? You think I'm the limit, and when a woman's mind's made up. (*Turns L. of c.*)

HETTY. (*Interrupting—following him*) That's precisely when she's dying to change it. Why are you such a thoroughly bad man.

SAMMY. I haven't anything on the husbands. They're a pretty bad lot. Do you know what's the trouble with married life?

HETTY. Yes. Bachelors. (*Both turn away—SAMMY to L. HETTY to R.*)

SAMMY. Must a married man give up his bachelor friends?

HETTY. No, only his friend's bad habits.

SAMMY. Me to reform. No married man can sit up in my flat. I'll found an order for the suppression of late hours for husbands. Will that square me? (*Puts out hand, HETTY takes it*) Well, good-bye. (*Runs upstairs and gets bundle*)

HETTY. No, not good-bye. Now you must stay to dinner with us—(SAMMY *looks surprised, drops bundle*) Stay to dinner with us.

SAMMY. You want me to? (*Picks up bundle*)

HETTY. Certainly. (*Crosses and rings the bell R. above window*)

SAMMY. You don't mind if I shake the benny and the soup and fish. (HETTY *laughs*) I'm a fancy little person when I'm all dolled up. (*Runs upstairs exits into room*)

(CARRIE *enters from L.*)

HETTY. (R. C.) We'll dine at home to-night.

CARRIE. (L. of C.) There ain't no dinner, unless you eat the scraps from the party.

HETTY. Then prepare the Sunday dinner.

CARRIE. Ain't none ordered. To-morrow's the day you eat to your mother's.

HETTY. I'll call up the market.

CARRIE. Saturday's a half day. The market is closed.

HETTY. Then I'll have to borrow some dinner from the neighbors. (*Goes to desk up R. C. starts to write note*) I'll write the note. You get the basket.

CARRIE. Me go around beggin' grub offen people—why?

HETTY. (*Writing*) Mr. Fletcher is stayin' for dinner.

CARRIE. Is he goin' to stop here?

✓ HETTY. (*Coming down R. of C.*) Have you any objections?

CARRIE. I sure have. Comin' around here where he ain't wanted, and upsettin' everythin'. Didn't I have to get an extra breakfast for him? And didn't I have to drop everything and make chicken hash for his lunch and a party on my hands. I stayed in for your party though I was promised a half day and had accepted an invitation from my gentleman

friend to dine at Childs' and go to a moving picture show in the city. Now on top of all this you ask him to dinner. Now that settles it. I quits. I didn't hire out to be for everlastin' entertaining people. I'm willing to work, but, God knows I'm no electro dyanmo. (*Exits L. 2 E.*)

HETTY. (*Staggered, starts to call her then pulls herself together.*) No, I will be mistress in my own house. (*Takes basket from under table c. Exits c. and R.*)

SAMMY. (*Enters, comes downstairs whistling, "Oh Gee I'm Glad I'm Free No Wedding Bells For Me." Takes out cigarette case, takes a cigarette, feels for match. He hasn't one. He goes looking around for one*) Where in blazes do they keep the matches.

(*During this bus. BARNES, the village Policeman has stepped softly on the veranda. He watches SAMMY apparently going through the house. Finally as SAMMY comes to the table and opens the drawer to look in, BARNES tiptoes in and grabs him.*)

BARNES. Caught in the act, young fellow. (*Grabs his arms and drags him down c.*)

SAMMY. Who are you?

BARNES. Constabule, I 'rest you in the name of the Law.

SAMMY. The devil you do. (*SAMMY struggles*)

(*They get down R. c.*)

BARNES. Now go easy. It's two years extra for resistin' a officer.

SAMMY. You're bughouse. Who do you think I am?

BARNES. I guess they got your picture to the

head-quarters. Come along with me. (*Throws him over to his L.*)

SAMMY. I'm a friend of the family.

BARNES. Tell that to the Judge. A fine friend of the family going through the place.

SAMMY. I tell you I'm looking for a match.

BARNES. A match—huh!

SAMMY. I tell you I'm Mr. Fletcher. Here is my cigarette case to prove it. (*He hands BARNES LARRY'S cigarette case*)

BARNES. Since when has Fletcher been spelled with an L. B.? (*Puts it in pocket*)

SAMMY. I'll get Mrs. Brice. (*He crosses towards the dining room door L. 2 E. calling MRS. BRICE. BARNES runs after him and grabs him*)

BARNES. No, you don't. (*Dragging him up c.*)

SAMMY. (*At the door, calling*) Oh, Mrs. Brice—Mrs. Brice. (*No answer*) Can you beat this? (*Takes hold of BARNES' coat and brings him down c.*) My, good man, this is a mistake. Here. (*Goes in pocket for money*) Not a cent.

BARNES. There'll be an extra penalty for trying to bribe an officer of the law. You to the house. (*Drags him up c. BARNES starts to drag SAMMY off, LARRY appears on the veranda*)

LARRY. Hello! What's doing?

(*BARNES throws SAMMY down L. c.*)

SAMMY. Oh, nothing, I'm pinched, that's all.

LARRY. Pinched. (*Down R. c., laughing heartily*)

BARNES. Caught 'em working your house, Mr. Brice.

LARRY. It's a msitake.

BARNES. (*Interrupting*) Well, the ladies telephoned for me.

LARRY. He's a friend of mine.

BARNES. On the level? You're not just bein' sorry for him. He's a tough looking rummy.

LARRY. I'll answer for him. (BARNES *throws SAMMY off*) Here. (*Gives BARNES a dollar*)

BARNES. Thank you, sir. But I'd advise you, Mr. Brice, friend or no friend, keep an eye on him— (*Gives cigarette case to LARRY*) I've a book to home on crime that says all fellers with ears like his are crooks. (*Exits c. and L.*)

(LARRY *laughs*, SAMMY *imitates him*)

SAMMY. (*Front of table L. c.*) Funny, isn't it? You'd had to go bail for me in another minute.

LARRY. (*Coming c.*) Where was Hetty?

SAMMY. I called for help, but no one answered. She isn't there.

LARRY. Didn't she treat you right?

SAMMY. She's all right, but I'm in wrong. I've had a peach of a day.

LARRY. What's the matter?

SAMMY. Oh, nothing, scared Mrs. Brice out of a year's growth, this morning, cooped up all afternoon in a room with a southern exposure—

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) Oh, forget it, you can tell me your troubles later. Colton is outside with his car. We're going to run out to the club and show you a thing or two.

SAMMY. Mrs. Brice expects us for dinner. Can't we take her along?

LARRY. No, this is strictly stag. Hetty will understand. That's why we're such good pals. she's so understanding. (*Goes up to desk R. c.*) I'll just leave a note. (*Writing*) She'll go over to her mother's.

(*Enter CARRIE from L. 2.*)

SAMMY. Whither away, Hebe?

CARRIE. (C.) (*Turning on SAMMY*) Whither away yourself—and don't call me Hebe—(*To LARRY*) I'm fired, Mr. Brice. And it's all his fault. Comin' round here where he ain't wanted, and up-settin' everything'.

SAMMY. I thought I was about due for another jolt.

CARRIE. Makin' extra work.

LARRY. Extra work—(*Rises and comes down R. of CARRIE*)

CARRIE. Two breakfasts and a lunch.

LARRY. Isn't it customary in my house to have lunch? (*Gets R. C.*)

CARRIE. A cup o' tea, and a bite on a tray is enough for Mrs. Brice. But didn't I have to drop everything and me with a party on my hands and make chicken hash.

SAMMY. What's she kicking about, I ate the hash.

CARRIE. I ain't no fault to find with you, Mr. Brice, even if you do come home with the owl and get up with the rooster. But (*Turning to SAMMY*) I'll have my gentleman friend knock your block off. (*CARRIE exits C. and R.*)

LARRY. Can you beat it?

SAMMY. You can't even tie it.

LARRY. Oh, well, come on. (*Goes up to small stand L. C. and gets cap*)

SAMMY. I tell you Mrs. Brice expects us for dinner.

LARRY. (*Coming back C.*) She can't get dinner without a cook. You don't want to embarrass her?

SAMMY. It seems to me it isn't quite the right way to treat your wife.

LARRY. What do you know about treating a wife? Back up. (*Takes him to table L. C.*) Where's your hat? Here take this one. (*LARRY grabs a cap off a table by the closet door and jamps it down*)

over SAMMY's eyes) Come on, we'll cut across lots. It's just about first cocktail time. (LARRY hustles SAMMY out L. 2 E., a pause)

HETTY. (*Appears on the veranda carrying a heavy basket. She has a loaf of bread in her arm. Her hat is on one side. She staggers in with basket. Sets it on the table. Sees note left by LARRY*) "Gone to the Club. Will be home early bye-bye, darling" Oh. (*Goes over L., throwing letter down*)

FAN. (*Enters carrying a bowl of soup tied in napkin*) Hetty, dear, here's your soup.

HETTY. (*Takes soup*) I don't need the old soup. (*Puts it on table L. c.*) Larry's gone and left me high and dry. That's what I get for fussing over his old guests, and giving up my rights. My rights. For two pins, I'd divorce him this minute.

FAN. (R. c.) Oh, Hetty, don't do anything rash.

HETTY. (c.) I will if I feel like it. Going round begging food from door to door. Lugging that heavy basket through the hot sun. Making myself the laughing stock of the place. Go on, say I told you so. You're perfectly right, Fan. If you want to hold a man make trouble for him. Oh, I'll teach Mr. Larry a lesson he won't forget in a hurry. (*Goes up to door*)

FAN. Hetty, where are you going?

HETTY. I don't know *where*, but I'm going. (*Exits hurriedly c. and R. followed by FAN*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE:—*Same as ACT I.*TIME:—*Two A. M.*

The room is faintly illuminated by a lighted lamp on a table at the end of the couch R. another at table L. C. and by the moonlight visible through the glass doors at center back and at the window above the landing on the stairs. The curtains at the window R. are drawn. HETTY is lying on the couch R. fast asleep. As the curtain rises, the clock on the table back of the couch strikes two, wakening HETTY, who yawns, rubs her eyes and reaches sleepily for the clock. She notes the time. The lateness of the hour shocks her into alert wakefulness.

HETTY. (*Amazed*) Two o'clock! (*She places the clock on the mantel and in so doing sees a telegram propped against a flower vase. She picks it up, reads the address*) A telegram for Mr. Samuel Fletcher. (*With a movement of petulant anger she slams it down on the mantel—at that moment MRS. COLTON'S voice is heard outside*)

MRS. COLTON. Hetty, Hetty?

HETTY. (*Startled, turns, runs to the switch at R. above window, turns on the lights and runs quickly to door at C.—opens it—Enter MRS. COLTON*) Why, Mrs. Colton, how you frightened me. (*Comes down L. C.*)

MRS. COLTON. (*Comes down R. of HETTY—she is in a fluffy peignoir over which she has thrown a light cloak*) Oh, Hetty, what has Larry done with

my Willie? I 'phoned the club at ten, and the boy said they'd left. He said for a joy ride. It's after two. I'm nearly crazy. (c.)

HETTY. (*In alarm*) Is Mr. Colton driving?

MRS. COLTON. Irving was at the wheel.

HETTY. Thank heaven.

MRS. COLTON. Why, Willie's a grand driver. I couldn't stand it any longer alone. I'm so nervous I haven't a finger nail left. Aren't you nervous?

HETTY. No, just mad, plain mad. Serve them right if they did get dumped out.

MRS. COLTON. Oh, Hetty, I tried hard to be mad. I tried to remember what all the women told me this afternoon, but I love Willie. (*Cries*)

HETTY. Of course you do. (*Leading MRS. COLTON to couch*) Sit down—(MRS. COLTON *sits*) Have a chocolate. (*Taking box off table*)

MRS. COLTON. Thanks. (*Takes one*) I couldn't eat a bite of dinner. Willie left me all alone. (*She cries*)

HETTY. Have another.

MRS. COLTON. Thanks. (*Takes another*) And I made a pudding special. (*Cries*)

HETTY. Try one of these.

MRS. COLTON. Thanks. (*Takes another*) Oh, you didn't need the cheese you borrowed, did you?

HETTY. No. (*Puts box back on table, goes c.*)

MRS. COLTON. I don't want to criticise another woman's husband but it was kind of mean of Larry when you went around an' borrowed everything. Did you eat it all alone, too?

HETTY. I did not. I dined with Fan. Dr. Lloyd brought me home at half-past nine, like an idiot.

MRS. COLTON. Dr. Lloyd seems intelligent.

HETTY. I'm the idiot. Fan wanted me to stay but I thought Larry might get home, be worried and sit up for me. Huh!

MRS. COLTON. (*Getting up*) I'd better go. I don't want to worry Willie.

HETTY. Sit down! (MRS. COLTON *sits again*) I see a man worrying, or sitting up for his wife. He'd go to bed contentedly if he didn't die of the shock.

MRS. COLTON. Willie didn't want to go but he said if he refused to leave his wife they'd think it wasn't manly.

HETTY. Manly! Who wants a man tied to her apron strings all day?

MRS. COLTON. I'd kind of like it if it was Willie.

HETTY. What do they *marry* us for if they want to stay *out* all night? Why can't a *woman* have the courage of her convictions, treat a *man* as he treats *her*. Look at me! I've every right to be furious. Lugging that heavy basket through the hot sun and I was going to teach Larry a lesson. Do something *devilish*.

MRS. COLTON. Oh, Hetty!

HETTY. Devilish. Sitting home here since half-past nine, ruining my digestion eating chocolates and worrying. Why, if I go in to a matinee I have to leave before the play's half over so afraid dear Larry might get home first and be anxious.

MRS. COLTON. It's terrible. I haven't seen an emotional actress die since I've been married. The last matinee I went to the leading lady began to die at 4 o'clock and at 4:15. I had to run for Willie's train. I hope he isn't going to keep this up. If he does I'll tell his mother. (*An auto siren is heard in the distance off R.*) Oh, there's Salome. (*Rises*)

HETTY. Salome?

MRS. COLTON. I call the car Salome cause it wiggles. I'm awful, aren't I even if I am married? Oh, I must hurry. (*Starts to go*)

HETTY. Don't let them see you. (*Passes her over L.*) Here, go the back way. I'm going to give Larry a good scare.

MRS. COLTON. Oh, Hetty, what are you going to do?

HETTY. Hide in the coat closet. (*Puts out lamp on table R.*) Go on. Don't tell Larry I'm here.

MRS. COLTON. I won't. (*Starts to go then stops*) I wish I had time to hide, too.

HETTY. But you haven't. Skedaddle.

(MRS. COLTON runs off door L. HETTY switches off bracket and runs to lamp that is on table up L. C., turns it off and exits into closet. In the ceiling is an electric light that shines on her as she enters. She closes the door. The room is in darkness. It is now bright moonlight outside. A slight pause. Then from R. C. enter LARRY. He peers through the glass doors into the room. Then opens the door cautiously. He enters, looks all around the room, returns to door, beckons off R. to SAMMY, then on tiptoe goes quickly down R. to switch. SAMMY enters, stumbles.)

LARRY. Sh! can't you? (*Touches button*)

SAMMY. (*Singing*) I just can't make my feet behave.

LARRY. Great ride, wasn't it?

SAMMY. Blame sight better than sitting around that stuffy club.

LARRY. Club's all right.

SAMMY. But the people are stuffy.

LARRY. (*Whispers, then picks up clock from mantel*) Two fifteen. Say, that driver of Colton's is a wiz! He certainly let her out; we did the last two miles in three minutes. (*Puts clock back in place*)

SAMMY. Who was that peacemaker on the home stretch?

LARRY. Dr. Lloyd.

SAMMY. Had a dame with him, didn't he?

LARRY. Yes. Watch me hand Hetty one on the model doctor. Have a drink?

SAMMY. No, I've had enough; me for the hay.
(*Yawning. Starts to stairs*)

LARRY. (*Yawning*) Here, too. Well, no 7:46 to-morrow, thank God, nothing but church.

SAMMY. (*Turns*) Church! You're not going to ring me in on that?

LARRY. Sure, do you good.

SAMMY. Well, call me early, Mother: I've got to study my catechism.

(*LARRY switches off the lights. They start upstairs, walking very softly. As they reach the landing, HETTY comes out, stands in under the stairs unobserved.*)

LARRY. Good-night.

SAMMY. Good-night. (*SAMMY exits into his room, switches on light and closes the door. LARRY opens his door cautiously and switches on light. HETTY stands below listening, smothering her laughter*)

LARRY. (*Voice off*) Oh! (*He tears out of his room along the landing to SAMMY'S room. He rattles the door fiercely. HETTY is weak with laughter. SAMMY opens the door, the light shining on their faces*) Sammy! Sammy! Is my wife in your room?

SAMMY. Good heavens, no!

LARRY. Where is she?

SAMMY. Isn't she in her room?

LARRY. In her room, you idiot? Would I be looking for her if she were?

SAMMY. Maybe she's out?

LARRY. Where?

SAMMY. With some of her women friends.

LARRY. What would they be doing?

SAMMY. Talking about their other friends.

LARRY. If she went out, why should she stay out?

SAMMY. Maybe to get square with you for last night and other nights?

(HETTY *snatches scarf from hook in closet, and exits quickly* L. 2 R.)

LARRY. Don't be a damn fool!

SAMMY. No, sir.

(*Door slams off* L.)

LARRY. What was that? (*He starts down the stairs*)

SAMMY. (*Yawning*) Um!

LARRY. Didn't you hear anything? (*Running downstairs to landing. He turns to SAMMY*)

✓ SAMMY. (*Yawning*) No, unless it was my downy whispering, "Come, Sammy darling." (*Goes back into room*)

LARRY. (*From landing*) You're not going to desert me in such trouble!

SAMMY. Trouble? She'll be home presently. Say your "Now I lay me's" and go to bed!

LARRY. Bed, the man talks of bed, when I don't know what has become of my Hetty! (*Running down and crosses to switch over* R.) Hetty, Hetty! (*Pushes switch*)

SAMMY. (*Yawning, at head of stairs*) Oh, come on to bed (*Coming downstairs*)

LARRY. It's easy for you to talk: you're not her husband! (*Exits to dining room* L. 2, *turns on lights in dining room, voice off-stage*) Hetty, Hetty, where are you?

SAMMY. (*Coming downstairs*) And they talk of the quiet life in the suburbs!

LARRY. (*Entering and running to veranda*) Hetty, Hetty! (*Calling off through window*)

SAMMY. Oh, come in. People will think you are

calling the cat! (SAMMY *comes down to table L. C., takes cigarette and lights it*)

LARRY. None of your silly jokes! Haven't you any tact when a man's worried! Oh, this is awful! (*Sits on couch*)

SAMMY. How do you like it?

LARRY. Like what?

SAMMY. Now you know how she feels when you don't come home nights.

LARRY. Oh, a man's different.

SAMMY. Yes, makes a different kind of an ass of himself. I told you we should have stayed home to-night. (*Sits R. of table*)

LARRY. Stayed at home? Who wanted to go to the Club? I had to entertain you. I'd rather have been here with my dear wife.

SAMMY. (*Imitating him*) His dear wife——

LARRY. We always ate dinner together at the club on Saturday night. Maybe I'll never eat with her again! (*He breaks down*)

SAMMY. Say, are you going to have hysterics?

LARRY. That's right, you cold-blooded brute! If it hadn't been for you, all this wouldn't have happened—coming out here estranging me from my wife.

SAMMY. I didn't want to come. (*Gets rid of cigarette on ash-tray on table*)

LARRY. You didn't: you forced yourself on me!

SAMMY. I like that! Dragged out of my nice cozy flat, roasted all day, jumped on by everybody, bored with a lot of yaps at that inebriates' home you call a club. I may be a worm, but by the Jumping Jerusalem. (*Rises*) I can do a flip-flap. I'm going now. (*He starts for the stairs*)

LARRY. That's right, get me into this mess and lay down on me, leave me, just like you! You've the heart of a fish. You've driven my wife out of her sheltering home; you'll stay here and help me find

her—Anyway, you can't go, there isn't a train. (SAMMY returns and sits gloomily. A pause. LARRY looks at him, gets up, runs over to him) Why don't you say something? Why don't you do something?

SAMMY. What the hell can I do? I don't know where your dear wife is. If I had a wife I wouldn't leave her lying around loose.

LARRY. If you had a wife—! I'd had mine if it hadn't been for you and your cursed flat! What do you mean enveigling me there, getting me drunk, making me neglect my Hetty; oh, Hetty, Hetty, where are you? (Suddenly rushes to the telephone)

SAMMY. What are you going to do? (Rises and comes up)

LARRY. Call up Fan Rolliston.

SAMMY. That's a cute idea, wake people up at this hour of the morning!

LARRY. What do I care for the people? I want my Hetty.

SAMMY. Haven't you any pride? Do you want to give the neighbors the impression that your wife's out on a bat? (Puts down 'phone)

LARRY. (Over to him) How dare you insult my wife!

SAMMY. Oh, I didn't mean what you mean! My foot slipped. Now, I have to pick and choose my language. (LARRY darts back to the phone) Now what are you going to do?

LARRY. Call up Mrs. Graham.

SAMMY. Are you crazy? Call up her mother at half-past two and scare her out of her fifty-seven senses! Go on—go on—and we'll have her up here in hysterics! (LARRY puts down telephone) And I came out to spend a nice peaceful day in the country! (Sits R. of table)

LARRY. Haven't you had it? (Goes R. and sits on couch. SAMMY just looks at him and groans)

If anything has happened to Hetty, I swear I'll never stay out again.

SAMMY. Remorse stuff: "When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be."

LARRY. Can that—?

SAMMY. If you swear to stay in nights when she does come back, it would be more like it.

LARRY. Maybe I'd better notify the police?
(*Jumps up quickly*)

SAMMY. (*Jumps up, heading him off*) If you've got a straight-jacket kicking around the house, I'll give you a fitting now.

LARRY. To think I've made her suffer like this!
(*Sits again on couch*)

SAMMY. Have a drink?

LARRY. I never want to see the stuff again!

SAMMY. Well, you are on the mourner's bench!
(*Picks up box of chocolates*) Have a chocolate?

LARRY. I'll give you a punch in the eye!
(*Snatches box and puts it on stand R.*)

(*HETTY has come to the door; she is looking in; a step is heard crunching on the gravel off R. She turns around startled and runs away again along the veranda to L. LARRY and SAMMY hear the steps*)

LARRY. That's Hetty! (*Jumping up. Runs up and throws open the door*)

SAMMY. Not unless she wears a number eleven.
(*SAMMY goes L.*)

(*ROLLISTON appears at the door.*)

LARRY. Oh, it's you!

ROLLISTON. Yes, hello, Sammy, I came out on the last train; saw the light and came in.

(*Comes down C. LARRY R. SAMMY L.*)

LARRY. I've awful news for you, Rollie. (To SAMMY) Perhaps you'd better break it to him, Sammy?

SAMMY. No: "Let George do it." (Goes back of table L. C.)

LARRY. Hetty has disappeared.

ROLLISTON. (Screams with laughter; during his shrieks he speaks) It's working! (Laughs) It's working! (Laughs)

(LARRY and SAMMY look at ROLLISTON as though he had suddenly gone mad.)

SAMMY. What's working?

ROLLISTON. (He looks again at LARRY and laughs) This is rich! (He laughs at LARRY) You're so easy! (Sits R. of table. He laughs)

LARRY. (Furiously, coming over to them) If you know anything about my Hetty's disappearance don't sit there grinning like a pie-eyed Billiken, spit it out!

ROLLISTON. Hetty and Fan have certainly put one over on you.

LARRY. (Looks at SAMMY) Hetty and Fan! What do you mean?

ROLLISTON. They planned this disappearance to give you a scare.

LARRY. Oh, piffle! (Turns R.)

ROLLISTON. When I called Fan up to-night she put me wise to the joke.

LARRY. (Looks at him blankly) Joke!

ROLLISTON. Yes, Hetty's been at my house all evening; she's there now.

(HETTY appears at windows at back. He laughs uproariously, looks at SAMMY, on whom the light breaks. SAMMY yells with laughter.)

SAMMY. I'm on. (They both work up the laugh

—LARRY *growing furious*. HETTY has disappeared again unobserved)

LARRY. Laugh, go on! (*Laughs*) Go on, mock at my grief! (SAMMY and ROLLISTON *shriek*) You—! (*To SAMMY*) If it hadn't been for you, I'd have telephoned and saved myself this anguish—

ROLLISTON. (*Laughing*) Anguish?

LARRY. And you! (*To ROLLISTON*) Why didn't you 'phone me, you're a fine mut! I wouldn't have let them put one over on you. Husbands should hang together; (*Loud laugh from SAMMY and ROLLIE*) and when you're both through acting like a couple of congenital idiots perhaps you'll explain the whyness of this joke. (*Crosses R.*)

ROLLISTON. He isn't on!

SAMMY. No, he's cold! (*They both laugh*)

ROLLISTON. Don't you perceive? You worried Hetty by staying out nights. Reverse English: She wanted to worry you—

LARRY. I see.

ROLLISTON. He sees!

SAMMY. He's getting warm!

LARRY. Who put Hetty up to this?

ROLLISTON. Fan; she didn't think you were treating Hetty squarely.

LARRY. (*Right up to him*) Oh, she didn't? Well I like her everlasting nerve! (*Goes back R. C.*)

ROLLISTON. Here, don't get fresh with my wife! (*Rises and comes forward to him*)

LARRY. (*Going to R. C.*) Well, you tell her not to get fresh with mine!

SAMMY (*Comes between them*) Now, don't you two start anything!

LARRY. Don't you butt in. (*Pushes him back*)

ROLLISTON. (*To SAMMY*) Well, what do you think of him? Can't take a little joke. (*Goes L.*)

LARRY. A little joke! (*Goes R. C.*) It's all very well for you to talk; you haven't sat here seeing her laid out on a little marble slab!

ROLLISTON. Oh, well, (*Takes his hat*) come on over home and get your dear wife. (*Coming up*)

SAMMY. (*c., stopping them*) Wait a minute, wait a minute: I've an idea.

LARRY. An idea? Bottle it—(*Goes R.*)

SAMMY. That's the trouble with you husbands, you never know how to turn a trick to your advantage. Now, if you take my advice—

LARRY. I don't want your advice—all I want is Hetty—

SAMMY. Oh, very well,—you know it all—(*Crosses L. of c. LARRY starts*)

ROLLISTON. Hold on, he has an occasional gleam of intelligence; (*Indicating SAMMY, who bows*) bring on your idea.

SAMMY. Sit down. (*ROLLIE sits R. of table L. c.*)

LARRY. No, I'm going for Hetty.

ROLLISTON. Oh, sit down!

LARRY. Now, no preliminaries! (*Brings chair from R. to R. c.*) Get busy with the point. (*Sits in it*)

SAMMY. You'd like to turn the laugh on Hetty! Well, to begin with—

LARRY. (*To ROLLISTON*) Oh, come on. (*Rises and comes up c.*)

SAMMY. Don't let Hetty know you've been making an ass of yourself.

LARRY. What do I care if she does know the truth about me? (*SAMMY and ROLLISTON both laugh*) I mean, I don't care what she knows—all I want to do is to take Hetty in my arms and implore her forgiveness. (*Clasps SAMMY fervently in his arms. LARRY indignantly pushes him off*)

SAMMY. Good heavens! You'd think the woman wasn't his wife! Do you want to give her the whip handle over you for life?

ROLLISTON. There's something in that—

SAMMY. You see, Rollie knows; now, you don't

want to be like him? Afraid to call your soul your own!

ROLLISTON. (*Rises and comes to L. of SAMMY*)
Who's afraid to call his soul his own?

LARRY. (*To ROLLISTON*) Now, you start something. Let him finish; whatever it is, it's no good. Go on. (*Sits again R. C. ROLLIE sits L.*)

SAMMY. If I weren't really fond of you.

LARRY. Cut that, the point.

ROLLISTON. Yes, the point.

SAMMY. Rollie goes home, doesn't say anything about being here, advises Mrs. Brice to come home. Mrs. Brice comes home, we're in bed, indignant husband for you, repentant wife for Mrs. Brice, concealed laughter for little Sammy.

ROLLISTON. Sounds good to me. (*SAMMY smiles*)

LARRY. I don't know, I'm not very strong for it.

SAMMY. If you had thought of it, it would be immense.

ROLLISTON. Don't you see, the joke will be on Hetty and Fan? Listens well.

SAMMY. (*To ROLLISTON*) Injured husband, sitting up all night.

LARRY. There, you see, that's his bright idea—she knows we went to the club. Oh, come on Rollie. (*Rises and goes up c.*)

SAMMY. (*Stopping him and bringing him down c.*) Don't you see—you took me out there because you didn't want to embarrass her owing to departure of Carrie. Hasty bite, quick return—reward—a night of tortured anxiety—

LARRY. All right. (*Crosses to c. turns*) What do you do first?

SAMMY. Go make yourself look like a distracted husband. Rollie and I'll give this room a worried look.

(ROLLIE hangs a newspaper neatly over back of chair. LARRY starts to go and stops on lower step.)

LARRY. What am I going to say to her?

SAMMY. "Is that you, darling?"

LARRY. It's easily seen you never came home late to a wife. (*Coming down c.*)

ROLLISTON. "Is that you, darling?" Not a bit like it: "This is a fine time to get home! Where the hell have you been?" (*Near LARRY*)

LARRY. Is that what your wife hands you?

(ROLLIE draws back angrily and gets front of table
L. C.)

SAMMY. Well, we'll can the darling. "Is that you, Hetty?"

LARRY. (*Business*) What will she say?

SAMMY. Oh, she'll come right back at you with—

ROLLISTON. (*Interrupting*) Oh, yes, she'll come right back at you, all right. (*Front of table L. C.*)

SAMMY. Say, I know women: if you hand it to her right in a more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger style she'll kneel at your feet and beg—

LARRY. (*On lower steps*) Doesn't sound much like Hetty!

SAMMY. It's all up to the way you do it. Can't you dig up a candle somewhere? You know; get busy, come on, Rollie. (LARRY starts to go. SAMMY and ROLLISTON begin to throw books and papers around. SAMMY grabs paper that ROLLISTON has placed on back of chair)

SAMMY. Not at all, not at all! My God, where can she be? (*He crushes it and throws it at ROLLISTON*)

ROLLISTON. (*Picks up another paper*) Oh, where, oh, where, is my little brown wife? (*Throws at SAMMY*)

LARRY. Say—(Both SAMMY and ROLLISTON turn) What are you two trying to do? Wreck this place? (*Exits into his room off balcony*)

ROLLISTON. Isn't he the fussy little party? Gee, I'm going to enjoy this. (*Sits in chair r. of table l. c.*)

SAMMY. You enjoy it? You won't be here. (*Takes up ROLLISTON's hat, puts it on his head and leads him up to door*)

ROLLISTON. Why not?

SAMMY. You yap, you're not supposed to be in on this joke. All you have to do is chase home and send her here.

ROLLISTON. I like that, me frame this thing up and not be here on the laugh!

SAMMY. You can laugh to-morrow. (*He pushes ROLLISTON out. SAMMY switches out the lights from switch r., then runs into room l., turns off light and runs upstairs, opens LARRY's door and says*) Fine! (*Goes to his door, laughs and exits. Shuts door. HETTY appears at the door, enters, stops as though a thought had suddenly occurred to her, opens the door, holds it ajar and steps on the veranda again*)

HETTY. Good-night, I've had a perfectly lovely evening. (*Enters, comes down c.*)

(*LARRY appears on the landing in dressing gown and slippers, carrying a lighted candle: a reversal of the usual midnight picture.*)

LARRY. (*In mock reproof*) Is that you, Hetty?

HETTY. Yes, dear. (*SAMMY enters and stands in door. HETTY goes over r.*)

LARRY. Do you know what time it is?

HETTY. (*Switching on the lights*) Is it late, darling?

LARRY. Half-past two.

HETTY. Really?

LARRY. How can you stay out so late when you know you have to get up in the morning?

HETTY. Oh, that's all right, dear, to-morrow is Sunday. Hope you didn't sit up for me. (*Sits on sofa*)

LARRY. (*Comes downstairs and crosses to desk R. C.*) You know I can't get a wink of sleep until you're in the house. (*Looks at SAMMY, blows out candle and places it on table R. C.*) Where have you been? Now, Hetty, don't tell me you have been sitting up with a sick friend? (*Moves to c.*)

HETTY. Met a couple of the girls, had a couple of drinks——

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) What?

HETTY. Of cocoa. We got to telling stories, one led to another. I wanted to come home, but as you say, one can't be a quitter.

LARRY. I am glad you've enjoyed yourself. (*Crosses to L. C.*) Sammy and I have been nearly frantic with anxiety. (*Turns to SAMMY who, on the landing, is watching the scene*)

HETTY. Oh, good-evening, Mr. Fletcher.

SAMMY. Good-morning, Mrs. Brice. (*Comes downstairs*) We've both been very much worried about you.

HETTY. Oh, Mr. Fletcher, it's so sweet of you to worry. (*SAMMY goes down to LARRY'S R.*)

LARRY. (*L. C.*) Of course, I don't mind for myself, but it's hardly hospitable to Sammy to stay out all night and make him feel as though he weren't wanted. (*His arm around SAMMY'S shoulder*)

SAMMY. Don't reproach her on my account. I did feel it: it's a terrible thing to have a sensitive disposition.

HETTY. This room looks as if it had been struck by a cyclone. You seem to have been enjoying yourself? (*Gets box of chocolates*)

LARRY. (*Exchanges look with SAMMY*) Sammy,

do you hear her, enjoying ourselves! I've had a night of tortured anxiety.

HETTY. If I had thought you would worry about me—but there have been so many evenings that you've managed to be content with Mr. Fletcher's society. (LARRY *crosses down* L. C. *near armchair*. SAMMY *moves towards* HETTY. *To* SAMMY) Have a chocolate?

(LARRY *and* SAMMY *are staggered a moment*. SAMMY *recovers while* LARRY *sits in armchair*. SAMMY *in pantomime indicates telephone*.)

LARRY. Why didn't you telephone me?

HETTY. I did intend to, but the time slipped away and I didn't want to disturb your rest—

LARRY. Disturb my rest, and did you think I could sleep calmly not knowing where you were or what you were doing? (*Rises and comes c.*) By the way, what were you doing?

HETTY. Oh, didn't I tell you?

(SAMMY *comes down c.*)

LARRY. No.

HETTY. Didn't I?

LARRY. I didn't hear you mention it, did you, Sammy?

SAMMY. Nary a mention—

HETTY. Granted that I am accountable for my actions to my husband—(*They both bow*) though I don't grant it. (*Both draw themselves up*) I am accountable *only* to him.

SAMMY. Zowie! (*Crosses back of* LARRY *to* L. *of c. He retires knocked out*. HETTY *helps herself to a chocolate*)

LARRY. (*Crosses to her c.*) Come, come, Hetty, you're evading the point—where were you?

(SAMMY comes down L. c.)

HETTY. I don't see that it is necessary that you should know.

(Exchange of looks between LARRY and SAMMY.)

LARRY. I've a right to know: I'm your husband!

HETTY. I'm your wife, but under similar circumstances, I don't cross examine you. I'm content with your explanations, no matter how fishy they are.

(SAMMY gives suppressed giggle.)

LARRY. (Crossing to SAMMY) When does she kneel and beg?

SAMMY. She's missed the cue—go after her—
(Crosses back of him and pulls him by arm to c.)

LARRY. These excuses will not do. (HETTY turns and laughs tantalizingly, puts chocolates on stand by her R.) Have you no longer any feeling for me, (Exchanges looks with SAMMY and crosses down to chair R. of table L. c.) that you could condemn me to an evening of tortured anxiety?

HETTY. You're repeating yourself! (He sits in arm-chair R. of table L. c.) Well, how do you like an evening of tortured anxiety? How do you like to sit here waiting, waiting, trying to convince yourself that the one you love is safe somewhere enjoying himself without thought of you? But you—you are worrying—worrying. A call on the telephone and your heart stands still with fear! Perhaps something has happened, dead possibly, and you wonder were you kind to him that morning! Did he kiss you good-bye? Oh, God, suppose you never kiss him good-bye again! I've had several nights of that, you've had one. (Rises) Well, how do you like it? (Crosses to him) How do you like it? (Turns

up-stage to the stairs. LARRY and SAMMY are paralyzed. The telephone bell rings sharply, LARRY rises and crosses to 'phone R. SAMMY gets up-stage near C. window)

LARRY. Hello! Oh, hello, Rollie. Yes, Hetty's here. What a relief! She left your house at half-past nine with Dr. Lloyd. *(He slams the receiver on the telephone. LARRY crosses to her quickly)* Where have you been? I insist on knowing where you've been? This joke is going far enough. *(Crosses down R.)*

HETTY. What joke? *(Follows to C.)*

LARRY. The joke you and Fan were to play on me. Well, you'll just explain where Dr. Lloyd comes in on this joke. Where have you been with Dr. Lloyd—*(Close to her)*

HETTY. *(L. of C.)* I refuse to answer that question, I refuse to insult you by acknowledging that the question has been asked.

LARRY. *(R. of C.)* You can't answer it. You've been out until this hour of the morning with Dr. Lloyd!

HETTY. I don't deny that I've seen Dr. Lloyd, but I do deny your right to question me in such a manner.

LARRY. You don't deny it! *(Goes R.)* That's good, you can't. I saw you with him; you were in his car; we passed you not half an hour ago. The point is, you'll tell me now at once where—*(Comes to her R.)* you've been!

HETTY. I'll tell you nothing. *(Starts for stairs)*

LARRY. You won't, eh? I'll soon find out. *(He darts to the telephone)*

HETTY. What are you going to do?

LARRY. Call up Dr. Lloyd.

HETTY. If you humiliate me by calling up Dr. Lloyd, I'll walk out of this house and never set foot in it again! *(She comes C.)* I warn you there's a limit even to my endurance. You can ignore me,

neglect me; rebel and I am made the object of vulgar suspicion. I must sit patiently at home. What do you care for me or my loneliness; you must be free to amuse yourself as you see fit. Now I intend to enjoy an equal liberty, and when you leave me to spend my evenings alone, don't presume to call me to account. (*Starts for stairs*)

SAMMY. (*Who has been standing at back, coming forward quickly*) It's all a joke, Mrs. Brice.

HETTY. (*Laughs bitterly*) A joke to be humiliated, insulted; that's not my idea of a joke! (*Goes up to first landing. She turns and runs upstairs. LARRY runs after her, to foot of stairs*) No—no—don't come near me, don't touch me. I hate you—I hate you! I hate you! (*She exits and slams the door*)

SAMMY. This is a hell of a joke!

CURTAIN.



ACT IV.

SCENE:—*The veranda of the BRICE home.*

TIME:—*Sunday morning.*

On the left of the stage and occupying about one-third of it is a suburban house with a veranda which has a low railing. In the center of the veranda double glass doors lead to living-room, the backing for these doors is a portion of the second act set. On each side of the door is a pot containing a formal box tree. On the floor of the veranda a rug. At up-stage end of veranda a small wicker armchair, another below the glass doors, and a third at down-stage end of veranda. Between these two chairs against the wall of the house is a small stand with a bowl of flowers, magazines, etc. At the

windows of the house are awnings and window boxes. The house and veranda are on a platform two feet high with steps leading to the stage. A white picket fence surrounds the yard with a gate opposite the steps R. C. On each side of the path from the gate to the steps is a border of pansies in bloom. Peonies and fox-gloves in bloom are banked against the picket fence at the rear of stage and against the veranda, the up-stage pillars of which are wreathed with climbing roses. Grass mats simulate the lawn and border the sidewalk outside the picket fence. The back drop is the same as used in the other acts. In addition there are foliage borders, and wood wings representing a row of trees on R. of stage.

Discovered:—At rise of the curtain LARRY and SAMMY seated on the veranda. SAMMY on top of steps—he is behind a Sunday paper. LARRY'S paper is in his lap—he is the picture of utter wretchedness as he stares straight ahead of him into space. SAMMY turns his paper, takes a sidelong look at LARRY, then lays the paper in his lap and takes out his cigarette case. Nudges LARRY who accepts one. His manner is preoccupied. A pause.

LARRY. Where do you suppose she was?

SAMMY. (*Wearily—seated on a small straw cushion at top of steps*) Still harping on my daughter.

LARRY. (*Absently*) What daughter?

SAMMY. Oh, just a little thing of Shakespeare's.

LARRY. (*Disgustedly*) What's Shakespeare to do with me and Hetty?

(SAMMY laughs, LARRY glares at him, SAMMY stops abruptly.)

SAMMY. I beg your pardon, I can't help seeing the funny side of everything.

LARRY. The man that can see the funny side of this affair, has a ghoulish sense of humor——

SAMMY. It *is* funny. A big husky kid like you afraid of a little woman. Why don't you kiss and make up?

LARRY. The best I'd get would be a call-down.

SAMMY. Why, Mrs. Brice seemed to be very pleasant at the breakfast table.

LARRY. That's all you know about it. A wife's never so pleasant as when she's laying to hand you one.

SAMMY. Well, if you take my advice——

LARRY. I have had too much of your advice and your fool jokes.

SAMMY. You shouldn't carry a joke too far.

LARRY. I did exactly as you told me.

SAMMY. Did I tell you to drag in jealousy of Dr. Lloyd? That was one of your own little trimmings.

LARRY. As her husband, I've a perfect right to know that my wife was doing out at that hour of the morning.

SAMMY. If you had worked it right she'd have told you. If I'd been talked to by my husband—told you. If I'd been talked to by my husband.

SAMMY. You know what I mean: flying off the handle, you hurt her pride.

LARRY. That's right, take her part!

SAMMY. She'd have told you, all right.

LARRY. Of course you know it all. (SAMMY *offended, picks up his paper and begins to read*) Can't you see how miserable I am?

SAMMY. I'm not having a particularly hilarious time.

LARRY. You got me into this mess. It's up to you to get me out of it.

SAMMY. I'm no first aid to fool husbands.

LARRY. You're so clever, so full of your little

jokes, joke me out of this. (SAMMY *continues reading*) What's the matter with you this morning? You haven't the brain of a hen.

SAMMY. What do you expect? Locked me out of my room. Let me spend half the night on that couch in there, and then when you did let me share your bed, talked me deaf, dumb and silly. I'm no perennial bright-eyes.

LARRY. I wasn't very hospitable; I'm sorry.

SAMMY. Oh, that's all right.

LARRY. But I can't think of other people's feelings. I've my own to think about. Do you think she'll forgive me?

SAMMY. Now see here, you asked me that question about eighty-seven times last night. I've heard your *sad* story so often that if you'll give me a chord in G minor I could do it as a cantata. How do I know what she'll do? Go ask *her* and let me read about other people's troubles. (*He grasps his paper irritably*)

LARRY. And this is the man I've always treated as a friend!

(HETTY *appears at the door. She is politely frigid in her demeanor. The men rise, SAMMY goes down steps, paper in hand.*)

LARRY. Can I help you wash the breakfast dishes?

HETTY. (*Sitting in chair*) They're washed, thank you.

(LARRY *subsides in his chair. There is a pause.*)

SAMMY. (*Going to her*) Would you care to look at this paper?

HETTY. No, thank you, I'm not in the mood for reading.

SAMMY. Not even the comic section? (*Offering*)

her the picture supplement. HETTY looks at him frigidly. SAMMY sneaks back, a strained silence ensues, LARRY and SAMMY steal apprehensive glances at her. SAMMY is smoking) Does this smoke annoy you?

HETTY. Not at all.

(A strained silence ensues again.)

SAMMY. If you'll excuse me I'll pack the bag you loaned me. (Goes up on veranda as if to go into house; picks up the straw cushion he was sitting on at beginning of act)

HETTY. (When he is near door) You're not leaving us, Mr. Fletcher?

SAMMY. (Coming back to her L.) Yes, I'll have to take the 11:02.

HETTY. Oh, if your mind is made up——

SAMMY. Oh, yes, my mind's made up. (SAMMY starts to go. LARRY clutches at his arm and hangs on like grim death)

LARRY. You can pack that bag later: you've loads of time.

(SAMMY throws down cushion and paper, and goes back down the steps.)

SAMMY. It's a pleasant day. (Pauses) The flowers are doing well. (Giggles. A pause) Great weather for lawns. (Giggles. A pause) Doesn't any one use this street on Sunday?

HETTY. I'm sorry you find it dull.

SAMMY. Oh, no, not at all. It's very restful after last night. (HETTY turns on him. He turns away, angry with himself) A change from the city, you know. (A pause) Funny thing about Sunday. If I were blindfolded and led to a foreign country where I had lost all sense of time and place and were awakened on Sunday, I'd know it by that sabbath

calm. (*Giggles*) You can cut it with a knife.

HETTY. How interesting. (*Yawning*)

SAMMY. Apparently Auburn Manor doesn't stir its stumps on Sunday.

HETTY. (*To SAMMY*) It's the one day in the week when wives can cease from troubling about their (*Severely towards LARRY*) husband's train.

(*LARRY winces; SAMMY looks from one to the other.*)

SAMMY. I must pack that bag. (*He exits quickly*)

(*A pause again: LARRY watches HETTY furtively. A pause, then LARRY rises determinedly and comes to HETTY.*)

LARRY. (*On her L.*) Oh, what's the use of sulking?

HETTY. I'm not sulking, I'm perfectly pleasant. (*She smiles acidly*)

LARRY. Ah, what's the use of keeping this up?

HETTY. I'm not keeping anything up!

LARRY. Then you're not angry?

HETTY. Why should I be angry?

LARRY. I'm very sorry.

HETTY. That's nice.

LARRY. I *was* a beast last night.

HETTY. You were.

LARRY. Oh, well, you weren't so pleasant yourself. (*Turns away L.*)

HETTY. Had I any very especial reason to be pleasant? Insult me, humiliate me, before a stranger—do you expect me to like it?

LARRY. Do you want me to get down and grovel?

HETTY. Not in your Sunday-go-to-meeting suit.

LARRY. Oh, damn the suit. (*Turns up-stage*)

HETTY. Why, it's a very nice suit.

LARRY. Oh, Hetty, let us drop all this! Don't you see how wretched I am?

(HETTY turns and looks at him searchingly.)

HETTY. You look about as usual.

LARRY. I didn't sleep a wink last night.

HETTY. I did—like a top.

LARRY. I wouldn't have believed that you could be so utterly heartless.

HETTY. And I wouldn't have believed that you could be so utterly unjust.

LARRY. There's some excuse: I had that man Fletcher on my hands all evening.

HETTY. You had none the best of me: I had him all day.

LARRY. He's going soon, thank God!

HETTY. Oh, Larry, that isn't nice to talk about your friends. It isn't hospitable.

LARRY. Hospitality be blowed! Come on, Hetty, be a good fellow, say you forgive me. (*He tries to put his arm around her*)

HETTY. Are you sorry, really sorry?

LARRY. Am I?

HETTY. And you won't stay out again?

LARRY. Never.

HETTY. Sure?

LARRY. Cinch. Now that's all settled, say, where were you and Dr. Lloyd last night?

HETTY. (*Rising quickly*) So that's why you made up and begged for forgiveness, to trap me into some admission? you don't trust me now! (*Crosses L.*)

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) Yes—yes.

HETTY. (*Turns*) You don't. I'd have told you in another moment, but now you can find out—(*LARRY tries to explain*) No, no, you've killed my love—(*HETTY exits into house. Enter SAMMY carrying a bag on which are the letters L. B. He*

stops abruptly, looks after her, and puts hat and bag down)

SAMMY. (*Cheerily*) Well?

LARRY. I've killed her love! (*Standing in daze. SAMMY laughs*) If you want to retain the slightest popularity in this vicinity, choke off that insane giggle!

SAMMY. I thought you'd patched it up?

LARRY. I thought I had. (*Sits in chair*)

SAMMY. What happened?

LARRY. I humbled myself, begged her forgiveness. She forgave me and then I did as you told me — asked her where she'd been.

SAMMY. Did as I told you to? Lord, man, I told you not to mention it. I wash my hands of the whole affair.

(*FAN appears on the street, dressed for church.*)

SAMMY *sees her as he turns away from LARRY.*)

FAN. (*Outside gate*) Oh, Larry, may I speak to you a moment, please?

LARRY. (*Rises*) Good-morning.

FAN. Hetty telephoned me this morning.

LARRY. What did she say? (*Crosses to gate*)

FAN. Oh, what didn't she say? (*LARRY opens gate, she passes in*) Rollie said it was up to me to come over and square myself. Oh, what's the trouble?

LARRY. Oh, nothing. Hetty's going to divorce me, that's all.

SAMMY. Larry exaggerates the situation.

FAN. I'll learn the situation from Mr. Brice.

LARRY. You know Mr. Fletcher?

(*SAMMY moves forward as if to shake hands with her.*)

FAN. Know him? (*SAMMY draws back*) He's

the cause of it all. I only gave Hetty a little advice.

LARRY. (*To SAMMY*) Everybody's very gay with advice. It's getting to be a habit.

FAN. I'll never interfere again; I only meant it as a joke. (*Crying*)

SAMMY. Pardon me, Mrs. Rolliston, but joke is on the taboo here.

LARRY. (*FAN cries still louder*) Oh, don't cry, Fan.

FAN. (*Goes up on veranda*) I can't help it; I'm an old married woman, but Rollie never talked to me in my life as he did this morning! (*Sits*) But I'm not responsible for Hetty's staying out until half-past two. Where was she?

SAMMY. That's the pulsating question of the hour.

FAN. What could anybody find to do in Auburn Manor until half-past two? Did you ask her?

LARRY. Did I ask her!

FAN. Why, if Rollie asked me about anything I wouldn't dare to refuse to tell him—

LARRY. Rollie has you trained—(*Laugh from SAMMY, LARRY looks at him reprovingly*)

FAN. She was at her mother's.

LARRY. She was not; I 'phoned this morning. Mrs. Graham's on her way here now. Hetty was with Doctor Lloyd.

FAN. But we were bored to death with Dr. Lloyd at half-past nine.

SAMMY. Well, we ain't "gettin' any forrader." Someone of us ought to straighten it out. Here we are, three intelligent people.

FAN. Speak for yourself, please.

LARRY. Oh, Fan, you go to her, beg her to give me another chance.

FAN. Let him go, he's responsible. Hetty's a dear, but you don't know what she can be when she's angry.

SAMMY. Oh, don't I?

LARRY. Fan, you wouldn't see me in the divorce court? Do this for me and I'll do as much for you when you get there.

FAN. (*Turning to him quickly*) Thanks, it won't be necessary, if you'll stop leading Rollie astray.

LARRY. Don't blame me, Fan, it's Sammy.

SAMMY. I'm the goat.

FAN. (*Rises*) Well, I suppose this is my punishment. (*She goes L.*)

SAMMY. Good luck, and the Lord be with you.

(*MRS. GRAHAM enters from house.*)

LARRY. Hello, mater, where did you spring from?

MRS. GRAHAM. I came in the back way. Whatever is the matter with you children? Good-morning, Fan; you telephoned me asking me where Hetty was last night. (*Bows frigidly to SAMMY; LARRY motions her to sit*) Hetty telephoned me to come and see her at once. It's a singular time to upset my nerves. (*Sits in chair above steps on veranda*) It's hardly proper. In fact, it's sacrilegious to quarrel on Sunday.

SAMMY. The better the day——

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) I felt that something was wrong. I never dream of black water but I'm sure to awaken to trouble. (*FAN sits in chair down L. on veranda*) Well, I think someone of you might relieve a mother's anxiety—(*All three try to speak*) and not keep me in this fearful suspense. (*All three try to speak*) What has happened to my poor child? (*All three try to speak*) Oh, somebody say something!

SAMMY. We'd like to——

LARRY. You see, mater, it's like this——

SAMMY. (*Interrupting*) Oh, for heaven's sake, don't go all over it again.

FAN. It's just this way, Mrs. Graham——

SAMMY. (*Interrupting*) Pardon me, Mrs. Roliston: I was there, and I know. Briefly, Mrs. Graham: dinner at club—arrived home two fifteen—no Mrs. B. Mrs. B. arrives 2:30—Larry asks her where she's been—

MRS. GRAHAM. A perfectly proper question.

SAMMY. Certainly, sometimes. (MRS. GRAHAM *looks at him quickly*) Then Larry sees fit to bring an accusation—

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Of what has he accused the poor child?

SAMMY. Of being out with Dr. Lloyd.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Rising*) How dare you, Larry, impute aught save what is innocent to my daughter?

LARRY. Well, if you came home late at night.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) I never came home late at night. I'm in bed every evening at nine o'clock, except Wednesday evening, prayer meeting. Why should my home coming be dragged in? (*Sits again.* LARRY *groans*)

FAN. But if you should—

MRS. GRAHAM. I tell you I never come home late—a woman of my years! What would I be doing out late at night? Don't be ridiculous, Fan! (FAN *subsides*) Will no one explain all this to me?

SAMMY. Mrs. Brice has been out until half-past two and Larry naturally but foolishly wondered where? Mark the insignificant word "where", that has put this happy home on the blink.

MRS. GRAHAM. Oh, what's the man talking about?

SAMMY. She won't tell Larry where she's been.

MRS. GRAHAM. Don't talk nonsense!

SAMMY. Does that broken-hearted man look as though it were nonsense? Mark the anguish.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Oh, do be quiet! (*Squelches him*) Larry, do you mean to tell me that I've been dragged up here on a hot morning be-

cause of this tomfoolery? You're her husband, insist on her telling you.

LARRY. I tried to, but she won't.

MRS. GRAHAM. Where is she? (*Starts to go into the house*)

LARRY. Mater, you'll have to approach her gently.

MRS. GRAHAM. Gently! my own child! I'll just ask her a plump and plain question, and I'll see to it that I get a plain reply.

FAN. (*Rising*) Oh, I think I'd better go, Mrs. Graham.

MRS. GRAHAM. She's my daughter, Mrs. Rolliston; I hope I know how to deal with my own flesh and blood! (MRS. GRAHAM *starts to go*. HETTY *appears dressed for church. She has a telegram in her hand; she stops at the sight of the quartette who are momentarily embarrassed*)

HETTY. (*Sarcastically*) Has the jury brought in its verdict?

MRS. GRAHAM. Hetty, I'm surprised at you—If you were true to your up-bringing, a verdict wouldn't be needed. I ask you—(SAMMY *tries to stop* MRS. GRAHAM. *She resents it*) a simple question: (HETTY *starts resentfully—the others try to stop* MRS. GRAHAM) where were you last night?

HETTY. So you four have been sitting here discussing me! You make our quarrel public property.

FAN. (*Interrupting*) We are your friends, Hetty, and have you and Larry's interest at heart. You should tell us where you were; this has gone far enough.

HETTY. Quite far enough. What right have you, any of you to pry into my private affairs?

MRS. GRAHAM. I am your mother.

HETTY. I am of age, and a wife; I've a right to the freedom of the individual.

MRS. GRAHAM. Don't quote that Mrs. Crane to

me! I always said that woman was a trouble-breeder.

HETTY. (*Ignoring her*) When anything in my conduct calls for question, I'll explain it, and not until then.

FAN. (*Very much offended*) I may have usurped the privilege of a friend, Hetty, but you've equally usurped it. (*Comes down step and joins LARRY*)

HETTY. I'm sorry to have offended you, Fan, but this matter is entirely between Larry and myself.

(*FAN turns away. LARRY joins her and expostulates with her. As FAN moves down, MRS. GRAHAM gets to L. of HETTY.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*To HETTY L. of her*) Hetty, I'd like to spank you! (*Comes down steps*)

HETTY. Oh, Mr. Fletcher, here's a telegram for you. (*Gives him telegram*)

SAMMY. When did this come?

HETTY. Last night?

SAMMY. Last night?

HETTY. Yes.

SAMMY. What time was it delivered?

HETTY. (*Indifferently—watching LARRY and FAN*) About ten o'clock.

SAMMY. You received it then:

HETTY. Yes, I meant to give it to you, but I forgot.

SAMMY. Then you were in the house all the time?

LARRY. What!

MRS. GRAHAM. Why on earth didn't you say so?

HETTY. I didn't have a chance.

LARRY. Oh, Hetty. (*Running up steps to HETTY*) Who was in Dr. Lloyd's car last night?

HETTY. The nurse. Didn't you know the Jones's had a new baby?

(*He goes to put his arms around her. Church bells begin; she hands him hat which is on the table. ROLLISTON and MRS. SHIPMAN have appeared up the street, followed by MR. and MRS. APPLEBEE and MR. and MRS. COLTON. They join MRS. GRAHAM and FAN and converse. LARRY and HETTY walk along. SAMMY takes up his bag and follows in the tail of the procession Church bells are ringing. The others disappear in this order: FAN and MRS. SHIPMAN, ROLLISTON and MRS. GRAHAM, APPLEBEE and COLTON, MRS. COLTON and MRS. APPLEBEE, leaving HETTY, LARRY, and SAMMY, who stop at R. I E.*)

LARRY. Oh, so sorry, you must go, Sammy—
(*Shakes hands*)

HETTY. But you'll come out soon and spend the day?

(*They turn away. SAMMY watches them disappear. A whistle is heard in the distance.*)

SAMMY. Oh, you Broadway! (*He runs up the street in the opposite direction. Church bells swell for curtain*)

CURTAIN.

DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS AND SUGGESTIONS AS TO CLOTHES.

LARRY BRICE. Juvenile lead, 30 years of age—type of American stock broker—smartly dressed in summer suit—belt—tan shoes—straw hat—

HETTY BRICE. Lead—

ACT 1ST—a simple house gown.

ACT 2ND—a white lingerie dress—at end of act small automobile hat.

ACT 3RD—Same dress with a scarf.

ACT 4TH—A simple house gown—changing later to gown, parasol and hat for church.

CARRIE. A village girl who has been a waitress in one of the Childs restaurants in New York, and is now a servant in the Brice home—ACT 1ST wears a cotton dress in blue or pink such as worn by maids. An exaggerated hat. Underneath it a very small cap such as worn by waitresses.

ACT 2ND—conventional maid's dress and white apron—no cap.

MRS. GRAHAM. Hetty's mother—sweet old woman—very well dressed.

ACT 1ST—A coat suit, silk shirtwaist and small toque.

ACT 2ND—Afternoon gown in light colors with corresponding toque.

ACT 4TH—Gray silk church gown and toque.

MR. ROLLISTON. Comedian about 35 years of age—more the family man in appearance and not so smartly dressed as LARRY—blue serge suit and Panama hat.

MR. COLTON. Boyish—a “newlywed” very well dressed in light sack suit.

MR. APPLEBEE. Stout—middle-aged suburbanite. Dark business suit—straw hat.

SAMMY FLETCHER. Comedian—a few years older than LARRY. At his entrance in ACT 1ST he wears evening clothes—white vest—collar and tie loosened—hair disarranged—must have the appearance of having slept in his clothes. In ACT 2ND, he wears an automobile coat of heavy material and several sizes too large—dress trousers—evening shirt—suspenders and four in hand tie. He has discarded coat and vest of evening suit. He changes in this act to smart sack suit and he must be underdressed in sack suit trousers in order to make necessary quick change.

MRS. JULIA STICKNEY CRANE. Tall, handsome, with touch of gray in hair—must represent the last word in style—carries a lorgnette on a chain.

MRS. COLTON. A young bride—in second act wears simple summer dress—in third act a negligee over petticoat and silk evening wrap.

MRS. SHIPMAN. A stout woman about forty—rather suburban in attire.

MRS. APPLEBEE. Tall, homely, woman—very æsthetic in appearance—dressed in a loose, “artistic” gown—a large flappy hat with one rose, antique jewelry, bracelets, etc.

MRS. ROLLISTON. 35 years of age—very well dressed in afternoon gown.

POLICEMAN. Policeman’s uniform—club and helmet.

In ACT II, women wear pretty summer gowns and hats suitable for afternoon reception. In ACT IV, summer gowns and hats suitable for church wear. MRS. APPLEBEE same costume as in ACT II.

In last act, LARRY, COLTON and ROLLISTON wear black cutaway coats—striped trousers—silk hats, etc. —APPLEBEE wears black frock coat, striped trousers, silk hat, etc.

PROPERTY PLOT.

ACT I.

- ON STAGE—AT RISE—Painted floor cloth—Center Rug or Medalion—Large center Round Table c. on table—fancy center piece and bowl of flowers
 1 small stand for telephone at R. below sideboard
 —large sideboard against wall up R. on sideboard—2 pepper and 2 salt shakers—1 muffinier
 —1 metal cigarette box with 2 cigarettes and matches—other articles to dress. In top drawer
 —1 serving fork and spoon—2 tea spoons, 2 forks, 2 knives—in lower drawer—1 table cloth and 2 napkins—cabinet (built in scene R. in flat) No. 1 (See diagram) on lower shelf—1 sugar bowl and table bell—on second shelf—2 finger bowls, 2 drinking glasses and two breakfast plates—other articles to dress—Cabinet No. 2 (L. in flat. See diagram) on lower shelf
 —2 bread and butter plates—on 3rd shelf—2 cups and saucers—other articles to dress—7 chairs—1 R. and 1 L. of c. table—4 chairs against scene L. (2 above and 2 below doors—1 at wall R.—1 above door R. 2 E.)—Curtains on casement window and pots of flowers.
- OFF-STAGE L.—2 boxes, done up in brown paper, supposed to contain shirt waists and slippers—Train whistle (at cue) 1 alarm clock (Set 7: 15)
- OFF-STAGE R. 1 E.—Kitchen table with following articles ready for characters:
- 2 daily newspapers (N. Y. Herald and World)—2 dishes of grape fruit (or melon)—1 water pitcher $\frac{1}{2}$ full of water—1 covered dish with

toast—I covered dish with 2 fried eggs—I cup and saucer (coffee in cup)—I tray with pot of coffee—I cream pitcher and milk pitcher.

OFF-STAGE—Back of c. Windows—grass mats.

ACT II.

Large Boxed Interior—stairs from center leading up to Balcony on L. of scene—on stage at rise—painted floor cloth and large rug—large square table L. c.—on which are—“Country Life in America”—“American Homes and Gardens” and “The Garden Magazine” (on R.) “Ladies Home Journal” and other magazines (on L.)—In center a bowl of flowers and a picture puzzle—Arm-chair R. of this table—Arm-chair L. of this table—small chair back of table—above this table and against the wall between the coat closet and stairs a small stand on table on which are a lamp and two caps (LARRY’S and SAMMY’S)—Arm-chair well over and down R. Mantel with ornaments, photos, small clock, etc.—fender fire irons, etc., against fireplace opening R. above window—Large comfortable sofa R. c.—back of this sofa is a large writing table with lamp, writing materials and telephone—small chair back of this table—small table L. of opening—on which are HETTY’S hat, parasol (used by MRS. APPLEBEE in burglar scene) and under table on floor a handsome market basket—push button on wall R. between window and mantel. Small stand (for MRS. CRANE’S notes) c. Small stand R. fireplace.

OFF-STAGE L.—Ready for character—I small tray with doily and cup of tea and saucer—I large paper bag supposed to contain a woman’s hat, an old umbrella and a very small hand bag (all for CARRIE)—bell to ring at cues (same as bell used in ACT I.)

OFF-STAGE C. and R.—Material to fill HETTY's basket to appear heavy and covered with napkin and a long loaf of bread with paper wrapped around the middle all for HETTY—a bowl tied up in napkin supposed to contain soup for "Fan."

SIDE PROPS—For characters—I silver dollar—for "LARRY"—I policeman's club for "POLICEMAN"—I cigarette case for "SAMMY"—I note book for "MRS CRANE"—I very large overcoat for "SAMMY"—cigarettes for "SAMMY"—Hooks and chair in room upstairs off L. 2 E. for "SAMMY'S" change in ACT II—small stand and I chair in room upstairs L. 3 E. for "LARRY'S" change in ACT III—In coat closet (back L. under stairs) 1 or 2 articles of clothing—other articles of furniture, flowers, etc., to dress scene.

ACT III.

Same set as ACT II—Night—On large table L. c. a metal box of cigarettes—I match stand and an ash tray—2 evening papers (World and Sun) at either end of table. Small clock used on mantel in ACT II and box of chocolates on writing table back of couch—small book for "HETTY" on couch—HETTY's scarf in coat closet (L. under stairs). Candle in stick and box of matches on small stand off-stage—upstairs in room L. 3 E. Auto horn off-stage (up R.) at cue.

ACT IV.

Full stage—exterior—large house L. Painted floor cloth—Grass mats inside of fence—grass mats long strip to outline street—Rug on Veranda platform—3 wicker chairs (platform)—I wicker table (platform)

SIDE PROPS—I small Japanese straw mat (SAMMY)

—I copy Sunday World (LARRY)—I copy Sunday Herald (SAMMY)—I cigarette case with cigarettes (SAMMY)—I hand traveling bag on which are initials L. B. (SAMMY)—I telegram (HETTY)—I train whistle (at cue off L)—I chime of church bells at cue up and off R.—Flowers on ground front of verandah—roses on posts and house—awnings on windows—window boxes on lower windows.

NOTE:—The diagram of ACT II shows a small table between the sofa and the fireplace. This is *incorrect*. The table, if used, should be on the R. of fireplace. The clock shown in the diagram should be on the mantel in ACT II. In ACT III it has been placed by HETTY on the table back of sofa. This should be a small gilt clock.

LIGHT PLOT.

 ACT I.

Boxed Interior—Early morning.

Foots— $\frac{1}{3}$ Amber—full up—

Borders—1st border $\frac{1}{3}$ amber—full up—
4th border—all white—full up.

Strip lights—10 light strip L. 3 E.

5 light strip R. 2 E.

Arc lights—Amber box L. U. E. on drop.

" " R. U. E. on drop.

" " on exterior backing R.

3 E.

Telephone (pract.) on small stand R., between door and sideboard.

ACT II.

Boxed Interior—Afternoon—

Foots :— $\frac{1}{3}$ Amber—full up.

Borders—1st border— $\frac{1}{3}$ Amber, full up.
4th border, all white, full up.

Strip lights—single light—in coat closet L. 3 E.
over the door.

Single lights, in rooms off Balcony L. 2 and
L. 2 E.

Single lights, in rooms off Balcony L. 2 and
L. 3 E.

Large lamp with shade on table R.

Large lamp with shade on table back L. (be-
tween coat closet and stairs.

Two double bracket lamps with shades R. and L.
above mantel on R. of scene.

Telephone on table R. c. (pract.)

NOTE:—These single lamp strips and lamps on tables
R. and L. are not used until ACT III.
Arc Lights—Amber boxes R. and L. U.

ACT III.

Same Set as ACT II.—Night.

Foots—At rise—Amber $\frac{1}{3}$ up—

At rise—Whites—out.

At cues—Whites on full.

At cues—Whites out.

At cues—Amber out.

At cues—Both white and Amber on
full—

At cues—All foots on and off (6
times)

Borders—None used this act.

Arc lights—I box, blue, from R. U. E. on drop.

I lense, blue from R. U. E. through
high window.

On at rise and all through scene.

Telephone on table R. C. to be worked at cue
near end of act.

ACT IV.

Full Stage—Exterior—Daylight.

Foots—All white and amber—full.

Borders—All white and amber—full.

Strips—2, 10 or 12—light strips on floor behind
picket fence.

I 2-light strips on backing of house L. 2 E.

I baby lense in door of house to strike chair
on veranda.

Arc lights—amber box—R. U. E. on drop.

amber box—L. U. E. on drop.

Proscenium lights on this act only.

NOTE:—*For production by amateurs* the sets can be simplified as follows:

ACT I. Substitute at stage L. ordinary door for double glass doors.

Substitute ordinary china cabinets at R. and L. of French windows for built in cabinets.

ACT II. To dispense with stair and balcony use two doors in back flat for bedrooms on balcony. Eliminate double glass doors at back center—making that entrance at R. 1 E., omitting window at R. 2 E. Armchair used by MRS. SHIPMAN in ACT II, can be then placed above door. These alterations will considerably decrease depth of scene, and will necessitate, naturally, a re-arrangement of entrances and exits for the persons in the play, but will not materially affect the “business” or positions during the playing of the scenes.

ACT IV. The platform and veranda can be eliminated and the house set on stage. The furnishings of the veranda can be on the lawn. The picket fence, the row of trees R., the awnings and window boxes can be discarded. These alterations will impair the attractiveness of the scene but will not affect the stage “business.”



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