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Unthankful Thankful

—BY—

HELEN L. NEWMAN



PRICE 25 CENTS

Eldridge Entertainment House

Franklin, Ohio

and

Denver, Colo.

944 So. Logan Street

YOU WILL BE GLAD TO KNOW OF THESE NEW PLAYS

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By Mary Shaw Page. A bright 1-act play with simple stage setting. William, husband of Mary, essays to train Mary, especially along the lines of correcting carelessness. As is always the case, William gets in deep water, but finally wades out. 2 males, 4 females, and plays about 45 minutes. Price, 25c.

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A comedy in 3 acts by Beulah King. 3 males, 5 females. Time, 2½ hours. The scenes are laid in a fashionable boarding house, and the characters are all distinct types and worth while. A successful playwright, desiring to escape notoriety, seeks seclusion at Mrs. Teague's and becomes the hero of Anne Marie, the dining room maid. The dialogue is bright, the situations clever and the story ends happily. 35c.

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By Ethelyn Sexton. A rollicking 1-act girls' play for 6 characters. Barbara's mother has a friend, Ann Burnett, who is to visit the girls at college, with the intention of giving a generous sum to the school. The girls, wishing to gain her good will, practice their "manners." Miss Burnett, however, appears in disguise and has much fun at their expense. All ends well and the school gets the money. Plays about 45 minutes. Easy setting and costumes. Price, 25c.

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A Little Girl Who Lost Her Name for a Year.

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ACT I.

Scene—Combined kitchen and living room of Cummens house. Door at rear from shed and one at left near front from small entry. Fireplace with crane and kettle. Large table at kitchen end and shelf with pewter mugs, porringers, plates, etc. As curtain rises, there are discovered Grandmother, sitting by fire, knitting; Prudence, near by at a spinning wheel; Fortitude, tidying the room; Simeon and Thankful standing together near front end; Mistress Cummens passing back and forth, with Josiah following her and asking questions (shown in pantomime).

Time—Morning after Thanksgiving day, 1650.

SIMEON—(*in low tone to Thankful*) Oh! I should think 'twould be awful not to have any name! What made Father say we mustn't call you by yours?

THANKFUL—(*in shaking voice*) Oh, don't Simeon! It's mine still, only I can't have it now.

SIM.—(*coming closer, speaking still lower*) What did you do, Th—?

THANK.—Go away, Simeon! I just wasn't thankful for Fortitude's old drab gown—or for anything else, either!

SIM.—Oh, my! And Father gave you the spotted calf only day before yesterday! I'd have been thankful enough if he'd given it to me.

THANK.—But I'll have my name back, Simeon Cummens.

SIM.—Yes, in a year. But a year's an awful long time to wait. You must have been wicked, awful wicked. Are you thankful for anything today?

THANK.—(*almost in tears*) I—don't—I don't believe so. I don't see how I can make myself so, if I don't feel so. Oh, Simeon! I can't tell anybody how I hate to wear this old drab gown that Fortitude had. And just the same on Lord's Day, too, in the meeting-house!

SIM.—What do you care? Don't be silly!

THANK.—Mercy Hopkins sits on the next bench. She has a new one—and, oh, Simeon, just think! It's re-re-red! And she keeps looking down at hers, and then over at mine! I don't believe I can bear—bear it!

SIM.—The constable ought to give her a good whack on her forehead. But he spends most all his time watching the boys. Oh, I s'pose all girls are silly! Boys aren't, not a bit. I like to wear Father's clothes made short. In a year or two I can wear 'em without cutting off at all. (*Begins to hum, at first low, then growing carelessly loud.*) You're a silly sister and I s'pose you're wicked, too. Oh, you haven't any name! Now, baby, cry boo-hoo, boo-hoo!

LITTLE JOSIAH—(*running up and pointing finger at Thankful*) Cwy boo! Baby, cwy boo!

(*Grandmother directs mother's attention to what the children are doing.*)

MISTRESS CUMMENS—(*severely, from the other end of the room*) Simeon, go out and bring in wood till the big wood-box is full. (*To Thankful, who is now sobbing.*) Help Fortitude make the room tidy. Then study the answer to the next question in the Catechism.

(*As Simeon passes her, she speaks to him low in reproof. Calls little Josiah to her.*)

(*Exit Simeon.*)

(*Enter Mr. Cummins, who stands a minute before the fire talking with Grandmother (in pantomime) and looking about the room.*)

(*Enter Simeon, bending under an enormous armful of wood.*)

MR. CUMMENS—Thou must bring more wood today, Simeon, from the pile by the big corn field. Hast thou done thy task this morning with Goodwife Fletcher?

SIM.—Yes, honored Father. I carried a bigger stick than usual. It was harder to saw, too (*looking at his hands*). It made two big blisters.

MR. C.—(*going nearer Thankful, who is sitting with lowered eyes, but who rises as he speaks to her.*) Hast thou been doing right this morning? (*Turning to her mother.*) Thy mother shall answer for thee.

MOTHER—Yes, she is obedient and ready to help.
(*Exit Mr. Cummens.*)

SIM.—(*going up to Thankful and speaking in loud whisper*) I'll make Mercy sorry. Just you wait and see!
(*Puts a handful of nuts into her lap.*)

ACT II.

Scene—A similar living room, arranged as school room with several long benches at front end. Before the front bench is a long table. In front of all is a large table with high-backed chair. Door at left.)

Time—Early November, 1651. Near end of day's session.)

(*As curtain goes up, Dame Fuller sits facing ten or more children, some of them on the benches, writing with great effort.*)

DAME FULLER—Jacob, make thy letters over again. Simeon, thy words and figures must be more carefully done. Take heed to do just what I say, not what thou wouldst like to do. Content, sit still in thy place on the bench and think of the verses thou must recite. If thy conduct is not good, Simeon, the report will go to thy honored father.

(*Door opens softly a crack and little Indian girl peeps in.*)

SHELAWNAH—(*very softly*) Shelawnah, she good girl! Shelawnah come in?

DAME FULLER—Come in Shelawnah. Sit down quietly on this bench. (*To the older girls.*) I wish now to speak to the girls who have done their first tasks.

(*Older girls, including Thankful, rise, courtesy and remain standing, while Dame Fuller speaks.*)

DAME FULLER—You are all to study the names of the books of the Bible, till you can give in order six more than you could yesterday. Then those who recite them correctly may work on their samplers.

(*Girls seat themselves and begin to study, making much noise with lips.*)

MERCY HOPKINTON—(*raising hand, rising and courtesying*) Please, Dame Fuller, I know mine. I want to recite before the others, and then may I please make my cross-stitch in red, like my dress?

DAME FULLER—Thou mayst recite.

(*Mercy goes forward confidently and begins glibly; then stops, hangs head.*)

DAME FULLER—(*severely*) Go back to thy place till I call thee.

THANK.—(*after reciting correctly, shown in pantomime*) Please, honored Dame, may I have my sampler now?

(*Dame takes it from drawer and puts it into Thankful's hand.*)

THANK.—(*looking at sampler lovingly*) See, Dame Fuller, it is all ready for my name.

DAME—See that thy name is made as well as thy sisters, Prudence and Fortitude, made theirs.

(*Dame steps back, as if from sudden thought. At the same time a distressed look comes over Thankful's face and she bursts into tears.*)

DAME—(*taking sampler back and putting it away*) Study now, child, on thy Bible verses and thy hymn.

THANK.—(softly, close to Dame Fuller's ear) May I stay, honored Dame, till all are gone—all but Shelawnah?

(Shelawnah watches Thankful anxiously.)

DAME—Yes, child, thou mayst stay.

(Passing out of others may be shortened or prolonged, according to wish. Every child turns at door and makes formal courtesy to Dame Fuller.)

THANK.—(going forward in tears and laying head in Dame Fuller's lap) Do you suppose, good Dame, that I can some time make my—make the name—on the sampler?

DAME—(stroking Thankful's hair) I am sure thou canst, my child, if thou art the best daughter thou canst be to thy honored father and mother.

THANK.—(raising head with look of joy) And will you show me how to make the T, honored Dame?

DAME—Yes, I will show thee how to make a beautiful T.

(Exeunt Thankful and Shelawnah, hand in hand. Turning at door, Thankful makes courtesy. Shelawnah makes queer little jump up and bobs back again to floor.)

ACT III.

Scene—Living room at Cummins house.

Time—Day before Thanksgiving, 1651.

(All the family are present except Mr. Cummins.)

GRANDMOTHER—When did he go, daughter?

MISTRESS C.—Several hours ago, long before light. Oneemik came to get him and Goodman Hopkinton.

GRANDMOTHER—Dost thou always trust Oneemik, daughter Deborah?

MISTRESS C.—Yes, dear mother. I am sure he would not be false to us. Dost thou not remember that good

Massassoit said of him, when he was only sixteen years old, that he should be his trusted messenger for these settlements? In the five years since, nobody else could have helped us as Oneemik has. He is stronger and swifter than any other Indian we know and he is devoted to his friends.

(Knock at door near front is answered by Prudence. Enter Goodwife Hopkinton, Mercy, John, and exchange salutations. Elders talk in low tones, showing anxiety in pantomime. John joins Simeon and Thankful.)

THANK.—Oh, I wish Father would come!

JOHN—I shouldn't think you'd care so much; such an awful cross man!

THANKFUL AND SIMEON—*(together)* He isn't cross, John!

JOHN—Well, I call it cross. Stern, the men say.

THANK.—You mustn't talk that way about him, John.

JOHN—I shouldn't think you'd do much standing up for him when he took your name away. *(Turning to Simeon.)* Look what you had to do, just for tumbling down and hiding a little wood from Goodwife Fletcher's woodpile. My! carrying her wood and sawing a big stick every day for a month! The fun was only a few minutes—and think how long you were punished for it!

SIM.—Father's punishments do keep a-punishing, some way, till you get more sense, I s'pose. At any rate, he's a good kind.

JOHN—So's mine.

SIMEON—I like my own kind best. He lets me have fun, too.

JOHN—Oh, come along out!

(Exit John, by rear door.)

THANK.—*(moving about restlessly, looking distressed)* Oh, I wish he'd come, I wish he'd come!

(Door at rear bursts open. Oneemik enters, panting heavily. Drops down before fire.)

MISTRESS C.—(*going quickly to him and putting her hand on his arm*) Speak, good Oneemik!

ONEEMIK—(*by jerks*) He safe!—All safe!—Oneemik sleep first!—Run back—show way! (*Dozes quickly off, with loud breathing.*)

THANK—(*who has come close to Oneemik*) Oh, I'm so glad he's safe! (*Sways as if faint, and is caught by her mother.*)

ACT IV.

Scene—Cummens living room.

Time—Thanksgiving Day, 1651, near noon.

(*All the family except Mr. Cummens present, also Oneemik and Shelawnah. Preparations for dinner are going on, directed by Mistress Cummens. Prudence turns fowl on spit; Fortitude lays the table and Thankful is generally useful as asked by others. This part of scene may be filled in with variations, as one wishes. Show may be made of vegetables and fruit. Oneemik braids ears of corn. Shelawnah sits on floor in corner, working with beads. Gets up from time to time to follow Thankful around.*)

GRANDMOTHER—After all is ready I want you to sing the old hymn I love so well:

“With thankful hearts we sing thy praise,
O Thou who keepest all our days!”

(*Beckoning to Thankful*) Canst thou sing it, too, my child?

THANK.—(*taking Grandmother's hand*) I wish I could, honored Grandmother, but I'm afraid not.

SIM.—(*passing Thankful and twitching her ear*) Hungry? I'm starving.

THANK.—No, not very. I don't like Thanksgiving Day.

SIM.—Why? Oh—oo—oo!

(*Enter Mr. Cummens.*)

THANK.—(*her face lighting up with quick joy*) Oh, my father, I am so glad that Oneemik brought you back last night.

MR. C.—(*taking Thankful by the hand and standing near Grandmother*) We are all thankful today that good Massasoit is well again and has put an end to the evil plan against us. We are thankful, too, for the help that our brave Oneemik gives us. (*Stooping down to Thankful*) Art thou thankful, besides, for many other things, daughter?

Thank.—Yes, honored father. I think I am for—almost everything.

MR. C.—(*touching her gown*) Even for this, daughter?

THANK.—(*very slowly*) Would it be like being thankful when you don't like something that you have, if you do like to have it?

SIM.—(*in low tone, passing*) Riddle! What is it you don't like that you have, when you do like to have it? Too mixed up. Make another.

FATHER AND MOTHER—(*looking at each other, as if puzzled*) What does she mean?

THANK.—I thought it wasn't being thankful if I didn't like the drab gown. (*Raising head and looking directly into her father's eyes.*) I don't like it, honored Father, but I shall just love to wear it now. I don't believe I shall cry any more when I put it on.

MOTHER—(*tears coming into her eyes*) My poor child!

THANK.—(*turning eyes to mother*) And I don't believe I shall feel cross about Mercy's any more. When I knew that Father was safe, I began to be thankful way down, all through me, but I didn't know if I was thankful enough for—everything. Do you think I am, honored

Mother? (*Smooths down the gown.*) Yes, I shall love to wear it, and I think I can wear it a good many years.

FATHER—(*tenderly*) My dear little Thankful!

THANKFUL—(*with joyful face*) Oh, my father! You said my name again! Oh, I'm so happy! And p'r'aps some time—even if it isn't till I'm as old as Grandmother—I can have a—a red gown.

FATHER—(*taking Thankful's hand and speaking to all, near Grandmother's chair*) Our dear, dear Thankful is back again.

GRANDMOTHER—Bless my dear child.

LITTLE JOSIAH—(*jumping about*) Tankful, Tankful, Tankful! I want to sit next Tankful.

(*All gather about her, then after a minute join hands around the table and sing:*)

“With thankful hearts we sing Thy praise,
O Thou who guardest all our days.
The past is full of mercies shown;
O Pilgrims' God, still keep Thine own!”

(*At the close, Thankful, as if doing it unconsciously, sings it again, alone, in clear voice, while others watch her intently.*)

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