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Walter H. Baker & Company

No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

Love and Tea

A Comedy-Drama of Colonial
Times in Two Acts

Written at the instance of the D. A. R.

By

ANNA PHILLIPS SEE

Author of "When Women Vote," etc.

NOTE

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BOSTON

WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1915

Love and Tea

CHARACTERS

MISS LAVINIA BOLTWOOD, *a despotic spinster.*

BETTY BOLTWOOD, *her niece.*

MRS. COWLES, *a neighbor.*

MRS. ADAMS, *a neighbor.*

MRS. STRONG, *the village gossip.*

MANDY, *slave of Miss Boltwood.*

JUDGE INGRAM, *a middle-aged bachelor of mild Tory sentiments.*

WILLIAM DICKINSON, *a fiery young Minuteman.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Place, the living-room of a comfortable village home.

Time, April 1775, a few days after the Battle of Lexington.

ACT II.—Place, the same.

Time, June 1775, not long after the battle of Bunker Hill.

THE STORY OF THE PLAY

Miss Boltwood, a despotic spinster, is persuaded to join a band of ladies who have sworn to give up tea and all taxed articles till the Revolutionary War is over. The tea habit is too strong for Miss Boltwood and she drinks it secretly. Her niece, Betty, discovers this and uses the information to compel her aunt to consent to her (Betty's) engagement to the young minuteman, William Dickinson.

Miss Boltwood also has a lover, the Tory, Judge Ingram, whom she has kept dangling for years. When he joins the Patriot cause and she hears the (false) report that he has been arrested as a spy, she champions him and finds that she loves him; she becomes an ardent Patriot also—all this just as he has decided that their *friendship* is ideal! Mandy, who is a privileged character, furnishes much fun.



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Love and Tea

ACT I

SCENE.—*The living-room of MISS BOLTWOOD'S home. There are doors to L. and R., a closed window near R., a fireplace with fire near C. and over it a cupboard that locks; a tea table, four straight chairs, a high winged chair or settle, a mirror, furnishings of a colonial tea table, a black cat (toy), etc.*

(MANDY is discovered on stage. She pokes fire, looks into kettle, stumbles over cat by the hearth.)

MANDY. Dere's dat cat agin! Here you, Salem, git out from under Mandy's feet 'fore I break my neck or yours! Black imp o' Satan! (*The cat is supposed to spit.*) He spits! I pray you, spit not at poor old Mandy, please, Mr. Cat! Oh, you looks a very witch cat! Good Salem! Good pussy!

(*Pets the cat.*)

Enter BETTY BOLTWOOD in afternoon dress but with an apron on.

BETTY. Mandy, aunt bids you assist me with the porcelain against the tea-drinking this afternoon. Fetch the linen towel and the tray.

MANDY. Yes, missy. Here dey is.

(MANDY gets towel and tray and she and BETTY wipe the dishes and arrange them on the tea table.)

BETTY (*holding up cream pitcher*). I like well this tea set, Mandy. 'Twas a most pleasing gift that aunt's cousin fetched her from China. She surely hath a vast love for tea. 'Tis almost a carnal weakness!

MANDY. True, missy. You' aunt do love tea most 'stravagantly, an' cats too! (*Looks scornfully at SALEM.*) A true sign she will never marry. But Missy Boltwood am so sperity de mens am 'fraid of her, mebbe.

BETTY (*as they set the table*). Aunt is too strong-willed and—and—managing to obey any man. Heard you not that when a girl she was betrothed to Judge Ingram, but could not abide the thought of marriage?

MANDY. Lawsy, Miss Betty! An' such friends as dey is, too! De Judge am a Tory. Is dat de reason Missy Boltwood ain't no patriarch like mos' of de Hartfield ladies?

BETTY. Nay, Mandy, 'tis because aunt lived so many years in England. She thinks there need be no quarrel between the Colonies and the king. Could she but hear William Dickinson defend the cause of our independence —

(*There is the sound of a wagon driven rapidly. MANDY runs to the window dish in hand.*)

MANDY. Why, dere's you' William Dickinson now, a-dashin' by in de wagon!

BETTY (*darting also to the window*). Where? I see only dust. Looked he not up at the window, Mandy?

MANDY. No, Miss Betty. He was racin' dose colts over de groun'!

BETTY (*pouting*). And we have not met in two long days!

MANDY (*earnestly*). Miss Betty, if you' aunt knew how lovery you is wid dat William Dickinson, she would prison you in you' chamber. You know well she can't 'bide de Dickinsons 'count of de old quarrel 'tween de famblies.

BETTY. True, but naught can be said against William. He is the bravest and handsomest minuteman in the company, and —

MANDY. Sh, missy! I hears you' aunt on de stairs.

Enter MISS LAVINIA BOLTWOOD, handsomely gowned.

MISS B. Cease your chattering, Mandy. Fetch me the egg cakes and the macaroons from the great cupboard.

[*Exit MANDY.*

BETTY. With your permission, aunt, I will go abroad to take the air. 'Tis too beauteous a day to remain within.

(*Takes off her apron.*)

MISS B. Then I pray you go down to the Meadow Road and buy me some sage cheese from Mrs. Abiel Dickinson. Should you chance to see young William, chatter not with him. 'Tis not seemly for maidens to talk overmuch with men.

Enter MANDY with a plate of cakes in each hand. She stands listening with the plates slanted so that the cakes are in danger of falling off. She now grins knowingly at BETTY behind MISS B.'s back.

BETTY (*demurely*). I will heed your counsel, aunt. 'Twill be best to wear my new bonnet. The old one is sadly shabby.

(Exit BETTY, who returns in a moment and puts her bonnet on before the mirror.)

MISS B. Mandy, you stupid, lay down the plates and put the teapot to warm.

MANDY (*putting teapot on the hearth*). Is you goin' to give old Mandy jess a leetle tea to-day, missy? I knows tea is powerful 'spensive. Why so, missy?

MISS B. Because the Parliament taxes tea. Have you no remembrance of the Boston Tea Party, more than a year ago, when the tea was thrown overboard in Boston Harbor?

MANDY. Yes, missy, I recommembers, an' lots of lady patriarchs stopped drinkin' tea den. Missy Abiel Dickinson she drink "Liberty Tea," an' I helps her pick de raspberry leaves las' summer —

(Knocker sounds.)

MISS B. There is the knocker, Mandy. Do you attend the door. (*Exit MANDY. She ushers in MRS. STRONG, MRS. COWLES and MRS. ADAMS.*) Good-afternoon, Mrs. Strong; good-afternoon, Mrs. Cowles; good-afternoon, Mrs. Adams. I hope I see you all well.

MRS. S. I am in my usual state of good health, thank you, Miss Boltwood.

MRS. C. Save for a slight rheum, I am enjoying the blessing of health, thank you.

MRS. A. Thank you kindly, Miss Boltwood, I am as well as can be expected.

MISS B. Lay aside your cloaks, ladies. Mandy, assist the ladies.

(They remove their wraps.)

MRS. S. Did I not see your niece Betty flitting through the lane as I came by?

MISS B. It may be. I sent her on an errand to Mrs. Abiel Dickinson's. 'Tis a safe walk to the Meadow Road.

(She moves to the fireplace and makes the tea.)

MRS. S. *(looking meaningly at the others)*. Laws-a-massy! Is she throwing the girl at William's head?

MRS. A. Sh! She does not know how enamored the young people are. When she learns it—poor Betty!

MISS B. *(turning from the fireplace)*. I pray you, ladies, draw up to the table ere the tea be cold. *(They seat themselves. MANDY brings the teapot and places it before MISS B. MANDY looks longingly at the tea, sniffs it, and licks her lips behind their backs. The ladies pour the tea into their saucers and blow it noisily, crooking their little fingers as they raise the saucers to their lips. At a sign from MISS B., MANDY exits.)* 'Tis a pity I have none of my rose conserve to give you. I sent it all to my friends in England by the Christmas packet.

MRS. S. Your conserve is marvelous, Miss Boltwood. The receipt is a secret, I presume.

MISS B. A family heirloom, Mrs. Strong. Pray tell me, ladies, if the tea be sufficiently brewed. I can assure you 'tis prime Bohea and no "Liberty Tea"!

(She laughs a little scornfully.)

MRS. C. 'Tis of an elegant strength and 'tis an elegant tea. I feel certain no duty was paid on it. Was it honestly smuggled, my dear Miss Boltwood?

(All laugh.)

MISS B. Indeed it was, and through Judge Ingram too. A poor Tory he!

MRS. A. Mayhap the good man will become a patriot in time. *(Helps herself to a cake.)*

MRS. S. We ought to scorn to use anything taxed, as the king hath used the Colonies so unjustly! Still, 'twould be a hardship to give up the tea.

MISS B. Well, I am neither Tory nor patriot; so I drink smuggled tea, and shall drink it till I am under better advisement. Pray take of the candied cherries, Mrs. Strong. May I fill your cup, Mrs. Cowles? *(The knocker sounds. MANDY*

passes through from L. to R. She ushers in JUDGE INGRAM, *who carries a newspaper. All rise and curtsy.*) Good-afternoon, Stephen Ingram.

JUDGE. Good-afternoon, Miss Lavinia. Pray do not let me interrupt your tea-drinking, ladies. I but stopped in passing to leave Miss Boltwood's Boston *Gazette*. The news is recent—but four days old—and of great moment. (*He opens the paper.*) The Provincial Congress at Lexington is adjourned. 'Tis said General Gage is resolved to crush the rebellion. (*Ladies show excitement.*) He has now in Boston four thousand disciplined men. I fear me there will be war, long and bloody, before our king is master once more.

MRS. C. Master! Never again in these colonies!

(*The ladies rise in indignation.*)

MRS. S. Our minutemen will match with any British soldiers!

MRS. A. We women can assist our men, if it comes to a war against injustice!

JUDGE (*laughing*). Ladies, ladies! Such ardent patriots, and yet drinking tea!

MRS. A. (*firmly*). If war is coming and our men must fight, I, too, can make some sacrifice. I will give up tea and all taxed articles.

MRS. S. And I!

MRS. C. I, too! Come, Miss Boltwood, join our league. It shall be named from your house where 'twas born, "The Boltwood Band." Come, now.

MISS B. Nay, I am no patriot.

ALL. Come, come; no denial.

(*They join hands and place hers in theirs.*)

MRS. C. This shall be our oath: "We swear to give up tea and all taxed articles till the war be over." Now, in unison.

ALL (*including Miss B.*). We swear to give up tea and all taxed articles till the war be over.

(*JUDGE looks on amused.*)

JUDGE (*rising*). Well, ladies, now that you are all committed to raspberry leaves and linsey-woolsey, I will go. (*There is the sound of a galloping horse, then excited voices of men. All rise and go to the window.*) 'Tis an express. Look you,

his horse is smoking! There must be news from Boston. I will go and learn it, then report to you. [Exit.

MRS. A. Oh, I pray there has been no bloodshed!

MRS. S. If blood has been shed, let us hope 'twas British!

(MANDY *rushes in from L., greatly excited. She looks over the shoulders of the ladies at the window.*)

MISS B. (*sharply*). Mandy! Get you to the kitchen!

[Exit MANDY, at L.

Enter JUDGE, at R. He looks very grave.

JUDGE. 'Tis as I feared. The rash minutemen have fired on the king's troops and war has begun. Day before yesterday there was a fight at Lexington and Concord —

MRS. S. Tell us, man! Who was victorious?

JUDGE. The rebels stood their ground, 'tis reported, and the king's troops retreated, but not because of defeat —

MRS. C. Did the Regulars retreat to Boston?

JUDGE. Yes, and I fear it was a rout at the last. Owing to the firing of the rebels from behind walls and trees, the British became panic-stricken.

MRS. S. (*excitedly*). Hurroo for our brave men! 'Tis glorious that they routed the trained troops!

MISS B. But why did the fighting begin out at Lexington, Stephen? 'Tis a good ten miles from Boston.

JUDGE. General Gage was hoping to destroy the ammunition at Concord. In some way his plan was learned, and Paul Revere, the goldsmith, rode all night warning the countryside. When the Regulars came, the minutemen were ready.

MRS. A. (*compassionately*). Did many men fall?

JUDGE. 'Tis reported a hundred minutemen and nearly three hundred of the king's troops.

MRS. S. Well, thanks for that! Each minuteman, it seems, convoyed three Britishers with him out of existence!

MRS. A. My dear Mrs. Strong! Feel you no pity?

JUDGE (*listening*). The Hartfield minutemen are summoned to assemble at once at Clapp's Tavern. Methinks I hear the drums.

MRS. C. I must needs return home with the news, Miss Boltwood. I thank you for a very elegant tea.

MISS B. As 'tis your last for the present, I am glad it pleased your taste.

MRS. S. (*rising*). Forget not your vow, ladies. 'Tis for our hostess to uphold the "Boltwood Band."

MISS B. I have passed my word, and shall keep it. I never break a promise. (*Ladies curtsey.*) Farewell, ladies. (*Exeunt MRS. C., MRS. A. and MRS. S.*) I fear me, Stephen, troublous times are before us, and there is a matter I would discuss with you. Should the war prove serious I may return to England. I would Betty were well settled, for she is over-impulsive and filled with romance. You are a Tory and will fare well when the patriots are punished, as they doubtless will be. Why should you not marry the child? 'Twould be a most excellent arrangement.

JUDGE. Marry Betty! Impossible! How can you suggest such a thing? The girl would not abide one old enough to be her father. Besides, there is an obstacle.

MISS B. An obstacle! Pray what?

JUDGE. Yourself, Lavinia. My heart is still yours though you cruelly condemn me to single living. I am ever hoping that you may reconsider your decision.

MISS B. Say no more, Stephen. I thought the old flame had died for lack of fuel. I like you well in friendship, but as I have declared, I will not be at the bidding of any man. I will not.

JUDGE (*sadly*). As you will, Lavinia. But if you consent not to my happiness, at least do not mar Betty's. She and young William Dickinson are lovers. He is a fine, upright youth. Let her marry where she will.

MISS B. (*horrified*). What? Betty philandering with William Dickinson! The sly minx! She shall never marry any Dickinson, however "upright" he be.

Enter MANDY at L., much excited, carrying carpet-bag and bundles.

MANDY. Oh, missy, missy! De Britishers is comin'! I'se all ready to run!

MISS B. Hush, stupid! They will not come here.

[*Exit MANDY, running from L. to R.*]

JUDGE (*moving toward door at R.*). Good-night, Lavinia. Is there never to be hope for me?

(*He takes her hand.*)

MISS B. (*positively*). Stephen Ingram, I have declared I will never marry, and I am not the sort to break my word.

(*Listens.*) List! There are the drums. Let us go view the minutemen. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter MANDY excitedly from L., with bundles. She runs to window and looks out. Then sees tea table with remains of the tea-drinking. She peers about to see if the coast is clear, then drinks tea left in the cups and teapot, eats cakes.

MANDY. Might as well eat dis 'fore de Britishers gets it.

Enter BETTY. MANDY jumps guiltily away from the table.

BETTY. Oh, Mandy! The minutemen are summoned. William must go. What if he should be shot—killed! (*She covers her face with her hands. The knocker sounds, MANDY answers it, R., and ushers in WILLIAM DICKINSON. BETTY runs to meet him. MANDY exits at L.*) William! William! I feared I should not see you before your leaving. Never did I dream that matters would come to war. 'Tis dreadful!

(*She weeps.*)

WILL. Nay, nay, Betty. 'Tis not dreadful, 'tis glorious to fight for our independence. Your tears are unseemly. Come, look up. I have brought you a keepsake. (*Takes a string of gold beads from his pocket. BETTY smiles through her tears.*) When last I was in Boston these confronted me in a goldsmith's window and straightway I had a vision of them about your fair neck. Let me see the reality.

(*He puts the beads around her neck and embraces her.*)

BETTY. I thank you, William. I will ever wear them hidden thus (*tucking them under her kerchief*) with thoughts of you when you are far away. Would that there were no need for you to go.

WILL. But there is need, and I go gladly if I go with your promise to wed me some time.

BETTY. But my aunt——

WILL. I know you have ever put me off because of your aunt's disrelish for my family. But now, dear Betty, give me this comfort as I leave. Do you not love me?

BETTY. Indeed I love you with all my heart, William, yet I cannot promise without aunt's consent. She has been father and mother to me since I was an infant child. 'Twould not be right.

WILL. (*impatiently*). You will not promise without her consent and you forbid me to ask it as she will of a surety say "No." Then it lies with you to obtain it by fair means or foul.

BETTY (*firmly*). William, I will do my best to obtain it even by craft.

Enter Miss B. unobserved. She listens.

WILL. Craft would be fair enough. She cannot appreciate true affection. A woman who has flouted one of the best men in the world and yet doth keep him dangling! Bah! If he were not a saint he would betake himself to another woman and be happy. Betty, I love you better than anything in life save honor, but I will not be put off like Judge Ingram. I swear that I will wed you e'en though a dozen frozen-hearted spinsters barred my way.

MISS B. Highty-tighty, young man! By what right do you embrace my niece?

(The lovers start apart.)

WILL. By the right of the great affection between her and me, madam. I duly crave your permission to marry her.

MISS B. (*coldly*). You are a Dickinson. That permission you will never have.

WILL. If there is naught against me save my name, I beg of you to reconsider your decision.

MISS B. (*positively*). Nay, my mind is made up on that point.

(Sound of drums.)

WILL. 'Tis the last call; I must go. Farewell, Betty. (*He gathers her in his arms before Miss B. can come between them.*) Miss Boltwood, I am resolved to wed your niece with your permission or—without it! [Exit.

(BETTY runs to the window.)

MISS B. Betty Boltwood, I am amazed that you should permit yourself to become interested in a Dickinson! I forbid you to receive this presumptuous young man again.

(BETTY begins to wave her handkerchief at the window. Her aunt snatches it from her hand. They both stand at the window watching the minutemen.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same. A fire is on the hearth, the cat by the fire. The window is open and the roses are seen climbing near the sill. It is an afternoon in June not long after the battle of Bunker Hill.*

(As the curtain rises, enter MISS B. She is in summer dress. She carries a reticule or bag. She goes to door at L.)

MISS B. Mandy!

MANDY *(appearing in door)*. Yes, missy.

MISS B. Fetch me the parcel of old linen. We roll bandages this afternoon for those wounded at Bunker Hill.

[Exit MANDY.]

(MISS B. sits down, takes the cat in her lap. She sighs.)

MANDY *(entering with a roll of linen in her hand)*. Here's de linen for de poor boys in Bos'on. Dis war am dreadful. All de mens gettin' killed and all de rest of us goin' widout tea! Isn't you hankerin' for jus' a leetle tea, missy?

MISS B. *(looking embarrassed)*. Why—why Oh, stop your chattering, Mandy!

(The knocker sounds. MANDY exits and returns with a letter.)

MANDY. De post left dis letter, missy.

(MISS B. opens letter, reads, looks thoughtful. MANDY gazes, all curiosity.)

MISS B. 'Tis from Judge Ingram at Boston.

MANDY. Glory! Glory! De Judge am fighting de Britishers!

MISS B. Stupid! You know the Judge is a Tory. I sent him to Boston to arrange my affairs in case I should return to England. He says *(taking up the letter)* that he is attending on young Dickinson who was badly wounded at Bunker Hill—

while bearing the colors at the head of his company. Humph! He doth not lack bravery, 'twould seem. The Judge requests me to send word to the young man's mother. Perchance neighbor Kellogg's boy would bear the message to Mrs. Dickinson. I will go and see.

(Exit Miss B., at R., leaving letter on the table. MANDY exits at L.)

Enter BETTY with knitting. Sits by the window which is open. She takes the cat and lifts it to the sill.

BETTY. Smell the roses, Salem. How sweet they be. You are a wise pussy; tell me if William has the rose and the letter I sent him some days since. The post is so tardy these days. *(Puts down cat; rises and goes to the mirror; pulls beads from their hiding-place under her kerchief; arranges them around her neck.)* 'Tis a pity I cannot wear William's keepsake openly. The beads become me well.

Enter MANDY and BETTY forgets to hide the beads. MANDY brings in the teakettle and hangs it on the crane.

MANDY. Oh, missy, missy! You' William Dickinson am shot!

(BETTY screams and falls back horror-struck, then seizes MANDY by the arm.)

BETTY. Not killed! Tell me instantly!

MANDY. He am mortally wounded but will recover. De Judge say so in dat letter. *(Points to letter on table. BETTY seizes letter and begins to read. MANDY is horrified that she should read her aunt's letter.)* Oh, missy, missy! You' aunt would scalp you did she catch you readin' her letter. She mos' awful 'ticular 'bout her letters.

BETTY *(with a cry)*. This letter has been on the way ten days! William may be dead for aught we know.

MANDY *(looking out the window)*. Lawsy, here's Missy Boltwood comin' now. She'll see you readin' her letter! Guess Mandy better be in de kitchen!

(MANDY runs out at L. BETTY drops down behind the high chair.)

Enter Miss B.; takes up letter again; reads it aloud thoughtfully.

MISS B. "The courage and patriotism of the men have so infected me that I am convinced at last. In fact I have already forsworn my allegiance to the king and have enlisted in the army of the patriots." (*She meditates ; takes cat in her lap as she still holds the letter.*) Stephen Ingram, you are a fool to change opinions at your time of life. And yet even I cannot but admire the devotion of the patriots to their cause; the cause, too, is a just one. I am minded to embrace it instead of being but an onlooker. (*She leans back wearily.*) Hum, hum. I feel the need of my tea. (*She goes to door at L. and listens, then to door at R. She takes a key from a hiding-place and unlocks the chimney cupboard, brings out a little teapot, caddy, cup and saucer. She makes herself a cup of tea with the water in the kettle and drinks the tea. BETTY watches her from her hiding-place, and MANDY also puts in her head and sees with amazement. Her eyes pop out. When MISS B. rises to put the things away, MANDY hastily withdraws and BETTY hides again.*) There, Salem, I feel better for my Bohea, but what a scandal 'twould make did the "Boltwood Band" know of my daily deceit. But you are my only confidant, Salem, and I know I can trust your discretion. (*She rises ; takes reticule preparing to go out. Steps toward L. MANDY can be heard falling backward and exclaiming "Oh, lawsy!"*) Mandy!

MANDY. Yes, missy.

MISS B. Come now into the garden and pick all the roses that are overblown. To-morrow I make the rose conserve. I will show you the blossoms I have in mind.

MANDY. Yes, Missy Boltwood.

(*They exeunt at R. As soon as they are gone BETTY comes from her hiding-place. She takes the key and unlocks the cupboard, smells of the teapot and says "Tea!" Then she locks the cupboard again and is about to steal out at R. when MISS B. reënters at R. She looks sharply at BETTY and perceives the beads.*)

MISS B. Betty, where got you those beads?

BETTY (*confused and trying to conceal them*). What—what beads, aunt?

MISS B. Do not attempt deceit with me. You know well what I mean. The gold beads about your neck; who gave you them?

BETTY (*with courage*). They are a keepsake from William Dickinson. I pray you, aunt, be not displeased.

MISS B. (*sharply*). Give them to me. 'Tis not seemly for maidens to receive trinkets from young men. Come, undo them.

BETTY. Nay, aunt, I will not. I promised to wear them always and I will not take them off, e'en at your command.

MISS B. Well, then, I will take them off for you. (MISS B. *unclasps the beads after some resistance on BETTY's part. They fall to the floor. BETTY snatches them up and throws them out of the window. She and her aunt gaze at each other defiantly. Miss B. goes to the window.*) Mandy, quick, bring me the beads that Miss Betty threw from the window just now.

MANDY (*heard from outside*). Yes, missy.

MISS B. (*angrily*). Your conduct is disgraceful, miss. Know you not 'tis wicked to disobey and flout your elders? From this moment I forbid you to ever see or communicate with this Dickinson again. I shall restore him the beads, and when I journey to England, you will accompany me. Do you hear? Now go to your chamber and meditate on your misconduct.

BETTY. Nay, aunt, I will not give William up; I love him. You may be cruel and dangle your lover for a lifetime, but I will marry mine, and you shall grant me your permission.

MISS B. I grant my permission! Never! I do not break my word, miss.

BETTY (*scornfully*). Ah, do you not? Who, pray, has been drinking tea daily while pretending to deny herself? I beheld you with my own eyes take your little teapot from the locked cupboard! 'Twould make a pretty story did I tell it. And I warn you, if you do not grant your permission to William and me, I will publish the secret tea-drinking. The town shall ring with it!

Enter MANDY.

MANDY. Can't fin' no gol' beads, missy, nowhere.

MISS B. Stupid! Did you search under the window?

MANDY. Poor ol' Mandy crawl all ober de groun'. No beads dere.

MISS B. (*suspiciously*). Methinks you may admire those beads. Unroll your turban.

MANDY. 'Fore de Lawd, missy, don' 'spicion Mandy o' dem beads. I isn't got dem.

(MISS B. *looks in MANDY's turban. She takes out strange*

things including a clay pipe. She also searches MANDY'S pockets and her dress hem. No beads. Miss B. is angry.)

MISS B. If you have thieved those beads, naught can save you from the whipping-post, hussy. I will search the garden myself. [Exit.

BETTY (*confidentially*). Come, Mandy. Tell me where my beads—tell me where my beads are.

MANDY (*excitedly*). May de debbil carry me off, Miss Betty, if I ain't tellin' you de trufe. I don' know where dose beads is. But I 'vises you to watch you' aunt in de garden. If she finds dem——

BETTY. True. I will be there to see. [Exit.

(MANDY wanders about the room in some excitement. She does a song and dance; anything appropriate to the period. Suddenly an idea strikes her. She goes to the hiding-place of the key, unlocks the cupboard, takes out the teapot and makes tea, drinks it with an exaggerated imitation of her mistress' manner, looking about nervously all the time.)

MANDY. Dat am de stuff, sure. Missy drink tea, Mandy drink tea too. No one see me 'cept dat black witch-cat! He can't tell. (*Sound of the knocker.*) Lawsy! Some one's at de door! (*She grabs the tea things and slams them into the cupboard, locks it and hides the key. She then exits at R. She returns with MRS. S. and MRS. C.*) Please seat you'selves, ladies, while I tells Missy Boltwood you is here. [Exit at R.

MRS. C. 'Tis best that friends should break her the unhappy news, not any chance comer. Think you not so?

MRS. S. Truly. A privilege of friendship is to report the disagreeable. I wonder how she will relish such tidings? Stephen Ingram was always a near friend to her, though 'twould take a Solomon to tell whether she cared aught for him.

Enter Miss B.

MISS B. Good-afternoon, neighbors.

MRS. C. } (*together*). Good-afternoon, Miss Boltwood.
MRS. S. }

MRS. C. We trust we see you well and—and—of good fortitude. Mayhap you will need it.

MRS. S. (*eagerly*). Prepare yourself for sad news; very sad news, my dear Miss Boltwood. Judge Ingram—you are aware that he but lately joined our army.

MISS B. I pray you go on!

MRS. C. The report has but now come that he has been discovered in communication with the British.

MRS. S. And that he has been arrested and will be executed as a spy!

MISS B. (*incredulously*). Stephen Ingram a spy! Impossible! It is not true.

MRS. C. His conversion to patriotism was very sudden, my dear Miss Boltwood, and all know his Tory beliefs.

MRS. S. You have our deepest sympathy in that an old, and, mayhap, a dear friend has proved unworthy. True, he was a kind, agreeable man, but he was far too easily influenced, as you well know yourself.

MISS B. (*rising in indignation*). Ladies, I will not hear Stephen Ingram traduced. I care not what reports are rife; I know the man. He would never do aught dishonorable. He may be of a yielding disposition, but his principles are adamant!

Enter BETTY. She looks in surprise at her aunt and guests.

MRS. S. (*maliciously*). Miss Betty, your aunt is deeply concerned over the downfall of Judge Ingram. The whole town is buzzing with the news. It seems the Judge joined the patriot army but to furnish information to the British. He has been discovered and is to be executed as a spy!

(*BETTY springs to her aunt's side and puts her arms around her.*)

BETTY. Dear aunt, 'tis a false charge—I know it. They would not execute an innocent man.

(*MISS B. sinks into a chair as if about to faint. BETTY runs and gets wine. MRS. C. rushes to the fireplace, seizes a turkey wing and burns it, then holds it under Miss B.'s nose. She waves aside wine and feathers.*)

MRS. C. Burnt feathers are so reviving!

MISS B. (*recovering*). I want no wine, or sympathy, so called. If my best friend is unjustly accused, I will journey to Boston and see him righted. Methinks I have some influence on both sides of this quarrel.

(*MRS. S. and MRS. C. look at one another.*)

MRS. C. (*aside*). 'Tis best to go now. Miss Boltwood, pray call on us if we can be of any assistance.

MRS. S. (*spitefully*). Mayhap you would prefer solitude for the recovery of your equanimity.

[*Exeunt* MRS. S. and MRS. C.]

BETTY. Pray, aunt, let us go immediately to Boston. Every minute may be precious.

MISS B. Betty, I am deeply grateful for your belief in Judge Ingram.

Enter MANDY with MRS. A. MANDY carries a basket into which she has been picking the roses. She looks curiously at MISS B., as she observes her agitation. MRS. A. takes MISS B.'s hand affectionately.

MRS. A. My dear friend, I have just heard the news concerning Judge Ingram. Surely there is some awful misapprehension. No one who knows him could, for a minute, believe him a spy for the British.

MISS B. (*still holding* MRS. A.'s hand). I thank you for those words. There is some grave mistake. For fear that he may—may be executed before others can clear him—— (*Turns to* MANDY, *who stands with open mouth, and speaks sharply.*) Mandy! Run to Clapp's Tavern and reserve two seats on the Boston coach to-night. Here, pay for them with this guinea.

(*Gives* MANDY gold from her side pocket. MANDY exits in haste.)

MRS. A. Take my prayers and my good wishes with you, Miss Boltwood. If I can be of service in any way, pray let me know.

[*Exit.*]

MISS B. Come, Betty, let us make haste to prepare for the journey.

[*Exeunt.*]

(*For a moment the stage is empty. There is the sound of a knocker. No one responds. The knocker sounds again. After a time* JUDGE, *in the uniform of a minuteman, enters supporting* WILL., *who has his arm in a sling.*)

JUDGE. There seems to be no one at home, William, but you must rest before going on to your own house. Mayhap the ladies will return soon.

WILL. (*sinking back wearily in the great chair; he is white and weak*). 'Twas most kind of you, sir, to bring me home.

I do not think I could have journeyed so far unaided. Yet you are needed in the army.

JUDGE. I shall return immediately. (*Enter MANDY in haste.*) Ah, here is the wench. How are your mistresses, Mandy?

(*MANDY falls back amazed and gazes at JUDGE with rolling eyes. She slowly backs into a corner and does not take her eyes from him.*)

MANDY. Is you a ghos', sir? I heard de ladies say you was executioned. Please, Mr. Ghos' —

JUDGE (*laughing*). Nonsense, Mandy. I am true flesh and blood. How fares Miss Boltwood?

WILL. How is Miss Betty?

MANDY. Dey is all well, sir. Dat is, dey is feelin' awful bad dat you is executioned. On dat account dey is startin' on de coach to-night for Bos'on, sir.

WILL. What does she mean?

JUDGE. Executed! What tale is this?

MANDY. De tale dat you is executioned as a spy, sir, for de Britishers. Missy Boltwood she say dat am a lie, an' she goin' to save you, sir.

JUDGE. Bless her for her faith in me.

WILL. And does Miss Boltwood—er—er—is she still disapproving of me?

MANDY (*cheerfully*). Oh, yes, sir. She powerful mad when she see dem beads on Miss Betty's neck. And when she frowed dem out de window —

WILL. Who? Not Miss Betty?

MANDY. Oh, yes, sir. She got mad, too, an' frowed de lovely beads out de window. We ain't never found dem, neider, sir.

(*WILL. looks much cast down.*)

Enter MISS B. and BETTY with handboxes and bags. They wear bonnets. They stare dumbfounded at the JUDGE and WILL.

MISS B. (*going to JUDGE at L.*). Stephen Ingram, thank God!

(*They clasp hands.*)

BETTY (*flying to the side of WILL.*). Oh, William! (*He tries to rise, but sinks back.*) Your wound, how fares it?

(She hangs over him and MANDY brings pillows.)

JUDGE (*laughing*). Do I look like a man about to be executed, Lavinia? Mandy has told us of the false report.

MISS B. 'Twas false! I knew it! But how—why——

JUDGE. Another Ingram, but not from Hartfield, was the spy. He has met his punishment ere this, poor fellow.

BETTY. Aunt Lavinia, William craves the fresh air. May we go into the garden?

MISS B. (*absently*). Yes, child.

[*Exit WILL., leaning on BETTY, at R.*]

JUDGE. Lavinia, I could not be a traitor to the patriot cause, for I am with it heart and soul. Your example did help to win me over.

MISS B. Mine? How so?

JUDGE. When you practiced such self-denial and gave up your tea. (*Playfully.*) I knew you were wedded to it.

MISS B. (*humbly*). Oh, Stephen, you shame me. I did not keep my vow. I confess I have been drinking tea in secret. The habit was too strong for me. But now your patriotism has kindled mine. I, too, adopt the patriot cause. To it I will give myself and all I have, even my tea! Look! I break the pot in token that I break the habit.

(She takes the teapot from the cupboard and is about to shatter it on the hearth when MANDY springs forward.)

MANDY. Oh, missy, don' smash de little teapot! Give it to old Mandy.

(She holds out her hands for it. MISS B. puts the pot into them. MANDY clasps it to her breast.)

MISS B. Well, take it and get you to the kitchen. You can brew naught but "Liberty Tea" in it now.

(MANDY starts to go but is loath to lose any of the conversation, so lingers by the door at L.)

JUDGE. Lavinia, it rejoices me that you so heartily embrace the glorious cause of independence. 'Tis noble——

MISS B. Say not so, Stephen. You must, in your heart, despise me for my weakness.

JUDGE. Despise you! I could not. Come, tell me. Were you about to journey to Boston in my behalf?

MISS B. Yes, I had so purposed. I would have wrested you from prison and execution, if need be!

JUDGE. What a friend you are, Lavinia!

MISS B. (*looking at him tenderly*). I have but now learned your worth to me, Stephen.

JUDGE. And I yours. Our friendship shall endure while life lasts. 'Tis above passion.

MISS B. (*faintly*). Yes, Stephen.

JUDGE. I see now how exalted is our relation. 'Tis an ideal.

MISS B. (*downcast*). True, 'tis an ideal—but——

JUDGE (*enthusiastically*). Dear Lavinia, you have shown me how earthly are mere love and marriage compared to this mating of our souls. Never again will I annoy you with words of love. Such friendship is all I ask!

MISS B. (*amazed, then indignant*). Stephen, I care not for your friendship!

JUDGE (*surprised*). What mean you, Lavinia?

MISS B. (*embarrassed, yet courageous*). I mean that I know—now—that I—I—love you, Stephen.

JUDGE (*joyfully*). Can it be that you are willing to wed me?

(*He comes nearer and looks tenderly at her.*)

MISS B. Yes, Stephen.

(*He takes her in his arms. MANDY looks interested, then glad. At this point she exclaims.*)

MANDY. Hurroo!

MISS B. (*sharply, turning about toward MANDY*). Mandy, why are you still here? Go into the garden and finish the rose gathering.

MANDY. Yes, missy.

(*She takes basket and exits at L., still clasping the teapot to her breast.*)

Enter BETTY and WILL. at R.

JUDGE (*looking at BETTY and WILL.*). Lavinia, I pray you permit the young people to be as happy as we are. Will you not?

MISS B. I will, at your bidding, Stephen. (*She goes toward them.*) Betty!

BETTY. Yes, aunt.

Enter MANDY excitedly, holding up the beads. She still clasps the teapot.

MANDY. Here's de gol' beads, missy. Mandy found dem hangin' on de rose-bush.

(She gives the beads to Miss B.)

MISS B. Good Mandy. You shall be rewarded. Here, Betty, take your beads. I give William permission to put them about your neck with my blessing.

BETTY (*joyfully*). Oh, thank you, aunt.

(She gives the beads to WILL.)

WILL. I am deeply grateful, Aunt Lavinia.

(He clasps the beads about BETTY'S neck and kisses her. The JUDGE and MISS B. stand hand-in-hand beaming at them. MANDY gazes joyfully also, still clasping the teapot. She turns suddenly to the cupboard which MISS B. had left open, and seizes the tea-caddy. With this in one hand and the pot in the other, she cries.)

MANDY. Glory! Glory! Dey has love and I has tea!

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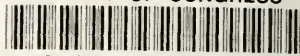
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