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*Cinderella  
of the Storm*

by  
*Maud Fulton &  
Louis Weslyn*

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*CINDERELLA OF THE STORM*



# CINDERELLA OF THE STORM

*A Comedy-Drama in Three Acts*

By

MAUDE FULTON and LOUIS WESLYN



CHICAGO  
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY  
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# CINDERELLA OF THE STORM

FOR THREE MEN AND FIVE WOMEN

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## CHARACTERS

*(In order of their first appearance)*

ENID FOWNES.....	<i>Oliver's sister</i>
MRS. HELEN QUAYLE.....	<i>Oliver's elderly cousin</i>
LESLIE QUAYLE.....	<i>Mrs. Quayle's daughter</i>
TILDEN DERRY.....	<i>Leslie's fiancé</i>
EVELYN HEMPSTEAD .....	<i>Enid's friend</i>
HARRY FOWNES.....	<i>Enid's husband</i>
OLIVER THEOPHILUS KEANE, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.A.S.. .....	<i>Devoted to science</i>
MAY JESSAMINE RICKETTS (RICKY) .....	<i>Maid in Enid's home</i>

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TIME—*Early autumn.*

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PLACE—*The neighborhood of the Park Country Club.*

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TIME OF PLAYING—*About two and a quarter hours.*

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## SYNOPSIS OF ACTS

ACT I. Drawing room of the Fownes country place. A night in autumn.

ACT II. Living room of Oliver's house on the hill. Dawn of the following morning.

ACT III. Same as in Act II, a moment later. No intermission between Acts II and III.

## COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

ENID—Aged about twenty-five. She is nervous and petulant. Her husband keeps her constantly worried by his drinking. She is alternately weepy and dignified. Throughout the play, she wears a modish evening gown, over which she wraps a man's raincoat during Act II.

MRS. QUAYLE—Aged about forty-five. She is a snobbish society woman with a decided superiority complex. She is the kind that would consider it lowering to her dignity to say, "please" or "thank you" to a servant; an egotistical, querulous woman. Throughout the play, wears an elaborate evening gown. In Act II, she is wrapped in shawls.

LESLIE—Aged nineteen, though her mother passes her as fifteen. Apparently a demure, unsophisticated child. She is sweet and lovable until she shows her deceitful nature, proving herself a contemptible little rotter. Throughout the play, she is daintily dressed in a modish evening gown, over which a shabby bathrobe is worn in Act II.

DERRY—Aged about thirty, though boyish and sprightly. He is devoted to Leslie, to whom he is engaged. Wears evening clothes throughout the play.

EVELYN—Typical vamp type, aged about twenty-six. She plays up the characteristics of the type for nothing else than to keep up her courage, for she has long ago found the mistake she made early in life and is weary of the whole game. She is sophisticated, poised, and clever, but her cynicism is largely a pose. Throughout the play, she wears a smart evening gown, with diamond bracelet and a few other jewels, donning a sports coat for Act II.



HARRY—A typical society rounder, aged about thirty. He is perpetually under the influence of liquor. The part should not be over-played. In Act I, wears evening dress, coat, and top hat. At end of Act I, changes to pajamas, and is assisted into an overcoat. In Acts II and III, he still wears pajamas and overcoat.

OLIVER—A tall young man of about twenty-eight. He is a serious student of astronomy, timid, reticent, and absent-minded. Silence has become a habit with him. The hair at the sides of his head is prematurely gray, and his horn-rimmed spectacles give him an owlish appearance. In Act I, wears evening clothes, coat, and top hat. In Acts II and III, exchanges evening coat for an old smoking jacket, discarding hat and retaining rest of costume of Act I.

RICKY—Aged about seventeen. A quaint and charming personality buried under the handicaps of hard work and loneliness; more numbed than dumb. She is not afraid to speak her mind when she feels it is necessary, but usually she is too tired to care. In Act I she wears a simple, old-fashioned dress, buttoning up the back but worn hind side to, with white cotton stockings and worn black shoes, and a queer, though dainty little hat. At her first entrance in Act II, the hat is discarded and she dons a man's velveteen hunting jacket and man's shoes too large for her. Toward end of act, she changes to a plain white dress, clumsily made to resemble a robe, also white shoes. In Act III, wears same costume, soon changing back to dress of Act I, and donning same hat for her last entrance.

## PROPERTIES

## ACT I

- Grand piano with bench
- Two sets of glass-enclosed bookshelves
- Writing desk and chair
- Divan
- Two armchairs
- Four straight-backed chairs
- Footstool
- Stone fireplace with mantelshelf
- Logs and red electric bulbs for fire
- Card table
- Telephone
- Box of poker chips in desk drawer
- Cushions for divan and window seat
- Ornaments for mantel
- Table lamp
- Two floor lamps
- Electrolier
- Box of candy
- Playing cards on table
- Pencil and score pad
- Workbag containing knitting
- Book resembling a textbook
- Several coats and sweaters in closet under stairs
- Silk drapes for window
- Scarf for piano
- Two large rugs
- Several small, bright-colored rugs
- Thunder sheet, wind machine, and rain box for storm off stage
- Auto horn to honk off stage

## ACTS II AND III

Large, rather shabby library table

Couch

Armchair

Rocking-chair

Three straight-backed chairs

Footstool

Fireplace

Logs and red electric bulbs for fire

Clock on mantelpiece

Traveling case containing hair brush

Rugs

Pictures

Window shade and curtains

Study lamp with green shade

Books, papers, and memoranda of various sorts  
on table

Cigarette case

Pipe, tobacco, and matches

Cushions for couch

Bell to ring for clock, off stage

Blue cluster lights off stage over window, for  
dawn effect

Amber cluster lights off stage, for sunrise effect

For ENID—Wrist watch; slice of bread and butter; cracked cup filled with tea.

For LESLIE—Diamond engagement ring.

For DERRY—Tray with glass supposed to contain a high-ball; cigarettes in case, and matches.

For EVELYN—Book; diamond bracelet.

For HARRY—Tray with glasses and bottles; pitcher of water.

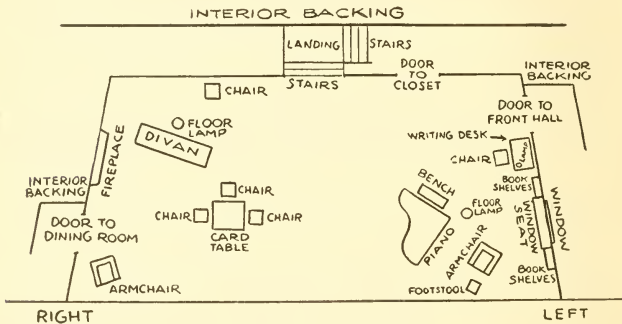
For OLIVER—Piece of note paper and pencil in

pocket; armful of firewood; watch; handkerchief; horn-rimmed spectacles; gold ring.

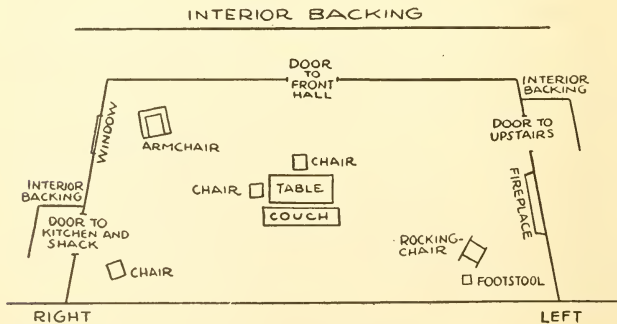
For RICKY—Two hatboxes; several large bundles; white poodle on a leash; broom; mop; scrub bucket; cup of tea on a saucer; complete coffee set including two cups and saucers, on a tray; coffeepot filled with coffee; white dress and white shoes rolled into a bundle.

## SCENE PLOT

### ACT I



### ACTS II AND III



## STAGE DIRECTIONS

*Up stage* means away from footlights; *down stage*, near footlights. In the use of *right* and *left*, the actor is supposed to be facing the audience.



# CINDERELLA OF THE STORM

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## FIRST ACT

SCENE: *Drawing room in the Fownes' country home. It has four doors: one to the front hall up left, a second into the dining room down right, a third in the shape of a flight of stairs with a landing, up center, leading upstairs, and a door up center left leading into a closet under the stairs. A large recessed window is in left wall a little down center, with a window seat underneath it piled with cushions. The room is luxuriously furnished. On each side of the window are shelves of books behind glass doors, and up left near the hall door is a writing desk, on which are a telephone and writing materials. A chair is beside the desk. A box of poker chips is in its drawer. Down left, well out from the wall, stands a grand piano with its bench, and between the piano and the wall is an upholstered armchair with a footstool in front of it. Against the wall at center right is a rough stone fireplace with mantelshelf and suitable ornaments, and drawn up in front of it half facing the audience is a large divan with cushions. On the hearth a fire is burning (red electric bulbs under stationary log). Near the divan down right is a card table, with three chairs drawn up around it: one at right, another at left, and a third behind it facing the audience. A similar straight-backed chair is up right near the stairs. An upholstered*

armchair is down extreme right. Handsome rugs are on the floor, pictures are on the walls, a fancy scarf is draped over the back of the piano, rich silk drapes frame the window, and two or three bright-colored rugs hang on the railing of the stair landing up center. In the closet under the stairs are a number of sweaters and coats hanging on hooks. A box of candy is lying among the cushions of the divan. The room is lighted by a central electrolier, a table lamp on the writing desk, and two floor lamps—one at left of piano and one up right behind divan. All are lighted except the desk lamp. The chairs are pushed a little back from the card table, which is littered by a jumble of playing cards. On the table also are a score pad, pencil, a book, and MRS. QUAYLE'S work-bag containing her knitting, with ball and needles. It is almost midnight of a stormy night in autumn.

At rise of curtain, the stage is unoccupied. After a short pause, ENID enters at center in evening dress. Coming downstairs, she crosses to up left, sits at the writing desk, and takes down the telephone receiver.

ENID.

(Speaking crossly into mouthpiece.)

Center 7999. (Pauses.) Hello! Country Club? (Pauses.) This is Mrs. Fownes. Will you page Mr. Fownes for me, please? I'll wait. (She taps her foot and bites her lip impatiently as she waits.) He just left? Thank you. Is there much alarm out there over this end-of-the-world scare? (Pauses.) I say, is there much alarm over to-morrow? (Pauses.) Yes; it is silly; isn't it? Good-bye!

As ENID hangs up receiver, MRS. QUAYLE enters, left.



MRS. QUAYLE.  
(*Very sweetly.*)

And has our dear Harry arrived as yet?

ENID.  
(*Crossly.*)

No! He is not at the club. I don't know where he is.

MRS. QUAYLE.

There is no virtue as beautiful as patience, Enid. You must learn to be patient with Harry and to remember that he is young and full of spirits.

ENID.

Of course he is. That is why he didn't come home for dinner.

MRS. QUAYLE.

Do you mean to say that he indulges in intoxicants?

ENID.

He swims in the stuff—plain stroke, Australian crawl, and fancy diving. And he can stay under for hours.

MRS. QUAYLE.

But where does he obtain it these days?

ENID.

I don't know, and I don't care.

MRS. QUAYLE.

Oh, oh! Such a sweet boy!

ENID.

He is nothing of the kind! He's a drunkard and

a rounder, and if men hadn't been scarce the year I came out, you may be sure I'd never have chased around after him with a net. (*Throws herself petulantly on the divan.*) I hate all of them—the beasts! They haven't a thought beyond the filling of their stomachs. (*Selects a bonbon from the candy box lying on the divan and eats it.*) If I had my way, I'd wipe every one of them from the face of the earth, and should there be anything in this to-morrow business, I hope that is just what happens to them. Serve them jolly well right!

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Remonstrating gently.*)

Who would pay your bills then?

ENID.

I wouldn't have any. Don't you see? If all the men were done away with, there would be no more silly bookkeeping going on in the shops, and I'd buy what I pleased.

MRS. QUAYLE.

What with?

ENID.

Good heavens, Helen! You are as bad as Oliver. (*Turns her back on MRS. QUAYLE.*)

(*MRS. QUAYLE takes her workbag from the card table and seating herself on divan beside ENID, gets knitting from bag and begins to work.*)

MRS. QUAYLE.

There is one word in the English language that does not fit Oliver, Enid, and that word is "bad."

ENID.

*(Sighing.)*

It's rather a pity; isn't it? He would be so much more interesting. As it is, he bores me to extinction with his everlasting figures about stars and moons and suns and all that rot! My word! The gas and electric bills are bother enough.

MRS. QUAYLE.

I am extremely fond of Oliver, yet I remember that he was never particularly bright; and I fail to understand why and how he managed to go through one university after another and win degrees in all of them.

*(A faint rumble of thunder is heard.)*

ENID.

*(Rising agitatedly.)*

There it is!

MRS. QUAYLE.

What?

ENID.

The storm! The newspapers predicted a storm at midnight and then the end of the world at six o'clock to-morrow morning. Some old fool of a scientist claims that a planet has got loose and is kicking up no end of a row. How annoying!

MRS. QUAYLE.

My own life is perfectly blameless, but it might be in good taste to offer up a few short prayers.

ENID.

Don't be absurd! The telephone operator of the

Park Club assured me that there was not the slightest danger.

MRS. QUAYLE.

Shall we get hold of Oliver and make sure?

ENID.

What could Oliver do but poke a stupid telescope at the thing? For myself, I shall ignore it utterly. (*She crosses to window, up right. There is another rumble of thunder slightly louder than the first.*) Evelyn will adore this. She loves bizarre things.

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Sweetly.*)

I do not like to criticize your guests, Enid. You know how broad-minded I am. But Evelyn Hempstead is fast becoming impossible. This house seems to be the only social refuge she has left, and if you do not wish to be classed with her you should not invite her.

ENID.

I didn't.

MRS. QUAYLE.

Oh, oh! How forward of her!

(*A patter of rain is heard on the roof. ENID turns an anxious face to MRS. QUAYLE.*)

ENID.

Do you suppose that crazy old astronomer could possibly be right? It is midnight, or nearly so, and here is his ridiculous storm just as he said! (MRS. QUAYLE puts her knitting on table and rising, joins ENID at the window. A flash of lightning causes her

*to dodge back hastily.*) You see! Even you are afraid.

MRS. QUAYLE.

The pure of heart need fear nothing, but there are two things I never fancied: boiled cabbage and lightning. (*She returns to the fireplace and reseats herself.*)

LESLIE and DERRY enter at right.

DERRY.

(*Cheerfully.*)

The river is rising.

ENID.

(*Alarmed.*)

That frightens me more than the storm does.

DERRY.

Why? (*Goes up to fireplace with LESLIE.*)

ENID.

We are quite low here, not quite two feet above the water level, and if the river rises it won't be safe to stay. I do wish Harry would come.

DERRY.

I don't believe Harry has any more influence with the river than we have.

ENID.

Suppose we should be flooded out? Swept away? Had we better start making rafts and things?

DERRY.

If we have to swim for shore, I can manage you one at a time while Harry saves the wine cellar.

ENID.

*(Beginning to sniffle.)*

You can be sure he wouldn't think of me or my poor little dog! He'll pay no attention to us. He never does. Even when he is home, he spends every moment he has down in the cellar puttering around some horrid old contrivance that gives out a perfectly atrocious smell.

DERRY.

*(Laughing heartily.)*

By Jove! I'll bet a dollar it's a still.

ENID.

*(Startled.)*

What! I am going right downstairs this instant and find out if that is what he is doing.

LESLIE.

How can you tell, Enid?

ENID.

*(Weakly.)*

I don't know. Besides, he keeps the door locked. *(She bursts into tears.)* Wretch!

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Smoothly.)*

Now, now, Enid! Have you forgotten so quickly what I told you about having patience? Harry is your husband. You must overlook this boyish prank of his. His nature was ever a playful one.

ENID.

*(Weeping.)*

Playful, indeed! He does everything he can to make me miserable. He conceals everything from

me! Everything! His actions, his thoughts, all the little sacred things a husband and wife should share. And this is the last straw. He makes whisky, and he doesn't even show me how! (*She turns up center.*) I shall be down directly when I have conquered this headache. I can stand just so much and then— (*Her voice breaks, and with a sob she goes on up the stairway and exit upstairs.*)

DERRY.

Poor old kid! She has had a hell of a life with Harry.

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Shocked.*)

My dear boy! (*Rises and goes up center to stairs.*)

DERRY.

(*Remorsefully.*)

I'm sorry.

MRS. QUAYLE goes up the stairway, passing EVELYN, who is on her way down. EVELYN is humming a gay French song. MRS. QUAYLE glares at her, and draws aside. EVELYN smiles her sweetest, but when MRS. QUAYLE turns her back and disappears upstairs, she makes a little grimace, shrugs, and comes jauntily down to the fireplace. LESLIE and DERRY, who have been holding hands, unclasp fingers at her approach.

EVELYN.

(*Airily.*)

Got a cigarette, Tilly?

(DERRY takes cigarette case from his pocket and

*offers it to her. She takes a cigarette, and he lights it for her.)*

DERRY.

Where do you want to sit—or do you?

EVELYN.

I don't. I prefer corns to a large waist. If you knew what we vampires have to suffer!

LESLIE.

*(Sweetly, to EVELYN.)*

I thought vampires were such dreadful people, and you seem rather nice.

EVELYN.

Thank you! As a matter of fact, I am not nice at all. I smoke, gamble, paint, and flirt. No home is completely broken up without me. Ask Till.

LESLIE.

*(Turning to DERRY suspiciously.)*

Has she been after you, too?

*(Both EVELYN and DERRY laugh heartily.)*

EVELYN.

*(Cheerfully.)*

Bless your heart, no! I have no charms for Till! You see, he knows me. Till, if you will insist on standing up, get me a drink.

DERRY.

Sure thing! What kind?

EVELYN.

Any kind that's deadly. And put lots of fun into it.



DERRY.

*(Crosses up to right door and turns in doorway, addressing LESLIE.)*

You won't mind, honey, if I have one, too?

LESLIE.

*(Brightening.)*

And I'll have one!

DERRY.

*(Hesitatingly.)*

Let's wait awhile. Shall we? I'm not really thirsty. *(Exit at right.)*

EVELYN.

How stupid it is to be in love! I suppose you are?

LESLIE.

Oh, yes, very much. Till adores me. *(Sits on divan.)*

EVELYN.

And you? Are you in love?

LESLIE.

*(Demurely.)*

I suppose so, although I'm too young to know a great deal about it. Mamma is so strict with me that I might as well be in a convent. Isn't Till a dear?

EVELYN.

*(Slouching into chair back of card table, half facing fireplace.)*

Uh-huh! *(Meaning "yes.")*

LESLIE.

And so good-looking!

EVELYN.  
(*Yawning.*)

Isn't he?

LESLIE.  
(*Sharply.*)

I hope I'm not boring you.

EVELYN.  
(*Laughing.*)

Certainly you are. It's just my luck to have to listen, hour after hour, to newly engaged couples, and of course you're that.

LESLIE.  
(*Puzzled.*)

What?

EVELYN.  
I say, of course you're engaged.

LESLIE.  
(*Demurely.*)

Yes! How did you know?

EVELYN.  
I didn't until you told me.

LESLIE.  
(*Admiringly.*)

How clever you are! Mamma doesn't like you in the least, but I do. I really do.

EVELYN.  
(*Laughing.*)

Don't say that in front of Till. He doesn't approve of me any more than the *Leviathan* does.

LESLIE.

The what?

EVELYN.

(*Carelessly.*)

That's what I've named your mother. Nice old party, though.

LESLIE.

(*Giggling.*)

You are terrible! If mamma ever heard you call her the *Leviathan*, she'd promptly kill you.

EVELYN.

(*Rising.*)

She couldn't hurt me. Nobody can. (*Comes to window at left.*)

LESLIE.

I can't endure the thought of to-morrow and the world coming to an end, because I've just got the sweetest gown from Lucille's. All full of tiny rose-buds, and perfectly darling on me! I mean to wear it Tuesday if we're not dead.

EVELYN.

No such luck.

LESLIE.

You say that because your life is practically through. (*EVELYN looks at her sharply.*) But I'm young! I'm only nineteen, and you must be at least thirty.

EVELYN.

(*Sighing.*)

Yes. I'm failing fast.

*Enter DERRY at right, with a high-ball on a tray. As he goes up to fireplace, a slight patter of rain is heard.*

EVELYN.

It looks as if we might have rather a wet Judgment Day. How disgusting! I shall have to marcel my hair again.

LESLIE.

Let Ricky do it.

EVELYN.

One maid to four women. Can you imagine it, Till? (*Comes to fireplace and takes glass from tray, which DERRY deposits on the mantel.*) Poor little devil!

LESLIE.

She's frightfully stupid, and so slow about helping me dress that I could scream sometimes.

EVELYN.

Perhaps she could, too. (*She raises her glass.*) *Bonheur, mes enfants!* (*Drinks with relish.*)

DERRY.

Strong enough?

EVELYN.

Heavenly!

LESLIE.

(*Enviously.*)

I don't see why I'm not allowed any fun!

DERRY.

Honey, it isn't good for little girls.

LESLIE.

I'm sick of being held down and forbidden to do things, and when I'm married I shall do as I please, so I shall.

DERRY.

*(Soberly.)*

But you wouldn't deliberately go against my wishes; would you? I'm older and I know what is best for you. Won't you take my word for it?

LESLIE.

*(Lisping.)*

Of course, silly!

*(He picks up her hand and kisses it affectionately.)*

EVELYN.

*(Casually, to the pair.)*

Would you rather I vanished into thin air?

LESLIE.

Oh, don't go! You are so amusing!

*(There is a rumble of thunder as the storm grows.)*

DERRY.

Poor old Harry will be soaked!

EVELYN.

If you must bring up unpleasant subjects, do try to present them in a new light. I loathe bromides.

LESLIE.

*(Giggling.)*

I saw some on your dressing table only to-day.

EVELYN.

(*Carelessly.*)

I hope you didn't sample them, dearie. There was just enough left for another night's sleep.

DERRY.

Aren't you going it a bit heavy, old girl?

EVELYN.

(*Plaintively.*)

I'm doing my best, but a fast reputation is so hard to live up to, once you've got it safely established! Being just bad doesn't get you anywhere socially. You've got to be entertainingly bad; and you have no idea what technique it requires.

LESLIE.

(*Delightedly.*)

Till! Isn't she delicious?

DERRY.

(*Disapprovingly.*)

That is hardly the thing to say, Eve, before a young girl.

EVELYN.

She must learn values *some* time. Mayn't I be the terrible example? Who knows but what I shall eventually commit suicide in a perfectly fascinating manner and point the moral?

DERRY.

(*Gravely.*)

Am I supposed to laugh at that?

EVELYN.

(*In a gale of laughter.*)

My dear Till! You are so gorgeously serious!

Why not laugh? Isn't life one long delirious chuckle from start to finish? (*There is a noise off left as if a motor were driving up.*) If that is Harry, I do hope he isn't alone. I haven't made eyes at a man for two days.

LESLIE.

Mr. Fownes wouldn't object if you practiced on him.

EVELYN.

I said "man," darling!

LESLIE.

(*To DERRY.*)

Well, you can't have my Till. Can she, lovey?

DERRY.

(*Griming.*)

She turned me down once. Isn't that enough?

LESLIE.

(*Startled.*)

She did! When?

DERRY.

(*Still laughing.*)

When was it, Eve? About six years ago?

EVELYN.

(*Yawning.*)

Mercy! Don't expect me to remember every little thing that happens.

*Enter HARRY FOWNES, up left. He is mildly intoxicated and speaks thickly.*

HARRY.

Hail! Hail! Gang's all here!

DERRY.

Hello, there!

HARRY.

*(With an air of secrecy.)*

Sh! I brought you somepin' pretty. *(He motions off stage.)* Come on in, ol' kid! Nobody's goin' bite you.

OLIVER KEANE *enters at left, in evening clothes and pauses diffidently near door.*

HARRY.

*(Waving his hand toward OLIVER.)*

Ain't it pretty?

EVELYN.

Oliver Theophilus Keane! Come here this minute!

OLIVER.

*(Stiffly.)*

How do you do? *(Comes down stage and is about to sit on divan with LESLIE, when DERRY puts out his hand in greeting. OLIVER absently gives him his coat and hat and reaches in his pocket for a tip.)*

DERRY.

You haven't forgotten me, Keane?

OLIVER.

*(Peering at him.)*

Most assuredly not. Though it escapes me who you are.



DERRY.

Derry! Till Derry!

OLIVER.

Ah, yes! (*He sits beside LESLIE without seeing her. DERRY laughingly takes his coat and throws it on piano.*)

DERRY.

You are something of a stranger, Keane. Where did you find him, Harry?

HARRY.

He found me. Didn't you, ol' kid? Walked right into the club, and there I was. The world's very small place. I'll get you 'nother drink, Ollie. (*He crosses to right door.*)

EVELYN.

(*Laughingly, to OLIVER.*)

You! Drinking with Harry at the club?

OLIVER.

(*Starting from a reverie.*)

To be sure. Yes. It—it occurred to me rather forcibly that I had been remiss in my duties toward Harry and toward my sister Enid, and I resolved to devote my last day to them.

LESLIE.

Going away, Cousin Oliver? When?

OLIVER.

To-morrow!

LESLIE.

Where?

OLIVER.

I do not know.

HARRY.

*(Standing in right doorway.)*

By thunder! That's right. He's got somepin' to tell you. Tell 'em about Cupid, Ollie.

OLIVER.

*(Blankly.)*

Cupid?

HARRY.

Yeh. That's the l'il' guy. *(Exit at right.)*

EVELYN.

*(Sitting, back of card table.)*

This is going to be interesting. So you are in love at last?

OLIVER.

*(Startled.)*

I? This is rather confusing. I—I feel—

EVELYN.

Of course you do. It's quite natural.

OLIVER.

I feel sure that Harry is referring to Eros. Yes. In all likelihood it is Eros.

EVELYN.

A pretty name. Who is she?

OLIVER.

Eros is a star.

LESLIE.

*(Excitedly.)*

On the stage? How wonderful! Do tell us more about her, Cousin Oliver.

EVELYN.

Is she young or old?

OLIVER.

Quite old. Perhaps many millions of years. Eros is really a planet.

EVELYN.

I am faint from the shock. May we hear more?

OLIVER.

*(Brightening.)*

I shall be most happy to give you the details—that is, if figures appeal to you.

EVELYN.

*(Yawning.)*

Indeed they do. I am thrilled to heaven over them.

DERRY.

*(To OLIVER.)*

Have you seen those crazy articles in the newspapers? That end-of-the-world stuff?

OLIVER.

Yes.

DERRY.

What do you know about them?

OLIVER.

I wrote them.

*(There is a general exclamation.)*

EVELYN.  
(*Cynically.*)

Come now! You don't really believe it? 'Fess up! You've been a hermit so long that you simply had to step out into the limelight for a moment and get some attention.

OLIVER.  
(*Bewildered.*)

My dear lady, I merely told them I saw a planet speeding at the rate of two hundred miles a second toward the neighborhood of Mars and its two moons, also the eclipse of the earth by this planet Eros, to-morrow morning at six o'clock.

LESLIE.  
(*With a slight scream.*)  
What is going to happen?

OLIVER.  
That will depend upon whether Mars will attract Eros or whether we, by reason of our closer proximity, will draw the planet in upon us. There is no doubt of the latter event.

DERRY.  
I say! You know that is a bit serious!

EVELYN.  
Jolly little idea, isn't it? Where is Eros?

OLIVER.  
It is not visible, because of electrical disturbances.

DERRY.  
Would you mind explaining it technically to us?

OLIVER.

Delighted to do so. (*He rises and stands before the fireplace, clearing his throat and joining his fingertips after the manner of a professor in a classroom.*) The minor planet Eros, hitherto charted, and erroneously so, as an asteroid, rotating elliptically in an elongated orbit which, at its aphelion, touches a suppositious point, basing the figures of the problem on the given mean equatorial long horizontal solar parallax, directly—

EVELYN.

(*Interrupting.*)

Oh, do tell us what a parallax is. I've never seen one.

OLIVER.

A parallax has to do with the change produced in the apparent place of an object when viewed from a point other than that of reference.

EVELYN.

No wonder they are so rare! (*In pantomime borrows another cigarette and match of DERRY.*)

OLIVER.

(*Resuming.*)

The sidereal system is complicated and varied in structure and in the same region of the stellar depths coëxist stars of—

LESLIE.

(*Interrupting.*)

But, Cousin Oliver, we want to know what is going to become of us if the crazy old thing hits us!

OLIVER.

At the moment of collision the temperature of the

colliding bodies will be raised thousands of degrees, and we shall expand into a huge mass of thin gas which will gradually cool and assume the form of a rotating spiral nebula.

EVELYN.

*(Rising.)*

I shall loathe being a nebula, especially a spiral one. Thanks, Oliver. I'll leave you now and look in on Enid. *(She pauses to light her cigarette.)*

DERRY.

You are quite right, of course.

OLIVER.

Can reason itself, apart from scientific figures, offer you anything in the way of proper proof?

*Enter HARRY at right, carrying tray of glasses and bottles.*

HARRY.

Got it right here, Ollie. Best stuff y' ever tasted.

EVELYN.

*(To LESLIE.)*

Shall we go over our wardrobes for some light milky-way costumes? *(LESLIE joins her and they go up center to foot of stairs.)*

HARRY.

*(Clinking the glasses on tray.)*

Looky what Santa Claus brought you, girls. Ain't it pretty? *(They start past without answering.)* Come on back and join li'l' Maypole dance. You're good fellah, Eve. Wha'sa matter with you?

EVELYN.

We must run up and see how Enid is.

HARRY.  
(*Blankly.*)

Enid!

LESLIE.

Your wife, Harry. (*Exit LESLIE upstairs. EVELYN goes as far as the first step and pauses.*)

HARRY.  
(*Chuckling.*)

Tha's one on me! By thunder! Tha's about the richest thing I ever said. Forgot my wife's name! (*He tries to concentrate. The tray begins to tip.*) Wait! There was somepin' else I had to remember. What was it? Very 'mportant! (*DERRY goes up, takes the tray away from HARRY, and comes back with it to piano. EVELYN laughs and goes on upstairs, leaving HARRY deep in thought. He addresses the spot she has just left.*) Eve, tha's too bad. Can't— (*He looks around for her.*) Acts like a damn ghost! Try to carry on a polite conv'sation with her, and she ain't where she ought to be. Tha's bad manners. (*Comes down stage. Demands of OLIVER in a roar.*) Ain't it?

OLIVER.

I beg pardon?

HARRY.

I said, "Ain't it?"

OLIVER.

Isn't what?

HARRY.

(*Fretfully.*)

I don't know. Got me all mixed now. (*He slaps OLIVER on the back. Addresses DERRY, who is mixing a couple of drinks at the piano.*) Funny l'il fellah, ain't he?

DERRY.

(*Good-humoredly.*)

High-ball, Keane?

HARRY.

Sure! We spent whole af'noon lappin' 'em up. Didn't we, ol' kid?

OLIVER.

You may not have noticed, but I was drinking Apollinaris.

HARRY.

(*Astounded.*)

What! D'you mean to say you swallowed all that stuff, and it didn't make you sick?

(*DERRY pours a glass and hands it to OLIVER, who reseats himself on divan.*)

OLIVER.

I feel quite normal, thank you.

HARRY.

Can you beat that? All that water! (*He tries to concentrate.*) Wait! 'Bout to remember—very 'mportant thing— Oh, rats! What's difference? Here's how. (*Raises his glass, and they drink.*)

DERRY.

(*Gasping.*)

Holy smoke!



HARRY.

*(Delighted.)*

Ain't it great stuff?

OLIVER.

May I ask what it is?

DERRY.

I'm darned if I know. What is it, Harry?

*(All set empty glasses on piano.)*

HARRY.

*(Mysteriously.)*

Sh! *(He tiptoes to right door, turns the key and comes back.)* Made it myself! Right downstairs in my own cellar! Got a still big 'nough to turn out coupla quarts a day. Didn't know y'r l'il' brother is a moonshiner; did you, Ollie? Ollie's astronomer. I'm moonshiner. Tha's pretty good. Let's have game of stud poker. *(He clears the card table by brushing everything off it in one sweep; then crosses to writing desk and rummages in drawer.)*

DERRY.

*(To OLIVER.)*

Do you play?

OLIVER.

I have never played at anything.

DERRY.

*(To HARRY.)*

Don't get the chips. We can't have a game, with only two of us.

OLIVER.

*(Trying to be congenial.)*

While it is true I do not know poker, still I shall

be very glad to keep the score or mark the various moves as they occur. (*Looks around him for a pencil and paper.*)

HARRY.

Tha's right! Every time I say, "What have you got?" you give me ten points.

DERRY.

Don't be a chump, Harry. We can't play—just you and I.

HARRY.

(*Coming down to piano with the box of chips, he draws DERRY aside and speaks in a loud whisper.*)

Sh! Show the ol' kid a good time.

OLIVER.

(*As he picks up pencil and score pad from floor, he finds a book, which he examines.*)

This is extraordinary! My first school book on astronomy! Do you mind if I take it with me?

HARRY.

(*Arranging card table.*)

Take anything in the house. D'you like dogs? (*Confidentially.*) There's a white one upstairs that barks at you with a fuzzy tail that I don't.

OLIVER.

(*Puzzled.*)

I beg pardon?

HARRY.

(*Sitting at table.*)

Don't apologize, ol' kid. Le's go. (DERRY also sits. HARRY sets out poker chips in stacks on table and deals the cards. OLIVER, book in hand, looks

on.) Now look what I got here, Ollie: a king and a queen. Better put that down.

OLIVER.

*(Writing on score pad.)*

Two members of royalty.

HARRY.

*(Pointing to DERRY's cards.)*

He's got an ace, and I can't see what else. Understand?

OLIVER.

*(Writing.)*

Visible, a small one-spot. Let X represent the unknown quantity.

HARRY.

*(Roaring with laughter, to DERRY.)*

Can you beat that? Picks it up right away.

*(He and DERRY bet, and HARRY deals another card.)*

OLIVER.

What relation have the colored disks to the game?  
*(Indicates poker chips.)*

DERRY.

They are to bet with. *(He bets again, and so does HARRY.)*

HARRY.

*(To OLIVER.)*

A bean is ventured.

DERRY.

*(As HARRY deals him another card.)*

Aha! Another little ace. Going up!

HARRY.

Y'see, Ollie, he raises me, and I'm going to raise him.

OLIVER.

(*Writing.*)

Both players arrive at an equal altitude.

HARRY.

(*Dealing.*)

By thunder! We got our third queen, Ollie. Look at that! We'll skin him alive.

OLIVER.

(*Writing.*)

Desperate measures resolved upon.

DERRY.

(*Laughing.*)

How do you know what I've got tucked away?

HARRY.

(*To OLIVER.*)

Did you hear that? He's keeping somepin' from us. (*He bets.*) Bet you ain't got it. (*DERRY bets. HARRY bets again.*) Once more. Now watch, Ollie. I'm betting him he ain't got another ace. See?

OLIVER.

But if he is quite certain that he has it, why speculate?

HARRY.

(*Putting down his cards solemnly.*)

That is the point, Ollie. That's what I've been leading up to all the time. Wait till I get 'nother drink, and I'll explain the whole thing in all its pristine beauty.

*(As he rises, a rumble of thunder is heard.)*

DERRY.

*(Turning over a card.)*

I did have it. Your three queens were no good.

HARRY.

I wouldn't put that down, Ollie. No use to give the Bolsheviks somepin' else to talk about. *(Pours a drink.)*

OLIVER.

*(Writing.)*

Closing commentary edited. See footnote.

DERRY.

*(To HARRY.)*

Don't drink any more of that stuff. It's got a terrible wallop.

*(There is a sudden flash of lightning from off left.)*

HARRY.

*(Who has taken a swallow just as the lightning flashed, now takes the glass from lips, alarmed.)*

I sh'd say it has! Didn't know it was that strong. *(He sits on divan, anxiously feeling his head.)*

OLIVER.

*(Tears page from tablet, folding the slip of paper and handing it to DERRY.)*

You may wish to keep the official report of the game.

DERRY.

We were just fooling. That wasn't poker.

OLIVER.

*(Puzzled.)*

You were not in earnest?

DERRY.

Harry knew you didn't have any idea of it, so he thought he'd have some fun with you. Wasn't that it, Hal?

HARRY.

*(Drowsily.)*

Huh? Wha'sa matter?

DERRY.

*(Rather embarrassed.)*

I tell Keane we were only stringing him.

OLIVER.

*(Hurt.)*

I see. *(He retires into his book.)*

HARRY.

*(Mumbling.)*

Give him a good time, poor ol' kid! Poor ol' stick-in-the-mud! *(Closes his eyes.)*

EVELYN *comes downstairs, center, and pauses on landing.*

EVELYN.

*(Leaning over the railing.)*

Harry! Enid wants you!

HARRY.

*(Rousing.)*

Let her wait outside. Very busy dictatin' 'mpor-  
tant letter.

EVELYN.

(*To DERRY.*)

Make him come up. Enid is all shot to pieces.

HARRY.

(*Struggling up, terrified.*)

My God! What a terrible tragedy! (*He clings to DERRY, who assists him up stage.*)

OLIVER.

(*Rising.*)

May I see her for a moment? I just want to say good-bye.

EVELYN.

I wouldn't bother her if I were you, Oliver. She knows you're here, and she doesn't care to talk to anyone.

HARRY.

(*As he and DERRY go up to stairs.*)

Tell me one thing. Was she happy to the very last?

EVELYN.

(*Sharply.*)

You ought to know whether she was happy or not.

HARRY.

Tha's good. At least I'll have that to r'member. Wait! I mustn't forget— What is it I mustn't forget?

DERRY.

(*Urging him up the steps.*)

Buck up, old sport!

HARRY.

*(Pausing on landing.)*

If you're going the same way I am, f'r heaven's sake, walk straight. This ain't a two-step.

EVELYN follows them, and all three exeunt upstairs. OLIVER's book slips from his hand to the rug. He stares into the fire absently. Then he crosses to the piano for his hat and coat and goes to left door, reaching it as EVELYN comes down the stairs.

EVELYN.

Please stay!

OLIVER.

*(Awkwardly.)*

It is nice of you to say that. I believe it is the first time I have ever heard it.

EVELYN.

Surely not!

OLIVER.

No one, as a rule, seems particularly to notice whether I am here or—that is to say—there. *(He attempts to laugh.)*

EVELYN.

*(Rather touched.)*

A man as interesting as you, Oliver Theophilus?

OLIVER.

I—I wish I could reply to that flattering statement with a bit of light banter. Any other—er—man—would doubtless think quickly and seize upon some trifling persiflage as—as charming as the original remark, which had the basic qualities of both grace and kindness.



EVELYN.

*(Choking with laughter.)*

Oliver! Do you know that you are perfectly ridiculous?

OLIVER.

*(Slowly.)*

Yes. I know it. Good night!

*(He bows precisely and opens the door up left. There is a crash of thunder, and a streak of lightning shows outside. He closes the door.)*

EVELYN.

*(Anxiously.)*

Open it again. I believe I saw— *(He reopens the door for an instant and again closes it. EVELYN clutches his arm.)* Look! Nothing but water. It's up to the steps.

OLIVER.

Quite true! Shall we notify the others?

EVELYN.

*(Sharply.)*

Of course! *(Runs to foot of stairway and calls upstairs.)* Till! Till! Come here! *(She speaks to OLIVER.)* The river is rising! There must have been storms north of us that we knew nothing about. Did you know?

OLIVER.

I predicted them.

EVELYN.

Why didn't you ring up and tell us that we were in danger?

OLIVER.

I telephoned yesterday.

EVELYN.

Enid said nothing of it.

OLIVER.

She was in the midst of a game of bridge and would not listen.

DERRY *comes running downstairs, center.*

DERRY.

What's the row?

EVELYN.

Open the door a crack, and you'll see.

DERRY.

*(Opening door at left a little, whistles in astonishment.)*

We're being flooded out, by Jove!

EVELYN.

What shall we do? We've got to do something quickly.

DERRY.

*(Still peering through crack in door.)*

It's almost to the hub of the car, Eve.

EVELYN.

The car! That's it. We'll get away in the car and go some place. But where? The hotel is closed for the season, and everyone has gone back to town. Where can we go?

OLIVER.

I have a home on the top of the hill.

EVELYN.

Can we get to it in a car?

OLIVER.

You may have to climb the last stretch of road on foot.

EVELYN.

I'd rather climb than swim. (*She starts for the stairs and turns.*) It's good of you to take us under your wing, Oliver. Have you room for seven people? Although it doesn't matter. Nothing matters if we only get on some sort of dry land again. I'll sound the alarm. (*Exit, up the stairs.*)

(*DERRY opens door of closet under the stairs and begins to pull out a pile of sweaters and coats. The storm grows in violence.*)

DERRY.

What a rum thing to happen! Makes you almost believe the stuff about to-morrow. (*Pauses, then turns to OLIVER.*) I say! Suppose that crazy planet of yours struck the moon first. Would that give us a chance to get our affairs straightened up and interview a preacher or two?

OLIVER.

(*Gravely.*)

Let us see. (*He goes to fireplace, sits, and begins to figure on a sheet of paper, which he takes from his pocket.*)

DERRY.

I would like time enough to make a few good resolutions even if I broke 'em later.

OLIVER.

I think I can fully reassure you on that point. You would have, judging from these hasty figures, three hours and nineteen minutes.

DERRY.

*(Disgustedly.)*

Huh! Not long enough to get a manicure.

OLIVER.

On the other hand, in event that the planet Mars attracts Eros before the impact drives them both toward us it is probable you would have—shall we say— *(He breaks off, absorbed in his figures.)*

MRS. QUAYLE and LESLIE run down the stairs, followed more slowly by ENID and EVELYN. DERRY hands each of them a garment from the pile he has brought from the closet, and they hastily wrap themselves up.

ENID.

*(Briskly.)*

Are we all here? Where is Harry?

HARRY stumbles downstairs in pajamas. *He pauses on landing.*

HARRY.

Up, men. The dam has burst!

ENID.

Shut up, dearest, and get down here.

HARRY.

*(Pained and surprised.)*

Did that sound come from my little wife?

ENID.

(*Exasperated.*)

Hurry! Do you want me to go up there after you, my darling?

HARRY.

(*Humbly.*)

No, sweetheart! (*He comes on down the stairs, and ENID bundles him impatiently into an overcoat which she takes from DERRY.*)

DERRY.

Everybody ready?

EVELYN.

(*Pointing to the absorbed OLIVER.*)

We must not forget our host.

ENID.

(*Sharply.*)

Oliver! Are you so unfeeling that you can sit there and say nothing?

OLIVER.

(*Rising hastily.*)

Er—quite extraordinary weather, isn't it?

(*The lights suddenly go out, leaving only the fireplace glow. There are startled exclamations from all.*)

DERRY.

We are just in time. That shows the cellar is flooding. Let's make a dash for it.

HARRY.

Wait! I mustn't forget something about the cellar. Very important.

ENID.

Idiot! Open the door, Till!

(DERRY opens door up left. A howl of wind greets them, and there is an amazing peal of thunder. All seven rush out, and the gale sweeps the door shut behind them with a bang. There are an excited gabble of voices off left, the honking of an auto horn, then silence.)

Enter RICKY, center, with her hat over one ear, where she has thrust it in her fright and haste. She comes down the stairway slowly and with difficulty, owing to an enormous load of bundles, bandboxes, and a ridiculous poodle which she has on a leash. On the last step she trips slightly and says under her breath, "Damn dog!" Once down, she rests her bundles on the newel post and looks about the room.

RICKY.

(In a small, timid voice.)

Mis' Fownes? (She piles the things in a heap, leaves the dog, and comes down, looking about.)  
Mis' —? (The silence makes her uneasy, and she repeats the name loudly and hoarsely.) Mis' Fownes! (Realizing she has been left behind, she runs to left door and opens it. The sight and sound of the storm terrify her. She closes the door and leans against it, trembling.) My goodness! Oh, my goodness! What'll I do? (She begins to wail, mingling broken sentences with her sobs.) They didn't wait fer me! That ain't right. It ain't right! I never done anything to them. I got f-feelings, too, same as they have, but they don't care! Makes me s-sick! (Her sobs having gradually spent them-

*selves, she relapses into apathetic weariness with an occasional sniffle of indignation. She turns back into the room and, her eye lighting on the poodle, she addresses him.)* Lookit what they done to you, Leo. I guess you won't be so stuck up, after this. You always treated me like I was dirt under your feet, when if you'd acted like a lady maybe you wouldn't be so sore at yourself now. See? That's what you get! Yes, sir! Now it's my turn, and I'm going to cut you dead. *(She wanders about the room aimlessly. As if to keep up her courage, she whistles a few notes. The sound causes her to jump and look behind her. She goes to fireplace and stretches her arms in an exhausted yawn.)* I guess it must be pret' near to-morrow. *(The significance of it strikes her, and she repeats the word apprehensively.)* To-morrow! *(She looks thoughtfully at the poodle.)* You and me better make it up, Leo, before the horn blows. What say? If you won't mention to nobody about the time I slapped you, I won't give you away, either. You know what I mean! You do so. Come here and get warm. *(She goes up and gets the poodle and returns to the fireplace, curling up on the rug with it in her lap.)* Why can't we be friends like this all the time? Wouldn't you rather? I'd rather have a kind word fer you than to chase all over heaven, roasting the tar out of you. Then why wasn't you nice to me? There's lots of evenings we might have had together when none of us would have been lonesome, especially me. I know fairy stories about doggies and kitties, and how they chased each other and both got et up, and the New Testament, and "Curfew shall not ring to-night." I don't guess you would understand the

New Testament, though. It's pretty deep in spots. (*She gazes into the fire awhile.*) I wonder what God will look like? He'll be big and tall, and he'll have whiskers—long white whiskers, because he's getting kinder old now. My goodness! Six thousand years! I should say he would have whiskers! (*She pauses and regards the poodle anxiously.*) The New Testament ain't got any chapter on dogs, Leo. What about it? You better think pretty quick. I don't know. You couldn't have much fun if the streets are all gobbled up with milk and honey. (*She sighs.*) Oh, don't look to me like I was in for any good time, either. I don't know a note on the harp. I *would* enjoy flying, for a change, and getting off my feet. And if my folks goes there, I will have somebody to talk to. *They* think I'm all right. (*She sees the book OLIVER has dropped on the rug, picks it up and opens it at the fly leaf.*) "Oliver The—Theo—file—us Keane." (*She embraces the book impulsively, then bends over and speaks in a stage whisper to the poodle.*) It's his! Look! I wouldn't string you, Leo. There's his name all wrote out. Can't you read nothing? 'Course you can't. Well, I guess I will read to you, then—something out of his book. Something beautiful and elegant and sad. Sh! (*She opens the book and reads.*) "As 57 angle M is to 89-3 angle B, so is 4000 miles BL to the perpendicular LM." (*She closes the book.*) Hm! Well, anyway, they lived happy ever after. (*She rises.*) Or would if—if to-morrow wasn't going to settle everybody's hash. That's what he says, and if he says so, it is! (*In the act of stretching her arms again, she chances to look down at herself and exclaims.*) My goodness, Leo! Why didn't you tell me I had



my dress on hind side before? For all you care, I could walk down Pearl Street or Diamond Street looking like a simp! (*She unbuttons the dress down the front, starts to take off one sleeve, stops, goes behind the divan, where she is hidden from audience, and turns her dress front side first. Only her head is visible as she talks to the poodle.*) I don't want you to see what I got on under here, Leo, because you might up and start some low gossip. (*Pauses and struggles with dress.*) I guess my dress is good enough to sit on any white cloud with. (*From off left comes a tremendous honking of an auto horn. Panic-stricken, RICKY screams.*) Leo! It's to-morrow! (*Tremblingly she hurries out from behind the divan, trying to fasten the top button of her dress, fails, falls to her knees, and gathers the poodle in her arms protectingly.*)

OLIVER, *indistinctly outlined in the shadows, enters at left, pausing at door.*

RICKY.

(*Quaveringly.*)

Let me take him with me! He's so little!

OLIVER.

(*Absently.*)

I left a book here. (*He sees it on the hearth, comes forward and retrieves it, starts again for the door, and turns.*) Yes. I remember. They said you were to come along.

RICKY.

(*Painfully.*)

I can't. I ain't buttoned up the back.

OLIVER.

A small matter. Turn around.

*(Dazed, RICKY obeys. Tucking the book under one arm, he buttons her dress.)*

RICKY.

*(Uncomfortably.)*

The third buttonhole is tore.

OLIVER.

We shall omit the third buttonhole. The seventh button is absent. What shall we do about that?

RICKY.

I meant to sew it on, but I lost it.

OLIVER.

*(Finishing.)*

Quite logical. There! *(He sits on chair near writing desk, opens his book, and reads.)*

RICKY.

*(Awkwardly.)*

Thank you.

OLIVER.

*(Politely.)*

Of no consequence, I assure you. *(He becomes engrossed in the book. There is a great crash of thunder.)*

DERRY.

*(Off left, honking auto horn and shouting.)*

Keane, hurry up!

OLIVER.

*(Starting up.)*

Er—shall we be going?

RICKY.

Yes, sir. (*She hesitates.*) When he made all that noise the first time, I thought it was God.

OLIVER.

(*Absently tucking the book under his arm.*)  
Did you?

RICKY.

(*Looking up at him adoringly.*)  
Yes! I thought it was only God, but it was you!

(*As they go out at left door—*)

CURTAIN



## CINDERELLA OF THE STORM

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### SECOND ACT

SCENE: *The living room of OLIVER'S home, at about five o'clock the following morning. It has three doors: one up center leading outdoors, another down right leading to kitchen and outdoors to the other shack, and a third door up left leading to the rooms upstairs. A curtained window is up right. The room is meagerly furnished and is somewhat disordered. A large library table is at center, with a chair at right of it and another behind it, facing audience. A fireplace, with mantelshelf, is in the center of the left wall, with a fire blazing on the hearth (red electric bulbs under several sticks of wood). An old-fashioned rocking-chair is down left, with a footstool close beside it. Against the table, facing the footlights is a couch with a few faded pillows on it. An armchair is up right near window, and a plain chair is down right. A few rugs are on the floor, the largest being in front of fireplace, and several pictures, of little charm and value, are on walls. On mantelshelf is a small clock, with the face so turned that it is not clearly visible to audience. Its striking is simulated by ringing a bell off left. The center table is littered with books, papers, memoranda, pipe, matches, pouch of tobacco, case containing cigarettes, a woman's traveling case containing a hair brush, also a plain study lamp with a cheap*

*green shade, which, with the glow from the fireplace, provides rather poor lighting for the room. Footlights should be on during this act, and blue lights just outside the window should be used on cue to indicate the coming of dawn.*

*At rise of curtain, ENID, with a raincoat of OLIVER'S about her bare shoulders, sits cross-legged on the hearth of the fireplace, eating bread and butter and sipping tea from a plain white cup. EVELYN, a sport coat over her evening gown, is in a chair drawn up to the center table, book in hand. MRS. QUAYLE, well swathed in shawls, is asleep in the rocking-chair, down left, and LESLIE sits on the footstool with her head in her mother's lap. She, too, is asleep, a frayed bathrobe about her. HARRY is stretched out asleep on the couch at center, still in pajamas and overcoat.*

*The right door, leading into the kitchen, opens cautiously and RICKY enters with broom, mop, and bucket. She wears a velveteen hunting jacket of OLIVER'S and a pair of his shoes. ENID turns at the sound, and RICKY, as if suddenly remembering an important engagement elsewhere, vanishes back to the kitchen.*

EVELYN.

*(Looking up from her book.)*

What was that?

ENID.

Just Ricky. She has been bobbing in every five minutes all night long, and I fully believe she means to clean the place if we ever go to bed. I'll say it needs it, too. Have some tea?

EVELYN.  
(*Yawning.*)

No, thanks. I'm trying to work up an appetite for sleep with this. (*She holds up her book.*)

ENID.

What is it?

EVELYN.  
(*Reading title on front of book.*)

"Perfect Poise and How to Attain It." (ENID *laughs.*) There is another very racy one here called "The Relation of Calm to Eternity."

ENID.

They are Oliver's. When he was about nineteen, he went in for all that sort of thing because he stuttered so badly.

EVELYN.

Oliver stuttered?

ENID.

Terribly, my dear. Funny old chap, isn't he? No end odd. Not a bit like the rest of the family, so we have rather left him to himself.

EVELYN.  
(*Dryly.*)

I can see that with the naked eye.

ENID.

He has never cared a straw for bridge or flirting or any of the really vital things of life. (*Sighs.*) But what estranges me from him more than anything else is his lack of soul.

LESLIE.

*(Sitting up and yawning daintily.)*

Am I missing something?

ENID.

Why don't you and Helen go upstairs? There are plenty of perfectly good beds up there.

LESLIE.

*(Rising and joining ENID at fireplace.)*

Mamma wants to wait down here until to-morrow, so that she can see what's going to happen.

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Waking petulantly and looking about her.)*

What time is it?

ENID.

*(Consulting her wrist watch.)*

It is after five.

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Groaning.)*

Such a night! I don't believe I shall be able to keep awake another minute! What is that you are drinking, Enid?

ENID.

*(Rising.)*

Tea! Have some?

MRS. QUAYLE.

Yes. It may help my poor head.

*(ENID crosses and goes out at right door.)*

*(HARRY raises himself on his elbow with some difficulty, and his glance falls upon MRS. QUAYLE.)*



HARRY.

(*Angrily, to Mrs. Quayle.*)

What are you doing in my room?

*Enter ENID at right.*

ENID.

Now that you are up, Harry, you'd better join the boys.

HARRY.

(*Holding his hand to his head.*)

No! Not another drop.

ENID.

(*Crossing to him and speaking with sharp exasperation.*)

Don't be a stupid fool and an idiot, sweetheart!

HARRY.

(*Clasping her hand beseechingly.*)

Do you still love your poor faults in spite of his husband?

ENID.

(*Severely.*)

Certainly, my darling. Now get up and get out of here.

HARRY.

(*Tearfully.*)

I'm no good. There's no use to argue the matter.  
(*He weeps.*)

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Complainingly.*)

I shall never find relief for my poor head at this rate.

RICKY enters at right with a cup of tea, on a saucer, which she holds out to MRS. QUAYLE, who pays no attention. RICKY, her eyes closing from time to time exhaustedly, continues to hold the cup toward MRS. QUAYLE.

HARRY.

(To MRS. QUAYLE, angrily.)

Then what are you arguing for?

MRS. QUAYLE.

(Indignantly.)

I am not arguing! I agree with you fully and always have done so. It was my poor aching head that caused my remark.

HARRY.

You needn't think you've got the only head in captivity.

MRS. QUAYLE.

I have no intention of submitting to further insult from you, Harry Fownes, and neither Leslie nor myself shall ever step across your threshold again either formally or in a playful spirit. Heaven knows I've given you no occasion to prove, as you are now doing, what a low, unprincipled, irresponsible, heartless—

RICKY.

(Absently.)

Oh, shut up! (She is so startled and frightened at her own words that she drops the cup and saucer with a crash of breaking china.)

ENID.

(Sharply.)

Ricky!

(MRS. QUAYLE rises majestically.)

RICKY.

(On her knees, picking up the pieces.)

I'm sorry, Mis' Quayle. I just thought out loud.

MRS. QUAYLE.

Come, Leslie. I am going. (Goes up left, LESLIE following her.)

ENID.

(Alarmed.)

Where?

MRS. QUAYLE.

(Loftily.)

To bed! (Goes out at left, followed by LESLIE.)

RICKY.

(On her knees.)

I'm sorry, Mis' Fownes. I'm sorry, Mr. Fownes.

HARRY.

(Reaching out a hand and laying it dramatically on her head.)

Rise, little one! Ere to-morrow's dawn sinks slowly to rest this rock shall fly from—

ENID.

(Catching him by the elbow.)

Go into the kitchen, Ricky.

RICKY.

(Rising obediently, carrying pieces of china.)

Yessum!

ENID.

(To RICKY as she reaches the door.)

Have you a place to sleep out there?

RICKY.

Yessum! There's a nice soft sack of potatoes, and me and Leo'll keep each other warm.

ENID.

Have coffee ready at nine o'clock.

RICKY.

*(Hesitatingly.)*

You better have it now, Mis' Fownes. It'll soon be six o'clock, and that's to-morrow—

HARRY.

*(Rising.)*

Wait! There was something I had to remember.

ENID.

Run along, Ricky.

*(Exit RICKY at right.)*

HARRY.

No. That wasn't it.

ENID.

*(Impatiently.)*

Evelyn and I want to go to bed, Harry. Go out with the boys.

HARRY.

Where are they?

ENID.

In the other shack where the telescope is: Oliver's study. (HARRY crosses to right door, muttering. ENID continues sweetly.) Lover, don't you want to apologize to Eve before you go?

HARRY.  
(*Turning.*)

What for?

ENID.  
For making such an ass of yourself, pet.

HARRY.  
(*Shouting at EVELYN angrily.*)  
I'm sorry. (*Exit at right.*)

ENID.  
(*Wearily.*)

Shall we go upstairs? I am so tired that I could sleep on a barbed wire fence. (*Goes to door up left.*)

EVELYN.  
(*Looking up.*)

Even that couldn't tempt me away from this delicious gossip about souls that yearn to be free.

ENID.  
(*Yawning.*)

It impresses you; does it?

EVELYN.  
I shall stop wearing tight shoes to-morrow.

ENID.  
(*With another yawn.*)

To-morrow is almost with us. I suppose it will be as stupid as any other day. Good night! (*Exit at left, going upstairs.*)

(*EVELYN puts down her book. Her head falls back against the chair. A look of unutterable weariness comes over her face.*)

*The door at right opens cautiously, and once more*

RICKY *enters with broom, mop, and pail. She drops the broom with a crash.* EVELYN *starts.*

RICKY.

*(Patiently.)*

Ain't you ever going to sleep?

EVELYN.

*(Rising.)*

I wonder!

RICKY.

You better get in a few licks before the horn blows.

EVELYN.

What about you?

RICKY.

*(Wearily.)*

Me? I ain't through with my work yet. I got to get this place swept up and cleaned around the edges so they won't think he didn't have anybody to look after him.

EVELYN.

"He" is Oliver, of course; but who are "they"?

RICKY.

Gabriel and all that gang. I don't want to let 'em have one chance to make any low cracks about him.

EVELYN.

Certainly not! *(She begins to take the pins from her hair.)* Could you spare me a moment to brush my hair? Perhaps it would make me drowsy.

RICKY.

*(Putting down broom, mop, and pail.)*

You'd ought to work harder, and then you'd sleep.

*(She dries her hands on the velveteen coat, as EVELYN searches in a traveling case on table.)*  
Sleep is the easiest thing I have to do.

EVELYN.

*(Handing her a brush and reseating herself.)*

This is good of you, Ricky. Would you mind not talking?

RICKY.

*(Hurt.)*

No'm. I'm used to it, but I was in hopes that before to-morrow set in, I would have just one conversation. *(She brushes EVELYN's hair.)*

EVELYN.

Not to-night, please. *(Closes her eyes.)* I'm too frazzled to utter a word.

*Enter DERRY at right. On seeing EVELYN, he halts abruptly.*

DERRY.

Pardon! Didn't know anyone was up. Did I leave my cigarette case here?

EVELYN.

*(Vivaciously.)*

Do come in! I'm dying for some one to talk to.

*(RICKY, hurt, continues her brushing. DERRY crosses to table and lights a cigarette from his case, which he finds among the litter.)*

DERRY.

Harry made such a row coming in that he woke us both, and for a minute I felt like chucking him into the bushes.

EVELYN.

I doubt if even Harry could add to this scenery.

DERRY.

Why aren't you in bed?

EVELYN.

*(Smiling.)*

Same old reason. Can't sleep.

DERRY.

What have you got on your conscience?

EVELYN.

*(Still smiling.)*

You!

DERRY.

*(Laughing.)*

I? When and why?

EVELYN.

I was very unkind to you once, and I said some horrid things about your being poor and inefficient and without enough brains to make a living for yourself and—for us.

DERRY.

*(Good-naturedly.)*

Oh, that! It was true—every word! It ought to please you enormously to think that you were perfectly right. Time has proved it. I'm still poor, still without brains—same old Till!

EVELYN.

But you are nice! There are so few men that are nice.



DERRY.

Thanks! It's never got me anywhere.

EVELYN.

No. It's rather a handicap to a man unless he has some one to encourage him—some one to fight for.

DERRY.

*(Enthusiastically.)*

And I've finally got that, Eve—that encouragement. I think I'd have made a lot of progress in my work if I'd only met a woman like Leslie sooner.

*(RICKY lays down the brush and glares at DERRY. EVELYN looks up inquiringly, and RICKY resumes, muttering, however, under her breath.)*

EVELYN.

*(Slowly.)*

Needless to say, I am very glad.

DERRY.

I knew you would be when you heard it. You and I were greater pals than any two people I ever saw.

EVELYN.

Yet I failed you.

DERRY.

Good Lord, Eve! I didn't blame you. Don't get it into your head that I did. Why on earth should you, with your charm and love of life, tie yourself to a pauper and live in a kitchen? You did the sensible thing and turned me down. Good for you!

*(RICKY, much interested, stops brushing, and*

*stands listening, with her hands on her hips. The others are too preoccupied to notice her.)*

EVELYN.

*(Dryly.)*

Instead of casting my lot with you, I wanted to better myself. So I married Jack Hempstead! *(Laughs, as if greatly amused.)*

DERRY.

*(Laughing also.)*

It wasn't so funny then, but I can laugh now, too. What a chump I was!

EVELYN.

*(Sharply.)*

I wasn't laughing at you. At times you are as stupid as Oliver.

*(RICKY, as if galvanized into action, raises the hair brush threateningly, thinks better of her evident idea to assassinate EVELYN, and resumes brushing.)*

DERRY.

*(Cheerfully.)*

Well, no matter. It's all over now—all over and forgotten. Don't you have me on your conscience, Eve old dear. *(He reaches out a hand, which she clasps warmly in silence.)* I am as happy as a fellow can be who didn't expect much and gets more than he deserves.

EVELYN.

*(Earnestly.)*

You have never had half a chance at what is really coming to you, Till. You will be a big man when

you get started. I know it. Do believe in yourself; won't you?

(RICKY *excitedly goes down left and brings the footstool to EVELYN's side, sits upon it, and listens, watching them eagerly.*)

DERRY.

I'm afraid there isn't much of anything there to pin faith to. You see, I'm not clever.

EVELYN.

Cleverness doesn't count, my dear. Any rotter can be clever. They usually are. People like me, for example, and it's nothing at all. The big thing that matters is to have a heart and a soul; and you've got both. Till, the fight is yours if you just go after it and stick to it and scrap.

DERRY.

(*Enthusiastically.*)

And you've no idea what it means to have some one by the side of you. I tell you it makes me mighty confident when I think that a sweet youngster like Leslie has the spunk to step out in line and meet the world shoulder to shoulder with me. That's love, Eve!

EVELYN.

(*Slowly.*)

Of course it is, and it's coming to you—that sort of love—the real kind! (*She gives his hand a final friendly pressure and releases it.*)

DERRY.

(*Conscience-stricken.*)

Here I am, drooling along about myself when you

should be in bed! But it's done me no end of good—this little chat. Things always seem plainer when you point them out. Good night, old dear. (*He impulsively bends and kisses her awkwardly on the top of her head.*) I'll leave these for you. (*Lays his cigarette case on table before her and crosses to right door. EVELYN remains motionless.*) Good night. (*Exit at right.*)

(*RICKY drops to her knees and opens her arms speechlessly to EVELYN, who, without a word, buries her head on RICKY's shoulder and sobs.*)

RICKY.

Miss Eve! My goodness, don't! Don't, honey! Lookit your pretty eyes getting all swole! He needs you, only he's crazy; that's all. She ain't his kind, and he don't know it. He'll find out like you did. You see if he don't.

EVELYN.

(*Lifting her head.*)

Thank you, Ricky. (*She sits up and wipes her eyes.*) It's this wretched insomnia that shakes me to pieces. Ordinarily I can laugh myself out of it as I laugh at everything.

RICKY.

I like you better this way. (*She opens her arms invitingly.*) Come on! Cry some more.

EVELYN.

(*Regaining control of herself.*)

No. That is quite enough. (*Pats RICKY's hand and rises.*) And don't imagine a lot of things that are not so. Anyone who hasn't slept for a week is apt to be silly and hysterical over nothing. Here!

(Strips a diamond bracelet off her arm and offers it to RICKY.) You are to say nothing whatever about this. Do you understand?

RICKY.

(Rising and speaking sharply.)

I don't want any pay just because I felt sorry for you. (Crosses to right door.)

EVELYN.

Ricky!

RICKY.

(Opening door.)

Keep your ol' bracelet! (She is very near tears herself.)

EVELYN.

(Following her to door.)

I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, Ricky.

RICKY.

Go on! Hurt 'em! Everybody does.

EVELYN.

(Considering her thoughtfully.)

After all—you are a woman, too; aren't you?

RICKY.

(Harshly.)

No. I ain't. I'm a doormat for people to scrape their feet on, and I tell you right now the "welcome" on it is damn near wore off! (She sniffs forlornly.)

EVELYN.

(Hesitatingly.)

I'm extremely sorry that I misjudged you. I really am, my dear. (Turns and goes up left.)

RICKY.

*(Without turning.)*

I'm sorry I snapped you up, Miss Eve. You're the only one that's treated me like I was white.

EVELYN.

*(Turning back to RICKY.)*

Then you will take the bracelet? Please do. Accept it as a little gift from me.

RICKY.

*(Longingly, as she goes toward EVELYN a few steps.)*

No, ma'am. Thank you. But if you was to stay and talk to me awhile—only maybe ten minutes—I'm pretty lonesome—five minutes even—

EVELYN.

*(Plaintively.)*

Oh, Ricky, anything but that. I'm dead! Good night! *(Exit at left.)*

*(RICKY crosses to fireplace and stands, arms akimbo, looking into it.)*

RICKY.

*(With an attempt at cheerfulness.)*

Well, here we are again. Hello, fire! You and me has been keeping company quite some time now; ain't we?

*As she speaks, the right door opens, and OLIVER enters with an armful of wood. He crosses, and she stands shyly aside while he drops the wood, and bending over the fire, builds it up. RICKY, stricken quite dumb in his presence, tiptoes to her broom and pail, picks up the broom, and starts sweeping.*

OLIVER, *unconscious of her presence, consults his watch, crosses to table, sits, makes a few figures, stops, arranges his papers and books neatly and crossing to window up right, throws up the shade, folds his arms, and stands waiting.*

RICKY.

*(On her knees, cleaning under the table.)*

Have I got time to wipe up?

OLIVER.

*(Startled.)*

Who spoke?

RICKY.

*(Rising.)*

It's only me.

OLIVER.

*(Peering at her short-sightedly.)*

Do I know you?

RICKY.

Miss Ricketts. May Jessamine Ricketts. *(He stares at her, puzzled, not recognizing her.)* Mis' Fownes help. Ricky!

OLIVER.

Ah, yes. I buttoned your dress last night.

RICKY.

*(Embarrassed.)*

Yes, sir! *(Drops to her knees and resumes cleaning.)*

OLIVER.

*(Crossing down to table.)*

May I ask what you are doing under there?

RICKY.

Cleaning! I thought I better get the place tidy before the angels started to track it all up.

OLIVER.

You mean—?

RICKY.

To-morrow! I guess it's pret' near here.

OLIVER.

*(Gravely comparing his watch with the clock on the mantelshelf.)*

We still have twenty minutes.

RICKY.

*(Rising, broom in hand.)*

What do you want me to do first?

OLIVER.

Let us omit the cleaning. Shall we talk?

RICKY.

*(Dropping the broom with alacrity.)*

Yes, sir.

OLIVER.

Where would you like to sit?

RICKY.

I'm uster to the rug than any place.

OLIVER.

*(Drawing rocking-chair from down left up to fireplace.)*

And I shall sit here.

*(RICKY sits cross-legged with her back to the*



fire, facing OLIVER in his chair. *There is a long silence, on his part a musing one.*)

RICKY.

*(Wriggling uneasily.)*

I wish I was a mind reader.

OLIVER.

*(Absently.)*

Beg pardon?

RICKY.

Then you wouldn't have to speak a word to me if you didn't want to.

OLIVER.

*(Rousing himself.)*

I must ask your forgiveness. You see, I am alone so much—all of the time practically—that silence is a habit with me.

RICKY.

It's bad for you not to talk once in a while. Talking lets the poison out.

OLIVER.

*(Interested.)*

And what poisons you?

RICKY.

People! I hate 'em. They're nasty-minded and mean. You've got to wait on 'em from morning till night, and then they—look down on you because you never had a chance to go to school like they did. And the men is always putting their arm around you.

OLIVER.

I thought women rather fancied that sort of thing.

RICKY.

From the right one, yes. Now if you— (*Pauses abruptly.*) You wouldn't do that. You're different from other men.

OLIVER.

(*Sadly.*)

I am afraid I am.

RICKY.

Afraid! My goodness! If the whole world was like you—

OLIVER.

(*Rising.*)

What a stupid place it would be! Eh? A place full of books and figures and dusty facts—and lonely days and lonelier nights.

RICKY.

(*Surveying him shrewdly.*)

You been poisoned, too.

OLIVER.

(*Rises and goes to table, where he fills the pipe lying there and lights it.*)

I daresay. However, it doesn't matter now. (*He hesitates at a confidence.*)

RICKY.

(*Softly.*)

Tell me.

OLIVER.

(*Capitulating to her sympathy.*)

I used to stutter. In my childhood the habit was quite pronounced and afforded me no little painful embarrassment. My family was ashamed of me. I

was ashamed, too. (*Laughs cheerfully and crosses back to stand before the fire.*)

RICKY.

Don't! It makes me hurt all over.

OLIVER.

During my boyhood, I learned to protect myself in a way: by saying nothing. It simplified the whole affair but did not tend to endear me to my relatives. In fact, they grew to dislike me. They thought me sullen, bitter, impossible. I don't believe I was. And being left alone, I began to conquer the thing slowly but surely. First, I analyzed myself, and found that I was too enthusiastic, too easily excited, that I cared too much about people and what they said and did. So I practiced a lack of interest. I fixed my thoughts on the abstract instead of the personal. And—just when I got the whip hand and could hold up my head among my fellow men, I fell in love.

RICKY.

(*Clapping her hands delightedly.*)

And she loved you for being so brave!

OLIVER.

(*Gravely.*)

She laughed at me.

RICKY.

(*Painfully.*)

Laughed!

OLIVER.

You see—I cared then. And caring, I lapsed again into my old habit of stuttering. I forgot my studiously cultivated poise, my detachment. I loved

her, and because I loved her I stuttered when I asked her to marry me. (*Throws back his head in a genuine laugh. RICKY suddenly buries her face in her hands.*) Shortly after that, desperately in need of something, I found a book on astronomy—just a child's primer. I have it now. (*Crosses to table and rummages among the papers there.*) Yes. Here it is! (*Absently he turns the leaves, sees a paragraph of interest, becomes absorbed, sits in chair right of table, and reads.*)

RICKY.

(*Rising, after a short pause.*)

Thank you for telling me.

OLIVER.

(*Starting up.*)

I say! It isn't at all nice of me to forget you.

RICKY.

That's all right. I'm used to it.

OLIVER.

(*Coming down left.*)

Let's be friends.

RICKY.

(*Ecstatically.*)

Oh!

OLIVER.

(*Putting out his hand.*)

We haven't much time, and I'm rather sorry. (*RICKY puts her hand in his.*) I haven't talked so much in years. It's been quite delightful.

RICKY.

(*Tensely.*)

I wish that to-morrow would never come so that

I could work for you and take care of you all my life long, to—to make up for what the others didn't do.

OLIVER.  
(*Touched.*)

My dear!

RICKY.  
Don't say that! I couldn't bear it. (*They unclasp hands. She backs away, confused.*) I got some hot coffee on the stove for you.

OLIVER.  
Shall we have it together?

RICKY:  
(*Delightedly.*)  
We? Everything's ready. I'll bring it in.

RICKY *crosses stage and runs out at right.* OLIVER *stares thoughtfully at the fire, then goes to table, picks up the book in which he has been recently interested, closes it decisively, smooths his hair, and removes his horn-rimmed spectacles.* RICKY *reënters at right with a complete coffee set, with two cups and saucers on a tray, and crosses to fireplace, depositing it on the rug.*

RICKY.  
Now! (*Squats beside it.*)

OLIVER.  
This is quite—er—jolly! (*Looks down at the tray.*) It seems such a distance down there. Am I expected to fold up like a tent and collapse beside you?

RICKY.

*(Merrily, as she fills the cups.)*

You are funny!

OLIVER.

*(Sitting cross-legged on the rug beside her.)*

Thank you!

RICKY.

*(Bewildered, looks at him.)*

But—what did you do while I was away? All of a sudden, you're different!

OLIVER.

Possibly it was the spectacles.

RICKY.

That's what it is! I ain't afraid of you any more. Oh, don't ever put 'em on again because you got such nice eyes. There's twinkles in 'em.

OLIVER.

I assure you there isn't a twinkle left.

RICKY.

*(Excitedly.)*

Yes! There was one just then looking at me!

OLIVER.

*(Gallantly.)*

Then it saw a very charming little person.

RICKY.

*(Looking back of her.)*

Where? Who?

OLIVER.

Miss—er—Ricky! I believe I shall call you Rikki-tikki-tavi.

*(They sip their coffee.)*

RICKY.

That's pretty! Where'd you get it from?

OLIVER.

A story of Kipling's. Rikki-tikki-tavi was a mon-goose.

RICKY.

*(Evidently crushed by this.)*

The goose part fits me. But what does "mon" stand for?

OLIVER.

*(Laughs heartily for the first time.)*

Never mind! Nothing whatever that should offend you. Another cup of coffee, please.

RICKY.

*(Uncomfortably.)*

Don't look at my hands. They ain't nice and smooth like other ladies' hands.

OLIVER.

The serviceable hand is the most beautiful, Rikki-tikki!

RICKY.

*(Surveying herself consciously.)*

I must be a sight, with your shoes on and everything, but I brought some other clothes with me—some pretty good-looking ones if they're pressed out. *(Absently rubs the back of her hand against her cheek and unconsciously leaves a smear of soot there.)*

OLIVER.

*(Observing her critically.)*

You have picked up a bit of soot. Have you a handkerchief? (RICKY *feels in the pockets of his coat without finding one. He offers her his.*) Take this!

RICKY.

*(Rubbing her cheek.)*

Is it off?

OLIVER.

Not yet. *(Again she scrubs.)* Let me have it. *(Rising to his knees, he rubs at the spot.)*

RICKY.

*(Humbly.)*

Don't bother about me, Mr. Keane.

OLIVER.

*(Interested in the scrubbing process.)*

Turn your face toward me a trifle more. There! I believe it's gone. *(He pokes her cheek with an experimental finger.)* Do you know—you are very soft and—and pleasing? (RICKY *is stricken dumb again.*) I shouldn't mind doing it all over. You are really quite—quite magnetic to the touch, little Rikki-tikki! *(He leans toward her slowly as the clock strikes the three-quarter hour. OLIVER starts up, dazed.)* Fifteen minutes to six. I had forgotten. (RICKY *slumps wearily, her hands folded in her lap, OLIVER goes to window up right, and looks out. Pale blue lights off up right indicate the break of dawn.*) Shall we arouse the others?



RICKY.

I wouldn't. Let 'em go out the way they are and not wake up. No use to scare 'em.

OLIVER.

(*Turning back.*)

Are you frightened, Rikki-tikki?

RICKY.

(*Hopelessly.*)

No. I ain't afraid. I'm glad. I've got pretty tired these last few years. (*Sighs.*) Maybe some place else I will get a square deal, and somebody will learn me the things I'm crazy to know: books and embroidery and all that. Or I would like a farm with flowers on it where I could work outdoors in the wind and let it blow me every which way.

OLIVER.

(*Gently.*)

I hope you find your farm.

RICKY.

(*Hopefully.*)

Which direction are you going?

OLIVER.

I don't know.

RICKY.

I wish you did. We might go at least part of the way together, and neither of us would get lonesome then. There's just one thing I'm sorry about: I never got engaged. Not a single person ever said, "Will you?" and I said, "Yes." And it's too late now. I guess I will never get engaged or have children or anything. (OLIVER *absently inspects a ring*)

*on his finger. RICKY rises.*) I'd better get into my Judgment Day dress. My mother will have a fit when she sees the way I cut it over. It was hers. (*Starts to right.*)

OLIVER.

(*Crossing down right with a queer smile, he meets her and holds out the ring.*)

Will you?

RICKY.

Will I what?

OLIVER.

You—you made the remark that nobody ever said, "Will you?" So I shall say it. Will you?

RICKY.

(*Trembling.*)

You ain't asking me to marry you, Mr. Keane?

OLIVER.

(*Awkwardly.*)

I believe I am. Yes. I'm quite positive that I am.

RICKY.

But you don't mean it. It's only a joke!

OLIVER.

(*Gravely.*)

It is scarcely the time to accuse me of being light and frivolous. Look at me (*RICKY faces him dizzily*)—and tell me what you see.

RICKY.

(*Unsteadily.*)

They ain't any more twinkles.

OLIVER.

What else?

RICKY.

And you're lonesome and tired.

OLIVER.

*(Picking up her hand and slipping his ring on her finger.)*

Take this with you to your farm, and if I can find you, I will, Rikki-tikki! Would you like me to?

RICKY.

*(Adoringly.)*

Oh!

OLIVER.

You wouldn't think me a dusty, musty bookworm or an awkward clown? Or laugh at me? You would, as a woman, consider me just a man and be patient with my mistakes and my timidity?

RICKY.

*(Breaking away from him.)*

Please don't!

OLIVER.

*(Misunderstanding her action.)*

After all, it is rather too much to expect. *(He goes to the fire and relights his pipe, then crosses to right door.)* I'll be back in five minutes, and we'll face the thing together. I'd like you to wear the ring, anyway, if you will. *(Exit, right.)*

*(RICKY, with a sob crosses slowly and exit, right.)*

*After a short pause, EVELYN enters at left, crosses to table, and restlessly lights a cigarette. By acci-*

dent she drops the cigarette case on the floor. After a moment, LESLIE enters at left, pausing in doorway.

LESLIE.

(*Brightening.*)

Eve! What luck to find you up! And where did you get the cigarettes? I've been dying for one all evening.

EVELYN.

(*None too cordially.*)

They were here. Why didn't you take one?

LESLIE.

(*Crossing to table, picks up cigarette case, takes out a cigarette, and lays case on table.*)

You know mamma. And not only mamma but Till. He loathes women to smoke. (*She lights a cigarette and puffs it.*) I'm so glad you can't sleep. I want a little chat with you. (*She settles herself in the chair by the table, as EVELYN roams the room nervously.*) I have never met anyone I admire as much as you. You don't mind my saying so, I'm sure. And I want some pointers from you.

EVELYN.

(*Stopping short and surveying her curiously.*)

About what?

LESLIE.

Life in general. It's dreadful to be young and not to know how to play the game. I mean to learn, and learn it cleverly, you can rest assured of that. Just as yet, I've had no thrilling experiences such as you've had, and it makes me furious. How can one be well poised unless one knows values?

EVELYN.

(*Crossing and standing over her.*)

I don't believe I understand what you're driving at.

LESLIE.

(*Laughing.*)

Of course you do! I think I made myself quite plain.

EVELYN.

How old are you, Leslie?

LESLIE.

I'm nearly twenty, and a girl of twenty these days is nobody's fool. You know that.

EVELYN.

But—you are just out of school; aren't you?

LESLIE.

What if I am? Do you suppose I learned nothing there but French and German verbs? How ridiculous! When the teachers' backs are turned, we smoke and gamble and flirt the same as women of your kind do, and while we're not recognized adventuresses or vampires, don't think for a minute we're slow! Indeed not!

(*EVELYN puts out her cigarette and sits in chair back of table, studying* LESLIE.)

EVELYN.

What does Till think of it?

LESLIE.

(*Airily.*)

He doesn't dream of it. *Mon Dieu!* Nor mamma,

either. I'm a simple shrinking violet to them, and it's clever of me to play the part so well. At least I won't have to learn that. You see, that is exactly why I admire you so tremendously. You're up on those things, every little trick of manner and speech, and you must teach me all you know. You must!

EVELYN.

(*Slowly.*)

I'm very dense to-night or else my nerves are playing weird jokes on me. Just what is it that you think I know so much about?

LESLIE.

Men, of course! How to attract them and make them perfectly crazy over you, how to hold them even if you don't care a lot yourself, and to get rid of them gracefully, once you are through with them. It must be wonderfully fascinating sport!

EVELYN.

(*Roughly.*)

Do you realize what you are saying?

LESLIE.

Certainly I do.

EVELYN.

You can't. It isn't possible.

LESLIE.

I mean every word I have said, and you needn't treat me like a child or pretend you don't understand. I know your reputation, Eve Hempstead. (EVELYN rises and crosses to fireplace, where she stands an instant in silence. Finally she laughs, and at some length. LESLIE rises and comes down to

*curl up on couch.*) How silly of you to try to pull the wool over my eyes! Now that you've stopped bluffing, we can talk seriously, as one woman to another.

EVELYN.

*(Trying to control her laughter.)*

Yes. Can't we?

LESLIE.

And personally I consider I'm paying you quite a compliment. There aren't many women as fast as you are that I'd have anything to do with. But you are so brilliant!

EVELYN.

Thank you!

LESLIE.

*(Reflecting.)*

Let me see. What shall I ask you first?

EVELYN.

*(Gravely.)*

We must make no mistake there. A first lesson badly given does unspeakable harm to one's art.

LESLIE.

So I've heard. Suppose you start me on something simple like lying, for example.

EVELYN.

*(Doubtfully.)*

That remark betrays what an amateur you really are. You see, lying is a separate study in itself.

LESLIE.

*(Seriously.)*

Is it, indeed?

EVELYN.

It requires not only a good memory, but a most delicate technique. As a rule, I teach lying as a post-graduate course.

LESLIE.

(*Worried.*)

How unfortunate, when I need it so badly right now! But I'll tell you later about that. What would you suggest for beginners? Flirting?

EVELYN.

(*Crosses and sits beside LESLIE on the couch.*)

Excellent! Tell me what you know.

LESLIE.

I've been quite successful with bachelors. The married men seem more difficult.

EVELYN.

As a matter of fact, they are the simpler of the two. Just say, "Your wife has a sweet face. What a pity she dresses her hair that way!"

LESLIE.

I see. But why hair? Why not clothes or manners?

EVELYN.

Because a married woman's hair is no secret to her husband. Either she goes to bed with it done up in hideous curlers, or it strings out untidily of mornings. Any mention of his wife's hair to a married man touches him on a sore spot.

LESLIE.

(*Delightedly.*)

Splendid! I'll not forget! Is there anything in



particular you would like me to remember in regard to bachelors?

EVELYN.

Wind them up and let them talk about themselves. When they threaten to run down, say, "Oh, how interesting! And then what did you do?"

LESLIE.

I could hug you for all this valuable information! And you will be proud of me when you see what progress I'll make. But to go back: you must teach me to lie gracefully even if it's only a teeny bit of a lesson. Otherwise, how can I handle Till?

EVELYN.

Do you mean you want to know how to get rid of him?

LESLIE.

*(Laughing.)*

No! I am going to marry him, silly!

EVELYN.

*(After a pause.)*

I thought you loved Till.

LESLIE.

Don't be old-fashioned, Eve! I'm fond of him, of course. He is a perfect old peach, and, thank heaven, not the suspicious kind who would snoop around and try to find out things about me! The truth of the matter is that I'm awfully fond of a good time, and I want the freedom it takes to enjoy one's self thoroughly. Mamma won't give it to me, so I shall have to marry to get it. I've plenty of money; so that doesn't worry me. All that I want is

to be free—free to do as I please when and why I please; and poor old Till will be the goat.

EVELYN.

*(Rising, speaks furiously.)*

You little rotter!

LESLIE.

*(Jarred out of her complacency, surveys EVELYN shrewdly.)*

Ah! You do care!

EVELYN.

*(Trying to be nonchalant.)*

Certainly I care. Till and I grew up together. I won't have you play him for a fool if I can help it.

LESLIE.

*(Sweetly.)*

What can you do to prevent it?

EVELYN.

If necessary, I will tell him the whole thing.

LESLIE.

And do you think he would believe you and not me? I'm just an innocent little girl, you see. You are not—quite—that!

EVELYN.

*(After a pause, speaks crisply.)*

You are perfectly right. I must use other tactics. You've no heart to appeal to and only a selfish tinkle of a brain; so I'm rather at a loss.

LESLIE.

*(Yawning.)*

Don't trouble. I shan't change my plans in the least.

EVELYN.

*(Sitting again.)*

See here, Les. Be fair. Till has a future, and that future will be ruined if you kill his faith in you.

LESLIE.

I don't intend to.

EVELYN.

He would know instinctively if you deceived him. He loves you. To him you represent the ideal woman—sweet, helpful, clean-minded—a woman to fight for and to protect.

LESLIE.

It isn't a particularly difficult rôle to play.

EVELYN.

Play it with some else, but not Till. He is square and fine and sincere. If you can't be that, break the engagement. Let him go.

LESLIE.

*(Rising.)*

So that you could have him? *(Goes up to table and lights another cigarette.)*

EVELYN.

*(Humbly.)*

Lord, no! I'm not his kind.

LESLIE.

*(Puzzled.)*

Then why are you interesting yourself so in his affairs? I rather fancied you were in love with him.

EVELYN.

*(Simply.)*

I am.

LESLIE.

You had a chance to marry him once. Why didn't you take it? Why didn't you help him build up this future of his that you speak of?

EVELYN.

Because I was a coward. I was afraid of being poor. I'd always been poor, and I was afraid of it. So I failed him.

LESLIE.

Yet you expect me to do something you wouldn't do.

EVELYN.

(*Rising.*)

I didn't realize how much it meant to him or to me until later—much too late to do anything about it, and I haven't had a moment's peace since then. I fly from place to place and from one giddy adventure to another, trying to forget. I go and go until I'm ready to drop. I'm dizzy and worn out with going. I'm deadly, deadly tired— (*She regains her poise and finishes monotonously.*) All this is quite beside the point. Till deserves the best there is. Will you be the one to give it to him?

LESLIE.

(*Fretfully.*)

It would bore me into an early grave, Eve. I appreciate how you feel about it. In fact, I'm rather sorry for you. But why put it up to me? What can I do?

EVELYN.

Let him alone. Disappoint him if you must, but don't lead him into a trap and then torture him.

LESLIE.

*(Peevishly.)*

I shall marry Till; that is certain, even if I divorce him five minutes later. And you have no right to speak of me as if I were a dreadful brigand or a highwayman. I wouldn't know how to torture anyone. I'm just a child. *(EVELYN stares at her a moment and breaks into a laugh—a laugh that fairly convulses her. She clings to the back of the couch for support. LESLIE takes this laughter as a compliment and smiles.)* Although I do say some bright things; don't I? *(This threatens EVELYN with a fresh attack, and she can only nod, with her handkerchief pressed to her mouth.)* I am sure we shall be better friends than ever now. So run along and finish your nap. *(EVELYN, unable to speak, goes up left.)* Good night, darling!

EVELYN.

*(Chokingly.)*

Good night, my angel! *(Exit upstairs, left, still laughing.)*

LESLIE.

*(Disgustedly.)*

Flippant thing! *(Lights another cigarette and inhales the smoke luxuriously. As she turns her back to go up stage—)*

*RICKY enters at right in white dress and shoes, pausing in the doorway.*

RICKY.

*(Ominously.)*

You better start gnashing your old teeth.

LESLIE.

*(Turning sharply upon her.)*

You were listening to us. Why aren't you in bed?

RICKY.

*(Solemnly.)*

I'm waiting for to-morrow.

LESLIE.

I shall tell Mrs. Fownes what an eavesdropper you are.

RICKY.

She can't do nothing then. She'll be pretty busy her own self, and so will you. I guess in two more minutes you will be flapping around, wishing for a big cake of ice to set on.

LESLIE.

What are you talking about?

RICKY.

And I hope they ain't even a soda fountain down there!

LESLIE.

*(Furiously.)*

You are a stupid, impertinent little fool! *(Exit at left.)*

RICKY.

*(Under her breath.)*

You're another. *(Thinking better of this, she runs up left and calls off anxiously.)* But I forgive you *(continues absently to herself)*—as we forgive others who trespass— *(She goes to the fireplace and stirs the half-dead coals. In the silence, she becomes unnerved with sudden fear. She makes a*

*dash across stage to door at right and reaches it as—)*

OLIVER *enters, right.*

OLIVER.

Where were you going?

RICKY.

*(Hoarsely.)*

To find you. I'm afraid. I'm terrible afraid!

OLIVER.

*(Kindly.)*

Don't be, little Ricky! *(He opens his arms, and she goes to him.)* You have done your best; haven't you? *(She nods, her face pressed against his coat.)* You have fought a very hard battle—because that is what life is: a battle. And you've fought against great odds and with no encouragement. There is a sure reward for bravery; there must be. And there will be a place where lonely, tired, bruised souls may stop awhile and find rest and be comforted. *(Pauses a moment.)* Will you—will you say, "I love you"? I have never heard it.

RICKY.

*(Sobbing.)*

I love you! I do!

*(He stoops to kiss her. The clock on the mantelshelf very slowly starts to strike six. At the second chime—)*

CURTAIN





# CINDERELLA OF THE STORM

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## THIRD ACT

SCENE: *Same as in Act II, a moment later.*

*At rise of curtain, the clock is just finishing the last stroke of six. RICKY is still in OLIVER'S arms, with her head buried on his breast, and he is staring over her head toward left, tensely expectant. They hold this position a moment in silence. By degrees, the room grows lighter as day breaks. Lights off right change to yellow, and stage lights gradually come on during the ensuing scene.*

RICKY.

*(In a frightened, muffled tone.)*

What happened?

OLIVER.

*(Dazed.)*

Nothing!

*(As they listen intently, the silence grows oppressive and they instinctively grip each other more tightly. After another moment of rigid suspense on the part of both, RICKY unclasps her arms and moves away from him an awkward step or two.)*

RICKY.

Well— *(A desperate embarrassment seizes them. They avoid each other's eyes.)* I bought these slippers last summer.

OLIVER.

(*Also looking floorward.*)

I wear boots.

RICKY.

(*Politely.*)

Are they hard to break in?

OLIVER.

Not when you buy them large enough. (*They both essay a light, casual laugh, which dies a chill death.*)

RICKY.

(*Unhappily.*)

I guess I will be going. It must be getting pretty late.

OLIVER.

I have the time here. It is just (*he pulls out his watch*)—five minutes past—six! (*With a start, he compares the watch with the clock, goes to table, puts on his horn-rimmed spectacles, and catching up a sheet of paper, consults it. He speaks to himself wonderingly.*) The figures are correct. (*He stares unseeingly at RICKY.*) Is there a cosmic law of attraction and repulsion that transcends human deduction?

RICKY.

(*Humbly.*)

I don't know.

OLIVER.

(*Absently.*)

It would prove conclusively the omnipresence of an attentive intelligence—an infinitely higher one

than ours. (*He slowly tears the paper to bits and goes to the window.*) And kindlier!

RICKY.  
(*Dully.*)

It's morning. (*Her former apathy settles upon her.*)

OLIVER.

(*Looking out of the window.*)

Nature has slept quietly and trustfully, and now it wakes refreshed. All the little creatures venture forth in search of food and drink.

*Enter HARRY at right, with a pitcher of water. He stares at RICKY's white gown.*

HARRY.

What's the idea? Trying to slip over a little party on me?

RICKY.  
(*Sullenly.*)

No!

HARRY.  
(*Warningly.*)

Papa spank! Little girls must always ask papa when they want to go to a dance. Then maybe he'll go, too. (*He chucks her under the chin, and she draws away shudderingly.*)

OLIVER.  
(*Gravely.*)

I assure you we were not dancing.

HARRY.

*(Surprised.)*

Have you been up very long?

OLIVER.

I have not been to bed.

HARRY.

What! *(He looks at them both and suddenly roars with laughter.)* That's pretty good, that is! Old Ollie! *(His aching head, jarred by the laughter, causes him to sit suddenly on the couch and put a hand to his brow in pain.)*

OLIVER.

*(Puzzled.)*

Miss Ricky was kind enough to keep me company.

HARRY.

*(Leeringly.)*

She's a good-hearted little kid. Always willing to please. Ain't that right? *(RICKY bolts for right door, as he takes a swallow of water from the pitcher. He calls after her.)* Hey! Make me some coffee! Damn strong. And hurry!

RICKY.

*(Drawing a shaky breath of rebellion and despair.)*

Yes, sir!

*(Exit RICKY at right.)*

OLIVER.

*(To HARRY.)*

Need you speak in that tone?

HARRY.

*(Flippantly.)*

If I want to. I'm paying her—not you. Don't

spring any of that hero slush on me, Ollie, because the old roof won't stand another chuckle. Have a heart!

OLIVER.  
(*Slowly.*)

I can't believe that you would imply that I—that she— You didn't mean that; did you?

HARRY.  
(*Chuckling in spite of the pain.*)  
Aw, get out, Romeo! I'm on to you quiet ones.

(OLIVER walks away and comes back to him. HARRY drinks.)

OLIVER.  
(*Mildly.*)  
Shall you be sober by ten o'clock?

HARRY.  
(*Groaning.*)  
Hope so. Why?

OLIVER.  
(*Mildly.*)  
Because if you are, I intend to knock you down.

HARRY.  
(*Bewildered.*)  
Me? Knock me down?

OLIVER.  
As many times as you have strength enough left to get up again. I may also step on you. I shall decide that later.

HARRY.

*(Still bewildered.)*

Something tells me you are angry with me, Ollie.

OLIVER.

On second thought, I believe the present time is the more propitious. *(Removes his spectacles, lays them on the table, and rolls up his sleeves. HARRY watches him anxiously. OLIVER suddenly roars at him.)* Stand up!

HARRY.

*(Cringing.)*

Ouch! Don't yell at me. *(He holds his head in both hands.)*

OLIVER.

*(Startled at his own tone.)*

What remarkable vibrations the voice may be capable of! *(He growls experimentally, seems pleased at the volume, advances on HARRY, and shouts.)* Get up, you swine!

HARRY.

*(Rising, stupified.)*

See here, Ollie: if I've said anything to offend you—damn me if I know what it was!—but if I said it, I apologize.

*(OLIVER, prepared for action, is now rather at a loss.)*

OLIVER.

*(Puzzled.)*

Is that all there is to it?

HARRY.

(*Grumbling.*)

It's enough; ain't it? I apologize, and that ends it.

OLIVER.

(*Rolling down his sleeves.*)

After all, it's quite simple. (*He is apparently regretful and at the same time pleased with himself. He expands visibly, turns sharply on HARRY, and once more roars at him.*) Sit down! (*HARRY obeys. OLIVER gets pipe and tobacco from table, swaggers to fireplace, and fills pipe.*) \*

*Enter* MRS. QUAYLE *at left.*

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Alarmed.*)

Surely I heard voices raised in anger. (*She becomes angry herself.*) Have you no consideration for those of us who are trying to snatch a few moments of rest before to-morrow?

(*OLIVER's inflated pride collapses at her reference to "to-morrow."* MRS. QUAYLE *comes down left.*)

HARRY.

(*Laughing.*)

By thunder! To-day's the day. Where's your star, Ollie? Where's the little cut-up that was going to jolt us off the map?

OLIVER.

(*Simply.*)

On its way back to the sun.

HARRY.

Slipped up on you, eh? Gave you the once-over

and said, "I'm going to show this smart guy up and make a fool of him."

OLIVER.  
(*Gravely.*)

Exactly.

MRS. QUAYLE.  
(*Who has been looking from one to the other, now attacks OLIVER.*)

Did you write that ridiculous article?

OLIVER.  
Yes.

MRS. QUAYLE.  
I have no patience with you, Oliver—I, who am so tolerant of the failings of others, so broad-minded, so considerate! But this! This last visionary prank of yours is too much for me, and I am obliged to take drastic steps as a means of protection. Henceforth you may consider me as a complete stranger. (*She sits on the couch majestically.*)

OLIVER.  
I was quite sincere. I hope you will believe that. (*A chuckle from HARRY and a snort of disdain from MRS. QUAYLE. OLIVER consults his watch.*) In my calculations there may possibly be some element of resistance that I overlooked, in which case it is not yet too late for the catastrophe to occur.

MRS. QUAYLE and HARRY.  
(*Alarmed, in concert.*)

What!



OLIVER.

*(Still consulting the watch.)*

We shall not be safe for some moments.

*(The pitcher in HARRY'S hand begins to shake.)*

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Timidly.)*

You know so much more about it than we do, dear Oliver. Tell me, is there no way we could send aviators out to frighten off the thing? Surely it would not dare to approach if it realized our unfriendly attitude.

*(OLIVER, unconscious of their presence, moves his lips frowningly as he calculates. There is an instant of silence and then, off stage, the dull, heavy roar of an explosion. This sound may be produced by dropping a heavy metal or stone weight, following the crash immediately by sound of the thunder sheet.)*

HARRY.

*(Dropping the pitcher and jumping to his feet.)*  
Good God!

*(MRS. QUAYLE sinks on the couch with a scream. OLIVER runs to the window and looks at the sky. His gaze searching the landscape, lowers to the valley.)*

OLIVER.

Fownes! Your house has been blown up!

HARRY.

*(Slowly and tragically.)*

I forgot it! I forgot to put the fire out under the big tank.

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Shocked out of her fright.)*

What are you talking about?

HARRY.

*(Dazed.)*

My still! For God's sake, don't tell Enid! *(He staggers to the window to look.)*

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Rising.)*

Your evil ways have found you out, Harold. It is a judgment upon you. For myself, I hope I never see any of you again.

*As she sweeps up stage around right end of table, ENID and LESLIE enter at left.*

HARRY.

*(Agonized.)*

Sh!

LESLIE.

Oh, what was that noise?

HARRY.

Some blasting in the valley.

ENID.

*(Going toward the window.)*

Where? *(She speaks sharply to HARRY.)* Get away from there, sweetheart, and let me look.

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Pausing on up-stage side of table.)*

Your home, Enid, your beautiful home is in ruins.

ENID.

What!

MRS. QUAYLE.

And it's all Harry's fault.

ENID.

*(Facing OLIVER angrily.)*

Nothing of the sort! It is Oliver's fault. If he hadn't dragged us up here in that silly storm of his, we'd have been there to look after it. I shall never forgive you, Oliver.

*(Without a word, OLIVER detaches himself from the group at the window, crosses to left, picking up a book from the table as he goes, and sits in rocking-chair down left to read.)*

HARRY.

*(To ENID.)*

My poor little wife!

ENID.

*(Tartly.)*

Oh, shut up, darling! I never liked the place, anyway, and you'll have to buy me a better one now.

LESLIE.

Mamma, it isn't in ruins. Just the windows on this side have been shattered! Look!

ENID.

Probably there isn't a mirror or a piece of glass-ware left *(as the thought strikes her, she says pointedly to HARRY)*—or a bottle!

HARRY.

My wine cellar! (*He comes forward and drops on the couch, his head in his hands.*)

ENID.

(*Sweetly.*)

And you'll not be able to get any more, lover. You know that; don't you, you poor thing?

HARRY.

(*Gravely.*)

All that wine!

LESLIE.

(*Giggling.*)

You can thank Oliver for making you reform.

HARRY.

(*Viciously.*)

He and his "to-morrow"! Blockhead!

(*OLIVER reads on without having heard.*)

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Takes a few steps up center toward left.*)

Come Leslie!

RICKY, *having changed back to the dress worn in Act I, enters at right and stands listlessly in the doorway.*

RICKY.

Coffee!

(*MRS. QUAYLE, up center left, turns back around left end of table.*)

ENID.

Set the table in here, Ricky. Have you a table-

cloth, Oliver? (OLIVER *does not hear.*) It doesn't matter. Clear off this stuff and bring in the cups and saucers. No plates.

RICKY.

Yessum! (*She sets dully about clearing the table.*)

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Sits on left end of couch.*)

We may as well have breakfast before returning to the city. Is it possible to get a car here? Leslie cannot be seen in an evening gown at this time of the day.

ENID.

I'm in the same fix. And Harry would look rather quaint himself. Wouldn't you, dearie?

HARRY.

(*Grumbling.*)

All that good wine!

MRS. QUAYLE.

I shall not blame Oliver for the loss of our wardrobe, although a check might not be unwelcome, since we owe the disaster entirely to him.

(RICKY *throws her a look of hatred.*)

LESLIE.

Mamma! It was only a trifle of seven or eight hundred dollars.

ENID.

Oliver's bank account won't stand too heavy a strain. (*She laughs.*) I fancy he'll have trouble disposing of any future magazine articles. One doesn't forget a mistake of that sort—and such a

positive mistake! Oliver! Oliver! (OLIVER *starts up.*) Didn't you predict the end of the world today?

OLIVER.

I did; yes!

ENID.

And give the statement out to the press?

OLIVER.

Yes.

ENID.

(*Sweetly.*)

Don't you feel too silly for words? (RICKY *bites her lip and utters an exclamation under her breath.*) What is it, Ricky?

RICKY.

(*Sullenly.*)

Nothing! (*Exit at right.*)

OLIVER.

I was mistaken.

LESLIE.

(*Laughing.*)

How ingenuous you are, Oliver! For all the world like a big, awkward schoolboy!

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Severely.*)

What a pity he didn't study longer and acquaint himself with his subject more thoroughly! It is criminal to speak with authority unless one is absolutely sure.

RICKY reënters at right, with a heavy tray on which are cups and saucers, also cream pitcher and sugar bowl. OLIVER crosses and relieves her of it. She attempts a smile and goes out again at right. OLIVER sets tray on the table, takes off dishes, and puts cups and saucers around at each place.

OLIVER.

(*Apologetically.*)

A scientist is apt to blunder. There are so few tangible facts to work with.

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Irritably.*)

Then why be a scientist? Could anything be plainer than that?

DERRY enters at right.

DERRY.

Good morning! Everybody up?

RICKY follows him in, carrying a large pot of coffee which she sets on the table. DERRY crosses to warm himself before the fire.

ENID.

(*Crossly.*)

I hope you are not going to be cheerful before breakfast, Till. I can't bear it.

DERRY.

(*Laughing.*)

I expect to find all of you greeting the glad morn with chirps of joy. You are still on earth; aren't you?

ENID.

*(With contempt.)*

Oh! (ENID, MRS. QUAYLE, and LESLIE look at OLIVER with an expression of disdain.) You didn't think for a moment we believed that idiotic rot!

DERRY.

*(Kindly, sensing OLIVER's unhappiness.)*

Well, better luck next time, Keane!

OLIVER.

*(Humbly.)*

I find I know so little that I shall not attempt to express myself or teach again.

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Sharply.)*

What will you do to make a living?

OLIVER.

My needs are simple. I shall have everything I want—almost everything.

ENID.

Don't hope for anything from me.

OLIVER.

*(Without malice.)*

I never have hoped for anything from you.

DERRY.

Coffee! Jove! It smells good, too. *(He crosses to table.)*

*(RICKY is patiently waiting in background, a little up right of table.)*



MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Querulously, nodding toward coffeepot.)*

Are you never going to pour it, Enid?

ENID.

Oh, Helen! Have a little patience, for the love of heaven!

*(All gather about the table, with the exception of OLIVER, who crosses to fireplace, HARRY, who still holds his head in dull sorrow, and RICKY, who keeps her position up right.)*

DERRY.

*(To LESLIE.)*

'Morning, little girl! Did you get any rest?

LESLIE.

*(Smiling roguishly.)*

I slept the whole night through like a baby. Didn't I, mamma?

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Fondly.)*

My angel!

*(ENID pours the coffee, and RICKY passes the cups, cream, and sugar to each in turn.)*

DERRY.

What's the matter with Harry?

HARRY.

*(Groaning.)*

I paid one fifty a case for it—a hundred and fifty dollars a case!

ENID.

Harry's still just blew up the house. He is en-

joying a little grouch party just because he lost all his wine and he will have to buy me that five-acre place next the Robertsons'.

DERRY.

Is that what the noise was? (*Laughs heartily.*)

HARRY.

If Ollie hadn't hustled us off, it wouldn't have happened. Blame him!

ENID.

For once you are right, sweetheart.

LESLIE.

(*Sweetly.*)

What a lot of mistakes grown-up people make!

ENID.

Not all the grown-ups are fools, Leslie.

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Pushing back her cup in sudden alarm.*)

Merciful heavens! Has it occurred to any of you how this disgrace will rebound upon us as members of his family?

LESLIE.

We can say we don't know him, mamma!

(*DERRY looks at her in surprise.*)

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Indignantly.*)

I, his cousin, must suffer for his folly!

ENID.

I fancy we needn't worry. Oliver won't dare show himself in public for quite some time.

RICKY.

(*Raspingly.*)

Gimme a cup of coffee.

ENID.

(*Staring at her, displeased, before she answers.*)

Please! You will wait until we have finished.

RICKY.

I don't want it for myself. I want it for him.  
(*She indicates OLIVER, and ENID unwillingly pours the coffee and gives the cup to RICKY.*)

ENID.

(*Acidly.*)

If he had any manners he would sit at the table with us. Do you take cream and sugar, Oliver? Oliver!

OLIVER.

(*Turning to her.*)

Cream, thanks!

ENID.

There isn't any more. You will have to do without. (RICKY crosses to him with the cup, which he accepts absently. She hesitates and crosses slowly toward right door.) Come here and sit down like a gentleman. I'm sick of your clownish ways. (OLIVER starts toward the table obediently.)

RICKY.

(*Whirling about quickly and speaking in a choked, furious voice.*)

Don't do it! You're too good for 'em.

(*There is a startled movement from all the others.*)

ENID.

(*Rising.*)

That will do, Ricky! You may go.

RICKY.

(*Blind with rage.*)

I'll go when I get good and ready!

ENID.

You must be mad!

RICKY.

If I am, you drove me to it, picking on him the way you been doing! Ain't you got any heart, any of you?

ENID.

(*Furiously.*)

Leave this room!

RICKY.

Don't you s'pose he knows he made a mistake? Is that any reason why you should rub it in like this and kick him when he's down? That ain't fair. He done the best he could. They ain't one of you that ain't made mistakes—worse ones than he ever thought of making, because he's white!

ENID.

(*Ominously.*)

What do you mean by this?

RICKY.

I mean you—and you and you! (*Turns to one after another.*) The whole outfit of you. You (*looks at ENID*) ain't got any right to live with your husband and hate him like you do. Ain't that a mistake? And she (*pointing to MRS. QUAYLE*)

thinks she's a good woman when she's nothing but a nasty-minded old hypocrite!

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Rising.)*

You little beast!

RICKY.

*(Rushing recklessly on.)*

And she's *(pointing to LESLIE)* a rotter. Miss Eve said so last night when she heard her say she was going to marry him *(pointing to DERRY)* and make a goat out of him!

LESLIE.

*(Jumping to her feet.)*

It's a lie!

RICKY.

You know it ain't a lie.

DERRY.

*(Rising uneasily.)*

You are going a bit too far, Ricky.

RICKY.

Don't you make a mistake, Mr. Derry.

HARRY.

*(Rising and addressing RICKY savagely.)*

Get out!

RICKY.

*(Turning on HARRY.)*

You! You've tried to kiss me for the last time!

OLIVER.

Rikki-tikki!

(RICKY, brought sharply out of her fury, looks first at him and then at the others. Her chin quivers impotently.)

RICKY.

(Facing the table.)

I'm sorry.

ENID.

(Coldly.)

You may go at once. I shall not need your services after to-day.

RICKY.

Yessum. Thank you. (Exit at right with dragging footsteps. OLIVER places his cup of untouched coffee on the mantelshelf and stares after her.)

MRS. QUAYLE.

I have never been so startled in my whole life. Is the child crazy?

ENID.

Ungrateful imp! After all I've done for her. (Comes down and takes HARRY by the arm angrily.) Is it true, darling?

HARRY.

Is what true, my love?

ENID.

What she said about your trying to kiss her?

HARRY.

(Indignantly.)

No!

ENID.

How disappointing! I should have got a sable coat out of you.

DERRY.

*(Who has been watching LESLIE gravely.)*

What on earth gave her such an idea about you?

LESLIE.

*(Innocently.)*

I can't imagine unless she dreamed it. *(She throws him a hurt, beseeching glance.)* You—you believe it!

DERRY.

*(Patting her hand.)*

No, honey! Don't I know you?

LESLIE.

*(Going to her mother tearfully.)*

Mamma! Till doubts me! I am so unhappy!

MRS. QUAYLE.

*(Gathering her in her arms and turning dramatically to DERRY.)*

Tilden! Would you, can you suspect this pure lily?

DERRY.

*(Genuinely ashamed.)*

I am a cad. Forgive me, baby.

LESLIE.

*(Waving him away.)*

No! You have hurt me too deeply. Perhaps—in time—

ENID.

Oh, let's break away from here and go back to town! This thing is getting on my nerves.

OLIVER.

*(Trying to be hospitable.)*

Don't rush! I'm sure I've enjoyed—

*(ENID sniffs coldly.)*

HARRY.

Can we get a car?

DERRY.

Ours is all right. I went down the road this morning and looked it over. There is plenty of gas and everything.

ENID.

Then for heaven's sake, let's go! This place gives me the creeps!

OLIVER.

Is there anything I—?

ENID.

*(Shortly.)*

No! *(She goes up center.)* Everybody ready?

DERRY.

Where is Eve?

ENID.

*(Coming down again.)*

I hadn't missed her. *(Crosses to right door and calls.)* Ricky!

*RICKY enters listlessly at right.*



RICKY.

Yes, ma'am?

ENID.

*(Peremptorily.)*

Call Mrs. Hempstead! We are leaving.

RICKY.

Yes, ma'am. *(Crosses up to left door and exit upstairs.)*

MRS. QUAYLE.

That is always the way with women who claim to suffer from insomnia. They sleep until noon.

LESLIE.

But mamma! Poor Eve didn't get to bed until after five. Neither of us— *(She catches herself.)* Neither of us slept because she woke me up coming in.

ENID.

If Eve gadded about less, she would be as normal as any of us. They say her wildness actually killed poor Jack. He gave her everything, too. Eve was a pauper and should have appreciated a noble soul like his, even if he did take drugs.

HARRY.

I don't do that. *(To ENID.)* Do I, dearest?

ENID.

*(Sharply.)*

Not yet, sweetie!

LESLIE.

*(Dimpling.)*

How strange this big, beautiful world is!

DERRY.

*(Humbly to LESLIE.)*

I hope you will always stay just a little, little girl.

LESLIE.

You don't want me to be—clever—like Eve?

*(DERRY hesitates.)*

*Enter RICKY at left, panic-stricken.*

RICKY.

She's dead!

*(This announcement has the effect of paralyzing the others for a moment. Then DERRY leaps to his feet.)*

DERRY.

My poor old girl! *(He runs up left, brushes RICKY aside, and goes out at left door.)*

ENID.

Phone for a doctor, Oliver. *(OLIVER hurries out at center, and his voice is heard in an indistinct murmur, vainly trying to get the operator.)* Where did you find her, Ricky? What was it? What did she do?

RICKY.

*(Trembling.)*

I knocked on the door, and they wasn't no answer. Then I opened it a teeny bit and seen she was asleep. I was going to close it again, only she scared me the way she was lying on the bed with her hands crossed like a—like somebody dead. And she was so still! Next thing I seen a little bottle on the table by her. It had folded white papers in it like headache pow-

ders, and some of 'em was gone. I run over and tried to wake her. She—she—she— (*Unable to go on, she sobs.*)

LESLIE.  
(*Sharply.*)

Suicide!

(*ENID leaves the group and goes out hastily at left.*)

MRS. QUAYLE.  
Whatever could have prompted such an action?

RICKY.  
(*Blazing at LESLIE.*)  
You made her do it!

(*LESLIE, genuinely frightened, backs toward her mother for protection.*)

MRS. QUAYLE.  
(*Throwing an arm about LESLIE.*)  
My child?

RICKY.  
(*Contemptuously.*)  
She ain't a child. She knows enough to be a wicked ol' grandmother!

LESLIE.  
Mamma! Don't let her say such things!

MRS. QUAYLE.  
(*Drawing herself up and speaking commandingly to RICKY.*)

Cease!

RICKY.  
And when she gets to be a grandmother, I hope she don't even have children!

ENID and DERRY, supporting EVELYN on either side, enter at left. RICKY flies to fix the couch. EVELYN is pale and stupefied. She essays a smile.

EVELYN.

Please don't bother.

ENID.

(To DERRY.)

Get her to the couch. Some water, Harry! (HARRY crosses and goes out at right. She raises her voice and calls.) Oliver!

OLIVER enters at center.

OLIVER.

Central doesn't answer. How is she?

EVELYN.

Quite all right. Just—tired! (She sits on the couch, her head dropping against the back of it. RICKY, kneeling in front of EVELYN, chafes the latter's hands. OLIVER pours a cup of coffee and brings it down to her. DERRY takes it from him and bends over EVELYN, offering it to her.)

MRS. QUAYLE.

(To ENID in a lowered voice.)

What was it?

ENID.

Veronal!

LESLIE.

A drug fiend! How dreadful of her!

(DERRY looks at LESLIE with sharp displeasure. EVELYN begins to laugh weakly.)

DERRY.

*(To EVELYN, commandingly.)*

Drink this down! *(He holds the coffee to her lips.)*

EVELYN.

I don't want it, Till. I want to sleep; that's all.

DERRY.

You are not going to sleep. Understand? Drink this. *(Obediently she drinks.)* How much of that stuff did you take?

EVELYN.

Only ten grains. I'd never taken any before. I was so tired, perhaps that is why it— *(Her voice trails off drowsily.)*

DERRY.

*(Relieved.)*

Ten grains isn't enough to hurt her. Another cup of coffee, Keane. *(OLIVER takes the cup and refills it. DERRY sits beside EVELYN and draws her head to his shoulder.)* Listen, honey! Don't you know you shouldn't frighten us like this? Remember: We love you.

*(EVELYN laughs again weakly.)*

EVELYN.

Love! *(Suddenly hides her face against his coat and sobs brokenly.)*

DERRY.

*(Holding her close.)*

Sh! Eve dear!

LESLIE.

*(Angrily, to DERRY.)*

Do you expect me to stand calmly by and watch this maudlin exhibition? What right have you, my fiancé, to hold another woman in your arms and tell her that you love her—a woman whose affairs are known from the Country Club to the Exchange?

DERRY.

*(Catching LESLIE up sharply.)*

That will do!

LESLIE.

*(Furiously.)*

A woman who had the effrontery to tell me, not two hours ago in this very room, that she was in love with you and had always been!

DERRY.

Eve? *(Rises.)*

LESLIE.

*(Mockingly.)*

Eve! Telling me how to flirt and lie and deceive you!

RICKY.

*(Seated on the floor and speaking to LESLIE.)*

You asked her to.

DERRY.

*(To LESLIE, looking from one to the other.)*

Then you were down here in the night.

LESLIE.

*(Biting her lip.)*

Certainly I was.

DERRY.

(*Sternly.*)

Why did you lie about it? Don't you know that I shall suspect you from now on—that I'll doubt everything you say?

LESLIE.

(*Tearing the ring from her finger and throwing it on the floor.*)

You'll not get the chance! Take your cheap ring! I've always been ashamed of it.

*She flounces up center as HARRY enters at right with a glass of water.*

MRS. QUAYLE.

(*Surveying the others forbiddingly.*)

I bid you good morning. (*Sweeps up stage to join LESLIE.*)

ENID.

(*Exasperated.*)

Good-bye! (*To HARRY.*) Take them to the station in the car, darling, and hurry! Good-bye, Leslie!

LESLIE.

(*Coldly.*)

Humph!

(*Exeunt LESLIE and MRS. QUAYLE at center, followed by HARRY. DERRY, dazed, reseats himself at EVELYN'S side.*)

ENID.

(*Sharply.*)

Get up, Ricky! (*RICKY scrambles up hastily.*)

Take out those cups and saucers and the coffeepot. We've got to clear up this place and get into town.

RICKY.

(*Timidly.*)

Are you going to let me go back with you?

ENID.

(*Crossly.*)

Certainly not! Didn't I discharge you?

RICKY.

I don't know if I could walk to the station. It's pretty far.

ENID.

You should have thought of that before being so impertinent.

RICKY.

Leo will miss me.

ENID.

Do as I tell you.

RICKY.

Yessum!

(*She goes to the table to gather up a tray of dishes. OLIVER follows her with the evident idea of saying something comforting. His mouth opens once or twice, but he remains awkwardly silent. RICKY, her head bent in humiliation, does not see this. He follows her to right door, as she exits. Meanwhile DERRY and ENID give their attention to EVELYN.*)

ENID.

Get her up, Till. She can sleep in the car going back. We'll go down the road and meet Harry.



DERRY.  
(*Gently.*)

Eve!

EVELYN.  
(*Making an effort, raises herself and speaks wearily but happily.*)

It was nothing. I am wide awake.

DERRY.  
(*Significantly.*)

And so am I—now! (*He kisses her hand and helps her to her feet. They go slowly around left end of couch and up center left, with his arm around her. ENID is about to follow them, then pauses and looks back.*)

ENID.

Oliver! (*OLIVER, who is still gazing blankly at right door, starts to her.*) I suppose we must make some return for your hospitality. There is room in the car. Come with us for lunch.

OLIVER.  
(*Formally.*)

Will you excuse me? An old chum of mine, the Rev. Bartley Summers, wrote me he would be here before noon. Naturally I didn't expect him, on account of—of—

EVELYN.  
(*At center doorway.*)

To-morrow? Thank you for this to-morrow, Oliver!

DERRY.  
(*Coming down center, shakes hands with OLIVER heartily.*)

Good-bye, Keane! It was Cupid, after all! (*He and EVELYN go out at center.*)

ENID.

(*Disgustedly, as she goes up to center door.*)

Cupid! The fat little beast! (*Exit at center.*)

OLIVER *makes a hasty movement toward right door, and at the slow opening of it, retreats in a panic of embarrassment toward the fireplace. RICKY enters at right, leading LEO. She is wearing her hat. Her bundle containing the white dress and shoes is under her arm.*

RICKY.

(*Timidly.*)

Good-bye, Mr. Keane!

OLIVER.

(*Awkwardly.*)

Er—

RICKY.

Yes, sir! Thank you, sir. (*Crosses up center, behind table, turns, drops Leo's leash, and, leaving him, comes back to OLIVER. Her embarrassment is equal to his.*) I got something that belongs to you. I ain't giving it back the way Miss Quayle did to Mr. Derry because I—I—didn't have any right to it in the first place. (*Takes his ring from her finger.*) Only that you was lonesome and thought it was all up with both of us made you do it. I know that. So you don't need to say, "I'm sorry," or "Wasn't I the darn fool?" or anything else. Just take it, and I'll pretend like I ain't looking. It's a pretty ring. (*Holds it out, and automatically he takes it and*

*looks at it dumbly. She hesitates painfully and then blurts out.)* I hope the woman that gets it some day will be just the kind of a party you want. I wish to goodness it was me, but it ain't. (*Turns and goes very slowly up to center door.*)

OLIVER.

(*Desperately.*)

Rikki-tikki! D-d-d-don't g-g-g-go!

RICKY.

(*Turning back and speaking before the words are out of his mouth.*)

All right!

CURTAIN

# Sweetwater Trail

BY

LARRY E. JOHNSON

COMEDY in 3 acts; 7 men, 6 women. Time, 2½ hours. Scene: 1 interior.

## CHARACTERS

Captain Terry O'Rourke.....A secret service man  
Colonel Randolph .....  
.....An officer of the Royal Mounted Police  
Mrs. Sheldon .....A widow  
Pomona.....The Randolph's hired girl  
Gabby Lon Peters.....Foreman of the Marlow ranch  
Jo Grosjean.....The Canuck cook at the Randolph's  
Dan Marlow.....A ranch owner  
Jeffrey Benson....A lieutenant in the Mounted Police  
Annie Crowfoot.....An educated Indian girl  
Vera Randolph.....The Colonel's daughter  
Stella Coleson } .....Vera's bridesmaids  
Della Coleson }  
Wully McCallum...A sergeant in the Mounted Police

Unless Vera Randolph is married by midnight of the day before her twenty-fourth birthday, she must forfeit a large estate, left to her in a freak will, and the property goes to the young lieutenant of the Royal Mounted Police, a black sheep, whom she is planning to marry. At the eleventh hour the groom-elect exhibits his natural caddishness, and the bride promptly breaks off the marriage, only to discover that her precious lieutenant had not intended to marry her, anyway. Furious at being double-crossed, she hastily digs up another bridegroom, a young rancher from up Sweetwater Trail, and a midnight wedding is solemnized. Fireworks! The double-crosser finding himself double-crossed in his efforts to seize the coveted fortune, attempts to break the marriage, and is fought at every step by the doughty young rancher. Bad blood between the two men culminates in an apparently fatal quarrel, but a sudden surprising twist in the action turns a would-be tragic ending into comedy. A breezy drama of the Canadian Northwest, full of stirring situations and typical Johnson humor.

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**T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers**

623 South Wabash Avenue

CHICAGO

# The Winding Road

BY  
LILLIAN MORTIMER

COMEDY-DRAMA in 3 acts; 5 men, 5 women. Time, 2¼ hours. Scene: 1 interior.

## CHARACTERS

Camilla Ray.....An orphan in search of a mother  
Billie Ray .....Her brother, ditto  
Pansy Black.....An ebony treasure  
Mrs. Lily Mason (Mother).....  
.....A good imitation of the real thing  
Dick Mason, alias Johnny Harrison .....  
.....Not what he seems  
Sheriff Theodosia Flicker.....The law in petticoats  
Skidwell Flicker (Skid).....The sheriff's husband  
Kay Elliston.....With a problem and a secret  
Ralph Gladden.....In love with Kay  
Jim Smith.....An ungrateful (?) son

"Wanted: a Mother!" Thus runs the newspaper advertisement inserted by the orphans, Billy and Camilla Ray, in their search for a good old-fashioned mother to take the place of their own lost parent. And what a dear, motherly old soul it is that answers the advertisement! Billy and Camilla are enraptured with her. She is also welcomed by their friend, the genial old village philosopher. In reality, however, she is the wife and accomplice of a notorious crook—none other than the good village philosopher himself, who has settled in this quiet country town in order to establish an alibi, preparatory to making a rich haul among the New Year's Eve crowds in Philadelphia, with her aid and that of their son. Their daughter, who has run away from home to escape a life of crime and now earns her living by honest work, enters upon a dramatic struggle with her crooked parents, urging them to abandon their life of crime, and manages to win her brother over to her side. Suddenly the hand of fate decides the contest. An almost fatal accident turns the old couple from their shady career. A stirring play, breathless with suspense and full of strong heart interest, with two charming love affairs woven into the plot.

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**T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers**

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CHICAGO

# What Anne Brought Home

BY  
LARRY E. JOHNSON

COMEDY in 3 acts; 5 men, 4 women. Time, 2½ hours. Scene: 1 interior.

## CHARACTERS

Sam Bennet.....A small-town lumber merchant  
Mrs. Hattie Bennet.....His wife  
Alma Bennet.....His youngest daughter  
Herb Hardcastle...Alma's young man, with ambitions  
Henry Bennet.....Sam's brother  
Anne Bennet Purdy.....Sam's second daughter  
Dudley Purdy.....What Anne brought home  
Nina Bennet.....Sam's eldest daughter  
J. T. Raymond .....  
....General manager of an electric power company

Fresh from a prosperous run on Broadway and a remarkably successful career in professional stock, this capital comedy of small-town life well deserves its popularity with the theater-going public. What Anne brings home from Valpo, to the consternation of her family, is a brand new husband, with whom she settles down in an already overcrowded household. Henceforward, Dudley, the young husband, has to sleep with the cranky Uncle Henry and endure the gibes of his in-laws, who make no secret of their contempt for him and sneer at his pet project of establishing a fish farm. The truth is that as a go-getter Dudley is a total loss. Nevertheless he persists in the fish farm enterprise, in the interest of which he secures an option on some property of his father-in-law, thereby temporarily blocking the sale of the land to a power-company magnate and incurring the wrath of not only the in-laws but Anne herself. How he finally manages to put over a big deal with the magnate, straighten out two tangled love affairs, placate the in-laws, and square himself with Anne are details of as vividly human and humorous a story as ever delighted an audience. Cast has a rich variety of comedy types including Anne's matter-of-fact mother; her dryly humorous father; Herb, the swaggering go-getter; and the irascible Uncle Henry, whose particular bug is "cramberry" culture.

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CHICAGO

# HILARIOUS FARCE COMEDIES

## *A Busy Honeymoon*

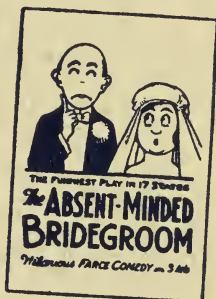


Farce-comedy in 3 acts, by LARRY E. JOHNSON; 6 m., 6 w. Time, 2½ hrs. *Scene:* 1 interior. Princess Alma of Deleria, on a visit to the United States, outwits her scheming royal mamma and elopes with a young crown prince, thereby starting a chain of thrilling events. Uproariously funny. Royalty, fifteen dollars. Price, 50 Cents

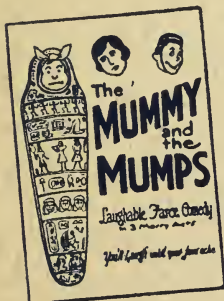
## *The Absent-Minded Bridegroom*

Farce in 3 acts, by LARRY E. JOHNSON; 6 m., 6 w. Time, 2½ hrs. *Scene:* 1 interior. Tim Shea, to escape impending marriage, pretends to lose his memory and assumes a false identity. The persistence of the bride and the appearance of a pseudo-wife and three children pile up trouble for him and laughs for the audience. Royalty, ten dollars.

Price, 50 Cents



## *The Mummy and the Mumps*



Farce in 3 acts, by LARRY E. JOHNSON; 5 m., 5 w. Time, 2½ hrs. *Scene:* 1 interior. To evade quarantine for the mumps, Sir Hector Fish has himself expressed to the ladies' seminary, in which he is to teach, inside the mummy case he is bringing from Egypt, only to find another Hector in the field. Hilarious complications arise. Royalty, fifteen dollars. Price, 50 Cents

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# Denison's Royalty Plays

—have been carefully selected for their high degree of dramatic strength and their practicable acting qualities. The majority of them have been specially written for amateurs by experienced playwrights with professional successes to their credit. The plays have been edited with unusual care, particularly as to stage directions, which are so complete, clearly expressed, and easily understood that they almost direct themselves. Above all, the Denison royalty plays have the swift movement, the humor, and the emotional qualities that appeal strongly to young players and grip the attention of audiences throughout an evening's entertainment.



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