

PT 1817

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Star Series

Price 15¢



WHO TOLD THE LIE



CHICAGO:
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Is the Editor In, farce. 20 min.	4 2	Ticket of Leave Man, drama, 4 acts, 2 hrs. 45 min.	8
I'll Stay Awhile, farce, 20 min.	4 0	Turn Him Out, farce, 50 min.	3
Ici on Parle Francais, farce, 40 m.	4 3	Toodles, drama, 2 acts, 1 hr. 15 m.	6
I'm not Meself at All, farce, 25 m.	3 2	Ten Nights in a Barroom, temperance drama, 5 acts, 2 hrs.	11
John Smith, farce, 30 min.	5 3	Two Ghosts in White, sketch 25 m	0
Just my Luck, farce, 20 min.	4 3	Uncle Dick's Mistake, farce, 20 m	3
Kansas Immigrants, farce, 20 m.	5 1	Under the Laurels, drama, 5 acts, 1 hr. 45 min.	5
Kiss in the Dark, farce, 30 m.	2 3	Wanted a Correspondent, farce, 1 h	4
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Larkins' Love Letters, farce, 50 m.	3 2	Won at Last, comedy, 3 acts, 1 hr. 45 m	7
Lady of Lyons, 5 acts. 2 hrs. 30 m.	8 4	Wonderful Letter, farce, 25 min.	4
Limerick Boy, farce, 30 min.	5 2	Women of Lowenburg, historical sketch, 5 scenes. 50 min.	10
Lost in London, drama, 3 acts, 1 h. 45 min.	6 3	Wooing Under Difficulties, 35 min.	4
London Assurance, comedy, 5 acts, 2 hrs. 30 min.	9 3	Yankee Detective, 3 acts, 2 hrs.	8
Lucky Sixpence, farce, 30 min.	4 2		
Lucy's Old Man, sketch, 15 min.	2 3		
Michael Erle, drama, 2 acts, 1 hr. 30 min.	8 3		
Mike Donovan, a farce, 15 min.	1 3		
Mitsu-Yu Nissi, Japanese Wedding, 1 hr., 15 min.	6 6		
Model of a Wife, farce, 25 min.	3 2		
Movement Cure, farce, 15 min.	5 0		
Mrs Gamp's Tea, sketch, 15 min.	0 2		
Misses Beers, farce, 25 min.	3 3		
My Wife's Relations, comedy, 1 hr	4 6		
Jeremiah, farce, 20 min.	3 2		
Turn Next, farce. 50 min.	4 3		
Neighbor's Wife, farce, 45 min	3 3		
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DENISON, Publisher, 163 Randolph St., Chicago

WHO TOLD THE LIE?

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

Roderich
ADAPTED FROM THE GERMAN OF BENEDIX BY
" "

HILTON BURNSIDE SONNEBORN,

AUTHOR OF "THE WEDDING TRIP," "THE WOMAN HATER," ETC.

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CHICAGO:
T. S. DENISON, Publisher,
163 RANDOLPH STREET.

(1190)

PT 1817
B8 Z 36

CAST.

EDITH STEVENS.....A Young Heiress.
 EX-JUDGE BEVERLY ROBINSON.....
A Prominent Lawyer, her Guardian.
 MRS. CARROLL.....The Housekeeper (one who knows it all.)
 MORTIMER HURD.....A Labor Agitator.
 DENNIS BYRNES.....Hod-carrier and Walking Delegate.
 FRITZ RUECKER.....Brewer and Socialist.
 MINNIE.....A Servant.

CAPTAIN OF POLICE.

SCENE—A well-furnished Parlor.

PERIOD—First of May. TIME—7 P. M.

Duration of Performance, 45 minutes.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R means right, as the actor faces the audience; *L*, left; *C*, center; *R C*, right center; *D F*, door in flat; *R U E*, right upper entrance, etc.

Can be played in any ordinary room.

WHO TOLD THE LIE?

SCENE.—A richly tapestried room and elegant furniture. Principal entrance at back R. C. doors, R. and L.; window, R. In front of sofa L., a small table with burning lamp. At back, C. table with candlesticks to the R. of sofa and sewing table.

EDITH sitting on sofa, crocheting; at her side EX-JUDGE ROBINSON.

ROBINSON. And you persist with your "No?"

EDITH. I persist.

ROBINSON. What counter arguments do you offer to all my logical reasoning?

EDITH. I have but *one* answer—which answers all: I do not love you!

ROBINSON (*offended*). You do not love me! *Wherein* have I made myself so objectionable to you; *wherein* merited your hatred?

EDITH. Oh, how you exaggerate! *Who* spoke of *hatred*? You are my guardian, have *faithfully* managed my estate—have educated and *protected* me; for *all* that I feel very grateful. I admire and honor you; but *this* gratitude, admiration, and so on, is *not* love, at least *not* the love which *I* must feel for a husband.

ROBINSON (*excitedly*). From your dissertation on love, you lead me to suppose that you have already tasted its sweets. (EDITH *turns her head to one side*.)

ROBINSON. You live in seclusion; as far as I know, do not associate with men. Answer me, Edith, have you ever experienced love?

EDITH (*striking an attitude and cunning*). Ex-Judge and guardian, when you *once* get to be gray-haired, then you can exact love confessions from young girls!

ROBINSON. But you are my ward.

EDITH (*smiling*). Yes, but my *heart* is *not* under *your* guardianship.

ROBINSON (*watching her*). Your repartee is good; I like your cunning replies, but be sensible, Edith! All your objections to me are merely youthful imaginations. Consider—and you will find it best to give me your hand and heart. (*Calmly*.) I am but forty years of age, have a well-paying clientage, and am familiar with the management of you—

EDITH (*interrupting*). Why rehearse what we have so often disposed of? You know I appreciate all the points in your favor. Thousands of girls would consider themselves happy, *indeed*, to become your wife; you see, my mind is *entirely* on *your* side!

ROBINSON (*surprised and anxious*). Well?

EDITH. But my heart is *not*! And, strange to say, whenever there

has been a dispute in me between mind and heart, the mind *always* has yielded. Have you never heard of similar cases?

ROBINSON (*perplexed, pauses; then with melo-dramatic intensity*). About eight years ago your father departed from this world, and left me guardian over you and Charles. His last words were (*solemnly*): "Beverly, tried and proven friend! I trust into *your* hands the fate of my children. Perhaps you may some day win Edith's heart. I will bless your union from above!"

EDITH (*seriously*). Do not quote my good father; his memory is too dear.

ROBINSON (*impressively*). But, Edith, it was his *will* that *you* should become my wife.

EDITH (*aggravatingly*). As you still insist on harping on my father's words, I will tell you my opinion: My father was too good and sensible to interfere with the future life of his children, and I do *honor* to the will of the departed by following *my own* convictions.

ROBINSON (*emphatically*). They are his *own* words, "Perhaps you may some day win Edith's heart."

EDITH (*cneerfully*). Yes. But this *perhaps* has not taken place; you have *not* won my heart.

ROBINSON. Pshaw! Edith, you are continually speaking of love, heart, or some such thing. (*Angrily*.) I have long suspected—

EDITH (*astonishedly*). Suspected!

ROBINSON (*watching her intently—then affectionately*). Since your father's demise, I have looked upon you as the woman who would some day be my wife. I have, so to say, educated you for this purpose, and—you *knew it*, Edith—and have never shown the least sign of objection to my wish. To-day, for the first time in eight long years, I give utterance to this latent feeling, and you absolutely and decidedly—

EDITH (*interrupting*). Your decided wooing calls for a decided answer.

ROBINSON (*vexed*). Aha! I have long suspected—

EDITH (*interrupting*). Who?

ROBINSON. Mr. Mortimer Hurd!

(EDITH remains silent.)

ROBINSON. You remain silent? Aha! my suspicions are verified by *that* silence! (*Tragically*.) Now I understand it all; no wonder you remained for hours in your brother's room. (*Points to L.*) Yes, (*sneering*), the noise on the street amused you; the view from here to the garden (*points to the window*) was so tiring, so *ennuyant*.

EDITH (*saucily*). And have I not a perfect *right* in my brother's room?

ROBINSON (*pauses—then jumping up*). To sum up: You prefer a stranger to an old and proven friend.

EDITH. I did not say so.

ROBINSON (*reseats himself*). Hm! when does a girl say what she means?

EDITH (*ironically*). Why, *you yourself* taught me, "One should not say all one knows."

ROBINSON (*losing his self-command and jumping up from sofa—tragically*). Enough, Edith! I accept the fact—I rest my case. Your fortune is to be managed by that fellow, Mortimer Hurd—a man who

seeks notoriety as candidate of the Labor party— (*bitterly*) this blood-thirsty socialist is to occupy the place made vacant by your father's trusted friend—

EDITH (*anxiously*). Why, what are you talking about? I have not said a—

ROBINSON (*interrupting*). I know it without *your* confession; but remember, Edith, I *still* have a word to say. Without *my* consent you *cannot* marry!

EDITH (*impressively*). Ex-Judge Beverly Robinson and Trustee of the Stevens' Estate! (*Intonates every word.*) *To-morrow* is my birthday—*to-morrow* I will be of age. (*Shows him the watch triumphantly.*) Still five hours! At midnight your reign ends!

ROBINSON. But, Edith! be sensible—yield!

EDITH. But, Mr. Guardian, *you* be sensible, *you* yield!

Enter MINNIE C., dressed neatly in calico dress, apron and cap.

MINNIE (*out of breath*). Oh, Judge! Oh, Judge!

ROBINSON. What is the trouble?

MINNIE (*fidgeting about in great excitement*). Revolt! Massacre! Shooting!

EDITH. Shooting?

MINNIE. Yes, Judge, the entire town is in uproar; mobs are forming at every corner. The militia is being called out. Come to the front to hear the shooting!

ROBINSON. And I must be off to take charge of my company!

EDITH. And am I to remain without a protector? Will these labor difficulties never be adjusted? Oh, if only Charley were home!

ROBINSON. Ah! you see how necessary my presence seems to you now. I shall be back soon. (*Drumming is heard.*)

MINNIE (*at the window*). Oh, Judge, do you hear them drumming?

ROBINSON. Yes, that's the last call. Confounded peace disturbers! One is not master of one's own time. Good-night, Edith! I will send you word how matters progress. (*Exit rapidly C.*)

MINNIE (*importantly and aside*). How my nerves are shocked! But I am getting used to these alarms—no end to this continual uproar. I'll wager the police get worsted this time!

EDITH. How will it all end! The idea of equal rights is a proper and noble one; but why must it be enforced by bloodshed—at the cost of human lives?

MINNIE (*at window*). Don't be afraid, Miss (*pointing*), there is a gang of mischievous boys creating this noise.

EDITH. Yes, but it may grow serious. It always commences in this way; oh, how I shudder to think of blood. If only Charley were back, I would go far away from here—the scenes of strife!

MINNIE (*important—laughs*). But where would you go? There isn't a quiet spot anywhere—why, even in military Germany there are disturbances. But speaking of your brother reminds me of the letter I have for you, which was left. (*Hands her the letter and walks to L.*)

EDITH (*examining letter*). Not by mail! Oh, no. (*Reads.*) Through courtesy of M. M. (*To MINNIE.*) Where are you going?

MINNIE. In Mr. Charles' room, to get a better view and see what is going on. Back here one is entirely cut off from the world.

EDITH. All right; but leave the light, because the mob would certainly smash in the windows, if they were lit up.

(MINNIE places light on table and exit L.)

EDITH (*alone—opens letter and scans contents*). In only four weeks he will return. Oh, that's an eternity! I will yet have many a hard rub with my guardian. (*Pausing*). Oh, yes, Mr. Guardian, you are a clever fellow; but I am shrewd enough to see through you: your principal motive in courting me is to get possession of my money—the girl is secondary. But, you see, I know the value of this little person, and will wait for a man who will marry the girl and to whom the money is secondary. (*Frightens*.) Hark! what do I hear? Voices in the garden! (*Walks unconcerned to the window, opens it and retreats hastily to the sofa, shouting; puts letter on sewing table.*)

EDITH (*in agony and terror*). Good God! who is that?

Enter DENNIS BYRNES through window; he is dressed in blue overalls and jumper, has turkey red bandana, and sandy whiskers.

BYRNES. Don't yer yell, missus; I'll not hurt yer!

EDITH. But how dare you intrude?

BYRNES. Do not git scared, marm! (*Jumps into the center of the room and admiringly gazes about.*) It's a foine plaze, to be shure!

EDITH (*nervously*). But what do you want—pray tell me! (*Frantic*.) And here's more.

Enter FRITZ RUECKER, through window; he wears light jean pants, velvet vest, red flannel shirt—has neither coat nor hat on—panting and trembling.

RUECKER. Ai vos innocent, Madomm! Ai shwear so!

EDITH (*agitated*). I shall call for help. (*Runs toward rear, but is intercepted by BYRNES.*)

BYRNES (*stops her without hurting her*). Begging yer parding, we're not tiefs—we're strikers—sure, we are that!

RUECKER (*comes closer*). Yes, Madomm! We're vos shtrikers, and ai haf a families of seven childrens!

EDITH (*indignant and calling violently*). Minnie! Minnie!

BYRNES. But missus, be carm, and Oi'll tark to yer.

Re-enter MINNIE, L.

MINNIE. What is up here?

EDITH. Come over here, dear Minnie, to me. Look at these strange men—they came through the window.

MINNIE. We can soon help ourselves. Company A of the 7th Regiment has just made a halt before our door—I'll call them! (*Starts for the door.*)

BYRNES (*holds her*). Ah, don't yer do it, marm—Oi'm an honest man!

RUECKER. Oh, I shwear! Ai haf never shtole anydinks—Ai was an honest mann! De odders I don know.

MORTIMER HURD (*appears in window, well dressed*). Pst! Pst!
 EDITH. Still another! (*Recognizes him.*) Oh!

Enter MORTIMER HURD—jumps through window.

MORTIMER (*surprised*). Where am I?

MINNIE. In a regular circus! Ha! ha!

MORTIMER (*hurriedly walks toward EDITH*). Pardon me! I was not aware that I was intruding upon you. Can you ever forgive me for this untimely invasion?

(*BYRNES is acting sentinel, refusing to let MINNIE escape, RUECKER is kneeling before EDITH with folded hands. MINNIE stands behind EDITH*)

EDITH (*majestically*). Sir! At *this* hour? In *this* manner? And in *this* company?

MORTIMER (*agitated*). Two words will explain our position—you can then pass sentence upon the guilty. The police were clubbing a mob at the square, and we were unfortunately looking on; as usual, the lookers-on—

RUECKER (*interruptingly*). Yea, I alvess voss unfortunated!

MORTIMER (*continuing*). Were arrested, and the participants and real assailants of the police managed to get away. As I said, we were arrested and escorted toward the jail; but the posse was again attacked at Drummond Avenue, and we succeeded in running away, although they followed closely upon our trail, until we got on to the premises of this man (*points at RUECKER*), whom we mysteriously purloined; from his back yard we climbed into yonder square and then into this garden. Knowing no other avenue of escape, as the militia had already encircled your garden and house, when I looked up here, I noticed the light in your window, and hoped to find an asy—

BYRNES. Shure, mum, do yer think we ain't never got no rights? Eight hours' work is inuff fur a man!

RUECKER. We vos forced to go wid dem! Dat fellow dere—dat dynamiter—he vos the wursht!

MORTIMER. But (*hesitatingly*), we are causing you alarm—we will leave.

MINNIE (*listens with BYRNES at the door*). Be quiet! There are strange voices down stairs. Pst!

BYRNES (*whispers to MINNIE*). Begorra! they be putting the bayonets on—

RUECKER (*interruptingly—crying*). Oh! den I mus' go in chail—my vif'—my childrens!

MINNIE. The captain is distributing orders.

MORTIMER. We must linger here no longer. I would not have you molested on our account. Forward! boys—out of the window again!

EDITH. But you will certainly be caught!

MORTIMER. Better arrested than to cause you trouble.

EDITH (*with emphasis*). Remain!

MORTIMER (*surprised*). What! You will save us?

EDITH (*hesitatingly*). I would—if I knew how.

MINNIE (*importantly*). Captain Rig has taken possession of the entrance to our house.

BYRNES. Now, doant go agin us, marm—shure, doant!

RUECKER. Please hide me, madomm!

EDITH. I do not see how I can safely hide you in my rooms; supposing they search them?

MORTIMER. And that will certainly be done—the police know that we are either in the garden or the house.

MINNIE (*looks out of window R.*). Captain Rig and two sergeants with lanterns are searching the garden.

EDITH. Oh! what a predicament I am in. What can I do?

RUECKER. An ai vos innocent—ai shwear so!

MORTIMER. Treat us as your guests.

EDITH (*happily*). Splendid idea! (*To MORTIMER, tenderly.*) Will you stay for tea? Minnie, serve tea! This gentleman— (*notices BYRNE and RUECKER*), but these gentlemen—

MORTIMER (*interrupting*). I understand your hint—you allude to my comrades. Sure, they have not the appearance of visitors; but couldn't you disguise them?

EDITH. A capital suggestion! Minnie, show this gentleman (*points to BYRNES*) to my brother's room, and give him Mr. Charles' dress suit.

BYRNES. I doan't so much moind that! (*Walks toward MINNIE.*)

RUECKER. An' me innocent! Ai cannot shtay in der sofar in diese clos'!

MINNIE. Just come along with me, I'll give you John's new livery suit; it has never been worn.

RUECKER (*insulted*). Liveri—a coachman! Ai vos ein beerbrauer—a fader of childrens. Liveri! oh no—nix kom raus!

MINNIE. You prefer being arrested?

RUECKER. Arrestirt! no, no—gif me de livery!

(*BYRNES, RUECKER and MINNIE exit L.*)

MORTIMER (*retreating a few steps and coughing*). Ahem! Ahem! Miss Stevens! Ahem!

EDITH (*embarrassed*). Sir!

MORTIMER (*coughing loudly*). Ahem! The peculiar circumstances under which I appear before you embarrass me, and still—ahem!—still I have so much to tell you.

EDITH. I do not understand—

MORTIMER (*interrupting*). Since six weeks ago—the very first time I saw you at your window—I have had a burning desire to see you closer—to speak to you—to be able to tell you—ahem!—that—

EDITH. Hist! I hear footsteps!

MORTIMER (*passionately*). I hear naught, see naught, this moment, but you!

EDITH. Excuse me—my servant is coming.

Re-enter MINNIE L., has blouse and overalls of BYRNES and vest and jean pants of RUECKER.

EDITH. Where are you going, Minnie?

MINNIE. While the gentlemen are dressing, I want to hide these pants and blouses, for fear they would awaken suspicion, if seen.

EDITH. All right. Bring the tea at once.

MINNIE (*bows*). Right away, Miss Edith. (*Exit R.*)

MORTIMER (*confidently*). Miss Stevens, why should I make an introduction to my speech? You know what I am going to say—ahem—you know—ahem!—that—(*stammering*) that I love you!

EDITH (*shocked*). But, Mr. Hurd!

MORTIMER (*more confidently*). Aha! You have even inquired after my name? Yes, for you have noticed that to me the dearest place in town was my window, from which I could see and observe you. You have felt how I loved to be in your presence when you watered the flowers at your window, when you fed the canary, and when you sat hidden behind the flowers crocheting, and now and then turning your sweet face to me.

EDITH (*evasively*). But, sir, such words!

MORTIMER. You dislike my forwardness; the peculiar circumstances form my excuse. For weeks I have prepared myself for the moment when we should meet, for weeks I have subdued a feeling which I should now give vent to, but can find no words to give expression. (*Passionately*.) All my preparation was for naught. Your presence awes! I know but the one phrase—I love you!

EDITH. But, Mr. Hurd! I dare not listen to such words from the lips of a man who has not been introduced to me—and then we are liable to be surprised at any moment.

MORTIMER. Be it as it may, I can no longer remain silent. Blessed be this adventure that has brought me to you! Who knows when I would have had the fortune of being introduced? (*Pausing, and then more passionately*.) You responded to my flirtations, and I imagined that your first look when you approached the window was over to mine, to see if I were there; am I mistaken? You know my name, consequently you inquired after me; you learned that I live in flourishing circumstances. If I now pledge you my sincere love and appeal to you for its reciprocation, will you reject my wooing? I await your reply, be it but a single word.

EDITH (*gravely*). Mr. Hurd! A maiden's heart is not stolen, like a bird from a bush.

MORTIMER. Even this answer satisfies me; you do not say "No." Yes, I was not mistaken—those noble eyes could not deceive. You made me long so much for an answer to my many letters!

EDITH (*astonished*). Letters—your letters?

MORTIMER. In which I begged for interviews, asking for your heart and hand—

EDITH (*in great astonishment*). I never received any letters!

MORTIMER (*surprised*). No? Why, I delivered them personally to your servant. They were all signed, "Your True Admirer."

EDITH. I never received any—ha! (*aside*) my guardian—

MORTIMER. You have not received any letters? And still you are not angry with me for my forwardness. You show me far more sympathy than even I had expected. Dearest girl, give me your hand!

EDITH (*listening at the door*). But, I beg you—

MORTIMER. I want nothing more at present; but give me your hand, Miss Edith. (*EDITH gives her hand*).

MORTIMER (*kisses it*). I am at the goal of my fondest hopes—at the realization of my most fervent wishes!

EDITH (*seriously*). Don't be too triumphant! The hand is often

given to a man out of mere politeness. You are suing for my heart, aren't you? And you believe I would trust it to such a reckless man?

MORTIMER. Reckless? Love for you alone has made me reckless.

EDITH. You do not understand! How do you appear before me? As a criminal who is eluding justice. And in what company do you force yourself at night into private dwellings? What anxiety you have already caused me!

MORTIMER. The last, in truth, is a misdemeanor, an unpardonable one; the others I do not recognize as such.

EDITH. What! And you took part in a public revolt; part and parcel in a violent mob?

MORTIMER. Oh, Miss Edith, the affair was not so serious; it was only a hoax, to tease those Sunday soldiers, the militia—

EDITH (*interrupting*). Yes, but this hoax excites the entire town, throws thousands of women, whose husbands hurry to the scene of conflict, into fright! You may have to pay dearly for such fun.

MORTIMER. Scold me! dear girl—you are right. I like to be scolded by you. It demonstrates to me that you interest yourself in my behalf. Am I really something to you?

EDITH (*ceved*). You are a man, like all men, full of conceit; always making capital for yourselves.

MORTIMER. And am I not justified in my conceit?

EDITH (*starts up in alarm*). Did you hear a knock?

MORTIMER. I believe I heard something.

EDITH. But who can it be?

MORTIMER (*quickly*). Fear nothing—I am with you! (*Knocking is again heard.*)

EDITH. Come in!

Enter MRS. CARROLL, a middle aged woman, dressed flashily, C.

MRS. CARROLL. Good evening, Miss— (*Sarcastically*). Aha! I'm intruding!

EDITH (*embarrassed*). This gentleman—

MRS. CARROLL (*interrupting, very ironically*). Oh, please, that is none of my business! Of course, I presumed you would be alone, as your guardian is on duty, and your brother in Paris.

EDITH (*confused*). But I tell you, this gentle—

MRS. CARROLL (*again interrupting*). Oh, never mind, Miss; it is none of my affairs. I simply wanted to notify you that three runaway criminals must have entered this house, and that they are being searched for. They have entered the roof. You will soon receive a call from the officers. You need not get frightened, Miss, for I have prepared you. Ahem! I hope you will enjoy yourself, and pass a pleasant evening.

EDITH. Mrs. Carroll, you say that in such a sarcastic tone—

MRS. CARROLL (*always interrupting*). Why, not at all sarcastic; I'm sure it does not concern me.

EDITH. You need not deny that you find it strange that I have gentleman company at night, especially one you do not know.

MRS. CARROLL (*endeavoring to conceal her anger*). Oh no! it isn't strange.

EDITH (*continuing*). In order to help your inquisitiveness at arriving at a positive conclusion, I will aid you with the information

that this gentleman—(*pauses a moment*) has been sent by my guardian.

MRS. CARROLL (*puzzled*). From your guardian?

EDITH (*smiling*). Yes. Further, my guardian will be absent all night, and has requested me to hand this gentleman some legal papers which he will need in the morning.

MRS. CARROLL. Well, I surmised something of that sort. You are entirely mistaken if you thought I was sarcastic.

EDITH. You have heard the entire affair—

MRS. CARROLL (*again interrupting*). I would not have thought it wrong, Miss—not at all. Don't get frightened when Captain Rig calls, he is a real pleasant man. Good-night! Sleep well! (*Exit C.*)

MORTIMER. Hu! What a bitter tongue!

EDITH (*ruefully*). What an embarrassment I was in! Oh! and I told a lie—for *your* sake. (*Meditating.*) This is the first lie I have ever told.

MORTIMER. And are you angry with me?

EDITH. Have I not cause?

MORTIMER. You have indeed! (*Looking around and with earnestness*). I must leave you! I prefer being arrested to further compromising you. (*Starts to go.*)

EDITH (*stops him gently*). What! You want to go? Run into the arms of the police—stand trial as a rioter?

MORTIMER. Yes, and that would involve my going to jail, and there, oh! Miss Edith, I could not see you.

EDITH (*resolutely*). Be sensible, Mr. Hurd, remain here!

MORTIMER. But when the captain comes and asks for us, you will have to—

EDITH (*sighing*). Tell another lie. Do you deserve that I burden my conscience with sins for your sake?

MORTIMER (*pleading, passionately*). No, dear, dear Miss Edith! But I will strive to become deserving.

EDITH. Of my lies?

MORTIMER. No; of your sacrifices.

Re-enter MINNIE R., carrying a large tray with tea service.

MINNIE (*as she enters*). They are coming; I hear them talking to Mrs. Carroll.

EDITH (*nervously*). Where are your accomplices?

MORTIMER. Excuse me. (*Walks to L. and opens door, calling.*) Hurry up, boys!

Re-enter BYRNES, dressed in swallow-tail coat; instead of former beard he now wears chin beard.

BYRNES. I'm here; the brewer is coming.

EDITH (*nervously*). Set the table quickly, Minnie!

(MINNIE puts dishes on small table in front of sofa.)

MORTIMER (*laughingly to BYRNES*). Worthy citizen, you look splendid! The day will come when you'll go to work in such a costume!

BYRNES (*in the center*). Aw! Oi couldn't carry the hod in this 'ere coat!

MORTIMER. What tonsorial artist trimmed your beard?

BYRNES. Shure, Oi thawt the baird would give me away, and Oi took me jackknife an' shure Oi cut it arf—shure Oi did!

MORTIMER. Practical, old man, you're all right!

BYRNES. An', be jabers! who am Oi to be? Oi must know, s'posin' they arsk me.

MORTIMER (*snapping his finger*). Ah! That did not occur to me. You may have to answer some questions.

EDITH. And the—the broad accent of the gentleman might give them a clue.

MORTIMER. Noble, worthy plebeian, walking delegate, dynamiter, and so on! Can't you leave off your brogue?

BYRNES (*insulted*). Oi tark the way me modder tawt me!

EDITH. That will never do! The dress and—

MORTIMER (*interrupting*). The language. H'm! I've an idea! (*To BYRNES*). You don't need to speak at all, you down-trodden member of the human race! We'll represent you as a Frenchman who doesn't understand English.

BYRNES (*happily*). Not tark at all! Oi kin do that—sure I kin!

MORTIMER. Just sit down at the table, drink tea and eat cake.

BYRNES. Ate cake? Oi'll bet Oi'll ate cake! (*Sits down opposite sofa.*)

MORTIMER. If anybody speaks to you, answer: *Oui (ow we)*—Yes!

BYRNES. Begorra! an' wuden't yer repate dat agin?

MORTIMER. *Oui!*

BYRNES (*repeats*). We—us, be jabers!

MORTIMER. No, not *us*, you simpleton! *We!*

BYRNES. Oi undershtand now—*We and us.*

MORTIMER (*aside*). I hope the captain does not speak French; we will have to risk it, (*Aloud.*) I think everything will pass off well. I will represent a stranger in town; nobody knows me.

EDITH (*trembling*). Oh, I feel so anxious!

MORTIMER. You frighten me! There is still time for us to escape through the window. Say the word!

EDITH (*determined*). No—never!

MORTIMER (*tenderly*). Then be courageous!

Re-enter RUECKER L., dressed in stylish livery, his face hid by standing collar.

RUECKER. I vas here, too, now; but dem close dem hurts!

MINNIE. Come this way. What is your name?

RUECKER. Fritz Ruecker; I vos de innocend beer brauer, de fader of—

MINNIE. Of seven children—yes, I know that part! Now, Mr. Ruecker, you will assist me in waiting on the folks.

RUECKER (*insulted*). Vait? I vos no vaiter—I, a beer brauer! Dat fellow dere—dat common Irish hod carrier, blaying de foks, and I be de vaiter—oh, no, dat goes not down!

MORTIMER. Take your choice; you want to be arrested?

RUECKER. Mine Gott! you knows dat Ai vos innocend!

BYRNES (*rising, threatens with fist*). Shut up, ye Dutchman! or I'll make your eyes look Irish!

RUECKER (*frightened*). Yes you vill—not if I knows it!

MORTIMER. Stop this nonsense! Both do as you are told!

RUECKER. Ya wohl! I do every dings yo say. (*Helps MINNIE waiting on BYRNES.*)

EDITH (*alarmed*). But Mr. Hurd, what is our programme? We must all agree. Let us quickly talk it over.

MINNIE. I hear footsteps—they're coming!

MORTIMER (*serious*). It is too late! Be courageous; answer all questions on the spur of the moment. (*Leads her to the sofa and sits down.*)

EDITH (*sits down*). Oh, I am so afraid!

MORTIMER. Courage! (*Knocking on the door is heard.*)

EDITH. Come in!

Enter POLICE CAPTAIN, in full uniform, with fatigue cap. In front of door a cordon of police to be seen C.

CAPTAIN. Excuse me for intruding upon your privacy.

EDITH. You wish to search the house? Minnie, show the Captain into the adjoining rooms.

MINNIE (*opens door L.*). Here, Mr. Captain!

CAPTAIN (*looks into room*). There is no one here!

(*BYRNES devouring a large amount of cake. RUECKER munches a piece of sugar. MINNIE shows CAPTAIN into room R.*)

CAPTAIN (*looks in*). And here no one!

EDITH (*forced laugh*). Have you found my rooms empty?

(*BYRNES eating and drinking heartily. RUECKER helps them to cake, trembling. MORTIMER talks tenderly to EDITH.*)

EDITH (*laughing*). You see, Captain, the runaways did not come to me.

CAPTAIN (*seriously*). I see. You must excuse me; it was my duty to examine your premises.

EDITH (*pleasantly*). No apology is necessary.

CAPTAIN (*looking at BYRNES and RUECKER*). It's queer; the house and garden have been surrounded. I can't perceive how they could have escaped, and yet there is no trace of them to be found in this house.

EDITH. Perhaps they got over the roof.

CAPTAIN. Impossible; the house stands alone.

EDITH. Have you searched every place?

CAPTAIN. Your rooms were the last to be searched.

EDITH. And your search was in vain.

CAPTAIN (*suddenly altering his manner*). Ahem! My duty, Miss, urges me to put one more question.

EDITH (*astonished*). And that is?

CAPTAIN. I do not deny being surprised to find you entertaining some gentlemen.

EDITH (*provoked*). But I am sure I have a perfect right to have gentlemen for tea!

CAPTAIN. Undoubtedly!

EDITH. What seems suspicious about my company?

MORTIMER. Yes, what seems suspicious?

CAPTAIN. Miss Stevens, I am an intimate friend of Ex-Judge Robinson, your guardian, and know your habits pretty well. I well know, that in the absence of Mr. Charles Stevens, your brother, you never indulge in gentlemen company. You will therefore not be astonished at my surprise at seeing gentlemen here to-night. Besides, your house-keeper, Mrs. Carroll, whom I asked to notify you of my coming, told me there was a gentleman at your house, and now I find two.

EDITH (*angrily*). When Mrs. Carroll called, this gentleman (*points to BYRNES*) was in my brother's room watching the manœuvres on the street.

CAPTAIN. I don't doubt it; but—ahem!—I must ask the gentlemen for their names.

EDITH. Permit me, Captain, to rob this proceeding of its police court aspect. I will introduce you to my guests. By the by, this gentleman (*points to BYRNES*) could not understand your questions, for he knows no language but French—Monsieur Murgez, an artist from Paris, whom my brother had burdened with a message to me, and in reciprocation of his kindness I asked him to tea. *N'est ce pas, Monsieur?*

BYRNES. We—we!

CAPTAIN. Oh, yes!

EDITH (*continuing*). And this gentleman (*points to MORTIMER*) met Monsieur Murgez at Havre, where both stopped at the same hotel. Seeing that he understands French, and Monsieur Murgez does not speak English, he kindly served him as guide and interpreter.

MORTIMER. Exactly so, sir; and we regret very much that our presence has caused the young lady annoyance, and had we surmised—

CAPTAIN (*to MORTIMER*). Your name?

EDITH (*quickly introducing him*). Mr. Arthur Welch.

CAPTAIN. Where are you stopping?

MORTIMER. At the Hotel Vendome.

CAPTAIN. Good. And these gentlemen were at your house when the trouble began?

EDITH. They came about that time.

CAPTAIN. But they were here before the militia took possession.

EDITH. Yes.

CAPTAIN (*taking out a memorandum book*). And you have seen no trace of the fugitives—a young well dressed man and two laborers?

EDITH. Not the slightest!

CAPTAIN (*pointing to RUECKER*). And that is your servant?

EDITH. Yes.

CAPTAIN. I am satisfied. (*Makes some notes in book*). Pardon me for having molested you.

EDITH. Certainly. Minnie, show the Captain out. (*MINNIE opens rear door. C.*)

Re-enter EX-JUDGE ROBINSON, in militia uniform, C.

ROBINSON (*sighing*). Back again! What means this? (*Seems puzzled.*)

EDITH (*aside*). All is lost! (*MORTIMER tries to hide his face.*)

ROBINSON (*bitterly*). You have company for tea, Edith? Strange, isn't it, during my absence? And you, Captain?

CAPTAIN. You have no doubt already heard about the search which I instigated?

ROBINSON. Yes.

CAPTAIN. That necessitated my entering your house; but I find no trace of the men here.

ROBINSON. But Edith, what means this—

CAPTAIN (*interrupting*). That is all right, Judge. This gentleman has brought Miss Edith a message from her brother in Paris, and this second gentleman served him as guide.

ROBINSON (*anxious*). And this servant?

CAPTAIN. Is the servant of Miss Stevens, as she has told me.

ROBINSON (*to EDITH*). Since when do you keep servants that I do not know of?

CAPTAIN (*suspicious*). What! you do not know him?

ROBINSON. No, sir! Edith never had a man servant, and her brother's servant has accompanied him abroad.

CAPTAIN. How is that, Miss?

EDITH. It's simply a misunderstanding. This is Monsieur Murgez's servant, who has been kind enough to make himself useful.

CAPTAIN. But you said he was *your* servant.

EDITH. Oh, no! You asked me: Is that a servant? And I answered: Yes!

CAPTAIN. I asked expressly: Is that *your* servant?

EDITH. Well, then, I misunderstood you.

CAPTAIN (*pulls out his memorandum book again*). Miss, this matter is thoroughly mixed up! I hope you have not—ahem! And now I must beg these gentlemen for their further identification. (*To BYRNES*). Can you identify yourself?

BYRNES (*nodding assent*). We—we!

EDITH. That gentleman does not understand you.

CAPTAIN (*aside to ROBINSON*). Do you speak French?

ROBINSON (*aside to CAPTAIN*). Not a syllable!

CAPTAIN (*to ROBINSON*). How unfortunate!

ROBINSON (*to CAPTAIN*). I should have learned it while at school, but I thought it superfluous, confound it! and how useful it would prove in this case!

CAPTAIN (*aloud to BYRNES*). You certainly have papers of identification on your person?

EDITH (*laughing*). Although I may spoil your cross-examination, I find it necessary to come to your aid. (*To BYRNES*.) *N'avez-vous pas de lettres dans votre poche?*

BYRNES. *Oui! Oui!*

EDITH. Monsieur Murgez changed his clothes just before leaving the hotel, he regrets very much that all his papers are there; but that reminds me, I have the letter which Monsieur Murgez brought from my brother—that will serve as evidence.

CAPTAIN. A letter!

EDITH (*fetches letter from sewing table*). Here you are, Captain! (*Hands it to him.*)

CAPTAIN (*examines it—aside to ROBINSON*). The letter bears no postmark—no—oh! "Through the kindness of M. M."; evidently has been delivered personally,

ROBINSON (*aside*). It might be an old one.

CAPTAIN (*aloud*). Miss, may I look at the date?

EDITH. You are very particular, Captain; but in order to protect my guests from further annoyance, I will not object.

CAPTAIN (*opens the letter*). Paris, the 24th— (*Aside*.) To-day is the 1st of May—that's seven days. (*Aloud*.) Perfectly satisfactory! (*To BYRNES*.) On what steamer did you arrive?

EDITH. Monsieur Murgez left Paris on the 24th, and Havre on the same day, on "La Bretagne," arriving this morning.

CAPTAIN. I am satisfied with the evidence submitted as regards Monsieur—and no doubt Mr. Arthur Welch.

ROBINSON (*interrupting*). Arthur Welch—who is Arthur Welch?

CAPTAIN. This fellow!

ROBINSON (*pointing*). He? You ought to know him; that is Mr. Mortimer Hurd, the new candidate for Sheriff of the Labor Party.

EDITH (*aside*). All is lost!

CAPTAIN (*sternly*). Explain this—an alias—Miss Stevens, I am shocked to find you telling an untruth, especially to me a man empowered with the same functions as a Police Judge. So that is an embryo hangman, Ha! Ha! (*BYRNES moves his chair ready to run away. RUECKER holds his hands praying*). I vos—

MINNIE *puts her hand on his mouth.*

EDITH (*in embarrassment*). I do not—

MORTIMER (*cheerfully*). Miss Stevens, do not deny it any further, tell them the truth!

EDITH. The truth!

MORTIMER. It need no longer remain a secret, tell the gentlemen in what relation—

ROBINSON (*furiously*). Relation? You are relations.

CAPTAIN. How so?

MORTIMER. Sancta Simplicitas! How difficult to say the word—I am—

EDITH. This gentleman is—

CAPTAIN (*impatently*). Well?

EDITH. My intended.

ROBINSON (*yelling*). Intended! Edith—is it really so?

MORTIMER (*rising from his seat, takes Edith's hand, and they walk together to the front of the stage*). This explanation will unravel the whole mystery. Our acquaintance was cultivated without the knowledge of Mr. Robinson, the guardian, perhaps against his will, and should have remained secret until after the arrival of the young lady's brother. Hence the embarrassment when you found me here, hence the reason for my posing under an assumed name. When the first row started in town I hurried here to give protection to my destined bride. Monsieur Murgez came about the same time and luckily for me, for Edith invited us both to tea, while I alone could not have staid. We understood, that Major Robinson would remain on duty and therefore did not fear his intrusion—I hope you now comprehend the reason of Edith's embarrassment and the necessity of her telling the *white lie*.

CAPTAIN. The explanation is satisfactory to me. Pardon me for having put you to so much trouble, and Miss Stevens (*offers her his hand*) accept my hearty congratulations. Adieu—(*exit C.*)

MINNIE (*shows the Captain out and exits C.*)

ROBINSON. But Edith, what am I to think of it all—is it possible to become betrothed in so short a time?

EDITH (*cunningly*). You ought really not to be so very much surprised—you certainly must have had *some idea*, when you insinuated about Mr. Hurd!

ROBINSON (*To EDITH.*) But yesterday you had not even seen the gentleman. (*To MORTIMER.*) Why, you begged so fervently for an interview—asked for an answer only.

MORTIMER. And how do you know that?

EDITH (*laughing*). Aha, Mr. Guardian, perhaps you read Mr. Mortimer's letters.

MORTIMER. None of which were received by Miss Edith.

EDITH (*triumphantly*). Which *you* therefore confiscated.

ROBINSON. Hang the luck! (*detected, ashamed, he frantically rushes off the stage. Exit, C.*)

EDITH. Thank God! I can again breathe freely.

BYRNES (*rises from his seat*). Begorra! Missus how yer kin lie—sure yer kin.

RUECKER (*walks close to BYRNES threatening*). Ah, an you vos anodder!

POSITION, *Edith, Mortimer, Byrnes, Ruecker.*

EDITH. What a shame—to have told a lie.

MORTIMER. T'is true! but will they remain lies; one at least should become true. (*pleading*). My beloved Edith?

EDITH. After a public acknowledgment how can *we* retract.

MORTIMER (*draws her to him*). Beloved Edith! Who could have predicted *that* a short hour ago (*triumphantly*) happy, engaged (*laughs*) and before these witnesses—but it is late we must leave you. Come ye worthy breadwinners, for if the Captain of the Pôlice should make inquiries at the Hotel Vendome and at La Bretagne, then you should be housed in your homes in safety. Good-night, dear.

EDITH. Sleep well—sweet dreams!

BYRNES. I'm much obliged for the tay mam.

RUECKER. Mine childrens comes to yer veddin,

EDITH. Mortimer and you men—*who told the lie?*

BYRNES. Not Oi shure!

RUECKER. Not mineself!

MORTIMER (*embraces her*). Not I!

EDITH (*kisses him*). Nor I!

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