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The Daughters of Men

By KATHARINE KAVANAUGH



No. 640

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THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN

DRAMA IN ONE ACT

BY
KATHARINE KAVANAUGH

AUTHOR OF
"CORINNE OF THE CIRCUS," ETC.

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CAST

JOHN MITCHELL, the District Attorney, a man of about thirty years, well built, determined and earnest in manner.

MRS. MITCHELL, his mother, a sweet looking woman of fifty-five or sixty, with grey hair. Dressed quietly in black silk.

JAMES, a butler.

DAN McQUADE, a man of forty-five or fifty years. A successful politician, one of the "bosses." Wears good clothes and a silk hat.

HELEN McQUADE, his daughter, a girl of eighteen, pretty and well dressed.

Plays twenty minutes.

MAY 2 1918

THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN!

SCENE. *The library in the home of the DISTRICT ATTORNEY. TIME: Midnight. A handsomely furnished room, with entrances C. and L. U. A large library table C. with lawbooks, writing materials, etc. A chair in back of table. A lighted dome or electric lamp over table. A fireplace L. with large easy chair before it. Bookcases upstage on either side of center entrance. Other furniture to dress stage. Curtain up, JAMES seated in chair before fireplace, dozing. There is no light on stage except from dome over table and fireplace. Enter MRS. MITCHELL, C. D., looks around room, sees JAMES.*

MRS. MITCHELL. James!

JAMES. [*Jumping up, rubbing his eyes.*] Yes, Ma'am. I begs your pardon, Ma'am.

MRS. MITCHELL. Has my son returned?

JAMES. No, Ma'am.

MRS. MITCHELL. What time is it?

JAMES. It's after midnight, Ma'am. He said he'd be late.

MRS. MITCHELL. I know, but I can't help worrying. To think of him going down in that part of the town, mixing with all that riff-raff, some of them hating him, only waiting for the chance to harm him.

JAMES. Beggin' your pardon, Ma'am, but don't you worry about the master. He's more than a match for any of them hoodlums.

MRS. MITCHELL. But they don't fight openly, James, like men. They creep up behind their foe, and kill him before he has a chance to defend himself.

JAMES. No doubt the master has taken a cop or two along.

MRS. MITCHELL. No, he has gone alone and secretly. It was the only way, he said, to get the evidence he wanted. Formerly, when he let it be known that he was going to these gambling dens to get sufficient evidence to close them, the police warned the keepers, and when my son reached there, there was no one there but the regular patrons, men and women old enough to take care of themselves.

JAMES. And those were not the ones he was after?

MRS. MITCHELL. No, it is the youth of the city my boy is trying to protect, and every one of these gambling places is open to them.

JAMES. 'Tis a big job he's laid out for himself, Ma'am.

MRS. MITCHELL. It is, indeed, but he'll win, James. He has right on his side, and he'll win. [*Door slams off stage L.*]

JAMES. That's the master now. [*Goes up stage and throws open door L. U.*]

MRS. MITCHELL. [*Remains R.*] Thank God!

[*Enter JOHN MITCHELL, L. U., with HELEN. She is shrinking back, he is holding her hand. His manner to her is gentle and reassuring. JAMES exits C. with MITCHELL'S coat and hat.*]

JOHN MITCHELL. Mother—

MRS. MITCHELL. [*Crossing to JOHN, puts her arms around him.*] John, my boy, I've been so worried.

MITCHELL. There—there—nothing has happened [*Kisses her and then turns to HELEN.*] I want you to take this young lady under your wing and make her feel at home. She is a little upset and nervous. I'll wager you've got a cup of hot tea somewhere.

MRS. MITCHELL. [*Putting her arm around HELEN.*] Yes, indeed. She shall have a cup immediately. What is your name, dear?

HELEN. [*Puts her hands to her face and cries.*] I can't tell you—Oh, I can't tell you.

MRS. MITCHELL. [*Draws HELEN'S head to her shoulder, and pets her.*] There—there—no one is going

to annoy you, child. You shan't tell anything if you don't want to.

MITCHELL. Mother, you haven't understood why I am making this fight— You haven't always approved of my going out in the night like this and risking my life among my enemies—look at this girl—I found her in one of the worst gambling dens in the city—surrounded by men and women of the lowest type. It was her first visit there, but it wouldn't have been her last. She would have kept going until she herself had fallen to their depth.

HELEN. [*Turns appealingly to JOHN.*] Oh, please let me go homé. My father will be wild with anxiety.

MRS. MITCHELL. You have a father? A mother, too?

HELEN. My mother died when I was a baby. I don't remember her. My father has been everything to me.

MITCHELL. What will he say when he knows where you have been tonight?

HELEN. Oh, he must never know. You must let me go home before he finds out. You must! Why—my father just worships me—I am all he has in the world—it would break his heart to know that I had been in that place tonight.

MITCHELL. Suppose I had let you go to the station house with the others?

HELEN. [*Buries her face in her hands and shudders.*] Oh, no—no—

MITCHELL. You are just beginning this life. What started you?

HELEN. I don't know. I've got the gambling instinct, I suppose. It seems to me I've always wanted to play—play—play! Father used to take me to the races and let me bet on the horses—but that didn't satisfy me. I don't do it for the money—I have everything I need—but it's in me, and I can't help it!

MRS. MITCHELL. The gambling instinct—an inheritance!

MITCHELL. Tonight was the first time you had visited one of these places?

HELEN. Yes.

MITCHELL. What is your name?

HELEN. I can't tell you.

MITCHELL. My dear young lady, you will have to tell me some time. I am making a fight against these gambling halls in the interest of just such as you—young girls and boys who are starting on the downward path. That is why I brought you home with me. You are the best argument I can bring before the Grand Jury. You will represent to them what I am fighting for more clearly than any words of mine could.

HELEN. [*Frightened.*] You are going to hold me as a witness?

MITCHELL. Yes—the one witness I wanted out of that bunch tonight. [*Door bell rings. JAMES enters C. and goes to L. U. JOHN stops him.*] Wait, James. Mother, take this young lady to your room. I have an idea who my caller is. [*MRS. MITCHELL leads HELEN off through C. D., her arm around the girl, HELEN is crying softly, her handkerchief to her face. The door bell rings again.*] Let him in, James. [*JAMES exits L. U. MITCHELL goes to table and lights a cigar, sits. JAMES enters L. U., stands inside door, allowing MACQUADE to enter. JAMES closes door, and exits C.*]

MITCHELL. Rather late for a call, isn't it, MacQuade?

MACQUADE. Never mind that. I've got something to say to you, and it can't wait!

MITCHELL. Indeed? Let's have it.

MACQUADE. Look here, Mitchell, I put you where you are, didn't I?

MITCHELL. If you mean your party put me up for District Attorney—yes.

MACQUADE. My party gave you the job—and my party means ME. I put you where you are—and don't you forget it!

MITCHELL. I'm not likely to—with such a reminder as you around.

MACQUADE. Then don't you go buttin' into things that don't concern you.

MITCHELL. What—for instance?

MACQUADE. You raided Logan's gambling place to-night!

MITCHELL. I did! And I consider that concerned me very much. You know the fight I am making against those places.

MACQUADE. [*Impatiently.*] Aw—I thought that was only a newspaper splurge. That's what all you youngsters do when somebody puts you into a place that's too big for you. You lose your head—try to get into the papers—make a big bluff at reforming things. T'hell with reforming things. You leave things as they are.

MITCHELL. Things as they are don't suit me. The gambling dens and other places of this town are open to any young boy or girl who wants to get into them. I'm not fighting in the interest of the old stagers, the men and women who are old enough to know what they are doing when they choose the path to perdition, but I AM fighting for the youth of this city, and I am going to keep on fighting until every den is closed.

MACQUADE. Is that so? Well, you've bit off a little more than you can chew, Mitchell. You've got about as much chance of closing those places as a snowball has in Hades. Do you know who owns Logan's place?

MITCHELL. No—who owns it?

MACQUADE. I do!

MITCHELL. You?

MACQUADE. Yes, and not only Logan's, but Romano's and Jake's. They're all mine. I'm backing every one of 'em. *Now* what have you got to say?

MITCHELL. Just what I said before. The fight goes on!

MACQUADE. It does, eh? Well, we'll see about that. You want to run for office again, don't you?

MITCHELL. I am *going* to run.

MACQUADE. You know what chance you got of being elected without *me* in back of you, don't you? You remember what you was when I discovered you, don't you? A little shyster lawyer, an ambulance chaser, with no practice but what you could pick up at the police station. And look where I've put you.

MITCHELL. Why did you do it?

MACQUADE. Because I thought you'd be only too willing to do what I told you. And here—the first crack out of the box—you start in reforming things. Reforming! You're out after newspaper notoriety, that's all.

MITCHELL. No, it isn't all, MacQuade. It's true I was a young lawyer with little or no practice when you found me. I don't see that that enters into the case at all. No matter what I was, I am now the District Attorney, and I intend to act as such.

MACQUADE. You'll act as I tell you, Mitchell.

MITCHELL. You're mistaken in your man, MacQuade. I made no promises to you when I was nominated, but I did make certain promises to the people who elected me, and I intend to keep those promises.

MACQUADE. The people who elected you! You make me sick! You'll stand a swell chance of being elected if you depend on "the people." Now, let me tell you as a friend, Mitchell, if you keep up this reforming thing, it'll kill you politically. By the time the next primaries come around you'll be as dead as a doornail.

MITCHELL. All right, then; I'll die fighting.

MACQUADE. You intend to go on?

MITCHELL. To the very end—until every joint in this town that admits young people behind its doors is closed.

MACQUADE. You make me smile. Why, you'll get just about as much result as a child would beating its little fists against a stone wall. I warn you, Mitchell, I'm going to balk you at every move. You thought you did a big thing tonight, didn't you? Making a grandstand play and sending a lot of witnesses to the station house. Do you know where them witnesses are now?

Released, every last one of 'em, on my say-so. There ain't a one left to tell the tale. Huh! You're a fool!

MITCHELL. Not such a fool as I look, MacQuade. I didn't want any of those men and women as witnesses. If I *had* wanted them I should have taken greater pains to hold them. I have my witness here—the only one in the place tonight that I wanted. I raided Logan's place tonight because I was told over the 'phone that there was a young girl there—a girl not yet out of her 'teens. That girl is here now—in the other room. I am going to show her to the Grand Jury. I don't think I'll have to make any other argument.

MACQUADE. Aw, I guess she's some tough kid of the neighborhood.

MITCHELL. No, she is not. She is evidently a girl of refinement. I want you to see her for yourself. [*Rings bell on table. JAMES enters at C. D.*] Ask the young lady to come here.

JAMES. Yes, sir. [*Exit C. D. MACQUADE is down L., while waiting for HELEN's entrance, he stands facing the fireplace, his hands clasped behind his back. MITCHELL remains at table. After a second, HELEN appears at C., looks first at MITCHELL, then at MACQUADE, and quickly stifles a scream. At the sound, MACQUADE turns and looks at her in amazement.*]

HELEN. Daddy! [*MITCHELL shows surprise.*]

MACQUADE. Helen! What are you doing here?

HELEN. [*Runs to MACQUADE, cries on his shoulder.*]
Oh, Daddy, take me home—please take me home.

MACQUADE. [*With his arm around HELEN, speaks in a tense voice.*] Where did you get my daughter, Mitchell?

MITCHELL. Out of your gambling den, MacQuade.

MACQUADE. You knew it was my daughter?

MITCHELL. I never suspected it for a moment.

MACQUADE. If you had known would you have raided that place tonight?

MITCHELL. Your daughter is of no more importance

than the daughters of other men, MacQuade. I am glad it has been brought home to you.

MACQUADE. What's your next move?

MITCHELL. I am going to make a proposition to you. With you against me I realize I am going to have an uphill fight closing these places.

MACQUADE. With me against you, you can't do it.

MITCHELL. Then I want you to give me your word that within a week you will close the doors of every gambling place in which you have an interest.

MACQUADE. And if I refuse?

MITCHELL. The story of tonight's raid, with the names of the proprietor and principal witnesses, goes to the *Tribune* in time for the morning issue.

MACQUADE. You would drag my daughter into this?

MITCHELL. *Your* daughter! What consideration have you had for other people's daughters? The whole story goes to the *Tribune* tonight unless you come to my terms. No doubt they've got a picture of her, and I'm sure they have one of you.

MACQUADE. You wouldn't dare!

MITCHELL. Watch me. [*Takes telephone off desk, calls a number.*] This the *Tribune*? What time do you go to press? This is Mitchell, District Attorney. Hold off awhile—I may have a story for you. [*Still holds receiver as he speaks to MACQUADE.*] What is it, MacQuade?

HELEN. Father—don't—oh, don't let them do that. I'll never be able to look anyone in the face again. Please don't let them do it—I'll kill myself if you do. [*Cries hysterically on MACQUADE's shoulder.*]

MACQUADE. [*Stroking HELEN's hair, has manner of a man beaten.*] You win, Mitchell.

MITCHELL. [*Into 'phone.*] The story is off, Burke. Goodnight.

[*MACQUADE has taken HELEN to L. U. E., his arm still around her.*]

MACQUADE. You win through her. She's all I've got in the world, and I'd sacrifice my life for her.

MITCHELL. You're a man, MacQuade.

MACQUADE. And I guess you're the District Attorney, Mitchell.

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