

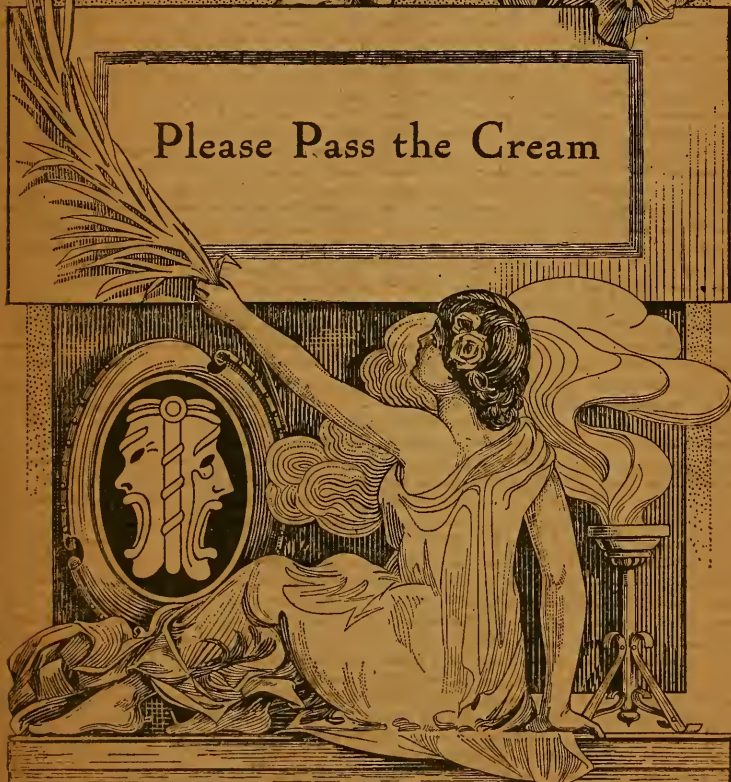
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# PLEASE PASS THE CREAM

A COMEDY

BY

CHARLES NEVERS HOLMES

AUTHOR OF

*"Their First Quarrel" and "Smith's Unlucky Day."*



CHICAGO  
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

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MRS. JOHN CLARK.....A Former Schoolma'am

PLACE—*Anywhere.*

TIME—*Breakfast.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*Twenty Minutes.*

## COSTUMES.

MR. CLARK—*Breakfast Attire.*

MRS. CLARK—*Morning Gown.*

## PROPERTIES.

All listed in description of stage setting.

## STAGE DIRECTIONS.

*R.* means right of the stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *1 E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance; *R. 3 E.*, right entrance up stage, etc.; up stage, away from footlights; down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

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SEP -7 1918

## PLEASE PASS THE CREAM

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SCENE: *Dining-room of the CLARKS, cosily furnished in dark; dining-table in center, two chairs at opposite ends, table set with plates, knives, forks, spoons, glasses, coffee pot and cups at right end, with sugar and a cream-pitcher; plate, knife, fork, spoons, glass at left end; also a carafe of water; butter, salt and pepper boxes, napkins, etc. A sideboard with silver. Rug under table. Modern hanging lamp over it. Doors at right and left. Window at back beside sideboard. Telephone on small table in left corner.*

MR. CLARK, *about 40 years of age, stout and easy going, seated in chair at left end of table.* MRS. CLARK, *about 35 years old, rather slim and nervous, at the right end.* *As the curtain rises both are eating some meat and potatoes, a clock in hall behind door at right striking the hour of eight.*

MRS. CLARK (*raising her napkin to her mouth*). I wish you wouldn't say "it don't," John. That isn't grammatical!

MR. CLARK (*raising a piece of potato on his knife to his mouth*). It ain't—why isn't it?

MRS. C. (*dropping her napkin to the floor, in a voice of utter horror*). Oh, John, John! How many, many times have I besought you not to use that terrible, terrible word "ain't"?

MR. C. (*very cheerfully, raising another piece of potato on his knife*). I dunno, Martha. I never was much good at mental arithmetic.

MRS. C. (*picking up her napkin, mournfully*). John, don't you remember that you *promised* me when we were engaged never more to utter that abominable word.

MR. C. (*cutting awkwardly at his meat*). I ain't quite sure that I made such a promise, Martha.

MRS. C. (*sharply*). John Clark, you *certainly* did make such a promise—not once but *several* times!

MR. C. (*starting to raise a piece of meat to his mouth, letting it fall*). But, Martha, that was *only* an engagement



promise, and engagement promises *ain't* no wise binding, so to speak, after the wedding march is ended.

MRS. C. (*angrily, again dropping her napkin*). Mr. Clark, if you utter that word *again* I shall withdraw from the table!

MR. C. (*still cutting away awkwardly at the meat*). All right, Martha. I won't use that word no more.

MRS. C. (*picking up her napkin, sharply*). John Clark, what you have just said is also ungrammatical. It is *very* incorrect for you to say "I won't use that word no more."

MR. C. (*raising another piece of potato on his knife*). But, my dear, I don't see *why* it is incorrect for me to say that I won't use the word "ain't" again. *Now* you're blaming me for *not* using it.

MRS. C. (*a little confused*). You know *very* well what I mean! (*Suddenly and more sharply*.) John, how many times have I requested you not to *cut* with your knife?

MR. C. (*letting his knife fall out of his hand to the floor*). But what is a knife for if it isn't to eat with?

MRS. C. (*in tone of utter disgust*). Oh, won't you *ever* speak correct English. Why *couldn't* you have said, "What is the purpose of a table-knife if it is not to use in eating?"

MR. C. (*very cordially, reaching down to pick up the fallen knife*). You are *exactly* right, my dear. I agree wholly with you—the purpose of a table-knife is to be used in eating.

MRS. C. (*very sharply*). But a table-knife is *not* a freight elevator, John Clark!

MR. C. (*starting to raise more potato on his knife*). No, Martha, a fork is the proper instrument with which to convey a piece of meat from one's plate to one's mouth.

MRS. C. (*rising hastily, speaking quickly*). John, *stop* that! *Never* use a knife, even at home, that has fallen to the floor! (*Goes to the sideboard, opens a drawer, takes out a table-knife and exchanges this knife for the one just dropped by MR. C.*) There! (*Resuming her seat.*) Don't you *dare* to misuse *this* knife as you misused the other one, John Clark!

MR. C. (*rather humbly*). No, ma'am! Still, it's ever so much easier to eat with my knife than with my fork.

MRS. C. (*decidedly, beginning to eat again*). No, it isn't! Besides, it's *very* vulgar,—and dangerous, too.

MR. C. (*now using his fork*). Yet I've read somewhere—I know I have—that George Washington ate with his knife in the same way that I did.

MRS. C. (*quickly*). Oh, well, forks were not invented then.

MR. C. (*drinking from his glass of water*). They never should have been invented. Fingers are ever so much better than forks.

MRS. C. (*rising from her seat to go again to the side-board*). I expected you to say that fingers were invented before forks. How *did* it happen that you forgot to make that remark—again?

MR. C. (*using his napkin very clumsily*). Really I can't see why an honest hungry man should be ashamed of eating with his knife.

MRS. C. (*returning to her seat with the sugar tongs*). Well, it's not the correct thing socially. Mrs. James's husband *never* eats with *his* knife. (*Quickly.*) John, that isn't a wash towel; it's a napkin.

MR. C. (*dropping the napkin to the floor*). I wish that Mrs. James's husband would pay that \$100 he has owed me for a year.

MRS. C. (*beginning to pour out the coffee*). You should feel proud that a gentleman of *such* high social position as Mr. James owes you a hundred dollars.

MR. C. (*picking up the napkin*). Well, when a dozen other gentlemen of high social position have each owed me a hundred dollars for more than a year I don't feel so proud of Mr. James's owing me a hundred plunks.

MRS. C. (*beginning to put in some sugar with the tongs into the cup of coffee*). Not a hundred *plunks*, dear. You mean a hundred *dollars*.

MR. C. (*a little crossly*). I mean *just* what I say—a hundred *plunks*! Perhaps if he ate with his knife and said

“ain’t” the way I do he would never have borrowed them hundred plunks.

MRS. C. (*in utter horror*). “Them hundred plunks!” Oh, John!

MR. C. (*angrily*). Ye-es, them hundred “bucks”! (*More angrily*.) Now, see here, Martha Smith, I am a *ve-ry patient* man. My father was a patient man and my mother was the most patientest woman you ever did see; but they have had their limits, and so have I. (*Bringing his hand down firmly upon the table*.) And when I get *real riled* I ain’t nearly as agreeable as aforesaid. (*Pauses for a moment as though to emphasize his remarks*.) As I said, I am a *ve-ry patient* man, but I have my limit. Now, Martha Smith, you have been a-pestering me all breakfast time, and a-correcting me on my expressions of speech. Also, you have been fault-finding with my table manners, and I have got *ve-ry* tired of it. Now, I want you to understand, Martha Smith, right *here*, that I won’t tolerate another word from you (*he rises and then bangs his fist hard upon the table*), and I’ll say “it ain’t,” “it hain’t,” “it don’t” as often as I *darn* please! And I’ll eat with my knife or my fingers as often as I *darn* please! (*Raising his voice still more*.) Do you understand *that*, Martha Smith? (*He glares angrily at her*.)

MRS. C. (*very coolly and very deliberately*). Mr. Clark, you are *so* amusing when you get “real riled.” If you could only *see yourself* (*mimics him*) “when you ain’t nearly as agreeable as aforesaid.” Now, I *never* get angry myself, *never*. And at any rate not after seeing you in a tantrum. It’s too disgusting. You are *not* a handsome man, even when you are *agreeable*, Mr. Clark; but when you are really “riled,” *my!* you’re *homely*, as homely as—well, words *fail* me! (*She laughs somewhat irritatingly*.)

MR. C. (*walking furiously up and down the left side of the room, savagely*). If you only was a man for a minute!

MRS. C. (*more coolly and deliberately*). I wish I were for only *half* a minute.



MR. C. (*walking more furiously, speaking more savagely*). It is no wonder your first husband died!

MRS. C. (*rising quickly from her chair*). What do you mean, Mr. Clark? (*Then she rescats herself just as quickly*.) No, I never get angry myself, *never*, and I'm not going to become angry this time. (*She rises again and carries the cup of coffee she has poured out, placing it at his end of the table*.) You see how *calm* I am, Mr. Clark—how *very* calm. (*She returns to her seat with a martyr-like smile*.) If I were you I should drink that coffee before it gets cool.

MR. C. (*pausing in his walking angrily*). I don't want any coffee! (*More angrily*.) Martha Smith, I asked you if you understood?

MRS. C. (*with great dignity*). Mr. Clark, please remember that I am Mrs. Clark.

MR. C. (*in a lower tone*). Guess I'll never forget that!

MRS. C. (*beginning to pour out some coffee for herself*). Don't you think you had better drink your coffee? It must be getting cool.

MR. C. (*with a flash of anger*). Oh, darn the coffee!

MRS. C. (*putting in two lumps of sugar*). Just as you please, Mr. Clark, just as you please.

MR. C. (*sitting down sulkily in his seat*). Martha Smith, this nagging of yours is getting on my nerves.

MRS. C. (*pouring from the cream-pitcher into her coffee*). I remarked a short while ago that I am Mrs. Clark!

MR. C. (*settling down into his chair*). Well, because you are Mrs. Clark doesn't give you any right to nag me.

MRS. C. (*stirring her coffee*). I am not nagging you. I have *never* nagged anybody in my life, but when you said "them hundred plunks"—oh, horrors!

MR. C. (*beginning to finger his coffee spoon*). But what *should* I have said?

MRS. C. (*still stirring her coffee*). What *should* you have said? Why—why—"those hundred dollars," of course.

MR. C. (*in a grumbling tone*). It's too blamed bad that a man can't speak as he wants to in his own home.

MRS. C. (*sipping her coffee*). You *may*, John, providing

that you follow the rules of grammatical English, as are observed by our best society.

MR. C. (*less sulkily, still fingering his coffee spoon*). What do you mean by our best society, Martha?

MRS. C. (*a little perplexed*). Our best society? Oh—yes—er—why, our best society means those that are *in* the best society—those who are the recognized leaders of society—the men and women who are socially “it.”

MR. C. (*quickly*). Martha! “Socially it”? I *am* surprised to hear such an expression fall from your lips. “Socially *it*”! Why, *what* a vulgar phrase. You *should* have said, “Our best society consists of those men and women who are the leaders of *élite* society!”

MRS. C. (*with much dignity*). Your coffee *must* be cold by this time, John. Let me give you another cup?

MR. C. (*rather gleefully*). No, Martha, this coffee is all right; but haven’t you forgotten something?

MRS. C. (*still with dignity*). What is it I have forgotten?

MR. C. (*cheerfully*). The milk, Martha, the *milk*. Please pass the milk.

MRS. C. (*reprovingly*). Of course you mean the *cream*, John. (*Passing the pitcher.*)

MR. C. (*receiving the pitcher*). No, I mean the *milk*.

MRS. C. (*rather sharply*). But, my dear, it isn’t milk; it’s *cream*.

MR. C. (*obstinately*). It is *not*! It’s *milk*. (*Spelling it.*) M-i-l-k, *milk*!

MRS. C. (*stirring her coffee*). It is not *milk*, John. Milk is what the cows give—this is *cream*!

MR. C. (*with a grin, still holding the pitcher*). I never knew before that cream does not come from milk. *Very* remarkable!

MRS. C. (*a little confused*). Now don’t try to misunderstand me. Of course milk comes from cream, and that pitcher contains cream, *not* milk.

MR. C. (*with another grin*). Martha, I never knew before that milk comes from cream.

MRS. C. (*with dignity*). That was a slip of my tongue.

MR. C. (*gleefully*). Yes, just as when you say that this pitcher contains cream.

MRS. C. (*sharply*). It *does* contain cream, and *not* milk!

MR. C. (*pouring some of it from the pitcher into a glass*). Now, see *there*. Do you call *that* cream? *Cream!* It's more like skim milk.

MRS. C. (*wearily*). Can't you comprehend, John? *Socially* it is cream. You never ask for milk in your coffee but always for cream.

MR. C. (*impatiently*). I don't care one continental what it is socially. *Practically* it is milk. (*Drinking from the glass into which he has poured from the pitcher.*) YES, that's *milk* all right. (*Pushing the pitcher towards MRS. C.*) Taste it yourself Martha. See if it isn't milk.

MRS. C. (*nervously sipping her coffee*). That isn't the point at all. Of course when it's in a drinking glass it *may* be milk, but when it's in a cream-pitcher it is *always* cream.

MR. C. (*still more impatiently*). But pouring it into a drinking glass doesn't change its *real* nature. If it's milk, it's milk, and if it's cream, it's *cream!*

MRS. C. (*again sipping her coffee*). Yes, it is *just* the same in the pitcher as it is in the glass, only we call it, politely, cream when it is in the pitcher and milk when in the glass.

MR. C. (*crossly*). Well, what has politeness to do with it, anyway? If it's milk in the glass it will be milk when it's in the pitcher.

MRS. C. (*sipping her coffee with a half smile*). Don't you *see*, John, that it's cream when it's in the cream-pitcher?

MR. C. (*still more crossly*). I suppose that if that pitcher contained only water it could be called cream!

MRS. C. (*putting down her spoon and drinking her coffee*). You are *aw-fully* stupid—when you want to be, my dear.

MR. C. (*rising quickly and going over to the telephone*). You needn't take *my* word for it. We'll have some one else's opinion. (*Takes down the receiver.*) Hello! Give me Main 203. (*Turns to MRS. C.*) I'm going to talk with Joe

Williams. He's head of the Wholesale Milk Company. (*Speaking into 'phone.*) Hello! Is this Joe? I'm John Clark. You see, Joe, my wife and I have had a slight dispute. She declares up and down that the milk we are using on our breakfast table is cream, and not milk at all. I say that it's *milk*—no matter whether it's in a cream-pitcher or not. She says that as long as it's in a cream-pitcher it's cream and *not* milk. Now, Joe, am I *right*? It's milk, because I have drunk some of it and I remember that Mrs. Clark told me this morning the milkman had forgotten to leave the cream. (*Pauses a moment.*) What's *that*? You *think* I am right, but you are going to ask your wife and will call me up soon? Thank you, Joe. (*He replaces the receiver and returns to his chair.*)

MRS. C. (*with a sweet smile*). I am sorry, John, that you have had to call for assistance, but Mrs. Williams will, I am sure, wholly agree with me.

MR. C. (*sourly*). Well, I was brought up on a farm and I ought to know the difference between milk and cream.

MRS. C. (*with a very sweet smile*). I guess you were brought up on a farm all right.

MR. C. (*angrily*). So were you! I found it out only a short time ago. (*Laughing softly.*) Ha! ha! ha!

MRS. C. (*mimicking him*). Ha! ha! ha! *ha!* Now, I'm *not* going to lose my temper, whatever you may say. I *never* get angry myself—no, *never!*

(*The telephone rings.*)

MR. C. (*hastening to the telephone*). *Now* we shall see! (*Takes down the receiver.*) Hello! Hello, Joe. Oh, good morning, Mrs. Williams. How do you do? Yes, thank you, both my wife and I are pretty well. *What* did you say? (*Listens while she is speaking.*) Is that so? It is? I understand. *What* did you say? Oh, of course *socially*—yes—yes! No, our dispute is not serious; only a difference of opinion. As I told your husband a very *slight* difference. *Thank* you for your trouble, Mrs. Williams. Will you please ask Mr. Williams to come to the telephone a moment?

O! He has gone for the day? Thank you—good-bye.  
(*Impatiently hangs up the receiver.*)

MRS. C. (*laughing heartily*). Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!  
*ha!* What did I tell you, John? Didn't Mrs. Williams agree  
*wholly* with me?

MR. C. (*reseating himself*). Yes, of *course* she did. I  
expected *that*, but Joe, I'm sure, believes that I am *right*.  
You see he didn't *dare* to tell me his real opinion when his  
wife was there. Probably he will visit us a little later and  
convince you that you are wrong. But he didn't have the  
courage to say so in the presence of his wife. Isn't it *too*  
bad, Martha, that Joe hasn't some of *my* independence?

MRS. C. (*a little angrily*). I hope that Mr. Williams is  
not as stupid as you are—*sometimes*. (*More angrily.*)  
John, how *very* obstinate you are! You know well enough  
that *I* have the right of it, and yet you won't admit it.

MR. C. (*slowly stirring his coffee*). After all, Martha,  
I think I'll have some coffee. Will you please pass me the  
milk?

MRS. C. (*with considerable temper*). John Clark, I  
*never* get angry myself, *never*, but certainly you do try my  
patience—sorely. Now, I don't want you to call that cream  
milk—*again!* *Not again!* (*She rises from her chair.*)

MR. C. (*still stirring his coffee*). Martha, will you please  
pass me the—milk?

MRS. C. (*angrily stamping her foot*). John Clark, how  
*dare* you!

MR. C. (*calmly*). Martha, will you *please* pass me the  
milk!

MRS. C. (*in a furious temper, stamping her foot and  
then pounding upon the table*). It *ain't* milk—it *ain't*!

MR. C. (*with mock seriousness*). Martha! It *ain't*!  
That is *not* grammatical. Oh, that terrible, *terrible* word—  
*ain't*!

MRS. C. (*very furiously*). I never said *ain't*—never—  
*never—never!*

MR. C. (*very mournfully*). You did, Martha—you *did*.  
I heard you. You said, "*It ain't no milk!*"



MRS. C. (*wildly seizing the cream-pitcher and suddenly dashing it and its contents to the floor, in view of the audience*). *There—darn it!*

MR. C. (*rising quickly*). Hold on! That is Grandmother Smith's old cream-pitcher!

MRS. C. (*in despair*). Oh, *what* have I done! (*She stands for a moment, looking silently at the ruins of the prized cream-pitcher, and then sinks into her chair, pulling out her handkerchief and weeping hysterically.*)

MR. C. (*standing as though dazed, gazing upon the shattered pitcher.*) Gee whiz! (*Taking a step forward towards Mrs. C., speaking kindly, placing his right hand gently upon her shaking shoulders.*) Well, Martha, don't feel so badly about it—it ain't any use to "cry over spilt milk!"

MRS. S. (*suddenly rising from her chair, glaring at Mr. C.*). It isn't spilt milk—it's spilt cream!

CURTAIN.

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Patsy O'Wang, 35 min. ....	4 3
Pat, the Apothecary, 35 min. ....	6 2
Persecuted Dutchman, 30 min. ....	6 3
Please Pass the Cream, 20 min. ....	1 1
Second Childhood, 15 min. ....	2 2
Shadows, 35 min. ....	2 2
Sing a Song of Seniors, 30 min. ....	7
Smith's Unlucky Day, 20 min. ....	1 1
Taking Father's Place, 30 min. ....	5 3
That Rascal Pat, 30 min. ....	3 2
Too Much of a Good Thing, 45 min. ....	3 6
Turn Him Out, 35 min. ....	3 2
Two Aunts and a Photo, 20 m. ....	4
Two Gentlemen in a Fix, 15 m. ....	2
Two Ghosts in White, 20 min. ....	8

	M. F.
Two of a Kind, 40 min. ....	2 3
Uncle Dick's Mistake, 20 min. ....	3 2
Wanted a Correspondent, 45 m. ....	4 4
Watch, a Wallet, and a Jack of Spades, 40 min. ....	3 6
The Whole Truth, 40 min. ....	5 4
Who's the Boss? 25 min. ....	3 6
Wide Enough for Two, 45 min. ....	5 2
Wrong Baby, 25 min. ....	8

## VAUDEVILLE SKETCHES, MONOLOGUES, ETHIOPIAN PLAYS.

Amateur, 15 min. ....	1 1
At Harmony Junction, 20 min. ....	4
Axin' Her Father, 25 min. ....	2 3
Booster Club of Blackville, 25 m. ....	10
Breakfast Food for Two, 20 m. ....	1 1
Cold Finish, 15 min. ....	2 1
Colored Honeymoon, 25 min. ....	2 2
Coon Creek Courtship, 15 min. ....	1 1
Coming Champion, 20 min. ....	2
Coontown Thirteen Club, 25 m. ....	14
Counterfeit Bills, 20 min. ....	1 1
Darktown Fire Brigade, 25 min. ....	10
Doings of a Dude, 20 min. ....	2 1
For Reform, 20 min. ....	4
Fresh Timothy Hay, 20 min. ....	2 1
Glickman, the Glazier, 25 min. ....	1 1
Good Mornin' Judge, 35 min. ....	9 2
Her Hero, 20 min. ....	1 1
Hey, Rube! 15 min. ....	1 1
Home Run, 15 min. ....	1 1
Hungry, 15 min. ....	2
Little Miss Enemy, 15 min. ....	1 1
Little Red School House, 20 m. ....	4
Love and Lather, 35 min. ....	3 2
Marriage and After, 10 min. ....	1
Memphis Mose, 25 min. ....	5 1
Mischievous Nigger, 25 min. ....	4 2
Mr. and Mrs. Fido, 20 min. ....	1 1
Oh, Doctor! 30 min. ....	6 2
One Sweetheart for Two, 20 m. ....	2
Oyster Stew, 10 min. ....	2
Pete Yansen's Gurl's Moder, 10m. ....	1
Pickles for Two, 15 min. ....	2
Si and I, 15 min. ....	1
Special Sale, 15 min. ....	2
Street Faker, 15 min. ....	3
Such Ignorance, 15 min. ....	2
Sunny Son of Italy, 15 min. ....	1
Time Table, 20 min. ....	1 1
Tramp and the Actress, 20 min. ....	1 1
Troubled by Ghosts, 10 min. ....	4
Troubles of Rozinski, 15 min. ....	1
Two Jay Detectives, 15 min. ....	3
Umbrella Mender, 15 min. ....	2
What Happened to Hannah, 15m. ....	1 1

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