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The Whole Truth



T. S. DENISON & COMPANY  
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When the Circus Came to Town, 3 acts, 2¼ hrs. (25c)	5 3

**T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago**

# THE WHOLE TRUTH

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT  
FOR FIVE MEN AND FOUR WOMEN

BY

LINDSEY BARBEE

AUTHOR OF

*"After the Game," "At the End of the Rainbow," "The Dream That  
Came True," "The Fifteenth of January," "Then Greek Met Greek,"  
"Her First Scoop," "The Kingdom of Heart's Content,"  
"The Promise of Tomorrow," "Sing a Song of Seniors,"  
"The Thread of Destiny," "Tomorrow at Ten," "A  
Trial of Hearts," "When the Clock Strikes  
Twelve," "In the College Days," "Little Men  
and Women in Stageland," etc.*



CHICAGO  
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

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# THE WHOLE TRUTH

## CHARACTERS.

(Named in order of appearance.)

AMY ROSS	.....	Miss Falkner's secretary.
BARCLAY	.....	Miss Falkner's chauffeur
PHYLLIS FALKNER	.....	An heiress
MRS. HATHAWAY	.....	Her companion
ALPHONSE	.....	A butler
REGINALD BROOKE	.....	A suitor
MONTMORENCY MONTMAIN	.....	A poet
MRS. MONTMAIN	.....	His wife
LORD HARDING	.....	Another suitor

PLACE—Sun Parlor of a Fashionable Hotel.

TIME—Midsummer Eve.

TIME OF PLAYING—About Forty Minutes.

## CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

AMY—Bright, attractive and exceedingly well-bred. Wears simple summer gown.

PHYLLIS—Beautiful and stately in appearance but ill at ease in her new role. Wears elaborate evening gown.

MRS. HATHAWAY—Haughty, affected, drawling in speech in her imposed character; in reality, free and easy, careless and slangy. Wears elaborate evening gown. Hair slightly gray.

MRS. MONTMAIN—Meek, timid and at first merely an echo of her husband; later, self-assertive. Wears evening gown which is not so elaborate as the others.

BARCLAY—Energetic, attractive and thoroughly manly. Chauffeur suit.

ALPHONSE—Conventional butler attire.

REGINALD—Simple and natural. Evening clothes.

MR. MONTMAIN—Pompous, egotistical and flamboyant at first; later, weak and quite spineless. Evening clothes.

LORD HARDING—English in appearance and speech. Evening clothes and monocle.

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no 1.

PS 3503  
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STORY OF THE PLAY.

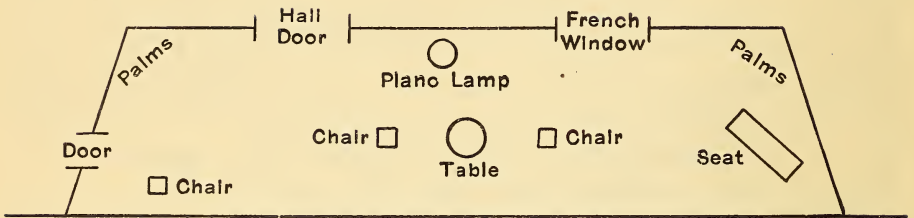
Phyllis Falkner inherits a large fortune from an English nobleman to whom she has acted as secretary. A peculiar feature of the will entitles Lord Harding, the family son and heir, who has supposedly been killed in battle, to a share of the estate, should he ever return—provided that, within a year, he weds Miss Falkner. The heiress, overwhelmed by her sudden notoriety and besieged by fortune hunters, flees to America and, acting on impulse, persuades a working girl who is in need of a vacation to impersonate her at a fashionable summer hotel. The supposed Miss Falkner gives a dinner in honor of Lord Harding who has suddenly appeared, declaring that the report of his death was false—and one of the guests asks that she, as hostess, make a wish in honor of Midsummer Eve since any wish on that night of elves and fairies is sure to be granted. At the suggestion of her secretary, Miss Ross (in reality the heiress), Miss Falkner wishes that, during the evening, nothing but the truth be revealed. The atmosphere changes; each one fully and frankly speaks his mind. Complexities arise, difficulties are straightened and the mystery of the heiress is solved before the magic gift is withdrawn.

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PROPERTIES.

Rugs appropriate to a sun parlor. Wicker furniture upholstered in cretonne of bright colors—three chairs and a long seat. Wicker table with books and flowers. Wicker piano lamp with cretonne shade. Palms, flowers and scarf for Amy. Basket of flowers and book for Barclay. Lorgnette for Mrs. Hathaway. Cigarette-case, watch, papers and monocle for Lord Harding.

## SCENE PLOT.



## STAGE DIRECTIONS.

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

## THE WHOLE TRUTH

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SCENE:—*Sun-parlor in a summer hotel. Open French window of L. of C. in F. revealing landscape drop. Door or archway to hall R. of C. in F. Door or archway to private dining room down R. Palms for R. U. E. and L. U. E. Bright rugs and wicker furniture upholstered in cretonne—a long seat down L., a table with books and flowers at C. Chairs R. and L. of table and down R. Tall piano lamp R. of C. in F. with bright shade. Stage is illuminated for late afternoon.*

*Discovered, AMY, arranging flowers in vase on table.*

*Enter BARCLAY at hall door.*

BARCLAY (*crossing to AMY with fancy basket of flowers*). Here are the flowers, Miss Ross.

AMY (*turning*). Oh Barclay—you startled me! (*As she glances at the flowers.*) How lovely! (*Takes the basket.*) The hotel florist has quite surpassed himself.

BARCLAY. I'm not generous enough to allow him that distinction. I arranged them myself.

AMY. Really? Your clever fingers are always working miracles.

BARCLAY. A chauffeur must be a Jack-of-all-trades, you know.

AMY. But a Jack-of-all-trades is not necessarily—artistic.

BARCLAY (*laughing*). Do you mean that *I* am artistic?

AMY. In many ways. Were I a feminine Sherlock Holmes, I should say that you had read much, traveled widely and observed minutely.

BARCLAY. You're making me out a mystery.

AMY. Maybe you are.

BARCLAY (*shaking his head*). Not a bit of it! I'm merely an ordinary British soldier, disabled by a bullet, laid low by typhoid and trying to recuperate.

AMY. In America. Why, so far?

BARCLAY. *Because.* (*After a pause.*) Isn't that the answer approved by your sex?

AMY. And why a chauffeur?

BARCLAY. And why *not* a chauffeur? Work in the open is what I need.

AMY (*as she takes a book from his pocket*). For a chauffeur, "The Guide for Mechanics" would be much more practical than—Browning. (*Holds up book.*)

BARCLAY (*taking the book*). But I don't need a guide book and I *do* need a Browning.

AMY. Relaxation, I suppose.

BARCLAY. Exactly. Relaxation. (*Replaces book in pocket.*)

AMY (*moving to door down R.*). Come, turn your glance upon my dinner table. (*Points within.*) Your basket will be the finishing touch. (*He joins her.*)

BARCLAY (*whistling*). Jove, that's ripping! An intimate little dinner of—one—two—three—six covers! (*Suddenly.*) Aren't *you* in this?

AMY. Why *should* I be? Not only would Miss Falkner's secretary be a quiet wren among gay-plumaged birds but it would be a social *faux pas* for the ambitious hostess.

BARCLAY. And to think that *you*, with your brains and your breeding, are forced to submit to this crude, untutored adventuress.

AMY (*raising hand*). Remember—you are speaking of my employer.

BARCLAY. And mine. (*Bows.*) I beg your pardon—and hers. (*After a moment.*) But, seriously—why don't you break away from it?

AMY. Daily bread is a necessity—and heiresses are not achieved every day.

BARCLAY (*crossing to chair R. of table*). Do you believe the story of this Phyllis Falkner? (*Leans on back of chair.*)

AMY. Why not? It is no stranger than those of other unexpected heiresses.

BARCLAY. Perhaps I have not heard it correctly.



AMY. I think you have. The papers—for once—proved authentic and reliable.

BARCLAY. Would you mind repeating it to me—as you know it?

AMY (*seating herself in chair down R.*) Certainly not. Phyllis Falkner was the penniless secretary of an old English nobleman whose only son, Lord Harding, had answered the country's call to arms. The reported death of the son proved a blow from which the old father never recovered, and in his need and loneliness he turned to the equally lonely girl to whom he soon became deeply attached. Upon his death it was found that his entire fortune had been left to Miss Falkner—with one condition. (*Hesitates.*)

BARCLAY. Yes?

AMY. That should the report of the son's death prove false—and the son himself return—half of the heritage should immediately revert to him, provided—

BARCLAY. Another provision?

AMY. An important one: namely, the forfeiture of his half should he fail to wed Miss Falkner within a year after his return.

BARCLAY. But suppose Miss Falkner happened to marry before his return?

AMY. The will forced her to wait five years; ample time for Lord Harding to return were he still alive.

BARCLAY (*crossing to L.*). Preposterous! Unfair! How could any father demand such a sacrifice?

AMY. You must remember that he had learned to love this girl as his own daughter.

BARCLAY. Granted; but why such an unnecessary entanglement of two lives? (*Stands before her.*)

AMY. Doubtless an old man's desire to unite the two of whom he was most fond.

BARCLAY. She probably was clever enough to coax him into such an arrangement.

AMY. Let us give her the benefit of the doubt. If she were a schemer, would she not have thwarted the provision for the possible return of the son?

BARCLAY. Such a provision meant a title. You must grant that from any standpoint affairs are advantageous for her.

AMY. You seem interested.

BARCLAY. I am. A man couldn't be Miss Falkner's chauffeur for six weeks without wondering how she obtained such a hold over her benefactor. She hasn't brains—nor culture.

AMY (*quickly*). But she has *looks*—you must acknowledge *that*.

BARCLAY (*impatiently*). You women are all alike—*looks* constitute everything.

AMY. We take our cue from the men.

BARCLAY. Oh, no you don't! For not every man cares for a pretty face without an accompaniment of gray matter.

AMY. But you can't deny that a pretty face is an opening wedge.

BARCLAY. It was in *this* case, anyway—and an entire fortune is no poor reward.

AMY (*after a pause*). An entire fortune! Then you haven't seen the papers?

BARCLAY. I've been on two days' leave in the city and haven't had time to look at a paper.

AMY (*rising*). And you haven't heard? (*Crosses to table and puts basket upon it.*)

BARCLAY. Heard what?

AMY (*facing audience*). That Lord Harding arrived here yesterday morning.

BARCLAY (*crossing to her right*). Lord Harding? Impossible!

AMY. Nothing is impossible, it seems. The report of his death was false. Upon returning home he learned the true state of affairs—and set sail immediately for America.

BARCLAY. Is he the—real thing?

AMY. He appears to be. Flaunts the family crest and produces papers that seem conclusively to prove his identity. (*Sits L. of table.*)

BARCLAY (*whistling*). So he's laying siege to the heiress? (*Sits R. of table.*)

AMY. He has turned his batteries full upon her. The wooing is fast and furious.

BARCLAY. And Miss Falkner?

AMY. I can't say. As you know, she has a gift of masking her emotions.

BARCLAY. You are kind to put it that way. I'd call it plain stupidity.

AMY (*reprovingly*). Barclay!

BARCLAY. Is young Brooke still in the running?

AMY. Apparently. The rivals meet tonight—for the dinner is in Lord Harding's honor.

BARCLAY. And the other guests?

AMY. Mrs. Hathaway, the inevitable chaperone. (*He makes a grimace.*) Mr. Montmain, the poet—and incidentally the social lion of the place—and—sad but necessary—his wife.

BARCLAY (*in disgust*). That cad of a Montmain.

AMY. Isn't he? And yet—how can a cad be a poet?

BARCLAY (*laughingly*). Another mystery for you.

AMY. Perhaps so.

BARCLAY (*suddenly rising and going to the back of her chair*). What a beastly artificial atmosphere it is—not the place for you—not the people you should be thrown with. Come away, Amy—come away—with me! (*Leans over her.*)

AMY (*rising and facing him*). Barclay! Barclay!

BARCLAY. Oh, you've seen how it is with me—you must have seen! I haven't much to offer you—I can't promise you a cent—but I've my health—and I'll make you happy.

AMY (*clasping her hands*). Oh, do you mean it—do you mean it?

BARCLAY (*taking her hands*). Oh, you know that I mean it—you know that I've loved you from the first—the very first!

*Enter PHYLLIS from hall.*

PHYLLIS (*in surprise*). Why, Barclay!

BARCLAY (*releasing AMY'S hands, turning and bowing*). Miss Falkner.

PHYLLIS. I have just sent my maid for the flowers.

BARCLAY. I thought Miss Ross might be ready—so I brought them myself.

AMY. Lovely, aren't they? (*Takes basket from table.*)

BARCLAY (*courteously*). Your maid is doubtless looking for me. With your permission I'll put an end to her search. (*Exit, hall door.*)

PHYLLIS (*looking after him*). Ain't he got lovely manners?

AMY (*in distress*). Oh—oh—oh! What did I tell you about *ain't*?

PHYLLIS (*correcting herself with an effort*). Isn't.

AMY. And you must not use *got*. Now say it over.

PHYLLIS. Hasn't he lovely manners?

AMY. That's better. If you'll just stop to think—

PHYLLIS (*coming down C. to table*). But, Miss Ross, I can't think of everything at the same time, and the talking does frighten me so.

AMY. Haven't you been getting on nicely of late?

PHYLLIS. Pretty well. Unless I am asked a question, I say, "Really!" "My word!" and "Fancy now!" just as you told me.

AMY. That's good. Do you raise your eyebrows?

PHYLLIS (*raising eyebrows*). Oh yes—and shrug my shoulders—so! (*Shrugs her shoulders.*)

AMY. You are quite perfect. And there's no real reason to be frightened, you know.

PHYLLIS (*anxiously*). But, tonight! What shall I do tonight? I've never given a dinner and I'm sure to do the wrong thing. (*Sits R. of table.*)

AMY. Not at all. Do just as you've been doing and everything will come out all right.

PHYLLIS. But I'm the first to eat—

AMY. I'll explain the forks.

PHYLLIS. And a hostess must talk, mustn't she?

AMY. Not necessarily. The guests are usually glad enough to assume the responsibility.

PHYLLIS. But when they first come in—

AMY. Now don't get excited. I'll tell you just what to say. (*Places basket on table.*) Now, let's pretend that Mr. Brooke is coming in.

PHYLLIS. Oh, you needn't mind about Mr. Brooke. I can manage *him*.

AMY. Then why bother about the others?

PHYLLIS (*consciously*). Oh, Reggie—Mr. Brooke I mean—is different—that's all.

AMY (*understandingly*). Oh—I—see! Then we'll take Mrs. Montmain. Watch now. (*PHYLLIS turns and watches her as she advances toward hall door with outstretched hand.*) Oh, dear Mrs. Montmain—it is indeed a pleasure to have you as my guest.

PHYLLIS. But it ain't—*isn't*, I mean—a pleasure.

AMY. A hostess must always make believe, you know.

PHYLLIS. Go on. I can remember that speech without your saying it again.

AMY (*again with outstretched hand*). And Mr. Montmain! I've just been reading your sonnet upon Sunrise.

PHYLLIS (*rising*). But I haven't been reading it. I can't understand his stuff Miss Ross—and that's all there is about it. (*Goes to AMY.*)

AMY (*soothingly*). Never mind. Just pretend you do. Clasp your hands—so—(*clasps hands*) and say, "Tell me—is it not symbolic of the potentialities within ourselves?"

PHYLLIS (*miserably*). Say that again.

AMY. Tell me—is it not symbolic of the potentialities—

PHYLLIS (*interrupting*). What's the word?

AMY (*slowly*). Po-ten-ti-al-ities within ourselves? (*PHYLLIS repeats the sentence mechanically.*) That's quite as it should be. Now for his lordship.

PHYLLIS. Give me a good one for him—he gets on my nerves.

AMY (*pondering*). Let's—see. Suppose you make it short and simple. (*As she advances toward hall door.*)

Lord Harding, America is always very glad to have the opportunity of welcoming England.

PHYLLIS. That suits me. Now how do we go out to dinner?

AMY. Alphonse will announce, "Dinner is served." Then you are to turn to Lord Harding like this—(*turns*) and say, "What a pity that the orchestra can't be playing 'Hands Across the Sea' as we lead the procession." (*Takes arm of imaginary partner and walks toward dining-room door.*)

PHYLLIS. Let me try that to be sure. (*Imitating every tone and gesture that AMY has used.*) "What a pity that the orchestra can't be playing 'Hands Across the Sea' as we lead the procession." (*Turns and looks back at AMY.*) Is that all?

AMY. That's all. The others will follow your lead. (*Returns to table and takes basket of flowers.*) Now suppose we place our centerpiece and learn all about the forks. (*Exeunt PHYLLIS and AMY, door down R.*)

*Enter MRS. HATHAWAY from hall.*

MRS. H. (*looking around*). Phyllis?

PHYLLIS (*from dining-room*). Yes, Mrs. Hathaway.

MRS. H. (*coming to C.*). Come hook my belt. I just ain't got the nerve to let that maid of yours see how hard it is to get my clothes fastened. (*PHYLLIS enters and stands back of her.*) Steady, now, while I draw in. (*Draws in her breath.*) Got it, didn't you? This bein' swell is all right in its way, but it ain't comf'table. What with gloves that are stoppin' my circulation and shoes that were made for a hummin' bird—

*AMY enters from dining-room.*

MRS. H. Oh, Miss Ross. (*Raises her lorgnette, affects a grande dame air and speaks drawlingly.*) Phyllis, you didn't tell me that Miss Ross was receiving with us.

PHYLLIS (*hastily*). Miss Ross has been arranging the flowers.

AMY (*turning as she reaches the hall door*). And explaining the forks! (*Exit.*)

MRS. H. (*returning to her former manner*). Ain't she the swell dame? Explainin' the forks—as if we didn't know! (*Walks to L.*)

PHYLLIS. We *don't*. Miss Ross tells me everything to do. (*Drops listlessly in chair R. of table.*)

MRS. H. And looks just about as important as that there hail-the-conquering-hero-comes chauffeur of yours. For high and mighty and stuck-on-themselves servants, Phyllis, nobody's got you beat. (*Seats herself on seat down L.*)

PHYLLIS. Don't it all seem strange?

MRS. H. *Strange?* Why, I spend half of my time pinchin' myself to see if I'm real—and not in my two-by-four, cookin' over a gas jet and pastin' handkerchiefs on a window pane. (*Sighs and settles back.*) Say, Phyllis, it's no easy job to think of you as an heiress—a regular heiress, same as you read of in books.

PHYLLIS. Sometimes I think I'll never get used to it.

MRS. H. (*sitting up straight*). Now that's plum foolishness. Look at me settlin' down in this gilded cage as if I'd been born to it. And it's thanks to you that I'm a-gettin' the chance—just to think that you'd make me a partner in all this high livin'.

PHYLLIS. You were good to *me* once.

MRS. H. But, takin' you in when you were minus a job didn't need no such reward as this.

PHYLLIS. An heiress needs chaperoning, you know.

MRS. H. And I guess you'll have to hand it to me that when it comes to hobnobbin' with crowned heads, nobody gets ahead of yours truly.

PHYLLIS. You *do* seem to get on with Lord Harding. (*Sighs.*) I wish *I* could.

MRS. H. Now, see here, Phyllis, if you've got any silly notion about Reggie Brooke in your mind, get it out.

PHYLLIS (*weakly, on the defensive*). Reggie knows all the swells.

MRS. H. He may know all the swells, but he ain't wearin' a coronet.

PHYLLIS. Well, he's just as important here in America as Lord Harding is in England.

MRS. H. Don't you think it for a minute.

PHYLLIS. Anyway—

MRS. H. Anyway—*nothing!* I've got a life-size picture of you wearin' a ta-ra-ra of pearls and havin' a royal trademark on all your stationery—and I ain't goin' to have that picture smashed.

*Enter ALPHONSE from hall.*

ALPHONSE. Mr. Brooke.

*Enter REGINALD. Exit ALPHONSE.*

MRS. H. (*rising and hastening to him*). Charming of you to come early, Mr. Brooke.

REGINALD (*hastily shaking her hand and rushing to PHYLLIS*). You don't mind, do you? (*Takes her hand.*) I wanted to see you—alone.

MRS. H. (*following him*). And ever since we've discovered the dear Duchess as a mutual friend, I've thought of a dozen things to ask you. (*Takes arm and guides him to L. of C.*)

*Enter ALPHONSE.*

ALPHONSE. Mr. and Mrs. Montmain!

*Enter MR. and MRS. MONTMAIN. Exit ALPHONSE.*

PHYLLIS (*hastening to MRS. MONTMAIN*). Oh, dear Mrs. Montmain—it is indeed a pleasure to have you as my guest. (*Turns.*) You know Mrs. Hathaway? (*MRS. MONTMAIN with set smile makes her way to MRS. HATHAWAY and REGINALD and is greeted by them. PHYLLIS takes MR. MONTMAIN'S outstretched hand.*) Oh, Mr. Montmain, I've just been reading your sonnet upon Sunrise.

MR. M. (*pompously*). My dear young lady, I am most grateful, most delighted that—

PHYLLIS (*clasping her hands*). Tell me—is it not symbolic of the potentialities within ourselves?

MR. MONTMAIN (*ecstatically*). To think that you can feel with me—that you can understand—that you are a



kindred soul! (*As they make their way toward the group at L.*) Maria?

MRS. M. (*meekly*). Yes, Montmorency?

MR. M. She understands—

MRS. M. Yes, Montmorency.

MR. M. (*dramatically*). She realizes what it is that infuses my very being when I strive to put into words the symbolism of nature.

MRS. M. (*still more meekly*). Yes, Montmorency.

MRS. H. Does it really hurt like that every time you write a poem?

PHYLLIS. Mrs. Hathaway, won't you show Mr. and Mrs. Montmain the view from the garden? It might help him to write another poem. (*Unwillingly* MRS. HATHAWAY escorts the MONTMAINS outside the French window, where they stand, quite visible to audience. REGINALD hurries to PHYLLIS. *They withdraw to R. 2 E.*)

REGINALD (*shortly*). What are you going to do about this English chap?

PHYLLIS (*weakly gazing at him*). What do you mean?

REGINALD (*impatiently*). Don't pull off any of that baby stare business. You know what he's after. (*After a pause.*) Well, what are you going to do?

PHYLLIS. I don't know—oh, I don't know!

REGINALD. Cut out the Britisher.

PHYLLIS. But I feel that the money is really his.

REGINALD. Give it to him, then.

PHYLLIS. You mean—

REGINALD. That I want *you*—money or no money.

PHYLLIS (*in a tremble*). Oh, Reggie—Reggie—that sounds too good to be true!

REGINALD. But it *is* true. (*Takes her hand.*) Now, what are you going to do?

PHYLLIS (*happily*). Don't you know—without my telling you?

*Enter* MRS. HATHAWAY and the MONTMAINS from the French window. *They hasten to* PHYLLIS and REGINALD.

MRS. H. (*as they advance*). Tell us how you do it, Mr.

Montmain—how you write those wonderful, wonderful things.

MR. M. (*thoughtfully*). I first go into meditation, don't I, Maria?

MRS. M. (*meekly*). Yes, Montmorency.

MR. M. And when I am imbued with genius, I write down my thoughts fast and furiously. Isn't that correct, Maria?

MRS. M. (*meekly*). Yes, Montmorency.

MR. M. And sometimes, when the frenzy of work is over, I am left in complete exhaustion. You often find me in total collapse, don't you, Maria?

MRS. M. (*still more meekly*). Yes, Montmorency.

*Enter ALPHONSE at hall.*

ALPHONSE. Lord Harding.

*Enter LORD HARDING. Exit ALPHONSE.*

PHYLLIS (*hastening to LORD HARDING*). Lord Harding, America is always glad to have the opportunity of welcoming England. (*Turns.*) You know Mrs. Hathaway?

MRS. H. (*bowing deeply*). Your lordship!

PHYLLIS. And Mrs. Montmain? Mr. Montmain? (*All bow.*) And Mr. Brooke? (*REGINALD glares.*)

*Enter ALPHONSE from dining-room.*

ALPHONSE. Dinner is served. (*Exit.*)

PHYLLIS (*taking LORD HARDING'S arm*). What a pity that the orchestra can't be playing 'Hands Across the Sea' as we lead the procession.

(*They pass into the dining-room followed by MR. MONTMAIN and MRS. HATHAWAY, REGINALD and MRS. MONTMAIN. The curtain is lowered for a moment to indicate a passage of two hours. It rises again upon PHYLLIS at C., MRS. HATHAWAY and MRS. MONTMAIN at L. Almost immediately the gentlemen enter from dining-room and cross to L. PHYLLIS starts to join group at L.*)

LORD H. Miss Falkner?

PHYLLIS. Yes?

LORD H. May I detain you a moment?

PHYLLIS. Certainly. (*They walk to R. 2 E. while REGINALD and MR. MONTMAIN join group at L.*)

LORD H. Business takes me to the city tomorrow.

PHYLLIS (*nervously*). That is a short stay here.

LORD H. But long enough for me to accomplish what I came for.

PHYLLIS. And that?

LORD H. I think you know. (*Softly.*) Have you an answer ready for me?

PHYLLIS. You really want it?

LORD H. Why do you suppose I came to America?

PHYLLIS. To get—your inheritance.

LORD H. Don't put it that way. My first thought was to carry out my father's wishes. When I saw you, I knew it would be easy.

PHYLLIS. But suppose you hadn't—well—liked me?

LORD H. Then I should have gone quietly away—without a word.

PHYLLIS. So you want your answer?

LORD H. (*sentimentally*). I am waiting for that only.

PHYLLIS. Then—I refuse.

LORD H. (*blankly*). I—beg—your—pardon?

PHYLLIS. I say I *refuse*.

LORD H. (*seizing her arm*). You can't mean that.

PHYLLIS (*breaking away from him*). I *do* mean it. I won't marry you—if *that's* any clearer.

LORD H. (*angrily*). How dare you?

PHYLLIS. How dare I *what*?

LORD H. Keep my inheritance from me.

PHYLLIS. I'm not keeping it from you—it's *mine*.

LORD H. Not lawfully yours. (*Comes closer.*) Why, you've *got* to marry me!

PHYLLIS. Never!

LORD H. (*furiously*). So it's your nice little scheme to keep all the money, is it?

*Enter AMY with scarf from hall.*

PHYLLIS. I don't want your old money—take it—all of it.

AMY (*crossing to them*). I brought your scarf, Miss

Falkner. I thought you might need it. Pardon me for interrupting.

PHYLLIS (*taking the scarf*). Thank you, Miss Ross.

MR. M. (*hurrying to them, followed by others*). Ah, Miss Falkner—a discovery on our part. It is Midsummer Eve—a time dear to the hearts of fairies—of elves—and of poets!

PHYLLIS (*mechanically*). Really?

MR. M. And 'tis said that a wish made at this mystic time is always granted.

PHYLLIS (*raising her eyebrows*). Fancy, now!

MR. M. (*pompously*). So, Miss Falkner, as queen of our gathering tonight, it devolves upon you to make the fatal wish.

PHYLLIS. Oh, I can't—I don't know what to say—I—(*turning*) Miss Ross, tell me what to wish.

AMY. Suppose you wish that for this evening each one of your guests speaks "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

MRS. H. (*to AMY.*) Why, how dare you?

MR. M. A most remarkable wish!

PHYLLIS (*clapping her hands*). Oh, just the thing—just the thing!

MRS. H. (*protesting*). Phyllis!

PHYLLIS. Hush—all of you! (*Slowly and seriously*). I wish that on this evening each one of my guests will speak "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!" (*PHYLLIS sinks into chair down R., AMY retires just outside of French window, MRS. MONTMAIN sits L. of table. MRS. HATHAWAY goes to LORD HARDING and slips her hand through his arm. REGINALD stands back of PHYLLIS' chair.*)

MRS. H. How absurd! Phyllis is so kind-hearted, Lord Harding, that she agrees to everything that creature says. (*Leads him to seat down L., where they seat themselves.*) Mr. Montmain, suppose you write us a beautiful ode to Midsummer—that will be much better.

MR. M. (*sinking heavily into chair R. of table*). I never wrote a line of poetry in my life.

MRS. H. (*laughing*). Listen to the man! Genius is so

modest! Now we'll give you just five minutes to compose a lovely verse.

MR. M. (*peevishly*). I tell you I never wrote a line of poetry in my life.

MRS. H. (*anxiously*). Mr. Montmain! You're ill!

MR. M. No, I'm not—I'm just telling the truth.

PHYLLIS (*in surprise*). But your book that everybody's raving about!

MR. M. Maria wrote it.

PHYLLIS. *What!*

MRS. M. (*complacently*). Oh, yes, I wrote it—I've written all his poems. He couldn't rhyme a word to save his life and he doesn't know pentameter from Sanskrit.

MRS. H. (*puzzled*). But the hour of meditation—

MRS. M. (*vigorously*). Meditation—*nothing!* Just plain loafing, that's all.

PHYLLIS. And the complete exhaustion—

MRS. M. (*sniffing*). Smoking cigarettes and sleeping one's stupid self away is apt to result in exhaustion.

MR. M. (*plaintively*). Maria has the brains.

MRS. M. And he has the nerve. He likes notoriety—I don't—and there we are!

MR. M. (*wiping his eyes*). 'Tis a cruel blow that you should know this, Mrs. Hathaway! You have been such an admirer of my—our—I should say—*Maria's* work!

MRS. H. Not for a minute! Why, I couldn't read that stuff at the point of a pistol. Me for the yellow backs!

MRS. M. (*in surprise*). Mrs. Hathaway! I don't understand.

MRS. H. No, of course you don't. Maybe when I tell you that I'm Birdie Brett, who used to do imitation stunts on the Peerless Vaudeville Circuit, you'll see why I made such a hit as a swell dame.

MRS. M. (*in horror*). To think that a woman of your age—

MRS. H. Now go slow on the age, friend Maria. This hair ain't so gray as it looks—these wrinkles ain't no sign of age and my feet ain't hurtin' from rheumatiz but from

shoes that are three sizes too little. (*Kicks off slippers with a sigh of relief.*) Don't tell the Duchess, Reggie!

REGINALD. I don't know the Duchess—I don't know any of the swells. I was never in a hotel before—and my real name's Tom Bliss.

MRS. H. What's that?

REGINALD. I've worked hard all my life and when I had saved up a little I made up my mind to have one big vacation, even if it cost me a year's savings. So I bought all these clothes—I pretended to be somebody—

PHYLLIS. *Reggie!*

REGINALD. And in reality I'm floor walker at a salary of twelve and a half plunks a week.

PHYLLIS (*rising*). *Reggie!*

REGINALD. Oh, I've been a cad; I know it. I'm sorry—and if I hadn't really cared for you, Miss Falkner—

PHYLLIS. *Don't!* Don't call me that—for it ain't my name. I'm Mame Maroney and I'm at Overhead and Underfoot's Emporium—glove counter—second aisle to the right!

LORD H. (*rising*). What do you mean?

PHYLLIS. Just what I say. I'm not Miss Falkner—I'm just her figurehead. She bought me—all—*this*—she's given me this grand vacation. But I'm tired of it all—I'm tired—and I'm going back with Reggie! (*REGINALD takes her outstretched hands.*)

MRS. H. Well, Mame—you've gone and done it now! (*BARCLAY appears in hall door.*)

MR. M. (*weakly*). Astonishing! Most astonishing!

LORD H. (*in thunderous tones*). Then—*who* is Miss Falkner?

AMY *enters from French window.*

AMY. I am! (*All rise.*) Please be seated until I give my explanation. (*Ladies are seated and AMY crosses in front of table and stands there.*) You all know the story of my unexpected fortune—for that is my sole claim to notoriety. In order to escape publicity and fortune hunters I came to America, and found that the story of my inher-

itance had preceded me. I did not care for the friends—and lovers—whom money attracts. To be frank, I had the desire to be sought and loved—for myself.

MR. M. Astonishing! Most astonishing! (*Sits.*)

AMY. By chance I found Miss Maroney, longing for a vacation. The idea of having her impersonate me came as an inspiration. She agreed—she chose her friend as companion (*indicating* MRS. HATHAWAY)—and the rest you know!

MRS. H. Well, I never! (*To* AMY.) And so you're the real Miss Falkner!

AMY. The real Miss Falkner—and very grateful to you all for helping me play my little game.

MRS. H. Grateful to *us*! We're the ones who ought to be handing thanks to you. What have *you* gotten out of it?

AMY. Everything—*everything*—for I've learned that after all I, myself, count!

LORD H. And I've learned that fate has played me a cruel trick. (*Takes step forward.*) Miss Falkner!

AMY (*motioning him back*). Please don't—for fate has been exceedingly kind, Lord Harding.

LORD H. Let me explain.

*Enter* BARCLAY.

BARCLAY (*striding to L. of table*). Yes, let him explain. (*LORD HARDING gazes at him in mingled bewilderment and terror.*) And before you begin to speak, suppose you hand over my watch—and my cigarette case.

LORD H. (*forcing himself to speak*). I don't understand.

BARCLAY. Oh, yes you do. (*After a moment.*) I'm waiting. (*Slowly* LORD HARDING *hands him a watch and cigarette case.*) And now the papers which you found so useful.

LORD H. (*weakly*). I have no papers.

BARCLAY (*quickly*). You have them on your person. They are too valuable to you to be far off. (*LORD HARDING hands papers to him.*) And now, before you go, you will

tell these friends just who I am. (LORD HARDING *is silent.*)  
Speak out.

LORD H. (*with an effort*). You are—(*hesitates*).

BARCLAY. Go on.

LORD H. You are—Lord Harding!

BARCLAY. And we won't stop to introduce you or to say just why you left the army. When I was lying insensible on the field, you thought I was as good as gone, didn't you? And that *you* might as well have my possessions. And after you returned to England and heard of my father's bequest, it flashed into your mind that you might as well raise Lord Harding from the dead, impersonate him and win the heiress for yourself. Unfortunately for you, I wasn't dead—and I've had the pleasure of checking your little scheme. (LORD HARDING *walks unsteadily toward the door.*) Yes—to leave us is best, Jones—and you're lucky to get off so easily. (*Exit LORD HARDING at hall door.*)

MRS. H. Two Lord Hardings—two Miss Falkners—my head's goin' round and round.

BARCLAY. I owe you all an apology for forcing my own affairs, but I have saved you from an impostor. I am the real Lord Harding. On learning of my father's strange will I came to America that I might see Miss Falkner for myself. I became her chauffeur—and I soon became interested in another way. (*Appealingly.*) Amy—Phyllis—shall I tell them?

AMY. Please do.

BARCLAY. Miss Falkner has promised to be my wife. Until a few moments ago I knew her as Miss Ross, the secretary. She knew me only as Barclay, the chauffeur.

AMY. Wait a moment—*please!* I knew you were Lord Harding—the *real* Lord Harding—from the very first.

BARCLAY (*in amazement*). You knew that I was Lord Harding?

AMY. Of course. Could I have been your father's secretary and constant companion without looking at your photograph each day? Could I have listened to his stories of



you—without loving you? Why, if you hadn't come to me—and wanted me—I should never have married—never!

BARCLAY (*stepping toward her*). Phyllis!

AMY (*as she goes to him*). You see, I am telling you “the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!”

(*He takes her hands and they walk slowly toward and out of the French window, disappearing from sight. MR. and MRS. MONTMAIN look after them in bewilderment, REGINALD and PHYLLIS become engrossed in each other and MRS. HATHAWAY gazes haughtily through her lorgnette.*)

CURTAIN.

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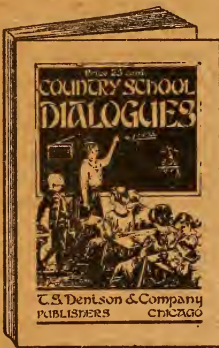
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