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Allen Norton**

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Title: The convolvulus: a comedy in three acts

Author: Allen Norton

Release date: May 3, 2014 [EBook #45571]

Language: English

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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CONVULVULUS: A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS \*\*\*

**THE CONVULVULUS**

**A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS**

BY  
ALLEN NORTON

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PRINTED SEPTEMBER, 1914

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TO  
CARL VAN VECTEN

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THOSE CONCERNED

JANE GIBBS  
GLORIA, HER SISTER  
KATHRYN  
DILL  
JACK HARGRAVE  
PETER HARGRAVE  
COL. CHRISTOPHER CRAPSEY

SCENES OF THE PLAY

[Act 1.](#) Jane's house on Gramercy Park  
[Act 2.](#) Peter Hargrave's Apartment  
[Act 3.](#) Reverting to Act 1

TIME  
An Afternoon

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THE CONVULVULUS

## ACT I

*Scene—JANE'S house on Gramercy Park. A living room with doors R. and L. Entrance U. R. Curtains U. C., showing an alcove which looks out on the Park. DILL, in velvet knickerbockers and jacket, is arranging service for tea. JACK, a young man of twenty, has entered. He wears green kid gloves and a green Alpine hat to match.*

JACK. So you're getting married, Dill?

DILL. I am, sir. Have you any objections to offer?

JACK. None whatever, Dill. But why tea at this hour? It's only just past lunch.

DILL. It's the very latest thing, sir; all Americans are doing it now. It's to keep up with the London time, sir, and there it's tea-time already. (*Examines a crumpled manuscript with his back to JACK.*)

JACK (*indifferently*). What is that, Dill?

DILL. It's a will, sir.

JACK (*observing DILL'S progress about the room*). Never admit that you have a will, Dill. Where there's a will there's a conscience, you know. One must get over such things.

DILL. I'll try to, sir. (*Puts manuscript back in pocket.*)

JACK (*with an air of importance*). I've some melancholy news, Dill.

DILL. Melancholy for whom, sir?

JACK. For you, Dill, and for my father. I hope you won't take it too seriously when I say you're the living picture of my father.

DILL. Oh, I just adore pictures, sir.

JACK. My father does not adore you, Dill. He took you for his brother.

DILL (*with dignity*). Really, sir! Who do you say that I am, sir?

JACK (*facing about*). I say you're the butler, Dill.

DILL. Quite right, sir. (*Attentively.*) Are you a gentleman?

JACK. By no means.

DILL. Your father?

JACK. Nor he either. (*Enter JANE.*)

DILL. My brother was a gentleman. (*Exit haughtily with tray.*)

*JANE is forty, a young woman of forty. If failure is the worst deformity, she must be open to that accusation, for she has compromised with life. But JANE will always be something a little better than a woman.*

JANE. What is it all about, Jack? Yourself? Kathryn? Or merely me?

JACK. None of us, Jane. Dill said that he was getting married.

JANE. Oh, Dill's always getting married. He never does, though.

JACK. And then Dill was telling me about a brother of his, and I was telling him about a brother of my father's. I have never told you, Jane, but father really came here looking for a brother. Sort of a business journey on his part. That is—none of his business whatever. I tell him fathers should begin at home and stay there. But father feels differently. Have you got a husband, Jane? I know that nothing short of marriage will ever stop him.

JANE. I haven't, Jack. But I almost had an English one once.

JACK. No need to explain, Jane. They don't exist. Our men were all killed in the Wars of the Wives. Father says it was they who started that horrible Rebellion in this country, and that it's going on still. Father doesn't believe in matrimony. That's because you're the first person I've had the heart to broach the subject to. (*Aside.*) I don't think I shall ever marry. It's a fine opportunity for a young man.

JANE. To become your mother, Jack, I might think of it. But a minister can support anything but a wife or a sense of humor.

JACK. Ah! but if father comes into the estate—

JANE. The estate?

JACK. Yes, you see when my grandfather died he left his entire fortune to his second son, at the same time disinheriting us. Said that when father became a minister he handled enough tainted money without hoarding any of his.

JANE. That's too bad, Jack. Not a penny?

JACK. No, just died and damned us.

JANE. He might have left that to his father, mightn't he?

JACK. So he might. It doesn't make much difference now though. By the terms of the will he had to be found, or to find himself, within one year, or the estate reverted to us. (*Pulls out watch.*) His time's almost up I fear.

JANE. You don't think he's dead, do you?

JACK. That or strayed I guess. (*Sighs.*) He was always the black sheep of the family.

JANE. It was certainly very good of your father to come to America to find his brother. Where did he think he was, do you suppose, in Australia?

JACK. Well—his brother always had an antipathy for Americans. He married an American! (*Enter GLORIA.*)

GLORIA. *is the ordinary middle-aged mortal. In face, figure and deportment she is like any other middle-class American woman. All American women belong to the middle class. They are not all GLORIAS, however.*

GLORIA (*flouncing into a chair*). Have you seen Kathryn—anyone? (*Puts the finishing look to a letter; seals it; then resumes without noticing either one of them.*) I have a very important letter for her.

JACK. I didn't know anything was of importance to Kathryn, now that she's in love with me.

GLORIA (*quietly*). Kathryn in love with you? Mr. Hargrave, you must be mistaken.

JACK. No—she proposed to me yesterday.

JANE. And did you accept?

JACK. No, I wanted to surprise Kathryn by refusing, and then to startle her by proposing myself. This afternoon I have chosen for my surprise. Three o'clock I think would be the appropriate hour.

JANE. The surprise, Jack, may be yours, but the romance remains with Kathryn. Eve will out, you know, and Kathryn has proposed again.

JACK. Again! May I ask who it is who has been so bold as to be proposed to?

JANE. Oh, it's still in the family.

JACK. The family?

JANE. Yes, Kathryn has proposed to your father. She said her love for you was of no import, that her love for your father was based upon degrees of reverential confidence which marriage alone could be trusted to dispel.

JACK (*rising*). I presume, Jane, that you refer to somebody else's father.

JANE. Your very own.

JACK. Impossible!

JANE. She recognized him at once.

JACK. How so?

JANE. By his resemblance to you.

JACK. Improbable.

JANE. Why so?

JACK (*seating himself*). I have no father.

JANE. Of course if you have no father, that settles it. You have often spoken to us of one, just the same.

JACK. So I have. But he's not a real father.

GLORIA. What sort of a father is it that's not a real father?

JACK. Oh, mine's adopted.

JANE. You mean that you're an orphan, an adopted son, or something of the sort?

JACK. Yes; father found me; on a Friday.

JANE. Found you? On a Friday?

GLORIA (*rising*). I don't see anything peculiar in the day at all, Jane. It is one of the seven, and to be found in all the best calendars. (*Brusquely.*) Have you found Kathryn, Jack? (*Enter DILL.*)

JACK. I think I have. I think she's in the next room. (*Edges off C.*)

DILL. Pardon the contradiction, sir, but Miss Kathryn is in the Park. Picking convolvulus I think. Convolvulus very sweet today, sir.

JACK. Was she alone, Dill?

DILL (*gaily*). No, sir; no, sir. I think she's with your father, sir. (*Retreats before JACK's glance.*)

JACK (*wheeling about*). Foolish father! foolish father! Really I cannot begin to account for such conduct on my parent's part. The sense of family obligation in the old is appallingly on the wane. But perhaps he's forgotten his glasses. Father's been wearing glasses for twenty years and

performs the most revolting capers whenever he's without them. He becomes a boy all over again. (*Stands in curtain way.*) Have you got a book on fathers, Jane? Or perhaps I'll see him from the window. (*Stretches himself out in inner room where he may be observed throughout remainder of scene.*)

GLORIA (*matter-of-factly*). I think a book on daughters is what you really need, Jane. (*Fans herself.*) I need not say that Kathryn has never been a daughter to you. (*They sit facing each other.*)

JANE. Of course not, Gloria. How could she have been? But Kathryn is my adopted daughter.

GLORIA (*very determinedly*). Kathryn is not your daughter at all! Kathryn is my daughter.

JANE. How unexpected, Gloria! Since when did you discover this?

GLORIA. I have never discovered it at all, of course. I have known it from the first.

JANE. Then that Friday, that biblical Friday, twenty years ago, when you came to me with tears in your eyes—and a basket and a baby—

GLORIA. I did it for your sake, Jane. I thought it would add to your character.

JANE. Why didn't you adopt Kathryn yourself, Gloria? You might have done that for your daughter.

GLORIA. For reasons of my own, and my husband's, I thought it best to allow you to.

JANE. Your child is quite your treasure, Gloria, you hide it so cleverly. As for your husband, I think you must have buried him.

GLORIA. We were married on our trip to London—yours and mine. My husband's father did not approve of the match and our marriage was annulled. Events which have since transpired allow us to be reunited.

JANE. It seems very strange this, your marrying your own husband.

GLORIA (*radiantly*). It is strange, beautifully, idealistically strange. Oh, you never could believe me, never!

JANE. I believed you once, Gloria.

GLORIA (*turning quickly*). In the exact spot where I said I had found the basket—

JANE. And with which Kathryn picks posies now—

GLORIA. It was there that I found the will!

JANE. What will, Gloria?

GLORIA. The will leaving everything to my husband—on condition that we were married—that is, left it to us as man and wife.

JANE. So you think the will won't hold?

GLORIA. Not unless we are married, and immediately.

JANE. It is a great temptation, Gloria, I admit.

GLORIA. More than that; my husband takes a title.

JANE. Oh, I detest titles—American titles at any rate. In America a title is the conventional crown to which the rich and poor alike must bow. Every professional man, every silly doctor and scientist holds some title by the hand with which he is clubbing us on the head. Once we assert ourselves, feel instinctively that which he never could comprehend, down comes the cudgel.

GLORIA. You don't think my husband is going to beat me?

JANE. I don't know, I can't say.

GLORIA (*proudly*). My husband is a baronet.

JANE. Then probably he will.

GLORIA. I tell you frankly that my husband is not going to beat me. The English haven't beaten anybody in years, and I'm not going to be the first. (*Going closer to her.*) Jane, why do you insist upon calling yourself Jane Gibbs? Would not your husband's name, or even Mrs. Gibbs, be better? You must think of Kathryn and your husband.

JANE. My husband?

GLORIA. Your husband! (*Drawing still closer, her curiosity lending a tone of affection.*) Who is your husband, Jane? I have always been most curious.

JANE (*shrugging her shoulders*). Indeed I am sorry, Gloria. I know that curiosity never should be allowed to go unanswered, but I have no husband.

GLORIA (*at the point of tears*). Jane, this is terrible! I sanctioned Kathryn's adoption believing you at least had that. What of her? What of your son? I thought that constant association with my daughter might arouse some affection for him whom you have evidently disowned. Have you never thought that he might want to visit this country, that he might feel the neglect of the only mother he can call his own? What of your son!

JANE. My son?

GLORIA. Your son!

JANE. I have no son.

GLORIA. Ever since your return from London I have been told that you had a husband, and you have told me that you had a son. You said his name was John.

JANE. Suit yourself, Gloria. I have a son.

GLORIA. And John is now?

JANE (*hesitating—then with real enthusiasm*). At a School for Socialism in Canterbury.

GLORIA. A School for Socialism!

JANE. Yes, and until John's twentieth year there is completed he must remain in socialistic hands.

GLORIA. You are not for socialism, Jane?

JANE. I am not enough interested in myself, Gloria, to be interested in others. However, I am for socialism till the advent of socialism, then I shall be for something else.

GLORIA. And this school—had it a founder?

JANE. Yes, a Col. Christopher Crapsey. A really lovable man. The idea was wholly his, and wholly original too. The school has prospered and is now one of the largest in England. From all that I hear John is its prize pupil.

GLORIA. But are you sure, Jane, that Crapsey is quite, quite reliable?

JANE. I am never sure of anything, Gloria. But Crapsey is in this country now and you may judge for yourself. He wrote me yesterday to say that he was coming to see me on a matter of importance, of the very first importance. I suppose he had reference to John.

GLORIA. I should never trust any man, Jane. They give us children and suffering and that is all. Pain has ever been the path of woman.

JANE. They talk a lot about the pain of women, Gloria, but it's not so. Slender waists are still the style.

GLORIA. Nevertheless I should investigate for myself.

JANE. And Kathryn—what would you do about her?

GLORIA (*holding up letter*). Kathryn will understand when she has read this. It is from her father and explains everything.

JANE. I am glad that Kathryn's father is a man of letters. Few Englishmen can boast of that. But is Kathryn to become your daughter, or will she remain with me?

GLORIA. For twenty years Kathryn has been your daughter. She has been your daughter and nobody else's. Kathryn thinks she is your daughter. She acts like your daughter. (*Rises.*) And now—when I had expected some vast upheaval of your nature, some evidence of more than a petty affection, you cast her off for a son whom you have scarcely seen. You have no maternal instinct whatever.

JANE. I am sorry, Gloria. But when one puts money into a thing one expects some return—even if it is a son. And I have spent a great deal of dollars on John's education.

GLORIA. How mercenary you are! And here Kathryn has barely a stitch on her back. (*Enter DILL.*)

JANE. That's due to the new fashions, Gloria. (*Clock strikes. Reënter JACK.*)

DILL (*to GLORIA*). There's a bit of Convolvulus in the air, my lady. (*KATHRYN steals in unnoticed.*)

JANE. A bit of what, Dill? I've heard that name before. Have you ever heard of the Convolvulus, Jack? It sounds as round as a race-track.

JACK (*watch in hand*). I don't know, Jane. I haven't followed the flowers for years.

GLORIA. Oh, it's only an ordinary flower that grows in the Park. I don't think it even has a smell, but Dill says I'm named after it.

JACK. That's not true, Gloria. There's only one Convolvulus, and that's Kathryn. I named her that yesterday. Besides, who ever heard of a Convolvulus Gloria or a Gloria Convolvulus? It's absurd.

KATHRYN (*emptying flowers over Jack's head*). Well, here are some anyway. A flower for you, Jack. And mother, a flower for you, too. A Convolvulus for each of you.

KATHRYN. *is picturesque and pretty. A little too young to be anything but herself, she is nicely original. Her favorite books are Brieux and Browning, with a little Tennyson in the summer. She believes in the soul, and has one.*

JACK. You are just in time, Kathryn. I have something of importance to tell you.

GLORIA. And I have an important letter for you.

KATHRYN. Oh, mother—you know how I have always wanted one. Do you think it could be from—father?

JANE. I don't know, dear. I'm going to look for a book on mothers and I'll know more about parents in general when I come back. (*Goes out C.*)

KATHRYN (*to herself*). Of course not; how silly of me. Why it hasn't even a postage stamp, to say nothing of a foreign one.

GLORIA. I shouldn't read it now, dear, anyhow. (*Prepares to go.*)

JACK. I shouldn't read it at all. I think Gloria wrote it herself.

GLORIA. If you have any intention of marrying Mr. Hargrave, Kathryn, I should advise you to teach his son better manners. (*Exit.*)

KATHRYN. I'm afraid you're too young, Jack, for me to ever teach you anything. (*Turns her back on him.*)

JACK (*with his back to her*). I'm old enough to be thoroughly cross—and rebellious, Kathryn.

KATHRYN (*facing about*). Jack, you're not, and such remarks are thoroughly disrespectful. One of the first lessons in life a young man must learn is never to rebel against a woman.

JACK. I distinctly rebel against your proposing to my father. I was with father most of the morning and took especial pains that he should meet no one. Where did you find him?

KATHRYN. I discovered him in the Park, Jack. He was wandering about as aimlessly as a child, and I am sure had no earthly idea of where he was going.

JACK. Yes, father moves very much like a planet at times, doesn't he? But then I'm not responsible for his defects. (*Nestles beside her.*)

KATHRYN. I don't think your father has any defects.

JACK (*continuing*). And then father's a terrible failure. But one expects that. The old are all failures. It is only from a very young man that one demands immediate, impossible success.

KATHRYN. Before you talk so much about others, Jack, you might educate yourself a little.

JACK. Oh, I don't believe in education, Kathryn. What has education done for this country? One-hundred-million Philistines?

KATHRYN. What a silly thing to say, Jack. (*Strokes his hair.*)

JACK. It makes no difference what one says, Kathryn, so long as one says something.

KATHRYN. You're very irreverent, Jack. (*Pushes him aside.*)

JACK. Please don't call me Jack! I'd so much prefer a number.

KATHRYN. A number?

JACK. Yes, a number. I know Shakespeare was thinking of me when he said there was nothing in a name.

KATHRYN. You're always comparing yourself to Shakespeare, Jack, and I don't like it. Shakespeare was a great poet, and you're not even a poet at all. (*Moves away.*)

JACK (*with mock gallantry*). The earth should not always be told it cannot rival the sun.

KATHRYN. That's better.

JACK. But seriously, I do wish I had a number.

KATHRYN. You're not a futurist, Jack?

JACK. I'm far too futile for that. But I believe in numbers in place of names.

KATHRYN. That's just nonsense, Jack.

JACK. It's not nonsense. Numbers are necessary and convenient. Moreover, I for one am entirely in accord with the socialistic idea of the separation of parent and child. (*Rises.*) A School for Socialism is the one thing most needed today—some place a child may be put and not molested by its parents, adopted or otherwise. Each child should have a number, a perfectly reliable number, one that was all his own and inherited from no one.

KATHRYN. I don't think your father would like to hear you talk that way, Jack.

JACK. No, but then you must remember that father is a back number.

KATHRYN. I don't care.

JACK. No woman ever does. Lack of care is their distinction.

KATHRYN. And lack of character a man's.

JACK. Then you are no longer my *Convolvulus*?

KATHRYN. It's too late. You had your chance and didn't take it. Never overlook an opportunity with a woman, you might change your mind.

JACK. Gloria said she was named after that flower, and I of course denied it. I said that you were my *Convolvulus*—my white *Convolvulus*.

KATHRYN. I am your father's *Convolvulus* now, Jack. What's more, he's coming to tea. (*Reënter JANE.*)

JACK. Well, of all that's outrageous! Tea? At this hour? It's three-fifteen, and they're deep in their dinners in London by now.

JANE. The clock may be set back, Jack. (*A pause.*)

KATHRYN. Jack's father was telling me about his poor lost brother.

JACK. Oh, I'm not so sure that he's poor, or lost either—at least not till tomorrow.



JANE. Why what do you mean, Jack? You said he was dead, to me these few minutes ago.

KATHRYN. And your father isn't even looking for him any longer.

JACK. Looking for him? I should say not! When people look for things they find them. When they look for children they are successful. And the same rule applies to brothers. Parents are harder to locate and it is their redeeming feature. But father has found his brother! He found him this morning in the Park—found him with his own eyes, or rather his glasses. Father can see anywhere with his glasses, and nowhere with his eyes. If it were not for his glasses he'd be like other people.

KATHRYN. I don't believe this imputation against your father. You think you can win my love by foully maligning his character and making him appear as wicked as yourself. But you cannot. I don't believe one word you have spoken, not one! (*Throws herself on sofa.*) Your father doesn't wear glasses! You have tried to deceive me. (*Enter GLORIA.*)

GLORIA. He has deceived me too. But my charge is of a more serious nature. Jane herself could not have been guilty of such conduct. You have tampered with the dearest thing it is a woman's privilege to possess. You have mocked that which was only mine to give and yours to take. You have sullied a woman's name. (*JACK looks appealing to JANE and KATHRYN. Both scorn him.*)

JACK (*on bended knees*). Gloria! (*His hands are uplifted in prayer.*)

GLORIA (*holding flower*). When I said I was named after that flower you denied it. But my name is Gloria and the Convolvulus is mine by baptism. (*Bell rings. DILL goes out.*)

JANE. He has been guilty of the grossest deception.

KATHRYN. Of the very grossest deception. We could never trust him now. (*They lock arms and saunter across the stage together.*)

GLORIA. He has! The Convolvulus is nothing but a Morning Glory, and I was named after it. If I were not so very stationary I should pick some now. I should pick a whole bundle of them.

KATHRYN (*most severely*). Your father does not wear glasses. You must promise never to say such a thing again.

JACK. And to think that of all days father should have chosen this one to forget his glasses.

JANE. Love is blind, Jack. (*Enter DILL out of breath.*) Perhaps that explains it.

DILL. Mr. Hargrave, Miss Kathryn.

*A white flower peeps clumsily from Hargrave's buttonhole. He wears the usual vest and has the unusual voice of a member of the clergy. His hair is long, and as he has apparently forgotten his glasses, he stands in the doorway quite, quite confused.*

KATHRYN (*running up to him*). Oh, you dear, dear man! (*Takes his hand.*) Of course you don't wear them, do you? (*Calling.*) Jack, let me introduce you to your father. Mr. Hargrave, let me introduce you to your son.

HARGRAVE (*groping about and wiping his forehead uneasily*). My son?

KATHRYN. Jack—your father!

JACK. I am not his son, and he is not my father. I consider his presence an intrusion, a disgrace. You shall be unfrocked, sir, at the first opportunity.

HARGRAVE (*marching up to Jane*). How dare you, sir! How dare you speak so disrespectfully of your father!

JANE. Mr. Hargrave, I am not your son—although you certainly do look familiar. (*HARGRAVE has floundered to the other end of the room and is being cared for by DILL, who mops his face with a big handkerchief.*)

JACK. I know, father, there's great suffering among the rich in this hot weather. Do you think you'd still care to marry him, Jane?

JANE. I'm not sure, Jack. Your father looks very much like someone I almost married before.

JACK. Ah, in that case you'd hardly care to repeat the experiment. (*Waves to them.*) Goodbye, Kathryn. Come soon and find his glasses.

KATHRYN. No, I'd rather read my letter.

JANE. I'm not a bad looker, Jack. And I have a new high hat which reaches to Heaven.

JACK. No more than mine, Jane. It's from the Alps. (*Takes his arm.*) This way, father. You don't drink tea anyway. (*They go out. JANE strolls off.*)

KATHRYN (*to DILL*). Do you think, Dill, do you think that a man could ever be a success in life, I mean a real success like you have, who wore glasses?

DILL. In my capacity, Miss Kathryn, I have often wished I wore them. There are so many things it's best not to see too clearly.

KATHRYN (*with a relieved sigh*). Oh, that's all right then. (*She disappears. GLORIA and DILL are left quite, quite alone.*)

DILL (*after a pause*). Your debut—and that about the Convolvulus—was very sweet, my dear.

GLORIA. Thank you, Dill.

DILL. On the contrary, Mr. Hargrave's entrance failed to come up to expectations.

GLORIA (*sternly*). No, Dill. But men never do, and Mr. Hargrave can render us a distinct service later. You forget that we must be married.

DILL. Is it really to come true, love?

GLORIA. Of course, Dill. And now are you quite ready?

DILL. Quite, my love.

GLORIA. Are your hands clean?

DILL (*taking hers in his*). No man's could be cleaner.

GLORIA (*smoothing his hair*). I don't think you brushed your hair, Dill.

DILL. It's a pleasure to hear you say that, dear. I have always noticed that when men and women tire of each other they become very careless of each other's appearance.

GLORIA. Then you do love me, Dill?

DILL. Oh, my love. (*Embraces her passionately.*)

CURTAIN.

## ACT II

*Scene*—PETER HARGRAVE'S *apartment. Door R. Exit L. Narrow hall U. R. with door L. An old-fashioned bell rope overhead; double desk, two chairs, and a Venus on the wall. Enter JACK escorting HARGRAVE by the arm.*

JACK. If it were my own father, he could not have acted in a more gentlemanly manner. Your every movement marks you the gentleman. You have a gentleman's happy faculty for doing the wrong thing at the right time. I have always feared that some day I should meet a gentleman, but never, never suspected you. (*They come down stage together.*) Dill said his brother was a gentleman, but no one believes Dill, no one but myself. (*HARGRAVE is doing his best to overlook JACK's frivolity.*)

HARGRAVE. I must confess that I am glad my brother has been found out. What did you say his social standing was?

JACK (*using Venus as a mirror*). A butler, father. The standing is on a par with petty theft.

HARGRAVE. A butler! A thief!

JACK. Yes, a menial, father, a form of man. It owes its origin to menus.

HARGRAVE (*rubbing his hands*). I haven't told you before, my boy, and an announcement of this kind should really proceed from the young lady in question, but I believe that I am engaged.

JACK. Of course, you are, father. I'm attending to that.

HARGRAVE. Then Kathryn has told you?

JACK. Kathryn? This is the last straw, father. (*Pulls quill pen from hat.*) You shall be unfrocked, sir. (*Sits down at desk.*) I'll write a brief to the Archbishop to that effect. (*Does not write.*) I had long seen the advisability of such action, and had you been my real father would have attended to it long ago. (*HARGRAVE glares at him.*) When would you be unfrocked, father? In the morning? I'll respect any preference you see fit to name. Well, some morning! Most any morning will do. Letters have to travel like other people. They would not be well read otherwise.

HARGRAVE (*at other end of the desk*). You shall go to jail, sir. (*Writes furiously.*) Or maybe there are many charitable organizations only too glad to take you off my hands.

JACK. That remark was cowardly, Mr. Kent. You know very well that I am not rich enough to go to jail, and that both influence and position are required today for a jail career. (*Snatches pen away.*) For the past fortnight a jail has been my prime ambition. I have a genius for jails, and I need not tell you, Mr. Kent, that I need rest and affection.

HARGRAVE. Hargrave, Jack, Hargrave! And until tonight I must be known by no other name.

JACK. Please don't call me Jack, father. It sounds so unartificial. And to think that I who have always perceived the immense superiority of a number, should have been endowed with a monosyllable like that.

HARGRAVE. You had a number once, Jack.

JACK. A number! Is it true, father, or do my ears deceive me?

HARGRAVE (*piously*). I shall endeavor to spare your feelings as far as possible. A young man tasting too soon of the bitter fruits of life is apt to form a very wrong impression of this world of ours, and the inhabitants above it.

JACK. Oh, people are above everything in this world, father, and in the next too, I guess. But have I got a number?

HARGRAVE. How little you understand! You think that I refer to some social distinction, some news of your misguided parents. I refer to your real parents, Jack. An immoral longing I have never had.

JACK. Oh, everyone's as moral and immoral as he knows how to be, father.

HARGRAVE (*expostulating*). Jack! Jack!

JACK. How often must I tell you not to call me that, sir. Even John were better.

HARGRAVE (*devoutly*). It was no desire of mine to dig up the past, to unearth that which belonged rightly to the dead. Your conduct, however, has made the telling inevitable.

JACK. A telling speech, father. But tell me, have I got a number?

HARGRAVE (*bitterly*). You have, sir! You have! Allow me to tell you, sir, that you once were, and I have no doubt still are, undutifully registered at Crapsey Hall, Canterbury, under the charge of an abominable brute by that name, as John—plain John, Disciple No. 1, in an evil establishment known as a School for Socialism.

JACK (*embracing him wildly*). Father! I forgive you! Everything! (*Kissing him.*) Turn the other cheek, father. Oh, such luck, such luck! I'll return at once. My fortune and future are assured now. (*Tosses his cap into the air.*) And to think that of all numbers, I should have been No. 1.

HARGRAVE (*kindly*). You are surely an odd number, Jack.

JACK. Dear Crapsey! I wonder how he came to give me that particular number, or if he knew that I thought of no one but myself?

HARGRAVE. I stole you from that heathen Hell—

JACK. Yes, yes, father.

HARGRAVE. And you were the first, last, and only little devil ever entered there.

JACK (*crushed*). Oh!

HARGRAVE. So come, let's to more serious things. You said my brother was getting married?

JACK. It's a man's malady, father.

HARGRAVE (*suddenly*). Jack! I have a thought! (*Steps forward.*) Could it be possible?

JACK. You slight yourself, father.

HARGRAVE (*meditating*). He is not marrying out of love. No! My brother would never do that. He must be marrying out of his—

JACK. Out of his senses, father. All men do that.

HARGRAVE (*gyrating in circles*). The will! the will! Oh, he must know, he must! The estate was left to him on condition that he was married, and that's why he's marrying now. (*Pulls large pair of colored glasses from his pocket.*) The will! Show me the will!

JACK. I knew you hadn't lost them. The old rarely lose anything. They have nothing to lose.

HARGRAVE (*teeming with excitement*). The will! the will!

JACK (*reaching in hip pocket, coat pocket, hip pocket*). Yes, father. (*Repeats the experiment.*) No, father. (*Subsides into chair.*)

HARGRAVE. Oh, Jack! He has found it—we are lost.

JACK (*springing to his feet*). No, it's not lost. I remember, you remember, it is under the tree. I left it in the Park this morning.

HARGRAVE. No!

JACK. Yes. (*Makes for door—returns deliberately.*) You agree to behave in my absence, father? I am very popular these days, and if Jane or Kathryn should happen in—

HARGRAVE. Jane! Did you say Jane! I have a particular aversion to that name, Jack. I trust that no woman named Jane bears any relationship to Kathryn?

JACK. Only her mother.

HARGRAVE. Her mother? Her name, please! Even now I trace a resemblance, a terrible resemblance. Tell me her name!

JACK. Her name's the same as Kathryn's, of course. I only ask you to leave the whole family alone hereafter. They did not even know you existed until this afternoon. You were a creation of my fancy and had form, color and expression. And now you have ruined it all. All, father, because you will not wear your glasses.

HARGRAVE. I don't know Kathryn's name. She never told me and I never asked.

JACK. Kathryn's name is Kathryn Gibbs, her aunt's name is Gloria Gibbs, and her mother's name is Jane Gibbs. Jane's a jewel, Gloria's an idiot, and Kathryn's mine. Have you learned all that you want now, or must I tell you more?

HARGRAVE (*in a most melancholy voice*). Jack, this is terrible. I had never expected that. Jane Gibbs!

JACK. The name's no worse than Jack, father. Too bad Jane's not a socialist, and could exchange for a number.

HARGRAVE. She is a socialist, Jack. Oh, a horrible, horrible socialist! Did I never tell you of a woman? whose views of life—

JACK. Are not so antiquated as your own, sir? (*There comes a tinkle of the bell, a second and a third.*) But come, father, one should always give in to the inevitable, and I have chosen Jane as your most likely spouse.

HARGRAVE. I will not marry that woman! I will not! (*JACK throws open the door and JANE enters. She has on a gown of many colors and a hat of many heights.*)

JACK. Ah, Jane! So glad to see you! I've just been speaking to father about that matter we discussed and he's quite interested already. Fact is, father's always interested, though interesting he is not. I've taken him to task about that blunder, though. Father's a bull for blunders. In the morning I've suggested that he be unfrocked. You'll be there of course? Great sight. (*Facing about.*) Why don't you say something, father! Or should fathers be seen and not heard? But perhaps you desire an introduction. Jane—my father. My father—Jane Gibbs. (*Each are about to shake hands, but JACK'S body intervenes and he rambles on.*) The family problem is the most important product of this age, and ranks even higher than the servant question. Of course, fathers were fashionable at one time, or I never should have had one. It's a great fault, though, I admit.

JANE (*loosening wrap*). My faults are my fortune, Jack. Some people are even famous for them.

JACK. Ravishing, Jane, ravishing! (*Plays with dress, avoiding HARGRAVE.*) But perhaps I should go.

JANE. Probably you should go, Jack.

HARGRAVE. It is not problematical at all. It is obvious, sir. (JACK *runs around the table.*) My son has a roving nature, Jane; it is almost poetical. I've just advised an interview with a certain tree, a rather poetical tree. He is a near poet, you know.

JACK (*bowing*). A minor poet only, not yet being of age.

JANE. Do not make fun of the minor poets, Jack. Leave that to the newspapers. They foster them.

HARGRAVE (*apologetic*). My son had good intentions.

JACK. Heaven is filled with good intentions, father. (*To JANE.*) Chesterton says that poets are a trouble to their families. But then Chesterton is always wrong. If the families of real poets are anything like mine, the trouble rests with them.

JANE. Hurry, Jack, the tree may be gone. (*Crosses L. and seats herself in the armchair.*)

JACK. My interview will prove a very short one. (*Pulls out watch.*) Before long, father, I shall expect you to have arranged everything.

HARGRAVE (*in a conciliatory manner*). You said that her sister was an idiot, did you not?

JACK. I did, father.

HARGRAVE (*writing on cuff*). It may prove of importance. (*Shuts door on him. A whistling sound is heard as JACK leisurely descends the stairs. HARGRAVE returns to JANE. Her taking the larger chair upsets him very much. There is a moment's lapse in which they look at each other.*)

JANE. How very still it is here, Peter. I feel almost as if I were in the country—in the country that we both knew so well before our hearts had learned to beat.

HARGRAVE (*rising to the sentimentality of the occasion*). My heart is bigger than its beat, Jane.

JANE. Ah, but you have been in this country many days, and you never once wrote to tell me. We should have been glad to see you, all of us, even Dill—that's my butler—but he's almost one of the family.

HARGRAVE (*scowling*). I came to America from a sense of duty, Jane, and it has completely absorbed my time. I came to find my brother.

JANE. You never told me you had a brother. You left that for your son to do.

HARGRAVE. Then Jack has told you.

JANE. Yes.

HARGRAVE. The fact is, Jane, that I have never spoken very much of my brother to anyone. The poor fellow eloped just before I met you, and our recollection of him has always been a sad one. Sadder still has been my present duty to investigate and find that he is dead.

JANE (*ironically*). The Peter Kent that I knew had very little sense of duty. Often I thought that he had none at all. But he was not the Peter Hargrave that I see now. He was not a minister, and he did not lie. He was not a hypocrite and he did not masquerade under a false name to swindle his own brother, his living brother whom he pretended to think dead.

HARGRAVE (*surprised and sullen*). It is not true.

JANE. It is true! Your son told me.

HARGRAVE. Jack is not my son. He is only mine by adoption.

JANE. He told me that too, but he also told me about your brother. You met him this very morning in the Park.

HARGRAVE. I admit that. But till this very morning I believed my brother was dead, as dead as my own father is today. And now how does he show himself! As a man with whom one would care to associate? (*With sudden inspiration.*) No, as a thief, an unrepentant, petty thief; and Jack will tell you that also.

JANE (*a little taken aback*). How did you happen to call him Jack, Peter? I think John were infinitesimally nicer.

HARGRAVE. Jack would hardly have had a name at all if it hadn't been for me. He might have had nothing but a number.

JANE. A number?

HARGRAVE. Yes, a number! I found him the very morning after you sailed, Jane, a babe in arms, bound heart and soul to a School for Socialism.

JANE (*eagerly*). A School for Socialism! Where, Peter?

HARGRAVE (*complacently*). At Canterbury, under the direction of—

JANE (*beside herself with excitement*). Of a most eminent man, a charming gentleman by the name of—

HARGRAVE. Under the direction of a wholly worthless, degraded rascal, who has dogged my footsteps from that day to this, who has even threatened my life, and who has been the one and

only cause of my assuming the name of Hargrave.

JANE. His name?

HARGRAVE. His name is Crapsey! And he has even followed me to this country.

JANE. Oh! (*Sinks into chair.*)

HARGRAVE. When I stole him from that pernicious place, his sole mark of identification was John, plain John, Disciple No. 1, in Crapsey's School for Socialism. (*Bell rings overhead.*)

JANE. You stole him, Peter, and your act was as free to censure as any committed by your brother.

HARGRAVE. Ssh!

JANE. I won't be still. I want to tell you right now.

HARGRAVE (*terrified*). There's someone at the door.

JANE. I don't care. They can hear too if they want to. (*Gets up.*)

HARGRAVE. Consider my position, Jane. I couldn't really ... I couldn't have a woman in my rooms. There, there, now! (*Takes her arm.*) You are all flushed—and the rouge is beginning to come off. (*JANE instantly subsides.*) This is my son's room. You may rest here for a while ... or at least until my visitors have gone. (*Bowing complacently.*) Love lingers in the spring and doubtless they are only some happy couple tasting for the first time that desire for the fruits of marriage which is the divine purport of our youth. (*Shuts door securely on her. Sighs with relief and wipes his glasses carefully. Then after a moment's conflict with his vanity, returns and places them on the table. This done he tiptoes to the door and apparently observing but one person, shouts down the stairs.*) Come in, sir! (*DILL'S head appears immediately through the opening, quite startling HARGRAVE who retreats before it. DILL still wears knickerbockers and a wondrous black cape falls from his massive shoulders. On second appearance he is followed by GLORIA, dressed in her very best and carrying a large colored satchel. She is somewhat out of sorts at the delay and is coaxed and fondled by DILL.*)

HARGRAVE (*bowing*). Ah, two strolling minstrels, I perceive.

DILL (*punctiliously*). No, sir. No, sir. We understood that you were a minister, sir.

HARGRAVE (*his hands clasped behind his back*). My heart and home are ever at the disposal of my flock.

GLORIA (*motioning DILL to be still*). You'll excuse the nature of our visit, sir, but you see my husband (*blushes a little*)—or rather I should have said the man who is to be my husband—

DILL (*to GLORIA*). Both, my love, both.

GLORIA (*bluntly*). There was no time to be lost and we must get married.

HARGRAVE. Ah, love is a tender thing, and her call is always urgent.

DILL. I overheard your son observe that you are to be unfrocked, sir—and so we just thought we'd take you while there was still time. (*Aside.*) There's only one time for marriage, and that's when the lady gives her consent.

HARGRAVE (*now scowling and suspicious*). My son?

GLORIA. Dillingham, you are always rendering the most unpleasant surprises. (*At mention of his brother's name, HARGRAVE stands stupefied, then with a fleeting glance over his shoulder, rushes back to the table and adjusts his glasses.*) Perhaps Mr. Hargrave does not care to acknowledge that he has a son, and what you said about being unfrocked was ungentlemanly. (*HARGRAVE glares at DILL and stations himself in front of JANE'S door.*)

HARGRAVE (*trembling with emotion*). Do I understand, sir, that you trespass upon my hearth entertaining visions of matrimony? (*DILL and GLORIA are stupefied by HARGRAVE'S peculiar behavior.*)

DILL (*very sweetly*). That's it, sir.

HARGRAVE. Then I take pleasure to inform you, sir, that it cannot be done.

DILL. But it must be done, sir. I have made a careful canvass of the ministry, and I find them all to be extinct at present, sir. They're like the birds and butterflies, sir, and are forever migrating at this season of the year. You're the only one that hasn't wings at present, sir.

GLORIA. Be quiet, Dill. It's love that makes the world go around, Mr. Hargrave.

HARGRAVE. It's love that makes the world stand still, I say. Besides, in this country at least marriage is illegal. The Constitution expressly provides that no man shall be deprived of the right of health, happiness, and the pursuit of freedom.

GLORIA. That's why we are going to change the Constitution, Mr. Hargrave.

HARGRAVE. Anyway there's no room here. A correct marriage requires space for tears and relatives.

DILL (*in the corner*). I think we might try it here, sir.

HARGRAVE (*superciliously*). I am not in favor of trial marriages. Marriage itself is responsible for the alarming decrease in the birth-rate so prevalent throughout the world.

GLORIA (*sweetly*). I think Mr. Hargrave is superstitious, dear.

HARGRAVE (*snatching at the straw*). I am. I am.

DILL. I always try to harbor superstitions in the heart, sir, and to remove them as far from the mind as possible.

HARGRAVE (*advancing with a crafty smile*). Ah, well! So be it then. My own experience with marriage is limited. However I will say this much for it. If it weren't for marriage a man could not honorably part with a woman.

GLORIA (*in a low voice*). I said Mr. Hargrave was the proper person to apply to, Dill.

HARGRAVE. We will first examine the license.

GLORIA. License?

HARGRAVE (*in the most insulting manner*). All women are not licensed in this country I am sorry to say. In that the continental custom is far better. However, before they are married they must be licensed. At any rate do you think we should have them running around at large?

DILL. Here is the license, sir.

HARGRAVE (*examining it critically*). I don't see your ages here.

DILL. We are both forty. (GLORIA *is about to remonstrate*.)

HARGRAVE. Hm—really, sir, I must object to that. I myself am forty and should not dream of marrying yet. You are both far too young.

DILL. If you insist, sir, I am a little over forty.

HARGRAVE (*squinting*). And your names are?

GLORIA. Gloria Gibbs.

DILL. Sir John Dillingham Kent.

HARGRAVE. Do I infer that you are a gentleman?

DILL. Oh, yes, sir. Even my brother was that.

HARGRAVE. And your social standing?

GLORIA (*whispering loudly*). Bart, Dill, Bart!

DILL. Br ... butler.

HARGRAVE. That settles it. I cannot marry a butler posing as a gentleman. (*Acts as if about to show them out*.)

GLORIA. There is nothing in the Bible which says anything against marrying a butler, Mr. Hargrave. Pharaoh's chief adviser was a butler, as you yourself know. (*There is no Bible to be seen and she stares at HARGRAVE deprecatingly*.)

HARGRAVE (*eyeing DILL as if choking would be a pleasure*). And Pharaoh hung him by the neck, if I am not mistaken.

DILL. The baker, sir, the baker. Very mixing indeed, sir.

HARGRAVE. As God is my baker—I mean my maker—I swear that I will have nothing further to do with the case. Under the most favorable conditions I can imagine my marrying a butler, or even a baker, for that matter, but with due respect to you, Miss Gibbs, I must (*glances at cuff*) decline to marry a butler, or even Pharaoh himself, to an idiot. The laws of hygiene govern that.

DILL. Sir!

HARGRAVE. My son has already informed me, Miss Gibbs, that you are an idiot, and I for one refuse to perform at any ceremony in which you are the principal.

GLORIA (*opening satchel*). Mediocrity may be the foundation of my family, sir, but idiocy is not. However, I was prepared for that. I have found your son something of a clever idiot himself, and first accurate deductions led me to the belief that his father would be also. (*Pulls out paper*.) I have here complete and accurate credentials to certify that I have never suffered from Christian Science, Mental Science, Physical Science, Woman Suffrage, Eugenics, or any of the other seven deadly diseases so prevalent amongst my sex. I have also fully recorded a memorandum of the character and chief events of my life, including ventilation, vivisection, vaccination, marriage—

HARGRAVE. Marriage! (*He gazes profoundly at them*.)

GLORIA. This is my second marriage, Mr. Hargrave.

DILL (*apologetically*). We have both been married before, sir. You see, sir—

HARGRAVE. I see. Are you calling attention to my glasses?

DILL. The fact is that we have each been married to each other, sir.

HARGRAVE (*drawing himself haughtily together*). Am I to gather that that is any evidence of her sanity? I say it's absurd. Any scientist in the country will tell you that a perfectly sane, healthy, well-organized marriage must end somewhere. All things do, and marriages have the habit, good or otherwise, of ending in divorce. It's their affinity.

DILL. Ah! But our marriage was annulled, sir. (*Looks about him confident that victory is won*.)

HARGRAVE. To you, sir, I owe an apology. When I informed Miss Gibbs of my decision in this

important case, I had entirely overlooked you. Your marriage was annulled, you say?

DILL. I do, sir.

HARGRAVE. And you are starting proceedings all over again?

DILL (*now dubious of his mastery of the situation*). Yes, sir.

HARGRAVE. In that event I substantially alter my original assertion. I said she was an idiot, did I not?

GLORIA. And I can prove to the contrary, Mr. Hargrave.

HARGRAVE. Any man or woman, not willing, but eager—as you have both shown yourselves to be—to repeat so dangerous an experiment, is clearly removed from that extremity of the body which we call mind. It is not a question of one idiot—you are both idiots.

DILL. Is not that a bit of an exaggeration, sir?

HARGRAVE. I think not.

DILL. I am sorry that Mr. Hargrave's son is not here, love. I know he would marry us.

GLORIA. It's no use, Dill. Show Mr. Hargrave the will, and explain why we must be married. (*Sound of JACK on the stairs.*)

HARGRAVE. Yes, the will! Show me the will! (*Reaches out for it.*)

JACK. Father! I cannot find it! The will is lost! (*Bursts upon them.*)

GLORIA (*after a painful pause*). What will, Mr. Hargrave? You seem extremely nervous. Can there be any relation between your will and ours? (*HARGRAVE looks very faint.*)

DILL. I don't know if there is any relation between the wills, my dear, but Mr. Jack said that his father took me for his brother. Of course Mr. Hargrave didn't know that my name was Kent. However, I had an uncle named Hargrave, and in case my brother is dead, one half of the estate shall be his.

HARGRAVE (*buoyant at this turn of affairs*). I am Peter Kent, your brother, your long missing brother! (*Embraces him.*)

GLORIA. When a woman does not change her name for love she does so for money. It is true sometimes of a man. I see now why Mr. Hargrave changed his name and why he refuses to marry us. He shall not get a cent. (*To DILL.*) I think that you knew all the while that Mr. Hargrave was your brother, and that you chose to be married by a thief. (*HARGRAVE'S expression has changed.*)

JANE (*stepping out*). Mr. Hargrave changed his name solely for my sake. We are going to be married, and I preferred Hargrave to Kent. That may be remedied, however. As for his brother—he did think him dead for he told me so himself.

JACK. You have done this for my sake?

GLORIA. For whoever's sake you did it, Jane, I am glad you have got a husband at last—even if you did it for your own. Come, Dill.

DILL. I should like to spend a few moments with my brother, my own.

GLORIA. Well, not more than a very few moments. (*To JANE.*) The two dears look absolutely alike, and when you get tired of yours we might change them around a bit.

JANE. Are you coming, Jack?

JACK. I'm tired of all this moving around, Jane. I haven't sat down for five minutes.

JANE. Well, just to the door. (*They go out. DILL seats himself comfortably in the big chair.*)

DILL. Charming little artificial nook here. Shaw says—

HARGRAVE. Do not jest about artificial things, sir. Browne avers that all things are artificial, nature being only the art of God.

DILL. Browne! Browne! No relation to Browning, sir? Pardon me. Of course; Browning's the diminutive, Browne naturally the father.

HARGRAVE. Of no relationship whatever. I had reference to Sir Thomas Browne.

DILL. Ah! A man with a title. One of God's favorites, sir, and possibly some relation of my own. (*Enter KATHRYN. She is very much out of breath and holds an open letter in her hand.*)

KATHRYN (*between gasps*). Of course, I always knew I had a father. Every young girl has, and it would be considered most unnatural not to. (*She is shielded by the angle of the room from DILL.*) And I always knew he was a horrid, horrid, man, too. Aunt Gloria confessed that. (*DILL, hearing KATHRYN'S voice, has risen.*) But at least I thought he was a gentleman (*DILL takes a step toward her*), and I never, never dreamed it could be Dill. (*They come face to face.*) Oh! (*Turns away.*)

HARGRAVE (*turning threateningly*). What is your social standing, Dill, I forget?

DILL (*abashed and discomforted*). A butler, sir.

HARGRAVE. Don't cry, dear, Dill is only a butler after all, and not at all responsible for what he does. (*KATHRYN had not thought of crying—but HARGRAVE thought she should have.*) It is your mother who is to blame—your mother! That will do, Dill. (*Forcing him back.*) This is the servant's exit.



DILL (*absolutely unhappy*). Miss Kathryn, let me explain!

HARGRAVE. You may explain to Miss Gibbs, Dill; perhaps she will defer marrying you now. (*Pushes him out. DILL carries a wounded look away with him.*)

DILL (*clattering down the stairs*). My brother was a gentleman. (*JANE and JACK enter leisurely by the front.*)

JACK (*taking in situation at a glance*). Is this your work, sir? Have you proposed to her again, or what?

HARGRAVE (*to JANE*). Kathryn is for the first time aware of her father. I need not say that neither butler nor baker is considered the thing in a family way. To find such a man one's brother is indeed an unpleasant surprise, but to find him one's father must be a tragedy. We both feel the blow more deeply than you think.

KATHRYN (*very haughtily*). You need not feel the blow at all, Mr. Hargrave. I am already half resigned to my parent, and by tomorrow I have no doubt that he will be in good standing again. My only regret from the first was that you cannot take his place, and that Dill can now be nothing more than a father to me.

JACK (*taking her arm*). There, there, my dear! All fathers are terrible, and I know yours could never be as bad as mine. (*He regards no one but her.*) I positively never think of anything he says unless by accident, nor must you either. And should the very worst come to pass you must always console yourself by remembering that we are none of us responsible for the species, either adopted or otherwise. (*They go out.*)

HARGRAVE. Kathryn took her father very nicely. (*Sets himself for a scene.*) I am sorry I do not share her strength.

JANE. One-half of strength is weakness.

HARGRAVE. And the other half?

JANE. That is weakness.

HARGRAVE. It is obvious, Jane, that you are incorrigible. Your daughter did not bid you good-bye. Can you blame her? This social evil, Jane, is far more than a harmless pleasure, as you once expressed it.

JANE (*languidly*). Kathryn is not my daughter. She is my adopted daughter. Gloria is her mother.

HARGRAVE (*beside her*). Jane, forgive me! How could I have guessed?

JANE. You are far too serious, Peter. Perhaps it is something that you eat.

HARGRAVE. I swallowed a whole tooth yesterday. I don't know just what the consequences are going to be.

JANE. You may get a tooth-ache, Peter. And again you may go to the dentist's.

HARGRAVE. I'd rather go to the dogs, Jane. I have already a hundred holes in my head that were made by those fellows.

JANE (*running her hands through his hair*). Your hair is long, Peter; far too long for married life. I have a marvellous tonic. It was recommended to me by no less than three physicians, and is guaranteed to make your hair fall out so quickly that you will positively never have to have it cut.

HARGRAVE. I remember it all now, Jane—the fields that we wandered together—and the Convolvulus, that little white flower that we picked and loved.

JANE. Recite that about the lilies of the field, and the birds of the sky, will you, Peter? It was always my favorite.

HARGRAVE. I didn't suppose you knew so much about the Bible, Jane.

JANE. I know something of birds, Peter.

HARGRAVE. You have always been my Convolvulus, Jane. Can you believe that?

JANE. It's a funny thing, Peter, but in love one never doubts, and the loved one never tells the truth.

HARGRAVE (*suddenly*). How beautiful you are, Jane! You look just as you did in the days of old—with your little hands and feet.

JANE (*jumping up and covering them*). Oh, my feet have grown, Peter.

HARGRAVE. I remember, Jane; in the olden days you would do anything but marry me.

JANE. Now that is the only thing I will do for you. (*Puts chair between them.*)

CURTAIN.

### ACT III

*Scene—Reverting to Act I. DILL and GLORIA facing each other. (They are surrounded by two diminutive trunks and bags and bundles innumerable.)*

DILL. Let us read the will again, dear.

GLORIA (*pompously*). "Regretting my anger and the annulment of his marriage—to my second son, John Dillingham Kent, be he found to have married any woman, good, bad or indifferent, the same wife or any other—" (*with a toss of her head*)—You wouldn't have married any other woman, Dill?

DILL. No, no, my love.

GLORIA. "To him I hereby bequeath my honorable title of baronet, conferred upon me by the crown as a reward for my stand against the nefarious practise of socialism, particularly that which has broken out and appeared on the point of flourishing in ye good and ancient city of Canterbury. Also to himself and wife, do they make known their identity within one year's time, I hereby release my rights, vested or otherwise, in all personal property, including three white-tailed cows"—You may milk the cows, Dill.

DILL. Charmed, my love.

GLORIA. "Seventeen adults of the porcupine variety, commonly known as pigs, but derived from the German bigge, or big."

DILL. You may ride the pigs, my lady.

GLORIA (*with a severe look at Dill who subsides*). "Forty-three geese, seven singing birds, nine parrots and two hens."

DILL. The estate has all the enchantment of a zoo, my love.

GLORIA. "To my only other relation, the Rev. Peter Kent, who much to my displeasure has taken upon himself that right of interpreting the Lord's intentions on earth, I give nothing. He is an undutiful son, but should he still possess one spark of parental affection, let him go forth to America, that land of beautiful women, and by diligent search for his own beloved brother, prove himself worthy of no title at all, but the rank of a gentleman." (*Hands DILL the will.*)

DILL. Am I a gentleman? (*Bows like a courtier.*)

GLORIA. Yes, Dill.

DILL. Is he a gentleman?

GLORIA. No, Dill.

DILL (*decisively*). He shall have nothing.

GLORIA. No, Dill.

DILL. Nor the chickens, nor the cows, nor even one of the—what was that derivation, my dear?

GLORIA. Of the pigs?

DILL. Yes, love.

GLORIA. Do not make fun of the Germans, Dill, I had an aunt born in Germany and I fear she is living yet.

DILL. Can they neither live nor die in Germany, my sweet?

GLORIA. I think not, Dill... But would you not even give him one teeney-weeney pig? (*DILL stands in front of GLORIA, seriously debating this all-important matter.*)

DILL (*at length*). No, my love.

GLORIA. Not one, Dill? Think of the sorrow we have already caused him! There are two misfortunes in life. One is to find one's relations quite, quite dead. The other is, as one generally does, to find them quite, quite, alive.

DILL (*moodily*). He said I was not a gentleman and shall get nothing.

GLORIA (*rising*). Ah, Dill, you would not be vindictive? I could never believe my husband guilty of that. Moreover, I have a vast superabundance of money myself.

DILL (*shocked and hurt*). Oh, my love! You might have told me, even if you did not give me any.

GLORIA. It was necessary that you, of all people, should know nothing of it. People would have thought you were marrying me for money.

DILL (*not wholly reconciled*). True, true.

GLORIA. I have something to tell you.

DILL. Concerning me?

GLORIA. No, it is a very sensitive subject. I don't think that either of us has mentioned it since

the day that we were born; and Jane has aged so rapidly that it would seem absurd on the surface of things—but she and I are twins.

DILL. One soon becomes reconciled to realities, my dear. (*Sighs and looks at his jacket.*)

GLORIA. It has taken me more than twenty years to become reconciled to you, Dill. But now for a surprise. (*She goes R., DILL following solemnly behind her. He is like a big St. Bernard dog following his mistress. GLORIA tramps back, DILL again several paces in the rear.*) See! Here it is! (*Opens a small bag of gold.*) I was forty yesterday. Now all this is mine.

DILL (*with a lump in his throat*). Yes, my love.

GLORIA. So you are not yet independent, Dill.

DILL (*swallowing his unhappiness*). No, my love.

GLORIA. It was left me by my father.

DILL. Ah, I see. And Jane?

GLORIA. No. (*Whispering.*) I think my sister got nothing. I was always my father's favorite daughter.

DILL (*discarding his jacket*). I am no longer a butler. No, I will not. My brother may be a butler if you like.

GLORIA (*sharply*). Dill!

DILL (*forgetting his good resolutions*). Yes, my love.

GLORIA. We have lived here very happily, Dill.

DILL. And now I will build you a castle among the clouds. We will be like the moon and the stars.

GLORIA. Aeroplaning is out of fashion, Dill.

DILL. As you would have it, my love.

GLORIA. For twenty years you have executed my orders.

DILL (*with revived ardor*). And now a hundred men shall do your bidding! We will go to the extreme ends of the earth—

GLORIA. I do not approve of extremes of any kind, Dill. The most important thing in life is that whatever a young man once starts he should see to the end.

DILL. But I hold a title, my sweet.

GLORIA. No matter. You were not born with it.

DILL. I never heard of a titled butler. (*Shakes his head dubiously.*) My brother has not got a title.

GLORIA (*sharply*). Dill! Do you love me?

DILL. Ah, how could you doubt it?

GLORIA. I have never doubted it. I was only testing you. (*Hands him bag.*) All this is yours, Dill.

DILL. My love, my love. (*Kneels.*)

GLORIA. On condition that you continue to serve me as faithfully as you have in the past.

DILL (*clasping her hands*). Ah, my beloved one! Light of my life! Blessed of women! (*His head sinks upon her lap. Enter KATHRYN and JACK. Each has an arm about the other's waist. Their eyes are glued on each other's, and they proceed very, very slowly.*)

JACK. My dear, you could hardly expect them both to belong to the same class. That is never the way. One is always rich, the other poor. One is always good, the other bad. Ask one of them and see! But if what I tell you is not convincing, consider the words of Shakespeare, England's great minor poet, who in a fit of melancholy once exclaimed—"Some are born with parents, others acquire them. But most of us just have the genus thrust upon us." (*GLORIA is unsuccessfully endeavoring to extricate herself from her embarrassing position.*)

KATHRYN. Jack, you really should not speak that way of England's poet. Your own father told me this morning that no man could hope to understand Shakespeare until he was forty. And that then he wouldn't understand him.

JACK. I don't doubt it. But you forget, Kathryn, that I never had a father, and that hereafter my responsibilities are numbered. (*They wheel slowly upon them.*)

KATHRYN. Oh—father!

JACK. What an extraordinary posture, Dill! Are you aware of your menial, Miss Gibbs? (*To KATHRYN.*) He must think it's a circus. He's trying to stand on his head.

KATHRYN (*looking away*). Perhaps he's praying.

JACK. Arise, sir, in the presence of your superiors! (*DILL gets up very guiltily.*) And why these bags and bundles, pray? Is your man about to start a millinery establishment, Miss Gibbs?

GLORIA (*almost in tears*). Mr. Hargrave! This gentleman is not my servant. This gentleman is soon to be my husband!

JACK. It's the same thing.

KATHRYN (*shocked*). Oh! What would mother say! I don't think I can ever allow you to become a

butler after all, Jack.

JACK (*glibly*). Dill, are you a polygamist, or what? Define yourself! (*To KATHRYN.*) I have yet to hear of a menial Mormon.

KATHRYN. I am sure that mother will discharge him now.

GLORIA. Kathryn, I am your mother! If you referred to my sister, I can only say that she is your mother by adoption, that I suffered your adoption solely because my time was taken up with my husband and— (*tearfully*) Oh, you have no maternal instinct whatever! I am sorry I ever brought you into the world, you have saddened my life so completely.

DILL (*comforting*, GLORIA *who is in hysteria*). There, there, my own—

GLORIA. That you whom I have loved as my own child should object to your father, should be ashamed of him who has waited upon your every want—oh, it is terrible.

KATHRYN. Mother, you don't understand. I have always liked Dill, and don't object to him at all. In fact, I think it would be rather nice to keep him always with us, and always, always ... (DILL *turns pale*) as a butler. (*To JACK.*) Men are wont to become oppressive when granted authority, and I feel sure that Dill could never succeed as well at anything else.

JACK. You are always right, my dear, but see to it at once. Contracts have ceased to be binding, and what you want is a verbal understanding with your mother.

GLORIA (*embracing them*). My children, I forgive you! As for Dill—that is settled.

DILL (*to KATHRYN*). My money! (*Hands her bag.*)

KATHRYN. Beautiful, ideal money! (*To JACK.*) I think he shows signs of submission already.

DILL (*to JACK*). My will! (*Hands him the will.*)

JACK. I warned you about that, Dill. I said a will was a very unsafe thing to have.

DILL. My broken heart and soul! (*Hands that to GLORIA.*) Oh, take everything! (*Falls back into a chair and buries his head in his hands.*)

JACK (*to KATHRYN*). A man is at least your friend who gives you money. No other friends get along these days, or amount to anything.

GLORIA. My dears, I agree with both of you. Your father has enough money as it is, and any more would surely spoil him. (*To JACK.*) I don't think husbands should be allowed titles. Mine I know would squander his. Moreover, in England the women have already gotten their rights or are about to get them, which is almost as bad. And when we women get the vote, if there are titles left, they shall certainly belong to us. You may keep the will, Jack, I assure you it is utterly worthless, and probably recorded all over the country. (*He and KATHRYN stroll off. GLORIA turns upon DILL.*) I don't mind about your heart, for if it's broken you couldn't use it, and I don't mind about the soul part either, for I don't think you have one. But I do seriously object to your wasting your money. (*Turns her back to him.*) You'll never amount to anything.

DILL. I have been always most saving, my dear.

GLORIA. Less saving than spent, Dill.

KATHRYN (*tossing her latest gift into the air*). Lovely, spiritual money. We can be married now, and you won't have to work as a stoker in the ship after all.

JACK. Positively, my dear, I never dreamed of such a thing!

KATHRYN (*pouting*). Of course, I never could have allowed you to. You might have upset us all, and I'm not going to be drowned for love or any other nonsense.

JACK. But, my dear, if I upset the ship, it would be your duty to get drowned. Any old captain will tell you that. They know absolutely nothing. It's like any other walk of life. A man wears whiskers, or white hair, or something, and you fancy he's learned. But he's not, and never will be. Sea-captains dress as they do, and wear peculiar caps, not that they should look like sea-captains, but that young innocent persons like yourself should be deceived into thinking them philosophers, or good men, or bad men, or some kind of men at least. That explains the old and venerable expression of thinking through your cap. But it's all wrong. They never think at all.

KATHRYN. I've often gone fishing, Jack, and I've never yet caught a fish. Do you think there are any fishes in the sea, or is it just a myth like mermaids and the millennium?

JACK. That is purely a piscatorial problem. My father is doubtless a proper authority. I know he drinks like a fish, and he eats like a race horse. (DILL *has been left entirely to his own reflections.*)

GLORIA. What are you two over there saying about running away?

JACK (*advancing solemnly*). Miss Gibbs, I have something to tell you. (*Sits down and with knees crossed nonchalantly lights cigarette.*) I have no money, of course. Nobody has these days. The philanthropists have stolen it all.

KATHRYN (*handing him money bag*). Of course not, Jack, how absurd! But this will surely pay off some of your debts.

JACK. Very few, my dear. You don't know what debts are. Debts are a man's constant reminder that even when he's very, very rich, one-half the money in his pocket, and all the money in his bank, belongs positively to somebody else.

GLORIA. I seriously object to your morals, Jack.

JACK. Surely you would not blame me for that which I never had?

DILL. As the lady's father, I must at least inquire of your habits, sir.

JACK. I have no habits; even the good ones are bad enough, and the bad ones are so hard to follow out.

KATHRYN. I quite approve so far, Jack.

JACK. I never vote.

GLORIA. I have yet to know the man who did. That's why they don't want us to.

JACK. And I am proud to say that I have never done even a single stroke of work.

KATHRYN. Oh! But you really must take up some useful occupation, Jack, and go downtown very early in the morning and come back very late every night. Married life would be impracticable otherwise. One could stand a husband in the morning and evening, but a whole day added to each night would be out of the question.

JACK. You don't understand. Business today is done under very bad principles. The proper way, in truth, the only way that a young man of my temperament could be induced to begin work, would be to start right up at the top and go right down to the bottom. It takes so much less time and trouble than the old way of beginning at the bottom and stealing one's way up to the top. Besides, one is just that much more likely to land somewhere.

KATHRYN. I wish that I were a man. Here you stand wasting my time talking, when in a few weeks you might learn to be a messenger boy, and grow right up into a millionaire.

JACK. I'm not old enough for a messenger boy, Kathryn. Messenger boys are never successful until they become at least fifty and have long white hair. Mine is a very firm yellow. I inherited it from my mother.

GLORIA. I thought you and Kathryn were having an innocent flirtation only. (*To DILL.*) Men are so deceiving.

JACK. There's no such thing as an innocent flirtation, Gloria. Naturally I shall have a great deal of trouble convincing you of my love for your daughter. I had expected that. When a man arrives at my age of indiscretion, love is no longer to be thought of.

GLORIA. Mr. Kent and I are no longer young, sir, though we have been long in love.

KATHRYN (*to herself*). Kathryn Kent! What a pretty name. (*Strolls off.*)

GLORIA (*sharply*). I'm afraid you're thinking, Dill. I am often aware of a most unpleasant sensation whenever you indulge in that.

DILL. I am, my love, I usually am.

KATHRYN. There's no use going further, Jack. It can't be done.

JACK (*going to her*). What can't be done, my dear? I think that rather a revolutionary sentiment, your saying a thing can't be done, especially before trying it.

KATHRYN. The name, Jack, the name! There's no use in losing that.

JACK. What name, dear?

KATHRYN. Why, Kent, of course! I never could marry a man named Hargrave.

JACK (*taking her hand tenderly*). Poor Kathryn! So busy exchanging relations, she's completely forgotten my name. I told you my name was really Kent. It's as really Kent as yours is.

KATHRYN (*still dazed*). Ah, so you did! (*Goes over to sofa. DILL follows—she plays with him with a piece of string.*)

JACK. And I told you that I had a number too. (*To GLORIA.*) Did I ever tell you, Gloria, that I had a number? Such a lovely number! Hereafter I must be known as John, plain John, Disciple No. 1, in Crapsey's School for Socialism.

GLORIA. Crapsey's School for Socialism?

JACK. In Canterbury, England! And I hold the unique distinction of being the only pupil that Crapsey ever had.

GLORIA. Jack, this is terrible!

JACK (*romping about*). So you refuse to give your consent! Oh, I am so glad. It has always been my ambition to marry someone whose parents absolutely disapproved of me, who thought me utterly unfitted for family life. (*To KATHRYN.*) We shall have all the fun of an elopement now, and when you have finally divorced me, you can always recollect that your parents advised you not to, and that they—(*pointing to GLORIA*) after all was said and done, knew absolutely nothing of what they were talking about. (*KATHRYN does not look up. DILL, like a lazy lion, is lolling about at her feet. Sometimes he paws for the string.*)

GLORIA. I have this much to say, Mr. Hargrave, and that is, that with or without my consent, you shall never marry any daughter of mine.

JACK (*with provoking mirth*). Kent, if you please! But why not? I am a socialist, of course, and I know that the world is not yet prepared for socialism. But we are only children as yet, and this is still the twentieth century. When we reach the twenty-first and become of age it will be time to talk about that.

GLORIA. You are Kathryn's first cousin.

JACK. I would be if I weren't adopted, Gloria.

GLORIA. Your mother! (*Enter JANE.*)

JACK. Gloria was asking of my mother, Jane. It is one of those impossible questions to answer, and possibly why she asked.

JANE. Have you ever thought of your mother, Jack?

JACK. Oh, I remember my mother. I was adopted almost before I was born and yet—

JANE. What was she like, dear?

JACK. Like no one else in the world, Jane. It's hard to be sure of course, but I think she must have been just the one woman who never could grow fat.

JANE. At least I am not fat, Jack.

JACK. Oh, Jane—my mother!

JANE. My son John! (*Enter HARGRAVE. His hair is short and his costume more civilized. At sight of him DILL grows instantly shy and timid. He retreats to the shelter of KATHRYN who, however, refuses to be taken for a tree, and by a series of short playful jumps takes him to the centre of the stage.*)

JACK. Father! Where is your hair? Have you swallowed it?

JANE. Your father's hair and I have had a falling out, Jack. We are decided to cut it upon first sight hereafter.

HARGRAVE. Water!

GLORIA. Come out of there, Dill. Where are your manners I should like to know? (*DILL holds tray and hands a pitcher to HARGRAVE.*)

HARGRAVE. Ah! (*Drains a glass.*) Ah! (*DILL grows impatient and HARGRAVE grabs the pitcher.*)

JACK. How degrading drink is! It's dangerous too. There are more germs in water than in anything else except whiskey, as scientists will tell you.

GLORIA. I will break the news to you first, Jack. Jane is really your mother, and—I think that he is your father too.

JACK (*to KATHRYN*). It is apparent that we never can be married now, dear.

KATHRYN. You feel quite sure that we are safe?

JACK. My dear, cousins could hardly afford to marry, and though I don't believe a word that Gloria said— (*Stops abruptly and goes over to HARGRAVE.*)

KATHRYN (*with a deep sigh of satisfaction*). Well, that's over. (*Retreats to lounge.*)

JACK (*insolently*). Sir! I have already found my mother. (*GLORIA looks ominously at JANE.*) And ever since I can remember I have been told I resembled you.

GLORIA (*to KATHRYN*). You said that you recognized him at once, dear. (*KATHRYN makes a little face.*)

JACK (*earnestly*). Are you my father?

HARGRAVE. I am not.

JACK. Who is my father?

HARGRAVE. I don't know.

JACK. Your answers are satisfactory. In the future I don't wish so distasteful a subject to be broached again. (*Turns away impatiently.*)

HARGRAVE. Did you say you had found your mother?

JACK. I did. (*Looks at JANE who shakes her head.*)

HARGRAVE (*eyeing them all a little suspiciously*). May I then ask who your mother is, sir?

JACK. Ah, my mother is an angel. (*Looks up in the air.*)

HARGRAVE. Do not stand there blinking at the stars. I am sorry your mother is dead, but I have known that for years.

DILL. Perhaps the will would put him in a better humor, sir.

JACK (*handing it to him*). I forgot to tell you, father, but I found it after all. (*To KATHRYN.*) It's easy enough to find a thing if you're not looking for it.

HARGRAVE (*to them all*). I have just this much to say—that even if I was disinherited by my father I intend to take this matter to the courts. Fighting, especially fighting for the right, has always been a point of honor with me.

GLORIA. One pig, Dill?

DILL. One pig, then.

GLORIA (*advancing*). As we do not seem able to be married on land, Mr. Hargrave, Mr. Kent and I have decided to try the water. We are sailing this evening.

JACK. You are not sailing in those trunks, Gloria?

GLORIA. Mr. Hargrave, I am a lady. Those are not trunks, those are my new hats.

DILL. My idea, sir. It's to pass the custom house.

JACK. Would you like a sail across the pond, dear? I know some capital fish stories, and can show you where they catch the most gigantic fish. Father caught a whale there or something of the sort.

KATHRYN. A shark, Jack, a shark, I'm sure.

JACK. Well whatever it was we're quite safe. Whenever they strike a leak or the ship gets too heavy they push all the women off into the little boats.

HARGRAVE. What boat are you sailing on, may I ask?

GLORIA. The Baltic, Mr. Hargrave.

HARGRAVE (*to JANE*). I feel a little lonely, my dear. Don't you think we might try a sail ourselves?

JANE. Yes, the rent's up.

KATHRYN. What idiots we all are.

GLORIA. DILL! Come here! Did you not tell my daughter in that letter that you were an idiot?

DILL. I did, my dearest, indeed.

KATHRYN. Oh, the letter! And now I've lost it—what a shame. I always read letters backward and never did read more than the last paragraph anyway. But it's the only letter from my father that I ever had and I feel the loss of it already.

DILL. Never fear, Miss Kathryn. I will write you another. (*He thinks long and earnestly, but fails to write.*)

JANE. I have a present for you, Jack. (*Gives him a bag similar to GLORIA's.*) It was left me by my father, but with disclosures of a nature which I could not countenance. (*At R.*) I could never own up to forty, Peter; never, never, never, if I were a hundred.

JACK. You must never own up to thirty, Jane; I shall feel so very old when you do so. (*To KATHRYN.*) Don't you think we might get married after all, dear? It is terrible to have so much money and not know what to do with it.

KATHRYN. Yes, love is very beautiful, isn't it?

JACK (*pulling other bag from trunk*). I knew I should succeed some day, Jane; and I cannot thank either you or your sister one-half enough.

JANE AND GLORIA (*with one voice*). I was always my father's favorite daughter! (*Each snatches a bag, the two of which are carried off by JACK.*)

GLORIA. Whatever are you doing, Dill? Are you writing a letter to the Pope? (*Bell rings.*)

JACK. I distinctly heard a noise. (*Bell rings more loudly.*) I am seldom mistaken, Dill, and as you are still the butler (*Bell peals again*).

GLORIA. Hurry, Dill. It may be some distinguished guest. (*Exit DILL very slowly.*)

JANE. I have never heard a bell ring that way before. I was sure ours had been broken for months.

JACK. Belles always are, I believe.

KATHRYN. I have taken a dislike to this one already.

JACK. It sounds painfully reminiscent. You do not ring that way, Father?

HARGRAVE. Someday I shall wring your neck, sir.

JANE. You must learn to control your temper, Peter. I don't mind your trying it out on your relatives, but until it gets quite, quite perfect you must remember never to practise it on me. (*Takes away his glasses and places them on table.*) It was only his glasses, Jack.

KATHRYN. This suspense is killing me. I know I look like a tableau.

GLORIA. My dear, your dress is too low! You must not show your neck until late in the evening, or at least until the lights are turned on and everyone is looking.

JANE. I am glad we have chosen so large a boat. I feel as though I weighed a ton already.

KATHRYN. I will not wait one moment longer. No! not for the Empress of Egypt, if there is such a thing. (*Goes forward.*) Dill can bring the bundles. (*They follow her to the door, only to recoil in astonishment as COL. CHRISTOPHER CRAPSEY appears. He is prodding DILL with his sword which he sheathes gallantly upon beholding KATHRYN. The others he salutes sternly. In fact he salutes at every opportunity, his chief occupation being apparently this same salute, preceded each time by three mighty strides and heels together in approved military fashion. He has all the vulgar airs of a soldier, of even a retired soldier.*)

CRAPSEY (*after saluting everybody and everything in sight*). Col. Christopher Crapsey—retired Army officer—Socialist—and—(*delves into pocket for card*).

GLORIA. The tray, Dill—the tray! (*The effect produced by the mention of the word CRAPSEY stuns everyone, with the exception of KATHRYN and DILL, who have no knowledge of what a really*

*interesting person the Colonel is. JANE, of course, was expecting him. But HARGRAVE was not, and, after adjusting his glasses and taking one furtive glance, he disappears up the chimney.)*

DILL (*bowing deeply*). I must observe for the second time, sir, that your bearing is most soldierly.

CRAPSEY (*drawing sword*). Silence, sir. (*Empties seven or eight cards on tray and again repeats the ominous words.*) Col. Christopher Crapsey, retired Army officer!—Socialist—and—

KATHRYN (*to JACK*). I am so surprised—I thought the men of war were all at sea, and fighting with their wives, or with themselves.

JACK (*audibly*). I think the man's a fool.

KATHRYN. I'm sure of it.

GLORIA (*admonishingly*). Little do either of you know how much the Colonel's visit portends. (CRAPSEY *glares at all of them.*)

JACK. This is my last broken ideal. And I so young! What a pity.

CRAPSEY (*looking about him*). Ah, I forgot. Jane Gibbs, I believe. (*Goes up to Gloria.*)

JANE. I am Jane Gibbs. You wanted to see me about my son, did you not?

CRAPSEY. I did.

GLORIA. Pray proceed. We are all prepared for the worst.

CRAPSEY. Ah, it is for the very best.

KATHRYN. How very too bad! Nothing thrills me like a disappointment, and now even you refuse to marry someone else, Jack.

CRAPSEY (*annoyed at the interruption*). For the very best! I have decided your son shall remain with me. (*To GLORIA.*) It is hard to realize the effect that environment has on the young. It is much more vital than heredity, and John I feel bound to state is the exact image of me. He has my eyes, my commanding manner, my masterly stride.

JOHN (*from the other end of the room*). Have you come here to insult me, sir?

JANE. But I thought John was a scholar, Colonel? You have written several letters about his French, and you said his Shakespeare was perfect.

CRAPSEY. He is more than a scholar, madam. Your son is a soldier. He has the soldier's finer feelings, and some day will surely join the ranks to become as famous as his guardian was before him.

JACK. I'd rather die than fight for anyone.

CRAPSEY (*trying not to hear*). Yes, for twenty years he has been mine. He has been a dutiful, affectionate son and a help to me in that institution which is destined some day to become known throughout the entire world. But come! (*Consults his watch.*) There's little time. I arrived yesterday on the Burgoyne and I sail tonight on the Baltic.

JACK. The Baltic?

CRAPSEY (*violently*). The Baltic! But it does not concern you in the least.

JACK (*to KATHRYN*). I assure you, my dear, that all this has reference to me.

CRAPSEY (*to JANE*). Your decision, pray?

JACK. I will not go.

CRAPSEY. Madam?

JACK. I will not go.

CRAPSEY. Madam, your decision!

JACK. It is easily decided, Jane. I refuse to go.

CRAPSEY (*marching up to him*). I did not ask you to go, sir! Your conduct is an impertinence.

JACK (*to JANE*). I will not live with a lunatic. Surely the law must side with me there.

CRAPSEY (*roaring with rage*). Who is this offensive young person, may I ask, who insults me in this fashion?

JACK (*stepping out*). I am John, plain John, Disciple No. 1, in Crapsey's School for Socialism. And I hold the dubious distinction of being the only pupil you ever had. (CRAPSEY'S *feelings are hurt beyond expression. He wilts perceptibly. At length, with whatever dignity is still his, he turns his back upon the company and stalks for the door. There he hesitates for a moment and all draw back in doubt as to whether he is about to go or charge upon them.*)

HARGRAVE (*crawling out*). Is he gone? (*He presents a droll figure, sooted and covered with dust.*)

CRAPSEY (*returning with two or three wondrous strides*). I am not gone, sir. And who are you?

JACK. This is my adopted father, the Rev. Peter Kent, alias Hargrave. (CRAPSEY *stares icily, then adjusts an extraordinary pair of glasses to his nose.*)

CRAPSEY. Aha! (HARGRAVE *shivers.*) So I have not tracked you twenty years in vain. (*Draws sword.*) You changed your name, but I am too clever to be misled by a woman's guile. Defend yourself,



sir! I remember—the truth is stronger than the sword! Come on, sir. (HARGRAVE *retreats to fireplace.*)

JACK. Fighting always was his forte, Crapsey, especially fighting for the right. If my life was as worthless as yours, father, I'd be fighting all the time.

CRAPSEY (*turning fiercely on JACK*). Shall I run you through and through, sir? (HARGRAVE *glides behind the table.*) This creature stole you from me years ago. But he is welcome to you—to all of you. I think it is a den of thieves.

JANE. Curb your emotions, Colonel. This man is soon to be my husband, and Jack was first of all my son. (HARGRAVE *is fired to action by this apparent disclosure. Forgetting his fears he stamps jealously up to CRAPSEY who meets him half way. They stand face to face.*)

HARGRAVE AND CRAPSEY (*together*). Her son!

GLORIA (*to KATHRYN*). I told you, my dear, that it was really so.

JANE. Yes, my own adopted son. I found him in one of the fashionable parks of England's great city ... quite homeless, quite dirty, and without name or parents. I called him John.

JACK. Thank you, Jane. I knew Gloria could never speak the truth.

JANE. You have been a most extravagant young man, Jack. Every dollar which I have spent on your education has been squandered.

CRAPSEY. And every dollar has been used in running this man down. You must admit that I have been successful. (*Smiles at the thought of his accomplishments and seats himself comfortably.*)

HARGRAVE (*well behind the table*). I have no doubt that you will still land in jail, sir.

CRAPSEY (*bounding to his feet*). Aha! For you, sir, I have something in the nature of a surprise. (*Fumbles in pockets.*) After many failures I have at last obtained a hearing before the Archbishop; and he, like the honest, upright man that he is, has decreed that you be unfrocked. I have the order with me.

JACK. I said you'd be unfrocked, father.

HARGRAVE (*discarding vest*). I am glad of it. For twenty years these clothes weighed upon my soul, ruined my digestion, dyed my hair, and made me the man I am.

JACK. Your reformation is complete, Jane.

DILL. In that case, sir, insomuch as my father specifically stated in the will that he had disinherited you solely because you had entered the ministry, I turn over one-half the estate to you. (GLORIA *stares at him reproachfully.*)

HARGRAVE (*kneeling*). My brother! forgive me!

CRAPSEY. The will! What will!

HARGRAVE (*holding Dill's hand and the will in the air*). The will of the late John Kent of Canterbury, whose elder son I am.

CRAPSEY. Pooh! (*Tears it to pieces.*) Absolutely worthless, revoked it before he died.

CHORUS OF VOICES. Revoked it?

CRAPSEY.. Revoked it! And seeing at the last the error of his ways, by the merciful will of God left every cent he possessed to a School for Socialism, to be founded in ye good and ancient city of Canterbury, whose ruling spirit I am. The new will was discovered just previous to my departure for this country.

DISCORD OF VOICES. Oh! (*Each seeks a chair, DILL alone being left in the scuffle.*)

DILL (*holding up bag*). At any rate we do not need for money, sir. (CRAPSEY *tosses the coins contemptuously into the air.*)

CRAPSEY. Bah! American pennies, as worthless as the American dollar. (*All are visibly annoyed.*) But hurry! My time is nearly up. Do I go alone, or will some of the party accompany me?

KATHRYN. We'll be the young married couple, Jack.

JANE. We'll be the sisters, Gloria.

GLORIA. Yes, and Dill will be the butler. (*All but DILL and JANE assent.*)

JANE. I think, Peter, that as your brother has been the butler for twenty years it is only fair that you should now take his place.

KATHRYN. No one can ever take my father's place. It may sound like affectation, but it's not. Dill will be the butler.

CRAPSEY. That is impossible! In my school the women work and do all the work. (*All the men and DILL are jubilant.*) One thing still requires our attention. After what person, or persons, shall the institution be called?

JACK, HARGRAVE AND DILL (*displaying their now reluctant better halves*). After my—

CRAPSEY. One name at a time, please.

VOICES THREE. The Convolvulus.

CRAPSEY. Then that is settled. Company fall in. (CRAPSEY *stands superbly at the head; next JANE*

and GLORIA; next HARGRAVE and DILL. KATHRYN *tries to hold JACK in last place with her, but he breaks away and goes up to HARGRAVE.*)

JACK. I told you, father, that I was going to complete my education; and perhaps some day I shall have the distinction of a number. (CRAPSEY *hits him a vicious crack with his sword just as JACK takes JANE'S chattels away from her. These he adds to GLORIA'S already prodigious pile and joins the ranks.*)

KATHRYN. I feel just as if I were boarding the Ark.

CRAPSEY. The Baltic! Forward march! (*They describe a short circle, JACK whistling the "Marseillaise," "Onward Christian Soldiers," or some terrible tango tune. Any old tune will not do, however, and care should be taken in its selection and use.*)

JACK (*disappearing*). Dear me! It's five-fifteen, and they're beating their wives in London now. (*Exeunt all.*)

CURTAIN.

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