

ACT ONE.

[1]

After a slight pause, a door out at the right is heard to close, and immediately Mr. Ritter comes along the hallway beyond the partition and into the room. He is a brisk, rather stocky type of man, in his early forties, wearing a brown suit and overcoat, a derby hat, and carrying a suit-case. He sets the suit-case down on the partition-seat at the right, and, with a glance around the room, at the unusual arrangement of the furniture, starts out into the hallway again, removing his gloves and overcoat. He glances along the hallway to the left and up the stairs as he goes. Jenny comes along the hallway from the left carrying a small, light chair. As she is about to come into the drawing-room proper from the hallway, she becomes conscious of Mr. Ritter out at the hall-rack at the right. She stops and peers in that direction. She is a pleasant little English person, plump and trim, dressed in the regulation parlor-maid's black and white.

JENNY. Is that you, Mr. Ritter?

RITTER. That's who it is, Jenny! How are you?

JENNY. [*Bringing the little chair forward and placing it above the little table at the left*] Pretty well, thanks, Mr. Ritter, how are you?

RITTER. [*Coming along the hallway from the right*] I'm whatever you are, Jenny. [*Jenny gives a faint little laugh and proceeds with her arrangements, and Ritter picks up several telegrams from the stand in the hallway, just to the left of the center entrance.*] [2]

JENNY. Ain't you back a bit soon?

RITTER. [*Coming forward to the small table at the right, below the piano*] Yes, I thought I'd have to go down to Cincinnati for a week or two, but I didn't.

JENNY. Mrs. Ritter ain't expectin' you, is she?

RITTER. [*Glancing thru the telegrams*] No, she isn't, Jenny.

JENNY. I thought I didn't remember hearin' her sayin' nothin'.

RITTER. Where is she?

JENNY. [*Starting for the hallway*] She's upstairs, sir, I'll call her.

RITTER. [*With a glance at the furniture*] What are you doing around here, Jenny, housecleaning?

JENNY. [*Turning and coming back*] No, sir, there's a rehearsal here tonight. [*Ritter stops reading and looks at her quizzically for a second.*]

RITTER. What kind of a rehearsal?

JENNY. Why, a rehearsal for a show that Mrs. Ritter's takin' part in tomorrow night. They done it at the Civic Club the week after you went away, and they liked it so well they're doin' it again tomorrow night.

RITTER. *Who* liked it?

JENNY. Sir?

RITTER. I say, who liked it so well that they're doing it again? [3]

JENNY. Why, everybody seemed to like it, Mr. Ritter, from what the papers said.

RITTER. What kind of a show is it?

JENNY. Why, I think it's a tragedy, from what I gather.