

ALFRED MASON

GREEN STOCKINGS: A
COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

Alfred Mason

**Green Stockings: A
Comedy in Three Acts**

«Public Domain»

Mason A.

Green Stockings: A Comedy in Three Acts / A. Mason — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

CAST OF CHARACTERS	5
SYNOPSIS OF SCENES	6
DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS	7
ACT I	8
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	22

A. E. W. (Alfred Edward Woodley) Mason Green Stockings: A Comedy in Three Acts

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Colonel J. N. Smith, D.S.O.	<i>H. Reeves Smith</i>
William Faraday, J. P.	<i>Stanley Dark</i>
Admiral Grice, R. N.	<i>Arthur Lawrence</i>
Honorable Robert Tarver	<i>Ivo Dawson</i>
James Raleigh	<i>Wallace Widdecombe</i>
Henry Steele	<i>Henry Hull</i>
Martin	<i>Halbert Brown</i>
Celia Faraday	<i>Margaret Anglin</i>
Evelyn Trenchard	<i>Mrs. Ruth Holt Boucicault</i>
Madge Rockingham	<i>Helen Langford</i>
Phyllis Faraday	<i>Gertrude Hitz</i>
Mrs. Chisholm Faraday	<i>Maudie Granger</i>

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I. Room in Mr. Faraday's House, February 11th. Evening.

ACT II. Same as Act I. Eight months later. About six o'clock.

ACT III. Morning room in Mr. Faraday's house. Evening same day.

DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

Admiral Grice (*Retired*), a testy old gentleman of about sixty-five, with the manner of an old sea dog, of ruddy complexion, with white hair and whiskers.

William Faraday, a well-preserved man of about sixty-five. Fashionable, superficial and thoroughly selfish.

Colonel Smith, a dignified, dryly humorous man of military bearing, about forty years old.

Robert Tarver, an empty-headed young swell.

Henry Steele and James Raleigh, two young men of about thirty and thirty-five respectively.

Martin, a dignified old family servant.

Celia Faraday, an unaffected woman of twenty-nine, with a sense of humor.

Madge (Mrs. Rockingham) and Evelyn (Lady Trenchard), handsome, well-dressed, fashionable women of twenty-five and twenty-seven respectively.

Phyllis, the youngest sister, a charming and pretty but thoughtlessly selfish girl of twenty.

Mrs. Chisholm Faraday, of Chicago (Aunt Ida), a florid, quick-tempered, warm-hearted woman of fifty or thereabouts.

ACT I

Scene: A room in Mr. Faraday's country house; at the upper left corner a little room is recessed, in which is a folding card table and four chairs. Windows at back. On table are two decks of cards, an ashtray and two bridge-markers and pencils. Hanging over table, a shaded electrolier. There is no door, but people sitting at the card tables are practically off the stage, though they can be seen and heard. At right corner balancing left corner exactly is seen a portion of the morning room (backing used is part of Act III set). Directly against back is a small table, between two chairs, both of which are facing it. On table, a lighted lamp and an English periodical, also an ashtray and a vase of spring flowers. Note: All flowers used in this set are spring flowers. Between card room and morning room on back flat, a tapestry is hung, against flat a baby grand piano, keyboard facing right up and down stage; on piano are a scarf, photograph frames, vase of flowers and a lamp. In the center of the left wall of the room, proper is hung a large picture; beneath this stands a large cabinet on which is formal garniture. Below this is a door (L.I) which leads into the hall; above door and to left center, a table on which is a sliding book rack holding several books and an English army list. Also a shaded lamp, a purse for Lady Trenchard to left of table, and a sewing-bag for Aunt Ida to right of table.

In R.I is a door balancing that in L.I. It leads to hall. Above door R. is a large mantel. Above this is hung a large picture, balancing that on left wall. On the mantel, a formal garniture of vases; against mantel, a club fender with upholstered top, fireirons inside fender, grate with lighted coal fire; below fender, facing sofa, an armchair. Opposite and facing the fender and about three feet from it is a large comfortable sofa, with a number of cushions; against the back of this, a long magazine table. On this are, beginning at upper end, an English timetable, a large shaded lamp, large cigarette box containing cigarettes, ashtray, match-holder, vase of tulips, photo frame, and at extreme lower end of table seven or eight English periodicals. On these, a large blue linen envelope, unsealed, flap being turned in. This contains a few spring fashion plates. With this are four ordinary letters, containing circulars (all of these letters are important). Below table, a square tapestry stool, left of table an armchair, under table a waste-paper basket. Between piano and entrance to morning room is a small light writing table. On this, a small lamp or a pair of shaded candles, a blotting pad with paper, envelopes, ink and pens. Above this a chair. Off L. a door bell and set of chimes. Electric light switch on R. wall to R. of morning room opening. Bell push on L. of back flat. The entire room should convey the impression of quiet, dignified, tasteful elegance. Complete darkness at windows, suggesting a rainy night. On rise of curtain, all lamps are lighted and fire aglow.

Before the curtain rises, Phyllis plays for a moment or two.

At Rise: Discovered: Phyllis at piano, playing. Lady Trenchard seated at upper end of sofa, smoking a cigarette and reading a periodical. Madge writing a letter at writing table up stage. Aunt Ida seated in armchair at R. of table L., knitting. The girls and Aunt Ida are in evening dress. Phyllis continues to play softly under conversation, something cheerful but not too fast. The opening scene should be played brightly and quickly.

Madge. (Rises. Brightly) Oh, Evelyn-
Evelyn. Yes, Madge.

Madge. (*Coming down to chair L. of table R. with letter in hand*) I do want this letter to my husband to catch the Indian mail. Do you know anything about the postal service in this benighted village?

Evelyn. (*Continuing to read and speaking over her magazine*) No, Madgie, I don't. Celia always attends to those things. *She's away. Ring for Martin.*

(*Madge goes to bell in upper flat L., rings it, and then comes L.C.*)

Aunt Ida. (*Without looking up from her knitting*) Has anyone gone to the wharf to meet Celia?

Evelyn. (*Indifferently*) Why, no. She's coming home to-night, isn't she?

Aunt Ida. (*Vehemently*) You got her telegram.

Madge. (*Unconcerned*) What time is her boat due?

Aunt Ida. At eight, and now it's nearly nine.

(*Enter Martin R.IE. and stands.*)

Aunt Ida. (*Continuing*) She'll have been waiting for an hour on that dreadful wharf.

Evelyn. (*Still reading and speaking over her book*) Oh, Martin, the motor must go at once to the wharf to fetch Miss Celia.

Martin. Yes, your Ladyship, but hadn't I better send down some extra wraps; it's a very wet night.

Evelyn. (*Looking up for a moment*) Wet? Dear me, is it raining?

Aunt Ida. Cats and dogs.

Evelyn. (*Returning to her reading*) Oh, very well, then, Martin, attend to it at once.

Martin. (*Turns to go to door R.*) Yes, your Ladyship.

Madge. (*From L.C.*) Attend to me first, Martin, if you please.

Martin. (*Turns back*) Yes, madam.

Madge. How late can I post in order to catch the Indian mail?

Martin. Up till ten o'clock, madam.

Madge. (*Going back to desk*) Oh, then I have time to write a longer letter. (*Martin exits R.I.*)

Aunt Ida. (*Looking around at girls, who are all occupied and quite oblivious of Celia's discomfort. With a deep sigh and shaking her head*) Poor Celia.

Phyllis. (*Gives a slight bang on the piano, rises and comes quickly down center. Indignantly*) Poor Celia. Well, she's coming back home just at a moment that's going to complicate-the-whole-situation.

Evelyn. Why, what do you mean?

Phyllis. (*Addressing Evelyn*) Well, you know how father feels about letting me get married-while Celia is settling down day after day into a permanent old maid. If she'd stay away a little longer, he might forget for a while, but here she's turning up just *this very night*, just as Bobby has gained courage enough to take the bull by the horns and beard the lion sulking in his tent.

(*Enter Tarver in evening dress, dejectedly, R.U., coming down center.*)

Aunt Ida. What an extraordinary proceeding.

Phyllis. (*Running up to Bobby and taking him by the arm*) Oh! Bobby, Bobby! What news?

Tarver. Well, I'm afraid it's hopeless, though I spoke with singular force. (*Sits in chair left of table R.*)

A

Phyllis. (*Stands L. of chair, L. of table R.*) Oh, Bobby, how splendid of you! How did you put it?

Tarver. In the form of a question. I said to your father, "Are you aware, sir, that I love your daughter and wish to make her mine?"

Evelyn. What did *Father* say?

Tarver. Oh, he said, "Has it escaped your observation, sir, that I still have *two* marriageable daughters?"

Phyllis. (*Protestingly*) But he hasn't, he hasn't.

Aunt Ida. Eh?

Phyllis. You know what I mean, Aunt Ida. *I'm* marriageable, but *Celia*-well-*Celia's* just-*unmarried*.

Evelyn. (*With smiling sarcasm*) And very likely to stay so.

Aunt Ida. (*Grunts*) Huh!

Tarver. That's just it, but tell me, what is your father's dearest wish in life?

Phyllis. To get rid of us *both*, of course.

Aunt Ida. *Phyllis Faraday!*

Evelyn. (*Putting magazine on sofa and putting out cigarette on ashtray*) Yes, so that he can give up this house to live at his club, but he promised poor mother to wait till we were all married-

Tarver. Yes, and he knows there's a better chance of getting Celia off his hands as long as Phyllis is about, because people will go on talking of her and Celia as the two Faraday *girls*, and lumping good old Celia into the girl division just out of habit. He won't risk letting Miss Celia put on a third pair of green stockings. (*Tarver looks around for ashtray, sees one on upper end of table, rises, goes to upper end of table, flicks ashes on tray and strolls down right of sofa and sits lower end of fender.*)

Aunt Ida. Eh? Will you tell me what all this has to do with Celia's *stockings*?

(*Phyllis sits in chair L. of table R.*)

Evelyn. (*Rising leisurely, going to lower end of table, taking her fan and crossing to Aunt Ida, speaking as she goes*) Not Celia's *stockings*, Aunt Ida, her *green stockings*.

Aunt Ida. Eh?

Evelyn. Why, yes. Have you never known of the old country custom which requires an elder sister to wear *green stockings* at the wedding of her *younger* sister, if that *younger* sister has captured a husband *first*?

Aunt Ida. (*Turning her back to Evelyn with disgust*) No, I never heard of such rubbish.

Evelyn. (*Patronizingly, crossing to head of table R. and speaking as she crosses*) And poor old Celia has had to put them on twice already. Once for Madge and once for me, and now comes Phyllis. (*Puts her hand on Phyllis's shoulder.*)

Phyllis. And if I have to wait to be married until Celia is out of the way- (*Sighs. Evelyn moves above table and down R. of sofa.*) Oh, couldn't we think of anybody who might marry Celia? Evelyn, do you think you could do anything about it with Henry Steele or Jimmie Raleigh?

Tarver. (*With a brilliant inspiration*) If it comes to that, why shouldn't *Admiral Grice* be got to marry Miss Celia? (*Everybody exclaims and throws up their hands in horror.*)

(*Evelyn sits on sofa.*)

Phyllis. (*Horried*) Oh, Bobby!

Tarver. Yes, Grice. (*Thoughtfully, strolling center below table*) Isn't half a bad idea, come to think of it. I'd like to get even with Grice. (*Aunt Ida gives a grunt of disgust.*) The way he keeps roaring questions at me all day about my election, and neither he nor Miss Celia are what you might call-in the first bloom of their youth.

Aunt Ida. (*Interrupting sharply*) *Mr. Tarver*, my niece, Miss Celia Faraday, is a dear, delightful young woman, still under thirty.

Evelyn. (*Again with smiling sarcasm*) Yes, but how *much* under, Aunt Ida?

Tarver. Yes, as Lady Trenchard says, how *much* is Miss Celia Faraday under thirty? Thirty-two is freezing-point, remember. (*Phyllis laughs.*)

Aunt Ida. Tcha! (*Picks up knitting and goes on with it angrily.*)

Tarver. (*Chuckling to himself and strolling right to foot of table*) Jimmie Raleigh said a very true thing about her. He said, "Whenever I talk to Miss Faraday, I'm warranted to stay cold for days-like a Thermos bottle." (*Sits on stool.*)

Phyllis. Oh, Bobby!

Aunt Ida. Oh, Mr. Tarver! (*Smiling with suppressed fury*) I *should* like to have you in Chicago for a week.

Tarver. (*Taking her seriously*) Oh, thanks awfully. I dare say some day, after my election, I shall have to look up America. Just at present, though, I have too much on my mind.

Aunt Ida. Shouldn't overburden the weak, Mr. Tarver.

Phyllis. (*Showing resentment*) Oh, Aunt Ida! (*Evelyn laughs.*)

Tarver. (*Rises, gives Aunt Ida a resentful look, turns up R. by fender and addresses Evelyn*) But the great thing now is to get old Grice to *propose* to Miss Celia.

Evelyn. (*Very patronizingly*) Why, yes, Bobby. Then out of gratitude she might go out and canvass for you.

Tarver. (*Doubtfully*) Ye-es, that would be very nice, of course. (*Rises enthusiastically.*) But fascinating girls are what is needed at a time like this-like you, Lady Trenchard, and Phyllis and Mrs. Rockingham. (*He bows to each as he addresses them. Going up to Madge at desk R.*) I say, when is your husband coming back from India?

Madge. Not till Christmas. (*Rises.*)

Tarver. Then *you* can spend all *your* time canvassing for me, can't you?

Madge. (*Patronizingly*) Oh, of course, Bobby.

Tarver. (*Crossing L. to C.*) Thanks awfully. And you two girls can do the same. But your sister-well- (*Madge comes to head of magazine table.*)

Aunt Ida. (*Turning on him quickly*) Well, what, Mr. Tarver?

Tarver. (*Very diffidently*) Well, I'm afraid *she* wouldn't be of much use-you see, she's rather difficult-isn't she?

Aunt Ida. Difficult!

Tarver. (*Seeing he has made a break, tries to recover himself*) Well, not quite the sort of person to make friends for one, don't you know?

Aunt Ida. (*Growing more and more enraged, rises and faces him*) Mr. Tarver!

Tarver. (*Now thoroughly frightened*) Well, shall we say a, – a-a trifle cold?

Aunt Ida. (*Backing him across stage to foot of table R.*) Yes, and who has made her a trifle cold- (*Imitating Tarver*) – and difficult? *You* and your *Henry Steeles* and *Jimmy Raleighs*.

All the Girls Together. Aunt Ida!

Tarver. Oh, I say!

Aunt Ida. Yes, where is she now, I would like to know? Freezing for an hour on an open wharf in the pouring rain, three miles away, because nobody took the trouble to think of her.

Madge. (*Coming center. Protestingly*) Oh, Aunt Ida, I heard the motor leave not two minutes ago.

Aunt Ida. Yes, just about two hours too late. (*Madge goes above table and joins girls, who with Tarver are evidently alarmed under Aunt Ida's attack and express it in a murmur. Tarver sits.*) Oh, if only she doesn't get tired of waiting before the motor can get there.

Tarver. (*To girls*) Don't worry. Don't worry. Why should she get tired? It would look like a lack of confidence in you if she stopped waiting.

Aunt Ida. Yes, and Celia is certainly accustomed to waiting for and on every one of you.

GIRLS and Tarver. Now, you know- Oh, I say.

(*Madge turns up to piano.*)

Aunt Ida. (*Continuing*) She is a back number. That's your constant suggestion, and because she hasn't found a Jim Raleigh to love her, she is on the shelf- (*Disgustedly*) – a Jim Raleigh.

(*Tarver and Phyllis rise and she consoles him.*)

Raleigh. (*Entering gayly through morning room*) Hello, what's that about me? (*Goes directly to Aunt Ida. They turn to table L.*)

(Aunt Ida *flustered and exclaiming*. Immediately following Raleigh are Faraday, Grice and Steele in the foregoing order. They are chatting and smoking and are all in evening dress.)

Faraday. (*Cheerily*) You don't mind, girls, if we bring in our cigars?

Madge and Evelyn. Not at all, Father.

(Faraday *crosses immediately to card table and looks it over*.)

Grice. (*Coming down R. of sofa. Gruffly to Tarver*) Tarver, I want to ask you a question.

Tarver. (*Going reluctantly to him*) Yes, sir.

(Phyllis *looks reproachfully at Grice and sits again in chair L. of table R., swinging her foot and watching Tarver and Grice. Steele goes to head of sofa and talks with Lady Trenchard. Madge remains by piano, turning over music. Raleigh crosses to left of table, above table, still talking to Aunt Ida. All of this business occurs almost simultaneously and quickly*.)

Faraday. (*Coming out of card room. Irritably*) Madge, where are those new markers?

Madge. I don't know, Father. Celia attends to everything.

Faraday. (*Coming down center. Testily*) Well, God bless my soul, where is Celia?

(Madge *gradually comes down C., R. of Faraday*.)

Aunt Ida. (*Facing him. Vehemently*) God bless your soul, William Faraday, down on the wharf in the pouring rain-

Faraday. What's that?

Aunt Ida. (*Continuing*) Frozen to death by this time.

Faraday. God bless my soul!

Aunt Ida. (*Continuing*) For all any one cares.

Faraday. But I need her. She must be sent for at once.

(Door opens suddenly. Celia, in dripping oilskins and drenched veil, carrying a soaking wet traveling bag, enters and crosses immediately from L.IE. to R.I. All give start of surprise.)

Omnes. Celia! Miss Faraday! (*Etc.*)

Aunt Ida. Darling!

Madge. (*As Celia gets center. Coming down center*) We did send the motor for you, Celia, only it was too late.

Celia. (*Pausing at door*) Yes, I know, Madgie, but when I met him, he wouldn't stop. He took me for the fish-monger- (*Exit quickly R.IE.*)

Faraday. Fish-monger! God bless my soul!

Madge. (*Idiotically to girls*) She must have walked. Evelyn and Phyllis. Why, yes.

Aunt Ida. Well, she could hardly sleep on the wharf, could she?

Grice. (*To Steele*) What an unfortunate way that poor woman has of doing things that make everyone feel uncomfortable.

Steele. (*To Grice*) Yes, the idea of her walking up here alone in the rain!

Evelyn. (*To girls*) Wherever did she get the clothes?

Celia. (*Off stage*) Martin, send to the station at once for my hat and coat and return these things to Wilson. He borrowed them from the pilot.

Grice. Wilson?

Evelyn. (*Patronizingly*) He is the man at the station. *He's* Celia's slave.

(Celia re-enters without oilskins and stands at door R. She is in a simple traveling dress.)

Faraday. (From center of stage) God bless my soul, Celia, where have you been?

Celia. Why; I've been away, Father, for a week. Perhaps you haven't noticed it.

Faraday. Not noticed it? I have missed you very much. I never get all the right things for breakfast when you're away!

Celia. Sorry, Father. (Celia crosses quickly to Aunt Ida, who is in the center of the stage, Faraday having turned and gone up into the card room. Celia nodding as she crosses, to the Admiral and the girls) Good evening, Admiral. Well, girls.

(Admiral acknowledges her greeting with a grunt, Steele with a stiff bow, and the girls say, "Good evening, Celia.")

Celia. Well, Aunt Ida.

Aunt Ida. (Kissing her on both cheeks) Dear child!

(Celia passing L. over to Mr. Raleigh, who is left of table L.

Celia offers her hand, which he takes with a very bored air. Meanwhile, the groups break up after Celia has passed. Lady Trenchard joins the Admiral and Steele at upper end of sofa. Phyllis joins Tarver; they sit at lower end of fender, Phyllis sitting in chair below fender. Aunt Ida joins Madge and they all talk in dumb show during Celia's scene with Raleigh.)

Celia. Mr. Raleigh, how are you?

Raleigh. I am very well, thank you. (Pause.) Yes.

Celia. Yes?

Raleigh. (In a bored monotone, looking straight in front of him) Yes. I hope you enjoyed yourself,

Miss Faraday. You were in London?

Celia. No, at Southampton.

Raleigh. Oh, yes-er-all amongst the ships and things,

Celia. Yes.

Raleigh. Yes.

Celia. Won't you sit down, Mr. Raleigh?

Raleigh. No, thanks. I never sit down.

Celia. Eh?

Raleigh. After dinner.

Celia. Oh.

Raleigh. You have been away quite a long time, Miss Faraday?

Celia. Yes, for me.

Raleigh. Yes, I mean for you. Well-nothing much has happened.

Celia. Well, one hardly expects much, does one?

Raleigh. No. Oh, Manners has got himself engaged.

Celia. Really? To Jennie Woodcote, I suppose?

Raleigh. Yes; they were all saying it was her last chance.

Celia. Yes, they would.

Raleigh. Of course, that's all nonsense. Nowadays, there's no-a-

Celia. Age limit?

Raleigh. Exactly! (Then catching himself up in great confusion) No, no! Good Lord, no! I didn't mean-

Faraday. (Coming forward L.C.) Well, we might as well have some bridge. (Murmurs of "Oh, splendid!")

Raleigh. (*With a shout of relief backs away from Celia toward card room*) Bridge! Oh, splendid!

(*Evelyn and Steele go slowly to card room. Tarver starts L.*)

Grice. (*Quickly*) Tarver, I have another question to ask you.

Tarver. (*To Faraday, enthusiastically*) Admiral Grice plays a ripping game.

Faraday. (*Gayly*) Come along, Admiral. Come along.

Grice. (*Crossing left. Faraday takes him by the arm. They go up to card room together, chatting gayly*) Not bad. Not bad.

(*These last few lines are played very quickly. Celia has remained in chair R. of L. table after Raleigh has gone to card room. Aunt Ida and Madge are standing up stage and those who have gone into the card room seat themselves in the following fashion, after the settling of partners in dumb show: Raleigh is seated down stage, his back to the audience; Lady Trenchard to his right, Faraday to his left, and Admiral Grice opposite him. They begin their game of bridge. Tarver has gone up R. of sofa, getting a cigarette at head of table. Phyllis throws herself lightly on the sofa on her knees, gathering up Celia's letters and flourishing them at her.*)

Phyllis. Celia, here are some letters for you.

Celia. (*Crossing to chair L. of table R. and sitting*) Letters for me?

Phyllis. One is a big one. (*Gives Celia letters, kneeling on sofa.*)

Celia. I don't suppose any of them are very important.

Phyllis. (*Pityingly*) No, I don't suppose so.

Celia. (*Looking at letters*) Circulars. Circulars. (*Tears open one envelope and takes out circular letter. Then seeing big envelope, says brightly as she picks it up and draws out fashion plates*) Oh, spring fashions.

Phyllis. (*With an air of superiority*) Oh, you don't want those. Give them to me.

(*Celia submissively hands them, over, leaving large blue envelope on table.*

Phyllis takes them and sits on sofa with Tarver, who has come down after lighting his cigarette. They hold hands, backs to Celia, looking at fashions.)

Celia. (*Reading letter that she has opened*) "Dear Sir or Madam: Having secured our unparalleled stock of sherry wine on a falling market-" (*Drops envelope and opens another. Reads*) "Dear Madam: You are cordially invited to attend our spring opening of household linens-"

Faraday. (*Coming from card room*) Madge, you will play?

Madge. No, thanks, I'll finish my letter. (*Who has been talking to Aunt Ida, goes back to writing table up R. and resumes writing.*)

Faraday. (*Disappointedly*) And Phyllis doesn't.

Aunt Ida. Well, there's Celia.

Faraday. (*Coming down to Celia,*) God bless my soul! Of course, why did I forget?

Celia. Oh-that's all right, Father. (*Cheerfully opening her letters*) It's being done, you know.

Faraday. (*To Tarver and Phyllis, who are seated on sofa, holding hands*) Now, then, you two, none of that! No holding hands! (*They rise quickly, looking embarrassed and facing father.*) You are; not engaged yet, you know.

Celia. (*Happily*) Engaged? Phyllis and Mr. Tarver?

Faraday. (*Reassuringly*) No, no, certainly not. Nothing of the kind. Cheer up, my dear. (*Patting Celia on the shoulder*) You don't suppose I would allow a chick like *Phyllis* to marry with you on my hands still?

Aunt Ida. (*Who has been watching him and listening to him*) William! (*She takes him by the arm and they go up to the card room together.*)

(*There are now in the card room Grice, Faraday, Steele, Raleigh, Lady Trenchard and Aunt Ida. Aunt Ida is out of sight. Raleigh, Lady Trenchard, Grice and Faraday are playing. Steele is circulating about above table. Tarver goes up in the morning room, sits left of table, and reads a magazine. Celia rises and goes to Phyllis, who meets her below sofa.*)

Celia. Phyllis-?

Phyllis. (*Eagerly*) Oh, Celia, you don't really mind, do you? Just because *you can't*-I mean, because you *don't want* to-get married, you won't try to stop Bobby and me, will you?

Celia. (*In a hurt tone*) Phyllis-dear-

Phyllis. (*Relieved*) I knew you wouldn't. I *told* Bobby-!

Celia. And do you mean to say that Mr. Tarver- (*Controlling herself with effort*) Phyllis, dear- You ought to know-by now-there isn't anything I wouldn't do to make my littlest sister happy. (*Patting Phyllis on cheek.*)

Phyllis. (*Carelessly engrossed in her own affairs*) Oh, of course, I *know* that. But, Celia, you're quite mistaken and unjust about poor Bobby.

Celia. (*Smiling, rather bitterly*) Oh-I hope not, Phyllis. I-can't stand-injustice!

Phyllis. (*Kneeling on stool R.C.*) *But you are!* In spite of all his worries and preoccupations about his election, Bobby takes the *greatest interest* in you, Celia-

Celia. (*Crosses C. Smiles ironically*) Yes?

Phyllis. I tell you *he does!* (*Forgetting herself in her zeal*) As soon as he has time, Bobby means to do everything he can to get *Admiral Grice to propose to you!*

Celia. (*Recoiling*) What!!

Phyllis. (*Crestfallen*) Oh-I oughtn't to have told you, I suppose. But it's true, all the same. (*Reproachfully*) You don't appreciate Bobby's *noble nature*, Celia. You don't know how Bobby realizes your-your *loneliness*, Celia. Unless you could hear him talk about you, you'd never guess how much darling Bobby *pities* you.

Celia. (*In a changed voice*) Phyllis. One moment, please- (*With an effort at calm*) Do you mean to say that you and-and Mr. Tarver have been-been discussing-me? Oh! (*Clenching her handkerchief.*)

Phyllis. Not *discussing*- (*Self-righteously*) Bobby *would not discuss* anybody. But-you see, Celia, we were all-Aunt Ida and all of us-talking, just in fun, about your having to wear Green Stockings once more at my wedding, and Bobby- (*Laughs to herself*) Darling Bobby, *is so witty!*

Celia. Oh, yes-go on, Phyllis.

Phyllis. (*Injured*) Well, but he is.

Celia. Oh, yes-yes-

Phyllis. And so Bobby was just being most awfully *sweet* and *sympathetic* about your-*your position.*

Celia. My position-! (*Between her teeth*) My-position! And so Mr. Robert Tarver was kind enough to express concern, was he-because there was no possible chance of any decent man ever wanting to marry me?

Phyllis. (*Half frightened*) Oh, Celia! (*Rises.*)

Celia. And he makes jokes about my stockings. (*Goes L. to chair R. of table L. and stands beside it.*) I can hear his jokes!

Phyllis. Oh, Celia! Bobby is witty.

Celia. (*Ironically*) Yes, very.

Faraday. (*In card room*) I don't think much of that, Admiral.

Grice. (*In card room*) You don't? What's the matter with it?

(These last two lines are spoken hurriedly, almost together in card room, as Celia's expression conveys to the audience her sudden determination to invent her story.)

Celia. *(With entire change of manner)* Call him down here, Phyllis, please, and tell him I want to speak to him.

Phyllis. Celia! *(Crossing to center)* But why?

Celia. Oh, nothing. I only want to thank him, you know, about old Admiral Grice, and tell him that he need no longer complicate his anxiety about his election with worries about me or the color of my stockings.

Phyllis. *(Startled)* Why, Celia-what do you mean?

Celia. Well, you see-*(Laughs)* – I am not quite accustomed to announcing-my engagement.

Phyllis. *(With undisguised amazement. Haltingly)* Your engagement? Why-it's impossible.

Celia. Yes, that's what Mr. Tarver says. Well, now suppose we call him down here, Phyllis, and tell him he is mistaken.

Phyllis. Oh-Ce-lia! *(Embraces Celia gushingly. Rushes up to Tarver and calling)* Bobby, Bobby, Bobby, Bobby! *(Tarver drops his magazine, Phyllis drags him down R. of Celia. He is right of Phyllis.)* What do you think? Celia's engaged to be married.

Tarver. *(Looks at her, greatly astonished, dropping his eyeglass)* Never!

Celia. *(Sarcastically)* Thanks so much, Mr. Tarver, for your kind congratulations.

Phyllis. *(Who has run up to card room, calling)* Aunt Ida, Aunt Ida!

(Tarver pauses a moment and then goes R., looking over at Celia incredulously as he goes. He finally sits on fender.)

Celia. *(Calling up to Phyllis)* Oh, Phyllis, I only meant to tell you and Mr. Tarver.

Phyllis. *(Excitedly. Bringing down Aunt Ida extreme L.)* Aunt Ida! Celia is engaged to be married.

Aunt Ida. *(Coming down left of table and below table to Celia. Smiling happily)* Darling-at last-*(Kisses Celia.)*

Phyllis. *(Dances across to center)* I can be married now. I can be married now. *(Runs across to Madge and sits on piano stool.)*

Aunt Ida. I knew that this would happen.

Celia. Did you, Aunt Ida? *(These last two lines spoken hurriedly and together.)*

Phyllis. Madge, what do you think? Celia is engaged.

Madge. *(Rises, drops her pen in blank surprise)* Not really!

(Phyllis runs to Bobby, who is on fender, and they sit together, talking excitedly, and looking at Celia.)

Faraday. *(Entering from card room. Testily)* Now then, now then, can't you girls make a little less noise?

Madge. Oh, Father! *(Rushes to him, brings him C. She is R. of him.)* What do you think has happened? Celia is engaged to be married. *(Pauses a moment to listen to ensuing dialogue and then runs up to card room and in dumb show tells others of Celia's engagement. They also in pantomime express surprise and incredulity. They come slowly out of card room.)*

Faraday. God-bless-my-soul! *(A broad grin breaks slowly on his face)* Celia-engaged?

Celia. Why, yes, Father, if you have no objection to the prospect of my leaving you.

Faraday. Objection? *(Joyfully)* Why, I'm delighted, my dear girl, delighted.

(Aunt Ida and Celia exchange glances and Aunt Ida, disgusted at Faraday, goes up to card room and talks to Evelyn.)

Celia. Yes, Father, I thought you would be pleased.

Faraday. Pleased? (*With mock sentiment*) I hope I show a father's feelings when his eldest daughter proposes to-er-desert the home-nest. (*Murmurs up in card room. Reverting to his former attitude of enthusiasm*) And who is he? What's the d-e-a-r fellow's name? Eh, Celia?

(*Evelyn comes down extreme left. Raleigh, Grice and Steele up L.C. Aunt Ida comes back of chair, R. of table L. Phyllis kneels on sofa, facing Celia. Tarver comes and sits in chair below fender.*)

Madge. (*Coming down R.C.*) Yes, Celia, tell us all about him. Who is he? (*Sits L. of table R.*)

Celia. (*Standing by chair R. of table L. Slowly*) Well-he is in the army.

Raleigh. (*Quickly to Steele*) A soldier, eh?

Evelyn. What's his rank?

Celia. He's a cap-a colonel-dear-a colonel.

(*Faraday center, Grice up L.C., Raleigh and Steele up L.C. Evelyn L. of table L.*)

Faraday. Colonel? What's his name?

Celia. (*Pause*) Smith.

(*They all show pained surprise.*)

Faraday. Smith?

Celia. Yes, *John* Smith.

Faraday. Smith-huh- (*Genially*) Well, of course the dear fellow isn't to be held responsible for that. Eh, Admiral? (*Joins Aunt Ida and Grice up C.*)

Grice. (*To Faraday. Coming down R.C.*) Miss Faraday engaged? You might knock me down with a feather. My dear, I congratulate yo-him, my dear, *him*.

Celia. (*Smiling and shaking hands with Grice*) Thank you, Admiral, thank you.

Raleigh. (*Up L.C. to Steele*) Engaged!

Steele. By George! (*They contemplate Celia from a new point of view.*)

Faraday. (*Up R.C. with Aunt Ida. Smiling broadly and rubbing his hands together*) Good-old-*John-Smith!*

Evelyn. (*Patronizingly*) Well, Father, he *may* be one of the *good* Smiths, you know.

Madge. (*From chair R.*) If Celia would only stop being such a clam, and tell us.

Celia. But, Madge dear, I have told you.

Faraday. (*Comes down stage to R. of Celia*) Well, Celia, I suppose he will be coming to *see* us soon?

Celia. Oh, yes-father-after the war. (*Leaning back on chair R. of table L.*)

Phyllis. (*Quickly*) The war?

(*All show surprise and interest.*)

Celia. Yes, you see he sailed this morning on board a troop ship, for Somaliland. It was just within an hour of his leaving that he-spoke to me.

Faraday. But during that hour he might have told you something about himself.

Phyllis. Oh, Father! How absurd! On occasions of that kind, an hour passes very quickly, (*Turns to Tarver and smiles.*)

(*All laugh.*)

Faraday. Well, I remember that when I proposed to your mother, I told her my life history *three times over* in the first hour. (*Goes up stage.*)

Evelyn. (*Deprecatingly*) Oh, Father! (*To Celia*) What's his regiment?

Celia. Oh, it is a very good one, Evelyn dear. It's one of the West African ones, you know. It has green thing-a-majigs all down the front.

(Evelyn goes up L. and crosses R.)

Tarver. It sounds like a garden party.

Madge. Well, but-Celia- (*Rises, comes to Celia and offers hand and passes Celia in front of her to chair L. of table R.*)

Phyllis. Oh, yes, do tell us.

Celia. (*Sitting L. of table R. Eagerly, to get rid of the questions*) But there is very little to tell.

(*Raleigh and Steele drop down R.C. Evelyn joins them. Aunt Ida is back of Celia. Grice is C. Madge L. of Celia. Faraday drops down behind Celia's chair to R. of Aunt Ida. They are now all grouped about Celia's chair, except Tarver, who is in chair below fender. They all show smiling interest.*)

Celia. Well, you see, we had been together in the house all the week-and-er-this morning I was in the garden-alone-and-and he joined me. (*Pause.*) And-er-it was then. (*Covers her-face in mock confusion.*)

(All laugh sympathetically.)

Phyllis. (*From sofa*) What did he say?

Celia. (*Looks at Tarver and Phyllis and waving toward Tarver*) Oh, you know.

(All laugh.)

Phyllis. And-are you *happy*?

Celia. (*Looking at group bending over her*) Well, I really believe that this change will make a very great difference in my life.

Faraday. (*Patting Celia on shoulder*) Well, I hope so, my dear child, I hope so. Now, let's go back and finish our rubber.

(*There is a general bright buzz of conversation, such as "By jove!" "I'll bet it does," "Why, yes, Celia," "Well, I should think it would," "Indeed it will," etc. Faraday goes up to card room with Evelyn, Grice and Aunt Ida. They resume their bridge game in former positions. Madge catches Tarver's eye and they join each other up R., evidently talking about Celia's engagement. Phyllis stops on sofa, talking across to Celia, as Celia glances over the remaining envelopes and slips them into the large blue envelope, in view of audience.*)

Raleigh. (*To Steele, L.C.*) It's obvious that Smith didn't find it difficult.

Steele. (*Who is R. of Raleigh. Looking thoughtfully at Celia*) No, he didn't. Perhaps, we have all been mistaken. You know she isn't so bad looking-if you look long enough. (*Steele starts to cross to Celia. Raleigh stops him and goes over himself. Steele comes back of chair L.*)

Raleigh. Miss Faraday, I haven't congratulated you yet. I hope you won't go off to Southampton soon again. We all missed you *dreadfully* when you were away.

(*Steele shows impatience at Raleigh's talking to Celia.*)

Celia. I'm sure you did. My coming back as I've done seems to have made a *very great difference*.

Raleigh. Oh, *great*. Believe me, *great*. Well, you've every good wish of mine. (*Gushingly extending his hand, which Celia takes amusedly.*)

Celia. (*Warmly*) I am sure I have, Mr. Raleigh.

Faraday. (*From card room*) Come, Raleigh.

Raleigh. (*Over his shoulder*) But you threw down your cards.

Faraday. Well, I'm going to take them up again.

Grice. (*Impatiently*) Come along, Raleigh!

Steele. (*Triumphantly motions Raleigh back to card room and eagerly takes his place beside Celia's chair*) What Raleigh has just said, I most warmly echo, my dear Miss Faraday.

(*Raleigh returns and takes Steele by the arm.*)

Raleigh. You are wanted over here, Steele.

(*Celia watches them with amusement.*)

Steele. But I am cut out.

Raleigh. (*Taking Steele back to card room*) Well, you can cut in again.

(*Steele goes reluctantly back to card room, protesting to Raleigh and looking back over his shoulder at Celia as he goes. Those in card room resume former positions and go on with bridge game.*)

Madge. (*Coming down to Celia and putting her arms around her*) Celia!

(*Tarver strolls up to morning room and sits right of table and begins reading again.*)

Celia. Yes.

Madge. The *Indian Mail* goes out to-night-via Brindisi and Port Said.

Celia. Well?

Madge. *Port Said*. That's where letters to Somaliland will be transferred.

(*Celia is startled.*)

Phyllis. Oh, of course you must write to him. (*Jumps up, runs up to writing table R.C., brings blotter from table, containing sheets of paper, envelopes, pens and ink, and puts them on magazine table; stands above and to the R. of Celia.*)

Celia. (*Protestingly*) But it's too late.

Madge. No, the post doesn't go until ten. You have just time.

Phyllis. (*Opening blotting pad and ink well*) You must, if it is only a note. He will be expecting something.

Celia. Oh, I couldn't write in such a hurry.

Phyllis. (*Forcing pen into Celia's hand*) You must.

Celia. (*Laughingly*) Well, I can't write with you two at my elbows, you know.

(*Madge goes slowly up into card room, turning and smiling at Celia as she goes.*)

Phyllis. (*Running up and around and down to foot of sofa*) I shan't look. (*Kneels on Chesterfield sofa, facing Celia*) What do you call him?

Celia. (*At a loss*) I don't know.

Phyllis. (*Surprised*) You don't know?

Celia. (*Recovering herself*) I mean, dear, I use a pet name.

Phyllis. Oh, lovely, what is it?

Celia. Really, it's too absurd, you know, Phyllis. It's-it's-*Wobbles*.

Phyllis. (*Laughing and surprised*) *Wobbles*!

Celia. Yes, dear. Everybody calls him-*Wobbles*.

Phyllis. (*Laughing*) Celia, it's delicious. Fancy your being married to a man called *Wobbles*! (*Pretending to write in the air*) "My darling *Wobbles*." (*Laughs and runs up to Tarver, who is seated reading in the morning room, saying as she goes*) Bobby, what do you think? (*She tells Tarver the name of Celia's fiance in dumb show as she sits opposite him.*)

Celia. (*Writing*) "My darling *Wobbles*."

(*Tarver laughs. Laugh in card room.*)

Celia. (*Looks around to see that no one is overlooking or watching her. Writes*) "I hardly know how to write you. It all seems too hauntingly beautiful to be true. I see your face everywhere-Wobbles. The very tulips have a look of you. Oh, dearest, don't get wounded in the war." (*Leans back and laughs to herself*) Good Heavens, when I got up this morning, did I ever think that I should be doing anything like this? (*Resumes writing*) "This is my first love letter, Wobbles, but even I know how it ought to end. Crosses, Wobbles, crosses. One, two, three, four, five, nought, nought, nought, nought, nought. To be taken as required. Thine forever. Celia Faraday." (*Phyllis comes to right of sofa and hands envelope to Celia.*) Thank you, dear. (*Tarver strolls down center, looking at Celia. Celia turns letter face down on blotter to prevent its being seen by Phyllis. Then seeing that she is being scrutinised by Tarver and Phyllis, she takes envelope from Phyllis, places letter in it, addresses it and seals it. Addressing letter*) "Colonel Smith, Field Force, Somaliland, Africa."

Tarver. I say, Miss Faraday.

Celia. Yes.

Tarver. I hope awfully that you will help me in my election.

Raleigh. (*Speaking from card room, turning in his chair and holding card aloft*) Yes, it's just girls like you, Miss Faraday, who win the day.

Tarver. Righto!!

Grice. (*Thumping the table*) Have you none of that suit, sir?

Raleigh. (*Whirling around and playing*) Oh, yes, I beg your pardon.

(*Madge comes to desk, gets her letter, goes down to foot of sofa and hands it to Phyllis. Steele sees that Celia has finished letter and comes slowly down C.*)

Celia. Of course, I will help you, Mr. Tarver. It's awfully nice to have you ask me for help, you know.

Tarver. Oh, thanks awfully. (*Goes up and around to Phyllis, who is on sofa, talks to Madge and Phyllis.*)

Steele. You have finished, Miss Faraday?

Celia. Yes.

Steele. May I put that letter in the box for you?

Celia. No, thanks. I will see to it.

Steele. Well-wouldn't you like to come and play a game of billiards?

Celia. No, thank you. I really must go and change my shoes. (*Indicating her feet*) You can see that these are quite damp.

Steele. (*Most graciously*) I can't be expected to see things so small as that. But- (*Getting chair from left*) Won't you let me talk to you for just a minute?

Celia. (*Rising*) I really must go and change.

(*Steele disconsolately and slowly puts back chair, leaving it turned on stage. He stands watching Celia for a moment, then walks up L. of table L., looking at big picture on left wall as he goes. Note: Evelyn should give him a signal when Celia exits.*)

Madge. I will go with you, dear. (*Goes to door R.I and takes the knob in her hand.*)

(*Tarver sits on fender, leans over and talks intently to Phyllis.*)

Celia. No, don't bother, Madgie.

Madge. It's no bother. I have a lovely new frock I want to show you. You might want to copy it for your trousseau. (*Exit R.*)

Celia. (*Puzzled*) My trousseau? (*Recovers herself*) My trousseau, oh, yes, yes, my trousseau. (*Looks quickly and vainly about for some place to hide letter, either in her dress or under the table. No one is looking at Celia during this business. She sees large blue envelope in which she has already*

placed two unopened letters. Note: The flap of this large envelope must be turned in. She quickly holds it up and slips the letter to Smith inside and hides it between the periodicals on lower end of table. She then looks around to see that no one has observed her and exits quickly

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.