Are You Ready To Play Outside

Just So Stories/The Crab that Played with the Sea

getting Things ready. First he got the Earth ready; then he got the Sea ready; and then he told all the Animals that they could come out and play. And the Animals

Description of the Rules of Football as played at Westminster School (1849-1855)

light-weights and quick runners dodging about outside, ready to dash off with the ball as soon as it worked out. The word 'Ready' was given, and the ball was thrown

The real Westminster football was the game in 'green' — that is, in Great Dean’s Yard. It was indeed a general game, for every boy had to play. Attendance in 'green' was compulsory in the half before Christmas, Sixth Form perhaps excepted; but few, if any, stayed away. The goals were at top and bottom of 'green,' and were called respectively the Terrace Goal and the Abbey Goal. The goals were about 20 yards wide; the ball, to score a goal, had to pass at any height between two trees at either end, and had to hit the rails or pass over them. The small boys, the duffers, and the funk-sticks were the goal-keepers, twelve or fifteen at each end, and were spread out across this wide space; if any fellow who was playing out showed any sign of 'funk,' or failed to play up, he was packed off into goals at once, not only for that day, but as a lasting degradation. But, on the other hand, if any goal-keeper made a good save of a goal, or made a plucky attempt to tackle a fellow who was charging down upon the goal, he was called for immediately to play out, and thenceforth he played out always. The footballs were made by Old Martin in Great College Street, with bladders inside, which were constantly being replaced or reblown, round balls and not very large, first-rate for 'kick-about.' They bounded true, not like those lopsided Rugby balls. You could kick one high, full volley from the hand, watch the bound, and kick up again time after time. Martin had always two or three ready, fresh blown, for each day's play. Sides were chosen, two of the best hands tossing for ?rst choice of men and of goals; each picked out alternately twelve or fifteen of the best, and the rest of the players-out were roughly divided. It was a proud moment when one first found one's self chosen by name, and not herded off among the ruck.

A bully was formed in the middle of 'green' opposite the pump, with an opening down the middle;

all

the heavy-weights went into the bully, the light-weights and quick runners dodging about outside,

ready to dash off with the ball as soon as it worked

out. The word 'Ready' was given, and the ball was

thrown in between the lines; then there was a general

shinning match till it worked out. No off-side play

was allowed. If the ball was kicked over the rails, it

was supposed to be thrown in straight; if kicked

against the rails beyond the trees marking the flanks

of the goals, there was a free kick-off, both sides

standing back. When this took place the off-side rule

did not hold good, and we generally arranged to which side the kicker-off was to send the ball, and had a pack there ready to rush the ball away to the enemy’s goal. The enemy, of course, watched for this manœuvre, and, if we packed together, sent men over to check us. Handling the ball was allowed, but only

to this extent: You might not pick a ball up from

the ground, or after first bound was over, but you

might catch it either before or after first bound if

fairly in the air; and you might then, if so be that

you

were not previously charged, and knocked head-over-heels, take two or three paces with it, sufficient for a

half-volley kick off the hand. You might not 'punt'

it from off the hand that is, kick it full volley or

drive it with your fist. The ball was, of course, constantly against the side-rails, and there were perpetual rough-and-tumble bullies there, especially by the pump, where the rails projected in a semicircle into 'green.' Here the ball would often hang for ?ve or ten minutes together. In these bullies shinning was allowed, and many a hack one got. Shin-guards were unknown in those days. The fellows next to the rails held on to them, and forced their way along, shinning their way through the press, the outsiders shoving with the shoulder, the Light Brigade on the watch on the skirts of the bully. The boys in goals had a cold time of it, poor little beggars! jackets on, but no caps, and hands deep in their pockets. There was no 'time' or changing of ends, and the only break in the game was at a goal or before a kick-out.

I think this is a fairly descriptive account of the game in 'green' as played for the last ?ve years of my school-life; but when I first came running with the ball (Rugby fashion) was allowed, and 'fist punting,' when you had the ball in hand—hitting the ball with your doubled fist, the ?rst joints of the thumb and forefinger being the driving weapon. One 'Phlob' Fellows, our fast bowler, was very fond of this running with the ball, and many a goal was got by the 'fist punting.' If you were near enough, and had the ball in hand, you could hardly fail in your shot. Of course, when running like this, the enemy tripped, shinned, charged with the shoulder, got you down and sat upon you—in fact, might do anything short of murder to get the ball from you. I think that this running and 'fist punting' was stopped in 1851 or 1852. At that time matches eleven a side began to be played, not in 'green,' but up at 'fields.'

The match game was entirely different from the school game. The ball was the same, but the goals were quite narrow, with high posts, between which at any height the goal had to be kicked, and one good man was told off to defend it, with liberty to stop at home or to charge out at his discretion, but not to follow the ball up. The rest of the eleven were not told off, but dropped each into the place he was best fitted for. The game played was much like the Association game, and, as Mr. Sargeaunt says in his excellent book, 'Annals of Westminster School,' 'The football of Westminster and Charterhouse was the mother of the present Association game.' The chief differences were: first, the catching and short run for the half-volley kick: second, the non-placing of the men; third, the non-use of the head.

Neither in this game in 'green,' after the running with the ball in hand was stopped, nor in the match game, were you allowed to handle a man. You were allowed to shoulder a man who was likely to get the ball, but you might not trip or shin a man unless he had the ball in his hand for a half-volley kick or was actually kicking the ball. Whilst in the army I often drew up rules for garrison football, to be played by both naval and

military officers from all manner of schools, and my Westminster rules were adopted at Malta, Gibraltar, Fleetwood, etc., and seemed always to meet the wants of both o?icers and men. This was before the Association rules were drawn up.

Association Football and How to Play It/Chapter 12

Association Football and How to Play It John Cameron Present Day Football 1575379Association Football and How to Play It — Present Day FootballJohn Cameron

Once a Week (magazine)/Series 1/Volume 7/Outside the walls

(1862) Outside the walls by Edward Wilberforce 2894580Once a Week, Series 1, Volume VII — Outside the walls 1862Edward Wilberforce ? OUTSIDE THE WALLS

Fanny's First Play/Induction

Footman stops]. When does the play begin? Half-past eight? FOOTMAN. Nine, sir. SAVOYARD. Oh, good. Well, will you telephone to my wife at the George that

The end of a saloon in an old-fashioned country house (Florence Towers, the property of Count O'Dowda) has been curtained off to form a stage for a private theatrical performance. A footman in grandiose Spanish livery enters before the curtain, on its O.P. side.

FOOTMAN. [announcing] Mr Cecil Savoyard. [Cecil Savoyard comes

in: a middle-aged man in evening dress and a fur-lined overcoat. He

is surprised to find nobody to receive him. So is the Footman]. Oh,

beg pardon, sir: I thought the Count was here. He was when I took up

your name. He must have gone through the stage into the library.

This way, sir. [He moves towards the division in the middle of the

curtains].

SAVOYARD. Half a mo. [The Footman stops]. When does the play

begin? Half-past eight?

FOOTMAN. Nine, sir.

SAVOYARD. Oh, good. Well, will you telephone to my wife at the

George that it's not until nine?

FOOTMAN. Right, sir. Mrs Cecil Savoyard, sir?

SAVOYARD. No: Mrs William Tinkler. Dont forget.

THE FOOTMAN. Mrs Tinkler, sir. Right, sir. [The Count comes in

through the curtains]. Here is the Count, sir. [Announcing] Mr

Cecil Savoyard, sir. [He withdraws].

COUNT O'DOWDA. [A handsome man of fifty, dressed with studied elegance a hundred years out of date, advancing cordially to shake hands with his

visitor] Pray excuse me, Mr Savoyard. I suddenly recollected that all the bookcases in the library were locked—in fact

theyve never been opened since we came from Venice—and as our literary guests will probably use the library a good deal, I just ran in to unlock everything.

SAVOYARD. Oh, you mean the dramatic critics. M'yes. I suppose

theres a smoking room?

THE COUNT. My study is available. An old-fashioned house, you

understand. Wont you sit down, Mr Savoyard?

SAVOYARD. Thanks. [They sit. Savoyard, looking at his host's obsolete costume, continues] I had no idea you were going to appear

in the piece yourself.

THE COUNT. I am not. I wear this costume because—well, perhaps I

had better explain the position, if it interests you.

SAVOYARD. Certainly.

THE COUNT. Well, you see, Mr Savoyard, I'm rather a stranger in your

world. I am not, I hope, a modern man in any sense of the word. I'm

not really an Englishman: my family is Irish: Ive lived all my life

in Italy—in Venice mostly—my very title is a foreign one: I am a

Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

SAVOYARD. Where's that?

THE COUNT. At present, nowhere, except as a memory and an ideal.

[Savoyard inclines his head respectfully to the ideal]. But I am by

no means an idealogue. I am not content with beautiful dreams: I

want beautiful realities.

SAVOYARD. Hear, hear! I'm all with you there—when you can get them.

THE COUNT. Why not get them? The difficulty is not that there are no

beautiful realities, Mr Savoyard: the difficulty is that so few of us

know them when we see them. We have inherited from the past a vast

treasure of beauty—of imperishable masterpieces of poetry, of painting, of sculpture, of architecture, of music, of exquisite fashions in dress, in furniture, in domestic decoration. We can contemplate these treasures. We can reproduce many of them. We can buy a few inimitable originals. We can shut out the nineteenth century—

SAVOYARD. [correcting him] The twentieth.

THE COUNT. To me the century I shut out will always be the nineteenth century, just as your national anthem will always be God Save the Queen, no matter how many kings may succeed. I found England befouled with industrialism: well, I did what Byron did: I simply refused to live in it. You remember Byron's words: "I am sure my bones would not rest in an English grave, or my clay mix with the earth of that country. I believe the thought would drive me mad on my deathbed could I suppose that any of my friends would be base enough to convey my carcase back to her soil. I would not even feed her worms if I could help it."

SAVOYARD. Did Byron say that?

THE COUNT. He did, sir.

SAVOYARD. It dont sound like him. I saw a good deal of him at one time.

THE COUNT. You! But how is that possible? You are too young.

SAVOYARD. I was quite a lad, of course. But I had a job in the original production of Our Boys.

THE COUNT. My dear sir, not that Byron. Lord Byron, the poet.

SAVOYARD. Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought you were talking of the Byron. So you prefer living abroad?

THE COUNT. I find England ugly and Philistine. Well, I dont live in it. I find modern houses ugly. I dont live in them: I have a palace

on the grand canal. I find modern clothes prosaic. I dont wear them, except, of course, in the street. My ears are offended by the Cockney twang: I keep out of hearing of it and speak and listen to Italian.

I find Beethoven's music coarse and restless, and Wagner's senseless and detestable. I do not listen to them. I listen to Cimarosa, to Pergolesi, to Gluck and Mozart. Nothing simpler, sir.

SAVOYARD. It's all right when you can afford it.

THE COUNT. Afford it! My dear Mr Savoyard, if you are a man with a sense of beauty you can make an earthly paradise for yourself in Venice on £1500 a year, whilst our wretched vulgar industrial millionaires are spending twenty thousand on the amusements of billiard markers. I assure you I am a poor man according to modern ideas. But I have never had anything less than the very best that life has produced. It is my good fortune to have a beautiful and lovable daughter; and that girl, sir, has never seen an ugly sight or heard an ugly sound that I could spare her; and she has certainly never worn an ugly dress or tasted coarse food or bad wine in her life. She has lived in a palace; and her perambulator was a gondola. Now you know the sort of people we are, Mr Savoyard. You can imagine how we feel here.

SAVOYARD. Rather out of it, eh?

THE COUNT. Out of it, sir! Out of what?

SAVOYARD. Well, out of everything.

THE COUNT. Out of soot and fog and mud and east wind; out of vulgarity and ugliness, hypocrisy and greed, superstition and stupidity. Out of all this, and in the sunshine, in the enchanted region of which great artists alone have had the secret, in the sacred footsteps of Byron, of Shelley, of the Brownings, of Turner and Ruskin. Dont you envy me, Mr Savoyard?

SAVOYARD. Some of us must live in England, you know, just to keep the place going. Besides—though, mind you, I dont say it isnt all right from the high art point of view and all that—three weeks of it would drive me melancholy mad. However, I'm glad you told me, because it explains why it is you dont seem to know your way about much in England. I hope, by the way, that everything has given satisfaction to your daughter.

THE COUNT. She seems quite satisfied. She tells me that the actors you sent down are perfectly suited to their parts, and very nice people to work with. I understand she had some difficulties at the first rehearsals with the gentleman you call the producer, because he hadnt read the play; but the moment he found out what it was all about everything went smoothly.

SAVOYARD. Havnt you seen the rehearsals?

THE COUNT. Oh no. I havnt been allowed even to meet any of the company. All I can tell you is that the hero is a Frenchman [Savoyard is rather scandalized]: I asked her not to have an English hero. That is all I know. [Ruefully] I havnt been consulted even about the costumes, though there, I think, I could have been some use.

SAVOYARD. [puzzled] But there arnt any costumes.

THE COUNT. [seriously shocked] What! No costumes! Do you mean to say it is a modern play?

SAVOYARD. I dont know: I didnt read it. I handed it to Billy Burjoyce—the producer, you know—and left it to him to select the company and so on. But I should have had to order the costumes if there had been any. There wernt.

THE COUNT. [smiling as he recovers from his alarm] I understand. She has taken the costumes into her own hands. She is an expert in

beautiful costumes. I venture to promise you, Mr Savoyard, that what you are about to see will be like a Louis Quatorze ballet painted by Watteau. The heroine will be an exquisite Columbine, her lover a dainty Harlequin, her father a picturesque Pantaloon, and the valet who hoodwinks the father and brings about the happiness of the lovers a grotesque but perfectly tasteful Punchinello or Mascarille or Sganarelle.

SAVOYARD. I see. That makes three men; and the clown and policeman will make five. Thats why you wanted five men in the company.

THE COUNT. My dear sir, you dont suppose I mean that vulgar, ugly, silly, senseless, malicious and destructive thing, the harlequinade of a nineteenth century English Christmas pantomime! What was it after all but a stupid attempt to imitate the success made by the genius of Grimaldi a hundred years ago? My daughter does not know of the existence of such a thing. I refer to the graceful and charming fantasies of the Italian and French stages of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

SAVOYARD. Oh, I beg pardon. I quite agree that harlequinades are rot. Theyve been dropped at all smart theatres. But from what Billy Burjoyce told me I got the idea that your daughter knew her way about here, and had seen a lot of plays. He had no idea she'd been away in Venice all the time.

THE COUNT. Oh, she has not been. I should have explained that two years ago my daughter left me to complete her education at Cambridge. Cambridge was my own University; and though of course there were no women there in my time, I felt confident that if the atmosphere of the eighteenth century still existed anywhere in England, it would be at Cambridge. About three months ago she wrote to me and asked whether I wished to give her a present on her next birthday. Of course I said

yes; and she then astonished and delighted me by telling me that she had written a play, and that the present she wanted was a private performance of it with real actors and real critics.

SAVOYARD. Yes: thats what staggered me. It was easy enough to engage a company for a private performance: it's done often enough. But the notion of having critics was new. I hardly knew how to set about it. They dont expect private engagements; and so they have no agents. Besides, I didnt know what to offer them. I knew that they were cheaper than actors, because they get long engagements: forty years sometimes; but thats no rule for a single job. Then theres such a lot of them: on first nights they run away with all your stalls: you cant find a decent place for your own mother. It would have cost a fortune to bring the lot.

THE COUNT. Of course I never dreamt of having them all. Only a few first-rate representative men.

SAVOYARD. Just so. All you want is a few sample opinions. Out of a hundred notices you wont find more than four at the outside that say anything different. Well, Ive got just the right four for you. And what do you think it has cost me?

THE COUNT. [shrugging his shoulders] I cannot guess.

SAVOYARD. Ten guineas, and expenses. I had to give Flawner Bannal ten. He wouldnt come for less; and he asked fifty. I had to give it, because if we hadnt had him we might just as well have had nobody at all.

THE COUNT. But what about the others, if Mr Flannel—

SAVOYARD. [shocked] Flawner Bannal.

THE COUNT. —if Mr Bannal got the whole ten?

SAVOYARD. Oh, I managed that. As this is a high-class sort of thing, the first man I went for was Trotter.

THE COUNT. Oh indeed. I am very glad you have secured Mr Trotter. I have read his Playful Impressions.

SAVOYARD. Well, I was rather in a funk about him. Hes not exactly what I call approachable; and he was a bit stand-off at first. But when I explained and told him your daughter—

THE COUNT. [interrupting in alarm] You did not say that the play was by her, I hope?

SAVOYARD. No: thats been kept a dead secret. I just said your daughter has asked for a real play with a real author and a real critic and all the rest of it. The moment I mentioned the daughter I had him. He has a daughter of his own. Wouldnt hear of payment! Offered to come just to please her! Quite human. I was surprised.

THE COUNT. Extremely kind of him.

SAVOYARD. Then I went to Vaughan, because he does music as well as the drama: and you said you thought there would be music. I told him Trotter would feel lonely without him; so he promised like a bird. Then I thought youd like one of the latest sort: the chaps that go for the newest things and swear theyre oldfashioned. So I nailed Gilbert Gunn. The four will give you a representative team. By the way [looking at his watch] theyll be here presently.

THE COUNT. Before they come, Mr Savoyard, could you give me any hints about them that would help me to make a little conversation with them? I am, as you said, rather out of it in England; and I might unwittingly say something tactless.

SAVOYARD. Well, let me see. As you dont like English people, I dont know that youll get on with Trotter, because hes thoroughly English: never happy except when hes in Paris, and speaks French so unnecessarily well that everybody there spots him as an Englishman the moment he opens his mouth. Very witty and all that. Pretends to turn

up his nose at the theatre and says people make too much fuss about art [the Count is extremely indignant]. But thats only his modesty, because art is his own line, you understand. Mind you dont chaff him about Aristotle.

THE COUNT. Why should I chaff him about Aristotle?

SAVOYARD. Well, I dont know; but its one of the recognized ways of chaffing him. However, youll get on with him all right: hes a man of the world and a man of sense. The one youll have to be careful about is Vaughan.

THE COUNT. In what way, may I ask?

SAVOYARD. Well, Vaughan has no sense of humor; and if you joke with him he'll think youre insulting him on purpose. Mind: it's not that he doesnt see a joke: he does; and it hurts him. A comedy scene makes him sore all over: he goes away black and blue, and pitches into the play for all hes worth.

THE COUNT. But surely that is a very serious defect in a man of his profession?

SAVOYARD. Yes it is, and no mistake. But Vaughan is honest, and dont care a brass farthing what he says, or whether it pleases anybody or not; and you must have one man of that sort to say the things that nobody else will say.

THE COUNT. It seems to me to carry the principle of division of labor too far, this keeping of the honesty and the other qualities in separate compartments. What is Mr Gunn's speciality, if I may ask?

SAVOYARD. Gunn is one of the intellectuals.

THE COUNT. But arnt they all intellectuals?

SAVOYARD. Lord! no: heaven forbid! You must be careful what you say about that: I shouldnt like anyone to call me an Intellectual: I dont think any Englishman would! They dont count really, you know;

but still it's rather the thing to have them. Gunn is one of the young intellectuals: he writes plays himself. Hes useful because he pitches into the older intellectuals who are standing in his way. But you may take it from me that none of these chaps really matter. Flawner Bannal's your man. Bannal really represents the British playgoer. When he likes a thing, you may take your oath there are a hundred thousand people in London thatll like it if they can only be got to know about it. Besides, Bannal's knowledge of the theatre is an inside knowledge. We know him; and he knows us. He knows the ropes: he knows his way about: he knows what hes talking about.

THE COUNT. [with a little sigh] Age and experience, I suppose?

SAVOYARD. Age! I should put him at twenty at the very outside, myself. It's not an old man's job after all, is it? Bannal may not ride the literary high horse like Trotter and the rest; but I'd take his opinion before any other in London. Hes the man in the street; and thats what you want.

THE COUNT. I am almost sorry you didnt give the gentleman his full terms. I should not have grudged the fifty guineas for a sound opinion. He may feel shabbily treated.

SAVOYARD. Well, let him. It was a bit of side, his asking fifty. After all, what is he? Only a pressman. Jolly good business for him to earn ten guineas: hes done the same job often enough for half a quid, I expect.

Fanny O'Dowda comes precipitately through the curtains, excited and nervous. A girl of nineteen in a dress synchronous with her father's.

FANNY. Papa, papa, the critics have come. And one of them has a cocked hat and sword like a— [she notices Savoyard] Oh, I beg your pardon.

THE COUNT. This is Mr Savoyard, your impresario, my dear.

FANNY. [shaking hands] How do you do?

SAVOYARD. Pleased to meet you, Miss O'Dowda. The cocked hat is all

right. Trotter is a member of the new Academic Committee. He induced

them to go in for a uniform like the French Academy; and I asked him

to wear it.

THE FOOTMAN. [announcing] Mr Trotter, Mr Vaughan, Mr Gunn, Mr

Flawner Bannal. [The four critics enter. Trotter wears a diplomatic dress, with sword and three-cornered hat. His age is about 50. Vaughan is 40. Gunn is 30. Flawner Bannal is 20 and is quite unlike the others. They can be classed at sight as professional men: Bannal is obviously one of those unemployables of the business class who manage to pick up a living by a sort of courage which gives him cheerfulness, conviviality, and bounce, and is helped out positively by a slight turn for writing, and negatively by a comfortable ignorance and lack of intuition which hides from him all the dangers and disgraces that keep men of finer perception in check. The Count approaches them hospitably].

SAVOYARD. Count O'Dowda, gentlemen. Mr Trotter.

TROTTER. [looking at the Count's costume] Have I the pleasure of

meeting a confrere?

THE COUNT. No, sir: I have no right to my costume except the right

of a lover of the arts to dress myself handsomely. You are most

welcome, Mr Trotter. [Trotter bows in the French manner].

SAVOYARD. Mr Vaughan.

THE COUNT. How do you do, Mr Vaughan?

VAUGHAN. Quite well, thanks.

SAVOYARD. Mr Gunn.

THE COUNT. Delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr Gunn.

GUNN. Very pleased.

SAVOYARD. Mr Flawner Bannal.

THE COUNT. Very kind of you to come, Mr Bannal.

BANNAL. Dont mention it.

THE COUNT. Gentlemen, my daughter. [They all bow]. We are very

greatly indebted to you, gentlemen, for so kindly indulging her whim.

[The dressing bell sounds. The Count looks at his watch]. Ah! The dressing bell, gentlemen. As our play begins at nine, I have had to put forward the dinner hour a little. May I shew you to your rooms? [He goes out, followed by all the men, except Trotter, who, going last, is detained by Fanny].

FANNY. Mr Trotter: I want to say something to you about this play.

TROTTER. No: thats forbidden. You must not attempt to souffler the critic.

FANNY. Oh, I would not for the world try to influence your opinion.

TROTTER. But you do: you are influencing me very shockingly. You invite me to this charming house, where I'm about to enjoy a charming dinner. And just before the dinner I'm taken aside by a charming young lady to be talked to about the play. How can you expect me to be impartial? God forbid that I should set up to be a judge, or do more than record an impression; but my impressions can be influenced; and in this case youre influencing them shamelessly all the time.

FANNY. Dont make me more nervous than I am already, Mr Trotter. If you knew how I feel!

TROTTER. Naturally: your first party: your first appearance in England as hostess. But youre doing it beautifully. Dont be afraid. Every nuance is perfect.

FANNY. It's so kind of you to say so, Mr Trotter. But that isnt whats the matter. The truth is, this play is going to give my father a dreadful shock.

TROTTER. Nothing unusual in that, I'm sorry to say. Half the young ladies in London spend their evenings making their fathers take them to plays that are not fit for elderly people to see.

FANNY. Oh, I know all about that; but you cant understand what it means to Papa. Youre not so innocent as he is.

TROTTER. [remonstrating] My dear young lady—

FANNY. I dont mean morally innocent: everybody who reads your articles knows youre as innocent as a lamb.

TROTTER. What!

FANNY. Yes, Mr Trotter: Ive seen a good deal of life since I came to England; and I assure you that to me youre a mere baby: a dear, good, well-meaning, delightful, witty, charming baby; but still just a wee lamb in a world of wolves. Cambridge is not what it was in my father's time.

TROTTER. Well, I must say!

FANNY. Just so. Thats one of our classifications in the Cambridge Fabian Society.

TROTTER. Classifications? I dont understand.

FANNY. We classify our aunts into different sorts. And one of the sorts is the "I must says."

TROTTER. I withdraw "I must say." I substitute "Blame my cats!" No: I substitute "Blame my kittens!" Observe, Miss O'Dowda: kittens. I say again in the teeth of the whole Cambridge Fabian Society, kittens. Impertinent little kittens. Blame them. Smack them. I guess what is on your conscience. This play to which you have lured me is one of those in which members of Fabian Societies instruct their grandmothers in the art of milking ducks. And you are afraid it will shock your father. Well, I hope it will. And if he consults me about it I shall recommend him to smack you soundly and pack you off to bed.

FANNY. Thats one of your prettiest literary attitudes, Mr Trotter; but it doesnt take me in. You see, I'm much more conscious of what you really are than you are yourself, because weve discussed you thoroughly at Cambridge; and youve never discussed yourself, have you?

TROTTER. I—

FANNY. Of course you havnt; so you see it's no good Trottering at me.

TROTTER. Trottering!

FANNY. Thats what we call it at Cambridge.

TROTTER. If it were not so obviously a stage cliche, I should say Damn Cambridge. As it is, I blame my kittens. And now let me warn you. If youre going to be a charming healthy young English girl, you may coax me. If youre going to be an unsexed Cambridge Fabian virago, I'll treat you as my intellectual equal, as I would treat a man.

FANNY. [adoringly] But how few men are your intellectual equals, Mr Trotter!

TROTTER. I'm getting the worst of this.

FANNY. Oh no. Why do you say that?

TROTTER. May I remind you that the dinner-bell will ring presently?

FANNY. What does it matter? We're both ready. I havnt told you yet what I want you to do for me.

TROTTER. Nor have you particularly predisposed me to do it, except out of pure magnanimity. What is it?

FANNY. I dont mind this play shocking my father morally. It's good for him to be shocked morally. It's all that the young can do for the old, to shock them and keep them up to date. But I know that this play will shock him artistically; and that terrifies me. No moral consideration could make a breach between us: he would forgive me for anything of that kind sooner or later; but he never gives way on a point of art. I darent let him know that I love Beethoven and Wagner; and as to Strauss, if he heard three bars of Elektra, it'd part us for ever. Now what I want you to do is this. If hes very angry—if he hates the play, because it's a modern play—will you tell him that it's not my fault; that its style and construction, and so forth, are considered the very highest art nowadays; that the author wrote it in

the proper way for repertory theatres of the most superior kind—you know the kind of plays I mean?

TROTTER. [emphatically] I think I know the sort of entertainments you mean. But please do not beg a vital question by calling them plays. I dont pretend to be an authority; but I have at least established the fact that these productions, whatever else they may be, are certainly not plays.

FANNY. The authors dont say they are.

TROTTER. [warmly] I am aware that one author, who is, I blush to say, a personal friend of mine, resorts freely to the dastardly subterfuge of calling them conversations, discussions, and so forth, with the express object of evading criticism. But I'm not to be disarmed by such tricks. I say they are not plays. Dialogues, if you will. Exhibitions of character, perhaps: especially the character of the author. Fictions, possibly, though a little decent reticence as to introducing actual persons, and thus violating the sanctity of private life, might not be amiss. But plays, no. I say NO. Not plays. If you will not concede this point I cant continue our conversation. I take this seriously. It's a matter of principle. I must ask you, Miss O'Dowda, before we go a step further, Do you or do you not claim that these works are plays?

FANNY. I assure you I dont.

TROTTER. Not in any sense of the word?

FANNY. Not in any sense of the word. I loathe plays.

TROTTER. [disappointed] That last remark destroys all the value of your admission. You admire these—these theatrical nondescripts? You enjoy them?

FANNY. Dont you?

TROTTER. Of course I do. Do you take me for a fool? Do you suppose

I prefer popular melodramas? Have I not written most appreciative notices of them? But I say theyre not plays. Theyre not plays. I cant consent to remain in this house another minute if anything remotely resembling them is to be foisted on me as a play.

FANNY. I fully admit that theyre not plays. I only want you to tell my father that plays are not plays nowadays—not in your sense of the word.

TROTTER. Ah, there you go again! In my sense of the word! You believe that my criticism is merely a personal impression; that—

FANNY. You always said it was.

TROTTER. Pardon me: not on this point. If you had been classically educated—

FANNY. But I have.

TROTTER. Pooh! Cambridge! If you had been educated at Oxford, you would know that the definition of a play has been settled exactly and scientifically for two thousand two hundred and sixty years. When I say that these entertainments are not plays, I dont mean in my sense of the word, but in the sense given to it for all time by the immortal Stagirite.

FANNY. Who is the Stagirite?

TROTTER. [shocked] You dont know who the Stagirite was?

FANNY. Sorry. Never heard of him.

TROTTER. And this is Cambridge education! Well, my dear young lady, I'm delighted to find theres something you don't know; and I shant spoil you by dispelling an ignorance which, in my opinion, is highly becoming to your age and sex. So we'll leave it at that.

FANNY. But you will promise to tell my father that lots of people write plays just like this one—that I havnt selected it out of mere heartlessness?

TROTTER. I cant possibly tell you what I shall say to your father about the play until Ive seen the play. But I'll tell you what I shall say to him about you. I shall say that youre a very foolish young lady; that youve got into a very questionable set; and that the sooner he takes you away from Cambridge and its Fabian Society, the better.

FANNY. It's so funny to hear you pretending to be a heavy father. In Cambridge we regard you as a bel esprit, a wit, an Irresponsible, a Parisian Immoralist, tres chic.

TROTTER. I!

FANNY. Theres quite a Trotter set.

TROTTER. Well, upon my word!

FANNY. They go in for adventures and call you Aramis.

TROTTER. They wouldnt dare!

FANNY. You always make such delicious fun of the serious people. Your insouciance—

TROTTER. [frantic] Stop talking French to me: it's not a proper language for a young girl. Great heavens! how is it possible that a few innocent pleasantries should be so frightfully misunderstood? Ive tried all my life to be sincere and simple, to be unassuming and kindly. Ive lived a blameless life. Ive supported the Censorship in the face of ridicule and insult. And now I'm told that I'm a centre of Immoralism! of Modern Minxism! a trifler with the most sacred subjects! a Nietzschean!! perhaps a Shavian!!!

FANNY. Do you mean you are really on the serious side, Mr Trotter?

TROTTER. Of course I'm on the serious side. How dare you ask me such a question?

FANNY. Then why dont you play for it?

TROTTER. I do play for it—short, of course, of making myself

ridiculous.

FANNY. What! not make yourself ridiculous for the sake of a good cause! Oh, Mr Trotter. Thats vieux jeu.

TROTTER. [shouting at her] Dont talk French. I will not allow it.

FANNY. But this dread of ridicule is so frightfully out of date. The Cambridge Fabian Society—

TROTTER. I forbid you to mention the Fabian Society to me.

FANNY. Its motto is "You cannot learn to skate without making yourself ridiculous."

TROTTER. Skate! What has that to do with it?

FANNY. Thats not all. It goes on, "The ice of life is slippery."

TROTTER. Ice of life indeed! You should be eating penny ices and enjoying yourself. I wont hear another word.

The Count returns.

THE COUNT. We're all waiting in the drawing-room, my dear. Have you been detaining Mr Trotter all this time?

TROTTER. I'm so sorry. I must have just a little brush up: I [He hurries out].

THE COUNT. My dear, you should be in the drawing-room. You should not have kept him here.

FANNY. I know. Dont scold me: I had something important to say to him.

THE COUNT. I shall ask him to take you in to dinner.

FANNY. Yes, papa. Oh, I hope it will go off well.

THE COUNT. Yes, love, of course it will. Come along.

FANNY. Just one thing, papa, whilst we're alone. Who was the Stagirite?

THE COUNT. The Stagirite? Do you mean to say you dont know?

FANNY. Havnt the least notion.

THE COUNT. The Stagirite was Aristotle. By the way, dont mention him

to Mr Trotter.

They go to the dining-room.

Harper's Magazine/A Play to the Gallery

A Play to the Gallery (1903) by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews 2403450A Play to the Gallery1903Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews A Play to the Gallery BY MARY

THE girl sat back in the saddle lazily and held the reins loose in her right hand, while the nervous brown beast under her fidgeted and walked about beneath the trees, and stopped to paw at the sod with a delicate hoof. The rest were having lemonades and other things over by the Country Club piazza, but she had refused. She wanted to get on, to ride hard, to jump a fence or two, and have a sensation of excitement, of danger, that would dull, if only for a second, the restlessness and choked feeling that held her. Besides, lemonades made one ride badly. It was foolish to drink them on a ride—still more the other things. She looked across, a touch scornfully, at the gay group by the wide piazza, the figures shifting in and out as the horses moved here and there. Very picturesque they looked, as horse back people always do,—the men mostly standing by their mounts, in their high russet or black boots and baggy, sporty-looking trousers; the women, more or less uniform in dark habits and white stocks, bending from their saddles to take the frosty glasses, and making cheerful little jokes as the quick-moving animals spilled a drop on skirt or cavalier. A very pretty picture indeed—but that was all. Twelve of them there were, and not one whom she cared a turn of her hand ever to see again. There was so little in the world that made any real difference. Except Annie, of course, her little sister, —she looked at the slim figure on the gray mare,—Annie was more her property than anything on earth. But the girl herself counted too much to be left to her reflections many minutes. Two tan-colored figures dashed across the bit of lawn, tinkling glasses in their hands.

"If you will be so exclusive—" began the foremost, and stumbled as he said it, splashing yellow waves of light out of the glass. "Jove!" he finished, and stared sadly at his spattered trousers.

"That's what you get for being intemperate," said the other, triumphantly, as he brought up with an unspilled goblet by the side of the brown horse. "Here, my Lady Disdain,—here's your nice, wholesome, plain lemonade, good for man and beast," and he held it up.

"I'm neither." The girl on the horse shook her head. "Give it to Crackerjack."

She patted the brown neck.

"There, then—who's turned down now?" demanded the spilled-drink hero. "You must know, my lady, that Jimmie and I had a bet as to what you'd take, and he went in for non-intoxicants; but I, on the theory that you were not like other girls, and full of spirit by nature, made so bold as to bring you something with a touch of spirits in it. Take it—there, do! It 'll do you good. There's a long ride before us."

The girl, with a pleading cavalier on either side, looked from one to the other, and patted her horse again. "Don't want either, thank you. Mr. Lyndon, you're very saucy to bring it. You must have had one before you dared. Take it back.—No,"—she put out her hand impulsively,—"give it to me."

The group by the piazza were watching to see what she would do as she lifted the glass, and with a smile and a quick outward curve of pale gold the doomed drink scattered over the grass. There were clapping of hands and laughter from the step, and the girl laughed back, and Crackerjack turned uneasily. Then, under cover of the hilarity, she bent to Lyndon, standing a bit stiff and dignified.

"It was horrid of me," she said. "I knew they would laugh, and I wanted them to, but it was nasty to you. You deserved it, for you knew I wasn't that kind—but it was just as horrid of me. It was a play to the gallery, and I'm ashamed. Come and ride with me, and I'll make up."

Two minutes more and a dozen riders and horses were streaming down the road, the prettiest sight in the world. Crackerjack led with his fast, effortless walk, and Lyndon by his side trotted his lean bay hunter to keep abreast of the alert, spirited brown head. Alert and spirited too, in the saddle, the girl tried hard to keep her word and "make up." With quick response and earnest questioning and ready sympathy she kept the man in play on the subject that interests every man—himself; and meantime prodded her spirit, that would not care, however hard she tried, for a single word he said. "He is so thoughtful and kind—yes, and bright and clever too," she told her flagging spirit, reproachfully. And the spirit answered, unimpressed, "Yes, and self-centred and uninteresting!" So the argument was not of much use. And like a pang of physical sickness came over her the quick, strong memory of another man who had ridden this road by her side. Lyndon talked incessantly, and talked well, and the other had been silent sometimes for miles. Yet to-day the big landscape ached with emptiness, while the last time—she remembered they walked the horses through this lane then too, and the brown earth rose up and sang beneath their feet. And through the memory Lyndon's satisfied voice rolled smoothly.

On a swift wave of impatience came the decision that she would not work over this man any longer. She had been rude to him for a minute—well, she had been civil for fifteen. It was enough. A quick pull at Crackerjack's light mouth brought him, snorting, to a standstill, and off she slipped. Lyndon, reining in more slowly, looked back in astonishment.

"What's wrong? Let me—" his leg slid over to dismount, but she stopped him. "No, stay on—don't get down. I don't want you—truly I don't. It's just—" she laughed. "I don't know how to explain and be polite."

Lyndon was standing by his horse now, facing her, perplexity all over his fresh, good-looking face. The others were coming up.

"What is it? Any accident?" they called, and the girl turned and addressed the bunch, half laughing, half irritated.

"Can't I be unreasonable without stirring up everybody? I want to stop and camp out—and I'm going to. You all go on."

"I'll camp too, with pleasure," said Lyndon, with the kindly indulgence of a man determined to be a gentleman always, no matter what vagaries of woman may try him.

"And I will too!" "Send off those chaps and let me!" broke in other voices from the saddles above her.

"Oh no!" The girl grew impatient. "I won't have you—I don't want you. I don't want to break up the ride. I'm just going to stop here and think over my sins, and plan some more. I know it's foolish, but I wish to be foolish. I won't have any one wait with me—I simply won't."

Of course there was nothing for it but, with many protests, to give the girl her way. She had stopped on top of a high hill that sloped down to a rushing little river. Somebody spoke of the bridge—its safety had been questioned.

"Is the bridge all right?" Lyndon asked Jimmie Saintsbury. This part of the world all belonged to the Saintsburys.

"Father said this morning at breakfast that it was probably good for six months unless they begin to mend it. They start in by taking out the stringers or something underneath, so it will be out of commission at once then till it's all made over. They were to begin to-day, but there's nobody there, you see, so we're safe enough."

The girl leaned against the fence, with her arm through Crackerjack's bridle.

"Please everybody get killed before Annie," she said, and tickled the horse's head with the handle of her crop. "And please go on—you disturb my thinking."

"We'll go down over the bridge out to Everett, and back by the Blue Island road, and stop here for you. if you're still thinking," said Lyndon. "Seems to me you're mighty foolish not to let me think with you," he added, tentatively.

She stood with a hand on the horse's bent neck—Crackerjack was browsing busily—and watched them dash off across the bit of level road and then slow up as they started down the long, steep hill: the bay and black and gray and brown horses, their sensitive ears twitching backward and forward, their clean-cut legs moving carefully, daintily, along the stony road.

Is there anything so good as to be on a good horse, with good roads and an afternoon before one? That there is "something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man" applies mentally as well as physically. There is no room in the saddle for Black Care, and if he indeed mounts behind the horseman, he is likely to fall off within the first mile. There is no better way to loosen his grip. Riders say that the animal feels his master's mood and personality through the touch of the reins and pressure of the body. As often, surely, the free, large nature of a horse flows back into the rider, and the world is for a human being in the saddle a kindlier, simpler, less complex affair than it is anywhere else. Yet the girl gave a sigh of relief as the chorus of hoofs clattered in distant thunder across the bridge and the last galloping figure disappeared over the top of the hill beyond.

"We couldn't stand them to-day, could we, Crackerjack? We're too lonely to have people about to-day, aren't we, beast?"

She twitched at the rein, and the horse raised a gentle, friendly face, gazed at her a moment from wondering, calm eyes, and lowering his head, set about munching grass industriously again.

"Crackerjaek, you're such a help. Nobody but you knows enough not to talk," she said, aloud, and then moodily fell to thinking.

Mental battles need no very wide scene for their field of action. Here in this narrow lane, her back against the silvery old wood of a farm fence, and the sappy June grass deep about her, the girl was drawing out her lines for the greatest fight that had come into her life. For two months, while the outer flow of her days had been even and usual, her inner life had grown daily more unbearable.

"So now, if l have any self-respect and any will, I shall straighten this thing out, and make up my mind what to think, and think it, and live my own life—hard. And not whine."

Her face set into a look that promised a bad quarter-hour for the half of her self that wanted to whine. With a firm hand on the emotional side, she began to review the course of true love that had not run smooth. It was much like other love-affairs, with two great points of difference. It was her own—that puts a love-affair into a class by itself. And it had stopped as if a stream in flood had run dry. And the girl did not know why—there lay the sting and the humiliation. A year ago he had come, in June, and on a day like this they had taken their first ride. Horseback had made them comrades at once, but it was a long time before the girl had felt anything more than friendship in the delight of being with him. Then by imperceptible, rapid slips it had moved on and on, till the pleasant, irresponsible, light-hearted good-fellowship hung swaying, unbroken, yet with a thrill of danger in its poise, on the edge of a precipice at whose foot rushed the deep water, the happiness and misery of love.

One night, when they were left alone in the cool darkness and quiet of the Country Club piazza, had come the landslide. A dozen empty chairs stood about them as she leaned her arms on the railing in the far dark corner. A track of yellow light streaming out from the open door a hundred feet away blackened the shadows, and, inside, the ping-pong rackets tick-tacked delicately. Every one had gone back to town but these four, and the

two players were absorbed; the girl and her lover were as much alone as in the heart of a wood. She went over and over the words he had said—very much what other men have said to other girls always, yet with no danger of monotony. And at the end she had felt his hands on each side of her face, holding it, and his mouth had touched her hair.

"That isn't so very wicked," he had said, and afterwards she wondered what he meant. Why was it wicked at all? A great rectangle of light had swept clanging up the dark road, and they had all rushed to catch the last car, and she remembered stumbling on it, dazed and quiet, knowing only that he sat next to her through the short four miles to town, but with hardly a word to say, as silent, as stirred as herself. There could be no mistake about that; no one could pretend feeling so strong; no one could be an actor so perfectly. And as she thought of it she rejected such a doubt with scorn. However things were after wards, he had been sincere, he had cared for her that night. Three days had gone after that, with no sign from him, and though puzzled she had not a gleam of distrust, and the memory of his voice and touch in the dark seemed almost enough. When she woke in the morning the flooding happiness of it met her, and when she went to sleep at night it floated her out on a shining sea of dreams. She could wait. And she waited for three days, saying to herself that his ways were not like other men's, that she would understand in a minute when he came, and that the king not only could but would do no wrong. And on the fourth day came a formal note of good-by. He was going away to live. He had hoped to be able to see her and tell her about it before he changed cities, a month from now, but most unexpectedly he was leaving for the West in the evening on a hunting-trip that would fill all the time between. He hoped that their paths might cross again some day, and in the mean time he could not thank her in words for the months past, but he would thank her always in thought, and would never forget them. That was all.

"Oh!" moaned the girl, aloud, and threw her arms sideways in the grass and her face on them as she felt again the dull ache and the sharp stab of reading his letter. Yet—she could not tell if she fancied it, but somewhere in those correct words she thought she could catch a note of the heartache and the pain they had brought to her. What did it mean? That was what she had set herself to day to decide. With a clear brain she separated the pros and cons like a lawyer, and found three possible theories as the result. First there was the chance that he had been amusing himself at her expense —she put that in its pigeonhole. Then there was the chance that he had been carried away for the moment, and, touched perhaps by feeling that she might have shown for him, had said more than he meant and regretted it after wards. She shivered as she pigeonholed that theory. Then—and this she liked best to think—there might be some obstacle, some reason why he could not go farther, should not perhaps have gone so far. It might be any of a dozen possibilities; it might be another girl whom he had been bound to before he knew her. He had come from so far away that no one here knew his people or his friends, and though he had told her more than any one, he was reticent, and it was evidently hard for him to talk about himself.

"So there are three theories," the girl said, aloud. "Now I'll decide which one I'll believe," and she turned at the sound of hammering and stared over the hill. There were four men, down below, at work on the bridge. She started as she thought of what Jimmie Saintsbury had said, and then remembered that the riders were to come by the other road, crossing the stream miles away at a new and safe bridge.

Crackerjack had eaten all the grass within his tether, and was pulling toward pastures new, so she threw the bridle over her arm and walked to the brow of the hill. She pushed down the daisies that gleamed white against the shaded grays of the old fence, and sitting down, threw her gloves and her sailor hat beside her, and the breeze blew her blond hair about her face. Three theories, and the first was that he had been playing with her all the time—it took her half a minute to discard that idea. He was a gentleman, to begin with. The straight, sincere look of his eyes, the thousand and one acts of simple friendship that had filled those months, rose up to reproach her. No; that theory was impossible. Then could it be that she had mistaken mere friendship for love, and that he had seen the mistake and been touched to a warmer feeling from pure sympathy? Had he pitied her? The thought was unendurable. Yet there were such depths of gentleness and kindness in him, and they had been such friends—it might be that he could not bear to see her care for him without response. He might have tried to care for her in return, and have failed, and so left her as he did as

the kindest way out of it. The girl's hair, yellow as corn, blew softly about her eyes in the light June breeze, and she pushed it aside quickly, as if she must see clearly. There was the third theory. It seemed to-day that it would be utter happiness if she might believe that he cared as she did, and had gone away only because he must. If she only knew! She balanced the two possibilities in her mind over and over, this way and that. Surely the look in his eyes, the tone in his voice, the touch of his hands on her face, never came from an effort of duty; surely there was a quality in them not to be mistaken, that meant the greatest and the simplest feeling—love.

A peasant woman would not have hesitated; but as the keenness of sense, the exquisite sight and hearing, that belong to a savage are lost somewhere in the refining process of the ages between him and his twentieth-century descendant, so this woman, who was the high-water mark of civilization, had dulled in training the woman's sure instinct. The bias of a practised mind to refuse mere feeling as a reason, and a certain Spartan vein of courage that impelled her to choose the harder of two roads—these decided her. With a wrench at her soul she cast away the happier possibility, and was adjusting her life sternly, with trembling, determined hands, to the bitter belief of the other. He had pitied her; he had loved her only for a moment, only because he was good and strong, and was sorry. But to the generous, torn soul there was a word of comfort in that. He was strong and good—it would always be sacred to him, this unasked love of hers; she might always remember him as she wished, as the truest of gentlemen; she need never be ashamed that she had put him first in her world. He had done the one right and brave thing, and done it, with the quick resolution she had learned to expect of him, instantly. It was hard and cruel, but it was best, and there was a pleasure, knowing it was his way, in the pain of it.

From the far-away city, whose steeples and towers rose like clouds against the sunset, beyond the distant silver river, chimed out, softened by the miles between, the bells and whistles of six o'clock. Up the hill in the low sunlight, dark against the brightening sky, toiled two work-worn figures; and Crackerjack, raising his gentle, high-bred head from his long feast, gazed at them mildly. The girl nodded brightly.

"How do you do, Peter? I didn't know it was you hammering down there

at the bridge. How do you do, Thomas?" Half the farmers in the country were her friends.

The men grinned with pleased faces, and asked if anything was wrong,—if they could help her on her horse. But she shook her head. No; Crackerjack would let her mount without trouble; they were old friends, she and Crackerjack. And the men, with a pat on the horse's shining neck, trudged along. But fifty feet away they stopped and turned.

"You ben't a-goin' to ride back over that bridge, be ye?" called the elder. "Because we've took out one of the stringers, that was rotted, and a dog couldn't go over it safe. Land! I 'most forgot to tell ye."

"No," said the girl, "I'm not going that way. But surely you've left it guard ed in some way, haven't you?"

The men looked at each other guiltily, and were silent for a moment. The elder said, sheepishly: "We shouldn't orter leave it even for a spell—I know that. But I done forgot the red lantern I had all fixed at my house, and we was both in a hurry to get home to-night, and nobody don't never come by here after six o'clock—never. So we let it go till after supper, and I cal'lated to send down little Pete with the lantern soon's he'd et his supper. I'll send him prompt, miss, I promise ye."

They were gone; and the girl, with a momentary thought that she was glad the party had planned to come by the other road, went back to the rearrangement of her life. Love was gone out of it, and. for the present, joy. But the girl knew that she could not be unhappy always, that it was of the essential part of herself to fight her way through clouds to sunshine as a diver pushes down the water to get back to the air that he must breathe or die. Life was full of good things, and only a coward would give up the battle because he might not win the best thing. She had still her work—the girl painted so well that people who knew foretold a future for her; she had still the brightness of other lives, close to her own, to consider; she had still the out-of-doors that she

had loved always—horseback and golf, the wide, free horizons, the dew-fresh mornings, the long, sunny afternoons, the streaming sunsets and the purple twilights that such things mean. Life was very full. While it might be made large and unselfish and brave and bright, it would be a pity, it would be a shame to her birthright of courage, if she should fail to live it with her might. The music might be silent in the march, but she could still walk with a swing, her feet timed to the memory of gay notes. And she would. The girl was not a coward, and as she faced, there by the roadside, years to come that seemed to her all colorless and up-hill, with a resolution not merely of endurance, but of heart and action, it was a good courage and a strong will that brought so glowing a promise from such burning ashes.

"But if I only knew!" she whispered. With a long, trembling breath she rose and stood leaning against Crackerjack. and stared, as if at a new, hard, yet beautiful world, across the fields, where the long shadows lay in cool, uneven masses; back up the brown country road, where the grass grew thick in the middle—thick over the prints of his horse's feet, made two months ago; and then down the hill to the rippling river and the treacherous bridge, lying shadowy in the hollow, and up the slope beyond, across whose crest the red and yellow sun set lay gorgeously dying into amethyst and rose.

"If I only knew!" she said again, aloud.

There was a dark blotch against the melted gold of the sky. The girl stood upright suddenly and gazed, her eyes wide. It moved; another had joined it; and another—half a dozen more. With quick, steady hands she caught the trailing bridle and threw it over Crackerjack's neck, and drew him to a little rise of the ground by the roadside. But the horse, fresh with his long rest, jumped mischievously aside as she put out her foot to the stirrup.

"Crackerjack. let me mount!" she pleaded aloud. "Oh, dear Crackerjack, don't you see they are coming back by the bridge, the broken bridge? Be still, horse. We have to save them."

The dark, dashing figures were well down the opposite slope, putting yards behind them with dreadful steadiness, before the skittish beast, unconscious of the desperate peril his skittishness meant, let her get near enough to spring to the saddle. It was only a minute and a half, but it seemed an hour. Then off she went recklessly down the rough road, and as she raced she called and waved her crop.

"Back! Back!" she called. "The bridge! The bridge!"

But the clatter of the many hoofs together, the noise and laughter as the riders shouted one to another, drowned her soft voice. They saw her now, and waved their crops at her, flying madly toward them, and more than one wondered a bit at her careless riding, but they did not catch any of the eager words on which death and life were hanging. Suddenly, as she rode, it came to her with a sick shock that she could not save them. They would not listen, would not be warned—it was useless. They would dash on the broken bridge, all together, and be drowned—it was too horrible! And then, in a quick, heroic flash, she saw the way. If she got there first and rode on the bridge, they would see her fall, they would have time to stop. The bravest cannot face death at a turn of the hand without a great heart-throb. This girl was of the bravest, and she felt her pulses bound and stop for a second of time, then she looked deliberately across the valley at the bunch of riders, as Crackerjack's long, sweeping stride carried her every second nearer them. Annie was the only one she cared an atom for, and Annie was back on top of the hill—she could see the gray horse and the slim figure. Annie was safe in any case. It was her life for lives that meant nothing to her—and she suddenly laughed aloud.

"Am I a coward? Is there a question?" she asked, in proud self-scorn. And then words that she had read flashed across her brain: "There is no better thing to do with a life than to give it away." And then: "It is easier to die than to live. They will think me a heroine, when I don't mind—I hardly mind at all. It's just another play to the gallery." And then again, for the last time, the sob wrung from her heart—"If I only knew!"

Across the river the horses clattered merrily on, and they were still talking and laughing.

"Wait a minute!" shouted Lyndon. "Wait! There's something wrong; she's calling to us."

But the others did not hear, and he dashed along with them, and the race for death was begun in earnest. On the other side of the bridge the girl rode harder, pell-mell, down-hill. She struck the astonished Crackerjack with her crop,—Crackerjack, who never needed more than her voice.

"I must get there at least thirty feet ahead, or they can't pull up," she said, and the pure excitement of the race caught her.

On she came, a flashing vision of intense life, and as Lyndon's hunter forged ahead to meet her, Crackerjack gathered himself for the spring on the bridge, the girl waved her crop triumphantly, and the bright picture—the splendid horse with his kindly, eager face, the girl with her fair hair blowing, her cheeks glowing, her eyes shining with victory, and the crop still lifted high in air—crashed through the bridge.

That night at twelve o'clock three men sat about a table in a corner of the big red room, luxurious with its deep warmth of crimson color, its heavy gilded rafters, of their club in New York. Two of them were commonplace enough; well bred, well dressed, low voiced, the outer edges of their personalities smoothed into the pleasant if monotonous uniformity that results from the steady friction of great cities. The third would have been conspicuous anywhere for the beauty of his graceful head and strong and well-knit body, and for a quality of charm that shone from him the moment he spoke. He spoke little, as it happened, but it was as if fire smouldered behind the dark impassiveness of his eyes, and he was visibly the centre of the group. A high, thin glass stood before him. frosted, pale gold, light -shot, bubbleflecked. He shook it gently and tinkled the bits of ice within, then kept his hand about it as if the coolness were grateful.

To this table, down the length of the room, came winding rapidly through the tangle of other tables a fourth man, with an excited, earnest face. The man watched him as he came, and when he met his eye a smile of such childlike radiance broke over his face that it seemed that the boy-angel who had shipped on the bark of his life some thirty-odd years before must be yet a passenger. It was easy to see, as he smiled up at his friend, why men and women loved him. The newcomer put a hand on his shoulder, but spoke to them all.

"I've just heard the most dreadful thing," he said. "Most horrible accident. I was dining at the Leavitts', and they had a telegram—cousins, you know. And immediately after, Lyndon, who was in the riding party, came in, pale as a ghost. He had run down on the train for the family. Jove! I didn't know there was such heroism to be found." He turned suddenly to the man on whose shoulder his hand still rested. "Jack, you must know them all," he said. "You knew the girl—I've heard you speak of her."

"What are you talking about?" asked the man, bluntly, his sombre eyes facing his friend with a bewildered, startled look. And the others stared, silent.

A few words told it; they must needs be swift, dramatic; it had all been so quick that there was little to tell. And nothing to do now for the girl, who lay quiet, with the hard decisions of life lifted from her. It was very simple—one minute had settled everything. Perhaps had even answered that cry—"If I only knew!"

The men listened breathlessly, and when the story was finished, spoke with quick exclamations or questions, after their characters. But the man with the glass did not take his eyes from his friend's face for a long half-minute after the story was told. It was as if they had been petrified, glazed. Then his hand that held the glass tightened about it, he lifted the untouched shimmer of crystal and gold and drained it to the last drop; he rose slowly and pushed his chair aside, and unhurriedly, but without a word or a look, walked down the long room and out through the doorway.

How a play is produced/The Dress Rehearsal-II

How a play is produced (1928) by Karel ?apek, illustrated by Josef ?apek, translated by Percy Beaumont Wadsworth The Dress Rehearsal—II Karel ?apekJosef

Layout 2

The Bobbsey Twins at Home/Chapter 7

at their desks to watch the play. "Are you all ready now?" asked Miss Earle of the children behind the curtain. "All ready! I'm going to pull the curtain

Plays in Prose and Verse/Cathleen ni Houlihan

Butler Yeats ? CATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN ? PERSONS IN THE PLAY peter gillane. michael gillane, his Son, going to be married. patrick gillane, a lad of twelve, Michael's

The strange story book/Aurore at Play

story book (1913) Aurore at Play 3764541The strange story book — Aurore at Play1913 ? AURORE AT PLAY When Aurore Dupin went to Paris she found herself in