

In Her Darkest Hour

By DOROTHEA ALLEN

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It was the night of Mrs. Munn's musicale—a bad night, too, for a heavy rain had begun to fall at dusk, and now at nine o'clock the earth was deluged, the trees dripping and the fall continuing without cessation.

Mrs. Munn had arranged her house very prettily. It was not a large house, but it was new and well furnished, and as this was the first time she had ever entertained on a large scale, great pains had been taken with the decorations and appurtenances. In the kitchen a caterer was busy among the edibles getting them ready to serve. And in the parlor Mrs. Munn was receiving her guests as they came downstairs after having divested themselves of their wraps.

Mrs. Munn was a small woman with a slender, girlish figure. She wore a new lace gown, and her hair, just a little gray, was carefully folded and puffed and crimped. Her heels were very high and her collar very correct. She looked uncomfortable and worried behind her polite smile. It was the rain, she knew, and not sick headache that had made Maud Merrill send a note at the last moment saying that she would, after all, be unable to appear.

And she had so counted on Maud's voice! The lack of it was likely to

It had been a long fight, and how hard only Kitty Munn herself could have told. And she told no one! Not even her husband. She smiled and smiled, and women who did not smile because they lacked her grit envied her for her seeming happiness. Then Dick built a house for her, and they moved into it from the one they had always rented. They bought new rugs and a few new pieces of furniture. Kitty gulped her buying by quality, not quantity. And now the time had come for her to make her final great endeavor; she would give an entertainment and invite all the best people, in return for which all the best people must invite her. And because all the really best people were interested in music and literature, more or less, she decided to give a musicale.

It seemed that all things had conspired against her. First the rain had come on; then because of it Maud Merrill had failed to keep her engagement; the whole thing was thrown "out of mash," as Dick would say of a piece of machinery. Yet with Prof. Dix the day might still be saved.

There was really a large percentage of people present for the number of invitations she had sent out. That was very encouraging. Her spirits had sunk pretty low after she had read Maud Merrill's note of regret, but they lifted again as she looked over her well-filled parlors. Then her heart stopped beating, for the girl who answered the bell was bringing her another note. She took it and tore it open with trembling fingers. In spite of the fact that a good many eyes were upon her, she felt her self-command slipping from her like a mantle from her shoulders. Prof. Dix, Westmore's greatest musical asset, had written to say that his sister was ill in New York and that he had been telegraphed for; therefore he would not be able, etc. He was very sorry, but he was sure she would understand. Yes, she understood. She understood that after all her efforts she had failed, through no fault of her own. She stood there looking straight ahead, still holding bravely to her little smile, but thinking over and over with deadly reiteration that her musicale was a farce and that she would rather be in her grave than hear the things that would be said about her to-morrow.

Then the doorbell rang again sharply and the girl came toward her again. "Mrs. Munn, can you come here a minute?"

What had happened now? Dazedly she obeyed the summons. In the vestibule stood a young man in a motor coat and cap.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I see you have a party here and I am sorry to disturb you, but you see our car has broken down right before your door and my sister is in it. Will you let her come in while I try to repair the damage? This is a terrible storm."

"It is a terrible storm," Mrs. Munn said, waking up a little. "Yes, do bring your sister in and come in yourself. You can run the machine into our barn till the storm lets up."

He thanked her and went back to the car. In a moment he returned accompanied by a tall young woman swathed in damp chiffon and rubber-lined silk. "I'm sorry to give you all this trouble," she said, "but the car positively won't move another inch. Carl thinks he can fix it, though. You are having a party here?"

"A musicale without any music," Mrs. Munn laughed, her eyes full of forlorn tears. "You see all the performers have disappointed me."

The girl stared. She seemed to be thinking rapidly. Then with an adorable smile she laid her hand on Mrs. Munn's arm.

"A musicale without music! Now that mustn't be. You must let Carl and me help you out. I am a concert singer and he my accompanist, from New York, you know. We are motor-ing to our bungalow in the mountains. And we have a lot of music with us. If you like we will entertain your guests, you poor little Samaritan."

Mrs. Munn could not answer, but the sob of joy and relief she permitted herself, said more than words. Fifteen minutes later she stood with beaming face among her guests while her husband proudly introduced to them by a name which set them gasping, their entertainers. For these young people had been heard of in Westmore, had once even refused to appear upon the lecture course program, and now, lo and behold, this amazing little Kitty Munn had them at her musicale!

That evening was a triumph—such a triumph as Mrs. Munn never even dared to dream of. Such singing such playing, had never before been heard in Westmore. And, besides, the presence of these two young people was enjoyed almost as much as their music. They were gay and sociable and very charming. They entered heart and soul into the pleasant task of making their hostess' musicale the greatest social success of years.

The company broke up at a late hour. Afterward Mrs. Munn told her husband and the two young people who still remained, everything. She cried a little as she talked, and the girl, at least, understood.

They went away next morning under blue skies, leaving many good wishes, many kindly farewells. They had been housed from the storm and had enjoyed themselves thoroughly. As for little Mrs. Munn, since that day she has been the acknowledged social leader in Westmore, the one woman to whom every other woman looks up. And her husband is becoming one of its most successful business men. But to this day they keep the secret of that musicale to themselves.

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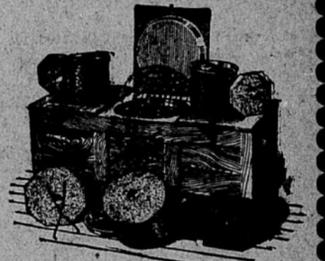
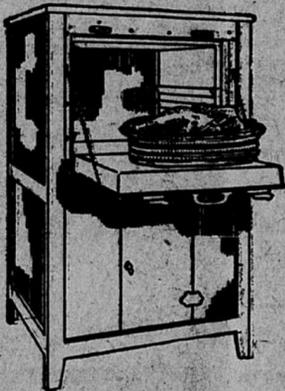


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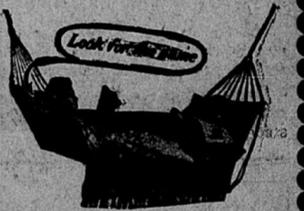
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DENISON, IOWA.

ABSENT MINDED

When the girl in the dark-blue linen suit and furring hat entered the room, the young woman in the trailing pink frock was wandering aimlessly about. "Goodness, Jess!" cried the caller. "Are you going somewhere or—"

"I'm so glad to see you, Genevieve," interrupted the girl in pink, gliding forward with both hands outstretched.

But her tone was restrained. The girl in blue looked her over critically.

"If you are going anywhere or have any one coming," said the girl in blue, "just tell me and I'll run away. It was such a lovely day that I thought I'd come over for the afternoon."

"Oh, did you?" queried the girl in pink, rather vaguely. "No, indeed, I'm not going anywhere."

The girl in blue sat down rather doubtfully. Some telepathic sense told her that she was intruding. However, she shook off the sensation and drew out her hatpins.

"You seemed so kind of odd," she explained.

"Oh, did I?" murmured her hostess. "See here!" exploded the caller. "You're all dressed up and you seem rather restless! What's the matter?"

"Why, nothing's the matter," insisted the girl in pink.

She looked out of the window and then came and sat down, carefully patting her hair in place.

"Did you have a good time at the party last night?" she asked, with apparent effort.

"Goodness, me!" cried the caller. "Don't you remember that I called you up on the phone yesterday and said I wasn't going because the party was called off?"

"Oh!" cried the girl in pink, with a start. "So you did!" She rose and regarded herself anxiously in the mirror over the mantel. "Do you think I have my hair too low on the right side?" she asked.

"You seem so odd," commented her friend. "Did you know Herbert Arrows is going west soon?"

The girl in pink looked for her handkerchief. "Yes," she said. "Where did you see Herbert?"

"His sister told me," explained the caller. "He's taken you around a lot this summer, hasn't he?"

"Not so very much," said the girl in pink.

"Yes, he has," said her friend; "Every one thinks—"

"It's no such thing," declared the girl in pink, whose cheeks suddenly flushed.

"When is he going?"

"He leaves this evening," said the girl in pink, with a little frown.

The bell rang and she sprang to her feet and patted her hair. "There he is now!" she burst out. "He—he said he'd drop in this afternoon to say good-by. Oh, don't go!"

The girl in blue reached hurriedly for her hat and began jabbing in the pins. "Was that what alluded you?" she asked. "Why didn't you tell me in the first place?"

"Perfumes Match Costumes. Some aesthetic women in London now use a rose perfume when they wear a rose-tinted gown, and a violet perfume with a violet costume."

"Burglar's Tools. According to a recent decision of the Kentucky court of appeals a bank cannot recover indemnity from a casualty or burglary insurance company in the case of robbery through intimidation of the cashier or other official."

It appears that the bank in this case had closed and the money had been locked in the safe, when robbers appeared, held up the cashier and forced him to open the safe. The casualty policy provided indemnity only in cases, after the bank had closed, where entrance was made to the safe "by means of tools or explosives employed directly thereupon."

The bank claimed that the cashier formed a tool within the meaning of the policy, but the court holds that more ordinary burglars' tools were meant.

"Not a soul!" declared the girl in pink, turning around suddenly. "Whom on earth should I be looking for in the afternoon?"

HAYES NEWS

Mrs. Rose Maynard closed a successful term of school at last Friday.

Miss Ella Jones of Denison visited with Hayes friends last week. Clara and Ed. Landorf visited with relatives in Manila the first of the week.

John Hagge of West Side spent Wednesday at the Walter Moore home.

The annual Kinder Fest Ball given by the Hayes Schutzen Verein was held at the Five Mile House Sunday, June 12.

Mrs. Andrew Gallagher is enjoying a visit from her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John O'Boyle, of Preston, S. D.

Mrs. Richard Martins and children of near Manila spent several days of last week at the Mrs. W. Martins home.

Mrs. August Voss and son, Dewey, of West Side were guests at the Hans Hansen home Friday.

Misses Katherine and Minnie Paskin of Manning were over Sunday visitors at the Fred Landorf home.

Mrs. Carl Petersen of Denison is visiting with Mrs. C. Voss and family.

Rob. Bradshaw of Ricketts spent several days of last week at the Fred Landorf home.

Mrs. John Hell and daughter of Manning spent several days of last week with her son, Honnas Hell.

John Weern of Manning was a Sunday visitor at the Platz home.

Congressman Woods voted with the Republicans one day last week.

Mr. Fred Schultz, who has been laid up in the hospital for the past two weeks, will be able to leave the hospital the fore part of next week.

Senator Dolliver, in a lengthy speech delivered in the United States Senate on Monday, replied to the vote of a majority of the Republicans of Iowa at the late primary.



spoil it all. Just that one omission had made a big hole in her carefully arranged program. However, people were good to come on such a bad day.

True, they had not worn their good clothes. Mrs. Holt looked as if she had made a quick change to that old foulard and Anna Marks certainly did not have on her best skirt. The hostess shuddered at the amount of wet and grime that was being tracked across her new rugs, for of course everybody couldn't come in cabs! And the lawn would look all cut up to-morrow, for they had driven right across it to the front door. Dear! dear! But at least there was Prof. Dix; he had promised to play two solos besides accompanying Harry Morse, the violinist, and Aline Carver, the contralto. With these they must do. But it was a shame that Maud Merrill should have failed her.

Poor little Mrs. Munn was desperately eager for this, her first real social venture, to be a success, for upon it depended her future in Westmore. And not only her future, but Dick's, which was of vastly more importance to her. She had been a poor, plain, unknown girl when she married Dick Munn, who also had been poor and plain and unknown.

In that first year of their married life she had done a great deal of serious thinking. She saw other men with no more ability than Dick go ahead in the business struggle because their wives helped them socially. It seemed to her that she was the custodian of Dick's financial well-being; if he was ever to do anything or be anybody she must help him. She took stock of her assets. Certainly she should be able to accomplish as much socially as Mrs. Clark, who had not half her wit, though, indeed, far more means. Yet brains should be worth as much as money—they must be in her case.

For 15 years she had struggled and planned and schemed and toiled. What she lacked in money she made up in resourcefulness. She was not extravagant; she made every penny count. Dick looked on amused, scarcely understanding, and gave her her head. But after a time he began to understand. He was succeeding slowly; he stood on a passable footing with men he had always envied. He was earning more money, too. People seemed to be forgetting that Kit was old Bill Armstrong's girl and that his own name had hitherto been of no account in the community. He was noticed in church, at society meetings; and he had been asked to join the Business Men's club. After all, these things meant a good deal. Each year he held his head higher and looked the world more confidently in the face. And each year he regarded more reverently and loved with deeper love the brave little woman who was ever at his side, encouraging, cheering, upholding him.