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T. HIDE'S,

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Jenny Jenkins "General."

On the kitchen table lay the unwashed-up crockery from dinner; it had been there since one o'clock, and it was now five, and at half-past two Jenny had plumped down in a chair in front of the fire and gone "on strike."

This strike of hers had a real grievance behind it. It was her monthly "half day out," and a stupid telegram from the husband of "the missus," requesting her immediate presence, had brought that lady into the kitchen, just as Jenny was expecting to go out.

"You can't have your half-day, after all. The master wires me to meet him in the city. You'll have to have it another day next week."

And without another word she had gone, and the sullen fit had come.

Five o'clock struck, and the girl glanced hopelessly at the clock. Then a vindictive look crossed her face.

"I'll go out! Yes, I will! I'll go out. I don't care what her ladyship says. It isn't fair! It isn't fair! Why should I be the one to be put about? Out I go. If she doesn't come back before me she needn't know; if she does—oh, she can go hang!"

Into the boxroom of the flat, called her bedroom, she dashed, tore off her apron and dress, washed her face and hands, put on her best dress and hat and boots, and humming defiantly, "I care for nobody and nobody cares for me," she opened the front door.

"Oh!"

A gentleman, high hatted and smart-looking, was standing there; but Jenny's action startled him as she came out.

"I was just going to ring," he said pleasantly.

"They're out!" she snapped. "And I'm just going out, too."

"I wanted a Miss Geneva Jenkins," he remarked. "I understand she is employed here."

"That's a fact," she said. "She is, I'm the young lady in question. What do you want?"

"Well, it's a long story. May I come in?"

"Not half! How do I know you're not a burglar? Say what you want to say right here now, where other folk can see you."

He smiled.

"You seem a very original young person," he remarked. "Still, if you prefer it I will talk here. You are Geneva Jenkins, daughter of the late Tom Jenkins, of Esseter, in Essex, I believe?"

"That's a fact."

"Well, your father had a brother who went to New Zealand, didn't he?"

"That's a fact!"

"He's dead. But before he died he made some money, and it seems he left it all to you."

"How did you know I was here?" suspiciously.

"I went to the clergyman at Esseter, and he found out your address from one of the old neighbours. So if you are the young lady in question I congratulate you on coming into a very nice little fortune, and I shall be pleased to act for you in any way. If, for instance you want any money at the present, I'll—"

"Oh, will you?" she said sarcastically. "Perhaps you'll hand me over £5 on the spot."

"Certainly!" he said. "Here it is." And he produced a five-pound note, and gave it to her.

She took it, felt it between her thumb and finger, held it up to the light. It was clearly all right.

"Come in!" she said, throwing open the door. "I guess you'll want a receipt. Now, sir—pointing him to a chair—"sit down and tell me all about it. How much is it? Five hundred?"

"He left £50,000, and a very nice little sum it is. It will make a great difference to you. You are, I presume, the maid here?"

"No," bitterly. "Only 'the slavey.' At it from six in the morning till half-past ten, and lights out at eleven. Every other Sunday night off and a half-day a month. But do you mean to tell me that I—me, Geneva Jenkins—have got £50,000 to do as I like with? Oh, I can't believe it!" she said desperately. "You are up to some game, and I'm here all alone."

"Now, Miss Jenkins, be a sensible girl; be sensible! Here is my card. The address of my office is on it. Come and see me. And just to convince you that I am in earnest, here's the rest of £50—you have £5." And he handed her £45 more.

That did it.

"Then it's true!" she declared. "I am very much obliged to you, sir for your trouble in finding me out, and I'll come round and see you to-morrow, or soon. Are you one of the partners?" looking at the card.

"No; I'm only the managing clerk."

"Well, you manage very well," said Jennie graciously. "Perhaps you won't mind taking one of these fivers for your trouble?"

"Nonsense!" he said. "It's my job. But if you don't mind, I should like to be allowed to wish you every happiness."

"Thank you, sir," said Jennie. "Stay a minute. If you're a lawyer tell me—tell me, am I bound to stay in this place a month?"

"Not if you forfeit your wages."

"And if I broke a few things before I went and had a general bust up, could they do anything to me?"

"You'd better send to me in such an event," he smiled. "It might cost a trifle, but we'd square any little cost. Why, do you want to get your own back with them for something?"

"Do I want to? Why, there's a kind of inside fire here burning for it. Perhaps I shall have to wire you to come and help me."

"Very well," he said. "Now I'll go. Good luck!"

Jenny let him out, and stood staring after him; then, as soon as he was out of sight she dashed out, too.

"Taxi!" she cried. "Kilburn High street. The Bon Marché!"

"I'll get some clothes there," she muttered. "I'll just have time between now and eight."

The Kilburn business proved a longer matter than Jenny expected; but she made her purchases, and in a taxi she whirled back to the flat.

She let herself in with her key—they were not back yet.

She poked out the kitchener, and laid it ready for the morning; then lighting the gas in the little hall and in the dining-room, she went to bed.

"No doubt they'd like to find me up, and it'd be, Jenny, get me a cup of tea, I'm dying for it! Well, she'll have to die, that's all. And there'll be no cups of tea in the morning, missus. How will you like that, 'Mrs Montagu'?"

Suddenly her eyes gleamed with mischief, and going into the kitchen, she lit the gas again, and left it on. When she went to her box-room.

It was eleven before Mrs Montagu and her husband returned, and seeing the gas lit ready for them, the mistress naturally imagined Jenny had waited up, so rang the dining-room bell.

No Jenny!

"Jim, that girl's gone to bed, and left her gas on."

"Go and make her get up and put it out," he growled.

"I've put it out already," she said. "It's too bad she should have gone to bed. I wanted a cup of tea."

"Well, go and light it again, and call out to her to get up instantly and turn it out. It will teach her a lesson; and while she's up she can get your tea, I'd like a cup, too."

That was the programme. This is what happened:

Bang! Bang! Bang! on Jenny's door. No answer. Jenny was hugging herself with glee.

Then the missus opened the door.

"Jenny! Jenny!"

"Yes, mum?" sleepily.

"Do you know you left the kitchen light on?"

"Did I?"

"Yes, you did!"

"Then put it out."

"What?"

"Didn't I speak plain?" queried Jenny.

"I said, 'put it out!'"

"Jenny, I'm very much surprised at you!" And she was. Then Jenny sat bolt upright.

"And I'm surprised at you," she said. "What kind of a woman are you, I'd like to know, waking up a poor girl out of her first sleep to go and turn your silly gas out? Haven't you got fingers? Why don't you use them?" And she lay down again, saying: "Shut that door!"

"Jenny, you will have to leave."

"Oh," came the reply, "I don't care when I leave if only you will go away and turn that gas out."

Pale-faced, Mrs Montagu joined her grinning husband, who had overheard the patter between them.

"What's come to her?" he said.

And his wife made a hopeless gesture.

Next morning Jenny rose with the lark. Instead of scrambling down anyhow, as usual, she carefully brushed her hair, donned one of the new prints, put on a smart linen apron, fastening crosswise over the shoulders, and gave a glance in the glass.

"Fetchin'!" she said. "Not half!"

So Mr Montagu thought as he breakfasted.

"Smart this morning, Jenny?"

No answer as she removed his plate in offended silence.

But he laughed, and the laugh stung her.

"What's it to do with you whether I'm smart or not?" she demanded angrily. "You keep your place, and I'll keep mine."

He remained at the table, very, very thoughtful; and presently as he rose to rush away, he said:

"I didn't mean any harm. I'm not that kind. Buck up, and take your mistress in a cup of tea."

"Take it in yourself, sir," she said. "It'd be a bit of a surprise." And went off into the kitchen.

He stared; then did it.

"Brought you in some tea, my dear."

"How good of you," she murmured sleepily. "Breakfast is all right?"

"Yes, the breakfast's all right, but Jenny's all wrong. Guess you upset her last night." And he left for the city.

She lay back for a second sleep when—Crash!!

"Good heavens! What's that?" Mrs Montagu cried. She sprang out of bed, and rushing to the door called:

"What have you done now?"

"Breakfast things, mum. Dropped the tray, that's all!"

"Very well, then, you'll have the cost of the breakfast service stopped out of your month's pay. It cost thirty shillings; and I can't match it."

She waited for the retort, then she heard something hit the wall near her. It was a sovereign. Before she could get over her surprise a half-sovereign followed.

She picked them up dazed, and went back to her room.

"Now where did she get this?" she muttered.

The owner of the next flat called in for a few minutes, and in that few minutes Jenny's character was torn to shreds.

She had been seen talking to a young man, and after a little had asked him in. "He stayed, my dear." He had gone away, and Jenny had gone out soon after and taken a taxi; and she came back dressed like a lady.

It was enough.

"You will have to leave at once, Jenny! Not another hour will you stay in a respectable flat. And it is no good referring to me for a character!" exclaimed her mistress, as she recited all this.

Jenny went red with indignation, and hounced out of the room, put on her hat, dashed to the 'phone, and summoned the solicitor, who came rushing down in a taxi.

"Now," said Jenny, as she let him in, "march in there! Here, mum," she said spitefully, "here's the gentleman who came last night. He is my solicitor! Tell her why you came and who you are; and then bring an action against her for taking away a poor girl's character." And he very quietly told her.

Mrs Montagu listened in amazed fashion.

"Why, then you're an heiress," she said. "I see it all now. I—I wish you every joy in your fortune."

"Oh, be quiet!" said Jenny. "What I want to know is, do you take back what you said about me and him?"

"Certainly!" said Mrs Montagu. "Certainly! But when you have a house of your own you will understand my anxiety about servants."

"When I have," Jenny retorted, "they'll be treated like human beings, not necessary evils. Well, my hour's up. And if you will wait, sir, I'll pack my boxes and come away with you. Have you got a wife?"

"No," he said; "but I have a mother."

"I meant perhaps your lady will take me for a little, as a paying guest," she suggested; "till I decide what to do. At present I only want to do one thing, and that's to start a home for servants that are put upon by the like of you," to Mrs Montagu. "Can your mother do that?" anxiously.

"Certainly," he said.

And in half an hour Jennie—neat, stylish-looking, far more of a lady than her mistress—hailed the driver to help her with her box, and drove off.

Potatoes seldom grow larger than marbles in Greenland.

From the date of the armistice to March 31, 1920, the British naval and military operations in Russia have cost £55,973,000.

ALLIED BLUNDERS IN THE WAR.

Very frank criticism of Allied war policy and methods of command is contained in an article, "At the Supreme War Council," in the September "Blackwood's," by Captain Peter Wright, late Assistant Secretary, Supreme War Council. Captain Wright maintains that "for a period that can almost be called of years the British and French were at least seven to four to the Germans on the Western front and almost double in material." At the end of 1917:—

Britain and France alone were, and had been for two years, numerically stronger than Germany. . . . How much more, and how crushing, had their numerical superiority been when more than 120 Russian and Rumanian divisions were fighting on their side. Yet they had failed to win the war.

This failure Captain Wright attributes to the lack of unity, both of command and plan, of the Allies. Upon Sir William Robertson he is specially severe. "His plan, and he had no other, was to raise more and more men. If the two sides were allowed to go on killing each other in France indefinitely, when all the Germans were dead there would still be a few Allies left and they would win the war." But at the end of 1917 German divisions were pouring from the east to the western front. Germany might be counted on to fling them against the weakest point in the Allied line, and that pressure might be sufficient to inflict disaster upon the Allies before sufficient help could be brought up from other parts of the front.

Hence, says Captain Wright, the scheme of a General Reserve, to be formed from the Armies of the west and to be placed under the control of the Executive War Board—Foch, Wilson, Bliss, Cadorna. This plan was elaborated after Carpoletto by Foch and Wilson.

It gave each Commander-in-Chief the advantages of a Generalissimo. The General Reserve was a banking account on which each could draw if he were attacked; his drafts would be fixed by the War Board according to their judgment. On the other hand, he had none of the disadvantages of a Generalissimo. No Commander-in-Chief could suspect his forces were being exploited for the benefit of an Ally's forces, for each nation had its representative on the war Board.

Foch, says Captain Wright, foresaw that the German blow must fall either towards Cambrai or towards Reims. His plan was to concentrate the larger part of his General Reserve round Paris, ready to be flung in on the flank of the German attack, whether it were towards Amiens or towards Reims; for "the more successful the German's attack is, the longer and therefore the more open and unguarded his flank will be."

But the General Reserve was never formed. Why? Because, says Captain Wright, Haig and Petain met at the end of February and formed a plan which was wholly inconsistent with and destructive of the plan of the General Reserve. This plan of the British and French Commanders-in-Chief was unknown to Foch. That is Captain Wright's belief.

The immediate consequence was that the General Reserve vanished, for the Italians at once withdrew their assent. Captain Wright does not blame Sir Douglas Haig—his refusal "was natural, for he could not undertake the double liability of taking over more French line (as far south as Bosisio) and feeding the General Reserve as well." But the defeat of Gough's Army in March at once became inevitable if the Germans should attack him.

From the first week of March, when the plan of the General Reserve was abandoned, Gough's Army was doomed. During the fortnight that preceded the battle no one on the immediate Staff of Foch had any doubt that a catastrophe was inevitable.

It came. Reinforcements, which would have been speedily available if the major part of the General Reserve had been concentrated as Foch had planned, could not be brought up in time. And then, in the midst of disaster, after the British had sustained what Captain Wright describes as "the greatest defeat we have ever suffered in our history, measured by any standard," Foch was at last given his chance.

He was only appointed towards the middle of the day on Tuesday. But at a quarter to five, a few hours after his appointment, he managed to get through to Debeneay on the telephone. He now had authority to command. He at once ordered him to take all his troops out of the line farther south on a front of six miles, risk leaving a gap there, and send them up in front of Amiens. Against these, on the Wednesday, the last effort of the spent German wave broke itself.

So Foch, as soon as he was given a chance, found in himself at once . . . the means of retrieving the faults and errors of other leaders, and so saved them, but only just, on the edge of ruin.