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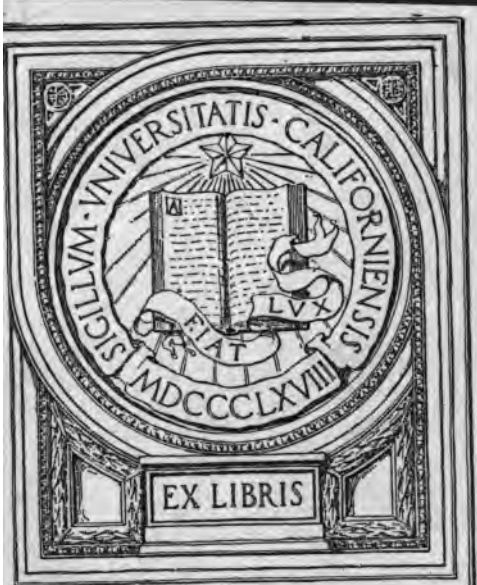
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THE STAGE GUILD PLAYS NO. 2

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# THE GREEN SCARF

AN ARTIFICIAL COMEDY  
IN ONE ACT BY  
KENNETH SAWYER GOODMAN



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AND YOURS  
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**CHARACTERS:**

A Man.....C. Frederick Steen  
A Woman.....Hazel Beck

This play was originally produced by the Guild Players,  
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COMPLETE LIST OF PLAYS UPON REQUEST

The place is a city park. The time is about two A. M. The setting is extremely shallow, consisting merely of a back drop, representing a line of shrubbery and above it a night sky. There is a lamp post in the center of the stage and below it a bench, at the opposite ends of which sit THE MAN and THE WOMAN, with their shoulders slightly turned to one another. THE MAN is in evening dress and wears a silk hat and an Inverness overcoat. He is smoking a cigar and gloomily regarding the toes of his patent leather pumps, which he has thrust out in front of him. THE WOMAN, who is perhaps thirty years old, and of sleek and prosperous appearance, is exquisitely gowned as if for the opera and wears a sumptuous evening wrap. She has jeweled pendants in her ears and a green chiffon scarf thrown loosely about her neck. The faces of both are very white and expressionless in the moonlight, giving them the appearance of Marionettes.

As the curtain rises, THE MAN takes out his watch, glances at it, shrugs his shoulder, tosses away his cigar, and speaks without turning his head.

THE MAN. You have been sitting here almost an hour and the park is excessively damp. May I suggest that you are, perhaps, wasting valuable time?

THE WOMAN. Your insinuation is extremely stupid. I am not trying to scrape an acquaintance with you. I have been far too carefully brought up.

THE MAN. I had no intention of offending you.

THE WOMAN. I am not in the least offended. Since chance has thrown us together, I frankly admit that your interest is not wholly repellent. There is a certain comfort in feeling the reaching out of another's intelligence to explore the hidden strata of one's troubled and possibly kindred soul.

THE MAN. Once and under other circumstances I might have investigated the geologic structure of your sub-conscious ego with the avidity of a connoisseur. Tonight I am entirely engrossed with the consideration of my own.

THE WOMAN. How like a man! You are both selfish and incurious.

THE MAN. I am neither. In fact, I have put myself to the unspeakable inconvenience of waiting fifty-seven minutes simply to spare you a most unpleasant experience.

THE WOMAN. I am so sorry.



THE MAN. How infernally like a woman to say that.

THE WOMAN. You cannot irritate me with a phrase that has become quite familiar at my own breakfast table.

THE MAN. My dear madam, since you are evidently impervious to polite hints, I may as well give you the unvarnished truth. Had it not been for the fortuitous obstacle of your presence I should already have committed suicide.

THE WOMAN. How very odd?

THE MAN. Odd?

THE WOMAN. You have been delightfully frank. I will, therefore, be equally so. We are here for the same purpose.

THE MAN. How damned annoying.

THE WOMAN. I cannot see why?

THE MAN. Does it occur to you that, when two persons of opposite sex die together, they lay themselves open to the most salacious inferences on the part of the press?

THE WOMAN. I had supposed that suicide as a sequel to questionable adventure was generally undertaken in the privacy of a hotel. Surely a bench in the park—

THE MAN. I fear it will not be accepted as absolute guarantee of innocence. My mother and sisters would be inexpressibly shocked.

THE WOMAN. How like a man. You are thinking only of your own reputation. Have you a card and pencil?

THE MAN.—(*feeling in his pockets*)—I believe so, why?

THE WOMAN. I at least have some presence of mind. I shall write a note and pin it to my frock. I shall say that I have never even laid eyes on you before.

THE MAN. It would be simpler merely to move to another bench.

THE WOMAN. If anyone is to move, it is certainly your place as a gentleman.

THE MAN. I should be happy to accommodate you, but unfortunately this spot is hallowed for me by certain recollections.

THE WOMAN. I must insist upon remaining for precisely the same reason. I could not take my life elsewhere with any degree of satisfaction.

THE MAN. Oh, well, I suppose this is what comes of having sacred associations with localities of a public or semi-public nature.

THE WOMAN. Quite so. One is obliged to share one's rights with so many other people.

THE MAN. Before we discuss the question of rights, may I presume to ask what has driven you to this desperate and irrevocable step?

THE WOMAN. I hope you grant that it is the first duty of every advanced person to express his true character in terms of art or action?

THE MAN. I must admit that I fail to see the connection.

THE WOMAN. You will perhaps understand me better when I say that in spite of all indications to the contrary, I feel that I possess the soul of a Lucretia Borgia.

THE MAN. In that case, I should think murder, or possibly arson, a more suitable means of self expression.

THE WOMAN. If I could bring myself to commit them, yes. But I have been far too carefully brought up. I am completely the creature of my early education and environment. I cannot even sit through a mildly immoral play without a distinct feeling of nausea.

THE MAN. I have been told that morality is the desirable result of altruistic concepts applied in the so-called interests of society,

THE WOMAN. I cannot willingly subscribe to any system which destroys the character of the individual, however vicious, for the benefit of a large number of ordinary persons whom one is not in the least likely to meet.

THE MAN. But with a natural predilection for evil, surely a little firmness on your part—

THE WOMAN. How little you realize the life of a female child in a Christian home. The seven deadly virtues may be grafted upon her as easily as tomatoes upon a rose bush.

THE MAN. I fear that I am neither a horticulturist nor a Christian.

THE WOMAN. For years I have done everything possible to undermine my own rigid puritanism. I have steeped myself in current poetry and fiction. I have cultivated the acquaintances of the most depraved men upon my dinner list. The result has always been the same. They invariably reform and have the bad taste to attribute it to my influence.

THE MAN. I cannot pretend to advise you. My own career has been singularly blameless. But it occurs to me that one may often be influenced by the opinion of others.

THE WOMAN. Alas, my friends know me far too well. I have even laid myself open to the suspicion of tampering with the seventh commandment without occasioning my husband a moment's uneasiness. When I most brazenly expose myself to the breath of scandal, scandal, I regret to say, holds it breath.

THE MAN. Your final act then is in the nature of a protest?

THE WOMAN. More than a protest. A vindication.

THE MAN. Quite so. And by what means do you intend to accomplish your purpose?

THE WOMAN.—(*fumbling in the sleeve of her opera cloak*)—I think they call it an automatic pistol. I took it from my husband's dressing case. Perhaps, you can instruct me in its use.

THE MAN. With the greatest pleasure.

THE WOMAN.—(*a little taken aback*)—Oh!

THE MAN. I mean—

THE WOMAN.—(*handing him the pistol somewhat coolly*)—Thanks, very much.

THE MAN.—(*after examining the pistol*)—It appears to be in working order, but where are the cartridges?

THE WOMAN. Cartridges? Cartridges? I don't think I quite understand.

THE MAN. Ha, ha! How devilishly like a woman.

THE WOMAN. I demand to be told what you are laughing at?

THE MAN. I regret to inform you that the pistol is not loaded.

THE WOMAN. Impossible! I thought they were always loaded. How else do all the accidents occur? Do you mean to say that I cannot kill myself with it after all?

THE MAN. I daresay, if you could manage to swallow it, you might possibly die of indigestion.

THE WOMAN. You are unwarrantably facetious. I can see nothing comic in being obliged to return home alive.

THE MAN. That will not be necessary. I can fortunately share with you my own infallible means of self-destruction. (*He produces a small bottle from his waistcoat pocket.*) Two grain tablets. I have quite enough to exterminate at least three tables of bridge.

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THE WOMAN. After your display of levity at my expense, I cannot put myself under even temporary obligations to you.

THE MAN. As you like, of course.

THE WOMAN. May I see the bottle?

THE MAN. Certainly. (*He hands her the bottle.*)

ro  
THE WOMAN.—(*after reading the label*)—Ha ha, ha! How exquisitely like a man!

THE MAN. Pray be good enough to explain.

nd  
THE WOMAN. You have evidently picked up the wrong bottle.

THE MAN. Impossible! I picked it up in the dark. When one picks up a medicine bottle in the dark, one always gets the poison if there is any lying about.

THE WOMAN.—(*rising and handing back the bottle*)—This, however, contains only throat lozenges. I must bid you good-night.

THE MAN. Don't go! I shall think of something presently. We might drown ourselves in the lagoon, for instance.

THE WOMAN. Do you swim?

THE MAN. It is one of my minor accomplishments, yes.

THE WOMAN. Then your suggestion is quite as futile as your recent assumption of superiority. The chivalrous instinct of the male animal would certainly assert itself. You would end by saving us both. Beside I should ruin my frock.

THE MAN. How like a woman. You are thinking only of appearances.

THE WOMAN. Is it not the function of the upper classes to set an example in the matters of neatness and economy?

THE MAN. Perhaps you are right. There is, of course, this lamp post. It would make an excellent gallows.

THE WOMAN. But we have no rope.

THE MAN. I have read somewhere of a French poet who managed to hang himself successfully with a pair of his mistress' garters.

THE WOMAN.—(*stiffly*)—If you have ever read the back pages of the magazines, you must realize that I cannot furnish the articles mentioned without at least partly disrobing.

THE MAN. I cannot for the moment think of anything else.

THE WOMAN. I fear you are gifted with a low imagination.

THE MAN. But what else can you suggest?

THE WOMAN. Since we cannot apparently avoid an otherwise unpardonable degree of familiarity, I might suggest your—your—

THE MAN. Suspenders?

THE WOMAN. Thank you.

THE MAN. My dear Madam, abstinence and rigorous exercise have thus far preserved my figure. I don't wear them.

THE WOMAN. How like a man! You have allowed your personal vanity to deprive you of a valuable aid in the gravest emergency.

THE MAN. Ha! I have it! May I examine that scarf of yours?

THE WOMAN.—(*unwinding the chiffon scarf from about her neck*)—How stupid of me not to have thought of it before. It is two yards and three-quarters in length. (*She hands him the scarf.*)

THE MAN.—(*testing its strength*)—Excellent! This ought to hold my weight nicely.

THE WOMAN. I hope you know how to go about it. A bungling attempt would, I am sure, prove most distressing.

THE MAN. I shall fasten the scarf just below the lamp. I shall then fasten the noose about my neck and jump from the back of the bench. Let me see—allowing for the give of the material, yes, it will do very nicely.

THE WOMAN. But afterward? What am I to do?

THE MAN. Unless you are more than ordinarily dense, you can easily imitate my procedure in every detail. You have only to take me down and unfasten the noose.

THE WOMAN. No! You have grossly overestimated my physical strength. I could never go through that part alone.

THE MAN. I had not thought of that.

THE WOMAN. It is your obvious duty as a gentleman to hang me first.

THE MAN. My dear Madam, I have always had an old fashioned compunction against even striking a woman. I ought not to be expected, at my age, to alter my principles to the extent of executing one in a public park.

THE WOMAN. You are most unkind.

THE MAN. Suppose at the very moment I had you neatly suspended we are subjected to an interruption by the park policeman.

THE WOMAN. Again you are thinking only of yourself.

THE MAN. I am not prepared to face a charge of murder simply for the sake of being polite.

THE WOMAN.—(*haughtily*)—Return me my scarf.

THE MAN. May I not first make use of it myself?

THE WOMAN.—(*sitting down again*)—Certainly not! Your own instincts of delicacy should prevent your asking a favor of one whose confidence you have so grossly abused.

THE MAN.—(*handing back the scarf*)—I am indeed sorry! But could you not return home and after a proper interval of rest repeat your attempt some other night?

THE WOMAN. No! In every well ordered existence there is but one hour and one place for the accomplishment of each fixed resolve. The briefest delay has often served to reduce an otherwise significant action to mere futile tragedy or burlesque.

THE MAN. I do not exactly follow you.

THE WOMAN. Eight years ago tonight, my husband proposed to me on this very bench. Tomorrow is the seventh anniversary of our wedding. He is a creature of habit and sentiment. Unless he reads of my death in the morning paper while he is eating his breakfast, I am sure the news will have very little effect on him.

THE MAN. Ha ha, ha! How confoundedly like a woman!

THE WOMAN. What are you laughing at now?

THE MAN. If you had taken the slightest trouble to inform yourself you would know that the last edition of the morning papers has already gone to press.

THE WOMAN. You are quite certain of what you say?

THE MAN. I am not in the habit of making reckless or incorrect assertions.

THE WOMAN.—(*rising*)—Then there is absolutely no point in carrying out my scheme. At least not until this time next year. You have saved me from committing a banality. I thank you. (*She extends her hand.*)

THE MAN. You are not going?

THE WOMAN. I can see no further occasion for remaining. I have detained you too long as it is. You may, however, keep my scarf.

THE MAN. Thanks, but I cannot allow you to trot about at this time of night unescorted. (*He glances at his watch.*) I have ordered a taxi to be waiting at the end of this path. It should be there now.

THE WOMAN. How like a man! You have provided for the possibility of altering your resolution at the last moment.

THE MAN.—(*cheerfully*)—Quite so! The prerogative is confined, I believe, to no particular race, age or sex.

THE WOMAN. You have forfeited your last claim to my respect. Are you weak or merely an inconsequent trifler?

THE MAN. I am both. I admit that I had no particular reason for departing this life. I am equally willing to admit that I see no particular reason for remaining alive other than—

THE WOMAN. Other than what?

THE MAN. Other than the desire to continue this acquaintance.

THE WOMAN. In a city of this size, we are, I am happy to say, quite unlikely to meet again.

THE MAN.—(*producing the card and pencil*)—On the contrary. I am not unknown in society. If you will be good enough to write your name and address, I daresay I can find some mutual acquaintance who will place me on your left at dinner in the near future. (*He hands her the card and pencil.*) It is even possible that before the year is out I may be able to assist you upon the downward path.

THE WOMAN. It is really good of you to offer, but I fear that I am quite incorruptible. (*She writes upon the card.*)

THE MAN. I can only do my best.

THE WOMAN.—(*handing back the card*)—Here is the card. I feel, however, that you are only laying yourself open to an inevitable and blighting reformation.

THE MAN. You need have no fear on that score. I have always prided myself upon an utter lack of the moral sense. I cannot even distinguish between the Decalogue and the Decameron.

THE WOMAN. That is at least a ray of hope.

THE MAN. And now may I suggest that, although the morning papers have already gone to press, the cafes are still open. I would be charmed to have your company at supper, or shall we call it breakfast?

THE WOMAN.—(*drawing herself up*)—You presume upon our slight acquaintance. Without a more formal introduction, I could not think of accepting your hospitality. (*There is the sound of an auto horn.*) I shall, however, accept your offer of a conveyance.

THE MAN. Permit me to escort you, then.

THE WOMAN. By no means. I am not a prude, but what would the driver of the taximeter think?

THE MAN. Does it matter what he thinks?

THE WOMAN. It is one of the obvious duties of cultivated persons like ourselves, to preserve the ethical illusions of the inferior classes. Without them, they would become quite unbearable.

THE MAN. You are doubtless right again.

THE WOMAN.—(*extending her hand*)—I trust you will not have far to walk. Good-night.

THE MAN.—(*shaking hands and bowing in a most formal manner*)—Good-night. (*THE WOMAN adjusts her cloak and goes out in the direction indicated by the motor horn.*)

THE MAN *adjusts his eyeglasses and examines the card.*)

THE MAN. Um—ah—let me see! (*He looks at the card more closely.*) By Jove! 141 East! ——— How deucedly convenient. I shall ask my wife to call on her.

CURTAIN.

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