

MAKESHIFTS & REALITIES

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Makeshifts & Realities by Gertrude Robins

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GERTRUDE ROBINS

**MAKESHIFTS
& REALITIES**

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The fee for each and every amateur representation of either play is one guinea. If both plays are performed on the same occasion the inclusive fee is one guinea and a half.

Fees payable in advance to Mr. Edwin T. Heys, Gaiety Theatre, Manchester.

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<i>To be played as a Sequel to "Makeshifts" or independently.</i>	



MAKESHIFTS

A Lower Middle-Class Comedy

PRODUCED BY Miss HORNIMAN'S COMPANY
AT THE GAIETY THEATRE, MANCHESTER,
OCTOBER 5th, 1908.

CHARACTERS.

CAROLINE PARKER, a Suburban young woman of about 30. Nervous mannerisms. Brown hair much frizzed. Dressed in a mauve silk tight-fitting blouse and dark-green skirt.

DOLLY PARKER, her younger sister, aged 28. Wearing a dark blue dress with cheap lace collar. Inclined to brusquerie and superficial sharpness.

MR. THOMPSON, the Parkers' lodger. Chemist's Assistant. Tall, thin, and rather shy.

MR. ALBERT SMYTHE, Stockjobber's clerk. Short sandy-haired. Moustache with waxed ends, shiny face. General blatant appearance.

MAKESHIFTS

The Parkers' sitting-room. Large table R.C. Window L. with small table and ferns. Lace curtains, and canary in cage. Sideboard up R. with cruet-stand, biscuit-box, silver teapot, etc. Chairs round centre table. Fireplace back L.C. with overmantel, mirror, clock and ornaments. Easy chairs on either side of fireplace.

CAROLINE sewing at back of table R. DOLLY reading novelette by fire L.

CAROLINE. You didn't forget to order the soap from Brown's, did you, Dolly?

DOLLY. No—I mean yes—I did order it. [Pause.]

CAROLINE. [Turning lamp up.] Did you tell them we must have it by nine?

DOLLY. [Impatient.] Oh—yes. Don't worry.

CAROLINE. It's very well to say, "Don't worry," but you forget Mrs. Hunt's coming at eight, and there's an awful lot of washing this time. [Pause.] I shall have to get up at half-past six to get the boiler going properly. [Pause.] Mrs. Cox called this afternoon.

DOLLY. Oh, what did she want.

CAROLINE. Nothing. Only wasted my time. [Pause.] All her pipes burst last week—quite spoilt one of her drawing-room chairs, she says.

DOLLY. How exciting.

CAROLINE. You are grumpy to-night, Dolly.

DOLLY. Well, I'm tired.

CAROLINE. So am I, but I don't see that's any reason for being disagreeable. [Pause.] Oh, Dolly, isn't it a nuisance, we've got to have some coal in, and the last lot aren't paid for yet, and they're 28s. now.

DOLLY. Well, I suppose we shall have to use the fifteen shillings I'd saved towards a new jacket.

CAROLINE. I wish we needn't do that. You haven't had a new one for three years.

2/10/19

DOLLY. What's it matter? There's no one to notice what I wear.

CAROLINE. Well, perhaps you might lend it, and then I'll give you some of Mr. Thompson's money at the end of the week, and when Ma gets her dividend she must make up the rest. [*Pause.*] Well, then, will you order half a ton to-morrow?

DOLLY. All right.

CAROLINE. Ma's been so difficult to-day, she quite tired me out.

DOLLY. Anything fresh?

CAROLINE. Oh, I don't know. She's got some new idea that she's being neglected, or that we don't confide in her or something.

DOLLY. Well, that's better than when she gets mopey and retrospective, and talks about her unhappy past.

CAROLINE. Still, Dolly, she has had a hard time of it.

DOLLY. Well, haven't we all, and isn't it going to be so world without end, amen?

CAROLINE. I don't know, I'm sure. [*Pause.*] Oh, Mrs. Cox says those new people two doors off are an awfully funny lot. [*Dolly puts book in her lap and listens.*] They haven't any carpets, and they don't touch butcher's meat, and their servant actually has her meals with the family. [*Dolly laughs.*] Mrs. Cox thinks they must be Socialists or Christian Scientists. There are some funny people in the world.

DOLLY. Yes, aren't there? Why, I was talking to that new teacher we've got to-day, and, my dear, if you please, she's a Suffragette.

CAROLINE. Oh!

DOLLY. Of course I didn't say what I thought of them, but she's evidently deadly serious. It beats me how people can make such idiots of themselves. A lot of good a vote would be to me.

CAROLINE. But I think there may be something in it, you know. [*Pause.*] By the bye, did you wash up the tea things, Dolly?

DOLLY. Oh, bother! No. I'll do it when I get Ma's supper. [*Putting her book down and looking up.*] Gracious, why, you've changed your blouse. [*Meaningly.*] I didn't know anyone was coming this evening.

CAROLINE. Don't be so—so—I suppose I can put something fresh on if I like, after spending the whole day in that stuffy, pokey kitchen, stewing over the hot fire, and washing up greasy saucepans I'd just like you to try it for a bit and see how you like it.

DOLLY. I shouldn't like it at all, my dear. But then, I don't suppose you'd enjoy seven hours a day with a lot of horrid, noisy, fidgety children driving you mad. Why, you'd chuck it up the first row you got into with the Inspector.

CAROLINE. No. I expect it must be pretty sickening.

DOLLY. I wouldn't mind so much if there were any chance of things ever being different. But there's nothing to look forward to. It will always be the same. [*Looking into fire.*] I shall go on hammering DOG dog, CAT cat, and twice eleven are twenty-two, and twice twelve are twenty-four, into wooden-headed brats, and you'll be skivvy and housekeeper combined, and look after Ma, and wait on the lodger, and scrape and contrive to make both ends meet, till we're both too old for anything.

CAROLINE. Oh, don't be so depressing, Doll. It gets on my nerves. Besides, you never know, something nice might happen. Why, one of us might—might—might even get married!

DOLLY. You might, you mean. Fat lot of men wanting to marry a school-teacher! Bless'm—they'd be afraid they'd get Euclid instead of eggs and bacon for breakfast, and that their buttons would never be sewn on. Oh, no. Men fight shy of girls like me. They think we're too clever; they like nice, domesticated, homely girls. [*Pause.*] Besides, what chance do we have of ever getting to know fellows? We've no father and no brothers,—How should I get to know men at a girl's school, or you sticking at home all day? Why, we don't see a man to speak to from one week's end to another, except Mr. Thompson. And there's precious little romance about our lodger as far as I am concerned, even though he is a chemist's assistant.

CAROLINE. [*Rising and putting on half-finished blouse which she has been making.*] Oh, but he's a god-send to us. I don't know how we should have managed the rent without his thirteen shillings every week. [*Crossing over towards fireplace.*]