

**THE HONEYMOON:
A COMEDY IN
THREE ACTS**

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The Honeymoon: A Comedy in Three Acts by Arnold Bennett

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A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

ARNOLD BENNETT

Author of "The Old Wives' Tale," "Polite Farcos,"
"How to Live on Twenty-four Hours a Day"

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CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

CEDRIC HASLAM

CHARLES HASLAM

MR. REACH HASLAM

THE BISHOP OF COLCHESTER

MR. FRAMPINGTON

CUTBERT

GASTON

FLORA LLOYD

MRS. REACH HASLAM

NOTES ON CHARACTERS IN ACT I

FLORA LLOYD. Beautiful. Elegant. Charming. All in the highest degree possible. The whole play turns on these qualities in her.

CEDRIC HASLAM. Renowned aviator. The taciturn inventive Englishman. Very self-controlled, but capable of passionate moments. Obstinate, with enormous force of character. His movements, gestures, and speech have a certain air of slow indolence, but are at the same time marked by that masculine harshness and brusqueness which would specially appeal to a woman like Flora. No one could guess from his demeanour that he is famous.

CHARLES HASLAM. Boyish. Impulsive. Very self-centred. But very agreeable.

MRS. REACH HASLAM. Majestic. Richly dressed. The foremost woman-novelist in England and America. Her name a household word. No sense of humour. But she is very, very far from being a fool, and the part is not a low-comedy part. This play shows the least sympathetic side of her.

MR. REACH HASLAM. The husband of a celebrity. Strong sense of sardonic humour, which has very little outlet. Always exceedingly polite and even deferential to his wife, yet preserving his own dignity. A prim, dry, precise man.

GASTON. There are scores of Gastons in the hotels and restaurants of the West End. He does not differ from the type.

THE HONEYMOON

ACT I

SCENE.—*A sitting-room in the only hotel at a small seaside resort in Essex. Old-fashioned Victorian furniture, producing a picturesque general effect. Some modern touch, such as a framed coloured advertisement of pneumatic tyres. Door, R., leading to hall, principal entrance, and kitchen. Door, L., leading through a porch to the garden. A large window, divided into three portions by stonework, at the back: the panes are small; one of these portions is open, the others are closed. Through the window can be seen a view of the garden, and the sea in the distance. The fireplace is not seen. Cedric and Flora are seated at either side of a tea-table.*

TIME.—*Afternoon in June. Sunshine.*

Flora. Another cup? [*Cedric, looking at her, makes no reply.*] *Cedric!* Another cup? [*with a touch of very good-humoured impatience. Cedric rises, goes round the table to her, takes hold of her, and kisses her.*]

Cedric [*standing over her, she looking up at him*]. I've been wanting to do that for about thirty solid minutes.

Flora. Then why didn't you, my poor boy? [*Cedric gives a gesture to show that he doesn't know why*] . . . Instead of keeping us both waiting like that! [*Reflective.*] And yet it's barely three hours since you kissed me in the vestry!

Cedric. Vestry be dashed! And here's another thing I've been wanting to do [*he carefully kisses her ear*].

Flora. My ear!

Cedric. Precisely, your ear! Strange! . . . And I can tell you something even stranger. Shall I? [*She nods.*] When I'm standing over you I feel as if I should like to kill you! Yes, really, Fluff! It takes me all of a sudden! You know — when you lean out of a high balcony and you feel you must jump — well, it's that sort of a feeling.

Flora. What particular *kind* of homicide?

Cedric. Oh! [*at a loss*] a kind of a fierce crushing. [*She smiles.*] You think it's justifiable?

Flora. I don't mind so long as I know my risks.

Cedric [*after staring at her with a convinced air*]. We shall get on together all right!

Flora. Yes, I think we're doing rather well so far, considering [*turning the ring on his finger*].

Cedric. Considering what?

Flora. Considering how nervous we both are, naturally [*drops his hand*].

Cedric [*moving away. Half to himself*]. Yes, and we shall keep getting more nervous!

Flora [*resuming exactly the same matter-of-fact tone as when she first put the question*]. Another cup?

Cedric [*similar tone*]. How many have I had?

Flora. I don't know, dear.

Cedric. I've had enough, then.

Flora. Well, about our programme. Suppose we settle it a bit.

Cedric. Yes, let's. [*Sits down.*]

Flora. I do think it was a lovely idea to start off without any programme at all! Heaven itself couldn't say where we shan't be this time next week!

Cedric. Well, subject to your approval, I don't mind informing heaven that anyhow we shan't be here.

Flora. Tired of this place — already?

Cedric. On the contrary! But it's too small to hold a couple that have just walked out of a vestry. One hotel, one flagstaff, one boat, one sea. No pier, no tea-shop, no concert, and very probably no moon.

Flora. Extraordinary how even three hours of married life will change a man! You always used to be rather keen on quietness, solitude, old flannel suits, and so on.

Cedric. Now look here, Fluff! This honey-