

**THE KNITTING CLUB MEETS
OR JUST
BACK FROM FRANCE;
A COMEDY IN ONE ACT**

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The Knitting Club Meets or Just Back from France; A Comedy in One Act by Helen Sherman Griffith

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HELEN SHERMAN GRIFFITH

**THE KNITTING CLUB MEETS
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The Knitting Club Meets

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Just Back from France

A Comedy in One Act

By

HELEN SHERMAN GRIFFITH

*Author of "Getting the Range," "An Alarm of Fire,"
"The Dumb Waiter," "A Large Order," "Maid
to Order," "A Man's Voice," "A Psychological
Moment," "The Scarlet Bonnet," "The
Wrong Miss Mather," "The Wrong
Package," etc.*

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The Knitting Club Meets

CHARACTERS

ROSAMOND ALLEN, *the hostess.*

ELEANOR KENT, *her best friend.*

LUCY GORDON,

ALICE LANE,

MYRA FIELDS,

GRACE BENNETT,

LYDIA GREENE,

NORA, *the maid.*

JANE RIVERS, *just back from France.*

} *members of the Knitting Club,*



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The Knitting Club Meets

SCENE.—ROSAMOND ALLEN'S *luxuriously furnished drawing-room. A tea table at one side; exits back and R. Time, the present.*

(*Curtain rises disclosing ROSAMOND putting finishing touches to room.*)

ROSAMOND (*looking at clock*). I do hope every one will be prompt, so we can get a lot of knitting done. Sometimes I wonder if we wouldn't get more accomplished if each of us stayed at home and worked quietly by ourselves. We talk so much—and eat so much!—at these meetings. By the way, has Norah brought in enough teacups? (*Surveys tea-table.*)

(*Bell heard. Slight pause; then enter NORAH, back.*)

NORAH. Mrs. Kent, ma'am.

(*Draws aside for ELEANOR'S entrance.*)

ROSAMOND (*cordially, coming forward*). Oh, Eleanor, I'm so glad you've come early! (*ELEANOR returns her greeting coldly, and crosses room. ROSAMOND, stopping NORAH as she goes out, back.*) Norah, have you arranged the knitting display in the library, as I said?

NORAH (*pausing in doorway*). Yes, ma'am.

ROSAMOND. And that last package—that came this morning. Did you open it and put the things with the rest?

NORAH (*hesitating and glancing at ELEANOR*). I don't think the last package was meant for the knitting display, ma'am.

ROSAMOND. Indeed? I thought it was labeled for that. What was it, Norah?

NORAH (*embarrassed*). I—I—Mrs. Kent can tell you, ma'am. Her card was in it.

ELEANOR (*turning at sound of her name*). What's that? Oh, yes, I sent my things over this morning. Sorry to have been so late with them, Rosamond.

ROSAMOND. Fetch the package to me, Norah.

NORAH. Yes, ma'am.

(NORAH *crosses room and exits, R.* *During this dialogue ELEANOR has wandered impatiently about room.*)

ROSAMOND (*laughing*). Why do you suppose Norah thought your things did not belong to the rest, Eleanor? Are they so beautifully done?

ELEANOR (*absent-mindedly*). I don't know, I'm sure. Rosamond, I came early this afternoon, to ask you—

Enter NORAH, R., carrying a heap of gay colored knitted garments.

NORAH (*holding them out to ROSAMOND*). These is them, ma'am.

ROSAMOND (*staring, and lifting card that lies on top of heap*). Why, Eleanor, what are these?

ELEANOR (*turning from restless fingering of books and photographs on table*). What are what? Oh—those are my contribution to the knitting exhibition.

ROSAMOND. But—

ELEANOR (*in vexed tone*). You mean that they are not of a hideous gray or khaki color? Well, why should they be, pray? The poor men must *starve* for color.

NORAH (*thoughtfully*). Perhaps they'se fer "The Rainbow Division," ma'am.

ELEANOR (*sharply*). Nonsense, Norah. Don't be impertinent.

ROSAMOND (*quietly*). Put them with the others in the library, please, Norah. (*Exit NORAH, R., with bundle, sulkily. ROSAMOND, graciously.*) They are very beautiful, Eleanor. You might almost keep them for Christmas presents. (*Scats herself and takes up knitting.*)

ELEANOR (*throwing herself into a chair near ROSAMOND, and playing with her gloves*). Rosamond, is it true that some one is coming to address us this afternoon?

ROSAMOND (*surprised*). True? Why, of course. You yourself helped us to arrange it, at the committee meeting. I telephoned the Red Cross headquarters, as we agreed, and they have promised to send a speaker.

ELEANOR. Well, do you know who she is?

ROSAMOND (*a little irritated*). Of course I do. What are you driving at, Eleanor? Do you think I have been inefficient in getting this thing up?

ELEANOR. Who is the speaker to be?

ROSAMOND. I think her name is—Smith—I'm not sure. I have it down in my book. (*She crosses to writing desk, takes out a small memorandum book and brings it back, sitting down as she opens it.*) Yes, here it is. "Miss Isabel Smith," from somewhere in Ohio.

(*She holds open book out to ELEANOR.*)

ELEANOR (*apologetically, taking book*). Oh, I—I beg pardon. (*Glances at book.*)

ROSAMOND. What has got into you, Eleanor? You and I have worked on so many committees, and everything has always —

ELEANOR (*interrupting*). Ah, you did not read it all, Rosamond. You have noted here—(*reads*) "Miss Isabel Smith, or a substitute if she does not turn up in time."

ROSAMOND (*calmly, knitting*). They always make that stipulation at the Red Cross rooms.

ELEANOR. Well, I happen to know that there is to be a substitute this afternoon.

ROSAMOND. Well, what of it? You speak as if it were a tragedy. None of the club know Miss Smith, or have heard her speak, so they won't feel that they are missing anything.

ELEANOR (*tragically*). That is not my point.

ROSAMOND. Well, then, what is your point? I declare, Eleanor, you are very odd to-day. Do tell me what is the matter. Are you afraid they won't be able

to send a satisfactory substitute, and what has happened to Miss Smith?

ELEANOR (*frowning*). They have already chosen the substitute, Rosamond. (*Eyeing her suspiciously.*) Are you sure you don't know anything about it?

ROSAMOND. Why should I? Mrs. Roberts knows that if Miss Smith failed to come, a substitute would be perfectly satisfactory to us.

ELEANOR. But not this substitute. Rosamond, they are sending Jane Rivers here this afternoon.

ROSAMOND (*looking pleased*). Jane Rivers? Why, I did not know she had got back. How lovely! I wish I had known in time. I'd have had some roses for her.

ELEANOR (*indignantly*). "How lovely," indeed! Is that all your friendship for me is worth?

ROSAMOND. Why, Eleanor, what can you mean? What have I done?

ELEANOR. What have you done? You have forgotten that Jane Rivers and I are sworn enemies.

ROSAMOND. Oh, that old quarrel? Surely, Eleanor, you have not cherished that all these years?

ELEANOR (*offended*). It is not a question of "cherishing." Jane Rivers hurt my feelings beyond all forgiveness. A few years more or less do not matter when one's heart has been wounded to the core.

ROSAMOND (*mildly*). Oh, Eleanor dear, it was not as bad as that. It really was nothing more than a school-girl quarrel. You have exaggerated its significance by thinking of it too much.

ELEANOR. It is easy enough for you to talk, when it was not you who suffered.

ROSAMOND. But, my dear —

ELEANOR. Never mind "buts." The question is, what are you going to do about this afternoon?

ROSAMOND. What can I do? Everything must go on as arranged.

ELEANOR. And you are going to let her come to us—here—and preach to us?

ROSAMOND. I don't think she'll preach. Jane was never one of the preachy kind.

ELEANOR. My enemy set above me—here in the house

of my best friend! I never believed I should be so affronted!

ROSAMOND. I don't want to affront you, Eleanor. Nothing could be further from my thoughts! Why, my dear —

(Bell heard.)

ELEANOR *(turning to listen)*. They are beginning to come. I shall have to brazen it out. Don't let any of the girls know how I feel, Rosamond. I shall never let any one say that I was routed by Jane Rivers.

ROSAMOND. Oh, Eleanor, dear, I am so sorry —

NORAH *(in doorway, back)*. Miss Gordon, ma'am.

[Exit.]

Enter LUCY GORDON. *She is rather a silly person dressed in the height of fashion, and carries a magnificent knitting-bag.*

LUCY *(gushingly, coming forward)*. How do, Rosamond, dearie. *(Kisses her.)* And Eleanor, too. "The early bird"? *(Kisses her.)*

ELEANOR. If you mean you think I came early to catch the worm of gossip, you may rest comfortable. You haven't missed anything.

(She takes out her knitting, not gray or khaki, but bright pink, and sits in chair rather removed from others, and knits fast.)

LUCY *(gayly)*. What, honey, breaking the rules? Only soldiers' knitting here, you know.

ELEANOR *(without turning her head)*. This is for a soldier.

LUCY *(coquettishly)*. Oh—one on leave? *(Fumbles in her gorgeous bag.)* Where is my work?

(Bell heard. Slight pause.)

NORAH *(in doorway, back)*. Miss Lane, ma'am.

[Exit.]

Enter ALICE LANE, *dressed smartly but simply in tailored suit; carries cretonne knitting-bag.*