

**A BACHELOR'S BANQUET,
OR, AN
INDIGESTIBLE ROMANCE:
A FARCE IN ONE ACT**

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A Bachelor's Banquet, Or, An Indigestible Romance: A Farce in One Act by Lewis D. Humphrey

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LEWIS D. HUMPHREY

**A BACHELOR'S BANQUET,
OR, AN
INDIGESTIBLE ROMANCE:
A FARCE IN ONE ACT**

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A Farce in One Act

BY

LEWIS D. HUMPHREY

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A BACHELOR'S BANQUET.

CHARACTERS.

MAJOR POMROY, *another victim of Fate.*
DICK FOSTER, *engaged to Miss Mortimer.*
NAT STILLMAN, *engaging to Miss Oldfield.*
MRS. MORTIMER, *a presiding deity.*
DELLA MORTIMER, *daughter of Mrs. Mortimer.*
CONSTANCE OLDFIELD, *niece of Major Pomroy.*
MCGINNIS, *servant of Foster and Stillman, with the doubtful virtue of being heard and not seen.*

COSTUMES.

DICK FOSTER, *Evening Dress.*
MRS. MORTIMER, *Evening Dress.*
DELLA MORTIMER, *Evening Dress.*
MAJOR POMROY, *Ordinary Street Dress.*
NAT STILLMAN, *Ordinary Street Dress.*
CONSTANCE OLDFIELD, *Ordinary Street Dress.*



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A BACHELOR'S BANQUET;

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AN INDIGESTIBLE ROMANCE.

SCENE. — *The sitting-room in the bachelor apartments of FOSTER and STILLMAN. Mantel, C., back. Entrances, R., R. C., and L. General disorder. Newspapers flung about. Table covered with magazines; also dish containing mixture. Boots and slippers in left corner. Dressing-gown flung over armchair, R. Pipes and tobacco littered about. Walls covered with hunting and sporting paraphernalia. General effect of confusion and over-crowded room. White necktie and dress coat draped over looking-glass over mantel; also collar.*

(Enter DICK, R., covered from head to foot with apron, a soup-ladle in one hand and a salt-cellar in the other.)

DICK (*glancing anxiously at clock on mantel*). By all the gods! half-past five, and not even an *entrée* ready yet. (*Drops ladle and salt into chair, R.*) Here's a sweet state of things! (*Drops into chair, L.*) Confound the kitchen clock! Knocks off work without saying a word, and gets a fellow into a devil of a scrape! There, I thought there was plenty of time to get dinner ready, and they ought to be getting here now. By the way, where's the Sport? Good heavens! I hope nothing's happened to him. (*Rises, and paces the room as well as he can.*) Well, if he does not show up, we get no fruit. Great Scott! what's this? (*Looks at bowl on table.*) The salad dressing, as sure as I'm a biped! Well, that's only the sixth thing forgotten. Who's that? (*Stops and listens.*) Steps too light for Sport; must be they, as sure as fate. (*Rushes to mantel, flings off apron, and puts on collar and necktie.*) Talk of catching trains! My! but that was a good idea of mine, getting ready dressed to begin with. I foresaw some hitches, and it is better to be ready for an emergency. Now, when they come, I'll be all ready. Confound that necktie! (*Pulls at tie in vain.*) Oh, well, if you don't want to, you needn't. (*Stops and listens.*) They're not coming, anyway. That's a mean trick to play a fellow. Really, old fellow

(*talking to himself in glass, and still struggling with tie*), you're looking pale and worn. Brace up now. The situation's not so bad, after all. In the first place, you're engaged. Good! In the second, you have invited your *fiancée* and her mother to dinner at six. Not so good! In the third place, you are bound to cook the dinner yourself. Bad; but you couldn't help it. Your *fiancée* suggested it as a joke. You swore you could. She bet you couldn't. You, of course, with true sporting blood, took her up, and there you are. She promised she'd eat the dinner, and judge of the merits of her future husband as a cook. Mother-in-law knows nothing about it. Heaven be thanked! Another step. (*A knock on the door L.; DICK hurries on coat, smooths hair, and prinks generally.*) The hour has come (*looks around the room*), order or no order. (*Goes to door L., and opens with a flourish.*)

VOICE (*outside, L.*). Please, sir, here's the pudding you ordered.

DICK. Bless my soul, the frozen pudding! I'd forgotten all about it. Well—er—there's no room for it in here. Leave it there; I'll attend to it later. Thank you. Good-afternoon. (*Coming down.*) Seventh thing. But anyway the pudding's a departure, an extra. I am justified in forgetting that. (*Stops and sniffs.*) There's the soup burning, I'm sure of it. (*Starts for R. More steps heard without, R. C.*) Now, who can that be? (*Stops.*) Shall it be soup or door? Heads or tails? Heads, soup; tails, door. (*Produces coin.*) Tails it is, I'll be bound. (*Starts for door, R. C. Sound of knocks and kick.*)

NAT (*without; crossly*). Hurry up, can't you? I've been waiting here a year, with my arms full.

DICK. Keep cool, Sport, I'm coming. (*Opens the door.*)

(*Enter, R. C., NAT with arms full of bundles, which he throws anywhere, and drops into chair upon the liddle and sallah-cellar. Rises hastily.*)

NAT. Keep cool, did you say? What in the deuce is that? (*Looks at seat.*)

DICK (*laughing*). Oh, yes; the ladle and the salt. I'd forgotten them. Never mind. There are so many things, you know. (*Puts them on floor.*)

NAT. My dear fellow, that's painfully evident. Nobody but an engaged man—

DICK. I don't blame you for being sore with envy. (*Examines bundles.*) But seriously, Sport, if I could get hold of McGinnis, I'd smuggle him in here and make him fix up a dinner for us.

(*Throughout this scene, both try to clear up room by putting articles in other places, thereby increasing the confusion.*)

NAT. I'm glad to see you're coming round to my opinions, but it's too late now. McGinnis is probably far away.

DICK. I thought I would be all right alone.

NAT. Lack of confidence never was a weakness of yours.

DICK. What made you so late? Half-past five, and nothing ready except the frozen pudding and probably the guests.

NAT (*jumping up*). Great Scott! half-past five, and I'm not dressed yet.

DICK. I told you to dress before you started. Who's that coming? (*Steps approach door, L.; low knock.*)

NAT (*stopping at R.*). That's a man's step. Don't answer, for heaven's sake! (*Very agitated; another knock.*)

DICK. Why not? It may be Della. We can't leave them there, even if there isn't any dinner.

NAT (*goes L.; agitated*). Who's there? (*No answer.*)

DICK. Answer immediately! (*Long pause. Loud blowing through the key-hole.*) I shall find out what this means.

NAT (*mopping face*). Let me go. I'll talk with him. Er—what is that fearful smell like fried paint?

DICK. Lord! Something must be on fire! (*Rushes out, R.*)

NAT (*opening door L.; peers around outside*). In the name of heaven, McGinnis, what are you doing here?

VOICE (*outside*). Hush! hush! Are they there?

NAT. Who's here? What are you talking about?

DICK (*from other side*). Who's there, Nat?

NAT (*shouting*). McGinnis.

DICK. McGinnis? We're saved. Nab him. I can't leave this. (*Loud crash heard.*)

NAT (*shouting*). All right. Come in, McGinnis.

VOICE. I can't, I only wanted some money I forgot and left behind; but I didn't dare make myself known, for Mr. Foster told me not to show myself around here for the rest of the day.

NAT. Well, he wants you now. Hurry up.

VOICE. I've got an engagement with a lady. I really must be going.

NAT. Hold on. (*Following him out, L.*) Hurry up, Dick.

DICK. Hang on, I'm coming.

(*Enter at R., with dishcloth over arm, face covered with flour, a poker in hand. Rushes across stage and exit, L. Tussle outside. Shouts.*)

DICK (*without*). McGinnis, you've got to. (*Sounds of rapidly retreating footsteps; enter, R. C., MISS OLDFIELD and MAJOR POMROY; she with sunshade; he with cane; both laden with bundles.*)

MAJOR (*looking about*). No one here. This is very strange. (*Pompous, dignified.*)

CONSTANCE (*looking about*). Why I certainly thought I heard some one say, "Come in."

MAJOR. I'm sure, my dear, I did. Perhaps they're in another room. It sounded as if they called from a distance. (*Starts for L.*)