

**"TROUBLED WATERS":
AN ORIGINAL COMEDY
IN FOUR ACTS**

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"Troubled Waters": An Original Comedy in Four Acts by Charles Thomas & Walter Ellis

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CHARLES THOMAS & WALTER ELLIS

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AN ORIGINAL COMEDY
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CHARACTERS.

ARNOLD ERRINGTON	
CYRIL TREHERNE	
SIR CHARLES AISLABIE, BART.	
MR. PARLBURY	
DR. GERALD LANGTON	
MARTIN	
MRS. MATCHAM ROLLITT	
MRS. PARLBURY	
ETHEL PARLBURY	
GLADYS AISLABIE	

SCENES.

ACT I.

NAPLES. Sir Charles Aislabie's apartments; 12, Corso
Victor Emmanuel. April.

ACT II.

DENETHORPE ABBEY. The Drawing Room. August.

ACT III.

THE FIRS. The Studio. September.

ACT IV.

NAPLES. Same as Act I. October.

(Four months are supposed to elapse between Acts I
and II. A week between Acts II. and III., and a month
between Acts III. and IV.)

TIME, - - - PRESENT.

“TROUBLED WATERS.”

ACT I

SCENE:—*Furnished apartments in the Corso Victor Emmanuel, in Naples, in the occupation of SIR CHARLES AISLABIE. Picturesquely, but rather shabbily furnished, as if better days had been known. Doors L. C., R. I. E., and R. U. E. Window R. C., with balcony. A picture on an easel, covered by a curtain R.*

(Enter MARTIN, ushering in ERRINGTON L. C.)

Martin.—If you'll take a seat, sir, I will tell Sir Charles you're here.

Erring.—All right. (Exit MARTIN, R. I. E.) What does he want with me, I wonder? Would like to see me very particularly, his messenger said. I heard he was in low water.

(Enter SIR CHARLES, R.)

Sir C.—My dear Errington, I'm delighted to see you! In fact, hearing you were yachting in the Mediterranean, I've been on the lookout for you some time.

Erring.—That accounts for your message reaching me this morning, almost before the yacht's anchor was down. Now, what can I do for you?

Sir C.—You guessed that I wanted something?

Erring.—Well, yes, and I was very pleased that you thought of me.

Sir C.—That's very kindly said. Fact is, Errington, I'm in a difficulty.

Erring.—How much?

Sir C.—No, no, my boy, it's not that, for a wonder. (Pause.) You remember my little daughter, Gladys?

Erring.—Of course, and a dear child she was—

Sir C.—Ah! Her mother was an angel—too good for me and for this world—so she left it. Until Gladys grew up I devoted all my spare time to her; then she began to ask questions about my time that wasn't spare, so I sent her to school. This left me free to follow my social, sporting, and theatrical tastes—until a year ago, I did follow them pretty rapidly—then came the smash, and I had to sell the old place to pay my debts. With what was left I meant to settle down—somehow, I didn't. The result is, what you see—(Going to picture on easel and drawing curtain.) This is Gladys' portrait, she sent it me the other day.

Erring.—(Starting involuntarily) What a lovely face! And where is she now?

Sir C.—Where she has been for the last five years, at a convent, near Brussels, finishing her education. Her education is finished, and she's coming home, if you can call this home.

Erring.—When do you expect her?

Sir C.—To-day, at any moment.

Erring.—What a happiness for you!

Sir C.—Perhaps. As a child, Gladys was devoted to me; in her eyes, I have always been the incarnation of all that is good and noble. Now Errington, if she should ever find out what my life has really been, I shall look devilish small.

Erring.—Why should she ever find out?

Sir C.—Why? She's a woman.

Erring.—And is that the reason that you have kept her away from you all these years?

Sir C.—Ask yourself, my dear Errington, if the atmosphere, with which I am surrounded, is one fit for a young and innocent girl to breathe?

Erring.—(Shortly) Change the air.

Sir C.—Reform? (*Laughing bitterly.*) I have reformed. Circumstances have reformed me. But you can't touch pitch without being defiled, and the stuff clings, sir, clings damnably!

Erring.—My dear Sir Charles, I think you are too hard on yourself.

Sir C.—No, I'm not; you judge others by yourself, and can neither see nor believe in the seamy side of human nature. I do both, and I feel I'm not a fit and proper person to have charge of her.

Erring.—What do you propose to do?

Sir C.—Give her to someone who is a fit and proper person.

Erring.—You mean a husband, of course.

Sir C.—Yes, and of all the husbands that this world could offer, you, Arnold Errington, are the one I would choose.

Erring.—(Staggered.) I?

Sir C.—Yes. Come, what do you say to my proposal?

Erring.—My dear Sir Charles, what a word and a blow man you are! I have never thought seriously of marrying—

Sir C.—Time you did.

Erring.—(Looking at picture.) If Miss Aislabie's face be an index to her character—

Sir C.—(As if hurt by the doubt expressed.) If? After all, (*with a sigh*) she is almost as great a stranger to me as she is to you. But if it be?

Erring.—Then he will be a lucky man who wins her love!

Sir C.—Aha! And why shouldn't you be the lucky man?

Erring.—(Dreamily, still looking at picture.) The whole idea is so new to me.

Sir C.—Of course, of course. You must have time to know her, and appreciate her. (*Pause.*) There, we won't discuss the matter further now, but—think it over, my dear boy, think it over.

(Enter MARTIN, L. C.)

Martin.—(To SIR CHARLES :) A gentleman has called, sir, to know if Mr. Errington is ready.

Erring.—It's old Parlbury, my fellow traveller; may he come up?

Sir C.—By all means. (to MARTIN) Ask the gentleman up.

(Exit MARTIN.)

Erring.—He's a good old sort, Parlbury. Mad after antiquities, of which he believes himself an infallible judge. As a matter of fact, his ignorance on the subject would fill the British Museum. (Enter PARLBURY, L. C., ushered in by MARTIN, who exits. PARLBURY carries a large jar under his left arm, rudely painted with birds and flowers.) Come along, Parlbury, and let me introduce you to Sir Charles Aislabie.

Parl.—(Entering, takes his hat off, and hangs it on the mouth of the jar, then holds his hand to SIR CHARLES) Delighted, I'm sure! (Shakes hands with SIR CHARLES.)

Erring.—Why, what in the world have you got there?

Parl.—(Putting jar with hat on it, on table carefully) Aha! A treasure, my dear Errington, a real art treasure!

Erring.—(Taking up hat) What, this?

Parl.—Don't be a fool. There (admiringly), a very perfect specimen of early Genoese pottery!

Erring.—(Examining it) Beautiful! And this, I presume, is an early Genoese bird, picking up an early Genoese worm?

Parl.—You're a Goth! Upon my word, Errington, I believe that even Mrs. Parlbury would have admired it.

(ERRINGTON up stage.)

Sir C.—Mrs. Parlbury! I met a Mrs. Parlbury when I was last at Denethorpe, some years since. She was very great on modern sanitation, I remember.

Parl.—Very likely, but I don't see much of her now.

Sir C.—Your sister-in-law, I presume?

Parl.—No, Sir Charles, my wife. (Sighs.)

Sir C.—(Uncomfortable) Indeed?—I—ah—(not knowing what to say.) Exactly.

Parl.—(Confidentially.) The fact is, Sir Charles, the paths of Mrs. Parlbury and myself have diverged of late years.

She was practical and modern, while I was artistic, and—

Erring.—Ancient.

Parl.—Don't you interrupt. I objected to her nineteenth century fads, and she sneered at my antiquarian tastes. So we separated. Ah! There's a lot of blanks in the matrimonial lottery!

Sir C.—There's an equal number of people always ready to dip their hands in.

Parl.—Which shows the natural tendency of mankind to make idiots of themselves. Why, there was Errington the other day with that widow at Malta—

Sir C.—(*Pricking up his ears*) Eh, what? What's that?

Erring.—(*Annoyed*) Oh, nothing!

Parl.—Nothing, indeed! Why, with your quixotic notions of honor and chivalry, I believe if I hadn't been there, you'd have married her out of pity!

Erring.—Nonsense! (*fuming*) It was a mere flirtation, nothing more. What an ass you are, Parlbury! Come, it's time we were off, the English post must be in.

Sir C.—Come back to lunch?

Erring.—It must depend on my letters. I may have to return to England this afternoon.

Sir C.—(*Disappointed*) This afternoon?

Parl.—Nonsense, Errington, I'm sure there will be no need to hurry away; you forget I've never been in Naples before.

Erring.—True (*with a glance at the portrait.*) I must not be selfish. (*SIR CHARLES secretly amused.*) So we'll be back to lunch, and you and Miss Aislabie must dine on board the yacht to-night. Come along, Parlbury (*going.*)

Sir C.—No, no, Mr. Parlbury looks tired.

Parl.—Ah! (*reseating himself.*)

Sir C.—And I'm sure he's thirsty.

Parl.—Ah-h-h!!

Sir C.—So he shall stop and have a glass of Chianti with me (*aside*)—and I'll pump him about the widow.

Erring.—Oh, all right.

Sir C.—You can get his letters for him, unless (*to PARL-*