

**THE DRONE: A PLAY
IN THREE ACTS, PP.
1-67**

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The Drone: A Play in Three Acts, pp. 1-67 by Rutherford Mayne

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RUTHERFORD MAYNE

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IN THREE ACTS, PP.
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THE DRONE
A Play in Three Acts
× By Rutherford Mayne *plout*
Samuel Beckett

LUCE & CO.
BOSTON

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MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

TO
SEVEEN

CHARACTERS

JOHN MURRAY, *A farmer.*

DANIEL MURRAY, *His brother.*

MARY MURRAY, *John's daughter.*

ANDREW McMINN, *A farmer.*

SARAH McMINN, *His sister.*

DONAL MACKENZIE, *A Scotch engineer.*

SAM BROWN, *A labourer in John Murray's
employment.*

KATE, *A servant girl in John Murray's
employment.*

ALICK McCREADY, *A young farmer.*

*The action takes place throughout in the kitchen
of John Murray in the County of Down.*

TIME *The present day.*

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A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

ACT I.

SCENE: *The farm kitchen of John Murray. It is large and spacious, with a wide open fire-place to the right. At the back is one door leading to the parlour and other rooms in the house, also a large window overlooking the yard outside. To the left of this window is the door leading into the yard, and near the door an old-fashioned grandfather's clock. Opposite to the fire-place on the left side is another door leading into Daniel Murray's workshop, and beside this door is a large dresser with crockery, &c. At the back beneath the window is a table near which KATE, the servant, a slatternly dressed girl of some thirty years of age or more, is seated. She is carefully examining some cakes of soda bread, and has a bucket beside her into which she throws the rejected pieces.*

KATE. That one's stale. It would break your teeth to eat it. *(She throws the cake into the bucket.)* And the mice have nibbled that one. And there's another as bad. *(She throws both pieces into the bucket.)*

(BROWN, the servant man, opens the door from yard and enters. He is elderly, and with a pessimistic expression of face, relieved somewhat by the sly humour that is in his eyes. He walks slowly to the centre of the kitchen, looks at KATE, and then turns his eyes, with a disgusted shake of the head, towards the dresser as if searching for something.)

BROWN. Well! Well! Pigs get fat and men get lean in this house.

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KATE. It's you again, is it? And what are you looking now?

BROWN. I'm looking a spanner for the boss. The feedboard to the threshing machine got jammed just when halfway through the first stack, and he is in a lamentable temper.

KATE (*uneasily*). Is he? (*She starts hurriedly to clear up the table.*)

BROWN (*watching her slyly to see what effect his words have*). And he's been grumbling all morning about the way things is going on in this house. Bread and things wasted and destroyed altogether.

KATE. Well, it's all Miss Mary's fault. I told her about this bread yesterday forenoon, and she never took any heed to me.

BROWN. Miss Mary? (*With a deprecatory shake of his head.*) What does a slip of a girl like that know about housekeeping and her not home a half-year yet from the boarding-school in the big town, and with no mother nor nobody to train her. (*He stares in a puzzled way at the dresser.*) I don't see that spanner at all. Did you see it, Kate?

KATE. No. I've more to do than look for spanners.

BROWN (*gazing reproachfully at her and then shaking his head*). It's a nice house, right enough. (*Lowering his voice.*) And I suppose old Mr. Dan is never up yet. I was told by Johnny McAndless, he was terribly full last night at McArns' publichouse and talking—ach—the greatest blethers about this new invention of his.

KATE. Do you say so?

BROWN. Aye. No wonder he's taking a lie this morning. (*He peeps into the door of the workshop.*) He's not in his wee workshop?

KATE. No. Miss Mary is just after taking up his breakfast to him.

BROWN. Some people get living easy in this world. (*He gives a last look at the dresser.*) Well divil a spanner can I see. I'll tell the master that. (*He goes out again through the yard door, and as he does so, MARY MURRAY comes through the door from the inner rooms, carrying a*

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tray with teacups, &c., on it. She is a pretty, vivacious girl about eighteen years of age.)

MARY. Who was that?

KATE. It's the servant man looking for a spanner for your father, Miss Mary. There's something gone wrong with the threshing machine.

MARY (*taking the tray to the table and starting to get ready to wash up the cups*). I do believe sometimes that Uncle Dan's a lazy man.

KATE (*assisting her at the washing and stopping as if astonished at the statement*). And is it only now you're after finding that out! Sure the whole countryside know'd it this years and years.

MARY (*sharply*). The whole countryside has no business to talk about what doesn't concern it.

KATE. Oh, well, people are bound to talk, Miss.

MARY. But then Uncle Dan is awfully clever. He's got the whole brains of the Murrays, so father says, and then, besides that, he is a grand talker.

KATE. Aye. He can talk plenty. Sure Sarah McMinn, that lives up the Cut, says its a shame the way he's going on this twenty years and more, never doing a hand's turn from morning to night, and she says she wonders your poor father stands him and his nonsense.

MARY. Who said that?

KATE Sarah McMinn told Johnny McAndless that yesterday.

MARY. Sarah McMinn? Pooh! That hard, mean, old thing. No. I believe in Uncle Dan and so does father. He'll make a name for himself yet.

KATE. Well, it's getting near time he done it.

MARY. And that Sarah McMinn they say just keeps her brother in starvation, and she just says nasty things like that about Uncle Dan because he doesn't like her.

KATE. Aye. He never did like people as seen through him, not but she is a mean old skin-a-louse. (*The voice of DANIEL MURRAY is heard calling from within.*) He's up, Miss.