# THE TEMPLETON TEAPOT. A FARCE IN ONE ACT

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The Templeton Teapot. A Farce in One Act by Grace Cooke Strong

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## The Templeton Teapot

A Farce In One Act

By
GRACE COOKE STRONG
Author of "Marrying Belinda," etc.

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### The Templeton Teapot

#### CHARACTERS

HORACE TEMPLETON, a collector of antiques.
PROF. ALGERNON GATES, bashful but persistent.
LEON BURNETT, a neighbor of the Templetons'.
ERIC DEAN, Burnett's brother-in-law.
MRS. TEMPLETON, Templeton's wife.
HILDA, his daughter.
SUE, his spinster sister.
FANNY BURNETT, Burnett's wife.

TIME :- Summer evening of present year.



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## The Templeton Teapot

SCENE.—Library in the Templeton home, a comfortable oldfashioned room, reflecting its owner's love for the antique. A door at R. leads into the hall; another door L., opens into an adjoining room. For furniture, a large desk strewn with books and papers, several easy chairs, and shelves containing books. The room is decorated with pieces of old china, dignified candlesticks, and various old-fashioned articles. In a prominent position on the mantel is a quaint silver teapot.

(As the curtain rises, Mr. Horace Templeton is seated at his desk writing, surrounded by several ponderous reference books. Mrs. Templeton enters L., carrying a large basket packed with cast-off clothing.)

MRS. T. (setting basket on floor near door R.). Hilda! (Goes to L.) Hilda! Horace, have you seen ——? (In despair.) Oh, it's of no use. Sue! (Enter Sue, L.) Sue, have you seen anything of Hilda?

Sue. She came in here after dinner,

MRS. T. (looking out R.). She must have gone out, for her

wraps are not in the hall. How unfortunate!

Sue. She will be at home presently. (Looks at basket.) I wouldn't leave that basket there, Celia. If—if Professor Gates should happen to call this evening he would surely stumble over it; the dear man is so near-sighted.

Mrs. T. (moving basket from door). It's only a few things that I've collected for poor Mrs. McLaffety. She's to send her boy for them. Did Professor Gates tell you that he was com-

ing this evening?

Sue (moving about nervously). Why, no-doesn't he usually call on Tuesday evenings?

MRS. T. (sitting down). Yes; and on Wednesday evenings

and Thursday evenings and Friday—I declare, I'm so worried about Hilda that I can't keep track of anything.

Sue (in surprise). Hilda?

MRS. T. Yes, Hilda. For weeks she has not been herself. I know that she has something on her mind, but I can't find out what it is. Her father is no help —— (Sound of doorbell.) I'm sure that's the evening paper; will you kindly get it, Sue? (Exit Sue, R. MRS. T. rises hurriedly and goes to desk.) Horace. (Pause.) Horace!

MR. T. (without looking up). Yes, yes.

Mrs. T. (in exasperation). Will you give me your attention one moment?

MR. T. (impatiently pushing aside his work). Celia, how many times must I tell you that I'm preparing an article for the press, entitled, "The Philosophy of our Forefathers as Revealed by their Kitchen Utensils," and that I cannot endure this constant interruption? (Resumes work.)

Mrs. T. You shall listen to me. Do you ever wonder at the increasing frequency with which Professor Gates calls here?

Mr. T. (impatiently). Well, Gates is a good fellow—fine family—most distinguished—that sort of thing.

MRS. T. Very true, and moreover, he is in love with Hilda.

Mr. T. Nonsense! He's twice her age.

Mrs. T. That doesn't matter. Hilda is old for her years; besides, she's in love with him.

MR. T. You must be mistaken.

MRS. T. (emphatically). I am not. Didn't you hear me telling Sue that Hilda is unhappy, moody, incomprehensible? Those are symptoms—trust me.

Mr. T. Well?

Mrs. T. I'm trying to determine your attitude toward this marriage.

(Sue appears unnoticed in door R., the paper in her hand.)

Mr. T. (irritably). You speak as if it were a settled thing. Mrs. T. It is—practically.

MR. T. Well, all I have to say is, if Professor Gates marries Hilda, they shall have the teapot.

(Resumes work. Sue gives a little cry.)

MRS. T. (turning violently). Sue, you frightened me. Sue. You were speaking of Hilda's marriage?

#### (Lays newspaper on desk. Sits down.)

MRS. T. Yes; we have the prospect of seeing her settled most comfortably.

Sue (in agitation). I wouldn't-you mustn't-she's too

young.

MRs. T. (sitting down and picking up the newspaper). Not at all. (Glances through paper.) Of course, since you've never married, you naturally think — (Springs from her chair.) For heaven's sake, Horace, the Wentworths were robbed last night of a thousand dollars' worth of silver!

Mr. T. (rising hastily and seizing paper). It can't be pos-

sible. Let me see !

MRS. T. (weakly). Burglars!

Sug. It's the third robbery on this street within a week!

Mr. T. (gloomily). We shall be the next victims, I am confident. Oh, why have I not carried the teapot to the safe deposit vault?

MRS. T. (indignantly). The teapot? I think that we have

other articles quite as valuable as the teapot.

MR. T. (pacing the floor in great agitation). Celia, are you crazy? Consider that teapot, which graced the tables of the English nobility in the seventeenth century when tea was first introduced into Europe, which passed into the hands of the Puritans in Cromwell's time, and was brought to this country in 1680, and which has been in our family for over two hundred years! Why, it's worth its weight ten times over in gold! (Picks up teapot and examines it lovingly.)

Mrs. T. I'm sure that no burglar would ever want it. My

rings are another matter.

SUE. We'll have to sit up all night.

MR. T. (replacing teaper on mantel). This shall not stay in the house another day. Fool that I have been to keep it so

long.

MRS. T. I'm more anxious about Hilda—out we know not where, and bandits on every corner. (Noise without.) Ah, here she is now. (Enter R., HILDA and PROF. ALGERNON GATES in street costumes, the latter perceptibly agitated.) Hilda, I'm so relieved that you have come. Good-evening, Professor.

PROF. G. (bowing nervously to every one). Good-evening. Oh, my dear Mrs. Templeton, such a painful experience for poor Miss Hilda!

Mrs. T. What has happened?

Mr. T. Some one please explain.

PROF. G. (sinking into a chair near Sue). A most horrible fright! (Mops his forehead.)

Mrs. T. I command you, Hilda, to tell me where you have

been.

HILDA (excitedly removing her wraps and tossing them and her purse in different parts of the room). Such an adventure, mother. I was crossing Elm Street in the shadow of the station, when a horrible man brushed against me, and, before I could prevent him, grabbed my purse, and was endeavoring to tear my watch from my waist—

Mrs. T. Mercy on us, has the child been robbed?

HILDA. He would have gotten away in a moment, had not a tall gentleman suddenly appeared from somewhere, who seized the ruffian and held him until the officer that my screams had summoned arrived.

MRS. T. Then what did you do?

Hilda. The strange gentleman had just offered to escort me home, when we met Professor Gates, who was kind enough to take me under his protection.

Mr. T. But your rescuer, child? To whom are you

indebted?

HILDA. I was so excited that I quite forgot to ask his name. Prof. G. An unpardonable oversight on our part, Mrs. Templeton.

Mrs. T. That is unfortunate! The whole affair is most

horrible.

HILDA. Horrible? I think it's splendid!

ALL. Splendid?

HILDA. It was an adventure. I'd never had one before; and, mother, he was so handsome!

MRS. T. The robber?

HILDA. No, no, the man who caught him. He was so big and masterful—quite the most attractive man that I have ever seen.

MRS. T. (glancing apprehensively at PROF. G.). Hush, dear, hush. You are all unstrung. You must lie down for a few moments. (Draws Hilda toward L.) You'll excuse us, Professor?