

**THE REBELLION OF MRS.
BARCLAY. A
COMEDY OF DOMESTIC
LIFE. IN TWO ACTS**

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The rebellion of Mrs. Barclay. A comedy of domestic life. In two acts by May E. Countryman

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MAY E. COUNTRYMAN

**THE REBELLION OF MRS.
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LIFE. IN TWO ACTS**

The Rebellion of
Mrs. Barclay

A Comedy of Domestic Life
In Two Acts

By
MAY E. COUNTRYMAN
Author of "Miss Parkington," etc.

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

The Rebellion of Mrs. Barclay

CHARACTERS

MORTON BARCLAY.
ROGER STUART, *a neighbor.*
DENNIS O'HARA.
ETHEL BARCLAY, *Morton's wife.*
RUTH CARTER, *Ethel's sister.*
MRS. BROWN, *Morton's sister.*
CORA, *her daughter.*
ELSIE STUART, *Roger's sister.*
MARY ANN O'CONNOR.



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The Rebellion of Mrs. Barclay

ACT I

SCENE.—*The dining-room at the BARCLAYS', Tuesday morning in summer. Doors R. and L. Window R. Dining-table with chairs C. Small serving-table L. Screen L. F. Shelf on wall at back of stage, on which are photographs, etc. Rocking-chair R.*

MORTON BARCLAY (*entering R.*). Eight o'clock, and breakfast not ready! I should think, after all I've said to Ethel about it, I might occasionally have my meals on time. (*Calls.*) Ethel! (*Listens; no answer.*) Confound it, where is everybody? (*Calls.*) Mary Ann!

ETHEL BARCLAY (*entering L., carrying coffee-pot and plate of rolls, which she puts on the table*). Did you call, Morton?

MORTON. Yes, I did. What's the matter with you? Are you getting deaf? And I would like to know why I can't have my meals on time once in a while.

ETHEL (*taking her place at the table*). Why, Morton, it's only eight o'clock. Here are your coffee and rolls, and Mary Ann will bring in the other things in a minute.

(*Pours coffee.*)

MORTON (*sitting down at table and reaching for a roll*). I thought I said I wanted my rolls warmed in the morning. This is as cold as a stone.

ETHEL. I did warm them, but it's hard to keep things warm on that new stove. Try this one,—this is better.

(*Passes plate of rolls, then cup of coffee.*)

MORTON. It's not much better. (*Tastes coffee.*) Great Scott! (*Makes up face.*)

ETHEL. Why, Morton, what's the matter? I'm sure the coffee is warm enough.

MORTON. Warm enough? Great Scott! I don't want to be scalded. Pass the cream, will you? You didn't put in half enough. (ETHEL passes cream pitcher and sugar bowl; he helps himself liberally; tastes coffee. She sits watching him anxiously.) You'll have to speak to Mary Ann about her coffee, Ethel; this stuff isn't fit to drink. That girl will have to learn to make better coffee than this. It gets worse every morning.

ETHEL. But I made the coffee this time, Morton.

MORTON. You did, eh? Funny you can't make better stuff than this. What were you helping about the breakfast for, anyhow? I thought you had a headache.

ETHEL. So I have, but that new stove you sent home bothered Mary Ann, and I was showing —

MORTON. That girl is the stupidest creature I ever did see. It's perfectly easy to run those blue-flame stoves. I could do it myself without the least trouble. (Looks around.) Where's my morning paper?

ETHEL. I don't think it's come yet.

MORTON. It's time it came. You know I always like my paper at breakfast time.

ETHEL. I'm sure I can't help it if it isn't here, Morton. Dennis always brings our mail in the morning, and —

MORTON. And I suppose the lazy fellow hasn't come yet. Give me some more coffee, will you? (Passes cup.)

ETHEL (filling it). I thought you didn't like it, Morton.

MORTON. Well, great Scott, I've got to have something to drink. Put cream enough in it this time, will you? No, I'll fix it myself, then I can get it right. I should think you might know how I like my coffee fixed by this time, but you don't seem to. (Puts cream and sugar in coffee. MARY ANN O'CONNOR enters L., carrying dish with steak and fried potatoes which she puts on table in front of MORTON. He looks at it frowning.) Is that steak fried? I like it broiled.

ETHEL. Why, Morton, you can't broil steak on a blue-flame stove. I would have given you something else for breakfast, only you insisted you wanted steak.

MORTON. So I did, and I should think I might have steak if I want it. Mary Ann, hasn't the mail come yet?

MARY. No, sor.

MORTON. That lazy Dennis is never on time!

MARY. If ye plaze, sor, it ain't Dinny's fault. The train's only just come in, sor, I heard it whistle.

MORTON. That train is always late. If they pretend to have a mail train in the morning, why on earth can't they have it on time? Bring the mail in here just as soon as it comes, Mary Ann, and don't stop to chatter half an hour with Dennis first.

MARY. No, sor,—I mane yis sor. (*Aside.*) Shure, an' the mather's cross agin this marnin', I'm thinkin'. [*Exit, l.*]

MORTON (*helping himself to steak and potatoes*). This steak isn't fried decently,—just look at the stuff! And those potatoes are just soaked in fat. Really, Ethel, you'll have to speak to Mary Ann about her cooking. I would like something fit to eat once in a while.

ETHEL (*reaching across table and taking a piece of potato*). Why, Morton, these aren't bad at all.

MORTON. They aren't fried the way I like them. I furnish the money to run this house, and I should think I might have my food cooked to suit me. Is this all the steak there is?

ETHEL. Yes; isn't there enough?

MORTON. Enough for me, but what about Ruth? I should think, Ethel, you might furnish food enough to go around. I'm sure I give you enough money.

ETHEL. I bought the steak just for you, Morton. Ruth doesn't care for meat in the morning.

MORTON. Why couldn't you say so, then? Where is Ruth?

ETHEL. She hasn't come down yet. You know she went to the dance last night with Roger, and I told her she needn't hurry this morning.

MORTON. Seems to me she and Roger Stuart are together a good deal. Not that I object at all. Roger will have money, and of course Ruth knows it will be a good thing for her if she can get him. And she's trying hard enough,—she's running over to the Stuarts half the time. I suppose that was why she was so anxious to visit you this summer.

ETHEL. Morton, how can you say such things! Ruth isn't that kind at all. She and Elsie Stuart are great friends, and Ruth goes over there to see her.

MORTON. Oh, I don't deny it's nice for her to have Elsie for an excuse.

ETHEL. Morton, I wish you wouldn't say such things about my sister!

MORTON. I'd like to know why I haven't a right to say what I please in my own house. You always —

MARY (*entering L., with newspaper and letter*). If ye plaze, sor, Dinny's brought the mail.

(*Puts them on table by ETHEL; exit L.*)

MORTON. What in thunder did she give the paper to you for? It's my paper, and I——

ETHEL. I'm sure I don't want it.

(*Hands paper to him; glances at letter.*)

MORTON. Well, I didn't say you did, did I? Who's your letter from? Why don't you open it, instead of sitting there staring at the address? That's just like a woman, trying to find out from the outside of an envelope who it's from, instead of opening it and looking at the signature. Sometimes I wonder——

ETHEL. If you'll give me a chance to speak, Morton, I'll tell you that the letter isn't mine at all, it's yours.

(*Gives it to him.*)

MORTON. Oh, it's mine, is it? Why couldn't you say so before? That looks like Amelia's writing,—I wonder if it is from her? I'm sure I don't see what she's writing to me for; she doesn't very often write.

ETHEL. Why don't you open it and find out, instead of sitting there staring at the address?

MORTON. I intend to. Give me time, can't you? I do wish you wouldn't be so impatient, Ethel. When you have a letter I notice you are never in a hurry to tell me what it's about. I have the hardest work getting anything out of you,—you are so secretive!

(*He opens the letter and reads. She starts to speak, then stops, looks at him impatiently, stirs her coffee and pretends to eat. Short pause, while he reads. Then he folds the letter and puts it back in the envelope.*)

ETHEL. What does Amelia want?

MORTON. Oh, she writes that she and Cora are coming here to-day to make us a visit. (*Takes up his paper.*)

ETHEL (*surprised*). What?

MORTON. I said she and Cora are coming to make us a visit. Cora has been sick, you know, and Amelia has had to take care of her, and she writes that they both need a change,

and as Cora likes the country they are coming here to make us a visit. They'll arrive some time to-day, so you had better tell Mary Ann to get the rooms ready this morning.

ETHEL. Oh, Morton! To-day? And Mary Ann has so much work planned for to-day! Why couldn't Amelia have let us know sooner?

MORTON. Perhaps she didn't think of it, or else she didn't think it was necessary. Amelia is careless about those things. It's a wonder she wrote at all. (*Reads his paper.*)

ETHEL. I wish she'd asked if it was convenient to have her. I'd so much rather put her off till next week. Mary Ann is so busy to-day, with the washing and all, and those rooms are not ready, there hasn't been a thing done to them for ages, and my head aches, and Amelia is hard company to have, anyway, and —

MORTON (*lowering his paper*). I don't see what you're making such a fuss about. I don't see why my sister and her daughter can't visit us just as well as your sister.

ETHEL. They can, of course, only —

MORTON (*impatiently*). Well, only what?

ETHEL. It isn't very convenient just now. Cora is awfully hard to get along with, she always makes me nervous, and just now after she has been sick she'll probably be worse than ever. Now, next week it would be —

MORTON. It isn't next week she wants to come, it's now. Cora is easy enough to manage if you only use a little tact and judgment. I don't see why you never got on better with Amelia, anyhow. It's probably your fault. You ought to be just as courteous to my sister as you are to your own. You have Ruth staying here with us, and I don't object, and I can't see why I can't have my sister here without your making a fuss over it. I must say you are getting very unreasonable, Ethel.

ETHEL (*taking out her handkerchief*). I don't mean to be unreasonable, but it's such warm weather, and I got tired out with those friends of yours last week, and purposely planned it so there wouldn't be anybody here this week, and to-day my head aches, and I—I —

MORTON (*impatiently*). For goodness' sakes, don't cry! I never could see why a woman wants to cry her eyes out over every little thing. (*RUTH CARTER appears in doorway R.*) And I must say I think you are making a good deal of fuss over nothing. I never could understand your attitude on that