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Maggie MacCarty Listens at the Door

AN IRISH MONOLOGUE

BY
MARY MONCURE PARKER

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Shure this was how it happened, Biddy Gilhooly—an' though 'twas sorry I was to hear thim fussin'—him an' her—yet 'twas dyin' laughin' I was listenin' at the other side of the shwing dure.

I hov nothin' agin this place, as you know, Mary O'Sullivan—barrin' one or two inconvaniences—sometimes they takes a strake of hovin' too mooch company—but I soon shows 'em by me haughty manner whin I've hod enough.

Make yersilves comfortable, girls—the fokes is home tonight an' is usin' the parlor thimsilves—so we'll hov to stay in the kitchen. Well, as I was sayin', this place is all right enough—the Master is a nice sort of a mon an' minds his own bisness an' seems stiddy enough—barrin' he's out till one or two onct or twiet a wake—but thot's shure not my affair and I think he do pinance—fer I hear her chewin' the rag ivery toime he cooms in late.

Well, this is how it was—I got it all patched together listenin' bechume courses, whin they was atin' dinner. It sames she says to him in the mornin', says she, “This is a holiday today—an' fwhot air ye goin' to do?”

“Oh—I don't know,” says he, “meet some of the byes I guess.”

“An’ play poker all afternoon—an’ lose money an’ I want a lot of new clothes,” says she. “Now Fred,” says she, “don’t do that—I’ll tell ye what—it’s our club day an’ I’ve asked ye so often an’ the other wimmen’s husbands go sometimes wid ’em an’—”

“Not on yer loife,” says he. “F’what do I want to git mixed up wid a lot of tabby-cats for?”

“Well, ye needn’t call ’em tabby-cats,” says she. “An’ they’re better than thim rid-faced, bald-headed old min ye play cards wid,” says she. “You ought to improve yer moind,” she says.

“To the Divvle wid my moind,” he says. “Is that what ye’re doin’ on the gad all day?”

An’ thru fer him it is, Biddy Gilhooly, she’s off on the gad all day—as soon as I gits her waist hooked up the back in the marnin’, off she goes on the hoof loike mad—an’ if it’s improvin’ her moind she is shure thin her brain ought to be bustin’ thru by this toime—but I ain’t sayin’ but f’whot she’s a plisant spoken lady at that.

Well, they wint on sparrin’ back an’ fourt an’ finally to git rid of her tazin’ he agrees to go, an’ off they goes to her club—she all ragged out in vilvet an’ plumes an’ he in a Prince Albert an’ silk hat an’ a face on him loike vinegar. They was gone about two hours, him coomin’ home first—she stayin’ to some extry meetin’ or other an’ whin I heard him shlam the front dure thin I knew how it was widdout aven hearin’ him shwear to himsilf while he was changin’ his clothes—an’ shure, girls, it is looky it is he didn’t know Frinch or Eytalian or any other language or he wouldn’t been thru swearin’ yit. Shure, I see ’twas goin’ to be a chilly meal whin they sot down to dinner. For some toime they didn’t spake, thin she busts out wid—

“I niver was so mortified in my loife,” says she.

“I hope yer satisfied,” says he, floppin’ his pork chop down hard on his plate. “Niver agin fer me!”

“Indade, and I’ll not ask ye,” says she, “but ye moight have been a gintleman,” she says, beginnin’ to cry.

“Now don’t go blubberin’,” says he, “or I won’t talk at all. An’ why wan’t I a gintlemin?” says he.

“I s’pose because ye don’t know how to be wan,” she says, firin’ up. “In the first place didn’t ye go to slape and shnore right out loud?”

“An’ who wouldn’t wid such a subject?—‘The Inner Ego in Relation to the Outer World.’—A foine thing to spind an hour talkin’ about?”

Shure, Biddy Gilhooly, I came near bustin’ right out laughin’ behint the shwing dure.

“Ye ought to know about the Inner Ego,” says she, “ye’re chock full of it,” she says—“but thot ain’t the worst—whin I woke ye up wid a punch onct or twict—thin ye turned and twisted about loike a child an’ finally, to cap it all, ye said to Miss Martha Briggs, who sat next to ye, ‘I’d loike to shmoke a cigarette,’ wouldn’t ye?”

“Well, fwhot’s the matter wid the ould girl—can’t she take a joke?” says he.

“Ould Girl—don’t spake so disrespectful,” says she. “An’ beside ye put yere foot in it foine—Miss Briggs is the head of the Anti-Cigarette movement in our Reform Department. But thot ain’t all,” she says, an’ she was workin’ her jaw so she couldn’t sthop to ate—but just thin she sthopped a minute whin I brought in some hot biscuits—for the appetite of him wint on the same. “The worst,” says she, continuin’ whin the shwing dure closes an’ I got up close to it agin, “The

worst," she says, "was whin we wint to serve the tay and wafers and coffee, and Mrs. Sthanly asked fwhot would ye hov—thin fwhot did ye say—'a rye high-ball'—says you—thot's fwhot ye said—'a rye high-ball'—I could hov dropped thru the flure."

"I forgot fwhere I was," says he, "whin she says, 'fwhot will ye hov'?—just loike thot—so familiar."

"Do ye know who she is?" says she. "The Prisidint of the Wimmen's Christian Timperince Union—ye've made a foine mess of it. Thin whin the chairman of the Art Departmint says to you, 'Air ye fond of Titian?' says she—thin fwhot did ye say—'I always take siltzer water in mine,' says you—Fwhot will she think of me wid a husband loike thot? Thin I steered ye off to the leader of our music class, thinkin' ye moight not disgrace me so mooch on music—an' I hope to die if it wasn't worse—she says to you—'Hov ye heard Paggiacci?'—an' how did ye answer? 'I don't care for thim Eytalians,' says ye—'but I loike Eddy Foy.'

"An' thin fwhot did ye say to ould Mrs. Billings aboot her niece?—'Thot's a cute little thrick in white,' says ye—an' she glared an' says—'Sir, thot's not a playin' card—thot's my niece.'

"Lord knows the aunt was homely enough to sthop a clock—an' how did I know she hod such a pritty rilate? If ye hod a bunch loike thot at yer club I'd go ivery wake," says he.

"Ye're an' ould booby—talkin' so silly," says she. "An' it's no more I'll ask ye to the club."

"An' it's no more I'll go," says he, "Ye can bet your boots on thot—I was the only mon there."

"Indade ye wan't," says she. "There was Professor Grote—a very brilliant mon."

"Professor Goat, ye mane," says he. "Shure he

looked loike wan wid thim gray alfalfas on his chin.”

“Don’t spake disrespectful of your betters,” she says. “An’ if there was a night school—ye could learn a few things from him.”

“Shure an’ if I took him out for a night or two I could tache him a few things,” says he.

“But not in the line of mintal improvemint,” says she—an’ thin she flounced up an’ I bate such a quick retrate, Mary O’Sullivan, thot I batted me head agin the pantry dure. I’m thinkin’, Biddy, me darlin’, thot whin the Master goes to the Missus’ club agin—Purgatory will be a place to wear your furs. An’ now we’ll hov our coffee. I hov some foine crame—knowin’ ye was coomin’ I gave the fam’ly the top of the milk bottle this marnin’ and saved the crame for oursilves.



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