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GORHAM'S INVITATION

S. E. KISER



HE looked down at him with a smile. Looked down at him out of soft, deep, tender eyes. And she was beautiful. The sweetness of innocence was upon her face. "Are you Mr. Gorham?" she timidly asked. "Yes," he replied, turning from the pile of unopened letters upon his desk, "won't you sit down?"

"Thank you," she said, gracefully settling into the chair which the office boy had brought forward, "I was sent to you by Mr. Ainsworth—Mr. Ainsworth of Ainsworth & Summerfield." "Ainsworth? I don't believe I know him. I've heard of the firm." "Oh, I got the impression that he was a friend of yours. Judge Binkham also advised me to see you." "I hope," he said, "it is nothing very serious. Has some administrator been cheating you out of your right?" "No, it is nothing of that kind. I wish I had rights for an administrator to administer."

She drew a long, deep sigh and looked down at the rug. Alexander Gorham began to have a feeling of pity for her. He wondered if one so young and so lovely could possibly want a divorce. It did not seem possible to him that any man could give such a girl cause to want a separation. Yet if she did not seek his services for the purpose of having her inheritance safeguarded he could think of nothing else but the desire for a divorce that would be likely to cause her to consult a lawyer. He felt that it was too bad, and suddenly he had an inspiration.

"Why not let the matter rest for a little while?" he suggested. "This is Thanksgiving time. It would be too bad to make a mistake now. Perhaps there has been a misunderstanding that can be cleared up."

She looked at him with some perplexity. "I don't think there has been any misunderstanding," she said. "It is because it is Thanksgiving time that I have come to you."

"Very well," he replied, "only let me say that I hope you will take no action hastily now that you may regret later. You say that Judge Binkham sent you to me?"

"Yes." "Did he understand the matter fully? Did you explain it to him?" "Oh, yes, he understood it thoroughly. He was very kind."

"The judge is a fine old man. If he advised you to see me, knowing all about the case, I suppose we may as well proceed. Please be good enough to state the facts fully and clearly."

She unbuttoned her neatly fitting coat and drew forth a book that was bound in limp leather.

"I am taking subscriptions," she said, "for an edition of the classics that—"

Alexander Gorham's face hardened and he interrupted her, saying:

"You will please excuse me. I'm very busy today. I have all the classics I want."

"If you can spare me just a minute," she resolutely went on, "I am sure you



"Are You Mr. Gorham?"

will see how meritorious this edition is. We are offering it only to gentlemen who—

"I never buy books on subscription."

"Won't you please glance at the illustrations? You see they are all photogravures—reproductions of the work of the most celebrated artists. We do not ask you to pay anything until the books are delivered, and if they are not perfectly satisfactory—"

"I must insist on being excused. Nobody ever coaxed me into buying a set of books that I didn't want, and I don't want these. You're wasting my time and your own."

She drew another long, deep sigh and let her book fall into her lap, while she looked steadily at the lawyer. He was almost middle aged and

to be gray. While she gazed at him he ripped open two or three letters and pretended to be busy reading them.

"You—you said this was Thanksgiving time," she ventured in hesitating, half trembling tones.

"What has that got to do with it?" he asked.

"You don't want to spoil my Thanksgiving, do you?"

"Will it spoil your Thanksgiving if I don't buy a set of books that I have no use for?"

"I am sure you will like them. You can give them to your wife for a Christmas present."

"I have no wife."

"That's too bad. I'm so sorry. I—I hope it is not a recent bereavement."

"No bereavement at all."

She slipped her book back inside her coat and got up.

"I hope," she said very softly and with a touch of sadness, "that you will have a pleasant Thanksgiving."

He threw down a handful of letters and turned toward her.

"Wait a minute," he said. "Maybe I've been unnecessarily harsh. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings."

"Oh, you haven't. I'm used to being ordered out of places."

"You don't look like a girl who could stand that sort of thing and not feel it."

"One can stand almost anything when one has to."

"Do you have to do this?"

"I shouldn't be doing it if I didn't have to."

"Do you live at home?"

"Yes, but I have to work."

"What's the trouble? Can't your father support you?"

"My father is dead. There are just my mother and me."

Alexander Gorham turned and gazed for a moment at the letters on his



Had Her Hand on the Knob.

desk. Then he looked up at the girl again.

"Are you going to have a Thanksgiving dinner?" he asked.

"I hope so," she replied.

"I used to be invited out to Thanksgiving dinners," he said, "but for some reason people don't ask me any more. I hate to go to a club for my dinner on Thanksgiving. There doesn't seem to be any Thanksgiving about it. I wish I could be invited out to dinner on Thanksgiving again. Suppose—won't you sit down?"

"I'm afraid I ought to be going. Unless I secure a subscription our Thanksgiving dinner will be pretty poor."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will invite me to have Thanksgiving dinner with you and your mother I'll subscribe."

"I'm afraid," she said, smiling, "it would be a bad bargain for you. We haven't ordered a turkey."

"That's all right. I knew where I can get one. Tell me where to send it. Do I get the invitation?"

She started toward the door, and he followed her. She had her hand on the knob. They stood, looking at each other.

"Well," he asked, "are you going to make it a real Thanksgiving for me?"

"Here is our address," she said, writing it on a card which she handed to him.

"Now there's one thing more I want. Don't try to get any other subscriptions. Let mine be the last."



Ancient Thanksgivings.

In ancient history days the feast of Thanksgiving lasted during one phase of the moon and was a sort of "harvest home" festival, which was called the Feast of Tabernacles. The offerings which the ancient Hebrews made to God on this occasion were gold, silver and precious stuffs, besides laborers to work upon the rebuilding of the House of God. Read the first chapter of Ezra and you will find that this is so. The Thanksgiving was an occasion of great pomp and ceremony. Workers in the church of God from the head dignitary to the least among them were clothed in purple and fine linen and wore golden bands upon their turbans bearing the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." They blew great trumpets as a signal, and all the people gathered together in the open places of the cities singing and praising God and giving thanks. Moreover, the building received the name of the builder. The Temple of Zerubbabel, for example, was built by Zerubbabel under King Cyrus. So the feast of Thanksgiving which we observe so joyously today in our homes and churches and in memory of "good times," generous harvests, general welfare in the days of our Puritan fathers, has been a church festival for many centuries.—Christian Herald.

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