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SYSTEM AND METHOD

(Continued from page 7)

JENKINS: To get rid of you, I'll look. (Fairy JENKINS: To get rid of you, I'll look. (Fairy lightly hums tune, and does steps during ensuing. Jenkins searches in pocket for envelope, and opens same.) What's this! Five hundred shares of Southern Pacific. Oh, it's a mistake of that fool Hatton. (Rushes to desk. Takes duplicate order book.) My own handwriting! How could I have been such a fool.

FAIRY: System and Method

JENKINS: Five hundred dollars a point. (Takes newspaper and hurriedly turns leaves.) "Southern passes dividend. Sensational 16-point drop." Oh, how could I have made such a mirchely."

FAIRY: Don't distress yourself. I wrote it. JENKINS: Then, I'll have you jailed for it. FAIRY: You forget. I'm a fairy. (Puts on cloak, takes it off.)

JENKINS: Come, Madam, whoever you are you have brought me bad news. I am a ruined man and not inclined to joke. Let me know who you are and what your object was in

FAIRY: Then the blow has been severe?

JENKINS: It would take more than I am worth to pay. I am not only ruined, I am disgraced. Who are you?

to pay. I am not only ruined, I am disgraced. Who are you?

FAREY (who up to this point has been speaking very airily, now most solemnly and impressively): I am not a mortal. I am a fairy. Now listen! For some time back we have been watching you. You are the worst man in town, the most selfish the least kindly, the most conceited. You think of nothing but your own comfort. You have, by ordinary ability and plodding, attained a reasonably good position. Your conceit makes you believe yourself a genius, marvel of system and method. Finally, you are cruel, abominably cruel, to your wife. Do you remember her as you first saw her? Do you recall the kind of protestations that won her love? Think of those early days. Then compare this evening. Recently children, four loving children, came to you. We hoped they would soften you. You have made them dread your footstep. For the sake of the man you were, we have decided to save you. First, it is necessary to chasten you. You have received the first discipline.

JENKINS: Is it not enough? I am ruined.

JENKINS: Is it not enough? I am ruined. There is truth in what you say. Cancel what has been, and I will do better.

FAIRY: You might try to, but you could not keep your word. Prepare for the second punishment now being brought you by the postman. The third soon follows.

(Post knock. Fairy assumes cloak, and remains at back of stage. Jenkins goes to door and returns with two letters.)

JENKINS: For Mary. (puts it on table, opens other.) Ah! From the Department (reads) "I regret to inform you that, owing to rearrangement of staff, your services will be dispensed with from date. Following the invariable custom of this office, a month's salary will be paid you in lieu of notice." That completes it. A new start in life at forty. What shall I do?

(Throws letter in desk. Gaes to chair and sits with head in hands. Mary enters.)

Mary: I think I heard the post. Is there

anything for me?

JENKINS: On the table.

(Mary takes letter and reads it eagerly.)

MARY: John, I have just heard from my sister, Margaret. JOHN (heavily): Yes.

MARY: It was in answer to one I wrote her a week ago.

JOHN (still abstractedly): Well? Mary: It was after you had spoken rather roughly to me, John. (A pause.) John, I have tried to please you for a long time, but I have not been very successful. I do not seem to be able to try any longer. I am not happy, John. Margaret has agreed to have me and the children, and—and I have decided to leave you. John

JENKINS: You are going to leave me?

MARY: It will be better for us both, John.
You will be happier without the children and
me, and I—I can't keep up any longer, John.
JENKINS: When do you leave?

MARY: To-morrow morning, I think, John. (Jenkins, dumbfounded, allows her to leave without further talk. Fairy comes forward.

Takes off cloak.) FAIRY: Well?

JENKINS: Could you not have left me my wife? Don't you know I love her and have always loved her?

FAIRY: How tactfully you showed it

JENKINS: I know. I've treated her brutally. Fairy, Fairy, bring what other misfortunes you wish, main me, blind me, starve me, but let me keep my wife's love.

FAIRY: You are showing a better spirit. Wait and see. I don't want to punish you, I want to improve you. Let us see what the force of example will do.

(Fairy assumes cloak. Knock kins opens it. Enter Meredith.)

JENKINS: Ah! Meredith! Have you heard the news?

MEREDITH: I have just heard it. I can hardly believe it.

JENKINS: How about your own position?

MEREDITH: I retain it. Tell me, Jenkins, is it true? The rumour I heard about your being hit on the Stock Market, this afternoon?

JENKINS: I'm a doubly, trebly ruined man,

Meredith: Well, that's what I came about. I have a little saved up, and I thought you might be able to use it in a little commission business, until something bigger turns up, you know.

Jenkins: I don't know what to—

Meredith Meredith and Meredith an

JENKINS: I don't know what to—
MEREDITH: Not a word. Not a word. You and I have had our tiffs at the office, but I have always thought highly of you. And what with your business knowledge, system and method, you know, you'll be at the top of the tree in no time. (Enter Mary.) Oh, Mrs. Jenkins. I just came in to cheer your husband up a bit. Don't let him despond at the bad news. He'll pull through all right. Good-night, good-night. (Exit Meredith.)

MARY: John, what did Mr. Meredith mean? JENKINS: I have lost both my money and my osition. I have only heard it during the last alf hour. Meredith was kindly offering me

assistance. MARY: John, you didn't tell me!

Jenkins: Mary, Mary, don't leave me, dear. I don't care for what has happened to-day if you will only stay with me and give me a little of your love. And Mary, my little sweetheart Mary, I'll try to deserve it.

Mary: I could never leave you if you needed me, John, and you have always had my love. Oh, John, dear, I am so happy.

(Mary exits quickly, with handkerchief to eyes. Enter Fairy.)

FAIRY: I've come to say good-bye. Do you believe in Fairies?

JENKINS: I do. I do.

FAIRY: Just a word in your ear. Look at your duplicate order to the broker when you have time. Now watch me perform a Fairy have time. trick. Good-bye.

(Fairy goes to clock and turns back hands one half hour. This must be done in full view of audience. Stage is immediately darkened for an instant. John is then found asleep in arm chair. Everything is in position as on Mary's exit with children. A pause. Jenkins wakes, as Mary is heard off stage.

Mary: All right, dears. I'll try. (Enters.)
John, the children are so anxious to have Santa
Claus. Don't you think we might?

JENKINS: Might? I should say we might!
(Gives her a wad of bills.) Run to the corner
store and buy everything in sight.

MARY: But, John, I have a few presents.

JENKINS: Well, buy lots more, especially Fairy Tale books.

Mary: Oh, John, you are a dear. I thought you didn't-JENKINS: Never mind, I do now. And bring me a Santa Claus suit if they have one.

(Mary puts on hat as they talk, goes to door. Postman's knock. Mary hands one letter to John, leaves another on table. Exits running.)

John, leaves another on table. Exits running.)

JENKINS: From the Department. Ugh! (reads letter.) "I am pleased to notify you that you have been appointed to fill the position made vacant by the transference of Mr. Meredith to the Department of Agriculture. The position will carry a salary double what you are at present drawing." (Dances a pass-seul that carries him to the desk.) Oh, my order to the broker. (Opens il.) Maria Jones! Jumping Snakes! I've sold, not bought! I'm to the good! Little Fairy, my hat off 'o you. That'll make a Christmas box for Mary. (Pulls stocking out of work basket and puts in order and letter.)

(Mary enters laden. Jenkins takes presents, etc., and exits.)

MARY (goes to door, calls): Mabel, bring the others here quickly.

(Enter children in night clothes. Jenkins enters immediately afterward, dressed as Santa Claus, wig, beard, etc.)

wig, beard, etc.)

Jenkins: Well, my little dears, I suppose you thought I was not coming. But I always come to good children who want me.

Mabel: We wanted you an awful lot.

Jenkins: Did you? Well, I had a fine old time getting down your chimney. Where's Baby? Here's the biggest Teddy Bear that was ever born at the North Pole. (Gives Baby bear.) Come, I think I ought to have a kiss for that (Kisses.) And for Irene, a most lovely doll that shuts her eyes, Lady Ermentrude Fitz-Jones. For Charlie, a big drum and a sureenough gun. And for Mabel, a whole bunch of books so that she can tell the others all about the Fairies.

(Jenkins kisses the children as he gives them the presents.)

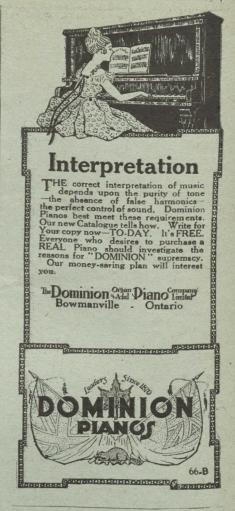
Then for Aunty, something she will like much better than toys. (Gives Mary stocking.)

MABEL: Please, Santa Claus, I hope you have brought something for Uncle. JENKINS: Oh, I gave him his when he came to

fetch me-MABEL: Why, I thought-

JENKINS: Oh, he was only joking with you. He's full of fun. You'll see.

(During last of above, Mary opens letter on table. The children group at back of stage, playing with toys.) (Continued on page 47).



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