

Those Borrowing Borwicks

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boil some corned beef in place of the beefsteak. She was looking for the pot when Polly came in.

"I think you put things in a new place each time," she said, rather crossly. "Wherever is the big pot?"

"The big pot—the only pot—is now in Mrs. Kenny's kitchen. I lent it to Louise."

"Then what am I going to cook the corned beef in?"

"I thought there was steak for dinner."

"I lent the steak to Mrs. Gibson. Where is the kitchen table?"

"Mrs. Duncan borrowed it; she painted hers."

"Then I shall have to mix the biscuits on the dining-room table."

"Let me help you to bring the table out here; Louise borrowed all the chairs, so we may as well dine in the kitchen this evening."

"It seems to me this is borrowing day," Beatrice said, as she followed Polly to the dining-room.

There was a gasp of amazement when they saw the empty room. Beatrice darted to the letter on the sideboard. "Helen Farrar has borrowed the extension table and all our dishes and cutlery," she said. "She says they expect company and she knows we won't mind. Really, this is a little too much."

"I—I believe it is a plot," Polly said slowly. "Things don't happen like that, and you know, Beatrice, we are awful borrowers. Perhaps people are getting tired of it."

"I'm going to return every borrowed thing in the house this very day," the angry Beatrice said. But when the borrowed articles were piled in the dismantled dining-room both girls were appalled at their number and variety.

"The Gibson's clock—I promised to take that back next day; Mrs. Connor's ice-cream freezer; Mrs. Duncan's rolling pin; Mrs. Brown's napkins; Louise Kenny's skating boots—I've had them for a month; Alma Stevens' kitchen apron—I borrowed that in October when I was putting up pickles; Helen Farrar's scissors; Mrs. Connor's egg-beater; Eva Kenny's blouse pattern; Mary Brown's fountain pen; Edna Stevens' umbrella; and books—"

She was interrupted by the opening of the front door. Will Borwick came in, accompanied by two strange young men.

"You've heard me speak of the Pierson twins," he said. "I've brought them home to dinner. My sisters, boys. I told the boys I was sure at least of beefsteak and lemon pie. But what has happened to this room?" he asked, suddenly realizing that it seemed even more disordered than usual.

Beatrice looked as if she wanted to cry, but Polly giggled. "It's a joke," she said. "I'll tell you about it later. And there isn't steak and lemon pie for dinner. There is canned tomato soup and hot

biscuits. You will have to drink the soup from cups without handles, and I can't make the biscuits until Will brings down the stand from his room."

It was a very jolly, if somewhat picnicy meal. The girls had the only seats left, two rocking chairs, while the young men reclined on cushions on the floor.

"I'm afraid Will brought us out at an inconvenient time," Tom Pierson ventured, helping himself to his sixth biscuit. "He did not mention that you were housecleaning."

"I didn't know it myself," Will retorted.

"Neither did we," Polly laughed. "You see, this isn't housecleaning, but just a little practical joke on the part of our neighbors."

"I do not think it a very kind one," Will said, flushing.

"It may be only a coincidence that so many people borrowed things to-day," Beatrice said. "Let us talk of something more interesting."

Mrs. Gibson came over before breakfast next morning. "Can you ever forgive me?" she cried. "John never mentioned until he was going away this morning that Will brought company home with him last night. If I had known, I should have asked you all over to my house. I feel very guilty, for I planned the whole thing. But we never intended it to go so far. You see—"

"It is all right," Beatrice exclaimed.

"We deserved the lesson. Polly and I will be busy all day returning things we have borrowed in the past. I hope, though, that the neighbors will not keep our furniture and dishes as long as we have kept some of their things; it would be rather inconvenient."

"You are angels to take it like this," Mrs. Gibson said. "I shall see that everything is brought back to-day, you may be sure."

Influence of Good Deeds and Words

A traveller through a dusty road
Strew'd acorns on the lea;
And one took root and sprouted up,
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening time,
To breathe its early vow
And Age was pleased, in heats of noon,
To bask beneath its bough;
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs,
The birds sweet music bore;
It stood, a glory in its place,
A joy for evermore.

A nameless man amid a crowd
That thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of hope and love,
Unstudied from the heart;
A whisper on the tumult thrown—
A transitory breath;
It raised a brother from the dust,
It saved a soul from death.
O germ! O font! O word of love!
O thought at random cast!
Ye were but little at the first,
But mighty at the last!

—Charles Mackay.

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