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Aunt Dinah on Matrimony
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ENIOYING THE TELEPHONE

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SCENES: A living-room in which is a telephone. This can be arranged of boxes and small, round tin can. Some one at side of stage can ring a bell for the telephone bell.

(Discovered, Mrs. Edwards, sewing)

Mrs. E.-How nice it is that we have a telephone in at last. I have wanted one for a long time and now I shall enjoy it. A 'phone is ever so handy and will save me a lot of running around. ('Phone rings.) Oh, it is ringing now. I wonder who wants me. (Goes to 'phone.) Hello. What? No. 1170? No, this is No. 770, not 1170. Oh, all right. Goodbye. (Sits.) Some one called up the wrong number.

I must order that ginger for those gingersnaps! How handy that we have had the telephone put in. (Goes to the 'phone.) Hello. Give me Clark's grocery. What? No. I said Clark's grocery, not the brewery. Yes. Hello. Is that Clark's? Will you send me some ginger when our grozeries are sent? What? How many quarts? Why, I don't want a quart. Ten cents' worth will be enough. What? Vinegar? No, no, I didn't say vinegar. Ginger. Ten cents' worth of ginger. Yes, all right. 770 West Johnson. Good-bye. (Sits.) Now, I must get some sewing done. ('Phone rings.) Wonder what this is? (Goes to phone.) Hello. Yes, this is Mrs. Edwards. What? My brother dead? Who said so? Funeral to-day? Why, my brother

isn't dead, I'm sure. What? Oh, no, I'm Mrs. Joseph W. Edwards, not Mrs. Jacob Edwards. Oh, all right. Good-bye. (*Sits.*) My, how it scared me when she said my brother was dead. She gct me mixed up with the other Mrs. Edwards. (*Sews.*)

Enter Hannah:

The packages have come that Johnnie ordered! What? Johnnie? Why, Johnnie didn't order anything! He did! What did he order? A box of chocolates, did you say? and a dozen bananas! and a package of dates! For goodness sake! The idea! I'll give that boy a good spanking. You put those things away in the dining-room closet where he can't find them.

Well, it seems that a telephone is too handy sometimes. I'll have to tend to Johnnie. Now, I must get some sewing done. (Starts to sew. 'Phone rings.) Dear me. What now? (Goes to 'phone.) Hello. Yes, this is 770. Yes, I am Mrs. Edwards. What? Oh, the missionary tea? This afternoon? Ye-es, I suppose I can come. Bring a cake? Ye-es, I guess I can. Good-bye. (Sits.) Dear me, how provoking. I didn't want to have to go to that missionary tea. If we hadn't had the 'phone they wouldn't have bothered to ask me. Now, I'll have to make a cake. Well, I must sew or I'll never get this done. (Starts to sew. 'Phone rings.) Oh, bother. (Goes to 'phone.) Hello. Yes, this is Mrs. Edwards. Why, Johnnie, is that you? What do you want? Nothing? Then what did you call me up for? Just for fun ! The idea ! Well, goodbye. (Sits.) The idea of his calling me up at

recess just for fun. (Sews. Ring is heard. She goes to 'phone.) Hello. Yes, this is Mrs. Edwards. Oh, Joseph, is that you? What? Going to bring company home to dinner? Dear me, who is it? Well, all right. Well, good-bye. (Sits.) Pshaw. I'll have to go and fuss for dinner now when I've got so much to do. If it hadn't been for the 'phone Joseph wouldn't have brought that man home for dinner because he couldn't have sent word. I guess 'phones are real handy sometimes, but I'm going out in the kitchen and not answer ours again for awhile. It makes too much work.

CURTAIN

DIGESTING THE NEWSPAPER

SCENE: A Home.

L

Mrs. Huckleberry discovered reading the news.

Mrs. Huckleberry—La me, I guess fer a wonder I've got my work done up so's I can set down a few minutes an' read the newspaper. I've been awful fond of readin' ever since I was a girl—my folks used to have to hide books to keep 'em away from me. But it does seem like I don't git much time fer books an' papers now days. W'y, land sakes, I do believe I shed two teacupfuls of tears when I read Dora Thorn, an' when I read Lena

Rivers I cried till my eyes was awful red an' ma wanted to know what in the world was the matter. Course I was 'shamed to tell 'er I'd bin cryin' over a love story, so I said I had the nooralgy, an' if you'll believe it, purty soon she saw the docter ridin' by an' she called 'im in an' asked 'im what to do fer my nooralgy. My land, I didn't know what to do, but jes' then ma had to run out doors an' shoo a hen outen the pansy bed an' while she was gone I told the docter the truth-'cause I knew he wouldn't tell-an' he said, "Why, bless your heart, I jes' about cried over that book myself when I read it." an' when ma come in he told her I had a little touch of nooralgy of the feelin's, but if she'd give me some catnup tea an' put me to bed early I'd be all right the next day. Oh. la. ves. I used to be an awful hand to read.

I wonder what's in the paper this week. (Begins to look it over.) Fer pity sakes ! It tells 'bout a prom'nent lawyer down in Kentucky that had jes' gone to the court house an' was shot twice, once in the rotundy an' once in the corridor. Now, wasn't that turrible? I don't understand these highfalutin' Latin names they're got fer the parts of the body, so I don't know whether the rotundy means lights er liver', er whether the corridor's in the head er the feet, but if that poor man was hit in both the rotundy an' the corridor his sufferin's must a bin turrible. I don't wonder he died.

Wal, wal, here it tells 'bout a nuther man that's dead—an' it calls 'im a celebrated antiquarian. Now, if it jes' don't beat all how many newfangled kinds er religion they is now days. They have dreadful big-soundin' names fer some of 'em, but I have my doubts 'bout their bein' real sound orthydox. Antiquarian ! Hum, I don't care 'bout style in my religion—jes' give me the plain, old-fashioned Baptists with their free use of water an' theology. I know 'bout the Presbyterians an' the Unitarians, but the Antiquarians is new to me. Mebbe they're Christian all right, but their name sounds dreadful kind of heathenish.

Humph ! I declare if they ain't sent off an' bought two gondolas to put on the lake in the big park in New York. I've heerd tell how they had swans an' pel'cans an' sech like floatin' round on the lakes in them big parks an' I s'pose these gondolas are somethin' real han'some. They must be dreadful fine 'cause it says they paid three hundred an' fifty dollars fer the two. Like a nuff they got a pair an' are goin' to let 'em hatch some more, an' after awhile they'll have a lot of little gondolars floatin' round-only I bet they won't look no nicer'n my flock of young goslin's. I do jes' think little ducks an' goslin's are awful cute-though like a nuff them gondolars has got more style. I wonder if they're short an' fat like ducks, er got long legs like storks an' pel'cans er if they look like swans. I'd like real well to see one, specially as they cost so much.

My, this does seem good to set down an' get time to enjoy the news. I guess they ain't nuthin' I like better'n readin' less it's talkin'—an' eatin'. I like to take my time readin' the paper through, too. Some folks skim over it so fast they don't know what they've read, but I don't do that. I digest a newspaper an' know what's in it when I git through.

Oh, my sakes-here's somethin' dreadful. (Reads from paper.)

"A terrible catastrophe occurred at Jonesville yesterday when the way freight struck John Burgess in the switching yards, instantly loosing the silver cord and breaking the golden bowl."

Dear. dear. how awful ! When I was young it was the Injuns with tommyhawks that was allus killin' off somebody, an' nowadays it's these railroad track injuns that's allus doin' somethin' dreadful. Where'd it say it hit 'im? (Looks at paper.) Struck 'im in the switchin' yards. Wal. I snum ! What part of the human 'natomy is the switchin' yards? Some folks like to put the switchin' on one part an' some on a nuther. My brother Si allus wanted ma to switch him on the legs an' then he'd dance so dreatful that ma'd think she was most killin' 'im an' he'd get off easy. In the switchin' yards ! Oh. pshaw now, what a goose I be ! It's a talkin' 'bout the part of the track where the injun was switchin' round when it hit 'im. Now, lots a folks wouldn't a thought of that, but I believe in understandin' what I'm readin'. I like to digest things. Now what's the rest? (Reads:)

"Instantly loosing the silver cord and breaking the golden bowl."

Whatever in the world do you s'pose he was carryin' a silver cord an' a gold bowl for? W'y, I never saw a gold bowl in my life. He must a bin awful rich to have sech things—though a silver cord ain't very expensive. That must a bin his watch chain, but I don't see what the gold bowl was for. I wonder if it killed 'im? (*Reads again*:)

"A terrible catastrophe occurred at Jonesville yesterday when the way freight struck John Burgess in the switching yards, instantly loosing the silver cord and breaking the golden bowl."

La, me, now ain't that funny—it don't say whether it killed 'im er not? I'd like to know. I believe in digestin' a newspaper.

Pity sakes ! Here comes Joshua to supper, an' I ain't read a word of the continued story 'bout "Luella's Misfortunes, or Wedded to a Bandit." Wal, I can git time fer that after the supper work's done up. Duty 'fore pleasure, I say, whether you're married er single, but specially if yer married an' got a hungry husban'. Now, I must'n't fergit to tell Joshua 'bout all these things I've jes' read—he likes to hear me tell 'em better'n to read 'em himself 'cause he says I make 'em so kinder plain to 'im when I tell 'em that he don't have to study out what they mean.

UNFORTUNATE BESSIE

BESSIE—Oh, kitty, do you love your poor, naughty mistress? I'm awful bad, sister says, Kittykins, bad enough to send to jail, an' mamma sent me up here to stay all alone till bed time an' not have a bit of supper. I'm hungry, too, though not so very, 'cause while Megs was here to play we went in the pantry an' swiped peanut sandwiches an' cream puffs an' wafers with cocoanut all sprinkled on 'em that Sister Josephine had fixed for her company to-night. My, they was awful good an' we didn't know there was only enough to go 'round for the company an' so we ate, oh, a whole lot—though we didn't mean to eat heardly any—jus' a little teeny bit, Kittykins.

Don't you think this is a hard world to live in, kitty dear, for children, I mean? I'm the most unfortunate girl—allus getting caught in some trouble when I don't mean anything bad. Sister says I'm a holy terror, an' Uncle Jack says I'm an imp, an' Aunt Mehitable says I'm on the broad road that leads to Perdition. I looked in my geography to see if Perdition is a nice city, but I couldn't find it an' I don't believe Aunt Mehitable knew what she was talking about. I can't bear her—I make faces behind her back every time I get a chance.

I wouldn't be bad, kitty, if folks wasn't allus finding me in mischief when they shouldn't ought to know 'bout it. I'm jus' as unfortunate as I can be. Now, that time I put the wash dish of dirty water on the back stairs so Jane, the maid, would step in it when she came down to go to the party, an' spoil her lovely blue dress—I didn't do it because I was bad. I did it because I was mad at Jane for telling mamma that I let Harry Williams kiss me. Mean thing ! I didn't let him kiss me 'cause I like to taste kisses—it was 'cause he said he bet five dollars I was 'fraid to let a boy kiss me an' I guess I wasn't going to let him think I was such a 'fraid cat, would you, Kittykins?

An' that time I poured kerosene on the minister's ice cream I didn't do it to be wicked 'cause I didn't know the minister was goin' to get that dish-I thought it was Uncle Jack's. I wanted to put it on his ice cream to pay him back for slapping me 'cause I cut the hand off my soldier-boy doll with his razor. I didn't want a soldier doll less he looked like he'd been in the war an' got to be a battle-scarred hero, so I cut one hand off and told folks it was shot off in the battle of Saint Julia Ann. An' Uncle Jack was mad jus' 'cause I used his razor, so I put kerosene on the dish of cream I thought was for him, an' I wasn't to blame 'cause the girl made a mistake an' gave it to the minister. My, it was awful funny to see the minister when he tried to eat it. An' when I laid Sister Josephine's beau's coat on the sticky flypaper an' they started off to the opery with it stuck onto his back, how did I know they would find out I did it. Kittykins? I thought he would think he laid it there hisself. This is a

mean old world an' I wish I'd die so they could put on my tombstone, "Here Lies Darling Bessie Who Always Was Good."

AUNT DINAH ON MATRIMONY

Aunt Dinah—La, chile, yes, days a whole lot er states in dat ar United States, but it suttinly peers to me de bigges' one's de state ob matermony. But days one t'ing—w'en you doan like a state, sech as Georgy er No'th Car'liny, all you gotter do is ter pack up yer duds an' move out into Canada, but w'en you gits in de state ob matermony it ain't bin so easy to trabbel outten ob it—you hab to gitten out by de way of de court—an' 'taint no sech court as you got 'fore you's married, nedder.

Affer you done tooken a man fer bettah or worsah you kinder sorter hates to gib 'im up, no mattah how shif'less an' no 'count he bin. La, yes, honey, dat's so. W'y days jes 'heeps an' piles ob wimmins dat's suppo'tin' der no 'count husban's wid hard wo'k radder'n go offen leave 'em fer such odder woman ter suppo't. Ain't you ebber done heerd 'bout dat ol' man day calls Atlas—er sum sech name? Wal, I heerd 'bout 'im—dey say he had to suppo't de worl' on his shoulders—yes, he suppo'ted de worl' but I say—who suppo'ted Atlas? Dat what I ask—who suppo'ted Atlas while he suppo'tin' de worl'? W'y, his wife suppo'tin 'im, in cou'se. . Ump, honey, I jes' doan see how it happens days so many shif'less pardnahs in de state ob matermony. De bible done say dat woman bin created outen one ob man's ribs, but I t'ink from de way dat woman hab to suppo't de fambly, she not only gotten one de man's ribs but mos' his backbone, too. But den days allus sumethin' to be t'ankful fer—my man ain't so lazy as sum ob 'em—no, Lijah say dat if I buy 'im a plush ro'kin' cheer to set in while he's turnin' de washin' 'chine he'll try an' run de washer fer me mos' ebery day.

La, chile, yes, lots of wimmin gits red ob der husban's—deys what' you calls grass widders. W'at? Doan you know w'at dat is? W'y, a grass widder's one them ladies dat has to run 'er own lawn mowah. 'Deed, yes !

I s'possin' you heerd 'bout dat Sallie Johnsing 'lopin' wid Jake Price, ain't you? Oh, yes, de 'lopement was er great success, but I'se suttinly mighty skeered dat de marriage is gwine ter be a failure. Wal, I 'clare—you gotter go? Kain't you stay an' hab a roas' 'tater an' sum co'n brade? No? Wal, you sure mus' come an' see me gin soon. Good-by, honey chile.

MISS PRIM'S CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

For a girl dressed as an old maid. Carries large handbag containing note-book, camphor, handkerchief, etc.

Good-mornin', Mr. Blake. Yes, it's a real nice day-if the wind wasn't quite so strong, an 'it was a little mite warmer, an' the sun would shine out some so's it wouldn't look so kind of stormy. But I allus take the weather as it comes-seein' I can't change it. Yes, I'm out to do some Christmas shoppin'. Have you got in some nice things fer presents? (Looks around room and up and down shelves, etc.) Last year I told my cousin, Betsey Haskins, she that lives over to Loontown, in that big stone house -they're real 'fraid she's going into consumption, too- that's got that big cupalo on it-that I thought you had a real poor stock of Christmas things for a store like this. Yes, I want to buy quite a considerable many presents because I allus plan to give a few more'n I get, long as the Good Book says it's more blessed to give than to receive. La, yes, last year I got a lot of presents. I kep' 'em on the centre table in the best room fer most a month so's folks could see 'em-an' there was most a table full.

I'd like to see some neckties, please. Dear me; not those lace ones fer wimmin; I want one fer aa-man! (*Giggles.*) What color? Wal, I guess a red one with quite a lot of green in it—an' mebbe a little bright blue; seems like that'd look real nice with his sandy complexion—if he is cross-eyed. Land sakes! How'd you ever guess it's fer Lem Harwood? (Giggles.) Now don't you tell nobody—not that I care, 'cause ev'rybody knows he's awful daffy 'bout me. But that's all the good it'll do him. I'm jest givin' him a present to pay back fer that lovely cup an' saucer he give me last year. It had such lovely red roses on it I could most smell 'em while I drank my tea. No, I guess I don't want any of these neckties. They're so sort of dull-lookin'. I think Christmas presents oughter be real bright an' cheerful, so's to make folks feel merry. Mebbe I can find a bright one over to Jackson's store—one with some purple in it.

I want to look at a cage for William. I want a good one that'll be quite lastin'. What do I want to cage 'im for? Why, so's he won't git away, of course. What? You don't keep cages for men? Land sakes, who said you did? I ain't askin' fer a cage for a man. I guess I could keep a man without cagin' 'im. You'd think so if you knew how many have wanted me! You thought I wanted a cage to catch William Bates? (Giggles.) The idee! Why, I wouldn't look at him. (Giggles.) I want a cage fer William, my pet canary. Ain't you got any trimmed with gold? I think the gold will match awful nice with his yellow feathers. La, yes, I allus git 'im a Christmas present. You needn't make fun of William; he's easier to manage than a man, 'cause when he gits too noisy I jest put 'im in the dark an' he keeps still.

Oh, let me look at that vase, won't you? That's real pretty. How much is it? Seventy-five cents?

Hum! that ain't very much fer a present fer your own sister! No, I don't want to buy it. I jest wanted to know how much it cost. Miss Billings got one fer her sister an' I wanted to know what she paid. Say, that's an awful nice dish. Let me see that, will you? what's it fer!? What! you don't know? The idee, not to know what it's fer! I might buy it fer my niece over to Craneville, 'cause she is so smart she could think up what to use it fer without bein' told. How much is it? Fifty cents? What? You'll let me have it fer forty-nine cents? Wal, I'll take that. I allus did injoy gettin' bargains.

How-de-do, Miss Graves. (Makes as if shaking hands.) Yes, I'm doin' some Christmas shoppin'. I'm real well-young folks most generally are, you know. You've heard that's it more blessed to give than to receive an' I jest would like to give this cold that I received las' night to somebody else-I'd feel more blessed. (Uses handkerchief vigorously.) What? I must a been out walkin' with a feller? The idee! (Giggles.) Oh, yes, I think I'll hang up my stockin'. I think it's nice fer young folks to do so. If you'll believe it, a man told me he'd like to be hung up in a big stockin' fer my Christmas present. (Giggles.) But I don't want 'im-I ain't lookin' fer a widower with four little cyclones to drive me crazy. Why, how'd you know it was Lorenzo Watkins? I never said it was. (Giggles.)

Oh, Mr. Blake, I want to look at some collars. No, of course, not for a man! What? You thought I wanted a collar to go with that necktie for Lem Harwood? Oh, land sakes! (Giggles.) I don't know what to do with such a jollier as you are. (Smells of camphor bottle as she giggles.) I want a dog collar for my little Towser—he must have a Christmas present. You ain't got any? Mebbe I can git one over to Johnson Bros. Wal, I must go. I'll come in again. No, of course, I ain't goin' 'cause Lorenzo Watkins jest went past. (Giggles as she hurries out.)

-Marie Irish.