

The Free Press Short Story

A SHADOW OF THE FUTURE

HARRIET LUMMIS SMITH

SUPPOSE you'll be rather late getting in, Stephen?

Stephen Boyd, home from college for the holidays, grinned engagingly. His look was so amiable that no one could have guessed it masked irritation.

His mother smiled rather painfully in tribute to his labored humor. At the head of the table his father went on with the dinner, his face expressionless, a trick a doctor learns early.

"Oh, the Penningtons," said Doctor Boyd, and rose quickly. He was at the telephone a full minute and when he came back, there was a new gravity in his face.

"She's worse?" asked Mrs. Boyd. "Yes. I'll drive out as soon as I have finished dinner. Sorry to leave you alone on New Year's Eve."

"Oh, I'll keep mother company for quite a bit," Stephen was recalling that his mother had planned a little party for that evening.

He actually had dreaded to tell her of his engagement. It was that reluctance, he was inclined to think, which had made his voice seem so gruff.

Half-past three New Year's morning, Stephen entered his home. He moved softly, both because he did not want to waken his parents, and because he had no wish for an encounter with either just at that minute.

He took off his hat and coat and stole a furtive glance at the chair by the window. Yes, it was still occupied, and by some one strangely like himself.

"Who-who-are-you?" His voice was husky as he put the question and the voice that answered was husky, too, as if it had been an echo.

"I'm Stephen Boyd." After a moment's silence, the figure in the chair was shaken by a convulsion of silent mirth. "I might have known," it whispered. "You're the used-to-be Steve."

alone, perhaps you'd come over. We're not having a party, but there'll be quite a crowd of us to watch the old year out."

Mrs. Boyd left Stephen to decline. He said lightly "Thanks but unluckily I have an engagement at the Scotts."

"The Scotts! Why, I don't know them." "You must have heard of them. At Brookside, you know."

"Oh, yes," said Constance, but her voice had flattened. She turned to Mrs. Boyd and laid an impulsive hand on hers.

"When the car came for him, Stephen ran downstairs whistling, and stopped to kiss his mother good night.

He stole down the long upper hall to his room, opened and closed the door softly, and put on the light. He took a step ahead and stopped short. His first impression was that the mirror had moved since he last had looked into it.

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"I'm Stephen Boyd." After a moment's silence, the figure in the chair was shaken by a convulsion of silent mirth.

"Nothing of the sort," declared Stephen. His throat was dry, but somehow it seemed dangerous to let the statement go unchallenged.

"I'm Stephen Boyd." After a moment's silence, the figure in the chair was shaken by a convulsion of silent mirth.

"I'm not there," said Stephen aloud, fighting the terror that threatened to master him.

SLATS' DIARY BY ROSS PARQUHAR

Friday--Well ma went to a bridge party today and Ant Emmy was loaded up with newswaley so I and pa went to the restaurant for are supper.

Saturday--Ma sent me to the drug store for sum medicine for Ant Emmy's newswaley and pa give me twenty five cts. to get sum medicine for the dog which all so is sick.

Sunday--I made the druggat mark both Packages very plain becuz I woodent have nothing happen to that Dog for nothing.

Monday--The teacher ant are class why was the days longer in the summer than the nites is and Jake set that when it cooled off the nites contract becuz cold contracts and heat xpands.

Tuesday--we had Co. for supper tantle and when I put my Napkin in my neck ma plinched my leg and when I spit suppe on my cole she grinds my toe with her ft.

Wednesday--Elys ma says she has got to be vaccinated next week and now she says she is in a pickle becuz she dument no where to get vaccinated at on abet.

Thursday--well I am looking forward to Easter day and I feel sorry for little blis of kids which are to young to go to school to have holidays from.

Friday--I got tired of the place where you took me, Charlie, and after I'd gone to bed, I got up, dressed, and slipped out. It would have been a long walk.

Saturday--I took him to the front room and got him quiet," said Doctor Boyd to his wife.

Sunday--I thought he must be dead, for it had been many years since any word had come from him, but the fall year went to college, he appeared.

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A Happy and Prosperous New Year

The year 1930 is closing. We are on the threshold of a New Year--full of opportunities--some happiness and some prosperity for all, mingled with some reverses.

To a great extent your measure of happiness and prosperity for 1931 depends on yourself. It's impossible to secure a marked degree of either just by wishing, no matter how sincere that wish may be made.

Every successful business man makes a study of his customers' needs; strives to anticipate their wants and fulfil them promptly. That is taken for granted in the average business man of to-day. He doesn't buy something he never expects to be asked to supply or can create a demand for.

BUT--

No matter how careful the buying, no matter how big the stock, or how courteous and prompt the service, if you don't tell the buyers of the things that make your store outstanding in your estimation they will not become your customers.

EVERY WEEK

You can address between 4,000 and 5,000 prospective customers (allowing an average of three readers for each paper). Certainly they don't all live in Acton, but THE FREE PRESS circulates in a wide territory in the country surrounding.

PROSPERITY IN 1931

Will come to a great extent in just the proportion you go after it. Among the sages and spokesmen for big business interests better times is predicted in many quarters. What share will you play as an individual in having it come to your community and to you? Now is the time to make your plans for 1931.

We Have Many Facilities

Never was there a bigger field presented to serve you in Acton's paper, THE FREE PRESS. Never were we able to present a better service to you. We will be glad to go into detail with you if you will call us and arrange a suitable time.

May We Assist You in Your Plans for 1931?

The Acton Free Press

Constantly Striving to Maintain Leadership for Acton with a Representative Newspaper!

HE KNOWS

"My husband is merely a manufacturer of waste-baskets, a slighted woman with aspirations." It seems such a prosy occupation.

"On the contrary, there is really much poetry in waste-baskets," replied the unappreciated bard.