

MAIN STREET

The Story of Carol Kennicott

By SINCLAIR LEWIS

Carol kicked off her silver slippers, and ignored the universal glance at her arches. The embarrassed but loyal Vida Sherwin unbuttoned her high black shoes. Erza Stowboy cackled, "Well, you're a terror to old folks. You're like the girls I used to go horseback-riding with, back in the sixties. Ain't much accustomed to attending parties barefoot, but here goes!" With a whoop and a gaiter jerk Erza snatched off his elastic-sided Congress shoes.

The other giggled and followed. When the sheep had been penned up, in the darkness the timorous wolves crept into the living-room, squealing, halting, thrown out of their habit of stolidity by the strangeness of advancing through nothingness toward a waiting foe, a mysterious foe which expanded and grew more menacing. The wolves peered to make out landmarks, they touched gliding arms which did not seem to be attached to a body, they quivered with a rapture of fear. Reality had vanished. A yeeping squabble suddenly rose, then Juanita Haydock's high siter, and Guy Pollock's astonished, "Ouch! Quit! You're scalping me!"

Mrs. Luke Dawson galloped backward on stiff hand and knees into the safety of the lighted hallway, moaning, "I declare, I nev' was so upset in my life!" But the propriety was shaken out of her, and she delightedly continued to ejaculate "Nev' in my life" as she saw the living-room door opened by invisible

hands and shoes hurling through it, as she heard from the darkness beyond the door a squawling, a bumping, a resolute "Here's a lot of shoes. Come on, you wolves. Ow! Y'would, would you!"

When Carol abruptly turned on the lights in the embattled living-room, half of the company were sitting back against the walls, where they had craftily remained throughout the engagement, but in the middle of the floor Kennicott was wrestling with Harry Haydock—their collars torn off, their hair in their eyes; and the owlish Mr. Julius Flickerbaugh was retreating from Juanita Haydock, and gulping with unaccustomed laughter. Young Rita Simmons' net blouse had lost two buttons, and betrayed more of her delectious plump shoulder than was regarded as pure in Gopher Prairie. Whether by shock, disgust, joy of combat, or physical activity, all the party were freed from their years of social decorum. George Edwin Mott giggled; Luke Dawson twisted his beard; Mrs. Clark insisted, "I did too, Sam—I got a shoe—I never knew I could fight so terrible!"

Carol was certain that she was a great reformer.

She mercifully had combs, mirrors, brushes, needle and thread ready. She permitted them to restore the divine decency of buttons.

The grinning Bea brought downstairs a pile of soft thick sheets of paper with designs of lotus blossoms, dragons, apes, in cobalt and crimson, and gray, and patterns of purple birds flying among sea-green trees in the valleys of Nowhere.

"These," Carol announced, "are real Chinese masquerade costumes. I got them from an importing shop in Minneapolis. You are to put them on over your clothes, and please for-

get that you are Minnesotans, and turn into mandarins and coolies and—and samurai (isn't it?), and anything else you can think of."

While they were shyly rustling the paper costumes she disappeared. Ten minutes after she gazed down from the stairs upon grotesque, ruddy Yankee heads above Oriental robes and cried to them, "The Princess Winky Poo salutes her court!"

As they looked she caught their suspenses of admiration. They saw an airy figure in trousers and coat of green brocade edged with gold, a high gold collar under a proud chin; black hair plowed with jade pins; a languid peacock fan in an out-stretched hand; eyes uplifted to a vision of pagoda towers. When she dropped her pose and smiled down she discovered Kennicott apologetic with domestic pride—and gray Guy Pollock staring beseechingly. For a second she saw nothing in all the pink and brown mass of their faces save the hunger of the two men.

She shook off the spell and ran down. "We're going to have a real Chinese concert. Messrs. Pollock, Kennicott, and, well, Stowboy are drummers; the rest of us sing and play the fife."

The fives were combs with tissue paper; the drums were talourets and the sewing-table. Loren Wheeler, editor of the Dauntless, led the orchestra, with a ruler and a totally inaccurate sense of rhythm. The music was a reminiscence of tom-toms heard at circus fortune-telling tents.

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THE COUGH WITH THAT Tickling Sensation

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or at the Minnesota State Fair, but the whole company pounded and puffed and whined in a sing-song, and looked rapturous.

Before they were quite tired of the concert Carol led them in a dancing procession to the dining-room, to blue bowls of chow mein, with Lichee nuts and ginger preserved in syrup.

None of them save that city-rounder Harry Haydock had heard of any Chinese dish except chop suey. With agreeable doubt they ventured through the bamboo shoots into the golden fried noodles of the chow mein; and Dave Dyer did a not very humorous Chinese dance with Nat Hicks; and there was hubbub and contentment.

Carol relaxed, and found that she was shockingly tired. She had carried them on her thin shoulders. She could not keep it up. She longed for her father, that artist at creating hysterical parties. She thought of smoking a cigarette, to shock them, and dismissed the obscene thought before it was quite formed. She wondered whether they could for five minutes be coaxed to talk about something besides the winter top of Knute Stamquist's Ford, and what Al Tingley had said about his mother-in-law. She sighed, "Oh, let 'em alone, I've done enough." She crossed her trousered legs, and snuggled luxuriously above her saucer of ginger; she caught Pollock's congratulatory still smile, and thought well of herself for having thrown a rose light on the pallid lawyer; repented the heretical supposition that any male save her husband existed; jumped up to find Kennicott and whisper, "Happy, my lord. . . No, it didn't cost much!"

"Best party this town ever saw, Only—Don't cross your legs in that costume. Shows your knees too plain."

She was vexed. She resented his clumsiness. She returned to Guy Pollock and talked of Chinese religions—not that she knew anything whatever about Chinese religions, but he had read a book on the subject, as, on lonely evenings in his office, he had read at least one book on every subject in the world. Guy's maturity was changing in her vision to flushed youth and they were roaming an island in the yellow sea of chatter when she realized that the guests were beginning that cough which indicated, in the universal instinctive language, that they desired to go home and go to bed.

While they asserted that it had been "the nicest party they'd ever seen—my! so clever and original," she smiled tremendously, shook hands, and cried many suitable things regarding children and being sure to wrap up warmly, and Kaymie's singing and Juanita Haydock's prowess at games. Then she turned wearily to Kennicott in a house filled with quiet and crumbs and shreds of Chinese costumes.

He was gurgling, "I tell you, Carie, you certainly are a wonder, and guess you're right about waking 'em folks up. Now you've showed 'em how they won't go on having the same old kind of parties and etunts and everything. Here! Don't touch a thing! Done enough. Pop up to bed, and I'll clear up."

His wise surgeon's hands stroked her shoulder, and her irritation at his clumsiness was lost in his strength.

From the Weekly Dauntless:
One of the most delightful social events of recent months was held Wednesday evening in the housewarming Dr. and Mrs. Kennicott, who have completely redecorated their charming home on Popular Street, and is now extremely nifty in modern color scheme. The doctor and his bride were at home to their numerous friends and a number of novelties in diversions were held, including a Chinese orchestra in original and genuine Oriental costumes of which Ye Editor was leader. Dainty refreshments were served in true Oriental style, and one and all voted a delightful time.

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The week after, the Chet Dashways gave a party. The circle of mourners kept its place all evening, and Dave Dyer did the "stunt" of the Norwegian and the hen.

(To be continued.)

AN INVITATION

To Inspect Our Goods During the Coming Week. Among Other Interesting Things We Will Offer The Following Special Items at These Truly Surprising Prices

Extra Big Values for the Week

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11 only, White Honeycomb Bedspreads, 72x84 and 76x88. \$4.00 \$2.50
- SHEETS**
24 only, White Cotton Waxed Sheets. Fine quality—72" x 90" \$2.25 \$1.40
- Silk Wool POPLIN**
Silk Wool Poplin in shades of Taupe, Brown, Henna and Navy Blue \$1.50 \$1.15
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Ladies' Crepe de Chine Waists in Pink and White; values up to \$5.50 \$3.50
- HOUSE DRESSES**
Ladies' Print and Gingham House Dresses—reg. \$3.50. To clear \$1.75
- SKIRTS**
6 only, Ladies' Black and Navy Blue Skirts; usual price \$6.50. To clear at \$2.25
- RIBBONS**
6 inches wide, Sateen Ribbon; in shades of Taupe, Sky, Blue, Brown and Plum. To clear 39c. yard
- MEN'S WEAR**
Men's White and Natural All-Wool Combinations—usual price \$4.50. To clear \$2.25
- Shirts and Drawers**
Men's All-Wool Shirts and Drawers, \$1.75 \$1.20
Men's All-Wool Shirts and Drawers, \$2.00 \$1.35
Boys' Fleece-lined Shirts and Drawers—75c. 50c.
- COATS**
9 only, Men's Mackinaw Plaid Coats; sizes 36 to 44. Values up to \$15.50 \$7.98
- SHIRTS**
Men's White Dress Shirts, reg. \$2.25. To clear \$1.30
- COLLARS**
A line of Men's White Collars; all sizes; to clear 28c. each
- SWEATERS**
3 only, Men's All-Wool Grey Coat Sweaters, \$6.50. \$4.50
- WRITING PAD**
A line of Writing Pads to clear 12c. each
- GLOVES AND HOSIERY**
Children's Black Ribbed Cotton Hose, reg. 50c. 25c. pair
Children's Brown Cotton Hose, all sizes 50c. 25c. pair
Men's Kid Gloves, well-lined, \$2.25 \$1.65
Men's Lined Cloth Gloves, to clear 30c.
Ladies' Cashmere Hose—Black—75c. 50c.
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A line of Ladies' Natural All-Wool Shirts and Drawers—\$2.25. To clear \$1.30
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- CHILDREN'S UNDERWEAR**
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Boys' Fleece-lined Shirts and Drawers—75c. 50c.
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