

GEORGE BAKER

SEEING THE
ELEPHANT

George Baker
Seeing the Elephant

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George Melville Baker Seeing the Elephant

SEEING THE ELEPHANT

CHARACTERS

Silas Somerby, a Farmer, occasionally addicted to the bottle.

Harry Holden, his right-hand Man.

Bias Black, a Teamster.

Pat Murphy, a Laborer.

Johnny Somerby, Silas's Son.

Rachel Somerby, his Wife.

Sally Somerby, his Daughter.

COSTUMES

Silas, dark pants, short, thick boots, yellow vest, a towel pinned about his neck, gray wig, face lathered.

Harry, gray pants, blue shirt, black neckkerchief, dark coat.

Bias, thick boots, blue frock, woolly wig, black face, long whip.

Pat Murphy, in shirt sleeves, blue overalls, cap, wig.

Johnny, close-cut hair, pants of his father's, rolled up at bottom, drawn up very high with suspenders, thin coat, short and open, very broad brimmed straw hat.

Rachel and Sally, neat calico dresses.

Scene. —*Room in Somerby's House. Old-fashioned sofa, R.; table, C., laid for breakfast.*

Harry seated R. of table, eating; rocking-chair, R. C. Sally seated, L., shelling peas or paring apples. Entrances, R., L., and C.

Sally. (Singing.)

“Roll on, silver moon,
Guide the traveller his way,
While the nightingale's song is in tune;
For I never, never more
With my true love shall stray
By the sweet, silver light of the moon.”

Harry. Beautiful, beautiful! “There's music in *that* air.” Now take a fresh roll, and keep me company while I take another of your mother's delicious fresh rolls.

Sally. Making the sixth you have devoured before my eyes!

Harry. Exactly. What a tribute to her cooking! She's the best bred woman in the country. Her pies are miracles of skill; her rolls are rolls of honor; her golden butter is so sweet, it makes me sweet upon her.

Sally. Well, I declare, Harry Holden, that's poetry!

Harry. Is it? Then hereafter call me the poet of the breakfast table. My lay shall be seconded with a fresh egg.

Sally. Another? Land sakes! you think of nothing but eating.

Harry. Exactly, when I'm hungry. My hunger once appeased, I think of this good farm – the broad fields, mowing, haying, the well-fed cattle, and sometimes, when I am *very* hungry, I think of the time when I leaned over the fence, and gazed enchanted upon the pretty girl milking her cow – whose name was Sally.

Sally. Eh – the cow?

Harry. Now, Sally, don't destroy the poetry of my language.

Sally. Don't be ungrammatical, Harry; and do stop talking nonsense.

Harry. I will, for my breakfast is finished, and I can talk to you no longer. I'm off. (*Sings.*)

“For to reap and to sow,
To plough and to mow,
And to be a farmer's boy.”

(*Rises.*) Ah, I little dreamed, two years ago, when I was playing the fine gentleman at Squire Jordan's, – a city swell, up in the country here on a vacation, – that I should soon become a farmer.

Sally. Are you sorry it is so, Harry?

Harry. (*Comes down, places a cricket beside Sally, and sits on it.*) Sorry, you gypsy, when it has made a man of me? No. It has been my salvation. I have a fortune left me, and was in a fair way of squandering it in all the vices of the city; had acquired a taste for hot suppers, fine wines, gambling, and all sorts of dissipation; was on the high road to ruin, when some good angel sent me up here. I saw you, and was saved.

Sally. And you are perfectly contented with your situation?

Harry. Well, no, I'm not. In fact, I'm getting very much dissatisfied.

Sally. Not with me, Harry?

Harry. With you? Bless your dear little heart! you're the only satisfaction I have. When I asked the old gentleman – your father – to give you to me, two years ago, he said, “No, young man. Though I've no doubt you love my Sally, you've got too much money. You never worked a day in your life. Suppose your wealth should take to itself wings some day, what's to become of her? She shall be a farmer's wife, or die an old maid. You say you would die for her. Go to work, learn to run a farm, bring out your muscle, get some color in that pale face, get rid of your vices, and then, if your money goes, you've the power to earn a living, and a smart wife to help you.”

Sally. That's just what he said, and 'twas good advice.

Harry. It was, though I did not think so at the time. But I took it, hired out to him, and now thank my good fortune for the copy he set me.

Sally. And everybody says there's not a more likely farmer in the neighborhood than you.

Harry. Much obliged to everybody. But, Sally, I think your father is a little selfish.

Sally. Don't abuse father. He's the most generous man —

Harry. I know. But I've grown valuable to him. And now, when I ask him to let me marry you, he “hems” and “haws,” and says, “Don't be in a hurry. Have patience.” He knows that the moment you are my wife, I shall pack up and be off; and that's what's the matter.

Sally. It will all come right one of these days.

Harry. I suppose it will. But it don't come right now. I tell you, Sally, I'm going to have an answer this very day, or to-morrow I'm off.

Sally. Off? And leave me?

Harry. O, no. Take you with me. You love me – don't you, Sally?

Sally. You know I do, Harry.

Harry. Then marry me. I'll make you the happiest woman in the world. I'll carry you to an elegant home, and scatter money in every direction, to bring around you luxuries and enjoyments.

Sally. No, Harry; I could enjoy nothing, leaving my father without his consent. I have always tried to be a good daughter. He would be very angry, should I disobey him, and no good fortune would follow me. No, Harry. Be patient. There's a good time coming.

Harry. Yes, it's always *coming*. But I shall ask his consent to-day.

Sally. Do, Harry. I hope he'll say yes, for you deserve it. (*Puts her arm about his neck.*)

Harry. And you deserve the best husband in the world, you gypsy. (*Puts his arm round her waist, and kisses her.*)

Enter Johnny, C

Johnny. Christopher Columbus! O, hokey! (*Sally and Harry jump up.*) Did you hear it?

Sally. Hear what? Why don't you frighten a body to death, and have done with it!

Johnny. Somebody fired off something close to my head. Blunderbuss, I guess. Did it hit you, Sally?

Sally. I didn't hear anything.

Johnny. Didn't you feel it? Must have hit yer right in the mouth. It's awful red!

Harry. Come, Johnny, there's enough of that. I don't like it.

Johnny. Don't you, though? Thought you did. Seemed to take to it nat'ral nuff. Where's dad?

Sally. He is not up yet. (*Sits and resumes her work. Harry goes to chair, back, and takes up his hat.*)

Johnny. Guess he's kinder sleepy after his jaunt to the city yesterday. Guess the coppers are hot! O, won't he catch it?

Harry. Why, what's the matter?

Johnny. Matter? Say, thought you was goin' down with me after that woodchuck this mornin'. Don't see what a feller wants to fool away his time here with a gal for, when there's a woodchuck to be got so handy.

Enter Mrs. Somerby, L

Mrs. S. I'll woodchuck yer! (*Taking him by the ear.*) What d' ye mean by keeping out er the way all the morning – hey?

Johnny. O! Quit, now! You hurt!

Mrs. S. Hope I do. You jest stir out er this room till I've done with yer, if you dare! (*Sits in rocking-chair, and rocks violently.*) Sakes alive! It's enough to drive one ravin' distracted! There's yer father sleeping like a log, and it's arter eight o'clock! Where did you two critters go yesterday – hey?

Johnny. Went to the city, of course.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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