

Butler Ellis Parker

The Revolt: A Play In One Act



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THE REVOLT

SCENE. —*The Class-room. A table. Chairs arranged in semi-circle; an easy chair for Grandma Gregg. Screen in one corner. Chairs or couch upon which to lay wraps and hats. Otherwise an ordinary room. Tea things on the table.*

(PAULINE, center of stage, with pail, broom, dusting rag, scrubbing brushes and mop, is discovered on hands and knees scrubbing. As curtain rises she rises to her knees, throws scrubbing brush and soap into the pail, gets up with difficulty and mops the floor. She is singing.)

PAULINE. (singing) "All alone, all alone, nobody here but me. All alone, all alone, nobody here but me, All alone, all —"
(*she stops mopping and leans on the mop handle*) Here it is now two weeks I've been workin' out my tuition in this Academy of Household Science for Young Ladies, and 'tis nothin' but scrub, scrub, mop, mop, sweep, sweep, from mornin' 'til night! I see plenty of work, but none of that tuition has come my way yet "Wanted," says the advertisement, "a young lady to work out her tuition in an academy." It says that, "Grandma Gregg's Flushing Academy of Household Science," it says, "fits

the young ladies for to occupy properly their positions at the heads of their homes," it says, "It will be a fine thing for you, Pauline," I says, "to be tuitioned in an Academy," so I come, (*mops*) "We'll begin your lessons right away," says Grandma Gregg, "take th' scrub brush an' a pail of water an' some soap an' scrub th' cellar." I've been scrubbin' ever since. I don't care much for the higher education when there is so much scrub in it. (*mops*)

(GRANDMA GREGG enters. PAULINE, not seeing her, goes to table and examines tea things, books, etc.)

GRANDMA GREGG. Pauline!

PAULINE. (*beginning to mop hastily*) Yes'm!

GRANDMA. Don't forget your curtsey, Pauline.

PAULINE. (*making a curtsey*) Good mornin', Grandma Gregg. I hope I see you well to-day. (*changing her tone*) If it ain't askin' too much, mam, when does my tuitioning begin? I've been scrubbin' for two weeks now, from mornin' 'til night —

GRANDMA. Have you scrubbed the cellar, Pauline?

PAULINE. Yes'm.

GRANDMA. Don't forget your curtsey, Pauline.

PAULINE. (*curtseying*) No'm. (*curtsey*) Yes'm. (*curtsey*)

GRANDMA. You have scrubbed the cellar?

PAULINE (*curtseying*) Yes'm.

GRANDMA. And the garret? And the first floor? And the second floor?

PAULINE, (*curtseying*) Yes'm.

GRANDMA. Very good, very good, Pauline. Then, when you

have finished scrubbing this class room, you may scrub the front porch and the stable. Then it will be time to scrub the cellar again. You are doing very nicely.

PAULINE. Yes'm, thank you, mam. (*curtsey*) But I was thinkin', mam, maybe I could have a little more tuition, and a little less work. "Work and tuition" was what the advertisement said, mam, an' I've seen nothin' but the work yet.

GRANDMA. My dear child! My dear, sweet child! I don't understand you. You have done no work yet.

PAULINE. (*looking at her dress and at pail and mop*) I've done no work? I wonder, now, what I have been doin'!

GRANDMA. (*placidly*) You have been receiving your tuition. In this academy the study of Household Science begins with the rudiments. Scrubbing is one of the rudiments. As a new scholar you begin with the rudiments, of course. And I must say you are doing very well. You are making excellent progress. Apply yourself earnestly to your lessons and in a short time you will be promoted to another class. (*PAULINE stands with her mouth open as GRANDMA talks. She seems to be stunned*) Let me see you scrub, Pauline.

PAULINE. (*dropping on her knees and taking brush from pail*) Yes'm.

GRANDMA. Don't forget your curtsey, Pauline.

PAULINE. (*curtseying on her knees*) No'm (*curtsey. She scrubs*)

GRANDMA. Very good indeed! Very good indeed! You

are progressing, Pauline! You are progressing. Apply yourself faithfully to your lessons. You may study awhile on the front porch now. And don't be afraid to use your muscle.

PAULINE. (*gathers up her pail and mop, etc. At door she turns*) Good morning, Grandma Gregg. (*curtseys*) (*aside*) Rudiment, is it? If I haven't done any work yet, I wonder now what the work will be like.

GRANDMA. (*has dropped into her chair and taken up her knitting*) Pauline.

PAULINE. Yes'm.

GRANDMA. Did you curtsey, Pauline?

PAULINE. No'm. (*curtseys*) But I will, (*curtseys*)

GRANDMA. Pauline, have the new Professors come yet? I have hired two new Professors. A Professor of Husbandology, and a Professor of Rudiments. They are very highly recommended.

PAULINE. Beg pardon mam, but what's Husbandology?

GRANDMA. Husbandology is the Science of the Proper Treatment of Husbands.

PAULINE. And I know what Rudiments is. It's scrubbin'. No, mam, nothin' like them has come yet. "All alone. All alone –"
(*sings*) (*exit PAULINE*)

GRANDMA, (*knits*) Dear me! Dear me! I thought when I started this Academy the girls would flock to it most eagerly. When I was a young girl my mother would have been glad to have an academy like this for me to attend. I don't know what the world

is coming to. Suffragists and Suffragettes, and Suffrage – this and Suffrage – that! If this academy wasn't sustained by the Anti-suffrage League it would have to close its doors. (*sees a book on table, takes it in hand*) "Woman and Her Rights." (*with disgust*) Augh! Who brought that here? (*throws it on floor*) I declare, I believe this is the last stronghold of the old-fashioned home-loving woman. I teach the girls to be good wives, (*door bell rings*) (*enter PAULINE*)

PAULINE, (*curtseys*) If you please, mam, there's a female at the door says she is the new Professor of Husbandology. It's Susan Jane Jones, mam.

GRANDMA. Show her in, Pauline.

PAULINE. Yes'm.

GRANDMA. Don't forget your curtsey, Pauline.

PAULINE. No'm. (*curtseys*) (*exit PAULINE*)

GRANDMA. I hope Susan Jane Jones will be a real nice lady. There's nothing in the world more necessary than lessons on the Proper Treatment of Husbands. Women don't seem to know how to treat husbands now-a-days. They neglect 'em, the poor things. When I was a girl – (*enter Susan Jane Jones.*)

SUSAN. (*strides into room with umbrella held by middle and hand bag under one arm. Slaps them on table, and begins pulling off her gloves*) Well, here I am —

GRANDMA. (*mildly*) Don't forget your curtsey, Miss Jones.

SUSAN. (*surprised*) Hey? What's that?

GRANDMA. (*gently*) All the faculty and students curtsey

when they come into my presence, Miss Jones. It is a sweet old-fashioned custom —

SUSAN. (*briskly*) Well, I'll soon change that — I mean, Howdy! Howdy! (*bobs several times*) (*aside*) I must not forget I am here as a spy in the enemy's country. If you are going to do the Romans you must do as the Romans do. (to GRANDMA) Swell joint you've got here, old lady.

GRANDMA, (*rubbing knees*) Swell joints? Yes, my dear, a little rheumatiz makes the joints swell. But I don't complain. I'm an old lady. I have to expect some aches and pains at my time of life. I'm thankful I can do a little good work in the world. Do you understand What your duties will be?

SUSAN. Sure Mike! I'm the Husbandology lady. I teach the girls how to treat their husbands when they get 'em.

GRANDMA. Just so. You will lecture on How to Coddle and Pet a Husband. Five lectures. Then you will give five lectures on Smoothing the Lines of

Care from Hubby's Brow. Then — of course you show by example how all this is done.

SUSAN. By example? You don't have a man here, do you?

GRANDMA. We use the practical method in our classes. "Practice makes perfect," you know, (*calls*) Pauline!

PAULINE, (*off stage*) Yes'm, I'm comin'.

GRANDMA, (*calling*) Bring me the Ideal Husband, Pauline.

PAULINE. Yes'm. In a minute, mam.

(*Enter PAULINE with the Dummy Husband under her arm.*

She throws it into a chair. Exit.)

GRANDMA. There! That is our Ideal Husband. He is all a husband should be. He does not drink nor smoke. He does not go to the club at night. He never says an unkind word. And he is happy. Do you know why?

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