

NEW PLAYS FROM OLD TALES

ARRANGED FOR

BOYS AND GIRLS

BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY

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THREE SUNDAYS IN A WEEK

THREE SUNDAYS IN A WEEK

This adaptation of Poe's story has a scientific element that pleases boys. It has been given by a Boys' Literary Club at the Poe Cottage in Fordham as a part of their celebration of Edgar Allan Poe's birthday.

No special costumes are absolutely necessary, but it may add interest to present the play in costumes of the first half of the nineteenth century. Then let Nephew Robert wear a tight-fitting double-breasted coat with long swallow tails. He should have a black satin stock made of black ribbon tied around a high white collar, with bow in front. His trousers are close fitting, fastened under the boots with a strap. Uncle Rumgudgeon wears an old morning coat of chintz in the first scene. In the second he wears his Sunday black coat of design similar to Robert's but less well fitting. His trousers are looser. His hair is white. He wears spectacles. He has a black satin stock.

Captain Pratt and Captain Smitherton have rather loose trousers of nankeen fastened under their boots with a strap. They wear double-breasted rather long full-skirted overcoats—blue or grey, and have black satin stocks. They have high black hats with small brims. The Captains wear side whiskers and short, trimmed beards under the chin.

Kate's hair is combed in high loops on top of her head with a bunch of curls at the sides and a high comb poised at the back. Her bodice has a pointed front and low neck with a fichu of fine embroidery about the shoulders. The sleeves are large at the top, growing smaller towards the wrists. Her skirt is very full over stiff petticoats and is trimmed with one or two flounces.

CHARACTERS

UNCLE RUMGUDGEON

NEPHEW ROBERT

CAPTAIN PRATT

CAPTAIN SMITHERTON

KATE, *Rumgudgeon's daughter*

PLACE: RUMGUDGEON'S home in London.

THREE SUNDAYS IN A WEEK

SCENE I

NEPHEW ROBERT

You hard-hearted, dunderheaded, obstinate, rusty, crusty, musty, fusty old savage! [*To* UNCLE RUMGUDGEON, shaking fist at him].

RUMGUDGEON

[*Sitting with his feet upon the mantelpiece—a bumper of port in his hand, trying to sing:*]

Remplis ton verre vide!

Vide ton verre plein!

NEPHEW ROBERT

My dear uncle. [*Approaching with blandest of smiles.*] You are always so very kind and considerate, and have evinced your benevolence in so many, so very many ways, that—that I feel I have only to suggest this little point to you once more to make sure of your full acquiescence.

RUMGUDGEON

Hem! good boy! go on!

NEPHEW ROBERT

I am sure, my dearest uncle (you confounded old rascal!) that you have no design really, seriously, to oppose my union with Kate. This is merely a joke of yours; I know—ha! ha! ha! how very pleasant you are at times.

RUMGUDGEON

Ha! ha! ha! curse you! yes!

NEPHEW ROBERT

To be sure—of course! I knew you were jesting. Now, uncle, all that Kate and myself wish at present, is that you would oblige us with your advice as—as regards the time—you know, uncle—in short, when will it be most convenient for yourself that the wedding shall—shall—come off, you know?

RUMGUDGEON

Come off, you scoundrel! what do you mean by that? Better wait till it goes on.

NEPHEW ROBERT

Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—hi! hi! hi!—ho! ho! ho!—hu! hu! hu!—oh, that's good! oh, that's capital! such a wit! But all we want just now, you know, uncle, is that you would indicate the time precisely.

RUMGUDGEON

Ah! precisely?

NEPHEW ROBERT

Yes, uncle—that is, if it would be quite agreeable to yourself.

RUMGUDGEON

Wouldn't it answer, Bobby, if I were to leave it at random; some time within a year or so, for example? Must I say precisely?

NEPHEW ROBERT

If you please, uncle, precisely.

RUMGUDGEON

Well, then, Bobby, my boy, you're a fine fellow, aren't you? since you will have the exact time I'll—why, I'll oblige you for once.

NEPHEW ROBERT

Dear uncle!

RUMGUDGEON

Hush, sir! [*drowning* NEPHEW'S *voice.*] I'll oblige you for once. You shall have my consent; and the plum, we mustn't forget the plum—let me see! when shall it be? Today's Sunday, isn't it? Well, then, you shall be married precisely—precisely, now mind—when three Sundays come together in a week! Do you hear me, sir? What are you gaping at? I say, you shall have Kate and her plum when three Sundays come together in a week, but not till then, you young scapegrace, not till then, if I die for it. You know me. I'm a man of my word

[CURTAIN]

—now be off! [*Here he swallows his bumper of port while NEPHEW rushes from room in despair.*]

SCENE II

[RUMGUDGEON'S home as in Scene I.]

CAPTAIN PRATT

Well, I have been absent just one year. Just one year to-day, as I live; let me see! Yes! this is October the tenth. You remember, Mr. Rumgudgeon, I called this day year, to bid you good-bye. And by the way, it does seem something like a coincidence, does it not, that our friend Captain Smitherton, here, has been absent exactly a year also, a year today?

CAPTAIN SMITHERTON

Yes! just one year to a fraction. You will remember, Mr. Rumgudgeon, that I called with Captain Pratt on this very day, last year, to pay my parting respects.

RUMGUDGEON

Yes, yes, yes, I remember it very well; very queer indeed! Both of you gone just one year. A very strange coincidence, indeed! Just what Doctor Dubble L. Dee would denominate an extraordinary concurrence of events. Doctor Dub——

KATE

[*Interrupting.*] To be sure, papa, it is something strange; but then, Captain Pratt and Captain Smitherton didn't go altogether the same route, and that makes a difference, you know.

RUMGUDGEON

I don't know any such thing, you huzzy! How should I? I think it only makes the matter more remarkable. Doctor Dubble L. Dee——

KATE

Why, papa, Captain Pratt went round Cape Horn, and Captain Smitherton doubled the Cape of Good Hope.

RUMGUDGEON

Precisely! the one went east and the other west, you jade, and they have both gone quite around the world. By the bye, Doctor Dubble L. Dee——

NEPHEW ROBERT

[*Hurriedly.*] Captain Pratt, you must come and spend the evening with us tomorrow, you and Smitherton; you can tell us all about your voyage and we'll have a game of whist and——

CAPTAIN PRATT

Whist, my dear fellow! you forget. Tomorrow will be Sunday. Some other evening——

KATE

Oh, no, fie! Robert's not quite so bad as that. Today's Sunday.

RUMGUDGEON

To be sure, to be sure!

NEPHEW ROBERT

I beg both your pardons; but I can't be so much mistaken. I know tomorrow's Sunday, because——

CAPTAIN SMITHERTON

[*Much surprised.*] What are you all thinking about? Wasn't yesterday Sunday, I should like to know?

ALL

Yesterday, indeed! You *are* out.

RUMGUDGEON

Today's Sunday, I say: don't I know?

CAPTAIN PRATT

Oh, no! tomorrow's Sunday.

CAPTAIN SMITHERTON

You are all mad, every one of you. I am as positive that yesterday was Sunday as I am that I sit upon this chair.

KATE

[*Jumping up eagerly.*] I see it, I see it all! Papa, this is a judgment upon you—about—about you know what. Let me alone, and I'll explain it all in a minute. It's a very simple thing, indeed. Captain Smitherton says that yesterday was Sunday: so it was; he is right. Cousin Bobby and you and I, say that today is Sunday; so it is; we are right. Captain Pratt maintains that tomorrow will be Sunday: so it will; he is right,

too. The fact is, we are all right, and thus three Sundays have come together in a week.

CAPTAIN SMITHERTON

[*After a pause.*] By the bye, Pratt, Kate has us completely. What fools we two are! Mr. Rumgudgeon, the matter stands thus: the earth, you know, is 24 thousand miles in circumference. Now this globe of the earth turns upon its own axis, revolves, spins round these 24 thousand miles of extent, going from west to east, in precisely 24 hours. Do you understand, Mr. Rumgudgeon?

RUMGUDGEON

To be sure, to be sure: Doctor Dub——

CAPTAIN SMITHERTON

[*Drowning Rumgudgeon's voice.*] Well, sir, that is at the rate of one thousand miles per hour. Now, suppose that I sail from this position a thousand miles east. Of course I anticipate the rising of the sun here at London by just one hour. I see the sun rise one hour before you do. Proceeding, in the same direction, yet another thousand miles, I anticipate the rising by two hours; another thousand by three hours, and so on, until I go entirely round the globe, and back to this spot, when having gone 24 thousand miles east, I anticipate the rising of the London sun by no less than 24 hours; that is to say, I am a day in advance of your time. Understand, eh?

RUMGUDGEON

But Dubble L. Dee——

CAPTAIN SMITHERTON

[Speaking very loud]

Captain Pratt, on the contrary, when he had sailed a thousand miles west of this position, was an hour, and when he had sailed 24 thousand miles west was 24 hours, or one day, behind the time at London. Thus, with me, yesterday was Sunday; thus, with you, today is Sunday and thus, with Pratt, tomorrow will be Sunday. And what is more, Mr. Rumgudgeon, it is positively clear that we are all right.

RUMGUDEON

My eyes! well, KATE! well, BOBBY! this is a judgment upon me, as you say. But I am a man of my word; mark that! You shall have her, boy, plum and all, when you please. Done up, by Jove! Three Sundays all in a row! I'll go and take Dubble L. Dee's opinion upon that.

THE END