

Miss Dobson's Chance.

By Katharine Kingsley Crosby.

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Her name was Dobson, but she intended to change it as soon as possible, not in any conventional way, like a process of law or getting married, however, but simply by going upon the stage. In pursuance of this plan she haunted the office of the theatrical manager, Malcom Sturgis, far up on the top floor of one of the older office buildings in that part of the city which the casual shopper never sees.

The elevator boy got to know her very well. Jim was a susceptible youth, and when on one of her ascensions Miss Dobson chanced to drop the circlet of blue ribbon which tied her left sleeve above a dimpled elbow he made a love knot of it and decorated the controlling lever. His passengers, if they noticed it at all, doubtless ascribed it to some hidden aesthetic yearnings.

From all this you may guess that Miss Dobson was pretty, which was very true, and, moreover, dainty and girlish, which does not always follow, with wide gray eyes and a gilt of gold in her soft brown hair.

She had a reserve of temperament and dramatic power which her complexion and bearing quite belied, however, and it may have been this which made it so hard to get a hearing in the office above stairs.

Jim had carried her back and forth now for over a month and noticed that her color was beginning to fade, a fact which proved it to be her own at least, but also suggested that her ambition was slowly consuming her with its white heat.

He knew her type, for he had seen it before, and it never gave up. But this girl was younger and fresher and—well, different, Jim thought. He was a chivalrous chap, and he lay awake nights thinking how he might

out. "Well, open the door, can't you?" demanded Sturgis impatiently.

"Sorry, sir, but we are between floors," replied Jim, who had so arranged it.

"Where is the watchman?"

"Doesn't come till 7, sir."

So there was no help for it, and Malcom tried to take it philosophically. He turned his attention to the girl. Where had he seen her before? Oh, yes, she was one of those little stage-struck things whom he had been trying to fire out. He was in for it now, though.

"Please, sir," said Miss Dobson bravely; "please, Mr. Sturgis, may I do some of my parts now? It—it may serve to pass the time while we are waiting."

The manager expected to glower at this bold request, but the man in him smiled instead. He, too, noticed a difference, and her pluck appealed to him. He would try to let her down gently.

"What experience have you had?" he inquired.

"Only in college," she replied, "but listen."

It was a tiny stage, that little car, hung between heaven and earth, with darkness everywhere beyond the reach of its single incandescent—a tiny stage, but her audience forgot it in the glamour of the scenes she spread before them.

She recreated old parts so freshly that the great manager could only wonder how else they might be played. Ancient and modern, from "She Stoops to Conquer" to "Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire" and the subtleties of "Candida," tragedy and comedy and problem—she forgot her audience completely in an involuntary "Bully!" from Jim, who could contain himself no longer, brought her to herself.

"Where did you learn to do it?" gasped Malcom Sturgis when Miss Dobson stood somewhat abashed in her own personality.

"Why, I've always done it," she stammered. "Do you think—do you think I will do?"

"Yes," he answered briefly, "I think you will. Meet me here at 10 tomorrow to talk over the contract."

"Do you mean for an engagement?" Her eyes were wide with astonishment.

"For an engagement," he said, and at the look of gratitude she gave him he suddenly conceived the possibility of a secondary meaning to the phrase. Aloud he only asked, "You haven't told me your name yet, Miss—"

"Dobson," she replied, adding hurriedly, "but I can change it if you think another would be better."

"I have one in mind which might do better, I confess, but we will talk that over another time. This has been a very lucky trip for me."

It seemed to Jim that matters had gone far enough, and as though suddenly inspired he turned his lever in a way which sent the car quickly to the street floor. As they passed out Miss Dobson gave his hand a little squeeze and whispered, "I'll never forget this, Jim," and the manager slipped a bill into the same receptacle.

Jim grinned.

"Shouldn't wonder if I'd made a match as well as a star," he thought.

"Not a bad day's work that!"

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"WELL, OPEN THE DOOR, CAN'T YOU?" DEMANDED STURGIS.

help her. He wondered if it would do any good to speak to Mr. Sturgis, the manager, about her some morning.

Malcom Sturgis had given the boy a five dollar bill the previous Christmas and always passed the time of day when he was not thinking about something else, but somehow his manner did not invite liberties.

A second month passed while Jim still pondered over the problem, and Miss Dobson's neat black suit was wearing shabby at the seams in spite of careful brushings. Then the end came. It was late in November, when the days are very short and dusk falls early. Miss Dobson had been waiting for the time when the door of the great man's office should open and she be bidden to enter.

So she had waited all these weary weeks, watching others pass in and out and reading on their faces what their fortunes had been. In spite of the despair which she so often saw her own hope never faltered, for she was sure of herself and her powers.

For this reason she was still sitting there, though it was after 6 and everybody had gone except the manager. Suddenly the door opened, and Malcom Sturgis hurried out and crossed the room into the corridor outside, where the elevator was waiting. The girl sprang up and followed, and the door clanged upon them, the two of them, and Jim.

If it hadn't been for Jim—well, failure does not make an interesting story, most people think, for Miss Dobson was just gathering her wits for a third appeal to the august man for a hearing on the morrow when—the car stopped.

The boy juggled with the levers, and the elevator went up a few inches, stopped again, then shot down another story, where it stopped definitely and so suddenly that it fairly bounced.

Instead of her speech Miss Dobson exclaimed earnestly, "Gracious! and the manager inquired: "Jove! What's the matter?" To this Jim, not Jove, replied truthfully enough that "she" had never acted like that before, and he guessed the power must have given

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LONDON, April 21.—The British public had their first sample of "George Ade comedy" last night in "The College Widow" which Henry W. Savage presented at the Adelphi Theatre. The audience was composed largely of Americans and conspicuous in the boxes were Robert J. Wynne, the American consul general and his daughters and Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Lewisohn (Edna May).

The verdict on the play was indecisive; the Americans were enthusiastic but the English spectators were interested and puzzled by turns. The management provided a glossary of

Geo Ade slang with the programs but much of the dialogue particularly the college along was Greek to the English contingent. Many of the best jokes were received in melancholy silence.

The company was almost entirely American and their acting more American than the English were accustomed to.

The fall of the curtain was followed by some hooting but applause predominated.

The newspaper comment is friendly.

"Magnificent," "stupendous" are the adjectives used, to criticize the third act.



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