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My Refuge.

The day has been long and dreary. With ceaseless pattering of rain. And the dragging hours have brought me Only some heartache and pain.

His Rummage Sale Bargain. The house was cold and cheerless. Even the cat howled dimly at the back door, preferring the atmosphere without.

Lemuel pulled his overcoat collar up around his ears, and drew his hat down to meet it. Then he seated himself in his accustomed chair at the dining table and surveyed the collection of cold scraps spread out before him.

"Darling, I have the most awful confession to make. But it is not my fault and I know you will forgive me, and get me another. I am so sorry that you have not a hot dinner.

He set his teeth resolutely into a piece of yesterday's roast. "I see myself down there to dinner. I've said I'd not set foot inside their blooming show, and I won't."

"Here, Sam, take this dime and this key, and give one of them to Mrs. Searles at the rummage sale."

Sam grinned, dropped the dime into his pocket and disappeared. Just as Searles turned to go, a pair of trousers, hanging near the window, caught his eye.

"By the great guns," Searles commented, "only \$2." Sam came around the corner. Searles collared the youth, led him into the recess of the alley, thrust \$5 into his hand, and some pointed directions into his head.

Still, those trousers were good and could be made better. If the story of their purchase got out he could invite the jokers to view a pair of elegant new trousers—at least, they would be elegant when overhauled by his tailor up in the city.

Having thus fortified himself against attack, he went home, and met a splenetic little wife. Searles' heart sank the moment he looked at her. The story of his method of attending the sale was probably all over town and this was the way it affected Lillian. Lillian could never take a joke.

"Lemmy, why don't you ask me to confess?" "Confess!" exclaimed Searles in surprise. A tear rolled down her cheek. "You didn't even read my note."

Seated himself in his accustomed chair at the dining table. A light broke in on Searles. He began to laugh. "It's no laughing matter to lose your muff," sobbed Lillian. "Oh, Lemmy, it's awful. I laid it down at the sale—it cost \$25—and some one made a mistake, and sold it for 25 cents, and we can't find it. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

Searles forgot his trousers. He threw his head back and roared. "I can't see anything to laugh at," observed his wife, her tones muffled by his coat front.

But Lemuel suddenly hardened his heart now that the trousers scare was over.

can't afford to run rummage sales

on \$25 muffs," he grumbled, and returned to his paper. The next day Searles and his dress-suit case repaired to the city, only to find that the way of the transgressor is hard.

Searles went up the following week, according to instructions, and found a pair of uncomfortably tight trousers, with long, faded streaks conspicuously showing themselves a quarter of an inch from every seam.

Searles asked the price of the suggested treatment, shut his teeth, and said, "Take 'em." The tailor followed him to the door. "I forgot to tell you that I was obliged to relime them throughout, as the old lining was so worn."

Searles half way down the stairs made a remark. The tailor did not hear distinctly, but accepted it as a pleasant "Good day," and returned it. One week later Searles was seated in the train, homeward bound.

"Lemmy, what is the matter?" shrunken them. Their weary owner was employed in itemizing on the back of an old letter.

Searles added the column three times. Then, tearing up the envelope, he scattered it piece by piece, along eighteen miles of track. He hoped the distance would effectively separate those items.

He carried his suit case home, reflecting on his blessings. Three weeks had elapsed since the sale, and he had not heard one word concerning his share in it.

Lillian had just come in. She was warming ten small, plump, red fingers over the grate. She exhibited each chilly digit to him in turn. The muff had not been recovered.

"Want to see my new trousers?" asked Searles, cheerfully, wishing to change the subject.

He shook out the trousers in all their freshness and folds, and swung them before his wife's eyes. She merely vouchsafed them a glance.

"How much did they cost?" Lemuel had anticipated this question, hence the figuring on the train. "Just \$15 at Long's," he replied glibly.

"Ugh, how they smell!" Searles knew that the odor was due to the recent dyeing, but all he said was: "Store smell on the cloth, probably."

His wife picked up the other trouser leg. She evinced a coming interest. She turned the legs over and tried the quality of the cloth. She examined the hems and gazed at the seams with a critical eye. Then she raised her childish blue eyes to her husband's face.

"Lemmy, how can you tell such stories? They were marked just two dollars. I thought at the time it was ridiculously cheap, because I remember you paid just \$20 for them, and then grew stout so fast that you really never wore them much."

Searles reached for a chair and sat down weakly. His trousers fell on the floor in a heap. "It's an old trousers! And he, Lemuel Searles, banker, had—he groaned aloud.

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