



By Marc "Harlequin"  
Woytowich

Rachael awoke with a start. She unconsciously reached across with a hand, then, remembering, drew it back. A chill wind parted the curtains of her bedroom window; they fluttered and she could smell a trace of autumn in the air. Outside she could hear Chips barking, even the sound of the hens clucking as he chased them playfully about the yard.

Rachael sat up in bed. She looked down at the empty space, the unused pillow, and started to bite her lip. No, she said to herself. No, I will start this day off right. She hopped out of bed, feeling the coolness of the polished wooden floor as she wrapped a housecoat around her young, supple figure. She had the nicest body in sixty miles, and she knew that. But what good was her body if — no, no, stop that, she told herself.

"I am the Duchess of Troyer Farms," she said aloud. "I am the Potato Queen of Corry, the most beautiful woman in Waterford." She stood before a gold-edged, full-length mirror and said these words over and over. "The best in Beaver County. Barbeque Mistress for many miles," she repeated. But Rachael knew her heart was not in it. Even her tall, graceful figure did not inspire her this day.

She heard the sound of metal clanging and went to the window to see. Chips was barking excitedly and she could hear the gruff sounds of men talking. They were playing horseshoes, loosening up before the morning's work. Chips was fetching the iron shoes for them, something Clint had taught him.

Oh, why did I think that name, Rachael thought. Little curls of steam were coming from the coffee cups setting on the tractor's hood. The old rusty weather vane made a noise as the wind shifted slightly. Chips chipped a tooth.

It was no use. Rachael clutched a hand to her breast. She couldn't hold back any longer, she couldn't make believe she didn't feel. She couldn't shake his memory or his meaning from her life. Even his name tore at the tender feelings in her heart. "Clint," she said tearfully. "Clint, Clint." Yes, in the full-length mirror she could plainly see a tear on the left cheek, a pretty good one, in fact.

She heard the ignition and the

tractor chugging slowly to life. In two weeks the potato crop would be ready. Two weeks! It was unthinkable that anyone but Clint could pull those taters from the ground. He had been lead tractor ever since she knew him.

And now this. Three weeks gone, alone in Pittsburgh, trying to nail down that french fry contract with Burger King. Why hadn't he called? Pittsburgh wasn't that far away. Was there bad news? Maybe he had failed and was afraid to return to Troyer Farms.

Nonsense, you silly girl, she told herself. Rachael drew her shoulders back and stood erect. Before the full-length mirror she studied her lithe, sinewy figure, her rounded, angular curves. Not bad, she thought.

After taking a hot shower, Rachael went downstairs for breakfast. She rang the bell, but not hearing Gussie, she decided to start breakfast herself. In one cupboard she found the long dish with the top that came off. The butterdishes, she thought, and just to be sure, she lifted the top to reveal a yellow tube of something soft. She dabbed a bit on her finger and tasted it. "Mmmmm," she said. Now she was happy.

Next, Rachael searched for the toaster. Gussie always put it away after meals, but Rachael never noticed where. It wasn't with the cups and saucers. It wasn't with the spoons. I'll get that later, she thought. Right now I'd like a grapefruit. Or a glass of potato juice.

Just then Gussie came through the door, carrying a paper bag filled with groceries. She gave a start. "Oh my, Miz Rachael, I thought you'd still be in bed." She set the bag on the counter.

"I couldn't sleep —" Rachael began. A voice inside her told her not to admit it. You're a Troyer, it said. A Troyer.

"I decided to come down early to help you with breakfast," she said. She got up to put the groceries away.

"Lord be praised," Gussie cried with disbelief. She stood back to watch the young, athletic figure of Rachael Troyer as she pulled out half-gallons of milk and stalks of celery, Philadelphia cream cheese, and cabbage rolls from the deli.

Suddenly there was a moist splat, as if someone dropped a cholestomy. The shattered yellow eye of an egg looked up from the floor. Rachael stared in terror.

"Out of the way, Miz Rachael," Gussie said, wedging her body between them to protect her from the sight. "I'll get this little mess," she said. "You just go sit down and wait for breakfast. This mess ain't nothin'. Why, in just a few minutes I'll have you a feast for a queen. Fresh grapefruit, hot coffee, hot rolls from the deli. I even bought some raisin bread this morning." Gussie turned to face Rachael. She looked blanched.

"Maybe you should freshen up a little," Gussie said. "Did you see the Estee Lauder book came today? There's lots of your favorites." Gussie wiped up the congealing mass with a paper towel. "Why, in just a few moments you'll be dining like a duchess. Give me half the time it takes a rabbit to mate, and I'll whip you up some pancakes so light you'll need a string to pull them down."

Rachael wasn't listening. Somehow that egg was more than just an embryo. When it cracked, her world had cracked too. Her life, her meaning, her man — the whole Troyer estate — all of it had shattered like the shells on the floor. One egg. One person alone — without Clint. It was unbearable. Wasn't dropping that egg symbolic of what life would be without him? Couldn't she do anything right?

Again she heard the voice. "It's been worse," it said. From some deep reservoir of inner strength, from some coal mine of fortitude and courage, it spoke. You're a Troyer, it said. Remember the floods in '69? You didn't cry then. How about when Clint broke his arm shaving? You made it through that one, didn't you? And the miscarriage? Big deal. And how about art school in New York? That was no picnic either. Why all the fuss over one broken egg? You have integrity, the voice said. You have character. You're a Troyer. And most importantly, you're a woman.

Woman. The word was like thunder.

Gussie helped Rachael to her seat, all the while apologizing for not getting the groceries double-bagged. She promised to see that the store clerk got fired. Again Rachael didn't hear. She was listening to her own vision, alive to nothing but her own womanhood, and the promise of Clint returning. For she was a woman to him, and to him alone. She thought of how they had

met, at the Crawford County Fair, and how she had secretly thrilled when he puffed up to slam that sledgehammer down, ringing the bell all three times to win her a wooden canary whose wings went up and down when you pulled a wire loop that stuck out of his back. She still had it.

Other memories came to mind. Their first date, their first kiss after they had exhausted themselves playing Skee Ball at Waldameer. That time he gave her a stained glass potter. And that funny man dressed like a beekeeper who wanted a ride home with them. Oh, Clint, Clint, Clint.

"What you thinkin' there, Mizzy?" Gussie was behind her now, placing her hands on Rachael's shoulders. "No, never mind," she said. "I know what you're thinking. You're thinking about him, aren't you?"

Gussie seemed to know everything. "Yes," Rachael said. "I am."

"I bet you're worried about the tater crop."

Rachael just nodded her head. That was the last thing on her mind.

Gussie bent forward to whisper in her ear. "He'll be back, and sooner than you think. He's a big man doin' a big man's job. It ain't easy. He's probably just makin' sure everything's perfect before he comes home. Don't you worry none." Gussie planted a tender kiss on Rachael's head. "Besides, cheese balls and pretzels are the big sellers now, so we can hold off on those ol' potatoes for a week or two."

Just then the screen door burst open with a flurry of cat hair and feathers. A tall, muscular man with a set jaw, and deep, piercing blue eyes stood in the doorway, his large hand around a piece of white paper.

"Telegram," he said. "Maybe it's word from Clint," Rachael said, springing from her chair. Again, disappointment. Simply Papa saying that the copter was stuck in Tidioute. Keep dinner warm. Would there ever be peace, the voice asked.

Just then the screen door slammed, and the tall, muscular figure of Clint strode through the room. As an Indian princess springs atop her pony, Rachael leaped into the arms she missed so much. His jacket was dusty and his breath smelled of Thunderbird. He lost the contract.

## Marijuana: The Unknown Dangers

It has been years since the popular backlash against anti-marijuana publicity. Though the outward attack has tapered off, in many laboratories across the country marijuana research has been quietly going on. The results, fresh and prejudice-proof, show conclusively that marijuana is more dangerous than the average pothead wants to believe. In several key areas, psychological dependence, physical dependence, and sexual performance, marijuana has made a lasting mark on the minds of innocent youths.

### Psychological Dependence

It was first noticed at Stanford, by a research scientist, that students who had recently "turned on" (been subjected to their initial marijuana "high") were inclined to laugh at things that before were very serious to them. "DNA became a genetic joke,"

they had ever smoked grass. They were told that marijuana smoking was all right, as far as the NASA people knew. In fact, they wanted this group of astronauts to go ahead and smoke dope while they trained for a moon-landing. Unknown to the astronauts, it was a test, and none of them would ever be considered to represent our country in outer space.

The test confirmed what NASA already knew: Even a highly-skilled aeronautic technician becomes a mental mushroom after a few tokes of Columbian gold. Voice tapes reveal the lunar lunacy that takes over once marijuana makes its way aboard.

Astronaut One: "Weren't we supposed to dock with something?"

Astronaut Two: "I don't know. Seen any space stations lately?"

Astronaut One: "There was a sign a few miles back." (Puffing sounds.) "Houston?"

(A knocking sound is heard.)

Astronaut One: "What's that?"

Astronaut Two: "Asteroids?"

Astronaut One: "Speaking of asteroids, my seat is sore from sitting so long."

(More knocking.)

Astronaut Two: "Too bad you can't go for a walk."

Astronaut One: "My God! That's the knocking! Captain Smith has been out there for hours!"

Astronaut Two: "Wanna let him in?"

Certainly men of irresponsible character could never go to the moon! Could you imagine if your doctor, your politicians, or your DC 10 pilot smoked grass?

### Physical Dependence

Physical dependence has yet to be established as a fact, but let's face it: you're hooked; you're hooked. Look at all that money gone up in smoke. Gerald McMakemeright, State Store operator, has a lot to say on the subject.

"Kids who smoke grass don't slur as much. They walk straighter and can concentrate better than kids smashed on the crap I sell. They can also straighten up quicker, a statistic that doesn't figure in with drunk driving. It makes it look like most accidents are alcohol-caused, not pot-caused, as some of them are."

Many tavern owners share a similar viewpoint.

### Sexual Performance

Finally, on the subject of damage to sexual performance, the research is still going on. And on.

## ROCK SCENE

Beginning a fourteen-city tour in February, Boston opens in Chicago, while at the same time, Chicago opens in Boston. In March, Kansas plays in Ohio, while the Ohio Players join America for their Canadian tour. Nazareth opens in Kansas, to later join New England for their benefit concert in Nazareth.

Elsewhere on the rock scene, Styx and the Stones play Boulder March 15, while the Ides of March join Jethro Tull and Uriah Heep for a Dickens benefit in London. March 23rd Metamorphic at Redwood, and Volcanic at St. Helen's. Stone Ponies rock Cleveland April 1st; Led Zeppelin and Iron Butterfly drop in Pittsburgh on the third.