

Billy's Ruse

By Edith M. Doane

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Earthquakes. Among the many strange relations which earthquakes hold to various natural phenomena there is possibly one between the times of their occurrence and of irregularities in the revolution of the world.

A Good Horse's Color. A good horse cannot be a bad color, it is said. It is certain that Derby winners are not drawn from certain colors.

With a warning blast of the horn, a man, a girl and an automobile whirled around a sharp curve and went spinning along the country road.

Coming suddenly upon a stretch of level pike, Billy Weston bent over the lever and let out the machine another notch.

For the past two years—ever since he had formed the habit of flinging his



"TELL ME ABOUT HER," SHE DEMANDED. tempestuous heart at her feet in season and out of season—Billy's clean shaven, clear cut face had been to Miss Huston as the open page of a book.

Her mind flew back to that parting scene—to Billy standing in the middle of the floor, big and awkward and altogether at her mercy.

"But I love you so!" he had pleaded humbly. "Can't you ever care just a little?"

"No; I never can," she had replied impatiently, "and I'm tired of being tagged around and gazed at and fussed over all the time; it's tiresome. I wish you would go away," she had ended suddenly.

"I do," she went on cruelly. "I wish you would go away so that I needn't ever see you. Some day you will meet some nice girl who will like you, and you will thank me for being so frank with you," she had ended magnanimously.

That had been six months ago, and now she was speeding to Mrs. Monteth's May party in Billy's motor—a situation of Mrs. Monteth's own devising.

"Billy," said Miss Huston, "you have changed."

"Yes," said Billy. "Have you found that nice girl I predicted for you?" Billy flushed.

"Yes," he said. A sudden sense of desolation enveloped Miss Huston. She drew her wraps more closely about her. It seemed as if without warning the clouds had swept across the smiling landscape and blotted out the warm spring sunshine.

"Tell me about her," she demanded, leaning back in her seat and regarding him with amused, tolerant eyes.

"Miss Isabel, you are not at all like other girls."

"That is not a compliment, Mr. Doane. You should say that other girls are not at all like me."

"aren't you going to tell me about her?" "I would if I knew how," said Billy.

"Is she pretty?" "She's beautiful." "Light or dark?" Billy turned a radiant face to his companion.

Miss Huston smiled tolerantly. He was too honest, too transparent, to play so delicate a game.

She opened her eyes on him under her heavy motor veil. "Of course you love her very dearly," she said lightly. To her chagrin a hot flush dyed her face from brow to chin.

"Love her! I cannot talk about it. It's like saying my prayers," he said reverently.

Miss Huston leaned back in her seat. Why had she never realized before how lovable Billy was?

They sat in silence, their thoughts keeping time to the monstrous beat of the motor as the car swung smoothly along the hard road.

"She will be at Mrs. Monteth's," he said half shyly.

Of course she would. If the motor continued to tear along at its present rate and they didn't land in a heap at the foot of one of the steep hills, she would be there in about half an hour.

Dear, clumsy Billy! She had half a mind to tell him that she understood.

His next move was more skillful. "I'm mighty grateful to you for putting me on the right track," he went on reminiscently.

"Only I was no end of a fool and I've always felt that I wanted to apologize to you for ranting around as I did. Though it was real enough to me—at least I thought so then—and I was terribly cut up when you threw me over," he went on cheerfully, "and for a good while afterward, too."

"And then?" "Oh, then I met—her." Billy's voice was very gentle. He turned impulsively toward his companion.

A shadow crossed Miss Huston's face. Of course the whole thing was only a ruse of Billy's, but for a beginner his part was remarkably well played.

There was a little jolt as Billy lessened speed; then the car swung smoothly into a wide shaded driveway leading to a rambling old stone house.

A laughing, chattering crowd filled the wide porch—tea tables were being set in the old fashioned garden, but as Mrs. Monteth gathered her in a vigorous embrace Katherine was conscious of but two things—that at sight of them a slender, dark eyed girl had left one of the groups and followed Mrs. Monteth to the wide stone steps, and that Billy had cleared those steps two at a time and was holding the girl's hands as if he never meant to let them go.

Mrs. Monteth smiled as her eyes followed Katherine's.

"Of course he has told you all about it," she laughed. "Come, Billy, don't monopolize Miss Deering—you engaged people are so selfish. Don't you see I am waiting to introduce Miss Huston to your fiancée?"

What the Boilers Were For. In the eyes of all engineers of steamships the deck officers of their ships are profoundly ignorant.

He pointed out the cylinders, the various rods, the eccentrics, the shaft, and so on, explaining roughly the uses of the various pumps and auxiliary machinery, and the mate was genuinely pleased and interested and said so.

Then, when going up on deck again, a thought seemed to strike him. Halting on the ladder, he called the engineer and explained his difficulty.

"The Ball in Lawn Tennis. It is a curious fact that every book written on lawn tennis cautions the player to keep his eyes on the ball at

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An Example of a Judicial Mind. At a dinner attended by a score of well known lawyers recently the phrase "judicial mind" was defined by illustration as follows: "I have searched far and wide for a satisfactory definition of the inevitable query raised when judicial nominations are in sight," said one of the lawyers.

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