

Bellefonte, Pa., August 15, 1913.

The WOMAN

A Novel by Albert Payson Terhune

Founded on William C. de Mille's Play of the same name

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Congressman Standish goes to the Hotel Kaswick, believing himself in a hotel in New York under assumed names.

CHAPTER II—Wanda Kelly, telephone girl at the Hotel Kaswick, Washington, is loved by Tom Blake, son of the political boss of the house.

CHAPTER III—She gives as one of the reasons her determination to get revenge on Jim Blake for ruining her father, Congressman Frank E. Kelly.

CHAPTER IV—Robertson, son-in-law of Jim Blake and the latter's candidate for speaker of the house, tries to win Standish over, and failing, threatens to dig into his past.

CHAPTER V—Jim Blake finds out about the episode of five years back at the northern New York hotel.

CHAPTER VI—Tom Blake and his father have a family row over the father's political theories.

CHAPTER VII—He lays a trap to secure the name of the woman. He tells Miss Kelly that he is going to have a talk with Standish and that at its conclusion the matter will call for a number on the telephone to warn the woman.

CHAPTER VIII—At the conclusion of the interview with Blake Standish gets a New York wire and calls Plaza 101.

CHAPTER IX—Miss Kelly refuses to give Jim Blake the number called by Standish.

CHAPTER X—Blake has a story of the Standish episode prepared ready to send out as soon as the woman's name is learned.

(Continued from last week.)

Van Dyke, pocketing the typewritten sheets, departed on his mission; almost colliding at the door with Tom Blake, who was coming in.

"Hello, dad!" hailed Tom. "I just dropped in on the way to the club to say 'howdy' to Grace. Where is she? Turned in?"

"No. Hasn't even got in. The train's hours late. Washout on the road somewhere. Mark telephoned up from the station. He's gone back there. They ought to be here any time now. Want to wait?"

"I'm sleepy!" yawned Tom. "Gee, but I wish Grace would show up!"

"So does Mark," answered Blake. Then, after a moment, a chuckle of genuine amusement startled his son.

"What's the joke?" asked Tom. "Did I miss it?"

"Yes, you missed it, all right. Both you and Grace always miss it. But I never do. I was just thinking—my little Grace—my kid—keeping the former governor of New York cooling his heels in a drafty railroad station.

"Dad," complained Tom. "I can't make you out! You always seem to take a savage delight in rubbing in the fact that everything we've got we owe to graft."

"Well," asked Blake, puzzled, "don't we? If we don't owe it to graft, what do we owe it to, I'd like to know?"

"To change the subject, dad," broke in Tom, "I've been making some plans."

"Have, hey?" queried Blake as though listening to the prattle of a somewhat backward child of six. "Such as what, for instance?"

"Well," answered Tom, trying not to show his irritation at Blake's tone. "The fact is—I want to get married."

"The blazes you do! Is that a boast or a confession?"

"I don't quite understand you," said Tom stiffly.

"I mean," began his father, "I mean—oh, never mind all that. Who's the girl?"

"Before I tell you," evaded Tom, "I'd like to get your views on the proposition in general."

"In general?" repeated Blake. "Son, marriage is never a proposition in general! Because every woman is an exception that proves no rule. You can't classify 'em any more than you can classify a nest of hornets that you happen to step into. Hell's full of women. So's Heaven, I guess. But neither class got to either place by following any 'proposition in general.' Tell me," he demanded, his philosophic mood changing in a flash to one of almost savage intentness, "is this

girl the sort who can help you in getting where I want to put you?"

"How can I tell? You've never told me just where you intended to put me."

"Then I'll tell you now. There's no real need in your calling any further under sealed orders. I've made you a pretty fair lawyer. You'll have one more term as assistant district attorney. Then one as district attorney. Then as attorney-general. After that a term or two in the cabinet—just to get the run of things—"

"There's only one thing left," said Tom, almost in awe, as his father hesitated.

"Yes," replied Blake grimly. "Well, maybe that won't be left when we get through. Now you can see why the girl must be of good family and have social position and breeding and all that kind of thing. Those are the things I'm shy on. And my children must make it up for me. This girl you want to marry—can she help you? Can you take her with you—right up to the White House?"

"I don't know," returned Tom. "You see, I've never thought of her as a political asset. Happiness means a good deal more to me than position. I've already told her so."

"Told her so? Then—then, you've asked her to marry you?"

"She's refused me—so far."

"Well!" grinned Blake, vastly relieved. "That's far enough, I guess. Don't go overplaying your luck."

"I'm going to stick at it till I win out!" declared Tom. "And I'm—"

"No, no! Don't do a crazy thing like that, son," pleaded Blake. "Take your medicine like a man. Don't keep on pestering the poor girl. By the way, you haven't told me who she is."

"She's—" faltered Tom; then, taking the plunge, he blurted out: "she's Miss Kelly."

"Kelly?" repeated Blake, mystified.

"Yes. Wanda Kelly, the phone operator downstairs."

"What?" exploded Blake. Then he collapsed in the nearest chair and stared in blank helplessness at his son.

"Well," demanded Tom, instantly on the defensive.

"It's—it's a bum joke," growled Blake. "Maybe it'd go better with the banjo. Stop guying me, boy, and tell me who the girl really is."

"I told you," repeated Tom. "She is Wanda Kelly."

There was a dead pause. Blake at last broke it.

"There's about forty-five million women in the United States," he muttered dazedly, "and out of that whole lot, you had to go and—fall in love with—"

"What's your objection?" bristled Tom. "You don't even know her, yet."

"I don't, hey?" retorted Blake.

Then, checking the impulse to tell his son the story of his verbal tilt with Wanda, he added:

"Maybe I don't. But I know her kind. She's after a rich man's son. She's an easy-mark hunter. And she's found one all right, all right."

"That's absurd. You don't know—"

"Absurd or not," snapped Blake, "it's got to stop short! I'm not going to let you throw yourself away on a girl like that. If it comes to a show-down, I'll withdraw my support from you. And then what can you do? Hey? Answer me that. Here I've given you the softest snap there is—a big salary for loafing around an office a few hours a week. How much could you

make by your own law practice if once I take my hand from under you? You haven't got an earning ability of a thousand dollars a year. And you know it. Suppose I try that; and see if she's so blooming anxious, then, to marry you."

"I understand," said Tom bitterly. "But you're wrong. I didn't ask your consent. I just told you what my plans are. That's all."

"It's enough, I guess."

"Look here, dad. You spoke just now of coming to a show-down. Also you claim I'm no good without your backing. If I can't make a living on my own hook, it's high time for me to begin to learn how. If all the education and money and training you've spent on me have fitted me for nothing except to be a political catpaw for you, it's time I started along a



"Cut Out Any Flowery Stuff and Bang Away at the Point."

fresh line. You've outlined my position pretty clearly. And I'm going to make my own way—with the girl I mean to marry."

"Oh, you poor walk-eyed fool!" sighed Blake.

"If I'm a fool," flared Tom, "I inherit it!"

"Of all the senseless come-backs I

ever heard," commented Blake disgustedly, "that's about the flattest and silliest. However, we understand each other at last—"

"I suppose," broke in Tom, with sulky contrition, "I needn't have said that. I'm sorry."

"You needn't be. Maybe you were right. Perhaps it wasn't such a punk come-back after all. But, of course, it's tough for a man to see his only son throw himself away on a—"

"Steady, dad! I won't stand for that sort of talk about her. Not even from you."

"Whether I say it or not," grumbled Blake, "you know what I think. So what's the difference?"

"When you change your mind," answered Tom, fighting hotly for self-control, "you'll have less to take back."

He jammed on his hat, flung open the door—and confronted a man and a woman who were entering.

The woman—tall, slender, strikingly handsome—darted forward to where Jim Blake stood scowling at his son. And at sight of her the scowl changed to a light that few men had seen—or suspected—in the grim old politician's face.

"Hello, Grace!" he exclaimed in delight. "Gee, but you come like a bunch of sunshine after a Welsh-rabbit nightmare! Stand still and let's look at you! No, don't waste time kissing Tom. He's got other people to kiss."

CHAPTER XI.

Before the Storm.

"It's good to get a welcome at last," laughed Grace. "Mark's been as cross as a bear."

"I haven't declared Robertson."

"You have!" she insisted. "And just because the train was a few minutes late. Oh, well—a few hours, then. When I got in you were stamping up and down the platform surrounded by a blue haze; like Ajax defying the—"

railroad. Really, I was ashamed of you. If it hadn't been for the lovely flowers you got me—"

"What was the delay?" asked Blake.

"I don't know," she answered, laying aside her wraps with Robertson's awkward if eager aid. "The engine made too strenuous an effort to get out of Baltimore. And it broke down. How are you, dad?"

"Oh," grunted Blake, "as well as a man may hope to be who never can hope to make himself worthy of such a wonderful son. I—"

"Tom!" cried Grace in jolly reproof. "There's been another explosion! What was it, this time? Tell me!"

"Politics," answered Blake before Tom could speak. "I'm a wicked, hopeless, corrupt old guy. And Tom's just discovered it—for the thousandth time. It's hurt his feeling something terrible."

"Why do you boys quarrel so foolishly?" she demanded. "Neither of you ever quarrels with me. I'm going to be an arbitration committee and a dove of peace, all in one, and settle your grievances—when I get time."

"And, speaking of time," put in Mark. "I ought to be at the Capitol this very minute. Coming?" he asked, turning to Blake and Tom.

"In a little while," said Blake. "You two run on. I want to speak to Grace."

Tom led the way from the room. Mark, following, paused an instant on the threshold.

"By the way, Grace," he called, over his shoulder, "we've asked Standish to come here. It wouldn't do for us to be seen conferring with him at the Capitol or anywhere else in public. If he gets here before we're back, ask him to wait, won't you?"

His wife's back had been turned toward him and she was leaning over a table arranging flowers in a vase. Her voice as she replied was quite indifferent.

"Certainly," she agreed. "Confer all night if you want to, so long as you don't do it loudly enough to keep me awake."

Robertson closed the door, leaving Grace and her father alone together.

Noting Blake's scowl, she asked: "How is the Mullins fight coming on?"

"Twenty-fourth round," he replied.

"Both men groggy."

"You'll win, though!" she said; and there was scarce a note of interrogation in her voice.

"It's a way I've got," bluffed her father; loath that the daughter, whose faith in his powers was so secure, should know of the straits in which he was laboring. "Standish is doing his best to block us. And he thinks he's done it. A lot of other folks think so, too. But I'm fixing up a mine to spring under him tonight. And after the explosion I guess the air will clear for the Mullins bill. But that wasn't what I wanted to speak to you about. It's Tom."

"Tom?"

"Yes. He's in love."

"Is that all? Oh, I see. The quarrel was about that. He came to you for sympathy and—"

"Oh, there's four things no man can get sympathy for. I don't know why, but he can't: having his umbrella stolen; getting his best hat sat on; a toothache; and falling in love. But it happens. Tom didn't come looking for sympathy. He just handed me an ultimatum. And it didn't ultimate. That's where I want you to help me."

"Who is she? Do I know her?"

"You've probably seen her here at the Kaswick, though I don't suppose

you've noticed her. You wouldn't be likely to. She's Wanda Kelly."

"Not the phone girl?" asked Grace in dismay.

"You win. Real nice, ain't it? Makes an awful hit with me, after all I've done and planned for that boy, to have him tumble into an affair like this."

"Don't worry!" she reassured him. "There are other ways of convincing a man—especially a lover—than by storming at him. You know all about politics, dad, and you can whip voters and congressmen into line. But Tom needs a different line of attack. And he's going to get it. From me."

"Say!" ejaculated Blake. "You've taken a three-ton load off my mind. By the way, do you know anything about this Kelly girl?"

"I've spoken to her once or twice. What about her?"

(Continued on page 7, Col. 1.)

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