



The Man on the Box

By HAROLD MacGRATH

Author of "The Grey Cloak," "The Puppet Crown,"

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CHAPTER XV.—CONTINUED.

How adroitly he had sown the seed! At that period he had no positive idea upon what kind of ground he had cast it. But he took that chance which all far-sighted men take, and then waited. There was little he had not learned about this handsome American with the beautiful daughter. How he had learned will always remain dark to me. My own opinion is that he had been studying him during his tenure of office in Washington, and, with that patience which is making Russia so formidable, waited for this opportunity.

I shall give the Russian all the justice of impartiality. When he saw the girl, he rather shrank from the affair. But he had gone too far, he had promised too much; to withdraw now meant his own defeat, his government's anger, his political oblivion. And there was a zest in this life of his. He could no more resist the call of intrigue than a gambler can resist the croupier's "Make your game, gentlemen!" I believe that he loved the girl the moment he set eyes upon her. Her beauty and bearing distinguished her from the other women he had met, and her personality was so engaging that her conquest of him was complete and spontaneous. How to win this girl and at the same time ruin her father was an embarrassing problem. The plan which finally came to him he repelled again and again, but at length he surrendered. To get the parent in his power and then to coerce the girl in case she refused him! To my knowledge this affair was the first dishonorable act of a very honorable man. But love makes fools and rogues of us all.

When the American returned to the world, his cigar was out and his coffee was stale and cold.

"A million francs!" he murmured. "Two hundred thousand!" The seed had fallen on fruitful ground.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PREVIOUS AFFAIR.

Mrs. Chadwick had collected her toilet and now stood smiling in a most friendly fashion at the reflection in the long oval mirror. She addressed this reflection in melodious tones. "Madam, you are really handsome; and let no false modesty whisper in your ear that you are not. Few women in Washington have such clear skin, such firm flesh, such color. Thirty-eight? It is nothing. It is but the half-way post: one has left youth behind, but one has not reached old age. Time must be very tolerant, for he has given you a careful selection. There were no years of storm and poverty, of violent passions; and if I have truly loved, it has been you, only you. You are too wise and worldly to love any one but yourself. And yet, once you stood on the precipice of dark eyes, pale skin, and melancholy wrinkles. And even now, if he were to speak . . . Enough! Enough of this folly. I have something to accomplish to-night." She glided from the boudoir into the small but luxurious drawing-room which had often been graced by the most notable men and women in the country.

Karloff threw aside the book of poems by De Banville, rose, and went forward to meet her.

"Madam,"—bending and brushing her hand with his lips, "Madam, you grow handsomer every day. If I were 40, now, I should fear for your single blessedness."

"Or, if I were two-and-twenty, instead of eight-and-thirty,"—beginning to draw on her long white gloves. There was a challenge in her smile.

"Well, yes; if you were two-and-twenty."

"There was a time not long ago," she said, drawing his gaze as a magnet draws a needle, "when the disparity in years was of no matter."

The count laughed. "That was three years ago; and if my memory serves me, you smiled."

"Perhaps I was first to smile; that is all."

"I observe a mental reservation,"—owlishly.

"I will put it plainly, then. I preferred to smile over your protestations rather than see you laugh over the possibility and the folly of my loving you."

"Then it was possible?"—with interest.

"Everything is possible . . . and often absurd."

"How do you know that I was not truly in love with you?"—narrowing his eyes.

"It is not explanatory; it can be given only one name—instinct, which in women and animals is more fully developed than in man. Besides, at that time you had not learned all about Colonel Annesley, whose guests we are to be this evening. Whoever would have imagined a Karloff accepting the hospitalities of an Annesley? Count hath not thy rose a candor?"

"Madam!" Karloff was frowning.

"Count, you look like a paladin when you scowl; but scowling never induces anything but wrinkles. That is why we women frown so seldom. We smile. But let us return to your query. Supposing I had accepted your declarations seriously; supposing you had offered me marriage in that burst of gratitude; supposing I had committed the folly of becoming a countess, what a position I should be in to-day!"

"I do not understand,"—perplexedly. "No?"—shrugging. She held forth a gloved arm. "Have you forgotten how gallantly you used to button my gloves?"

"A thousand pardons! My mind was occupied with the mystery of your long position." He took the arm gracefully and proceeded to slip the pearl buttons through their holes. (Have you ever buttoned the gloves of a handsome woman? I have. And there is a subtle thrill about the proceeding which I can not quite define. Perhaps it is the nearness of physical beauty; perhaps it is the delicate scent of flowers; perhaps it is the touch of the cool, firm flesh; perhaps it is just romance.) The gaze which she bent upon his dark head was emotional; yet there was not the slightest tremor of arm or fingers. It is possible that she desired him to observe the steadiness of her nerves. "What did you mean?" he asked.

"What did I mean?"—vaguely. Her thought had been elsewhere.

"By that supposition."

"Oh, I mean that my position, had I married you, would have been rather anomalous to-day." She extended the other arm. "You are in love."

"In love?" He looked up quickly.

"Decidedly; and I had always doubted your capacity for that sentiment."

"And pray tell me, with whom I am in love?"

"Come, Count, you and I know each other too well to waste time in beating about the bushes. I do not blame you for loving her; only, I say, it must not be."

"Must not be?" The count's voice rose a key.

"Yes, must not be. You must give them up—the idea and the girl. What! You, who contrive her father's dishonor, would aspire to the daughter's hand? It is not equitable. Love her honorably, or not at all. The course you are following is base and wholly unworthy of you."

He dropped the arm abruptly and strode across the room, stopping by a window. He did not wish to see her face at that particular instant. Some men would have demanded indignantly to know how she had learned these things; not so the count.

"There is time to retrieve. Go to the colonel frankly, pay his debts out of your own pockets, then tell the girl that you love her. Before you tell her, her father will have acquainted her with his sin and your generosity. She will marry you out of gratitude."

Karloff spun on his heels. His expression was wholly new. His eyes were burning; he stretched and crumpled his gloves.

"Yes, you are right, you are right! I have been trying to convince myself that I was a machine where the father was concerned and wholly a man in regard to the girl. You have put it before me in a bold manner. Good God, yes! I find that I am wholly a man. How smoothly all this would have gone to the end had she not crossed my path! I am base, I, who have always considered myself an honorable man. And now it is too late, too late!"

"Too late? What do you mean? Have you dared to ask her to be your wife?" Had Karloff held her arm at this moment, he would have comprehended many things.

"No, no! My word has gone forth to my government; there is a wall behind me, and I can not go back. To stop means worse than death. My property will be confiscated and my name obliterated, my body rot slowly in the frozen north. Oh, I know my country; one does not gain her gratitude by failure. I must have those plans, and nowhere could I obtain such perfect ones."

"Then you will give her up?" There was a broken note.

The count smiled. To her it was a smile scarce less than a snarl. "Give her up? Yes, as a mother gives up her child, as a lioness her cub. She has refused me, but nevertheless she shall be my wife. Oh, I am well-versed in human nature. She loves her father and I know what sacrifices she would make to save his honor. To-night!"—But his lips suddenly closed.

"Well, to-night? Why do you not go on?" Mrs. Chadwick was pale. Her gloved hands were clenched. A spasm of some sort seemed to hold her in its shaking grasp.

"Nothing, nothing! In heaven's name, why have you stirred me so?" he cried.

"Supposing, after all, I loved you?" He retreated. "Madam, your suppositions are becoming intolerable and impossible."

"Nothing is impossible. Supposing I loved you as violently and passionately as you love this girl?"

"Madam,"—hastily and with gentleness, "do not say anything which may cause me to blush for you; say nothing you may regret to-morrow."

"I am a woman of circumspection. My suppositions are merely argumentative. Do you realize, Count, that I could force you to marry me?"

Karloff's astonishment could not be equalled. "Force me to marry you?" "Is the thought so distasteful, then?" "You are mad to-night."

"Not so. In whatever manner you have succeeded in this country, your debt of gratitude is owing to me. I

do not recall this fact as a reproach; I make the statement to bear me on in what I have to submit to your discerning intelligence. I doubt if there is another woman, here or abroad, who knows you so well as I. Your personal honor is beyond impeachment but Russia is making vast efforts to speckle it. She will succeed. Yes, I could force you to marry me. With a word I could tumble your house of cards. I am a worldly woman and not without wit and address. I possess every one of your letters, most of all have I treasured the extravagant ones. To some you have signed your name. If you have kept mine, you will observe that my given name might mean any one of a thousand women who are named "Grace." Shall you marry me? Shall I tumble your house of cards? I could go to Col. Annesley and say to him that if he delivers these plans to you, I shall denounce him to the secret service officers. I might cause his utter financial ruin, but his name would descend to his daughter untarnished.

"You would not dare!" the count interrupted. "What? And you know me so well? I have not given you my word to reveal nothing. You confided in my rare quality of silence; you confided in me because you had proved me. Man is not infallible, even when he is named Karloff." She lifted from a vase her flowers, from which she shook the



"IT IS WAR, THEN?"

water. "Laws have been passed or annulled; laws have died at the executive desk. Who told you that this was to be, or that, long before it came to pass? In all the successful intrigues of Russia in this country, whom have you to thank? Me. Ordinarily a woman does not do these things as a pastime. There must be some strong motive behind. You asked me why I have stirred you so. Perhaps it is because I am neither two-and-twenty nor you two-score. It is these little barbs that remain in a woman's heart. Well, I do not love you well enough to marry you, but I love you too well to permit you to marry Miss Annesley."

"That has the sound of war. I did love you that night,"—not without a certain nobility.

"How easily you say 'that night!' Surely there was wisdom in that smile of mine. And I nearly tumbled into the pit! I must have looked exceedingly well . . . that night!"—drily.

"You are very bitter to-night. Had you taken me at my word, I never should have looked at Miss Annesley. And had I ceased to love you, not even you would have known it."

"Is it possible?"—ironically. "It is. I have too much pride to permit a woman to see that I have made a mistake."

"Then you consider in the present instance that you have not made a mistake? You are frank."

"At least I have not made a mistake which I can not rectify. Madam, let us not be enemies. As you say, I owe you too much. What is it you desire?"—with forced amiability.

"Deprive Col. Annesley of his honor, that, as you say, is inevitable; but I love that girl as I would a child of my own, and I will not see her caught in a net of this sort, or wedded to a man whose government robs him of his manhood and individuality."

"Do not forget that I hold my country first and foremost,"—proudly. "Love has no country, nor laws, nor galling chains of inequity. Love is magnificent only in that it gives all without question. You love this girl with reservations. You shall not have her. You shall not have even me, who loves you after a fashion, for I could never look upon you as a husband; in my eyes you would always be an accomplice."

"It is war, then?"—curtly. "War? Oh, no; we merely sever our diplomatic relations," she purred.

"Madam, listen to me. I shall make one more attempt to win this girl honorably. For you are right; love to be love must be magnificent. If she accepts me, for her sake I will become an outcast, a man without a country. If she refuses me, I shall go on to the end. Speak to the colonel, madam; it is too late. Like myself, he has gone too far. Why did you open the way for me as you did? I should have been satisfied with a discontented clerk. You threw this girl across my path, indirectly, it is true; but nevertheless the fault is yours."

"I recognize it. At that time I did not realize how much you were to me."

"You are a strange woman. I do not understand you."

"Incompatibility. Come, the carriage is waiting. Let us be gone."

"You have spoiled the evening for me," said the count, as he threw her cloak across her shoulders.

"On the contrary, I have added a

peculiar zest. No, let us go and appear before the world, and smile, and laugh, and eat, and gossip. Let the heart throbb with a dull pain, if it will; the mask is ours to do with as we may."

"They were, in my opinion, two very unusual persons."

CHAPTER XVII.

DINNER IS SERVED.

"Ha!"

Monsieur Pierre, having uttered this ejaculation, stepped back and rested his fat hands on his fat hips. As he surveyed the impromptu butler, a shade of perplexity spread over his oily face. He smoothed his imperial and frowned. This groom certainly looked right, but there was something lacking in his make-up, that indefinable something which is always found in the true servant—servility. There was no humility here, no hypocritical meekness, no servility; there was nothing smug or self-satisfied. In truth, there was something grimly earnest, which was not to be understood readily. Monsieur Pierre, having always busied himself with soups and curries and roasts and sauces, was not a profound analyst; yet his instinctive shrewdness at once told him that this fellow was no servant, nor could he ever be made into one. Though voluble enough in his kitchen, Monsieur Pierre lacked expression when confronted by any problem outside of it. Here was the regulation swallow-tail coat and trousers of green, the striped red vest, and the polished brass buttons; but the man inside was too much for him. "Diab! You like right. But no, I can not explain. Bet sees on zee tongue, but eet rayfuse. Ha! I haf eet! You lack vot zay call zee real. You make me tink of zee sairvant on zee stage, somet'ing bettair off: eh?" This was as near as monsieur ever got to the truth of things.

[To Be Continued.]

SOME QUEER WEDDINGS.

Humorous Incidents of Nuptials Performed by a Noted Cleric.

"It is hard to look over my record of marriage services without continuous merriment," wrote the Rev. John Henry Barrows, president of Oberlin College. In a memoir of her father's life Miss Barrows gives some of his experience in his own words.

"I recall the marriage where the awkward father of the bride, who was himself nearly seven feet tall, tried to kneel when his daughter knelt and who required help to bring him to his feet again.

"I remember the loving groom who had come to my house to be wed, and who, after the ceremony, tenderly remarked:

"Jennie has no friends here, doctor. I should be so glad if you would kiss her!"

"I think of the young man in church who walked with five other young men up one aisle, while the bride and five other young ladies walked up the other aisle, the two forming a straight military line before the altar, and who, when I whisperingly asked him his first name, replied in loud tones, 'I do,' and who, at the close of the service, took out a ten-dollar bill and presented it in the presence of the entire congregation.

"I think of the couple whom I called by wrong names, saying, 'Do you, George?' 'Do you, Martha?' when I was really addressing John and Jane. In hurriedly glancing over the license, I had read the names of the bride's father and mother instead of those of the bride and groom."

Why the Actor Smiled.

The late Joseph Jefferson used to enjoy telling, in his quaint way, of the sad case of a player in the old days. A company had been sent out from New Orleans to visit the towns along the Mississippi river up to St. Louis. Business had been anything but good, and the meager receipts at the box office had resulted in a heavy reduction of salaries before the company had been out for many weeks. One night, after the performance, the stage manager, who also was the leading man, took exception to the manner in which one of the players had interpreted a certain "death scene." "Why," exclaimed the stage manager, indignantly, "you actually smiled in that scene!" "Yes," replied the player who had been rebuked, "in view of the salary that you now pay me, death seems a pleasant relief."—Success Magazine.

French "Bull."

The following verbal "bull" is credited to a Frenchman who, while promenade with a friend, noticed a passing cab drawn by a pair of horses, one black and the other white. "Look," said one; "you don't often see a pure white horse and a pure black one harnessed together."

"That's so," was the response. "Do you know why the black horse is on the near side?"

"No."

"Why, they always put the horse that isn't the same color as the other on the near side."

Proprietary Rights.

"My stars!" exclaimed a sympathetic old lady who had seen a man fall on the icy pavement.

"You are mistaken, madam," responded the man, sitting up and blinking; "they're mine."

Rising stiffly to his feet he went his way.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Significant.

"Well, Borroughs has moved to Lexington."

"Yes, and I miss him, too."

"For how much?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

JOHN HENRY

ON COURTING.

By HUGH McHUGH [GEORGE V. HOBART]



"In the Days of Old."

Are you wise to the fact that everything is changing in this old world of ours, and that since the advent of fussy wagons even the old-fashioned idea of courtship has been chased to the woods?

It used to be that on a Saturday evening the young gent would draw down his six dollars' worth of salary and chase himself to the barber shop, where the Dago lawn trimmer would put a crimp in his mustache and plaster his forehead with three cents' worth of hair and a dollar's worth of axle-grease.

Then the young gent would go out and spread 40 cents around among the tradesmen for a mess of water-lilies and a bag of peanut brittle.

The lilies of the valley were to put on the dining-room table so mother would be pleased, and with the peanut brittle he intended to fill in the weary moments when he and his little geisha girl were not making goo-goo eyes at each other.

But nowadays it is different, and Dan Cupid spends most of his time on the hot foot between the coroner's office and the divorce court.

I've got a hunch that young people these days are more emotional and like to see their pictures in the newspapers.

Nowadays when a clever young man goes to visit his sweetheart he hikes over the streets in a benzine buggy, and when he pulls the bell-rope at the front door he has a rapid-fire revolver in one pocket and a bottle of carbolic acid in the other.

His intentions are honorable and he wishes to prove them so by shooting his lady love if she renigs when he makes a play for her hand.

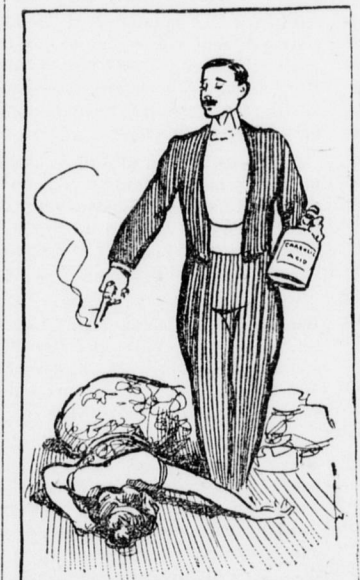
I think the old style was the best, because when young people quarreled they didn't need an ambulance and a hospital surgeon to help them make up.

In the old days Oscar Dobson would draw the stove brush cheerfully across his dogskin shoes and rush with eager feet to see Lena Jones, the girl he wished to make the wife of his bosom. "Darling!" Oscar would say, "I am sure to the bad for love of you. Pipe the downcast drop in this eye of mine and notice the way my heart is bubbling over like a bottle of sarsaparilla on a hot day! Be mine, Lena! Be mine!"

Then Lena would giggle. Not once, but seven giggles, something like those used in a spasm.

Then she would reply: "No, Oscar; it cannot be. Fate wills it otherwise."

Then Oscar would bite his finger nails, pick his hat up out of the coal-scuttle and say to Lena: "False one! You love Conrad, the floorwalker in the butcher shop. Curses on Conrad, and see what you have missed, Lena. I



"To Prove His Intentions Were Honorable."

have tickets for a swell chowder party next Tuesday. Ah! farewell forever!"

Then Oscar would walk out and hunt up one of those places that Carrie Nation missed in the shuffle and there, with one arm glued tight around the bar rail, he would fasten his system to a jag which would last for a week.

Despair would grab him and he'd be Oscar with the gouse thing for sure.

What do you think?

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MEDIUM-SIZED SHIPS IN FAVOR.

Late shipping returns compiled by Lloyd's prove quite conclusively that the great cargo carrier of the world is still the medium-sized tramp steamer which can get in and out of all ports of consequence in the known world and on a draft of from 22 to 25 feet

and carry from 6,000 to 10,000 tons of cargo. The extent to which vessels of this type predominate over all others has been frequently shown in Lloyd's Register, and, despite the fact that

When he would recover strength enough to walk down town without attracting attention of the other side of the street, he would call on Lena and say: "Lena, forgive me for what I done, but love is blind—and, besides, I mixed my drinks. Lena, I was on the downward path and I nearly went to hell."

Then Lena would say: "Why, Oscar, I saw you and your bundle when you fell in the well, but I didn't know it was as deep as you mention."

Then they would kiss and make up, and the wedding bells would ring just as soon as Oscar's salary grew large enough to tease a pocketbook.

But these days the idea is altogether different.

Children are hardly out of the cradle before they are arrested for butting into the speed limit with a smoke wagon.

Even when they go courting they have to play to the gallery.

Nowadays Gonsalvo H. Puffenlotz



"She Thinks She Is a Sibson Girl."

walks into the parlor to see Miss Imogene Cordelia Hoffbrew.

"Wie gehts, Imogene!" says Gonsalvo.

"Simlich!" says Imogene, standing at right angles near the piano because she thinks she is a Gibson girl.

"Imogene, dearest," Gonsalvo continues: "I called on your papa in Wall street yesterday to find out how much money you have, but he refused to name the sum, therefore you have untold wealth!"

Gonsalvo pauses to let the Parisian clock on the mantel tick, tick, tick! He is making the bluff of his life you see, and he has to do even that on tick.

Besides, this furnishes the local color.

Then Gonsalvo bursts forth again: "Imogene! Oh! Imogene! will you be mine and I will be thine without money and without the price."

Gonsalvo pauses to let this idea get noised about a little.

Then he goes on: "Be mine, Imogene! You will be minus the money while I will have the price!"

Gonsalvo trembles with the passion which is consuming his pocketbook, and then Imogene turns languidly from a right angle triangle into more of a straight front, and hands Gonsalvo a bitter look of scorn.

Then Gonsalvo grabs his revolver and, aiming it at her marble brow, exclaims: "Marry me this minute or I will shoot you in the topknot, because I love you."

Then papa rushes into the room and Gonsalvo politely requests the old gentleman to hold two or three bullets for him for a few moments.

Gonsalvo then bites deeply into a bottle of carbolic acid, and just as the coroner climbs into the house the pictures of the modern lover and loveliness appear in the newspapers, and fashionable society receives a jolt.

This is the new and up-to-date way of making love.

However, I think the old style of courting is the best, because you can generally stop a jag before it gets to the undertaker.

What do you think?

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Exercise.

"You consider walking the best exercise?"

"It used to be," answered the physician, "until the necessity of dodging street cars and automobiles made it so violent."—Washington Star.