



The Man on the Box

By HAROLD MacGRATH

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CHAPTER XIX.—CONTINUED.

"Come back to the army, lad; the east is no place for a man of your kidney. Scrape up a commission and I'll see to it that you get back into the regiment. Life is real out in the great west. People smile too much here; they don't laugh often enough. Smiles have a hundred meanings, laughter but one. Smiles are the hidden places for lies, and sneers, and mockeries, and scandals. Come back to the west; we all want you, the service and I. When I saw you this afternoon I knew you instantly, only I was worried as to what devilment you were up to. Win this girl, if you can; she's worth any kind of a struggle, God bless her! Win her and bring her out west, too."

Warburton wrung the hand in his till the old fellow signified that his fingers were beginning to ache.

"Do you suppose she suspects anything?" ventured Warburton.

"No. She may be a trifle puzzled, though. I saw her watching your hands at the table. She has eyes and can readily see that such hands as yours were never made to carry soup-plates. For the life of me, I had a time of it, swallowing my laughter. I longed for a vacant lot to yell in. It would have been a positive relief. The top of Troop A peddling soup! Oh, I shall have to tell the boys. You used more pipe-clay than any other man in the regiment. Don't scowl. Never mind; you've had your joke; I must have mine. Don't let that Russian fellow get the inside track. Keep her on American soil. I like him and I don't like him; and for all your tomfoolery and mischief, there is good stuff in you—stuff that any woman might be proud of. If you hadn't adopted this disguise, I could have helped you out a bit by cracking up some of your exploits. Well, they will be inquiring for me. Good night and good luck. If you should need me, a note will find me at the Army and Navy club." And the genial old warrior, shaking with silent laughter, went back to the house.

Warburton remained standing. He was lost in a dream. All at once he pressed the rose to his lips and kissed it shamelessly, kissed it uncountable times. Two or three leaves, not withstanding this violent treatment, fluttered to the floor. He picked them up; any one of those velvet leaves might have been the recipient of her kisses, the rosary of love. He was in love, such a love that comes but once to any man, not passing, uncertain, but lasting. He knew that it was useless. He had dug with his own hands the abyss between himself and this girl. But there was a secret gladness; to love was something. (For my part, I believe that the glory lies, not in being loved, but in loving.)

I do not know how long he stood there, but it must have been at least ten minutes. Then the door opened and Monsieur Pierre lurched or rolled (I can't explain or describe the method of his entrance) into the room, his face red with anger, and a million thousand thunders on the tip of his Gallic tongue.

"So! You haf leaf me to clear zee table, eh? Not by a damn! I, clear zee table? I? I tink not, I cook, nozzing else. To zee dining-room, or I haf you discharge!"

"All right, Peter, old boy!" cried Warburton, the gloom lifting from his face. This Pierre was a very funny fellow.

"Petraire! You haf the insolence to call me Petraire? Why, I haf you keeked out in zee morning, lackey!"

"Cook!"—mockingly.

Pierre was literally dumfounded. Such disrespect he had never before witnessed. It was frightful. He opened his mouth to issue a volley of French oaths, when Zhamess's hand stopped him.

"Look here, Peter, you broil your partridges and flavor your soups, but keep out of the stables, or, in your own words, I keel you or keek you out. You tell the scullery maid to clear off the table. I'm off duty for the rest of the night. Now, then, allons! Marche!" And M'sieu Zhamess gently but firmly and steadily pushed the scandalized Pierre out of the room and closed the door in his face. I shan't repeat what Pierre said, much less what he thought.

Let me read a thought from the mind of each of my principals, the final thought before retiring that night. Karloff (on leaving Mrs. Chadwick): dishonor against dishonor; so it must be. I can not live without that girl. Mrs. Chadwick: (when Karloff had gone.) He has lost, but I have won. Annesley: So one step leads to another, and the labyrinth of dishonor has no end.

The Colonel: What the deuce will love put next into the young mind? Pierre (to Celeste): I haf heen discharge!

Celeste (to Pierre). He ees handsome! Warburton (sighing in the dolorosa): How I love her!

The Girl (standing before her mir-

ror and smiling happily): Oh Mister Butler! Why?

CHAPTER XX.

THE EPISODE OF THE STOVEPIPE.

In the morning Monsieur Pierre faithfully reported to his mistress the groom's extraordinary insolence and impudence of the night before. The girl struggled with and conquered her desire to laugh; for monsieur was somewhat grotesque in his rage.

"Frightful. Mademoiselle, most frightful! He call me Petraire most disrespectful way, and eject me from zee stables. I can not call heed out, he eez a groom and knows nozzing uf zee amende honorable."

Mademoiselle summoned M'sieu Zhamess. She desired to make the comedy complete in all its phases.

"James, whenever you are called upon to act in the capacity of butler, you must clear the table after the guests leave it. This is imperative. I do not wish the scullery girl to handle the porcelain save in the tubs. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Miss. There were no orders to that effect last night, however." He was angry.

Monsieur Pierre puffed up like the lady-frog in Aesop's fables.

"And listen, Pierre," she said, collapsing the bubble of the chef's conceit, "you must give no orders to James. I will do that. I do not wish any tale-bearing or quarreling among my servants. I insist upon this. Observe me carefully, Pierre, and you, James."

James did observe her carefully, so carefully, indeed, that her gaze was forced to wander to the humiliated countenance of Monsieur Pierre.

"James, you must not look at me like that. There is something in your eyes; I can't explain what it is, but it somehow lacks the respect due me." This command was spoken coldly and sharply.

"Respect?" He drew a step back. "I disrespectful to you, Miss Annesley? Oh, you wrong me. There can not be any one more respectful to you than I am." The sincerity of his tones could not be denied. In fact, he was almost too sincere.

"Nevertheless, I wish you to regard what I have said. Now, you two shake hands."

The groom and the chef shook hands. I am ashamed to say that James squeezed Monsieur Pierre's flabby hand out of active service for several hours that followed. Beads of agony sparkled on Monsieur Pierre's expansive brow as he turned to enter the kitchen.

"Shall we ride to-day, Miss?" he asked, inwardly amused.

"No, I shall not ride this morning," calmly.

James bowed meekly under the rebuke. What did he care? Did he not possess a rose which had known the pressure of her lips, her warm, red lips?

"You may go," she said.

James went. James whistled on the way too.

Would that it had been my good fortune to have witnessed the episode of that afternoon! My Jehu, when he hears it related these days, smiles a sickly grin. I do not believe that he ever laughs heartily over it. At three o'clock, while Warburton was reading the morning paper, interested especially in the army news of the day, he heard Pierre's voice wailing.

"What's the fat fool want now?" James grumbled to William.

"Oh, he's always yelling for help. They've coddled him so long in the family that he acts like a ten-year-old kid. I stole a kiss from Celeste one day, and I will be shot if he didn't start to blubber."

"You stole a kiss, eh?" said James admiringly.

"Only just for the sport of making him crazy, that was all." But William's red visage belied his indifferent tone. "You'd better go and see what he wants. My hands are all harness grease."

Warburton concluded to follow William's advice. He flung down his paper and strode out to the rear porch, where he saw Pierre gesticulating wildly.

"What's the matter? What do you want?"—churlishly.

"Frightful! Zee stove-pipe ees vat you call bust!"

James laughed.

"I can not rreach eet. I can not cook till eet ees fix'. You are tall eh?"—affably.

"All right; I'll help you fix it." Grumbling, James went into the kitchen, mounted a chair, and began banging away at the pipe, very much after the fashion of Bunner's "Culpepper Ferguson." The pipe acted pig-ish. James grew determined. One end slipped in and then the other slipped out, half a dozen times. James lost patience and became angry; and in his anger he overreached himself. The chair slid back. He tried to balance himself and, in the mad effort to maintain a perpendicular position, made a frantic clutch at the pipe. Ruin and devastation! Down came the pipe, and with it a peck of greasy soot.

Monsieur Pierre yelled with terror and despair. The pies on the rear end of the stove were lost for ever. Mademoiselle Celeste screamed with laughter, whether at the sight of the pies or M'sieu Zhamess, is more than I can say.

James rose to his feet, the cuss-words of a corporal rumbled behind his lips. He sent an energetic kick toward Pierre, who succeeded in eluding it.

Pierre's eyes were full of tears. What a kitchen! Soot, soot, everywhere, on the floor, on the tables, on the walls, in the air!

"Zee pipe!" he burst forth; "zee pipe! You haf zee house full of gas!" James, blinking and sneezing, boil-

ing with rage and chagrin, remounted the chair and finally succeeded in joining the two lengths. Nothing happened this time. But the door to the forward rooms opened, and Miss Annesley looked in upon the scene.

"Merciful heavens!" she gasped. "what has happened?"

"Zee stove-pipe bust, Mees," explained Pierre.

The girl gave Warburton one look, balled her handkerchief against her mouth, and fled. This didn't add to his amiability. He left the kitchen in a downright savage mood. He had appeared before her positively ridiculous, laughable. A woman never can love a man, nor entertain tender regard for him at whom she has laughed. And the girl had laughed, and doubtless was still laughing. (However, I do not offer his opinion as infallible.) He stood in the roadway, looking around for some inanimate thing upon which he might vent his anger, when the sound of hoofs coming toward him distracted him. He glanced over his shoulder . . . and his knees all but gave way under him. Caught! The rider was none other than his sister Nancy! It was all over now for a certainty. He knew it; he had about one minute to live. She was too near, so he dared not fly. Then a brilliant inspiration came to him. He quickly passed his hand over his face. The disguise was complete.

"James!" Miss Annesley was standing on the veranda. "Take charge of the horse. Nancy, dear, I am so glad to see you!"

James was anything but glad. "Betty, good gracious, whatever is the matter with this fellow? Has he the black plague? Ugh!" She slid from the saddle unaided.

James stolidly took the reins. "The kitchen stove-pipe fell down," Betty replied, "and James stood in the immediate vicinity of it."

The two girls laughed joyously, but James did not even smile. He had half a notion to kiss Nancy, as he had planned to do that memorable night of the ball at the British embassy. But even as the notion came, to him, Nancy had climbed up the steps and was out of harm's way.

"James," said Miss Annesley, "go and wash your face at once."

"Yes, Miss."

At the sound of his voice Nancy turned swiftly; but the groom had presented his back and was leading the horse to the stables.

Nancy would never tell me the substance of her conversation with Miss Annesley that afternoon, but I am conceited enough to believe that a certain absent gentleman was the main topic. When she left, it was William who led out the horse. He explained that James was still engaged with soap and water and pumice-stone. Miss Annesley's laugh rang out heartily, and Nancy could not help joining her.

"And have you heard from that younger brother of yours?" Betty asked, as her friend settled herself in the saddle.

"Not a line, Betty, not a line; and I had set my heart on your meeting him. I do not know where he is, or when he will be back."

"Perhaps he is in quest of adventures."

"He is in Canada, hunting caribou."

"You don't tell me!"

"What a handsome girl you are, Betty!"—admiringly.

"What a handsome girl you are, Nancy!" mimicked the girl on the veranda. "If your brother is only half as handsome, I do not know whatever will become of this heart of mine when we finally meet." She smiled and drolly placed her hands on her heart. "Don't look so disappointed, Nan; perhaps we may meet. I have an idea that he will prove interesting and entertaining;"—and she laughed again.

"Whoa, Dandy! What are you laughing at?" demanded Nancy.

"I was thinking of James and his soap, water and pumice-stone. That was all, dear. Saturday afternoon, then, we shall ride to the club and have tea. Good-by, and remember me to the baby."

"Good-by!"—and Nancy cantered away.

What a blissful thing the lack of prescience is, sometimes!

When James had scraped the soot from his face and neck and hands and had sussed it from his hair, James observed, with some concern, that Pirate was coughing at a great rate. His fierce run against the wind the day before had given him a cold. So James hunted for the veterinarian.

"Where do you keep your books here?" he asked William. "Pirate's got a cold."

"In the house library. You just go in and get it. We always do that at home. You'll find it on the lower shelf, to the right as you enter the door."

It was half after four when James having taken a final look at his hands and nails, proceeded to follow William's instructions. He found no one about. Outside the kitchen the lower part of the house was deserted. To reach the library he had to pass through the music-room.

The first thing that caught his attention was a movable drawing-board, on which lay an uncompleted drawing. At one side a glass into which were thrust numerous pens and brushes. Near this lay a small ball of crumpled cambric, such as women insist upon carrying in their street-car purses, a delicate, dainty, useless thing. So she drew pictures, too, he thought. Was there anything this beautiful creature could not do? Everything seemed to suggest her presence. An indefinable feminine perfume still lingered on the air, speaking eloquently of her. Curiosity compelled him to step forward and examine her work. He

approached with all the stealth of a gentlemanly burglar. He expected to see some trees and hills and mayhap a brook, or some cows standing in a stream or some children picking daisies. He had a sister and was reasonably familiar with the kind of subjects chosen by the lady-amateur.

A fortification plan!

He bent close to it. Here was the sea, here was the land, here the number of soldiers, cannon, rounds of ammunition, resources in the matter of procuring aid, the telegraph, the railways, everything was here on this pale, waxen cloth, everything but a name. He stared at it, bewildered. He couldn't understand what a plan of this sort was doing outside the war department. Instantly he became a soldier; he forgot that he was masquerading as a groom; he forgot everything but this mute thing staring up into his face. Underneath, on a little shelf, he saw a stack of worn envelopes. He looked at them. Rough drafts of plans. Governor's Island! Fortress Monroe! What did it mean? What could it mean? He searched and found plans, plans, plans of harbors, plans of coast defenses, plans of ships building, plans of full naval and military strength; everything, everything! He straightened. How his breath pained him! . . . And all this was the handiwork of the woman he loved! Good God, what was going on in this house? What right had such things as these to be in a private home? For what purpose had they been drawn? So accurately reproduced? For what purpose?

Oh, whatever the purpose was, she was innocent; upon this conviction he would willingly stake his soul. Innocent, innocent! ticked the clock over the mantel. Yes, she was innocent. Else how could she laugh in that light-hearted fashion? How could her eyes shine so bright and merry?

Karloff, Annesley! Karloff the Russian, Annesley the American; the one a secret agent of his country, the other a former trusted official! No, no! He could not entertain so base a thought against the father of the girl he loved. Had he not admired his clean record, his personal bravery, his fearless honesty? And yet, that absent-mindedness, this care-worn countenance, these must mean something. The purpose, to find out the purpose of these plans!

He took the handkerchief and hid it in his breast, and quietly stole away . . . A handkerchief, a rose, and a kiss; yes, that was all that would ever be his.

Pirate nearly coughed his head off that night; but, it being William's night off, nobody paid any particular attention to that justly indignant animal.

[To Be Continued.]

Sure to Die.

Nora was a good girl, but dearly loved to wheedle the "missis" out of an extra half-day off once in a while. One morning Nora, busily engaged with the week's washing, asked: "Could I get off Sunday, mum, to go to my brother's funeral, mum?" Says the "missis": "Why, Nora, this is only Monday. You don't mean to tell me that they are keeping your brother's body a whole week?"

"Oh, no, mum; he isn't dead yet, but the funeral will be next Sunday."

"But, my good girl, how can any doctor say today that a man will be dead in a week from now? Many a person given up for dead has lived to a good old age."

"The doctor has nothing to do with it; my brother is sentenced to be hanged on Friday next."—Boston Herald.

Only One.

The following incident occurred during the administration of Gov. Robie of Maine. It has been the custom of the governor and council to visit the Indians once in two years. On one occasion, during a visit to the Passamaquoddy tribe, situated 25 miles above Calais on the St. Croix waters, after everything had been arranged satisfactorily to the tribe the governor sent for the chief spokesman of the Indians, known as "Lying Joe," and asked where he could find a trusty Indian to look after a certain matter. The Indian, with all the dignity he could summon, straightened himself up, and, after a moment's hesitation, replied: "Gubner, don't you trust a d—d Injun but me."—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Full Up.

When the ladies were picking up the dishes after a Sunday school picnic given to the children of the poor quarter several slices of cake were found which they did not wish to carry home. One said to a small lad who was already asthmatic from gorging, "Here, boy, won't you have another piece of cake?"

"Well," he replied, taking it rather listlessly, "I guess I can still chaw, but I can't swallow."—Lippincott's.

Correcting a False Report.

Archie—"Miss Tartun, I have a bone to pick with you. I am told that you said I fell in love with every pretty girl I met."

Miss-Tartun—"Some Malicious person has been lying to you, Mr. Feather-top. I said you fancied that every pretty girl you met was in love with you."—Chicago Tribune.

Mathematics.

Teacher—What are the principal parts of mathematics? Johnny—Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and restitution.—N. Y. Sun.

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