

# SHIFTING SANDS

By Sara Ware Bassett  
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## CHAPTER XII—Continued

"I shall be. I never appreciated Hortie until now. I was too silly, vain—feather-headed. I have realized it since knowing Marcia."  
"We all want to be different after we have seen Marcia," Stanley Heath said gently.  
"We don't just want to be—we set about it," was the girl's grave reply.  
"Sit down, Sylvia, and let us talk of Marcia," ventured Heath after a pause. "I am deeply sorry if I have wounded her—indeed I am."  
The girl searched his face.  
"I cannot understand you, Mr. Heath," she said. "What has Marcia done that you should have left her as you did? Hasn't she believed in you through thick and thin? Stood up for you against everybody—going it blind at that? Few women would have had such faith in a stranger."  
"I realize that. You do not need to tell me," he answered. "It is precisely because she has gone so far I believed her capable of going farther yet—the whole way."  
"What do you mean by the whole way?"  
"To the end."  
"Well, hasn't she?"  
He shook his head.  
"No. She has fallen short—disappointed me cruelly. When it came to the final test, her affection collapsed. Oh, she has been wonderful," he added quickly. "Do not think I fail to appreciate that. She has far out-distanced every other woman I ever have known. I simply expected too much of her, doubtless the impossible. Human nature is frail—a woman's heart the frailest thing of all. I have always said so."

"You wrong Marcia," cried Sylvia hotly. "Her heart is not frail. Neither is she the weak sort of person you have pictured. In all the world you could not match her loyalty or the depth of her affection. If after the experience we three have lived through together you have not discovered what she is, it is futile for me to attempt to show you."  
"You came into our lives like a meteor—entirely detached from everything. We knew nothing about you and in the face of damning evidence you offered neither Marcia nor me one word of explanation. Marcia asked none. Without rhyme or reason she believed in you. I had not her faith. I freely confess I thought you guilty. Oh, I liked you sufficiently well to be ready to help you save your skin. But Marcia cared enough for you to want you to save your soul."  
"When you were taken ill, we both nursed you—I willingly, she devotedly. Here lay another difference had you been able to detect it. What happens as a result of this enforced intimacy? You know—know far better than I."  
"I fell in love with Marcia," replied the man without an instant's hesitation.  
"You fell in love!" Sylvia repeated, her lip curling. "You call it love—the poor thing you offered her! Why, Marcia would have gone to the world's end with you, Stanley Heath, had she the right. She would have faced any humiliation for your sake. If prison doors closed upon you, she would have remained faithful until they swung open and afterward followed you to any corner of the earth in which you chose to begin a new life."

"That's where you're wrong, Sylvia," contradicted Heath. "Marcia was not ready to do that. I tried her out and she refused. When I told her I should return to her, and asked her in so many words whether she was willing to face shame and public scorn for my sake she turned her back on me. She could not go to that length."  
"Are you sure she understood?" asked Sylvia, stepping nearer and looking fearlessly into his eyes. "There is a shame Marcia never in this world would face for any man; but it is not the shame you have just described."  
"It is the shame of wronging another woman; destroying a home. In the villages where we have been brought up, we believe in marriage as a sacred, enduring sacrament—not a bond to be lightly broken. When you offered Marcia less than that—"  
"I never offered Marcia any such shameful position, Sylvia," cried Stanley Heath. "I would not so far insult her."  
"But you are married."  
"That is a lie. Who told you so?"  
"The wire to Mrs. Stanley Heath—the telephone message. I heard you call her Joan."  
"But, Sylvia, Mrs. Stanley Heath is not my wife. She is my young stepmother, my father's widow. I always have called her Joan."  
"Oh! I beg your pardon."  
"I see it all now," the man explained. "You have entirely misunderstood the situation. I'm a Junior. Since my father's death, however, people have got out of the way of using the term. Sometimes I myself am careless about it. So Marcia thought—"  
"Of course she did. We both did. How were we to know?" Sylvia demanded.  
"How, indeed? If an innocent citizen cannot visit a town without being arrested as a criminal within a week of his arrival, why shouldn't he be married without his knowledge. Circumstantial evidence can, apparently, work wonders."  
Then suddenly he threw back his head and laughed.  
"Bless you, little Sylvia—bless you

for setting me right. I told you you were a brick and you've proved it. Thanks to you, everything is now straightened out. Here, give me your hand. How am I to thank you for what you have done? I only hope that young Horatio Fuller of yours realizes what a treasure he is getting."  
"He does, Mr. Heath—he does," observed that gentleman, strolling at the same instant through the door and encircling his tiny bride-to-be with his arm. "Haven't I traveled half way across this big country of ours to marry her?"  
"Oh, we're not going to be married yet, Hortie," demurred the girl trying to wrench herself free of the big fellow's hold.  
"Certainly we are, my dear. Didn't I tell you this morning I came to get married? I was perfectly serious. Dad gave me two months vacation with that understanding. I must either produce a wife when I get home or lose my job."  
"Looks to me as if you had Mr. Fuller's future prosperity in your hands, Sylvia," Heath said.  
"She has. She can make or break me. A big responsibility, eh, little Sylvia?"  
"I know it, Hortie," retorted the girl seriously.  
"She is equal to it, Fuller—never fear," Stanley Heath asserted.  
"I'm not doing any worrying," smiled Horatio. "I—"  
The sentence was cut short by the radio's loudspeaker:  
"The much sought Long Island gem thief was captured this morning at his lodgings in Jersey City. Harris Chambers, alias Jimmie O'Hara, a paroled prisoner, was taken by the police at his room on K—street. A quantity of loot, together with firearms and the missing jewels were found concealed in the apartment. The man readily admitted the theft. He has a long prison record."

For a second nobody spoke. Then as if prompted by common impulse, the three on the piazza rushed indoors.  
Elisha was sitting limply before the radio.  
"Did you hear that?" he gasped.  
"Well, rather!" Horatio Fuller shouted with a triumphant wave of his hand.  
"Ain't it the beater?" exploded the astonished sheriff. "That sends the whole case up in the air. All that's needed now to make me out the darndest fool on God's earth is for Eleazer's young nephew-lawyer in New York, who's checking up Heath's story, to wire everything there is O. K. If he does, I'll go bury my head. There goes the telephone! That's him! That's Eleazer—I'll bet a hat."  
"Hello!—Yes, I heard it.—You ain't surprised? Wal, I am. I'm took off my feet.—Oh, your nephew, did he, an' everything's O. K.? That beat the case, I reckon there's no more to be said. I feel like a shrimp. How do you feel?"  
Elisha hung up the receiver.  
"Wal, Mr. Heath, the story you told Eleazer an' me is straight as a string in every particular," he announced. "You're free! There ain't nothin' I can say. To tell you I'm sorry ain't in no way adequate. You'll just have to set me down as one of them pud'din'-headed idiots that was over-ambitious to do his duty."

"It was outrageous of you, insulting to leave a thing of this sort for Marcia."  
"I shall not let it go at that, Mr. Winslow," Stanley Heath exclaimed, stepping to the old man's side and seizing his palm in a strong grip. "We all make errors. Forget it. I'm going to. Besides, you have treated me like a prince since I've been your guest."  
"You are the prince, sir. Livin' with you has shown me that. Wal, anyhow, all ain't been lost. At least I've met a thoroughbred an' that ain't none too frequent an occurrence in these days."  
"What I can't understand, Mr. Winslow, is why you didn't recognize he was a thoroughbred from the beginning," Horatio Fuller remarked.  
"You've a right to berate me, young man—a perfect right. I ain't goin' to put up no defense. 'Twas the circumstances that blinded me. Besides, I had only a single glimpse of Mr. Heath. Remember that. After he was took sick I never saw him again. Had we got acquainted, as we have now, every-

thing would 'a' been different. Findin' them jewels—"  
"Great hat, man! I had a diamond ring in my pocket when I came to Wilton, but that didn't prove I'd stolen it."  
"I know! I know!" acquiesced the sheriff. "Eleazer an' me lost our bearings entirely. We got completely turned round."  
"A thief with a Phi Beta Kappa key!" jeered Horatio. "Godfrey!" Then turning to Sylvia, he added in an undertone: "Well, so far as I can see the only person who has kept her head through this affair is our Aunt Marcia."  
Elisha overheard the final clause.  
"That's right!" he agreed with cordiality. "The Widder's head-piece can always be relied upon to stay steady."  
"Whose head-piece?" inquired Stanley Heath, puzzled by the term.  
"Marcia's. Here in town we call her The Widder."  
"Well, you'll not have the opportunity to call her that much longer," Heath laughed.  
"You don't tell me!" Elisha regarded him, open-mouthed. "Humph! So that's how the wind blows, is it? Wal, I can see this mix-up would 'a' ended my chances anyway. Marcia'd never have had me after this. Disappointed as I am, though, there's a sight of comfort in knowin' she won't have Eleazer neither. He don't come out of the shindy a whit better'n me. That's somethin'. In fact it's a heap!"

## CHAPTER XIII

Intense as was the joy of the three persons, who a little later set out toward the Homestead in the old yellow dory, they were a silent trio.  
Too much of seriousness had happened during the morning for them to dispel its aftermath lightly.  
Horatio, pulling at the oars, was unusually earnest, Sylvia turned the ring on her finger reflectively and Stanley Heath looked far out over the water, too deep in thought to be conscious of either of them.  
When, however, the boat swung into the channel, Sylvia spoke.  
"Hortie and I are not coming with you, Mr. Heath," she said. "We will stay behind. Only do, please, promise me one thing. Do not tell Marcia the whole story before we have a chance to hear it. There are ever so many connecting links I am curious beyond words to have you supply."  
"Such as—?"  
"The jewels in the first place. I can hardly wait to have that mystery solved."  
Stanley laughed.  
"The jewels are no mystery at all. I can satisfy your mind about those here and now. They were Joan's—Mrs. Heath's. Her maid, Corinne, took them and disappeared. Soon afterward, purely by accident, I met Paul Latimer, a friend who lives on Long Island, and during the course of our conversation, he asked if I knew a good man servant, saying that Julien, their butler, had just given notice that he was to be married to Corinne, the new parlor maid, and return with her to France."  
"The woman's name instantly caught my attention."  
"Why shouldn't I do a bit of sleuthing on my own account?"  
"Thus far the detectives Joan and I had hired had made no headway at locating the jewels."  
"Why shouldn't I have a try at it myself? I got a boat and cruised along to the Latimers' at whose house I had frequently stayed, and with the habits of whose household I was familiar. My plan was to arrive early in the morning before the family was astray and catch the parlor-maid alone at her work."  
"Should she prove to be our Corinne, I would boldly confront her with the theft and demand the jewels; if, on the other hand, she turned out to be another person altogether, it would be perfectly easy to explain my presence by falling back on my acquaintance with Paul."  
"It seemed, on thinking the matter over, that this would be a far more considerate course anyway than to drag in the detectives, not only because I had no real evidence to present to them, but also because of my friendship for the Latimers and for Julien, who had been in their employ many years. I knew they esteemed him very highly and would be dreadfully cut up should they find him involved in an affair as unpleasant as this one. Besides, I felt practically certain he had had nothing to do with the crime. He was too fine—one of the old-fashioned, devoted type of servant."  
"To shame such a man and throw suspicion on him if he were blameless would be a pity, especially just on the eve of his resigning from service. It might mean that instead of leaving with the gratitude and good-will of his employers, he might be sent away under a cloud. I did not wish that to happen."  
"Well, my scheme worked to a dot. I reached the Latimers' unobserved; found Corinne alone straightening up the library; faced her and demanded the jewels."  
"The instant she saw me she knew the game was up, and, without more ado, produced the gems from her pocket, shouldering all the blame."  
"Julien, she protested, knew nothing of the theft. He was a self-respecting, honest man. Should he be told of what she had done it would end everything between them. She loved him. Indeed it was because of him she had committed the crime."  
"It proved they had been engaged some time and long before had agreed to save their money and sometime pool it a little home in France."

CHAPTER XIII  
The same methods would of course apply to husbands. If Mr. Smith went on a strike against the hired girl's night out and his local was to parade in signs which announced that "Mrs. Smith Cooks With a Can Opener" something might come of it—maybe a trip to Reno, I dunno.  
Of course not everybody would be eligible for admission into these Unions. Only skilled workers would be taken in. The women would have to be skilled at working their husbands, and the men would have to be skilled at working alibis.  
In order to join the Married Women's Union ladies would have to prove they were able to rule the roost and the rooster, and the test would be made by a committee of ladies who would watch while the wife-candidate stuck her head in her husband's poker game and called his first name violently. If he drops a straight flush and comes home immediately, the candidate is elected.  
The qualifications for joining the Husband's Protective Association should be the husband-applicant hit, insult, or abuse his wife, and get away with it. The president of that Union would probably be the guy who accidentally drops a hammer on his wife's head and then shouts at her for putting the tool box on a high shelf.

# The Rogues' Gallery



The President of That Union Would Probably be the Guy Who Accidentally Drops a Hammer on His Wife's Head and Then Shouts at Her for Putting the Tool Box on a High Shelf.

## MATRIMONIAL UNION, LOCAL 13

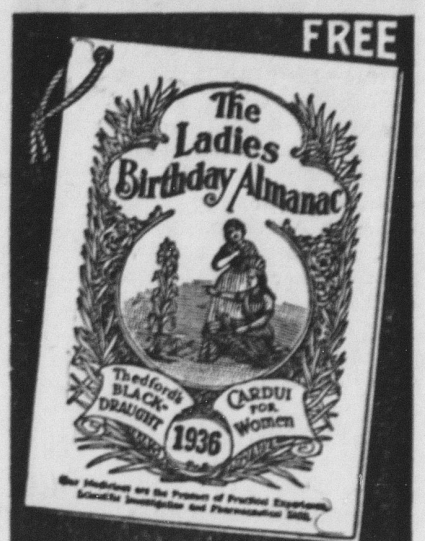
By NINA WILCOX PUTNAM

A LOT of people are under the impression that the big controversy of the day is between Hitler and Europe, or Father Coughlin and General Johnson, or even between the New Deal and the Republicans; but they are wrong. The big controversy which is occupying most of the human race, is the one between the husbands and the wives, to decide who's boss.  
The minute the letter H precedes the word Alter, the trouble begins and for hundreds of years past the difficulties of this particular type of union were settled by the men, who used a club for the purpose. Each man had his own private club, and when he joined up with it and then brought sufficient pressure to bear, the lady lolled a lot about going home to Mommy's cave but generally didn't get any further than hollering because as there were no police radio cars, none of the neighbors telephoned in about it and the lady stayed licked and liked it.  
This undoubtedly the origin of the male club as an institution. And in more modern times the mere mention of the fact that a man was going to his club was enough to start a panic in his home. His wife would promise practically anything if he'd go only once a week, hence the expression "holding a club over her head."  
Then in quite recent years women got resigned to the club idea because it gave them something to reproach their husbands about. And next they got some clubs of their own. Then some pants of their own and some votes of their own and the battle over who was boss got less cute and more acute.  
The trouble with the women is, they want the man to be the boss, but they want him to prove it. And when a competent wife asks that she's really asking too much.  
And the trouble with the men is, they want the woman to be boss but to pretend she isn't.  
The Matrimonial Union ought to adopt some modern methods of operating if it wants to get anywhere. Look where organization got the A. F. of L. No, you look, I can't quite bring myself to. But what I mean is, that clubs are out of date but strikes are not. And if this eternal man-woman question is ever to be settled satisfactorily, it should be done through protective associations which will see to it that the interests of both parties are stimulated, I beg pardon, I mean looked out for.  
Of course strike methods would be no novelty in most homes where she has been striking with a rolling pin for years, and he has been taught that no gentleman ever raises his hand to a woman with the one exception of the school teacher when he is very young and wants to leave the room.  
But modern strikes are not conducted that way. Nowadays when strikers walk out they also walk up and down. They crawl in between two slices of a sign-board, make a human sandwich out of themselves, and if they also wore an onion and a little mustard you could bite into them for a hamburger and never know the difference. This is called picketing but does not mean you are on the picket fence. It just means you are picking on somebody.  
The way I figure the Matrimonial Union could work it would be something like this: say Mr. Jones has refused to buy his wife a new hat. Mrs. Jones immediately reports the outrage to her local and the women start walking up and down in front of the Jones' house wearing sandwiches which proclaim "Mr. Jones is unjust to the millinery trade." Then underneath "Married Women's Protective Union, Local No. 1."

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## Excited Gentleman Finds He's Not Who He Thought

A man came into a barber shop the other day and asked for the works. He was in the chair, lather on his face, a manœuvre working on his nails, when another man burst in and cried excitedly: "Hey, Shapiro, your house is on fire."  
The fellow jumped out of the chair and ran down the street, the towel around his neck waving in the wind, the lather drying on his cheeks. Out of breath, he stopped suddenly. "What the dickens is the matter with me?" he muttered. "My name ain't Shapiro."—Jane Provinces in Chicago Tribune.



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