

The DIM LANTERN

By TEMPLE BAILEY

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THE STORY SO FAR

Young, pretty Jane Barnes, who lived with her brother, Baldwin, in Sherwood Park, near Washington, was not particularly impressed when she read that rich, attractive Edith Towne had been left at the altar by Delafield Simms, wealthy New Yorker. However, she still mused over it when she met Evans Follette, a young neighbor, whom the war had left completely discouraged and despondent. Evans had always loved Jane. That morning Baldwin Barnes, on his way to work in Washington, offered assistance to a tall, lovely girl in distress. Later he found a bag she had left in the car, containing a diamond ring on which was inscribed "Del to Edith—Forever." He knew then that his passenger had been Edith Towne. Already he was half way in love with her. That night he discussed the matter with Jane, and they called her uncle, worldly, sophisticated Frederick Towne. He visited them at their home, delighted with Jane's simplicity.

CHAPTER III

Edith Towne had lived with her Uncle Frederick nearly four years when she became engaged to Delafield Simms. Her mother was dead, as was her father. Frederick was her father's only brother, and had a big house to himself, after his mother's death. It seemed the only haven for his niece, so he asked her, and asked also his father's cousin, Annabel Towne, to keep house for him, and chaperone Edith.

Annabel was over sixty, and rather indefinite, but she served to play propriety, and there was nothing else demanded of her in Frederick's household of six servants. She was a dried-up and desiccated person, with fixed ideas of what one owed to society. Frederick's mother had been like that, so he did not mind. He rather liked to think that the woman of his family kept to old ideals. It gave to things an air of dignity.

Edith, when she came, was different. So different that Frederick was glad that she had three more years at college before she would spend the winters with him. The summers were not hard to arrange. Edith and Annabel adjourned to the Towne cottage on an island in Maine—and Frederick went up for weekends and for the month of August. Edith spent much time out-of-doors with her young friends. She was rather fond of her Uncle Fred, but he did not loom large on the horizon of her youthful occupations.

Then came her winter at home, and her consequent engagement to Delafield Simms. It was because of Uncle Fred that she became engaged. She simply didn't want to live with him any more. She felt that Uncle Fred would be glad to have her go, and the feeling was mutual. She was an elephant on his hands. Naturally, he was a great old dear, but he was a Turk. He didn't know it, of course. But his ideas of being master of his own house were perfectly archaic. Cousins Annabel and the servants, and everybody in his office simply hung on his words, and Edith wouldn't hang. She came into his bachelor Paradise like a rather troublesome Eve, and demanded her share of the universe. He didn't like it, and there you were.

It was really Uncle Fred who wanted her to marry Delafield Simms. He talked about it a lot. At first Edith wouldn't listen. But Delafield was persistent and patient. He came gradually to be as much of a part of her everyday life as the meals she ate or the car she drove. Uncle Fred was always inviting him. He was forever on hand, and when he wasn't she missed him.

They felt for each other, she decided, the thing called "love." It was not, perhaps, the romance which one found in books. But she had been taught carefully at college to distrust romance. The emphasis had been laid on the transient quality of adolescent emotion. One married for the sake of the race, and one chose, quite logically, with one's head instead, as in the old days, with the heart.

So there you had it. Delafield was eligible. He was healthy, had brains enough, an acceptable code of morals—and was willing to let her have her own way. If there were moments when Edith wondered if this program was adequate to wedded bliss, she put the thought aside. She and Delafield liked each other no end. Why worry?

And really at times Uncle Fred was impossible. His mother had lived until he was thirty-five, she had adored him, and had passed on to Cousin Annabel and to the old servants in the house the formula by which she had made her son happy. Her one fear had been that he might marry. He was extremely popular, much sought after. But he had kept his heart at home. His sweetheart, he had often said, was silver-haired and over sixty. He basked in her approbation; was soothed and sustained by it.

Then she had died, and Edith had come, and things had been different.

Yet, as time went on, he learned that Edith's faults were tempered by her fastidiousness. She did not confuse liberty and license. She neither smoked nor drank. There was about her dancing a fine and stately quality which saved it from sensuousness. Yet when he told her things, there was always that irritating shrug of the shoulders. "Oh, well, I'm not a rowdy—you know that. But I like to play around."

His pride in her grew—in her burnished hair, the burning blue of her eyes, her great beauty, the fineness of her spirit, the integrity of her character.

Yet he sighed with relief when she told him of her engagement to Delafield Simms. He loved her, but none the less he felt the strain of her presence in his establishment. It would be like sinking back into the luxury of a feather bed, to take up the old life where she had entered it.

And Edith, too, welcomed her emancipation. "When I marry you," she told Delafield, "I am going to



"Bob is utterly at sea."

break all the rules. In Uncle Fred's house everything runs by clockwork, and it is he who winds the clock."

Their engagement was one of mutual freedom. Edith did as she pleased, Delafield did as he pleased. They rarely clashed. And as the wedding day approached, they were pleasantly complacent.

Delafield, dictating a letter one day to Frederick Towne's stenographer, spoke of his complacency. He was writing to Bob Sterling, who was to be his best man, and who shared his apartment in New York. Delafield was an orphan, and had big money interests. He felt that Washington was tame compared to the metropolis. He and Edith were to live one block east of Fifth Avenue, in a house that he had bought for her.

When he was in Washington he occupied a desk in Frederick's office. Lucy Logan took his dictation. She had been for several years with Towne. She was twenty-three, well-groomed, and self-possessed. She had slender, flexible fingers, and Delafield liked to look at them. She had soft brown hair, and her profile, as she bent over her book, was clear-cut and composed.

"Edith and I are great pals," he dictated. "I rather think we are going to hit it off famously. I'd hate to have a woman hang around my neck. And I want you for my best man. I know it is asking a lot, but it's just once in a lifetime, old chap."

Lucy wrote that and waited with her pencil poised.

"That's about all," said Delafield. Lucy shut up her book and rose.

"Wait a minute," Delafield decided. "I want to add a postscript."

Lucy sat down.

"By the way," Delafield dictated, "I wish you'd order the flowers at Tolley's. White orchids for Edith of course. He'll know the right thing for the bridesmaids—I'll get Edith to send him the color scheme."

Lucy's pencil dashed and dotted. She looked up, hesitated. "Miss Towne doesn't care for orchids."

"How do you know?" he demanded.

She fluttered the leaves of her notebook and found an order from Towne to a local florist. "He says

here, 'Anything but orchids—she doesn't like them.'"

"But I've been sending her orchids every week."

"Perhaps she didn't want to tell you—"

"And you think I should have something else for the wedding bouquet?"

"I think she might like it better. There was a faint flush on her cheek.

"What would you suggest?"

"I can't be sure what Miss Towne would like."

"What would you like?" intently. She considered it seriously—her slender fingers clasped on her book.

"I think," she told him, finally, "that if I were going to marry a man I should want what he wanted."

He laughed and leaned forward. "Good heavens, are there any women like that left in the world?"

Her flush deepened, she rose and went towards the door. "Perhaps I shouldn't have said anything."

His voice changed. "Indeed, I am glad you did." He had risen and now held the door open for her. "We men are stupid creatures. I should never have found it out for myself."

She went away, and he sat there thinking about her. Her impersonal manner had always been perfect, and he had found her little flash charming.

It was because of Lucy Logan, therefore, that Edith had white violets instead of orchids in her wedding bouquet. And it was because, too, of Lucy Logan, that other things happened. Three of Edith's bridesmaids were house-guests. Their names were Rosalind, Helen and Margaret. They had, of course, last names, but these have nothing to do with the story. They had been Edith's classmates at college, and she had been somewhat democratic in her selection of them.

"They are perfect dears, Uncle Fred. I'll have three cave-dwellers to balance them. Socially, I suppose, it will be a case of sheep and goats, but the goats are—daring."

They were, however, the six of them, what Delafield called a bunch of beauties. Their bridesmaid gowns were exquisite—but unobtrusive. The color scheme was blue and silver—and the flowers, forget-me-nots and sweet peas. "It's a bit old-fashioned," Edith said, "but I hate sensational effects."

Neither the sheep nor the goats agreed with her. Their ideas were different—the goats holding out for something impressionistic, the sheep for ceremonial splendor.

There was to be a wedding breakfast at the house. Things were therefore given over early to the decorators and caterers, and coffee and rolls were served in everybody's room.

When the wedding bouquet arrived Edith sought out her uncle in his study on the second floor.

"Look at this," she said; "how in the world did it happen that he sent white violets? Did you tell him, Uncle Fred?"

"No."

"Sure?"

"Cross my heart."

They had had their joke about Del's orchids. "If he knew how I hated them," Edith would say, and Uncle Fred would answer, "Why don't you tell him?"

But she had never told, because after all it didn't matter, and if Delafield felt that orchids were the proper thing, why muddle up his mind with her preferences?

The wedding party was assembled in one of the side rooms. Related guests trickled in a thin stream towards the great doors that opened and shut to admit them to the main auditorium. A group of servants, laden with wraps, stood at the foot of the stairs. As soon as the process-

May Replace Chestnut Trees Killed by Disease

The slopes of the Appalachians are spotted with ghost forests.

Little more than a generation ago, perhaps, the most characteristic tree of the region was the chestnut. It was taken as a matter of course.

About 1904 an Oriental fungus known as endothia parasitica appeared on the trees in New England. It spread rapidly through the entire chestnut region, attacking the bark, girdling the trunk, and killing the trees. There was nothing to be done about it. The spores of this fungus were extremely light, so that every little breeze wafted them into new regions.

Today probably 95 per cent of the chestnuts are gone. The few left, which have escaped largely by accident, are doomed. But a few years ago a few healthy trees were transported bodily to the campus of the North Carolina State college at Raleigh, 200 miles from their usual habitat and away from the path of the blight.

For four years, according to a report, writes Thomas R. Henry in the Washington Star, they have escaped infection and remain healthy and thriving. It is hoped that they will live to become the ancestors of other great chestnut forests when

sion started they would go up into the gallery to view the ceremony.

In the small room was almost overpowering fragrance. The bridesmaids, in the filtered light, were a blur of rose and blue and white. There was much laughter, the sound of the organ through the thick walls.

Then the ushers came in. "Where's Del?"

The bridegroom was, it seemed, delayed. They waited.

"Shall we telephone, Mr. Towne?" someone asked at last.

Frederick nodded. He and his niece stood apart from the rest. Edith was smiling but had little to say. She seemed separated from the others by the fact of the approaching mystery.

The laughter had ceased; above the whispers came the tremulous echo of the organ.

The usher who had gone to the telephone returned and drew Towne aside.

"There's something queer about it. I can't get Del or Bob. They may be on the way. But the clerk seemed reticent."

"I'll go to the 'phone myself," said Frederick. "Where is it?"

But he was saved the effort, for someone, watching at the door, said, "Here they come," and the room seemed to sigh with relief as Bob Sterling entered.

No one was with him, and he wore a worried frown.

"May I speak to you, Mr. Towne?" he asked.

Edith was standing by the window looking out at the old churchyard. The uneasiness which had infected the others had not touched her. Slender and white she stood waiting in the aisle with her and they would be married. In her mind that program was as fixed as the stars.

And now her uncle approached and said something. "Edith, Del isn't coming—"

"Is he ill?"

"I wish to heaven he were dead."

"What do you mean, Uncle Fred?"

"I'll tell you—presently. But we must get away from this—"

His glance took in the changed scene. A blight had swept over those high young heads. Two of the bridesmaids were crying. The ushers had withdrawn into a huddled group. The servants were staring—uncertain what to do.

Somebody got Briggs and the big car to the door.

Shut into it, Towne told Edith: "He's backed out of it. He left this." He had a note in his hand. "It was written to Bob Sterling. Bob was with him at breakfast time, and when he came back, this was on Del's dresser."

She read it, her blue eyes hot:

"I can't go through with it, Bob. I know it's a rotten trick, but time will prove that I am right. And Edith will thank me."

"Del."

She crushed it in her hand. "Where has he gone?"

"South, probably, on his yacht."

"Wasn't there any word for me?"

"No."

"Is there any other—woman?"

"It looks like it. Bob is utterly at sea. So is everybody else."

All of her but her eyes seemed frozen. The great bouquet lay at her feet where she had dropped it. Her hands were clenched.

Towne laid his hand on hers. "My dear—it's dreadful."

"Don't—"

"Don't what?"

"Be sorry."

"But he's a cur—"

(TO BE CONTINUED)



OBJECTION OVERRULED

The defense counsel was cross-examining the witness, a lovely blonde with big blue eyes. "Where were you," he thundered, "on Monday night?"

The blonde smiled sweetly. "Out for a run in a car."

"And where were you," bellowed the counsel, "on Tuesday night?"

"Out for a run in the car," repeated the lovely blonde.

The counsel leaned closer. "And what," he said, "are you doing tomorrow night?"

Prosecuting counsel leaped to his feet. "Your Honor," he protested, "I object to that question."

"And why do you object?" inquired the judge.

"Because," said the prosecutor, "I asked her first."

Vice Versa



She—I think I'll let my hair grow out again.

He—I'm using something now to make mine grow in again.

One Way Out

A candidate for the police force was being verbally examined.

"If you were alone in a police car and were pursued by a desperate gang of criminals in another car doing sixty miles an hour along a lonely road, what would you do?"

The candidate looked puzzled for a moment. "Eighty," he replied.

Farm Labor

Smalltown—Remember, Al, every cloud has a silver lining.

Farmer Alfalfa—it would be better if they also had a lining of arsenic. Then the rain would spray our crops with insecticide as well as moisten them.

HER WILL



Daughter (excitedly)—I'll marry whom I please! I want you to know I have a will of my own!

Mother (quietly)—So have I—but you won't share in it, my dear.

Memories

Pa—I think I'll have to go down stairs and send Nancy's young man home.

Ma—Now, Elmer, don't be hasty. Remember how we used to court.

Pa—For gosh sakes; I hadn't thought of that. Out he goes.

Explanation

Foreman—How is it that, although you and Jim started diggin' at the same time, he has a bigger pile of dirt than you?

Sambo—Well, you see, boss, he's diggin' a bigger hole.

Berth Mark

Boogy—Why do you say that scar on your forehead is a birthmark? It looks more like an old wound.

Woogy—it is. You see, I accidentally got into the wrong berth.

Empties

Mrs. Gee—William, how do you suppose those dozens and dozens of empty bottles got into the cellar?

Mr. Gee—I'm sure I don't know. I never bought an empty bottle in

Rain Economy

Poderaj—Are you saving up anything for a rainy day?

Goober—Yes, in a little while I expect to have enough to buy a new cloth top for my old auto.

Found Out

An Englishman was visiting this country for the first time, and as he was driving along the highway, saw a large sign, "Drive slow. This means you!"

The Englishman stopped in surprise and exclaimed, "My word! How did they know I was here?"

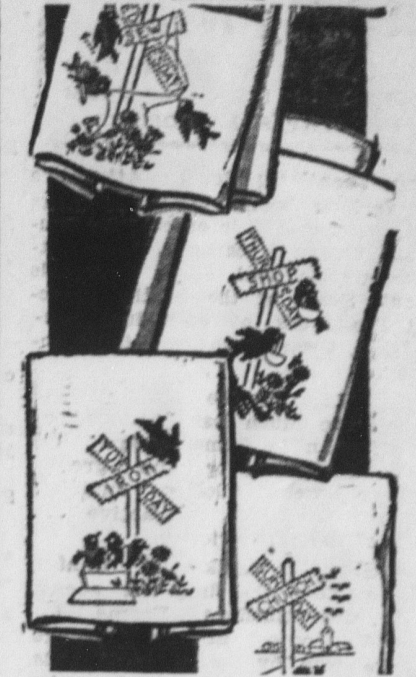
Truthful Liar

Polly—Frank asked me last night how old I was.

Maudine—What did you tell him?

Polly—A lie.

Brighten Tea Towels



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