

The Woman Hater

By Ruby Ayres

Who's Who in the Story

MILES FAVERSHAM, wealthy businessman, bachelor and sportsman. Due to a blighted love affair of ten years before the story opens, he has come to be a hater of women.

PHILIP TRANTER, young and rich. Faversham's chum and in love with a beautiful woman.

MARIAN TRANTER, Philip's mother, who objects to the marriage planned by her son. She appeals to Faversham to do all he can to break the attachment of Philip for the woman.

LALLIE DUNDAS, the woman in the case, and

PARRY, another club friend of Faversham's.

member . . . He broke off, checking his reminiscence.

"I never met Mrs. Dundas before tonight," he asked with sudden quick suspicion.

"No," Faversham met Mrs. Dundas in my life," Miles answered. He got up, and once again knocked out the ashes of his pipe.

"Well, I'm off. Good-night."

"Good-night. A month from tonight, then."

"Yes."

Miles was conscious of the skeptical smile in Parry's eyes as they parted; and he laughed to himself as he went. He was going to win that bet. He was certain of it as if he had already been told that Mrs. Dundas and Tranter were irrevocably separated. Tranter should not marry her. He had a double incentive now to prevent it. Earlier in the evening he had merely resolved to do his best for Parry's sake; but now that he knew that Mrs. Dundas was a fresh iron had been thrust into the fire.

The desire to punish her for what she had made him suffer ten years ago was hot in his heart. He had gone through the pains of hell for her and she had laughed at him. Well, if he could not make her suffer as he had suffered, then he would at least thwart her ambitions.

It was Tranter's money she wanted, he was sure. She was sure she was a woman who spent money as freely as if it were water. In the old days, when he had known her as Lillian Davis, her one cry had been for wealth and the things it could bring her. Afterward he had known her as Mrs. Dundas, and he had not been to her heart when he had nothing but his own to offer. Her honey brown hair had been a temptation, and the poor man he had been then to a future that was rosy with promise of looking many things he had heard.

With regard to what Parry had told him about Paris, he shrewdly suspected that a deal had been written, and that it did not trouble him. He had done with the past—with his own and hers. All he cared for was the present and the future.

It was still early in the evening, so he took a taxi and drove to Mrs. Tranter's. She was sitting by the fire, with an open book in her lap which she was obviously not reading.

She knew to greet him eagerly; and with a sort of shy diffidence, Miles bent and kissed her cheek.

"Well, here I am—in answer to your note," he said, cheerily.

She wrung her delicate hands impatiently.

"I did not want to bother you, Miles, but I am so helpless. What can I do? Philip defies me." Her voice broke. "Oh, Miles, he looked at me last night as if he almost hated me when I implored him to give that woman up."

"You mustn't say things like that, or even think them," Faversham said, quickly. "Philip's a bit off the rails just now, you know. A wry smile twisted his lips.

"I've been through it—I know the symptoms; but it will all come right if you have a little patience."

He drew her gently back to her chair and made her sit down.

"I've just had dinner with them both, and you'll be surprised to hear."

She gave a cry of protest, her delicate face flushing.

"With—that woman! Miles! After all you have said!"

"I considered," Miles said, "but I wanted to be sure what sort of an enemy we had to fight." He looked away from her, ruefully.

"Well, I must admit that I had the surprise of my life."

"What do you mean? Was she worse than you thought?" Oh, I can just imagine what she is like—a common—"

Miles stopped her with a gesture.

"She isn't at all that sort of woman," he said, quietly. "Though I admit from all I had heard that I thought she must be—well, she's a lady—outstandingly, at least," he added, bitterly. "She is well dressed and . . . good looking."

He stopped, with a sense of amusement at himself.

"Good-looking! Were those the only words he could find with which to describe that dainty little face, those honey brown eyes and alluring smile?"

He pulled himself together with an effort. He leaned over and diffidently touched Mrs. Tranter's hand.

"Philip is not going to marry her," he said, confidently. "Trust me! I promise you that I shall not marry her, even if I have to marry her myself to prevent it." He laughed grimly at his own words, and Mrs. Tranter smiled a little too.

"That would be too great a sacrifice," she said playfully, and then once more she reverted to gray. "Miles, you are not deceiving me? You really think that he can be saved? Oh, I would give anything I possess if I could only be sure that he will not marry her. I had such wonderful plans for him, such great hopes for the future and now—"

Miles did not speak for a moment; then he asked abruptly:

"You have never seen Mrs. Dundas, have you?"

"I do not wish to see her. Philip has begged me to ask her here. As if I would have the creature in my house! A widow and a scheming widow, of whom I have heard the most appalling tales."

"I can't say that I have heard anything very drastic," Miles answered dryly. "There are rumors and rumors, but so far, I have not been able to hear of anything with actual proof."

Mrs. Tranter drew her shoulders together distastefully.

"I wish I could forget that I have ever heard her name," she said vehemently. "Miles, where did Philip meet her?"

"I haven't the least idea. He never speaks about her to me if he can avoid it. She seems to have just appeared in London. She met the Mastermans, and they introduced her in New York—and now, apparently, she goes everywhere."

"I hear that she has ten more at all, and that she is terribly in debt, and that Ralph Masterman left his wife for her sake."

"Very likely," he agreed. Her anxious face flushed.

"It comforts me to hear you say so. I never knew any one who gave me such confidence as you do."

Miles smiled ruefully, and for the first time a little doubt crept into his heart.

Supposing he failed! Lallie had turned his will into clay in the days that were gone. She had twisted him round her little finger and made him a thing so subject in his devotion that he could only look back upon it all now in disgust.

But ten years was ten years, and much water had gone through the mill since then. He was a man now—an embittered man, who cared for nothing and nobody, unless one counted his friendship for Philip and his affection for Philip's mother.

He looked at her with remorseful eyes. He would hate to disappoint her more than anything in the world.

She raised her anxious blue eyes suddenly to his face.

"I am sure that is not so. Philip is a rotten hater of keeping a secret. He was the kind of nature that must share with some one; even as a boy he had never been able to keep a confidence. In spite of the dissimilarity in their dispositions, there had been a very real friendship, and Miles felt unutterably sore at the constraint that had been growing between them ever since Mrs. Dundas had appeared on the scene. Of course, any marriage would inevitably make a difference, he knew, but this marriage—"

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

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By Sidney Smith



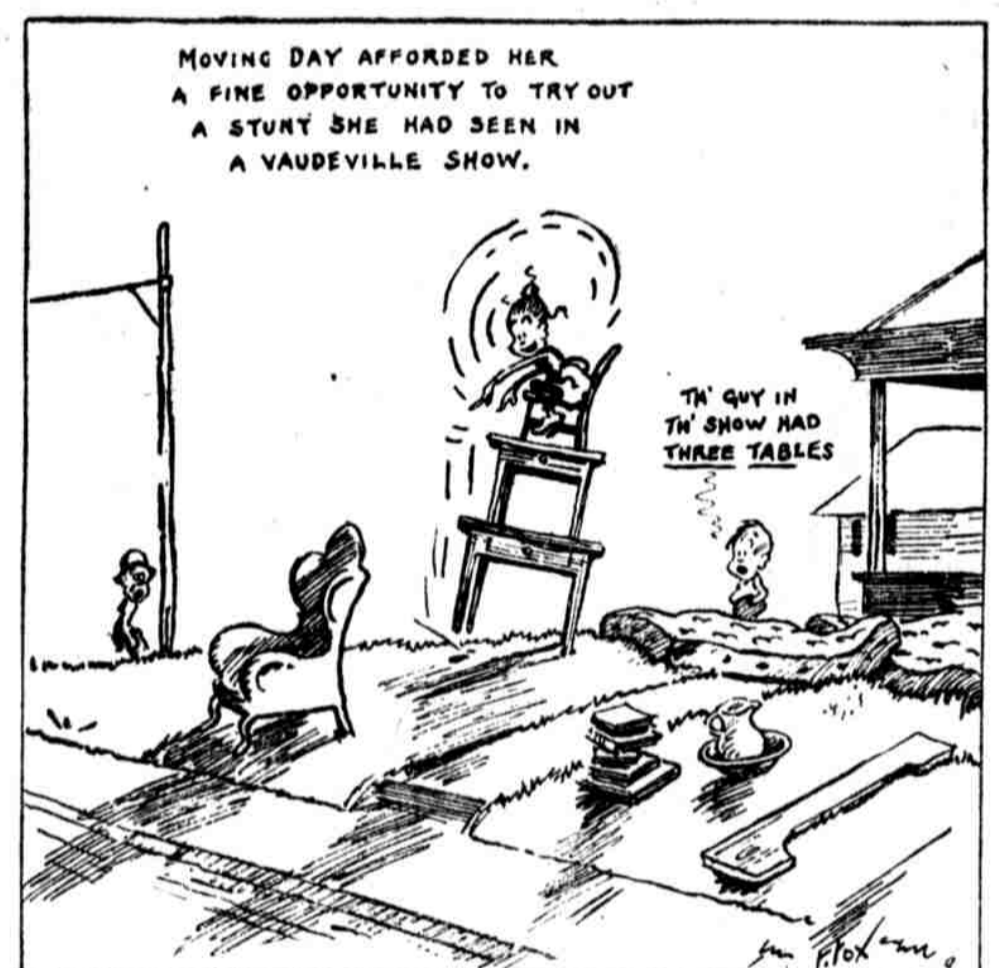
PETEY—A Vacation Is a Vacation

By C. A. Voight



The Young Lady Across the Way

By Fontaine Fox



SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Clack, Clack, Clack!

By Hayward



"CAP" STUBBS—It's Too Bad Ma Can't Keep Her Temper

By Edwina

