

An Unexpected Marriage
It was a cold December twilight, but the room was cozy where Harry Cutler was seated in the easy chair before the grate. Winnie was standing beside the chair, with her hands clasped in front of her, looking at him with a steady gaze.

Harry Cutler had been left an orphan at the age of twenty. His parents were wealthy, and every comfort wealth could afford had been bestowed upon him. About this time a malignant disease broke out in the city where his parents resided, and his father had mysteriously succumbed to it and died. A month later his mother gave birth to a daughter, but before the little Winnie was an hour old she was motionless. Harry prepared a nurse for the babe, and soon she grew to be a gay, lively, fascinating child. She regarded her mother more in the light of a father and guardian, and in return, watched over her with all the tenderness and devotion of a father.

At the age of ten she had been placed at a school, where she remained until she was sixteen years of age. She was rather slight of frame, with blue eyes, a fair complexion, and a most pleasing combination of an artless and winning manner. "Come, Harry, why don't you speak?" You have been silent at least ten minutes. What are you thinking about?" questioned Harry, who had been staring after her from the reverie into which he had fallen.

"I was thinking, Winnie," he replied, "what you and Walter are going to do if you get married. He has only his clerkship." "I know it, Harry," said Winnie, "but we intend to wait a year at least. You will consent to our union then. Will you not?" "Yes, Winnie, and I should not withhold my consent now if you wish to be married for I know of no man more worthy of my precious sister than Walter Adams."

"I am happy to hear you speak so, Harry, for your manner toward Walter has always been so reserved that I did not know whether you liked him or not." A silence ensued for a few moments, which was broken only by the monotony of the ticking of the clock on the mantel. At length Harry spoke: "Winnie, you and Walter like to be married soon, is that right?" "Yes, indeed," replied Winnie, the rose tint deepening upon her cheeks, while her brother's eyes were turned to hers. "Walter said last night," she continued, "that he did not wish to wait a year; but we cannot do otherwise."

"You can, Winnie. Half of the fortune our father left us is yours, and next Thursday will be Christmas. You will be married then and live with your husband. What say you to this arrangement?" "Oh how happy we shall be!" murmured Winnie, with a low cry. "After a pause of a few moments, she asked: "How old are you, Harry—thirty-seven?" "Yes, Winnie, was the reply.

"Were you ever in love, Harry?" was the next question. "Yes, Winnie, I loved once. But we will not talk of that now—some time I will tell you all about it." "Please tell me now," said Winnie, coaxingly. "Well, I will, since you desire it. When I was a young man I loved a woman named Lucy Abbott, and her parents had appointed a day for our marriage. She was 20 years of age, a beautiful, accomplished woman, with a kind word and a smile for everybody. She was the only woman I ever loved, and I think she reciprocated my love; but I am not sure. One day I was absent from home for a week, attending to a business in a distant city. While I was gone Lucy attended a party with a young man who had just arrived from South Africa, although single stones have occasionally been picked up in England and in Canada, and furnish many gems, particularly opals, but North America, while rich in gold, is almost devoid of precious stones. North Carolina has furnished some interesting stones, particularly the brilliant, a grass-green gem called chrysoberyl, which is found in the region of the western mountains, and the stones which remain in the States are carefully examined. In the region, in McDowell county, in the State of North Carolina, the first opal was found in great variety of sizes and colors. The mining is carried on in the region, and the opal is a precious stone, and there was a perceptible tremor in her voice when she bade me 'good evening' and I think she regarded the words she had spoken as utterly as I did mine; but I was too proud to seek a reconciliation. Now you know, Winnie, why I never married."

"Have you ever seen Lucy Abbott since you parted with her?" she asked. "Winnie, I have not, but I have heard she still continues to reside in this city, but in seclusion. Let me drop this subject now, as it is the last time for your lover to be here?" "Oh, Harry, I forgot to tell you about my aunt's aunt's mother's sister. He has been lately in this city, and I heard that he was not like to be separated from him. "She shall not, Winnie. You can be one of the servants to prepare a chamber for her. How old is she? Do you know?" "Thirty-five, I believe," replied Winnie, and with a happy face she left her heart, she left the room, while Harry relaxed into a thoughtful silence. It was a clear, cold Christmas afternoon. Harry Cutler was seated in his own room, deeply engaged in the contents of a book. Everything had been arranged for the marriage of his sister, and he was to take place in the evening. The opening of the door in the room roused Harry, and Winnie came in, exclaiming: "Come down in the library and let me introduce you to Walter's aunt. She has been here nearly three hours, and you have kept yourself aloof, as if you did not desire to see her. The truth, Winnie," replied Harry, reluctantly rising and closing his book. "I think you are wrong, as you know who she is," said Winnie, while she vainly tried to suppress the merry light that danced in her eyes. "Oh, Harry! it is Lucy Abbott!"

"I can not see her, Winnie," was the reply. "You must, Harry! She loves you! Why do you wish to wreck two lives?" For an hour Winnie reasoned with her brother, and, at last, she persuaded him to seek a reconciliation with Lucy Abbott.

"He had it No Doubt." "Do you wish a humorous?" queried a sad-eyed young man. "No," replied the editor, who was writing up the funny column himself.

Why Meat Stays Dear.
The past winter has inflicted losses on range cattle whose amount no one is able to state, but which has already had their effect on the price of beef cattle in Chicago. This has been supplemented by losses due to the drought in the region immediately around the great meat market of the country, and prices have steadily advanced through August until they stand on a level with quotations a year ago. But neither fall nor advance can greatly increase the consumer, who sometimes has to pay more because it has gone down. Beef cattle prices in Chicago, as a table set by Wood Brothers, of that city, shows were lower for last June and July than for any year on record, except 1878, and the difference between prices in June and July was 100 per cent.

As compared with the period of high prices from 1881 to 1883, when the price of beef cattle was \$1.00 per hundred weight, a dollar will buy from twice to once and a half as much meat on the hoof in Chicago this summer as it would in the five years of high prices. In July of 1882 and 1883, when the price of beef cattle was \$1.00 per hundred weight, a dollar would buy from 100 to 120 pounds of meat from a head of beef, while now it will buy from 200 to 250 pounds of meat from a head of beef.

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How to Kill a Snake.
The snake is a creature of habit, and it is a good idea to know how to kill a snake. The best way to kill a snake is to strike it on the head with a heavy object, such as a brick or a stone. It is important to strike the snake on the head, as this is the most vulnerable part of its body. Once the snake is dead, it should be disposed of properly, and the area should be disinfected to prevent the spread of disease.

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Who, Oh Who is Jim?
Who, oh who is Jim? He had his photograph taken one day when he was at the beach with the boys. It was not a good picture, for he was not exactly in condition for taking a good one. But he thought he would have a joke with his wife about it, so when he reached home he handed it to her saying: "There is a picture of a man who would come, and a deep blush overspread her face as she said: 'Is that Jim? Where did you see him?'" He would give a good deal to know now who Jim is.

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