

# NOT LIKE OTHER MEN

By Frederic Van Rensselaer DeY. Author of "The Brotherhood of Silence," "The Quality of a Sin," etc.

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[Continued from last week.]

"This! I'm preaching, lad. Every one of these years that rest on my head without having come into my life was put there by a piece of scandalism that I committed when I was just the age that you are now, and I hadn't any more excuse for getting into it than you have now either. I don't say you'll ever get into a place where you may be likely to do anything that ain't right, but if you do there will be time to think—there always is, for thinking is mighty quick work—and if that time ever does come you remember what I have said just now and stop long enough to him that song over to yourself before you cut loose from the outfit and go it alone. Life ain't going to be all roses for you, Lisie Maxwell, and don't you forget it! Your father hasn't brought you up right, to my way of thinking. You needn't get huffy, I ain't criticizing him. I'm analyzing you. You don't know any more about the world outside of this ranch than a hog knows about skating, and that ain't much to speak of. I've been watching you while I've been here, and there are a whole lot of things that you have got to learn between now and the time when you will have to go it alone, and nobody ever knows when that time is coming. It's just like a blamed Injun and draws a bead on your vitals from behind a bush or a rock when you ain't looking, and it's a dead shot every time. You can't throw a loop over circumstance and drag it along a willing captive, like we did that steer. It's got a way of slipping out and roping you instead, and you've got to post yourself about things so that you will be ready to keep one hand out in just about the same way that you poked yours through the loop of Jim Cummins' rig over in that barn. I don't wonder that you look like a woman. You do, and you do not. You go because you have got a tender heart, like a woman's, and it sticks out through your masculine garb just as plain as daylight when you ain't slipping out. Maxwell has trained you right enough as far as he has gone, for all I know, but he's a good ways from going far enough. I want you to make me a promise, Lisie."

"What sort of a promise, Craig?" "You'll be 20 some day, and when the day comes that sees you that old I want you to promise that you will ride over to my ranch and see me. Will you?" "Certainly. I will ride over a great many times in the meanwhile, too, if you care to have me."

"That's all right. Of course I care to have you, but I want you to remember that promise anyhow."

"I'll remember it."

"And now, while we've got a chance to talk, I want to say one thing more to you about women. This idea that you've got that they are abominations on the face of the earth is all wrong, if you had did teach it to you, and some day I'll prove to you. I've been looking through your library, and there ain't a book there that will tell you a blamed thing about them—not one. To my way of thinking you ought to have a few, even if you don't know what the wisdom of the old man. They won't hurt you any, and in my opinion they will do you a lot of good. Do you know where that old corral is, down in the southwest corner of my ranch?"

"Yes."

"Well, next Sunday you ride over there. It ain't much more than a dozen miles. I'll leave some books there for you to read. Maybe I'll meet you there if you come about sundown. They will be books that will teach you something that you ought to know, and don't, and—here comes Dick. Lord! I never delivered such a long lecture before in my life. It all comes of your slugging that song."

When on the following morning Lisie would have accompanied his father and Craig for the latter was going to his own home, and the former, having an errand in that direction, rode out with him—he discovered that he was not wanted. Later, when the two men

work they were to perform he could not have exercised better judgment. They contained nothing that was calculated to shock the awakening faculties of Lisie Maxwell's emotional nature, but to his immature perceptions they were filled with unimpeachable revelations as beautiful and profound as they were mysterious. They did nothing else but to lead him to dream and wonder and surmise upon subjects and theories which before had been permitted access to his mind. Richard Maxwell could guard against outward and visible assaults upon the fortress that he had built up around his son, but he could not contend with this subtle foe to his theories, and the battle went on under his eyes without once revealing its existence.

There was one conversation between them which rather startled the father, and possibly it had something to do with a serious incident which immediately followed it. It is true, however, that the incident had its effect more in the fact that he had erected about his son so two nearly impenetrable for successful assault.

"Father," said Lisie on that occasion, "I will be 19 in June."

"Yes, Lisie," was the reply. "You are almost a man grown—and still a child." Richard Maxwell stilled deeply, and his mind leaped backward over the flight of years.

"And still a child," echoed Lisie. "Will you tell me why I am still a child?"

"I mean, my son, that you are still a child to your father. You will always be that. Sons who are loved forever remain as children to their parents. It is one of the elements in the law of matrimony."

Lisie was silent for several moments; then, raising his head, he said slowly: "I have in mind several things that are puzzling me. I wish that you would discuss them with me now."

"You are puzzling me?" "Yes, my son, that you are still a child to your father. You will always be that. Sons who are loved forever remain as children to their parents. It is one of the elements in the law of matrimony."

"I think of these, sir, each one suggested by the replies that you have already made. I will approach them one by one."

"Very well. The first, then?" "I'm still a child; not in the sense that you refer to—namely, not solely in that respect—but in every way. Why have I not matured more nearly to manhood? While I was with you in the Smoky valley I saw several young men who were younger than I am. There was something about them that is different from anything I have ever known or experienced. It was tangible, if you please, but it was nevertheless real, because I could not discover that it existed between them and themselves, only between them, or any one of them, and me. They were rougher, brawlier, heavier in every respect than I. Their features, their eyes, their hair, their clothes, their manner, their speech, their whole way of life, everything about them was different. Hair grows upon their faces, as it does on yours. Will you explain this difference to me?"

"Your training has been different from theirs, Lisie."

"Pardon me, sir, but I cannot understand why that should make all the difference. There were subtle differences which I have not words to explain. I do not know how to define them, but I could feel them. One day, while we were sorting our cattle, two of them sat upon their horses close beside you. I studied them, and I studied you. Afterward I rode up and took a place beside you myself, and I studied over them again. The same difference did not manifest itself between them and you as it did between them and me or between you and me. Do I make myself understood? I mean that in the eyes of these strangers were more like you than I, who am your son, am like you. The same subtle something which distinguishes those young men from me does not separate them from you, and the same inexplicable difference which exists between you and me could I discover also between you and me. I am not like other men. Why am I not?"

"Am I like other men whom you know, Lisie? Am I like Craig Thompson?" asked Richard Maxwell.

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"We are provided with efficient servants," Miss Thomas said Maxwell calmly. "Lisie, will you find all the tin in tin to prepare supper for our guests?"

"A Chinese cook?" cried Miss Thomas. "How lovely! Is she chambermaid too? I have heard that they are excellent servants and that they are really preferred to women in lots of places. Papa never took me with him on one of his trips before, but I just wouldn't let him go without me this time. An hour ago I would have given the world to be back again in Kansas City, and now I wouldn't be anywhere else than here if I could. What a pleasant note this one is!" rising and passing unceremoniously through the open window.

"This is the library? Your son mentioned it to us, but I did not suppose that anybody had such a thing as a real library in this region."

She began an inspection of the bookshelves, which she continued with verbal approval of the bindings until her eyes rested upon the piano.

"Well, that's not so bad, after all," she murmured. "Who plays upon this—the Chinese cook?"

"No," responded a quiet voice directly behind her. "My father and I play upon it."

"Why, Mr. Maxwell! How you started me! I did not hear you come in. Whoever would have expected to find a piano here? Why, you are really quite civilized, are you not?"

She asked the question, and her eyes and face were much more perfect than her manners, for they were exquisite, but when she encountered the wide eyed stare with which Lisie was regarding her cheeks and nose, throat and chest, and she flushed. Then, because she continued silent and because she knew that he was still watching her, she became angry.

"One would think that you never saw a piano," she murmured.

Miss Thomas forgot her confusion and her anger at the same instant.

"What did you say? Say it again, please," she exclaimed after a short pause.

"You are the first woman that I ever saw, Miss Thomas," said Lisie in the same quiet tone. He was perfectly self-contained. He regarded the beautiful creature before him with exactly the same emotion that he would have felt if she had been standing before a cage in a menagerie, viewing some rare specimen of capture from equatorial Africa. He was studying her physique without approval, mentally rejoicing that his own in no way resembled it. That slender neck, which he might have stamped with his fingers, found no likeness in his own. That swelling bust, prominent beneath the tight fitting tailor made waist, appeared to him like a deformity. The tightly drawn skirt of brown cashmere seemed to him as though it would be a degrading ornament to walking, and he realized at once why his wearer had declined to mount his horse. Her hair filled him with wonder. She had thrown aside her hat, and he saw upon her head the most beautiful hair he had ever witnessed. Miss Thomas was justly proud of her hair. She had often been accused of bleaching it, but she had the satisfaction of knowing that it was not only natural, but that its tint could not be counterfeited by the dyes of the hairdresser. Lisie studied it in amazement. He believed that if it were permitted to fall to its full length it would have reached to the ground, as indeed it would, or very nearly so. He thought it must be very heavy to carry around, and he wondered if she slept with it that way. While he studied her the anger in her face died out altogether and gave place to an expression of genuine amazement.

"This is the first time," she said presently, "the very first time, in all my life that I ever looked at a curiosity. I rather like it. Go on, I am sorry that I did not think to provide myself with a catalogue. Perhaps, though, I can assist you verbally. What are you looking at in the world, and how is it manufactured by Smith & Brown, Main street, Kansas City; quality of the finest; shape, the latest; style, unexceptional; finish, superb; handsome and warranted; price, \$75.00. What now? Look at them closely. I mean at the eyes, like Lee. See how warm mine are. Oh, the rings! Did you think they were pearls? They slip off and on—so. One of them—one is an engagement ring, but I shouldn't marry the man who put it there. How old are you, Mr. Maxwell, may I ask?"

"I am 18," Lisie replied.

"No, sir. I much prefer to remain until these people arrive. I wish to see what a woman of our own kind looks like. Is it the manner of dress that makes the difference, or is it the dress and training? Let me beg of you, Lisie, not to permit your curiosity to express itself to either of our guests. Such conduct would not be gentlemanly."

"You do not like to have this woman here, sir?" "No, emphatically I do not."

"I could not do otherwise than to ask them to come."

"Certainly not. Their being here, however, need not necessarily bring you in contact with them or with the woman. I will send Jack over to Thompson's with them in the morning."

"I have already promised to go, father."

"I have other duties for you to perform. It will make no difference who acts as your guide."

The strangers arrived soon afterward. Mr. Thomas came up with outstretched hand, for he had dismounted and was walking beside his daughter.

"You are welcome, Mr. Thomas. Pleased to meet you, Miss Thomas. I regret that there is not a woman in my establishment; so, if you will permit me, I will show you to your room myself."

"If you would show me to the dining room, it would be more to the point. I am simply famishing. As for going to a sleeping room, I much prefer to remain here until we have had some breakfast. I have not had any sleep since the morning we left Belmont this morning with the only conveyance that could be procured, and we've been hopelessly lost ever since we started. It comes of permitting a woman to run things for you."

"You were nearer Thompson's ranch when you started than you are now. You have come past it," said Lisie, leaping from his horse. "If your daughter will let me assist her to mount my horse, I will lead the way to my father's house. It is not far."

"What! Ride on that saddle? Sit astride, like a man? I guess not! I'll walk," exclaimed the young lady in dismay. "How far is it?"

"No more than a mile. I walk farther than that in the afternoon's shopping at home. But how are we to get to take all my things?"

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MRS. HARRIET S. MYERLY, Executrix of George W. Myerly, Deceased, Edward Sayre Gearhart, Counsel, Danville, Pa., December 10th, 1902.

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Executive Notice.

Mrs. Harriet S. Myerly, Executrix.