

I Win the Wager

A Christmas Love Story

By GENEVIEVE KENNEDY

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RETURNING ever and anon to the town which held the one thing desirable to me, I was feted in the usual manner. It was Mrs. Jack Copita's 5 o'clock that was responsible for the wager which won me the wedding, a function I had grown to despair of ever arriving at.

One fine summer day, boorishly enough, I was berating the stupid habit of Main street—a primeval and inalienable habit of blazoning abroad misstatements and woefully garbled versions of "the truth concerning the matter," whatever the matter might be. However, she spoke truly enough who said of Sue and me, "She's refused him every summer for the last ten years." Perhaps, because of the precision of the guess in this instance, my remarks were more than usually scathing concerning "gossip" in smaller towns generally and the little tattle of Main street, Hilton, particularly.

"I'll wager," said I to Sue as we passed the postoffice on our way to Mrs. Jack's tea, "that they'll have us engaged before we reach the end of the street." Sue's hatred of gossip is as pronounced as her love for her native town, and what the board walk is to Atlantic City even so is Main street to Hilton.

"I'll wager," Sue challenged, ignoring my remark, "that I can have and hold against Main street for three months, if necessary, any matter which you may care to intrust to me, provided you swear to keep faith also."

"You for accomplishing that," said I, warily reviewing the weak points of a plot I had in mind. Sue's capacity for silence was the poser in my little scheme.

Arriving at Mrs. Jack's, it was very near the end of the allotted hour of "gobble and gabble" that I found myself unexpectedly in retreat in an alcove near the portiered entrance to the dining room. I had blundered upon a tete-a-tete between Sue and her inseparable ally, Mrs. Jack Copita.

"A thousand pardons," I murmured meekly, my eyes on Sue. "A few less will do," she laughed. "There is Mrs. Fish moving downward, and I have something of importance to say to her. Wait here awhile," said Mrs. Jack as she fluttered away, leaving Sue and me together.

"Drawing my chair ever such a trifle closer, so that I might the better feast my eyes on that adorable face whose allurements for me neither time nor change nor any other creature could ever lessen, I said, 'I dote on tea.' 'I judge you came for that reason,' Sue replied.

"Do you remember?" "I seldom or never do," she interrupted. "That little thing," I continued casually, "concerning the uselessness of trying to queer one's proportioned becoming cargo of fate and how the little stars and tidal waves and other natural impediments are greatly in error, imagining that they can but in between us and our natural belongings?"

"Your translation into the vernacular is not at all smart," Sue commented. "And has nothing whatever to do with the subject I had in mind?" said I. "For what I was wondering is, are you going with the Percys and yours overlastingly, for the week end, at the Reef?"

"Yes, I believe we're all to go together in the big car. We're to be there in time for dinner at 8. The Reef is raggeder and lovelier than ever."

"Dear Reef," said I. "It's rather a coincidence that I first saw you there. Heavens, it was at a picnic of the Percys, come to think of it."

penchant for secrecy. At school it amounted to genius. 'I'll die, but not divulge,' was Bob's motto. 'Then,' continued I, with the airy unconcern of true sport, 'say Bob marries us.' Sue is so uniformly master of herself she scarce lifted an eyebrow, and of course it may have been a glint of the westerling sun that shone in her eyes, but I can swear to the shine in them.

"Say Bob marries us at the Reef," I repeated, with nonchalance, "some time between now and Monday a. m. Why, I'll give you a month—two, three—any time you say for Main street to find us out and gossip us to house-keeping. I'll stake my life and Bob's that death will find us yet dumb. If I win you lose, maybe. If you win I lose all," I whispered.

"If," said Sue slowly, deliberating, chin on hand, "Bob swears, too, I'll accept the wager. It's as good as lost to you, though. I have, and still do hold, matters of more or less moment and less strenuously guarded than this will be, which have never reached the ears of Main street."

"This is the 23d," said I. "Two months from tomorrow will be Christmas eve. 'Merry Christmas,' I murmured anticipatively. Won't I look sweet all done up in tissue paper and Santa Claus seals and holly ribbon? But supposing I shouldn't. Suppose I lose?"

"That is the end," said Sue tersely. I tried to read in her inscrutable eyes ever so small a hint of interest in Main street gossip. She smiled slightly and repeated her creed. "Serene I fold my hands and wait, nor care"—A sound as of muffled scraping and a sharp click caused us to turn toward the portiered alcove. Then some one joined us.

I have but a pipe dream of the whirl into the Reef that night; a memory of a delicious sense of having to sit gloriously close to Sue in the well filled car; a sunlit Sabbath spent in hazy October woods and at midnight a solemn ceremony in a dim lit church, minus music or flowers or faces, save only three; the exchange of a written compact and farewell. I did not see Sue again, for I had to leave the Reef at dawn to make my train.

According to agreement, we exchanged no letters. The days followed each other with uneventful regularity. News—that is, the news I strained my ears to hear—came out until it seemed as though a cursed fate slew all the little birds that tell things on Main street. Sue preserved a silence which I doggedly forbore to break. Week after week, day after day, brought no sign nor the faintest breath of rumor till three days before Christmas, when there came a note from Mrs. Jack, which read: "I am having a surprise party for Sue Christmas eve. Fall me at your peril."

Had Mrs. Jack met me with a triumphant air as of "one who knows" I was prepared to have hugged her on the spot, but her bubbling mirth, candid and unsophisticated, struck chill to my heart as she proceeded to enjoy "the surprise" she was giving Sue.

Sue's back was toward the door as Mrs. Jack announced me. She turned, and for an instant I fancied her face paled. Perhaps it was but the reflection of my own. Then the dear, resolute chin lifted, and she calmly bade me welcome. The only other members of the party were Jack Copita, Mr. and Mrs. Percy and the Rev. Robert Clemmons. As I grasped Bob's hand I fairly pierced him with my questioning gaze. But his face was unresponsive. I fancied a bit pitying. I turned hopelessly away. "Here," said I to myself, "endeth the first lesson."

At dinner I found myself at Mrs. Jack's left. Sue was next me and Bob directly opposite. The garishly diminutive Christmas tree seemed mocking me from its icy lake in the center of the table. Everywhere were holly and mistletoe, but across the happy hum of voices there floated to me a sound as of "sweet bells jangled out of tune," but it wasn't. Sue had evidently heard it also. Her little hand unconsciously touched my sleeve. In the alcove near the portiered Reef, the irrepressible ten-year-old Copita, stood near a table which held a big talking machine. "It's a little surprise Syd has been saving for Sue's party," explained Mrs. Jack. "It was a surprise to me also till a week ago, when I was

hunting for the last blank record. Would you like to hear it?" The chorused response was all in the affirmative. "All right, son," and she nodded to Syd to proceed.

A sharp click, a preliminary muffled scraping as Syd adjusted the record. Sue shot at me one look of startled apprehension as from the brazen mouth of the horn came an indistinct murmur of voices and clatter, then my voice, low, but unmistakable: "Say Bob marries us at the Reef some time between now and Monday a. m. Why, I'll give you a month—two, three—any time you say for Main street to find us out and gossip us to house-keeping. I'll stake my life and Bob's," the metallic echo of my voice ran on, "that death will find us yet dumb. If I win you lose, maybe. If you win I lose all."

The party around the table listened breathlessly as one waits the denouement of the third act. It came as Sue's voice replied clearly and deliberately and with a trifle brassily, "If Bob swears, too, I'll accept the wager."

Mrs. Jack broke the spell. "That will do, Syd," she gurgled. "Hold up your hands, Sue. Last Friday I went to the Reef and while Mrs. Percy sang to Bob I secured the key of the church and searched the register." Then, springing to her feet, glass high in air, "I toast," she cried, "the bride of the Reef, the loser of the wager, my dearest friend—Mrs. Ted Moore!" Sue touched her glass rim to mine and gracefully, gloriously surrendered.

"Yes," she nodded comprehensively, and so in response I toasted, "The ubiquitous, the all pervading, the ever blessed Main street and its presiding genius, true son of his mother—Syd Copita."

"But whatever made you think of the blank record, Syd?" asked Sue. "Well," replied her youngest adorer, "there was such a racket when mum had one of her ten fights on I thought it would be fun to get it and let her hear it some time for a surprise—maybe her birthday. But I guess I got too close to you and Mr. Moore there, and of course if he wouldn't split on you I wasn't a-going to. Only for mum I'd died and kep' it dark too. 'But it wasn't a bad surprise for your party, was it, Sue?'"

Later, in the recess afforded by that ever blessed alcove, Sue assured me that if I would but loosen my arms enough to permit her to breathe she would tell me what she thought of the surprise, she meant, of course. "And as a small asset to start house-keeping on," I whispered, "would I do for a Christmas box without the holly ribbon?"

I'm afraid her answer tightened my arms again, but the memory of its thrilling sweetness will ever be to me the most exquisite music of all the bells of all the Christmases.

"Clinton—I suppose your little ones ask you many embarrassing questions? Clubbleigh—Yes; they are just like their mother—Boston Transcript.

Talk about being hungry! I was hungry as a bear. So, walking into a dairy lunch, I ate off the arm of a chair. —Index.

Early Shoppers Get Their Pick

This doll is waiting for some one to buy her, but she will not wait long. Some early shopper will get her, and the late ones will get left. By shopping early YOU GET YOUR PICK not only of dolls, but of all other Christmas goods.

SHERIFF'S SALE OF VALUABLE REAL ESTATE.—By virtue of process issued out of the Court of Common Pleas of Wayne county, and State of Pennsylvania, and to me directed and delivered, I have levied on and will expose to public sale, at the Court House in Honesdale, on

FRIDAY, DEC. 22, AT 2 P. M.

All the defendant's right, title, and interest in the following described property—viz:

All that southern 1/2 part of a certain piece or parcel of land, situated in Preston township, Wayne county, Pa., beginning at a heap of stones on the line of land surveyed to John Chambers; thence by the same and land surveyed by Daniel Bauman, north 63 degrees east 107 perches to a beach corner; thence by lots Nos. 42-37 of the allotment of the Bond tract, north 27 degrees West 320 perches to stones the corner; thence by lot No. 29 on said allotment, south 63 degrees west 107 perches to stones corner and thence by lots No. 39 and 40 of said allotment, south 27 degrees east 320 perches to the place of beginning. Containing 314 acres more or less, being the same land that Thomas Cadwalader and wife by their deed dated the 7th day of December, 1830, said deed being recorded in Deed Book No. 7 at page 256, granted and conveyed to Bernard and Cornelius Reilly, and the said Bernard and Cornelius Reilly divided the said land property by the said Bernard Reilly taking the southern half or 160 rods by 107 rods of the said tract and the said Cornelius Reilly taking the north half or 160 rods by 107 rods of the said tract.

Also all that certain piece or parcel of land situate in Preston township, Wayne county, Pa., bounded and described as follows: Beginning at a stone corner in the line of other lands of the said Bernard Reilly; thence by Lots Nos. 43-44 of the allotment of the Cadwaladers in Preston township, south 27 degrees east 186 rods to a post set for a corner; thence by Lot No. 23 of said allotment, south 84 1/2 degrees west 180 1/2 rods to a stones corner; thence by land of N. L. Kennedy, north 5 1/2 degrees west 159 1/2 rods to a stones by corner in the line of land of Bernard Reilly; and thence along said line, north 63 degrees east 4 1/2 rods to the place of beginning; containing 78 acres and 149 perches be the same more or less, and being the same land that Mary Cadwalader by her deed dated the 2nd day of March, 1843, granted and conveyed to Bernard Reilly, and the said Bernard Reilly having died on or about January 1, 1866, having made his last will and testament in which he devised the said land to his two sons, Michael Reilly and John Reilly. The said will having been duly probated in the office of the Register of Wills in and for Wayne county on the 13th day of January, 1866, and recorded in Wayne County Will Book No. 2, page 243, and the said John Reilly at, ux having, by their deed dated March 27, 1873, recorded in Wayne County Deed Book No. 43, at page 76, granted and conveyed all his interest in all the said land to the said Michael Reilly. And the said Michael Reilly having died intestate on or about the first day of January, 1896, leaving to survive him a widow and one child, Charles J. Reilly, and the said widow having since died the entire title to the land above described became vested in the said Chas. J. Reilly absolutely.

Upon the premises are a good frame dwelling, barn, shed and other out-buildings and a good orchard. Land mostly cleared and balance has some good timber growing upon it. Seized and taken into execution as the property of M. J. Moran and Chas. J. Riley, at the suit of The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, No. 96, March Term, 1910, Judgment, \$300. Attorneys, DeLaney & McCarty.

ALSO All the defendant's right, title, and interest in the following described property—viz: All that certain piece or parcel of land situate in the township of Dyberry, county of Wayne, and State of Pennsylvania, bounded and described as follows: Beginning at the south-western corner of a lot of land, devised by William Hogland, deceased, to Ephriam P. Kimble; thence south 50 degrees west 90 rods to the middle of the public road leading down the Dyberry Creek from Tanners Falls to Honesdale; thence along the middle of the same, south 28 degrees east 23 7/10 rods to a corner of Eli Buritt's land; thence by the same and by other land of the said party of the first part north 50 degrees east 95 rods to a corner and thence

north 44 degrees west 23 6-10 rods to the place of beginning, containing 13 acres more or less. Being the same land that Frederick Hubbard and Elizabeth Hubbard his wife by their deed dated the 29th day of November, 1870, recorded in Wayne County Deed Book No. 65, at page 247, granted and conveyed to Charles Tribes. Upon said premises is a frame house, barn and other improvements; land mostly improved. Seized and taken into execution as the property of Charles Tribes at the suit of Harry B. Ely. No. 131 June Term, 1910. Judgment, \$50.55. McCarty, Attorney.

TAKE NOTICE—All bids and costs must be paid on day of sale or deeds will not be acknowledged. M. LEE BRAMAN, Sheriff. Honesdale, Nov. 22, 1911.

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NOTICE TO BONDHOLDERS OF THE MILANVILLE BRIDGE CO. The bondholders of the Milanville Bridge Company will take notice that in pursuance of a resolution duly adopted by the Company, and in accordance with the provisions of the mortgage dated January 2, 1905, given by the Milanville Bridge Co. to Homer Greene, trustee, one thousand dollars of the bonds secured by said mortgage have been drawn for redemption. On presentation of said bonds to Homer Greene, Trustee, at his office in Honesdale, Pa., they will be paid at their par value, together with interest thereon to January 1, 1912; on and after which date interest thereupon will cease. The numbers of the bonds so drawn are as follows: 64, 243, 32, 153, 218, 242, 30, 112, 276, 33, 36, 114, 37, 245, 300, 87, 251, 227, 290, 298, 133, 11, 229, 126, 240, 100, 188, 142, 180, 231, 16, 62, 187, 246, 272, 164, 80, 169, 12, 173.

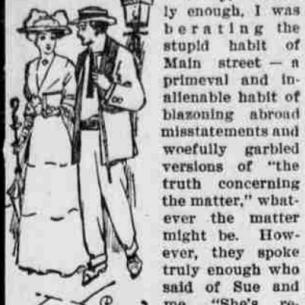
CHAS. E. BEACH, Secretary of the Milanville Bridge Company. Nov. 14, 1911. 92eol4w

CHICHESTER'S PILLS THE DIAMOND BRAND W. C. SPRY BEACHLAKE AUCTIONEER HOLDS SALES ANYWHERE IN STATE.

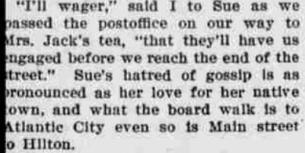
To the Farmers of Wayne Co.-- We Desire to Have You Patronize the FARMERS & MECHANICS BANK 75 per cent. of the stockholders of this Bank are Farmers Open An Account in the Progressive Bank Capital Stock \$75,000.00 Surplus and Profits \$17,000.00 Comparative Growth of Deposits: June 1st 1907, \$24,398.54 May 1st 1908, \$109,896.20 May 1st 1909, \$161,077.58 May 2nd 1910, \$241,843.67 May 1st 1911, \$272,500.68 Officers: M. E. SIMONS, President C. A. EMERY, Cashier Directors: M. B. Allen, George C. Abraham, J. Sam Brown, Oscar E. Bunnell, Wm. H. Dunn, W. M. Fowler, W. B. Guinnip, John E. Krantz, Fred W. Kretzner, John Kubbach, John Weaver, G. Wm. Sell, M. E. Simons, Fred Stephens, George W. Tisdell, J. E. Tiffany.

D. & H. CO. TIME TABLE---HONESDALE BRANCH Table with columns for A.M., P.M., Stations (Albany, Binghamton, Philadelphia, Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Carbondale, Lincoln Avenue, Whites, Parvies, Canaan, Lake Lodore, Waymart, Keene, Stone, Prompton, Fortville, Selkville, Honesdale) and times.

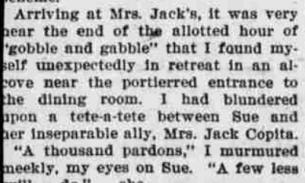
Play Pocket Base Ball A brand new game of skill—exciting, fun-making and fascinating to young and old. Is indestructible and can be carried in the vest pocket. Has All the Points Of Regular Base Ball You Can Make Put-Outs, Strike-Outs, Runs, Base Hits, Etc. One or any number can play. One team may match another. Simple Instructions. Become a Champion. MOTHERS, Here's the Chance Everybody That Likes Base Ball TO INTRODUCE this fascinating game we will for 25 cents and the names of your leading toy dealer and druggist send you a game with full instructions of play. SEND TO-DAY, this offer is for right now. ESPE SALES COMPANY, - Nashville, Tennessee



THEY'LL HAVE US ENGAGED BEFORE WE REACH THE END OF THE STREET.



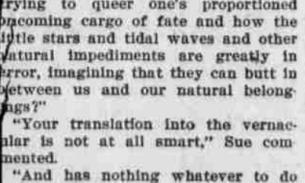
I FAIRLY PIERCED HIM WITH MY QUESTIONING GAZE.



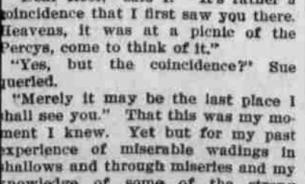
THE PARTY AROUND THE TABLE LISTENED BREATHLESSLY.



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