

Faith Baldwin's WIFE Versus SECRETARY

Visualization adapted by BEATRICE FABER... from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture

SYNOPSIS

Linda and Van Sanford have had three years of extraordinary happy marriage based on their passionate love and mutual trust. Van is secretly making plans for the merger of his magazines with National Weekly, owned by J. D. Underwood. Van's secretary, "Whitey" Wilson, who is wholly absorbed in her employer's interests, is telephoned by him one evening just as she is leaving for the theatre with Dave Evans, her fiance. She goes to Van's home to check the National's circulation reports with him. Later, Linda asks her to remain for the party she is giving. But when all the guests, including Whitey, have left, Linda becomes thoughtful and apprehensive over Van's close association with his beautiful secretary.

KISS AND MAKE UP

Chapter Two

The bedroom door swung open and Van walked in. He caught Linda in a tight embrace. "Gwendolyn," he said solemnly, "if it weren't for the wife whom I love..."

She smiled up at him. "I'm the best, aren't I, Van?" she asked wistfully. "The only best... always?"

His voice was soft. "Some day they're going to put us in the same wheel chair... and whenever my lumbago isn't bothering me... say!... you look out."

Whitey sat beside Finney in the Sanford car, for Linda had graciously insisted that the chauffeur drive her home.

The car came to a stop and she climbed out. She was about to mount the steps of her house when she noticed Dave's roadster at the curb. He was curled up on the front seat, fast asleep.

Opening the car door, she stepped in and gently awakened him. He drew her hand into his and relaxed languidly against the back of the seat. Then, as Whitey apologized for not meeting him and breathlessly described Linda's party, he listened to her in attentive silence. Neither reproach nor envy was in his face... only the honest love he had for Whitey shone in his eyes.

Suddenly she noticed the small envelope he was fingering.

"That" he grinned, "was the surprise." There had been no time to tell her when she had hurried off to the Sanfords.

Her mouth rounded into a pink oval. "Seventy-five dollars a week! A twenty-dollar raise! Oh Dave, how wonderful!"

"Honey," he said, in weighed tones, "tomorrow you better hand in your two week's notice."

She swallowed hard. "We could have a servant, Dave. I wouldn't have to give up my job."

His face clouded. "We've gone over that." There was an uncomfortable pause. "It's not like being married. It's..."

Whitey clasped his hand with desperate sympathy. "Darling, we'll work it out." Then she offered her lips to him and their kiss was long and fervent.

The next afternoon Van's car was gliding smoothly through the gateway of the Underwood estate and into the beautifully landscaped grounds.

Whitey snapped down the cover of her dictation notebook and as Van hopped out of the car she held up two fingers, crossed for luck. "Watch him in the clinches."

He returned the gesture grimly. "Anything goes."

Underwood, a large vital man of seventy, boomed a hearty greeting to Van and clapped him on the shoulder. Then he said, with unexpected directness, "Van, no beating about the bush. What are you trying to put over on me?"

Guilelessly, Van explained that he was thinking of reducing "Mayfair" to fifteen cents. Underwood was silent, then expostulatory. Advertisers could never reach both classes with a fifteen cent magazine. And, to Van's delighted amazement, Underwood immediately launched into a proposal... the very proposal that Van had been



"I'm the best, aren't I, Van?"

for the evening, were seated on the arm of Linda's chair. Before dinner the arm of Linda's chair, before dinner cocktails were in the act of being hoisted.

Exclaiming over Linda's delicious liver-paste crackers, Anne greedily looked around for more. Van sprang up and went for the tray at the far end of the room.

"You know," Ted said earnestly to Linda, "Van looks a little fagged out. Now I've found out that to keep in trim you have to spend some time at it. I was at the club swimming in the pool all afternoon and I tell you I feel like a new man. You ought to get Van to do that. I haven't seen him at the club in months."

Linda heard the short pause screaming at her.

Van now moved into earshot with the platter. Linda rose. "I'll get Molly to make you up a jar of liver, Anne."

Her spine rigid, she walked toward the kitchen. "Molly," she said calmly to the cook, "would you fill a little jar with chicken liver for Mrs. Barker. And also write down the recipe?" Her head ached wretchedly.

Molly was flattered, but alas, she had no little jar. Linda summoned Finney. "I'd like you to run a little errand. You've had dinner, haven't you?"

"No, ma'am. I took Miss Wilson home after I brought Mr. Sanford."

"I see." Woodenly, Linda explained the errand, then returned to the living room, her heart shattered to bits, but her face masked in the smile of the perfect hostess...

about to proffer, J. D. now informed Van that he would sell him National Weekly and Van could thereby merge the cheaper publication with his own magazine, selling advertising under one enticing contract.

As Van stepped back into his waiting car, he burst into uncontrollable laughter. "He tried to talk me into it," he gasped to Whitey. "Believes it's his idea now. He fell like a ton of bricks."

When he had reached the door of his house, he directed Finney, his chauffeur, to drive Whitey home. "And Whitey..." he leaned into the tonneau of the car "... if even the faintest rumor of this gets out... I can't even tell Linda..."

She nodded vehemently. "You can trust me." The car moved off.

Linda was waiting for Van at the head of the stairs. "I called you at the office," she said with pretended sternness, "and left a message to be called back, and why didn't you?"

"Didn't go back to the office," he explained glibly. "I was at the Club all afternoon in the swimming pool. What did you want?"

Linda pouted provocatively. "Nothing. Too late. The mood's gone."

Masterfully, Van grasped her shoulder. "It's gone, eh?" He eyed her as if she were some rare tidbit. "It is, eh?" It is? Then, swooping down on her, he found her lips and pressed them into flame.

Ted and Anne Barker, Linda's guests

The Sanford Publication Welfare Club was holding its annual skating ball at the Manhattan Ice Palace. Enclosed in a huge fur coat, Linda sat at the edge of the rink. Van was adjusting his skates.

"You shouldn't be here with your cold, Linda," he said solicitously.

"I'm all bundled up," her voice was edged with irritation.

Surprised, Van, looked at her closely, then good-humoredly attributed it to the discomforts of her cold.

Whitey crashed into the railing in front of them. "May I borrow your husband, Mrs. Sanford, if you're not skating?"

Linda smiled evenly. "You're quite welcome."

Two pairs of eyes, Dave's and Linda's, fixed themselves grimly on the

tallyho as it sped down the rink, the spotlight revealing the close familiarity of Van and Whitey, with the former's arm clasped around the girl's lithe body.

Linda turned as a girl plopped down beside her. "You're lucky to get out of skating, Been with Sanford long?"

Involuntarily, Linda smiled. "Oh... Three years."

Really! Say!... there's Sanford now. The good looking one. And see that girl with him?"

Linda stiffened. "Yes?"

The girls smirked. "That's his... secretary... if you know what I mean." She fell back suddenly at the strange blaze in Linda's eyes. Backing away hurriedly, she skated off.

The skating ball was beginning to break up. "We ought to come here more often," Whitey said to Dave, her cheeks aglow. "Next year I'd like to surprise them and do figure skating." She tugged at her glove absently. "Your ring's in the way."

Dave directed a deadly cold stare at her. "I guess it is."

Her face drained itself of color. It was stark and white. "I guess you're right," she said tonelessly. Dropping the ring into his palm, she spun around and left...

"Sorry I kept you waiting, Darling," Van said as he entered the car where Linda was already waiting.

She murmured something and was silent. Then to his perturbed amazement she began to talk to him in a low monotone. Why not let Whitey go... not fire her, of course, but find another position for her in his company...

At his mute question, she proceeded to tell him of the young woman who had sat next to her at the rink.

Angrily, Van turned to her. "Linda, I certainly won't let Whitey go because someone thinks something smutty of our association. Any one would think you were jealous..."

The car drew up before the house. Stepping out, Linda disdained Van's proffered hand and swept past him, her face hard and set.

Stunned, he looked after her. Then

he glared. "Take me to the club," he rasped to Finney and re-entered the car.

He was morosely sitting in on a poker game when Linda's telephone call came.

"Van," she sobbed, "Come home." "D-darling," he blubbered, "I'll be right there."

And with Linda once again in his arms, everything seemed to right itself. Whitey was remote and forgotten as their lips met in a kiss of love and forgiveness.

Two weeks later Whitey brought her complete report on National Weekly's figures to Van.

"Do you think the directors will let you buy it?" Whitey asked.

"Oh, sure, Underwood's the catch. How much will he want?"

The telephone rang. Harrington, Van's representative at the Publisher's Convention in Havana, was ill. Van came to a rapid decision. He would represent his firm at the convention, himself, especially as Underwood was there.

His plane was well on its way to Havana when Whitey made her unpleasant discovery. Interviewing a Mr. Jenkins for a job as bookkeeper she was informed that he had been working for Hanson House, a rival publishing firm, on a report of American Weekly. Then they, too, must be planning to buy, she told herself apprehensively.

Not until evening was she able to reach Van on the telephone in Havana. Swiftly, she reported Jenkin's disclosures.

"Whitey," Van's voice had set purpose in it, "you don't mind flying, do you?"

The telephone almost fell from her hand. "Oh-h no," she quavered.

Then listen. Get all those papers out of the safe and take the first plane down here. Underwood's here, not in New York. Hurry it up, toots!"

Linda and Van have managed to patch up their quarrel. But now this new complication arises. Does Van intend to confine himself strictly to business on Whitey's arrival? Be sure to read next week's concluding, thrilling installment.

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