

LITERARY PAGE

I'll Wait for You

By Fred Beckwith

As he toyed with his drink, Mark Sterling thought of the reason why he was here—at the Sand-Bar, five o'clock, on this Saturday afternoon in September. His brain raced back two years through a sea of events that even now seemed like distant memories. Then, as now, he was having a drink at one of the tables by the window that looked over the pounding surf.

But two years ago, there was a beautiful girl at his table. She was Sandra Lewis, who, at twenty-one, had captured the hearts and attention of a fabulous group of young men. Sandra Lewis—with her auburn hair and green eyes and with that quiet, enamoring personality.

He and Sandra had talked a good deal that afternoon.

Finally Sandra had said: "Mark, let's leave it this way. You know how I hate goodbyes. I'm not going to see you off at the train tomorrow."

"No?"

"No!"

"I don't know when I'll be able to see you again. The army doesn't hand out furloughs too often."

"Perhaps it's better that way, Mark. And no letters, please."

"What is this, a complete fade-out?"

"Not at all. I'm not exactly sure how I feel about you. Maybe you have the wrong slant on me, too. I want you to make a promise, Mark."

"Depends on what it is . . ."

"Meet me here, on the same spot, at five o'clock, two years from now. A few months in advance of that date, if you're sure you can't keep the appointment, write me and let me know. . ."

"But, damn it, Sandra, that's crazy!"

"I have my reasons, darling. I want to know just how much I'm going to miss you. I want to know exactly what you mean to me."

"This is a very peculiar way to find out. . ."

"I'm sorry Mark, but that's the way it's got to be."

And so Mark Sterling had left for an army camp the next day, and the last thing he had remembered was the faint smell of Sandra's perfume when they parted. He had put her in a taxi and that was goodbye, for she had not come to the train to see him off.

A year later, Mark had had his taste of war. Bits of shell fragment had lodged in his left arm, and although they were extracted, that member of his body was definitely crooked and a little foreign when put to practical use. They gave him a medical discharge, and he came home. But he hadn't written to Sandra. He had thought a lot about her. He had been on the verge of writing a letter dozens and dozens of times, but some force always restrained this move.

Even when he got home, he made no attempt to communicate with Sandra. After a couple of attempts at taking a vacation, he finally secured himself a job with a construction company and moved out of town.

. . . This was the first time he had been in the Sand-Bar since that time two years ago. Will she show up? he asked himself as he lit a cigarette. He glanced at his watch. Two minutes before five. I mustn't appear excited, he told himself. I'll try to appear casual. But all these thoughts were lost in a swirl of emotion as the auburn-haired loveliness that was

notice the army lieutenant who was by her side. The pair approached Mark's table, and Mark rose and said, "Won't you sit down?"

"Ted, this is an old friend of mine. Mark Sterling. Mark, this is Ted Hubbard, my husband."

"Glad to know you." The words fell from Mark's mouth like so many bricks.

"The feeling is mutual," returned Sandra's husband. He added, "Let me order us some drinks. What will you have?"

"Scotch, thanks."

Sandra had taken off her fur wrap and was casually looking around the room.

"The place hasn't changed much, has it?" she asked.

"Then you haven't been here, either, since . . ." Mark couldn't finish the sentence.

"Oh, that's all right, Mark. Ted knows everything." After the waiter had brought the drinks, Ted said:

"I'll leave you two alone for awhile. I've got a phone call to make." As he spoke, he moved to his feet, and headed for the phone booth at the other end of the room.

When he left, Sandra bent eagerly forward and said: "Mark, try to understand. I made a terrible mistake. I'm not in love with Ted. Two years was such a long time. I had no word from you . . ."

Mark smiled a bit grimly. "It was your idea, Sandra," he said.

"I know, I know. But I didn't think you'd be a big enough fool to carry it out to the letter. I thought I was being sophisticated. I never knew how much you meant to me, until after you had gone. Tonight, I took a desperate gamble. I prayed that you might be here. I told Ted the whole story, because I felt I had to."

Mark took a long drag on his cigarette. "Excuse me, Sandra, I have to make a phone call, too." He left her, and he turned quickly from the sight of that hurt look in her eyes. He entered the phone booth at just about the time Ted Hubbard left it. Inserting a nickel in the pay-slot he dialed his number and after a moment's pause, said: "Hello, Helen, is that you, darling? This is Mark. I'll be home for dinner, after all. No, nothing important. Just a little unfinished business I had to attend to. Yes, dear, I'll be home before that steak burns."

Okie's Lament

Ah'v cum from Oklahomah, piumb
O-re-gone to live.
And Ah guess it's sho-nuff true
That the place is just a sieve.
Fo jus' a little sunshine
Ah had hoped with all mah
heart
Ah went to th' weathah bureau,
An' th' man gave me this chart:

On Sunday it will rain;
We surely won't have snow,
On Monday, 'midst the drizzle,
Might shine a moment or so.
On Tuesday it will pour—
To keep water levels high.
On Wednesday a slight mist,
As the gloomy clouds hang by.
On Thursday 'twill be frosty.
The air: sharp, cold and clear.
On Friday blackened skies again,
'Twill rain 'ere night, I fear.
When Saturday comes rollin' round
The ground will be right wet;

Lament

The hours
Speed by and fall
Off the edge of the world
The fire
Blazes yellow
Tiny red sparks simmer.
Seasons
Repeat themselves
And Spring is past, lost . . .

Death gropes forward,
Twisting and gasping,
As it gains a subtle grip
Upon the burdened world.
There is a lilting fragrance
Caught in the air of a past decade;
Seen in the simple beauty of an
evening sky—
Left over reflections from a joyous
image.

—Jeanne Wiltshire.

Ad Infinitum

From deep in the Universe
The Power smiled,
The center of energy
Core of an atom;
Listened to men talking.
"Who is God?" they asked,
"Why are we here?"

Humorously the Power
Offered man a fraction
Of himself, of knowledge.
Man seized it; he cried,
"Here I have all of it,
Here is the answer,
Here, in my hand!"

—Joan Beckman.

A Trio of Triolets

Last month I wept that spring was not,
For then I was an April Fool!
I longed for sun, ah, sad my lot!
Last month I wept that spring was not,
But now in May the days are hot,
The blossoms droop, the sun is cruel.
Last month I wept that spring was not,
For then I was an April Fool.

The palisades which spurn the sea
I long for. You my heart does ache
For, too. I hold in memory
The palisades which spurn the sea
As I spurned you, nor did foresee
That fleeing you, I should forsake
The palisades which spurn the sea.
I long for you, my heart does ache.

He kissed me with solemnity
And started bravely on his way.
His eyes were sober, flashed no glee,
He kissed me with solemnity.
Just six years old, to school went he.
I stilled a sob which bade him stay;
He kissed me with solemnity
And started bravely on his way.
—Nancy Meyer.

Improving On the Masters

By Jacqueline Winetrou

Many a famous and noble person had quaked at the thought of eating a grapefruit in public. Scientists, politicians, insurance salesmen, people big and small, important or unimportant, in fact, everyone who has ever eaten a grapefruit has pondered over various ways of improving the art of eating this delicious fruit. I don't want to brag; but yes, you have guessed it; I believe that I have discovered a fool-proof method of safely transferring the delicate little sections of the grapefruit from their firm position in the skin to our watering mouths.

grapefruit is to be supplied with proper equipment. I suggest that you carry with you at all times an oil skin cap, to protect your hair, an apron of the same material, to fully cover the area between the neck and waist, and a pair of oil skin gloves to use in case you get angry at the little grapefruit and start tearing the section out with your hands. I advise all of you ladies to dispense with mascara powder, and lipstick while eating a grapefruit. As you know, it is always necessary to wash one's face thoroughly after eating the fruit. And what is worse than runny mascara? I advise both ladies

The important factor in eating a (Please turn to page thirty-one)



TOPS IN ICE CREAM

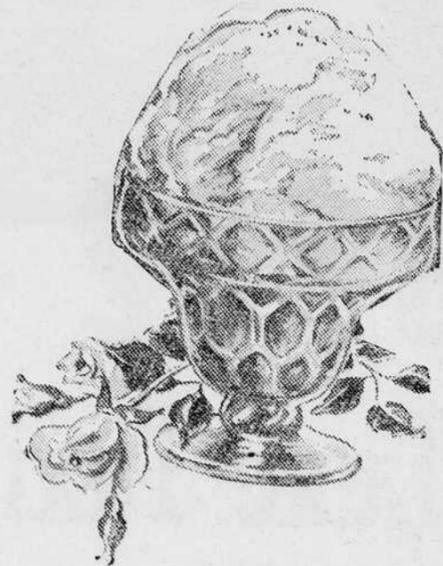
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