



"Will—Will You Marry Me?" He Blurted.

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The WOMAN

A Novel by **Albert Payson Terhune**

Founded on
William C. de Mille's Play
Illustrated with Photos from the Play
and Drawings by V. L. Barnes

CHAPTER I.

Five Years Before.

The woman looked up from her task of fitting the trunk tray into exact position. Standish noted vaguely that the effort of packing had not made her red or frowny. Even as she sat there on the floor beside the nearly-full trunk, with a litter of garments about her, her pose was not ungraceful. Yet her face was oddly tense, and her clenched hands spoke of self-control hard to maintain.

"No," she said patiently, as though trying to teach a lesson to some rather stupid child, "that isn't what I mean, at all. I mean, it's—over. Can't you understand?"

"Why, yes," answered Standish, "of course I understand. Why shouldn't I? It's over. You will be safe at your aunt's house by six o'clock this evening, and you will start for Europe tomorrow, just as you arranged. And our wonder-week is ended. And for the next three months I'll be counting every—"

"Oh!" interrupted the woman, her hard-worn patience going to pieces. "Won't you understand? I said it was over. Over! Not for three months or for any other time. But for always. Why do you make me put it this way? I tried to say it more—"

"You don't mean"—he began thickly, his throat sand and sore.

The woman nodded.

"But," he protested lamely, "it—it can't be. Why, girl, you love me!"

"I thought I did. Oh, I was so sure I did! But little by little, for days, I've begun to understand. Don't look at me like that! Do you suppose I enjoy talking so? It has to be said. And you're not making it a bit easy for me."

"Forgive me," he answered, a bitter note creeping into his heavy voice. "You are wrecking me. You are smashing all I hold dear. You are making my future as barren as a rainy sea. Forgive me for not making the process a bit easy for you."

"You have no right to say such things!" she flared. "It is cowardly. It is ungenerous."

"Why? Because you are a woman? A woman may flay a man. She may break his life to pieces for her own amusement. If he dares to protest, he is cowardly and ungenerous. Because she is a woman. A man's hands are tied behind him by that asinine old tradition. How about the woman who pommels a man when she knows his hands are so tied? Isn't she as 'cowardly' and 'ungenerous' as I would be if I thrashed a cripple? And yet women clamor for their 'rights'—Rights! With one-tenth of the 'rights' that silly chivalry showers upon women, I could conquer the whole world!"

"But you could not conquer one woman. If I begged you to avoid a scene it was as much for your own sake as for mine. Since you will have one, let's get it over with as quickly as we can. Here is the situation in—"

handful of words: I met you. You weren't like any other man I'd ever known. You didn't fall down and worship me at sight—or pretend to, which comes to the same thing. It didn't seem to interest you that I had money and that other men made fools of themselves over me. And then your Quixotic ideas about politics and government and all that sort of thing, appealed to me. These and other reasons of the same kind made me think I was in love with you."

"You didn't think. You were! And—"

"Perhaps. Perhaps not. Does it matter—now? Isn't that also an effort to save the anchor after the wreck? But never mind. I thought I loved you. With your impractical high-souled ideas about political reform and the people's wrongs you seemed to me a modern Galahad; instead of just a—Don Quixote."

"Ah!"

"I'm sorry it makes you wince. But it's the truth. And the truth is generally painful. When you wanted to marry me, I felt as though a demigod had stooped to earth. That isn't the way to feel when one marries. I didn't know it then. I do, now. And perhaps the knowledge that I would not be allowed to marry you just yet, or even acknowledge our engagement, helped strengthen the infatuation. Then when I found I must go to Europe so soon, and you begged me to give you just this one 'perfect week,' it all seemed so natural—so right—so beautiful—"

"I was wrong!" he cried. "I was insane. I had no right to suggest it. I had no right to let you consent."

But, womanlike, she would not let him blame himself.

"It was not your fault," she cried. "Or if there were fault at all it was mine as much as yours. I say you 'begged' me to come here. You did not. At your first hint I was as eager as you. Perhaps," she added with a return of her forced hardness, "it was not quite the way one would expect a Galahad or a Quixote to spend a week. But the blame is as much mine as yours. So don't let's talk of that. Can't we both forget it?"

"Forget it? Why, girl, it's my whole life."

"It is an episode whose memory can be sweet or bitter as we choose to make it. We were clever enough to leave no trace when we went away. I'm supposed to be on a visit and your worthy constituents were told that their congressional representative was going away to recuperate, somewhere in the mountains. You will return from your vacation much benefited—if a little vague as to its details. And I will go back to my aunt's tonight, prepared to start happily on my European trip tomorrow morning. That is all."

"Oh, girl, I love you! You are mad—insane—to talk this way to me what you are planning. Can't you see it? Won't you give me

a chance to get back your love? I had it once—I can get it again if you will give me the chance. I know I can make you happy."

A smile that savored of the rack twisted her set lips—and died before it reached her eyes.

"No, dear," she contradicted gently. "You can't make me happy. I doubt if you can make any woman happy. A woman—one who didn't know the un-Galahad side of you as I do—might respect or even reverence you. But you couldn't hold her love. No woman ever really loved a man because he was good; or because he fought against political evils or slew dragons. She might admire him for it. But admiration and reverence are petty poor every-day fare. When your wife wanted you to say crazy adoring things to her, you would be thinking out a new insurgent plan by which you could block the machine in congress. When she hoped you'd buy her some candy or a few flowers on your way home from the Capitol, you'd be too busy framing your next speech to think of such trifles. Those same trifles and his wild extravagance of praise and the quick noticing of anything she puts on to please him, are the cords that lash a woman's heart to a man's. Not her pride in the way he is fighting his country's political battles."

"Listen!" pleaded Standish. "I'll give it all up: my seat in congress, my fight for the people, my political hopes—everything! I'll give it all up—all—if you will marry me and give me a chance to make you love me again."

"It's no use," she returned. "For the moment you almost carried me off my feet. I can understand now why your speeches that read so stupidly, can sway people. But it's only an impulse. Inside of an hour you would question it. Inside of a day you would regret it—"

"No! No!"

"And inside of a week you would be secretly reading every scrap of congressional news and cursing your lot at being out of the fight. It would be like all sacrifices. In time one gets to hating the person one made them for. Oh, it would be misery for us both! It would be even worse than this week."

"Today there seems much I don't understand," he retorted. "But one thing is very clear to me: the course you've chosen is an impossible one for you. You must marry me. If not for love, then because it is the right thing to do. I do not ask you to care for me or even to live in the same house with me. But for your own sake you must—"

"It is for my own sake that I must do nothing of the sort. You get your ideas of life from books. Too many people do that. I am not going to let this one mistake ruin every bit of my future. I won't let one moment of folly blot all my life. Men don't. Why should women? There is still much in the world for me. And for you, too, if you'll look at it sanely. Oh, I know my kind of sanity shocks you. But it is sanity. You are held back by centuries of traditions. Your father began life as a millionaire's son. Mine began it in an Irish orphanage. Your grandfather was a supreme court judge. I don't know who mine was. There must be something, after all, in this talk of heredity. For instance, I don't suppose there's a girl in all your sisters' set who would have con-

sented to a 'honeymoon' like ours, is there? Your sisters wouldn't have done such a thing, would they?"

"No!" he exclaimed in involuntary disgust.

At his word and tone a faint red showed across the woman's face as if he had struck her lightly with his open hand. But at once she recovered herself.

"Let's say goodbye and part as friends," she suggested. "No irreparable harm is done. Except for myself, you are the only person hurt. You'll have to stand that as part of the price of—"

"You are mistaken," he broke in. "Others, besides myself, are affected."

"Who?"

"I don't know. But this I do know: No one can live to himself or herself. No one can say: 'My fault or folly hurts me alone.' In this miserable old world of ours, we are all tangled up in one another's destinies. And when one tears loose the cord that binds him, the vibration of that wrench will soon or late reach and affect people whom he perhaps does not even know."

"The cord you speak of," she mocked, "is that holy bond known as Conventionalty, isn't it? The bugbear that the weak and the prim have raised to scare the strong and the courageous."

"No. The beaten path that ten billion failures and tragedies since the birth of Time have shown to be the only safe one. Conventionalty's path may seem to the near-sighted to be twisted foolishly, and unnecessarily long. But each of those twists represents the place where the Man in Front wisely stepped aside to avoid the pitfall into which the man ahead of him had tumbled. And the short cuts in the long tortuous road are white with the bones of failures."

"I'm going to walk over those same whitened bones in my short cut from one point of Conventionalty's twisted path to another. I'm going to walk back from a union that would mean misery to me—back to the pleasant home life and social life I love and don't mean to lose. Don't worry. No whitened bones will turn under me and bring me a fall. I can defy the boggy, Conventionalty, and still live happy."

"Others have defied the boggy. You are not the first nor the millionth. To most of them it seemed as safe as it seems to you."

"Yes? I should like to meet them and compare notes."

"You will not meet them," he answered grimly, "but you will tread on their bones—in the short cut. Even as some future challenger of Conventionalty shall one day tread on yours."

(To be continued.)

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Notice for Publication

Department of the Interior, United States Land Office at The Dalles, Oregon, August 4, 1914.

Notice is hereby given that Eva Grogan, of Sisters, Oregon, who, on March 20, 1911, made Homestead Entry No. 08381 for NW 1/4 SE 1/4, NE 1/4 SW 1/4, SE 1/4 NW 1/4 & SW 1/4 NE 1/4 Section 9, Township 14 South, Range 11 East, Willamette Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make Final Three Year proof to establish claim to the land above described, before George E. Aitken, U. S. Commissioner, at Sisters, Oregon, on the 12th day of September, 1914.

Claimant names as witnesses: William A. Arthur, R. W. Grogan, J. B. Fryear, J. L. Clett, all of Sisters, Oregon.

H. FRANK WOODCOCK,

Register.
First publication Aug 13-Sept 10

Notice for Publication

Department of the Interior, United States Land Office at The Dalles, Oregon, July 16, 1914.

Notice is hereby given that Gerald G. Groves of Terrebonne, Oregon, who, on January 4, 1911, made Homestead Entry No. 09836, for the SE 1/4 NE 1/4, Section 24, Township 14 South, Range 13 East, Willamette Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make Final Three-Year Proof to establish claim to the land above described, before W. B. Daggett, U. S. Commissioner, at Redmond, Oregon, on the 5th day of September, 1914.

Claimant names as witnesses: George Gates, John Perry, Barney Roadside, all of Terrebonne, Oregon, and Van W. Hanks of Redmond, Oregon.

H. FRANK WOODCOCK,

Register.
First publication July 23-Aug. 20

Notice is hereby given that by virtue of an order and license of the County Court of Clackamas county, State of Oregon, I will offer for sale at private sale, and on the 16th day of September, 1914, will sell to the highest bidder the northeast one-quarter of section 11 in township 17, south of range 11 east of the Willamette Meridian, containing 160 acres, more or less, in Crook county, Oregon, said described property belonging to the estate of John Kropf, deceased.

All bids may be sealed and addressed to me at Hubbard, Oregon, or to my attorneys.

C. I. KROPP,

Administrator of the estate of John Kropf, deceased.
C. D. & D. C. Latourette,
Attorneys,
Oregon City, Oregon.
First publication Aug 13-Sept 10

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