

Promise of Perfection

by Adele and Cateau De Leeuw

"READY, EI?" Bill Sheridan flung the question over his shoulder, not pausing in his nervous pacing of the narrow room. His topcoat was tossed on a chair, he held his hat in his hand.

Ellen nodded. "Just as soon as I put these few things in my bag." "I'll carry it down and see about the car." He was anxious to be off; one would think it was his vacation. She supposed it was foolish to linger like this, absurdly vainly, wishing . . .

This was where she and Bill had come when they married. They had stood in the doorway and surveyed their domain as if it were as vast as a continent. How proud they had been of their few possessions, how sure they had been that this was to be only the beginning!

Such fun, such days of planning! Why had it happened to them? Why had it changed? Bill getting nervous and moose, herself ready to weep, to fly off about nothing. Something had gone terribly, terribly wrong. Was it herself, or Bill?

She was going to find out. And this might be the beginning of the end. For if she discovered the answer—up there in the quiet hills of Connecticut—she would not be coming back. She must look around the little apartment, so that she could remember every line and dimension of it.

Here were her window boxes, the geraniums and phlox striving bravely in the sunlight. Here was where she had sewed on frilly aprons—looking out across the cement and stone-walled street and dreaming. Here was where Bill had sat smoking . . . here on the tiny sink he had worked for so many evenings to make the little set of doll furniture for his niece.

Bill was waiting for her beside the car. He helped her in, his face a mask. He did not speak while he maneuvered through the up-town traffic. She sat beside him, feeling shrunken and miserable, clasping her gloved hands in her lap until her fingers ached.

Little by little, as they left the city behind them and began winding through the hills, she found her face relaxing, and her hands unclenched. It was restful—the rolling green hills dimming to blue against the horizon, the smell of new-mown grass, the cattle grazing in the fields, the occasional sound of water.

HE asked her if she wanted to stop in the next village for lunch.

"Oh, no. I told Mrs. Biddle I'd be there in time for lunch, and meals are included, you know!"

He drove on; the silence was deeper. The silence between them pressed on her like a weight; the silence around her was a balm. Mrs. Biddle came out to meet them. She was a motherly looking woman with tightly drawn back gray hair and a print dress with an apron tied over it. She beamed at them.

"Too bad your husband ain't staying," she clucked. "But I'll take good care of her. . . I'm right glad to have a young person in the house. Maybe I'll plump her up a bit—she could stand plumpin'." Unless you like 'em thin?"

Bill said, "I like her the way she is." He did it very well. "Goodbye, Bill," Ellen said. Her throat felt dry and she held out her hand.

With Mrs. Biddle's eyes on them, Bill took her in his arms and kissed her. "Goodbye," he said in a muffled voice. "You'll write?" It was what a husband ought to say to a wife. But they knew what it meant, its real significance.

She nodded, afraid to speak for a moment. "I'll write—as soon as I know." "All right," he said brusquely. "I'll come up when you say."

AFTER lunch she got up and announced that she was going for a walk. "When you come back, I'll have a cup of tea for you," promised Mrs. Biddle.

There seemed to be only one way to start out—along the road in front of the house. The street was shaded and there was a breeze blowing. Everything was peaceful and drowsy and sweet-smelling.

Suddenly she was arrested by the smell of honeysuckle. It was her favorite fragrance taking her



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back to her childhood when she had played with her dolls near the hedge of it that ran across the back garden. There must be a hedge of it near—nothing less than a hedge would smell so overpoweringly sweet.

Yes, there it was—yellow and white, long-tongued blossoms foaming over thick green. It, too, was at the far end of a garden.

The house had a "For Sale" sign on it. The paper had been partly torn off and the board was so weather-beaten that it must have been for sale a long time. She thought, "I don't suppose it would hurt if I went in and took a spray or two—just to remind myself. And I would like to see the garden."

The wicket gate was not locked; she pushed it open and went in and around the house, following a winding path of uneven stones sunk in the grass. She drew a little indrawn breath of surprise. It was an enchanted place.

NOT just as it stood, but because, in one swift moment, she could visualize it as it ought to be. The beds were overrun with weeds; tall stalks lay over on their sides, the flowers lost in the grass. Ramblers rioted over a sagging pergola; a bird-bath leaned drunkenly under an apple tree.

She wondered what this old house was like, inside. It reminded her of her childhood as much as the garden. She tried to peer in the windows, but those on the side were too high, and on the veranda the light was against her and she couldn't see. But she must see inside. The sign said, "Inquire of Asa F. Henderson, 10 Willow Place."

It wasn't hard to find 10 Willow Place. The real estate office was built like a cottage, with a brick stoop and blue shutters. A girl was typing at a desk, and a lean, sandy-haired man was talking to a client.

When Ellen explained what she wanted, the girl called "Mr. Henderson!" and the sandy-haired man came forward. He explained that he had to take another client out in the country to look at a farm; but Ellen might have the key and examine the house herself, and he would call on her the next day and answer any questions she wanted to ask.

ELLEN had an adventurous feeling as she slipped the key in the lock and felt it turn under her fingers.

The hall divided the house through the center; there were two old-fashioned "parlors" on the left, with marble mantelpieces and long windows; a dining room and kitchen on the right. To one side of the hall a long white staircase with a mahogany rail curved to the upper floor.

Upstairs there were two bedrooms, a storeroom, and a bath that made Ellen want to weep with pleasure. It had evidently been a bedroom at one time, it was so large. A deep, claw-footed tub with high sides, in which you could really stretch out; a wash-bowl of generous size flanked by enormous slabs of marble; a medicine chest big enough to hold a

small drugstore. She went around in a delirious haze, seeing only vaguely the hardwood floors laid in patterns, the sun streaming through the west windows. An idea was forming in her mind. An audacious, breath-taking idea that she must not let come to birth before she knew. But oh, if by some impossible chain of circumstances, it might come true!

Mr. Henderson told her the price next morning. The rental was much less than she expected, but even so it was more than she could afford.

BUT she couldn't get the idea out of her mind, and at last she faced it. She wanted to come here to live. The more she thought about it, the more imperative it seemed. In this house she could breathe, in this garden she could let her heart expand, in this atmosphere there was peace.

Only, it would all depend on Bill. When she said that to herself, her heart contracted with fear, and she thought, "It's crazy! You've let yourself in for a frightful disappointment—because you know it's impossible."

Bill was generous, but he couldn't afford to be that generous. And she hated to ask him. Just the same, at the end of a week, she sent for him.

"Please come up," she wrote briefly. "I've reached a decision, and I want to talk to you about it." Waiting for him, she grew nervous. He hadn't telegraphed when he would come—probably it would be over the week-end.

Sitting on Mrs. Biddle's veranda, listening to Mrs. Biddle discourse at length on the vagaries and eccentricities of her friends, Ellen planned what she would do to the house and the garden. The thing she liked best was that they both needed so much done to them.

That reminded her—the petunia bed needed weeding; the flowers were choked with rank grass. She decided to walk down the road to The House.

On her knees before the petunias, she found herself still planning. At the end of the hall she would have a French door cut through, and it would open onto a flagstone terrace.

A dropleaf table with a bowl of flowers on it for the hall. An antique gold mirror, lacquered Chinoiserie paper running up the stairwell. A new stove for the kitchen, and yellow curtains, and a table where she could sit and read while the vegetables were cooking.

THERE was room for everything, even if it wasn't a big house. More than enough room, with only one person in it, she thought, putting Bill out of her mind with an effort.

For Bill would not live in this house. She must get used to thinking of life without Bill from now on. After her divorce— How dreadful that sounded! So cold-blooded and final. And yet it was the only way to solve the problem.

She sat back on her heels and let her hands lie in her lap. When

the grass was cut and the birdbath straightened—but all this was probably an impossible dream!

And it was so that Bill found her. Mrs. Biddle having told him that Ellen had gone for a walk, he had set out in search of her. But he had not seen her, and he had about decided to turn back when he saw a house. It made him stop short in the road.

It wasn't an unusual house at all—not very big, not any particular style of architecture. But solid, and strong, and roomy looking. Big windows and a veranda. Lots of space around it. Trees. A gate that invited you in, and up the flagged walk and the shallow steps to the door. It wouldn't hurt to look around a bit.

He tried the door and it opened. He saw Ellen from an upstairs window. She looked so little sitting there, so relaxed, almost as if she were asleep and dreaming. He put the thought of the house behind him and went down to her, surprised and shaken at what the sight of her did to him.

She jumped up, startled. How pretty she was, with her flushed cheeks and wide eyes and the sunlight sitting down on her nut-brown hair! Like the Ellen he had married.

"I came up just as soon as I could," he said, holding both her hands. "El, what did you mean? What have you decided?"

It was hard to tell him. She had never dreamed it would be so hard. To make it easier, she pulled her hands away, but his eyes were fastened on hers and she could not avoid them.

"But, you know yourself, Bill, we just couldn't go on as we were. It was dreadful; we weren't ourselves."

Her breath coming faster and faster, she told him what she had decided. That she would get a divorce, and they must both try to start their lives over again. "And if you could let me have a— a hundred and ten a month, why, with what I have—"

His face showed how stunned he was. Oh, he mustn't think her mercenary, greedy!

"You see, Bill, I've found the place where I want to live. Where I can build myself up again. It'll take close planning and working. But that's what I need. I like to work, to work toward something. I've never had enough to do since we married; that was part of the trouble. The place isn't perfect—that's the marvelous part about it—but it gives—it gives the promise of perfection, and as soon as I saw the house—"

He stared at her. "The house?" She swept her hand in a circle. "Yes. Maybe you don't see it, but I can visualize just what I want to do. It'll grow, and so will I." "This house?" he cried, startled. But he wanted this house! He had known it the moment he saw it; he was sure of it while he walked through it, thinking, with a quickened heartbeat, of how it could be managed.

They were staring at each other. "Do you mean—you want to live here?" he asked. "Yes," she said.

SUDDENLY he took her by the shoulders. "El—El, I wanted to live here, too!" "You?" she cried. "Here?" "I wanted to live in this house," he said again, on a stronger note. "But not alone, El. With you."

"That's what's been the matter with us. We needed—what did you call it?—something that has the—the promise of perfection to work for. Something that's our own."

She looked at him. It was the face she had known and loved come back to her again; his eyes were lit with hope and a shy ardor. In a wave of self-pity, she thought how narrowly she had come to missing this. It had been so sudden, all this resolving of their problems, that she still could not believe it, but she had the deep conviction that they had stumbled on the truth, each in his own way.

"El," he said pleadingly, "say it. Say we shall live here together." The house called them both, and they walked toward it arm in arm. "It's not very big, is it, after all?" he demanded, surveying it with pride. "But more than big enough for the two of us."

"Yes," she said, out of a happy silence. "Even, perhaps, a time, big enough for three of us."

Helvetia Roll of Honor for Period Given

(By Mrs. J. M. Davidson)

HELVETIA—Pupils on the honor roll for first six weeks of school were Hobby Ruffer, Sul Inami, Yone Inami, Jean Yunggen, Caroline Hershey, Paul Bishop, Yutaku Inami and Mary Sanders.

Helvetia school has joined the Junior Red Cross 100 per cent and the teacher Joseph Weizel was the first to pay the Red Cross annual membership fee. The roll call workers, Mrs. J. M. Davidson, called at the school Friday to put a service flag on the window and present a lovely poster, left by W. F. Norman, president of Washington county Red Cross.

Mrs. Staehle Honored Mrs. Staehle of ladies honored Mrs. Henry Staehle with a surprise shower at her home October 23. Mrs. Eddie Meier had high score in the guessing games. Present were Mesdames Pearl Christensen, Lucy Baker, Jennie Davidson, Emma Diarrdorf, Maud French, Rosa Feuerstein, Martha Guertler, Sarah Hershey, Angie Keffer, Eva Meek, Gertrude Meek, Violet Obermeier, Elizabeth Ritter, Janie Sandford, Lola Solberger, Lesa Wenger, Elsie Zurcher, Miss Clara Tschobold, the honor guest and several children.

Arnold Leppin, Albert Grossen, James Davidson and Anna Marie and Hilda Meyer went on a motor trip Sunday to Bonneville dam, government camp and visited at the Florrie Hemmy place at Boring.

Several children had a good time with their jack-o'-lanterns and ghost outfits on Halloween and some of the older ones played pranks and had their fun, but no harm was reported.

West Union to Serve West Union ladies will serve at the pot luck dinner Saturday when the County Farmers' Union meets at the Legion hall in Hillsboro. Every family brings a pot luck dinner.

Postpone Sale A committee of Sunshine club ladies decided to postpone their proposed sale for a time.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Raynor and son of St. Johns visited at the home of her sister, Mrs. Victor Christensen, from Friday until Sunday.

Birthday Celebrated Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Gonyo were Sunday dinner guests at the Victor Christensen home. The occasion was Mrs. Gonyo's birthday. Sunday evening Mrs. Christensen entertained with a surprise birthday party in her honor. Present were Mr. and Mrs. L. P. Harrison and Frances, Hallie Isaac, LeRoy and Henry Butler, Ardel Buss and Albert French of Hillsboro, Mr. and Mrs. Otto Solberger and family, Mr. and Mrs. John Pavelic and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. French and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Obermeier, Mr. and Mrs. Chris Christensen, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Christensen and daughter, C. H. Gonyo and honor guest. She received many beautiful and useful gifts.

Hallow'en Activity Proves Quiet Here

The youth of Hillsboro spent an "exceptionally quiet" Halloween weekend, it was stated Monday by Chief of Police O. O. Freeman, who said that damage this year from celebrants was limited.

The new residence of Morris Well was damaged when a leaded glass window in the doorway was broken by a tomato. The boy was

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GOAR'S

Woman's Shop E. M. BARNES, Prop.

P. Harrison, Ralph Kay and Arthur Holman families. Law Volumes Purchased Four volumes of Wharton's "Criminal Evidence," recently purchased by the county, have been included in the law library of the district attorney.

Grand Jury Reopens Inquiries Thursday

(Continued from page 1) Beaverton; Roy V. Burten, Sherwood route 1.

Edward Greeley, 48, Forest Grove, was arrested by a sheriff's deputy Monday on a charge of assault and battery arising out of a fight late Saturday evening at Al's Oasis at Forest Grove.

Paul Barringer was awarded \$49.50 in circuit court late Friday evening, concluding his case against Sam Logan on charges arising out of a dog-shooting incident. He had asked \$3,014.50. In his suit, Barringer held that the dog represented a considerable value and that it had given no provocation. This, Logan denied.

Suits filed in circuit court during the past week included Mildred Moore against Willard Moore, Bernice Joos against David R. Joos, and A. R. Mathey against A. E. Windell.

An interlocutory decree was granted by Judge R. Frank Peters to Charles Burgdorfer against Napoleon and Josephine Roderick. Orders were filed in the estates of John Gfeller, Mattie Copeland, Rebecca Crane, Victoria Batchelder and Rudolph Wolf.

Mason Hill

Olga Johnson assisted by her mother, Mrs. Harold Johnson, was hostess Saturday at a Hallow'en party. Present were Virginia Christensen, Joyce and Clifford Solberger.

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'Bargain Day' Slated Nov. 27

Bargain Day for Hillsboro and Washington county was set for November 27 by the retail trades committee of the Hillsboro chamber of commerce Friday night.

This event, managed as usual by the committee and Secretary Leon S. Davis, will feature bargain offerings in the local stores for the winter season, especially holiday stock.

Of unusual interest because of the approaching Thanksgiving and Christmas season, bargain day will bring all Hillsboro merchants together in an all-day show. The complete project will be worked out by the retail trades committee.

The leading stores of Hillsboro will offer special bargain attractions on this day, and some stores are already planning added features, it was indicated.

Poultry Conference Topic is Announced

"Factors Affecting Fall and Winter Egg Production," will be the subject of the discussion for the monthly poultry meeting to be held in the Beaverton high school Tuesday at 8 p. m., reports L. E. Francis, assistant county agent N. L. Bennis.

Hillsboro Argus contains all the news of Hillsboro and the surrounding communities. Read it and keep informed on what is happening at home.

extension poultryman, will lead the discussion. The building up and maintenance of fall and winter egg production is one of the vital problems for poultrymen states Francis, and a review of the factors involved in this problem should be very timely and valuable. Bennis devoted some time to the study of this problem during his recent graduate work at the Kansas State college and he has some very interesting information for the poultrymen. Anyone interested in this discussion is welcome to attend.

Vehicle Crashes Into Park Bench

An automobile belonging to Jack Connell found itself on the court-house lawn Monday afternoon through no fault of its own.

When Cliff Mennen, Gaston route 1, cranked his car at 2:15 p. m. he forgot that the automobile was in gear. The vehicle rammed into the rear of Connell's car which rolled onto the lawn and crashed into a park bench. No one was injured in the unusual accident, and Connell's car was only slightly damaged.

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