

# THEIR FIRST RIDE

By T. S. Boyd

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Gilder glanced anxiously at his watch. He had only seven minutes in which to catch his train. The night was dark, and he could scarcely walk five blocks in a driving rain, wait for a car and make connections.

Just then a carriage drove up to the curb and an elderly man of about his build alighted. The chairs were all occupied; it would be fully fifteen minutes before the newcomer could get a shave. In that time he could get to the station and the carriage would have time to return.

It was worth the chance. He dashed across the sidewalk, called an order to the driver and jumped in. As the door slammed the horses started up and they were off at a brisk pace before Gilder realized that there was a second occupant in the carriage.

"It did not take you very long," laughed a musical voice. Gilder sank into the seat with a groan. "I don't know who you think I am," he said apologetically, "but I'm a robber. Don't be afraid. I'm not a regular robber, but one through force of circumstances. I have to catch the 6:45 train, and the only way I could do it was to borrow a carriage without permission."

"My uncle did not give you permission to use the carriage?" demanded the voice. Gilder knew that a girl with a voice like that must necessarily be pretty.

"I didn't ask him," he said calmly. "You see, it would have wasted precious time. I figured that I could get to the station and the carriage could get back before he was shaved. A dollar would have fixed the driver. I suppose now you will have me arrested."

"For trespass, perhaps," she laughed. "On your own confession you did not mean to steal the brougham."

"How was I to know that a man who went in to get shaved would leave a woman waiting in the carriage for him?"

"When one gets as old as uncle one is apt to feel himself privileged," she laughed. "He doesn't appreciate his privileges," he said boldly. "Now, if I had a pretty niece"

"Flattery will not amend your offense," she warned. "How do you know what I look like?"

"By your voice," he explained. "It's a sort of intuition."

"I thought that was a feminine gift," she laughed. "Not entirely," he insisted. The carriage rattled past an electric light, and he peered into her corner. "You know I am right," he added triumphantly.

"What can I say?" she laughed helplessly. "You are a most embarrassing person."

"Don't say anything," he pleaded. "If you did you would probably tell me to get out."

"In all this rain?" she questioned, with a little shudder. "I shall let you go on to the station in common charity."

"The gods are good," he murmured. "I am only sorry it is such a short ride to the station. I'll be there in a minute." He glanced out of the window and gave a cry.

"What is the matter?" she asked. "The man's driving downtown," he wailed. "I can never make the train now."

"Did you just tell him to drive to the station?" she asked. "Of course," he said. "There is only one station."

through it. When he had given the order for the change of direction he turned to the girl again. "It's going to be mighty awkward explaining," he said. "Is your uncle inclined to be?"

"Very," she said impressively. "I don't know whether he will come you or call a policeman."

"Pleasant prospect," he commented. "You can get out before we get there if you wish," she suggested. "I usually face the music," he said. "It's the better way," she said approvingly, "but uncle can play a very lively tune."

"Sort of 'Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight' thing," he suggested with a chuckle. "Very likely," she assented, "but you will not be long in doubt. Here is the shop."

Gilder threw open the door and darted across the sidewalk. The men in the shop crowded curiously to the door. "The old gentleman has gone to the police station," they explained. "He thought it was an elopement." Gilder went back to the carriage.

"Your uncle thinks we have eloped," he said. "Shall we follow him to the police station?"

"I think you had better take me to the Northern," she said coldly. "Perhaps that will be the quickest way of stopping a scandal."

He gave the order to the coachman and stepped inside. "I am sorry to have to inflict my company on you longer," he said penitently, "but it might be as well if I went along. I will take you to the station and then be driven to the house and explain to him in person."

He sat silent as they sped along to the little suburban station, his forgetfulness of which had caused a part of the situation. The Northern was only a fifty mile line, cutting some of the manufacturing towns, and it had entirely escaped his memory.

It seemed a longer drive than it really was, for the girl was annoyed and he keenly felt his responsibility for the awkward position in which he had placed her. Just as they were driving up to the station the horses were pulled up quickly and a blue coated form shortly appeared at the door.

"I didn't think you would be so foolish as to try to get away," was his remark as a policeman stepped into the carriage. "The captain wants to see you at the house."

"Won't it be sufficient if you take me?" demanded Gilder. "This lady is anxious to reach her home."

"They're anxious to have her there," was the terse comment, "but orders is orders, and I was to bring you both in if I found you."

"I don't suppose that \$25 would bring about a forgetfulness of orders?" suggested Gilder. "It 'ud bring about a broken head," was the wrathful answer.

Gilder remembered that there was a police investigation then on and realized that the policeman feared a trap, so he kept silent until they drew up before the green lights. The policeman proudly led them up to the desk sergeant, who ushered them into the captain's room.

"Your uncle said he would come right down when we phoned," he explained. "I don't like to lock you up."

Gilder had recovered his self possession and by the time the wrathful uncle arrived he had made such good use of his time that his apology had been accepted in full. Then the door flew open with a bang and a choleric old gentleman entered flourishing a cane. Even in his excitement Gilder wondered how the coachman had mistaken him for his master, but the next development drove all such thoughts from his head, for the new arrival paused in his belligerent demonstrations.

"Are you Jimmy Gilder's son?" he demanded. "So I've been given to understand," he answered wonderingly. The cane flew across the room, and the old man came toward him with outstretched hands.

"You're the living image of your father when he left college," he cried. "I'd have known you anywhere."

**Kept His Nerve.**  
An English clergyman had a rich parishioner, Lady Blank, who dictated to and hectored him outrageously. At length he declined to put up with this kind of treatment and told her ladyship so. Thereafter she refused to put anything in the offertory, merely making a stately inclination over the plate. This moved an elder to remark in her hearing, "We could do with less of her manners and more of her cash."

The clergyman, dining at a lord's table, told this story with great success one evening. The host said with a frown, "Are you aware, sir, that Lady Blank is a relative of mine?" The clergyman smiled slightly. "No," he said, "I wasn't, but in future when I tell the story I'll always be careful to mention the relationship."

**The Nutmeg.**  
The nutmeg is the kernel of the fruit of several species of trees growing wild in Asia, Africa and America. The cultivated nutmeg tree is from fifty to seventy feet high and produces fruit for sixty years. The fruit is of the size and appearance of a roundish pear, yellow in color. The fleshy part of the fruit is rather hard and resembles candied citron. Within is the nut, enveloped in a curious yellowish red aril known to us as mace. To prepare the seeds for use they are dried in a moderate heat for about two months. Then the shells are broken and the nutmegs picked out and assorted, the inferior ones being reserved for the oil press.

As the essential oil of nutmeg brings a high price, dishonest growers often steep the nutmegs in hot water to extract the oil from them. They are then coated with lime and sent into the channels of commerce. Such nutmegs are worthless, their aroma and pungency having disappeared, these qualities being due exclusively to the oil. If on inserting a pin no oil rushes out to the surface, the nutmeg is, to all intents and purposes, a wooden nutmeg.

**He Knew the Game.**  
A Kenwood man consented the other day to go to the millinery department for the purpose of helping his wife decide on a hat. After much trying on the lady decided on two hats from which to make her selection. One of them was \$24, the other \$16.

"Now, I want you to tell me honestly, George," she said, "which of these two you would advise me to get?" Then she put one on after the other and permitted him to view her from in front, each side and from behind.

"Well, I'll tell you," he said at last. "The one you had on first looks to me as if it might be more stylish and all that, but the second one makes you look much younger than you do in the other."

He had wasted an hour, but he saved \$8.—Chicago Record-Herald.

**Short Lived Insects.**  
The wonderful brevity of insect life is curiously illustrated in the case of those that prey upon different species of mushrooms. The life of the mushroom itself is measured by hours, yet it is often entirely ruined by an insect which deposits its eggs upon the fungi while it is in the vigor of youth. The entire span of life of this mushroom insect is so brief that the grubs hatch from the eggs and the creature becomes fully developed and capable of laying eggs itself before the mushroom dies, even though the latter's life may not extend over a period of forty-eight hours from the moment it first pushes through the soil.

**Had a Welsh Cough.**  
There was a crowd watching the fire when one of the bystanders gave a smothered, guttural cough. Immediately the man beside him grabbed his arm.

"You're Welsh," he said eagerly. The man with the cough looked puzzled. Then his neighbor poured out a volley of Welsh words that ended in English with, "What part of the country did you come from?"

The man with the cough shook his head, and his neighbor became indignant. "It's nothing to be ashamed of, to be a Welshman," he said, "so why not admit it?"

"But I'm not Welsh," said the man with the cough. "I wouldn't know a word of the language if I heard it."

His neighbor was still indignant. "You just said a Welsh word a minute ago," he growled. "You can't fool me. You forgot yourself for a minute."

"I didn't. I only coughed," came in protest, and the man coughed again. "That's it! That's it!" said the Welshman enthusiastically. "That's the word I heard."

But the coughing individual lost himself in the crowd, muttering something about "fools being allowed to run loose."—New York Press

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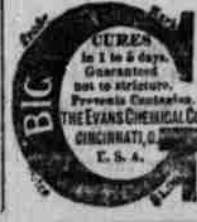


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"THE MAN'S DRIVING DOWNTOWN," HE WAILLED.

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