

THE GIRL IN THE NOVEL

SUPPOSE SHE WERE REAL



Francesca of "Three Weeks"

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Lady Monica from "The Car of Destiny" by C. N. and A. M. Williamson

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HEROINES OF FICTION AS AUTHORS AND ARTISTS SEE THEM



Betty from "The Shuttle" by Frances Hodgson Burnett



Eileen's Surrender from "The Younger Set" by Robert W. Chambers



Julia from "The Good Comrade" by Mrs. Z. S. Gilbert

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SOME person has said that the heroine is the secret of the success of any book. There are, of course, such isolated cases as "David Harum," "Eben Holden" and "Treasure Island," but of recent popular successes in literature this rule may generally be said to hold true.

Of the heroine, adorable creature, what do you know? How do the heroines of various novels compare? How do authors introduce them, and enable them to win their way into one's affections? And the artists who illustrate the books, how do they picture the pleasing women who live on blithely and tread the golden path of romance?

THERE is no more fascinating creature in fiction than the loquacious Dolly of the Dialogues. But then Mr. Hope, chivalrous gentleman, may be expected to do the gallant thing by all his ladies, as he has done by his latest creations—the glorious Helena, of "Helena's Path," for instance, who refused to permit her neighbor, Lord Lynborough, to use a path crossing her estate, which resulted in many complications and the defiant Helena's capitulation.

This is how Mr. Hope introduces her: Helena Victoria Maria Antonia, Marchesa di San Servolo, was now in her twenty-fourth year. Born of an Italian father and an English mother, she had bestowed her hand on her paternal country, but her heart remained in her mother's. The marchese took her as his second wife and his last pecuniary resource; in both capacities she soothed his declining years. Eagerly for her—and not unhappy for the world at large—these were few. He had not time to absorb her youth or to spend more than a small portion of her inheritance. She was left a widow—stepmother of adult Italian offspring—owner for life of an Apennine fortress.

She liked the fortress much, but disliked the stepchildren (the youngest was of her own age) more. England—her mother's home—presented itself in the light of a refuge. But how shall she receive the lord who trespasses upon her property!

knee. It was stripped of any ring—unadorned, white. Her cheeks were pale—the olive regained unchallenged; her lips were set tight, her eyes downcast. She made no movement when Lord Lynborough entered. He bowed, while the clock ticked the minute of which he had raved and dreamed the night before, while she felt his lips slightly brush the skin of her hand. "I have rendered my homage," he said. "It is accepted." Suddenly tears sprang to her eyes. But Helena is courteous and invites her now reconciled foe to luncheon. He is bold, very bold, for he says: "It may be that some day—yes, some day soon—in return for the homage of my lips on your hand, I would ask the recognition of my lips' right on your cheek." Then— "She came up to him and laid her hand on his arm. "Suffer me a little while, my lord," she said. "You've swept into my life like a whirlwind; you would carry me by assault as though I were a rebellious city. Am I to be won before ever I was wooed?" "You shan't lack wooing," he said quickly. Of the folk in "The Younger Set," Eileen stands

The Heroine of "Helena's Path" by Anthony Hope

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rather extravagant ink-black lashes and a straight young stare, which seemed to accuse, if not condemn. She was being educated at a ruinously expensive school with a number of other inordinately rich little girls, who wore all too wonderfully dressed and too lavishly supplied with pocket money.

Betty, we are told, could not endure Sir Nigel Anstruthers, who married her sister Rosalie and later abused her unpeppably. Betty, as she grew older, "had been taken to France and placed in a school."

When Betty got to England she doubtless won what she wanted—an ideal husband, who severely punished Sir Nigel for abusing her sister. The description of her is pleasing:

At sixteen Betty was a strong-limbed young nymph whose small head, set high on a fine, slim column of throat, might well have been crowned with the garland of some goddess of health and joy of life. She was light and swift, and being a creature of long line and tender curves, there was pleasure in the mere seeing of her move. The cut of her spirited lip, and delicate nostril, made for a profile at which one turned to look more than once, despite one's self. Her hair was soft and black, and repeated its color in the extravagant lashes of her childhood, which made mysterious the changeful dense blue of her eyes. They were eyes with laughter in them, and pride and a suggestion of many deep things as yet untried.

So it was no small wonder that the Lord Mount Dunstan fell head over heels in love.

Mrs. Edith Wharton, with her art of description, may be expected to present an alluring heroine. In "The Fruit of the Tree," John Amherst, assistant manager of her mills, goes to see Mrs. Westmore.

Mrs. Westmore's beauty was like a blinding light abruptly turned on eyes unaccustomed to obscurity. As he spoke, his glance passed from her face to her hair, and remained caught in its meshes. He had never seen such hair—it did not seem to grow in the usual orderly way, but bubbled up all over her head in independent clusters of brightness, breaking, about the brow, the temples, the nape, into little irrelevant waves and eddies of light, with dusky hollows of softness where the hand might plunge.

Mrs. Wharton's heroine was not an entirely unselfish and devoted woman, and she died after being thrown from her horse—died of an overdose of morphia, administered by the woman who later became her husband's wife.

Mrs. Glyn's heroine of "Three Weeks" is introduced as entering a dining room in a hotel in Switzerland.

She herself was all in black, and her hat—an expensive, distinguished looking hat—cast a shadow over her eyes. He could just see they were cast down on her plate. Her face was white, like that of a statue, and her eyes were white, like a magnolia bloom, and contained no marked features. No features at all he said to himself. Yes—he was wrong, she had certainly a mouth worth looking at again. It was so red.

VOICE LIKE RICH MUSIC

Later, after their meeting, Paul Verdayne observed that her voice was like rich music.

Her age? But what was age or youth? And what was beauty itself, when a woman whose face was neither young nor beautiful could make him feel he was looking at a divine goddess, and thrilling as he had never dreamt of doing in real life.

She lingered over his name as if it were music, thrilling him every time, and as she leaned back among the purple cushions her figure so supple in its lines it made him think of a snake. And he noticed her mouth again. It neither drooped nor smiled, it was straight, and chiseled and strong, and small rather, and the lower lip was rounded and slightly cleft in the center. A most appetizing red flower of a mouth.

In "The Car of Destiny," by C. N. and A. M. Williamson, we are introduced to Lady Monica in the way Ouida used to present her heroines. Lady Monica is betrothed to a Spanish nobleman, and her English lover, who tells the story, has many adventures in winning her. Thus the stricken one tells of a meeting:

A girl sprang out of the carriage, her white figure and rippling hair of daffodil gold in full moonlight.

I stood as a man might stand who sees a vision, hardly breathing. I made no sound and yet she turned and saw me, sheltered as I was by the dappled trunk of a tall plane tree. It was as if I had called and she had answered.

I knew she had remembered me, and that she did not misunderstand my presence. There was no anger in her face, only surprise, and a light which was hidden as she drooped her head, and passed on through the gate. I could have sung the song of the stars.

Julia Polkington, in "The Good Comrade," presents the type of a simple, truthful, charming girl, who endeavors to save a father addicted to drink and making debts. Miss Julia, we are told, was not pretty, therefore she was seldom to be found in the drawing room alone; she knew better than to attempt to occupy the stage by herself. Her father owes a debt to Mr. Rawson-Clew, who, out of pity, cancels it.

While giving her father tea Julia sees the paper. Her eyes blazed as she read.

She tore the paper across and then across again. Her father indignantly tries to prevent her, declaring the note made him free.

"Free," Julia said with scorn. "Your debt is discharged," she said gently, "but mine is not; it has been shifted, not cancelled. It lies with me and Mr. Rawson-Clew now, and it shall be paid somehow."

And do you wonder that she paid the debt—when Mr. Rawson-Clew was in love with her!



From "The Fruit of the Tree" by Edith Wharton

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