

A Woman Scorned

by Martha McCulloch Williams

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THE rosy radiance of a shimmering sunset bathed the lawn and garden of Edgemoor, painted each western window crimson, and tipped the golden weather vane with iridescent glory. Even upon austerous winter days, or those of dreaching easterly storms, it was the show-place of a millionaire countryside. Now, in the fulness of midsummer growth, with roses to ruffle it in every riotous wind, with spice-scent of carnation coming hot and sweet through the dewfall, with gorgeous peacocks parading velvet lawns, crying raucous welcome to the coming night, and doves in furry clouds circling and wheeling above their red-tiled roof, it was as fair as paradise. Only the flutter of wings, the soft chirping of insects broke up the summer hush. Now and again from the distant highway there came a dull burring of wheels, or the ghost of a siren's shrilling, but so faintly they merely accented the heavenly peace. Edgemoor's master, having no other business, had set his gray stone castellated mansion upon a fair hill, in the midst of so many acres, they made him secure from both.

In front there was parking and thick plantations, with a drive winding artfully through, giving here and there glimpses of gray walls soon to be ivy-grown. All the back was open. First came the sunken garden, then the grassed Pleasure, with clipped yews, a fountain, and stone benches, also a weather-eaten sundial. From the ground fell down in long velvet slopes to other and thicker plantations, masking various buildings. Through the green of these lower plantations, from the Pleasure, one caught flashes of color—red-tiled roofs, steep gables, and more gilded weathercocks. The red tiles and golden vases meant the stables and their offices beyond was the training track. With a glass one could see all that went on there from the bell tower rising at the mansion's southwestern angle. From the tower one could see also the flagstaff and the roof tips of Green Park's clubhouse, notwithstanding the course lay five miles away.

Mr. Luttrell, of Edgemoor, to be exact, Blair Luttrell, Esquire—had, until three months back, spent in the gray castle the most part of what time he was not sailing up and down the seas in a marvellous yacht. A bachelor whose sole business was spending money he had not made, the estate and the yacht were very great helps. His friends were few, but his father's, his rivals, would-be friends, many; his loves—but there discreet silence is best. The fit friends, nearly as much at home in the big house as his master, did not even turn away their eyes significantly from the cottage and its chateleine. It stood at the stable level, but well apart from it. There was a wholly separate approach to it from the outer world; also a path, well screened and amazingly tortuous, running down to it from the greenhouses, which nestled at the west of the Pleasure. Neither were eyebrows lifted when, upon voyages, the chateleine went along. She did not act the part of hostess, merely that of unconventional guest. Moreover, she danced, deliciously, and in soft dusks sang weird, croony things, half

although they had seen the race run thus together three years in four since the park was opened. For the impossible had happened—Luttrell was not merely in love, but resolved on matrimony. The fact was less astonishing than the girl. She was none of his own sort, not of the carefully nurtured virgins who, through so many successive seasons, had been thrown at his callous head. Instead, a Cook's tourist from Texas, without a g-final in her vocabulary, and not on speaking terms with the letter R.

The meeting had been after a sort romantic: she had managed to lose herself in the streets of a Mediterranean city, just where Luttrell and his friends, ashore briefly from the yacht, were looking up picturesque vagabonds, and talking gaily to each other. The whole voyage had been rather riotous—the chateleine had not come alone—and there had been variegated diversions at every port of call. Yet their talk had not in the least daunted the girl—perhaps by Fate's doing, she had singled out Luttrell and appealed to him all unafraid. She had said with a smile and a lifting of big, dark, innocent eyes: "I been prayin' the good Lord to send me somebody that talked English. I reckon that's how you happened along. My French is all book—French, you see, and those poor folks are so ignorant. I can't make them understand."

That had been the beginning. The end none might foresee. Miss Jessamine Twigg, restored to her proper milieu, had decorously presented her father, the Colonel, a truculent gentleman, withal obedient parent, who, in the warmth of his gratitude, had shaken hands twice with all of them, roaring out the while welcomes to Texas, and pretty well everywhere. He wasn't going straight back home; Jess had her heart set on summering at the seashore, after she was done with this fool grand "tower." He hadn't wanted to take the "tower," but you had to do something—with 12-cent cotton pills' up money so scandalous fast. Moreover, when you had just one gal-chick, and her your partner, 'twould a-been mighty lonesome, stayin' at home and lettin' her prance off 'round the world. However, that didn't matter—there was his card—also his banker's—would the gentleman, and especially Mr. Luttrell, when all were back again in God's country, please not to forget?

They had not forgotten—least of all Luttrell. The voyage had been out short a full month, so as to fetch home about the time the tourist ship made port. Afterward Luttrell had given himself sedulously to courting. Jessamine had met him half way at first, but with the glancing gaiety of a finished but untutored coquette. All her art was learned in nature's school, which was possibly the reason it was so effective. The rest marvelled less at Luttrell's first infatuation than that it survived such constant slight of its object. He had actually haunted the moderate Twigg establishment, not even blinking conscientious sight-seeing. The hardest thing had been the Colonel's assumption of camaraderie: "Men of our age, Mr. Luttrell, was a favorite and frequent phrase with him.

That's a pity—it helps so to know all about 'em to next neighbor." All he could be sure of was that she did not hate him. Her bafflings had but made him the mad-dor to win her. He had tried to induce the Colonel to fetch her down to Edgemoor for Heathcote day, but had found him adamant, notwithstanding a great inclination for the sport of kings. "Well, be there—me and Jessy to see this horse of yours win," he had said. "We're right down anxious, both of us, to see him. We reckon he's a right smart of a racer; but I'll bet you a thousand even if you were to cyart him down to Texas, we'd find a creeter or so that at four miles 'd run him clear into the ground."

There had been illumination for the rest in hearing of this frustrated plan. It could mean but one thing—the chateleine was safe in her native island, and likely there to stay. That was the best possible ending to this seven-year entanglement; a bit hard on her, but Luttrell, of course, would do the right thing. He was, above everything, square—even cubic in his squareness. Bentham had said, adding thoughtfully, "When it comes to crushing you, is there anything more effectual than the cube?"

There had been further reassurance as they drove from the station. They had come in at the back, by way of the stables, so had had a chance to note that the cottage was closed, every window barred and shuttered, the vines trailing unemptily about the lattices. Everts had looked away from it, sighing under breath; Bentham had nodded to himself almost imperceptibly. But Luttrell, in the box seat, had given all his eyes to Doswell, who, almost innocently, the very latest story from the elude. Then they had swung into the stable yard, where Nock Hardaway stood straddling like a colossus, the moral and pattern of pride. That had been astonishing enough. Nock was Luttrell's trainer, shrewd, hard-headed, cross-grained, and commonly pessimistic, particularly as to stable changes in any big event. But there he had stood, swelling out his chest and saying: "Come for tips—ah! Never yet give one to nobody—but this I will say. Man that's got money, any money worth while, and don't make his checks big when he puts 'em down on the horse, ain't settin' but 'jest er plumb matchin'—hoss foot. Heatscote? What's er Heatscote make or least 'jest er good exercise gallop. If I had my will I'd er make some 'thin' in it that could make the hoss raisin' scratch his self."

"Gentlemen, will you listen? The hoss! Nock's clean cutty," Doswell had flung at the exultant trainer. "No wonder, though; five races won right off the reel might turn a horse's head, much less an old man's. But, say, Nock, if Enderby's the hoss, what, pray, are all the rest?" "Catties; not much more," Nock had retorted in high dudgeon. "When you could see his fer yerself of I choosed ter fetch out the hoss. Yes, I know them others is got heads, hair, huffs and tails, and some on 'em can race 'raile cute amongst themselves—in sprints and dashes like, er eben git prepped up ter stay a mile. But, Lord, whu! of hit. The hoss can run rings round that best time, yit stay the four-mile route, same as Lexington and Sir Archy."

"Come away; Nock's dangerous when he breaks out in pedgrees," Luttrell had interrupted, herding his guests toward the brake. But, with his foot on the step, he had turned back, saying: "There is something I forgot—go on without me, please. I won't be long, and to-morrow we'll come back very early to be shown. I can't think what has come over Nock; in fact, his humor disquiets me. If he were crabbled, as usual, I should know our money was as good as won."

As they drove upward Bentham had said guardedly to Everts at his elbow: "Have you imagination enough to fit the Jessamine tower into all this?" nodding comprehensively to the landscape as he spoke. Everts had merely shaken his head, so Bentham had run on: "It's almost enough to make one believe in spells—the change here in everything. Enderby, I admit, the horse of the century; but Nock has been gnarly as a blackthorn over other horses mighty near as good. I admit, further, that the Jessamine flower has graceful eyes, hair like black floss silk, and absurdly small feet; but beyond that she is no more than an agreeable young person, comely and commonplace. Yet she can take or leave all this, and God knows what beside. Take it in spite of a thousand more beautiful, more fascinating women. What is this secret?"

"Antithesis, I think. Remember what she displaces. Orchids prepare us to dots on homely bloom," Everts had answered thoughtfully. Before he could say more Doswell had called over his shoulder, small, ecstatic sighs between his words: "Sit tight, my sons! Sit tight! Behold the fulfillment of a hopeless dream. I've pinned always to show you how I could manage this dandy four-in-hand. Thank fortune, Blair will have none of bubbles! Now, good men, now look and die—with envy of your charioter."

"Envy is worse than sinful—foolish," Bentham had said gravely as they clambered down and passed into the big hall. "Consider, Blair has the better of ownies all this; we get the use, the sweet of it, with none of that bitter. Upon my word, there are times when I'm actually sorry for him."

"No need to be," Doswell had answered. "Owning things is fun enough for him. Take Enderby, for example. Shall I ever own a bit of him? Yet I love him, and I care for him because he is Enderby. Blair cares for the hoss because he is his horse. If he were another man's, and Enderby twice over, he would hardly look at him. Maybe Blair can't help it; it's been the same with him about—oh, about pretty near everything."

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Doswell had finished lamely enough, and turned away, flushing deeply. He was the youngest of them. The others had looked at each other, recalling now upon voyages, and the rare seasons when the chateleine had sung for them there at Edgemoor. Doswell's attitude toward her and been most distant of all, but somehow most touched with compassion. It was partly to escape this consciousness that Everts had led them to the Pleasure. As they trooped out Bentham shivered faintly, and said in Doswell's ear: "Luttrell ought to have come along with us. I'm not a bit superstitious; but don't you feel things in the air?"

Doswell had nodded, answering very low, "Yes; but if we are in real friends, we will think they are only good things."

Luttrell took the upward winding path, at the end of a brief whispered conference. Hardaway looked after him, chuckling grimly and clenching a huge fist, muttering to himself the while: "I will know how far you trust me—it's just as far as you've got use for me—damn you. But that's a heap siller funder I trust you, Mr. Blair Luttrell. You don't deserve the hoss, not er more'n you did the woman. I'm ter be fer hit she don't make back yer makin' trouble fer you, am I, Lord, er is you knowed? You take me fer stock or stone. Maybe you'll come ter know some day I'm er man—er better man's you." Then he dropped his chin on his breast and stood massive and ruminant until the mazy path had swallowed up Luttrell.

Luttrell walked fast—rapid motion was a relief in his mood of tense uncertainty. At last he had made Jessamine listen to him seriously, and though she had said no more than, "Wait, maybe things will happen," he was somehow curiously elated. He wanted things to happen—first, a simple wedding, then a long, long honeymoon, afterward blissful years, full of homely delight. Jessamine would never care for society, no more than she would shine in

corridor. "Do you want me to stay here all winter?" she demanded suddenly. "I want you to do what is for your best." "But I don't want to study art or anything else. I want to go back to dear old Manisto, and mother says it's slow and provincial and all that. And I love every foot of its precious flat prairie land."

The Dean nodded silently, his lips pressed close together. He knew. So did he love Manisto, better than all the wealth and lore and beauty of this rare old world. And he knew that he loved Cecily better than he did Manisto. "Oh, take me back home with you," pleaded Cecily suddenly, leaning toward him with dewy eyes and clasped hands. "You understand, and mother doesn't bit."

"If—if you go back home," the Dean tried to speak quietly, "do you know what it will mean, Cecily?"

Something in his voice warned her. She had caught that tone before when he had spoken to her, caught it during those long, happy walks on deck under the midsummer moonlight; heard it when he had singled her out during the little trips through Normandy and Brittany, and around Barbizon and other shrines of the past they had visited. And Cecily, being wise, said nothing. The Dean waited for an answer, and looked at her. It was a narrow settle, one of those ancient, weathered oak affairs, with just room on it for two. And suddenly the Dean's arms closed about the girlish figure so near him, and he held her close to his heart, close away from the old world's charm, held her for himself and for the little home prairie town.

"I told you what it would mean, dear," he said at length, for the Dean was a man of few words. "Are you content?"

But Cecily laughed, and leaned her head back on his shoulder. "I wonder if mother will approve of the heart-to-heart talk we have had," she said. "She ought to. We've settled my career, haven't we?"

"No, only begun it, sweetheart," said the Dean.



"Tread on my heart, please, so I may die."

barbaric, wholly entrancing, accenting their rhythms and harmonies with banjo chords. She did not need even her maid's chaperonage—televy was impossible in the face of Luttrell's profoundly distant attitude. "Blair remains the Puritan he was born, even in his vices. I tremble to think of him—when he reforms," Everts, his nearest friend, had said half-bumorously to Bentham, the cynic. "Or breaks out," Bentham had answered with a shrug. "Though he cannot be haunted by the uncommitted sins of his youth, he will find them in retrospect all so deadly respects. He they may well send him to the deuce." Bentham, Everts, Doswell and McCray lounged easily about the Pleasure, smoking, gossiping gaily, yet underneath not wholly at ease. They had come down from town with their host for Heathcote day;

If he spoke it with a veiled twinkle, he had lived up to it, rarely letting Luttrell take Jessamine out of earshot, and almost never out of sight. Then, when Luttrell in desperation had proposed formally for his daughter's hand, he had got first very red, then very white, and answered, chokingly: "Ask her, I haven't got a word to say; if I did have, it would be, 'I hope to God she won't have you.' Not that I bear you any grudge—I'm bound to hate any fellow who wants to rob me—and I can't seem to fit you and Texas, anyhow."

That was a month back. Ever since Luttrell had been asking Jessy, getting no other answer than plaintive looks, quick scarlet flurries, and such speeches: "If you keep on bein' tiresome, I'll send you to smoke with Daddy," or "Did you ever play puss in the corner with yourself? No!

had run on: "It's almost enough to make one believe in spells—the change here in everything. Enderby, I admit, the horse of the century; but Nock has been gnarly as a blackthorn over other horses mighty near as good. I admit, further, that the Jessamine flower has graceful eyes, hair like black floss silk, and absurdly small feet; but beyond that she is no more than an agreeable young person, comely and commonplace. Yet she can take or leave all this, and God knows what beside. Take it in spite of a thousand more beautiful, more fascinating women. What is this secret?"

Cecily's Career

By Izola Forrester

THE Dean waited for Cecily to speak, watching her anxiously and uncertainly the while. She was going to cry instead. He knew it from the way her lips quivered, and her eyes grew soft and misty like a child's. And she had begged him into a tete-a-tete down at the end of the Flemish corridor, far from the rest of the party. Cecily was dove and serpent in one small wise person.

"But what can I possibly do about it to help you?" said the Dean in final desperation. "This winter abroad would be delightful for you and your mother."

"Poor little mother doesn't know what to do with me," interposed Cecily, recklessly twisting up her chinon veil into a wadded wreck. "You don't know what it is to be the mother of five girls, Dean Knowles."

The Dean hastily and gravely agreed with her. He didn't know. "There's Jess, music keeps her busy," Cecily counted off her sisters on her small, tanned fingers. "Then Pauline is Aunt Nell's special pride and pet, so she's provided for. Then Marjory married, and that settles her fate, and only leaves Edna and my own self. Edna's only fifteen and I'm sixteen. And all mother thinks of now is how on earth to dispose of me. Yes, she does, too" (as the Dean tried to interrupt). "You know she does. She tries to make me think I want to study art. I don't want to look at another single old picture. I—I just want to go home."

She was actually crying this time. The Dean took one hasty side glance, and turned away his eyes, steeling his heart against the ways of Cecily. It was two months since the party had started from Iowa to do Europe. Every Summer the little college town took pride in sending over its contingent of tourists, who should shed some of Manisto's civic glory upon the old world. And every year it was Dean Knowles who was the star and leader of the pilgrimage. For eleven years he had been the abiding hope of Manisto, the special trimmer and tender to its shining lamp of knowledge. He was young, too—about thirty—but in the West it is youth that

carries strength and promise, and Hope College was as proud of its dean as though he had been silver haired and crowned with years.

So for five years the Dean had gone abroad with his earnest little class of students and brought them back safely to Manisto. But this year he had not reckoned upon the problem of Cecily. She had joined the party at the last minute, and was to meet her mother in Rouen.

"I didn't want to sail with Aunt Nell, and mother, and Edna," she had told him confidentially during those first wonderful nights on board ship, when the Dean found himself peering the deck with Cecily for no reason whatever. "Aunt Nell's always sick. At least, she isn't; but she's so afraid she may be that she goes to bed before the boat sails and stays right there until it docks on the other side. And she wants me to read to her all that time. And she loves Scott. I don't mind him, you know, once I've finished him; but he's simply terrible to read aloud over and over and over again. So I came with you instead."

And now the two months had passed all too swiftly, and they were in Rouen. After dinner that night Mrs. Winthrop had insisted on a heart-to-heart talk with the Dean as to Cecily's future. "I shall feel so relieved if she will only stay over with her aunt and study through the winter. Somehow with the other girls I know just what to do for the best, but with Cecily—well, you know, Dean, she is wilful."

And the Dean had agreed, surely, surely, if she was anything adorable and original at all, Cecily was wilful.

"If you would only have a talk with her, Dean," her mother had added, tearfully. "I know it would carry weight. Have a heart-to-heart talk with her, and try to make her see what is best."

And the Dean had again agreed. He would have a heart-to-heart talk with Cecily, watching the earnest conversation from the corner of her eye, had taken matters into her own hands, and swept the Dean away at once to the quaint, high-backed settle at the end of the long

corridor. "Do you want me to stay here all winter?" she demanded suddenly. "I want you to do what is for your best."

"But I don't want to study art or anything else. I want to go back to dear old Manisto, and mother says it's slow and provincial and all that. And I love every foot of its precious flat prairie land."

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