

# "But Love Will Find A Way!" Said Pretty Fifi Widener

—And in Spite of Detectives, Servants, Cruel Locks, Chaperones and Guards the Philadelphia Multi-Millionaire's 17-Year-Old Daughter Runs Off and Marries the Little College Boy Her Family Had Forbidden to Come to the House

"Knotted the sheets of her bed together, cast them from her window, and in true, old-fashioned, romantic style, was climbing down to freedom and her sweetheart. She landed, as a matter of fact, in the arms of the watching guards."

PRETTY Fifi Widener, hundred-million-dollar heiress and only daughter of the Philadelphia traction magnate and financier Joseph E. Widener, has at last succeeded in breaking through the cordons of detectives, servants-sleuths, guards, chaperones and relatives with which her anxious family has surrounded her for the last two years, and has eloped with the college boy of her youthful choice. He is eighteen-year-old Carter Randolph Leidy, son of the much more socially prominent but not nearly so rich old Philadelphia family of the Leidys—who have numbered among them scientists, statesmen and men of action for many generations. Fifi is just one and a half years younger than her boy bridegroom!

This is just what Fifi—who was christened Josephine Pancoast, by the way—has been threatening to do for the whole two years.

Every time Fifi found life growing dull she would casually remark: "Well, it won't be long now before I run away with Carter!" Then her parents would get busy and add more guards to the Widener entourage. Sometimes, it is said, Fifi would vary this by remarking: "But love will find a way! No matter what the bolts and bars, ah, love will find a way!"

And Fifi was right. Despite all watchfulness, detectives in the guise of gardeners, chauffeurs, indoor and outdoor servants, even governesses who watched her every move to keep young Leidy away from her and her away from young Leidy, wilful and resourceful Miss Widener departed calmly when she had fully made up her mind.

Girl bride and boy bridegroom are now at Asheville, North Carolina, having a gorgeous time.

There is no doubt that the Wideners have not been so thoroughly and unpleasantly surprised since the day years ago that workmen, making repairs at Fifteenth and Filbert streets in Philadelphia, tore down a false wall and uncovered a sign with letters three feet high, telling the world that here was the P. A. B. Widener Meat Emporium. Ready and Willing to Sell the Best Meat to Philadelphians that they ever tasted. It was the wall of the old butcher shop where the fortunes of the Widener family were laid. But as for a generation they had been trying to forget this humble origin and to make fashionable society, into which they were just entering, forget it, the disclosure was disconcerting. Philadelphians still remember with what dizzying quickness a host of workmen descended upon and obliterated that shameless and distressing sign.

Nor was this later surprise and discomfiture lessened when it was found that Miss Fifi, with an unusual enterprise and thrift, and fearing, perhaps, that forgiveness might be long withheld, had taken with her all her own jewels and some others that she thought she had a right to. These wedding presents to herself were worth, friends say, no less than \$100,000!

The attachment of Fifi for young Leidy was noted by the Wideners in the Spring of 1918. The two had known each other since babyhood. They had always been friends. But Fifi, though only fifteen then, was precocious, unusually developed for a girl of her age. There were phases that lifted the romance from any usual boy and girl affair that could be depended upon to die out in a month or two.

Besides, Papa Widener had other plans upon which it is said he had set his heart. Extremely ambitious socially, he had dreamed of a titled son-in-law. Indeed, it was said, a list of eligibles, any one of whom might qualify and bestow his title upon the Widener heiress, had already been made up.

A tentative guard was placed around Miss Fifi. Also her opportunities for seeing her Carter were carefully curtailed.

Then the Wideners got a real shock. One night Miss Fifi was caught sliding down from her maiden chamber in the great Elkins Park mansion. She had knotted the sheets of her bed together, cast them from her window, and in true, old-fashioned, romantic style she was climbing down to freedom, love and her sweetheart. She landed, as a matter of fact, in the arms of one of the watching guards!

Up to this time Fifi, friends say, didn't know just how extensive the plans for restraint were. Now, like her parents, she awakened to them.



Mrs. Joseph E. Widener and Fifi's Brother Allen, Who Helped Guard Her at Lenox Last Summer.

The temper and will of old P. A. B. Widener comes with his money straight through son and granddaughter. Miss Fifi stormed and defied. Papa raged and threatened. Young Mr. Leidy was forbidden even to enter "Lynnewood House" again. Fifi was forbidden to see him anywhere.

And the guards were doubled and redoubled. At receptions or other functions the grounds swarmed with them. Added to the joy of keeping papa and mamma on tenterhooks was now that of "joshing" these watchers. Unerringly Miss Fifi would "spot" them. And then their usefulness would be ended.

"I know where Mlle. So-and-So," her new governess, "learned her French," she would remark casually.

"Yes?" her mother would reply, interestedly.

"Oh, yes," Miss Fifi would answer, "from So-and-So's correspondence course of detective science."

There would be a silence, ghostly, followed by a new governess.

And it was profoundly disconcerting to any well-meaning, conscientious sleuth who thought his identity hidden beneath gardener's overalls to be greeted as "Sherlock Holmes," or have to listen to discourses that began, "Absurd, my dear Watson! How could Carter Leidy be hidden beneath that geranium?"

There came last Summer a second crisis—as near a call as that of the almost successful drop from the maiden chamber. How the Wideners got wind of the plans of the two isn't definitely known. Fifi said they "snooped" through her letters. Find out they did, however, and Fifi was whisked up to Lenox, Mass. She appeared there unannounced with a retinue of servants, her brother Allen and two mysterious, determined looking men, casting threatening glances right and left and their feet almost audibly saying "Hiss!" as they watchfully trod along.

Quite naturally it couldn't be kept hidden that if the Widener heiress wasn't a prisoner she seemed mighty like one.

Mrs. Widener, joining the party, gave out indignant denials. Fifi was there for her health, she said. That did sound strange, for no one much healthier looking than Fifi could well be imagined.

The Summer ended. Back came Fifi. Her parents wanted her to go abroad. She wouldn't. They didn't dare send her to college. They couldn't trust her that far without guards!

It was decided to let her "come out"—that is, become a debutante.

It was decided to give a great reception on January 30. Miss Fifi insisted upon Leidy being present! Absolute refusal!

Very well! The time had come! Some hours before the reception was scheduled, Mrs. Joseph was taking a beauty sleep. Miss Fifi was supposed to be looking at the wonderful dresses she had been showered with. But she was not. Through the mansion slipped Fifi, dressed in a quiet traveling suit. Miss Fifi was looking for the snags of war. She was in a hurry.

She hadn't been able to connect with her own individual bank account because if she withdrew any considerable amount she knew it would be at once reported. So Fifi, friends say, took her jewels.

Where were the guards? All the watchful servants! How did she slip by them?

No one knows! But when Mrs. Widener awakened there was no Fifi in the mansion. Fifi had vanished.

Hurriedly the reception was called off. The telegraph wires buzzed with messages. Inquiry showed that young Leidy was also gone. The wires buzzed more desperately. Every resource of the family—and they are many—was set to work to head off the elopers.

There came a telegram from Knoxville, Tenn., from the Widener daughter, saying briefly that hereafter she should be addressed as Mrs. Carter Randolph Leidy! Love had found a way, all right.



Mr. Joseph E. Widener Explaining, Perhaps, How It All Happened

The Wideners promptly telegraphed forgiveness. But the lovers didn't seem to care whether they were forgiven or not.

Young Leidy went to the first S. A. T. C., at Princeton. He was also a student at St. Mark's School. Recently he has been a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania. He is extremely popular in Philadelphia social circles. His father, Dr. Joseph M. Leidy, is a widely known specialist. Dr. Leidy's father was the world famous surgeon, contemporary of Cope, and the family has held position in the ultra exclusive society of Philadelphia for generations.



Miss Fifi Widener, Now Mrs. Carter Randolph Leidy, at Palm Beach, Where She Was Taken to Forget Her Love for Her College Boy Sweetheart.