THREE KINDS of LOVE

by KAY CLEAVER STRAHAN

CHAPTER XXXII

WELL—wasn't there something about his book?" Ann asked.

Yes. But that wasn't my fault. ld it possibly be my fault that hateful creature in New York back the last two chapters of rry's book and said that they had en flat? Reasonably, Ann—not ause I'm your sister or anything ould that have been my fault?"

Darling, of course not. How d it be?"

"Barry thought it was my fault," ly said. "He didn't say so right but he acted as if it were my He said that he'd either have pend less time with me or more. meant get married, and he knows n't right now. He had to blame eone, and he wouldn't blame that derful person, Mr. Ammington, he blamed me. When Mr. Ammington returned the chapters in May, Barry was seeing me all the time, his praise was so extravagant Barry said he saw himself in York quelling the literati with a and a gesture. And now, just use these aren't so good, he es me. Maybe he didn't blame I don't know. Oh, Ann—Ann, t am I going to do? What am I to do? What—"

S-h-h, honey," said Ann.

I was talking kind of loud then. 't I? But that's just because so—so wretched. I don't usual- You said I didn't. Ann, I couldn't screamed at him, do you think? n't know. I can't remember. n he wouldn't answer me, and dn't answer me, no matter what Think of it, Ann—we came st 15 miles, and he wouldn't an- me; just drove along with that ble expression—set and white— is face. I felt as I were going I felt as if I had to make him —say anything. I may have d my voice. Ann, do you suppose l forget and raise my voice?"

ear, how can I tell? But I can this—if he loves you he won't away and not try to make up because you raised your voice you were talking to him. If he'd hat, you wouldn't want him, would Cissy?"

would. Of course I would. You understand. The more I think the more it seems like it was my fault. And yet—I was to Thursday, and I told you, Mr. ey was rude to me, and he'd r been rude before and everything wrong that day. I scorched the , and Grand had a preachy k and was rowing about you and th. I just kept thinking that Barry came everything would right. And then when he came had the letter from that Mr. Am- ton, and he was all out of sorts. he said that about my not de- ing frying-pan querulousness we were married. Warning me he'd have in a wife. And then ent on, and it came out that he ht cooking was important. Think Ann! Cooking really important! d to laugh it off by saying we'd menu for a marriage license, but ouldn't even smile. Not that I ht it wa ssmart—but he usually And—let me see, where was Anyway, I am a good cook, if all he wants. I am a good cook, I, Ann?"

ou're a wonderful cook. Of e you are."

* * *

ry-Frances knocked on the door opened it. "Cissy, telephone—" Cecily was in the hall before -Frances had time to say, "It's I told her you had a head- but—"

ly ran down the sairs, hoping, knew, to hear "something." aching hopes for indefinite things, which one never heard, or hearing, hurt so unbearably. rossed the room and rolled the up from the open windows to the gentle grey twilight. Where, ondered, were Phil and Letty precise moment; and what were doing? Since that night in May, nd Letty in Ann's thoughts had as concurrent as thunder and ing, and in consequence she was more and more deft with ing shut the doors of her mind ocking them securely against slaughts of a storm. This eve- she closed them more readily usual by merely saying, "Poor and she locked them with a "Silly!" and went to meet Ce- the top of the stairs.

me into the bathroom, honey. ash your face. It will make you etter."

made all the difference," said "whether I didn't wish him —he had to go then; or whether n't wish to go."

n are like that," Ann said, and ed a face cloth out of the wa- and tried to wash Cecily's face r.

n't. You dab so. I'll do it." d it, thoroughly, splashing and dipping her head to the water like a boy.

"I suppose he left town on Friday," she said, and took the towel Ann handed to her.

"Where did he go?"

"Albany."

"That isn't far. Only about 50 miles, isn't it?"

"I don't know. I wish it were China."

Ann said, "You do?"

"Yes, I do. And then I wouldn't be hoping all the time."

* * *

"Don't hope," Ann advised, and filled an eye cup with Grand's boric acid solution. "What is he doing in Albany, for pity's sakes?"

"I don't want that eye stuff. The new hotel building I told you about. He wasn't going. He'd talked his uncle out of sending him. Don't—I don't want it, Ann."

"Of course you want it. What will you say if Grand or Rosalie asks you what you've been crying about?"

"For once—just once in my life I'll give myself the dear delight of telling them it is none of their business."

"Cecily! I must say! You won't make yourself any happier, dear, by being mean and making other people unhappy."

"My word, Ann, you do preach, don't you?"

"I'm sorry. It is contagious, maybe. Did you have an overdose of it at supper this evening?"

"I didn't go down. Mary-Frances set it out for them."

"I'm hungry," Ann said. "Let's go down and find something."

"I couldn't eat. I couldn't think of eating. I really have a bad headache."

"Come watch me eat, then." Ann put an arm around Cecily's waist and pulled.

"I wish," Cecily said, as they went down the stairs together, "that you'd tell me how you manage that serenity of yours. I'd give almost anything for some of it. I'm not sure that it is genuine; but there is something so sort of—clean about it."

They were in the lower hall before Ann answered: "I'm afraid you'll think I'm preachy again, honey, but I've thought a lot lately. I—well, I've had lots of time alone to think. And one thing I thought sort of seems to fit in with what you said about serenity being clean. I don't know, but I think that sorrow is something that should be put away and left alone: that it is something that shouldn't be taken out and fingered and soiled."

* * *

The moon poked out from between two small sprawling clouds and blotted black shadows, industriously, into the silvery whiteness below as Earl said, "Yeah, but litsen, hon. Butt'll be out of the hospital in a week now, and he wants his car—see? 'Nother thing is, I got to get back to Denver and deliver that damn—pardon me—desk to the other guy and get off my bonds. See?"

"Beloved," Mary-Frances answered, "I wish you'd remember about my not saying 'see' all the time. I love it, of course; and I wouldn't change a thing about you for the world, if I were the only one, but it would give people who didn't know the depths of you and all a kind of false impression of you. That's why I wish you'd stop. I don't want people who—"

"Sure, I know. But listen, hon. What I was getting at was, how about that classy little vaudeville act? I'm telling you, hon, and I'm not kidding you a bit, that you'll never have a better chance for cleaning up money, and cleaning it up easy—see? You give me your promise, a long time ago, that you'd think it over—see? Give it your consideration and all. But you won't do it. You won't look at it serious, nor—"

"Heart's dearest, I have. Honest and truly I have. I've talked it over with my friend and everything. And I just think the same thing—that unless a girl has exceptional beauty and talent she is foolish to select the stage as a career." That was Ermintrude's mother talking.

"Oh, yeah? Well, that's where you're wrong, Frankie. That's where you and me differ—see? And maybe I'm in a position to know a little more about it than you are. If a couple has the looks and the act, they don't need hardly any talent. Besides, I told you, I got talent. And it isn't like you couldn't do steps or anything. You got the rudiments down pertty good; and, anyways, mostly you'd just feed me—see? You and I in a little act that this guy in Denver would fix up for us—we'd get swell bookings, and I'll tell you why. I can step, see? You got the looks, see? The public is sick of red-hot mammas. They want something young and innocent; see? A little hot stuff coming from you—the contrast would go big. You got a sweet voice. Like I've been telling you all along, you're the perfect ideal awn-jew-nay type. You know that, sweetness?"

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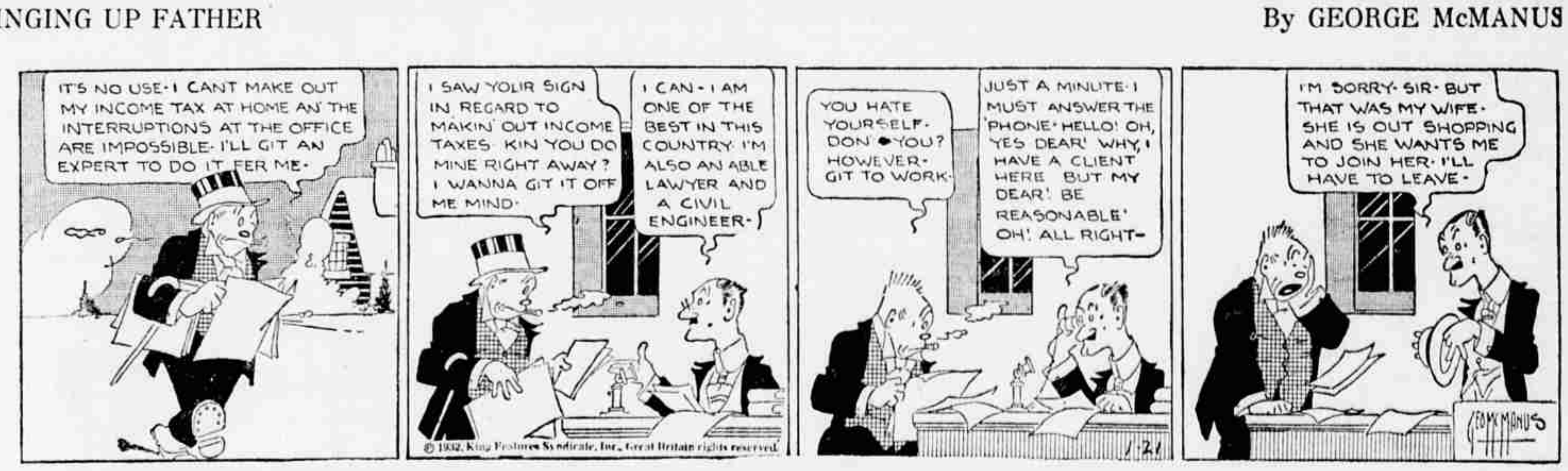

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