Whistle Widow

As told by the Referee's Wife

ANTICIPATION

I am the wife of a basketball referee. A few years ago I would have made that announcement as a happy boast. I had visions of delightful rides in the moonlight to a game where joy and friendly enthusiasm would be unconfined and where I could feel slightly superior to wives of lesser heroes because my one and only would be out on the floor doing his daily dozen while the multitude waited in breathless suspense for his every decision. I would sit in the reserved section behind the scorer's table and before each half when he would come to check the timer, I would lift a hand to the side of my head and wiggle four fingers in a half hidden salute of encouragement. At the end of the game I would have a happy gossipy visit with wives and the coaches and board members and thrill with pride when my date came to claim me for a triumphal trek homeward.

DISILLUSIONMENT

Why, Oh Why didn't mother or somebody tell me? And why did woman's intuition fail me at a critical time? Some friends tell me I ought to go modern and go to a bridge club or to the movies when Bill goes on a long trip to officiate but I happen to still be in love with my man. I can't seem to become resigned to being another whistle-widow. Sometimes I spend the whole week holding to the firm resolve that this time I absolutely will not go. But this dizzy habit of being there for the grudge battle has fastened itself upon me. It's like a drug. It's got me; I lay out the black and bite striped shirt, the sweat-caked smelly shoes and place the thumb-smeared and dog eared rule book on top of the pile. Shall I stay home and pace the floor wondering if he will get there on time or whether the car will do a flip flop on icy roads, or lie awake in the small hours worrying about wheather some freak is wrecking his reputation or whether he has been waylaid on some lonely highway? Shall I stay home and expect the worst or go along and see and hear the worst? You guessed right the first time.

SELF DISCIPLINE

Some ancient who believed in self torture must have been in my family tree. Flag pole sitters fascinate me. I have spent a goodly portion of my young life on narrow, non-form fitting board bleachers with shapely ankles tucked in the scratchy folds of the overcoat that cushions the seat in front of me and with a pair of knees making dimples in my back. My legs have been asleep so much that they don't feel right when they are awake. My foundation garments have adjusted themselves to the bleacher posture so that they have a bustle effect and a tendency to creep up under my arms. My gloves and pocketbook have been on the floor so much they have a coating of seal o san garnished with sweeping compound. Physical endurance is easy to acquire. It's the mental agony that tests ability to take it. Freedom of speech and expression includes the raspberry and the Bronx cheer. Sometimes I think the Fascists have something there. I could use a couple of concentration camps myself.

INVECTIVE

Gradually I have become immune to ordinary slander. I can manage a stock stage smile when someone behind me greets a decision with, "Aw nertz! How much they payin' you?" I don't even listen when a gray-haired lady opines, "You can't lick six men" or when a section chats, "Throw away the whistle." I can even bear up under a barrage of claims that 'The guy is crazy. He didn't even touch him.' But did you ever try biting your lip and looking demure while the lord and master of your house is being publicly labelled a flat foot floogie or a dumb fat head? And on the night when you are sitting with a sorority sister who, during college days, cut in on your Sunday date and came to the game that night mostly to see if you are wearing the same suit you had last year.

In reality, Bill is fast on his feet and, if you ask me, his form and appearance isn't so bad. But then I like the guy. It isn't any fun sitting anonymously in a bunch of coquettish debs who are throwing eyes at everything but the game and staking claims on any good looking male, including the referee. Some of the glances are sickeningly eloquent. So are the comments. Who is the wavy-haired referee? I'll take the fat one. Keep away, I saw him first. Wonder if he is married? He has the duckiest smile. How do you like that? Do I rise to battle, and slay with a killing look or strike out with a catty comeback? I do not!

CHILLY ATMOSPHERE

Experience has taught me that the lesser of several evils is to tell all before the game starts. I find myself in a group which may include the wife of the coach, teachers who are partisan fans and the wives of chamber of commerce dignitaries. I hasten to confess my identity and offer to isolate myself. I do not desire to cramp their style or hinder free speech. Invariable they laugh away my suggestion and warmly welcome me to the friendly circle. Througe one game we may be the warmest of friends, but sooner or later the inevitable happens. The idolized forward is put out of the game on four personals at a critical time. Anyone can see it was the big guard who had no right to be in the way. The atmosphere in our friendly circle becomes chilly. And when the tying points are taken away in the last seconds because the center ran with the ball there are icycles hanging on the curt farewells as my erstwhile friends flounce out of the gymnasium. I wait alone for a half hour that seems an eon. Sometimes the janitor speaks a cherry word as he goes about his chores but tonight he is glum. He turns out the lights and I stand in a draft ready to stick one foot in the door to keep from being locked in. Why, oh why can't people be sensible? Anyone knows that Bill is as honest as the day is long and his decisions are fair. After all it's only a game and not a life and death matter.

SMUG COMPLACENCE

It is the week after the regional tournament. I am furious. In the finals last Saturday Bill called a fourth foul on the cutest forward I have seen all year and broke the fifteen game winning streak of the team I had picked for the state championship. If you ask me, — on that last foul he didn't even touch him. For the last four days, Bill has been getting his own breakfast and taking his other meals out. I'm not speaking to the big lug.

In one way I am happy. For the first time this season I am not tortured by having to decide whether to go along this week end. Satisfaction and smug confidence accompany the decision. Outside the wind is blowing a gale and sleet and snow are coating the walks and the window panes. Visibility is near zero and the temperature is headed downward. I have done some crazy things in my life but I am not sap enough to tag along on a hundred-mile drive to a sectional tournament and get home at two o'clock in the morning. Woman's place is in the home. I have no grudge against the elements. Why fight them? That rumble that rides the wind is a garage door being rolled up. The car backfires a time or two as it is backed out and headed into the wind. In a minute, it will be even with the kitchen door. I am glad I am staying home. Being a whistle-widow isn't so bad after all. Or is it? What if - - ? I grab coat, hat and galoshes and throw the night latch on the back door.

Wait, Bill, you've got a passenger.

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What scriptures show that death as sin's penalty means cutting off,

Ps. 37:9, 22, 34: Evil doers shall be cut off. They that be cured of Him shall be cut off. The wicked are cut off. Lev. 22:5: Whosoever . . . goeth unto the holy things . . . having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off. Num. 15: 30: But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, . . . the same reproacheth the Lord; and that Soul shall be cut off.

What scriptures show that death as sin's penalty means perishing?

(1) The fact, Job. 4: 9: By the beast of God they perish and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed. Job. 6: 15, 18. My brethren have dealt deceitfully . . . as the streams of brooks they pass away . . . They go to nothing, and perish. Ps. 73: 27: For lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish. Thou hast destroyed all them that go . . . From Thee. Pro.11:10: The wicked perish.

(2) The meaning, Ps. 37:20: But the wicked shall perish and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. Luke 11:50. 51: The blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world . . . from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple . . . shall be required of this generation. Luke 13: 33: It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that Whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. — "The Herald of the Epiphany."

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR JACKSON COUNTY.

In the Matter of the Estate of

ROBERT LEE COOK, also known as R. L. COOK, Deceased.

The undersigned, having been appointed Administrator of the Estate of Robert Lee Cook, also known as R. L. Cook, deceased, by the County Court of the County of Jackson, State of Oregon, and having qualified, notice is hereby given to all persons having claims against said estate, to present them at the office of the undersigned's attorney at 126 East Main Street, Medford, Oregon, properly verified and with proper voucher, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice, which is the 20th day of February, 1941.

CLARENCE L. COOK, Administrator

O. H. Bengtson, Attorney for Administrator. F20-M13

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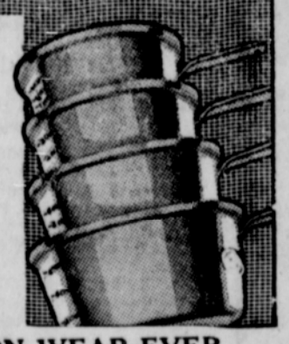

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