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## A Story of Fate

### Cupid Plays Odd Pranks

By CLARISSA MACKIE

The first day of spring was warm and bright, with a faint mist of green over the trees and shrubs in Linda Greer's garden.

"I never knew such a forward spring," mused Linda as she shook her dust out of the sitting room door. "The yellow larks in bloom, and I smelled violets down in the orchard this morning. I wish—I wish I didn't have to enjoy everything alone!"

She looked wistfully down the straight aisles between the apple trees in the tiny orchard. Robins tripped jauntily over the short green grass, and bluebirds were flashing around the fences.

All the rare promise of spring was in the air, a promise that the summer would fulfill with its mated birds and blossoming flowers and ripening fruit.

Linda sighed a little and closed the glass door regretfully.

It was sad to be alone—the last of a large family and without one congenial friend to share her delight in birds and flowers and trees.

A tall, thin form came slowly down the long, hilly street and passed Linda's house. It stopped a moment and leaned over the fence to admire the daffodils and crocuses which made a circle of purple and gold about the old house, then passed on with studious head bent above a book.

Linda blushed like a girl and leaned dizzily against the window frame.

After a little while she roused herself and flew indignantly about her neglected tasks.

"Linda Greer, you're the biggest fool," she scolded herself roundly. "Here you've been forty-five years old to-morrow and fluttering like a goose every time James Irving walks past the house!"

"As if he hadn't been walking past the house twice a day for the last fifteen years! 'Tisn't likely he could get to and from his office without going by here, and yet—you're always a-fluttering, a-fluttering!"

Linda viciously thumped a teacup into the china cupboard, and to her dis-

single woman would cause remark he was constrained to do what looked to Linda like avoiding her.

Had she not noticed in him a liking for her she would have considered his keeping away from her simply as a mark of indifference. As it was, the evidence of his good will in one respect and his action in not cultivating a friendship between him and her puzzled her. She could never make up her mind what to think of his treatment of her.

A dozen years passed, at the end of which Irving was beginning to feel that life without a home was scarcely worth living. At this time his affairs began to pick up, and within another year or two he had accumulated enough to own a house. This was his condition at the time Linda Greer received the letter containing a proposition of marriage.

James Irving closed his desk and put on his hat. He bundled together some documents and tied them up with a red tape and placed them in his safe. He locked the door of his dusty law office and made his way down the street.

A little crowd in front of the post-office denoted that the evening mail was in, and groups of giggling girls and smart youths watched Mr. Irving as he opened his letter box and took therefrom a number of letters.

Thrusting them into his coat pocket, he took his slow way home toward his boarding place. He paused a moment for another glance at Miss Linda's apartment, and he did not see her tender eyes beaming at him from behind the parlor blind.

Up in his quiet room he sat down by the window and opened his letters.

Two of them pertained to business, several were from old friends in distant cities, and the last one was a small envelope addressed in a prim, ladylike hand with faded ink.

A faint, delicate perfume as of dried rose leaves assailed his nostrils as he carefully opened the letter:

Glendale, April 1, 1908.  
Dear Mr. Irving: I received your note this morning. You press me for an immediate answer to your proposal of marriage. I have never dreamed that you

thought. He would go and see Linda Greer, and perhaps he might gain some clue as to what had really occurred. It was a delicate matter—a very delicate matter.

He finished dressing, and without waiting for supper he made his way down the village street in the sweet April dusk and opened Linda's garden gate.

He walked slowly up the path, inhaling the spring odors of garden and field, and turned around to the side door.

This was the first time he had ever entered that garden, but for years he had stood afar, wistfully gazing at the one woman in the world for him and whom his poverty had prevented him from seeking out.

As he mounted the steps to the porch the door opened hurriedly, and Linda Greer precipitated herself out of the entrance.

"Oh, you!" she breathed hurriedly. "Did you receive a letter from me?" she asked, with a certain fierce excitement which sat strangely upon her.

"I—I believe I did," stammered James Irving, taken aback by her sudden question.

"I want it back again!" she cried fiercely. "It was a mistake. Hulda Lansing has just been here"—she paused and choked down a little sob—"and she says it was a trick of some of the girls and boys. Oh, oh!"

Linda broke into angry sobs, and in a trice James Irving's shyness vanished, never to return.

He took Linda into his warm embrace and kissed the top of her brown head with tender, lingering touch.

"Don't you believe one word that Hulda Lansing says," he soothed gently. "You are the only woman I ever loved, Linda, and your answer to my letter has made me the happiest man in the world."

"Your letter!" murmured Linda amazedly.

James Irving fled without a tremor of conscience.

"My proposal of marriage was genuine," he said gravely. "I have loved you for years, and you will not keep me waiting long, dear!"

"No," sighed Linda happily.

## A YOUNG MAN'S SCHEME

By M. QUAD

Copyright, 1911, by Associated Literary Press.

"Gaul darn her picture, but I love her!"

The young man who uttered the words was at work in the field, and he straightened up to rest his weary back and mutter:

"And I'll make her love me before I'm through with her! She may think I don't amount to much, but all I want is a chance to prove that I do. Durn farm work! Durn widder! Durn love! Durn everything!"

He kicked the fence to show his disgust and wearily resumed work. Ebenezer Schermethorn, hired man, was in love with the Widow Tompkins, whose farm adjoined that of his boss on the west. Ebenezer was twenty-four years old, plain of face and ungainly of form and without a hundred dollars' worth of property.

One evening as he dropped in to see the widow about borrowing some farm implement next day he found her reading a love story. She read a few chapters to him and afterward acknowledged that she had always been romantic and that if she ever married again it would be to a hero.

The farmer's heart didn't rush right off that night and try to be a hero, but sat down and did some thinking.

Three or four days after Ebenezer's thinking he came along the road and, seeing the young man hoeing corn just over the fence, laid for a word or two. Ordinarily Ebenezer would have leaped the fence and run the wayfarer half a mile, but on this occasion he invited him over to the corn and sat down with him for a confidential conversation. The result of that conversation was that at 8 o'clock that evening the tramp appeared before the Widow Tompkins and made threats of what he would do if she didn't set out victuals, hunt up old clothes and come down with a dollar in cash.

Ebenezer was not far away—just far enough to come running up and knock the tramp head over heels and rescue the widow. But as he started to come running he fell down and got tangled up with the bushes, and before he could get away the widow had broom-sticked the tramp into flight. She said she was glad that the would-be hero was so near at hand. What she did say was that she wasn't afraid of any tramp walking the roads.

Ebenezer's first try was a failure, but within a fortnight he was ready for another. Two or three farmhouses in the township had been robbed, and this fact became the basis for his second plan. One night at midnight he left his bed, descended to earth by way of a window, and, armed with a club, he became a guard for the widow's house. He circled around it and patrolled the garden and the orchard, and he felt that he would give a year of his life if a robber would appear. He would first fell him and then arouse the house, and when the widow came to know that he had been guarding her for love her heart would melt toward him.

But no robber came. Instead of that his footsteps awoke the widow, and, peering out, she saw some one walking about, and she got a shotgun and raised a window and blazed away. The gun was loaded with bird shot to shoot insects that might come swooping down on chickens, but in this case they answered just as well for a man. Ebenezer received about twenty of them and ran two miles to a doctor to have them picked out. He also had a vacation from work for a week under the excuse that he had sprained his back turning over in bed.

Ninety-nine out of every hundred would be heroes would have given up right here, but Ebenezer was a man to hang on. It was while he was limping around on his vacation and doing a lot of stalling up and wandering over the fields that he came upon the widow fishing in the river at a certain point. He did not show himself, but fifty feet from where she sat under a tree he discovered a bumblebee's nest in the grass. It was a large and liberal nest, and it gave him a thought. "The bees wouldn't bother anybody so long as they were left alone. If stirred up they would look for meat.

There was a haystack not far away, and Ebenezer had matches in his pocket. He retired behind the stack and collected a handful of stoves from the plowed land. These he threw one by one at the spot where the bees were pursuing the even tenor of their ways. The plot thickened. You can thicken a bumblebee plot in a very short time. All you've got to do is to tread on their cottages and when the insects found the rocks dropping on their heads they swarmed out of the grass to look for the enemy. They should have seen the widow and descended upon her, and at her first shriek Ebenezer would come charging down with a wisp of lighted hay in either hand. But things went wrong. The bees then went for him alone. They ran him up and down the haystack; they ran him over fences and back; they ran him across lots and in circles, and when they finally left him and he fell down the widow came forward and asked:

"But why were you such a fool?"

"Because I want you to marry me!" he groined in reply. "And you said you would marry a hero. I thought the bees would attack you and I could rush in and save you."

"Why, you great idiot! I've been ready to say yes any day for the last three months!"

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### Cuban Cruiser and Commander At Maine Shaft Unveiling



Photos by American Press Association.

An interesting feature of the Maine monument unveiling in New York on Memorial day was the presence of the marines from the Cuban cruiser, the Cuba, which visited the United States for the special purpose of taking part in the ceremonies. The ship anchored in the Hudson with the super-Dreadnoughts of the north Atlantic fleet. Commander Fernandez Quivrela allowed his men to take part in the land parade and to hold open house for the sightseeing visitors while the vessel was in the harbor.

Not Wasted.  
Mother—Johnny, did you take your cough medicine regularly in school, as I told you?  
Johnny—No'm. Tommy Dodd liked it, an' he gimme an apple for it.—Boston Transcript.

From Choice.  
A metropolitan matron once ventured to interrogate James Lane Allen as to the raison d'etre of his state of celibacy.  
"Are you a bachelor from choice?" she queried.  
"Yes," came the answer with disconcerting promptness from the famous author.  
"But isn't that—er—rather ungracious and ungalant?" protested the fair inquisitor.  
The novelist smiled.  
"You must ask the ladies," he suggested gently. "It was their choice, not mine."—Woman's Home Companion.

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