



and be my Love

By PEGGY DERN

WNU RELEASE



THE STORY THUS FAR: "Mentally ill," Tom Fallon had described his wife, Meg, shivered as she went on home. Jim MacTavish was happy as he announced that he had sold the farm. They quarreled, and Meg called Larry for advice. He told her no sale was valid without her signature. Late that night Meg was awakened by a knock at the door. It was Tom Fallon, who said that Martha, his wife's sister, had fallen and hurt herself. He wanted to call a doctor. Meg called the doctor, then rushed to the Fallon home. Martha did not want her to come in, but Tom allowed her to enter and bandage the injured ankle. A blood-curdling cry came from the next room.

CHAPTER VII

Megan rose and lit the oil cook-stove. She was just putting water on to heat when suddenly a cry rang out that was like icy fingers tapping up and down her spine, a cry that chilled the blood and left the heart beating with mad, staggering haste.

"Tom—" Martha cried.

Megan said quietly, her voice not quite steady, "Mrs. Fallon must have had a bad dream. They can frighten one to pieces."

Martha's eyes widened a little, and her expression relaxed ever so slightly. She was plainly startled, and a little suspicious, but as Megan scalded out the teapot, Martha nodded slowly and said uneasily, "Yes—it must have been that. She's—she's ill and doesn't sleep much, and my fall excited her and—yes, she must have had a nightmare."

Megan poured the boiling water into the teapot, and said, her tone deliberately quiet and natural, "Perhaps Mrs. Fallon would like a cup of hot milk? Would it soothe her, do you think?"

Martha hesitated. "It might, at that," she agreed. "Tom could get her to drink it."

Megan nodded and poured some milk into a saucepan. When it was hot, she filled a glass and went to the door with it. She knocked with the tips of her fingers, very lightly, and a moment later, Tom opened the door. She made herself speak casually and offered him the glass of milk. He took it from her with a flash of gratitude that was touching.

She came back to the stove, and tested the tea. Martha said it was "just right" and Megan poured her a cup of it. They were drinking the last of the tea when there was a sound of a car in the drive, and a moment later, Dr. Alden, stout, elderly, tired-looking, the typical country doctor, came briskly in.

"Hello—you here?" he greeted Megan cheerfully, looking at Martha curiously. "What seems to be the trouble?"

"There's no seeming about it," Martha told him tartly. "I fell and twisted my ankle somehow, and Tom would have it that we must call a doctor."

Dr. Alden made a swift examination of the ankle, congratulating Megan on the way she had bandaged it.

He straightened at last, saying briskly, "Painful, but not dangerous. Just keep up the treatment, Megan, and see that she stays off her feet for the next three or four days—or a week. I don't look for any complications."

As he turned towards the door, Tom came out of that room that was in such sharp contrast to the drab, cheerless house, and shook hands with the doctor, thanking him for his trip.

He walked with him out to the car. When he came back, he said to Megan, "I don't know how to thank you—"

"There's nothing to thank me for—"

"I know—it's just the neighborly spirit of Pleasant Grove," he told her, smiling.

"Well, it is, at that," she assured him sturdily. "Now if you'll help me get Miss—the patient to her bedroom, I'll get her comfortable for the night."

Martha stiffened. "No!" she said sharply. "I can put myself to bed—"

"But you are not to use your foot—"

"Tom can help me. I don't need you to help me," said Martha with such unexpected savagery that Megan felt the color pour into her face.

"Martha, for Heaven's sake—" pleaded Tom in an agony of embarrassment and helpless anger. "You are behaving like a shrew—"

"Why? Just because I said I could put myself to bed?" snapped the woman, her hostile eyes upon Megan. "I appreciate all she's done for me, but she didn't have to bother; the doctor would have got here in plenty of time to do what was necessary. There was no call for her to come pushing in here—"

Tom said, ignoring her, "I'll see you home, Megan, of course."

"No," said Megan firmly. "You are needed here. It's not far and the dogs are waiting for me outside. You stay here. Goodnight, Miss—Martha, and I hope you'll be much better in the morning."

Martha did not answer. Tom walked with Megan out of the warm, lamplit kitchen and to the drive. He walked beside her to the road, and there she turned and said, "This is far enough. You mustn't leave them alone."

"I don't know how to thank you,

or how to apologize for Martha," he said awkwardly.

"Please don't say any more," Megan begged him quickly. "I understand perfectly. Sick people, or people who are in pain, should not ever be held accountable for their actions—and she was in great pain tonight. Get her to bed and see that she takes one of those tablets Dr. Alden left. It will help her to sleep."

Megan let herself quietly into the house, grateful for its warmth and darkness. But as she moved across the kitchen towards the hall, there was a sudden sound and the light flashed up and she faced her father.

She gave a startled gasp, and tried to laugh. "Oh, did I wake you?" she said. "I'm sorry—I tried to be very cautious—"

"Sly would be the word I'd use," said her father with insolence and sharp accusation in his voice, his eyes taking her in from the top of her hair, tumbled where she had just removed the closely wrapped scarf, to the tips of her shoes, dusty from the quarter-mile walk along the unpaved road. "I would not have believed it if I hadn't seen it

himself into a fury, and Megan eyed him for a moment, with a look beneath which his self-righteous bluster faded a little.

"You'd like to make it impossible for me to stay on in Pleasant Grove, Dad?" she suggested quietly. "You'd go even to that length to try to force me to sell—"

"You are being insolent and brazen," her father cut in loftily. "I admit frankly that if you're in love with this married man, the wisest thing for you to do is put as much distance between you and him as possible."

Megan's eyes were wide and incredulous.

"In love with Tom Fallon?" she repeated as though she could not believe the absurd charge.

Her father shrugged. His eyes were cold now and frankly hostile. "Well, I admit I'd rather think you were in love with him than that you were merely chasing an indecent thrill," he told her savagely.

Megan was suddenly conscious that she was very tired.

"But—I'm willing to be broad-minded about tonight, Meggie," her father said at last. "You've always been a good daughter, and if you tell me there was nothing in your going out with Fallon—I'll take your word for it."

"That's—white of you!" Megan forced the words through her teeth, her voice trembling.

Her father shot her a swift, vindictive look.

"But of course, only on condition that you see no more of the man, and that you sell out and we both get as far from this place as possible," he went on sternly. "You've got a chance to marry a fine young fellow, and live a much easier life than you've known here. Farming is no job for a girl—"

Once more, she dared risk only a few words, lest the threatening tears overwhelm her.

"I'm not selling the farm, Dad—that's final," she told him, and managed to get up the stairs and to her own room before she gave way to tears.

She admitted now, forlornly, in the first moment of her emotional reaction, that she had never liked her father. But now she hated him! The thought shocked her. But she had to admit it.

She was bitterly ashamed of her weakness when she awoke in the crisp coolness of the dawn a few hours later. She was startled to see that it was almost eight o'clock, a good two hours later than she was accustomed to rise, but she remembered that it was Sunday, and Amos would have finished long ago the milking and the early morning chores.

She dressed and went downstairs, where Annie beamed at her warmly. "Did you get your sleep out, Miss Meggie?" she greeted her cheerfully.

"I feel like a lazy loafer, Annie," she admitted.

"Well, it ain't no matter. An' he'd as 'yo' wuks. Miss Meggie, I like to see you get your sleep out," said Annie promptly. "How 'yo' like a waffle for 'yo' bre'k'fus?"

"Hm-m-m!" said Megan happily.

Annie chuckled and went briskly about the business of pouring waffle batter on the piping hot iron and closing the lid carefully.

"Mist' Larry comin' today?" asked Annie, as she made fresh coffee.

"For lunch," Megan nodded.

"I 'spected him," Annie assured her cheerfully. "I done got me two fine chickens all dressed and waitin' for de fryin' pan. Dat po' young man don't git ha't 'nough to eat at dem old resty-rants in Meaderville—us got to feed him up good and hearty!"

Megan laughed. "I'm sure he'll appreciate that when I tell him about it."

Later, when Megan had helped straighten the downstairs rooms and seen that there were chrysanthemums and a few late zinnias and asters and marigolds scattered about the shabby old place to lend their own indefinable charm, she went upstairs, bathed leisurely, and dressed. There was a thin jade-green shantung dress that was two years old, but Laurence liked her in it, and it was cheerful looking.

She walked up to the bus stop to meet him, and when he came swinging towards her, his face lit up with eager delight at the sight of her. The day was mild and warm, the sunlight golden on her russet-brown head, out all that Laurence said as he greeted her was an eager "Hello!"

"Hello," she answered, and laughed a little because it was such a glorious morning and she liked being with Laurence.

They walked hand in hand back down the road to the house, and then Laurence said, "I've been shut up in what passes for a city, in these parts, for quite a bit—couldn't we walk down through the meadow and over to the Ridge before lunch?"

"We'll probably just about have time," Megan answered him lightly. They crossed the backyard, and went down through the meadow with, of course, the inevitable accompaniment of dogs and cats and chickens and cows.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

with my own eyes! How long has this—this disgraceful business been going on?" he added, his voice thick with righteous anger.

Megan stared at him, wide-eyed and bewildered by the depth of his anger.

"I don't know what you're talking about—" she began.

"Don't try to lie out of it," he snapped at her furiously. "I heard that—that Fallon man come to the back door and tap, for all the world like some—street bum beneath the window of his—light o' love! And I heard you go down to him—I couldn't believe that you would leave the house with him—"

"If you heard so much, Dad, without even sufficient interest in my affairs to ask a simple question, then you must have heard me telephone Dr. Alden—"

"I heard nothing of the sort," her father cut in furiously, playing the role of an outraged father and enjoying it, she was a little sickened to realize. "I only heard you creep down the stairs to let him in. Then a little later, I heard you come upstairs and get some clothes on. You then went out with him and you've been gone more than three hours! My daughter! A MacTavish—this, Megan, is the last straw. I do not propose to have you carrying on like some common—wanton—"

Megan's eyes flashed with anger. "That's quite enough, Dad!" she said. "You don't want to know the truth—"

"I don't propose to have my intelligence insulted by some weak-kneed silly lie!" he blazed at her.

"You're going to listen to me just the same," her voice cut across his. "Mr. Fallon came here to use the telephone to call a doctor. His sister-in-law, who lives with them and takes care of his invalid wife, had fallen and hurt her ankle. She was in pain. I called the doctor for him and when I found he couldn't get there for more than an hour, I went over, as any good neighbor would, and made use of some of my First Aid training—"

Her father sneered at her.

"And that was exactly what I meant by some weak-kneed, silly lie," he told her shortly. "You sneaked out of this house and were gone with that man—a married man, whose wife is a bedridden invalid, and were gone three hours—"

"Dr. Alden was there. I'm sure he would be glad to back up my story," she interrupted him.

"It's likely that I'd go around admitting to people in this ditty little hick town that I don't even know where my daughter was for three solid hours after midnight? Oh, no, you are perfectly safe in offering me a lie like that—"

He was lashing



himself into a fury, and Megan eyed him for a moment, with a look beneath which his self-righteous bluster faded a little.

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NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

By PAUL MALLON

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

PEACE CONFERENCE 'VICTORY' MORE APPARENT THAN REAL

WASHINGTON. — 'Tis being advertised as a famous victory at Paris. The accounts from there were headed: "Molotov Finally Yields." A weighing of the event since then by expert—and even some official news accountants—has developed wonder if it was victory, and how much Molotov yielded.

In the first place, China was not made a sponsoring nation for the big peace conference of 21 nations. Molotov did not yield on this. The leading dispatches from the conference the day after neglected to mention this point. Nothing was said about China. Earlier both Messrs. Byrnes and Bevin contended the omission of our friend in the Orient as sponsor would be an insult to her. Molotov claimed China was not influential in the defeat of the nations for which treaties were being written in Paris—Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland and Italy—and therefore she was not entitled to be a sponsor.

Morally, China was entitled to be a sponsor as a big five member and a participant in the war. Technically, she may not have used any troops in the five countries mentioned, but the United States did not use many either in Finland (with whom we were never at war), and not many more in the Balkans, although the Russians used plenty of our equipment.

POTSDAM AGREEMENT CITED

Next day France worded the invitation more peacefully, and a movement to save China with the chairmanship, upon the second day of the meeting was attempted, but Molotov insisted upon China's omission as a sponsor, pleading this was provided in the Potsdam agreement, which has never been enforced, economically at any rate.

Then the big four conference decided to call the 21 nations, apparently to approve the treaties they are making. This was regarded as a victory for our Mr. Byrnes, who wanted such a conference. But Molotov wanted to restrict the rules of the conference, which naturally had no rules, never having been in assembly. He succeeded in requiring that each treaty go to a committee made up of the leading participants in the war on that country (which is all right), but he said the committee must make decisions only by a two-thirds majority (which is not all right). The committees apparently had no power to make any decisions. At least the conference did not. It could not change a treaty, or no public suggestion was made that it could. It was merely called to approve. Certainly its committees could not do anything it could not do. Yet Russia imposed a two-thirds majority upon decisions of committees, with majority decisions among the whole.

What this will do, I have not yet found an authority to explain. A two-thirds majority without authority can only be a two-thirds majority without power—except to nullify any action.

TWO-THIRDS RULE A JOKER

Actually, the big council of nations was insisted upon by Byrnes to let the smaller nations participate in the decision of the peace. His victory in this respect was far from clear cut. Will the small nations be satisfied? The question cannot be answered until you find out what the two-thirds-majority-rule-in-committees-only will mean to their conference. Obviously Russia drew her peace in such a way as to believe she excluded the small nations from changing it. This is an old Russian position against small nations, which has taken many forms since the San Francisco conference. Actually, she does not care what small nations do, but we do care.

What it looks like to me is that Russia has considerably but yet indefinitely stultified the Byrnes-inspired conference, first by excluding China as a sponsor, and secondly by a fool-rule she can use as a veto on action. This would deny the existence of a victory for anyone except Russia in her purpose to get the world to accept peace treaties which (except for Italy) she is largely imposing.

The peace then depends actually upon the terms of the treaties themselves, and in Finland, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary these are being enforced and imposed by Russia—in Italy by us.

IS RUSSIA NECESSARY?

The illusion of a co-operative world peace is thereby becoming more elusive. The participation by the smaller nations becomes less and less important and more and more restricted. What was won at Paris was that we got Russia into another half-world conference for better or worse.

My personal opinion is Mr. Byrnes is proceeding on the wrong theory: namely that we must get Russia into an agreement on everything or he will lose his case.

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"At first?"

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with SORETONE



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"After the use of Soretone according to the directions on the label for a period of only ten days, 80.6% of the cases showed clinical improvement of an infection which is most stubborn to control."

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