

A Quick Transition

By EUNICE BLAKE

"Howdy, Amanda? Excuse me for not comin' sooner when you sent to say you wanted to see me, but I was workin' at the cider press."

"Come in, Mr. Morehouse. It's gittin' chilly nights now. I got some logs blazin' on the hearth, and I'll bring up some birch beer from the cellar."

Josh Morehouse, a bachelor of forty, accepted the invitation and was soon sitting on one end of a sofa drawn before the fire, while Amanda Waters, aged twenty, sat at the other. Beside Josh stood a table on which were a dish of nuts and a bottle of birch beer. After a swig of the beer he began cracking the nuts and invited Amanda to tell him what he could do for her.

"Law sakes, Mr. Morehouse, I don't believe I can."

"Waal, now, that's surprisin'."

"There's somethin' I want you to do for me, but it's awful hard to say it. Fact is, I want to borrow you for awhile."

"Borry me?"

Mr. Morehouse paused while cracking a nut and looked at Miss Waters inquiringly.

"You know Enoch Rogers. Well, Enoch has been talkin' soft to me lately, and I don't want him to do it. He's a nice feller, but he's nothin' but a boy. I don't cotton to these 'kids, but Enoch is givin' me an awful lot of worriment. I don't want to hurt his feelin's, and I can't stand it to have him follerin' me about, makin' people believe I belong to him."

"Why don't you tell him, squar, to keep off?"

"I have. It don't appear to do any good."

"You don't want me to give him a hakin', do you?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Morehouse. I wouldn't have you do that."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Waal, I've reckoned that if you wouldn't mind make b'lieve for awhile I belong to you mebbe he'd give me up and be ruckensiled to get on with-out me."

"Oh, I see! That's a mighty good way o' lettin' him down."

"His mother and my mother are mighty good friends, and Enoch is a nice boy. So I musn't do anything to make bad blood. Jest as soon as Enoch sees that some un has got ahead of him he'll draw off and find another gal."

"You don't mean that he'd think you'd look at an old feller like me, do you?"

"La sakes, Mr. Morehouse, how you talk! You're just the age for a woman between eighteen and twenty-five. Girls want a husband to look up to. They don't want a boy that they kin wipe the floor with."

"You don't mean it! Waal, now, I wouldn't 'a' thought any gal except an old maid would want me."

Mr. Morehouse looked very much pleased. The fire crackled merrily, dancing on the fender and gilding articles in the room. The birch beer had a delicious flavor, and the nuts, having been newly gathered, were the same.

"When shall we begin, Mr. Morehouse?" asked Amanda, moving from her end of the sofa toward her make believe lover.

"Begin? Begin what?"

"Why, pertendin' we're engaged."

"Isn't there a big difference between

pertendin' and the real thing?"

"Mebbe there is, but if we don't act engaged before people they won't believe we're engaged. Enoch'll think I'm just sayin' I'm engaged to sbet him off."

"That wouldn't do, would it? But how are we goin' to act engaged?"

"Laws a-massy, Mr. Morehouse, you don't reckon we're goin' to know how to act engaged without any practicin'?"

"Mebbe not."

Mr. Morehouse took another pull at the birch beer, and when he had set down his mug he found that Amanda had moved to the middle of the sofa and there was barely room for a sheet of paper between them. The fire was crackling and giving out its genial warmth. Mr. Morehouse felt very happy. He looked sidewise at Amanda, while she looked down at her lap, smoothing her dress. He wondered if a borrowed lover practicing to play his part was entitled to take a kiss. He dropped an arm, which was resting on the back of the sofa, to her waist. She did not move. He felt encouraged. He drew her toward him till she was leaning up against him. Her head toppled to the side; he turned her face, and his lips were drawn magnetically to hers.

"By jinx," he exclaimed, "I wonder if bein' a real lover is better'n a borryed one!"

"Nobody kin tell that without tryin'," said Amanda.

Another kiss helped him on, and still another helped him on further, till at last, as he afterward said, "the words just came right out by themselves without my havin' anything to do with it."

When Josh Morehouse went home that evening he was astonished at remembering that he had stood within an hour in three different positions—friend, pretended lover and betrothed.

"It beats anything," he said to himself, slapping his knee. "how sudden some things come about. Just think that Mandy's wantin' to borrow me to head off Enoch Rogers should 'a' made a match between her and me!"

Human Frailty.

Let a bishop appear and members of his church will be preached a great sermon. The appreciation is for the man's reputation and position. Thousands of books actually worthless receive what is called appreciation because they are written by noted men, printed by noted publishers. You laugh at the jokes of a clown, but you would not smile at the same nonsense offered by a neighbor. How the children laugh at the teacher's jokes! How an agent laughs at your jokes when he thinks he has you in a buying humor! We are actually honest about nothing.—E. W. Howe's Monthly.

A Four Story Drop.

Ritter, the Swiss writer, as we learn from his "Letters," went so wild over George Elliot's works that he learned English in order to read her in the original. Subsequently he read her biography by Cross and wrote, "I had the sensation of falling from a fourth story window into the street!"

Where?

"And where," demanded his wife, with flashing eyes, "would you be now, only for me?"

The man glanced at the clock. It was verging on the hour of midnight. He sighed and was silent.—Boston Journal.

The Spenders.

"How are you getting along, Jones, since you got married? Saving any money?"

"Yes, but for heaven's sake don't tell my wife."—Exchange.

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