

The Handsome Man

by Margaret Turnbull

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

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THE STORY

Returning to London, practically penniless, after an unsuccessful business trip, Sir George Sandison takes dinner with his widowed stepmother, his old nurse, "Aggy." He did not approve of her marriage to his father, but her explanation satisfies him. Little is left of the estate, and Lady Sandison proposes that they go to the United States to visit her brother, Robert MacBeth, wealthy contractor. Sir George agrees. MacBeth lives on an island estate with his daughter, Roberta, who longs for city life. MacBeth is a victim of arthritis and almost helpless. MacBeth is glad to see his sister and asks the two to stay. Roberta is keeping a date with Jack Navarro, about whom she knows little. MacBeth arranges for his sister to take charge of the household and George to act as secretary. Roberta does not approve of the arrangement. She tells her father she is not interested in George, while the young man takes an air of indifference to her.

CHAPTER IV—Continued

"Quite a watchdog," observed Roberta scornfully, but she swung to her feet and went to the doorway and looked out. Yes, it was Jack. What was he doing here? She had written him that she could not meet him until next Monday.

"Want to send him a message? It can be done."

"No," said Roberta, feeling instantly that he thought she was afraid her father might see her and ask questions. "I can manage my own affairs, thanks."

"Absolutely," agreed Sir George and moved away.

To her astonishment he went through the doorway and toward the house. Roberta was so amazed that she could not make even the faintest move to stop him. She was annoyed. She was quite unused to such treatment. Here was she, the only girl he knew, apparently, this side of the Atlantic, in any way the only girl he knew in this place, and instead of improving the shining hour, he came to her and delivered his message as casually as though they were two schoolboys and then walked off and left her!

Roberta walked slowly toward the beach and the bridge. Jack had seen her now. He moved toward her. He looked worried. Was he afraid of her father? Why hadn't he come directly to the island and asked for her, like any other boy she knew? The sunlight struck across his face, and showed her lines she had never seen before. Why, he was much older than she had thought. He was not a boy, he was a man.

Jack stood his ground near a tall sycamore and a thicket of sumac which screened him. He beckoned to her eagerly. Why couldn't he meet her in the open?

Robert MacBeth was frowning when Sir George joined him. He looked up quickly as the younger man came toward him.

"Wouldn't you like to try a bit of exercise?" Sir George asked. "Suppose you take my arm."

"Maybe I'd better," MacBeth agreed reluctantly, "though I'm dashed unwilling to stir. Well, once around, if you're bent for exercise."

"Once around it is," Sir George told him encouragingly. "We'll have you dancing in no time."

It would give the girl a chance, Sir George thought to himself, his eyes seeking the path to the bridge. Yes, there she went. It might be that the wisest course would be to warn the father, but he could not bring himself to do it. The girl was plucky. She had not asked him to keep quiet or anything of that kind. He could either keep his mouth shut, or go to blazes for all of her. Well, he would keep his mouth shut.

Slowly and painfully, leaning heavily on the strong young arm that supported him, Robert MacBeth made his way along the terrace. When they reached his chaise longue again, he relaxed gratefully as the younger man helped him to a comfortable position, and arranged his pillows.

There was a short silence. Sir George lit a cigarette and leaned against the wicker chair he intended to slide into in a moment. He could not see the girl now, and the car had disappeared.

Robert MacBeth had taken up a letter he had laid down just before his promenade. He handed it to his secretary.

"What do you think of that?"

It was a typewritten letter addressed to "Robt MacBeth" and said:

"Dear Sir: Do you know the man your daughter is meeting at different resorts on the Lincoln highway? Many facts in your life are known to the writer of this, which you would not like to find public property. If you want to know all the writer knows send letter to the P. O. Box given below and wait for telegram appointing meeting place. All will be told you." It was unsigned, merely the number of the post office box, 0111, in a small Pennsylvania city, being given.

Sir George handed it back. "I'd throw it in the fire."

Robert MacBeth grasped the letter firmly. "That's where you would be wrong. Such letters should be kept and used to trap the writer or writers. I'll send it to a detective agency. It

isn't scandal I'm afraid of. I've never done anything to be blackmailed for and neither has Roberta."

"Then why should you bother?"

MacBeth turned an honestly worried face to the younger man. "I'm pretty sure that the writer of this letter has some connection with the difficulty I've been having with my payroll, but I can't convince the police."

"Payroll!" Sir George looked at him in astonishment. "Do you mean the payroll for your employees in the city?"

Robert MacBeth shook his head. "Not the office. A much bigger thing. The money for the men on the construction job. You will likely laugh at the idea that this has anything to do with it, but though I've tried to, somehow I can't succeed in laughing very hard. I have a feeling these letters have some connection with a gang of men who mean to have a try for that payroll again, if they can't get at me and my money this way." He shook the letter.

"But surely you've taken precautions? Why not pay the men by check?"

Robert MacBeth made a wholly contemptuous gesture with his hand, which still held the letter. "Use your head. I can't pay laborers by check. Lots of the foreigners don't know what to do with checks. No, we've got to make and keep things safe ourselves."

He looked at Sir George, and, leaning toward him and in a low tone, said: "It's all right in New York. I can get protection, armored cars if need be, but I've a hunch there's trouble brewing for me and I've got a great many thousands of dollars to pay out on the big piece of construction work being done up the river. It's how to get the money there safely that is puzzling me now."

He paused a moment and said quietly: "I don't mind telling you that I have the sum deposited in the nearest local bank. I'm going to send some one down to collect it from the bank later and that some one may be you." He looked at Sir George questioningly. "Yes, of course, but when and how?"

"That's what I want you to tell me. I'd like you to go down with Roberta today and look over the lay of the land."

"Can't your man take me?" Sir George asked. "Might find out more that way."

"I don't want the servants to know or suspect anything about it, nor the people in the village. In fact, I don't want anybody to know anything about it, except possibly Roberta."

"Must she know? Why drag a girl into this?"

"Roberta won't be dragged in," her father promised him. "But I want her to take you down the river to the bank and up the river to show you where the money is to be taken."

"By motor?"

"Yes."

"But you surely wouldn't let the girl drive if there was likelihood of danger."

"No, but you could drive yourself, once you knew the way."

"Oh, yes."

"Well, go with her to the village and to the bank, where she will cash a check and introduce you to the cashier. Then tomorrow she'll take you up the river."

"Have you told her this?"

"Not yet. Why?"

"It's barely possible she may have made arrangements of her own."

"She'll change that if I ask her," her father said easily.

"Ah—"

Sir George was not aware himself of how much he put in that "Ah." It was sufficient to make Robert MacBeth turn his head quickly and survey the young man. Having turned if he saw that the young man's eyes were fixed on a spot of blue. MacBeth was presently able to observe that this was a car on the high road over on the mainland and that opposite that car was a dim blur that had a bronze color. He remembered the color of the dress his daughter had been wearing that morning and turned his head so that the younger man might not see his face. Sir George continued to

watch the bronze blur until it took shape and outline and began to look like Roberta MacBeth. Then he started, aware that the silence had been long.

"You were saying?"

"That I'll tell Roberta what I want as soon as she crosses the river. Or will you meet her and tell her I want to see her? And take yourself off for a time."

"Absolutely."

Sir George sauntered toward the river and met the flushed and exultant looking girl.

"Spying?"

His look was enough to make her feel ashamed of herself.

"Oh, I say," she said. "That was unfair and I didn't really mean it."

Sir George did not stop. "It doesn't matter," he said stiffly. "Your father is waiting to see you."

The girl angrily kicked a rock off the towpath into the canal. "Well, if you want to be hateful, be hateful."

He turned. "If you would only get it into your extraordinarily pretty little head," he told her not unkindly, "that I'm here because I have to earn my living and your father has been good enough to give me a post—that's that. As for you and your friends, at the risk of being thought rude, I tell you that I don't give a tinker's d—n whom you meet or where you meet him, and that's all of that."

There had been a quickly drawn breath and then silence and he had walked on over the canal bridge to the highway, feeling completely ashamed of himself. Why had he lost his temper? His remorse gaining on him, he was about to turn once more when the sound of flying footsteps came to him. He turned to confront an angry and flame-checked girl, who told him vehemently: "You've just got to know this. You don't hate me one degree less or more than I hate you."

"Well, since we know it's mutual," said Sir George evenly, "suppose we go on hating each other as much as we like in private, and keep a friendly smile to face the world." He smiled at her now.

"Oh, you're hateful!" the girl cried. "Just when I meant to be decent to you for father's sake, you make it impossible. I promise you I'll do anything I can to speed your return to Bonnie Scotland."

"Ah," returned the homesick Sir George, his heart in his voice, "if you only could."

The girl looked at him speechless a moment and yet she did not go. He wondered why, but almost before he was done wondering he suddenly saw the answer to his question. The blue car was some little way ahead of him, on the tree-shaded cross road to the highway, and its owner was struggling frantically to start it.

That was why she thought he was spying; that was why she would not, if she could help it, leave him alone.

He continued to walk toward the car and to speak so that the man, whoever he was, might hear. "Surely you don't want to annoy your father and have him question you, do you? As for the blue car and its owner," he continued, "it is hardly my affair."

The man at the car jerked his head up and nodded to the girl and then quickly turned his back and busied himself with the car again.

Sir George waited for a moment. Surely any decent sort would be likely to come over and speak—make it easy for the girl to introduce him. The man, however, after that one look hurried back to work at the car, his face resolutely turned from Sir George. The girl, looking first at one and then at the other, slowly turned and went toward her father's house.

Sir George walked away past the car. What sort of cheap and awful person that little devil had elected as hero of her secret romance, he now had a pretty fair idea. The man's face, though good-looking in its way, was an open book to Sir George.

Sir George wondered why the fellow had been so anxious as to try to hide his face, so anxious to avoid any speech with him. He stopped dead in the middle of the road for a moment as the solution occurred to him. It must have been that he was afraid, since he had seen Sir George first, of recognition. Then the fellow must be some one whom he himself would recognize. He walked on thoughtfully.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Salt Important Part in Rites of Sacrifice

The first accredited mention of salt appears in the first books of Moses, where it is referred to as an essential part in many of the sacrifices of the Jews. The most familiar Bible reference to salt is in Genesis ix, 26, in which Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of that valuable commodity—probably to the great enjoyment of the goats, sheep and cattle of that district.

The next most familiar Bible reference to salt is that in Matthew v, 13—"If the salt has lost his savor, where-with shall it be salted?" Other references in the New Testament are Mark ix, 49-50, and Colossians iv, 6.

Homer, 800 years before Christ, speaks of salt in the Greek sacrificial rites; no sacrifice was complete without it. Herodotus, who was born in 484 B. C., says the Egyptians ate salted food, including raw fish that

was first steeped in brine and then sun-dried. They must have been exactly like the Gloucester salt fish of today, or the Provincetown scull-joes. The Egyptians also ate raw duck and quail, salted in similar fashion.—Boston Globe.

Childish Speech

Elizabeth Cleveland says that the child begins to use single words at from ten months to a year old. At twenty-three months he should be using simple phrases. By the time he is three he has a large vocabulary (500 to 1,500 words), and can converse well enough for his own practical purposes.

Needs to Pause

Sometimes a 3-minute c.e. is a guy who needs that much time to think of a snappy comeback.—Des Moines Tribune Capital.

Should Have Known What He Would Do

The hero of this one is not exactly as meek as Moses, but yields often to the wishes of a somewhat domineering wife, with mental reservations.

The two went north not so long ago and, when the husband's two weeks of vacation were over, he yielded to her entreaty that she be allowed to stay on the lake for the remainder of the month and assured her everything would be all right at home. Of course, he would take his meals out, but he would sleep at home and take care of everything just as she would were she right there.

The woman came home Sunday to find the grass out of bounds, every window shade awry, and ashes, cigarette stubs, newspapers and whatnot scattered everywhere. But greater than her dismay at the disorder was the shock she received at friend husband's attitude toward her displeasure at the state of affairs.

There was no apology, no remorse on the part of the culprit.

"What is the meaning of this?" she asked, falling into the time-worn question that wives save up for just such a situation.

"It's just my idea of 'Revolt in the Desert,'" he answered calmly, and stood his ground right there.—Kansas City Star.

A Real Knife

In a large advertisement in another column of this paper the Remington Arms Company, manufacturers of the famous Remington arms and ammunition, announce a new one dollar knife. Your local dealer probably carries it. If not, send his name and one dollar to Remington Outery Works, 951 Barnum Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut, and knife will be forwarded to you. A perfect Christmas present for a husband or son.—Advertisement.

A Family Custom

"Have your parents given their consent to our union?"

"Not yet. Father hasn't expressed his opinion yet, and mother is waiting to contradict him."—Faun.

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The Great Eastern, originally called the Leviathan, launched in 1858, was nearly 700 feet long, and was for many years the largest ship in the world.

Fair Antiquarian

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