

LAST LOVER

BY Helen Topping Miller

Richard McFarlane, who disappeared during the first World War, leaving his wife, Julia, and two children, suddenly returns 25 years later and identifies himself as Captain Mackey, stationed at the same camp as his son, Ric, serving in World War II. Ric has become involved with Sandra Calvert, a divorcee who Captain Mackey knew at one time. He threatens her, but she marries Ric anyway, arriving at Julia's farm to live with her. She startles Julia by recognizing a picture of Richard as that of Captain Mackey. When Julia goes to a theater with Dave Patterson, a family friend, Sandra and Jill, Julia's daughter, become engaged in a vehement argument.

CHAPTER XVIII

"You couldn't understand Ricky, though. He's so sensitive. And you aren't a complex person at all, you know, Jill. You're primitive really. You are in your element here on a farm. Odd that two people could be so entirely different as you and Ricky."

"I'm such a primitive that I learned to tell the truth very early, and Ric never bothered. He went in for the more esthetic angles; he thought living excitingly was more important than keeping his word or choosing high-minded people for friends, or anything like that."

"I suppose that's intended for a dig," Sandra said, "but it's quite all right. It doesn't worry me at all. Ricky told me that you would probably hate me."

"How stupid of him—to think that I'd bother!" Jill drawled. "Why should anything you do matter to me, Sandra? Or anything that I do concern you? We're separate people. We can live our lives without getting emotional, one way or the other. Only don't put on an act with me, Sandra. It's no good. And leave my mother alone. Dooley's not like me. She doesn't know how to take care of herself."

"I rather like your mother," Sandra said, languidly. "I'd never want to do anything to hurt her, if I could help it."

"What do you mean, if you can help it?" demanded Jill, hotly. "You'd better make an effort to help it, Mrs. Richard McFarlane."

Sandra got up and strolled over to the dressing table, picked up the framed photograph that stood there. The picture of a blue-eyed officer in an old-fashioned, wide-brimmed campaign hat.

"Is this a relative?" she asked, with studied casualness.

"My father." Jill did not look at her. "Ric's father, too. He died in France in the last war."

"Oh, yes, Ricky told me. He looks so like an old friend of my first husband's that the resemblance is really startling." She studied the picture, and her lips curved greedily. She licked them slyly like a cat, and her eyelids narrowed, a speculative look growing behind them. She put the frame down, shrugged a little. "Your father was very handsome, Jill, but he reminds me so much of that man I detest that I won't look at him any more. Odd that two people should be so alike, isn't it?"

"Not terribly odd. We only have a few features. They couldn't help putting a few similar combinations together."

"By the way, Jill?" Sandra paused in the door. "I haven't discussed the future with your mother. I really dread having to do it. But I do have to know what's ahead of us, don't I?"

Jill stood up, stiffening. "What has my mother to do with what's ahead of you?" she asked.

"But naturally—she has everything to do with it! Don't you think it would be better if you talked to her about it, Jill?"

"Talked to her about what? What future do you mean? You knew that Ric would be gone, perhaps for years. You knew that, when you married him."

"But that's just it. I did marry him. I am Ricky's wife. And because I'm his wife I do have to be concerned about our future. Ricky has rights that have to be considered."

"Rights?" Jill repeated curtly. "Of course he has rights. The right to get the best out of life that he can when the war is over. But my mother has nothing to do with that. That's Ric's problem."

A Request for Ric's Rights

"You'd like to see him pushed out, wouldn't you? You'd like to keep everything for yourself. You've been digging yourself in, haven't you—building yourself up as such a dutiful daughter, playing Ric down with those sly, sidelong digs! Awfully clever! But—I think I know something that you don't know. Miss Jill McFarlane! It's merely a hunch I have, but my hunches have a way of coming through. And my advice to you is to change your act, and quick."

Jill looked at her, her eyes like ice. "You'd better put it in words of one syllable, Sandra," she said, coldly. "Being a primitive I'm no good at puzzles. I think you know how to speak plainly, if you want to do it. I think you know a lot of very plain words, indeed."

Sandra threw back her head. "I

do know the plain words! Only plain words would do for you, you smug, self-satisfied little snob! I want ten thousand dollars. Is that plain enough? And I mean to have it. Oh, I know this smart show you've all been putting on, I saw through it instantly. You're all so poor, and you work in corn-fields and wear overalls and eat cabbage and grits like white trash, and put your cars up, but none of that fooled me for a minute. Ricky has a right to his share, and I'm going to have it."

Jill's eyes were amber flames. "So blackmail is one of your special arts, too, is it? I thought as much," she said, slowly. "I suppose poor Ric has done something foolish—the poor deluded sap! And now you've got hold of it and want to hold it over my mother's head, because you've seen how she adores Ric? Well, it won't work, Sandra. It simply won't work. Ric's been in jams before, and my mother is more or less resigned to anything that comes now. She's given up expecting anything from Ric, except disappointment."

"I'll see her grandfather's eyes move past her unessily for a moment, focus on the picture on her dresser; then his mouth drew straight and his eyes narrowed a little. Without a word, he walked out of the room. Then she heard a car door slam down below, and she snatched up her robe and wriggled into it and flew down the stairs. Dooley had come, and Dooley must not know. She had to get to Dooley before Sandra did."

She flung open the screen door and stood framed in the light, all wrinkled green silk and flaming hair and eyes like black flames in a face as white as chalk.

And so it was that Richard McFarlane, standing there under the light, saw his daughter. Jill drew back, startled, and said, "Oh!" and pulled her flying drapery around her. Then she got her breath a little and said, "Oh, I'm sorry! You startled me. I was expecting my mother. You're Captain Mackey, aren't you? I remember. I saw you at Ridley."

He came into the room, blinking at the light. He looked a little odd, Jill thought; there was that same bewildered look in his eyes, that same curious nostalgia, as though he were thinking back hard, trying to remember something that hurt. He held out his hand.

"I remember," he said. "You are Julia, aren't you? You were with young Gordon, down at Ridley."

"I'm Jill. Nobody ever has called me Julia. Won't you sit down, Captain Mackey? You came to see Mother, did you? I'm sorry. She's out just now, but she should be back soon. Will you wait?"

He stood turning his cap around in his hands.

"I came," he said, "to see your brother's wife. The young Mrs. McFarlane. She's here, isn't she?"

"Yes, she's here. Shall I call her? She won't be, I think. There isn't anything wrong, is there, Captain? With Ric, I mean?"

"No, there's nothing wrong. Not with your brother, at least. But I have a message for your sister-in-law. But there's no special hurry about it."

"Will you sit down then? I'm sorry you find me in such disarray, but I was tired, and I didn't feel like dressing again after my bath." He took the chair she indicated. He said, "You're very like your mother. She had hair like that, I remember."

"Oh, yes," Jill said, "you were an old friend of my mother's, weren't you? You told me, and I'd forgotten." She dropped on a stool and coaxed her thin garments to cover her brown legs and eased her broken arm into a comfortable position. "But I'm more like my father," she went on. "He was an officer, too. I was always sorry that I wasn't born a boy so that I could be a soldier like my father. I have a brother in the air corps—but you know that, of course. You've seen him, down at Ridley, I suppose?"

"I may have seen him," he evaded. "You've been hurt, haven't you? What happened? Car get away from you?"

"No—it was a horse. I went over her head. Can't I get you something to drink, Captain?"

"I could use a drink." He smiled at her. "Could I come with you and fix it myself?"

"Of course, if you like. Men always like to get into kitchens, don't they?" Jill led him through the hall and the dining-room, flipping switches as she went, noting that he seemed to be studying the rooms as they passed through them. "This house is very old," she talked on, pushing the swing door back and waiting for him to precede her into the warmth and peach-pickle fragrance of Mamie's kitchen. "My mother's grandfather built it before the Civil War, and the bricks were burned here on the place."

"What's broke?" he whispered. Jill got herself in hand with a little difficulty.

"I got mad, John I." she said, hoarsely. "I yelled like a—like a..."

"Like a McFarlane," supplied her grandfather, helpfully. "I heard you. What were you yelling about?"

"What's broke?" he whispered. Jill got herself in hand with a little difficulty. "I got mad, John I." she said, hoarsely. "I yelled like a—like a..." "Like a McFarlane," supplied her grandfather, helpfully. "I heard you. What were you yelling about?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)



Double Corn Yield By Soil Management

Illinois Tests Prove Value of New Methods

Farmers can double the present 50-bushel-per-acre state average corn yields through good soil management, declares Prof. A. L. Lang, University of Illinois.

Corn yields above 100 bushels per acre are repeatedly harvested by research workers from high fertility plots at the experiment stations. At Illinois, Lang points out, the high fertility plots have averaged above 100 bushels since the use of hybrid seed.

The No. 1 problem in getting these high yields is the rebuilding of the organic matter supply of the soils. Years of "soil mining" have run down this supply, even on the



rich black soil of the state. In addition, the soil supply of phosphorus and potash, vital to the growth of legumes, is badly depleted in most Corn Belt soils.

Lang outlines four steps toward rebuilding the soil:

1. Test your soil to determine the needs for lime and plant food.
2. Use of lime and fertilizers according to test to build the fertility level for the growth of legumes in the rotation.
3. Use of deep-rooted legumes, crop residues and manure to rebuild the organic matter supply. This organic matter will help aerate the soil and furnish the bulk of the nitrogen needed for crop rotation.
4. Supplementing the increased fertility of the soils with fertilizers carrying nitrogen, phosphorus and potash to permit the raising of 100-bushel corn crops.

Root Rot Resistant Oats Increase Yield

Because a disease called helminthosporium is affecting older varieties of oats in many grain states, farmers are turning to new introductions, such as Bonda and Mindo, which have proven resistant to this form of root rot.

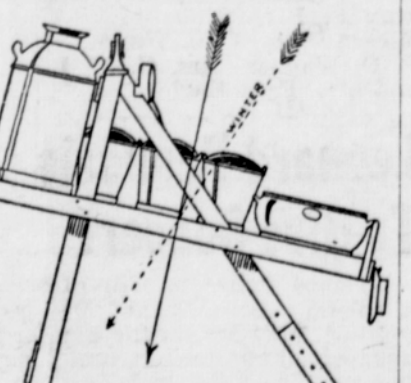
In Minnesota the Minnesota Crop Improvement association is furnishing seed of these varieties to farmers who agree to retain only half of the crop for their own use, selling



Rhoda, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Lawson, Albert Lea, Minn., beside a typical shock of Bonda oats on her father's farm. The yield last year was 86 bushels to the acre.

the balance to farmers who will agree to grow it for certification as pure seed. Those who have received the seed of these two varieties report excellent yields and no crinkling down of the straw from disease.

Utensil Sunning Rack



Adjustable sunning rack for milk utensils may be constructed to permit adjusting the angle of the slope so that the sun, summer or winter, will enter into the milk pails, cans or other utensils. The device shown was designed by Kansas board of agriculture.

Rules for Good Milk Insuring Top Profit

In order to make money with dairy cows not only must volume milk production be secured, but also it must be of good quality. To secure good milk, milk only clean, healthy cows and keep them in a well-ventilated barn. Use of only clean sterile utensils, prompt cooling of the milk and proper handling until it is used or delivered will assure good quality milk. Men handling cows also should be clean.

NEEDLECRAFT PATTERNS

Crocheted Chair Set, Pillow Top



You can crochet a pillow top and chair set in this design. Pattern 870 has directions and charts for chair set and pillow top. Send 20 cents in coins for pattern.

Due to an unusually large demand and current conditions, slightly more time is required in filling orders for a few of the most popular patterns. Send your order to:

Sewing Circle Needlecraft Dept. Box 3217 San Francisco 6, Calif. Enclose 20 cents for Pattern.

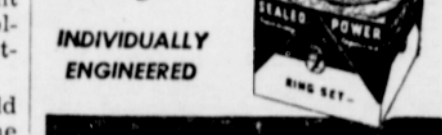
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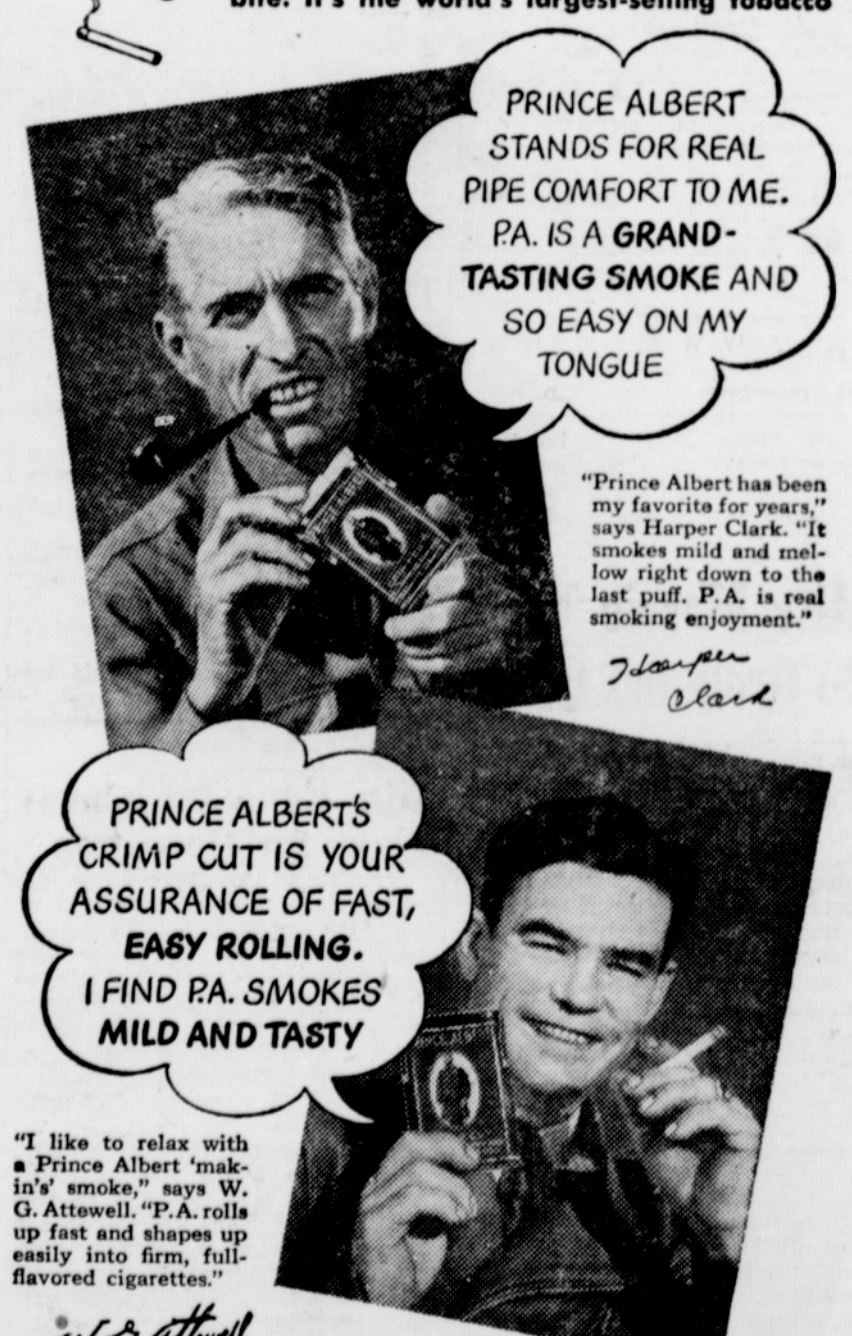
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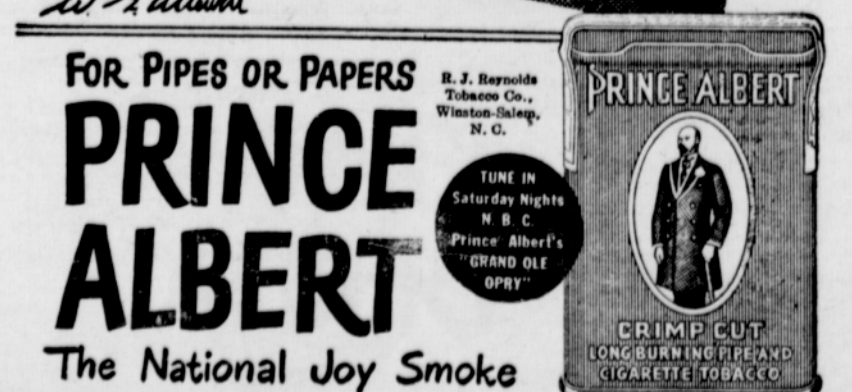


PRINCE ALBERT STANDS FOR REAL PIPE COMFORT TO ME. P.A. IS A GRAND-TASTING SMOKE AND SO EASY ON MY TONGUE

"Prince Albert has been my favorite for years," says Harper Clark. "It smokes mild and mellow right down to the last puff. P.A. is real smoking enjoyment."

PRINCE ALBERT'S CRIMP CUT IS YOUR ASSURANCE OF FAST, EASY ROLLING. I FIND P.A. SMOKES MILD AND TASTY

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