



Marriage Is Different Today

By PEARL S. BUCK

ILLUSTRATION BY AL MOORE

A famed novelist says today's young man doesn't want a girl like dear old Mom; life's too different and challenging, and he needs a companion who can share every exciting moment of it

"THERE IS nothing 'new' about marriage," John said. John is a friend of many years, the solid, conservative son of a radical, independent father. He and his wife Mary and their newly married daughter Joan and her husband Mark sat in my living room.

John is a fine man, intelligent and forthright. His work takes him around the world at least once a year, and now that Joan is married, Mary goes with him. We meet with mutual eagerness to discuss everything that is happening everywhere.

I had just put the question to him about "new marriages." I turned to Mark. "Do you agree? Or is it too soon to ask?"

"I don't agree," he said positively, "and it's not too soon to ask. Joan and I talked about this long ago."

"What do you want out of marriage that you think your parents didn't have?" I asked.

Mark is a thoughtful young man, highly educated, still in his early 20s. Of course, Joan is an unusual young girl. She has traveled with her parents and speaks several languages very well.

"I want companionship," Mark said. "And when I say companionship, I mean I want a real companion, not just a good housekeeper and a mother for my children. I expect to spend the rest of my life with Joan, and I want to be able to talk with her about everything that interests me. I don't want to have to explain things to her. I want her to know what I mean when I talk about the diffusion of neutrons, for example."

"Isn't that a tall order, Joan?" I asked.

She shook her head. "I know what he means."

I persisted. "And you, Mark—do you understand everything she may want to talk about?"

"We're interested in the same things," he said. "I took care of that. I made up my mind long ago that when I married it would be to a girl in my own field. There's no time nowadays to build long bridges across the chasms between man and woman. If she didn't want to marry a man in her field, then she wouldn't have married me. I'm in her field as much as she's in mine."

He turned to John. "That's what's new in marriage! We're beginning our marriage at the point the older generation reached only after years of mutual love and effort. We're ready to live together."

AFTER THEY were gone, I went back to Mark's answer to my question. Is he right? Is this demand something new in marriage? What do men and women expect of one another when they marry?

I suppose, now as always, they expect or hope for the satisfaction of their needs. The needs, again in general terms, have always been the same—security and belonging, love, companionship on some level, home, and children.

But there is something new in this word *companionship*, which Mark stressed with peculiar emphasis. Mark is a modern young man. He has been educated in specific fields, and he wants a new kind of companionship—the sort of com-

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