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Marta's Interference

By Constance D'Arcy Mackay

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"Heaven deliver me from neighbors!" grumbled Marta to herself as she dusted Professor Travers' study. From its windows she could look across to the next lawn, where a girl in an emerald dress was tending a flower garden, a lace parasol in one hand and a ridiculously small green watering can in the other. At her heels barked a tiny dog, and it would have been hard to tell which Marta regarded with the more disapproval, the toy spaniel or its owner.

The next door house had been vacant so many years that Marta looked on its new purchasers, the Gainsbors, in the light of intruders, as the little village of Hampstead was seldom frequented by summer people. For this reason Professor Travers made it his retreat the moment college closed in order to escape the festivities of commencement—cheering students, pink ice cream and a host of enthusiastic girls had no charms for him. He was bored by the former and too deeply absorbed in his books to notice the latter. For this Marta, his middle aged housekeeper, was supremely grateful. She had taken care of him too many years to relinquish her supremacy without a struggle.

"But it will come some time," said John, her husband. "Love is like the measles. And the older he is when he takes it the harder it will go with him."

"He is thirty-five and it hasn't come yet," answered Marta hopefully.

She had nursed Travers through many childish ailments and felt herself capable of warding off this most dangerous ailment of all. So she guarded his solitude with watchful zeal. She had a horror of intruders, especially young and feminine ones, and the nearness of Betty Gainsboro was a positive menace to her peace of mind.

"Running about in high heeled slippers and wearing big, fluffy hats, just



"OH, WON'T YOU PLEASE STOP?" BEBOUGHT A SWEET VOICE

as if a freckle or two would hurt her" sniffed Marta, though it was undeniable that the face beneath the wide brims was winsomely attractive.

The professor caught his first glimpse of it one afternoon as he came home through his orchard after a morning spent in the woods near by. One coat pocket bulged with specimens, the other contained his notebook, and he hurried along the grassy path, wondering if Marta had kept luncheon waiting, when from the branches of a gnarled apple tree above him came a great rustling.

"Oh, won't you please stop?" be-sought a sweet voice.

The professor halted, blinking upward into the leaves, where a pretty, embarrassed face looked out like a Dryad in distress.

"I'm up here, and I can't get down, so I'm afraid I'll have to ask you for help."

To the professor, unused to climbing any tree save that of knowledge, the feat was extremely difficult. Yet he managed it skillfully enough and swung himself up to where Betty sat. Then slowly, holding very tight to his hand, she made her descent, ending with a jump and a frightened little laugh.

"I won't do that again," she declared. "It's been awfully good of you to help a neighbor in distress, especially when she's been trespassing on your property."

Travers said that he hoped she would trespass as often as she liked, and side by side they moved homeward through the long orchard grass. He saw her to her own gate, and next day when they went for a stroll by the Hampstead River Marta's worst fears seemed realized. Her consternation increased when Travers began to look to his canoe that he had not used in years, humming a college glee as he worked. "If he is drowned it will be the fault of that flimsy piece next door!" wailed Marta.

He began, too, to take an alarming interest in his personal appearance, a thing he had never done before. It

gave up his somewhat seedy coats and queer, loose collars, and a box presently arrived from New York bearing the hall mark of a fashionable tailor. And Marta felt that a crisis had been reached when the loss of some of the finest specimens of flora in Travers' collection only moved him to a temporary regret. He no longer spent his days poring over books. Instead, he studied the moods of Miss Betty Gainsboro and came to the conclusion that there was nothing on earth more incomprehensible than a woman. Once, when the canoe had nearly overturned in the face of danger, yet the sight of a tiny garter snake made her seek refuge on the nearest fence, where she perched in a panic till Travers had killed it.

One evening when Travers was returning from a lecture he had given at the summer school of an adjoining town he noted a tall young fellow, fair haired and broad of shoulder, get off at the Hampstead station and strike along the village road like one accustomed to the place. The professor followed a little in the rear. At the Gainsboro gate the young fellow turned, and Betty, who was lingering on the lawn, flew to meet him with outstretched hands.

"Oh, Dick!" she cried, an unmistakable thrill of surprise and joy in her voice. Of the rest Travers saw and heard nothing. He stepped back quickly into the shadows. What right had he to be a witness of a lovers' meeting?

"You must have had a tiresome day," said Marta solicitously, "for you're as white as a sheet."

"I'm an old fool," groaned Travers to himself, "an old fool! How could I ever have supposed that she could care for me? Why, I'm nothing but a book-worm—all my life has been spent in dusty volumes and class rooms, and now—" He looked toward the Gainsboro house, where the glimmer of a cigarette shone like a firefly through the darkness and the cheerful tink-a-ting of a banjo came on the night air. "Love," said the professor slowly, "was not intended for me."

Thereafter, to Marta's satisfaction, he stayed indoors, forsaking his canoe and applying himself listlessly to his books. But Marta was quick to read the signs and soon realized that all was not well with the young professor. That he should fall in love had been trouble enough, but to be refused by a girl with no more brains than a butterfly, that was not to be borne and Marta's anger rose the longer she thought of it. But when, after artfully questioning the professor, she found that he had not asked Miss Betty Gainsboro to marry him, then she raged in Marta's heart a battle between the desire for her own supremacy and the desire for Travers' happiness. The latter conquered.

"I see," she remarked to Travers as she entered his study bright and early, duster in hand. "I see that Miss Gainsboro's cousin, who's been visiting there has gone. He's going to marry a girl out west and Miss Gainsboro's to be bridesmaid. Just read it in the paper this morning. I'm sorry to disturb you, professor, but you know this is cleaning day. I won't be long. Suppose you go out in the orchard and wait till I'm through?" Marta had seen the flicker of a white dress between the trees. Travers, absentmindedly clutching a paper knife, went out into the orchard in a happy daze and came face to face with Betty Gainsboro.

"Looking for specimens?" she demanded, a catch of laughter in her tone.

"No," said Travers, "for I've found a perfect one at last, a rose of all the roses that I mean to cherish forever, if you will let me, Betty."

"If you don't mind the thorns," she whispered.

And Marta, watching them from the study window, surreptitiously wiped her eyes. "I do believe I'm glad of it after all," she said huskily, "though I know he'll never get his meals on time."

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TREASURER'S NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given that there are funds in the county treasury for the redemption of all outstanding Klamath county warrants protested on and prior to July 11, 1906. Interest on same will cease from this date.
Dated at Klamath Falls, Oregon, this 11th day of October, 1906.
L. Alva Lewis, county treasurer.

SOCIETIES OF KLAMATH FALLS

A. O. U. W.—Linkville Lodge No. 119 meets in the A. O. U. W. hall every Tuesday evening. Visiting Brothers always welcome. Roy Hamaker, M. W. J. W. Siemens, Recorder.

Evangeline Lodge No. 88 Degree of Honor Lodge meets in the A. O. U. W. hall every second and fourth Thursdays in the month. Nancy N. White, C. of H. Jesse Marpie, Recorder.

W. O. W. Ewanna Camp, No. 769, W. O. W. meets every Tuesday evening at 7:30 o'clock at Sahlerson's hall. All neighbors cordially invited.
C. K. Brandenburg, Clerk.

A. F. & A. M.—Klamath Lodge No. 77. Meets Saturday evening or before the full moon of each month in the Masonic Hall. Alex. Martin Jr., W. M. W. E. Bowdoin, Secretary.

O. E. S.—Aloha Chapter No. 61, meets in the Masonic hall every second and fourth Tuesday evenings in each month. Laura A. Willets, W. M. Jennie E. Reames, Secretary.

I. O. O. F.—Klamath Lodge No. 137 meets every Saturday evening in the A. O. U. W. hall. Jasper Bennett, N. G. Geo. L. Humphrey, Secretary.

Ewanna Encampment No. 46, I. O. O. F. Encampment meets second and fourth Saturdays in the month in the A. O. U. W. hall. Jasper Bennett, C. P. Geo. L. Humphrey, Scribe.

Prosperity Rebekah Lodge No. 104 I. O. O. F. meets in the A. O. U. W. hall every first and third Thursdays in the month. Jennie Hurn, N. G. Lorinda M. Sauber, Secretary.

K. of P.—Klamath Lodge No. 99 meets in the A. O. U. W. hall every Monday evening. Bert Bamber, C. U. John Hamilton, K. of R. and S.

M. W. of A.—Lodge meets in the A. O. U. W. hall every first and third Wednesday in the month.
W. B. McLaughlin, Consul
W. A. Phelps, Clerk.

Foresters of America—Ewanna Camp, No. 61, meets in the A. O. U. W. hall every second and fourth Fridays in the month.
C. D. Willson, C. R.
E. E. Jamison, Rec. Sec.

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