

I, THE KING

By WAYLAND WELLS WILLIAMS.

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(Continued From Saturday.)

"What I've done is this," he went on, with some difficulty. "I've put aside the safest investments. I sold them as bonds, and the stock are public utilities and things that won't fluctuate much. They bring it, all told, an income of something like five thousand a year. Later on, when things recover, they'll bring more, but not much. Probably not more than fifteen thousand, at the best. Well, these securities I'm planning to settle on you, absolutely, with-out condition."

"I'm not pretending, Mary, that it's much. I know it's a pretty poor fulfillment of our marriage contract. It's hard to say anything without implying that you married me for money, which of course you didn't; but our marriage gives you certain rights in my money. Your business and—salvation lies in things that big income gives, all mine lies in other things. On what I propose leaving you, you can't have any say. You can have a flat in New York and a trip abroad now and then and perhaps a car and chauffeur, but that's about all. And, Mary, if it isn't enough, I want you to say so truthfully, because I've no right to buy my salvation at the expense of yours. I don't say I'll give up my whole plan if you object, but I'll consider it, and perhaps modify it. At any rate I shouldn't consider it settled without knowing how you feel."

"He stopped. The soft bright little face was dead quiet; the new chintzes gave forth a light pleasant odor; a fragmentary whistling drifted in from the crew's quarters. Mary looked at the end of her cigarette, flicked the ash out and then, with a gasp, looked all out on a small brass tray. She leaned forward in her chair toward Kit, her arms resting on the table.

"Then—you don't want me?" she said.

VIII.

The words were like a two-edged knife in a finely woven texture, the texture of Kit's talk and all that lay behind it. The whole prayerfully devised pattern lay in shreds between them.

"Why," he said, and felt his heart give a curious flutter, "why, I haven't considered that, Mary. I've been taking a pretty selfish point of view all along, but that's really one thing I haven't allowed myself to think about."

"What?" Her question was blind, dumb, like a stupid child's.

"Why, whether I want you to—share this exile with me. I thought your freedom was the best I could offer you—and the least."

"The flicked her hand impatiently. "Don't go on like that."

"Like what?"

"In that... impersonal way."

He stifled a laugh, not having been aware of impersonality, exactly. But Mary was deadly serious.

"Don't tell me," she went on, and deep feeling suddenly vibrated in her voice, "that when you've found yourself at last—come to see the world from your right point of view—I've got no place in it?"

"Place?" he stammered. "Why, you'll always have a place—"

"You don't suppose," Mary broke in, "that I haven't known you weren't yourself, all this year? Ever since before we were married? It's been plain as a pikestaff. It was as if you were in a trance. It was for what you'd be when you came out of it—and to help you out, if possible—that I married you."

"That was dear of you," said Kit, although he was alive now with hope and excitement, but Mary had the lead and was talking on, with ever-growing fire.

"Of course, I haven't been able to lift a finger to help you out. Perhaps that gives you some right to shove me aside, but not all—oh, not all, when I've watched for it and wanted it so. And now that it's come, you don't think I don't appreciate it, do you? Why, it's superb. Giving all you're giving up, just for a conviction—it's the most magnificent act of this life."

"And in spite of all this, not to be with you, not to mean one decided thing—"

"Mary," he cut in sharply. "Do you mean you want to go to Dinmurch with me?"

She looked at him as one would look at a perfect fool, and spoke as if at the height of an argument. "But of course I want to go to Dinmurch with you! Kamchatka, if you like."

"Really?" he pursued in wonder. "Give up New York? Restaurants? Music?"

"This—society thing?"

"Why, of course. That's nothing but a game. As soon as I found I could play it I began to lose interest in it."

"And you're interested in me?"

"Well, I believe so."

"Ah, but you aren't sure," he said, sinking back in his chair, remembering something. "This was just a generous impulse on her part, beautiful but transient; he must not take advantage of it."

"What do you mean?" Mary followed him up. "Can't I be interested in anything but cafes and Schumann if I want to? Is it so absurd to be interested in one's own husband?"

"Why, no. The point is, I killed all that in you. How could it have been otherwise, the way I carried on? That was why you took it that way, when I came into it."

"VI? Did she come into it, after all?"

"I mean, when I did that funny thing, and asked you to get her away. You were dear about it, perfectly fine, but—"

"Oh, God!" said Mary, thumping the table. "I see! I see it now! You were worried because I wasn't jealous of VI? Was that it?"

"Well—"

"Jealous!" cried Mary, her eyes flashing with a kind of crazy amusement. "Jealous! As if I didn't hope and pray that VI would get you, from the very start! As though—oh, I don't know. I couldn't help but hate her, of course, and hate the idea; and I knew that if she once dragged you down it would do the trick. It couldn't have failed—with you."

"What trick?"

"Why, give you a big jolt, shake you out of the trance. What you needed, you so careful and orderly and refined every minute, was one large, wholesome, indiscretion. I thought VI would give it to you—not consciously, oh no, but that you'd wake up and see afterward. I'd lose you for a while, yes, but I knew there'd be something different, and better, in your place."

"Well, of all the—"

"It didn't even need that, it seems—a simple drunken orgy was enough. To think of that, too. Often and often this winter, when a man's been carried feet first out of a dance, I've thought, 'Oh, if that could only happen to Kit Newell, just once—!'"

"But why should you hope for such a thing? It might have meant—"

"It never could have meant but one thing, with you. What do you think you are a kind of Nero? Hal, A

to me. Come on, dear, the launch is waiting."

They went up into the dark, and descended a small flight of steps leading obscurely into a bobbing boat. A man half rose from his seat, touched his cap and bent over the engine, and they sat down in the forward cockpit. The launch cast off, the yacht moved slowly away, the yellow lights flowing from her ports and skylights. Kit and Mary watched her, their hands joined in the darkness.

The launch gave a sneeze and plunged forward and about, humming comfortably. The harbor yawned in front, broken by the dim forms of anchored boats, slim and shipshape, black or white, teetering with the waves of vastly immovable. Lights swung from their mastsheads and glittered from their hulls. Afar on shore gleamed a chain of whiter points; from behind these, fugitively, at the will of the breeze, came a soft moaning of brass horns. A ship's bell changed. The water, black and choppy, was

riddled with moving high lights. Occasionally launches darted about, chugging feverishly and blowing sterna; waves divided from their sterns, deflecting channels of light that swept smoothly out at an expanding angle. Soon they broke, scattered, coalesced with other lights, subsided. The expanse was a welter of

struggle between living light and dead darkness; to look at it was like looking at chaos. Mary and Kit sat blinking and speechless before it, but their craft, guided by the unseen man at the wheel, plunged steadily through the landing.

(The End.)

Dance Hall Law Sought.
Special Dispatch to The Omaha Bee, York, Neb., Dec. 14.—Mayor Colton of York and the members of the city council have under consideration an ordinance to control the public dance halls of the city.

THE NEBBS

BLIND JUSTICE.

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess (Copyright 1924)

SATURDAY RUDOLPH NEBBS WAS ARRESTED FOR FAST DRIVING HIS CASE COMES UP THIS MORNING

YOUR HONOR, I PICKED THIS MAN UP ON MAIN STREET GOING 40 MILES AN HOUR AND I GAVE HIM A TICKET. HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO GET MY JOB.

YOUR HONOR, I MAY HAVE BEEN GOING A LITTLE FASTER THAN THE SPEED LIMIT BUT NOT 40 MILES AN HOUR - I HAD A VERY IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT OF MY BANK AND WAS LATE AND WHEN THIS OFFICER ROLLED ALONG SIDE OF MY CAR YOU WOULD THINK HE WAS HERDING CATTLE - YOU'D THINK HE WAS TALKING TO A BANDIT INSTEAD OF A RESPECTABLE CITIZEN!

MR. NEBBS, I'M GOING TO PROPOSE TO THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL TO MAKE AN APPROPRIATION TO SEND OUR OFFICERS TO A FINISHING SCHOOL SO THEY CAN TALK RESPECTFULLY TO OUR LAW OFFENDERS. IN THE MEANTIME STEP OVER TO THE CLERK AND PAY A STEP OVER AS DOLLARS AND COSTS AND FINE OF 25 DOLLARS AND COSTS AND IF YOU EVER GO TEARING THROUGH OUR STREETS AT 40 MILES AN HOUR AGAIN YOU'D BETTER HAVE THE PRESIDENT AND THE BANK WITH YOU IF YOU COME TO THIS COURT.

I'M SUPPOSED TO BE A RESPECTABLE CITIZEN OF SOME IMPORTANCE BUT NOT IN THAT COURT! HE TOOK THAT LEATHER-NECK'S WORD AGAINST MINE! I DON'T CARE FOR THE DOUGH BUT HE TOOK COP'S GOT NO RIGHT TO INSULT ME! I SUPPOSE IF HE TOOK ME TO THE STATION IN THE PATROL WAGON THE JUDGE WOULD BE STUCK ON ANOTHER 85⁰⁰ FOR TAXI FARE.

W.A. CARLSON.

Barney Google and Spark Plug

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck (Copyright 1924)

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO, BARNEY? I GOTTA CREEP TO MAJOR SPARK PLUG AGAINST MAJOR KLOTZ'S HAG NEXT SATURDAY AND I AINT GOT A DIME TO SEE THE THING GO THROUGH.

BLUFF YOUR WAY THROUGH - HUNT UP THE MAJOR AND TALK HIM INTO TAKING YOUR 1.0.U. FOR 500 BUCKS - IF SPARKY LOSSES YOU CAN BEAT IT FOR THE WOODS.

ALL RIGHT BROTHER GOOGLE - IF YOU SAY ALL YOUR READY CASH IS TIED UP RIGHT NOW, THIS 1.0.U. OF YOURS IS ACCEPTABLE.

GEE, MAJOR! YOUR A SPORT - COME OUT AND HAVE DINNER WITH ME AND WELL TALK THINGS OVER.

WELL, THE BEST SUPPER IVE HAD SINCE I LEFT INDIANA - WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

NO MORE PUDDING OR ANYTHING FOR YOU MAJOR? ALL RIGHT - ILL YELL FOR THE WAITER TO BRING THE BILL AND WELL BEAT IT.

THE BILL IS \$14.50 YOU PAY IT MAJOR! ILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER 1.0.U.

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BRINGING UP FATHER

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus (Copyright 1924)

PUT THOSE HAT'S RIGHT BACK IN THOSE BOXES AN DON'T GIVE ME AN ARGUMENT - DO YOU HEAR ME?

BUT DADDY -

DID YOU CALL SIR?

I DID - JAMES - PUT ON YOUR HAT AN TAKE THESE BOXES BACK WHERE THEY CAME FROM -

THE VERY IDEA - I'M NOT THE MINT - ALL YOU THINK OF IS HATS - ILL TELL YOU WHEN YOU CAN ORDER SOME HATS.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT - DADDY? THOSE HATS WERE FOR MOTHER - NOT ME!

HEY, JAMES - COME BACK HERE WITH THOSE BOXES!

Registered U. S. Patent Office SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

JERRY ON THE JOB

THANKS FOR THE REMINDER.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban (Copyright 1924)

I AINT SAVING IT'S TRUE, MR FIGSBY - BUT THERES A RUMOR GOIN AROUND THAT THIS YOUNG MAN JERRY IS TELLING PEOPLE THAT YOU'RE A TIGHT FISTED OLD NICKEL NURSER.

So!

JERRY COME IN HERE!

I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU CALLING ME, MR FIGSBY.

HAVE YOU OR HAVE YOU NOT BEEN GOIN AROUND TELLING PEOPLE THAT I'M A NICKEL NURSER AND A MISER AND THAT I'M TIGHT FISTED AND DOUGH DAFY?

ONO - NOT ME.

BUT IT IS A GOOD IDEA.

How to Start the Day Wrong

ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield (Copyright 1924)

GEORGE I'M GOING TO SEND A LOT OF STUFF TO THE POOR TODAY.

ATTIA GIRL! THIS IS THE TIME OF YEAR ONE MUST SHOW A CHRISTIAN SPIRIT.

SO HERE'S A LOT OF YOUR OLD HATS I'M GOING TO GIVE AWAY - YOU'LL NOT -

THOSE ARE PERFECTLY GOOD HATS.

IT ISN'T IN STYLE.

YOU'LL NOT THROW THIS ONE OUT - IT'S ALL RIGHT.

MY NEPHEW JUST GRADUATED FROM DENTISTRY SCHOOL AND IS COMMENCING AN OFFICE - WILL YOU GIVE HIM YOUR TRADE?

DID I SAY NO?

IT DON'T HURT TO DRUM UP TRADE FOR HIM - EFTER ALL, A NEPHEW AIN'T NO OUTSIDER - I HOPE HE GETS ENOUGH TO DO!

THAT LOOKS SILLY ON YOU!! MY STARS!

THIS ONE ONLY NEEDS TO BE BLOCKED AND RE-SHAPED.

I'D BE ASHAMED TO BE SEEN IN A THING LIKE THAT.

THIS IS A GOOD FISHING HAT.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT! GIVE SOME OF YOUR OWN CLOTHES AWAY. WHEN YOU GET THESE CHARITABLE STREAKS YOU WANT TO GIVE AWAY ALL MY THINGS - NOW LAY OFF!

I HAVENT HAD ANY NEED FOR DENTISTRY, YET, ABE!

IF YOU DO, DON'T FORGET MY NEPHEW, THE DENTIST.

HOW'S HE DOING?

HE'S VERY, VERY BUSY - OY, HAS HE WORK TO DO OVER AGAIN.