

MAN PROPOSES; WOMAN _____?

Making Two Hearts Beat As One

by A Married Woman



I AM A WOMAN twenty-six years old. And I am married. It will be granted therefore that I am in some position to speak about each of the three words which compose my text — to say nothing of the dash after Woman.

A moment ago I was looking at myself in the mirror, and I marvelled at my innocent look. By the side of my dressing table is a photograph of eight girls in stunning hats and gowns. These were my bridesmaids, and when I looked at them I marvelled at their innocent looks. On the other side of the mirror is a photograph of my husband, Fred. How stern he looks! How commanding! How full of purpose! I would laugh, but Fred might hear me, and if he guessed the reason of my laughter it would spoil the innocent effect.

I have just finished reading an article "Should Women Propose?" Is it necessary to say it was written by a man? Perhaps it would surprise him to know that, with a few unimportant exceptions, the woman always proposes. Should Woman Propose, indeed! In the name of the prophet: Figs!

Of course it's the man who finally mumbles or murmurs the words, but it's the woman who has to put the question first in his heart, and then in his mind, and then on his lips. How does she do it? Or better yet, perhaps, in the racy speech of the day, how does she work it?

That is precisely what I am about to tell, and to show my good faith I am going to give my own experiences first. My married masculine readers may be interested to see the methods unfolded which brought them to the point. To the married women this article will be like a comparison of notes on the most interesting subject in the world. My young unmarried male readers may as well know how they will presently be caught. And as for the girls whose engagement fingers are still unadorned, I feel sure that many will live to bless me for the hints herein contained.

How did I lead the first man to propose to me? It was absurdly simple.

It happened in that primary school for proposals: the summer resort. I never stooped to a summer resort proposal after that. It's too much like stealing the ribbons from baby's bonnet. But I was out for practice, and I got it. Moreover, I might have got a husband if he had been the right man. But I didn't want my first proposal to "take." So I purposely picked a man who wasn't the right one.

YES, everything was pre-arranged, even to the phrasing of the gentle but firm rejection. I chose a summer resort where there was plenty of boating and the first thing I did was to rent a boat for the season and arrange that I should keep the oars in my room at the boarding house. Oh, I was perfectly enthusiastic on the subject of boating —

But wait. Perhaps some of my readers are wondering why I didn't go in for canoeing. A paddle is so much lighter and canoeing is so much more romantic. True, but let me whisper something else. A canoe is no place for sentiment. It's too wobbly, and if the man is impulsive, the water is too wet. Of course it's very exciting to be saved from drowning, but what if the man can't swim? All things considered, a boat is much to be preferred as the *mise en scene* for a proposal.

Very well. After lunch one day I went to my room and waited until one of the most eligible young men was sitting in the hammock on the lawn. So then I tripped downstairs, carrying the oars over my shoulder, and when I strolled by him I naturally gave him a passing smile.

Illustrations

by CHARLES
FREDERIC
MILLER



"Going rowing?" he said. Shyly I nodded my head. Of course then he insisted on carrying the oars. What else could he do? And the first thing he knew he was rowing me up the river.

"Isn't it a beautiful view?" he said once. "It must look lovely by moonlight," I told him. And did he take the hint? He engulfed it — any young man would. But we had a week of dark nights before the moon began to shine again, and in that week we grew to know each other very well.

And then came the night of my first proposal. I was three hours dressing for it, and another half hour choosing the wrap which he was to drape around my shoulders at the proper moment. When we reached the boat I placed this wrap in the bow and took my usual seat in the stern. It may sound like a simple thing but nearly all the great facts of life are simple things like that.

Moonlight — water — ripples — distant music — a summer night — a girl — and a man. I let the combination work on him for half an hour, and by that time he had reached the point where nothing else in the world mattered. Then I shivered a little with the cold, and turning, he snatched up my wrap with such concern that he nearly upset us. I leaned forward so that he could arrange it around my shoulders, our faces were very close, our hands touched, he tried to kiss me, I wouldn't have it, and then of course I received my first proposal.

HEARTLESS? Who says so? Who else could possibly say so but a man! And when a man calls a woman heartless, every thoughtful woman turns a few pages of her memory, and begins to laugh.

My second proposal, I will admit, makes me just a little ashamed of myself, because I played upon a man's sympathetic nature. It was a delicate little comedy all the way through, but it was valuable because it taught me that I had the proposal situation well in hand.

One Sunday afternoon when Joe called, I had a headache. He had a gentle, soothing manner, and a voice to match. So I received him, thinking he might be able to make me forget my headache. Joe looked so tenderly sympathetic that an imp of mischief whispered to me "Make him propose! Just the thing for curing headaches!"

I was lying on a sofa with my smelling salts, cologne and handkerchief. As the first step I placed the scent-moistened handkerchief upon my forehead and let it slip off when I sniffed the smelling salts. Joe picked the handkerchief up. Again I put it on my forehead, again it slipped and again Joe picked it up. The third time it happened he drew his chair close to the sofa and gently held the handkerchief in place.

By then he was taking a deep, personal interest in me, and I knew there were only three logical steps between me and a proposal.

As the first logical step, my hand fluttered out for the cologne. It fluttered near Joe, and Joe held it. Taking the second logical step, I closed my eyes. This time it was Joe's turn to do the logical stepping. He kissed me (somewhere near the ear) and proposed. Dear Joe, he surprised himself, and I fear he felt relieved when I gently told him "No." But at least it cured my headache, and showed me that I was proficient in the art of proposing.

I was just twenty when I made my husband propose. And like my first two trials, it was ridiculously easy. I simply noticed the things that pleased him most, and guided myself accordingly. Before I had known him a fortnight I knew I had two accomplishments which charmed him more than anything else I did. By taking long strides, I could keep in step with him when he

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