

# The Real Adventure

By Henry Kitchell Webster

Copyright 1916, Bobbs-Merrill Co.

## AFTER THE SUGGESTION OF MARRIAGE HAD BEEN MADE TO RODNEY ALDRICH, HE DIDN'T WASTE TIME IN FOLLOWING IT UP—ROSE SURPRISES HER MOTHER

**SYNOPSIS.**—Rose Stanton, student at the University of Chicago, is put off a street car in the rain after an argument with the conductor. She is accosted by a young man who offers help and escorts her to another car line. An hour later this man, Rodney Aldrich, a well-to-do lawyer, appears soaked with rain at the home of his wealthy married sister, Mrs. Martin Whitney, to attend a birthday dinner in his honor. Mrs. Whitney suggests that it's about time Rodney looked around for a wife. He calls on Miss Stanton, and what occurs at the meeting is described in this installment.

### CHAPTER III.—Continued.

"Oh," she said, "mother's written two or three books, and lots of magazine articles, about women—women's rights and suffrage, and all that. She's been—well, sort of a leader ever since she graduated from college. Back in—just think!—1870, when most girls used to have—accomplishments—French, music, and washing extra, you know."

She said it all with a quite adorable seriousness, and his gravity matched hers when he replied: "I would like to meet her very much. Feminism's a subject I'm blankly ignorant about."

"I don't believe," she said thoughtfully, "that I'd call it feminism in talking to mother about it, if I were you. Mother's a suffragist, but—there came another wave of faint color along with her smile—but—well, she's awfully respectable, you know."

She didn't seem to mind his laughing out at that though she didn't join him.

"What about the other interesting member of the family," he asked presently, "your sister? Which is she, a suffragist or a feminist?"

"I suppose," she said, "you'd call Portia a feminist. Anyway, she hasn't time to talk about it much. You see, she's a business woman. She's a house decorator. She tells you what kind of furniture to buy, and then sells it to you. Portia's terribly clever and awfully independent."

"All right," he said. "That brings us down to you. What are you?"

She sighed. "I'm sort of a black sheep, I guess. I'm just in the university. But I'm to be a lawyer."

Whereupon he cried out so explosively that she fairly jumped. Then he apologized and said the notion of her in court trying a case—he was a lawyer himself—seemed rather startling.

She sighed again. "And now I suppose," she said, "you'll advise me not to be."

"Not a bit," he said. "It's the finest profession in the world."

But he said it off the top of his mind. Down below, it was still engaged with the picture of her in a dismal courtroom, blazing up at a jury the way she had blazed up at that conductor.

"I suppose," she hazarded, "that it's awfully dull and tiresome, though, until you get way up to the top."

That roused him. "It's awfully dull when you do get to the top, or what's called the top—being a client caretaker with the routine law business of a few big corporations and rich estates going through your office like grist through a mill. That's supposed to be the big reward, of course."

He was out of his chair now, tramping up and down the room. "The thing to bear in mind, if you're going to travel that road, is that a case is worth while in a precise and unalterable ratio to the amount of money involved in it. If you question that axiom at all seriously, you're lost. That's what happened to me."

He pulled up with a jerk, looked at her and laughed. "If my sister Frederica were here," he explained, "she would warn you that now was the time for you to ask me if I'd been to see Maude Adams or something like that."

She smiled in a sort of contented amusement. Then the smile transmuted itself into a look of thoughtful gravity, and there was a long silence which, though it puzzled him, he made no move to break.

At last she pulled in a long breath, turned straight to him, and said: "I wish you'd tell me what happened to you."

And, under the compelling sincerity of her, for the next two hours and a half, or thereabouts, he did—told it as he had never told it before.

He told her how he had started at the foot of the ladder in one of the big successful firms of what he called "client caretakers." He told of his discovery of a real legal problem and of the passionate enthusiasm with which he had attacked it, the thrilling weeks of labor he had put upon it.

And then he told her how the head of the firm, an old friend of his father's, had called him in and said the work he had done was very remarkable, but, unfortunately, not profitable to the firm, the whole amount involved in the case having been some twenty dollars. In other words, he was fired.

He told her how he'd got in with an altruistic bunch—the City Homes association. And from the way he

told of his labors in drafting a new city ordinance, she felt that it must have been one of the most fascinating occupations in the world, until he told her how it had drawn him into politics, and then how after an election a new state's attorney had offered him a position on his staff of assistants.

In a sense, of course, it was true that he had, as Frederica would have put it, forgotten she was there.

The girl knew he had forgotten, and her only discomfort came from the fear that the spell might be broken and he might remember suddenly and stop.

In the deeper sense—and she was breathlessly conscious of this, too—he hadn't forgotten she was there. He was telling it all because she was there—because she was herself and nobody else. She knew—though how, she couldn't have explained—with that intuitive certainty which is the only real certainty there is, that the story couldn't have been evoked from him in just that way by anyone else in the world.

At the end of two years in the state's attorney's office, he told her, he figured he had his training and was ready to begin.

"I made just one resolution when I hung out my shingle," he said, "and that was that no matter how few cases I got, I wouldn't take any that weren't interesting—that didn't give me something to bite on. I wasn't willing to be bored for any reward they had to offer me. It's cynical to be bored. It's the worst immorality there is. Well, and I never have been."

It wasn't all autobiographical and narrative. There was a lot of his deep-breathing, spacious philosophy of life mixed up in it. And this the girl, consciously and deliberately, provoked. It didn't need much. She said something about discipline and he snatched the word away from her. "What is discipline? Why, it's standing the gaff—standing it, not submitting to it. It's accepting the facts of life—of your own life, as they happen to be. It isn't being conquered by them. It's not making masters of them, but servants to the underlying things you want."

She tried to make a reservation there—suppose the things you wanted weren't good things?

But he wouldn't allow it. "Whatever they are," he insisted, "your desires are the only motive forces you've got. No matter how fine your intelligence is, it can't ride anywhere except on the back of your own



passions. Learn to ride them—control them—spur them. But don't forget that they're you just as essentially as the rider is."

It was with a curiously relaxed body, her chin cradled in the crook of her arm, which lay along the back of the couch, her eyes unfocused on the window, that the girl listened with more and more poignantly vivid consciousness of the man himself, the driving power of him, of something carelessly exultant in his own strength.

She got to thinking of the flight of a great bird wheeling up higher and higher on his powerful wings. Suddenly and to her consternation, she felt her eyes flushing up with tears. She tried to blink them away, but they came too fast.

Presently he dropped short in his walk—stopped talking, with a gasp, in the middle of a sentence, and looked into her face. She couldn't see him clearly, but she saw his hands clench and heard him draw a long breath. Then he turned abruptly and walked to the window and for a moment, endless minute there was a silence.

Something happened during that moment while he stood looking into her tear-flushed eyes—something momentous—critical—which no previous experience in her life had prepared her for. And it had happened to him, too. His silhouette as he stood there with his hands clenched, between her and the window, showed her that.

What underlay her quiet was wonder and fear, and more deeply still, a sort of cosmic contentment—the acquiescence of a swimmer in the still, irresistible current of a mighty river.

It was distinctly a relief to her when her mother came in and, presently, Portia. She introduced him to them, and then dropped out of the conversation altogether. As if it were a long way off, she heard him retelling last night's adventure and expressing his regret that he hadn't taken her to his sister to be dried out, before he sent her home.

She was aware that Portia stole a look at her in a puzzled, penetrating sort of way every now and then, but didn't concern herself as to the basis of her curiosity. It wasn't until he rose to go that she aroused herself and went with him into the hall. There, after he'd got into his overcoat and hooked his stick over his arm, he held out his hand to her in formal leave-taking. Only it didn't turn out that way. For the effect of that warm, lithe grip flew its flag in both their faces.

"You're such a wonder," he said. She smiled. "So are y-you." It was the first time she had ever stammered in her life.

When she came back into the sitting-room, she found Portia inclined to be severe. "Did you ask him to come again?" she wanted to know.

Rose smiled. "I never thought of it," she said.

"Perhaps it's just as well," said Portia. "Did you have anything at all to say to him before we came home, or were you like that all the while? How long ago did he come?"

"I don't know," said Rose behind a very real yawn. "I was asleep on the couch when he came in. That's why I was dressed like this." And then she said she was hungry.

There wasn't, on the whole, a happier person in the world at that moment.

But Rodney Aldrich, pounding along at five miles an hour, in a direction left to chance, was not happy. Or, if he was, he didn't know it. He couldn't yield instantly, and easily, to his intuitions, as Rose had done. He felt that he must think—felt that he had never stood in such need of cool, level consideration as at this moment.

But the process was impossible. Anyway, it was a remark Frederica had made last night that gave him something to hold on by. Marriage, she had said, was an adventure of which no amount of cautious thought taken in advance could modify the essential adventurousness. There was no doubt in his mind that marriage with that girl would be a more wonderful adventure than anyone had ever had in the world.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### How It Struck Portia.

It was just a fortnight later that Rose told her mother she was going to marry Rodney Aldrich, thereby giving that lady a greater shock of surprise than, hitherto, she had experienced in the sixty years of a tolerably eventful life.

Rose found her neatly writing a paper at the boudoir desk in the little room she called her den.

Mrs. Stanton said, "What, dear?" Indifferently enough, just in mechanical response of the matter-of-fact intonation of Rosalind's voice. Then she laid down her pen, smiled in a puzzled way up into her daughter's face, and added: "My ears must have played me a funny trick. What did you say?"

Rose repeated: "Rodney Aldrich and I are going to be married."

But when she saw a look of painful incomprehension in her mother's face, she sat down on the arm of the chair, slid a strong arm around the fragile figure, and hugged it up against herself. "I suppose," she observed contritely, "that I ought to have broken it more gradually. But I never think of things like that."

As well as she could, her mother resisted the embrace. "I can't believe," she said, gripping the edge of her desk with both hands, "that you would jest about a solemn subject like that, Rose, and yet it's incredible. . . ." The mother freed herself from the girl's embrace, rose, and walked away to another chair. "If you'll talk rationally and seriously, my dear," she said, "we can continue the conversation. But this flippant, rather—vulgar tone you're taking, pains me very much."

"The girl flushed to the hair. 'I didn't know I was being flippant and vulgar,' she said. 'I didn't mean to be. I was just trying to tell you—all about it.'"

"You've told me," said her mother, "that Mr. Aldrich has asked you to marry him and that you've consented. It seems to me you have done so so hastily and thoughtlessly. He's told you he loves you, I've no doubt, but I don't see how it's possible for you to feel sure on such short acquaintance."

"Why, of course he's told me," Rose said a little bewildered. "He can't help telling me all the time, any more than I can help telling him. We're—rather mad about each other, really. I think he's the most wonderful person in the world, and"—she smiled a little uncertainly—"he thinks I am. But we've tried to be sensible about it, and think it out reasonably. He said he couldn't guarantee that we'd be happy; that no pair of people could be sure of that till they'd tried. But, he said, it looked to him like the most wonderful, magnificent adventure in the world, and asked if it looked to me like that, and I said it did. Because it's true. It's the only thing in the world that seems worth—bothering about. And we both think—though of course we can't be sure we're thinking straight—that we've got a good chance to make it go."

Even her mother's bewildered ears couldn't distrust the sincerity with which the girl had spoken. But this only increased the bewilderment. She had listened with a sort of incredulous distaste she couldn't keep her face from showing, and at last she had to wipe away her tears.

At that Rose came over to her, dropped on the floor at her knees, and embraced her. "I guess perhaps I understand, mother," she said. "I didn't realize—you've always been so intellectual and advanced—that you'd feel that way about it—he shocked because I hadn't pretended not to care for him, and been shy and coy—in spite of herself, her voice got an edge of humor in it—and a startled fawn, you know, running away, but just not fast enough so that he wouldn't come running after and think he'd made a wonderful conquest by catching me at last. But a man like Rodney Aldrich wouldn't plead and protest, mother. He wouldn't want me unless I wanted him just as much."

It was a long time before her mother spoke, and when she did, she spoke humbly—resignedly, as if admitting that the situation was beyond her powers.

"It's the one need of a woman's life, Rose, dear," she said, "the cornerstone of all her happiness, that her husband, as you say, 'wants' her. Doubt of it is the one thing that will have the power to make her bitterly unhappy. That's why it seems to me so terribly necessary that she be sure about it before it's too late."

"Yes, of course," said Rose. "But that's the true of the man, too, isn't it? Otherwise, where's the equality?"

Her mother couldn't answer that except with a long sigh.

Ever since babyhood, Rose had been devoted, by all her mother's plans and hopes, to the furtherance of the cause of women, whose ardent champion she herself had always been. For Rose—not Portia, was the devoted one.

The elder daughter had been born at a time when her own activities were at their height. As Portia herself had said, when she and her two brothers were little, their mother had been too busy to—luxuriate in them very much; and, during those early, and possibly suggestive years, Portia had been suffered to grow up, as it were, by herself.

She expected Rose to marry, of course. But in her day-dreams it was to be one of Rose's converts to the cause. Certainly Rodney Aldrich, who, as Rose outrageously had boasted, rolled her in the dust and tramped all over her in the course of their arguments, presented a violent contrast to the ideal husband she had selected. Indeed, it would be hard to think of him as anything but the rock on which her whole ambition for the girl would be shattered.

That night, during the process of getting ready for bed, Rose put on a bathrobe, picked up her hairbrush, and went into Portia's room. Portia, much quicker always about such matters, was already upon the point of turning out the light, but, guessing what her sister wanted, she stacked her pillows, climbed into bed and settled back for a chat.

"I hope," Rose began, "that you're really pleased about it. Because mother isn't. She's terribly unhappy. Do you suppose it's because she thinks I've—well, sort of deserted her, in not going on and being a lawyer—and all that?"

"Oh, perhaps," said Portia, indiffer-

ently. "I wouldn't worry about that, though. Because really, child, you had no more chance of growing up to be a lawyer and a leader of the 'cause' than I have of getting to be a brigadier-general."

Rose stopped brushing her hair and demanded to be told why not. She had been getting on all right up to now, hadn't she?

"Why, just think," said Portia, "what mother herself had gone through when she was your age: put herself through college because her father didn't believe in 'higher education'—practically disowned her. She'd taught six months in that awful school—remember? She was used to being abused and ridiculed. And she was working hard enough to have killed a camel. But you! . . . Why, lamb, you never really had to do anything in your life. If you felt like it, all right—and equally all right if you didn't. You've never been hurt—never even been frightened. You wouldn't know what they felt like. And the result is. . . ."

Portia eyed her thoughtfully. "The result is," she concluded, "that you have grown into a big, splendid, fearless, confiding creature, that it's perfectly inevitable some man like Rodney Aldrich would go straight out of his head about. And there you are!"

A troubled, questioning look came into the younger sister's eyes. "I've been lazy and selfish, I know," she said. "Perhaps more than I thought. I haven't meant to be. But . . . do you think I'm any good at all?"

"That's the real injustice to it," said Portia; "that you are. You've stayed big and simple. It couldn't



"I Guess Perhaps I Understand, Mother."

possibly occur to you now to say to yourself: 'Poor old Portia! She's always been jealous because mother liked me best, and now she's just green with envy because I'm going to marry Rodney Aldrich.'

She wouldn't stop to hear Rose's protest. "I know it couldn't," she went on. "That's what I say. And yet there's more than a little truth in it, I suppose. Oh, I don't mean I'm sorry you're going to be happy—I believe you are, you know. I'm just a little sorry for myself. Here I stay, grinding along, wondering what it's all about and what after all's the use . . . While you, you baby! are going to find out."

Portia began unpacking her pillows. "Open my window, will you? There! Now, kiss me and run along to by-by! And forget my nonsense."

The wedding was set for the first week in June. And the decision, instantly acquiesced in by everybody, was that it was to be as quiet—as strictly a family affair—as possible. Indeed, the notion of even a simple wedding into the Aldrich family left Portia rather agnostic.

But this feeling was largely allayed by Frederica's first call. Being a celebrated beauty and a person of great social consequence, didn't, it appeared, prevent one from being human and simple-mannered and altogether delightful to have about. She was so competent, too, and intelligent (Rose didn't see why Portia should find anything extraordinary in all this. Wasn't she Rodney's sister?) that her conquest of the Stanton family was instantaneous. They didn't suspect that it was deliberate.

Rodney had made his great announcement to her, characteristically, over the telephone, from his office. "Do you remember asking me, Freddy, two or three weeks ago, who Rosalind Stanton was? Well, she's the girl I'm going to marry."

And so, the "real adventure" of marriage begins for Rose Stanton. You'll find the next installment of extraordinary interest.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### Warned.

"Robert," said his teacher, sternly, "you are incorrigible. I shall certainly have to ask your father to come and see me." "Better not do that, teacher," responded the doctor's son; "pop charges two dollars a visit."



### WHISTLER WAS MOST ACTIVE

Observer Marveled at Great Energy Displayed by the Famous Artist in His Studio.

The studio was surprisingly different from the room he previously used in Lindsay row, and entirely unlike the studios usually occupied by other artists, says Hay in "Memories of Whistler." I remember a long, not very lofty room, very light, with windows along one side; his canvas beside his model at one end, and at the other, near the table which he used as a palette, an old Georgian looking-glass, so arranged that he could see his canvas and model reflected in it. Those who use such a mirror (as he did constantly) will know that it is the most merciless of critics.

I marveled then at his extraordinary activity, as he darted backward and forward to look at both painting and model from his point of view at the extreme end of the long studio. He always used brushes of large size with very long handles, three feet in length and held them from the end with his arms stretched to their full extent. Each touch was laid on with great firmness, and his physical strength enabled him to do without the assistance of a mahlstick, whilst the distance at which he stood from the canvas allowed him to have the whole of a large picture in sight and so judge the correct drawing of each touch.

#### How Germans Attack.

It has frequently been stated of late that the German troops attack in mass formation even in the face of machine gun and shell fire, a policy little short of suicidal under conditions of modern warfare. A Dutch army officer who has been an observer on the front says that this is not strictly so. He states that the attack has the appearance of a mass attack because it is composed of successive waves of infantry. The rear waves are kept in close formation to heighten the morale of the troops, but the attack is not a mass attack, strictly speaking. The Germans charge in close order when they have located what they consider the weak spot in the line of defense.

#### Muddled.

The day was drawing to a close. Judge, jurors, witnesses, and lawyers—all were growing weary. Counsel for the prosecution was cross-examining the defendant.

"Exactly how far is it between the two towns?" he asked at length. For some time the man stood thinking, then:

"About four miles as the cry flows," came the answer.

"You mean as the flow cries!" retorted the man of law.

The judge leaned forward.

"No," he remarked, suavely; "he means as the fly crows."

And they all looked at one another, feeling that something was wrong somewhere.

#### It Was All Right.

Alberta—Oh, Harry, I hope what I am going to say won't pain you; but I love George better than you, and I think you ought to know.

Harry (bitterly)—Well, well, give me back the engagement ring.

Alberta (eagerly)—Thanks, Harry, how noble of you; but you needn't worry about the engagement ring; George says I may continue to wear it.—Pearson's Weekly.

Give a woman a clew and she will worm a secret out of the best man.

A knock is a boost for the deserving only.



## Grape-Nuts

Made from choice whole wheat and malted barley, this famous food retains the vital mineral elements of the grain, so essential for balanced nourishment, but lacking in many cereal foods.

From every standpoint—good flavor, rich nourishment, easy digestion, convenience, economy, health from childhood to old age—Grape-Nuts food.

"There's a Reason"