

# The Master Man

By Ruby M. Ayres

"I suppose I might have guessed that you would say things like this," she said. "I suppose I might have known you would seize upon the opportunity to preach at me. Do you think I am going to accept what has happened without a fight? Do you think I am going to be content to be poor and nobody for the rest of my life? I am not. I tell you I am not." Her voice was broken with sobs now, but they were sobs of anger. "I am going to fight for what I have lost. I don't believe there is any son in Australia or anywhere else. I believe it's all a trick, a hateful trick to make me suffer, to pay me out. Mr. Rolf always hated me—I can see now that he did."

Tears were running down her cheeks, but she brushed them angrily away. "But I'm not going to give in so easily," she laughed excitedly. "His son shall find that I am more than a match for him. I won't be poor, I won't, I won't." She looked at Milward defiantly. Even if I—if I have to marry him and get the money that way," she said.

Milward's face changed a little.

"I don't think you will do that," he said gently.

Patricia turned on him furiously. She was upset and overstrung by the shock and disappointment of the day.

"Oh you! you!" she said hoarsely. "What do you know about it? Why do you come here at all? I didn't wish to see you. You can't go on ordering me about as you did last week, you know."

The faintest smile crossed Milward's face, but it was gone instantly, and he said:

"I have no wish to order you about. I only said that I did not think you would marry Michael Rolf for his money or for any other reason, because—"

"Because what?" she demanded stormily.

Milward met her eyes steadily.

"Because I am Michael Rolf," he said.

## Chapter III

In the moment of blank silence that followed every drop of colour seemed to fade from Patricia's face.

She stood staring at Michael with wide eyes and parted lips. Unprepared as she had been for his announcement, somehow she never for one moment doubted the truth of what he said.

Even when, after a moment, she forced herself to say shrilly "I don't believe you—" she knew quite well in her heart that she did believe him; that he was not a man to speak unless he had first weighed the value of what he said; he was Michael Rolf, the son of the man whom she had hated, and already, with her impulsive waywardness, she had made an enemy of him.

Her deepest emotion was rage; rage with herself that some intuition had not warned her, and yet—how could she even have remotely guessed!

Even Mr. Philips had believed Michael to be in Australia; how, then, had it been possible for her to foresee that this man, whom she had snubbed and quarrelled with during those weeks at the Chesneys, was the man who had the power to make or ruin her whole future?

"I don't believe you—" she said again desperately. "Only this afternoon Mr. Philips said that Mr. Rolf's son was in Australia, and that he had cabled to him. I don't believe you," she said again. It's just a trumped-up story to frighten me—to—to—to—" Her anger rose suddenly, the hot blood rushed to her face. "If it's true, how dared you pass yourself off as somebody else all this time? I suppose that was all part of your mean plan—to make me hate you, to get me to quarrel with you, and then—to turn around and do this!"

Michael shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"I had not the slightest idea that my father would ever leave me a penny piece," he said casually. "I neither wanted it nor expected it; he kicked me out of this house fourteen years ago, and I never had the least wish to return. I always understood that he had made you his heir-

ess. You can hardly blame me if he changed his mind and suddenly remembered my existence. Come, Patricia—be reasonable, and I promise you that we shall not quarrel."

The soothing indulgence of his voice roused her to fury.

"How dare you call me by my Christian name?" she cried passionately. "How dare you speak to me at all? Do you think I care if you quarrel with me? Do you think I mind one little bit what you say or do?"

He smiled faintly.

"I think perhaps you will when you have had time to realize the truth of those very melodramatic words you spoke to me just now," he said quietly. "When you said that you had not a penny in the world, I mean."

"I would rather die than take a shilling from you," she stormed at him.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Well there's plenty of time to refuse when I have offered it to you," he said coolly. "In the meantime, I will see Mr. Philips and tell him that you are to stay on here for the present, until something can be arranged for your future."

"My future is nothing whatever to do with you," she broke in, her voice trembling. "I can arrange my own future."

His face darkened as he looked at her.

"You mean by marrying Chesney and making him miserable for the rest of his life," he sneered.

Angry tears rushed to her eyes. Fortunately, everyone does not see me as you do," she said. "Not that I care in the least what you think of me—not that I mind at all how much you sneer at me."

"You seem to care a great deal," he answered coolly. "If not, why are you crying?" She dashed her hands across her eyes.

"You'd cry if you were me," she said stormily. "You'd cry if you'd just been served such a trick by an old man who—"

She broke off, conscious of the anger in his eyes.

"A man who took you from nothing and has fed you and clothed you and looked after you these years," he finished for her with anger. "What in heaven's name are you made of that you can't even find a spark of gratitude for all that he did for you?"

"He never liked me," she broke out. "I can see now that he must have always hated me."

Michael smiled rather cynically. "Without wishing to be rude, I must say that it is hardly to be wondered at if you treated him as you treat everyone else," he said.

Her eyes blazed.

"What do you mean? I have heaps and heaps of friends who like me, and are always glad to welcome me—heaps of friends who will agree that your father has behaved abominably, who will take me in and be kind to me."

He turned to the door. "I am glad to hear it. It will relieve me of the responsibility of looking after you."

She followed his retreating figure with fiery eyes.

"Why did you come at all if you didn't know anything of this, as you say?" she broke out impulsively. "Just to pry on me, I suppose; just to see what I was doing."

Young Rolf turned and looked at her across the room. She made a very attractive picture as she stood there back to the window and the rosy sunlight.

"I came," he said quietly, "to see if there was anything I could do to help you. I came as a friend."

"A friend," she echoed scornfully.

"Yes—in my ignorance," said Michael bitterly. He opened the door. "But you need not be alarmed," he added. "I am not likely to repeat the mistake." And he went out without a word of farewell.

Patricia flew to the window, and presently saw him driving away down the road in the same little car in which he had taken her to the station nearly a week ago.

Suddenly she began to cry. Everything had gone wrong

with her, she told herself, sobbing stormily.

People always say that when for the first time trouble knocks at their door; they are so angry and sorry for themselves that they are firmly convinced that their whole life has been one of suffering and failure.

Patricia had never known a moment's care or responsibility until Peter Rolf's death; she had lived her life utterly selfishly, and without thought for others; she had grown to believe that it was a state of things which could continue indefinitely; the shock of recent events had seemed like the destruction of her whole world; she felt herself utterly alone in the ruins of all she had believed to stand for happiness.

If she had been quite honest with herself she would have admitted that her greatest trouble now was the fact that she had quarrelled with Michael Rolf and made him dislike her; she could have bitten her tongue through with rage when she remembered how she had told him she would marry the dead man's son and get his money that way. What madness could have driven her! She began to pace up and down wringing her hands she knew that now there was very little to hope for from him; he was glad to see her humbled and disappointed; he would most certainly do nothing to help her in the future.

She thought of all the men whom she had known, and whom she might have married; she had dismissed them from her life one after another, with no thought for them save that they were not good enough; but.....there was still Bernard Chesney. He loved her, poor boy, in spite of everything; and the thought of his devotion warmed her sore heart; he would not fail her, she would show Michael Rolf that she had no need to fall back on him and his reluctant charity.

She sat down to write to Bernard.

For once in her life she felt a genuine affection for him; he would take care of her; he would save her from the hideous nightmare of a future which was lying in wait.

The Chesneys had plenty of money, and he was their only son. Marriage with him would not be such a bad thing.

She managed to put a great deal of sincerity and distress into her letter; she told him how unhappy she was, and that her one comfort was the thought of his parting words to her; she wanted him—would he come to her as soon as possible? There was nobody else in all the world who cared for her, or how troubled she was.....

"I suppose you have heard by now that Mr. Milward and Michael Rolf are one and the same," she wrote. "I never liked him, and now.....but I forgot that he is your friend. Come to me soon—your very unhappy Patricia."

She posted the letter and went back to the house feeling more confident and secure.

She had arranged her own future without help from Michael Rolf, and she would make him furious by engaging herself to his friend.

"If he thinks he can master me, he will see that he is mistaken," was the thought in her mind, as she settled down to wait happily for Chesney's reply.

He would not write, she was sure. He would come to her. She calculated the time. He would get her letter in the morning, and of course would start at once—therefore she might expect him to lunch.

She felt almost happy as she waited. Life was not going to be such a bad thing, after all, if she made the most of its opportunities.

The morning brought her a letter from Mr. Philips. He had had a visit from Michael Rolf, it appeared, and was very surprised to find that he had been in England for some months.

"He tells me," so he wrote, "that he has already met you, and that you have spoken together about his father's will. I am sure you will find that the son is prepared to make provision for you, as I intimated, and he has instructed me that you are to stay on at Clayton Wold as long as you wish, at his expense....."

Patricia crushed the letter in her hand. How dared he so condescend to her! She would not take a farthing of his money, or spend one night more in his house than she was obliged. She would not answer Mr.

Philp's letter until she could tell him that she was to be married. She would not communicate with Michael at all—he could find out for himself if he was in any way interested.

She ordered an extravagant lunch for Chesney, and when she thought it was about time for him to arrive she went down the drive to meet him.

It was a dull, thundery sort of day, sunless and oppressive.

The road that wound away to the village looked dusty and dry, and though Patricia walked to the drive gates a dozen times there was no sign of Chesney.

At two o'clock she was hungry, so had her lunch alone.

"Mr Chesney's car has probably broken down," she told the maid, conscious of the girl's surprised look. "He can have lunch later, when he comes."

But Chesney did not come, and Patricia had her tea alone also.

"He must be away," she excused him to herself. "They will have to send my letter on to him. He will wire directly when he gets it."

But the day passed and there was no message of any sort, and Patricia began to feel angry.

"Michael Rolf has seen him," was the thought that leapt to her mind. "Michael Rolf has said something to prevent him from coming."

She cried herself to sleep that night. They were only tears of anger. She really cared nothing for Chesney, but she felt thoroughly miserable, and she longed to see him, even if only that he might give her back her poise and confidence.

It seemed an endless time since she had left him that day by the river. She told herself in depression that she felt ten years older than she had done when he lay at her feet and the gramophone played across the water.

When she said she lubb'd me, she didn't speak true: So I'm off with the old lub, an' on wid the new.

The silly lines beat through her head as she fell asleep, and were still haunting her when she awoke; she was thankful when the maid brought tea and letters. Patricia sat up eagerly among her pillows; she did not hear the girl's "Good morning"—she was sorting the little heap of letters through with trembling hands.

Was there—would there be.... Then she sank back with a little sigh of relief, for there was one in Bernard Chesney's writing.

Now everything would be explained and arranged, and she would be able to write to Mr. Philips.

Already she began to think of her wedding—necessarily quiet it would have to be, unfortunately! She drank her tea, pulled the pillow more comfortably beneath her head and opened her letter.

It began: "Dear Miss Rolf...." and for a moment Patricia's heart seemed to stop beating. What was the meaning of it? He had always called her by her Christian name. She forced herself to read on—

"I am dreadfully sorry that I shall not be able to come and see you, as I should very much like to do, or to answer your kind letter in the way which I feel it should be answered, but by the time this reaches you I shall be on my way to America, where I am going on business for my father's firm. I should have written to tell you before, but everything has been arranged so suddenly, and I know that you have your own affairs to occupy you without being worried by mine. Yes—I knew about Milward, or rather Michael Rolf, as I suppose we must now call him. He is a fine chap and, as you know, one of my greatest friends.

kindest regards.—Your ever sincerely,

Bernard Chesney."

Patricia closed her eyes with a little feeling of faintness, it was a dream, she was sure it must be a dream; she was not fully awake yet—soon she would be thoroughly aroused and find this letter just a phantom imagining.

She lay quite still, hardly daring to breathe; then she opened her eyes desperately, and they fell again on the formal, written words.

".....You have your own affairs to occupy you, without being worried by mine....."

She sat up in bed with a stifled exclamation, and the haunting song began again in her head:

When he said he lubb'd me, he didn't speak true; For he's off with the ole lub an'

on wid the new.

She hid her face against her clenched hands. He had sworn that he loved her, he had said that if she wanted him she had only to send or write, and now.... he had gone to America to escape her, the whole letter was just a subterfuge, an excuse; it was either that he had no use for her now he knew she had lost her money or—that Michael Rolf had interfered!

It was a terrible shock to Patricia's pride; she felt as if everyone must know about it, and be laughing at her. She stayed indoors all day and refused to see anyone.

The servants at Peter Rolf's had never liked Patricia, chiefly because she had never allowed them to do so, but they knew all about the will now, and were vaguely sorry for her.

Patricia did not want pity. The kindly commiseration in the eyes of the maid who waited upon her scorched her pride. That she should have come to this! That Bernard Chesney, who once would have been beside himself with joy at the thought of marrying her should have gone to the other side of the world to escape the now doubtful honour.

In the evening a letter came from Michael Rolf; he was staying in town, he told her, but should be coming down to Clayton Wold in a day or two. In the meantime he had seen his lawyer and had arranged to allow Patricia five hundred a year and to give her the freehold of a small house about a mile from Clayton Wold.

"You will not be separated from your friends if you live there—" so he wrote. "And of course, I will have the place done up for you and made as nice as possible. I hope this will be an agreeable arrangement."

(Continued Next Week)

## THE HIGHLAND LILT.

Down in the sunny Strand  
The ragged fiddler played,  
And he took my heart in his hand,  
And away it strayed  
To the old North-country land.

For he fiddled an old Scots tune  
Than sang of a Highland hill  
And the hope of a Highland June;  
And the Strand stood still  
In the lap of the afternoon.

Out in the London grey  
He fiddled a sunlit burn  
Dancing its days away  
To the linn at the turn  
Where the Avon starts to the Spey.

Whaups hung in the sky;  
Sheep called in the glen;  
The red grouse roared by;  
Up on the Ben  
In the corrie the deer stood high.

He fiddled heather and peat,  
Birk and rowan and fir;  
He fiddled my heart a-beat,  
My pulse a-strir,  
And the step of a reel to my feet.

For the Highland Road's ahead,  
And the Summer's mine to lease  
So I paid, ere the magic fled,  
With a silver piece;  
It should have been gold instead.

—H. B. in Punch, London.

The Wish For Happiness  
If ye know these things—happy are ye if ye do them.—St. John 13:17.

Let me talk of happiness for six days—only one minute a day.

The wish for happiness is natural; all men share it.

It is the law of life itself that every being strives toward the perfection of its kind.

Every drop of blood in the bird beats toward flight and song.

In a conscious being this movement toward perfection must take a conscious form.

This conscious form is happiness, the rhythm of the inward life, the melody of a heart that has found its keynote.

To say that all men long for this is simply to confess that all men are human, and that their thoughts and feelings are an essential part of their life.

Virtue means a completed manhood. The joyful welfare of the soul belongs to the fullness of that ideal. Holiness is wholesome.

In striving to realize the true aim of our being, we find the wish for happiness implanted in the very heart of our effort.

Christ alone can teach us how to attain it.

Fellow Feelings.  
From the New York Sun and Globe.  
Cresshaw—I always thought you said you would never lend money again.

Henpeck—But this was to a married friend who needed it to keep his wife away in the country another month.

Worthy A Better Cause  
From the Philadelphia Record.  
Muggins—Harduppe says the bill collectors are keeping him busy.

Buggins—Yes, the ingenuity that fellow displays in dodging creditors would make his fortune in any other line of industry.

Watch Out!  
From the American Legion Weekly.  
First Pickpocket: "Wanna buy a watch, Red?"

Second Pickpocket: "I dunno. How much is it worth?"

First Pickpocket: "Say! Yer don't think I was sucker enough to stop and ask the guy wot paid for it, do yer?"

In an out of town story, locating the scene of action, or the principal character by town or state frequently gains a reading from some who otherwise would miss them is the main point of interest.

**WRIGLEYS**  
After Every Meal  
Have a packet in your pocket for ever-ready refreshment.  
Aids digestion.  
Always thirst.  
Soothes the throat.  
For Quality, Flavor and the Sealed Package, get  
**WRIGLEYS SPEARMINT GUM**  
THE FAVOR LASTS

Tides Too Low for Power.  
The scarcity of coal since the French invasion of the Ruhr valley has set the Germans to thinking of ways to use the force of the tides for power. The chief difficulty seems to be that the north coast of Germany is very flat and consequently that the available head of water is too low for practical use.—Scientific American.

Never Too Old.  
Alice—As people grow old I like to see them still keep up with the fashions.  
Agnes—Yes, we never grow too old to acquire the latest wrinkle.

Boy, the Anatomical Chart.  
Divorce report—"Mrs. Snyder told the court that her husband hit her in the bakery and broke her gas range."  
—Boston Transcript.

Little Tommy.  
"Then you like your geography?"  
"Yes, it is the only book big enough to hide a detective story."

Some men exert themselves more in trying to borrow a dollar than in trying to earn one.

To make the day pleasant, study what you say; and don't study what others say—too much.

Yesterday is dead—forget it; tomorrow doesn't exist—don't worry; today is here—use it!

Women enjoy wearing tight clothes because it makes them feel so good when they take them off.

Not the man who knows the most, but the man who knows the best is wisest.

Every man has a grievance and he will tell you all about it on the least provocation.

Girls who make the greatest exertions to catch husbands are usually last in the race.

Roads to happiness and to misery frequently run parallel.

Any woman can marry any man she wants—if he is willing.

One must be imposed upon more or less, but that sort of thing is reciprocal.

Made only of wheat and barley scientifically baked 20 hours ~ Supplies Vitamin-B and mineral elements. How can Grape-Nuts be other than a wonderfully appetizing, healthful food? "There's a Reason"