

MY LADY OF THE SOUTH



A Fiftieth Anniversary War Story

By RANDALL PARRISH

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CHAPTER XVII.

TALKING TO JEAN.

She looked at me in strange bewilderment, her cheeks flushed, her breath rapid.

"I—I do not quite understand; you—you mean Calvert Dunn?"

"Certainly not. You forget I have already overheard your opinion of the lieutenant. My reference was to Colonel Donald."

"Oh!" the exclamation of surprise came through her parted lips without effort or restraint. "To Colonel Donald? You mean?"

"That I am not blind to your feeling toward him. Not only your actions, but your words as well, have convinced me that he is more to you than any of us. Am I not correct?"

"I deny the right of Lieutenant King to question me."

"But not that of your husband. This relationship, oddly as it came about, disagreeable as it may be to you, surely entitles me to know the truth."

She hesitated, her lips tightly compressed, as though this holding back her first impulse to answer.

"Why do you ask this?"

"Because you are legally my wife, because my heart also claims you, and I cannot give you up without cause."

"With cause you will? With cause you will renounce all claim upon me, relinquish all effort to hold me through this form of marriage?"

"Yes," I assented soberly. "I will endeavor to act the part of a gentleman."

There was a moment of silence in which I looked at her, leaning against the dresser with eyes lowered to the floor. That she was embarrassed, doubtful, was plainly evident. Suddenly her eyes uplifted to mine.

"Ask me your question, and I will answer."

"Do you love Colonel Donald?"

She drew a quick breath, but there was no faltering in her steadfast gaze.

"I do," she said quietly. "Is that all?"

"That is surely enough," bitterly, "as it leaves me nothing further to hope for."

"Is that not best? Would you wish me to act less frankly?"

your first act a grievous wrong against myself, and—yet I can't hate you. I've tried, but I can't! Oh, it is the strangest thing! I even believe I dread to have you go away, and yet you must, and I wish you to."

"Then I shall go, but you tempt me strongly."

"Tempt you?—how?—to what?"

"Tempt me to urge that the war will some time be over; tempt me to hope I may be welcome when that time comes."

"Have I said that?—have I said anything like that?"

"No; only that you are not indifferent; that you do care a little. It is not your words, but your eyes, which encourage me."

"My eyes!" They dropped an instant, then opened wide, gazing into my own.

"Yes; I cannot explain, yet they seem to say I shall be welcome, even while your lips deny." I caught her clasped hands in mine and separated them. "Which tell the truth?"

She made no effort to draw away from me, but laughed lightly.

"Neither, would be the safer guess," she responded, "for both are masks. You cannot understand me, Lieutenant King, and it is useless to try. I do not even understand myself. I am a continual contradiction. I don't in the least want to like you, but I do. I know I wish you to go away, and—yet it is not so easy. You interest me; perhaps that is why I have such opposite moods. But really you must not take me too seriously either from the eyes or the lips. I do not promise that either tell all the truth."

"Where, then, can I discover the truth?"

"I am sure I do not know," innocently. "Would you expect to in a woman?"

"Yes, in a true woman. But you puzzle me. What are you—a flirt?"

"Indeed no!"

"A coquette?"

"Certainly not, Lieutenant King."

"Then what?"

She was breathing heavily, her hands still clasped tightly in mine.

"Only a rebel," she said softly, "an uncompromising rebel."

asked, unable to refrain from one last effort.

"Yes, Lieutenant King. It shall be a friendly parting, but goodbye nevertheless."

She held out her hand and I took it, almost unconscious of the action, my eyes looking into hers.

"You will go? You will not make this any harder for me?" she asked, a note of appeal in the soft voice.

"Yes, I will go."

I lifted the hand to my lips, and she drew back with flushed cheeks, holding the door ajar to glance back at me.

"I thank you—goodbye."

She was gone, and, feeling the reaction of weakness, I dropped back again into the chair, resting my head upon one hand.

It seemed to me that door, now tightly closed, typified everything, and I remained staring at it, sitting motionless, with hand shading my eyes. It was all over, then—all over.

Her heart belonged to another; she had definitely told me so, and this knowledge alone was sufficient to debilitate my action. I could no longer trouble her and retain my self-respect.

I got up slowly, feeling greater weakness than I had been aware of during the excitement of the interview, and advanced to where I could survey myself in the mirror. Evidently one of my nurses had bathed my face, but my uniform jacket was sadly torn, and my appearance was not improved by the cloth bound across my forehead. I was gazing into the glass, fascinated by its revelation, when, it seemed to me, the door leading into the hallway opened slightly. I could perceive the movement within the mirror, although it was noiseless. Gazing into the mirror, I never moved, waiting motionless to discover who this silent visitor might be. My hands gripped the dresser, every nerve throbbing, as I saw that countenance—the haggard, ghostly lineaments of the mad woman. Our eyes met in the glass, met as if fascinated, each standing rigid from surprise, too greatly startled to cry out. There was no doubt as to the insanity in those wild orbs staring at me, and for the instant I could not escape their power. They seemed to hold me as the snake does the bird. Then my fingers gripped hard on the dresser, and I swung around, desperately resolved to make the creature captive. With my first hostile move the door clicked shut, and before I could touch the latch my foot caught the edge of a rug, and I fell to my knees.

Could she have gone down the stairs? I sprang to the railing and glanced below. A guard, fully armed, stood just within the front door, leaning on his rifle. No one could pass that way unobserved. Then she must be hiding within one of the rooms. So certain

was I of this that I took time to the search, opening door after door and surveying each interior thus revealed with a carefulness which convinced me they were absolutely empty.

Thoroughly puzzled, I came out of the last room, that in which the Irish lad and I had been imprisoned, and, scarcely knowing why, paused at the head of the stairs to glance down once again at the sentry stationed below. He was apparently a young fellow, roughly dressed in butternut, a wide brimmed and rather disreputable hat shading his face. He lifted his eyes to the stairs, and I nearly cried out in startled amazement. As I lived, it was O'Brien! I would have believed it merely a strange resemblance had not the fellow impudently grinned up at me, making use of a peculiar gesture, which left no doubt of his identity. O'Brien, in pretense of Confederate uniform, acting as sentinel here as one of Donald's guerrillas! What had it to do with my escape—with the mystery of this house? And Jean—did she know? Could she have passed and repassed without noticing the boy and recognizing him?

"For the Lord's sake, sor," he whispered hoarsely, "av ye're goin' to skip now's the toime, before the sergeant gits here wid my relief."

"What do you mean? Have you been stationed there to let me slip through?"

"Sure, that's the program. It's the girl that fixed it all up."

"Not Miss Denslow?"

"An' who the devil else would it be? Sure she picked me out from the whole bunch for the job an' niver cracked a smilie, but them pretty ones of hers was danclin'. Just now when

she came down she give me the wins an' said I was to pass ye out an' niver say nothin'."

"But what are you doing here? What's the meaning of this masquerade?"

The fellow grinned, bringing his hand to a salute.

"I'm Private O'Brien, sor, of the Confed army. I was left behind when me fellow sojers departed after the late fracas. Sometimes I tell them I belonged to Dodd's squad, sometimes to Thellen's, an' thin agin I came over here wid Lieutenant Dunn. Divil a bit o' difference it makes so I belong to some other outfit than the fellow I'm talkin' to. It's an illigant liar I am, begorra, an' that's how I hold the job. Sure, thin divils shot the horse under me, an' I came down in a bit of bush, so shook up I didn't know me own name for an hour. Thin there was no gittin' away, an' I lay there studyin' it all out an' watchin' him rebs layin'. The way they had fixed me I couldn't see how I was ever goin' to git shut of this except by bein' a reb myself for awhile. So I stole a coat—this beauty I've got on, sor—an' a hat, an' after the most of thin had marched away I came out an' reported to the sergeant. He talked to me like hell, sor, till the girl took me part, an' since thin he's bin civil enough."

"Miss Denslow took your part?" I questioned in surprise. "What did she say?"

The Irish eyes twinkled merrily.

"Bedad, she said she knew me; that I was wan of Lieutenant Dunn's cavalrymen."

"She said that?"

"Begorra, she did, sor, an' I stood lookin' at her purty face wid me mouth open. It was a beautiful lol, sor, an' she niver cracked a smilie while she was givin' it to him. She'd 'n' fooled a better man than that sergeant wid the honest way of her an' thin eyes a lookin' straight at him. They're great divils, thin girls."

"But why did she do this? What object could she have had?"

New Goods Arriving—

must have room for them. A further reduction on all Winter Suits and Overcoats. You will need them yet this season and you'll be dollars ahead next Fall. Just bring \$10 in here and see what it will buy for you now. A final clearance in men's flannel shirts 95c—see them in our west window. A few pairs men's pants left at \$1.99. Better get one. We are still selling ladies' mannish shirts at \$1 and \$1.50.

C. E. Wescott's Sons

Always the Home of Satisfaction

A Birthday Surprise.

From Saturday's Daily.

Leslie Marousek was made the recipient of a most complete surprise, when a large number of his friends gathered at his home last evening. The occasion was in honor of his twelfth birthday anniversary, and his friends, thinking this too important an event to let slip by without the proper celebration, planned this happy event without saying a word about it to Leslie. Consequently, when they arrived at his home last evening he was some shocked, but he joined in the fun and frolic and entertained his guests in a most enjoyable manner. They played all sorts and kinds of games and participated in many amusements calculated to make the occasion one that would not soon be forgotten. At the proper time a fine luncheon was served, but it was a late hour when all dispersed, wishing Leslie many more happy birthdays and pronouncing him a splendid entertainer. Those in attendance were: Silvia Green, Meta Jennings, Gladys Steinhauer, Elsie and Gertrude Roessler, Edna Warren, Laura Gravitt, Janet Forbes, Erma Covert, Violet and Gladys Higley, Ruth and Mary Hetherington, Glen Thompson, Orlo Phebus, Roy and George Lamphear, Verdon and Eugene Vroman, Joe and Ed Bulin, Fred Warren, Silas Green.

A Good Shot With Rifle.

From Saturday's Daily.

Mrs. Harry Smith, residing west of the city, is an expert with a rifle and winged an o'possum at 125 yards last Wednesday afternoon, putting five shots in rapid succession into the animal with her repeating rifle. She did not know what kind of an animal she had slain, and when her husband returned from town Mrs. Smith had her trophy lying on the porch and was anxious to know what it was. Mrs. Smith has had nineteen years' experience with a rifle and there are few marksmen that can beat her when it comes to shooting at a mark, or at game, either.

In County Court.

From Saturday's Daily.

The will of Henry C. McMaken was probated before Judge Beeson this morning. One of the provisions of the Colonel's will is that the museum of Indian and war relics, which he spent much time and money in gathering, will be given to the city of Plattsmouth, provided a fire-proof building is constructed in which to house the valuable collection.

Final settlement was made in the estates of Isaac N. and Leroy Applegate. F. P. Sheldon of Nehawka, administrator of the same, was in court with his final report.

Good Prospects for Wheat.

Prospects for a big wheat crop are good thus far, says the Lincoln News. The fall conditions were favorable. Winter wheat made a fair start and there has been sufficient precipitation during the winter to start the spring growth, is the report of the state experimental station. No signs that the crop has been harmed by winter weather have been reported with the exception of certain limited localities in the southeastern part of the state. Professor Pugsley, who has visited many farmers over the state during the winter, states that the reports from them are nearly all favorable. Elevator men give out the same reports. It is too early yet to make forecasts, but conditions through the fall and winter could hardly have been more favorable. It will be impossible to tell exactly how the winter wheat has fared until spring opens up.

800 Acres.

Over 400 acres under plow, all of the finest Platte river alfalfa land; level as a floor; balance pasture. Two sets of improvements of the finest kind. Close to town. School on the land. Telephone and R. F. D. \$30,000; \$10,000 cash, balance long time at 6 per cent. This can be cut up, as it is square. Write to C. B. Schleicher, Brady, Neb. 2-12-21-wkly.

A Strong Man.

Lieutenant Governor Morehead of Falls City, who is aspiring for the nomination for governor on the democratic ticket, is forging the front at a rapid rate, and were the election to be held tomorrow he would be the nominee. He is a strong man, free from any entangling alliances and we believe could defeat Aldrich.—Nebraska City News.

For Sale!

Team of mules, harness and wagon for sale. Good mules and harness and wagon new. Address Alex Campbell, Route 1, Plattsmouth, Neb.

Frank Houghson and son, Jesse, of Union, were in the city today trading with the stores.

Here With the Fiddlers.

From Saturday's Daily.

The southern part of Cass county was pretty well represented at the Fiddlers' Contest given by the Red Men last evening at the Parmele. The following people came in on the M. P. train last evening: William Balfour of Nehawka; Reuben, Syl and Al Hathaway, James Rainey, Forest and Moss Barkhurst, W. H. Mark, Edgar Morton, Ralph Davis, Sherman Austin, Rose O'Donnell, Lotie Wunderlich, Charles L. Graves and daughters, Misses Vernice and Leola, all from and near Union.

LOCAL NEWS

From Saturday's Daily.

L. J. Terryberry and wife visited the metropolis this afternoon.

Phil Becker and wife were Omaha passengers this afternoon to spend Sunday with friends.

A. L. and S. C. Hathaway of Union came up last evening to enjoy an evening with the fiddlers.

John Whiteman of Nehawka was in the city last night, a pleased spectator of the fiddling contest.

Miss Edna Propst came from Omaha on No. 24 today and was met at the station by her parents, R. L. Propst and wife.

Julius Pitz and W. T. Adams were passengers to Council Bluffs this morning, where they were called on business.

John Gorder of Eight Mile Grove precinct was a Plattsmouth visitor yesterday afternoon looking after business matters.

G. W. Goodman and wife left for Lincoln on the morning train today, where they will visit Mrs. Goodman's parents over Sunday.

Charles L. Graves and two daughters of Union were in the city last evening and witnessed the entertainment at the Parmele.

W. H. Pool of Weeping Water was a Plattsmouth visitor yesterday afternoon and was a guest of the Riley while in the county seat.

F. P. Sheldon, merchant prince of Nehawka, was in the city last evening and occupied a box at the Parmele during the musical contest.

Alex Campbell drove up from his farm near Murray this morning and boarded the early train for Omaha to look after an item of business.

Miss Mary A. Moore and Miss Lena Young came down from their school work at Cedar Creek yesterday and were spectators at the fiddling contest last night.

Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Foster and little daughter came up from Union last evening to attend the Fiddlers' Contest, and were overnight guests at the Larson home.

C. H. Lewis went to St. Joseph's hospital on the morning train today, where he visited his daughter for the day. Mr. Lewis received a card yesterday that his daughter was not so well.

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- ✦ in the Farmers' Mutual Fire ✦
- ✦ and Live Stock Insurance ✦
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- ✦ Nebraska. Limited to Cass ✦
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- ✦ sessment of 2 mills made ✦
- ✦ during the entire time. ✦
- ✦ Amount of insurance in ✦
- ✦ force \$1,303,955.00. Amount ✦
- ✦ of money in treasury. \$4.- ✦
- ✦ \$57.69. Membership fee 50 ✦
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- ✦ years. For particulars ✦
- ✦ write ✦
- ✦ J. P. FALTER, Secretary, ✦
- ✦ Plattsmouth, Neb. ✦

Mrs. Alice Hipp and Vie of Lyons, who have been visiting Mrs. Hipp's parents, A. Dill and wife, for two weeks, departed for their home this morning.