

Adele Garrison
"My Husband's Love"

The Curious Query Made Put to Mrs. Bird

I have heard people say that a few minutes sometimes seemed like eternity, and I have employed the same simile myself. But I have never realized its truth quite so vividly as I did in the last spurt of the motor boat containing Harriet and Edwin and the Harrison children, while I stood on the lonely pier back of Mrs. Bird's house, waiting with her for the signal which Lillian had promised when they were safe on board the larger boat.

Mrs. Bird was standing with her hand cupped behind her ear, and I knew that her trained hearing was following every sound of the smaller motor boat.

"He's alongside now," she said. "He's shut off the motor. Would you say Griffin's boat is out of the inlet yet?" She turned to the youth called John, who stood near her.

"Just about," he returned.

"That's what I thought," she commented. "Well, we'll know what's what in a minute or two! Not a sound now."

Involuntarily I put out my hand and gripped her shoulder, breathlessly waiting for the signal Lillian had promised, while the lapping of the water at our feet sounded like thundering surf, and the distant chug of motor boats like the rattle of artillery.

It came clear—clear and distinct—the cry of the screech owl. Then a second's silence, and again the cry "tooted to our ears."

"Give your reply quickly," Mrs. Bird whispered, "so you won't delay 'em."

I obeyed her, and repeated the cry three times as Lillian had asked me. My cry, however, was but a poor imitation of either the bird or my gifted friend, and I felt my cheeks burn in the darkness as I heard an involuntary and quickly smothered chuckle from the young chauffeur.

"We'll wait a minute or two," Mrs. Bird announced, wisely ignoring the levity of her aid. "I want to see that bigger boat get off. There. Her light's moving. Everything's set now, John."

"Yes, Mrs. Bird." The youth came toward us promptly.

Take the other boat and beat it down to George. Tell him to find

out whether Griffin had his own boat or whether he rented it to somebody. If the latter, tell him to get a line on that boat if it takes him all night, and report to me as soon as he finds out. Then come back up to the house."

"All right, Ma'am." He touched his cap and vanished into the dark night.

Mrs. Bird grasped my arm firmly. "We'll go back now," she said. "There's room for two on this path if you keep close to me."

With my mind torn between fear that something would happen to prevent the sailing of the children, and the hope which Lillian's signal had given me, I made a nervous comment to Mrs. Bird I otherwise would have left unuttered, following Lillian's precept of no questioning ever, unless absolutely necessary.

"You have an ample and able staff for any undertaking, have you not?" I felt her stiffen involuntarily against me, and feared that she would regard the question as the impertinence it really was, although unintentional. Then she relaxed and laughing softly.

"Bless you," she said. "Those boys are not on my payroll. They all have jobs of their own—except the man who drove you—he works part of the time for me here, and I have first call on him. But George and Martin used to work with me and under Mrs. Underwood, and they are always glad when the chance comes to do something along the old line. Mind your step here. We're beginning to climb. And we'll do no more talking until we're safe in my sitting room again."

We retraced our course silently around the hill to the outdoor garage. Unlocking the door and switching on the lights, Mrs. Bird looked searchingly around the room. Evidently finding nothing disturbed, she locked the door, and put out the lights, and fumbling with the masked door in the wall, drew me after her into the passage.

"There!" She drew a possibly relieved breath, as she slid the door into place behind her, and turned the light of her flashlight on the floor of the narrow passageway.

"Everything's all right now."

But I noticed that she spoke in a whisper, and I made no reply. Neither did she speak again, until after reaching the end of the passage in the basement, she led the way upstairs to her sitting room.

"Now," she said, drawing up a rocking chair before the fire, "you've got the hardest job of all. Sitting

still until John comes back so that we can find out what the gentry watching the streets are doing." (Copyright, 1924.)

Milch Cows Average \$145

Head at Gage County Sale

Special Dispatch to The Omaha Bee, Beatrice, Neb., March 28.—At the

Jasper Mitchell Holstein sale at Wymore, 50 head of milch cows and calves were sold, it being one of the biggest sales held in Gage county in years. Milch cows averaged \$145 per head and yearling calves brought \$75. The sale netted \$5,000. Stockmen from southeastern Nebraska and northern Kansas were in attendance.

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