

The Married Life of Helen and Warren

They Are Lured on a Midnight Visit to a Clandestine Montmartre Resort.

"Dear, do we have to order champagne? I'd just as soon have claret," whispered Helen, economically. "Now we can't do Montmartre on the cheap," scowled Warren. "You've got to order champagne in all these joints—they don't serve anything else."

A glance around the crowded room showed at each table a gold-topped ice-embedded bottle—the price of admission to the Cafe Royale. The air was hazy with cigaret smoke and stifling with French perfume. Each girl diffused a different scent as she whirled by in the dancing space.

The head waiter, beamingly hopeful of large tips from Americans, placed the wine list before Warren. Moving closer on the leather wall bench, anxiously Helen scanned the card. Only champagne was listed—a dozen vintages and all unpriced.

"Dear, just a half bottle! We couldn't drink a quart." "We do not serve half bottles, madame," a slightly contemptuous note in his accented English, his smile fading as the prospective tip dwindled.

"A quart of that Pol Roger," ordered Warren, glowering at Helen's interference. Here the orchestra began to march around the room, followed by half a dozen girls, evidently paid entertainers, in extremely abbreviated costumes.

Helen felt their hilarity was forced, but they worked hard to keep up the gayety, throwing couffees and colored balls. As they passed the girl at the end of Warren, who deviously caught and returned the balls.

"Lively bunch," he grinned, when one of them paused to kiss a gleaming bald head. "Dear, look at that girl in yellow. Not even straps over her shoulders! How does she keep her bodice up?"

"Sitting plaster, I guess. Isn't that what they use?" "Bon soir, monsieur," the girl who had petted Warren came to their table.

Helen had read that in Paris an American wife has the choice of either remaining reprovingly aloof or coming into the spirit of the Parisian gaieties. With a view to holding her husband, the latter was strongly advised.

So Helen managed a friendly smile while the girl carried on an animated conversation with Warren, not a word of which he could understand. Her mauve tulle gown was cut alarmingly low in front and to the waistline in the back. Her lips were rouged to a vivid carmine against the other powdered pallor of her face.

Her glistening black hair, drawn low over her ears, was combed by a rhinestone bandlet from which trailed a paradise aigret. "I'm afraid I don't get you," hunched Warren, refilling her glass. "Sure!" drawing out a box of cigarets when she held up her empty case.

A general stir of departure. The waiters began clearing of bottles and glasses, and turning off some of the lights. "What in blazes does this mean?" demanded Warren. "They're not closing up already? It isn't chucking out time yet?"

"Monsieur, it is a new order," the head waiter came up to explain. "We must close now at one." "Then why the devil didn't you say so? You let me order a quart of wine and don't give us 10 minutes to drink it?"

"I can't help, monsieur," with the inevitable exasperating shrug. "It is the law." "Regardez! Regardez!" the girl fairly shook Warren's arm in her eagerness to make him understand what followed—but "clandestin" repeated several times was the only recognizable word.

"Marie says she can take you to a place near here where they stay open all night," translated the head waiter. "What kind of a joint is it?" demanded Warren. "A private place. The police do not know of it—so they do not close."

"All right. Tell her we're game." "Oui, oui, monsieur," Marie glowed her approval. When Warren had paid the 90-franc check for the one bottle of champagne, they made their way to the doorway, tip-expecting doorman.

"We don't know where she's taking us," anxiously Helen. "It may be some AWFUL place! You might be robbed!"

"Oh, I guess we can take a chance. That head waiter seemed to know about it. He wouldn't dare steer us up against any cut-throats. We'll size it up when we get there. Don't have to go in if it looks phony."

"Oui, oui, monsieur," purred Marie, who was walking on the other side of Warren, holding tight to his arm with an air of triumphant possession. She led them around a corner and down a side street, dimly lit and deserted. Another turn and they were in an unknown neighborhood of small shops, now all closed. Not a window held a friendly light.

At last she passed before a low doorway. Then, as a policeman emerged from the darkness across the street, she hurried them by the house.

Further on a horse cab stood by the curb. A whispered word from Marie and the man drove up before the house, cutting it off from the officer's view.

Then with a cautioning "H-s-sh," she led them back. Instantly the door opened and they were drawn into a pitch-black hall.

"Hold on," protested Warren. "What sort of a dive is this?" Another warning, "H-s-sh." The woman who had admitted them produced a flashlight and motioned them up the stairs.

"Oh, dear, let's get out of here," whispered Helen. "I'm afraid." "Does look pretty queer," Warren muttered, his arm about her, drawing her close. "But we're in for it now. May as well sput it through."

When they reached the top of the stairs, the sound of strutting mandolins brought a throb of reassurance. Helen could have screamed with relief as they entered a well lighted room where several couples were dancing.

With a familiar nod to Marie, the

proprietor came forward to seat them. After the gilded Cafe Royale this place was conspicuously plain. Heavy draperies at the windows kept the light from the watchful police. Evidently there was fear of a raid for the mandolins strummed subduedly, and a girl who laughed too loud was promptly hushed.

It was a mixed crowd. At one table sat a stout prosperous-looking American, his arm about a girl in a silver-cloth gown. He could not speak French, but with the sign language they were making rapid progress.

"Why, we didn't order this," protested Helen, when a waiter placed before them the inevitable quart of champagne. "We can't drink any more."

"You don't have to drink it—but you have to pay for it," grumped Warren. "These are all champagne joints. We're lucky if that's the only holdup."

"I'll tell you a sandwich, but I don't see how they can drink without something to eat," for here as at the Cafe Royale only wine seemed to be in order.

"What kind?" Then to the waiter. "A chicken sandwich for madame." "A girl who sat alone at an adjoining table translated the order.

"You speak English? That's good. Better come over and join us." Warren's invitation was eagerly accepted, but not wishing to share her "hid," Marie did not look over-pleased. Immediately she asked him to dance.

"Yes, dear, do—if you want to," Helen tried to say it with enthusiasm. With mingled sensations she watched them wait off, then forced her attention to the girl who had joined them.

Under the huge black hat her hair shone a metallic gold, and her gown, a beaded chiffon, was slashed to the knee. She was from Maxim's, in answer to Helen's inquiry. Tonight she had brought a rich South American here, but he had been afraid to come up the dark stairs.

"Such a fool," with a disdainful shrug of her powdered shoulders. "But they have money—ah, much money! Look! displaying a diamond bracelet." "He wait for Buenos Aires. And the Americans—they, too, have money. But the English—they are not generous. No, I do not care for them."

"Rotten floor," Warren came back to his seat. "Is that all the show they put up here? Just that bum orchestra? Nothing else doing? Just a place to rope in suckers who fall for anything clandestine—that it?"

The girl who spoke English admitted as much. "Well, then we might as well mosey along. Ask her how much she wants for steering us here."

"She says 200 francs," after consulting Marie. "Two hundred! Isn't that pretty stiff?"

"She says she often gets more," after another consultation. "And she has to pay the head waiter, and the Cafe Royale, the man outside and the—"

"Graft all around, eh? All right, here you are," counting four 50-franc notes into Marie's eager palm. "Merci, merci, monsieur!" "I would like a little something, too. Tonight I have hard luck."

Helen felt her face grow hot for sheer shame at this brazen request, but Warren laughed good-naturedly. "Yet you might as well have a rake-off, too," giving her 20 francs.

"Now how do we get out of this damn place? Can you work the combination?" "You better go with her. She will think I take you to some other place."

Griefful over her 200 francs, Marie smiled a general adieu as she drew on her gold brocade wrap and ushered them out.

Down the long hall and steep black stairs. At the door she peered anxiously out. The road clear, she beckoned them on.

The horse cab was still there. Warren gave their address to the driver and they trotted off—Marie waving a cautious farewell from the sidewalk.

"Stung! And the way we swallowed that 'clandestine' bait," growled Warren, slamming the door which had swung open. "Why, that whole thing's fixed up for suckers. Nothing there—just an excuse to soak you! And I thought we'd scared up the real thing."

"Think what it cost you!" bewailed Helen. "Two hundred francs to her, 20 to that other girl—and what was the check?"

"It was enough," curly. "But that's all right, we were out to be done—and they did us up brown! We'll take our medicine and not squeal." Then with a grin, "But we certainly were nice, 'tutty pickings!'"

Scarcely a day passes when this house is not visited by robbers, who are always able to get away with their booty.

The great size of the building, which contains over 1,000 rooms, evidently attracts attention, and although the military and police have taken all possible steps, they have been unable to end the present state of affairs, and not only so, but some officials have been killed on the premises.

Typewriters, ornaments, pictures, mirrors, door handles and brass fittings are all carried away.

Should a thief in the course of his wanderings about the huge building encounter someone in one of the rooms, he insists he requires for some imaginary person, and continues his supposed search for him until he finds a room that is unoccupied, then he quickly gathers together anything that he can find and departs.

To overcome the difficulty of carrying away a typewriter the thief hands it out of a window to an accomplice in the street, and in some cases machines have been taken to pieces and removed in an innocent looking dispatch case.

Among the Brave—The Parson's Wife



Heart Secrets of a Fortune Teller.

THE WAY OF A MAN

By RACHEL MACK.

"It's not hard to tell when a woman's peevish, is it? As soon as a certain young lady opened my office door today and stepped in, she said to myself: 'She's angry all right. She's got a chick to her heels and a snap to her eyes that's not quite regular.'"

"Gee!" I says, when we've opened the interview, "you seem to be slightly miffed for some cause. And my occult senses tell me there's a man at the bottom of it."

"How strange that you should know it," she exclaims. "I always keep my feelings under perfect control."

"I give myself a nudge and say nothing, lookin' as wise as Solomon's fifty-second wife.

"Your insight has given me great confidence in you," she goes on. "I'm going to tell you the whole story, and depend on your advice. You see I am—or rather I was—engaged to be married. Jack and I thought we were very much in love. But it must have been a mistake. He could not possibly treat me so if he really loved me."

"So Jack's eulogy to blame for this disturbance, is he?" I parley. "Absolutely!" she insists. "It's a perfectly one-sided affair. He's in the wrong, and he knows it. Furthermore he knows that I know it, but he simply won't apologize!"

"Well, Well! I soothe. 'No wonder you're all speed up today. Have you had no message from him since the big battle?'"

"Not a word," she says. "Everytime the telephone rings I think it's Jack on the wire. Every time the postman comes in I begin to hope he's bringing me a letter from Jack. But I'm doomed to disappointment."

"He's just disappearin' out of your life, is he, like they do in the novels an' everything?"

"Well," she admits, "I can hardly say that. He sends the candy just as usual, and the flowers still come perfectly regular."

"Oh! I reflect. 'But you don't count the sweet tokens as a boui fide apology, eh?'"

"Indeed I do not!" she answers. "He's simply evading the question—trying to make me come across without one word of apology on his part."

"And you've come to me," I venture, "to get occult advice on how to pry that apology out of him? Well, girlie, I'm for you alright, and I'm your friend from first to last. But I won't be guilty of cruel and inhuman treatment."

"What do you mean?" she exclaims. "Simply this, dearie: the male is not an apologetic animal. Durin' infancy you can drive 'em to it. You can take 'em by the collar while they're young and helpless and march 'em up to the offended party and say 'Now apologize! And sometimes they'll do it. It all depends on the pressure from the rear!'"

"But when a man grows up, dearie, he doesn't exactly drop all his kid ways. He doesn't lose his distaste for apologizin' any more than he does for castor oil."

"Do you mean," she asks, "that a man never says he's sorry when he can possibly find a loop hole out of it?"

"That's just what I mean, dearie! He may say it with flowers; he may say it with Huyler five-pounders; he may say it by keepin' his ashes and cigar stubs off the floor; or, if he's married, he may say it by offerin' to wipe the dishes every night for a week. But when it comes to sayin' it with words—well, that's different!"

"But," she interrupts. "I believe that I can make him apologize if I hold out long enough."

"Sure you can, girlie," I agree. "He's sorry for his sins alright, and he loves you! You can tell that by the peace offerin' he's passin' out. But what I'm urgin' is for you to have a heart! Any woman that makes a man eat the dust of repentance just to satisfy her own miffed belief's—well, she's my idea of the original feminine feud."

"So you think," she asks smilin'ly "that I ought to take Jack's flowers and candy as the high sign that he's repentant and wants to be forgiven?"

"Katie!" I calls, when I see she's pullin' off her gloves like a good sport and preparin' to fall to. "Bring this young lady a stamp."

"You'll find paper and ink in that desk by the window, girlie, and there's a mail box on the first corner goin' east!"

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