

JOANNA

Story of a Modern Girl and a Million Dollars

First Prize Letter in Contest

THE following answer to the question, "What would you do with a million dollars?" was awarded first prize in the contest conducted by The Times. It was written by Clement L. Poston, 1415 Tuxedo St.

"If I had a million dollars handed to me tomorrow, I should marry the sweetest girl in the world tomorrow night. Therefore, to begin with, I have solved about three-fourths of the problem."

"But since I am furthermore a little serious-minded, I would from then on attempt to conduct myself as I normally do, and to keep myself directed toward the goal I set for myself when a boy. I should continue my studies in the Medical School which I am now attending and thereby derive for myself the true pleasure that come from doing real work."

"Even with a million dollars, I would try to be a common mortal, speaking as I might think, and in all things keeping myself loyal to truth and the sacred professions of friendship."

"With a fraction of the million dollars, I would, after graduation from the medical school, give myself the added advantage of continuing my studies for a time under the direction of the best scientists in my profession. In this way I should improve to the maximum the mind that God gave me, and thus place myself in a fair way to be an asset to my profession and to those about me."

"Finally, after I had developed a breadth of mind that would guide me to judiciously spend the remainder of the million dollars, I believe I should get rid of it by erecting and equipping a great hospital to care for those less fortunate than the most of us."

"With that accomplished, I should hope to keep always in mind the fact that a man who secretly thinks himself a martyr will never be one."

Advice to Miss Manners is to never worry over the source of her dramatic good fortune, but proceed to hire as many pipers to make music for her as she wants to pay.

Yvonne laughed a silvery little laugh that Joanna envied. "And you, Roddy, are dying to offer your self as one of the original pipers," she accused. To Joanna she added brightly:

"He's a beast of prey, this Roddy. He has the same accessories in every port that a sailor is supposed to have put away for his shore leaves. You must never take him seriously. Especially when he makes furious love to you." Kenilworth raised a protesting hand, but Joanna continued, nodding at him:

"Oh, you'll be making love to her before the evening's out." She turned again to Joanna, and informed her with a trill of dropping her voice into the inflections of a mock confidence that Joanna resolved to practice as soon as she was home: "He'll start in with your eyes, my dear; he has a fancy that young people pin their faith in their eyes and old women on their complexions."

"Don't let her mislead you," Kenilworth pleaded. "She has me confused with someone else. She is positively libelous. I never begin with the eyes, as I'll prove to you as soon as possible."

"You see?" Yvonne exclaimed. "He prepared you for his onslaughts. You must tell me at once if I am right. It'll be the eyes, I'm sure. They're quite pretty you know, I can fancy him raving over them."

Brandon came to Joanna's rescue. "She will survive even Roddy," he commented. "She has a most disconcerting way of putting the proper people in the right places."

Kenilworth—the he of the sort she was most accustomed to, only, of course, he was the super-kind that would press to his lips whatever ribbons might come to his finger tips at night, and blow them to the winds in the morning without regard for silk or cotton.

HE would always have to be on her guard against Brandon. If Kenilworth carried out the threat which lurked in his calculating eyes as he let them sweep over her, she'd checkmate him, easily. Considering all persons of the other sex as hunters, Joanna fell to wondering what would be the tactics of such a man as Kenilworth who, not being by any means young, must have had divers experiences. She was brought sharply out of this reflection by the young woman with the black hair, whom Brandon had called Yvonne.

"Don't you all know it's horrid, to have to pretend," Yvonne said, suddenly, allowing her fingers to flutter over Joanna's wrist, "that we aren't bubbling over with excitement about Miss Manners' amazing news? I, for one, must tell her how thrilling I think it must be."

Joanna gave her a grateful glance. "There doesn't seem to be anything else I can think about," she admitted. "If I only knew why and from whom!"

"Let's see," Kenilworth mused aloud. "Joanna stands for some generosity of the gods, doesn't it? Something like a 'gracious gift.' If I remember my mythology aright, Gods, like gift horses, mustn't be looked in the mouth. Not even by the lover of their favorites. My

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ing Yvonne desires, that she hasn't found a way to get it. Brandon, your banker's nephew. And Brandon undoubtedly will be having a try at you. Because any other woman would handle the situation differently. I've a mind Yvonne will want to take her newest rival right into her own camp."

He spoke lightly, almost whimsically, but Joanna was certain he was serious. And she remembered her impression that the coming of Yvonne and Kenilworth to Brandon's table had been prearranged. It made another puzzle that baffled her. She tried to catch Kenilworth off his guard.

"Why are you telling me this?" she flung up at him.

He didn't answer her at once, but smiled, quizzically again, and let his eyes rove over her upturned face. The music stopped, and he guided her to the rim of the dance floor, toward an opening between the tables. Still he had not acknowledged her sudden question. She put her hand on his sleeve and stopped him.

"You haven't told me, you know," she reminded him, standing quite still so that he could not evade her again; "Why you warn me against your—both of your friends."

"For perfectly obvious reasons, my dear girl," Kenilworth said, then, meeting her gaze steadily. "I've suddenly decided to have a try at you myself; Brandon plays his games deep, and I think Yvonne plays her's deeper still. And just now you are the stake. I'm going to play for you, too."

"I shall supply your comments now, and spare your slumbers," he returned. "I don't like that dumbbell! You should say: 'Sit at my feet, sir, and speak freely of pleasure-givings. They shall enter one ear and depart not from the other!'"

"Your deliveries will have to be better than your samples, or they won't even get into the first ear," she promised him. "I thought we had decided to talk about Yvonne, and the husband. Why did she divorce him, if she had to marry him at all? I've always wondered about such things."

"Our beautiful friend is one who is never comfortable without a thrill," Kenilworth informed her. "A new husband is a thrill, I suppose. As for other reasons for Yvonne's whims, you probably will find them out for yourself. She has taken a liking to you. I know the signs. She'll probably decide to take you under her wing. You will make an admirable foil for her."

A curious tumult shot through Joanna's blood. "Yvonne Coutant might take her, Joanna, under her wing! The most glittering wings in the world, according to her standards. She glanced shily at the man who was dancing with her. He caught her glance and fathomed it. "Quite probable, I assure you," he insisted. "And the obligation won't be on your side, you know. You mustn't forget that. It won't be the money. She's collected half at least two millionaires fortunes already. It'll be Brandon."

"Mr. Brandon? I don't see what you mean."

"Now you've got me gossiping! Oh, well, we're all new friends. You'll play us one against the other, most likely. So I'll start your imagination working. If there is one thing in the world that our charm-

YVONNE COUTANT! Now Joanna knew why her face had been fascinated her; why it had seemed so vaguely familiar! Each marriage a sensation, and each divorce a greater one. She had seen her pictured regularly in the Sunday newspapers—that part of them which she really looked at, the illustrated pages. She remembered Yvonne Coutant divorcing a college boy she'd run away with. A college boy, who was a scion of a family, or something like that. Yvonne Coutant engaged to another millionaire's son, and then to an Egyptian prince.

Yvonne Coutant at Monte Carlo, shocking English duchesses with gowns that wouldn't be allowed even in the movies—one newspaper had described them just that way. And in the most daring of beach costume at Deauville. Then married to the famous author and promptly divorced in Paris. Joanna saw her Sunday paper history as girls of another day knew their cook books. The Paris buyer for the store had sent over a dress, one time, which he said was an exact copy of the model worn by Yvonne Coutant in the Longchamps races. The store designer had added four inches to the back and front and put on shoulder straps, and made it a best selling number in the four hundred dollar class. And she, Joanna, yesterday morning "Miss Twenty-seven," had talked with her! Had talked and held her own with her!

"Did you really mean that her husband actually is here, tonight?" she asked her companion.

"One of them. If I spot him I'll give you a nudge. He's with a new flame."

Yvonne went over to them, awhile ago, to see what she's like. Says she's the kind that has golden wigs."

Joanna laughed gaily with him.

"Funny things to look forward to golden wigs, aren't they?" he bantered, looking down at her quizzically.

"Fancy you, now, getting through the marrying stages fast enough to leave time for an anniversary like that!"

"Oh, I shan't be so quick to get married that I'll be likely to change my mind," Joanna retorted.

"Now that's a sensible resolve," Kenilworth agreed. She felt his arm tightening a bit. He was holding her closer than Brandon had,

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