

The VANITY CASE

A Tale of Mystery and Love

By CAROLYN WELLS

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he smiled all was forgiven and he won the heart of any one who saw him.

Bunny liked him a lot, and though they were eternally sparring, they were the best of friends.

"Fraid not," she returned, "the ceremony has to take place in my bathroom, and Myra is such an old fuss where the proprieties are concerned."

A maid entered, pushed a perambulator, which was really a small cellaret. She brought it to rest in front of Heath, who at once set himself to the business of mixing cocktails.

Myra, from her lounge-chair, studied the maid critically. But she could find nothing to censure. Cap, apron and personal attitude were all perfection, for Katie was quick to learn and Myra was a thorough and competent teacher.

Though there was supposed to be about the house that air of careless and informal air always associated with a studio or a bungalow, Myra Heath's housekeeping instincts rebelled, and she was most punctilious in the matters of domestic etiquette.

So Katie took the glasses from Heath, on her perfectly appointed tray, with its caviare canapes and tiny napkins, and served them properly.

But after that she was allowed to leave the room, and "dividends" were apportioned out by Heath himself.

"Rotten to have a snooty maid around," he growled, "cocktails should be absorbed only in the bosom of one's own family."

"Katie isn't snooty," his wife rejoined, not curiously, but with the air of one stating an important fact.

"Not snooty exactly," offered Inman, "but so softly and cat-footed she gets on my nerves."

"I wouldn't have a noisy servant about," Myra informed him, with a calm glance of hauteur.

"Well, she spoils the whole day for me," Heath declared. "I do wish, Myra, you'd let us have the cocktail hour au naturel. Without hired service. Larry could pass the tray, or, if he balked, Bunny could."

"No," Myra said, and the one word was far more eloquently final than any tirade could have been.

She did not smile, but neither did she frown. It was her way of closing an incident.

Her pale oval face was of a classic beauty, which would have been rendered a thousand times more attractive by even a fleeting smile. But smiles were not Myra's strong point. Her calm was superb, her dignity was unassailable, her poise was never shaken, but of meriment she had none, nor ever showed response to its manifestation in others.

Of course, she was inordinately vain of her looks; of her quiet, well behaved ash blonde hair; of her large gray eyes, that never grew dark and stormy with rage, or soft with unshed tears; of her pale pink lips and delicate white complexion, untouched by the makeup box, and of her individual style of dressing.

Her wardrobe included only gowns of white or pale gray, or elusive shades of fawn or beige. And all were made on soft, clinging lines, that made her look like an exquisite Burne-Jones picture, in unusually modish garb.

All these effects should have appealed to her artist husband, but they didn't. He was all for color, and he begged Myra to wear pale green or yellow, or even black, but a calm "No" was his answer.

And so, though few people knew it, he became a little fed up with Myra. To be sure, she had the money, so he couldn't seriously offend her, but by slow degrees, spiritual, and though outwardly just as usual, they knew themselves where they stood.

Heath's absences in New York, when he went down to see about selling his pictures, became a little longer each time. He paid more attention than he used to feminine guests in the house. He contrasted in his own mind the deadly dullness of his wife and the gay bantering moods of Bunny or other girls and women who visited Myra.

For she loved to entertain. Her superiority complex craved opportunity to display her home in all its marvelous perfection of detail. Consequently no week-end found them without guests, and many remained as longer time visitors.

Lawrence Inman, too, an artist, dabbled about in Perry's studio, producing futile attempts at seascapes, or garden pieces, at which Heath laughed good-naturedly and told him to try blacksmithing.

A distant relative of Myra's, Inman was her only kin, and, except for Heath, the natural heir to her large fortune.

Moreover, he was in love with her, or as near as one could come to such a thing as romance with Myra Heath.

He had often told her so, only to receive a grave look and a calm "No" in response. But Larry Inman was not easily daunted, and he continued to dance attendance on his beautiful kinswoman, to the secret amusement of her true and lawful husband.

For Perry Heath was astute to a degree, and very clever, and in his house of which he was unaware.

He even sensed, through sheer intuition, that Larry contemplated proposing to Myra some plan of divorce or elopement, and he hidly wondered how his wife would take it.

This conviction, however, made not the slightest difference, and the attitude toward the pair, and the peace of the household was untroubled.

But Heath, not illogically, told himself that since for the goose was sauce for the gander, and if Myra chose to philander with Inman, her husband was excusable if he flirted a tiny bit with the bewitching Bunny.

Cocktails finished and dinner announced, they went across the lounge to the dining room.

Here again, the absolute perfection of the appointments and the excellence of the food justified Myra in her pride in her housekeeping.

Dinner was rather a merry feast, for the cocktails had been potent, and, though Myra smiled but sel-

dom, the other three were in fine fig and feather, and a pleasant time was had by all.

Coffee was served on the front terrace, that looked out to sea, and later, as the darkness settled down, they went inside for bridge.

"Let's play in the studio," Bunny said, "it's so much more cosy."

"Yes, I know your idea of cosiness," Heath retorted, "it's to huddle all the time you're dummy and most of the time you're playing."

Bunny made a face at him and went on to the studio, where Katie was deftly placing table, chairs and smoking stands.

They played a few rubbers, for moderate stakes, and then, Bunny, being dummy, and chattering as was her wont, Heath said, sharply:

"Do shut up, child! I can't think straight with your tongue chattering like that!"

"Oh, all right!" and the girl flounced out of her chair, went through the French window and out on the terrace.

"Now, she's mad," observed Inman, but Perry Heath said, gayly:

"Not so you'd notice it. That's a bid for me to follow her."

"Run along, then," said Myra, tolerantly, "I'll entertain Larry till you get back."

It was not entirely unprecedented, for their bridge games occasionally broke up in just this fashion.

Heath strolled along the terrace to the far end, where he found Bunny in a rambling arbor, exactly where he had expected to find her.

Very fair she looked, as she stood leaning against its trellised window, her fair hair a soft gold in the moonlight, her flower-like face a little wistful as she gazed up at him.

Perry Heath was not a handsome man, but he was gentle and kindly, and little Bunny, unversed in the ways of men of the world, had fallen for his gay, good-natured charm.

His appearance was a bit inconspicuous in its lack of distinction or striking features. His rather pale face was surmounted by a shock of dark brown hair, which he had a habit of impatiently pushing back from his forehead, over which it invariably dropped again. His eyes were a gray blue, and he wore large tortoise-shell rimmed glasses, which, he said, having put on for his painting, he was later compelled to wear constantly.

They were not specially becoming, but Bunny contended they lent distinction to his face and gave him a Bohemian look.

For the rest, Heath was average sized, average weight, and always dressed in the perfection of good taste as well as in the latest mode of tailoring.

His manner was always pleasant, receptive, responsive and generally charming. This, though habitual with him, was looked upon by Bunny as specially his, and she was rapidly becoming his abject slave and adorer.

Heath saw this, of course, and tried to stave it off by coolness and even negligence toward the girl.

But Bunny disregarded this and blithely went on falling in love with neatness and dispatch.

"Come along, Bunny girl, they're waiting for us," Heath said, trying not to look too directly at her.

"Stay just a minute," she whispered, stepping a bit nearer to him. "Just one little minute—to look at the moon."

"Why, there isn't any moon, child," he exclaimed.

"There will be in a minute. It's just going to rise—up out of the sea. Oh, do wait for it. Do—dear—"

Of course, Perry had to meet the occasion. He waited. Waited, with Bunny in his arms, her slim little form held so close he could feel her quick, startled breathing, could hear her ecstatic little gasps as she nestled her chin in his cupped hand that sought to raise her face to his.

But as the golden disk began to show above the sea horizon, Myra's voice sounded from the doorway:

"Come on in, you two—the evening's over."

They obeyed her summons, and, returning to the studio, found Inman mixing himself a nightcap and Myra looking with deep interest at an old brown bottle she was holding.

She referred to a big book on glass and verified its exact status.

"Yes," she said, rapidly, "it's all right! Dyottville Glass Works—Philadelphia—oh, it's a gem! A wonderful find!"

"Hang your wonderful find!" cried her husband, irritably. "It amazes me, Myra, when you are so unenthusiastic over most things how you can go into ecstasies over a bit of ugly old glass, just because it is old."

Myra looked at him a few seconds, without speaking, and then turned her attention to the brown bottle.

"I love that particular stare my wife gives me occasionally," Heath said, addressing no one in particular.

"You shall have it again, if you cure for it so much," Myra retorted, and gave him another look, this time showing a more definite trace of contempt.

"Come, come," said Larry, "birds in their little nests agree. Let up on the bickering, if only to spare your guests embarrassment. And, too, old scout, your pictures are no more uniformly good than Myra's glass junk. This isn't saying that some of them are not masterpieces, but on the other hand—"

"Shut up," growled Heath, "yours are uniformly bad, you know. Well, consistency's a jewel."

"Larry knows more about color than you do," said Myra, judiciously, speaking almost as if she was judging an exhibition of art.

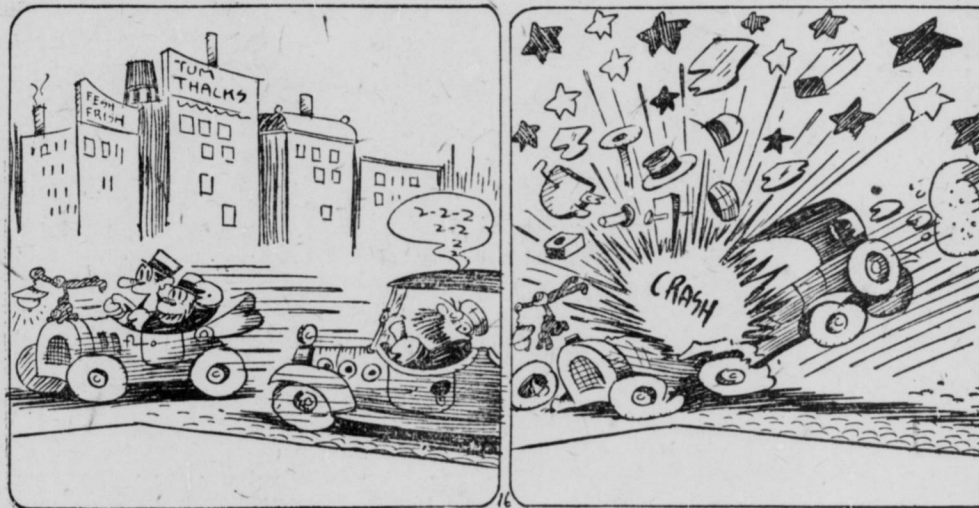
"Pooh, color is my middle name," Heath retorted. He was not miffed at all, these altercations were of frequent occurrence. "I wish to goodness, Myra, you had a little sense of color. It might lead you to see how a touch of it would improve your pure, angel face. Your lips are perfectly shaped, but too pale. Your delicate, but high cheek bones would welcome a touch of rouge,

OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY—A DOUBLE EXPOSURE.

SALESMAN \$AM—By SWAN



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES—By MARTIN



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By AHERN



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her ever come in deep red? I believe this is my color—don't you?"

She leaned over Heath, her saucy face near his own, and by her own movement brought herself within the circle of his arm.

"You let my husband alone, Miss Vampire," said Myra, with more spirit than she often showed.

(To Be Continued.)

DON'T SNEEZE AT THIS

By United Press
CHICAGO, Aug. 16.—Advice not to sneeze at was issued here today by Health Commissioner Herman N. Bundesen, in listing ways of preventing hay fever.

"Wear amber glasses; stay in the city away from dust and pollen; ride in closed automobiles; be moderate in eating," are included in Dr. Bundesen's list.

"No weeds, no pollen," he explained. "No pollen, no hay fever."

Fire Alarm? Hunt Band on Pole

Look for a yellow band on a pole when you're in a hurry to find a fire alarm box.

Yellow stripes today are being painted above all boxes, which are being repainted by a squad of city employees under direction of William Griffin, board of safety electrical engineer.

"Business Kisses"

By BEATRICE BURTON

Author of "Gloria, The Flapper Wife"

The names in this story are purely fictitious and are not to be taken as referring to any particular person. Place of firm.

CHAPTER LXIII
The first week in April, Mary Rose left old Dr. Fitzroy's office and went to work for Jim Morrell's business partner, Cornelius Tuedeman.

Tuedeman was, beyond all shadow of doubt, the handsomest man that Mary Rose had ever seen in her life.

He was dark with the fiery, romantic swarthy of a Valentino. And—wonders of wonders!—he was not conceited over his good looks.

He wore loose, shabby suits and dark neckties; and he was so painfully shy that Mary Rose was sorry for him.

"I don't know when I've met any one that I liked as well as I do him," she told Flossie one afternoon, when the two of them returned to Flossie's little flat from a shopping trip.

"Well, then—why not marry him?" asked Flossie, who never minced matters.

"You could, if you tried to," she went on, delicately applying a new paste rouge to her lips, as she talked. "For one thing, you're a fool not to

tween 40 and 50—and that he'd found out that it is!" she added. "I told him he was talking cuckoo, but he just laughed. Sometimes he says the weirdest things!"

Mary Rose laughed, too.

"That wasn't a queer thing to say," she told Flossie. "It's a well known fact that a lot of men—and women, too—have their wildest love affairs during their middle age. I suppose it's because they know old age is just around the corner."

Flossie set her too scarlet lips in a determined line.

"Well, just let me catch Sam Jessup cutting up any dikes like that when he's middle-aged," she cried, her eyes flashing like blue flames, "and I'll bet I'll fix him! It'll be a 'dangerous age' for him, all right, if he does!"

It was a week or two later that Mary Rose saw John Manners once more.

She and Flossie were out walking and as they turned a corner his car passed close to them.

"There's John Manners!" Flossie cried, excitedly pinching her sister's arm. "Right there in that car! See?"

Mary Rose did see. She was looking straight into John Manners' eyes—the gray eyes that she loved—and on her lips was a small smile that barely lifted the dimpled corners of it.

John raised his hat and the car swooped on down the wide street.

"Why, you're sinking all over like a bowl full of jelly!" Flossie, who was still holding Mary Rose's arm,

exclaimed. She looked at her and saw that she had gone dead white.

"Mary Rose Middleton!" she said disgustedly. "You're still crazy about that chump, aren't you? You look as if somebody had knocked you silly!"

"I always will be," Mary Rose found herself saying. She hadn't meant to say it, but a ilber defenses were down any one he's ever seen."

"He did care for me—once upon a time," she answered. "There were weeks and weeks, while I worked for him, that we both were miserable because he was engaged to Doris Hing. He told me he loved me better than any one he's ever seen."

Flossie laughed a little. "Men have been known to tell women things like that before—and not mean it! Men are brutes, Mary Rose. The only way to get along with some of them is never to believe anything they say."

Mary Rose shook her head. "No—I have to believe people when they say things to me," she said. "That

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