

**THE LIBERAL SHORT STORY**

**SUNDAY NIGHT**  
By Elizabeth Armstrong

As Miss Melinda Ray—Miss Melly for short—stepped into the hotel elevator she saw again the good looking, middle-aged man, whose name the telephone girl told her was Mr. Chadwick. Miss Melly knew he noticed her, too, and was glad she had on her new blue silk dress.

It was the most becoming one she had bought and went well with her gray hair and fresh complexion, which looked even fresher this evening after the first facial she had ever had in her life.

Miss Melly was past the first blush of youth, in fact, although she didn't look it she was decidedly on the wrong side of forty. For twenty years she had been in charge of a small town library.

Her girlhood had been forlorn, for when she should have been enjoying herself, her parents, both imaginary invalids, needed coddling and demanded all her time. Forgetting that once they had been young themselves, they frowned upon boy friends their daughter might acquire.

However, in spite of her parents there was one persistent youth named Fred, a short fat uninspiring person who finally got a chance to ask Miss Melly to marry him and to whom Miss Melly said no. But, even though it was with difficulty that she recalled Fred's features she remembered and was grateful to him for one thing—he taught her to dance. This she was obliged to hide from her parents as they didn't approve of such nonsense, but she never forgot. At home when she was alone in the house and Fred had long since passed from the picture, Miss Melly used to put the Blue Danube on the phonograph and waltz around the room all by herself.

When the library was built Miss Melly got the job of librarian because she liked to read and nobody else turned up. In her twenty years of service, it was quite natural that she should absorb a great deal of knowledge; people got into the habit of asking for information on all sorts of subjects, rather than take

the trouble to hunt themselves. Miss Melly knew practically all the answers and accordingly considered herself very well informed—sophisticated and worldly wise into the bargain. Well informed she was indeed, but the blue-eyed kitten never lived as innocently, as she.

Her salary went mostly into the bank, at her parents' death having inherited a small house and a trifle to keep it going. When she had reached the age of 68 she intended to retire and live peacefully on her savings; thus her life was all planned. Also, in death she was attended too, for in the cemetery beside her parents, remained a space for her.

One day, after life had gone on month after month, year after year with no change, a friend died unexpectedly and left Miss Melly the sum of two thousand dollars. Like a pack of hounds, her relatives pounced upon her, not to get the money, but with advice as to investment.

At the usual family Sunday night supper, Cousin Ed stated definitely that, with times what they were three per cent was all one could get safely. With any other type of investment would be fly-by-night and not to be considered. Miss Melly was good at arithmetic too. If she followed this advice her inheritance would bring in about \$5 a month, which even, in her pile and uneventful existence, couldn't make any real difference. But Cousin Ed was so sound that it never occurred to Miss Melly to go against his judgment.

However, on her way home that night something happened that changed her entire life. Or at least it didn't happen to her—nothing ever did—but as she passed the Miller's house, she saw Mary Miller kissing her boy friend, Joe Haley, good night. Distinctly, she caught the expression on Mary's upturned face as she did so, the most depressing sensation swept over her; in one illuminating flash she realized that this girl, who probably had never read a dozen books in her life actually knew more than she, Melinda Ray, who did nothing but study and to whom important people like Professor Guthrie came for information.

On the instant in Miss Melly's mind an idea was born—a wild, insane, impossible, delicious idea. By the time she reached home it was more than an idea—it was a fixed determination from which nobody could budge her. She called Cousin Ed on the telephone.

"I'm not going to invest my money," she said. "I'm going to spend it in New York, learning—er—something." Just what this was Miss Melly didn't know herself.

A few weeks later saw Miss Melly on leave from the library and settled in a hotel on a side street, a quiet little place, but to her huge and bustling, where anything could happen.

Up to now, sightseeing, shopping, the never failing thrill of the theatres, had been quite sufficient but suddenly this evening, for the first time she felt lonely. Probably because it was Sunday night, when at home she was accustomed to sitting down with all the family at Cousin Ed's hospitable board. Instead, here she was coming down in the elevator to sit by herself and watch other people have a good time.

When the elevator reached the lounge, everybody except Miss Melly got off. Mr. Chadwick, the good looking man, with the rest. Miss Melly saw a young fellow, obviously his son, rush up to him, pump his hand violently and then talking animatedly, walk off with his father. They disappeared, the elevator door closed and Miss Melly went on down.

She chose a certain corner chair where she could see everything going on. She glanced across at the telephone girls, one of whom had been very friendly and helpful—in fact it was this very girl who was responsible for Miss Melly's smart appearance. It was she who had put her up to a lorgnette instead of the spectacles she didn't need and showed her how to fix her hair so the new hats would be becoming. Only that morning she had suggested a facial for the beauty shop was open Sundays until noon. "I'll make you feel like a two-year-old," she said confidently.

It did. Miss Melly put her hand to her face—how soft and young her skin was! That was the heart-breaking part of growing old; if your health was perfect, you felt as young as ever.

Through the revolving doors came a never-ending string of young people—boys calling for their girls or coming with them to dance. Boy Meets Girl, thought Miss Melly, who had seen the play the day before, doesn't it ever happen that Man

Meets Woman? At that instant, the orchestra commenced to play in the tea room; the strains of a heavenly waltz floated through the door. Miss Melly was so depressed by it, that even though she was in New York, with plenty of money, good clothes, a lorgnette and a facial tears came into her eyes. But, even as she dashed them out, her foot tapped in time to the music.

The elevator came down again with another load of young people. It also brought the good looking man, Mr. Chadwick quite alone. Miss Melly wondered what had become of his son, then because it was rude to stare she stopped looking at him, so she didn't see what Mr. Chadwick did. He, in his turn, looked very hard at Miss Melly, started in her direction, then apparently changing his mind, walked over to the telephone girls, and spoke to the one who was with Miss Melly's friend. In another minute this girl rose, and came over to Miss Melly's corner.

"Miss Ray," she said, "I hope you won't mind but a gentleman living in the hotel has taken a great fancy to you and wants to meet you."

"Me. "You're crazy!"

"Indeed, I'm not. It's Mr. Chadwick—that very good-looking man with gray hair. Maybe you've noticed him." Miss Melly's heart fluttered and she felt the way she did when she danced the Blue Danube alone in her room. But, aloud she merely replied primly:

"I should be very pleased, I'm sure."

Mr. Chadwick was brought over and introduced. At close range he proved even more attractive than at a distance; a little older than Miss Melly, the lines on his face were strong ones, the wrinkles around his eyes, those of amiability. The telephone girl discreetly withdrew and Mr. Chadwick sat down.

"I hope you don't mind my forcing myself on you like this," he began, "but I've seen you so many times. I wanted to know you."

"I wanted to know you, too," replied Miss Melly boldly.

"Thank you. You see it's this way with me. I'm a widower, and my son has a job on Long Island so he lives there. He has supper with me every Sunday night, but tonight he just dropped in to give me the air for a new girl friend." Mr. Chadwick paused and offered Miss Melly a cigarette. Miss Melly gulped but took it. Quite as a matter of course. Mr. Chadwick produced a match and then continued. "Week-days I don't have time to be lonely, but there's something about being by myself Sunday night that gets me down."

"The same here," answered Miss Melly, and then proceeded to tell him all about her uneventful life back home, and Cousin Ed's family gatherings. But, from the way Mr. Chadwick listened he didn't consider it dull at all, but most entertaining. When she finished he said:

"Considering that we both see eye to eye about Sunday night, I wonder if you would go out to dinner with me?"

"Oh, I'd simply love to!"

"Good. I know an awfully nice little place where they have a wonderful orchestra," said Mr. Chadwick, then he added a trifle sheepishly. "I'm very fond of dancing. Of course, I'm not up to these modern steps."

"But," interrupted Miss Melly, with shining eyes, "to my way of thinking, there's nothing like a good, old-fashioned waltz." Again her foot tapped to the music coming through the tea room door. "I'll go put on my things."

Up in her room, Miss Melly sat down in front of her mirror and fixed her face the way the telephone girl had advised for evening. Then she adjusted her new hat—it certainly did look better with her hair waved this way. "Not a day over thirty-five," she said confidently to her reflection, "and maybe only thirty-two if I once get dancing."

Going down in the elevator with her was a girl young enough to be her daughter. The girl was pulling on a pair of white gloves; Miss Melly did the same.

Then she glanced at the girl who glanced back with an excited happy smile. Miss Melly smiled too, in an understanding fashion. Boy friends waiting for both of them downstairs. Just two girls together.

# HALF a LOAF

## IS A WHOLE LOT BETTER THAN

# NONE

At this time when the year 1937 is passing we make an earnest request to those whose subscriptions are in arrears, and to others whose accounts who have been running for a long time to "render unto Caesar," as the Good Book puts it.

As time passes it becomes more and more evident that the depression has produced a most careless attitude, on the part of many people toward obligations that they would have paid promptly in the days previous to 1929.

There is a tendency these days to say: "Well, no one is paying his debts, so why should I?" This is one of the most potent causes of the continued hard times. If you don't pay me, I can't pay the other fellow, and in the end it goes around the circle until he can't pay you. So nobody gets paid and business languishes.

## PAY SOMETHING ON ACCOUNT

Some people who have let an account run for some time avoid making any payment because they feel obligated to pay the whole thing at once and can't afford the outlay. This is a wrong attitude. People who pay some on account are helping their creditor along and, at the same time, they are reducing their obligation and establishing a reputation for being "good pay."

The Liberal employs a staff and has a heavy overhead, like all other business concerns of the kind, and it must pay its help in dollar bills. We ask, therefore, that subscribers in arrears give this matter a little bit of thought and meet their obligation either in whole or in part.

The thing to do is pay something on account and keep the wheels of business moving.

## LOOK AT YOUR LABEL

Your label shows how you stand with The Liberal. If it reads "1934" that means you owe since 1934 and a few dollars would be most acceptable.

This appeal also applies to accounts for advertising and job printing that have been allowed to slide for some time. Loose credit is the curse of business today. It could be eliminated, prices of everything could be reduced at least 25 per cent. The trouble is the man who pays promptly for everything, these days, is helping to carry some other fellow who is running a long overdue bill.

## Prompt Payment of Accounts Like Competition, is the Life of Trade.

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