

THE LIBERAL SHORT STORY

CAREER GIRL
By Denis Morrison

Hilda came off the courts dripping with perspiration. You wouldn't have thought it possible. No excess weight on that slender, supple frame of hers.

She moved with the grace of the natural athlete every muscle knowing its function as if by instinct, and instinct schooled by months and years of hard, driving practice and harder competition.

Maxine Dorsey picked her up at the showers. Maxine hovered over little Hilda like a clucking mother hen over an extraordinary chick. Maxine admitted a proprietary interest in Hilda Dale. She'd discovered Hilda on the public courts when Hilda was barely past eleven years old, and Maxine's practiced eye even then perceived in the gangling, tow-headed girl the makings of a champion.

"Nice work," Maxine said. "I liked the way you stood up and took it in that third set, Hilda. That tall girl from New Jersey had you six-two and I was frightened."

"Come through, didn't I, Maxine?" Hilda said.

"Like a champ. You'll make headlines with today's performance my girl. A few more like that and—well, those English girls are going to make a terrific try to lift the Wightman Cup next year."

"The Wightman Cup! Oh! Maxine, you can't mean it!"

The ladies' tennis pro smiled enigmatically.

"And why not?" she demanded. Haven't I made you the hottest thing in tennis this season? Haven't you got a trunkful of cups and medals to show for it? The Wightman Cup team, of course. That's our goal and we're on the verge of seeing it accomplished."

Hilda got under the cold shower and shivered as the water battered her pink and tingling body. Her eyes shone. Maxine Dorsey's eyes glowed black. The next thing to being a champ yourself was making a champ. Maxine, a famous old-timer, was going to experience the double thrill.

But it was something else that brought fire to the blue eyes of Hilda Dale. A boy. No, two boys. It was thrilling and, yes, a little frightening as well, to have two boys tugging at your heart, each straining in an opposite direction. Johnny Rogers had whispered things into her ear something like the seductive prospect held out by Maxine. And

Johnny Rogers was a god, no less. A Davis Cup player. Erratic, but, at his best, probably the most brilliant and devastating volleyer in all the world. Young and strong and magnetic. He lived and breathed tennis. Tennis to Johnny was father and mother, eat and drink, and if it must be admitted, support. He'd been around the world a couple of times playing his way. He knew all the best people and put up at the better clubs. Sports writers worshipped him, opponents trembled at his name.

Hilda remembered the first time Johnny Rogers had condescended to notice her. It was the night after she'd won her first important tournament. Just two years ago. She was seventeen then a lithe, bubbling, vivid kid from the West, with rubber legs and amazing power in her slender shoulders. Those days Hilda was scribbling a note every night to George Burton back home. Maybe it wouldn't be any more than a scrawled "I love you," but enough to let George know she wasn't forgetting.

George was no tennis player. That is, he could dub and slam his way through a set well enough to trim a complete duffer, and he had been a fair sort of a football player at Stanford. He got around to the best clubs too because he was, of all things, a swimming pool salesman. Naturally, the prettiest girls at the club dances had no eyes for the likes of him when young newspaper odds like Johnny Rogers were about.

So Maxine, observing the shine in Hilda's eyes, thought that her excitement arose from the prospect of being a Wightman Cup team player, of competing before the King and Queen at Wimbledon, perhaps being presented at court—the prospect too, of years of luxurious fun and travel, hers solely because she could slap a little white inflated ball harder and more accurately than any other girl in the world!

But Hilda wasn't thinking of those things, not exclusively. She was thinking of Johnny Rogers and Geo. Burton, and wondering—wondering—with the most excruciating delight a girl like her could know—"which one shall I take? Which one ought I to take?"

Why can't a girl have two husbands, one to stay at home with and another to fly around places with?"

Her dinner date was with George, who was doing all right in his business. He came straight to the point. "Hilda," he said, "do we go West tonight?"

"George! What are you trying to do, rush me?"

"Been trying to rush you for years, darling. As if you didn't know. I've got to know, honey."

"Maxine says I'll be good enough for the Wightman team next year."

Hilda remarked as casually as she could.

"Next year? You could lick any woman and most of the men in the world the way you played this afternoon. But that's not the point. What's tennis? A game, that's all, and the sooner you come down to earth and realize it the better off you'll be."

She glared. "If you're proposing to me again, I must say you're about as diplomatic as a charging buffalo."

"Truth beats diplomacy any day, Hilda. If you could only see it as I can you'd know that all these club people and so on that are making such a fuss over you don't care a whoop about Hilda Dale, the girl—like I do. They're only interested in Hilda Dale, the tennis player—who can bring them reflected glory to bask in—swell their gate receipts—advertise them—so they can cash in. Why to them you're only a tennis racket, a boxful of rubber balls—and a machine. Yes, that's it—a machine!"

"George Burton! You dare—"

"I dare anything, sweetheart, because I love you—and because I know you love me. And it's time we did something about it."

Johnny Rogers strolled by. He gave George Burton a supercilious glance and bent down over Hilda.

"Wonderful match, dear," he felicitated. "Your forehand was unbeatable—simply unbeatable. How about tonight?"

"I won't be busy, Johnny," she said sweetly. They both gave Burton an offhand glance as if to tell him wordlessly that he was in the way.

"See you later," George said, getting up and leaving his entree untasted.

The girl watched him go in dismay. George had never done that sort of thing before. Always been the good old dependable squire. She shrugged and smiled.

"Walk?" she invited Johnny.

Over by the deserted courts they

found a secluded bench behind a hedge. Johnny was in rare form. He, too, had won his match that day. He was going to Forest Hills this year, he said. He hoped to go after the Wimbledon title again. Lost it last year owing to his own damned carelessness. After that, Auteuil—and then:

"Bob Ross has a tour mapped for me, sweetheart. We'll go East through the Mediterranean, stopping off in Athens, then running over to Cairo—on through Suez—play here and there—Manila, Hong Kong—maybe Shanghai—hit Japan at the right season. Never been to Japan, little Hilda? Marvelous place! Treated me like I was the Emperor last time I was there. Then on to Honolulu and home. Nice?"

"Too absolutely scrumptious, Johnny!"

"Want to go along? You can, you know."

"Me? How?"

"Say the word. Be Mrs. Johnny Rogers. Keep it secret if you want to. Might be better. I'll wangle it with Ross. Plenty of gals in foreign parts that would like to see the great Hilda Dale on the courts. Make a mint of dough for everybody. Not cost us a penny. How's about it?"

"How's about it? Just like that. She glanced at the tall boy beside her. Read desire, possessiveness, mastery in his eyes along with the insouciant charm, the self-confidence, condescending nonchalance. Something she missed that she never missed in George. Adoration. Silly. Yes, but a girl being proposed to can stand a bit of adoration just the same. But—this delightful jaurt around the world! She felt dizzy.

"Think it over, baby," Johnny told her.

She got up. "That's just what I want to do," she said—breathed, rather—and ran away.

She found a huge chair in the committee room. Dark, the room was. She knew it would be, and that's why she chose it as a refuge. She curled her slim legs under her and gave herself up to serious miserable contemplation. Which? Which? "I'll go mad!" she told herself, and believed it. "Did George mean it when he ran away? I'll slap him for being so fresh, the big, loveable mugg! Go away from George? How can I?"

The light came on. Voices of two men rumbled through the room. Hilda hunched herself up farther. But the men weren't noticing her. She recognized their voices—two members of the all-powerful Tennis Committee. Arbiters of her fate and the fates of all the glory-seeking youngsters at the nets.

"Dale will go to Essex next month. Weak draw there last year. Dale's hot now. She'll pull them in. By the way, have our press department build her up."

"Dale for Essex. Okay. Marblehead is yelling for her already. Route her right through. By the way, Johnny Rogers is getting out of hand. Wants too much."

"They get that way," the other man said. "Have to nurse him along, though. If young Peables comes along as good as he looks, Rogers will be out in the cold. Give him enough rope to hang himself. But we ought to show a big profit on Dale this year."

Hilda closed her ears the best she could. Finally the men left. Hilda felt cold and clammy and—used! She found George in the lounge reading, a highball at his elbow.

"Hi!" she said, approaching timidly.

"Hi, yourself!"

"Did you say something about going West tonight, mister? Because—if you did—I'm thinking I'll want a reservation."

The late Thomas A. Edison was showing a party of friends over his beautiful summer residence, equipped with many labor-saving devices. One exception, however, was a turnstile so stiff that it required considerable strength to force a passage.

One by one his guests pushed their way through. At length one of them ventured to say: "Mr. Edison, why do you have everything so perfect except this awful turnstile?"

"Ah," replied the host, his eyes twinkling. "Everybody who pushes that turnstile around, pumps eight gallons of water into the tank on my roof."

Wife — "I'm afraid Oliver, that you do not love me any more — at least, not as much as you used to."

Husband — "Why?"

Wife — "Because you always let me get up to light the fire now."

Husband — "Nonsense, my dear! You're getting up to light the fire makes me love you all the more."

There seems to be no middle-ground. When people stop being down-trodden, they begin to be bored.

COLLINGWOOD TO VOTE ON LIQUOR STORE ONLY

The result of a straw vote taken among the business and professional men of Collingwood on the liquor question was placed before the municipal council at a special meeting recently. The ballots indicated that 20 were opposed to a vote being taken, 64 favored beverage rooms and 111 advocated a liquor store for Collingwood. The vote in favor of a change from the present local option in force there was five to one. The matter was left entirely with the council and considerable opposition to beverage rooms was voiced by the council members. In response to the request of the merchants and professional men of Collingwood, a bylaw authorizing a vote on a liquor store only was passed unanimously by the council.

ARCHBISHOP BEREAVED

Trevor R. Owen, father of Archbishop Owen of Toronto died in Toronto on Wednesday, Nov. 3rd. He was born in Wales 91 years ago and came to Canada in 1882. He first resided in Manitoba, and later in Peterboro before going to Toronto. He was a retired army officer.

A philosopher is one who faces today's crisis with the reflection that the 837 crises of the last year wouldn't have bothered him if he hadn't read about them.

The town of Georgetown will vote on December 6th on the matter of an addition to the High School to cost \$45,000. The town's share will be \$39,000. The addition would include a gymnasium.

William Finlayson's majority in East Simcoe is now given officially as 103.

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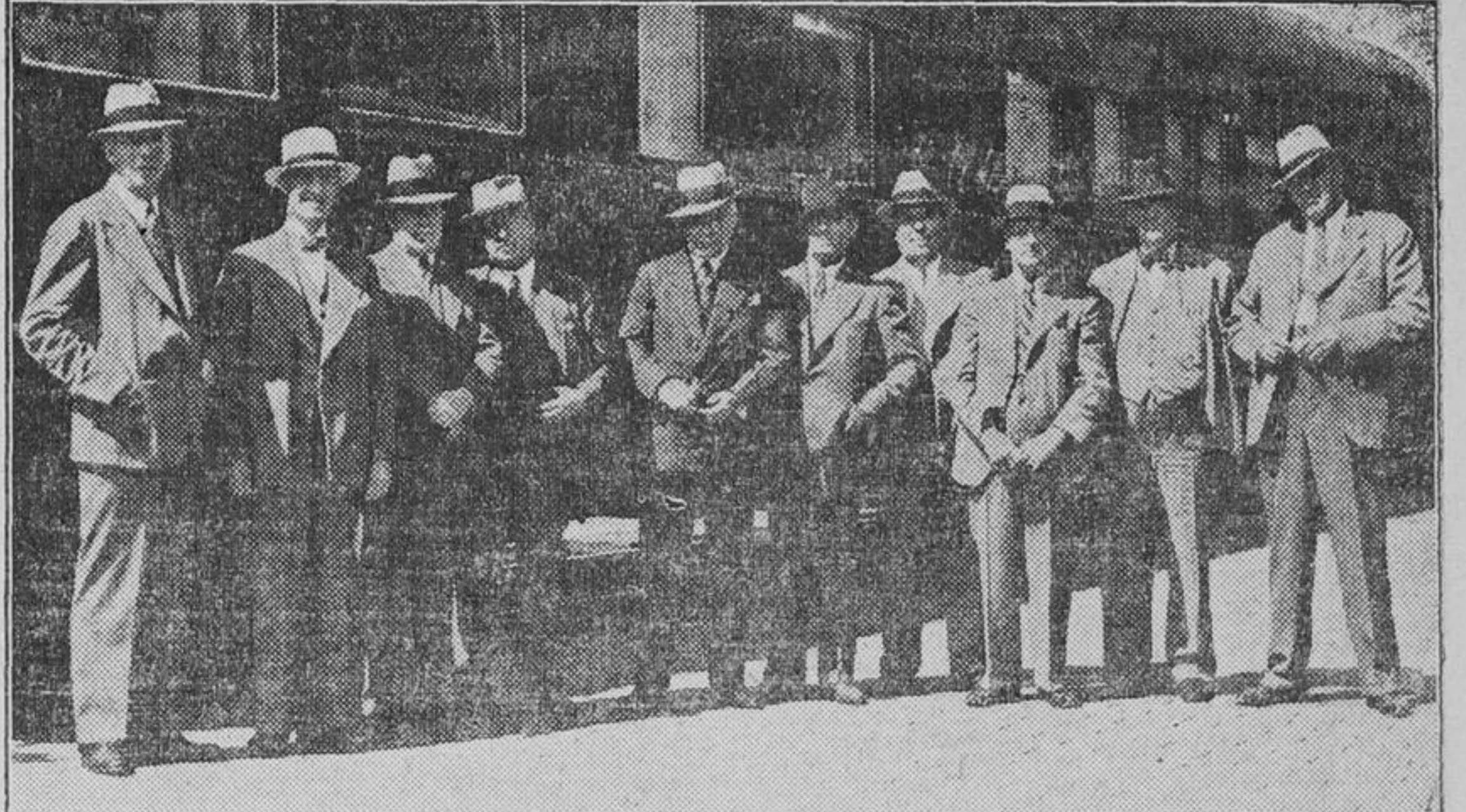
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"Ontario on the whole is enjoying an excellent year. Beginning with agriculture and ending with industry progress has been greater than in the past seven years," Sir Edward Beatty, G.B.E., K.C., LL.D., Chairman and President, Canadian Pacific Railway, stated after a recent inspection of the Company's properties and of agriculture and business general-ly throughout the province. Sir Edward, and the members of his party, were everywhere welcomed by representative citizens, and are here shown on the station platform at Sudbury after being received by W. E. Mason, president of the Sudbury Board of Trade; J. H. Simpson, acting mayor of Sudbury, and Mayor E. A. Collins, Copper Cliff. In the picture are seen from left to right: L. B. Unwin, vice-president of finance and treasurer; Aitken Walker, general freight agent; George Stephen, vice-president of traffic; Mayor Collins; Sir Edward Beatty; H. J. Humphrey, vice-president and general manager, eastern lines; Thomas Hambley, North Bay general superintendent; Mr. Simpson, Mr. Mason, and B. J. Quilty, superintendent Sudbury division.

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