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By
George Barr McCutcheon

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—In the New York home of James Brood Dawes and Riggs, his two old pensioners and comrades, await the coming of Brood's son Frederic to learn the contents of a wireless from Brood, but Frederic, after reading, throws it into the fire and leaves the room without a word.

CHAPTER II—Frederic tells Lydia Desmond, his fiancée, that the message announces his father's marriage and orders the house prepared for an immediate homecoming. Mrs. Desmond, the housekeeper and Lydia's mother, tries to cool Frederic's temper at the impending changes.

CHAPTER III—Brood and his bride arrive. She wins Frederic's liking at first meeting. Brood shows dislike and veiled hostility to his son.

CHAPTER IV—Lydia and Mrs. Brood meet in the study-room, where Lydia works as Brood's secretary. The room, dominated by a great gold Buddha, Brood's father confessor, is furnished in oriental magnificence. Mrs. Brood, after a talk with Lydia, which leaves the latter puzzled, is disturbed by the appearance of Ranjab, the Hindu servant of Brood.

CHAPTER V—Mrs. Brood makes changes in the household and gains her husband's consent to send Mrs. Desmond and Lydia away. She tries to fathom the mystery of Brood's separation from his first wife before her death, and his dislike of his son, but fails.

CHAPTER V.

Husband and Wife.

The ensuing fortnight brought the expected changes in the household James Brood, to the surprise of not only himself but others, lapsed into a curious state of adolescence. His infatuation was complete. The once dominant influence of the man seemed to sink away from him as the passing days brought up the new problems of life. Where he had lived to command he now was content to serve. His friends, his son, his servants viewed the transformation with wonder, not to say apprehension.

It would not be true to say that the remarkable personality of the man had suffered. He was still the man of steel, but retempered. The rigid broadsword was made over into the fine flexible blade of Toledo. He could be bent but not broken.

It pleased him to submit to Yvonne's commands. Not that they were arduous or peremptory; on the contrary, they were suggestions in which his own comfort and pleasure appeared to be the inspiration. She was too wise to demand, too clever to resort to cajolery. She was a Latin. Diplomacy was hers as a birthright. Complaints, appeals, sulks would have gained nothing from James Brood. Nor would it have occurred to her to employ these methods. From the day she entered the house she was its mistress.

There were no false notions of sentiment to restrain or restrict her in the rearrangement of her household. She went about the matter calmly, sensibly, firmly; even the most prejudiced could not but feel the justice of her decisions. The serene way in which she both achieved and accepted conquest proved one thing above all others: She was born to rule.

To begin with, she miraculously transferred the sleeping quarters of Messrs. Dawes and Riggs from the second floor front to the third floor back without arousing the slightest sign of antagonism on the part of the crusty old gentlemen, who had occupied one of the choice rooms in the house with uninterrupted security for a matter of nine or ten years. Mrs. Brood explained the situation to them so graciously, so convincingly, that they even assisted the servants in moving their heterogeneous belongings to the small, remote room on the third floor, and applauded her plan to make a large sitting-room of the chamber they were deserting. It did not occur to them for at least three days that they had been imposed upon, cheated, maltreated, insulted, and then it was too late. The decorators were in the big room on the second floor. They had been betrayed by the wife of their bosom friend. Is it small cause for wonder, then, that the poor gentlemen as manfully turned back to the tippie and got gloriously, garrulously drunk in the middle of the afternoon and also in the middle of the library, where tea was to have been served to a few friends asked in to meet the bride?

The next morning a fresh edict was issued. It came from James Brood and it was so staggering that the poor gentlemen were loath to believe their ears. As a result of this new command, they began to speak of Mrs. Brood in the privacy of their own room as "that woman." Of course it was entirely

due to her mischievous, malevolent influence that a spineless husband put forth the order that they were to have nothing more to drink while they remained in his house. This command was modified to a slight extent later on. Brood felt sorry for the victims. He loved them and he knew that their pride was injured a great deal more than their appetite. In its modified form, the edict allowed them a small drink in the morning and another at bedtime, but Jones, the butler, held the key to the situation and—the side-board. And after that they looked upon Mrs. Brood as the common enemy of all three.

The case of Mrs. John Desmond was disposed of in a summary but tactful manner.

"If Mrs. Desmond is willing to remain, James, as housekeeper instead of friend, all well and good," said Mrs. Brood, discussing the matter in the seclusion of her boudoir. "I doubt, however, whether she can descend to that. You have spoiled her, my dear."

He flushed. "I trust you do not mean to imply that—"

"I should like to have Mrs. Desmond as my friend, not as my housekeeper," said his wife simply.

"By jove, and that's just what I should like," he cried.

"There is but one way, you know."

"She must be one or the other, eh?"

"Precisely," she said with firmness.

"In my country, James, the wives of best friends haven't the same moral standing that they appear to have in yours. Oh, don't scowl so! Shall I tell you that I do not mean to reflect on Mrs. Desmond's virtue—or discretion? Far from it. If she is to be my friend, she cannot be your housekeeper. That's the point. Has she any means of her own? Can she—"

"She has a small income, and an annuity which I took out for her soon after her poor husband's death. We were the closest of friends—"

"I understand, James. You are very generous and very loyal. I quite understand. Losing her position here then, will not be a hardship?"

"No," said he soberly.

"I am quite competent, James," she said brightly. "You will not miss her, I am sure."

"Are you laughing at me, darling?"

She gave him one of her searching, unfathomable glances, and then smiled with roguish mirth.

"Isn't it your mission in life to amuse and entertain me?"

"I love you, Yvonne—Good God, how I love you!" he cried abruptly. His eyes burnt with sudden flame of passion as he bent over her. His face quivered; his whole being tingled with the fierce spasm of an uncontrollable desire to crush the warm, adorable body to his breast in the supreme ecstasy of possession.

She surrendered herself to his passionate embrace. A little later, she withdrew herself from his arms, her lips still quivering with the fierceness of his kisses. Her eyes, dark with wonder and perplexity, regarded his transfigured face for a long, tense moment.

"Is this love, James?" she whispered. "Is this the real, true love?"

"What else, in heaven's name, can it be?" he cried. He was sitting upon



"You Will Not Miss Her, I am Sure."

the arm of her chair, looking down at the singularly pallid face.

"But should love have the power to frighten one?"

"Frighten, my darling?"

"Oh, it is not you who are frightened," she cried. "You are the man. But I—ah, I am only the woman."

He stared. "What an odd way to put it, dear." Then he drew back, struck by the curious gleam of mockery in her eyes.

"Was it like this twenty-five years ago?" she asked.

He managed to smile. "Are you jealous?"

"Tell me about her."

His face hardened. "Some other time, not now."

"You have never told me her name."

He faced her, his eyes as cold as steel. "I may as well tell you now. Yvonne's name is never mentioned."

and stood looking out over the bleak little courtyard. Neither spoke for many minutes, and yet he knew that her questioning gaze was upon him and that when he turned to her again she would ask still another question. He tried to think of something to say that would turn her away from this hated subject.

"Isn't it time for you to dress, dearest?" The Gunning's live pretty far up north and the going will be bad with Fifth Avenue piled up with snow—"

"Doesn't Frederic ever mention his mother's name?" came the question that he feared before it was uttered.

"I am not certain that he knows her name," said he levelly. The knuckles of his hands, clenched tightly behind his back, were white. "He has never heard me utter it."

She looked at him darkly. There was something in her eyes that caused him to shift his own steady gaze uncomfortably. He could not have explained what it was, but it gave him a curiously uneasy feeling, as of impending peril. It was not unlike the queer, inexplicable though definite sensing of danger that more than once he had experienced in the silent, tranquil depths of great forests.

"I wonder what could have happened to make you so bitter toward her," she went on, still watching him through half closed eyes. "Was she unfaithful to you? Was—"

"Good God, Yvonne!" he cried, an angry light jumping into his eyes—the eyes that so recently had been ablaze with love.

"We must never speak of—that again," he said, a queer note of hoarseness in his voice. "Never, do you understand?" He was very much shaken.

"Forgive me," she pleaded, stretching out her hand to him. "I am foolish, but I did not dream that I was being cruel or unkind. Perhaps, dear, it is because I am—jealous."

"There is no one—nothing to be jealous of," he said, passing a hand over his moist brow. Then he drew nearer and took her hand in his. He lounged again on the arm of her chair. She leaned back and sighed contentedly, the smile on her red lips growing sweeter with each breath that she took. He felt the blood warming once more in his veins.

For a long time they sat thus, looking into each other's eyes without speaking. He was trying to fathom the mystery that lurked at the bottom of those smiling wells; she, on the other hand, deluded herself with the idea that she was reading his innermost thoughts.

"I have been considering the advisability of sending Frederic abroad for a year or two," said he at last.

She started. She had been far from right in her reading. "Now? This winter?"

"Yes. He has never been abroad."

"Indeed? And he is half European, too. It seems—forgive me, James. Really, you know, I cannot always keep my thoughts from slipping out. You shouldn't expect it, dear."

"I suppose it is only natural that you should inquire," he said resignedly.

"Of my servants," she added pointedly.

He flushed slightly. "I dare say I deserve the rebuke. It will not be necessary to pursue that line of inquiry, however. I shall tell you the story myself some day, Yvonne. Will you not bear with me?"

She met the earnest appeal in his eyes with a slight frown of annoyance.

"Who is to tell me the wife's side of the story?"

The question was like a blow to him. He stared at her as if he had not heard aright. Before he could speak, she went on coolly:

"I dare say there are two sides to it, James. It's usually the case."

He winced. "There is but one side to this one," he said, a harsh note in his voice.

"That is why I began my inquiries with Mrs. Desmond," she said emphatically. "But I shan't pursue them any further. You love me; that is all I care to know—or that I require."

"I do love you," he said, almost imploringly.

She stroked his gaunt cheek. "Then we may let the other woman—go hang, eh?"

He felt the cold sweat start on his brow. Her callous remark slashed his inner sensibilities like the thrust of a dagger. He tried to laugh, but only succeeded in producing a painful grimace.

"And now," she went on, as if the matter were fully disposed of, "we will discuss something tangible, eh? Frederic."

"Yes," said he, rather dazedly.

"Frederic."

"I am very, very fond of your son, James," she said. "How proud you must be to have such a son."

He eyed her narrowly. How much of the horrid story did she know? How much of it had John Desmond told to his wife?

"I am surprised at your liking him, Yvonne. He is what I'd call a difficult young man."

"I haven't found him difficult."

"Morbid and unresponsive."

"Not by nature, however. There is a joyousness, a light-heartedness in his character that has never got beyond the surface until now, James."

"Until now?"

"Yes. And you talk of sending him away. Why?"

"He has wanted to go abroad for years. This is a convenient time for him to go."

"But I am quite sure he will not care to go at present—not for awhile, at least."

"And why not, may I ask?"

"Because he is in love."

"In love!" he exclaimed, his jaw set

hard. "He is in love with Lydia." "I'll put a stop to that!" "And why, may I ask?" she mimicked. "Because—why—" he burst out, but instantly collected himself. "He is not in a position to marry, that's all." "Financially?" "He swallowed hard. "Yes." "Poof!" she exclaimed, dismissing the obstacle with a wave of her slim hand. "A cigarette, please. There is another reason why he shouldn't go—an excellent one."

"The reason you've already given is sufficient to convince me that he ought



He Was Silent for a Moment.

to go at once. What is the other one, pray?"

She lighted the cigarette from the match he held. "What would you say if I were to tell you that I object to his going away—at present?"

"I should ask the very obvious question."

"Because I like him, I want him to like me, and I shall be very lonely without him," she answered calmly.

"You?" he cried. "Why, you've never known anything but—"

"One can be lonely even in the heart of a throng," she said cryptically. "No, James, I will not have him sent away."

He was silent for a moment. "We will leave it to Frederic," he said.

Her face brightened. "That is all I ask. He will stay."

There was another pause. "You two have become very good friends, Yvonne."

"He is devoted to me."

She blew cigarette smoke in his face and laughed. There was a knock at the door.

"Come in," she called.

Frederic entered.

Continued next week

WHY A DOG'S TAIL WAGS

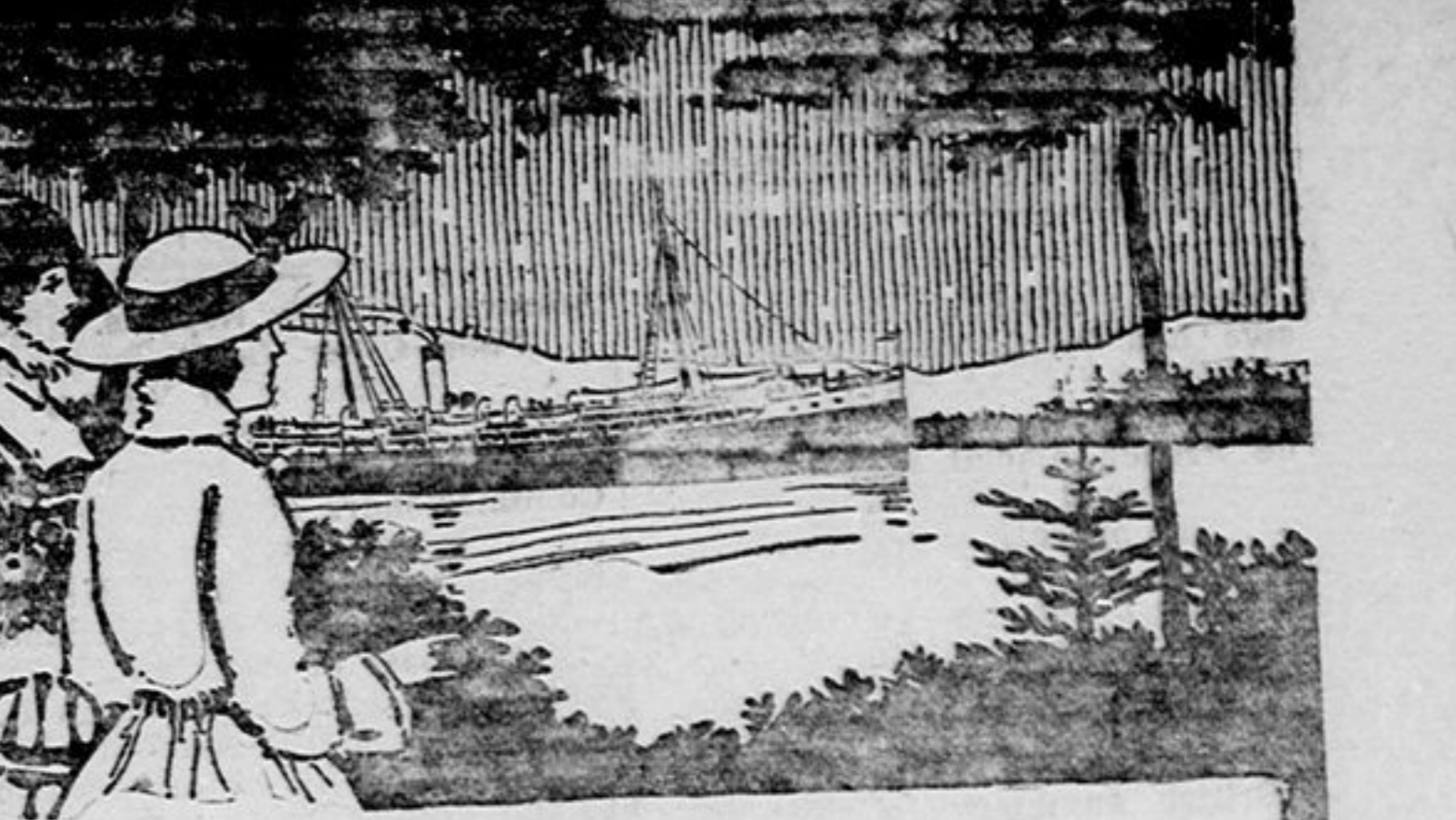
When a dog's tail whips to and fro frantically he is not carrying on an aimless muscular exercise. He is signalling the thoughts and feelings which he cannot put into words. It is his own code, and varies according to the message he wishes to flash on his rearward semaphore. He has a short twitching motion that expresses anxiety and interest, a violent lashing that makes known his enthusiasm and affection, a steady whipping from side to side that spells hunger, and a motionless droop that signals defeat and discouragement. Canine experts have always been able to read these wigwagings, but it took science to explain why the dog used them.

This is the explanation. When a dog is pleased and delighted he must have some outlet for his feelings. Just as a bashful boy in the presence of ladies twirls his cap or twists about wildly in his chair, or as a person tickled beyond measure by some humorous sally rolls on the floor and holds his sides, the dog wags his tail. The human beings in the situations described above are striving through physical action to relieve the strain on their nerves. Embarrassment must be relieved through some outward convulsion of muscles. Fido becomes filled with joy, and his tail, like a safety valve, takes the pressure off his nervous system. His emotions must be translated into some physical manifestation.

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