



"Will—Will You Marry Me?" He Blurted.



The WOMAN

A Novel by **Albert Payson Terhune**

Founded on **William C. de Mille's Play**
Illustrated with Photos from the Play
and Drawings by V.L. James

CHAPTER I.

Five Years Before.

The Woman looked up from her task of fitting the trunk tray into its position. Standish noted vaguely that the effort of packing had not made her red or frowy. Even as she sat there on the floor, surrounded by the neatly packed trunk, with a litter of garments about her, her pose was not ungraceful. Yet her face was oddly tense, and her clenched hands spoke of self-control hard to maintain.

"No," she said patiently, as though trying to teach a lesson to some stupid child, "that isn't what I mean, at all. I mean, it's even. Can't you understand?"

"Why, yes," answered Standish, "of course I understand. Why shouldn't it? It's over. You will be safe at your aunt's house by six o'clock this evening, and you will start for Europe tomorrow, just as you arranged. And our wonder week is ended. And for the next three months I'll be counting every—"

"Oh!" interrupted the woman, her hard-won patience going to pieces. "Won't you understand? I said it was over. Over? Not for three months, or for any other time. But for always. Why do you make me put it this way? I tried to say it more—"

"You have no right to say such things!" she flared. "It is cowardly. It is ungenerous."

"Why? Because you are a woman? A woman may say a man's name as much as a man. She may break his life to pieces for her own amusement. If he dares to protest, he is a coward and ungenerous. Because she is a woman. A woman's hands are tied behind her back that she cannot do as she pleases. How about the woman who pommels a man when she knows his hands are tied? Isn't she as 'cowardly' and 'ungenerous' as I would be if I thrashed a cripple? And yet women clamor for their 'rights'—"

"Rights! With one-tenth of the rights that silly chivalry showers on men, I could conquer the whole world!"

"But you could not conquer one woman. If I begged you to avoid a scene it was as much for your own sake as for mine. Since you will be gone, let's get it over with as quickly as we can. Here is the situation in a handful of words: I met you. You weren't like any other maid I ever known. You didn't fall down and



No Woman Ever Really Loved a Man Because He Was Good.

way to feel when one married. I didn't know it then. I do now. And perhaps the knowledge that I would have allowed to make you just yet, or even acknowledge our engagement, helped strengthen the infatuation. Then when I found I must go to Europe so soon, and you begged me to give up just this one perfect week—it all seemed so natural—so right—so beautiful—"

"It was wrong!" she cried. "It was wrong! I had no right to suggest it. I had no right to let you consent."

"But, womanlike, she would not let him blame himself," she cried.

"It was not your fault," she cried.

"Or if they were fault at all it was mine, as much as yours. I say you

beared me to come here. You did not. At your first hint I was as eager as you, perhaps, who added with a return of her forced hardness, "It was not quite the way one would expect a Galahad or a Quixote to spend a week. But the blame is as much mine as yours. So don't let's talk of that. Can't we both forget it?"

"Forget it? Why, girl, it's my whole life."

"It is an episode whose memory can be sweet or bitter as we choose to make it. It's over. We were clever enough to leave no trace when we went away, and your worthy constituents were told that their congressional representative was going away to recuperate, somewhere in the mountains. You will return from your vacation much benefited—if a little vague as to its details. And I will go back to my aunt's tonight, prepared to start happily on my European trip tomorrow morning. That is all."

"Oh, girl, I love you! You are mad—insane—to talk this way—to plan what you are planning. Can't you see it? Won't you give me a chance to get back your love? I had it once—I can get it again if I will give me the chance. I know I can make you happy."

A smile that savored of the rack twisted her set lips—and died before it reached her eyes.

"No, dear," she contradicted gently, "you can't make me happy. I doubt if you can make any woman happy. A woman—one who didn't know the unrespect or even reverence you. But you couldn't hold her love. No woman ever really loved a man because he was good; or because he fought against political evils or civic dragons. She might admire him for it. But admiration and reverence are petty power every day fare. When your wife wanted you to say crazy adoring things to her, you would be thinking of a new block the machine in congress. When she hoped you'd buy her some candy or a few flowers on your way home from the Capitol, you'd be too busy framing your next speech to think of such trifles. Those same trifles and his wild extravagance of praise and the quick nothing of anything she put on to please him, are the cords that lash a woman's heart to a man's. Not her pride in the way he is fighting his country's political battles."

"Listen!" pleaded Standish. "I'll give it all up, my seat in congress, my fight for the people, my political hopes—everything! I'll give it all up—all if you will marry me and give me a chance to make you love me again."

"It's no use," she returned. "For the moment you almost carried me off my feet. I can understand now why your speeches that read so stupidly, can sway people. But it's not on my question it. Inside of a day you would regret it."

"No, No!"

"And inside of a week you would be secretly reading every scrap of congressional news and cursing your lot at being out of the fight. It would be all self sacrifice. Making the person one made them for. Oh, it would be misery for us both! It would be even worse than this week."

"Today there seems much I don't understand," he retorted. "But one thing is very clear to me: the course you've chosen is an impossible one for you. You quit matrimony for love. Inside of a week because it is the right thing to do. I do not ask you to care for me or even to live in the same house with me. But for your own sake, you must—"

"It is for my own sake that I must do nothing of the sort. You get your idea of life from books. Too many people do that. I am not going to live my life as a man's ruin every bit of my future. I won't let one moment of folly blot all my life. Men don't. Why should women? There is still much to do in the world for you and you, too. If you'll look at it sanely. Oh, I know my kind of sanity shocks you. But it is sanity. You are held back by centuries of tradition. Your father began life as a minister's son. Mine began it in an Irish orphanage. Your grandfather was a supreme court judge. I don't know who mine was. There must be something, after all, in the tale of heredity. For instance, I don't suppose there's a girl in all your sister's set who would have consented to a 'honeymoon' like ours, is there? Your sisters wouldn't have done such a thing, would they?"

"No!" he exclaimed, in involuntary disgust.

At his word and tone a faint red sheen came to the woman's face as if he had struck her lightly with his open hand. But at once she recovered herself.

"Let's say goodbye and part as friends," she suggested. "No threatened harm is done. Except for myself, you are the only person hurt. You'll have to stand that as part of the price of love."

"You are mistaken," he broke in. "Others, besides myself, are affected."

"Who?"

"I don't know. But this I do know: No one can live a life of himself. No one can say: 'My fault or folly hurts me alone.' In this miserable old world of ours, we are all tangled up in one another's destinies. And when one tears loose the cord that binds him, the vibration of that wrench will soon or late reach and affect people whom he perhaps does not even know."

birth of Time have shown to be the only safe one. Conventionalism's path may seem to the near-sighted to be twisted foolishly, and unnecessarily long. But each of those twists represents the place where the Man in Front wisely stopped aside to avoid the pitfalls into which the man ahead of him had tumbled. And the short cuts in the long tortuous road are white with the bones of failures."

"I'm going to walk over these same whitened bones in my short cut from one point of Conventionalism's twisted path to another. I'm going to walk back from a union that would mean misery to me—back to the pleasant home life and social life I love and don't mean to lose. Don't worry. No whitened bones will turn under me and bring me a fall. I can defy the boggy Conventionalism, and still live happy."

"Others have defied the boggy. You are not the first nor the millionth. To most of them it seemed as safe as it seems to you."

"Yes? I should like to meet them and compare notes."

"You will not meet them," he answered grimly. "But you will tread on their bones—in the short cut. Even as some future challenger of Conventionalism shall one day tread on yours."

CHAPTER II.

The Girl and the Boy.

The Hotel Keswick telephone girl was a character. Even the politicians who made the big Washington caravansary their headquarters recognized that. Some of them had sought to unbend from their labors at law-building and law-sapping long enough to try to improve their casual acquaintance with her. But they had one and all abandoned the effort.

Not that Miss Wanda Kelly was in the very least shy. No, she had a responsive word for everybody. Only sometimes that word had a queer way of searing instead of flattering.

"If Joan of Arc had been brought up in the alleys," once observed the Honorable Jim Kellogg, "and if she's been nursed on iron tonic and learned her alphabet from George Ade's fables, she'd have been a dead rival for Wanda Kelly."

To which the more or less Honorable Jim Blake had made reply: "Maybe that hello girl was all Wanda when she started out. But a Keswick switchboard conversation has made her all Kelly. I don't know why no one reports her for being fresh. Except, maybe, that he'd have to tell what he said to her to bring out the fresh comeback."

In any case, no one did report Wanda Kelly. There, in an alcove under the great gallery stairway, she sat day after day manipulating her racks of switches. To her left stood the telephone booth; to her right the corridor where all the political world passed in her review. Behind her—and when voices chanced to be raised in eagerness or dispute, in easy earshot was a spot where far more history was made than in the Capitol itself.

This historic place was a deep niche known to local fame as the "amen corner." It is one of the best kept secrets of the corridor, yet a vantage-point whence everything was visible. Here Jim Blake—lean, saturnine master of the machine and a word of it on his cheek—sat in a corner of his mouth, his slouch hat askant on his head or under his chair. And here, like flings to the magnet, the men who gleamed in Jim's vision and whose useful life hung on his curt nod, would cluster.

One evening as the dinner crowd was drifting along the corridor toward the huge dining hall, a word of it from the amen corner held two men. Both of them she knew, and both were very evidently awaiting Jim Blake's return from the Capitol. More than one passer-by along the corridor nudged his companions and pointed out the elder of the corner's two occupants.

The object of these surreptitious glances was a fine-looking, rather portly man of early middle age—the Honorable Mark Robertson, former governor of New York, present representative in congress from the same state and—equally important—Jim

Blake's son-in-law. More—he was the man whom the machine, at its master's orders, had slated as next speaker of the house. Yes, and perhaps if all one heard were true, for a far higher office later on.

Wanda Kelly knew this. And, thanks to overheard scraps of amen-corner talk, she knew much more. She had often seen Robertson. Now and then she had received a careless nod from him or from his stately young wife. Blake's only daughter, who so often while congress was in session ran down from the Robertson house in New York for a sojourn of a day or two with her husband and father at the capital.

Yet Wanda wasted fewer thoughts just now on the celebrity than on the much younger man with whom she was talking. And perhaps her thoughts had telegraphic power. For, as Robertson strolled out into the foyer, his companion crossed directly in the switchboard's rail and stood looking down at the girl.

Wanda did not see him. Or, if she



"I Don't Love You."

It did not pass by her eyes. And before he could speak, the telephone buzzer rasped out.

"Wanda!" said the young man who was leaning over the rail.

It was the third time he had broken in. But, busy rattling the switch keys, she did not hear.

"Wanda Kelly!" he exclaimed,asperated.

She looked up with a suddenness that startled him.

"Will—you will marry me?" he blurted, his elegant cigar in one corner of his mouth, his slouch hat askant on his head or under his chair. And here, like flings to the magnet, the men who gleamed in Jim's vision and whose useful life hung on his curt nod, would cluster.

"I can't take it," he returned glumly. "And I won't take it. Maybe you think I got a lot of fun being thrown down like this. It means more to me than you've got patience to hear. I'm going all to smash. Oh, you needn't laugh. It isn't so funny to me."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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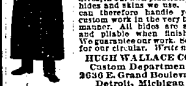
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Worms Know Her Song.

Mrs. B. A. Hitchcock of Canaan, an owner of the Litchfield County Equal Franchise League, has made the following statement in a letter to a local newspaper:

"I tamed half a dozen angle dogs or worms, and got them so that they would come up out of the earth and eat out of my hand. I fed them pumpkins and bran mash, and they thrive best on sugarcorn. It took me some time to tame them so that they knew my knock on the earth above them from the tap of an old hen's bill. I rap softly three times and whistle 'Oh, Promise Me' and they come the angeliworms. One day I discovered that the biggest, fattest angeliworm was cross-eyed."—Winsted (Conn.) dispatch to New York World.

Turn About Is Fair Play.

"A famous tenor," said Giulio Gatti-Casazza, "was invited one night to sing at a Chicago trust magazine. The dinner was superb, but at its end the trust magazine asked the tenor to sing. This, of course, was as bad as inviting a doctor to dinner and then asking for a free prescription. So the tenor politely declined. The trust magazine, however, insisted. After five or ten minutes of this, the tenor said, with a laugh:

"Oh, well, every one to his trade. Let me see you pick a pocket. Then I'll sing."

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The cranes will unload coal from ships; a conveying system will transfer it to bridges spanning the storage basin and dump it at any place de-

sired; and a system of buckets operating upon these bridges will make it possible to lift coal from the storage basins, and by means of conveyers raise it to loading machines that will drop it into colliers or lighters. The Cristobal plant will be capable of unloading 1,000 tons and loading 2,000 tons of coal each hour, and the Balboa plant 500 and 1,000 tons.

Vessels requiring bunker coal will not go alongside the wharves of the plants, but will be coaled in mid-stream from barges.

It Was a Pity.

They have a wise ten-year-old boy in an east end family, and some of his sayings are really worth padding. At least, his father thinks they are, or he wouldn't tell this one.

The other day the youngster approached his father and stared at him for some time.

"Daddy," he finally said, "you think mamma is the most beautiful person you ever saw, don't you?"

"Of course," replied the father, with great propriety.

Again the boy scrutinized his father.

"Gee, daddy," he finally said, "it's a awful pity she ain't the same thing about you, ain't it?"